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Emergent anti-establishment political parties in Europe: exploring lessons from Southern Europe

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1 Introduction

In 2014, three radical right-wing parties won the European Parliament elections in their countries: the UK Independence Party (UKIP), the Danish People's Party (DF) and the National Front (NF), with 26.7, 26.6, and 24.8 % of the votes, respectively. In other countries, those kinds of parties were the third most voted political forces: the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), the Party for Freedom (PVV), Finns Party (PS) and Golden Dawn (XA). In Germany, Alternative for Germany (AfD) irrupted in the political scene surprisingly reaching 7.10 % of votes, being the fifth largest party of the European elections.

In Southern Europe, the electoral earthquake of 2014 came from the left wing: Syriza won the European elections in Greece (with 26.5 % of votes), the Five Star Movement was the second most voted party in Italy (with 21.5 % of votes) and the Spanish party, Podemos (founded just 4 months before), obtained the fourth place with 7.9 % of the votes in the European elections. Regarding Portugal, it seems to be the exception in Southern Europe. Even though, the country suffered severe financial cutbacks, the electoral competition still concentrated in the established political parties.

Far from being a phenomenon of "second order", the rise of these parties indicates a deep structural change in the European political space. At national level, these parties have obtained great electoral results in recent years, gaining government influ-

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ence in some countries. It is, for example, the case of the Progress Party in Norway, that got seven ministries in 2013; the Finns Party, that joined the current government coalition in 2015; or Syriza in Greece, who has led the government since January 2015. In Denmark, the Danish People's Party is the second largest party within the chamber after the 2015 elections and, at present, it is the party that supports the current government coalition in the parliament. In other countries, the radical right-wing has obtained good results after European elections, as the UKIP, who achieved 12.6 % of votes in the 2015 general elections (9.5 points more than in 2010), or the Sweden democrats, who gain 12.9 % of votes in September of 2014. In regional and municipal elections in Spain, the left-wing populism won in the major capital cities of the country: Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, and other smaller places like Cádiz and Santiago de Compostela. At a regional level, Podemos supports some governments led by socialists.

Following Kriesi (2014, 2006), these electoral results may be explained by "the increased importance of the European and the global level in the contemporary mul-tilevel governance structures and the increasing medialization of politics" (2014, p. 364), opening favorable political spaces for populist parties. Firstly, the contem-porary multilevel governance structures are reducing the representative function of traditional parties. Secondly, the increased importance of global and European issues at a national level creates new political potentials which can be articulated by popu-list parties more easily than by traditional ones. In general terms, mainstream parties have maintained a similar position about the European integration and globalization, to wit, a favorable position to the integration. This position generates some dilem-mas to mainstream parties (Kriesi 2006): the conservative parties have to deal with cultural and security threats created by open borders, whilst the social democratic parties have to preserve the social protection in an increasingly hostile international economic environment. In this context, mainstream parties face great difficulties in articulating the new demands related to opposition to integration, whether in eco-nomic or cultural terms. Finally, the increasing medialization of politics is leading to greater visibility and importance of the candidate to the detriment of the party appa-ratus. With new technologies of information and communication, the party leaders can interact directly with the public, favoring the charismatic personal leadership (a typical feature of populism).

Regarding terminology, there is a constant debate about which label fits better with the nature of these parties. We can find in literature a great variety of terms to refer to that kind of political organization: from extreme or radical parties, to populist, anti-establishment or outsider parties. Normally, the "extreme" or "radical" label is accompanied by the ideological side that occupies the party (left or right). However, the "extreme" label may suggest formations that are in the limits of legality of demo-cratic politics, and even organizations that support the violent direct action. To distin-guish these parties from violent organizations and the old fascisms or communisms, some authors label them as "new extreme" right or left. In the case of radical right-wing parties, we also find authors that use more specific terms (anti-immigration parties, Eurosceptic parties or national populisms), in order to emphasize the main feature of the political party (xenophobia, Europhobia or nationalism).

On the other hand, the "outsider" label is useful to describe their position into the party systems. However, the distinction between insiders and outsiders may vary depending on the definition of outsider. For Robert R. Barr (2009), the definition of outsiders strictly relates to their location into the party system: "An outsider is someone who gains political prominence not through or in association with an established, competitive party, but as a political independent or in association with new or newly-competitive parties" (Barr 2009, p. 33). Hence, "the notion of outsiders is not necessarily associated with anti-establishment politics and populism, but simply reflects a political actor's relationship to the system of competitive parties" (Barr 2009, p. 44). McDonnell and Newell differ from this definition by stating that outsider parties are "those which—even when their vote-share would have enabled it—due to their ideology and/or attitude towards mainstream parties have gone through a period of not being 'coalitionable', whether of their own volition or that of other parties in the system" (McDonnell and Newell 2011, p. 445).

