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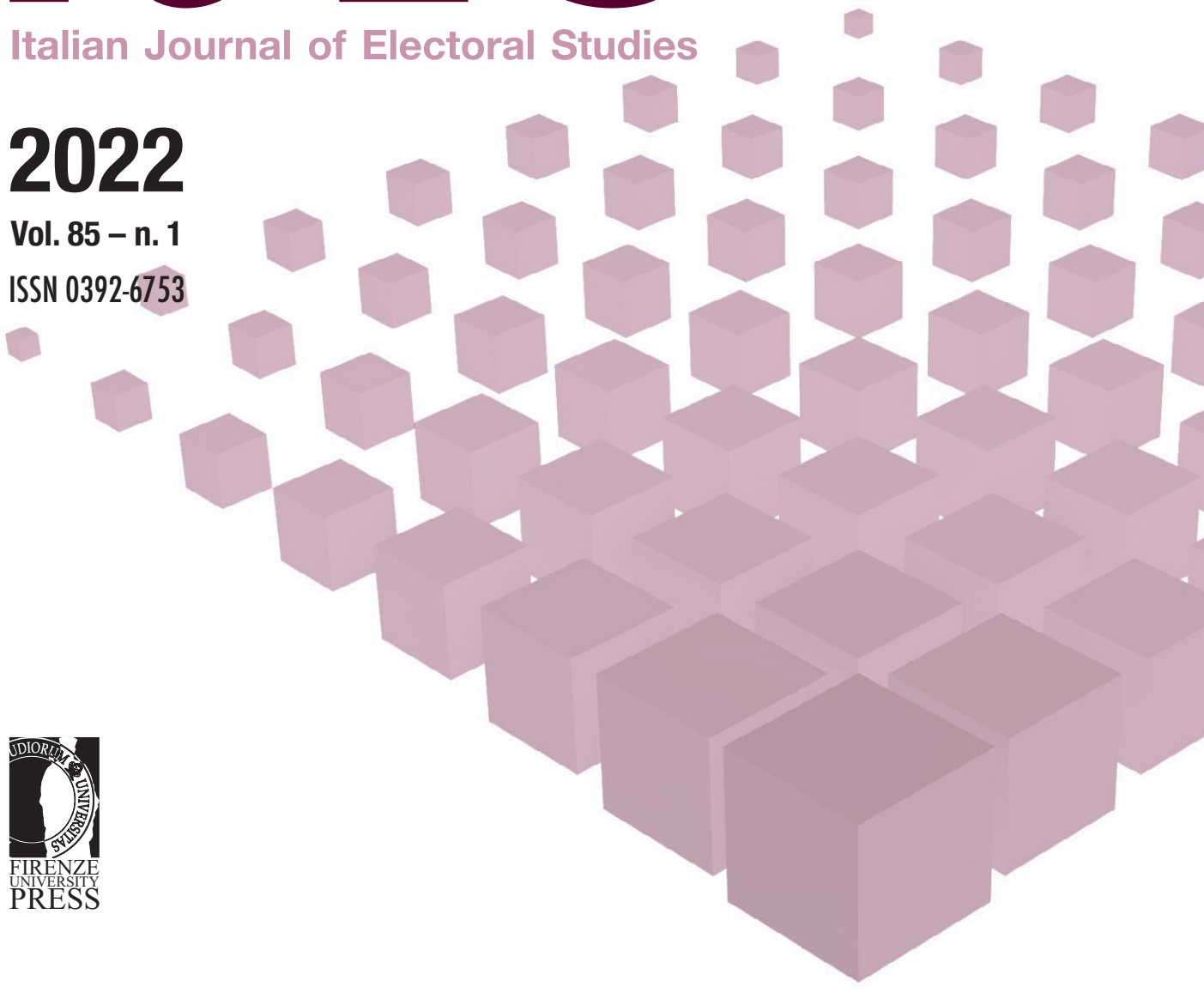

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Vote metropolitanization after the transnational cleavage and the suburbanization of radical right populism: the cases of London and Rome

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Abstract. Voters' division into opposing territorial blocs seems to be a noticeable feature of current European politics, as traditional-left parties remain entrenched in the 'centers' and parties of the populist Right surge in the 'peripheries'. This electoral dynamic is also affecting metropolitan areas, where inner districts represent the bastions of cosmopolitanism, while the outer ones the realm of ethnonationalism. In this regard, some authors argue that advanced post-industrial democracies are affected by a 'metropolitanization of politics' process. Against this backdrop, the present contribution advances the thesis that the emergence of the 'transnational cleavage' and its strengthening during the 'long crises-decade' (2008-2019) gave a boost to the electoral metropolitanization process. This thesis is tested on two case studies: London and Rome, the capitals of two countries where populist radical right forces proliferated in the 2010s and apparently widened the division between centers and suburbs. First, I investigate whether there has really been a pattern of metropolitanization of the vote in London and Rome. Second, relying on the data collected by the British Election Study (BES) and the Italian National Election Studies (ITANES), I verify whether the presumed electoral polarization corresponds to the concentration of GAL (green/alternative/libertarian) values in inner districts and TAN (tradition/authority/national) values in the suburbs. Findings help to discern not only if the metropolitanization of politics thesis holds in the UK and in Italy, but also if the transnational cleavage has a rooted territorial dimension.

Keywords: Electoral Behavior, Territorial Cleavages, Vote Metropolitanization, Transnational Cleavage, Populism.

1. INTRODUCTION

During the last years, voters' division into opposing territorial blocs has seemed to become an increasingly prominent feature of European (and non-European) politics. Indeed, while traditional-left parties have appeared entrenched in central-urban areas, populist radical right parties and claims have appeared rampant in peripheral-rural places.

2016 sparked public attention towards this phenomenon: both Brexit and Trump's election came largely thanks to the support of rural areas and

less densely populated or peripheral metropolitan spaces. In rural areas of England, the percentage of votes to leave the European Union was 55.3%, compared to the national result of 51.9%, and the 'Leave' vote was stronger the more rural the district (Harris & Charlton, 2016, p. 2122). Beyond the polarization between cities and the countryside (Jennings & Stoker, 2019), many commentators underlined that which existed between London and the rest of the country, as the capital voted 'Remain' at 60%. This has fueled the image of a 'mutiny' against London's urban and cosmopolitan elites (Calhoun, 2016; Mandler, 2016; Toly, 2017) and, according to the sophisticated study by Johnston and colleagues (2018), among the many geographical divisions shown by Brexit, the one between the capital and the rest of the UK would be the only one that remained in the 2017 election. However, when these authors speak of a 'cosmopolitan and globalist center', they are not referring to the whole of Greater London, but to Inner London alone. And indeed, the only 5 London boroughs in favor of 'Leave' were all located in Outer London.

Later in 2016, this territorial polarization of the vote occurred also in Italy, during the constitutional referendum. The 'Yes' strongholds were cities with over 100,000 residents and the central districts of metropolises; the 'No' triumphed in small towns and suburbs (D'Alimonte & Emanuele, 2016). The same phenomenon took place in the 2018 general and 2019 European elections (YouTrend, 2019). The center-left Democratic Party stood at around its national average in communes with up to 100,000 inhabitants, while it gained much more in large cities over 300,000. Here, however, support for the party was weaker in areas farthest from the real metropolitan center. On the other hand, the right alliance, led by the populist party the *Lega*, has failed to break through in the largest urban centers, strengthening its support in the suburbs. In short, recent elections seem to have revealed the presence of two distinct 'worlds' within the largest Italian cities.

This spatial polarization of politics is the general problem I intend to explore here. However, rather than the more typical urban-rural divide, the preceding examples highlight the divisions that exist between voters within large metropolises, between their inner and outer districts. Therefore, the present work focuses on this 'subclass' of the general phenomenon, namely on vote territorialization and polarization within major cities. The research objective is thus to give a structural explanation to the heterogeneity of electoral behavior within metropolitan areas spotlighted by recent elections.

In this regard, even before the phenomenon became of public attention, some authors argued that advanced post-industrial democracies are affected by a 'metropolitanization of politics' process (Sellers et al., 2013; Sellers & Kübler, 2009). According to this interpretation, with the metropolitan area becoming the prevalent form of human settlement, divisions between and within metropolises are more relevant than traditional divides between regions or between cities and countryside. And, through these new divisions, the metropolitanization process would reinforce the importance of the territory in structuring national politics.

Against this backdrop, the research question is: are we now facing a strengthening of this vote metropolitanization process? if so, what sociopolitical changes and what determinants are driving this electoral dynamic?

Building on the cleavage theory approach (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967), but going beyond old analytical categories, the paper advances the thesis that the emergence of a new cleavage, namely the 'transnational cleavage' (Hooghe & Marks, 2018), gave a boost to the electoral metropolitanization process. Indeed, this process seems to have strengthened after the multiple European crises – the Great Recession and the euro and migrant crises - during what I call here the 'long crises-decade' (2008-2019). This is exactly when the transnational cleavage has begun to mold more evidently the European political competition. Furthermore, the empirical results of the authors supporting the metropolitanization thesis showed that inner metropolitan districts represent the bastions of cosmopolitanism, while the outer ones the realm of ethnonationalism (Sellers et al., 2013; Sellers & Kübler, 2009). And these are basically the same orientations characterizing the opposite poles of the transnational cleavage. In fact, at the extremes of this cleavage are the TAN (tradition/authority/national) pole and the GAL (green/alternative/libertarian) pole. On the supply side of politics, the TAN pole is occupied by the populist radical Right and the GAL pole by the Left and the Greens. On the demand side, the TAN pole is represented by voters 'who feel they have suffered transnationalism – the down and out, the culturally insecure, the unskilled, the deskilled' (Hooghe & Marks, 2018, p. 115), whereas the GAL pole by highly educated and cosmopolitan voters who have benefited from transnationalism. But if it is true that, even before the structuring of the transnational cleavage, cosmopolitan orientations were concentrated in the central metropolitan districts and ethnonationalist ones in the suburbs, then it is reasonable to hypothesize that this new cleavage has exacerbated the vote metropolitanization process.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The next section concerns the theoretical framework. I will emphasize two remarkable gaps in the literature

dealing with the geography of electoral behavior: the tendency to look only at individual-level explanations, overlooking the importance of places, and the still predominant focus on traditional concepts, such as the urban-rural dichotomy, which does not account for the important inner-urban divide that we know less about. Addressing these gaps offers the opportunity to illustrate the 'metropolitanization of politics' theory in detail and to clarify why I deem it important to explore the territorial-metropolitan dimension of new cleavages. Then, I will test the thesis of this article on two case studies: London and Rome. After describing the research design (section 3), introducing the hypotheses, the empirical analysis follows two steps. Firstly, I investigate whether there has effectively been a strengthening of vote metropolitanization during the 2010s (section 4). Secondly, relying on the British Election Study (BES) and the Italian National Election Studies (ITANES) surveys, I verify whether the presumed electoral polarization corresponded to the prevalence of GAL values in inner districts and TAN values in the suburbs (section 5). In the conclusion, I summarize the findings, detecting not only if the metropolitanization of politics thesis holds in the UK and in Italy, but also if the transnational cleavage has a rooted metropolitan dimension.

2. LOOKING AT PLACES, BEYOND CLASSIC CONCEPTS: THE METROPOLITAN VOTE AND THE TRANSNATIONAL CLEAVAGE

Most of the electoral studies that have investigated the polarized geography of voting behavior, and especially the distribution of electoral support for populist right-wing parties, has focused on individual-level determinants. Little attention has been given to territory on an aggregate level. In particular, 'frequently age, education and income are lumped together to form the "holy trinity" of the populist voter' (Dijkstra et al., 2020, p. 7). Therefore, although it is clear from maps that populist consensus is concentrated in certain types of places, it is mostly believed that at the root there are interpersonal, not territorial, differences and inequalities (as already stressed by Gordon, 2018; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018, pp. 200-201).

Nonetheless, in the last years there has been some renewed attention to the spatial polarization of politics and to the local context in analyses of voters' behaviors (Fitzgerald, 2018; Harteveld et al., 2021; Patana, 2020). For instance, Fitzgerald (2018) has unraveled the significant impact of local ties on radical right support, showing that people who are more strongly attached to their localities (at the individual level) and the most cohesive communities (at the community level) are more likely to vote for radical right parties. Then there is the captivating explanation put forward by Rodríguez-Pose (2018), according to which the recent populist surge can be interpreted as a 'revenge of places (not people) that don't matter', i.e., those places left behind by the increasing concentration of wealth and opportunities in the central districts of major urban agglomerations. The present contribution aims to continue in the wake of these studies that reaffirm the importance of not forgetting the role of places in determining politics.

Drawing on the seminal work by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) we could otherwise interpret electoral results like those provided in the introduction as a 'revitalization' of classic territorial cleavages, such as the center-periphery or the urban-rural cleavage. For instance, Emanuele (2018b) explained the results of the 2017 French presidential elections as a 'reactivation' of the 'apparently dormant' urban-rural cleavage. But while the use of traditional analytical categories, such as the 'region' or the 'city-countryside dichotomy', may still be useful in some cases and in some respects (Harteveld et al., 2021), these do not adequately capture the pronounced electoral heterogeneity and polarization within metropolitan areas. Thus, I believe there is a need to shift attention from the classic urban-rural divide to the less investigated inner-urban one.

Similar statements have already been advanced by different disciplines. Since the 1990s, economic geography, urban sociology and political ecology have suggested focusing less on traditional categories and more on the new types of space that characterize our contemporary post-industrial societies. For instance, French sociologists have examined the 'peri-urban': an intra-metropolitan hybrid space that is neither center nor suburb nor countryside, and whose inhabitants are likely to vote for the populist Right (Damon et al., 2016). Sassen's (1991) pioneering analysis of the 'global city' has instead focused on the sociopolitical and economic consequences of the expansion and the leading role of metropolises in a global world.

However, Sassen does not pay much attention to the fact that transformations of global cities and within them may lead not only to new political practices, but also to changes in the main democratic activity: voting. On the other hand, Sellers, Kübler, Walks and other scholars explored how the metropolitanization processes of advanced post-industrial democracies influence both turnout levels and voters' preferences (Kübler et al., 2013; Sellers et al., 2013; Sellers & Kübler, 2009; Walks, 2005, 2013). Their empirical results revealed that the

willingness to vote depends on the size of the community and that there is a new electoral geography molding a different voting behavior between different metropolitan places. In particular, political orientations proved to be different especially between low-density suburbs and inner-city concentrations (Sellers et al., 2013). Thus, they came to the thesis that metropolitanization processes are causing a reterritorialization of politics.

To sum up their findings, in countries where a great share of voters lives in metropolitan areas, party competition seems to coincide with conflicts between metropolitan places. Furthermore, the specific characteristics of different types of districts[1] appear to foster distinct economic and especially cultural interests, which then affect voters' choices. Therefore, urban concentrations represent the bastions of cosmopolitanism, whereas low-density and disadvantaged suburbs are the strongholds of ethnonationalism. Consequently, each of the main party families has collected votes in different metropolitan spaces.

So, the polarization of cultural and political orientations between metropolitan places would lead parties to catch different segments of the metropolitan population. Right-wing parties have started to be predominant in low-density suburbs, former territories of the Left, due to the concentration of conservative-ethnonationalist orientations in these places. Conversely, the Left and the Greens have conquered the libertarian-cosmopolitan centers.

The main conclusion put forward by Sellers and colleagues (2013) is that due to lower turnout rates in urban concentrations than in right-wing leaning suburbs, the metropolitanization of politics has been beneficial for the conservative vote. Thus, with data relating to the 2000s, these authors stated that the patterns of vote metropolitanization contributed to pushing the Left towards neoliberal stances (so as to maintain the centers without losing the low-density suburbs), and consequently to the general shift of politics towards conservatism.

But how has this framework transformed over the 2010s, after the multiple – financial, economic, and migrant – European crises, and the transformations of cleavage politics? Indeed, many authors, although using different expressions[2], agree that European party systems have become increasingly structured around a value-based cleavage (Kriesi, 2010) connected to the opening of national borders. The conception of the 'transnational cleavage', i.e., the divide between TAN and GAL values, opposing losers and winners of transnationalism, summarizes this extensive literature (Hooghe & Marks, 2018, p. 109). But a quite neglected 'dimension' of this cleavage is exactly the spatial one. Indeed, several analyses have already been carried out on how this cleavage shapes political competition at national and individual levels, but the same cannot be said for the subnational-territorial dimensions[3]. Therefore, only a few scholars (Kübler et al., 2013; Strebel & Kübler, 2021; Strebel, 2021) seem to have realized that there may be important connections between new globalization-related cleavages and territorial developments of politics. Among these, two recent studies have linked debates on international integration with debates on the organization of metropolitan areas, showing some implications of the transnational cleavage for citizens' perceptions within metropolises and, in particular, that the GAL-TAN divide can explain why citizens support (or not) reforms that lead to a strengthening of metropolitan governance (Strebel, 2021) or of local autonomy and inter-local cooperation (Strebel & Kübler, 2021).

Reflecting instead on the consequences of the transnational cleavage for metropolitan electoral geography and connecting with the findings of works on the metropolitanization thesis, it is straightforward to assume that the two groups mobilized by the transnational cleavage live in different places: the 'losers' of transnationalism (TAN voters) in peripheral districts and the 'winners' (GAL voters) in the central ones. This assumption entails that the new cleavage should have led to a strengthening of the vote metropolitanization process. And since winners and losers of transnationalism are defined more in a cultural than in a socio-economic sense, to confirm this interpretation we should find, in different metropolitan places, concentrations of opposite cultural orientations. Therefore, we should look for prevalence of TAN values in the suburbs and GAL values in the centers.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Case Selection

The paper's thesis is tested on the metropolitan cities of London and Rome. I consider the two city-regions as

[1] These are not only 'compositional' – such as the socioeconomic composition and the level of ethnic diversity of urban and suburban districts – but also 'contextual' – above all population density and home-ownership – characteristics (Sellers et al., 2013; Sellers & Kübler, 2009)

[2] 'Integration-demarcation' cleavage (Hutter & Kriesi, 2019; Kriesi et al., 2006), 'transnational' cleavage (Hooghe & Marks, 2018), cleavage between 'libertarian-universalistic' and 'traditionalist-communitarian' values (Bornschier, 2010), 'cosmopolitan-communitarian' cleavage (Strijbis et al., 2020), cleavage between 'cosmopolitan liberalism' and 'populism' (Inglehart & Norris, 2016).

[3] This has already been stressed by Kübler, Scheuss and Rochat (2013, p. 211), who, dealing with the Swiss case, noted that 'much has been written about the ways in which the rise of the new cleavage between globalization losers and globalization winners has affected Swiss politics. Interestingly, however, little has been said regarding the spatial patterns of this new cleavage'.

'most different cases'. The differences in terms of European macro-region (London in Northwestern Europe and Rome in Southern Europe) and political-institutional system (London as the capital of a majoritarian democracy with a historical two-party system and Rome as the capital of a consensus democracy with a long history of multipartyism) certainly have an impact on the electoral behavior of the two countries, and therefore of the two cities. But what counts more for the paper's argument, that is, for vote metropolitanization and for the metropolitan dimension of the transnational cleavage, is the different extent to which the two cities can be deemed 'global'. London is a classic example of a 'global city' (Sassen, 1991), where transnationalism-related issues, behaviors and events have been fundamental for decades. For instance, the debate on the UK's belonging to the European Union has often coincided with the debate on the remoteness of London's globalist, cosmopolitan and multiculturalist elites from the rest of the country (Calhoun, 2016; Mandler, 2016; Toly, 2017). Rome, on the other hand, does not have an equivalent global dimension[4]. Therefore, we could expect transnationalism to have had a weaker impact on the Roman metropolitan vote and orientations. For all these reasons, we would not envisage the same kind of development in the two cases. Yet, in both the UK and in Italy populist radical right forces have been protagonists of an overwhelming rise during the 2010s and seem to have gained high levels of support in areas populated by 'losers' of transnationalism. Therefore, despite all the differences just discussed, the metropolitanization patterns may have been similar in the two cases.

As just mentioned, the British and Italian party systems are quite dissimilar. The British party system has historically been characterized by great stability and by bipolarism, which translates into the alternation of the Conservative Party (Con) and the Labour Party (Lab) between government and opposition. In the last couple of decades, alongside these two main actors, there have been the Liberal Democrats (LibDem), the Green Party (Greens), and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). To capture parties' position on the GAL-TAN continuum, I use the '1999-2019 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) trend file' (Bakker et al., 2020). CHES has periodically positioned political parties on the GAL-TAN scale, where 0 corresponds to the GAL pole and 10 to the TAN pole.

Not surprisingly, the Greens have been the closest party to the GAL pole of the transnational cleavage for the last two decades, followed by LibDem and Labour. Conservatives and especially the UKIP are instead located towards the TAN pole, and the latter is the 'most TAN' party (Tab. 1).

Table 1. Position of UK political parties on the GAL/TAN continuum (0=GAL; 10=TAN).

	Green	LibDem	Lab	Con	UKIP
2002	N/A	2.5	4.83	8.17	N/A
2006	2.25	2.56	4.67	6	8.13
2010	1.43	2.73	4.06	6.27	7.62
2014	1	2.43	3.43	6.14	9.29
2019	0.82	1.53	2.29	6.18	8.20
Mean	1.38	2.35	3.86	6.55	8.31

After the multipartyism of the 'First Republic', the Italian party system of the 2000s was also characterized by bipolarism. The two main political forces were the Center-Left, driven by the Democratic Party (PD) or its predecessors[5], with small formations placed on its Left[6], and the Center-Right, led by Silvio Berlusconi's Forward Italy/The People of Freedom (FI/PDL)[7]. However, this picture was upset in the post-Recession period, firstly by the rise of the Five Star Movement (M5S) and then, more recently, by the strengthening of populist radical right parties – the transformed *Lega* and Brothers of Italy (FdI) - which changed the internal equilibrium of the right-wing field. Finally, in 2018, from an evolution of the Radical Party (which never participated in elections with its own lists), the '*+Europa*' (+EU) party was born.

Being Europeanism its flag, +EU has been the 'most GAL' party since it was founded. This is followed by the Left formations, which have always been very skewed towards the GAL pole, and by the Center-Left/PD. Other research has shown that it is not really possible to place the M5S on the left-right continuum, nor on one or the

[4] For instance, the comparison between the percentages of foreign residents in the two cities according to the 2011 census data is telling: almost 37% in London; less than 10% in Rome.

[5] When I speak of 'Center-Left' before the birth of the PD (2007), I mean: the two lists '*Democratici di Sinistra*' and '*La Margherita*' at the 2001 general election; '*Uniti nell'Ulivo*' at the 2004 European election; '*L'Ulivo*' at the 2006 general election.

[6] By 'Left' I mean: '*Rifondazione Comunista*' (PRC) at the 2001 general, 2004 European and 2006 general elections; '*La Sinistra l'Arcobaleno*' at the 2008 general election; '*Sinistra Ecologia Libertà*' (SEL) and PRC at the 2009 European election; SEL at the 2013 general election; '*L'Altra Europa con Tsipras*' at the 2014 European election; '*Liberi e Uguali*' at the 2018 general and 2019 European elections.

[7] '*Forza Italia*' and *'Alleanza Nazionale*' united to form the PDL in view of the 2008 general election. In 2013, from the dissolution of the PDL, Berlusconi's FI was reborn.

Table 2. Position of Italian political parties on the GAL/TAN continuum (0=GAL; 10=TAN).

	+Eu	Left	Center-Left/PD	M5S	Center-Right/ FI/PDL	LN/ Lega	FdI
2002		2.62	3.32		7.51	8.23	
2006		0.75	4.01		7.94	8.75	
2010		0.75	3.11		8.44	8.44	
2014		0.29	2.43	2.57	7.29	9.14	9.29
2019	0.41	0.69	2.26	3.74	6.84	9.21	9.42
Mean	0.41	1.02	3.03	3.16	7.60	8.75	9.36

other side of new political cleavages, due to the highly elusive ideological profile of this party (Mosca & Tronconi, 2019). And in fact, the M5S is the most equidistant party from the two poles, even if inclined towards the GAL one. The Center-Right has constantly been oriented towards the TAN pole, but to a lesser extent than the League and FdI, the two populist radical right parties (Tab. 2).

3.2 Data, Approach and Hypotheses

The first part of the empirical research deals with general and European elections that have taken place in London and Rome from the beginning of the 21st century to the end of the 'long crises-decade' (2008-19)[8]. The Great Recession of 2008 is adopted as a watershed to distinguish between pre-and post-European crises elections.

To verify whether there has been a trend towards metropolitanization of electoral behavior in the two capitals, it is first necessary to have electoral results aggregated at the level of metropolitan districts. These can be extrapolated from the Electoral Commission Office (for London) and from the Ministry of the Interior and the *Roma Capitale* website.

As for London, the territorial units of analysis are the 33 boroughs into which Greater London is divided. These are in turn grouped into Inner London boroughs, which I consider to be the core of the metropolitan area, and Outer London boroughs, which I consider to be the suburbs.

Of course, the consideration of Inner London and Outer London as inner-urban and suburban areas respectively serves analytical purposes and is approximate. Nonetheless, previous research has already convincingly employed this division (Walks, 2005; see also Walks, 2013, p. 130; Johnston *et al.*, 2018, pp. 8–9). Furthermore, although some Outer London boroughs are 'very urban' (e.g., Newham), the division between Inner and Outer London is meaningful according to many criteria, beyond the obvious geographical one. Table 3 shows, for instance, the boroughs' data related to population density, the temporal distance from the central railway station and the housing market. The means and a measure of variance (the Coefficient of Variation) within the Inner and Outer London groups are also reported (Tab. 3).

As regards Rome, the territory of the Metropolitan City is divided administratively into 121 communes (*comuni*), one of which is the huge *Roma Capitale*, the commune of Rome. This is in turn divided into 15 municipalities (*municipi*) and 155 urban zones (*zone urbanistiche*), subdivisions of the *municipi*. Therefore, I adopt the 15 municipalities[9] and the 120 other Roman communes as units of analysis. I consider as the 'heart' of the Metropolitan City those municipalities that fall entirely or mainly within the '*Grande Raccordo Anulare*' (GRA), the highway that surrounds the most inner urban area of Rome. The rest of the Metropolitan City, i.e., those *municipi* of *Roma Capitale* that are entirely or mainly outside of the GRA and the 120 other Roman communes, are instead considered as the 'periphery'. Indeed, previous works have shown that the GRA constitutes a watershed between 'two Romes', not only in urban planning and demographic, but also in social, economic and cultural terms (Lelo et al., 2019; Tomassi, 2018) (Tab. 4).

I will gauge two different aspects of the metropolitan vote: the level of metropolitan '*territorialization*' of parties' support (H1 and H2), and the level of '*polarization*' between metropolitan centers and suburbs (H3 and H4). Thus, two different tools are adopted. First, I calculate the Coefficient of Variation (CV) of the voting shares obtained by each party in the territorial units. The CV is an index of variance, i.e., an index based on the dispersion of parties' values – in our case at the level of metropolitan districts – around the mean. Variance measures have been extensively used by studies on territorial differences of electoral behavior, and in particular by the literature on the nationalization of politics (Caramani, 2004). Unlike a less solid index such as the standard deviation, the CV enables comparison between parties with different electoral strengths[10].

[8] A distinction between different types of elections (first or second-order ones), which certainly influence the vote, is not necessary for this research design. Indeed, the comparison here is about changes in the metropolitan distribution of the vote, rather than changes in parties' strength.

[9] To the best of my knowledge, electoral results at the urban zones level are not available for all elections and for all parties examined here. Therefore, I use municipalities as territorial units within *Roma Capitale*.

[10] The literature on vote nationalization has also highlighted the limits of the CV (Bochsler, 2010, pp. 156–159; Emanuele, 2018a, pp. 24–28), which, however, do not affect this research design.

Table 3. Population density, travel time to get to the central railway station and average house prices per London Boroughs (in ascending order).

