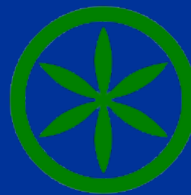# The European Identity crisis: Territoriality and the Self/Other Dichotomy

A comparison of EU and Italian populist discursive practices

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On title page: MoVimento 5 Stelle logo, n.d. ; Lega Nord logo, n.d.

Executive Summary

Post-structuralist theory has frequently been discarded because of its theoretical character, extremely pluralist approach and lack of problem-solving attitude (Edkins, 1999 ; Campbell, 2013 ; Harcourt, 2007). Indeed, the main claim of post-structuralism is that reality is a socially-constructed artefact which is shaped by discursive practices. That is how the powerful, which are themselves elusive and multiple, naturalise certain dichotomic orders and values through which reality is discerned. As a result, the relationship between the Self and the Other is vital for the affirmation of any identity. Starting from such premise, this paper attempted to answer the question: ***"How can the post-structuralist theory of the Self/Other dichotomy explain the European Union's current identity crisis?"***.

In order to provide a comprehensive answer, this paper first clarified how European Identity came to be conceived the way it is. This was done through critical discourse analysis and Foucault's genealogical method. As a result, this dissertation found out that the discursive construction of European identity is based on three main themes which have been iterated over the years: Christian roots, the Illuminist value of rationality and the idea of a free market. Moreover, the EU has been carrying out othering practices to affirm its identity by targeting the Balkans and its own past at first and, most recently, Turkey and the "new Islamic reality" (Andre, 2015, p.188).

Subsequently, the focus was brought on the definition and causes of the identity crisis the EU seems to be currently experiencing. It was found that six factors play a major role in this regard: the lack of a compelling common culture among Member States, the hybrid nature of the EU which determines its incapacity to act in certain crucial policy areas, the enlargement project, migrant flows, the sovereign debt crisis and, most importantly, citizens' retreat to nationalism and populism. Especially the latter proved to be an engaging development as populist parties are currently on the rise and opposing the EU in what seems to be a 'virtuous EU/extremist populism' dichotomy.

For such purpose, a case study on two Italian populist parties was created, namely Lega Nord and MoVimento 5 Stelle. It was found that both parties seem to use discourse to achieve territoriality through active citizenship. The same strive was retrieved in European elites' discourse, especially in relation to the project of enlargement. As a result, the EU's set of values and strategies proved to be comparable to its populist opponents. Indeed, though the EU and populists can be placed at two extremes of a dichotomic order, they are each other's fundamental components and neither can be rightfully attributed greater value without compelling discursive efforts to substantiate such choice.

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Introduction

The aim of the European Union (EU), ever since the dawn of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), has always been to create a unified territory of prosperity and peace (Buonanno & Nugent, 2013). In order to achieve such goal, as Green Cowles stresses, each Member State is bound to pool part of its sovereignty and allow the Union to harmonise legislation (Green Cowles, 2011). The European Union has therefore managed to create a complex system which unifies its states through common policies and still grants each member enough freedom to affirm its identity. However, states undoubtedly find themselves in particular relationships with each other, not necessarily dictated by trust and cooperation. This fosters phenomena such as Euroscepticism and nationalism (Bührmann, 2014).

It is enough to think about immigration policy which, in the wake of the refugee crisis, is currently sparkling debate among Member States which, as Bührmann highlights, resort to Other-oriented discourse (Bührmann, 2014). More recently, with Brexit, the threat of populism and nationalism has become concrete and led both states and citizens to question the legitimacy of the European project (Crisp, 2016). Indeed, As Weedon affirmed a little over 10 years ago, it is the rise of extreme parties that has brought identity issues back on the global political agenda (Weedon, 2004). Accordingly, populist parties in Europe have found the strength to create a common front and grow as a threatening Other to the identity of the EU.

Given the aforementioned premises, the central research question that this dissertation aims to answer is: *"How can the post-structuralist theory of the Self/Other dichotomy explain the European Union's current identity crisis?"*. In order to provide a comprehensive answer, it is necessary to introduce three auxiliary sub-questions:

1. According to post-structuralism, what is the importance of the Self/Other dichotomy for identity and sovereignty?
2. What do scholars mean by 'European Union's identity crisis' and what are thought to be its causes?
3. What phenomena does the EU's identity crisis generate on national level?

This paper will follow the post-structuralist approach for a variety of reasons. Firstly, post-structuralist theory stands for a critical means to question themes such as power and identity which is precisely the

objective of this dissertation (Finlayson & Valentine, 2005). In fact, as Campbell points out, post-structuralism engages in extensive criticism of identities, conceiving them as the product of dichotomising practices of social construction (Campbell, 2013). Secondly, despite the highly theoretical character of the approach, this dissertation aims to create renewed awareness of some assumptions that permeate the European political landscape (Edkins, 1999 ; Campbell, 2013 ; Harcourt, 2007). Thirdly, though this paper does not offer a problem-solving outlook per se, it presents itself as a tool to bring the attention on issues of identity and, possibly, stimulate further research to define more inclusive policies at all levels of governance (Borg & Diez, 2016).

The main findings deriving from such approach will be addressed throughout the following chapters which will aim to juxtapose European and populist identity building dynamics. This will be done to ultimately prove their similarities and guide the reader through a process of deconstruction. Such process will show that, indeed, the EU and populism can be placed at two sides of a socially-constructed 'Self-Other' dichotomic order in which the EU is attributed a higher value. However, populism is gaining a stronger grip among citizens and setting itself as their point of reference. Such order, as will be seen, is mainly built on values, identity markers and is generally permeated by the theme of territoriality which acts as this dissertation's red thread.

The prominence of discursive practices within the established dichotomic order will be proved as this paper will present critical discourse analysis (CDA) of both European and populist practices on themes such as immigration, the financial crisis, democratic legitimacy and, undoubtedly, the Other. Populist practices will be analysed in relation to two Italian populist parties: Lega Nord and MoVimento 5 Stelle (M5S). The decision was made on the basis of their interpretation of the theme of territoriality which proves particularly of interest for this dissertation. In fact, Lega Nord has always based its political programmes on territoriality, to the extent that it created a strong community based on a fictitious country, Padania, which has been constantly re-territorialising. On the contrary, MoVimento 5 Stelle has built a strong common identity among its followers in a web-based extra-territorial space. This paper will show that such efforts can be compared to the European enlargement process while many of the arguments and othering practices put forward by populist parties are similar to the EU's.

In order to present the findings, this paper will firstly review the tenets of post-structuralism with a particular focus on power dynamics, binary oppositions, deconstruction and genealogy. Subsequently, the overall research methodology will be laid out. Afterwards, the genealogy of European identity will

be presented, which will be followed by an observation of the meaning and causes of the European identity crisis. This will be followed by a case study of Lega Nord and M5S's discursive practices and strategies. The subsequent chapter will bring European elites' and the populist parties' discourse together to compare it and retrieve similarities that will lead to this paper's conclusion.

Chapter 1 - Post-structuralism: identity construction as a game of power

Post-structuralism is a critical approach that presents a peculiar standpoint on the relevance of language and meaning in the discursive construction of reality by the powerful (Reed, 2013). Though ascribing to the same premises, it constitutes a detachment from structuralism. In fact, whereas structuralism focuses on identifying patterns of behaviour, post-structuralism stresses the contingency of identities and their dependence on "signification" and "the big Other" (Belsey, 2002, p.66). From the latter depends the construction of identities, subject positions and binary oppositions, which poststructuralist analysis focuses on uncovering by means of deconstruction, archaeology and genealogy. By doing so, Krause Dornelles points out that post-structuralism aims to be "more realistic than realism" (Krause Dornelles, 2002, p.8). Each concept will be further developed in the following sections with the intent of determining the relevance of this approach to International Relations (IR) theories.

1.1 The relevance of language and meaning

As previously stated, post-structuralism owes much of its premises to structuralism. In fact, as stated by Belsey, it is from Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure that the poststructuralist conception of language and meaning arises (Belsey, 2002). Saussure's work on semiotics focused much on the relationship between the "signified" and the "signifier", which, as remarked by Edkins, is thought to be purely discretionary (Edkins, 1999, p.24). According to Saussure, the relationship between the sound or the appearance of a text and its meaning does not stem from what Belsey defines as "referential" linguistic practices (Belsey, 2002, p.10). It is, on the contrary, the iteration of societal exclusionary practices that produces meaning (Finlayson & Valentine, 2005). This paper will return on this point further below.

Belsey stresses that such approach is also useful to determine how culture is generated through the establishment and iteration of meanings (Belsey, 2002). In fact, as stated by Derrida, "there is no event worthy of its name" (Thomassen, 2010, p.49). Language and meaning determine what things are and what they are not, in a system of values that is highly dependent upon the environment where meaning itself is developed (Edkins, 1999). Such environment, in Foucauldian terms, goes under the name of "episteme" and allows the organisation of speech and the production of "objects of knowledge" (Danaher et al., 2000, p.22-23). Given the arbitrariness of language and its constructive character, it

follows that, as remarked by Carta and Morin, meaning is accordingly "volatile, contingent, (…), and elusive" (Carta & Morin, 2013, p.8). This, Weedon highlights, generates room for subjectivity, which, according to Belsey, is in contrast with the Cartesian and Enlightenment tradition of objective language originating from the subject (Weedon, 2004 ; Belsey, 2002).

As observed so far, language and meaning have an active role in shaping the perception of reality. The following section will bring a closer focus on the centrality of discourse in the construction of reality.

1.2 The discursive construction of reality

Danaher et al. define discourse as "language in action" (Danaher et al., 2000, p.31). Its productive character entails providing the subject with value-laden perceptions of reality (Danaher et al. 2000). This view is shared by Campbell, who stresses the "performative" aspect of discourse, as well as by Carta and Morin who, recalling Foucault, highlight how "rhetorical strategies" shape our perception of "social facts" (Campell, 2013, p.235 & Carta & Morin, 2013, p.2). In a similar way, Mihas highlights Foucault's belief according to which, as speech is uttered, values are attributed and reality is shaped (Mihas, n.d.). As a result, discourse can be seen as what Diaz describes as "replicated agency", the "only point of access to the real world" (Carta & Morin, 2013, p.2). In fact, according to Carta and Morin, there is no distinction between the realm of thought and that of factuality because it is only through discourse that subjects can make sense of reality (Carta & Morin, 2013). Essentially, discourse can be seen as a practice through which meanings and identities are built and put in relation to each other (Campbell, 2013).

Given the above-mentioned premises, Smith affirms that the discursive construction of reality is far from mere theoretical exercise because discourse has a decisive function: to set exclusionary criteria against which actions and knowledge can be evaluated (Smith, 2002). Accordingly, Bialasiewicz and his colleagues shift the focus to IR. They point out that, thanks to discursive practices, states and institutions legitimise their strategies to their citizens in order to generate consensus on "social relations" as they are or want them to be (Bialasiewicz et al., 2007, p.406). Campbell highlights that, in present days, such task is delegated to the media that constantly establish social classifications to reinforce certain identities at the expense of others (Campbell, 2013).

According to Smith, the goal of discursive practices is to create "collective cultural identit[ies]". Through these, citizens will feel bound by shared memories from the past as well as by a sense of facing a

"common fate" (Smith, 1992, p.58). This is what Judith Butler defines as "performativity" (Weedon, 2004, p.6). Indeed, discourse can instil certain assumptions as natural truths through iteration and "citational practice" (Weedon, 2004, p.7). Nowadays, Peters remarks in Lyotard's words, capitalist discourse presents itself as the dominant discourse in the West. It has turned language into a "productive commodity", the latest expression of which is to be found in the development and naming of new technologies (Peters, 2001, p.48). The following section will explore how dominant discourse is established and how power is wielded in poststructuralist terms.

1.3 Power

Post-structuralism, as stated by Mihas, constitutes a critique to "the pervasive Western metaphor that knowledge is power" which perpetrates the general Enlightenment idea of objectivity as the utmost principle in science and social studies (Mihas, n.d, p.133). However, Caterino argues, post-structuralism offers a perspective according to which "subjects […] are formed by regimes of knowledge" (Caterino, 2008, para.15). In fact, Harcourt highlights, poststructuralist accounts bring a very close focus on what he calls the "'power/knowledge' critique" (Harcourt, 2007, p.22). Indeed, authors such as Foucault and Deleuze conceive dominance as the capacity to construct new meanings and have them rooted in society as an apparent natural order of things (Caterino, 2008).

Foucault based much of his work on the relationship between power and knowledge which he defines as "biopolitics" (Finkelde, 2013, p.1247). His main contribution revolves around the conception of power as "productive" (Edkins, 1999, p.53). Edkins and Reed remark that, according to Foucault, power should not be intended as repressive: instead, it must be regarded as the force that produces "rituals of truth" through discourse (Edkins, 1999, p.53 ; Reed, 2013). Campbell highlights that from this perspective, power is "disciplinary" because it imposes limitations on subjects through exclusive discourse (Campbell, 2013, p. 234). It dictates what one is and what one is not, thus favouring the production of consensus (Campbell, 2013). Carta and Morin argue that such idea of power is closely related to Gramsci's concept of hegemony in the sense that they both conceive power as a tool to ensure "organisation of consent" (Carta & Morin, 2013, p.8).

The power attributed to discursive practices by Foucault may recall tyranny at first glance. However, Foucault's idea is not that of power wielded by an identifiable person. On the contrary, as Reed points out, Foucault repeatedly stressed his conception of "power as diffuse and anonymous" (Reed, 2013,

p.197). Moreover, Danaher et al. characterise power as "mobile and contingent" (Danaher et al., 2000, p.71). Carta and Morin highlight that according to Foucault, power is not complete as such, it is an "ongoing productive creation of shared knowledge" which, in turn, generates identities (Carta & Morin, 2013, p.5).

Schmidt affirms that it is of utmost importance to acknowledge that power only exists in relation to difference and to each stratum of society. In fact, not only elites and political actors engage in discursive practices among themselves, but also in relation to their public in order to create what Mihas names "master narratives" (Schmidt, 2010 ; Mihas, n.d., p.126). The environment in which such practices take place is what Finlayson and Valentine call the "sphere of culture" (Finlayson & Valentine, 2005, p.6). In such sphere, political legitimation is defined (Finlayson & Valentine, 2005 ; Carta & Morin, 2013).

The poststructuralist conception of power recalls Habermas's idea of "language as 'medium of domination and social force'" (Carta & Morin, 2013, p.6). However, multiple times Foucault highlighted the dependent nature of power on struggle and resistance (Weedon, 2004). Moreover, Belsey points out that power, in poststructuralist terms, is easy to transfer. This is so because subjects are free to alter the mainstream system of meanings by establishing a more compelling narrative (Belsey, 2002). This can happen through what Foucault calls "reversed discourses": a way to defeat oppression by the dominant group through opposing discourse (Weedon, 2004, p.17). Reversed discourses, according to Slavoj Žižek, empower the subject to subvert the order of the "established political doxa" and to produce new fields of knowledge and perceptions of reality (Finkelde, 2013, p.1247 ; Danaher et al., 2000).

1.4 Identity construction and subject positions

This paper has previously made reference to identity and subject positions. These are produced by discursive practices and struggles of power (Weedon, 2004). This section of the paper will lay out in detail poststructuralist accounts in relation to current debates on the concept of identity. In fact, as stressed by Weedon, identity issues are crucial in the West, both when it comes to dealing with the aftermath of colonialism and when societies are faced with migration inflows (Weedon, 2004). In this context, Belsey agrees, people's need for belonging and identification rises as a consequence of general confusion (Belsey, 2002 ; Weedon, 2004).

Both Belsey and Weedon suggest a certain uniqueness to identity, Belsey asserting that "identity implies sameness" and Weedon affirming that, through identification, subjects can find their "stable core" (Belsey, p. 2002 ; Weedon, 2004, p.1). This is exactly what post-structuralism rejects: as Caterino points out, in poststructuralist terms, identity is constituted by difference (Caterino, 2008). As Belsey remarks, post-structuralism places the construction of the subject outside of the subject itself (Belsey 2002). This, Harcourt argues, directly contrasts phenomenological existentialism, according to which it is the subject that lays down the criteria for his understanding of the world (Harcourt, 2007).

Poststructuralist identity is "fluid, dynamic, shifting and variant" as well as "multiple" and "multi-dimensional", based on certain categories that discern the "Self" from the "Other" (a point that will be highlighted in the next section) (Kouhpaeenejad & Gholaminejad, 2014, p.200). Dolan also remarks the divided nature of poststructuralist identity since he considers it to be the "site of struggle" where competing discourses take place and shape the subject (Dolan, 1989, p.60). As a result, Belsey points out, "the subject of poststructuralism is neither unified nor an origin", clearly representing a break from the Western philosophical tradition (Belsey, 2002, p.65).

Campbell relates poststructuralist accounts of identity to IR. He affirms that identity construction is necessary for the survival of a state: it can be achieved through the iteration of discursive practices (Bteddini, 2008). Such practices, Weedon points out, can involve "education, the media, sport and state rituals" with the aim of building a "temporary fixing" and give subjects something to identify with (Weedon, 2004, p.155 & p.19). In this regard, Bteddini sees in nationalism the goal of successful political discourse (Bteddini, 2008). In fact, nationalism, he follows up, generates strong feelings in an "imagined political community" which is nothing but a "cultural artefact" (Bteddini, 2008, p.115).

Peterson and Hellström argue that political actors do not hesitate to refer to a common past binding the nation together, thus making history become "the centrepiece of identity" (Petersson & Hellström, 2003, p.238). This corroborates the thesis according to which "ideology leads to identity" (Kouhpaeenejad & Gholaminejad, 2014, p.199). Given the fluid character of identities, politically speaking, post-structuralism leans towards what Chueh defines as "politics of difference" in acknowledging the plurality of societal structures (Chueh, 2000, p.149). In fact, even national identities are by no means stable and attached to a geographical territory anymore. Instead, they are "a kind of becoming" and a "global interplay" (Kouhpaeenejad & Gholaminejad, 2014, p.200).

Breakwell points out that views similar to the poststructuralist one have been endorsed by the "Identity Process Theory" according to which identity is a product of social interaction (Breakwell, 2004, p.28). In fact, poststructuralist accounts conceive the subject as a product of discursive practices which take place in society. These shape categories that enable subjects to identify themselves as well as to differentiate themselves from the outside (Borg & Diez, 2016). The next section will elaborate on the formation of such categories.