In this article, we argue that there is a feature which can be considered common to these parties, regardless of their ideological position: their "anti-establishment" rhetoric, that "constructs a view of society where 'the people' (commoners) are pitted against the power elite" (Barr 2009, p. 32), presenting the social conflict in terms of "us versus them" (Fig. 1). For this reason, we will refer to these formations as populist parties (left-wing populism or right-wing populism depending on their ideological positions).
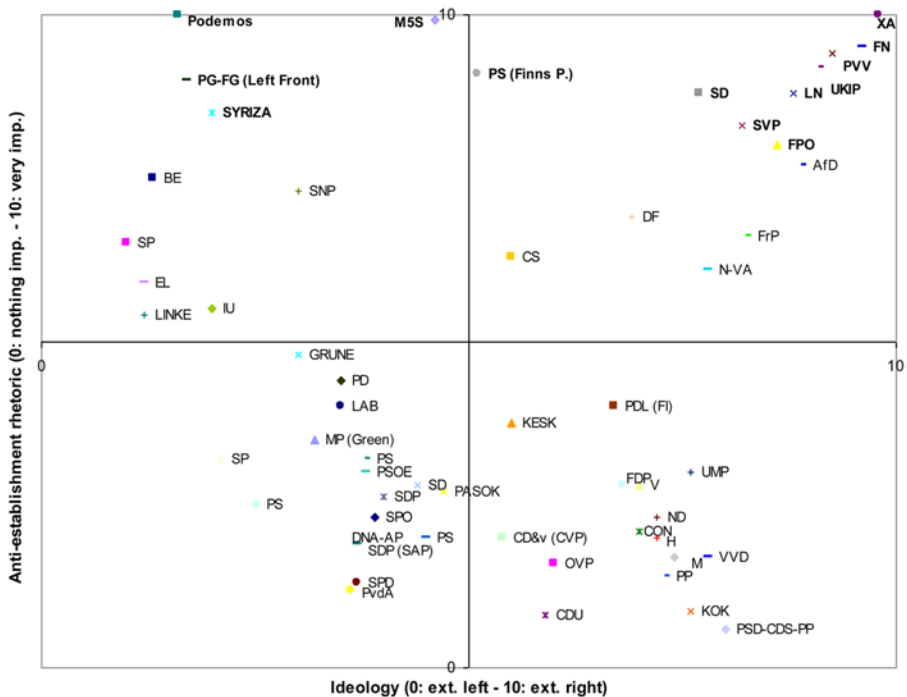

Fig. 1 Anti-Establishment Rhetoric by Ideological Position (Source: Authors Data from Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014)

Note: Main parties of fifteen European countries (Annex 1). In bold: parties with over eight points on "anti-establishment rhetoric".

According to Cas Mudde, the term populism refers to "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (Mudde 2004, p. 543). From the point of view of Mudde and others, as Canovan (2002), populism is a "thin" ideology, insofar as does not offer a complete vision of the political world (in contrast to "full" ideologies as socialism or liberalism). In fact, populism usually appears combined with other ideologies -nativism or conservatism on the right, and socialism or anti-capitalism on the left-, but always is characterized by two dimensions: people-centrism and anti-elitism.

This conception of populism as a "thin" ideology implies a specific vision of democracy: in terms of Takis Papas (Kriesi 2014), populism has an illiberal vision of democracy. From the populist point of view, the constitutive elements of liberal democracy (checks and balances system, the division of power, the rule of law and all kinds of intermediaries between the people and rulers) limit the people's sovereignty. The populism has a monolithic conception of the people, which means that the majority is always right (the "government by the people" is taken literally). In this sense, some authors like Robert Barr (2009), refer to populism as a combination of anti-establishment appeals and plebiscitary linkages, "a form of 'direct democracy' that criticizes the ineffectiveness of intermediaries and attempts to focus the embodiment of the general will" (Barr 2009, p. 44).

Finally, we argue in this article that the rise of populism in Western Europe is related to the challenges of globalization (immigration, deindustrialization, individualization, etc.), but also with the erosion of trust in representative democracies, especially in Southern Europe, where distrust in mainstream political parties and democratic institutions is very high.

2 Northern & Central Europe

If the economic crisis has been the main factor behind the creation of new political parties in the South, in the North the situation has been different. Indeed, North Western European countries did not suffer the crisis to the same extent and, hence, populist parties addressed different concerns. This might be the main reason behind the fact that most of those parties aligned to the right and extreme right, instead of the left and extreme left in the south. According to Fig. 1 political parties like Alternative for Germany (AfD), the Finns Party (Perussuomalaiset), the National Front (FN), the Party for Freedom (PVV), the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) or the UKIP (United Kingdom Independence Party); all of them fit in the category.

