Southern European populism: Not the same home

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Abstract
Populism has gained new momentum in Western Europe during the financial crisis. Germany's role as top creditor fuelled anger, anxiety, and accusation towards traditional political forces and elites in Greece. Podemos exploited the same crisis in Spain to 'generate discursively a popular identity that [could] be politicized along electoral lines' (Iglesias 2015a). Similar contested debates emerged in Italy, with a harsh campaign against the Eurozone during the 2014 European Parliament elections. All these cases bring together Euroscepticism, populism and in some cases implicit references to nationalism. Drawing upon Derrida's notions of *aporia* and hospitality, this article argues that these forms of Southern European populism project a home of the people that is at the same time inclusive and exclusive towards an antagonistic Other. This Other, both threatening and welcomed at the home of the people, oscillates ambiguously between images of the EU and corrupted political elites. To support this argument, our narrative proceeds with comparative deconstructive discourse analysis, looking at speeches of the political leaders of SYRIZA, Podemos and the Five Star Movement in the run-up of elections that have seen them successful in Greece, Spain, and Italy.

Keywords
Euroscepticism, populism, discourse analysis, Derrida, hospitality, *aporia*

Introduction

The 'heartland' is one of the six core characteristics of populism, the 'idealised conception of the community [populists would] serve' (Taggart 2003), and a key research interest in this analysis. The heartland is retrospectively structured from a past-derived vision, blurred at its margins, but romantically constructed, with an emotional bond that brings together 'the people' in an inclusive and at the same time exclusive towards the 'outsiders', comfortable place. As Taggart (2003) invests the heartland with an emotional dimension, Stavrakakis et al. (2017: 5) note that populism 'equates' 'with a strictly *moralistic* view (developed along the good/evil and pure/corrupt axes) and a *homogenizing* construction of the people', in a sort of religious reconstruction within a secular domestic environment. Stavrakakis (2017) re-proposes Laclau's definition (2007) of the people, 'a signifier without fixed signified' in order to sustain 'the fluidity accounting for the hegemonic appeal of paradigmatic populist articulations' (Stavrakakis et al. 2017: 6).

Within the aporetic (see below for explanation of the term) logic of this essay, the meaning of heartland as home of the people is never empty, it always assumes and integrates heterogenous identities. Whereas, populism is a reaction against the Establishment and 'takes the language of popular sovereignty', where the people is not an empty claim, but the real meaning of occupiers of the heartland (Taggart 2003: 11).

The research questions guiding our analysis are the following: How has populism in Southern Europe (ie.: Greece, Italy and Spain) perceived the notion of heartland or homeland? Following the populist antagonistic logic of us vs. them, who is the Other, the "them" endangering the home of the people for populists in Southern Europe? We argue that populism in this regional context has focused on an *aporetic* understanding of the home of the people, in its inclusive and exclusive dimensions at the same time. Drawing upon the notion of *aporia* and hospitality as in the works of Jacques Derrida, we examine below samples of populist discourse that envisage EU as a point of reference that is at the same time invited and ousted from "the people's" home. We suggest that this type of discourse re-claims, or even reinvents, the notion of a populist homeland.

To support this argument, the discussion is structured as follows. The first section illustrates our theoretical approach, combining notions from the literature on Euroscepticism, populism and Derridean philosophy. As we seek to examine some of the most successful current cases of populist discourse across Southern Europe, section two focuses on the Greek SYRIZA, the Italian Five Star Movement (M5S), and the Spanish Podemos. Our intention is to deconstruct the discourse of political leadership in these countries, comparing our insights to show how different types of populism intertwine with Eurosceptic attitudes in an endeavour to reconfigure the home of the people. The concluding section comparatively discusses the populist discourse in the selected countries

for the sake of more holistic inferences and paves the way for further research, and addresses the challenges of understanding different variations of populism (see Katsambekis and Kioupkiolis 2019) in Europe.

Populism and Euroscepticism meet Derridean philosophy

The recent outburst of movements and political elections (as with Occupy, Barcelona en Comú, Indignados, the election of President Macron, and the EU referenda in Greece and the UK) in Europe have signalled renewed interest in populism. Analyses focus on its link with the extreme right-wing ideology (Stavrakakis et al. 2017), on original approaches to interpret its contemporary mediatised and performative dimensions (Moffitt and Tormsey 2013, Moffitt 2016), distinctions between rhetoric, movements and political parties (Urbinati 2013, 2018), leading to a comprehensive overview of definitions, approaches and case studies (Rowira Kaltwasser et al. 2017). Most recently, contributions have appeared which explore key dimensions of the link between populism and opposition to European integration (Pirro and Taggart 2018) and draw an overview of the literature to address recent findings and new avenues of research (Mudde and Rowira Kaltwasser 2018).