1.5 Binary oppositions

Hansen remarks that identity, in poststructuralist terms, is a concept based on difference, the so called "self-other oppositions" (Hansen, 2002). In fact, Caterino acknowledges, poststructuralist accounts are charged with what he defines as "ethics of otherness" through the writings of Derrida, Nancy, Lyotard and Levinas (Caterino, 2008, para.7). All of these thinkers, Fagan highlights, have focused their work on underlining the essential relation between the subject and the Other, in which the first depends on and retains a certain responsibility towards the Other (Fagan, 2013). As for depending on the Other, Belsey affirms, the objective wields a certain amount of power on the subjective because it contributes to shape its identity (Belsey, 2002). As for retaining a responsibility to the Other, Der Derian points out that the subject's task is to acknowledge the diversity of and necessity for the Other in order to find his or her own identity (Fagan, 2013).

As Caterino points out, identity needs difference to be meaningful (Caterino, 2008). Campbell concurs that identity is based on "rendering the unfamiliar in the terms of the familiar" (Campbell, 2013, p.238). The inevitable result of this, as Belsey remarks, is the creation of categories with which the subject can identify (Belsey, 2002). Such categories form a dichotomic system of binary oppositions that Foucault defines as "regulatory ideals" (Chueh, 2000). These categories, according to Jacques Lacan, besides being a result of discursive practices, are embedded in language itself: they are pre-existing and independent from the subject (Belsey, 2002). In fact, Edkins remarks, language and discourse attribute value (Edkins, 1999). More practically, Diez highlights that one cannot identify oneself as European without acknowledging the difference between Europe and Asia. Moreover, Diez continues, in poststructuralist terms, the Other is present every time one identifies him or herself (Diez, 2004).

The interdependence between the Self and the Other is further explained by highlighting that, in order to strengthen itself, identity always needs to convert the Other into a threat, a view also shared by

Deleuze (Peters, 2001). This creates a system of "oppressive hierarchy" (*Identity Politics*, 2016, para.7). This view is adopted by Derrida who conceives binary oppositions to be "always hierarchic" (Belsey, 2002, p.75). Derrida called this process of establishing dichotomies as an apparently obvious order "logocentrism" (Krause Dornelles, 2002, p.9). In fact, as Edkins remarks, discourse, hence "identity", "sutures the subject into the structure" (Edkins, 1999, p.22).

Levinas points out that categories form labels with a "rhetorical force" (Bernasconi, 2005, p.200). This, Bernasconi continues, allows traditions to be established and unites identities into communities (Bernasconi, 2005). The production of labels through the identification of Self/Other dichotomies has been brought into the realm of IR by Campbell who defined it as "rhetoric of insecurity" (Bteddini, 2008, p.114). Through this, states justify their choices and legitimise their actions to ultimately shape national identity (Bteddini, 2008). Therefore, Borg and Diez argue, othering practices are a state's absolute need that may never be fulfilled because of their very nature (Borg & Diez, 2016).

States are capable of bringing othering practices to an extreme. Edkins calls this "securitisation" and Diez defines it as constructing the "Other as an existential threat" (Edkins, 1999, p.11 ; Diez, 2006, p.16). Such phenomenon, Levinas argues, is generated by contact with outer cultures which hold different systems of values that upset our "complacency" (Bernasconi, 2005, p.149). The encounter with other cultural systems is described by Foucault as an "exotic charm" to highlight how such opposition is vital for identity formation (Danaher et al., 2000, p.13). Acknowledging this, according to Žižek, is the key to reaching political balance because it prevents totalitarian forces from gaining power as well as Western democracy's endo-colonizing strives from homogenising all cultures (Belsey, 2002).

Hansen points out that binary oppositions might suggest the existence of antagonist relations according to the poststructuralist standpoint. However, the focus of post-structuralism is to uncover the oppositions and investigate the ways in which they come into being (Hansen, 2002). It does so through deconstruction, archaeology and genealogy which will be explained in the following section.

1.6 Deconstruction, archaeology and genealogy

1.6.1 Deconstruction

Much scholarly speculation as well as criticism have been dedicated to the poststructuralist technique of deconstruction. Strong supporter and theorizer of deconstruction is Jaques Derrida who, according to Finkelde, was inspired by Heidegger's "destruction of philosophy's tradition" (Finkelde, 2013,

p.1245). However, Nazer remarks that deconstruction is much closer to analysis than destruction (Nazer, n.d). In fact, deconstructive practices focus on the analysis of taken-for-granted texts to identify the binary oppositions that shape reality (Campbell, 2013). The outcome of this is a better understanding of the world which, in turn, will lead to the acceptance of the boundaries that make us who we are, hence a renewed respect towards the Other (Borg & Diez, 2016). Moreover, Levinas argues that deconstructive practices allow subjects to become conscious of their innate othering mechanisms (Bernasconi, 2005).

As Campbell and other authors highlight, deconstruction is a sort of reversed process in which the analyst overturns the binary oppositions that constitute his or her conception of reality. In order to do so, the analyst must first acknowledge the value that is attached to each side of the binary opposition in question, and subsequently demonstrate the interdependence of the two terms, thus the fragility of the exclusive hierarchical order on which reality is based (Campbell, 2013 ; Finlayson & Valentine, 2005 ; Mann, 1994). Deconstruction, in short, aims to prove how the Self is pervaded by the Other (Belsey, 2002).

For the purpose of giving deconstruction a concrete dimension, Derrida introduced the concept of *Differance.* Based on the Western prioritisation of spoken word as more virtuous than written text, Derrida explains how the spoken word '*differance'* presents no dissimilarities with the word '*difference*'. Only when written, the subject can indeed see a difference in the two words (Belsey, 2002). Derrida's conclusion is that the written constitutes the spoken and the hierarchies established by the West are nothing but constructed (Belsey, 2002 ; Edkins, 1999).

Through deconstruction, it is possible to understand how certain discourses became dominant, whose interests were involved and how certain historical constructions have come to be regarded as natural (Belsey, 2002 ; Harcourt, 2007 ; Aydın-Düzgit, 2014). Moreover, Dolan argues that it is possible to establish a link between deconstructive practices and the political realm. The ways in which meanings came to be attributed and power structures were formed "are intensely political projects" (Dolan, 1989, p.64). This view is sided by Critchley who sees an ethical aspect to deconstruction. In fact, Critchley argues, deconstruction helps subjects question the legitimacy of their cultural, social and political systems leading to resistance and reversed discourse (Fagan, 2013).

Following such arguments, Carta and Morin point out that "society becomes a totally open discursive field" (Carta & Morin, 2013, p.8). Deconstruction, in fact, does not aim to deprive reality of all meanings. Rather it must be regarded as a tool to acknowledge the processes through which "myth converts history into nature" (Belsey, 2002, p.31).

1.6.2 Archaeology and genealogy

Deconstruction is a theme which was also developed by Foucault through his concepts of *archaeology* and *genealogy*. The aim of these approaches is to find out how "history is universalized" to establish certain beliefs as natural conditions (Belsey, 2002, p.29).Through archaeology, Foucault's goal is to explore society's historical background to discover what discursive practices have been imposed in the past that make present reality acceptable to subjects (Danaher et al., 2000). Foucault highlights that archaeology is basically about "exposing […] networks of interacting relationships" which have brought subjects to accept a certain discourse as undeniable truth (Finkelde, 2013, p.1247).

Harcourt highlights that archaeology helps subjects become conscious of the irrationality of reality. Once that assumption is established, it is possible to proceed with genealogy (Harcourt, 2007). According to Danaher and his colleagues, like archaeology, genealogy involves discovering those previous power struggles that have currently brought certain values and forms of knowledge to the forefront (Danaher et al., 2000). However, Foucault's aim in this context is to reveal the inconclusive nature of history, without any claim to provide an explanation (Foucault, 1974).

Foucault opposes the discursive construction of history as a causal continuous flow. On the contrary, he argues, history is "a process of rupture, deviation and contingency" (Finkelde, 2013, p.1246). Discourse, Finkelde affirms, is the only force that steers the advancement of history and the construction of subjects (Finkelde, 2013). History, consequently, is the product of power struggles among discourses that gain and lose their dominant positions (Krause Dornelles, 2002). In the end, historical heritage is just a "narrative" and an "an assemblage of faults" with no identifiable beginning (Chueh, 2000).

The genealogical approach has been frequently accused because of its lack of concreteness in asking questions about "meta-theory" (Campbell, 2013, p.227). However, Manners explains that it has been increasingly considered in IR analysis during the past two decades (Manners, 2006). This is so, Borg and Diez argue, because it is useful to account for states' "desire for bounded identities" and the violent

political consequences deriving from it (Borg & Diez, 2016, p.138). In the end, Campbell argues, genealogy represents an awareness-raising tool to question power/knowledge relations (Campbell, 2013).

In order to bring a more concrete focus, Chapter 3 will apply genealogy, and the ideas discussed so far, to the much discussed concept of European Identity. The following chapter will lay out in detail the research methodology adopted for this paper.

Chapter 2 - Methodology

Research was conducted to apply the post-structuralist theory of the Self/Other dichotomy and investigate whether the EU's identity crisis is linked to its Member States' changing self-perception. Firstly, for the sake of clarity, scholarly views on the meaning, causes and consequences of the 'European identity crisis' were investigated. Subsequently, it was attempted to find out the extent to which nationalist discursive practices set aside Member States' self-perception as integral parts of the EU's bigger whole. In order to narrow down a research focus that would otherwise prove inconclusive, it was decided to build a case study to explore the discursive practices of two Italian populist parties: Lega Nord and MoVimento 5 Stelle. A particular focus was brought on their impact on Italian national politics. Finally ,their discourse was compared to the practices carried out by the EU. This was done in order to investigate whether a link can be established between the overall EU's identity crisis and populist rhetoric.

More precisely, the following sections will firstly lay out how desk research was conducted. Secondly, the criteria and rationale adopted to build this dissertation's case study will be reviewed. Finally, a particular focus will be brought on discourse analysis.

2.1 Desk research: sources and reliability

Overall, given the theoretical approach of the dissertation, extensive qualitative research was conducted. Namely, for the purpose of establishing a solid theoretical framework, books were consulted and documentary research was conducted through online and offline resources. Mainly secondary documents were consulted, which, as Mogalakwe remarks, build on existing primary sources by commenting, citing and elaborating (Mogalakwe, 2006). More specifically, academic documents were considered such as papers and journal articles, following proper evaluation, as suggested by Macdonald (Macdonald, 2001). Research featured works by prominent post-structuralist scholars (such as Foucault and Campbell) as well as later thinkers and commentators. The aim of this was to gather in-depth information on the post-structural conceptualization of 'identity', with related arguments and counterarguments, and ultimately provide an analysis of the EU's identity crisis in the light of such theories.

Specifically, in order to answer sub-question 1 and 2, a wide range of journal articles, books and academic papers were consulted. The articles elaborated on the theme of European identity. More in

detail, the subjects addressed were: the factors that challenged the EU's stability over the past decade, general mechanisms of identity politics, theoretical speculations on how national identity coexists with European identity, European symbols and their meaning for European identity, EU enlargement and the overall impact of Euroscepticism. The books that were consulted approximately covered similar topic areas with a further accent on migration issues and territoriality brought by authors such as professor Anna Triadafyllidou and sociologist Willfried Spohn. Finally, academic papers ranged from working papers, lecture transcripts and PhD theses which complement, with a critical approach and a fresh outlook, pre-existing literature on themes of European identity.

At that stage of research, primary sources were scarcely used. However, some newspaper articles, reports from the European Commission and a speech transcript were well-suited to elaborate on European discourse concerning its self-perception. Instead, a larger use of primary sources was made in order to build the case study on populist movements and answer sub-question 3. Such sources include the parties' statutes, social media posts, videos of Lega Nord's speeches at the European Parliament, Lega Nord's 'chronicles', the movements' website pages and political programmes. Consulting such sources was essential in order to retrieve information on the parties' discursive practices. To complement this set of sources, research also focused on a number of newspaper articles reporting on Lega Nord's and M5S's statements as well as on one academic paper by Sinan Celiksu based on first-hand experience within Lega Nord. Such paper proved particularly helpful to investigate Lega Nord's structure and racist attitude.

All sources for this dissertation were retrieved in physical libraries, online databases and websites. Assessing the reliability of books and journal articles did not constitute a challenge as journals were peer reviewed and books were either published by university press (eg. Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press and Open University Press) or by highly reliable publishing houses such as Routledge, Rowman & Littlefield, the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute and Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Editore. The publications that were considered for this dissertation mostly date from 2002 onwards as research presented a close focus on the EU as it is nowadays, with an emphasis on post-enlargement dynamics. However, sources dating back to previous years were not discarded in the process of investigating the theoretical aspects of identity building. In fact, it was found that most of contemporary research on identity building is strongly rooted in previous accounts.

As far as websites and newspaper articles are concerned, a distinction is to be made between the sources employed in the case study and those mentioned throughout the rest of the dissertation. Generally, close attention has been paid in assessing the reliability of websites and the reputation of news outlets. As a result, sources consulted range from The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy and the Cise (Italian Centre for Electoral Studies) to The Guardian, The Independent, La Repubblica and CNBC. However, exclusively in the case study, some sources were consulted which might have presented biased information. These were the movements' political programmes, social media statements and website pages. Such sources, as Yin highlights, are particularly suitable in order to build case studies as they represent primary sources (Yin, n.d.). These sources were not excluded because research aimed to measure citizens' perception and support of the discursive practices promoted by populist parties. As a result, bias and one-sidedness expressing clear approval of populist arguments were deemed acceptable and addressed critically.

2.2 Case study on Italian populism

Given the broad scope of this dissertation, it was deemed appropriate to concretise its results through a case study which would investigate populist discursive practices as opposed to the ones carried out by European elites. Case study was preferred as a methodology for a variety of reasons: firstly, as Rowley remarks, case studies allow to conduct a "deeper and more detailed investigation" (Rowley, 2002, p.17). Indeed, as will be specified in the following section, one of the objectives of this dissertation was to perform critical discourse analysis (CDA) in order to study the successful strategy of populism. This necessarily required gathering in-depth qualitative information.

Moreover, as Yin and Rowley remarked, though frequently associated with less valuable research methods, case studies, if conducted critically, represent an adequate tool in order to answer "how or why question[s]" (Rowley, 2002, p.17). This is exactly the aim of this paper, as its main research question specifies. Finally, as Zainal points out, case studies are useful research tools when it comes to researching the behaviour of certain subjects, especially if part of a large sample (Zainal, 2007). Indeed, as previously mentioned, a case study was conducted in order to bring a narrower and more concrete focus to this dissertation.

One could argue that by narrowing down the research focus, opportunities for generalisation would be equally reduced (Zainal, 2007). However, the aim of this dissertation is not to retrieve a universal

pattern among populists. The objective is to verify the application of the post-structuralist Self-Other dichotomy to a crisis situation within the EU. A case study, in this regard, is purely instrumental.

2.2.1 Subject and sampling

As expressed above, the subjects that were chosen for the case study are two Italian populist parties: Lega Nord and MoVimento 5 Stelle. The first is an extreme right party characterised by a strong xenophobic and anti-European component that has undergone changes over the years which prove particularly interesting for the developments of this paper. The latter, instead, is an extreme left party which, however, refuses to position itself on the left-right political spectrum. Because of its innovative take on Italian politics, its wide consensus and its approach to territoriality, M5S was chosen to side Lega Nord in the case study.

The decision to focus on Italian politics stemmed from various considerations among which is the author's cultural and linguistic background which is more suited to retrieve nuances of meaning in discourse. However, the parties were also deemed as fitting the overall research design as they constitute a strong, highly supported, anti-European front with a widening public engaged in promoting their worldview. These are exactly the strengths that, research highlighted, place populism in the limelight. As a result, in can be stated that the case study was based on "purposeful sampling" (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995, para.42).

In solely choosing two populist parties, this paper applied what Guetterman names "critical case sampling" in order to retrieve and provide more in-depth information (Guetterman, 2015, para.3). Moreover, Lega Nord and M5S constitute the strongest foothold of populism in Italy thus having a substantive influence on national politics and holding seats in the European Parliament. Finally, the parties were chosen as they position themselves at two opposite, equally interesting sides with similarities and divergences which prove stimulating for discourse analysis.

2.2.2 Operationalisation and critical discourse analysis

CDA was chosen as an approach to prove what Rowley calls the "internal validity" of the case study (Rowley, 2002, p.20). Indeed, the aim, as seen in this paper's concluding chapter, was to establish a relationship in which "certain conditions" (the European identity crisis) "lead to other conditions" (populist reversed discourse) (Rowley, 2002, p.20). In order to successfully accomplish this, proper

operationalisation was carried out. The objective of this was to retrieve identity markers and main themes in anti-establishment discursive practices.

 As suggested by Wodak and Meyer, this paper's CDA focused on "lexical style (…), topic choice, speech acts (…), rhetorical figures" (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p.26). Once such goals were established, CDA was initiated. Wodak and Meyer report that such method is highly "eclectic" (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p.29). This allows authors to select the preferred themes and procedures in order to achieve results, as long as these are sound (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Accordingly, this paper combined some of the approaches that were suggested by Wodak and Meyer and Wodak et al.

Firstly, a broad focus was brought on what Wodak and Meyer name the "semantic macrostructures", hence the main topics addressed (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p.26). Subsequently, meanings were analysed in order to discover "implications, presuppositions (…), omissions", keeping in mind the context in which they were expressed (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p.26). Indeed, such approach can be synthetized in three steps which this paper has followed. Following Wodak et al., such steps are: content analysis, the analysis of discursive "strategies" and "the forms of linguistic realisation" (Wodak et al., 2009, p.188). Such steps were not considered individually but integrated.

CDA was not limited to the case study: it was also used to retrieve patterns of discursive practices concerning European elites. Such patterns were compared to the ones retrieved in the populist parties considered. However, this was performed by paying attention to chronological and thematic consistency.

Chapter 3 - The genealogy of European identity

Much debate has concerned issues of European Identity, however this section will bring a closer focus on its discursive construction according to poststructuralist principles, without exploring all sides of scholarly interpretation.