Trust in government and in other institutions, like political parties, is also considerably higher in this countries than in Southern countries, at least since the economic crisis, when a different pattern was initiated. Attending to Fig. 3, we can highlight two interesting elements: first, the economic crisis did not have a significant impact in trust in the government. Second, France and the UK show a behavior that while
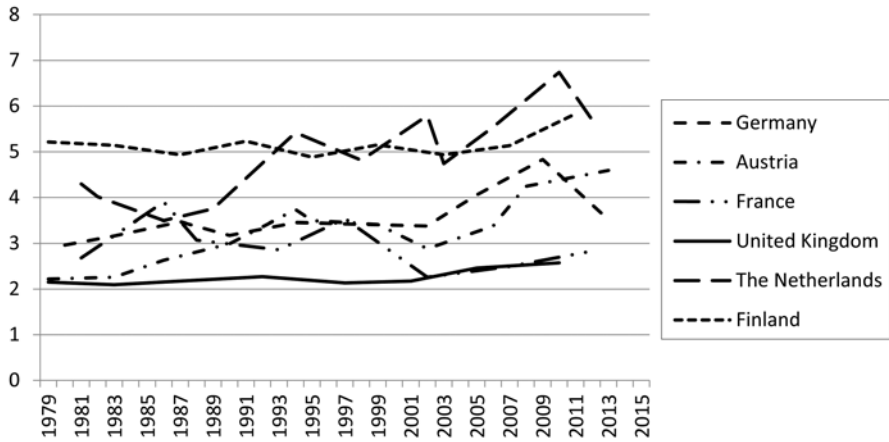
Fig. 2 The Effective Number of Parties at the Parliamentary or Legislative Level in Northern Europe (1976–2015). (Source: Michael Gallagher, Election indices). (http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/staff/michael_gallagher/ElSystems/Docts/ElectionIndices.pdf. Accessed 22.02.2016)
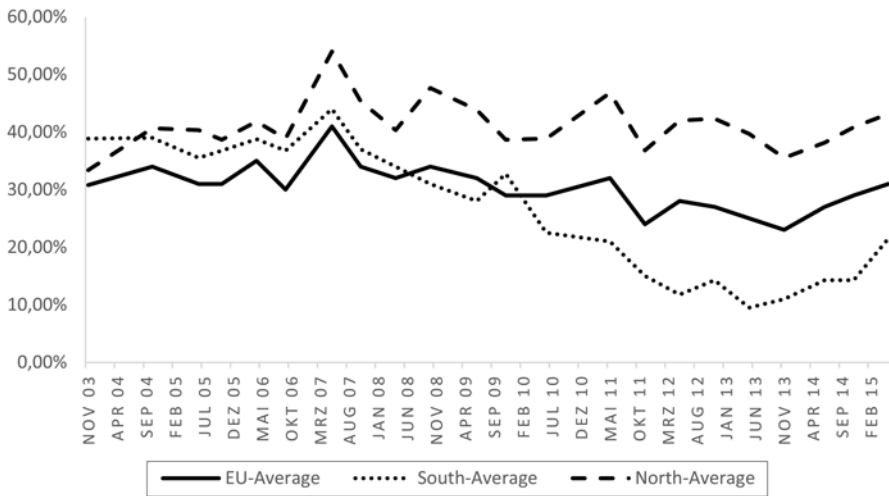

Fig. 3 Trust in National Government North-South (North: Germany, Austria, France, UK, The Netherlands and Finland. South: Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy). (Source: Eurobarometer)

might be closer to Southern countries (their trust records in the government are below the EU average), it is stable for the whole period of time taken into account, which is similar to Northern countries. It is also remarkable that both countries are the only ones with a majority electoral system and, therefore, have a number of effective parliamentary parties close to two[1] (Fig. 2).

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[1]Attending to Fig. 2, the difference between parliamentary and electoral number of parties both in France and the UK is much bigger than in other countries due to the electoral system (5,27 vs. 2,83 in France in 2012 and 3,71 vs 2,57 in the UK in 2010).

Table 1 Political Representation

Party	National Parliament	Regional Parliaments	European Parliament
AfD	0/631	41/1857	7/96
Finns Party	38/200	1195/9674	2/13
National Front	2/577	118/1880	23/74
PVV	12/150	66/570	4/26
FPÖ	38/183	–	4/18
UKIP	1/650	496/20565	22/73

(Source: own elaboration)

*It does not include the second chamber in France, The Netherlands, Austria or UK

**It only includes the regional councils in France

As stated before, all these political parties share some core elements due to their positioning in the extreme right: mainly, they reject the principle of human equality, and therefore advocate exclusionary policies towards immigrants and minority groups[2]; and they adhere to a populist anti-establishment strategy that is deeply critical of the mainstream parties and is ambiguous—if not hostile—towards liberal representative democracy (Rydgren 2003, 2005). This is an outcome of a quasi-biological binary perception of the world "us" versus "them", good versus evil or, at least, the positive versus the negative. The second group, "them", cannot have the same rights because, due to their very nature, are unable to integrate in the Nation. The second core feature of these parties is their populist anti-establishment strategy. Here, also, the nature of confrontation is binary: us/them, corrupt/pure, politicians/citizens, or national identity/multiculturalism.

Thus, those parties are not against democracy as a political system. In many cases the key point lies in their confrontation against representative democracy, that try to bypass through direct democracy, i.e. their total support for referendum as the chosen tool to solve political conflicts. And, both the tool and their dichotomist vision are applied to a range of issues which tend to focus closely on the most popular demands of citizens in each country: their relation within the European Union, the treatment for immigrants, their relations with other cultures, mainly Islam, and the question of taxes.

From the electoral point of view, all these parties have been successful to some extent. Table 1 shows the number of seats obtained by party through the last electoral processes. Of course each case is different because electoral systems tend to make easier or more difficult to obtain political representation. Countries with a more proportional electoral system tend to have more parties represented in their parliaments and countries where the electoral system is less proportional tend to have a bipartisan parliament (Fig. 2 and Table 1). Therefore, the chances of each party to gain seats differ according to the electoral system and also their political strategies.