Populism 'represents an appeal to the people in a political order in which the people is formally already the sovereign' (Urbinati 2013: 145), but views society as divided into two antagonistic groups. As Urbinati (2013: 146) underlines, this dichotomist interpretation of society plays a

cardinal role for populism and 'displaces equality for unity' at the peril of liberal democracy. This vision opposes minorities and seeks to legitimize the state in compliance with the demands of the community as represented by the collectivity of the people. Urbinati's reading clearly points towards an exclusive populism. Such populism jeopardizes the value of inclusiveness which is endemic in liberal democracy. On the other side, in Laclau (2007) we find a form of inclusive populism, which brings the people to the centre of politics. For Laclau the notion of the people represents democratic politics more than elected and unelected representatives would do. In Laclau's theorization, representation is re-articulation, representation happens 'in a terrain that is partly sedimented, "citing" existing identities and structures' (Thomassen 2019: 8). Representation becomes articulation of pre-existing meanings and structures, close to 'Derrida's work on the performative, where the performative is interpreted as iteration, that is, as re-articulation and re-representation' where 'there are no pure moments and no pure elements' (Thomassen 2019: 8), but the representation of what is not discursively represented. This sovereign subject is named through recognition and, as such, it is capable of being named in an already partly sedimented terrain, dependent on subjects within society (Thomassen 2019: 9). Here lies the danger of talking for the people or a community, as Thomassen points, as speaking for the people is generally associated with populist radical right parties, with the re-articulation of the people becoming a

subject position, partly determined through the populist leader's articulation of it. Yet, in the case of Podemos, as we will see below, the Laclauian chain of articulation on the one hand negatively brings together the equivalence of the antagonism and opposition to the establishment, and on the other positively re-articulates the people as an empty signifier that is re-articulated through appellation by the populist leader and party.

The multiple crises in Europe (economic and financial, on security, terrorism and migration, around the endless debate on its democratic deficit) have not only affected domestic politics, but provided the opportunity to produce an opposition to the EU, the latter representing domestic costing demands. This resulted in increasing levels of Euroscepticism, allowing populism to combine with a Eurosceptic discourse. As contingent or outright opposition to European integration (Taggart 1998), Euroscepticism has changed its face, becoming embedded and persistent (Usherwood and Startin 2013). This is evidenced by empirical reality. In 2012 and 2013, 29 per cent of citizens held a negative image of the EU, in 2016 about 38 per cent neither had a positive nor negative image of the EU (EB86 2016), at the end of 2018 almost half of European citizens (43 per cent) have a positive image of the EU (EB90 2018). John FitzGibbon (2013) highlights that the 2005 French referendum on the EU Constitutional Treaty and the 2012 Irish referendum on the Fiscal Compact Treaty already showed emerging opposition, not towards the EU *per se*, but towards the trajectory the EU

was taking. Stressing the turning point of the Eurocrisis and the unpopular role of the European Commission and European Council supporting the austerity measures, FitzGibbon (2013) underlines that the only opportunity to voice opposition, while still supporting the EU, is the calling for alternative measures, and terms Euroalternativism as contemporary forms of contestation widespread across both public opinion and civil society.

Public contestation of the EU intensified with the 2016 British referendum on EU membership (Vines 2014), within a political and social context where '[T]here has been an almost total lack of political belief in the European project amongst the political classes for decades' (Daddow 2016). Yet the Eurosceptic narrative can take different forms, it can be articulated as the representative of big interests, the ones which go against workers' rights and exploit citizens. Of course, this is no fresh news; twenty years ago Paul Taggart (1997) explored the populist politics of Euroscepticism. According to his study the question of European integration embodies the politics of populism. First, the definition of populism enables flexibility and it is created around the negative reaction to representative politics. Differently from other ideologies, populism does not show core key values, but it attacks institutions 'without attacking the system as a whole' (1997: 16). In this case, as with bankers or (corrupt) politicians, the EU can represent an easy target, perceived as remote and overly bureaucratic. Second, as in FitzGibbon's (2013) analysis centering

on Euroalternativism, populism represents the conflict and critique to the status quo, 'an attempt to by-pass or limit the institutions and the institutionalization of politics' (Taggart 1997: 17). Third, the populists refer to the heartland as community, where the EU would appear alien and an extension of bureaucratic politics (Taggart 1997; FitzGibbon and Guerra 2010).

It is worth to be noted that an additional element of the notion of heartland that has regularly appeared side by side with Euroscepticism is a nationalist discourse focusing on the notion of the purity and unity of the nation, as highlighted also by Thomassen (2019). This form of discourse resembles how exclusive populism refers to the notion of heartland. In fact, the idea of the nation merges with the notion of the people; the (homogenous) nation becomes the people and hence the main political subject in populist politics. In this case, citizens of different nationalities and cosmopolitan images of EUrope turn into the Others, the "them" – in line with the populist dichotomist logic – which endanger the unity and homogeneity of the nation. Following, nationalist discourses concentrate on the securitization of immigration and national sovereignty to articulate the claim that the heartland belongs to a nationally homogenous people. Thus, a nationalist demand on heartland is *ex definitio* exclusive. As such, we counter it more often in the case of right-wing populism. Nonetheless, the 'perennial' (Taggart 1997) problem of un-elected bureaucrats plotting against the people is found in both right-

and left-wing discourses. Differently from 20 years ago, it is now articulated also by parties that have moved from the fringes of the party system towards the centre of politics. That is why it becomes even more critical to understand their narrative, what and who they represent, and how.