Firstly, it is relevant to begin with Diez's remark according to which the European Union has grown to be identified with 'Europe' despite the lack of geographical correspondence between the polity and the continent (Diez, 2004). In particular, Diez mentions the case of Switzerland and Russia. Russia is a country that is seen as European up until the Urals, which represent themselves historically-constructed borders, but that presents no membership to the EU (Diez, 2004). In the same way, Pinto affirms, "European identity is being increasingly associated with the European Union" (Pinto, 2006, p.723).

Secondly, the above mentioned identifying practice, Cinpoes argues, is the result of a top-down elitist effort and represents a landmark for the construction of European identity by political actors. In fact, it helps create "myths of common descent" that present noticeable affinities with the ways national identities are shaped (Cinpoes, 2008, p.5). Borg and Diez lay out a similar argument and put national and European identity construction on the same level in poststructuralist analysis (Borg & Diez, 2016).

Thirdly, Petersson and Hellström affirm Commissioners should be regarded as the creators of the master narrative of European identity (Petersson & Hellström, 2003). However, the discursive construction of the "historical myths" of European Identity can be retrieved in the speech and text of national politicians, as well as media and education (Cinpoes, 2008, p.6).

Once the above premises have been laid out, the following sections will proceed to highlight the genealogy of European Identity. The sections will retrieve the discursive practices concerning the origins and development of European Identity that led to present-day perceptions of the EU.

3.1 The "origins" of European Identity

Though considered a weak bond for effective identity construction, Cinpoes, Smith and Winn agree that the discursive production of European Identity is rooted in Christian ethics (Cinpoes, 2008 ; Smith, 1992 ; Winn, 2000). This, reflects in a variety of acts such as the 1975 "Tindermans Report" which remarks the importance of solidarity among European citizens (Öner, n.d., p.6). Consequently,

Ntampoudi highlights how various "normative and regulatory practices" in the EU have aimed to create "equal opportunities for all" and "solidarity with weakest members" (Ntampoudi, 2014, p.5). Furthermore, solidarity has been enclosed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union which recites: "the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity " *(*Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000, Art.21, para.1). Finally, as Checkel and Katzenstein point out, Christian Democratic political ideals have had a major role in shaping "the continental European welfare state" (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009, p.15).

 Enlightenment is one more trope that recurs in European discourse. Cinpoes points out that "civil right tradition, democracy and the rule of law" are all principles which are iterated in European identity discourse (Cinpoes, 2008, p.9). In fact, Winn argues, Enlightenment is a phenomenon which influenced Europe as a whole and that therefore represents a commonality in the vastness of the European cultural tradition (Winn, 2000). This, for example, is mirrored in President of the European Commission Romano Prodi's statement in 2003 according to which European principles were "inherited from the Age of Enlightenment" (Kølvraa, 2010, p.11). This, he affirmed, would represent a strength for the EU's position in an ever globalized world (Kølvraa, 2010). The aim was to construct a reality in which Member States would not feel threatened by the supranational character of the EU. On the contrary, references to a "Golden Age" would sparkle faith in the European project as a "better whole" (Petersson & Hellström, 2003, p.243-244).

Finally, as highlighted by Sidaway and Pryke, ideals related to the Free Market have permeated the construction of the EU as a polity and its identity. In fact, they continue, as early as in 1776, Adam Smith affirmed the "market model" can be considered an identity marker in Western cultures (Sidaway & Pryke, 2001). Andre therefore points to the Founding Fathers of the European Community and their strive to assemble a union of nations bound by a common market (Andre, 2015). Through the establishment of the ECSC, Monnet and Schuman managed to construct "peace and stability" (Petersson & Hellström, 2003, p.242). Such idea has been echoing in European discourse throughout the years. This is stressed by Kølvraa through Commissioner Margot Wallström's words. In 2007, she expressed gratitude to the Founding Fathers of the European Communities as those who managed to transform Europe from a theatre of war to a place where states would "cooperate [..] to settle their divergences in a consensual way" (Kølvraa, 2010, p.9).

The aforementioned themes seem to meet scholarly consensus on the most recurring arguments constituting the discourse on European Identity. The following section will highlight the development of discourse concerning European Identity over the years.

3.2 The discursive development of European integration

In the attempt to draw up a timeline of the discursive practices linked to the process of European integration, Cinpoes, Held and McNally identify three major turning points: World War II, the Cold War and the 1990s return to a democratic balance. Cinpoes and Delanty agree on the post-war construction of the European Economic Community (EEC) as a form of cooperation among sovereign states in response to the disastrous consequences brought about by the world conflict (Cinpoes, 2008 ; Held & McNally, 2015). Öner, in Bruter's words, sees the EEC in such period as an "international cooperation" project (Öner, n.d., p.4). In this context, the construction of the EEC resulted to be a sole political effort. In fact, as Andreatta highlights, reasons for unification were linked to a renewed sense of trust among Member States and to an urgent need for a functioning welfare state (Andreatta, 2011). As Robert Cooper puts it, the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1956 sanctioned "a highly developed system for interference in each other's domestic affairs" (Andreatta, 2011, p.37) .

The second turning point was identified by Held and McNally with the Cold war, while more specifically, Cinpoes refers to the 1980s (Held & McNally, 2015 ; Cinpoes, 2008). According to Cinpoes, the most relevant development in European discursive practices coincides with the elimination of the adjective "economic" from the denomination of the European Community (EC) (Cinpoes, 2008). The tangible consequences of this, he continues, were a shift from "cooperation to interdependence" among Member States, as well further integration and the introduction of new policies (Cinpoes, 2008, p.6). Checkel and Katzenstein convene that such policies, combined with the tension brought about by the Cold war, fostered negative integration, hence the further reduction of barriers to movement of goods and services (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009). As a result, Öner sees the EC during such period as a "policy making project" and an "institutionally consolidated system" (Öner, n.d., p.3).

With regards to the previously discussed timeframe, Biegon expresses the development of two discursive modes within the European Union: the first took place between 1973 and 1984, while the second evolved between 1985 and 1990. As for the first period, Biegon refers to "the narrative of functionalist Europe" in which discourse was mainly focused on the "economic and social challenges"

of a globalized world, primarily addressing political elites (Biegon, 2013, p.202). Subsequently, Biegon continues, there was a focus on what she calls "the narrative of European Identity". The discursive practices that developed involved the establishment of symbols (i.e. the European Flag, European Anthem and academic exchange programmes) in order to create a sense of cohesion among the people of Europe as well as a "cultural community" (Biegon, 2013, p.204). Furthermore, references to the USA as characterised by a "poor cultural tradition" were frequent in order to strengthen the more solid history of Europe (Biegon, 2013, p.205).

As Ntampoudi points out, it is during the 1980s that the issue of a European Identity started to concern elites and their discursive practices (Ntampoudi, 2014). As a result, the involvement of the European people started to be seen as necessary for the establishment of a European Identity. Consequently, the concept of "European Social Model" was firstly introduced by Jaques Delors, even though efforts to build a European Identity date back to the 1973 Declaration on European Identity (Ntampoudi, 2014, p.5). This provided a strong contrast with other political systems (such as the USA and the EC's own past) in which market-based policies were predominant (Ntampoudi, 2014).

At the same time, Kølvraa argues, the Community witnessed the death of Jean Monnet in 1979. This established discursive practices based on what he calls "EU's 'symbolic politics'" which brought the Founding Fathers of the European project to the forefront in the construction of European identities (Kølvraa, 2010, p.9). As Petersson and Hellström highlight, the Founding fathers have often been exploited for rhetorical purposes in order to generate history and "legitimise and guide the EU in the present". (Kølvraa, 2010 ; Petersson & Hellström, 2003, p.237).

From the 1990's, Cinpoes, Held and Mc Nally, and Biegon argue, one more shift in discursive practices took place. This coincided with the Maastricht Treaty's redefinition of the EC as the European Union (Cinpoes, 2008). A closer focus was brought on the democratic legitimacy of the European project through what Biegon calls the "narrative of democratic Europe" (Biegon, 2013, p.205). The consequences of this were the introduction of the concept of European citizenship, as highlighted by Cinpoes, as well as the popularization of new themes such as "citizenship" and "communication" (Biegon, 2013, p.206).

While Cinpoes holds that in this period more social policies were established, Held and McNally argue that the EU did not effectively respond to the growing issues concerning the economy as well as society

itself (Held & McNally, 2015). Finally, Manners highlights, the introduction of the Common Foreign and Security Policy by the Treaty on the European Union, contributed to establish the EU's international identity as a polity based on values of "democratic conditionality" and the respect of human rights (Manners, 2001, p.15).

3.3 Who is Europe's Other?

From a poststructuralist point of view, the EU is the field in which discursive practices compete to shape perceptions of European identity within and without the polity (Manners, 2006a). As a result, all the above mentioned ways in which the European Union has identified itself necessarily entail carrying out othering practices. In fact, as remarked by Derrida, European integration could be seen as a "journey towards the other" (Manners, 2006, p.86). Scholarly contribution to the debate is vast, however the most recurring theories will be illustrated.

3.3.1 The Balkans as the Other

As mentioned in the previous section, the atmosphere of the Cold War had a noticeable effect on the development of the European Community by placing the USSR at the other side of the dichotomic order (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009). However, Checkel and Katzenstein argue, once the Cold War ceased, so did the binding force that would keep Europe together (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009). On the contrary, according to Kratochvíl, Russia kept constituting a valid Other for Europe because of the country's position in the discourse of its "partner countries" (Kratochvíl, 2009, p.6). It is, in fact, European discursive efforts towards such states that, according to Smith shaped European Identity after 1989 (Smith, 2002).

Smith specifies that through the establishment of the 1993 Copenhagen Criteria for accession, the EU's efforts have aimed to establish the Balkans as the Other by remarking their communist past and economic backwardness against the Western "functioning market economy" (Smith, 2002, p.654) . The result of this was a dichotomic order in which Eastern Europe stood for the "repository of negative characteristics" while Western Europe built its "self-congratulatory image" (Smith, 2002, p.654 & p.664).

3.3.2 Europe's own past as the Other

Once the focus shifted to social policies and identity issues, there were frequent references to Europe's own past as the Other (Biegon, 2013). This thesis finds broad acceptance among Manners, Weedon, Kølvraa and Diez. These authors see a certain self-reflexive character to this approach and acknowledge the strength of such othering practice (Manners, 2001 ; Weedon, 2004 ; Kølvraa, 2010 ; Diez, 2004). According to Ole Wæver, Manners points out, continuous reference to a European past full of violence and bloodshed constitutes a strong force that could bind the EU into a powerful "European international identity" (Manners, 2001, p.4). Accordingly, Weedon highlights, history provides current political speech with a variety of powerful symbols (Weedon, 2004). Discourse linked to history, according to Wæver, creates "fragmentation/integration dichotomies" that naturalise the idea that European integration is only destined to advance while fragmentation will necessarily bring Europe back to the horrors of the Holocaust (Kølvraa, 2010, p.10).

3.3.3 Turkey as the perfect Other and the EU as a normative power

Opposed to the self-reflexive othering practices laid out above, scholarly also focuses on exclusionary practices aimed at building the EU as a normative power, domestically and internationally. One of the cases that are made in this regard is the relationship between the EU and Turkey (Diez, 2006 ; Öner, n.d). Diez defines this kind of othering as "geopolitical" (Diez, 2004, p.320). In fact, he stresses how Cyprus's accession to the EU was characterised by discursive practices which highlighted the country as "the cradle of European civilization" and "the birthplace of Aphrodite" with no emphasis on its broad Muslim community (Diez, 2004, p.328). On the other hand, Diez reports, Turkey has been at the centre of exclusionary practices because of its geographical position and because of its cultural tradition. Diez remarks that Turkey therefore constitutes the perfect Other, "constructed as the Muslim enemy in front of the gates of Europe" (Diez, 2006, p.21).

More instances in which the EU has been constructed as a normative power include, according to Manners, the Union's close attention to human rights and the deriving acts such as the European Convention of Human Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These have placed the EU at the forefront in the defence of human rights globally (Manners,2006). Moreover, Borg and Diez point out, the various association agreements that the EU has been stipulating can also be seen as the result

of an effort to constitute the Union as a normative power. In fact, such agreements are forged with the promise of contributing to the creation of more stable and democratic regimes (Borg & Diez, 2016).

3.3.4 The "new Islamic reality" (Andre, 2015, p.188)

Most recently, Petersson and Hellström suggest, a new trend is rising that addresses othering practices towards Muslim communities within and without the EU (Petersson & Hellström, 2003). Such change, Andre argues, was brought about by globalisation and migration flows which have enriched Europe with a new cultural background. However, Andre continues, such background has met the resistance of a society which shares the tradition of Christianity and "secular democracy" promulgated by the Founding Fathers of the EU (Andre, 2015, p.183). Manners, through Dider Bigo's words, highlights that the institutional response of the EU to such threat is to be found in the Schengen agreement and the Dublin regulations which connected migration issues to the field of security (Manners, 2006). Such securitising trend, Borg and Diez point out, was already detected in the 1990's by Delanty who affirmed European identity was being constructed on populist anti-Islam premises (Borg & Diez, 2016).

Diez points out how, according to Campbell, constructing Islam as the Other has proved to be a successful move in legitimising European identity, especially after 9/11 and the terrorist attacks in Madrid (Diez, 2004). In fact, Muslims came to be regarded as a threat located outside of European borders, despite the numerous Muslim population living within the Union itself (Diez, 2004). Weedon highlights that media coverage of Muslim minorities is undoubtedly fostering the creation of a dichotomic order in which Islamic communities are represented as "extreme, fundamentalist, often violent and more primitive" (Weedon, 2004, p.16). In short, Andre points out, Europe is faced with "a new Islamic reality" which is generating questions and causing governments and EU institutions to search new ways of legitimising their identity (Andre, 2015, p.188).

In the light of the latest developments, the EU is faced with what Checkel and Katzenstein describe as a generally perceived lack of identity in which dominant discursive practices are shifting from elitist efforts to build a cohesive and peaceful union to populist arguments of "Europe for Europeans" (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009). Moreover, they point out, elites are starting to acknowledge the issues revolving around the construction of European identity based on arguments of common history (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009). Smith remarks that growing consciousness is developing around the

actual diversity that pervades the European people and that differentiates them from the Other placed both inside and outside of the Union (Smith, 1992).

Despite the ongoing hostile context, the Commission does not seem to drop the project of a European identity, like Pinto remarks. On the contrary, educational programmes are being set up with the aim of teaching young generations how to handle "discrimination, exclusion, racism and xenophobia" (Pinto, 2006, p.727). Finally, Winn speculates, European identity should neither be sought in discursive practices that look up to Europe's golden age, nor in discriminating arguments. Instead, the focus should be on the EU's common fate in a globalised world characterised by "multi-tiered power centres" (Winn, 2000, p.33). Yet, what seems to prevail is a general notion of European identity crisis which will be reviewed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 - The European identity crisis

In 2012, Francis Fukuyama stated: "The EU is undergoing a life-threatening crisis" (Fukuyama, 2012, para.2). According to him, just as relevant as the financial crisis that was hitting Europe at that time, was a fundamental loss of purpose and objectives throughout Europe, a view also held by Ntampoudi (Fukuyama, 2012 ; Ntampoudi, 2014). This, Fukuyama continues, represented a meaningful defeat as Europeans shifted their focus away from values of solidarity and mutual support which are at the basis of the EU's system of beliefs (Fukuyama, 2012). Such phenomenon can also be observed in a view held by Jean-François Lyotard according to whom postmodern societies are plunged in a "crisis of narratives" deriving from the iteration of Enlightenment ideals of "meaning, truth, emancipation" (Peters, 2001, p.42).

According to Lyotard, as a result of societal development, transformations are occurring which question such ideals as well as the status of knowledge and the activities linked to it (i.e. analysis and communication) (Peters, 2001). Bteddini remarks that current developments are causing a shift in how values and threats are defined within European society. In fact, he concurs, national identities are not the sole repositories of identity construction anymore and 'the foreigner' does not determine otherness per se. On the contrary, identity is increasingly shaped in relation to an Other that threatens "within and across" the national territory (Bteddini, 2008, p.116) Such feelings of precariousness raise debate around the meaning of European identity and the causes that led to its crisis (Weedon, 2004).

As far as European identity is concerned, various arguments are put forward. For instance, Ntampoudi attributes the crisis to enlargement policies, changes in the institutional outlook of the EU, society's discontent with the functioning of the polity and the financial crisis (Ntampoudi, 2014). Held and McNally attribute the European crisis to Greek financial weakness, migration flows and Islamic fundamentalism (Held & McNally, 2015). The following sections highlight the most recurrent themes in current scholarly debates.

4.1 The lack of compelling common culture and values

According to Breakwell, a degree of sameness is a prerequisite for effective identity and community construction (Breakwell, 2004). Foucault highlights that discourse can construct categories through which culture and norms are created and subjects can identify themselves (Belsey, 2002). Following

the same line of thought, Fukuyama indicates a failure by the EU to create a cohesive community with consequent Member States' retreat to their national sphere (Fukuyama, 2012). This, Cinpoes argues, would not necessarily represent a threat because European citizens could simultaneously hold a national and a post-national identity. The issue, he continues, lies in the fact that Member States and supranational institutions are in a situation of rivalry over the same symbols and practices. In this context, the EU cannot establish a compelling narrative (Cinpoes, 2008).

Kovacev points out that, according to Erik Fossum, the project of creating a comprehensive European identity should not focus on building "cultural markers" because each Member State is bound to retain a strong national culture despite all efforts (Kovacev, 2006, p.3). On the contrary, the aim should be to build "postnational markers" that are common to all citizens (Kovacev, 2006, p.3). He specifies that such aspects could be "rights and values" (Kovacev, 2006, p.3). However, Svitych holds that such efforts are unlikely to be pursued unless EU elites engage in identifying a plausible significant Other located outside of the Union while promoting an identity based on "solidarity, equality and justice" (Svitych, 2013, para.7).