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[2] Recent research has shown that PEPs frame minority groups as threatening in several ways, namely as (1) a threat to national identity, (2) a threat to social order, (3) as a threat to economic stability and (4) a burden on public services and the welfare state: J. Rydgren (2003), A. Zaslove (2004). More active supporters of populist parties go further, interpreting their involvement as an attempt to defend their wider group from the threat of racial extinction. See Klandermans and Mayer (eds.) (2005).

From the perspective of electoral success, each analyzed party is different: AfD is a new political party, founded in 2012 (as Electoral Alternative 2013) in order to alter the monetary union. In this regard, it is an exception because it is the direct result of the economic crisis, something unusual in Northern countries. Their initial results were modest but remarkable: 4,7 % of the total votes, thus missing the 5 % electoral barrier in Germany. However, since the elections for the European Parliament have not electoral barrier—since 2014—in Germany, and the results were even more positive (7,1 %), the party reached seven seats at the European Parliament.

The Finns Party, as well as the FPÖ in Austria or the PVV in the Netherlands, are already well established in their countries, finding real possibilities of taking part on the government. The Finns Party was founded in 1995 from the dissolution of the Finnish Rural Party, but it has been lately when the party has achieved electoral success. It won its first seat in 1999, but in the 2011 parliamentary election the party won 19.1 % of votes, becoming the third largest party in the Finnish Parliament. In the 2015 election the organization obtained 17.7 % of the votes, making them the parliament's second largest party. The party was in opposition for the first 20 years of its existence. In 2015 they joined the current government coalition.

The FPÖ is even older, being founded in 1956 (but its origins can be traced back to 1848). In the Austrian party system, the FPÖ was since its foundation a third party with only modest support until it entered into government together with the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ), following the 1983 legislative election. When Jörg Haider was chosen as new FPÖ party leader in 1986, the party started an ideological journey which can be described as the representation of the turn towards right-wing populism (in a sense, this party should be considered as anti-establishment from 1986). In the 1999 legislative election, the FPÖ won 26.9 % of the vote, its best-ever result in a nationwide election, and came ahead of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) by a small margin. This led the ÖVP to agree to form a coalition government with the FPÖ in 2000. Notwithstanding, the Party fell sharply in the 2002 legislative election, where it gained only 10.0 % of the votes; however, the two parties agreed to continue their coalition after the election. In 2005, increasing internal disagreements in the FPÖ led Haider and many leading party members (including the party's ministers) to defect and form the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ), which replaced the FPÖ as government partner. Since then, under the leadership of Heinz-Christian Strache, the party has again attracted and increased its popular support. In the 2013, legislative election the FPÖ won 20.5 % of the vote and, more recently, it came ahead either of the two main parties in some state elections, entered in a coalition government in Burgenland and gained more than 30 % of the vote in Vienna.

The case of the PVV (Party for Freedom or *Partij Voor de Vrijheid*) is somewhat different. It is much more recent. Founded in 2005 as the successor to Geert Wilders' one-man party in the House of Representatives, it won 9 seats in the 2006 general election, making it the fifth largest party in parliament. In the 2010 general election, it won 24 seats, making it the third largest party. Since then, the PVV has agreed to support the minority government led by Prime Minister Mark Rutte, without having ministers in the cabinet. However, the PVV withdrew its support in April 2012 due to differences over budget cuts. It came third in the 2014 European Parliament election, winning 4 out of 26 seats.

The cases of UKIP and the FN diverge from those exposed above. The main dissimilarity is that the electoral system is similar in both cases (plurality FPTP in the UK or two round system in France), which explains, to some extent, the gap between their parliamentary representation in their countries and their representation at the European level. The National Front is a traditional party in France, being founded in 1972. However, the party suffered a total transformation in 2011 when Marine Le Pen, daughter of the founding leader Jean-Marie Le Pen became the new leader. Since 1984, it has been unrivaled as major force of French nationalism. In the 1997 legislative elections, the FN polled its best-ever result with 15.3 % support in metropolitan France, confirming its position as the third most important political force in the country. It also showed that the party had become established enough to compete without its leader, who decided not to run to focus on the 2002 presidential election. The UKIP is not a new party neither, being founded in 1991 (as the Anti-Federalist League) gradually increased its support vote over the coming two decades. From 2009, the party tailored its policies toward a politically disenfranchised white working-class support base, before making significant breakthroughs in the 2013 local elections and the 2014 European elections, where UKIP obtained the best outcome ever. At the 2015 general election, the party gained the third largest vote share but won only one seat in the House of Commons.

As stated before, these political parties also share some strategies or, at least, they tend to address similar demands: specifically, the European Union and immigration. Regarding the latter, is commonly demanded stricter rules for non-EU immigrants, in the form of quotas or according to labour market requirements. Of course, each party has its particular hallmark: the PVV see immigration from Eastern Europe similar than that of non-EU countries and the UKIP propose to extend the existing point system to EU citizens. However, all of them link immigration with cultural purity and, accordingly, treat immigration from Muslim countries as a threat to national identity. In fact, the fear of Islam is one of the key features shared among them. Another threat to national identity is the European Union in the view of this political parties. All of them propose a different kind of relation between nation states and the EU, from the moderation of AfD (which demands more power for states within the EU), to the extreme position of the UKIP (independence from the EU), or the exit from the Euro of the FN, the PVV and FPÖ. Other points are usually aligned with the biggest concerns in each country: family policies, unemployment, national debt, health or taxes.