Our study suggests exploring the idea of the heartland using the positively normative notion of hospitality, which plays a cardinal role in Derridean political philosophy. A politicized notion of home offers protection, hospitable refuge and a sense of belonging for its host (Bulley 2015). Capitalising on the notion of aporia – i.e. that two meanings, concepts, and ideas are mutually inter-constitutive and mutually negating at the same time – Derrida (2000a) has drawn the distinction between unconditioned and conditioned hospitality. Conditioned hospitality points towards a home hospitable under conditions, allowing the guest at one's home only with the prior existence of an invitation. Conditioned hospitality draws distinctions between the political subject permanently inside the home and the outsider that is temporarily visiting, not residing (Bulley 2009, 2010; Fanoulis and Musliu 2018). It is due to this distinction between host and guest, which is necessary for the definition of hospitality, that Derrida (2000b) reminds us of how hospitality entails the endemic danger of becoming hostile towards the guest within the context of 'hostipitality'. The "host" is welcoming and at the same time exclusive towards Others. Last, but not least, according to Derrida (2000a)

unconditioned hospitality remains transcendental and aporetic. This means that unconditioned hospitality remains an impossible possibility. Whenever we try to comprehend and experience its unconditioned nature, we follow back to its conditioned form, and in populism, a form subject to recognition.

By the same token, a populist heartland may be seen as hospitable home for the people and at the same time hostile towards the Others that come to visit under conditions. An example of conditioned hospitality in our discussion below is the agreement (of the Other) to socio-political rules as determined by the people's general will. Suffice it to say, that the integration of the visiting Others in the populist heartland is never to be fully accomplished. They are always to remain visiting guests, which aporetically reinforces the social construction of the populist heartland as the spatial reference of belonging for the people.

Research design: The home of the people in Southern European populist parties

The analysis focuses on the speeches that populist political leaders launched just before the elections (central pre-electoral speeches) or after their electoral victories (triumphant speeches). We select three different countries and three populist political parties respectively, SYRIZA in Greece, PODEMOS in Spain, and the Five Star Movement (M5S) in Italy. Although the M5S attracts voters from both the right and the left, at its emergence it has been referred as the party

that most successfully gathered the Democratic Party (PD) voters' choices (Natale 2017). The Italian Association of Electoral Studies has also shown that the loss of shares of votes from the PD mainly awarded the M5S – and partly led to abstention (Natale 2017) – while more recently shares of the votes shifted also towards the League (Emanuele 2018). In this context, we examine the M5S as a populist movement party (Della Porta et al. 2017), able to mobilize right- and left-wing voters against the elites and as a response to austerity measures enforced by these same elites. The ensuing empirical explorations of 'the people', using Derrida's notion of *aporia*, help us identify whom populists define as insiders and outsiders and how they construct the people. What is more, our analysis of the selected speeches seeks to identify and un-blur the borders of the heartland. The analysis does not seek to be exhaustive, but similar to Stavrakakis et al. (2017: 6-7), the objective is to provide an in-depth, inductive analysis of the 'signifiers and logics in a given discourse' when these relate to the people (and its home), and are attached to the anti-Establishment narrative, the latter including Eurosceptic elements. 'The people' or the community belonging to the same nostalgic heartland are not just an important feature of extreme right-wing populism, but as in the case of Greece and SYRIZA that we present here, can be articulated as an inclusive ally against the economic crisis and the social costs of austerity. The people can mobilize active and activist forms of citizenship against the crisis (Isin 2013), which can result in corresponding political subjectivities

Arguably, the mixture of Euroscepticism with populist and nationalist

discourses is at its peak when articulated on behalf of political leaders at the time of electoral procedures. More precisely, we select the speeches of political leaders at the time of the election, as they expect to hold office in case of electoral success or break through the political system. Table 1 thus provides a brief summary of the selected data:

Table 1. Research design

Country	Party	Leader	Election	Speech
Greece	SYRIZA	Alexis Tsipras	National elections 2015	Central pre-electoral speech on 18 September 2015
Spain	Podemos	Pablo Iglesias	National elections 2015	Election night speech on 20 December 2015
Italy	Five Star Movement	Luigi Di Maio	National elections 2018	Final speech on 2 March 2018

In our socio-linguistic deconstructive exercise, we pay attention to: (i) how the notion of the people is articulated and socially constructed; (ii) to what extent Eurosceptic discourses are linked to populist and nationalist discourses; (iii) to what extent such discourses associate with the idea of hospitality and home; (iv) and eventually what is the position of the EU in relation to the home of the people. Our objective is to offer a comparative deconstructive discourse analysis of the speeches to answer the questions above.

Central pre-electoral speech of Alexis Tsipras in September 2015

The speech of Alexis Tsipras in Athens on the night before the 2015 national elections is a fine sample of populist discourse.[1] A lot of ink has already been spilled over how SYRIZA is a populist party with an emphasis on inclusiveness (Stavrakakis et al. 2017). The speech investigated here demonstrates a complex combination of populism, Euroalternativism and sense of national belonging, a combination which needs to be deconstructed by means of discourse analysis.