The role of elites is a recurring theme when discussing European culture or the lack thereof. Fukuyama, Ntampoudi, Held and McNally agree that ever since the establishment of the ECSC, the EU grew as a result of elitist efforts towards economic cooperation as well as at the establishment of an "anti-national identity" (Fukuyama, 2012, para.21 ; Ntampoudi, 2014 ; Held & McNally, 2015). Fukuyama points out that the direct result of this is a growing disengagement of European citizens from their rights and obligations as foreseen by the various European treaties (Fukuyama, 2012). Similarly, Held and McNally highlight that the grandeur of the European project, as laid out by the Founding Fathers of the EU, is weakening because of the lack of "thicker ideals" which impede effective political and social integration (Held & McNally, 2015, para.19).

Breakwell sees a potential asset in the weak and unclear set of categories that determine the existence of European identities. In fact, he argues, had the EU a stronger character, it would be perceived as a menacing institutional apparatus. This, in turn, would favour Member States' irreversible retreat into their ivory towers (Breakwell, 2004). However, Ntampoudi argues, such phenomenon can already be witnessed in some practices carried out by national politicians and citizens alike. These are, for instance, the creation of "stereotypes" and "narratives of blaming" which, in the wake of events such

as economic issues and migrant flows, often turn Northern and Southern European states against each other (Ntampoudi, 2014, p.6). This, Schmidt suggests, is due to the multiplicity of cultures that coexist within the EU, each of which conceives European identity according to its own national standards and objectives (Schmidt, 2010).

European elites do not disregard the EU's fundamental diversity, however what characterises their discourse is a positive outlook.

"A case in point is European Central Bank president Jean-Claude Trichet's speech in 2009. He remarked that European identity is characterised by diversity as well as a – just as strong – spiritual nature based on Husserl's idea of a "community (…) which extends beyond nations" (Europe – Cultural Identity, 2009, pt.II, para.7). What stands out in Trichet's remark is the acknowledgment of Europe's "cultural diversity" as a strength denoting openness, acceptance and complexity (Europe – Cultural Identity, 2009, pt.V, para.3). As a result, as expressed by Trichet, European cultural identity is a "tightly woven fabric" that combines the distinctiveness of national cultures and languages with cross-border forms of cooperation and influence (Europe – Cultural Identity, 2009, pt.II, para.10)." (Di Canzio, 2016, p.4)

Belsey highlights that cultural and linguistic diversities can constitute a serious obstacle for the creation of a cohesive identity (Belsey, 2002).However, Kovacev points out, the EU has been trying to create an "identity based upon (…) existing diversity"(Kovacev, 2006, p.1). This, he continues, goes against Europeans' attachment to their own cultural background. Nevertheless, Kovacev identifies the need for a common language policy. This, he argues, is an option that had already been explored in the 1990s with the introduction of European policies, such as the "Lingua programme", that diversified the variety of languages offered by European educational institutions (Kovacev, 2006, p.6). Nowadays, he highlights, the establishment of such policies could be furtherly complicated by the introduction of new languages, such as Turkish and Arabic, brought in the EU by immigration flows (Kovacev, 2006).

4.2 The hybrid nature of the EU

Large scholarly views agree in conceptualising the EU as a hybrid system with little efficiency in some crucial identity-shaping policy areas. Manners convenes that the EU cannot be seen as a state of any nature but it also does not resemble an international organisation (Manners, 2001). This, he continues, has considerable repercussions on the EU's international identity which is indeed characterised by

undecidedness and a multi-perspective approach (Manners, 2001). Schmidt convenes that the "EU is a quasi-pluralist system of governance" whose policy outcomes have scarce political relevance (Schmidt, 1999, p.156). This, she argues, mainly has a direct effect on Member States that, due to divergences between the national and supranational level, are not able to make efficient decisions (Schmidt, 1999).

Diez, in accordance with Ole Wæver, points out that the EU can be seen as a "postmodern polity" in which identity is present and absent at the same time in a struggle to fill in the void of its incompletion (Diez, 2004). Such void, Wæver argues, is "due to the presence of the outside in the inside" (Diez, 2004). Breakwell agrees that the EU is faced with difficulties in shaping its own identity markers. However, he argues, such issue is bound to be solved with the passing of time. In fact, he points out, the EU has had a short existence so far which has not yet determined compelling categories to make up its identity (Breakwell, 2004). Although Smith puts forward a similar argument, he remarks that the EU "lacks a pre-modern past" which has not raised binding Romantic ideals in its population. As a result, the creation of effective identity markers is deemed unlikely (Smith, 1992, p.62).

The hybrid and multi-faced nature of the EU characterises its internal composition as well as its attitude towards the outside. Carta and Morin argue that the variety of EU institutions, processes and policies has multiplied the amount of agents that act on EU level. This, in turn, generated a cluster of interpretations and views on how the EU should position itself (Carta & Morin, 2013). The authors point out that this also reflects in elites' discursive practices who, for instance, see the EU as "a technocratic edifice" as well as a "Family of nations" (Carta & Morin, 2013, p.10). This subsequently has repercussions on the EU's attitude towards foreign policy (Carta & Morin, 2013).

Bteddini points out that a state's foreign policy is based on guaranteeing security for the territory, citizens and political apparatus against a threatening Other situated outside of the 'virtuous' national soil (Bteddini, 2008). Kratochvíl points out that, in this regard, the EU's approach is rather mild. As a result, because of fragmentation and undecidedness, the EU tends to base its foreign policy on its "benign identity", without strong political positions or direct involvement in conflictual situations (Kratochvíl, 2009, p.20). This, Schmidt highlights, has allowed Member States to build up a variety of arguments in the sole interest of national politicians (Schmidt, 2010). Closely related is the theme of EU enlargement which has fostered strong national responses. The next section lays out its relevance to the current identity crisis.

4.3 EU enlargement

Ganeshalingam defines the EU enlargement, through commissioner Romano Prodi's (1999-2000) words, as the final move towards lifting the barriers that were created by the Cold War (Ganeshalingam, n.d.). However, Checkel and Katzenstein remark that there have been multiple attempts to bring politics of exclusion to the forefront by means of debates surrounding the establishment of a European Constitution. The focus, they continue, has been increasingly brought on the downsides related to enlargement with a subsequent impasse in the process of European identity construction (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009). Ganeshalingam ascribes such process to endemic causes among which are French feelings of mistrust towards Eastern European citizens and the country's 2005 consequent retreat to protective rhetoric. Such discourse, the author points out, mainly targeted Poles and Hungarians who were consequently depicted as raiders of the French job market (Ganeshalingam, n.d.).

Maier and Rittberger indeed agree that the general European attitude towards enlargement is aimed at creating what they call "symbolic boundaries" which, they argue, are highly shaped by the way media present information regarding a given country or area (Maier & Rittberger, 2008, p.249). Moreover, they point out how the establishment of the 1993 Copenhagen criteria has influenced citizens' acceptance or rejection of European enlargement efforts. In fact, they prove, the more EU citizens perceive a high "level of democracy" within a candidate for accession, the more they are willing to assume a proactive attitude towards it, national identity still retaining strong power over opinion formation (Maier & Rittberger, 2008, p.261). Fukuyama also highlights that, consequent to enlargement, solidarity and sharing of responsibilities are not principles that guide relations among European citizens who, on the contrary, engage in suspicion and blaming discourse (Fukuyama, 2012).

Vobruba ascribes the Union's identity crisis to the very nature of the enlargement process and its legitimation strategies. He argues that enlargement procedures were created and executed in the interest of a core area – Western Europe – with the aim of establishing concentric circles of influence (Vobruba, 2003). He points out that the sole legitimation strategies for carrying out such practices were "pacification and prosperity", both of which have currently lost their effectiveness and appeal, the first due to its economic and political costs and the latter because of its long-term character (Vobruba, 2003, p.44). Moreover, he remarks, Eastern enlargement was presented by the core as a "moral

necessity", a strategy that has backfired and created an economic and social divide between the West and the East (Vobruba, 2003, p.43).

Pellerin-Carlin argues that enlargement is not a failure per se, however the European project was too ambitious, trying to conciliate Eastern orthodox-based culture and Western Catholicism-laden culture (Pellerin-Carlin, 2014). In such way, he continues, the "project of non-domination" envisaged by the EU was jeopardized, leading to an identity crisis (Pellerin-Carlin, 2014, p.80). However, he suggests, there is room for future development as he envisions two scenarios: "Europe 2.0" - which foresees closer political cooperation among a shrinking European Union - or "EFTA 2.0" based on less binding agreements in a multi-cultural, multi-perspective union (Pellerin-Carlin, 2014, p.80).

Archick raises the question of whether the EU deepening (in the form of integration) and widening (enlargement) can co-occur. The answers, according to him, lays in a very much needed streamlining of decision making procedures which necessarily cannot keep pursuing consensus among the broad variety of Member States (Archick, 2016). For the same reason, Archick suggests that solving the EU's identity crisis is a feasible undertaking as long as deepening is prioritised over widening and some states, such as Greece and the United Kingdom, are left behind (Archick, 2016). However, he observes, the EU seems to feel what he calls a "historic pledge" to pursue further enlargement towards the Balkan area (Archick, 2016, p.4).

4.4 Migrant flows

Because of its various enlargement waves, Blanco Sío-López points out that the EU presents a strong tradition of exclusionary practices which have often remoulded European geopolitics and mindsets (Blanco Sío-López, 2016). As a result, Triandafyllidou and Spohn concur, the presence of an "immigrant other" is vital as far as identity construction is concerned (Triandafyllidou & Spohn, 2003). In fact, they explain, the immigrant upsets taken-for-granted values and practices, thus generating a situation of crisis. Similarly, within the EU, the same mechanisms take place with a tendency to elaborate a hierarchy of 'Others' which separate Member States' and North American immigrants from groups with a more 'threatening' background (Triandafyllidou & Spohn, 2003).

In 2003, the EU's threatening Other according to Triandafyllidou and Spohn was "labourers coming from outside the EU, notably Asia, Africa and Latin America" (Triandafyllidou & Spohn, 2003). This was so because the 2002 wave of enlargement declassed Eastern Europeans to a lower level in the

hierarchy of otherness. Citizens of the former USSR, in fact, had been previously subject to discriminating practices within EU member states which, after accession to the EU, adopted more welcoming attitudes. Moreover, othering practices within the EU undoubtedly put migrants in uncomfortable positions of non-belonging to either their country of origin or their host country (Triandafyllidou & Spohn, 2003). As a result, the authors argue, what is needed is a "re-organisation" of European national identities (Triandafyllidou & Spohn, 2003, p.13).

McLaren highlights that, indeed, hierarchical othering practices take place within the EU which are animated by different reasons (McLaren, 1999). In fact, she continues, EU citizens tend to perceive no substantial distinction between European migrants and "extra-communitarians" by rejecting both kinds (McLaren, 1999, p.10). At the same time, national elites are increasingly fostering discourse based on a classification that distinguishes 'worthy' internal migrants - who share EU-wide rights - and "external immigrants" (McLaren, 1999, p.10). Such distinction, McLaren concludes, stems from nationalist feelings and racism, the first prevailing in relation to internal migrants and the latter having a   strong impact on the way external immigrants are depicted (McLaren, 1999). In this regard, "behaviors, beliefs, and self-understandings are increasingly pathologized as syndromes and disorders" *(Identity Politics*, 2016, pt.7, para.11).

Nougayrède reports that ascribing the European identity crisis to migrants and refugees is a feeble argument as the EU is instead increasingly affected by a toxic debate between "liberal internationalists" who strongly support the project of a "borderless world" and "xenophobic fence-builders" who treat immigrants as the threatening Other (Nougayrède, 2016, para.3). Such debate, Nougayrède continues, has given room for theories such as the "great replacement", most prominent in France, which fosters citizens' fears by associating migrant flows to rising unemployment rates (Nougayrède, 2016, para.5). Instead, she agrees with Benjamin Stora, by coming in contact with migrants, Europeans are faced with "the challenge of knowing the other" which can only be overcome with the establishment of an inclusive "positive narrative" (Nougayrède, 2016,para.6).

Martiniello points out that the European identity crisis has been, to some extent, the result of the EU's efforts to establish European citizenship under erroneous premises. In fact, he remarks, the Maastricht treaty closely linked Member State citizenship to European citizenship, thus leaving extra-communitarians out of the equation in a top-down approach that allows no room for "mobilization of

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the grassroots citizens" (Martiniello, 1995). A similar argument is put forward by Kohli who remarks the need to diverge from typical accounts of national identity in favour of the formation of "hybrid identities" whose bearers are, indeed, migrants (Kohli, 2000, p.131).

Kohli also refers to a certain conflict that generates between migrants (especially if external) and Member State citizens which in turn can easily pave the way to radicalisation. The solution for such conflict, he speculates, lies in the elaboration of policies aimed at fostering inclusion and welfare that can ensure migrants are treated with dignity and granted decent economic standards (Kohli, 2000). Albassam concurs that the EU has been adopting policies which have proved untrue to its core value of solidarity. He mentions the Common Asylum Policy and the establishment of Frontex which, he argues, have not been as successful as other national initiatives in solving issues linked to the ongoing refugee crisis (Albassam, 2015).

Geddes remarks that rights and freedoms within the EU are benefits that only Member States citizens can enjoy, with a general elitist discourse that "places far more emphasis on the responsibilities of individuals and far less on the rights of groups" (Geddes, 2003, p.83). Such practices, he argues, generate an "integration problem" which, he highlights, is tackled by a variety of pro-migrant movements that cooperate with the European Commission by providing legitimisation to what would otherwise be highly controversial policies (Geddes, 2003, p.83).

Finally, Belsey mentions Julia Kristeva's line of thought according to which identity is so volatile that it is impossible to know oneself. Yet, intruders are feared as they prove "that there are alternative ways to be" which upset what is conceived as normal (Belsey, 2002). Spohn, in a case study of German-Polish relationships, concretises such mechanism by highlighting German and Polish mutual concerns prior to Polish accession to the EU. Hostility and stereotypes were central to both German and Polish discourse which faded as the two peoples got acquainted with each other as parts of the same union. As a result, Spohn points out, othering practices can be mitigated through "increasing cultural exchange" with a positive outcome for the future of the EU (Spohn, 2003, p.140).

4.5 The sovereign debt crisis

The European Commission states that the Euro, as the Eurozone common currency, has a twofold function: economically, it fosters a conscious management of Member States' balance sheets and better resistance to economic crunches (European Commission, 2014). Socially, the Euro plays a

fundamental role in European identity building: it represents the synthesis of the European motto "United in Diversity" by combining national and European symbols (European Commission, 2013). As Risse remarks, money has historically been a key "symbolic marker" in the construction of national identities, a pattern of "entitativity" that can also be retrieved on EU level (Risse, 2002, p.8). Similarly, Kaelber argues, the Euro represents an effort to build European identity which, he remarks, implies the development of "social relation(s)" of conditionality based on mutual trust (Kaelber, 2004, p.177).

Lichfield points out that, with regards to the Euro, 2012 represented an "economic ice-age" in which many discrepancies came to the surface such as the lack of a unitary economic or political strategy to support the monetary union (Lichfield, 2012, para.3). This, he continues, led to a European "existential crisis" because the narrative of the benefits linked with the adoption of a single currency lost its compelling character in the wake of pan-European economic difficulties (Lichfield, 2012, para.11). Such crisis, he argues, was furtherly exacerbated by internal conflicts regarding the approach the Union should follow. For instance, France was tendentially advocating for increased solidarity among Member States and Germany was underscoring the need for a German-led European federation (Lichfield, 2012).

Galpin argues that that the financial crisis that hit Europe was transformed into an identity crisis by media coverage and political elites which have identified a "window of opportunity" to reinforce existing national identities. In such way, a dichotomy was established between Northern Europe as a "community of economically virtuous" and Southern Europe as the "profligate" (Galpin, 2014, p.106 & p.118). Alternatively, Prentoulis points out that the North-South rupture is the result of the EU's fundamental failure to react to the financial crisis which subsequently led to further recession on the Southern side (Prentoulis, 2016). Finally, Fligstein concurs that the division between Northern and Southern Europe is existing and has undermined the importance of solidarity and mutual help among the citizens of Member States (Fligstein, 2014).

Prentoulis and Buttonwood remark that poorly elaborated measures to counter the European economic crisis have also exposed the lack of democratic legitimacy of European institutions (Prentoulis, 2016 ; Buttonwood, 2015). Buttonwood takes the Greek bailout as an example by showing how the Greek were imposed austerity measures from technocratic Brussels despite voting against them. At the same time, creditor Member States did not hold referenda that would allow citizens to

dissent on their tax money being devolved to Greece (Buttonwood, 2015). Borg and Diez echo that the economic crisis has generated a "crisis of legitimate governance" with a general retreat to national identities or, on the contrary, demands for further EU involvement (Borg & Diez, 2016, p.147)

Polyakova and Kligstein suggest that the general retreat to national identity might be due to the fact that EU institutions and the European Central Bank have been promoting austerity over "social protection" (Polyakova & Fligstein, 2013, p.32). This had deleterious effects on the economically weaker members of the Union which found no room for domestic manoeuvre (Polyakova & Fligstein, 2013). Indeed, Alessi and McBride highlight, the economic crisis showed the implications of European interconnectedness and simultaneous division on fiscal and monetary policy. Moreover, they point out, the crisis uncovered how the convergence criteria, as envisioned by the Maastricht treaty, were applied selectively and inappropriately, thus generating recession even in the three most productive Member States: Germany, France and Italy (Alessi & McBride, 2015).

Pettinger argues that the European economic crisis represented a failure of social cohesion because there was no appropriate strategy to tackle issues in a coherent way (Pettinger, 2014). Held and McNally convene that various measures adopted by the EU under those circumstances did not take into account the EU's fundamental "moral vision" in favour of "punitive" solutions (Held and McNally, 2015, para.7). However, Janse highlights that the EU's approach to the economic crisis represents a successful story that made Europe stronger and capable of more future cooperation (Janse, 2016). Nevertheless, Watt asserts, "policy makers' self-satisfaction" is unjustified because "European fiscal solidarity" failed (Watt, 2009, p.19). Hall argues that such solidarity can be built through discursive practices by political elites and is the key to approach the Eurozone crisis while respecting Member States' single economic models in a "trans-European response to the crisis" (Hall, 2012,p. 367).