Population Density (persons per hectare)*			Travel time to get to Central Station by public transport**			Average house prices***		
Borough	*Inn*/Out	Per/hec	Borough	*Inn*/Out	Min	Borough	*Inn*/Out	£
Bromley	Out	20.6	Westminster	*Inn*	11	Barking and Dagenham	Out	269,318
Havering	Out	21.1	City of London	*Inn*	14	Bexley	Out	320,635
Hillingdon	Out	23.7	Southwark	*Inn*	19	Havering	Out	339,384
City of London	*Inn*	25.5	Kensington and Chelsea	*Inn*	24	Newham	Out	351,367
Richmond upon Thames	Out	32.6	Camden	*Inn*	25	Croydon	Out	358,488
Bexley	Out	38.3	Harrow	Out	25	Sutton	Out	369,743
Enfield	Out	38.7	Croydon	Out	32	Greenwich	*Inn*	380,772
Barnet	Out	41.1	Greenwich	*Inn*	32	Enfield	Out	384,296
Croydon	Out	42.0	Lewisham	*Inn*	33	Redbridge	Out	388,322
Kingston upon Thames	Out	43.0	Bromley	Out	34	Hounslow	Out	388,954
Sutton	Out	43.4	Hammersmith and Fulham	*Inn*	35	Hillingdon	Out	401,761
Hounslow	Out	45.4	Haringey	Out	35	Lewisham	*Inn*	404,973
Harrow	Out	47.4	Lambeth	*Inn*	35	Waltham Forest	Out	405,638
Redbridge	Out	49.5	Tower Hamlets	*Inn*	35	Bromley	Out	432,272
Barking and Dagenham	Out	51.5	Hackney	*Inn*	36	Tower Hamlets	*Inn*	439,720
Merton	Out	53.1	Islington	*Inn*	36	Harrow	Out	449,361
Greenwich	*Inn*	53.8	Barnet	Out	38	Ealing	Out	477,207
Ealing	Out	61.0	Wandsworth	*Inn*	38	Brent	Out	493,629
Waltham Forest	Out	66.5	Bexley	Out	40	Kingston upon Thames	Out	495,559
Brent	Out	72.0	Waltham Forest	Out	40	Hackney	*Inn*	500,430
Lewisham	*Inn*	78.5	Brent	Out	41	Southwark	*Inn*	503,827
Newham	Out	85.0	Ealing	Out	41	Lambeth	*Inn*	509,850
Haringey	Out	86.2	Kingston upon Thames	Out	41	Merton	Out	513,336
Wandsworth	*Inn*	89.6	Merton	Out	44	Haringey	Out	530,877
Southwark	*Inn*	99.9	Sutton	Out	45	Barnet	Out	539,830
Camden	*Inn*	101.1	Newham	Out	46	Wandsworth	*Inn*	609,995
Westminster	*Inn*	102.2	Richmond upon Thames	Out	46	Islington	*Inn*	632,660
Hammersmith and Fulham	*Inn*	111.2	Enfield	Out	48	Richmond upon Thames	Out	654,185
Lambeth	*Inn*	113.0	Hounslow	Out	52	Camden	*Inn*	770,905
Tower Hamlets	*Inn*	128.5	Redbridge	Out	53	Hammersmith and Fulham	*Inn*	778,275
Hackney	*Inn*	129.2	Barking and Dagenham	Out	67	City of London	*Inn*	907,964
Kensington and Chelsea	*Inn*	130.8	Havering	Out	67	Westminster	*Inn*	1,017,286
Islington	*Inn*	138.7	Hillingdon	Out	81	Kensington and Chelsea	*Inn*	1,246,351
Outer London Mean		48.1	Outer London Mean		46	Outer London Mean		428,208
CV		0.39	CV		0.29	CV		0.21
*Inn*er London Mean		100.2	*Inn*er London Mean		29	*Inn*er London Mean		669,462
CV		0.32	CV		0.32	CV		0.39

Sources: *2011 ONS Census Data. **The amount of time was estimated using Google Maps, setting the fastest means of public transport to travel from the borough centroid to Charing Cross station between 8 and 20 on a weekday. ***2016 UK House price index.

Table 4. Population density, travel time to get to the central railway station and house prices: within and outside the GRA.

	Average population density (per/hec)*	Average travel time to get to Central Station by public transport (min) **	Average house prices (€/m²) ***
Urban zones *outside the GRA* and other Roman communes	7.2	72	1,526
Urban zones *within the GRA*	75.4	35	3,295

Sources: *2011 Istat Census Data. **The amount of time was estimated using Google Maps, setting the fastest means of public transport to travel from the zone/commune centroid to *Roma Termini* between 8 and 20 on a weekday. ****Osservatorio Mercato Immobiliare dell'Agenzia delle Entrate* (2016).

Through the CV we can detect the level of metropolitan territorialization of electoral behavior, understood as homogeneity/heterogeneity of the vote between metropolitan districts. At the party system level, the expectation is that the mean of parties' coefficients has increased over the long crises-decade compared to the last elections held before the Great Recession. This would mean that the level of electoral territorialization within metropolitan areas has grown with the structuring of the transnational cleavage. At the parties' level, I expect the CV to be higher and growing for parties located near the poles of the transnational cleavage. This would mean that parties that most politicize the new cleavage are having a more dispersed consensus across metropolitan districts.

H1: the electoral territorialization of party systems within metropolises – measured by the mean of the CVs of parties' support – has increased during the long crises-decade.
H2: the electoral territorialization within metropolises – measured by the CV of party's support – has been higher and growing during the long crises-decade for parties located at the poles of the transnational cleavage.

The CV, however, says nothing about how much support for a party is rooted in the heart of the metropolitan city rather than in the suburbs. In other words, it fails to grasp the polarization of party consensus between metropolitan centers and suburbs. To measure this aspect, we can calculate the ratio of a party's share of the vote in the central metropolitan districts to its share of the vote in the suburbs. This approach has already been adopted in a study on Great Britain's city-suburban electoral polarization (Walks, 2005). Following this contribution, we can define this ratio as the 'city-suburban balance index'. Quite simply, an index value of 1 indicates that the party is equally strong in central and peripheral metropolitan districts; an index value greater than 1 indicates that that party is stronger in the central districts; an index value smaller than 1 that the party is stronger in peripheral ones. By examining how this index has varied over time, we can detect whether party support has become more 'centralized' or more 'suburbanized'. And to evaluate the level of metropolitan polarization of the entire party system we can look at the range of variation between the party with the highest index and the one with the lowest index. The expectation is that the range has widened throughout the long crises-decade. At the parties' level, I expect the index value to be higher than 1 and growing for parties located near the GAL pole and to be lower than 1 and decreasing for those located near the TAN pole. This would mean that GAL parties are polarizing their consensus in the metropolitan centers and TAN parties in the suburbs.

H3: the metropolitan polarization of the vote at party systems' level – measured by the range of the 'city-suburban balance index' – has increased during the long crises-decade.
H4: GAL parties have a 'city-suburban balance index' value higher than 1 and increasing over the period; TAN parties have an index value lower than 1 and decreasing over the period.

In the second part of the empirical research, I move on to examine metropolitan voters' orientations. I will verify whether, at the time of the elections where the highest level of metropolitan polarization was recorded, there was also a concentration of opposing orientations in different metropolitan areas, i.e., GAL values in inner districts and TAN values in the suburbs. I rely on the data collected by the BES and the ITANES. These surveys are suitable for this research because the BES reports the respondent's borough of residence, while the ITANES specifies the size of the respondent's commune, making it possible to distinguish between residents of the commune of Rome and of the other communes of the Metropolitan City[11]. As I show in the next section, the highest

[11] The respondent's *municipio* is not specified, so it is not possible to distinguish between residents inside and outside of the GRA. Therefore, in the surveys' analysis, the urban/suburban distinction is made more roughly between *Roma Capitale* and the other Roman communes.

level of metropolitan polarization in London was reached at the 2015 general election. Therefore, I selected the 7th Wave of the BES, which was conducted after the 2015 election and a few months before Brexit. In Rome, on the other hand, the highest level of polarization was reached at the 2018 general election. Therefore, I used the 2018 ITANES questionnaire. Unfortunately, while the sample of respondents in London is quite large (N=3579), that of respondents in Rome is much smaller (N=426). This implies that the results of some statistical operations are not significant in the case of Rome.

In examining the orientations of central and peripheral metropolitan voters, I focus on the two issues that have become more salient after the emergence of the transnational cleavage: immigration and European Union (Hooghe & Marks, 2018, p. 123). The expectation is that

> **H5**: at the time of the elections characterized by the highest level of metropolitan polarization, voters of the metropolitan centers were clearly more in favor of immigration and the European Union than voters of the suburbs.

To test this hypothesis, I selected five questions from both the BES and the ITANES questionnaires. Three concern voters' position on immigration, two on the EU. The questions relating to immigration are the same in both questionnaires and are listed below, preceded by the name I assigned to each variable:

(1) 'Immigration Level': some people think that the UK/Italy should allow many more immigrants to come to the UK/Italy to live and others think that the UK/Italy should allow many fewer immigrants. Where would you place yourself on this scale?
(2) 'Immigration and Economy': do you think immigration is good or bad for Britain's/Italy's economy?
(3) 'Immigration and Culture': do you think that immigration undermines or enriches Britain's/Italy's cultural life?

Differentiating between these different sub-issues is useful because, as briefly illustrated, new cleavages are mostly based on cultural elements, and the populist radical Right, by virtue of its nativism (Mudde, 2007), is particularly focused on presenting immigrants as a threat to national culture, even more than to economy. Thus, since I expect populist radical right parties to have a suburbanized support, I also expect the difference between centers and suburbs to be more pronounced for the 'Immigration and Culture' variable.

The variables relating to the EU are instead slightly different in the two case studies, since the BES and the ITANES questionnaires do not provide equivalent questions on this issue. For London, the selected questions concern the need to integrate or not with the European Union ('EU Integration' variable) and the sense of belonging to Europe ('Europeanness' variable). For Rome, the first question concerns again the 'EU integration' and the second one the euro ('EU currency' variable).

I recoded the scale of each question, so that low values correspond to TAN (anti-immigration and anti-EU) orientations and high values to GAL (pro-immigration and pro-EU) orientations. I also normalized the variables, so that they range from 0 (=most highly TAN position) to 1 (=most highly GAL position). Based on these variables, I will test hypothesis 5 through descriptive statistics and logistic regression models.

4. EVIDENCE OF VOTE METROPOLITANIZATION IN THE 'LONG CRISES-DECADE'

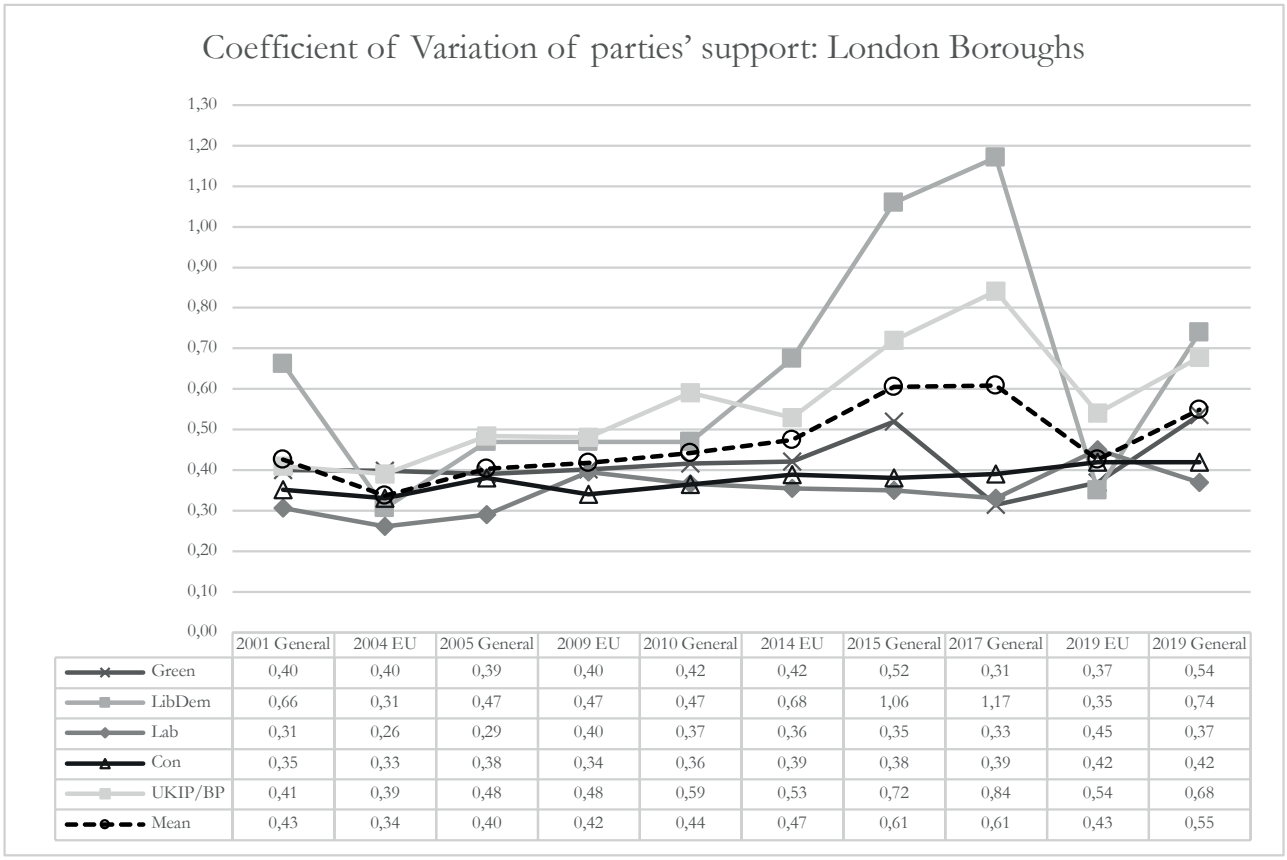
In this first part of the empirical research, the same analysis is conducted for both case studies in turn. First, I examine the metropolitan territorialization of the vote, testing hypothesis 1 (electoral territorialization at the party system level) and hypothesis 2 (electoral territorialization of each party individually). Second, I consider the polarization of the vote, between the metropolitan center and periphery, to test hypotheses 3 (the party system level) and 4 (the party level).

4.1 London

The average level of electoral territorialization between London boroughs during the three pre-crises elections was 0.39[12].

Compared to this level, the mean of the Coefficients of Variation of the five parties has started to increase from 2009 on and has continued to increase until the 2015 and 2017 general elections, when it reached its peak (0.61) (H1), due to the great inhomogeneity of the vote for the LibDem (1.17) and the UKIP (0.84). The mean of the Coefficients fell, returning almost to pre-Recession levels, at the 2019 European election, and then rose again at the 2019 general election (fig. 1). To summarize, during the post-Recession period, the average level of electoral territorialization between London boroughs has

[12] The UKIP and the Greens did not run in all the districts during some general elections. Therefore, I calculated the CVs and the city-suburban balance indexes based only on the territorial units where the parties effectively participated in the elections.



	2001 General	2004 EU	2005 General	2009 EU	2010 General	2014 EU	2015 General	2017 General	2019 EU	2019 General
Green	0,40	0,40	0,39	0,40	0,42	0,42	0,52	0,31	0,37	0,54
LibDem	0,66	0,31	0,47	0,47	0,47	0,68	1,06	1,17	0,35	0,74
Lab	0,31	0,26	0,29	0,40	0,37	0,36	0,35	0,33	0,45	0,37
Con	0,35	0,33	0,38	0,34	0,36	0,39	0,38	0,39	0,42	0,42
UKIP/BP	0,41	0,39	0,48	0,48	0,59	0,53	0,72	0,84	0,54	0,68
Mean	0,43	0,34	0,40	0,42	0,44	0,47	0,61	0,61	0,43	0,55

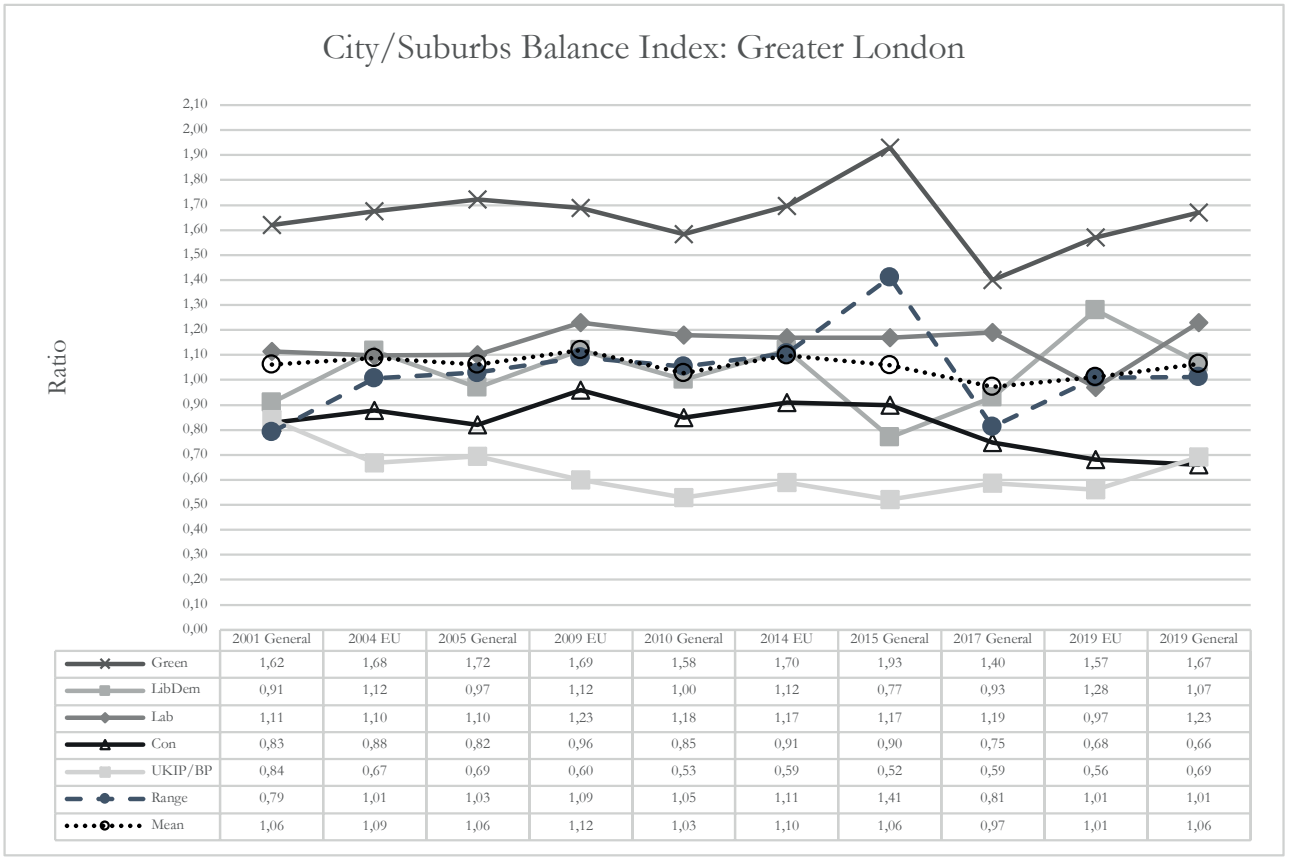
Figure 1. Coefficient of Variation of parties' support: Greater London.

been significantly higher (0.50) (fig. 5). However, a truly evident tendency towards metropolitan territorialization of the vote took place only from 2010 to 2017.

As regards the distribution of the vote for each party (H2), the first relevant observation is that the two main parties, Labour and Conservatives, those formed along the lines of traditional cleavages and which politicize less the transnational cleavage, are also those that have kept a more homogeneous consensus between London boroughs. Among the parties located at the extremes of the transnational cleavage, the Greens also have had a fairly homogeneous electoral strength, except in some elections of the post-Recession period, such as the 2015 and 2019 general elections. Conversely, the LibDem and the UKIP have had a higher level of territorialization during almost all elections and have undergone major changes. Above all, both have registered a remarkable increase in their level of vote territorialization in the mid of the long crises-decade, reaching a peak in 2017. Their average CV during the long crises-decade has been considerably higher than their average CV of the last pre-crises elections (0.71 versus 0.48 for the LibDem; 0.63 versus 0.43 for UKIP). Again, however, the fluctuating results of the last three elections make it difficult to detect a clear trend towards metropolitan heterogenization of the vote for these parties throughout the whole long crises-decade.

Moving to the analysis of polarization between the metropolitan center (Inner London) and the suburbs (Outer London), the range of variation of the city-suburban balance index has also climbed in the middle of the long crises-decade (H3) (fig. 2). In the post-Recession period, the average range has been 1.07, compared to the average range of 0.94 of the last pre-crises elections. However, the difference between the two periods turned out to be not really statistically significant (fig. 5).

As can be seen from figure 2, the trend of the range is strongly determined by the score of the Greens, which have always had the most centralized vote, touching their maximum in 2015 (1.93) and their minimum in 2017 (1.40). This underscores the 'vulnerability' of the range of the city-suburban balance index, which can be driven by the results of minor parties, such as the Greens. Nonetheless, switching to the last point (H4),



	2001 General	2004 EU	2005 General	2009 EU	2010 General	2014 EU	2015 General	2017 General	2019 EU	2019 General
Green	1,62	1,68	1,72	1,69	1,58	1,70	1,93	1,40	1,57	1,67
LibDem	0,91	1,12	0,97	1,12	1,00	1,12	0,77	0,93	1,28	1,07
Lab	1,11	1,10	1,10	1,23	1,18	1,17	1,17	1,19	0,97	1,23
Con	0,83	0,88	0,82	0,96	0,85	0,91	0,90	0,75	0,68	0,66
UKIP/BP	0,84	0,67	0,69	0,60	0,53	0,59	0,52	0,59	0,56	0,69
Range	0,79	1,01	1,03	1,09	1,05	1,11	1,41	0,81	1,01	1,01
Mean	1,06	1,09	1,06	1,12	1,03	1,10	1,06	0,97	1,01	1,06

Figure 2. City-suburban balance index of parties' support: Greater London.

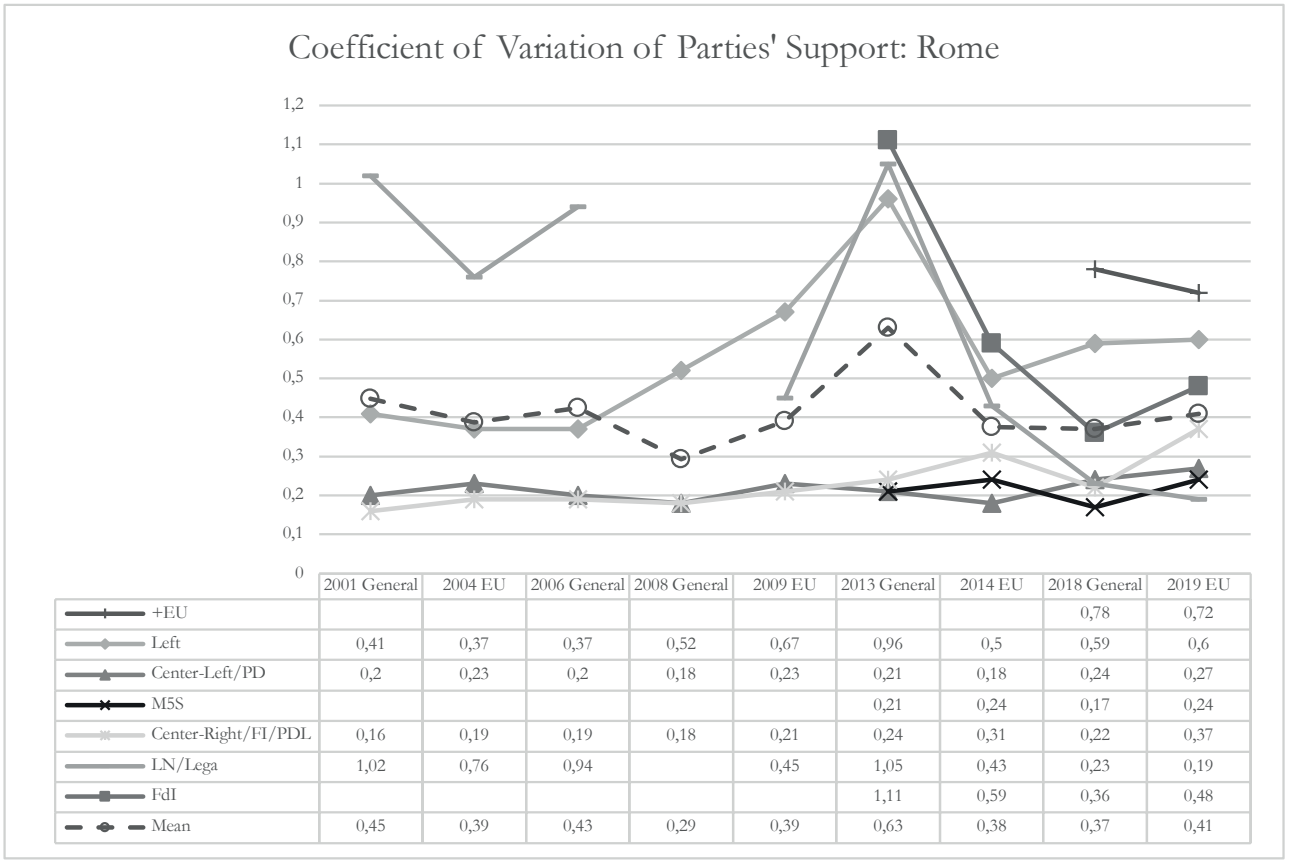
the values of the Greens are the first important 'half confirmation' of hypothesis 4, as the 'most GAL' party has always had a very high index. The other two parties located near the GAL pole - LibDem and Labour - have maintained a quite high city-suburban balance index throughout the time frame. LibDem, Labour and especially the Greens are, therefore, the parties with the most 'centralized' metropolitan consensus. However, the Labour's index has remained steadily above 1 (except at the 2019 European election) while the LibDem's index has been oscillating, and on more than one occasion it went below 1. The Conservatives' index has always remained below 1, and the consensus for the Tories has been very 'suburbanized' in the elections from 2017 onwards. Finally, the UKIP's index has always been very low, especially during the long crises-decade. From the 2010 general election to the 2019 European one, this party has been almost doubly strong in Outer London than in Inner London. Ultimately, GAL parties have always had a higher and usually greater than 1, but not clearly growing, city-suburban balance index; TAN parties have always had a lower and less than 1 index, with the index of the 'most TAN' party – UKIP - significantly lower after the Great Recession[13].

Before moving on to Rome, it is also interesting to look at the trend of the mean of the city-suburban balance indexes (fig. 2). This reveals whether the party system as a whole has become more centralized or more suburbanized. Not much has changed between the pre-crisis and the post-crisis periods in this respect: the average value of the indexes has always been around 1-1.1[14].

4.2 Rome

The average level of vote territorialization in Rome during the elections of the early 2000s was 0.39[15].

[13] The t-test on the difference between the average UKIP index of the post-crisis and pre-crisis periods confirmed that the UKIP index has been significantly lower in the post-crisis elections (p-value = 0.04).
[14] And indeed, the t-test on the difference between the average value of the indexes in the two periods rejected the alternative hypothesis that the difference is statistically significantly different from zero.
[15] At the 2008 general election, the *Lega Nord* ran with its own lists only in the Center-North (not in Rome).



	2001 General	2004 EU	2006 General	2008 General	2009 EU	2013 General	2014 EU	2018 General	2019 EU
+EU								0,78	0,72
Left	0,41	0,37	0,37	0,52	0,67	0,96	0,5	0,59	0,6
Center-Left/PD	0,2	0,23	0,2	0,18	0,23	0,21	0,18	0,24	0,27
M5S						0,21	0,24	0,17	0,24
Center-Right/FI/PDL	0,16	0,19	0,19	0,18	0,21	0,24	0,31	0,22	0,37
LN/Lega	1,02	0,76	0,94		0,45	1,05	0,43	0,23	0,19
FdI						1,11	0,59	0,36	0,48
Mean	0,45	0,39	0,43	0,29	0,39	0,63	0,38	0,37	0,41

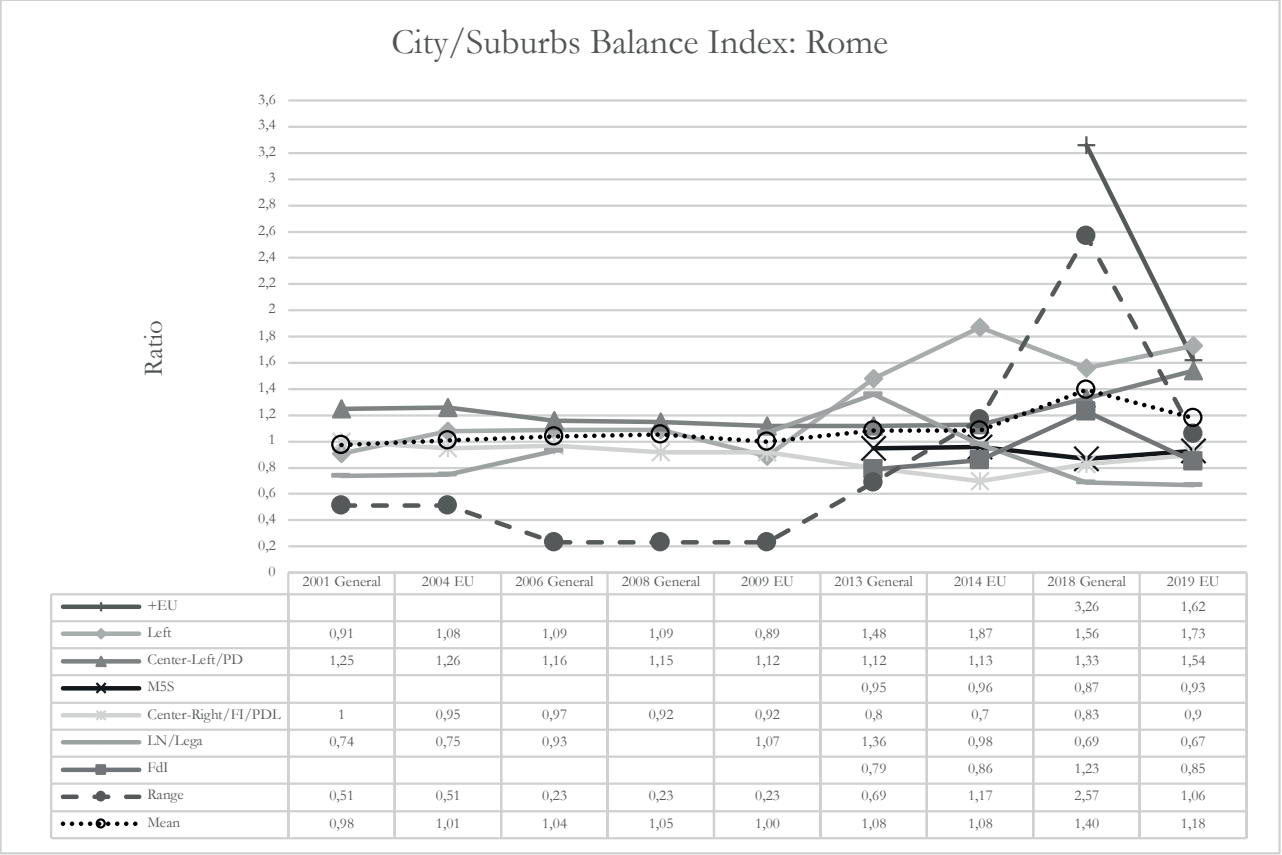
Figure 3. Coefficient of Variation of parties' support: Metropolitan City of Rome.