3 Southern Europe

The economic crisis in Southern Europe essentially dates back to the end of 2008, the year the Spanish housing bubble burst. If there is a region in Europe where the financial and debt crises, and consequently the political representation emergency, has been particularly visible, this is clearly and without any kind of doubt the South. Therefore, in those countries, mainly Spain, Italy, Greece, and to some extent Portugal, there are also substantial doubts about the credibility of the political, economic, and social elites. That is why the economic straits lead to a political representation
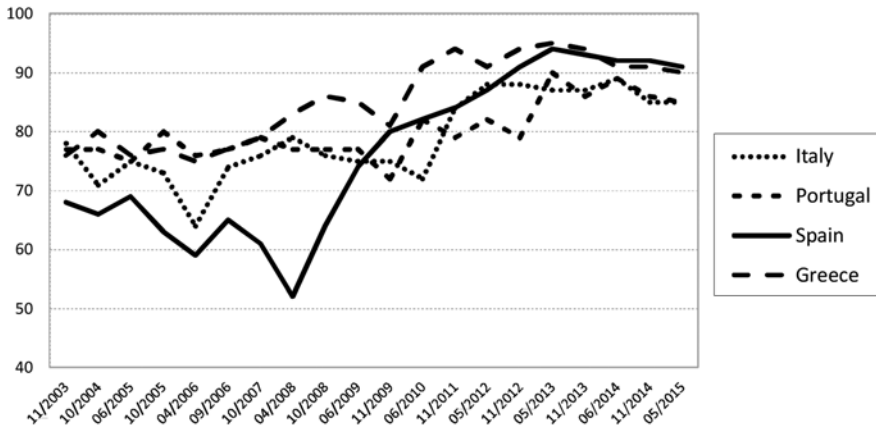
Fig. 4 Tend not to trust in Political Parties, Southern Europe. (SOURCE: Eurobarometer)

system general distrust, and this situation opened the possibilities for new political parties who received waves of upset voters from traditional established parties.

Hence, the political landscape in Southern Europe has changed significantly in recent years. This is especially perceivable in countries that, for decades, have only had a two-party system. It should be noted that new political formations have recently grown out of this increasing fragmentation. Political challengers are expected to exploit this contingent window of opportunity to gain an advantage over incumbents in national elections (Borghetto, De Giorgi and Lisi 2014, p. 4).

In Fig. 4 we can observe that there are some indicators that help to understand the raising of new political parties in most of the countries analysed, as a consequence of all those factors already pointed out. Following the data offered by the Eurobarometer[3], if we track the evolution of the trust in political parties, we can easily identify that 2008 involves a profound change in the trend. Obviously, in general we can state that the trust in traditional political institutions in the region under exam has been traditionally low compared to those records in surrounding European countries. Those numbers have been moving from 60 to 80 % before 2008, pre-crisis times, but from that moment onwards they increased till around 90 %. In other words, in Southern European countries only around 10 % of the population have showed more or less trust in political parties. Nonetheless, it is not difficult to understand the party-system development in those cases. The most remarkable evolution in that sense is the Greek, where usually citizens have been especially unconfident towards political parties (75–95 %), and the Spanish, where in 2008 only 50 % showed trust and 6 years later, the same record increased 40 %.

The truth is that in Greece, Italy and Spain, and to a lesser extent Portugal, the common reference of the 2014 European Parliament elections states that the new

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[3] http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm. Accessed 22.02.2016. This is the website for the Public Opinion Analysis sector of the European Commission. Since 1973, the European Commission has been monitoring the evolution of public opinion in the Member States.

emergent anti-establishment parties increased their support enormously compared to the previous elections in 2009. In some of the countries in more than 20 %: Syriza was the winner of those elections in Greece with 26.57 % of the votes; Five Star Movement was the second party with 21.15 % of the electoral support; Podemos almost reached the 10 % of the suffrages. Neither M5S nor Podemos run for elections in the previous ones in 2009[4].

In Spain, there is a big political earthquake awaited at the end of 2015, when general elections will be taking place. Podemos have generated big expectations among citizens and scholars, since this very young political organisation obtained impressive and unexpected electoral results in several secondary elections (European, Regional and Local), an event with no precedent in the Spanish democratic history. However, the party has never had any experience in government to date, excluding the local realm.

Podemos was founded in January 2014 by Pablo Iglesias, a lecturer in political science from University Complutense of Madrid, a very well-known character in Spanish talk shows. The beginning of this formation can be traced back to the aftermath of the 15-M, the famous outraged movement that in 2011 organised camps within the main Spanish cities against corruption and political representation crisis, and in opposition to the austerity measures imposed by the so-called Troika.