Tsipras' references to the Greek people are frequent in the speech. Even though his opening statement is to the 'Citizens of Athens', the politician inductively continues with the people as his preferred political subject. The inductive reasoning – from the Athenian citizens to the Greek people – brings the image of the community together. At another instance of intense political subjectification, the people becomes undistinguishable from the party of SYRIZA: 'SYRIZA is you, SYRIZA is the people', a tendency that features prominently in Tsipras' discourse.

In line with the antagonistic logic of the people vs. elites, the Greek people is socially constructed in the most positive way. With mentions to the 2015 EU referendum, Tsipras rhetorically describes the Greek people as victorious because they voted "No" to further austerity measures; as protector of the interests of the public majority; as full with bravery and

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[1] The whole speech is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H59dNyZvYTc. Accessed 1 March 2018.

hope; as a fierce power ready to fight for the common good ('Our people will say again the great "No"'). On the other hand, the elites of the country associate with the elements of being obsolete, outdated and traditionalist ("to palio", the Old), responsible for the stagnation of progressiveness, hence being an enemy to the people. As mentioned in the text, 'The Old lurks now to take revenge on our people'. Moreover, elites emerge as the antagonist Establishment. In the speech, the Establishment in Greece includes Yes supporters to the 2015 EU referendum, tax evaders, 'collaborators of the creditors and of Ms Merkel', 'the ones who feast with Mr Christophorakos' (the latter refers to the Siemens corruption scandal in Greece in the early 2010s). This type of discourse groups the adversaries of the people into one uniform arch-enemy, a process that complies with Laclau's (2007) point on chains of equivalence and chains of differentiation being vital for the rise of populism. This arch-enemy of the people remains generic, implicitly presented by Tsipras as a dark force, comparable to the well-known cinematic one: 'The dark plans make arrangements without taking into account the popular will'.

If the enemies of the people are articulated as a generic unethical ensemble, what does that signify for the social construction of the people? There is an *aporetic* contradistinction and not simply an antagonism between Greek people and the economic and political elites. The ethical advantage of the people is *aporetically* accentuated due to the depravity

of the corrupted Establishment. This means that the former understands its populist nature based on the juxtaposition with the ethical inferiority of the latter.

The populist discourse of Tsipras is entangled with elements of Fitzgibbon's Euroalternativism (2013) and mentions on changing Europe are regular in the speech:

> ….in order to give together the fight to change Europe … Which is the Europe that we vision? Is it the Europe of the Hungarian prime minister that builds fences? We, the progressive Europeanists, shall fight to change Europe … Europe is a battlefield and it is there that we shall give battle together with the other peoples and on a daily basis to change it.

In the passage above the Greek politician brings up the rise of transnational populism in Europe ('peoples of Europe') as a force of change and progress. The antagonism in this case is struck between the peoples of Europe and a EUropean Establishment incarnated in the conservative European People's Party and the right-wing figures of German chancellor Angela Merkel and German minister of Economics Wolfgang Schäuble, all of them accused in the speech for the imposition of unpopular politics upon the Greek people.

Apart from Euroalternativism, Tsipras' populist discourse entails a romantic sense of national belonging. Greece is often referenced as the heartland of the Greek people:

- our homeland to return to dignity
- our small Greece, our small homeland, a people that fought battles

- the youth leaving our land, they immigrate and live with the dream of returning
- a progressive government of the people, of all Greek and of our homeland
- Greece marches ahead, led by the people and having SYRIZA as its compass

Tsipras' populist discourse complies at this point with a nostalgic rhetorical style ("populism as political style", see Moffitt 2016). Since the financial crisis in 2009, SYRIZA's left-wing populism in Greece has referred to the need to restore the country's dignity without necessarily falling into the racist trap. Unlike right-wing populism, with its dense emphasis on the nation and its glorious past, SYRIZA's left-wing populist discourse has focalised on Greece as a small country fighting for its own future against the country's own *ancien regime*. This type of discourse combines feelings of patriotism – see all references to the homeland above – and a romantic sentiment of national belonging, without embedding the right-wing's nationalistic account of race. What we witness here is an inclusive inoculation of the concept of the people. Tsipras refers to the *Greek* people as his updated political subject of main interest, yet without defining Greece or Greek based on the racial criterion.

His focus is on the populist communitarian dimension, envisaging Greece as the home of an internally diverse community of persons, who all together constitute the Greek people and who come together to fight against the Establishment - having SYRIZA as their political compass (see quote above). But Greece, as the home of the Greek people, is both

inclusive and exclusive. Tsipras addresses a general invitation for aligning with the party of SYRIZA, the party of the Greek people: 'I am also addressing the conservative citizens, all Greek women and men'. Following Derrida, this general call of hospitality to the home of the Greek people becomes at the same time exclusive. This is because SYRIZA's call is one of invitation and not of visitation (Derrida 2000a). It comes with certain conditions. Everyone is welcome to the hospitable home of the people, i.e. Greece, as long as they firstly accept the people as the main political subject of liberal democratic politics and secondly consent to the fact that the Left and in particular SYRIZA is the voice of the people. The latter manifests very clearly in the way that Tsipras equates the Greek citizenry with the Greek people and the Greek people with SYRIZA as noted above. He romantically (and rhetorically) emphasizes that the Left serves the interests of the Greek people: 'a Left that is ready to bleed for our people to stop bleeding … a populist relation, pure, honest'.