Since then, electoral territorialization within the Metropolitan City of Rome has increased (H1), but, as in the London case, there has not been a clear trend. Indeed, just when the Italian party system underwent major changes and the transnational cleavage began to structure Italian politics in a more evident way (from 2013 onwards), the mean of the Coefficients of Variation remained rather stable (around 0.4) (fig. 3). Thus, even though during the long crises-decade the average level of territorialization has been higher (0.44) (fig. 5)[16], what we detect is a 'shock' represented by the 2013 election, followed by a return to the normal: not an upward trend in the mean of the CVs during the long crises-decade. The one-off shock of the 2013 election reflects the fact that this vote represented an 'electoral earthquake' for the Italian party system in many respects (Chiaramonte & De Sio, 2013). However, what contributed most to increasing the CVs average in 2013 was the first electoral participation of FdI, the radical right-wing party born from a split of the PDL. The 2013 FdI's CV was the highest ever recorded in the observation period (1.11).

As for H2, the same observation made for London applies to Rome: the traditional parties of the Center-Left and the Center-Right have kept a more homogeneous territorial consensus throughout the time span. The support for the M5S has also been very homogeneous since it participated for the first time in the elections. Instead, parties at the extremes of the transnational cleavage have had a higher level of territorialization in almost all elections. Nevertheless, in the last two elections, the League obtained incredibly homogeneous support across Roman territorial units, mirroring its advancement in many territories from which it had been absent so far. The trend of the Coefficients of the Left and FdI has been really fluctuating, especially during more recent years. However, from 2018 onwards, the parties with the most territorialized vote are the 'most GAL' ones: *Liberi e Uguali* (Left) and +EU.

Switching to the analysis of vote polarization between the center and the suburbs of the Metropolitan City, the range of the city-suburban balance index (H3)

[16] However, not statistically significantly higher.



	2001 General	2004 EU	2006 General	2008 General	2009 EU	2013 General	2014 EU	2018 General	2019 EU
+EU								3,26	1,62
Left	0,91	1,08	1,09	1,09	0,89	1,48	1,87	1,56	1,73
Center-Left/PD	1,25	1,26	1,16	1,15	1,12	1,12	1,13	1,33	1,54
M5S						0,95	0,96	0,87	0,93
Center-Right/FI/PDL	1	0,95	0,97	0,92	0,92	0,8	0,7	0,83	0,9
LN/Lega	0,74	0,75	0,93		1,07	1,36	0,98	0,69	0,67
FdI						0,79	0,86	1,23	0,85
Range	0,51	0,51	0,23	0,23	0,23	0,69	1,17	2,57	1,06
Mean	0,98	1,01	1,04	1,05	1,00	1,08	1,08	1,40	1,18

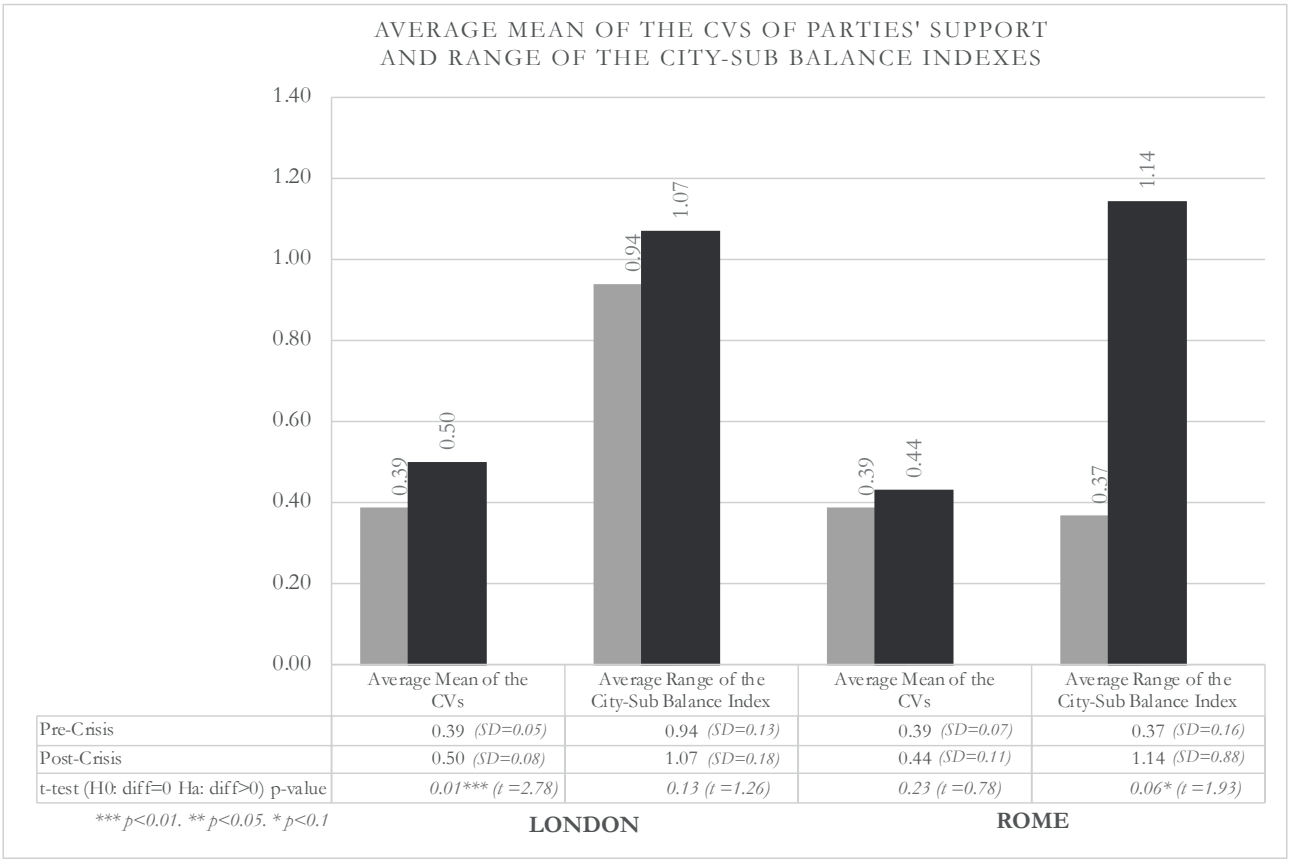
Figure 4. City-suburban balance index of parties' support: Metropolitan City of Rome.

has continuously grown during the long crises-decade and decreased only between 2018 and 2019 (strongly influenced by +EU) (fig. 4). In each election after 2009, the range was higher than the average range of the pre-crises period (0.37), and in the post-Recession period the average range has tripled (1.14)[17]. In short, the level of metropolitan polarization of the vote has effectively surged during the 2010s, and the statistical test confirmed that the difference between pre- and post-crisis elections in this respect is significant (fig. 5).

Parties located near the GAL pole have almost always kept a greater than 1 city-suburban balance index, revealing themselves to be the parties of the center (H4). At its first appearance, *+Europa* has gained extremely 'centralized' support, having an index above 3. It is the presence of this party that has made the range of the city-suburban balance index rocket. The M5S has always recorded a close to 1 index. This supports H4 in a certain sense: a party that is not leaning towards any pole of the transnational cleavage has an equally distributed consensus between the metropolitan center and suburbs. The Center-Right's index has almost always been less than 1 and it has been lower in the post-crisis period. The same goes for the FdI's index, except at the 2018 general election. The Northern League's index was below 1 at the beginning of the century, when it was still a regionalist party; it went above 1 in the first elections after the financial crisis and it remained greater than 1 until 2014; finally, in the last two elections, which marked the definite transformation of the League into a nationalist and populist radical right party, as well as its electoral success, the League's index has dropped remarkably. So much so that now the League is the party with the lowest index (0.69 in 2018 and 0.67 in 2019). In other words, the rise of the League in 2018 and 2019 went hand in hand with its 'suburbanization'.

Looking at the trend of the mean of the city-suburban balance indexes we notice that, as in the London case, there have not been major (nor statistically significant) changes between the pre- and the post-crisis periods. The mean of the indexes has been close to one in all

[17] Although this result is extremely driven by the score of *+Europa*, which is after all a minor party.



	Average Mean of the CVs	Average Range of the City-Sub Balance Index	Average Mean of the CVs	Average Range of the City-Sub Balance Index
Pre-Crisis	0.39 *(SD=0.05)*	0.94 *(SD=0.13)*	0.39 *(SD=0.07)*	0.37 *(SD=0.16)*
Post-Crisis	0.50 *(SD=0.08)*	1.07 *(SD=0.18)*	0.44 *(SD=0.11)*	1.14 *(SD=0.88)*
t-test (H0: diff=0 Ha: diff>0) p-value	*0.01*** (t =2.78)*	*0.13 (t =1.26)*	*0.23 (t =0.78)*	*0.06* (t =1.93)*

**** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1*

Figure 5. *Territorialization* and *polarization* of the metropolitan vote: pre- and post-crisis periods.

elections except the two most recent ones, when the party system was overall more centralized but, again, due to the +EU's high score (fig. 4).

5. THE METROPOLITAN DIMENSION OF THE TRANSNATIONAL CLEAVAGE: EXPLORING VOTERS' VALUES

The electoral analysis showed that, although there has not been a constant trend towards a strengthening of vote metropolitanization, the level of metropolitan territorialization and polarization has increased during the long crises-decade in London and Rome. Furthermore, GAL parties have been those with the most 'centralized' support and TAN parties those with the most 'suburbanized' one. In this section, I proceed to examine metropolitan voters' orientations, that is, the demand side of metropolitan politics, testing Hypothesis 5: voters of the centers are clearly more in favor of immigration and the EU than voters of the suburbs.

5.1 London

I start with a simple comparison of the means of Inner and Outer London respondents on the five selected variables. The means' comparison provides a first confirmation of H5: central Londoners are on average more favorable to both immigration and EU than suburban Londoners. The difference between the average position of the center and the suburbs is remarkable and statistically significant for all the variables, but the largest one is that of the 'Immigration Level' variable (33.33%) (tab. 5). It is noteworthy that, in the pre-crises period, according to the 2005 BES survey, the percentage difference between Inner and Outer London on an equivalent question to that relating to the level of immigration was only 8.51%. The 2005 BES Survey comprised also questions on 'immigration and economy' and 'European integration'. In these cases as well the percentage difference between the average stances of the city and the suburbs was relevantly weaker than the post-crisis one (e.g., 7.69% versus 32.35% for 'European Integration'). All this seems to confirm that during the long crises-decade the

Table 5. Orientations of voters from London suburbs and center: means of the 7th Wave of the BES (2016).

Issue	Suburbs		Center		t-test (H0: diff=0)		
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Center-Suburbs	t	Ha: diff>0 p-value
Immigration Level	0.33	0.29	0.44	0.3	33.33 %	10.63	0.00***
Immigration and Economy	0.51	0.32	0.62	0.3	21.57 %	10.17	0.00***
Immigration and Culture	0.46	0.34	0.58	0.33	26.09 %	9.94	0.00***
EU Integration	0.34	0.31	0.45	0.31	32.35 %	9.74	0.00***
Europeanness	0.46	0.32	0.54	0.32	17.39 %	6.95	0.00***
TOTAL	2.1		2.63		25.24 %		

*** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1

metropolitan dimension of the transnational cleavage has become more pronounced.

Returning to Table 5, as expected, the center and the suburbs are more divided on the cultural aspect of immigration than on the economic one. Finally, a total indicator given by the sum of all the variables is also reported. The percentage difference between the center and the suburbs on the total indicator is 25.24%. It should also be noted that, while Outer London is clearly against immigrants and the EU – since on all the variables except 'Immigration and Economy' its average is less than 0.5 – Inner London has a mostly halfway stance, since on only two issues its value is closer to 0.6 than to 0.5.

To validate these observations, I resort to the Spearman correlation coefficient. This is a non-parametric statistical measure of correlation, whose values can range from -1 (no correlation between variables) to +1 (perfect correlation). I created a dummy variable, labelled 'Suburbs/City', which takes a value of 0 if the respondent resides in Outer London, and a value of 1 if the respondent resides in Inner London. Then, I correlated this variable to each of the five variables of immigration and EU (Tab. 6).

A positive Spearman coefficient signals a positive correlation between being a resident of the center and having a more GAL stance. Therefore, the examination of the Spearman correlation coefficient supports what has already been argued by comparing the means: the coefficient is statistically significant and positive for all variables. Ultimately, being Inner Londoners is correlated with a more favorable orientation to immigration and the European Union.

To complete the analysis, I verified whether being a citizen of the center rather than the suburbs of Greater London increased the probability of having a more GAL stance. To do this, I used the ordered logit model, which

Table 6. Spearman's correlation coefficient: 7th Wave of the BES (2016).

Issue	Suburbs (0) / City (1)
Immigration Level	0.19***
Immigration and Economy	0.17***
Immigration and Culture	0.17***
EU Integration	0.17***
Europeanness	0.12***

*** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1

applies to ordinal dependent variables, such as the five variables relating to immigration and the EU. In this model, the independent variable is geographical belonging (0=suburbs and 1=city). As customary in this type of analysis, I also included a set of socio-demographic variables as control: gender, age, education level, occupational status. Variables related to political attitude (i.e., the Left-Right scale) and party support (i.e., the intention to vote or not for each party) are also included in the model.

Table 7 shows the results of the ordered logit model. An odds ratio of 1 implies that being a citizen of the metropolitan center rather than the suburbs does not change the probability of having a 'more GAL' position on the dependent variable. An odds ratio greater than 1, instead, implies that belonging to the center of the metropolis increases the probability of having a 'more GAL' position, whereas an odds ratio less than 1 implies that belonging to the center decreases that probability.

For all five dependent variables, being resident in the metropolitan center effectively increases the probability of having a stance closer to the GAL pole (Tab. 7). In short, it is very likely that an Inner Londoner is more favorable to immigration and the European Union than an Outer Londoner. What is more relevant is that the

Table 7. Results of the ordered logit model, reporting the odds ratios and the coefficients (in parentheses): 7th Wave of the BES (2016).

Independent variables	Immigration Level	Immigration & Economy	Immigration & Culture	EU Integration	European ness
Suburbs/City	1.21*** (0.19)	1.37*** (0.32)	1.26*** (0.23)	1.17** (0.16)	1.18** (0.17)
Male/Female	1.1 (0.09)	0.72*** (-0.33)	1.04 (0.04)	1.01 (0.01)	0.75*** (-0.29)
18-50 years/>50 years	0.63*** (-0.46)	0.77*** (-0.26)	0.7*** (-0.35)	0.62*** (-0.48)	1.39*** (0.33)
Graduated/Not Graduated	0.48*** (-0.73)	0.47*** (-0.75)	0.48*** (-0.73)	0.53*** (-0.63)	0.48*** (-0.74)
Employed, Student, Retired/Unemployed	0.72*** (-0.32)	0.82* (-0.2)	0.81* (-0.21)	0.8* (-0.22)	0.96 (-0.04)
Left/Right Scale	1*** (-0.00)	1*** (-0.00)	1*** (-0.00)	1*** (-0.00)	1*** (-0.00)
Green	2.91*** (1.07)	2.63*** (0.97)	2.85*** (1.05)	3.21*** (1.16)	1.29 (0.25)
LibDem	2.1*** (0.74)	1.69** (0.52)	1.57* (0.45)	1.97*** (0.68)	1.03 (0.03)
Lab	2.38*** (0.87)	1.95*** (0.67)	2.28*** (0.83)	2.71*** (1)	1.06 (0.06)
Con	0.56*** (-0.59)	0.52*** (-0.65)	0.49*** (-0.7)	0.52*** (-0.65)	0.35*** (-1.05)
UKIP	0.14*** (-1.95)	0.16*** (-1.81)	0.15*** (-1.88)	0.1*** (-2.31)	0.1*** (-2.26)

*** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1

predictive strength of the independent variable 'Suburbs/City' remains remarkable even controlling for socio-demographic variables and for the variables related to party support.

All the demographic variables except gender show important effects on almost all items. Above all, the probability that non-graduates are more opposed to both immigration and the EU is particularly high. These results confirm the mainstream notion that age, education and, to a lesser extent, occupational status are decisive determinants of voters' orientations on the issues that have become more salient after the emergence of new cleavages.

Lastly, as expected, the variables on party support reveal that those who claimed to vote for the Greens, the LibDem and the Labour have a much higher probability of supporting GAL stances. The opposite is true for declared voters of the Tories and the UKIP.

5.2 Rome

The same analysis has been applied to citizens of the Metropolitan City of Rome, divided between residents of *Roma Capitale* ('center') and residents of the other communes of the metropolitan area ('suburbs').

As in the London case, the means' comparison confirms H5: Romans of the 'center' are on average more favorable to immigration and the EU (Tab. 8). However, the difference between the average position of the center and the suburbs is considerable for the immigration variables, whereas not so high and not statistically significant for the variables relating to the EU. The greatest percentage difference is that of the 'Immigration and Culture' variable: 31.58%. The cultural aspect of the immigration issue is therefore the one on which the center and the suburbs of Rome are mostly divided. In this regard, a brief comparison between the 2018 and the 2008 ITANES surveys is telling. The percentage difference between the mean stance of the center and the suburbs on 'Immigration and Culture' is very much stronger in 2018 than in 2008: 31.58% versus 7.02%. This supports again the idea that, since the Recession, the transnational cleavage has become increasingly decisive in structuring and polarizing metropolitan voters' opinions.

The total indicator finally reveals that the residents of *Roma Capitale* are about 15 percent closer to the GAL

Table 8. Orientations of voters from Roman suburbs and center: means of the 2018 ITANES Survey.

	Suburbs		Center		t-test (H0: diff=0)		
Issue	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Center-Suburbs	t	Ha: diff>0 p-value
Immigration Level	0.28	0.31	0.35	0.32	25.00 %	1.88	0.03**
Immigration and Economy	0.36	0.3	0.41	0.3	13.89 %	1.47	0.07*
Immigration and Culture	0.38	0.32	0.5	0.33	31.58 %	3.04	0.00***
EU Integration	0.65	0.48	0.7	0.46	7.69 %	0.67	0.25
EU Currency	0.53	0.5	0.56	0.5	5.66 %	0.48	0.31
TOTAL	2.2		2.52		14.55 %		

*** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1

Table 9. Spearman's correlation coefficient: 2018 ITANES Survey.

Issue	Suburbs (0) / City (1)
Immigration Level	0.09*
Immigration and Economy	0.07
Immigration and Culture	0.15***
EU Integration	0.04
EU Currency	0.03

*** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1

pole than the residents of the peripheral communes. In general, the average stance of both *Roma Capitale* and the other communes is rather opposed to immigration (all immigration variables have an average of less than or equal to 0.5 for both sub-metropolitan areas) and rather favorable to the European Union (all EU variables have an average greater than 0.5 for both sub-metropolitan areas).

The Spearman's correlation coefficient supports what has just been maintained, although the results are statistically significant only for some variables. Considering only these variables, the coefficient is positive for all, and it is highest for 'Immigration and Culture' (Tab. 9).

Moving on to the ordered logit model, the only statistically significant result is that of the dependent variable 'Immigration and Culture' (Tab. 10). On this variable, being resident in the center of the Metropolitan City rather than in the suburbs greatly increases the probability of having a more 'GAL' position. In simple terms, it is more probable that immigrants are considered a resource for Italian culture in *Roma Capitale* than in the other smaller and peripheral Roman communes.

As for the demographic variables, education shows a noteworthy effect, but only on the immigration-related questions. Finally, the variables related to political attitudes and party support lead to the expected results: those who showed intention to vote for the Center-Left (PD) and even more for +EU and the Left (LEU) have a much stronger probability of supporting 'GAL' stances. Conversely, the intention to vote for the Center-Right (FI), the populist radical Right (FdI and *Lega*) and also for the M5S predicts a much more anti-immigrant orientation. The effect of voting for FI and for the League diverges on the EU: the former increases the likelihood of supporting the EU; the latter decreases it.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The goal of this work was to give a structural explanation based on the established cleavage theory to the heterogeneity of electoral behavior highlighted within metropolitan areas by recent European elections. I have thus put forward the thesis that the emergence of the 'transnational cleavage', and its strengthening during the 'long crises-decade' (2008-2019), reinforced the vote metropolitanization process, already detected in advanced post-industrial democracies (Sellers et al., 2013; Sellers & Kübler, 2009). Adopting a 'most different cases' design, I have tested this thesis on two city-regions: London and Rome. In both capitals, I found 'traces' of greater vote metropolitanization after the structuring of the transnational cleavage, but the results do not point to evident trends.

Vote *territorialization* within the two metropolitan areas at the party systems' level has been on average higher during the 2010s than in the last pre-crises elections (H1). However, the difference in territorialization between pre- and post-crisis elections was statistically significant only in the London case. In both metropolises, there has not been a constant pattern towards surg-

Table 10. Results of the ordered logit model, reporting the odds ratios and the coefficients (in parentheses): 2018 ITANES Survey.

Independent variables	Immigration Level	Immigration & Economy	Immigration & Culture	EU Integration	EU Currency
Suburbs/City	1.16 (0.15)	1.04 (0.04)	1.44* (0.36)	1.06 (0.06)	1.08 (0.08)
Male/Female	0.83 (-0.19)	0.92 (-0.08)	1.19 (0.17)	1.36 (0.3)	1.03 (0.03)
18-50 years/>50 years	1.17 (0.16)	1.65*** (0.5)	1.34 (0.29)	1.09 (0.08)	1.07 (0.07)
Graduated/ Not Graduated	0.72* (-0.33)	0.64** (-0.44)	0.60*** (-0.51)	0.95 (-0.05)	0.89 (-0.12)
Employed/Unemployed	0.88 (-0.13)	0.91 (-0.09)	0.74 (-0.30)	0.73 (-0.31)	0.78 (-0.24)
Left/Right Scale	0.98*** (-0.02)	0.97*** (-0.03)	0.99** (-0.01)	0.98*** (-0.02)	0.98*** (-0.02)
+EU	2.75** (1.01)	2.91*** (1.07)	2.83** (1.04)	0.78 (-0.25)	2.49** (0.91)
LEU (Left)	3.91*** (1.36)	5.13*** (1.63)	4.85*** (1.58)	1.33 (0.28)	2.38* (0.87)
PD	1.91** (0.65)	1.67* (0.51)	1.79* (0.58)	1.03 (0.03)	2.34*** (0.85)
M5S	0.63* (-0.46)	0.58** (-0.56)	0.63** (-0.46)	0.76 (-0.27)	0.81 (-0.22)
FI	0.24*** (-1.41)	0.37*** (-1.01)	0.38*** (-0.96)	1.52 (0.42)	2.26** (0.82)
Lega	0.00 (-17.18)	0.07*** (-2.6)	0.09*** (-2.42)	0.43* (-0.85)	0.44* (-0.83)
FdI	0.24*** (-1.44)	0.34*** (-1.08)	0.28*** (-1.29)	1.09 (0.08)	0.53 (-0.63)

*** p<0.01. ** p<0.05. * p<0.1

ing territorialization. Instead, there was an increase in vote territorialization in the first half of the long crises-decade, followed by a return to normal levels and then by some tendencies of new increase during the most recent elections.

Parties located at the poles of the transnational cleavage have shown a higher level of heterogeneity of electoral consensus between metropolitan districts, compared to Center-Right and Center-Left parties, which politicize the new cleavage less. Nonetheless, the level of territorialization of 'more GAL' and 'more TAN' parties appears to fluctuate over the period, rather than grow steadily (H2).

Vote *polarization* between metropolitan centers and suburbs at party systems' level has also risen during the long crises-decade in both London and Rome, but only in the Roman case the difference between pre- and post-crisis elections is statistically significant (H3). In addition, the trend from election to election is more intelligible in Rome, so it is possible to detect a clearer tendency here towards metropolitan polarization of the vote between the more 'centralized' and the more 'suburbanized' political forces.

In both metropolises, parties located near the GAL pole of the transnational cleavage have kept a greater than 1, but not always growing, city-suburban balance index. Conversely, parties located near the TAN pole have maintained a less than 1, but not always decreasing index (H4). In short, GAL parties are the parties of the metropolitan center, but they have not all become more 'centralized' over the decade. On the other hand, TAN parties are the parties of the suburbs, but they have not all become more 'suburbanized' throughout the decade. The comparison between the two 'most TAN' and main populist radical right parties of the two countries - UKIP and *Lega* - proves that other general remarks cannot be made. UKIP has maintained a very 'suburbanized' support in both elections in which it performed

well and in those in which it scored poor percentages, although its index has been even lower after the Great Recession. Conversely, in the first half of the 2010s, when it was still a marginal party, the League recorded a city-suburban balance index greater than 1. Thus, it gained higher percentages in inner Rome than in the Metropolitan City of Rome area outside of the GRA (*Grande Raccordo Anulare*). In recent elections, however, the League's surge has been accompanied by its 'suburbanization': the party has taken root in the peripheral communes of the Metropolitan City and in the *Roma Capitale* area outside of the GRA.

Linking the electoral results to the attitudes of metropolitan voters, I then verified whether, at the time of the elections where the highest metropolitan polarization was recorded, GAL values prevailed in inner districts and TAN values in the suburbs. To do this, I investigated the orientations of London and Roman voters on immigration and the European Union: the two issues mostly associated with the transnational cleavage. Findings of the statistical analyzes are more convincing in the case of London. Nonetheless, in both metropolises, central voters turned out to be considerably more in favor of immigration and European integration than peripheral voters (the difference is not statistically significant only for EU related issues in Rome). Furthermore, brief comparisons with pre-crises surveys showed that the percentage difference between metropolitan centers and suburbs on immigration and EU related issues has grown remarkably. This is additional evidence for the claim that the metropolitan dimension of the transnational cleavage has become more decisive since the Recession. It is also worth noting that, especially in Rome but also in London, centers and suburbs are more distant on the cultural aspect of immigration than on the economic one. In other words, suburbs are much more inclined to consider immigrants as a threat to national culture compared to centers. This is probably why populist radical right parties, being strongly nativist, have hoarded votes in the suburbs and have had a decidedly 'suburbanized' consensus.

In conclusion, it cannot yet be stated with certainty that the pervasiveness of the transnational cleavage during the long crises-decade gave a boost to the electoral metropolitanization process. Perhaps, other elections are necessary to understand if electoral metropolitanization is strengthening in London and Rome, or if the high polarization observed in some elections of the last decade was a coincidence or was due to other contingent factors. And, of course, the potential limitations of this research also need to be recognized. For instance, an improvement of the research design may consist in adopting more sophisticated methods, such as spatial regression models.

Nevertheless, the research has already at this stage emphasized a notable finding. In two very different cities such as London and Rome, capitals of two very different countries in many respects, the transnational cleavage has an evident territorial-metropolitan dimension. Such similarity in two 'most different cases' supports the generalizability of the findings. However, other studies on the territorial distribution of the vote and of the orientations may shed light on additional geographical lines along which this cleavage is splitting the European electorate.