4.6 Detachment, nationalism, populism and Euroscepticism

Hansen ascribes the EU identity crisis to the inadequacy of the polity's institutional framework which, he argues, generated a "legitimacy crisis" (Hansen, 2002). This, he continues, contributed to create a split on EU citizens level with their subsequent detachment from the Union's values, despite governments' rising willingness to pool their sovereignty to the supranational level (Hansen, 2002). Checkel and Katzenstein concur that there is an evident discrepancy between citizens and political elites. In fact, the latter, as creators of the EU's "institutional machinery", seem to be blind in front of

the evident legitimacy issues the polity has faced (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009, p.1). This is so, Fligstein argues, because only certain strata of European society have been able to fully enjoy the benefits provided by the Union, while radical Left and Right parties have been depicting the EU as a "capitalist plot" or "an attack on the nation-state" (Fligstein, 2014 ; Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009, p.23).

In order to solve the issue of citizens' detachment from the EU, Schmidt recommends further politicisation of the Union which could guarantee the people's "engagement" in elections and debate practices (Schmidt, 2010, p.22). This, in turn, could generate stronger feelings of European identity (Schmidt, 2010). However, Trenz argues, European citizens are already involved in the EU through "popular referenda" which constitute a tool to impede further integration through what he calls "constraining dissensus" (Trenz, 2012, p.3). The issue, Schmidt argues lays in the fact that political elites have not put enough effort in constructing feelings of European identity through communication "about what the EU has been doing" unless they were faced with a crisis situation (Schmidt, 2010, p.2). Politicians, in fact, tend to be more focused on national level discourse, thus generating citizens' detachment themselves (Schmidt, 2010).

Prentoulis highlights that "new media technologies and social media" represent a valid tool to improve communication among citizens and facilitate the creation of groups to contrast what she calls "the European dystopia" (Prentoulis, 2016, para.10). However, "disembodied communications technologies" have also fostered the creation of new identity markers which have favoured the rise of "new forms of identity politics" (*Identity Politics*, 2016, pt.7, para.10). This is particularly relevant as a variety of nationalist movements rise throughout the EU concurrently with growing disillusion towards the European project (Fligstein, 2014).

Weedon argues that it is indeed the rise of extreme right parties in the EU that has brought identity issues back on the political agenda (Weedon, 2004). This, Andre highlights, has mainly happened as Europeans were faced with massive immigration which brought about individuals with various 'threatening' cultural background. This generated a "loss of identity" and a retreat to nationalism and populism (Andre, 2015, p.191). Held and McNally concur that the rise of various populist movements throughout Europe is citizens' response to growing immigration. This, they continue, highlighted the EU as a "fragile system of social integration" (Held & McNally, 2015, para.8). Within such system, Andre

highlights, there is strong correlation between "Islamist extremism and far-right extremism", both constituting a vigorous response to a deep identity crisis (Andre, 2015, p.195).

Ntampoudi highlights that the European identity crisis has brought about wide "solidarity gaps" (Ntampoudi, 2014, p.7). However, Cinpoes argues, a retreat to national identities is not an issue by and of itself, it is nationalism which represents a challenge to the EU's legitimacy and future (Cinpoes, 2008). In order to contrast such phenomenon, Pinto points out that the EU is "re-invent(ing) and re-defin(ing) its identity" (Pinto, 2006, p.721). In the meantime, Hooghe remarks, right wing parties within the EU are constituting the "largest reservoir of Euroscepticism", each Member State clinging to different arguments that resonate effectively among its population (Hooghe, 2004, p.6) .

Trenz argues that Euroscepticism fills a gap between elites and citizens that the EU still needs to counter with constructive discourse. That is why it should not be considered as "marginal" or "irrational" (Trenz, 2012,p.550). In fact, he explains, Euroscepticism is an attitude of contestation - against the EU's legitimacy, development and policies - that contrasts "pro-European discourse" (Trenz, 2012,p.550). Its strength lies in the mediatic attention it receives that allows certain arguments to spread quickly among masses, thus constituting a threat to the European project (Trenz, 2012). Euroscepticism, Trenz continues, constitutes an "identity marker" and its tools are the "approved interpretations of truth and value" within a society (Trenz, 2012, p.544). This is why Euroscepticism is present in a variety of forms, depending on the environment in which it develops (Trenz, 2012).

Alessi and McBride remark that the EU has not given enough attention to Euroscepticism as a rising threat because while populism and nationalism rose, the institutions were engaged in developing policies that could stabilise the European economic and financial situation in a moment of severe crisis (Alessi & McBride, 2015). Moreover, Prentoulis adds, the rise of such movements is due a paradox: while EU citizens were granted freedom of movements, they are still fundamentally unaware of their fellow citizens' "history, politics and culture" as well as of the workings of EU institutions (Prentoulis, 2016, para.8). Raising awareness on such themes could indeed boost a more cohesive Union (Prentoulis, 2016).

4.7 European discourse: the need for territoriality to strengthen identity markers

As pointed out throughout chapters 3 and 4, both scholars and European elites themselves have been selecting the EU's identity markers in order to clarify the polity's response to current developments.

Indeed, some highlight the EU's fundamentally economic purpose as its strongest identity marker by highlighting its "market model" or common currency (Sidaway & Pryke, 2001 ; European Commission, 2014 ; Risse, 2002). Others seek identity markers in the cultural realm by looking back at the Enlightenment and Christianity's heyday (Cinpoes, 2008 ; Kølvraa, 2010 ; Petersson & Hellström ; Smith, 1992 ; Winn, 2000). Finally, a third group of thinkers points out the EU's fundamental incapability to shape its own identity markers due to its short existence and erroneous practices (Breakwell, 2004 ; Smith, 1992).

However, one goal that seems to underlie all European discursive efforts seems to be territoriality: a wish by the EU to exert power on its geographical territory. Indeed, all aspects mentioned in the previous chapters point towards it: from enlargement and othering practices to migrant flows and the financial crisis. Each theme is characterised by discourse related to territory: from Prodi's wanting to lift the barriers created by the Cold War, to Vobruba's division of the EU in a concentric system of "core" and "periphery" (Vobruba, 2003, p.43). Even the Euro was presented by the Commission as a common currency to bind peoples, and effectively Member States, together in a free market area (European Commission, 2013).

More instances of European territoriality discourse will be discussed in Chapter 6. However, as previously mentioned, populism and nationalism are rising within the EU, which are themselves important instances of territoriality. For this purpose, the next chapter will present a case study of two Italian populist parties (Lega Nord and MoVimento 5 Stelle). Such parties present two different ideas of territoriality but the same Euroscepticism and capacity to mobilise masses. As a result, they constitute a source of reversed discourse worth exploring.

Chapter 5 - Case study: Lega Nord and MoVimento 5 Stelle as reversed discourse

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the EU seems to be facing a moment of identity crisis as it strives to create identity markers to contrast citizens' insecurity (Fukuyama, 2012). While it responds to migration emergencies and financial crunches with further policy making, populist parties are fostering feelings of mistrust among citizens and promoting Euroscepticism as an identity marker (Alessi & McBride, 2015). Indeed, populism is currently tapping exactly into those issues that are putting the EU in a crisis situation, namely: financial issues, migrant flows, cultural differences and democratic legitimacy. The sections below will analyse the discursive efforts of two Italian populist parties whose aim is to build two very distinctive views of reality: Lega Nord and MoVimento 5 Stelle. The reason for such choice is straightforward: they are swimming upstream, binding citizens in strong communities, bringing them out to the polls and back in action on a local level.

5.1 Lega Nord

"Immigrants have rights only in their homeland." ("Fini: «Suicidio negare diritti ai migranti»", 2009, para.3). This statement summarises the stance of Italian party Lega Nord in the words of its historic leader Umberto Bossi. Over the years, the party has received media and scholarly attention ad was attributed a variety of labels ranging from "populist" , "ethno-nationalist" and "a subculture" to "protest party" with a "regionalist" and "radical right" attitude (Cento Bull & Gilbert, 2001, p.1 ; Zaslove, 2011, p.4). Giordano provides a synthesis by stating that, because of the party's strong attachment to territory and self-determination, Lega Nord stands for an example of "autonomist regionalism" similar to its Flemish extinct counterpart, the Vlaams Blok (Giordano, 2000, p.448).

The Lega's roots are relatively recent: while its birth was undoubtedly influenced by the 1970s European rise of "Progress parties", national dynamics certainly constituted the biggest influence for the significant growth of the 1990s (Zaslove, 2011, p.5 ; Balocco & Maggiora, 2014). Indeed, Cento Bull and Gilbert specify, Lega Nord's success is embedded in the rise of small and middle businesses in the North-East of Italy during the 1960s. During the 1980s, these same businesses would encounter a hostile competitive environment as a result of the completion of the European Single Market. Simultaneously, Democrazia Cristiana, the Italian Christian Democratic party, failed to respond to the needs of its electorate after representing Italian entrepreneurs during the Cold War as an opposition to the Communist party (Cento Bull & Gilbert, 2001 ; Balocco & Maggiora, 2014).

In such context, Lega Nord, which had since 1979 developed as a very local movement, saw a window of opportunity to raise as an anti-establishment, "pro-business" party that could represent Northerners' interests against governmental nepotism, strict fiscal regulations and Southern Italians (Segreteria Organizzativa Federale, n.d. ; Cento Bull & Gilbert, 2001, p.4). Within less than a decade, in the early 1990s, Lega Nord positioned itself on the Italian political landscape and started to develop a set of symbols, traditions and rhetorical features that would come to forge a common identity among its supporters and justify the party's political agenda (Balocco & Maggiora, 2014).

Along the years, leaders such as Umberto Bossi, Roberto Maroni, Roberto Calderoli and Roberto Formigoni would foster arguments such as the need for a federalist turn in Italy and looser fiscal policy. This, according to their narrative, could allow Northern Italy to raise as a nation state characterised by a loose bureaucratic structure, a strong autochthonous component, a neo-liberal approach to taxation and, ultimately, political autonomy from the central state (Celiksu, 2014 ; Cento Bull & Gilbert, 2001). Such arguments would be constantly wielded until the early 2000s, despite many turns, only to undergo a significant change in 2004 with the movement's shift from regionalism to nationalism and anti-Europeanism. The causes for such shift might lay in growing immigration and the European enlargement process which determined an equal shift in othering practices. This was furthermore exacerbated in 2013 by Matteo Salvini's leadership.

5.1.1 Common history, rituals and symbols and their discursive construction

Lega Nord attributes the beginning of its common history to the 1158 invasion of Padanian soil by Frederick I which, in 1176, caused Padanian people to take an oath (the Oath of Pontida) and rise against his imperial power. According to the party, such union has only strengthened over the years until today when "leaders have different names but determination and aspiration to be free has remained unchanged" (Segreteria Organizzativa Federale, n.d, p.4). The party, through the words of Padanian writer Gilberto Oneto, consecrates Padania as the "most ancient community in Europe" with a "Celtic descent" that clearly separates Northerners from other Italians (Bussoletti, 2009, p.87).

Such premises are at the basis of Lega Nord's political programmes and legitimacy. Therefore, the party has dedicated much attention to the establishment of rituals and symbols that could bind the electorate in a compelling cultural community. Among them are symbols such as the 1996 commemoration of the Oath of Pontida where Padanians in folkloristic attire cried: "Undo Italy or die!" (Dematteo, 2011 ; Balocco & Maggiora, 2014, p.78). In the same year, rituals developed such as the

adoption of an anthem (interestingly, Giuseppe Verdi's 'the Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves'), uniform (green shirts), national hero and flag (with the invented green Sun of the Alps).

Relevant is also the creation of an apparatus of ideals that featured "Founding Fathers", Padanian "militants" and intellectuals (Segreteria Organizzativa Federale, n.d, p.6 ; Statuto della Lega Nord, n.d, p.2). Finally, on 15 September 1996, Padania was declared "sovereign and independent" by the party in a ritual that celebrated the Po River as "the lifeblood of Padania" (Giordano, 2000, p.457).The cultivation of the above mentioned symbols and traditions and the strength of their appeal is, however, no fluke. Discursive practices have been fundamental to determine the values and dichotomic orders that have brought Lega Nord to gather consensus and make its way up from a very local movement to a party capable of gaining seats in the national and European parliaments in 1994 (Balocco & Maggiora, 2014).

Such practices have varied over the years and can be ascribed to four distinguished phases: a Federalist phase, a Secessionist phase, a return to Federalism and an ongoing phase of openness to broader nationalism. Each is characterised by a set of values, strategies and othering practices: a brief overview of the first three will be presented while the fourth will be analysed in more depth for the purpose of this case study.

5.1.2 The 'Padanian' identity

Central to 'leghista' rhetoric have always been territorialism and populism, the prime example of which, Giordano reports, is the construction of "an imagined geographical and cultural community" named Padania: a territory that originally extended from the Alps to the Po valley and is home to the Padanian people (Giordano, 2000). Such construction, Giordano highlights, was successfully established in very few years and, as Fernandes remarks, quickly established itself as Northern Italians' refuge from the mismanaged and unconvincing Italian government (Giordano, 2000 ; Fernandes, 2009). The Lega's success was that of establishing what Cento Bull and Gilbert call a "regional collective identity" based on popular values, rituals and symbols which embraced people's longing for past times in front of the threat of globalisation and immigration (Cento Bull & Gilbert, 2001, p,4).

Lega Nord positioned itself as the pioneer of morality and spirituality (Fernandes, 2009). This should not be considered as striking given the party's relentless efforts towards fostering Northerners' participation and sense of belonging to the so called "Republic of the North" (Balocco & Maggiora,

2014). This was achieved by constructing legitimacy through common history, rituals, symbols, values and, most importantly, enemies. As will be noted below, the creation of a Padanian identity is a crucial, flexible and often contradictory process that caused the movement to espouse and drop political positions as quickly as the electorate's wishes changed.

5.1.2.1 Federalist Lega Nord

From its creation up until 1995, Lega Nord advocated for a federal reform on Italian soil which would allow Northern Italy to become an independent and sovereign republic, separate from the Italian central state and based on "peaceful co-existence" of peoples (Statuto della Lega Nord, n.d. ; Segreteria Organizzativa Federale, n.d., p.33). Such claim was substantiated by the Lega's first political programme in 1982 which foresaw the "re-affirmation of (…) culture, history, Lombard language, social and moral values against the attack on Lombard national identity" (Segreteria Organizzativa Federale, n.d., p.33). Indeed, Padania was yet to be associated with Lega Nord which, at that point in time was still laying the groundwork for the unification of various independentism movements across Northern Italy (Balocco & Maggiora, 2014).

In 1992, Lega Nord had become a cohesive movement that was able to take advantage of the numerous scandals pervading the Italian government. This allowed the party to easily identify Rome and the South as an 'Other' to juxtapose to the Northern "bulwark of fairness and respect" (Balocco & Maggiora, 2014). Typical of this period were slogans such as "Roma ladrona" (Robber Rome) (Balocco & Maggiora, 2014) as well as contrasts between "the gigantic Northern fist" and "the government's paunch" (Dematteo, 2011, p.25). Dematteo remarks that attitudes of discrimination against the South, which was seen as the cause of all evils as millions of Southerners moved to Northern Italy in search of fortune, could be compared to anti-Semite behaviour (Dematteo, 2011).

Nevertheless, within such context, Lega Nord presented itself as a strongly Europeanist party by manifesting great support for the principle of subsidiarity and the creation of a supranational institution (Bussoletti, 2009). The Lega itself was proud to call the European Community "the Federalist European Alternative" (Segreteria Organizzativa Federale, n.d, p.36). Tarchi points out that such enthusiasm is explained by the slogan "Farther from Rome, closer to Europe" as Lega Nord saw in European integration an opportunity to drift away from centralism and affirm its independence or, at least, strengthen Northern economy (Tarchi, 2016, p.190). In fact, small business owners from the North were the core of its electorate (Tarchi, 2016).

5.1.2.2 Secessionist Lega Nord

Starting from 1995, the leadership of Umberto Bossi paved the way for the "secession of Padania from Rome", a concept that would be iterated for years to come (Balocco & Maggiora, 2014). Padania came to mean the territory of Northern Italy developing by the Po river (Balocco & Maggiora, 2014). Cento Bull and Gilbert remark that the discursive construction of Padania was necessary for Lega Nord to retain its legitimacy over a target electorate that was, by that time, threatened by Silvio Berlusconi's rising popularity (Cento Bull & Gilbert, 2001). Moreover, the Lega leveraged the strict economic policies that had been imposed on Italy in order to meet the Maastricht criteria by proposing itself as a party that cared about "the sufferings of the people during the harshly forced integration of the economy" (Celiksu, 2014, p.227).

Indeed, it is after 1996, when Padanian identity started to gain consensus especially among the young electorate, that Lega Nord raised as an anticlerical pro-homosexuality party with a strong anti-European stance (Bussoletti, 2009). The EU started to be seen as a "Euromenace" incapable of reforming the political landscape (Tarchi, 2016, p.192). This was so because Europe, as envisaged by Lega Nord, was what Bussoletti calls "Europe of the people" whereas, with its highly technocratic character, the EU was becoming "Europe of finance and institutions" (Bussoletti, 2009). At the same time, paradoxically enough, Lega Nord had managed to get six seats at the European Parliament (Balocco & Maggiora, 2014). Nevertheless, anti-European discourse, combined with rising immigration, pushed the Lega to campaign strongly for Padanian secession from Italy in 1998.

Consensus was gathered among masses by focusing on heavily exclusionary practices that opened the way for the party's radicalisation and recurring episodes of racist discourse (Bussoletti, 2009). Biorcio and Vitale argue that xenophobia helped Lega Nord further root Padanian identity but also gain visibility on national level (Biorcio & Vitale, 2010). Lega Nord is remembered for supporting a policy that foresaw the obligatory display of crucifixes in public offices and educational institutions as a response to the "arrogance and intolerance" of Muslim immigrants. Moreover, under Calderoli's leadership, the Lega strived to oppose Western "civilization" to Middle Eastern "camels" and "apes" (Betz, 2016, p.45).