However, in the context of the conditioned hospitality of left-wing populism, who is to be left outside the home of the people? Tsipras' references to the conservative Right and New Democracy's leader Mr Meimarakis implicate a rupture with the voice of the people: 'those who coalesced with Ms Merkel … they don't want to give any fights for the people's interests'. His references to the country's elites, the Old and the Establishment are similar. Thus, on the one hand everyone is welcome at the home of the Greek people, on the other those who cannot accept the

populist conditions noted above are bound to be left outside. Again, Greece as the home of the Greek people is *aporetically* defined; inviting everyone but at the same time unwelcome towards the ones who cannot comply with SYRIZA's (= Greek people's) conditions.

Is then the EU one of these unwanted guests at the home of the Greek people? Tsipras opens the door to the EU so far that the latter is ready to change and get rid of the corrupted ways of the EUropean Establishment. The relevant references in the speech are numerous:

- Europe will never be the same again
- Do we want a Europe of societal rigidity?
- A fight for Europe to regain the value of solidarity
- At the European level, we fought hard in the context of harsh negotiations

As the EU currently stands, the conservative, driven organization and its political leaders are invited at the hospitable home of the Greek people with the precondition that they will change and embrace the populist vision of the EUrope of peoples (see quote above). Interestingly, Tsipras does not present the EU as the basis for further political integration at a pan-European level or the "EU family" as a potential home for the Greek people. This chimes with the Euroalternativist tones of his discourse and brings his populism in contrast to aspirations of a Habermasian pan-European demos. It appears as if the envisioned Europe of peoples is a conglomeration of peoples' homes that are in solidarity with each other and can smoothly cooperate, but with no intention to merge into one

single home. Greece remains the primary home of the Greek people, its "first residence" to put it simply. Along these lines, the ideal of European integration is both invited and at the same time negated in the case of SYRIZA's left-wing populism. One more *aporia* that makes us better understand the paradoxical ontology of left-wing populism in Greece.

Pablo Iglesias' night speech and his 'Understanding Podemos' (2015b)

The speech by Pablo Iglesias is about 'heaven', 'love' and 'heroes', and portrays the image of a 'decent country', possibly counter-posing the unpleasant and unpopular image of Spain, which emerged in the social and political debates. His words, as in the case of Greece, are for the 'everyday citizens' and the small acts that make the country great or honest:

> Tonight, I want to pay tribute to the anonymous heroes and heroines who with their small acts, have shown us what it means to change a country. The grandmother who teaches her grandchildren that toys are for sharing, the activist who loses hours of sleep because he is out putting up posters in his neighbourhood, … The (female) teacher who strives so that despite the cutbacks, all children learn and are happy learning. The (male) police officer who does not lose his patience and puts up with whatever comes along and does his job without reaching to his belt. … The grandfather who stretches his pension to pay his daughter's university fees. Behind those everyday acts lie the heroes who change a country. Revolution does not consist of flags. It is in the small things

As in the community of the Italian M5S (following this section), Podemos' representatives often cite family values that are endemic among the

people who struggle against austerity. It is about 'ordinary people' resisting the invasion of the country and who are willing to coalesce with Podemos and fight for socio-political changes: 'we will be the leaders of political change in Spain'. Iglesias's discourse centres on the people that, as the main populist political subject, need to resist unfair economic policies and take control of democracy,

> I want to thank my family, all my comrades, and all those of you who are here, but above all, the people [*las gentes*] and the peoples [*los pueblos*] of Spain. … Never again a Spain without its peoples [*pueblos*] or its ordinary people [*gentes*]. Today from here we commit to push towards a new historic settlement that defends social justice and decency. Democracy must reach the economy, so that there can be no more violations of human rights and dignity.

In Spanish there are two separate words to indicate the English 'people'. '*Gentes*' indicates the day-to-day usage, while '*pueblo*' refers to the political term. Both the people, as ordinary citizens, and the Spanish country can do it together. Podemos is aware that the '*gentes*' is a fluid term and will always be ambivalent, but it is re-constructed by re-constructing 'the common sense of their time', as subjects experiencing challenging 'working conditions, evictions or public health' cuts (Errejòn and Mouffe, 2016: 135). In their joint fight for social justice, the Spanish '*gentes'* can be articulated within the opposition to the violation of humanity, similar to the fights of SYRIZA in Greece and M5S in Italy for solidarity. An *aporetic* moment emerges at this point. The family – a traditionalist institution often referenced by conservative parties – and the people – the force behind society's progress in populist politics – bring

Spanish people together, strengthening them against the social costs of

the economic crisis. The hospitable refuge is Spain, but not the Spain of

the domestic Establishment or of the EU German bloc, which has so far

divided the EU between north and south (Iglesias 2015b). For Iglesias,

Spain is the populist *topos* that ordinary citizens ('*gente*s') can win

together against the national and supranational elites and Establishment

(for the '*pueblo*'). These points feature clearly in quotes such as:

- The emergency policies to "save the euro" imposed—and soon normalised – by the German-led bloc have had disastrous effects in Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain, where millions have lost their jobs… The EU has been split along north–south lines
- Now, along with the other PIIGS, it is being forced to surrender historic social rights through austerity policies that Germany and its Northern allies would never impose at home. But the crisis itself has helped to forge new political forces, most notably SYRIZA in Greece—which finally has a sovereign government, defending a social Europe—as well as Podemos in Spain, opening up the possibility of real political change and the recuperation of social rights. Clearly in present conditions this has nothing to do with revolution, or a transition to socialism, in the historic sense of those terms.

Parties on the right and on the left are both to be blamed for their

corruption, but, as in his final speech before the elections, Iglesias

addresses a positive note and sees the change emerging from the

reaction to the social cost of austerity imposed by Germany 'and its

Northern allies'. SYRIZA in Greece and Podemos in Spain would give the

two countries respectively a 'sovereign government' ready to serve the

people's will, while they would support an alternative Europe (FitzGibbon

2013). Again, the people's homogenizing force merges '*gentes*' and

'*pueblo* vs. a corrupt and unjust system both at home and at EU level. It is in the articulation of this crisis and this distance between the State or the EU on the one side – both of them representatives of an unethical Establishment – and the people on the other side that Iglesias views the opportunity for the electoral success of Podemos:

> In Spain, the spectre of an organic crisis was generating the conditions for the articulation of a dichotomizing discourse, capable of building the 15-M's new ideological constructs into a popular subject, in opposition to the elites.

Iglesias (2015b) successfully articulates the 'renewal' against political elites' 'stubbornness' and 'conservatism'. As in the case of the Italian M5S, the critique moves beyond domestic and EUropean institutions, addressing in addition the role of the TV and journalists, pointing to the negative socialization of the people, and the need to create a new discourse that can cross 'political boundaries' (Iglesias 2015b). It is Spain coming back together against the tortures of the past history of the country, a fresh return of the Spanish people:

> We hear the voices of those who raised the flags of freedom against terror. The voices of the prisoners of the dictatorship. The voices of the working class who won their rights through strikes. We hear voices in Basque, in Catalan, in Galician.

But now, 'history is ours' (Iglesias 2015a). The economic crisis, the adoption of austerity programmes, and domestic cronyism have contributed to the emergence of movements and parties that protect the people against the sedimented status quo. The past for Podemos and

SYRIZA, but also the future for the M5S as we show below, are inclusive allies against the social costs of the crisis. As Taggart (1997: 17) addresses, the heartland is often associated with the notion of a nostalgic past, but is not necessarily back-award looking, it resembles more the 'embodiment of a concept of utopia which the populists by implications, view as attainable'. The perceived utopian nature of Taggart's heartland coincides with the *aporetic* nature of the populist home in our narrative, which is 'here and now', but at the same time promised in an unknown future (Derrida 1997). Thus, both EU and domestic institutions need to change for Spain to become the hospitable home of the Spanish people. And Iglesias warns on the danger of strengthening institutional power and losing ground at the grassroots level. The battle for Podemos gains strength, as for the M5S, from both the people and the '*gentes*' (see Urbinati 2018).

Luigi Di Maio's speech from Rome, 2nd March 2018[2]

In the context of the 2018 Italian general elections , the final speech by the candidate for Prime Minister of the M5S was given in Rome on Saturday 3rd March 2018. Luigi Di Maio's speech is framed around the forecast success thanks to the 'community' of the M5S, the latter being notably distinguished from the old Establishment. Di Maio cited both

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[2] Final M5S speeches from Rome: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6famKVJgj6A Luigi Di Maio from 29:35 to 1:38:00

right-wing candidates and the centre-left Democratic Party (*Partito Democratico*: PD) in this case. The M5S took advantage of the list of Ministers they had already presented, while Matteo Renzi (PD), Matteo Salvini (*Lega*), Giorgia Meloni (*Fratelli d'Italia*) and Silvio Berlusconi (*Forza Italia*) were still working on their possible ministerial candidates. Di Maio underlined,

> Who is your candidate Prime Minister? … They cannot answer, they say, we will tell after the elections, and you know why? They need to share offices among different factions, it is a battle for each office.

and added

> There are still so many people who think that voting cannot make the difference, I tell you, just a single vote can make the difference, today the centre-left cannot be considered a credible candidate [with reference to Matteo Renzi and his electorate], today you can make the difference.

Di Maio's words sustain the construction of a unified antagonistic community by empowering the citizens in opposition to the elites. Di Maio's message gives them strength against

> those who have been in power for twenty years and still tell us they want to change, why didn't you change, while you were in government? … While we run the country, they will still be arguing one against the other, trying to share offices [*poltrone*]. This is going to be another referendum [reference to the December referendum in 2016] and we will win again, but we need to work hard and explain that voting makes the difference … We are on our own and we are the first political party of the country, we have shared our history in the last five years and we are still here.