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Euroscepticism and populism in Italy among party elites and the public

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Abstract. The recent history of European politics has been characterised by the mounting phenomena of populism and Euroscepticism. Some recent analyses discuss the possible convergence between the two, exemplified, above all, by the increased success of Eurosceptic and populist parties. Conceptually and historically, Euroscepticism and populism are two distinct ideological realms. To what extent do they develop in parallel or converge, both at the elite and mass levels? We address this question by looking at the Italian case, where populism and Euroscepticism have apparently progressed simultaneously. Through an analysis of the attitudes of political elites and the public, we argue that the two phenomena actually move in parallel and in general do not converge, with the main exception of the Five Star Movement where a convergence is instead visible. Finally, by observing the effects of Euroscepticism and populism on the voting choices of citizens, we find a high level of congruence in the political system between demand and supply, hence between voters and their representatives.

Keywords: Italian MPs, Italian public opinion, EU attitudes, Euroscepticism, populism, survey.

INTRODUCTION

Euroscepticism and populism are two key phenomena of contemporary European politics that can often be observed in tandem. During the last two decades, they appear to have progressed jointly within national political spaces and party systems (Harmsen, 2010). Both phenomena were nourished by the emergence of new political entrepreneurs (mainly parties, but also social movements and interest groups) that challenged 'mainstream' parties by eroding their electoral support (De Vries & Hobolt, 2012; Meijers, 2017) and by influencing the national policy agenda (among others see Schumacher & Van Kersbergen, 2016; Di Mauro & Verzichelli, 2020; Biard, 2019; Pirro & Taggart, 2018). Scholars agree on the point that Euroscepticism and populism remain two distinct subjects at both the theoretical and empirical levels (Rooduijn, 2019). Despite this conclusion, recent research shows an increasing connection between the two (Kneuer, 2019). Especially under the effects of the Great Recession and the so-called refugee reception crisis

(Ambrosini et al., 2019), populists started to carry the flag of anti-EU establishment, while Eurosceptic radical left and radical right parties converged on anti-elitism and an emphasis on people's centrality (Polk et al., 2017; Basile & Mazzoleni, 2020).

Despite the relevance of the topic, from an empirical point of view the relationship between Euroscepticism and populism remains under-investigated in the literature, especially at the elite level. *Do Euroscepticism and populism meet within the national political elite and the public? Are these two stances influential on the voting choices of citizens?* We aim to address these questions and provide empirical evidence by analysing the Italian case in depth. This is a key example of how both Euroscepticism and populism can enjoy unprecedented success, resulting in their chief political entrepreneurs winning the national elections of 2018 and forming the first (although short-lived) Eurosceptic-populist government in Italy (Conti et al. 2020a).

The article is structured as follows. In the next section, we review recent patterns of convergence between Euroscepticism and populism in Italy. We then present our framework for analysis and introduce the question of why the electoral success of anti-establishment parties may lead to erroneous conclusions about the relationship between Euroscepticism and populism. In the subsequent sections we present our data based both on an *ad hoc* elite survey and a broader public survey and introduce our findings. Some conclusive remarks discuss the main results of our work.

EUROSCEPTICISM AND POPULISM IN ITALY: CONVERGING OR PARALLEL PHENOMENA?

In the past, Europhilia flourished among Italy's political elite, especially among those politicians serving in public office. The wide support for European integration in this country was the result of a deep-rooted consensus established between the elites and the masses (Conti, 2017; Isernia, 2008). With the permissive consensus of citizens, Italian policy makers signed onto all major European rules with a belief that this would favour the country's modernisation and its overcoming of an inefficient national government (Dyson & Featherstone 1996; Radaelli, 2002). But in recent times, as in other countries, more critical views have also emerged here. Multiple (financial, migration) crises affected Italy as one of the most exposed countries in Europe and contributed to determining a peak in opposition to the EU and its capacity to handle different crises. The fall in public support for the EU, in particular, is impressive (Lucarelli, 2015). Thus, a large electoral market available for a Eurosceptic platform has progressively materialised and parties have started to look at this market – and to capitalise on the anti-EU motivations of voters – with greater interest (Conti et al., 2021; Giannetti et al., 2017; Serricchio, 2018).

After the Maastricht Treaty and the launch of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) the EU certainly started to produce a more evident impact on the member states, particularly on Italy. Beyond the many advantages, the EU-led retrenchment measures inflicted sacrifices on Italian society and the competitive pressures within the Single Market created concern among citizens. Especially during the Great Recession, EU constraints materialised through the bitter medicine imposed on Italy by the technocratic Monti government, which implemented EU conditionality resolutely despite its lack of popular legitimacy and weak anchorage with Italian society (Culpepper, 2014). It is especially at this critical juncture – when the scope of EU conditionality and its impact on Italy proved so ample in affecting the country's social and political stability (Fabbrini, 2019; Matthijs, 2017; Sacchi, 2015) – that the functional dissonances that arose from the incomplete EMU architecture turned out to be more macroscopic. At this point, the associated costs of EU membership were perceived, at least by some segments of Italian society, as outweighing the gains. Indeed, in the presence of adverse economic conditions, Italians responded more intensely to the EU and to its regulatory capacity. This phenomenon occurred at the mass level (Balestrini, 2012) and had implications at the elite level as well (Conti et al., 2020b).

National governments have had to manage a high number of *stress tests* and EU constraints on the domestic economic system. Because much of the popular discontent with EU policy has been directed toward national executives (especially in the context of the Great Recession: on this point see Bosco & Verney, 2012), these elites have learned that when citizens are unhappy with EU policies, delegation to the EU level is something that could easily be thrown back on them. As a result, some sectors of the Italian elite which used to be more Europhile, as well as some newly emerged elites, have become more reluctant to accept further integration if this undermines their capacity to fulfil their most substantive goals – i.e. sustaining tenure that requires electoral success and fostering ties with strategic constituencies (Conti, 2017). Concerns about the economic impact of the EU process have paired with tensions on the issue of immigration, especially where immigrants are perceived as competing for the same resources as natives and these resources are scarcer, such as in times of retrenchment

politics (Caponio & Cappiali, 2018). In the end, issues such as the competitive pressures within the Single Market, the severity of EU conditionality, the widening gap in prosperity between the Eurozone's core and periphery members, the reduced levels of EU funding to Italy after enlargement to Central-Eastern Europe, and the attractiveness of Italy as an arrival destination in Europe for migrants, are all factors that have opened up a space in this country for an increased Euroscepticism that targets, in particular, EU policy and the EU's capacity as chief manager of different crises.

Italy has also been seriously shaken by the rise of populism in recent years. The electoral success of a variety of populist parties has altered the established interactions within the national party system and has created a new challenge to politicians, confronting them with the problem of either ignoring or attacking populist challengers or else accommodating their rhetoric and communication style to theirs. As a reflection of its widespread diffusion, Italy has been considered as being permeated with populism. Indeed, the Italian political system has been defined as affected by 'endemic populism' (Mazzoleni & Bracciale, 2018); a 'promised land' (Tarchi, 2015), and a 'breeding ground' (Bobba & Legnante, 2016) for populists, and a system that expands the varieties of populism, developing some innovative, mutating and durable forms (Bobba & Roncarolo, 2018, Verbeek & Zaslove, 2016). According to some authors, the generality of Italian parties has shown some signs of populism with the intensification of populist features strongly linked to the exacerbation of the financial and economic crisis and its governance (Caiani & Graziano, 2016).

We know that the rise of populist parties is a key factor that may (negatively) affect elite consensus on the EU (Pirro & Taggart, 2018). Indeed, populists often voice their opposition to the EU on the basis of a composite series of arguments, and those politicians representing populist parties are more often outside the traditional elite consensus and may well represent a main threat to the EU integration process within national institutions (De Vries & Edwards, 2009; Taggart, 1998). Also at the mass level, attitudes towards the EU and populism can be connected to each other (Gómez-Reino & Llamazares, 2013).

In the article, we explore whether the prospect of a merger of the two stances of populism and Euroscepticism has really materialised. We do this using Italy as a case study by reason of being a country that has recently been permeated by both stances (Pirro & Van Kessel, 2018). Moreover, we explore whether Euroscepticism and populism are factors affecting political behaviour by linking voters and parties. More precisely, we assess whether Euroscepticism and populism consistently contributed to determining the voting preferences of citizens and to aggregating election results. The analysis of the Italian case adds to a theoretical debate that has not yet reached any definite conclusion on the relationship between Euroscepticism and populism and about their significance for voting behaviour.

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

At least in the last two decades, Italian politics has been characterised by the rising success of Eurosceptic and anti-elite/establishment sentiments. At the elite level, Salvini's *Lega* and the Five Star Movement epitomised this process by gaining unprecedented electoral success and government leadership in 2018. Both of them, although sometimes with deep differences, have been defined as populist parties: the former of the 'classical' radical right family while the latter of the *Polyvalent* type (Pirro, 2018). Similarly, these two parties have been considered as falling within the Eurosceptic side of political supply, with the League clearly focused on the defence of natives' cultural/economic prerogatives and the Five Star Movement (M5S) on anti-elitist claims (Carlotti & Gianfreda, 2018). Pirro and Kessel (2018) include these parties in the category of *Eurosceptic populists*. According to these authors, the multiple crises affecting the EU from the 2010s – namely the Great Recession, Brexit and the refugee crisis – pushed towards a convergence of frames on the Eurosceptic side. Indeed, both M5S and the League launched campaigns against the Euro currency, converged on rejection of immigrants during the most acute years of the refugee crisis (with the League making the point its own 'flag') and considered Brexit as the affirmation of the people's will to protect their own identity (League) and own democracy (M5S) (Pirro & Kessel, 2018).

However, it is important to recall that opposition to the EU and populism are two distinct phenomena that may also point to different stances and motivations (Gianfreda & Carlotti, 2018). Euroscepticism originates from a mix of motivations (among others, nationalism, sovereignism, rejection of foreign citizens, and the division between winners/losers of EU integration). Populism is instead a reaction to a perceived corrupt elite in defence of the popular will. In this work, we address the problem of a populist/Eurosceptic convergence testing, empirically, whether *Euroscepticism and populism are dependent on each other or are postures that run in parallel*. Theoretically, the two phenomena do not necessarily converge but could run in parallel for, at least, three main reasons.

First, Eurosceptics advocate the primacy of the nation state and a re-appropriation of decision-making powers against EU institutions. Populists' main concern is instead about flaws in national politics stemming from misconduct and the lack of attention of corrupt elites to citizens' rights and demands. Although these two stances emphasise the re-appropriation of power, populists aim primarily to overturn the status quo at the national level while Eurosceptics aim to block the foreign/external influence.

Second, these two phenomena may well originate from different traditions. In Italy, for instance, anti-elite rhetoric has deep roots in peoples' sentiments of distrust towards corrupt and self-advantaging politics that go back to the eve of the Republic. Different political parties have in the past benefited from those sentiments of aversion against elites. Among them, the flag of anti-elitism has been carried by anti-system parties (Sartori, 1976; Bardi, 1996) but also by populist leaders at their political acme such as Silvio Berlusconi (Ruzza & Fella, 2011). Euroscepticism is, in comparison, a more recent phenomenon. Italy has long been considered a Europhile country with a very minoritarian opposition at both party and public level. Regionalist parties and movements (such as the League; on this point see Basile, 2015) have instead attempted to mobilise citizens against the (domestic) centre, accused of despoiling regions of their resources and peculiar traits. It is also true, however, that the shift of Salvini's 'new' League (Albertazzi et al., 2018) to Euroscepticism has followed a different representation of centre, based, in his view, in the EU institutions. In Salvini's representation of threats, immigrants and technocrats in Brussels have become the new enemies who despoil Italian citizens of their resources and of their freedom to decide their own destiny.

Third, most of the literature on EU attitudes documents a double gap. The first gap is between elites and citizens where, contrary to the masses, elites tend to maintain the status quo on the EU (Vogel & Göncz, 2018). Thus, if a convergence between populism and Euroscepticism emerged at the mass level, this is more unlikely to develop at the elite level. In this respect, despite a public discourse that has become very much oriented towards inter-party demarcation on the EU and very inclined to anti-EU sentiments, some recent analyses of elite attitudes in Italy have shown that, in actual fact, they were not as polarised as one might expect. In particular, the results of a survey of Italian MPs conducted in 2014 showed that positive feelings towards the EU survived the crisis years and the changes to the composition of the Italian political elite following the 2013 general elections (Conti, 2017). In this respect, the analysis of elite attitudes has allowed the specification of arguments about the mainstreaming of Euroscepticism (Brack & Startin, 2015), a growing phenomenon in Italy at the level of the rhetoric of political leaders (Brunazzo & Mascitelli, 2021) but manifestly less on the rise among the elites serving in public office. We can find in the comparative literature a possible interpretation of this apparently contradictory phenomenon. Whereas parties and their leaders are answerable to national electorates and do not want to be punished by their voters for unpopular policies imposed on them by the EU, individuals serving the party in public office may behave differently from the party central office (Charalambous et al., 2018). Actors in different settings face a different strategic calculus, which is shaped in accordance with the resources available to them and the opportunities, constraints, and incentives they face when acting in their respective roles. If a party's public stance can be more sensitive and responsive to the mounting discontent of citizens – a widespread phenomenon that has driven scholarship to replace the concept of a 'permissive consensus' in public opinion towards the EU with the notion of a 'constraining dissensus' (see Hooghe & Marks, 2009) – public office holders can be more impermeable to popular pressures and more influenced by their government's traditions and entrenched approach to the EU. It is worth mentioning that more recent research based on a survey conducted in 2016-2017 found, instead, a good level of congruence between the mass and elite positions on the EU and concluded that Italian MPs have become more responsive to (or in tune with) their national publics as regards their feelings about European integration (Conti et al. 2020b). Apparently, the interchange between mass and elite on the EU is less and less a dialogue of the deaf. Inspired by the most recent findings concerning EU attitudes (and extending them also to populism), in the analysis we test the following hypotheses concerning the electoral effects of those attitudes.

H1. Citizens ranking high in populist attitudes are more likely to vote for populist parties (and vice versa citizens who rank low in populist attitudes are more likely to vote for parties that reject populism).
H2. Citizens who hold more Eurosceptic attitudes are more likely to vote for Eurosceptic parties (and vice versa pro-EU citizens are more likely to vote for Europhile parties).
H3. At the individual level, populist and Eurosceptic attitudes have independent effects on voting choices.

The above hypotheses are far from being tautological. Their validity is actually contended in the literature.

Although some authors argue that parties are capable of strongly affecting public perceptions and attitudes regarding EU issues by effectively cueing constituents (Hellström, 2008), other scholars found the nature of EU attitudes to be diverse and often conflicting between parties and their voters (Sorace, 2018; Vasilopoulou & Gattermann, 2013). Indeed, whereas some scholars maintain that EU attitudes have only limited observable effects on national elections (Green-Pedersen, 2012; Miklin, 2014), also in the Italian context (Maggini & Chiaramonte, 2019), other scholars argue that they have instead contributed to determining the voting preferences of citizens and to aggregating election results (Angelucci & Carrieri; Conti et al. 2021). Similarly, some authors claim that populist attitudes are essential in explaining voters' preferences (Akkerman et al., 2014, Plescia & Moritz Eberl, 2021), while some others maintain that 'the populist voter' simply does not exist (Rooduijn, 2018). Finally, some authors have documented a convergence between Eurosceptic attitudes at the individual level and voting for populist parties, but only in some regions of Europe (Santana et al. 2020) and solely with respect to radical rights parties (Werts et al., 2013). At this point, it becomes relevant to assess, with fresh data on the current legislature (appointed after the 2018 general elections), firstly whether a convergence between Euroscepticism/populism has occurred in Italy, both within the elite segment of society and the masses; secondly, if convergence has also occurred between the demand and supply sides, thus contributing to aggregating election results.

DATA AND METHOD

The analysis that is presented in this article makes use of an original database, collected through a CAWI elite survey conducted between 25 February and 9 August, 2019. The conclusion date of the survey is prior to the fall of the Conte I government, and the subsequent change of majority that took place with the formation of the Conte II government; the reference period is therefore characterised by stability in the government structure and the political alignments within parliament. The survey targeted serving MPs, through a sample of 87 cases (both deputies and senators, equal to 9% of the total) and is representative of the Italian parliament elected in 2018 by political groups and gender. Descriptive data about party membership and sociodemographic variables are reported in the Appendix (Table A1). Considering the elite nature of this survey, the sample size is comparable to, or higher than, that of previous surveys of the same kind and constitutes an international standard in empirical research in the field of parliamentary elites (see in this regard the transnational projects INTUNE and ENEC documented, among others, in the works of Conti, 2017, De Giorgi & Verzichelli 2012 and Roux & Verzichelli, 2010).[1]

From this dataset we selected, among the available ones, 15 questions pertaining to different dimensions of attitudes towards the EU such as those relating to *diffuse support* (benefit from EU membership, etc.) and to orientations towards further integration in specific policy areas. Moreover, we included questions targeted to detect populist attitudes (such as those pointing to people-centrism and the divide between the 'pure people' and the 'corrupted elite' (Mudde, 2004); charismatic leadership (Taggart, 2000); closed borders to entrench the opposition between "Us" and "Them" (Lamour & Varga, 2020). The question wording, codes and descriptive statistics of respondents' answers are presented in the Appendix (Table A2). Table 1 reports the questions and the coefficients of a factor analysis that we ran in order to observe possible correlations between Euroscepticism and populism at the elite level.

Populism and Euroscepticism are two broad concepts sometimes disentangled in lower-level concepts. The definition of such concepts through various categories (such as inclusionary/exclusionary populism and soft/hard Euroscepticism) has generated a plethora of proposals, not necessarily alternative to each other and sometimes difficult to apply to real-life cases. In operational terms, we do not dispose of the data (such as one's broad and policy-specific stance on the EU to assess different types of Euroscepticism) that may provide simultaneous information on all those dimensions referred to by several categorical definitions. Lacking all the necessary information, one should logically refrain from making use of categorical definitions based on the matched assessment of several aspects. Thus, in this work, we adopt a different measurement of populism and Euroscepticism – based on scaling – that fits well our data. We avoid locking attitudes into pre-established categories of populism and Euroscepticism while we measure the continuum of stances between extreme (positive and negative) positions on the analysed items. This approach, although having the disadvantage of not including all possible indicators of populism and Euroscepticism gen-

[1] To guarantee the quality of the survey data, in order to stem the phenomenon of speeders (recurrent in CAWI surveys), we excluded questionnaires with very fragmented or selective responses (i.e. those with response rates below 50 % of the questions contained in the questionnaire) while only complete questionnaires and those with answers greater in number than 50% of the total questions were included.

erated by past definitions, allows the accurate assessment of those mixed views and maverick positions in between the most unambiguous categories (while their measurement would be more difficult through use of definitions based on mutually exclusive categories). The problem of mixed views is indeed relevant, as the diverse and apparently contradictory nature of those attitudes has been documented in cross-national and cross-temporal studies (Henjak et al., 2012).

After observing populism and Euroscepticism at the elite level, we moved to the analysis of voters in the general elections held in March 2018. In order to do so, we selected data from the Populism Public Opinion Surveys (Grzymala-Busse et al., 2020) run in ten countries during the autumn of 2018. Within this dataset, we selected variables reflecting attitudes about populism and EU integration among Italian citizens. As far as populism is concerned, we selected the variables included in the so called Akkerman scale[2] (Akkerman et al., 2014). This scale represents one of the most largely applied set of indicators to measure attitudes toward populism[3] (for an overview of different scales, see Roccato et al., 2019). We also selected two indicators of support for the EU, namely confidence in the EU and support for EU regulation in market/labour. Both can be considered as indicators of diffuse support/opposition: the former is a classical indicator of trust (Easton, 1975), while the latter taps into support for more integration through regulation. Finally, we selected socio-demographic variables (age, gender, education, left-right self-positioning, occupation and income) as control variables. Table A3 in the Appendix shows the question wording and the percentage of answers for each indicator of populism and the other selected variables.

The test of the hypotheses followed two successive steps. First, we ran different factor analyses in order to check for multidimensionality in populist and Eurosceptic attitudes at mass level. This first step mirrors the analysis that we conducted before at the elite level. Secondly, we applied logistic regression analysis on the vote declarations in 2018[4] to assess whether the populist and Eurosceptic orientations of the public relate to voting preferences. For each party we created binary dependent variables. For the smallest parties, such as Brothers of Italy and Freedom and Equal (LEU), we added their voting options to those of the closest party in the political space (*Lega* and Democratic Party, respectively). As a result, we ended up with four logistic regression models on the voting declarations for the Five Star Movement, *Lega* plus Brothers of Italy, Democratic Party plus Free and Equal and *Forza Italia* (FI), respectively. Our main independent variables are two additive indexes pointing to populist attitudes and diffuse opposition/support for the EU, respectively. The first is an addictive index of Akkerman's indicators of populism; the second is an index adding the individual preferences for the two selected questions on the EU (trust and regulation). Socio-demographic variables are added as controls.

ANALYSIS

As we announced above, in table 1 we report the results of the factor analysis run on 15 different questions submitted to our sample of national MPs[5]. Results clearly show that, as far as political elites are concerned, EU attitudes and populism build two distinct phenomena[6]. The former can be characterised through the two dimensions that we labelled Euroscepticism and prospective Europeanism (consisting of attitudes towards perspective integration in specific policy areas). The latter can instead be characterised through a single dimension bringing together attitudes towards strong leadership, people-centrism and closed borders (the protection of the 'Us' community from the 'Them' enemy is not unique to the Italian case but is often expressed by populists in general through the necessity of closing national borders, on the point see Lamour & Varga 2020).

Once we assessed that populism and Euroscepticism are two separate dimensions in the minds of political elites – confirming the notion of these two phenomena being separate, thus corroborating our initial expectation for the elite segment of our research – we focused on the stance of the different parties on the three dimensions of Euroscepticism, prospective Europeanism and populism (making use of the three specific indices that we built with factor loadings). As first evidence, we deem it important to underline that the different party groups of the Italian parliament appear far from united

[2] It is worth mentioning that the dataset does not include item 8 of the original scale "Interest groups have too much influence over political decisions".

[3] Consistently with the findings of Akkerman and colleagues (Akkerman et al., 2014, p. 1334) we excluded item 6 "Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil" because "respondents had difficulties in interpreting" this question (p. 1335) and because this item is related more to elitism than to populism.

[4] The exact question wording is "Which party did you vote for in the general election this March?"

[5] For coding see table A2 in the appendix.

[6] We also ran three distinct factor analyses for each of the discovered factors. Table A4 in the Appendix shows the results confirming the correlations among the selected items.

Table 1. Factor Analysis with Varimax rotation.

		Euro-scepti-cism	Prospec-tive Euro-peanism	Populism
All in all, would you say that Italy has benefited from membership of the European Union or not?		0.639		
*Thinking about the EU in the next 10 years, could you tell me how you favour…*an EU welfare system			0.823	
An EU fiscal system			0.817	
A larger cohesion programme to reduce inequalities among European regions			0.813	
How desirable it is for the European Union to exercise a strong leadership role in international affairs			0.690	
The EU helps protect us from the negative effects of globalization vs The EU exacerbates the negative effects of globalization		0.766		
Those who decide in the European Union do not take Italy's interests sufficiently into consideration		0.830		
For each of the following indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that states are harmed by the EU: The integrity of Italian culture		0.668		
Welfare achievements in Italy		0.847		
Economic growth in Italy		0.870		
The quality of democracy in Italy		0.802		
UE authority on the economy vs. member states' authority		0.613		
Strong Leadership good vs. Strong Leadership danger for democracy				0.604
Professional politicians in Parliament vs. common persons				0.756
Italian borders controlled vs. open borders				0.619
Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin test	0.866			
Barlett's Test (Sig.)	0.000			
Eigenvalue		5.051	3.175	1.580
Cronbach's Alpha		0.839	0.902	0.442

Source: own elaboration of the Italian MPs dataset, 2019.

and are actually very dispersed, often polarised, across these different stances (figure 1).[7]

We first refer to prospective Europeanism – pointing to a positive stance on the EU – and we show that, as always in the recent past, Europhilia appears the dominant posture of the Italian centre-left. MPs of the two parties in this area champion pro-European stances, with Free and Equal[8] exceeding the score obtained by the Democratic party (traditionally, the most pro-European party in Italy, see Conti, 2017). If one considers this result in combination with the results obtained by these two parties in the index of Euroscepticism – where they both show negative values pointing to a clear disagreement with this posture – we find evidence of the fact that serving MPs of the Italian centre-left still represent nowadays the main stronghold of pro-Europeanism within the Italian Parliament. These two parties coalesced with the Five Star Movement in 2019 (after the breakdown of its short-lived coalition with the League) and have certainly been a major factor in the return of the Italian government to pro-Europeanism, after the troublesome relationship with the EU experienced in the 2018-2019 period (Capati & Improta, 2021).

Silvio Berlusconi's party, *Forza Italia*, which in the past showed rather ambivalent attitudes towards the EU (Conti, 2017), has now openly moved towards pro-Europeanism. This may also be due to the leadership shared by Berlusconi (now less and less involved in politics) with Antonio Tajani, a former President of the European Parliament. Indeed, its MPs locate on the positive side of the scale of Europhilia, although with a lower score than the above two parties. When their score in the index of Euroscepticism is also considered, we find consistent evidence of the fact that this party has certainly reconsidered its position on the EU, de-emphasising its anti-EU rhetoric of the past while embracing, at the same time, a pro-EU posture (although less fervently than the centre-left). Taken together, the serving MPs of the three above parties can be seen within the Italian parliament as the main defend-

[7] We will not comment on the group of Independents as this is made up of a mix of MPs with various ideological belongings and leanings and not a unified voting pattern within parliament.

[8] This party was founded in December 2017, and its MPs are, for the most part, members of a splinter group of the Democratic party.

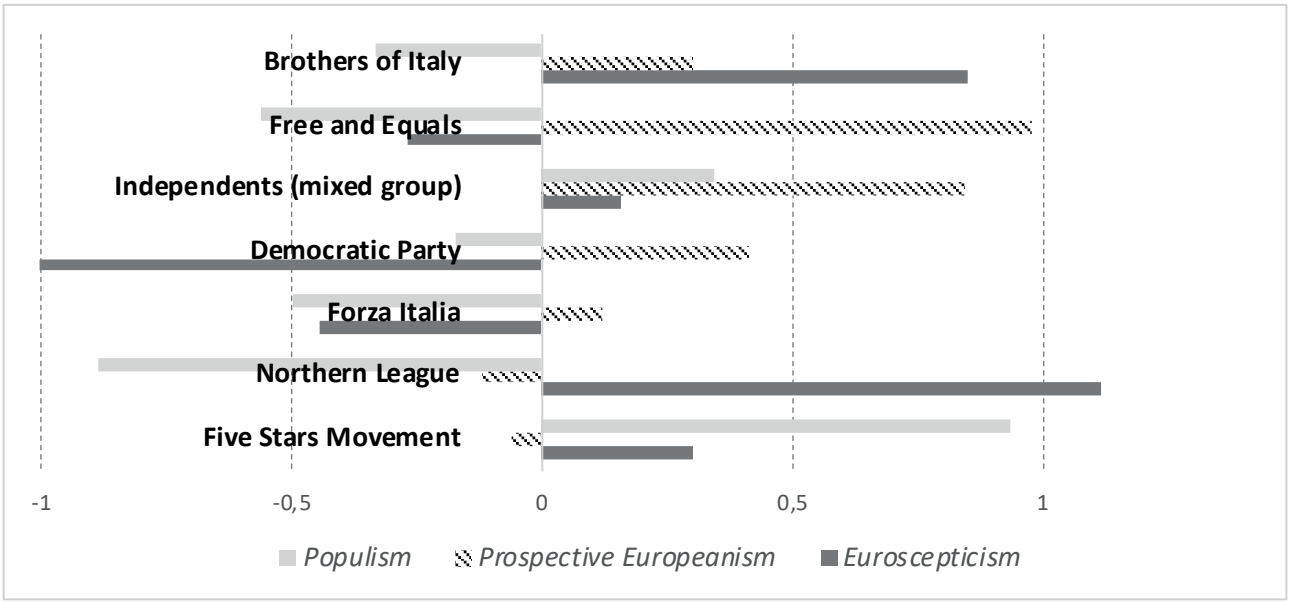

Figure 1. Average factor scores of Populism, Prospective Europeanism and Euroscepticism by party groups. Source: own elaboration on the Italian MPs dataset, 2019 (see Factor Analysis Table 1).

ers of the integration process. At the time when the survey was conducted, these three parties together represented just over one third of the seat share within parliament.