A switch from anti-meridionalism to anti-Islamism took place that would characterise Lega Nord for the following years and open the movement to a nationalist stance capable of including Southerners in a constructive way against the immigrant 'Other'. This represented a significant change but it also

highlights a relevant point. Padania is a clear example of a postmodern identity, characterised by fluidity and heavily "de-territorialised" thanks to compelling discursive practices that transcend even the incoherence of the movement's affiliations (Fernandes, 2009, p.274). As we shall see in the following section, Padanian identity has furtherly parted from its original purpose and has now, implicitly, come to include a wider electorate scattered along the Italian territory and social classes.

5.1.2.3 Padania nowadays

Starting from 2010, Lega Nord witnessed a variety of structural changes that reformed the movement, its values and political relationships. Even though in September 2010, the party's Federal Secretary Umberto Bossi went on stage in Venice declaring that "Nobody can stop the Padanian people!", the movement's nationalist turn was right around the corner (Segreteria Organizzativa Federale , n.d.a, p.7). Such turn would shift the Lega's political discourse away from its typical regionalist stance to endorse Italian radical parties such as Fratelli d'Italia, Forza Nuova and neo-fascist CasaPound with the aim of building a consistent anti-European force (Celiksu, 2014).

In 2010, Lega Nord's target voters were young poorly educated men with an anti-establishment attitude exacerbated by the global financial crisis and migration issues (Zaslove, 2011). When, in 2011, Italy underwent austerity measures dictated by the EU, the Lega found the grounds for expansion to a wider audience beyond Padanian borders. In fact, Celiksu remarks, the party started to characterise the EU as an "imperial power" that was "stripping [Italy's] sovereignty" (Celiksu, 2014, p.234-235). As austerity led to increased taxation, Lega Nord took a chance to strategically gather its followers in open-air conventions where the electorate was addressed as "brothers". This brought a particular focus on farmers who were being imposed restrictions on milk production (Segreteria Organizzativa Federale, n.d.a).

In order to broaden its consensus, Biorcio and Vitale point out, Lega Nord also leveraged Northern and Southern factory workers, large families and retired people as these were the strata of society that were particularly damaged by economic and fiscal reforms (Biorcio & Vitale, 2010). Biorcio and Vitale remark that during this period, media coverage was essential: immigration and petty crime were largely covered by newspapers and television programmes. As a result, the Lega managed to affirm a "causal, rational and metaphoric" relationship that tightly linked immigrants and Roma people to criminality, unemployment, moral decay and the diffusion of new diseases (Biorcio & Vitale, 2010, p.186). Such

construction of reality was substantiated by anti-Islamic campaigns such as demonstrations and public readings against the construction of mosques on Italian soil (Biorcio & Vitale, 2010).

By 2012, Lega Nord had become a proudly nationalist and xenophobic party. As Celiksu reports, an exponent of the party clearly stated: "Yes, we are racist (…), if desiring a civil life is racism!" (Celiksu,2014, p.237). Moreover, as Bussoletti states, the movement experienced an anti-Communist, pro-American shift which, however, quickly underwent a turn of tide due to Italians' discontent regarding the costs related to the deployment of arms in the Middle East (Bussoletti, 2009).The result was that Lega Nord slowly embraced Berlusconi's pro-Putin stance with many of the Lega's militants proclaiming the Russian president as their own in public demonstrations.

2012 is also referred to as the "Padanian Spring" as the movement witnessed a change in internal dynamics which resulted in a change in leadership (Celiksu, 2014, p.244). The typical hierarchical structure of the party had allowed Umberto Bossi to be its Federal Secretary for over 20 years. In 2012/2013, the introduction of internal elections crowned young and charismatic Matteo Salvini as the movement's leader with consequent repercussions on the party's identity (Porcellato & Rombi, 2014). Salvini embraced Bossi's legacy but made significant changes to open up the movement to a wider electorate and international influences, notably Le Pen's, Wilders's and Putin's (Riva, 2015).

5.1.3 Target electorate

Within three years, Salvini's leadership has already witnessed the rise of two important groups within the Lega's electorate: younger generations (which had lost interest in the movement after a first wave of excitement) and women ("Carta dei Valori", n.d ; Emanuele & Maggini, 2014). The first were attracted by the construction of a new identity, the "Young Padanian" ("Carta dei Valori", n.d, para.1). Such figure is depicted by the movement as a lone voice, a "noble incarnation" of traditional values such as faithfulness, honesty, brotherhood, coherence and respect of previous generations' hard work ("Carta dei Valori", n.d, para.1).

Biorcio and Vitale remark that Lega Nord, with its conservative set of values, has shown affinities with Southerners' civic sense and social attitudes (Biorcio & Vitale, 2010). Indeed, a growing number of Southerners (22% of Lega Nord voters) are espousing the arguments brought forward by Lega Nord, especially since Salvini has managed to construct the Italian government as the cause of Southern economic backwardness (Emanuele & Maggini, 2014 ; Marraccini, n.d.). The Lega's leader has, in fact,

brought Federalist arguments back into his discourse by affirming that Rome's centralisation has damaged Southern Italy by hindering its economic development and autonomy (Marraccini, n.d.).

Salvini concretised such arguments by mainly fighting the import of oranges and lemons, typically Sicilian products, in campaigns that emphasise themes such as the future of Italian children and the hard work of Italian farmers. In this way, not only does he oppose extra-European imports but also intra-communitarian ones which substantiates his opposition to the European single market, a point that will be highlighted further in this paper.

One more strength of Salvini's leadership is his charisma which he has used while receiving regular media exposure, especially in television and social media. He presents himself as a chivalrous man whose priorities are children, the ill, the unemployed and the mourning, against the immigrant, the European technocrats and bankers (Bussoletti, 2009). This allowed him to win 57% of low-educated Catholic women's votes, an electorate that had typically been on Berlusconi's side (Emanuele & Maggini, 2014). The result was the creation of social media communities of women who, all over the country, consider the leader as a pioneer of freedom and fairness ("Noi Con Salvini Comitato Donne", n.d.).

Dematteo remarks that bringing a focus on people's everydayness has allowed Lega Nord to depoliticise itself in front of a target electorate who engages in volunteering and Church-related activities (Dematteo, 2011). Nevertheless, Salvini does not hesitate to identify the Catholic Church as the principal responsible for immigration (Zapperi, 2016). Seemingly a paradox, Salvini has used such argument to bring himself even closer to the people. "I am a Catholic, even though I am a big sinner" was his public statement, a move that humanised him and therefore helped him win the consensus of large strata of his electorate (*Salvini: "Sono cattolico, anche se un gran peccatore "*, 2015).

As Lega Nord has opened up to a broader public, Padanian identity has grown beyond its borders to not only include the inhabitants of an alleged Republic of the North. It has taken under its wing all those Italians who feel threatened and weakened by globalisation, economic issues and migrant flows, especially in the lowest strata of society (Palmieri, 2015). As a result, the party's political programme has grown articulated on a variety of points which all aim to bring Italy back in an idyllic pre-EU past of harmony. Such points will be highlighted in the following section.

5.1.4 Lega Nord's political programme

5.1.4.1 Anti-Immigrant, anti-Islam

As previously mentioned, Lega Nord has always had a protective attitude of ethnicity and traditional values. Because of such attachment, the movement has repeatedly targeted immigrants, an attitude that has become increasingly popular under Salvini's leadership. What he accomplished was to link the immigrant to Islam by highlighting Italians' Christian roots (Bussoletti, 2009). That is when the party started with its invectives against the Church and "the Left" as partners in a "conspiracy (…) to allow the Muslim invasion of Europe" (Celiksu, 2014, p.242).

Cento Bull and Gilbert argue that what affects Lega Nord is an "invasion syndrome" (Cento Bull & Gilbert, 2001, p.174). However, Betz argues, this is a classic move of Lega Nord's. Such victimhood has always brought them closer to the oppressed of Italian society and has ensured the successful outcome of initiatives such as the celebration of the "Christian victory against the Turks in Lepanto" that had allegedly "saved Europe from the horrors of Muslim invasion" (Betz, 2016, p.44). Indeed, Lega Nord has always managed to mobilise crowds to re-affirm the 'Christian/Muslim' dichotomy. The latest expression of this has been Salvini's fight against laic schools that would refuse to display the nativity scene as a sign of respect towards children from other cultures (Di Marzio, 2014).

Social media campaigns followed against "shameful (…) ANTI-CHRISTMAS school principals" who tell "the nice fairy tale about European culture being the result of many more influences" (Salvini, 2014c). Beside the media support he gathered, his success was sealed by his statement: "I will bring the nativity scene to school myself", a promise that he proudly kept.

In order to further foster Italian identity against the threatening Muslim, Lega Nord insinuates doubt in its followers, a move that has brought the movement to connect Muslim migrants with diseases such as Ebola and scabies. The party mobilised people and not only defined a 'healthy Italian/sick Muslim' dichotomy but also exploited it to foment masses against the Italian government, especially its Minister of Internal Affairs, Angelino Alfano. ("Centomila in piazza", 2014).

At the same time, Salvini engaged in extensive campaigning for the violent destruction of migrant and Roma camps on Italian soil. His proposal to enter migrant camps with scrapes to destroy everything and everyone has been embraced by a surprising amount of people and even led to the creation of

merchandise. Moreover, buzzwords such as "scrapes" and "invasion" were iterated on social media and during television appearances normalising the attitude in the eyes of many.

6.1.4.2 Euroscepticism

As Celiksu, Porcellato, Rombi, Emanuele and Maggini remark, Lega Nord has turned into a highly Eurosceptic party by affirming that Italy has never benefited from EU membership (Celiksu, 2014 ; Porcellato & Rombi, 2014 ; Emanuele & Maggini, 2014). Such attitude has brought to the deployment of arguments in favour of Italy's exit from the Eurozone with a consequent return to the Lira as the Italian national currency (Emanuele & Maggini, 2014). This is called by the party "the Lega's economic revolution" within the "Basta Euro" (tr. Stop Euro) campaign ("Basta Euro Tour", n.d.). With this campaign, in order to get followers to vote for the 2014 European elections, Lega Nord has also been opposing Angela Merkel and constructing a link between Italians' voting preferences and her political leadership. According to Lega Nord, "If you vote for the others, you vote for her" ("Basta Euro", n.d.).

During the 2014 campaign, Lega Nord has put effort in diminishing the Euro and Italy's Eurozone membership. Among the tools that were used were simple videos with infographics and a triumphant tone in which Salvini himself states his party is fighting a "battle to bring words of truth to our people" (Salvini, 2014a). The Euro, he argues has brought "unfair competition from a mass of immigrants that are used as blackmail. They have killed our enterprises, destroyed 50 years of European social and economic conquers". As a result, the "Euro is a criminal currency" and a "poverty tool" which must be abandoned as a "moral duty towards all those workers who committed suicide because of the economic crisis" (Salvini, 2014a).

Biorcio and Vitale remark that Lega Nord has also repeatedly opposed the European Single Market and the freedoms attached to it. This has given rise to policy proposals suggesting the imposition of custom duties and barriers to movement to protect Italian workers (Biorcio & Vitale, 2010). Indeed, Emanuele and Maggini convene, especially the party's opposition to the Schengen agreement has helped Salvini achieve a considerable amount of followers, with 55% of Leghisti in favour of a "nationalist closure" (Emanuele & Maggini, 2014, para. 10). Especially such argument has brought Lega Nord closer to the French National Front with Salvini and Le Pen jointly affirming that "Schengen is over" (Fiammeri, 2016, para.1).

As remarked in some of Salvini's interventions at the European Parliament, Lega Nord believes the EU is an "anti-democratic cage" that does not work in favour of European citizens but pays attention to the interests of "multinationals, bankers and financiers" (Salvini, 2014b ; Salvini, 2015). He also repeatedly stressed the "shame" that should pervade the European Parliament as it engages in "thinking and reflecting" while workers need to be defended against extra-communitarian competition (Salvini, 2015). According to Salvini's rhetoric, Europe deprives its citizens of hopes and aspirations in clear opposition with the "Erasmus generation" it aimed to build (Canale Italia, 2016). Finally, he remarks, Europe is "frightening", sick and filthy and not worth leaving children's future to (Salvini, 2014b).

6.1.4.3 Nationalism

As an alternative to European integration Lega Nord proposes a retreat to local identities through "fiscal federalism" (Marraccini, n.d, p.8). In fact, Marraccini argues, the party believes not only supranational but also national identities have lost their appeal because globalisation has brought about a bureaucratic crisis that has forced nation states to join together and miserably fail (Marraccini, n.d). Fiscal federalism, on the contrary, is depicted as the solution to the "economic dualism between North and South" and a viable solution to implement "subsidiarity from below" (Marraccini, n.d, p.9).

Nationally, Lega Nord does not hesitate to use its anti-European stance to oppose the political establishment. A recurring target is the Italian President of the Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini. Her pro-refugees, pro-European stance brings her at the centre of much of the party's political discourse. She is usually depicted as a "hypocrite", "racist against Italians" and compared to an "inflatable doll" (Pucciarelli, 2016). Her political position is usually used by Lega Nord to persuade its followers to vote against her will, thus reducing people's right to vote to a simple spite. As a result, Lega Nord has been presenting itself as anti-gay, anti-immigrant, pro-securitisation party (Emanuele & Maggini, 2014 ; Porcellato & Rombi, 2014). Its strategies for success will be reviewed in the following section.

5.1.5 Strategies for success

As a movement, Lega Nord undoubtedly presents a strong character and, despite what could look like incoherent efforts to gain the support of as many people as possible, its strategy is very much rooted in its leaders' charisma and bold political statements (Giordano, 2000). Giordano and Lerner remark

that the party's strength is the use of "strong symbols" (Giordano, 2000 ; Lerner, 2011). According to Giordano, Lega Nord is capable of providing its followers with an effective range of slogans (Giordano, 2000). Lerner argues that the social symbols that the movement has established are just as relevant. Among these are the adoption of green shirts as uniforms and the introduction of the National Padanian Guards as opposed to the Italian police system (Lerner, 2011).

Lerner also points out that Lega Nord's triumphant style has determined the movement's tendency to make symbols sacred by pioneering for traditional values (Lerner, 2011). Fernandes remarks that values such as "hard work, civic practices and economic entrepreneurship" are in fact proudly opposed to the "rational, impersonal, bureaucratic and mercantilist models" that characterise the Italian government and the EU (Fernandes, 2009, p.274). Such values are supported by a media and intellectual apparatus that include the movement's own newspaper, radio station, television channel, writers and thinkers (Bussoletti, 2009). Moreover, especially under Salvini's leadership, social media such as Facebook and Twitter are increasingly used as tools to reach for an ever wider audience. Posting frequent and controversial visual content yields the movement a faithful group of followers as well as increased visibility among those users that contest Lega Nord's position.

Lega Nord does not only rely on media attention but, as Dematteo and Fernandes point out, the movement's strategy is largely based on face-to-face interaction to stimulate "fellowship among activists" (Dematteo, 2011 ; Fernandes, 2009, p.274). Dematteo highlights that Lega Nord frequently gathers in squares, without overlooking even the smallest village. This is accompanied by a down-to-earth attitude characterised by simple gestures, language and attire to resemble the average "self-made man from the Alps" (Dematteo, 2011, p.51). This combination allows Lega Nord to have considerable influence on its followers who tend to regard the party leaders as men who do what they promise.

Indeed Lega Nord's strength mainly resides in its leaders who, Zaslove argues, are seen as men "of the people" (Zaslove, 2011, p.3). These speak simply and avoid building their speeches on rules of rhetoric, preferring a style that is much closer to an anger outburst (Segreteria Organizzativa Federale, n.d. ; Dematteo, 2011). Characteristics of the party's speeches range from violent language and insults to philosophical considerations and concrete language to appeal to the average Italian (Dematteo, 2011). Lerner also remarks that Lega Nord's leaders have a tendency to play "idiot" by filling their speeches with "irony and fury" while depicting parodies of their enemies and "wearing the mask of the average

person against the powerful" (Lerner, 2011, p.9). Indeed, Lerner argues that such strategy has always allowed Lega Nord the "iterated abuse of verbal violence and mockery" without consequences (Lerner, 2011, p.10).

With Lega Nord, Lerner argues, politics quickly becomes a show characterised by strong tones and gestures (Lerner, 2011). Yet, the party has managed to gather followers and create "emotional attachment" to its leaders. This, Celiksu argues, has been made possible by the fact that Lega Nord pays close attention to citizens' concerns and transform their feelings into "legitimacy" (Celiksu, 2014, p.247). This, in turn, she continues has determined the creation of an effective Padanian identity capable of uniting followers in a "common vision,(…) future and fate" (Celiksu, 2014,p.247).

Porcellato and Rombi argue that Lega Nord has been experiencing less cohesiveness ever since another populist party has risen in Italy with similar discursive practices and anti-establishment attitude: MoVimento 5 Stelle (Porcellato & Rombi, 2014). Its features will be reviewed in the following sections.

5.2 MoVimento 5 Stelle

MoVimento 5 Stelle (M5S) is an Italian political party that witnessed a remarkable escalation over the last decade. Though sharing an anti-establishment attitude with Lega Nord, its approach to politics is interesting to consider as it presents features that are completely innovative to the Italian political landscape. In fact, the movement puts forward a political identity that is not confined to any geographical area and is not built on any idea of common history. Identity, within the party is only built on a largely utopian vision of the future that binds citizens together through the internet and IT technologies, under the supervision of the party's charismatic leader and "megaphone" (as he defines himself), Beppe Grillo (Biorcio, 2015, p.24). Further below, this paper will elaborate on these points.

Though active in national politics, the movement may even be considered a 'non-party'. In fact, as Corbetta and Vignati remark, it oddly conciliates "neoliberal and anti-capitalistic, centralist and federalist, libertarian and reactionary" stances which yet make M5S a strong voice (Corbetta & Vignati, 2013, p.54). As Beppe Grillo himself repeatedly stated, the movement does not aim to position itself along the left-right political spectrum or North-South geographical axis because it refuses to engage in compartmentalising and labelling reality (Tronconi, 2013). However, inadvertently or not, as will be seen below, what Grillo does is exactly the opposite thus reducing his movement's dynamics to typical dichotomic exercise.