Di Maio talks about solidarity between the populist movement and the people as well as about support from the Italian people. The enlarged

M5S community – which is the vitalizing seed for the flourishing of the Italian people - creates these successful populist bonds within the citizenry, winning over the failed elites who are still running as candidates against the tide of time. The re-articulation of this collective identity, through performing practices and discourses, is the result of the political struggle against the elites. Europe is absent in this discourse, but it often appears in the M5S narrative. Interviews carried out at the European Parliament among their MEPs in 2015 and 2016 reveal the same Euroalternativist position that SYRIZA has. The M5S MEPs joined the EFDD (Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy), with which they only converge on their common opposition to austerity and the Eurozone:

- Europe [the EU], as it is, doesn't work (M5S MEP4 2016).
- Who should care about our national economy? And the economic crisis is the government's fault, and banks' and the IMF... citizens, oh, poor citizens, what have they done? (M5S MEP2 2015)
- Ideally, we seek to represent the whole of European citizens (M5S MEP2 2015), … as in the EU it is always the same two or three countries deciding for all. (M5S MEP1 2015)
- We have changed the relationship between politicians and citizens, the M5S is synergy, citizens are now involved, they sometimes answer me back, … "are you writing me back?" Actually we do! (M5S MEP1 2015)

As in the Greek and Spanish cases, the Italian M5S narrative *aporetically* accentuates the ethical divide and antagonism between the community and the elites, at the domestic and EU levels (IMF, ECB, banks). The ethical advantage is constituted over the corruption of the elites.

The mission for Di Maio is leading the country with responsibility: 'I will respect the expectations, and your hopes, we need to feel honored of people's trust and start on working together since next Monday'. Di Maio stresses that everyone wonders about the ministerial candidates of the M5S, and explains,

> We have chosen the right people for the right offices, *they* [corrupt elites] need to choose from their own lists, factions and interests but we do something different, we choose the best, but it is not a technocratic government, we choose based on their knowledge and expertise, we need mind and heart for the common good … it is about the quality of life, I wake up and I feel better because my son is happier, my mum is happier, my grandpa is happier, you experience it, not through the TV lies, telling you that our unemployment rate is decreasing …, when we are ranked last, just before Greece, this is just a nightmare [*allucinazione*].

It is evident in the above passage that the promise of the M5S is to turn Italy into a true, hospitable home for the Italian people. Citizens will be held together thanks to the supportive State the M5S is in the process of changing, and thanks to the M5S community. The *aporetic* moment between the populist demand for social change and the focus on the traditionalist institution of family repeats itself here, as in the Spanish case. Let us not forget that the institution of family is substantially associated with the notion of a hospitable home. Along these lines, Italian families have participated in the common good, the aim of the fight for representation in Spain, and against the corrupt tide of the Establishment, holding together Italy for more than twenty years. Di Maio emphasizes

that the 1 per cent ruling the country cannot see what the 99 per cent

can see:

> The M5S community's answers are positive and represent an answer against the corrupt elites,

> we offer enthusiasm, solidarity, promises we maintain, it will not be smooth, but we will fight to have as much as we can, it will be great, but also challenging, no one will be left behind by the State, we are the ones who are making it. If everyone votes, we can actually change Italy.

The people is made up by Italian families, not just unemployed, pensioners, mums, and students, who used to work as waiters or had to move abroad, often cited in the speech, but also by businessmen, all those Italians who do not feel represented. This general call for inclusiveness reminds us the Greek discourse of Alexis Tsipras. As in the Greek case, Di Maio invites groups that would traditionally belong to Italy's antagonistic Establishment (businessmen) to become part of the Italian people, yet under conditions. These primarily refer to the need for socio-political change aiming at the best interest of the people.

 According to Di Maio, the M5S will thus be able to 'purify' and change direction to both the Italian State and the EU. The latter will always be a 'home' for the Italians, but, as with Italy, the EU needs to take a new direction. The M5S promises to change the EU from within its own institutions due to the commitment of the M5S MEPs (Grillo in Ciriaco 2016) and by holding a referendum for Italy to leave the Eurozone, a

demand repeated during the campaign, but then always rejected in the political debates after M5S's taking office. Nadia Urbinati (2018) calls this populism *'gentismo,'* because it speaks the language of the 'ordinary citizens' more than referring to the people, and she views the success of the M5S as the victory of anti-partyism. In her own words, '70 years of Italian democracy have consolidated the public sentiment against parties and the party form of political participation' (Urbinati 2018). The protests against Italian politics and against the EU celebrate the ordinary men and women, who find hospitality in the Movement, protected against corruption and TV lies, politicians and journalists, austerity and the social costs of policies for families. Hence, even before Italy develops into a populist home for the Italian people, it is the M5S itself that can become a hospitable refuge for all Italians. As in the Greek case, the movement's hospitality is again conditioned over the citizens' acceptance of the dominant role that the M5S should play in populist politics.