Our initial findings suggest that the EU is clearly not a matter of consensus in Italy and that other groups challenge the pro-EU posture embodied by the above three parties. To start with, the score in the index of prospective Europeanism obtained by the MPs of the M5S has a value close to the zero point (but still on the Eurosceptic side of the scale). This makes a big difference compared to the above pro-European parties. Especially if one considers the posture of the M5S – a party that contested nation-wide elections for the first time in 2013 and emerged, in 2018, as the unequivocal winner of the general elections – the new scenario appears inconsistent with a past of elite consensus on the EU within the Italian parliament. This party alone won roughly the same number of seats (just over one third) as the above three pro-EU parties considered together. When we analyse the average score obtained by the MPs of the M5S in the index of Euroscepticism (not the highest score among party groups, but still comparable in size to the score obtained by the Democratic party in the contrasting index of Europhilia), we find clear evidence of the fact that in 2019, when it was part of a government coalition with the League, the Five Star Movement could definitely qualify as a Eurosceptic party.

We know that a lot has changed since, as this party has rapidly changed its trajectory to embrace an alliance with the Democratic Party and Free and Equal, contributing to inaugurating a more harmonised course of action of the Italian government with the EU – also supporting Von der Leyen for appointment as President of the European Commission and contributing fundamentally to the appointment of a Europhile champion, such as Mario Draghi, as the Italian Prime Minister in early 2021. The shift of the Five Star Movement to pro-Europeanism is an established fact that goes together with its overall ideological realignment, moving from a past of radicalism to a more mainstream present. Despite this extreme flexibility – one that makes this party a sort of moving target – it is certainly useful to note that at the time of its greatest electoral success, its party branch in parliament could certainly be qualified as Eurosceptic. Precisely, from our analysis, its posture does not emerge as antagonistic to the EU as that of other parties, but it still locates on the critical anti-EU side, confirming the results of past analyses in this respect (Franzosi et al., 2015). Our results resonate well also with a more specific analysis that shows how Euroscepticism was a relevant factor in the vote choice for the Five Star Movement in the general elections of 2018 (Conti et al., 2021).

The two remaining parties in the analysis may well be defined as Eurosceptic. This is certainly the case of the (resolutely Eurosceptic) League while Brothers of Italy show a more ambivalent posture (high in Euroscepticism

but positive in prospective Europeanism).[9] When the survey was conducted, their combined seat share amounted to about one quarter of the Italian parliament (but they have since experienced an impressive growth in vote declarations). It should be noted that these two parties experience extremely volatile public support, with the League ranking third largest party in terms of votes in the 2018 elections but doubling its score in vote intentions at the start of the legislative term (especially at the time when it was in government) to slowly decline afterwards. Brothers of Italy just passed the electoral threshold (3%) to be guaranteed representation in parliament in 2018, but grew in vote intentions to double digits in the following years. Although Euroscepticism should not be considered their unique signature issue and, therefore, the only reason for their success, it is certainly quite remarkable that these two Eurosceptic parties have become so successful within the Italian electorate.

Hence, we were able to find a differentiation (even polarisation) with respect to the EU dimension(s) across the party groups in the Italian parliament. This line of division consists of a committed pro-EU pole (Democratic Party, Free and Equal and, more mildly, *Forza Italia*) opposed to a pole with different Eurosceptic nuances represented by the League, the Brothers of Italy and the Five Star Movement.

Finally, we should refer to our last dimension of analysis, namely populism. The results shown in figure 1 are univocal: the MPs of M5S were, at the time of the survey, the true champions of populism within the Italian party system. M5S anti-establishment identity has been a major factor in the breakthrough of this (otherwise eclectic) party (Fonti et al. 2021; Mosca & Tronconi 2019) and, it appears from our analysis, it played enduring effects also on the party public office. Although some contagion effects between parties may have occurred in the past at the level of party leadership and rhetoric, it appears from our analysis that, contrary to what is often implied in the literature (D'Alimonte, 2019; Valbruzzi, 2018), parties such as the League should not be classified as populist. Several of the constitutive components of the definition of populism (which we assessed through our specific index) are indeed missing in its parliamentary branch. This finding recommends the use of a more rigorous operational definition of populism and an empirical verification of its real occurrence within the Italian system.

Now the analysis moves to the examination of the general public. Table 2 reports the results of three factor analyses on Akkerman's selected indicators of populism and the variables on opposition/support for the EU.[10] The factor analyses shown in Table 2 confirm, for the two sets of indicators (i.e. populism and Euroscepticism), that the selected items are strongly correlated and define two unique factors. The third column, where we included both sets of indicators, clearly distinguishes between a factor grabbing populist attitudes and a second factor pointing to Euroscepticism. What is more interesting, however, is that the results of the factor analyses show a clear distinction between populism and attitudes towards EU integration among the general public, in a similar way to what was found for MPs. This is an interesting finding that appears to corroborate our original expectation about Euroscepticism and populism being independent from each other also with respect to the mass level.

Table 3 reports the results of our logistic regression on voters' choices for the main Italian parties contesting the 2018 general elections.[11] The first model confirms H1 since the higher the respondents' score on the Populism index[12] the more likely to vote for the Five Stars Movement. In this case, however, also Euroscepticism shows a significant relationship with voting for M5S. Accordingly, the two dimensions play a parallel role on the voting choice for the M5S. It is worth mentioning that also the interviewed MPs of this party showed high levels of populism and some clear Eurosceptic positions (Figure 1), H2 can thus be confirmed. On the opposite side, in the fourth model we find another confirmation about the observed relationships: citizens supporting the EU and those ranking low in the populist scale are more likely to vote for the Democratic Party and LEU. The other two models show more mixed findings. Citizens' populist attitudes significantly relate to voting for *Forza Italia*. Although the party MPs ranked low on populism (Figure 1), their voters showed a greater populist leaning, maybe more in line with the original populist nature of this party and its leadership (Castaldo & Verzichelli, 2020). Finally, coherently with their broad stance (also documented in figure 1) the vote for *Lega* and Brothers of Italy is positively and significantly related with Euroscepticism. Populism and EU attitudes appear a coherent amalgam in the vote choice for the M5S and the Democratic party/Free and Equal, respectively. How-

[9] Its five respondents show mixed attitudes, in particular with respect to the EU role in cohesion policy and international affairs.

[10] Unfortunately, the mass survey is rich in questions about populism but it does not include a complete range of attitudes towards the EU like the elite survey (only two indicators of diffuse support for the EU are included).

[11] We grouped the two smaller parties, Brothers of Italy and Free and Equal, for whom we can rely on fewer vote declarations with the party (and electoral ally) closer to their overall stance.

[12] The Populism Index ranges from 0 to 18 (mean 12.64, st. dev. 3.06); the Euroscepticism Index ranges from 0 to 4 (mean 2.09, st. dev. 1.12).

Table 2. Factor Analysis of attitudes on populism (Akkerman's scale) and opposition/support to EU.

	Factor Analysis Populism	Factor Analysis Euroscepticism	Factor Analysis Populism + Euroscepticism	
	Factor 1	Factor 1	Factor 1	Factor 2
The elites are corrupt (corrupt)	0.723		0.689	
I would rather be represented by a citizen than by an elected official (citizens)	0.688		0.706	
Politicians tipically look out for their own interest (own issue)	0.780		0.757	
The political differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people (divide)	0.663		0.698	
The politicians in [Congress/Parliament] need to follow the will of the people (Leg)	0.721		0.702	
The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions (people)	0.811		0.702	
Do you think EU market and labour restrictions should be expanded or reduced?		0.804		0.774
How much confidence do you have in the following institutions? (Europe)		0.804		0.799
Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin test	0.788	0.500	0.766	
Barlett's Test (Sig.)	0.000	0.000	0.000	
Eigenvalue	3.220	1.292	3.235	1.380
Cronbach's Alpha	0.768	0.354	0.768	0.354

Source: Own elaboration based on Populism Public Opinion Surveys, 2018.

ever, they are also unconnected in the vote choice for *Lega*/Brothers of Italy and Forza Italia, thus corroborating H3.

CONCLUSIONS

Different scholars have highlighted a convergence between populism and Euroscepticism both at the level of parties and public opinion. In order to observe this relationship empirically, we focused on Italy, a country where these two stances gained momentum with the establishment of a populist-Eurosceptic government after the 2018 elections.

Our analyses revealed that, in actual fact, the complete overlapping of populism and Euroscepticism has not materialised as it was commonly expected. At the level of political elites serving in public office, the attitudes of MPs shape distinct dimensions of populism and Euroscepticism. Moreover, both the political elites of the most Eurosceptic (*Lega* and Brothers of Italy) and most Europhile (such as PD and Free and Equal) parties have not been substantially caught up by populist contagion. Only in the case of the M5S, populism and Euroscepticism appear to converge at the level of party MPs.

Furthermore, our analysis of Italian public opinion shows that the mass-elite gap on populism and Euroscepticism is probably smaller than in the past. The two concepts are distinct in public minds consistently with what we observed at the elite level. Moreover, they show distinct relationships with voting preferences during the national elections of 2018. Eurosceptic voters declared to vote coherently for Eurosceptic parties and the same is true for the pro-European voters voting for Europhile parties. The relationship between populism and voting is maybe less straightforward. As it was expected, populism was a driving factor in the vote choice for the M5S (and, on the opposite side, its rejection was influential for the choice to vote the Democratic party and LEU). Populism was instead not significant for the decision to vote *Lega* and Brothers of Italy, two parties whose stance – based on the attitudes expressed by their MPs and contrary to what is often assumed in the literature – we defined as not populist. The only mismatch we found was with *Forza Italia* whose electorate still appears motivated by the populist ideas that can be associated to the origins of this party, but not to its current posture.

Finally, in 2018 the M5S appears the only Italian party with a capacity to mobilise the electorate on a mixed populist/Eurosceptic platform and the only one that appears to fit well the definition of Eurosceptic populist of Pirro and Kessel (2018). Beyond this case, we could not find an overall convergence between Euroscepticism/populism in Italy, neither within the elite segment of society nor within the masses. On the

Table 3. Regressions on declaration of voting in 2018 national elections.

	M5S		League-Brothers of Italy		Forza Italia		Democratic party-Free and Equal	
	OR	St. Err.	OR	St. Err.	OR	St. Err.	OR	St. Err.
Populism Index	1.130**	0.040	0.991	0.840	1.047**	0.067	0.883**	0.047
Euroscepticism Index	1.169*	0.105	1.318**	0.014	0.940	0.152	0.461****	1.484
Age								
30-44	1.827	0.670	1.032	0.479	0.320*	0.208	0.802	0.467
45-64	1.478	0.284	1.199	0.547	0.356*	0.211	1.068	0.618
65+	1.003	0.487	0.935	0.583	0.627	0.371	2.059	1.096
Education (Lower secondary or less)								
Upper secondary or equivalent	0.786	0.228	0.781	0.277	1.097	0.583	1.471	0.659
Higher education or advanced vocational	1.059	0.290	0.602	0.207	0.700	0.371	1.280	0.549
Occupation (Employed)								
Permanently ill or disabled	0.408	0.504	1.394	1.599	1.274	1.582	1	--
Retired	0.873	0.315	0.892	0.410	2.640	1.613	1.030	0.555
Student	1.627	0.743	0.577	0.364	1.725	1.235	1.362	0.941
Taking care of home or family	1.215	0.418	0.452	0.222	0.894	0.672	3.019**	1.439
Unemployed	0.835	0.261	0.975	0.394	0.770	0.499	4.030***	1.920
Income in Euro/*month* (less than 750)								
750-1100	0.738	0.310	2.610	1.549	0.252**	0.168	2.062	1.644
1101-1400	0.615	0.246	3.357**	1.935	0.232**	0.153	4.681**	3.523
1401-1700	0.539	0.233	2.185	0.874	0.352	0.241	9.774***	7.750
1701-2000	0.520	0.241	2.589	1.287	0.312	0.237	7.601**	6.349
2001-2400	0.820	0.364	2.710	1.304	0.207**	0.166	5.178*	4.369
2401-2900	0.584	0.284	4.646**	2.052	0.220*	0.177	8.857**	7.760
2901-3500	0.450	0.229	2.739	1.335	0.382	0.318	7.530**	6.346
3501-4550	0.333*	0.186	3.050	1.549	0.572	0.488	5.858**	5.106
more than 4550	0.655	0.413	4.500*	3.589	0.129*	0.156	5.757	6.420
Left-right scale	0.808****	0.048	2.184****	0.209	1.806****	0.231	0.527****	0.052
Constant	0.297*	0.212	0.002****	0.002	0.017	0.021	4.007	4.633
Pseudo R square	0.062		0.231		0.188		0.314	
N	498		498		498		494	

Note: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***0.01, ****p<0.001.

opposite, these two stances play an independent effect on the electoral choice of citizens contributing to aggregating election results. In relative terms, from our analysis, populism emerged as a limited phenomenon in Italy, mainly confined to the M5S (still the largest party in the Italian Parliament) and its electorate, its effects on voting are probably smaller than commonly expected and certainly smaller than those of attitudes towards the EU.

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APPENDIX

Table A1. Descriptives of interviewed MPs.

		%
Chamber	Deputies	64.4
	Senators	35.6
Parlamentary group	Forza Italia	17.2
	Fratelli d'Italia	5.8
	Lega- Salvini Premier	8.1
	Liberi e Uguali	2.3
	Lega-Salvini Premier-Partito Sardo	10.3
	Misto	2.3
	Misto-Maie-Italiani all'Estero	1.2
	Misto-Minoranze linguistiche	1.2
	Movimento Cinque Stelle	32.1
	Partito Democratico	19.5
Education	Secondary	21.5
	Bachelor	45.2
	Master and PhD	33.3
Duration of Mandate till the interview	less than 1 year	36.9
	2 or more years	61.9
	refuse	1.2
Age	29-40	27.6
	41-50	45.9
	51-60	25.3
	61+	1.2
Ideological self-positioning	left	22.6
	center	38.7
	right	38.7
Employment sector	unemployed	3.6
	public	31.3
	industry	16.9
	services	43.4
	other	4.8

Table 2A. Questions with coding from the Italian MPs dataset, 2019.

Question	Code	% (instead otherwise stated)
All in all, would you say that Italy has benefited from membership of the European Union or not?	Binary:Benefited	71.2
	-Not benefited	28.7
*Thinking about the EU in the next 10 years, could you tell me how you favour…*an EU welfare system	Strongly in favour	62.1
	Somewhat in favour	24.1
	A little in favour	9.2
	Not at all in favour	4.6
An EU fiscal system	Strongly in favour	43.7
	Somewhat in favour	39.1
	A little in favour	9.2
	Not at all in favour	8.1
A larger cohesion programme to reduce inequalities among European regions	Strongly in favour	62.1
	Somewhat in favour	24.1
	A little in favour	9.2
	Not at all in favour	4.6
How desirable it is for the European Union to exercise a strong leadership role in international affairs	Very	41.4
	Somewhat	36.8
	A little	14.9
	Not at all	6.9
The EU helps protect us from the negative effects of globalization vs The EU exacerbates the negative effects of globalization	Binary	52.4 vs 47.6
Those who decide in the European Union do not take Italy's interests sufficiently into consideration	Binary (agree/disagree)	70.1 29.9
For each of the following indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that states are harmed by the EU:	Strongly agree	12.7
The integrity of Italian culture	Somewhat agree	19.5
	Somewhat disagree	33.3
	Strongly disagree	34.5
Welfare achievements in Italy	Strongly agree	18.4
	Somewhat agree	31.0
	Somewhat disagree	27.6
	Strongly disagree	23.0
Economic growth in Italy	Strongly agree	25.3
	Somewhat agree	32.2
	Somewhat disagree	24.1
	Strongly disagree	18.4
The quality of democracy in Italy	Strongly agree	11.6
	Somewhat agree	19.5
	Somewhat disagree	35.6
	Strongly disagree	33.3
UE authority on the economy vs. member states' authority	1 (EU more authority) to10 (Member stats' authority)	Mean =6149
Strong Leadership good vs. Strong Leadership danger for democracy	1 (strong leadership good) to10 (strong leadership dangerous)	Mean =4218
Professional politicians in Parliament vs. common persons	1 (common people) to10 (professional politicians)	Mean =2.33
Italian borders controlled vs. open borders	Binary	Item 1: 51.19 Item 2: 47.62

Table 3A. Questions with coding from the Populism Public Opinion Surveys.

Question	Code	%
Q1: The interests of the people are represented well by the political elites	Agree	23.0
	Disagree	63.0
	DK	14.0
Q2: The political elites have the best interests of the nation/people in mind	Agree	19.2
	Disagree	69.6
	DK	11.2
The elites are corrupt (corrupt)	Strongly disagree	2.4
	Somewhat disagree	20.4
	Somewhat agree	47.5
	Strongly agree	29.7
I would rather be represented by a citizen than by an elected officials (citizens)	Strongly disagree	8.4
	Somewhat disagree	40.5
	Somewhat agree	32.2
	Strongly agree	18.9
Politicians tipically look out for their own interest (own issue)	Strongly disagree	8.8
	Somewhat disagree	7.5
	Somewhat agree	44.0
	Strongly agree	47.7
The political differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people (divide)	Strongly disagree	2.0
	Somewhat disagree	15.8
	Somewhat agree	53.0
	Strongly agree	29.2
The politicians in [Congress/Parliament] need to follow the will of the people (people)	Strongly disagree	1.2
	Somewhat disagree	4.5
	Somewhat agree	40.2
	Strongly agree	54.1
The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions (Leg)	Strongly disagree	3.7
	Somewhat disagree	21.3
	Somewhat agree	43.3
	Strongly agree	31.7
How much confidence do you have in the following institutions? European Union	none	21.4
	a little	38.5
	some	31.0
	a lot	9.1
Q6: Do you think EU market and labour restrictions should be expanded or reduced?	<1> Expanded greatly	5.0
	<2> Expanded somewhat	17.2
	<3> Kept at its current level	22.5
	<4> Reduced somewhat	30.5
	<5> Reduced greatly	6.2
	<6> Not sure	18.6
Age (categories)	18-29	17.4
	30-44	25.4
	45-64	40.2
	65+	17.0
Education: What is the highest level of education you have completed?	<1> Did not attend or complete elementary school	0.6

Question	Code	%
	<2> Elementary School	3.5
	<3> Lower secondary school (middle school)	41.3
	<4> Upper secondary school (high school)	39.3
	<5> Post-diploma professional specialization	5.7
	<6> Bachelor's degree or equivalent	5.3
	<7> Single cycle master's degree+PhD	4.3
Occupation: Which of the following best describes your current employment status?	<1> Employed	40.6
	<2> Unemployed	0.8
	<3> Student	18.0
	<4> Permanently ill or disabled	10.1
	<5> Retired	12.3
	<6> Taking care of home or family	18.2
Income: What is your monthly family income	<1> Less than € 750	13.7
	<2> € 750 - € 1.100	3.2
	<3> € 1.101 - € 1.400	15.5
	<4> € 1.401 - € 1.700	13.8
	<5> € 1.701 - € 2.000	10.7
	<6> € 2.001 - € 2.400	11.3
	<7> € 2.401 - € 2.900	7.6
	<8> € 2.901 - € 3.500	5.8
	<9> € 3.501 - € 4.550	4.1
	<10> More than € 4.550	14.3
Which party did you vote for in the general election this March?	+Europa	1.36
	Forza Italia (FI)	6.48
	Fratelli d'Italia (FdI)	2.19
	Lega	17.35
	Liberi e Uguali (LeU)	3.97
	Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S)	32.50
	Partito Democratico (PD)	11.81
	Other	7.63
	Did not vote	16.72
	DK-NO Answer	6.27

Table A4. Factor analyses on each set of indicators observed from the selected variables.

	Euroscepticism
All in all, would you say that Italy has benefited from membership of the European Union or not?	0.708
The EU helps protect us from the negative effects of globalization vs The EU exacerbates the negative effects of globalization	0.818
Those who decide in the European Union do not take Italy's interests sufficiently into consideration	0.843
For each of the following indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that states are harmed by the EU:	0.728
The integrity of Italian culture	
Welfare achievements in Italy	0.854
Economic growth in Italy	0.884
The quality of democracy in Italy	0.806
UE authority on the economy vs. member states' authority	0.759
Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin test	0.912
Barlett's Test (Sig.)	0.000
Eigenvalue	5.150
Cronbach's Alpha	0.839
	Prospective Europeanism
*Thinking about the EU in the next 10 years, could you tell me how you favour…*an EU welfare system	0.846
An EU fiscal system	0.828
A larger cohesion programme to reduce inequalities among European regions	0.843
How desirable it is for the European Union to exercise a strong leadership role in international affairs	0.777
Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin test	0.797
Barlett's Test (Sig.)	0.000
Eigenvalue	2.716
Cronbach's Alpha	0.902
	Populism
Strong Leadership good vs. Strong Leadership danger for democracy	0.373
Professional politicians in Parliament vs. common persons	0.837
Italian borders controlled vs. open borders	0.782
Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin test	0.502
Barlett's Test (Sig.)	0.000
Eigenvalue	1.452
Cronbach's Alpha	0.442

Source: own elaboration of the Italian MPs dataset, 2019.

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Leader selection in Italian parties. Intraparty democracy in weak organisations, 1946–2020*

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Abstract. This study is an analysis of the methods Italian parties used to select their leaders from 1946 to 2020. Using an extended database originally based on the Comparative Study of Party Leaders (Cospal) project and collected through a content analysis of the statutes, the study deals with three topics. First, the individual requirements for candidacy are examined; second, the different types of selectorates are reported; third, a cursory test of the conformity between statutes' provisions and actual leader selections is proposed. The analyses show that both candidacy requirements and selectorates have become more inclusive through time; that the diffusion of inclusive – and cumbersome – selectorates has been followed by the adoption of alternative faster methods of selection based on some type of party council to be used under pressure; and that there is a large overlapping between formal and actual selectorates. A result of this work is a quantification so far unavailable of intraparty democracy in Italy on a long period.

Keywords: Italy, Parties, Party leaders, Leader selection.

WHY PARTY LEADERS?

Personalisation has been defined as a process of change through which '… individual political actors have become more prominent at the expense of parties and collective identities' (Karvonen 2010, 4). Although conceptually controversial, the trend towards personalisation has attracted the attention of scholars and is considered remarkable for its impact on numerous contemporary democracies. Rahat and Sheafer (2007) have contributed proposing a distinction among three types of personalisation. Institutional personalisation denotes the rise in power wielded by prime ministers within the governments they lead, a process also described as an example of 'presidentialisation' (Poguntke and Webb 2005). The media comprise the second arena in which personalisation has expanded dramatically in

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recent times; this type entails the overwhelming visibility of politicians within media coverage, with parties and institutions relegated to the background (Van Aelst, Sheafer and Stanyer 2012). Both politicians and voters may represent behavioural personalisation: politicians may disconnect from their parties, engendering 'candidate-centred politics' (Wattenberg 1991) during electoral periods; similarly, the choices made by voters could be driven by their assessments of leaders and candidates rather than the party attachment (Mughan and Aaldering 2018).

Political personalisation thus pertains to several strands of research, and as usual it has generated mixed evidence and many controversies. Yet, party leaders have been deemed pivotal actors, regardless of the point of view. First, popular leaders were considered relevant for their direct influence on electoral results (Aarts, Blais and Schmitt 2011; Bittner 2011; Costa Lobo and Curtice 2015; contra King 2002). Scholars have subsequently indicated the existence of indirect effects evoked by the electorate's perceptions of party leaders. For example, Garzia (2012) has demonstrated that the origin of party identification was once connected with family socialisation and social class; however, it is currently deemed the specific consequence of a positive appraisal of a leader. Ferreira da Silva, Garzia and De Angelis (2021) have instead detected a 'personalisation of voter turnout' because the propensity towards electoral participation is demonstrated to some extent to result from the approval ratings of party leaders.

Such leader effects are not confined to the domain of electoral activities. Webb and Poguntke (2005) focused on party organisations and identified a shift of power towards the party leader as a significant aspect of the presidential syndrome affecting democratic polities. Presidential or personal parties have become a recurrent presence in all party systems (Passarelli 2015; Kefford and McDonnell 2018); they may also assume the extreme form of the 'entrepreneurial' party (Hloušek, Kopečec and Vodová 2020), a hierarchical and centralised political organisation that is directed by its leader using business logic.

In this article, I adopt an organisational perspective to examine the changes in Italian political parties from World War II to recent times. The organisation of Italian parties has been extensively researched in the past[2]. The available analyses have included several topics, such as membership, finance, and cadres. Such a wide-ranging study would exceed the scope of this work, therefore I attend here to a single aspect of party organisation: how Italian parties have selected their leaders. Marsh (1993, 229) emphasised the relevance of leader selection via a path-breaking analysis presented in a special issue of the *European Journal of Political Research*. First, the methods used for their selection reveal a party's organisational style given the abovementioned importance of leaders. Moreover, leader selection is a crucial aspect to assess the extent of intraparty democracy along with the selection of candidates for public offices and internal referenda about crucial decisions on policies and coalition-building.

To pursue my goals, I have first examined the party statutes to collect data about candidacy requirements and the inclusiveness of selectorates. These data may be used in different ways. I have avoided employing advanced statistical techniques in the present context and have instead proposed tabular and graphical analyses. Also, I did not search for covariates that can presumably predict the changing selectorates of the Italian parties. Rather, I have presented my data disaggregated by decades to describe trends. In comparison to other researchers that have recently approached Italian parties from a similar perspective (Sandri, Seddone and Venturino 2014; Valbruzzi 2020), I make use of comparable techniques of analysis applied to a dataset unparalleled for duration and number of parties.

The article is organised as follows. In Section 2, I address the methodological questions related to choosing relevant parties and identifying their leaders. Sections 3 and 4 are focused on two types of formal rules for selecting party leaders, namely requisites for being a candidate and inclusiveness of selectorates. In Section 5, I propose a cursory check on the reliability of this formal approach through the correspondence between formal and actual selectorates. In the final section, I emphasise some general characteristics of Italy's version of leader selection and intraparty democracy.

PRELIMINARY (BUT RELEVANT) PROBLEMS

Who is the leader?

To start, it is necessary to identify the leaders of Italian parties. In left-wing parties, they are usually called *segretario* and are called *presidente* by the right-wing parties, although Lega Nord and Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà are exceptions to this rule. These parties' leaders are often assisted by a deputy leader in a clearly ancillary position, and I do not address that position here. I have also excluded acting leaders (*reggenti*) selected under pressure for a short term who are not acknowledged as

[2] A review (in Italian) of this body of literature is offered in Massari and Venturino (2013).

full leaders[3]. Finally, during the Second Republic, the recurrent practice of creating cartels and coalitions has generated electoral leaders who lack a supporting party, Romano Prodi being the most prominent case. I have also disregarded these examples of no-party leaders.

An additional dilemma arises from the coexistence between the organisational leaders and what we might call the frontmen. The latter are the party officials more known to the public opinion who despite their standing are not formal leaders; a recent example is Matteo Renzi, who holds only the roles provided for his parliamentary qualification, while the formal (dual) leadership of Italia Viva is exercised by the presidents, Teresa Bellanova and Ettore Rosato. In these cases, I have privileged the formal aspects and focused on the bureaucratic leaders.

Italia Viva under Bellanova and Rosato is an example of shared leadership, which has been applied, usually by new-left parties, in two ways. Rejecting the sheer principle of leadership, during their first years some parties did not create central offices but rather use large assemblies composed of dozens of activists. Parties that operate in this way cannot identify clear leaders, and thus I disregard them. Other parties merged and adopted dual leadership so that both founding parties are represented or, as in the case of Italia Viva and Verdi, to gender balance party governance. Parties in these cases have recognisable leaders, and thus I include them here.

What is a party?

In her comparative study of 17 advanced democracies, Bolleyer (2013, 1) excludes Italy because of 'the disintegration of its party system in the 1990s, which prevents a clear-cut application of a distinction between organizationally old and organizationally new parties'. Indeed, Italy's parties and party system are extremely challenging, and to manage the chaos I have made two critical choices. First, I consider only those parties that have gained at least a seat in the Lower House (*Camera dei Deputati*), and if a party is present in parliament even for a single term I consider the party's whole history. Second, although several parties feature an apparent organisational continuity through hectic rearrangements, I use name changes as the main principle to distinguish different parties. Applying these criteria, I selected the 48 parties reported in Table A.1 in the Appendix.

Data collection and arrangement[4]

The most relevant comparative research on party leaders is the Comparative Study of Party Leaders project (Pilet and Cross 2014; Cross and Pilet 2015). The chapters of these edited books are based on large datasets assembled by analysing several types of sources. I have built on that experience, utilising the same variables with a few amendments and applying them to different cases. To accomplish this task, I first performed a content analysis – a recurrent source for data collection in this field of research (Von dem Berge et al. 2013) – on about 120 statutes used by the 48 Italian parties I selected. These data refer to formal selectorates and have been used here to compile sections 3 and 4 (*The rules for candidacy* and *The changing selectorates of the Italian parties*). Second, I collected information on the actual leadership choices of the Italian parties under investigation. Party statutes were not suitable in such cases; rather, varied reports published simultaneously with the relevant leadership selections proved useful data sources. Data on the actual leader selections were used to write paragraph 5 (*How reliable are party statutes?*).