Beppe Grillo proudly stated "I do not want to found a party, an apparatus, a structure of intermediation." (Bartlett et al., 2013, p.13). By simply asserting so, he immediately set himself and his movement at one side of a dichotomic order that pioneers for direct democracy against the ills of representative democracy as it is currently administered and mediated (Floridia & Vignati, 2014). Floridia and Vignati highlight that Grillo and his party co-founder, Gianroberto Casaleggio, envisaged a quasi-Marxist view of the future. Accordingly, after a long struggle and a dictatorial phase, parties and political intermediation would be swept away by increased faith in direct democracy (Floridia & Vignati, 2014)

Biorcio and Natale argue that the figure of Grillo as well as his party are a characterised by great divergences between what they advocate for and what they do. In fact, he continues, M5S can be seen as Grillo's "personal movement" as he exercises his regulatory power on all party members and dictates his political views to his followers via his successful blog (Biorcio & Natale, 2013, p.23 ; Biorcio, 2015). Nevertheless, Biorcio and Natale continue, Grillo gathers his followers' concerns and gives them a voice, thus fostering the idea that M5S is an "amplifier of popular protest" and a supporter of bottom-up political processes (Biorcio & Natale, 2013, p.16)

5.2.1 Context

The Movement's stance would not gain much support, strength and visibility if there were not ideal premises for it to develop. In fact, M5S was founded in October 2009 and, within three years, established itself as a major political actor in the Italian landscape (Biorcio, 2015). In 2012, M5S had an unexpectedly successful turnout in municipal elections which was followed by significant growth in 2013 leading to the party's participation to Italy's general elections (Maggini, 2012 ; Biorcio, 2015). In 2014, the movement gained seats at the European Parliament, in coalition with UKIP, advocating for themes such as "neo-environmentalism", "moralisation of politics" and a general hostile attitude against political elites and their misuse of public revenues (Biancalana & Tronconi, 2014 ; Salvati, 2016, para.2). Finally, in 2016, M5S furtherly strengthen their position with the election of M5S mayors in Rome and Turin (Navarria, 2016).

The root of such sudden success has been at the centre of some scholarly discussion: Bordignon and Ceccarini undoubtedly see the economic crisis that hit Italy in the late 2000s as a factor that incentivised the movement's popularity (Bordignon, & Ceccarini, 2013, p.431). However, they

continue, what was crucial was a general drop in Italians' trust towards institutional actors caused by Mario Monti's technocratic government and austerity measures. This gave M5S a chance to focus its discourse on the "mismanagement of economic and financial resources" (Bordignon, & Ceccarini, 2013, p.441). As a result, Floridia and Vignati report, M5S presented itself as a solution to destabilise the oligarchic order and recover "citizens' direct role" (Floridia & Vignati, 2014, para.1).

Within such context, as highlighted by Floridia, Vignat, Biorcio and Natale, M5S took a radical position and exploited the diffuse feelings of mistrust that pervaded the Italian society. As a result, the movement rose as a "collective actor" that would give prominence to citizens' questions in a way that traditional politics could not (Floridia & Vignati, 2014 ; Biorcio & Natale, 2013, p.10). In fact, as Art.1 of the Movement's non-statute points out, M5S proposed itself as a platform to stimulate the exchange of ideas on Beppe Grillo's blog (MoVimento 5 Stelle, 2016). Because of its non-party self-portrait, accessing the movement was made as easy as signing up on Grillo's website, free of charge, a notable innovation in Italian politics (MoVimento 5 Stelle, 2016). The result was a growing amount of followers and voters who saw in voting a fair opportunity to express their protest in a way that was not abstention (Biorcio & Natale, 2013).

5.2.2 M5S's populism

Salvati highlights that M5S constitutes a relevant turning point in Italian political history because it caused what he calls the "tri-polarization" of a system that, for 20 years, was characterised by the bipolar struggle between the Democratic Party and Berlusconi's various party formations (Salvati, 2016, para.2). Moreover, the movement's future, according to Navarria, looks promising as the party plans to participate to the Italian 2018 national elections (Navarria, 2016). This, he remarks, denotes a wish by Italians to witness change (Navarria, 2016). In fact, all geographical barriers that have so far been hindering a pan-Italian anti-establishment response seem to be breaking down in favour of M5S, evidence of which is Lega Nord's slight loss of consensus. As a result, Navarria argues, what Grillo envisaged as an anti-political movement is clearly moving in the opposite direction as it "reminds citizens that politics is about solving problems" rather than talking (Navarria, 2016, para.24).

The way in which Beppe Grillo has managed to construct such consensus around his ideas is also the result of the creation of some symbols, the first of which is M5S's non-statute that Casaleggio himself regards as the "cornerstone" of the party (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.439). Mosca et al. also

remark that the movement has an anthem, though not official, that always accompanies M5S in its public events. The anthem, they highlight, was born in 2013 and is evocative of the movement's message as it clearly states that its followers are neither a political party, nor part of a "casta" (tr. Caste, to refer to political elites). They proudly say: "we are only citizens, everybody counts as one!", thus reinforcing Grillo's dichotomic order (Mosca et al., 2016).

Beppe Grillo is also the owner of the party's logo which is granted as a franchise to his followers. The logo, as Bordignon and Ceccarini remark, is composed by five stars, each of which stands for one of the movement's "mission(s)". These are respectively: protection of "public water", respect for the environment, development, and increased public transportation (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.430). In order to defend such tasks, Grillo involves his followers in a "word-of-mouth" mechanism. However, he also takes action himself by personally attacking banks and industries as if in the name of his logo (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.432). Indeed, the logo also displays a capital V that evokes a checklist style to imply that the movement indeed takes action.

Grillo also organises events to promote himself and spread his word. An example are his Vdays in which he insults the ruling class as well as the media which, Bordignon and Ceccarini highlight, are both seen as a "single corrupt entity" (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.433). One of such public events was held on 25 April 2008, a significant date for Italy as the country celebrated its freedom. On such day, Grillo went on stage criticising the media and stating that just like Italians freed themselves once, they could do it again, thus establishing a relationship between a glorious past and the disappointing present (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013).

Some critics have compared Grillo's attitude to the one displayed by Lega Nord at its beginnings and the leader, in turn, never rejected such allegations (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). However, there is still debate around whether M5S can be considered a properly populist party. Some state that Grillo's iteration of the theme of exclusion in his discourse is indicative of a certain populism (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013 ; Floridia & Vignati, 2014). Indeed, Floridia and Vignati point out, M5S promotes an idea of citizens as 'oppressed' by elites of all natures which, in turn, generates a dichotomic order of 'rulers' against 'citizens'. Such order furthers a vision of the world based on the oversimplification of the diversified political landscape and society (Floridia & Vignati, 2014 & Tronconi, 2013).

Biorcio argues that because of its objective, M5S cannot be seen as a populist movement as much as it can be ascribed to a sort of social movement that aims to improve the relationship between citizens and institutions without much political involvement (Biorcio, 2015). However, Corbetta and Vignati remark in Eugenio Scalfari's words, the moment the movement decides not to belong anywhere within the left-right spectrum of politics, it also shows "the worst element of the right, the populist" (Corbetta & VIgnati, 2013, p.53). This way, the authors continue, the party relies on its leader to find the movement's legitimacy and accountability (Corbetta & Vignati, 2013).

One more element that brings M5S nearer to populism is its constant reference to political conspiracies which, in reality, Bidussa argues, hinders the party from practicing self-reflection and does not allow it to understand its own mistakes (Bidussa, 2014). Indeed, Davidesera highlights, the movement is characterised by a simplistic view on themes such as the economic crisis and the issues concerning EU institutions. For instance, the author continues, Grillo has supported a view according to which Italy should leave the Eurozone and, de facto, enter isolationism and autarchy in a Fichtian view of the state (Davidesera, 2012).

5.2.3 The Web as an identity marker

As Bobba and Legnate highlight, the movement's aspiration to establish direct democracy for the sake of "the common and public good" parts from typical populist discourse (Bobba & Legnate, 2017). As a result, the author suggests, in M5S's case, it is correct to talk about "web populism" (Bobba & Legnate, 2017). Indeed, the internet is used by Grillo as an instrument to favour direct democracy and bring a new value to citizens' vote without the involvement of political parties (Floridia & Vignati, 2014 ; Mosca et al., 2016).

What is certain, as Mosca et al. remark, is that the web is depicted by the movement as the "carrier of a quasi-pastoral message", almost as a redemption tool that is capable of purifying the current corrupt political landscape. This, according to the movement, can be done by enhancing the internet's potential to foster "multidirectional open conversations" (Mosca et al., 2016). However, while preaching transparency, Mosca et al. denote that the party itself is characterised by a hierarchical structure in which Beppe Grillo manages comments under his blog posts and expels members that disobey his instructions (Mosca et al., 2016). Nevertheless, he managed to make the internet a crucial identity-building tool as will be seen below.

Beppe Grillo, as remarked by Bordignon and Ceccarini, has turned his blog into the focal point of the movement where "active citizenship" takes place. In this regard, the authors continue, M5S can be seen as a "meta-organisation" in which subgroups are formed that are granted a certain freedom to act (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.438). This was done through the introduction of the so-called "meetups" (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.437). Meetups are platforms of online aggregation that allow local communities to form online and subsequently meet in the 'real world' to discuss and tackle local issues. The success of such format is proved by the existence of over 1100 regularly active meetups all around the country ("Il Movimento 5 Stelle", n.d.).

The strength of meetups, Fornaro argues, lays in the fact that they are very similar to party sections in what he calls a "telematic agora" (Fornaro, 2012, p.2). Moreover, Bartlett et al. add, they represent a valuable synthesis between online support and real life engagement which involves people in a way that is unusual in the contemporary political landscape (Bartlett et al., 2013). One more element that ensures great participation to M5S's operations is its massive social media presence. Bartlett et al. report that M5S's Facebook followers are almost 1 million while other Italian political parties have not yet fully figured out how to use the internet strategically (Bartlett et al., 2013).

In the end, as Fornaro points out, M5S has managed to create congruency between the web and the party itself, thus sending a clear message: political parties as they are do not have the right tools to tackle issues efficiently. What is needed is what Fornaro calls "viral marketing" that can trigger new and efficient forms of communication. Grillo's propaganda is strongly based on web presence and consequent word-of-mouth: this allows him to formulate cost- and time-effective campaigns that bind the electorate together in an ever growing support network (Fornaro, 2012, p.4).

5.2.4 Electorate, values and innovations

5.2.4.1 Target electorate

Biorcio acknowledges that the reason why M5S enjoys the consensus of an ever wide public is strictly connected to an identity crisis, experienced by citizens, in which they try to conciliate their belonging to multiple categories in society (Biorcio, 2015). The movement has in fact taken up such challenge and, thanks to its broad set of values and its strong opposition to political elites, it has managed to gather the consent of a wide demographic category (Corbetta & Vignati, 2013). Though mainly male, the electorate of M5S is constituted by students, unemployed and factory workers whose age ranges

from 18 to 45 years old (Maggini, 2012 ; Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). Moreover, the electorate is neither concentrated in any particular geographical region, nor divided between rural and urban areas: it is homogeneous throughout the country (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013 ; Corbetta & Vignati, 2013).

Bordignon and Ceccarini point out that a wide electorate denotes citizens' intention to express a protest vote (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). Such statement is supported by Tronconi who remarks that M5S voters are mainly individuals who migrated from other protest parties, such as Lega Nord, in the wake of Grillo's charismatic success (Tronconi, 2013). Moreover, the author adds, the rise of M5S also brought noticeably lower electoral consensus to the Italian Democratic Party, seen by grillini (Grillo's followers) as part of the 'caste' (Tronconi, 2013). However, seeing a vote for M5S merely as a protest vote would be a mistake according to Fornaro. This is so, he argues, because grillini are also heavily fascinated by Beppe Grillo's charisma which is not to be overlooked (Fornaro, 2012).

Among M5S voters there is a great feeling of mistrust towards institutions with a tendency to find the internet and small and medium enterprises much more trustworthy (Bartlett et al., 2013). Indeed M5S activists are usually citizens who, according to Biorcio, feel abandoned by traditional political parties and are still influenced by previous political disappointments. What is interesting, Biorcio argues, is that M5S members assert that membership actively changed their lifestyle by giving them a sense of involvement in decision making processes (Biorcio, 2015).

Though successful at binding individuals with different ideological backgrounds, Corbetta and Vignati argue that what awaits is not a "rosy future" (Corbetta & Vignati, 2013, p.58). In fact, the party's ability to bring so many followers together might turn into a liability as it might not allow the movement to make any meaningful coalition at any level of governance. Indeed, the authors state, "the movement lacks unifying ideological principles" (Corbetta & Vignati, 2013, p.58). Moreover, the party's negative stance on many themes might prevent it from overcoming its protest dimension and reveal its vulnerability (Corbetta & Vignati, 2013).

6.2.4.2 The values of M5S

Despite all, M5S states that its main focus is "direct democracy"(Floridia & Vignati, 2014, para.14). This, Floridia and Vignati highlight, concretises in a strong refusal of any kind of political mediation as representative democracy is not able to address citizens' issues and ideas. One alternative, the movement proposes, is the principle of "rotation in office" and "citizens as employers" which would

allow every citizen to enter politics in an easier way and work to serve the common good (Floridia & Vignati, 2014, para.29 & para.9). Indeed, in Grillo's discourse, there is always a contraposition of representative democracy as an "incentive for apathy and passivity" and direct democracy as "active citizenship" (Floridia & Vignati, 2014, para.4).

What Grillo proposes is, Floridia and Vignati remark, an anti-government by recalling cases such as the Belgian one where national GDP increased despite the country's political instability (Floridia & Vignati, 2014). Within such scenario, Bordignon and Ceccarini point out, a peculiar vision of political parties and journalists rises. The first are characterised as "self-referential elite" to the extent that Grillo stated the parliament itself was an "illegitimate" institution (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.433). The latter are depicted as part of a "conspiracy" to cover up the truth and retain vital information from citizens (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013 ; MoVimento 5 Stelle, n.d).

Undoubtedly, according to Grillo, effective politics is a "lack of professionalism", the only condition that allows individuals not to be blinded by power (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.435). As Grillo himself stated, "we will go to parliament to expose them, denounce their misdeeds, not to govern" (Mosca et al., 2016). Such attitude is strongly backed up by facts as Grillo himself is a man originating from the show business while, for instance, the newly elected mayors of Rome and Turin are respectively a lawyer and an economist (Di Marco, 2016). However, Mosca et al. argue, the movement stays a rather contradictory phenomenon as Grillo represents the leader and owner of a movement that preaches the horizontalization of politics (Mosca et al., 2016).

Further themes that the movement pioneers are, as highlighted by Bartlett et al., the current economic crisis, the Italian massive unemployment rate and the mismanagement of taxation with a rather negative and destructive take (Bartlett et al., 2013). Grillo widely caters his followers' opinions and draws his arguments from the comments that they leave under his blog posts and social media pages. The result of this has been a book in which he tells some of his followers' unemployment stories, eloquently named "Modern Slaves" (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). This all contributes to shape the identity of the average grillino, a strong supporter and a passionate member of a group of fighters against the 'caste'.

Grillo's dichotomic order undoubtedly has a vital importance in keeping grillini's motivation high. As Bordignon and Ceccarini reports, Grillo tends to oppose the "morality of ordinary people" to the

corrupted political elite with a strong contraposition between the death of political parties and the livelihood of direct political participation (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.435). He also highlights the theme of social exclusion by characterising the movement as David fighting against Goliath for the introduction of "young blood" in a political system that has fundamentally failed (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.435).

6.2.4.3 The party's innovation

With its success, M5S has undoubtedly brought about innovations in Italian politics. One of its most significant achievements has been to bring citizens back to the polls after long periods of abstention, as Biorcio and Tronconi remark (Biorcio, 2015 ; Tronconi, 2013). Indeed, Biorcio remarks, the movement, against the general trend, has overcome the typical dynamics of Italian political parties by forging relationships among citizens and encouraging 'old-fashioned' mobilisation and activism (Biorcio, 2015). Indeed, as Fornaro points out, by strategically combining online presence and offline activism, Grillo has managed to build a "gaseous non-party" that has silently grown online to constitute a real threat to all other Italian parties (Fornaro, 2012).

While Bordignon and Ceccarini argue that the party's success is closely linked to Grillo's charisma and ability to fill the "void left by traditional parties", Salvati, Biorcio and Natale point out that the consensus generated by M5S is due to the themes it highlights (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.428 ; Salvati, 2016 ; Biorcio & Natale, 2013). In fact, Salvati remarks, the party is focused on themes he defines as "post materialistic" such as ecology (Salvati, 2016). However, Bartlett et al. present a more concrete and plausible argumentation by pointing out that factors such as citizens' mistrust of politics and the consequent loss of motivation to vote have determined an opportunity for Grillo to tap into their everyday problems and bring them back in action (Bartlett et al., 2013).

Indeed, as Biorcio points out, Grillo managed to create a common identity among his followers after understanding the motivations of their disengagement with politics (Biorcio, 2015). As a result, he tailored a political programme, though disguising it as a non-statute, that would allow his followers to see a collective incentive in political participation. Consequently, a sense of community rose which, Biorcio argues, eventually reinforced the group's identity and self-esteem (Biorcio, 2015). The way in which such feelings were aroused are linked to Grillo's strategic use of the internet.

One more of Grillo's innovation was to create a strongly web-based movement in a country that, as Mosca et al. point out, "relies heavily on television and newspapers to get political news" (Mosca et al., 2016). However, beside focusing on Grillo's blog and Meetups, the movement has also paid attention to "campaigning on the ground", the most famous achievement of which was Grillo's Tsunami tour (Mosca et al., 2016). In fact, in 2013, Grillo toured Italy by holding rallies and public speeches in front of wide audiences in the biggest city squares. Just like the tour's name, he violently addressed crowds by highlighting the movement's indestructibility.

Grillo's use of media also goes against the typical way in which Italian media cover politics: in fact, as Bobba and Legnate remark, Italian media are heavily focused on "scandals and gossip" (Bobba & Legnate, 2017, p.368). This gave Grillo the chance to promote a kind of information that was deemed as transparent, informative and trustworthy. Moreover, Grillo often interacts with his followers by re-posting what they write or answering their comments (Mosca et al., 2016).