Some of the movements involved in the foundation, beyond the intellectuals and celebrities that signed the founding manifesto, were the party Anti-Capitalist Left and part of the Spanish International Trotskyist movement. The main goal established was opposing the dominant policies of the EU from the left and the austerity politics which were being applied.

Last May 2014, Podemos found its first political "acid test", and passed it with honours, polling with 7.98 % of the national vote and thus obtaining 5 seats at the European Parliament. From that moment, Podemos generated an enormous expectation increasing its electoral support in Andalusian elections, reaching the third position with 14.8 % of the votes and 15 seats at the regional chamber, and in municipal elections, gaining the mayoralty of the two principal Spanish cities, Madrid and Barcelona. Moreover, some of the polls gave the first position in direct voting intention in January 2015 and also September[5], although this fist exploding prospect cease to some extent.

The level of the party's potential influence is high, as Podemos has thus far taken up clever positions with regard to the sensitivities of the Spanish (Heinen and Kreutzmann 2015, p. 13). Those demands have been tracked by some electoral polls, as for example the Eurobarometer, and are mainly unemployment, economic situation, health and medical insurance and national debt. The potential success of Podemos relies on its capability to address the problems that the Spanish people con-

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[4] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/election-results−2014.html. Accessed 22.02.2016.

[5] Centre for Sociological Research (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas). Barometer January 2015, Study 3050. http://www.cis.es/cis/export/sites/default/-Archivos/Marginales/3040_3059/3050/es3050mar.pdf. Accessed 22.02.2016. MyWord, Social and Market Research (Observatory of the Radio Station Cadena Ser): http://myword.es/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Informe-de-resultados-ObSERvatorio-septiembre−2015.pdf. Accessed 22.02.2016.
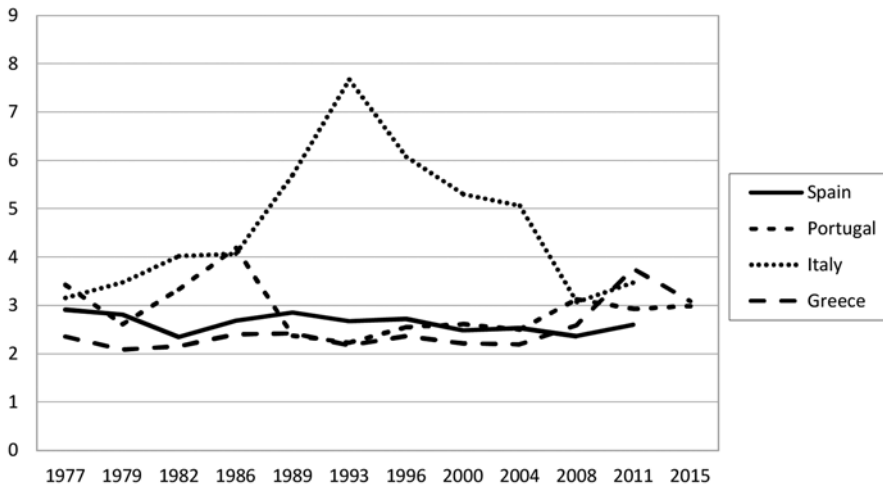
Fig. 5 The Effective Number of Parties at the Parliamentary or Legislative Level in Southern Europe (1976–2015). (Source: Michael Gallagher, Election indices)

sider to be the most important and urgent. The main political strategy of Podemos is based on the change of the electoral competition axis; its leftist past cannot be denied, even with some controversial support to the Venezuelan government, but instead of evoking the ideology they highlight the conflict between the privilege (what they call "caste"), and the regular people.

Podemos, also with the parallel electoral growth of other emergent parties (eg. Ciudadanos), has definitely broken the stable dynamic of the Spanish "imperfect" two-party system (Cotarelo and Bobillo 1991). In the last decades, two big parties concentrated the electoral support between 73 and 85 % in general elections[6], but in terms of political representation, those two major parties monopolised between 80 and 90 % of the seats. As could be noted in the Fig. 5, Spain hold an Effective Number of Parties (Parliamentary level) that has been oscillating between 2 and 3 in the last almost forty years, but that is expected to reach around 4 in the next elections at the end of 2015. In that sense, with regard to electoral behaviour there are indications that the Spanish electorate has become more volatile, with an increasingly more blurred party identification. In the last 20 years, the aggregate electoral volatility has doubled from 4.2 in 1996 to 8.7 % in 2004, and based on the results of opinion polls, we expect volatility records higher than 30 in the parliamentary elections of December 2015. As stated by Gallagher (1995), in addition to those new emergent political parties mentioned, and given a dynamic fuelled by the emergence of regional political forces, Spain is quite likely to represent one of the most fragmented party systems of Europe, provoking one of the highest rates of parliamentary fragmentation, and presumably a complicated governability.

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[6] Source: Ministerio del Interior, Dirección General de Procesos Electorales http://www.infoelectoral.interior.es/min/. Accessed 22.02.2016.

Probably the most significant case of anti-establishment or populist political party is Syriza, which means Coalition of the Radical Left[7]. At this moment, is the only political party in the Southern European region that is having governmental responsibilities, winning even two parliamentary elections in 2015, with 36.34 % of the votes in January, and 35.46 % in September.