Another major difference between the original Cospal project and the present work concerns data arrangement. The original methodology involved data collection only for the years in which a party initiated a leadership selection. In this study, I collected data for all years, regardless of the scheduling of leadership selection. Additionally, the data for this study were organised and analysed in the form of party-years: in opposition to the Cospal original methodology, each party was separately enumerated in the database for each year of activity. For example, Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà (Sel) was founded in 2010 and remained active until 2016, for a total of seven years, so Sel accounts for seven party-years in the database. Overall, this duplication of information on the 48 parties for which I collected data based on their years of activity increased the available number of cases to 796[5].

[3] I make two exceptions to this rule: Vito Crimi was chosen as acting leader of Movimento 5 Stelle (M5s) in January 2020, Claudio Grassi of Sinistra Italiana in June 2019, and both still held their respective positions in December 2020, the data time limit. Under my general rule, both parties would have been without leaders in some years: M5s in 2020 and Sinistra Italiana in 2019 and 2020. To avoid this paradox, I decided to consider Crimi and Grassi de facto leaders and to examine them here.

[4] Additional information on data collection and arrangement are reported in the Appendix.

[5] There are 26 cases of missing data for three reasons: traditional parties operating many years ago whose statutes cannot be found (f.i. Msi, Pr); newly launched parties still lacking a statute (f.i. An, Fi, Pdci); and personal parties working informally without a statute (f.i. Idv, M5s).

THE RULES FOR CANDIDACY

How to analyse candidacy: a framework

To get a position, a candidate must win a tournament under the current rules of the game, and this holds true both for party leadership and representative public offices. Moreover, and again analogous to general elections, winning a competition for party leadership requires first being a candidate. Even if it is often hidden in the 'secret garden of politics' (Gallagher and Marsh 1988), this first step is no less important than the more visible final election. In fact, different rules can screen aspirants by creating momentum for some, disadvantaging others, and perhaps more importantly, excluding any who lack the requirements for entering.

Once it is agreed that the candidacy stage is important, parties in contemporary democracies can set rules for who is eligible versus ineligible for leadership. Parties establish their criteria along a continuum arranged in terms of inclusiveness and exclusiveness (Hazan and Rahat 2010, 19). Based on my analyses, I identify four types of candidacy rules. First, the most exclusive prerequisite to stand for party leadership is to be a member of a party council; this qualification restricts candidacy to a few party notables with long previous careers, usually numbering no more than in the tens in every party. A second and slightly less exclusive prerequisite is membership in parliament; this is the solution British parties maintain even since the important reforms adopted beginning in the 1960s. Third, a quite permissive rule imposes party membership as the only necessary requisite for leadership, so that any actual field of aspirants depends on the number of formally enrolled members, in theory allowing thousands of potential contenders. Finally, a party might impose no requirements at all for candidacy, which makes every citizen potentially eligible for leadership. Next, I address which candidacy prerequisites political parties in Italy have selected for choosing their leaders.

Basic requirements for candidacy

Figure 1 charts the basic requirements for candidacy to leadership for 48 political parties in Italy from

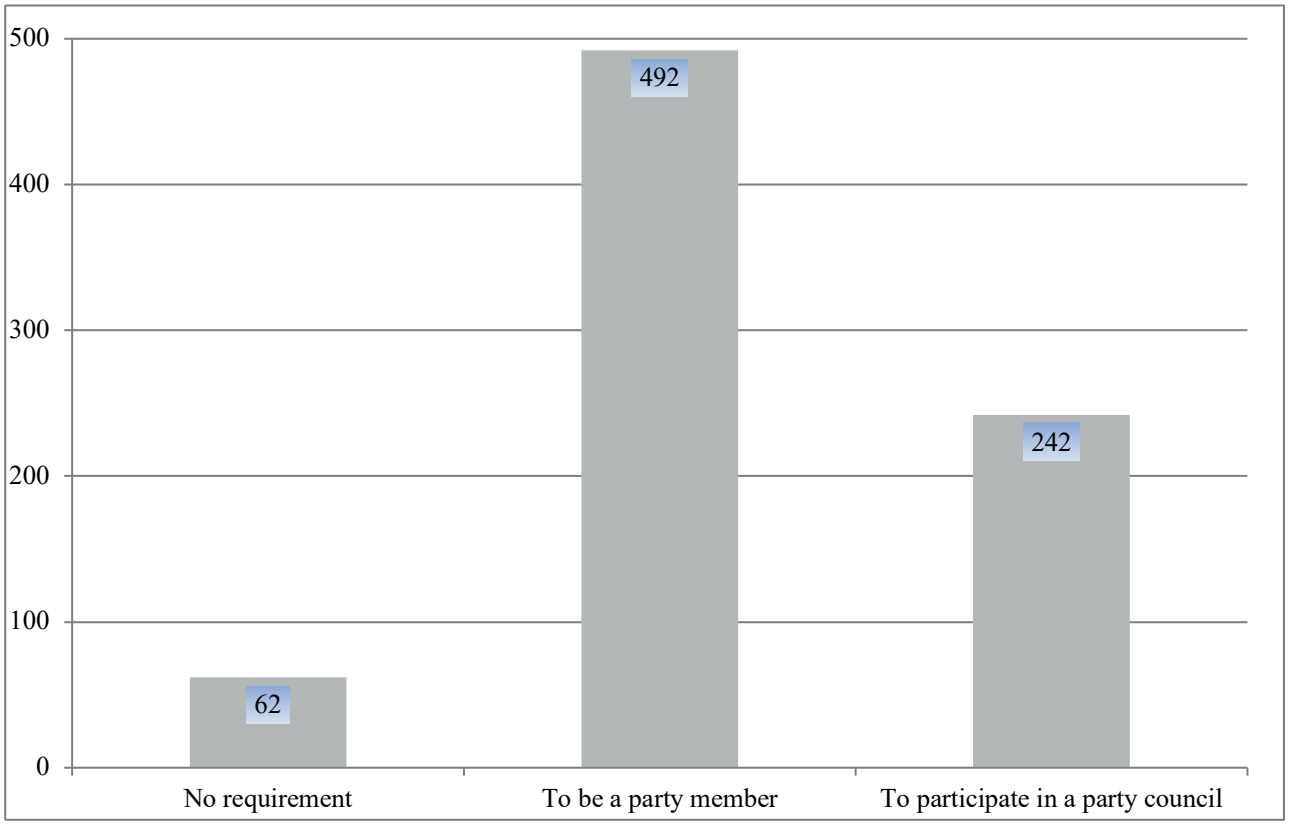

Figure 1. Basic requirements for candidacy for Italian party leadership, 1946–2020. Note: Figures are absolute years of party activity by year presented as party-years (N = 796).

1946 to 2020. Figures are the number of years parties have used a given type of requirement. The first piece of data I found striking is that no party ever required parliamentary representation as a criterion for eligibility for leadership; however, this is hardly surprising because this practice is restricted to Westminster democracies (Cross and Blais 2012), whereas parties in Italy follow an opposite model. Similarly, I only found 62 cases of absent party requirements for leadership candidacy, which applied to only five parties throughout the whole period. Two were long-lasting parties that had launched in the years of the First Republic. The neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano in 1977 rejected the party council as the main entity to select party leaders and meanwhile removed all requirements to stand for the leadership. The case of Verdi is different. Launched in 1986, Verdi initially refused leadership in principle and were directed by a collective board until 1992. Subsequently, a recognisable leadership was created, but a still hyper democratic ideology persuaded the party to adopt the most inclusive candidacy rules. The other parties that imposed no requirements for becoming a leader were the moderate Scelta Civica and Partito Popolare Italiano and left-wing Articolo Uno. All three of these began during the Second Republic, and only Articolo Uno is still operative.

Nearly all Italian parties have reserved the right to restrain access to leadership, though most have enforced only the loose requirement of formal membership. The 492 party-years that party membership was required are accounted for by 36 parties that have mostly been operative in the Second Republic and that individually often only account for a few party-years. Parties chose leaders from members of an internal council in 242 party-years, which were disproportionately accounted for by only a few parties that were operating before 1994. Four of these parties – Msi, Pci, Pri and Psi – accounted for 29 party-years each, and the Partito Repubblicano, which survived the transition to the Second Republic, accounts for a record 75 party-years. In contrast, the short-lived Democrazia Proletaria achieved only nine party-years. The three parties that after 1994 maintained the requirement of membership in a party council are Pds, Rc and Pdci; all are heirs of the late Partito Comunista, thus path dependency appears to have driven these parties' choices.

The above analysis suggests that parties in Italy adopted different solutions to candidacy requirements

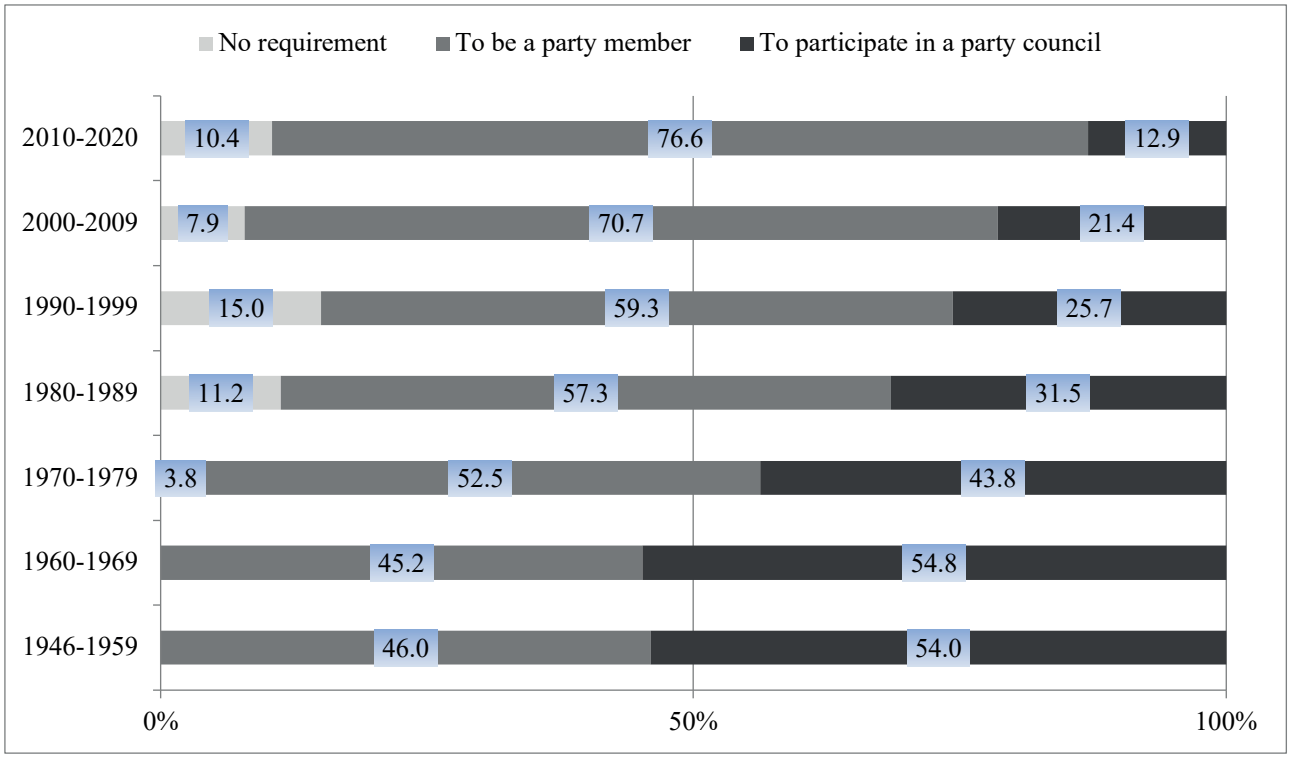

Figure 2. Basic requirements to candidacy for Italian party leadership per decade, 1946–2020. Note: Figures are percentages measuring party-years (N = 796).

Table 1. Basic and Additional Requirements for Candidacy for Party Leadership in Italy, 1946–2020.

Additional candidacy requirements	Basic requirements for candidacy			
	No requirement	Be a party member	Participate in a party council	Total
No endorsement	46	342	233	621
Endorsement by party members	9	113	9	131
Endorsement by party council	7	20	0	27
Endorsement by delegates	0	13	0	13
Endorsement by voters	0	4	0	4
Total	*62*	*492*	*242*	*796*

Note: Figures are absolute values representing party-years.

first in the mid-1970s and then massively in the passage from the First to the Second Republic. As time appears to matter, Figure 2 presents the three adopted solutions distributed by decade. During the first twenty years, party membership was a frequent prerequisite, but membership in a party council was still the predominant requirement for politicians pursuing leadership. Since the 1970s, membership in a party council, the most exclusive requirement, progressively diminished as the main candidacy criterion. Some of the diminishment was accounted for by parties that admitted aspirants with no requirements, but this nevertheless persistent practice never gained wide traction. Instead, party membership came to be by far the predominant requirement for candidacy. In sum, although only a few parties adopted the loosest criterion for pursuing party leadership – mere citizenship with no supplementary requirements – candidacy criteria grew much less strict from 1946 to 2020 as most parties came to merely require party members to be a candidate for the party's leadership.

Additional requirements for candidacy

Beyond the basic prerequisites just examined, parties can adopt additional requirements to further circumscribe candidate pools. For instance, some parties that want only party members as candidates can impose a length of active membership for eligibility to run for leadership. The only party in Italy with this requirement is Lega Nord, which initially admitted for candidacy only members who had been active for at least five years, and this time limit has been later extended to ten years[6]. In other political systems, some parties have established age limits to foster leader turnover, but this never happened in Italy. Instead, the typical additional requirement in Italy is a formal endorsement from party actors to be verified with signatures. The intended aim of this practice is to avoid frivolous entries lacking viability, but that eventually could alter the competition among main candidates and influence the results. Table 1 shows the requirements parties in Italy have added beyond the baselines. The first row of the table shows that in 621 out of 796 party-years no parties required that a candidate has a party endorsement to be eligible for party leadership – a striking 78 per cent. Rather, when endorsements are required party members are the most common endorsers, while few parties have envisaged party councils and congress delegates, and only Fratelli d'Italia has requested ordinary voters, for only a few years at that.

Two intriguing cases in Table 1 are Democrazia Proletaria and Partito Popolare Italiano. Following the tradition of Communist parties, Dp restricted leadership candidacy to members of the *Direzione Nazionale* – a party council composed of 60 officials – but also introduced the novelty of the endorsement by party members. Strangely, the moderate Ppi mixed the most inclusive arrangement for candidacy – no requirement at all – with the severe requirement of an endorsement by the members of a party council. No Italian party ever required endorsement by legislators for eligibility to party leadership.

THE CHANGING SELECTORATES OF THE ITALIAN PARTIES

How parties select their leaders

In their pioneering book, Hazan and Rahat (2010), in the process of proposing a general framework for analysing political recruitment, identified two

[6] Lega Nord, statute 2002, art. 10; Lega Nord, statute 2012, art. 10. The requirement for ten years of membership has been maintained in the various statutes of the Lega per Salvini premier, the heir of the Lega Nord launched in 2018.

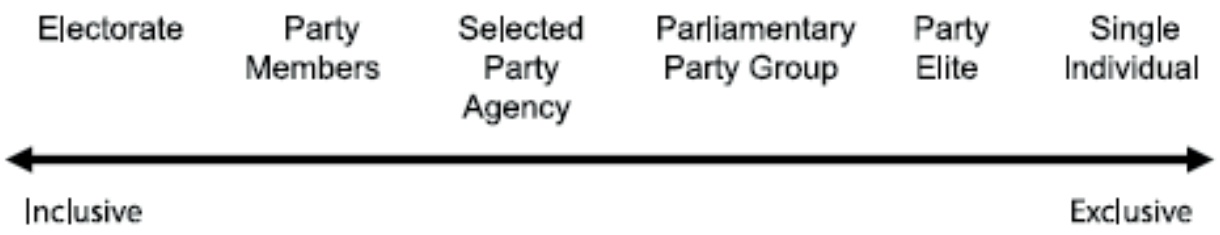

Figure 3. Classification of the selectorates for party leadership by level of inclusiveness. Source: Kenig 2009, 435.

dimensions necessary to categorise selection methods: selectorate and decentralisation. Because most prior researchers have emphasised the former, I focus on selectorates as well, with the aim of answering the seemingly simple question of who selects a party's leader. To start with, Figure 3 presents the six existing selectorates in their order of inclusiveness versus exclusiveness (Kenig 2009); the figure shows the most exclusive selectorate to be a single individual, which is uncommon in modern democracies. It operates infrequently when the outgoing leader or the spiritual chief of a religious party is wholly empowered to choose the new leader. A party's elite comprises a restricted group of political professionals or party notables who have been empowered to select the leader, though sometimes informally. The 'emergence' of the Conservative leader by a magic circle before the 1963 reform is often cited as an exemplary case (Punnett 1992; Stark 1996). In other cases, a party elite may follow a tight regulation, for instance when it determines that an internal board of party officials is entrusted to choose the party leader, as happens in the Swedish party system (Aylott and Bolin 2020a). The parliamentary party group has been a recurrent selectorate in the Westminster democracies, although most parties in the United Kingdom and Canada have adopted reforms to enhance internal democracy (Quinn 2012; Pruysers and Stewart 2018). Continuing the range in Figure 3, by 'selected party agency' Kenig means the party congress – also said conference or assembly – practised by most parties in Western Europe. In this case, all party members elect from among themselves teams of delegates in a number usually varying from some hundreds to a couple of thousands. The delegates convene at the party's congress to elect all the party councils and the party leader. Finally, when party members or the whole electorate are empowered, we enter the 'primary zone' (Cross et al. 2016, 23-24). Primaries can be used for selecting both leaders and candidates, and they are the most recurrent examples of internal democracy. Primaries are closed when members are the enabled selectors and open when all voters have the upper hand.

Figure 3 presents all existing methods of selection as 'simple'. Hazan and Rahat (2010, 35) argue that methods are simple when a single selectorate chooses a candidate or leader, but real politics is more intricate; researchers have in fact found that most parties follow more complex selection procedures (Hazan and Rahat 2010, 36; Cross et al. 2016, 29-34). In these cases, would-be leaders and candidates face more than a selectorate. Given that these multiple selectorates inescapably feature different levels of inclusiveness, assessing and even just categorising these complex methods is challenging, and researchers have not agreed on any definitive solutions (Hazan and Rahat 2010, 49). Here I prefer to condense complex selection methods to simpler ones using the most inclusive selectorate as a reference criterion. Admittedly, this is a disputable procedure affected by subjective choices, but what are the impacts of this decision?

Of the 796 total party-years from 1946 to 2020, statutes empower single selectorates to select candidates under simple methods in 769 party-years. This left 27 party-years in which parties chose candidates following complex methods, only 3.4 per cent of the total; moreover, only three parties accounted for these 27 party-years. Given this small size, I am confident that these methodological choices had no real impact on my results. Among the three parties that used complex methods to select candidates, in the years 2009-2012 Italia dei Valori selected its leader in a congress of delegates elected by party members and integrated by three types of 'superdelegates', namely the members of the *Esecutivo Nazionale* (a party council), the national legislators and representatives elected in local institutions[7]. In the same vein, Centro Democratico provides for a congress of 1,000 delegates along with national

[7] The 2012 statute also included representatives from international institutions. This obscure provision could be referring to members of the European Parliament.

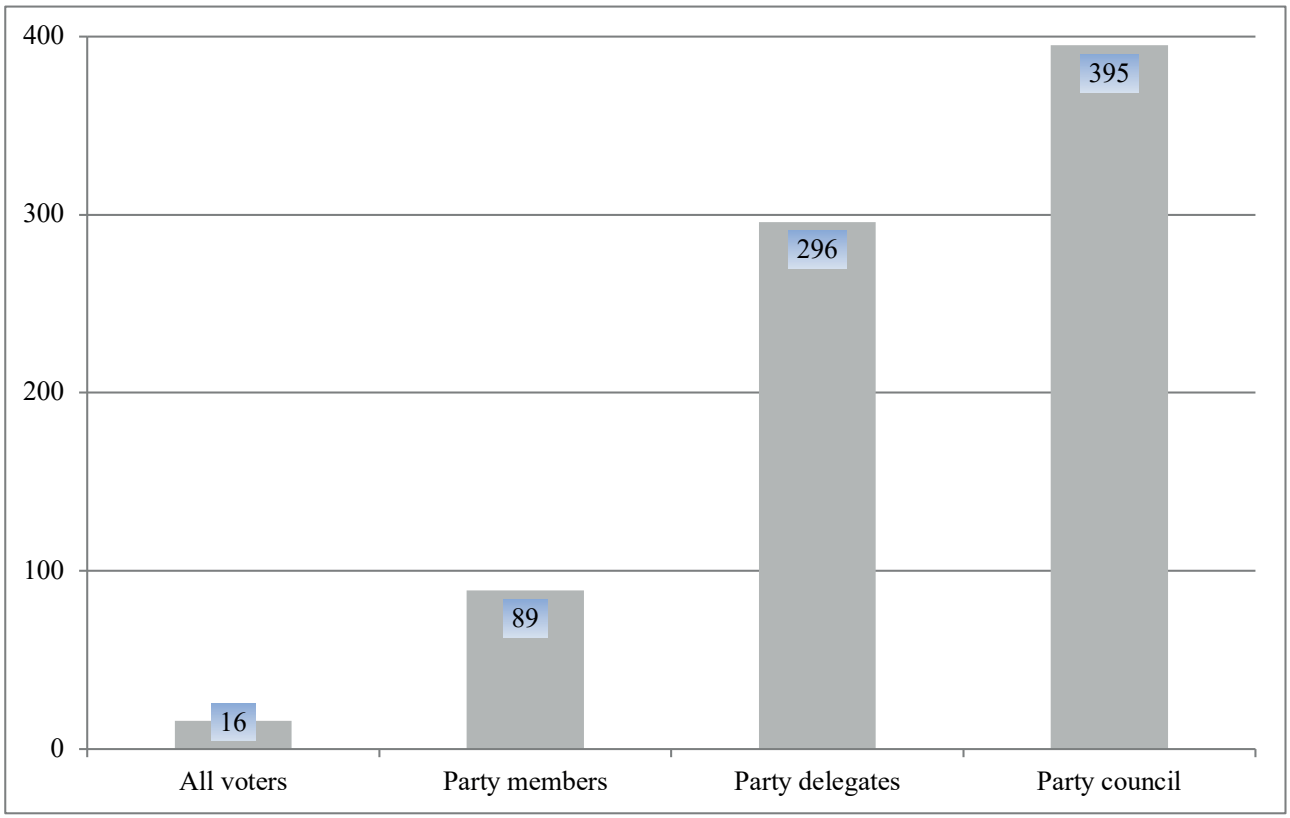

Figure 4. Selectorates used by Italian parties to select their leaders, 1946–2020. Note: Figures are absolute values presented as party-years (N = 796).

legislators and local public officers to select leaders. The Partito Democratico, however, since 2007 follows the most inventive complex procedure to select party leaders in three stages (Venturino 2015): First, party members screen three from all aspirants; second, all eligible voters can choose from among those three in an open primary election; third, if no candidate gains a majority of votes, then the Assemblea Nazionale – a permanent party council here temporarily operating as an electoral college – holds a runoff between the top two primary candidates. Following the reasoning above, I categorised the method of Italia dei Valori and Centro Democratico as selection by a congress of delegates and the Partito Democratico's process as selection by open primary election[8].

[8] I should add that in the five contested primaries to date, the winning candidate gained a majority of votes and thereby curbed the role of the party council. Moreover, the statute adopted in 2019 limits access to open primaries to two candidates, which clearly ruled out the Assemblea Nazionale. The new method will be used in the primaries scheduled in 2023.

Who select(ed) the Italian party leaders?

Political parties in Italy, although they are numerous, have not used all the possible methods I discussed above to select their party leaders. For instance, whereas parties in English-speaking democracies have empowered parliamentary groups, no Italian party ever preferred such a solution. Moreover, no party in Italy has ever let a single individual select the party's leader. This could appear strange given that researchers have identified Italy as a country with notable personalisation of its political parties (Rahat and Kenig 2018, 200); it seems intuitive that highly personalised parties would be particularly suited to empowering their incumbent leaders to select their heirs.

I speculate that this did not happen in Italy for a variety of reasons. First, whereas in some countries such as France, the personalisation of leadership dates to the 1960s, this personalisation only began in Italy in the mid-1990s after the demise of the traditional party system. In other words, personalisation in Italy is a pervasive but recent trend. Second, some Italian leaders are extremely resilient. Consider for instance the case of Silvio Ber-

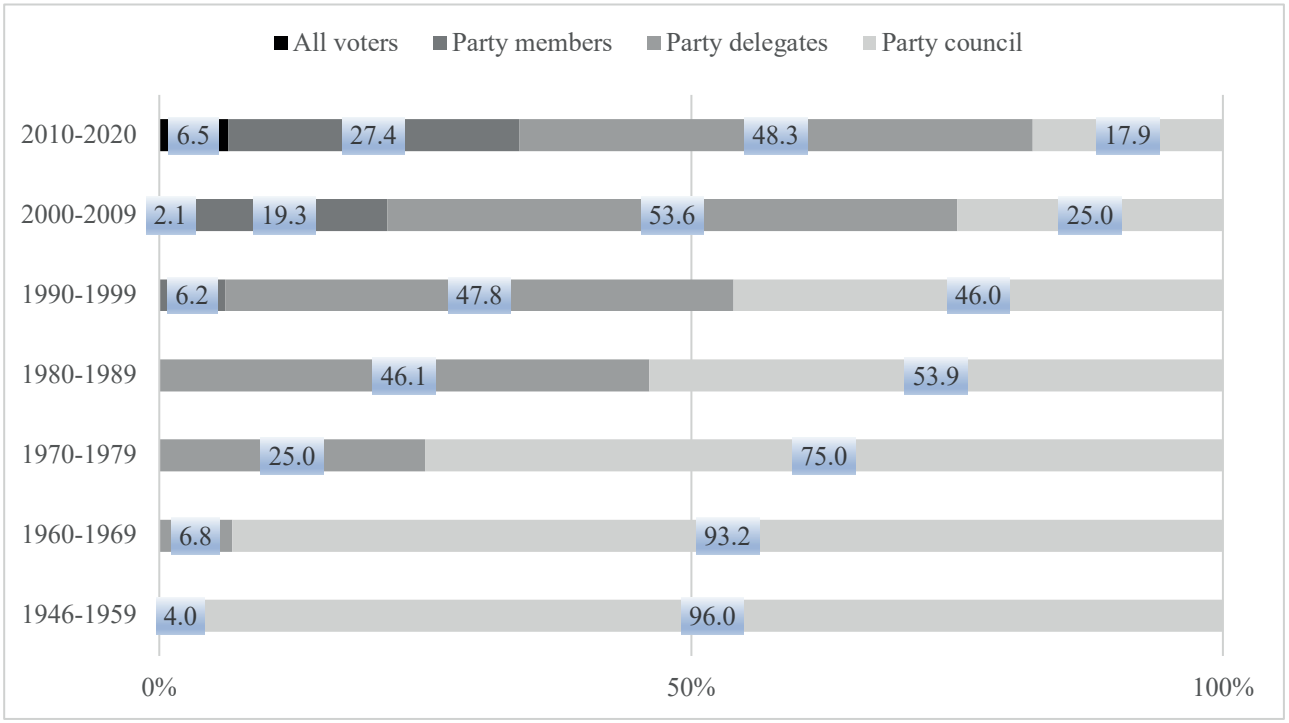

Figure 5. Italian parties' selectorates per decade, 1946–2020. Note: Figures are percentages representing party-years (N = 796).

lusconi, who launched Forza Italia in 1994 and still maintained his leadership in 2021 at age 85; he repeatedly chose an heir apparent to alternate his leadership, but ultimately he never stepped down. Third, current Italian parties are extremely de-institutionalised; therefore, most personal parties simply did not survive the political ends of their founders. Fourth, Lega Nord presents a clear case of how a personal party chose a usual method of selection – a closed primary election – to ease the replacement of the sitting leader by a younger challenger.

All things considered, when analysing the selectorates used by the Italian parties we are left with the four cases reported in Figure 4. The figure shows that the most common has been the party council, a party board designated through proportional systems by delegates during a national congress. These councils take different titles in different parties but are commonly called *Consiglio Nazionale* in the case of Liberal and Christian Democratic parties and *Comitato Centrale* in parties such as Communist and neo-fascist. Progressing towards the inclusive end of the continuum there are congresses of delegates, One-Member-One-Vote closed primaries and open primaries with all citizens enabled even if they are not formal party members. The use of primary elections is spreading beyond the United States (Sandri, Seddone and Venturino 2015) but usually is still reserved for party members. Thus, Italy's experience with open primaries should be considered innovative and intriguing. However, the short-lived Cambiamo! and the Partito Democratico are the only parties that so far have included open primaries in their statutes (Venturino 2015), thus the following analyses are based on only a small number of cases[9].