Conclusion: All in, but some out

The analysis started as a study of Southern populist parties and an examination of the heartland, as home for the people, who belongs and who becomes the Other, in particular when the understanding of the people is embedded in a narrative that develops with a critical position towards the process of EU integration. While studying these parties, the M5S has started to stand out as an outlier for some of its contributions

regarding the role of immigrants in the Italian society. While parts of the leadership (e.g., the President of the Lower House, Roberto Fico) have been showing a cosmopolitan dimension, the main narrative of the M5S focuses on the Italian family, Italian young people, and Italian unemployed. In the M5S, the debates after the general elections and the alliance with the League, a populist radical right party, have led to ambiguous positions by the movement's/party's leadership. The strength of the M5S is in its predominantly populist nature, which has often shown in the protection of its community of Italians vs. banks, international institutions, uncontrolled immigration. In Greece, a Euroalternativist heartland emerges, inscribed in the 'dignity' 'to return to our homeland', to 'little Greece', which has been betrayed and abused by the current EU policy-making. In Spain, the EU is seen as responsible for the new cleavage between north and south, between winners and losers of the economic and financial crisis. The narrative in Spanish populism is inclusive and cosmopolitan, aiming to social justice and 'decency'.

When comparing them, even though the M5S and Podemos partly share the political context and configuration, they show differences in the conception of the elites (the *casta*). In Errejón's words (Errejón and Mouffe 2016: 106), Podemos is not just against the *casta* because of the latter's corrupt morality, but 'because they put themselves at the service of the privileged: "butlers of the rich instead of representatives of the citizens"'. Furthermore, the loci of political representation vary in the

three cases of Southern populism. From the "Square" in both Greece - although in a more institutionalised context (Errejón and Mouffe 2016)- and Spain to internet connection and meet ups in the case of the Italian M5S. While in Spain Podemos seeks to subvert the left/right dimension and represent a national popular frontier, in Greece SYRIZA was an already established party which tried to shape a new social majority, consisting mainly of frustrated voters of the mainstream center-Left, with right-wing voters being invited under conditions. The openly declared objective of SYRIZA at that time was to express the view of this social majority and to work toward transforming it into a political majority that would effectively oppose the policies of austerity (Kioupkiolis and Katsambekis 2018: 210-216).

In all three cases, a severe crisis of representation is the triggering mechanism for populist politics. SYRIZA, Podemos and the M5S have all represented popular grievances and concerns against established elites, articulating a plurality of demands and identities in their discourses, with Podemos in particular seeking to move beyond the Left/Right dimension and to return to the popular, bringing '*las gentes*' and '*el pueblo*' together (Errejón, in Errejón and Mouffe 2016: 106; see also Kioupkiolis and Katsambekis 2018 for the case of Podemos and SYRIZA). In fact, in Spain, the spectre of an organic crisis was generating the conditions for the articulation of a dichotomizing discourse, capable of incorporating the 15-M's new ideological constructs into a popular subject, in opposition to

the elites.

More importantly for this analysis, the perception of the home of the people in Southern European populism has variations. In the case of SYRIZA, it is determined by using social class as a distinctive cleavage. Podemos has endeavoured a disarticulation of the established socio-political and economic structures in Spain to eventually articulate a more representative notion of home for the Spanish people. In Italy, the traditional left-wing vs. right-wing dimension is more blurred due to the more salient populist nature of the M5S. In 2007, when the Movement emerged, Beppe Grillo (2007) talked about the burden of Roma population in Italy, as a 'volcano' and a 'time bomb', threatening the security of Italian citizens. This has returned in the M5S blog, where posts frame immigration as a challenge for the labour market, for security (with regular crime news), and for citizenship rights at birth in case parents are not Italian. In interviews, immigration has also been linked to corruption and the need to keep refugees under closer surveillance and halt illegal immigration. Questions of identity seem to be here important, influencing the definition of the Other in M5S's populism as well as the definition of a hospitable home of the Italian people.

Our inferences on Italy's M5S resonate recent findings by Aslanidis (2018). The analysis of the home of the people as aporetically constructed can be coupled by the dichotomous identitarian dimension offered in his study. Aslanidis (2018: 9) addresses to what extent

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'residual (non-populist) identities are denied moral legitimacy' and tend to 'other' as a 'strategic undertaking', within the dichotomous narrative of populism. In general, the notion of the *aporia* helps us understand both the internal tensions within the discourse of the three Southern European populist parties (Taggart 2000) and the external tensions (vs. the Other). Especially the latter often represents a weakness within the social construction of inclusive populism. Our analysis has shown how the connotation and representation of a different chain of equivalence, when parties aim at giving voice to the people, entails a re-presentation of hospitality within the frame of populist politics. With its transcendental and aporetic nature, a hospitable home of the people affords a sense of belonging that reinforces the social construction of the populist heartland as the spatial reference for the people. Within this aporetic construction, there lurks the danger of displacing 'equality for unity' (Urbinati 2013) and hence legitimize demands for a more homogenous society, that becomes more salient in the case of thickening populist ideology, which demands represented by the collectivity of the people. The conditions under which the 'heartland', ie: the hospitable home of the people in Southern Europe, can become hostile to the Other, whether this Other sits at the domestic or EU level can illustrate the nature and variation of populism beyond this case.

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