This political party is finding its roots more than a decade ago, in 2001, when the Space for Dialogue for the Unity and Common Action of the Left was established. This space was composed of some political organisations linked to a left ideological view, and whose main concerns were the deficient social view of neoliberalism, the actual role of the European Union, and against the antisocial legislation. The defining moment of Syriza as a political coalition willing to run for parliamentary elections was 2004 when this coalition, composed by some splinter groups of the traditional Communist Party of Greece, ecology and worker organisations connected to left organisations and groups, obtained 6 Seats in the elections with 3.3 % of the votes.

Regarding its electoral evolution, in 2007 Syriza increased their previous record to 5 % and 14 seats. In 2009 elections decreased slightly the results (4.6 % and 13 seats), but in 2012 we could witness the definitive spread when this party became the second political force in Greece and the main opposition party (16.78 % and 52 seats in May; 26.89 % and 71 seats)[8].

As we can observe from the data offered by the Eurobarometer in 2014, the political context of Greece is basically monopolised by the profound concerns of the Greeks about the financial crisis, more specifically unemployment, economic situation, taxes and national debt. Under these circumstances, and given that the traditional political parties, particularly the social democrats of PASOK, were pointed as the traditional actors that allow this hard social situation, Syriza found the opportunity to absorb this demands.

During the three decades before the beginning of the crisis, we can talk about a quite stable party system, based on two major parties sharing the power consequently. This is stated by the details observed in the Fig. 5, where we can check that the Number of Effective Parties (at the parliamentary level) was slightly higher than 2 until 2004, increasing the record to more than 3, and almost 4, from this moment onwards.

Concerning the international relation to other sister organisations, Syriza traditionally was closed to their communist political parties' counterparts. Although, Pablo Iglesias from Podemos travelled to Athens January 2015 to company Alexis Tsipras during the events of the election day, offering a very interesting approach to the changing international alliances of those emergent "new" political parties.

Although in Italy we can find some example of "traditional" political parties that could fit into the category of populism, as Forza Italia and Northern League, in the midst of one of the worst economic recessions in recent decades, a political force without any previous parliamentary experience, the Five Star Movement (M5S), led by the Italian comedian and blogger Beppe Grillo, secured about 25 % of votes in last parliamentary elections in Italy (Borghetto, De Giorgi and Lisi 2014, p. 5).

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[7] ΣΥΡΙΖΑ in Greek

[8] http://www.electionresources.org/gr/. Accessed 22.02.2016.

The M5S started its activity in October 2009 and from the very beginning it was labelled as anti-establishment, populist, anti-corruption, anti-globalist and Eurosceptic. One of the main founders, Beppe Grillo, stated that this organisation is not a political party, understood in the traditional terms, but a movement. The 5 star of the denomination comes from the five key issues: public water, sustainable transport, sustainable development, right to Internet access, and environmentalism[9]. Saving the differences with Podemos, the M5S is also trying to avoid the location in the conventional dynamic of electoral competition left-right. The party's criticism focuses on the party-political corporatism in Italy and the privileges granted to politicians (Heinen and Kreutzmann 2015, p. 9).

At the 2010 regional elections the M5S obtained notable results in the five regions where it ran a candidate for President, obtaining councillors in Emilia-Romagna and Piedmont. One year after, the Movement occurs in some municipalities in the vote at the local elections. The best results were located in the cities and towns of the centre-north, especially in the two regions mentioned above. The vote for M5S in the Congress reached 25.6 % in 2013 parliamentary elections, making it the second most voted list obtaining 109 seats. The M5S vote for the Senate was 23.8 % in Italy winning 54 Senators. This was a successful election for M5S as the party reached a higher share of the vote than was expected by any of the opinion polls published. It is important to note, that for the first time in Italy, the candidates were chosen by party members through an online primary. Finally, the M5S came in second place in the 2014 European Parliament elections, receiving 21.15 % of the vote and winning 17 seats.

Today, the party consistently scores around 20 % of the vote at national level in opinion polls, being consolidated as the second political force. However, the Italian Party politics have been considered traditionally quite fragmented, something we can confirmed by checking the Fig. 5: between 1986 and 2006 Italian party system exhibited an Effective Party Number that ranged from 4 to 8. It is quite surprising that in Italy this index never went down below 3 in the last four decades, which means an extremely fragmented parliament.

Portugal represents undoubtedly the most stable party system in Southern Europe, at least in what concerns to parliamentary fragmentation. The political context has been quite equivalent to the other countries in the region, but in this case no significant charismatic and new political figure emerged neither from the situation created by the economic and political crisis, nor from the social movements that reacted as a consequence of it, as for example, Pablo Iglesias in Spain, Alexis Tsipras in Greece, or Beppe Grillo in Italy.

The evolution of the electoral results in the last decades shows that the party system did not suffer a strong destabilisation. From 2002, the proportion of votes monopolised by the two main parties oscillated from 78 to 68 % in 2015. The Effective Number of Parties shown in the Fig. 5 points out that in Portugal from 1996 we can perceive a moderate level of fragmentation, ranging from 2 to 2,5, but from 2008 to the elections of 2015, the same indicator increases marginally to 3.