Figure 5 depicts how Italian political parties selected their party leaders between 1946 and 2020. The figure shows that in the first two decades nearly all leaders were selected by party councils. The only exception was the Partito Radicale, then an unimportant party that entered the parliament for the first time in 1976, which empowered party delegates. During the 1970s, a growing number of party congresses were given the power to select the parties' leaders, and this method steadily expanded to become the predominant method of selection by the 1990s. Because of this shift, party councils gradually lost importance and were only in use by minor parties after 2000.

In particular, the Communist and post-Communist parties – Rc, Pdci and Sinistra Italiana – have main-

[9] Launched in 2019, Cambiamo! never promoted open primaries and has been disbanded in 2021; instead Fratelli d'Italia organised uncontested open primaries in 2014 and 2017 although its statute arranged different selectorates.

tained the party council as the selectorate due to their ideological stances. In the case of Scelta Civica, the persistent use of the party council is certainly attributable to the lack of a ground organisation outside of parliament, and the Partito Repubblicano Italiano has likely been constrained by a mix of these motivations. In the same years, Italia dei Valori, a highly personalised party, initially used a party council but then changed its statute in 2009 to adopt more inclusive methods of leader selection. After paving the way for party delegates, the tiny Partito Radicale was the first to enfranchise its members in 1993, and this practice has been successively maintained by its heirs, Radicali Italiani and Più Europa. During the 2000s, left-wing Verdi and Democratici di Sinistra joined this stance, showing that ideological factors may matter for internal party democratisation.

However, in the following decade, other left-wing parties, e.g. Possibile, Italia Viva, Azione; centre parties, e.g. Popolari per l'Italia; and right-wing parties, e.g. Fratelli d'Italia, Futuro e Libertà and Lega empowered their memberships to select their leaders. Changing from the informal leadership of Beppe Grillo to a formalised method of selection in 2017, even Movimento 5 Stelle empowered party members. Finally, as anticipated, in 2007, the newly incepted Partito Democratico enacted a statute where open primaries were the default method for candidate and leader selections, a practice imitated by the right-wing Cambiamo!

Overall, the Italian parties have followed the same path already travelled by other parties in many democratic political systems. Indeed, they have broadened their methods of leader selection progressively from more exclusive to more inclusive. Moreover, the democratisation in most cases stopped in the middle of the spectrum, as demonstrated by the fact that the congress of delegates, a membership-based method, is still the most common way to select party leaders. However, the Partito Democratico has been the first great European party to use open primaries, paving the way for new forms of party democratisation.

The consequences of intraparty democracy: alternative selectorates

Although the use of complex methods of leader selection is quite rare in Italy, party statutes do often mention alternative selectorates to the main ones discussed above. As reported in the last row of Table 2, this was the case in 178 of 796 political party-years across the study period of 1946–2020, disproportionately party councils. The reason for this unbalanced distribution is obvious: Selecting a leader may be diversely time- and money-consuming, and while inclusive selectorates demand intensive organisational effort, exclusive selectorates can act quickly with limited costs. Under a party congress method, members vote locally for delegates, and then delegates meet for leader selection. Direct internal democracy can be even more challenging, particularly with open primaries that can require thousands of polling stations nationwide. The primaries and members' referenda launched online by Movimento 5 Stelle prove that intraparty democracy can be fast and cheap. Nevertheless, inclusive selectorates generally continue to be slow and cumbersome, and the speed and efficiency of party councils remain an option for parties under pressure.

Examining individual cases can substantiate my point. First, as shown in the last row of the table statutes do not mention alternative selectorates in 618 out of 796 cases, 78 per cent of the total party-years. In these parties, when leaders voluntarily resign, are dismissed or become incapacitated, the main selectorate automatically receives a time limit to select a new leader, but this practice only applies to twenty parties. Among them, Democrazia Cristiana, Movimento Sociale Italiano and Partito Socialista Italiano in the mid-1970s transformed

Table 2. Distribution of Alternative Selectorates According to Main Selectorate, 1946–2020.

Main selectorate	Alternative selectorate					
	No alternative selectorate	All voters	Party members	Party delegates	Party council	Total
All voters	0	0	0	0	16	16
Party members	76	0	0	2	11	89
Party delegates	147	5	9	0	135	296
Party council	395	0	0	0	0	395
Total	*618*	*5*	*9*	*2*	*162*	*796*

Note: Figures are absolute values representing party-years.

their main selectorates from party council to congress of delegates. When these parties adopted their new statutes, respectively in 1975, 1977 and 1978, all empowered a party council as an alternative selectorate as contingencies. By so doing they in some cases influenced the choices of their heirs after the 1994 earthquake. The effects were marginal in the case of the Christian Democrats in that only Unione di Centro used an alternative selectorate, whereas, after the neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano, Alleanza Nazionale simply accepted the predecessor's choice with the congress of delegates as the main selectorate and a party council as an alternative. In 2008, Alleanza Nazionale merged with Forza Italia to form Popolo delle Libertà under the leadership of Silvio Berlusconi, but when the short-lived Futuro e Libertà per l'Italia split in 2011, the party still maintained an alternative selectorate while adopting One-Member-One-Vote as the main method of leader selection. The same holds true for the initial choices by the Partito Socialista Italiano, which had been replicated by heir parties (Socialisti Italiani in 1994 and Socialisti Democratici Italiani in 1998) until the present Partito Socialista. Launched in 2007, the latter maintained the party congress as the main selectorate and rejected any alternative. Although they consistently allied with the right-wing coalition, even the Nuovo Partito Socialista Italiano – which split in 2001 from Socialisti Democratici Italiani – maintained the double selectorate of congress of delegates and party council.

While the abovementioned parties launched after 1994 accepted the pre-existing practice of the party council as an alternative selectorate, other recent Italian parties began using the same practice for the first time. This was the case with the right-wing Cambiamo!, Nuovo Centrodestra (2014–2016) and that party's successor, Alternativa Popolare (2017–2019), all of which split from Forza Italia. The same held true for the left-wing Democratici di Sinistra (2000–2006) and Partito Democratico (2007–2020), heirs of the Partito Comunista Italiano, for Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà (2010–2016), heir of Rifondazione Comunista, and Articolo Uno (2017–2020) and Azione (2019–2020), the latter two parties split from the Partito Democratico.

Three parties allow for alternative selectorates without a clear hierarchy. Verdi (2012–2020) and Più Europa (2019–2020) provide for party members and a congress of delegates, while Fratelli d'Italia (2012–2017) empowered both delegates and voters. In practice, all these parties defer the choice of the selectorate to the guidelines (*regolamenti congressuali*) issued at the same time of the congress. Although in these cases the statutes are not the main source, remarkably both Verdi and Fdi seem to have adopted an alternative selectorate that is more inclusive than the main one.

HOW RELIABLE ARE PARTY STATUTES? MATCHING FORMAL AND ACTUAL SELECTORATES

Although valuable, all approaches based on the inspection of official documents, such as party statutes and congress guidelines, pose tricky methodological problems as the advocated methodological formalism clashes against the informality of the objects under examination. In the case of political parties, this inconvenience can be particularly consequential because they often escape state regulation; this state of affairs allows their organisations and internal life to be largely self-determined and prone to informality. However, are these drawbacks detrimental to any realistic analysis of party leader selections? Addressing this question requires using the concept of the actual selectorate, that is the selectorate used on the ground irrespective of what is stipulated in the party statute.

Using actual selectorates to examine real leadership choices led to two relevant consequences. First, party statutes are no longer appropriate sources of information, and alternative sources must be used; among these, I found newspaper articles, congress reports by parties' offices and secondary sources from both political scientists and historians to be very useful. Second, although I have used party-years as the unit of analysis for data collected from the statutes, for the actual selectorates I studied the real leader contests in some years. This is because the available number of cases shown in Table 3, where the occurrences of the formal and actual selectorates are matched, shrinks in comparison with the analyses above. Importantly, in the everyday examinations there are more types of actual selectorates than formal types provided by the statutes. In fact, some parties have chosen leaders through informal agreements among their notables, a circumstance that obviously no statute considers. The eight cases reported in the penultimate column are all parties launched during the Second Republic that selected their leaders informally because of pressing situations even though their statutes contained formal procedures[10].

In all cases except for informal party elites, formal and actual selectorates can be matched. The high-

[10] Most of them split from pre-existing parties: Cambiamo!, Azione, Futuro e Libertà, Italia Viva, Possibile, Fratelli d'Italia and Rifondazione Comunista; only Popolo delle Libertà is the result of a merger. The other eight parties are not counted here because when they informally selected their first leaders, they still lacked a statute; Msi is the only traditional party accounted for.

Table 3. Correspondence between Formal and Actual Selectorates, 1946–2020.

Formal selectorate	Actual selectorate					
	All voters	Party members	Party delegates	Party council	Informal party elites	Total
All voters	5	0	0	3	1	9
Party members	0	35	0	1	4	40
Party delegates	2	0	94	0	2	98
Party council	0	0	0	186	1	187
Total	7	35	94	190	8	334

Note: Figures are absolute values measuring leader selections. Grey cells are matching cases.

est correspondence – occurring in 186 cases out of 187 – appears between selections by a party council; the single exception was Rifondazione Comunista when it split from Pci in 1991. Where party delegates were the formal selectorate, the only deviating cases were Pdl and Fratelli d'Italia. As reported above, the latter selected its leader through an informal agreement in 2013 and subsequently through uncontested open primaries in 2014 and 2017; strangely enough, so far Fdi has never selected its leader following its own statute. Out of 40 leader selections by party members, 35 have followed party statutes; the outliers were M5s, Fli, Italia Viva, Azione and Possibile. Finally, when all voters constituted the formal selectorate, what is noteworthy is the high percentage of deviant cases: four out of nine cases. While Cambiamo! activated its informal party elite in 2019, in three cases the Partito Democratico resorted to the abridged procedure outlined by a party council after the incumbent resigned under pressure. Overall, formal and actual selectorates corresponded in 320 of 334 cases, 96 per cent. That is, and not surprisingly, in normal times parties simply adhere to their statutes. As such, I consider the present formal analyses quite accurate approximations of how political party leaders are elected in Italy.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of large and inclusive selectorates for party leadership and candidate nomination elicits, among others, a normative question: Is intraparty democracy democratic? Some critics assert that the supposed democratisation of parties' life is disingenuously practised by party elites to avoid internal opposition and to freely implement strategies for cartelisation (Katz and Mair 1995). On the one hand, one piece of evidence indirectly supports this point of view: in Italy as elsewhere, selections for party leadership positions are often uncontested; a single candidate is proposed, conveying the impression of a 'managed' intraparty democracy (Aylott and Bolin 2020b). On the other hand, it could be conjectured that the hypothesis of manipulation is tailored to the relationships between party leaders and members, including the extreme form of direct democracy envisaged by digital parties (Gerbaudo 2021). Instead, this explication is probably inadequate for the elucidation of open primaries because non-enrolled citizens are too external to the party organisation in comparison to formal members, and hence do not permit easy top-down control.

In any case, normative questions are peripheral in this context. Rather, from a descriptive viewpoint, I have shown through an extensive analysis of parties' statutes how the role of party councils – both for candidacy requirements and selectorate inclusiveness – declined to begin from the 1970s to be replaced by congresses of delegates that have mostly selected the leaders since then. Parties in Italy began taking major steps toward the One-Member-One-Vote method to empower their members in the 1990s. Several parties followed this path during the tremendous challenges of Tangentopoli, and some left-wing parties pioneered the use of open primaries in Europe for selecting both party leaders and legislative candidates (Venturino and Seddone 2017). Since the internal democratisation of the 1990s, Italian parties have only sporadically used mixed or complex selectorates; rather, gradually adopting more inclusive but more difficult to manage selectorates brought about the implementation of faster alternative methods for use under pressure. Finally, although the problem would deserve more consideration, a brief but formal analysis has shown a potentially realistic picture of the parties' actual functioning.

I have used information on formal selectorates and actual leader selections in this study to investigate *when* parties changed their selectorates. Undeniably, such (and similar) data can be exploited to achieve a different purpose and explain the advent of intraparty democra-

cy. In this case, the key research question pertained to *why* parties change. Several possible accounts have been proposed in comparative politics to address this problem. These accounts are usually grounded at the level of the political system, the party system, or the intraparty arena (Barnea and Rahat 2007). For instance, a research inquiry could concern the possible existence of correlations between types of selectorate, considered as a dependent variable, and some characteristics of a given party such as age, left-right location, or family identity. Alternatively, parties could promote internal democracy because of an electoral failure, or after a period when it has been relegated to the opposition[11]. Moreover, a different approach could focus on the *consequences* of different types of selectorates. In such instances, researchers could probe whether alternative methods of selection could render the serving leader more or less accountable to members of party councils, or renew the party by electing young or female leaders. In practical terms, this study only posited a non-causal analysis based on the examination of a single variable. However, an extension towards causal analyses based on the study of possible correlations would appear as a natural development of the present work.

Two additional questions should be addressed to assess the qualities and limitations of this article. First, are the parties analysed in this study illustrative of the entire Italian party system? This problem arises because it is impossible to attain full compliance with my stated criteria. Table A.2 in the Appendix reports several parties that were seated in the Italian parliament at least once – my criterion for inclusion – but were not considered for the empirical analyses because of data lack. In general, these parties are small and not important, but the same holds true for parties that were included in the study. If these excluded parties were considered, they would contribute 355 party-years to the analysis. Conversely, the number of years would be reduced to 130 if regional parties were omitted from the current examination. Hence, the present study's results must be accepted with caution because of some excluded but not irrelevant parties.

Second, is the Italian political system representative of parliamentary democracies? Changes in party systems have occurred in all democracies (Mair 1997), but in Italy the transformations traced a peculiar course. In most countries, new parties emerged beside the old; however, the Italian parties encountered a total demise in the mid-Nineties, and the new parties launched since then never achieved the desired level of institutionalisation (Harmel and Svåsand 2019). Italian party politics has thus underperformed for decades, resulting in Italy being deemed incomparable with other normally working democracies, as noted in Bolleyer's quote reported above. Although debatable, this incompatibility with other democracies remains an open question. It is, however, certain that the diffusion of intraparty democracy only occurred in Italy in conjunction with weak and sometimes totally unconsolidated organisations.

The evidence conveyed in this article has demonstrated that most Italian parties have participated in the 'democratic revolution' involving many parliamentary systems since the Sixties. In the case of Italy, intraparty democracy is said to be a reaction to the impressive loss of legitimacy affecting all parties in recent decades (Ignazi 2012). Some authoritative scholars doubt the suitability of intraparty democracy as a strategy for facing party crisis. Under this point of view, the causes of decline are exogenous to the type of organisation a party might adopt, and therefore incremental expansions of internal democracy cannot revitalise parties under strain (Katz 2013; 2021; Ignazi 2020). If need be, representative democracies will eventually battle their enemies without this weapon.

[11] The characteristics of the electoral systems promise to be an important determinant of the methods for the candidates' selection. Conversely the possible correlation between electoral systems and leaders' selection seems to lack a clear rationale.

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APPENDIX

Table A.1. List of parties included in this study.

Party	N	%	Years
1. Partito Repubblicano Italiano	75	9.0	1946-2020
2. Partito Socialdemocratico Italiano	50	6.1	1947-1998
3. Democrazia Cristiana	49	6.0	1946-1993
4. Partito Liberale Italiano	49	6.0	1946-1994
5. Movimento Sociale Italiano	48	5.8	1946-1993
6. Partito Comunista Italiano	45	5.5	1946-1990
7. Partito Radicale	45	5.5	1956-2000
8. Partito Socialista Italiano	45	5.5	1946-1993
9. Rifondazione Comunista	30	3.6	1991-2020
10. Lega Nord	28	3.4	1989-2016
11. Verdi	28	3.4	1993-2020
12. Italia dei Valori	23	2.8	1998-2020
13. Forza Italia	22	2.7	1994-2020
14. Nuovo Psi	20	2.4	2001-2020
15. Radicali Italiani	20	2.4	2001-2020
16. Unione di Centro	19	2.3	2002-2020
17. Partito dei Comunisti Italiani	16	1.9	1998-2013
18. Udeur	15	1.8	1999-2013
19. Alleanza Nazionale	14	1.7	1994-2007
20. Partito Democratico	14	1.7	2007-2020
21. Partito Socialista	14	1.7	2007-2020
22. Movimento 5 Stelle	12	1.5	2009-2020
23. Centro Democratico	9	1.1	2012-2020
24. Democratici di Sinistra	9	1.1	1998-2006
25. Democrazia Proletaria	9	1.1	1982-1990
26. Socialisti Democratici Italiani	9	1.1	1998-2006
27. Centro Cristiano Democratico	8	1.0	1994-2001
28. Fratelli d'Italia	8	1.0	2013-2020
29. Margherita	7	0.9	2001-2007
30. Partito Democratico della Sinistra	7	0.9	1991-1997
31. Partito Popolare Italiano	7	0.9	1994-2000
32. Popolari per l'Italia	7	0.9	2014-2020
33. Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà	7	0.9	2010-2016
34. Possibile	6	0.7	2015-2020
35. Scelta Civica	6	0.7	2013-2018
36. Popolo delle Libertà	5	0.6	2008-2012
37. Alternativa Popolare	4	0.5	2017-2020
38. Articolo Uno	4	0.5	2017-2020
39. Lega per Salvini Premier	4	0.5	2017-2020
40. Nuovo Centrodestra	4	0.5	2013-2016
41. Sinistra Italiana	4	0.5	2017-2020
42. Socialisti Italiani	4	0.5	1994-1997
43. Partito Socialista Unificato	3	0.4	1966-1968

Party	N	%	Years
44. Azione	2	0.2	2019-2020
45. Cambiamo!	2	0.2	2019-2020
46. Futuro e Libertà per l'Italia	2	0.2	2011-2012
47. Italia Viva	2	0.2	2019-2020
48. Più Europa	2	0.2	2019-2020
Total	*822*	*100.0*	–

Note: values are year-party spells. Parties are ranked according to N and alphabetical order.

Data collection

The present study builds on the methodology employed by the Comparative Study of Party Leaders (Cospal) project. Cross and Pilet (2015) proposed this framework, which entails almost 60 variables combined in five sections.

Section 1 involves variables ascertaining party distinctiveness: name, year and country (the latter is not relevant in this instance).

Section 2 concerns variables describing the rules for the selection of party leaders: requirements for candidacy, type of formal selectorate, electoral systems, the role of members and the length and repeatability of the mandate.

Section 3 pertains to variables describing the party condition: participation in government, parliamentary representation, electoral results, left-right location and party family.

Section 4 incorporates variables describing the leadership selections: type of actual selectorate, number of candidates, incumbent eventually running, competitiveness and result.

Section 5 encompasses the characteristics of the selected leader: name, gender, age, previous career, term length and reason for the end of the leadership.

I have used variables from sections 2 and 4 for the present study. The data relating to Section 2 were collected through a content analysis of the party statutes, which were predominantly lengthy documents of a similar format. National party leaders form the core of my analysis; hence, I focused my scrutiny on statute articles pertaining to the central office. From these documents, I collected the information requested by the Cospal project framework, which I reused with minor adaptations. The data with respect to Section 4 were collected through an inspection of newspapers, books of political history, and party reports of congresses and other forms of leadership selection.

Data arrangement

Table A.1 above exhibits the extremely different durations of Italian parties operating since World War

Table A.2. List of parties excluded from this study.

Parties	Number of parliamentary mandates	Highest number of parliamentary seats	Period of activity
1. Südtiroler Volkspartei	15	5	1945-present
2. Union Valdôtaine	6	1	1945-present
3. Partito Nazionale Monarchico	3	40	1946-1959
4. Partito Sardo d'Azione	3	2	1921-present
5. Partito Democratico Italiano di Unità Monarchica	2	8	1959-1972
6. Partito di Unità Proletaria	2	6	1972-1984
7. Alleanza Democratica	1	18	1993-1997
8. Alleanza per l'Italia	1	6	2009-2016
9. Alternativa Sociale	1	1	2004-2006
10. I Democratici	1	20	1999-2002
11. Il Manifesto	1	5	1972-1974
12. La Destra	1	4	2007-2017
13. La Rete	1	12	1991-1999
14. Movimento per l'Autonomia	1	8	2005-present
15. Partito Monarchico Popolare	1	14	1954-1959
16. Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria	1	23	1964-1972
17. Patto Segni	1	13	1993-2003
18. Uomo Qualunque	1	4	1946-1949

Note: Lower House (*Camera dei Deputati*); parties are ranked according to the number of parliamentary mandates and alphabetical order.

II. This disparity poses the problem of weighting each party according to its years of activity to avoid inflating the contribution of minor parties to the distribution of a given variable. The extant literature on the survival analysis offers a solution to this difficulty which has been applied in political research to study the mandated length of party leaders (Guo 2010; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). In practical terms, this approach simultaneously considers the organisational and time dimensions rather than considering the party as the unit of analysis. In so doing, the unit of analysis is the party-year or a 'spell' denoting the number of years a given party is active. In this study, the *potential* total number of party-years is computed as the product of the number of parties and the number of years (in this case: 48 parties * 75 years = 3,600 party-years). The *actual* number is calculated by tallying the number of years each party has contributed in reality (in this case: 796). This latter computation forms the basis of the calculation of the percentages used in this work.

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Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the most populist of them all? A comparison of League and Five Star Movement voters

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Abstract. The article investigates the voting determinants for partners of the first populist government in Western Europe, the first Conte cabinet. Although the Five Star Movement (FSM) and the League share a common populist root, they differ in their ideological morphology: the FSM embodies an almost pure populism with inclusionary tendencies, while the League expresses an exclusionary populism clearly anchored to the Right. The article explores how populism affects voting choices for these two parties, looking at the interconnections between the thin-centred populist ideology, other host ideologies and policy preferences. We show the importance of populism as a predictor of voting choices for these two parties, as well as marked ideological differences between the two electorates. Moreover, support for the main policies of the government has been mixed, a symptom of the poor cohesion between these two parties.

Keywords: Populism, Italian Politics, Public Opinion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Populism is undoubtedly one of the most popular (and elusive) concepts of contemporary Political Science. Despite a deep-rooted history within the discipline, the academic debate around this phenomenon remains wide open. There is no unanimous agreement on its real nature, since its morphology is variously interpreted as a communicative style, a mentality, a political strategy or an ideology (Tarchi, 2016). While each perspective emphasises a different combination of characteristics to define it, two elements seem shared by all of them: a powerful critique against the economic, cultural, and political establishment (the corrupted *élites*), and the centrality assigned to the people as a whole, the exclusive depositary of political power (Canovan, 1981; Taggart, 2000; Mudde, 2007; Rooduijn, 2019).

However, over everything else, the differences are often profound, given the interconnections between the 'thin' populist ideology and other host ide-

ologies in which populism is embedded. In particular, a recent debate has developed in Europe on the variety of populist parties on the Left and the Right. Is populism in Europe an exclusive domain of radical right-wing parties, or do left-wing parties also find a home under the admittedly hospitable umbrella of populism?

This article stems from three premises. First, it focuses on the demand side. The literature agrees that this dimension is less explored than the supply side when it comes to the discussion about the morphology of populism (Piccolino and Soare, 2021), and we exploit a rich dataset to shed some light on voting behaviour for populist parties.

Second, the article explores two relationships that involve populism, and which are, ultimately, at least ambiguous. On the one hand, we have the interplay between populism and other host ideologies. On the other hand, we explore the connection between varieties of populism and policy preferences.

Third, we use Italy as our case study, a crucial country for the analysis of populism, to the extent that it has been labelled as a 'populist paradise' (Zanatta, 2002, p. 286). We focus our attention on a brief yet crucial period in which, for the first time ever, a genuine populist-only government ran a Western European country (Piccolino et al., 2018). More specifically, we compare here the voters of the Northern League (*Lega Nord*), now simply the League, and those of the Five Star Movement (*Movimento 5 Stelle*) between the summer and autumn of 2018.

Based on these considerations, the article is organised into four sections. We first introduce the two parties, giving a brief account of their government experience. Next, we discuss the theoretical contributions dealing with the varieties of populism and those related to the differences between left-wing and right-wing populist voters. We then present our data and discuss the results, which reveal a markedly different profile between the electorates of the two government allies. The article ends by exploring the implications of our results for the debate on populism and its various specific ideological forms.

2. LEAGUE AND FIVE STAR MOVEMENT: THE (POPULIST) ODD COUPLE

In the Italian political landscape, it is possible to trace populist parties in each of the main populist waves that have crossed the continent. Indeed, in this country populism has reached a high level of normalisation, to the point that the 'convergence around the themes and argumentative styles of populism [...] is now so widespread [...] that what until a short time ago was considered by nearly everyone a pathological feature of representative democratic systems has now become one of their physiological components' (Tarchi 2018, pp. 376-377; *translated by the authors).*

In this national context, the (Northern) League is certainly the most important populist party in the history of the country. This party was founded in 1991 as an evolution of a coalition formed for the 1989 European election by some regionalist parties of the North, under the brash yet attractive leadership of Umberto Bossi, the party's indisputable leader. Ideologically, and particularly since the end of the 1990s, the Northern League adopted an ideological profile that was chameleon-like, yet close to that of the populist radical right-wing party family (Mudde, 2007), even though other authors have preferred to classify this party as populist and regionalist (McDonnell, 2006; Albertazzi, 2007).

Bossi's party exploited the political cleavage between the centre and the periphery of the country which, despite the profound divisions between the North and the South, had been dormant until then. The Northern League was able to ignite the disaffection of the rich regions of the North against the perceived inefficacy and clientelism of the political-bureaucratic apparatus of Rome, the worst enemy in the party's imagery of these early years (Diamanti, 1993; Biorcio, 1997; Cento Bull & Gilbert, 2001). Crucial in this growth was the symmetrical decline of the Christian Democracy (*Democrazia Cristiana*), Italy's largest party for decades, which had managed to bury the deep economic and cultural divisions between the various regions of the country in the name of anti-Communism and common Catholic roots, an appeal that was no longer attractive after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Morlino, 1996).

In the following years, the Northern League changed its ideological positioning and approach toward the centre-right several times. The party participated in three different governments (1994-1995; 2001-2006; 2008-2011) within the centre-right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi in which, however, it failed to assert its federalist plans. At the beginning of the 2010s, the party experienced an abrupt change in its platform. Bossi's leadership was fatally compromised by a major scandal over the management of the public funding assigned to the party, which involved close relatives and allies of the leader. After the short pragmatic leadership of Roberto Maroni and a poor result in the 2013 general election, Matteo Salvini became leader of the Northern League. In a short period, the young leader radicalised the already hostile stances on immigration and European integration and, above all, quickly downplayed

the autonomist agenda to evolve into a national party (Albertazzi et al., 2018). This strategy clearly paid off in terms of electoral results. The party saw initial growth at the 2014 European election, to then reach unexplored levels of support in the 2018 general election, where the party was presented as just the *Lega*, obtaining 17.4% of the vote, and becoming the largest party in the centre-right coalition.

The history of the Five Star Movement is rather different (Tronconi, 2015; Corbetta, 2017; Biorcio & Natale, 2018). This party was born essentially around Beppe Grillo, a successful ex-comedian. In 2005 Grillo launched his blog, which echoed some themes already present in his theatrical production during the 1990s, such as environmentalism, anti-corruption, and consumer protection. The blog soon started to promote grassroots participation through the online platform Meetup, whose groups laid the foundations of the new party (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). After a successful protest rally in 2007, Grillo obtained wide media visibility, which led to the foundation of the Five Star Movement in 2009.

After some good results in local elections, the party achieved its first major success in the 2013 general election, when it garnered 25.6% of the vote. After the election, the FSM refused any collaboration with the centre-left, which won an absolute majority in the lower house but not in the Senate. Grillo's party thus led a strenuous opposition to the cabinets led by the Democratic Party, in alliance with some centre-right parties, formed during the legislature. Despite some difficulties related to the political inexperience of its parliamentary groups, the FSM continued its growth in the subsequent 2018 general election, achieving 32.7% of the votes – becoming the largest Italian party by far - under the leadership of Luigi Di Maio, who had replaced Beppe Grillo as the party's leader in 2017.

The interpretation of the ideological mixture of the party posed a challenge for the literature. The FSM has been considered 'close to an ideal-typical image of a populist party as far as its political rhetoric and style of communication are concerned' (Mosca & Tronconi, 2019, p. 1259). Its staunch refusal of the left/right ideological continuum, the heterogenous stances of its platform, the absence of analogous European parties, as well as its ability to attract voters from different origins (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014), made the classification of the FSM particularly difficult. The use of themes usually associated with the Left, such as environmentalism and welfare intervention, has led some authors to classify the party within left-wing populism (Spierings & Zaslove, 2017; Santana & Rama, 2018), while others have considered it close to a case of pure populism (Ivaldi et al., 2017; Soare & Stambazzi, 2017)

After the 2018 election, the Italian Parliament appeared thus divided into three main blocs, the centre-left coalition led during the election by Matteo Renzi, the centre-right gathered around Salvini, and the Five Star Movement. Initially, the FSM was open to a coalition with both the League and the Democratic Party, an offer rejected due to the stark opposition of Matteo Renzi's area. After weeks of negotiations, a cabinet was eventually formed by the two main populist parties. Their agreement was based on the 'Contratto per il governo del cambiamento' (*contract for the government of change*), a 58-page long document containing the preferred policy solutions of both the League and the Five Star Movement. The two parties struggled to find a name to lead the new cabinet, ultimately selecting an almost unknown Law professor, Giuseppe Conte, an independent figure close to the Five Star Movement. The leaders of both parties sat in the cabinet as Deputy Prime Ministers, with Di Maio at the Ministry for Economic Development, and Salvini as Minister of the Interior, in charge of the domestic security of the country.

The cabinet was marked by a lack of political experience among its members. It was composed almost entirely of ministers without previous government experience. Only two of them – Enzo Moavero Milanesi (Foreign Affairs) and Paolo Savona (European Affairs) – had held cabinet positions before. Moreover, they were both independent, another crucial characteristic of this government which was, at the same time, the most populist and the most technocratic (considering only party political cabinets) in the history of the country: indeed, roughly one-third of its members had no political affiliation (Valbruzzi, 2018, p. 475).

The government had a rather difficult life. Salvini took advantage of his role to put his restrictive immigration policy at the heart of the public debate, overshadowing the FSM ministers. Despite important political successes, such as the introduction of the *reddito di cittadinanza* (citizenship income), the Five Star Movement failed to assert its role as the major partner in the coalition. After one year, the balance of power between the two partners reversed. At the 2019 European election, Matteo Salvini's party gained over 30% of the votes, while the FSM halved its share compared to one year earlier. As a result, during the summer, Salvini called for a snap election. Somewhat surprisingly, the Five Star Movement managed to find an agreement with the Democratic Party for a new cabinet, again with Giuseppe Conte at the helm.

To sum up, the experience of the first Conte cabinet can be considered a *fiasco* for both parties. The League

was undoubtedly able to put forward its preferred policy stances and increase its electoral share. However, at the same time, it clearly missed the opportunity to strengthen its position after the European election, being able in a few weeks to establish itself as the country's largest party and to be confined to the opposition. For the Five Star Movement, the inexperience of its government team, rather than the policy results achieved, led to an electoral bloodbath that abruptly stopped the growth of the party.

3. IDEOLOGY, ISSUE PREFERENCES, AND POPULISM

As mentioned, the discussion about the varieties of populism has already produced a significant set of theoretical reflections and empirical data. In this regard, an important distinction is the one suggested by Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser between the *exclusionary* and *inclusionary* variants of populism (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). The authors argue that this phenomenon 'hardly ever emerges in a pure form. Consequently, populism is almost always attached to certain other ideological features that are related to particular grievances existing in different regional contexts' (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2013, p. 168). Accordingly, exclusionary populism would be prevalent in Europe, whereas in Latin America populism would predominantly take the inclusionary form. Both variants share a common populist core, but they often differ markedly in the economic and political spheres, as well as over the meaning of what constitutes the 'people' and the 'élites'. Exclusionary populism would emphasise the ethnical differences between non-native groups and the native population, favouring the latter in the distribution of economic and political resources, whereas inclusionary populism would highlight the social homogeneity of the people and the need to include the weakest social groups, regardless of their ethnocultural origins, in society (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013, pp. 158-166).

Mény and Surel had already distinguished three different forms of the key reference of populism, the people, which 'often become confused in practice' (Mény & Surel, 2000, p. 185; *translated by the authors*). More specifically, the authors identify its political manifestation, the sovereign people (*demos*), interpreted as the sole source of political power, whose originality can be traced back to the 'perpetual disaffection with the effective practice of popular sovereignty and, by corollary, in defining the people/élite dichotomy as perpetually structuring' (Mény & Surel 2000, p. 191; *translated by the authors*). Then we have the class-people (*plebs*), its economic component, a framing of the people as the bottom part of the society. This conceptualisation rejects the class struggle, and rather blames 'a parasitic and idle minority' (Mény & Surel, 2000, p. 202; *translated by the authors*), usually identified with the financial sector and other economic élites, for exploiting the small and hard-working people. Finally, we have the nation-people (*ethnos*), its historical-cultural manifestation, primarily constructed on a negative basis, starting from the ethnical and cultural elements not belonging to the people (Mény & Surel, 2000, pp. 204-214).

Recently, a third distinction has been debated in literature – that between left-wing and right-wing populism. According to scholars adopting the ideational approach, populism is a thin-centred ideology because of its limited scope and lack of consistency, beyond a few core concepts, compared to fully-fledged ideologies (Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008). Moreover, since 'thin-centered ideologies are often attached to other worldviews, the term is a useful way of theorizing about populism's tendency to combine with other sets of ideas' (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019, p. 5).

Two positions compete for supremacy here, as described by Luke March (2017). A first position argues that, despite ideological differences, the placement on the Left/Right continuum may be less influential when it comes to populist parties. Populist *repertoires* would be rather independent of the Left/Right positioning, in that populists on both sides share profound commonalities not related to other ideological contents, and we may argue that '*populism trumps (underlying) ideology*' (March, 2017, p. 284). Others suggest that although populism marries different host ideologies, the placement on the Left/Right continuum remains more relevant, and there may indeed be important differences in the populist characteristics of a party depending on its ideological positioning. According to this perspective, '*ideology trumps populism*' (March, 2017, p. 285), in that what really matters in assessing the ideology of a populist party is the host ideology in which populism becomes lodged.

A second aspect, related to the ideological sphere, has to do with the role of issue preferences in explaining support for populist parties. By virtue of their different ideological roots, '[w]hile left populists base their argument on an economically defined dimension, the right uses a culturally defined one' (Loew & Faas, 2019, p. 496). Many questions in this field remain to be answered. Is populism able to gather voters with a set of coherent (and radical) policy preferences or, on the contrary, does the fact that it is not a fully-fledged ideology enable it to attract voters with a variety of policy concerns?

In this article, we look at these two different determinants of voting choice, political ideology, and issue preferences. Even though the literature on the voting determinants of populist parties on the Left and the Right in Western Europe has reached a high degree of sophistication and consistency, studies that directly address how the varieties of populist positions meet ideological beliefs and policy preferences are rather limited. Akkerman et al. (2017), analysing the case of The Netherlands, found a commonality in the explanatory power of populist attitudes, and profound differences on other policy variables. Pauwels (2014) highlighted distrust toward the functioning of democracy as a unifying factor for populist electorates, while Rooduijn (2018), taking into consideration fifteen countries, did not find unifying elements among the populist electorates, either at the socio-economic level or in terms of political inclinations.

This work introduces two new elements in the attempt to analyse the interplays between populism, host ideologies, and policy preferences. The first is the very nature of the parties under study. Unlike other analyses, in which the comparison is between left-wing and right-wing populist parties, we will compare one party with a clear position on the Left/Right continuum with another whose ideological makeup is so blurred as to make it difficult to identify another, different host ideology beyond the 'thin' populist one.

The second reason why these two parties are interesting for our purposes is the very special moment in their life that we examine. The opportunity is represented by the fact that both parties were in government together, while they were busy putting forward, quite vehemently, different policy solutions to pressing political problems. In other words, examining voting choice for these two parties in a period in which some of the most important policies they advocated during the electoral campaign had to be put into place.

For these reasons, all our hypotheses are related to the debate around the varieties of populism. First of all, compared to non-populist parties, we should expect a marked role played by populism in explaining the voting choice for two parties which, after all, despite marked ideological differences, still belong to a common populist *genus*:

> H_1: Populism will be a positive predictor of the chance of voting for the FSM and the League compared to non-populist parties.

However, we should also expect a difference in the *degree* of populism between these two parties. As we have seen, the Five Star Movement displayed an archetypal populist profile. By contrast, we should expect that the vote for the League will be less linked with this phenomenon, since this party is more contaminated by other, more traditional, political content. This led us to expect that populism will be a better predictor of the chance of voting for the FSM compared to the case of the League:

> H_2: populism will be a stronger predictor of the chance of voting for the FSM compared to the League.

The following two hypotheses are closely connected with the first two, and deal with the relationship between populism and other host ideologies. As already noted, the electorates of the League and the FSM have rather different ideological profiles (Emanuele et al., 2022). Here we adopt the ideational approach to populism, namely that the 'thin' populist ideology will co-exist with other host ideologies. This interpretation, however, fits better with the League, a party clearly positioned on the Right, for which other host ideologies can be identified. It is thus possible to predict that both populism and the placement on the Right of the Left/Right continuum, a proxy of ideological positioning, will be associated with voting preferences for the League.

This framework is instead problematic for the Five Star Movement, a party that does not have a proper host ideology to encapsulate populism, and whose classification on the Left/Right continuum is rather unclear. Moreover, perhaps no other European party has rejected this line of division more than the FSM. In this case, we thus expect that the explicit *refusal* to place on Left/Right will be a determinant of the voting choice for this party, beyond a strong association with populism. Consequently, this leads us to formulate two hypotheses:

> H_3: All placements on the Left/Right continuum will be a negative predictor of the chance of voting for the FSM compared to the other parties.

> H_4: The placement on the Right of the political Left/Right continuum will be a positive predictor of the chance of voting for the League compared to the other parties.

A further hypothesis concerns the role of ideological explanations in accounting for policy preferences. Following the line of interpretation discussed in the previous hypotheses, we expect a different role of policy preferences in defining the voting choices for these parties. As we anticipated in our discussion on the first Conte cabinet, this experience was characterised by fierce competition between the two government parties in putting their own policies into practice.

The League, being an expression of exclusionary populism, should be linked with the preferences for a restriction of immigration policies, while it is difficult to make *a priori* assumptions on the preferences of these voters toward policies connected to the inclusionary variant form. On the one hand, these policies should not fit the ideological profile of the League. On the other hand, they were part of the agenda of the government supported by this party.

Although it is difficult to place the FSM even between inclusionary and exclusionary populism (Font et al., 2021), this party has supported policies more linked to the former, such as the introduction of the *reddito di cittadinanza*, a guaranteed minimum income often misinterpreted as a basic income scheme (Baldini & Gori, 2019). In this case as well it is difficult to predict what position FSM voters will adopt on the policy supported by the other coalition partner. For this reason, we will be conservative in our hypotheses, limiting them to a comparison between each party and the rest of the Italian parties.

H_5: Preferences for more restrictive immigration policies will be a positive predictor of the chance of voting for the League compared to other parties.

H_6: Preferences favouring the introduction of a guaranteed minimum income will be a positive predictor of the chance of voting for the FSM compared to other parties.

4. DATA AND VARIABLES

The data used in this study come from four waves of surveys (two in June, one in July and one in October) carried out by SWG in 2018 as part of its opt-in panel. In each wave, a sample of approximately 1,200 individuals was interviewed online, for a total of 4,935 completed interviews. The four samples are independent of each other, so the study is not a panel survey but rather a pooled cross-sectional survey. The four samples are representative of Italy's 18+ population, and are stratified by gender, age class, and geographical area. Interviewees answered a CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing) questionnaire that includes a standard section, identical throughout the four waves, and a section on specific themes that varied across the waves. After collection, the data was also weighted by age, gender, education level and geographical areas, to ensure the representativeness of the samples to the population on such parameters. For weighting, we relied on the data of the general population with access to the Internet provided by the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (Istat 2018), and we used the iterative proportional fitting procedure (Kolenikov, 2014).

Since we have hypotheses that compare the Five Star Movement and the League with non-populist parties and others that separately test them with the rest of Italian parties, we will use three different dependent variables, obtained from a question that asked respondents to indicate their voting intention. For our hypothesis on populism, we created a variable with three values: voting choice for FSM, the League, and non-populist parties. In the other cases, we will separately compare the voting choice for FSM and the League with *all* Italy's parties, including the respective governing ally. From these variables, we excluded non-voters, 'Don't know' answers, and undecided respondents, as it would have been impossible to assign them to a party choice.

The ideology of respondents was measured through two items. The first one encompasses a series of variables that estimate the attachment to, and the evaluation of, populism on the part of the respondents. This set of items differs from the study of populist attitudes, a recent and promising field of study (Akkerman et al., 2014; Castanho Silva et al., 2020) but, nevertheless, it can give us a measure of the position of the respondents toward populism. We constructed it starting from three questions. The first one simply asked the respondents *What is populism according to you?* Two answers were possible: 'Demagoguery, systemic adulation of the crowd, making appeals to the lowest instincts of the population' and 'It is considering the needs of the people and listening to its voice'. The second question investigated whether the label of 'populist' attributed to a politician or a party has become a negative or a positive thing. Respondents positioned themselves on this question with a 4-point forced Likert-type scale, from 'Very positive' to 'Very negative'. The last item asked the respondents how close to or far from a populist proposal they feel, with three possible answers: 'Far', 'Partially close' and 'Close'. These questions were present only in the first wave. The three items (standardised Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$). were ordered from the least to the most populist answer, standardised and added together to create a single scale.

The investigation of the traditional Left/Right continuum was operationalised through a question that asked the respondents to position themselves on this spectrum with six possible answers: 'No political area', 'Right', 'Centre-Right', 'Centre', 'Centre-Left' and 'Left'. We grouped the respondents placed on the Left and the Right of the spectrum with a single value for each of them, thus obtaining a nominal variable with four values considering the other two positions (refusing to place on the scale, and Centre).

As regards policy preferences, we focus on the two policy areas that represent the 'flagship policies' of the parties under scrutiny. Moreover, they are both present in the same wave, the second. Therefore, we will have:

- a '*Reddito di cittadinanza* index'. This variable was obtained from a question that asked the respondents their judgment on the introduction of this scheme, using a 4-point forced Likert-type scale from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'. Respondents agreeing with the introduction of the citizenship income were asked if they would have been favourable to its introduction also in the event that it had led to a high increase in public spending. Respondents disagreeing with the main question were asked to confirm their opinion in the event that the absence of such a scheme would leave millions of people in poverty. For each detailed question, there were three possible answers: 'Yes', 'No' and 'Don't Know'. From the combination of the answers to the main question, and those to the detailed questions, we produced various positions on the scale. For this calculation, we also used the 'Don't Know' answers to the detailed questions, placing them halfway between those who responded 'Yes' and those who responded 'No'. Even though they did not express an opinion on the more detailed questions, they nevertheless expressed an opinion on the main question, which is why we decided to keep them in the index[1]. We thus have a 12-point scale, scaled from the lowest (0) to the highest (1) support for the introduction of the citizenship income.
- an 'Immigration index'. This was obtained from a question that asked the respondents the best strategy to deal with the migrant influx. Three options were possible: ensuring the rescue of migrants at sea; creating hotspot camps in Libya; and adopting a strict rejection policy. In line with the previous scale, each option was followed by a more detailed question with the following possibilities: the burden of dealing with the influx rests completely with Italy only (first case); inhumane treatment of migrants in Libya (second case); risks of deaths of migrants at sea (third case). We thus obtained a 9-point scale, scaled from the most sympathetic (0) to the strictest (1) stance on immigration.

Beyond the political-attitudinal variables to test our hypothesis, we also used a series of socio-demographic variables for control, present in each wave. In particular, we have age, gender, education, and perception of personal economic situation. Moreover, the models on the whole sample had a variable to take into account the different waves, and in some of them we employed some variable transformations to deal with the lack of linearity. Table 1 shows a short description of the variables employed in the study. For categorical variables, we present relative frequencies *in lieu* of means. As a result of the "honeymoon" between the Italian electorate and Salvini during the Conte I cabinet, the share of voting intentions for the League is not very distant from that of the FSM.

This first descriptive data shows that both parties have a much higher mean on the populist index compared to non-populist parties, and the placements on the policy indexes also show a fracture between them and the other parties. The placement on the Left/Right axis reveals some interesting differences, in particular among the two governing allies. Among League voters, placement on the Right (62%) is prevalent over all other positionings, even though the share of people who refused to place themselves on this axis is conspicuous (22%). Among Five Star Movement voters, the explicit rejection of this axis is the most selected category (40%). As a result, and among those who are placed on this continuum, the Left is prevalent (32%) but we can observe also non-negligible percentages on the other two positions (17% for the Right, and 11% for the Centre).

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the models employed to test our first and second hypotheses. Since these hypotheses involve a comparison between the two governing allies and the non-populist parties, we employed multinomial regression models, using as a reference category the intention to vote for non-populist parties[2]. In the first model, beyond socio-demographic controls, we used only the populist index, while in the second we also added the placement on the Left/Right continuum. However, this variable will merely serve as a control variable, and not as a test for our third and fourth hypotheses. In these two hypotheses, we deal with separate comparisons between the League and the FSM and the rest of the

[1] We also ran models eliminating the 'Don't Know' answers to the detailed questions from these indexes. The results did not alter the results of our hypothesis testing, and we decided to keep the complete indexes.

[2] Some questions may be raised regarding the applicability of this label for Brothers of Italy (Fratelli d'Italia), a right-wing party with an ideological profile similar to that of the League. We ran additional models excluding Brothers of Italy from the reference category, i. e. employing it as a separate category from the other opposition parties. This operation did not alter the results of the test of our hypotheses.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the variables employed in the study (weighted data, unless otherwise specified).

	Total Sample			Parties		
				Non-Populist Parties	FSM	League
	Mean/Rel. Freq. (st dv)	N (Unweighted)	Min/Max (continuous variable)	Mean/Rel. Freq.	Mean/Rel. Freq.	Mean/Rel. Freq.
Voting intention	-	**3,687**	-			
Non-populist parties	0.39	1,612	-			
FSM	0.32	1,118	-			
League	0.29	957	-			
Left/Right Positioning	-	**4,585**	-			
No political area	0.27	966	-	0.09	0.4	0.22
Left	0.39	2,079	-	0.64	0.32	0.09
Centre	0.08	389	-	0.06	0.11	0.07
Right	0.27	1,151	-	0.21	0.17	0.62
Populism Index	**0.23 (2.6)**	**623**	**-3.29/4.43**	**-1.5 (2.06)**	**1.48 (1.99)**	**2.08 (2.09)**
***Reddito di cittadinanza* Index**	**0.57 (0.32)**	**1,113**	**0-1**	**0.45 (0.3)**	**0.77 (0.22)**	**0.59 (0.31)**
Immigration Index	**0.51 (0.35)**	**1,120**	**0-1**	**0.32 (0.33)**	**0.57 (0.30)**	**0.75 (0.25)**
Age	**44.55 (15.1)**	**4,929**	**18-93**	**44.13 (16.51)**	**44.11 (14.21)**	**45.48 (14.53)**
Gender (Dummy, Female=1)	**0.49**	**4,935**	-	**0.41**	**0.48**	**0.5**
Education	-	**4,935**	-			
High	0.22	1,868	-	0.27	0.19	0.14
Medium	0.51	2,533	-	0.49	0.55	0.52
Low	0.28	534	-	0.24	0.26	0.35
Difficulties with household income	**0.61**	**4,840**	-	**0.51**	**0.68**	**0.63**
Waves	-	**4,935**	-			
First	0.26	1,224	-	0.28	0.27	0.23
Second	0.25	1,223	-	0.24	0.26	0.26
Third	0.25	1.253	-	0.25	0.26	0.25
Fourth	0.24	1,235	-	0.23	0.21	0.25

Source: authors' own table, based on SWG data.

Italian parties, while in this case our reference category is limited to non-populist parties.

An initial inspection of the first model allows us to see that both parties, compared to non-populist parties, have a highly positive and significant coefficient of the index of populism. This finding is in line with our first hypothesis, and it highlights the common populist root of the FSM and the League.

Contrary to our expectations, however, the coefficient among voters for the Five Star Movement is *lower* compared to that of the League. This picture does not change in the second model, where we added the placement on the Left/Right axis as a control. Using the relative risk ratios, we should expect that one-unit change in our populist scale will be associated with an increase of 1.76 (FSM) and 1.97 (League) times in the chance of voting for the two then governing parties compared to the baseline. In both models, however, the differences in the index of populism between the two parties did not attain statistical significance. In other words, we found support for our first hypothesis, without however supporting evidence for a difference in the degree of populism between the two parties. Our second hypothesis is thus rejected.

While the first two models helped us in ascertaining a common populist root between the Five Star Movement and the League, in Table 3 we show the models to test the rest of our hypotheses, using separate logistic models.

In the third and fifth models, we tested the role of the Left/Right continuum with some socio-demographic controls, with a sample crossing all waves of our survey. These first results are in line with our third and fourth hypotheses. Compared to the baseline of the refusal to

Table 2. Multinomial Logit Models on Populist Index.

	Reference Category: Non-Populist Parties			
	Model 1 Populism Index and controls		Model 2 Populism Index and controls, including Left/ Right positioning	
	FSM vs Non-populists	League vs Non-populists	FSM vs Non-populists	League vs Non-populists
	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.
Populism Index	0.57***	0.7***	0.56***	0.68***
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.1)
Left/Right positioning (*baseline category: No political area*)				
Left			-1.21*	-1.50*
			(0.49)	(0.67)
Centre			-1.24	-1.02
			(0.65)	(0.74)
Right			-1.79**	0.94
			(0.61)	(0.63)
Age (centred)	-0.02	-0.00	-0.02	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age (centred squared)	-0.00**	-0.00*	-0.00**	-0.00*
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Female	0.34	0.67	0.25	0.76
	(0.32)	(0.35)	(0.33)	(0.42)
Education *(baseline category: Middle)*				
High	0.25	-0.37	0.33	-0.32
	(0.31)	(0.37)	(0.32)	(0.43)
Low	0.84	0.84	0.60	0.83
	(0.5)	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.58)
Difficulties with household income	0.56	0.10	0.58	0.08
	(0.34)	(0.37)	(0.36)	(0.39)
Constant	-0.7	-0.81	-0.41	-0.78
	(0.4)	(0.47)	(0.64)	(0.8)
N	503	492		
Log likelihood	-402.938	-335.066		
McFadden's R2 (adjusted in parentheses)	0.238 (0.208)	0.350 (0.308)		

Source: authors' own table, using SWG data. Robust standard error in parentheses. Models weighted for socio-demographic characteristics. Significance level: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.01$.

place on the Left/Right continuum, all the positions on this spectrum show negative and significant coefficients among Five Star Movement voters. Interestingly, however, the coefficients for placement on the Right and the Left are much more pronounced and significant compared to placement on the Centre (b=-0.42, p=0.026). By contrast, among League voters, compared to the baseline of non-placement, self-placement on the Right is positive and highly significant.

Moving to the fourth and the sixth models, where we added both the indexes on *reddito di cittadinanza* and immigration, two findings stand out. First, for both parties, the indexes of their flagship policies are positive and highly significant. Thus, for each party, placement on their preferred policy area is a relevant predictor, corroborating our hypotheses 5 and 6. However, it is interesting to note how voters for these two parties place themselves on the other ally's policies. Among Five Star Movement voters, on the index on immigration, we observe a concave relationship, which was corrected by introducing a centred squared term, and a positive coefficient which just fails to achieve statistical significance (b= 0.75, p=0.054). Among voters for Salvini's party, the relationship with the immigration index appears slightly

Table 3. Logit Models for Left/Right Positioning and Policy Preferences.

	Model 3 Left/Right Positioning	Model 4 Left/Right Positioning and Policies	Model 5 Left/Right Positioning	Model 6 Left/Right Positioning and Policies
	FSM vs Other Parties Coeff.	FSM vs Other Parties Coeff.	League vs Other Parties Coeff.	League vs Other Parties Coeff.
Left/Right positioning (*baseline category: No political area*)				
Left	-1.18***	-0.75*	-1.66***	-1.50***
	(0.13)	(0.3)	(0.19)	(0.42)
Center	-0.41*	-0.59	-0.12	0.38
	(0.19)	(0.49)	(0.20)	(0.45)
Right	-1.83***	-1.49***	1.25***	1.37***
	(0.15)	(0.32)	(0.14)	(0.31)
Immigration Index (centred, model 4, squared root, model 6)	-	0.75 (0.39)	-	3.61*** (0.56)
Immigration Index (centred squared)	-	-3.93*** (1.11)	-	-
Reddito di cittadinanza Index	-	3.35*** (0.42)	-	-0.85* (0.4)
Age (centred model 3)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.01)
Age (centred squared)	-0.00** (0.00)	-		
Female	-0.01 (0.10)	-0.29 (0.22)	0.30** (0.12)	0.74** (0.25)
Education *(baseline category: Middle)*				
High	-0.13 (0.10)	0.08 (0.22)	-0.36** (0.11)	-0.25 (0.27)
Low	- 0.16 (0.16)	-0.35 (0.34)	0.24 (0.16)	0.35 (0.32)
Difficulties with household income	0.38*** (0.10)	0.65** (0.22)	0.01 (0.12)	-0.25 (0.25)
Waves (*baseline category: First*)				
Second	0.03		0.15	
	(0.14)		(0.16)	
Third	-0.08		0.23	
	(0.14)		(0.16)	
Fourth	-0.19		0.29	
	(0.14)		(0.16)	
Constant	0.29	-0.79	-1.29***	-3.73***
	(0.17)	(0.5)	(0.18)	(0.67)
N	3434	811	3434	811
Log likelihood	-1868.975	-376.890	- 1577.641	-308.937
McFadden's R2 (adjusted in parentheses)	0.095 (0.088)	0.221 (0.196)	0.201 (0.195)	0.325 (0.301)

Source: authors' own tablem using SWG data. Standard error in parentheses. Models weighted for socio-demographic characteristics. Significance level: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.01$.

logarithmic-like, and we transformed it with a squared root term which proved to be highly significant and positive. Moreover, placement on the *reddito di cittadinanza* index is even *negative*, suggesting that a one-unit change on this index will reduce the chance of voting for the League, a coefficient which however barely achieves statistical significance (b= -0.852, p=0.035). In other words, for both parties, we can observe a strong role of their preferred policies in explaining the chance of voting for them, and a weak or even negative role of the other main policy supported by their government.

Second, the coefficients on the Left/Right axis of League voters, and especially that on the Right, do not particularly differ from the model that does not take into account the policy indexes. Among Five Star Movement voters, by contrast, we can observe a sharper reduction of the coefficient of the Left placement, and a coefficient on the Centre that is no longer significant, a finding that does not allow us to fully confirm our third hypothesis. If we regress on the same sample of the fourth model the equation without the policy indexes, both placements have indeed much more explanatory power and statistical significance (-1.03, p=0.012 for the Centre, -1.299 p<0.001 for the Left). In other words, this finding may suggest a mediating role of the policy indexes on the Left/Right as regards the Five Star Movement.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This article tried to explore the voting determinants of two of the most successful contemporary populist parties, the Five Star Movement and the League, in a crucial period for Italian – and, arguably, European - populism. More specifically, we relied on the literature on the varieties of populism to account for affinities and divergences between the electorates of the two (then) governing allies. Our results confirmed most of our hypotheses, but also highlighted some important *caveats*.

Both parties share a clear populist root. Our index of populism has introduced a line of demarcation between the Five Star Movement and the League, on the one hand, and non-populist parties, on the other. However, contrary to our expectations, we did not observe a significant difference in the degree of populism between the two electorates, whereas our theoretical framework suggested a higher level of populism in an 'almost pure' populist party, the Five Star Movement, compared to the League. The 'pureness' of the populism of Grillo's party appears observable in another focus of our analysis, placement on the Left/Right continuum. We thus observed a party where populism co-exists with a clear ideological anchorage (the League) and another one whose populism is more associated with the refusal to place on the ideological spectrum.

Compared to the rest of the Italian parties, in the FSM electorate, all placements on the Left/Right continuum have shown a negative coefficient compared to the explicit refusal of this line of division, even though our models suggested a mediating role of the policy areas. Among League voters, we found a strong and significant role of placement on the Right. The electorate of this party is thus rooted in the traditional political line of division between Left and Right, even though a meaningful share of the voters of Salvini's party rejects the validity of this axis.

In line with our expectations, the preferences for the policy supported by their respective party have been a powerful predictor of the voting choices for the FSM and the League. A crucial question remained: what role has been played, in each electorate, by the policy supported by the *other* government partner? We did not draw up any hypothesis on this effect, as these policies, on the one hand, contrasted with the populism embodied by each party while, on the other hand, being put forward by the government they supported. Our analysis showed a weak role of these policies, and in the case of the League even a negative coefficient for the index of the *reddito di cittadinanza*.

In other words, beyond a common populist root, both parties showed profound differences both on the ideological and the policy levels within their electorates. These findings confirm the scarce cohesion among the two allies and, among other factors, may account for the failure of their joint cabinet after just one year of governing together.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data used in this study are available for replication upon request to the authors.

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