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[9] http://www.movimentocinquestelle.it/. Accessed 22.02.2016.

Although, in Portugal the political and electoral development of last years is not comparable to those of their Mediterranean neighbours, we can observe some small changes with the creation of new political parties, most of them considered outcomes from the split of the main organisations within the left of the ideological continuum. That is the case of Bloco de Esquerda (Left Bloc), who doubled its representation from 8 to 19 seats, winning a significant political space to the traditional Communist Party. This political organisation had the explicit support of Podemos and Syriza in some international events. However, the reasonable steadiness of the Portuguese Communist Party is probably one of the factors that could help to understand why social movements like Together We Can (Juntos Podemos), did not find success enough in order to place a strong candidacy to run for elections and, consequently, reach positive results in the 2015 electoral process. Also the fragmentation of the left (eg. Agir and Livre, who were founded from the separation of Bloco de Esquerda) with too many, and small, political alternatives, most of them unable to reach more than 50,000 votes in the last elections in 2015.

Another element to comprehend why there is no anti-establishment important defined alternative in Portugal, could be the high levels of abstention. The electoral turn out during the last four decades fluctuated from more than 80 to 58 %—more than 20 points, when the same reference in Spain was never more than 7 points for the same period. This event, together with a quite conservative electorate, also explains the reason why votes of protest directed to alternative parties have, if anything, shrunk (Borghetto, De Giorgi and Lisi 2014, p. 5).

Conclusion

The political landscape in Europe has changed significantly in recent years. The emergence of populisms is a development that has been reactivated from 2008, when the effects of the financial crisis started to be noticed by European citizens. The crisis leads to the growth of abstention, exploding parliamentary fragmentation and the proliferation of new political forces, notably those expressing anti-party, extreme right-wing or even racist positions. The nature of these new political parties has crystallised in different ways depending not only in the region, but also in the country. Therefore, the profiles of the various populist movements in Europe are fundamentally distinct. They differ not only in their messages and their political affiliations, but also between countries from Southern and Northern Europe.

We can point out two different fundamental issues, somehow linked between each other, around which populist parties in Europe have reacted and consolidated within the electorates: the economic crisis and immigration. We have found out that traditional populist parties in Northern Europe have mainly reacted to immigration, as a threat to their nations and traditional cultures, and also against the already overwhelmed labour markets. In the South political parties in general, but those emergent forces in particular with the exception of Golden Dawn, demonstrates a high degree of openness with regard to immigration. In Spain, Greece and Italy, new political parties started to stand against the traditional political elite, referred as the "caste" by their leaders, which has been accused of being the very responsible for the financial crisis and the worst and most dramatic effects towards regular population. Maybe

that is the reason why we have already seen incumbent punishment, that seems to have become the hallmark of crisis elections in Southern Europe (Bosco and Verney 2012, p. 142).

Following Cass Mudde, we can remark some helpful factors in order to explain the emergence of those mentioned parties. Firstly, it can be noted that a significant size of European citizens are to some extent outraged. They believe that important issues are not adequately addressed by the political elites. As a consequence, secondly, national political elites, or using Podemos terminology, the "caste", are increasingly perceived as being "all the same". Thirdly, a growing amount of Europeans perceive national political elites as essentially "powerless". Fourthly, the media structure and daily media markets pressures have become much more favourable to political challengers. Finally, while the previous four factors have created a fertile breeding ground and favourable 'discursive opportunity structure' for populists, the success of populist parties like the FN or Syriza is also related to the fact that populist actors have become much more "attractive" to voters (and media). Almost all successful populist parties have skilful people at the top, including media-savvy leaders like Beppe Grillo, Pablo Iglesias or Geert Wilders (Mudde 2015).

Political scene has been transformed enormously in Europe in the last decade, but with special intensity in the last 5 years. This is also true for countries that for years held a stable two-party system, where the evolution of their national and the European parliament party systems in recent years results seemed to take the direction of what has been called balkanisation.

The future is still very unpredictable. Old dimensions, like the conclusion of the crisis in Western Europe, whose real consequences are still unknown, and elements appeared in recent times, for example the waves of thousands of refugees escaping from the war in Syria and other countries in the Middle East, might provoke radical new right populist movements in receiver countries like Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Greece or Hungary.

Annex 1

AUSTRIA	BELGIUM	DENMARK	FINLAND	FRANCE	GERMANY	GREECE	ITALY
SPO	N-VA	V	KESK	UMP	CDU	PASOK	PD
OVP	PS	SD	KOK	PS	SPD	SYRIZA	PDL (FI)
FPÖ	CD&v (CVP)	EL	SDP	FN	DIE LINKE	XA	LN
DIE GRÜNE		DF	PS (Finns P.)	PG-FG	AfD	ND	M5S
NETHER-LANDS	**NORWAY**	**PORTUGAL**	**SPAIN**	**SWEDEN**	**SWITZER-LAND**	**U.K.**	
VVD	DNA-AP	PS	PP	SDP (SAP)	SVP	CON	
PvdA	H	PSD-CDS-PP	PSOE	M	SP	LAB	
SP	FrP	BE	IU	SD	FDP	SNP	
PVV			CS	MP (Green)		UKIP	
			Podemos				

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