Finally, as Bidussa reports, the movement's strength has been to give a voice to all those members of the Italian middle class who had felt ignored and betrayed by the ruling class within and outside the country (Bidussa, 2014). In fact, it is not uncommon to find Eurosceptic arguments in the movement's discourse where the EU is seen as a bureaucratic apparatus that is not capable of addressing the weakest in society (Bidussa, 2014). Indeed, as one user of Grillo's blog put it, the EU is seen as something that undermines popular sovereignty by siding with bankers and imposing itself as an "undiscussable dogma" that does not execute what it promised to all the "European brothers and sisters" (La Terra, 2012).

Such arguments resonate in the Movement's campaign for the 2014 European elections, a point that will be discussed in the following section.

5.2.5 M5S's political programme: the 2014 European Elections

After gaining consensus on national level, in 2014, M5S presented a political programme for the May European elections. The programme was called "Seven Points for Europe" and was presented by Grillo himself before a crowded square on his third Vday (García Lupato & Tronconi, 2016). The presentation itself, according to Biancalana and Tronconi, is evocative of Grillo's contradictory style of politics because, as the movement emphasises citizens' involvement, it should refrain from granting Grillo such uncontested leadership (Biancalana & Tronconi, 2014).

The points that were presented were also characterised by what Salvati calls an "ideological confusion" (Salvati, 2016). In fact, if, on the one hand, Grillo expressed his willingness to adopt Eurobonds, and therefore proceed with further European integration, he also mentioned a wish for a significant retreat to the national level (García Lupato & Tronconi, 2016). For instance, the movement supported the creation of an alliance among Mediterranean member states to oppose austerity measures as foreseen by the EU (MoVimento 5 Stelle, 2014). Moreover, Grillo wished for the development of agricultural enterprises acting on local level, an idea that clearly counters the purpose of the European single market (MoVimento 5 Stelle, 2014 & García Lupato & Tronconi, 2016). Finally, he proposed a referendum for Italy to decide whether to exit the Eurozone in favour of a return to national currencies (MoVimento 5 Stelle, 2014).

Especially the last point elicited responses from citizens as well as the media. In fact, as highlighted by García Lupato and Tronconi, Grillo stated: "Italians need to be able to decide whether they want to die with the Euro or live and take back their sovereignty" (García Lupato & Tronconi, 2016, p.7). Indeed, he turned economic policy into a matter of life, death and public sovereignty in a way that caused acclamation among an ever wider electorate (García Lupato & Tronconi, 2016). The potential of such consensus should not be overlooked as it should, according to Sylvers, serve as a wakeup call for the Italian government to forge an adequate response to the general disillusionment (Sylvers, 2016).

All in all, it can be said that M5S's stance during the 2014 European elections was strongly critical of the EU as an "anti-democratic", pro-bankers body (Salvati, 2016, para.1). Such stance, as well as a strong viewpoint on immigration and EU enlargement as deleterious to Italy and to Europe, placed the movement in close relations to radical parties such as UKIP (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). At the same time, as Salvati remarks, because of its views related to sustainability and ecology, M5S has also been drawn near "leftist groups" (Salvati, 2016, para.2). It is therefore hard to tell whether the movement, within the European Parliament, stands out as part of the Eurosceptic threat.

García Lupato and Tronconi argue that, despite M5S's anti-establishment stance, the party has not expressed Euroscepticism as it only criticises European integration for the ways in which it has been carried out. This, the authors continue, is substantiated by Grillo's words according to which "Europe has turned into a modern dictatorship that uses democratic ceremonials to legitimise itself" (García Lupato & Tronconi, 2016, p.8). However, Biancalana and Tronconi point out, it should not be

overlooked that Grillo has also been criticising the EU as an institution that supports bankers without any popular accountability. As a result, he has been defending the national dimension against a supranational one that threatens to "pollute" citizens (Biancalana & Tronconi, 2014). The latest expression of such stance has been the movement's strong support of Brexit as a symbol of the failure the EU stands for (Navarria, 2016).

Nevertheless, what makes Grillo's campaign confusing are certain references that he made to typically pro-European discourse. As mentioned above, Grillo wishes for further integration through the adoption of Eurobonds (García Lupato & Tronconi, 2016). Moreover, as Biancalana and Tronconi highlight, he has repeatedly praised the work of the Founding Fathers of the EU, albeit contraposing it to the current unsatisfactory situation, by constructing them as the representatives of a "distant utopia of direct democracy" (Biancalana & Tronconi, 2014, p.133). Finally, as mentioned in the non-statute itself, many are the references to European standards as the examples Italy should follow when it comes to energetic certification, internet fares and health systems (MoVimento 5 Stelle, n.d.).

5.2.6 Strategies for success

Despite incongruences, Grillo and his M5S managed to gather a wide public. This is undoubtedly so because of the leader's strategic effort. Indeed, as Floridia and Vignati highlight, Grillo has "atomised" his followers by constructing a reality in which the party allows them to express their free opinion in a leaderless environment (Floridia & Vignati, 2014, para.10). However, the movement's strong centralisation is also not hard to note as Grillo "throws his diktat" on crowds and deliberately decides whose opinion is worth publishing on his blog and social media pages (Floridia & Vignati, 2014, para.23).

Moreover, the movement's strength is paradoxically deriving from outside factors as none of the actors of the Italian Political landscape have given enough attention to Grillo's rise who, in turn was merely seen as a "showman" with bizarre ideals (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.435). However, as remarked by Mosca et al., within the movement, Grillo presented himself as "a responsible father" who would protect every citizen who feels mistreated by the political establishment or by "trolls", the party's dissenters (Mosca et al., 2016). Indeed, all of Grillo's rhetoric is characterised by simplification and contrapositions as he makes his arguments tangible to his audiences (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013).

As a showman, Beppe Grillo possesses notions of rhetoric and uses them in his favour during his seemingly disconnected speeches. The sole fact that his speeches sound like angry and random exposition of facts in extremely concrete terms proves this point, as he manages to catch and retain attention fairly easily (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). As Biorcio and Natale remark, such strategy allows him to "overcome the barriers of social norms" and engage in recurrent insults and satire (Biorcio & Natale, 2013). It is thanks to this that he managed to attribute names such as "valium" or "psychodwarf" to members of the political elites without any consequence (Sala, 2007).

One more figure that has contributed to the success of M5S has been that of Gianroberto Casaleggio, co-founder and online marketing expert (Biorcio & Natale, 2013). Mosca et al. argue that the movement has always used the internet in a very strategic way as a free tool to achieve "mass media attention" (Mosca et al., 2016). In such a way, despite his refusal to be shown on television, Grillo achieved broad media coverage, a strategy that, however, he dropped during the 2014 European Elections. In fact, Biancalana and Tronconi speculate, Grillo might have perceived the need to show a more balanced side of himself, away from angry crowds, to ensure support for his political programme (Biancalana & Tronconi, 2014). Nevertheless, his signature events, Vdays, stay a "fundamental ritual for the identity of the movement" as they allow followers to come in contact with their leader (García Lupato & Tronconi, 2016, p.6).

One more of Grillo's strategies has been to focus on the local, as Biorcio remarks. Thanks to Meetups, Grillo has managed to spread his word and create activist groups who carry out events and distribute information, thus generating further support (Biorcio, 2015). However, as Floridia and Vignati point out, such local practices would not be as efficient if there was no central control by Grillo himself who, by establishing the movement as a brand, retains the right to dictate rules and modalities for action (Floridia & Vignati, 2014). According to Biorcio, the movement has in fact constructed a mechanism according to which activists gain motivation by believing that they have a moralising and sensitising mission for the sake of a better future (Biorcio, 2015).

5.3 Lega Nord and M5S: old forms of territoriality in a globalized world

Just like European discourse, Italian populism is permeated by a strive to establish territoriality. This is done by both Lega Nord and M5S through the promotion of values capable of binding citizens together in active communities. This, precisely as found in the European case, is mainly achieved through

othering practices. However, while Lega Nord presents a strong tradition of othering hierarchies, M5S puts forward "ideological confusion" (Salvati, 2016). This reflects in the parties' strategies: by switching from a pro-European, anti-Meridional to an anti-Muslim nationalistic stance, Lega Nord managed to extend its territoriality beyond the Po river. This was also done by promoting traditional old values of localism, hard work and honesty.

On the contrary, M5S seems to oppose all labels and forms of coalition with other political actors by creating an online extra-territorial space that, volatile as it might seem, still manages to retain support. Though the party leaves wondering about its present Self by focusing on the achievement of a utopian future, its success lays in the revival of long lost local communities and party sections which had strongly characterised Italians' identity during the 20th century ("Il Novecento", n.d.).

The next chapter will provide a deeper analysis and a comparison of European and populist discourse in order to demonstrate how Europe and populism are at two sides of a dichotomic order which, however, are closer than expected.

Chapter 6 - Territoriality and identity markers: the battlefield of contemporary Europe

As reported in the previous chapters, various factors are hindering the EU from establishing a compelling narrative to legitimise its identity. These range from economic issues and migrant flows to citizens' disengagement and unbridgeable cultural differences (Ntampoudi, 2014 ; Held & McNally, 2015). All these issues undoubtedly generated a climate of instability that populist parties were ready to tap into to strengthen their positions and open up to a wider electorate. However, what is striking is the amount of similarities that pervade EU identity building practices and their populist counterparts'. Though positioned at two opposite sides of a dichotomic order that characterises the EU as a benign identity against the populist villains, the underlying theme of territoriality pervades the discursive practices of both entities. This reinforces post-structuralist accounts that foresee a relationship of interdependence between the Self and the Other, as shall be seen in this chapter.

As Paasi, in Sack's words, remarks, territoriality is a "spacial strategy" the aim of which is to establish boundaries and zones of influence, geographically and culturally (Paasi, 1998, p.6). Such strategy, Paasi continues, is particularly relevant as globalisation has created what he calls a "world of flows" (Paasi, 1998, p.1). Such boundaries, Newman specifies, are continuously brought down and reconstructed to perpetuate the Self-Other dichotomy that confers meaning to every identity (Newman, 2005). The way in which such mechanism has been complicated for states by globalisation has been explained earlier in this paper: national identity has been complemented by other factors, such as economic crises and migrant flows. These generate a kind of Other that transcends geographical boundaries and represents both an intra- and a cross-border threat (Bteddini, 2008).

6.1 The North-South divide

The above mentioned system proves particularly true if taken on the level of EU identity. The European multi-layer governance is generating exactly the same effect with striking similarities with some mechanisms enacted by the populist parties analysed in the previous chapter. In fact, if on European level the refugee crisis, the democratic deficit and the sovereign debt crisis have been generating a North-South divide, such pattern can easily be retrieved in early Lega Nord's discursive practices. In fact, during the 1990s, Lega Nord's discursive efforts all aimed to build a cultural and physical boundary. Such boundary would divide virtuous Northerners and passive Southerners thanks to the banks of the sacred Po river (Giordano, 2000).

Just like in the EU nowadays, the Lega's discourse was generated by massive flows of Others, in this case represented by Southern Italians moving to the North of the country (Dematteo, 2011). Likewise, the economic component played a relevant role in both cases: scandals and corruption in the Italian political landscape were damaging Italian economy and creating yet another intra-border Other for the Lega to oppose, namely the Italian government. Similarly, within the EU, the financial crisis furthered "narratives of blaming" within the allegedly unified territory of the European Union (Ntampoudi, 2014, p.6).

In both cases, as Paasi highlights, boundaries represent the "expression of social, economic, cultural and political life" that stress the North-South dichotomy, the North being attributed a higher value as virtuous and productive against a "profligate" South (Paasi, 1996 ; Galpin, 2014, p.118). This generates what Albahari describes as "moral geography" (Albahari, 2009, p.142). To substantiate this statement it is enough to look at both Lega Nord's and the EU's attitude towards their respective peripheries, a concept that will be discussed more extensively further in this chapter. In the European case, Northern European states have been presenting themselves as virtuous and as the strong promoters of austerity measures against a reprobate European South which, in need social policies, proves to be at the "outskirts" of the European polity (Talia, n.d., p.147). Such blaming mechanism is recurrent in Lega Nord's discourse as well.

 In the Italian case, Lega Nord constructed a Padanian Northern identity as the "bulwark of fairness and respect", as strong as a "fist", thus denoting rationality, vigour, power and a general condition of supremacy and dominance over Southerners' government (Balocco & Maggiora, 2014 ; Dematteo, 2011, p.25). The latter, characterised by a fraudulent attitude, is identified as a "paunch", a large belly (Dematteo, 2011, p.25). Such identification underlines two characteristics: firstly it hints at Southerners' corruption as the Italian language uses the metaphor 'to eat money' in order to refer to one's readiness to accept bribes. Secondly, it may represent a reference to the way in which popular culture has been characterising Southern Italians. These, as Albahari and Talia remark, have often been associated with strong emotions (the site of which is mythologically a person's abdomen), irrationality, violence, patriarchy and "dense backwardness" (Albahari, 2009 ; Talia, n.d., p.1).

A compelling development to testify the changing meaning of boundaries that was highlighted at the beginning of this chapter is Southern Italy's changing self-perception. While currently being included in Italian populist discourse as an integral part of the Italian nation, Southern Italy seems to be

undergoing a switch in discursive practices. These have started to position the area as "the centre of the Mediterranean" and part of Western Europe (Albahari, 2009, p.141). This is so, Albahari continues, because migrant flows have been a source of Others that has boosted Southern Italy's self-perception as a territory of "wealthy and hardworking Westerners" living on an "open frontier" that allows "lazy" migrants in (Albahari, 2009, p.142, p.151, p.141).

6.2 Cross-border cooperation and influence

Despite the fundamental existence of a North-South divide, as stated in Chapter 4, European discourse emphasises the EU's capacity to stimulate cross-border forms of cooperation and influence in a non-dominant way. Though not overtly stated, such position denotes a form of territoriality already. Such premise is once again similar to the self-perception of Lega Nord and M5S, though it is expressed in different, sometimes opposite, ways. In fact, at the dawn of Lega Nord, the party stood for a form of cooperation among various independence movements in Northern Italy (Balocco & Maggiora, 2014). Territoriality was therefore seen as the basis for political action. It was clearly stated through the creation of Padania both as a territory and as a fluid identity capable of creating an imagined community against the threat of globalisation (Bteddini, 2008 ; Cento Bull & Gilbert, 2001).

An innovation in the ways in which territoriality is exerted is represented by M5S. In fact, the movement can be considered as 'cross-border' in the sense that it completely transcends geographical and, most importantly, political borders. In fact, the movement united an electorate from different socio-political backgrounds in a situation of a-territoriality which is both geographical and moral. However, such positioning has contributed to develop a boundary that separates citizens from political elites through an anti-establishment attitude as well as through the creation of an extra-territorial space constituted by the internet (Floridia & Vignati, 2014 ; Tronconi, 2013 ; Fornaro, 2012). This last point will be highlighted further in this chapter.

The way in which the EU has been making efforts to exert influence, and hence territoriality, are multiple, two of which are similar to, yet diverging from, the analysed populist movements. Firstly, the creation of the Eurozone constitutes an attempt by the EU to create an area of influence in which peoples, bound by the same currency, would further integrate their economy to European standards, in a community mainly characterised by economic benefits and a free market (European Commission,

2014). On the contrary, Lega Nord and M5S advocate a return to national currencies, thus mainly fostering isolationism and a form of territoriality that clearly opposes the European project.

Secondly, language policies represent an effort to exert territoriality. In fact, as highlighted previously in this paper, during the 1990s, the EC took important steps to promote linguistic differences among the various peoples of Europe, also considering the upcoming enlargement (Kovacev, 2006). Lega Nord, in parallel, engaged in defending the Lombard language as a way to fight for the sovereignty of Padania and to defend its culture and history (Segreteria Organizzativa Federale, n.d.). Though the EU denoted an attitude of openness and diversification while Lega Nord focused on closure, both efforts aimed to unite a territory through language. Such aspect is not to be overlooked as language is instrumental for the establishment of common perceptions of reality (Danaher et al., 2000).

The greatest territoriality project by the EU, however, remains its enlargement. The following section will elaborate on it and on how Lega Nord and, partly, M5S have countered that.

6.3 Territoriality: enlargement and localism as moral duties

As previously highlighted, the master narrative promoted by European elites is that of enlargement as the final move towards lifting the barriers created by the Cold War (Ganeshalingam, n.d.). Such action of lifting barriers was presented, as Vobruba points out, as a "moral necessity" (Vobruba, 2003, p.43). However, on the contrary, it can be argued that lifting barriers is nothing but the creation of new boundaries. In fact, the word 'barriers' seems to already presuppose a historical difference between Eastern and Western Europe, with the West presenting a condescending attitude towards the East.

The ways in which such East/West divide has been perpetrated are multiple. Firstly, as stated by Smith, the 1993 Copenhagen Criteria contributed to create what Maier and Rittberger name "symbolic boundaries" (Smith, 2002 ; Maier & Rittberger, 2008, p.249). This fostered a dichotomic order based on economic criteria for accession that stressed the difference between the Western market model and Eastern backwardness. Moreover, because of the convergence criteria being applied selectively in favour of Western European countries, the EU fostered a model of core and periphery that has not only generated economic gaps but also social divides (Vobruba, 2003).

Finally, by presenting enlargement as a way to rescue Europe from conflict and poverty, the EU has tapped into Eastern European fresh history of conflict. This fostered the fragmentation/integration dichotomy discussed in chapter 3 (Kølvraa, 2010). The result of this, Murphy points out, was Eastern

European elites' full support of enlargement, despite the exclusionary practices that were implied with it (Murphy, 1999). However, what has destabilised the EU is, as previously highlighted, a crisis of the values that the polity has promoted to justify enlargement, namely "pacification and prosperity" (Vobruba, 2003, p.44). Indeed, what is needed is a renewal of values to make enlargement as compelling as it was before.

On the contrary, Lega Nord has been able to reinvent its values over time and therefore it has also been able re-territorialise (Paasi, 1998). For instance, the party had no problem switching from a pro-European to an anti-European stance in 1996 by characterising Europe as a "Euromenace" and ascribing such feelings to a moral duty (Tarchi, 2016, p.192). Such moral duty, for Lega Nord, was constructed upon the need to defend the culture and work of previous generations as well as to protect the economy as a sign of respect towards people who were defeated by their economic issues and committed suicide ("Carta dei Valori", n.d ; Salvini, 2014a). Consequently, Lega Nord managed to broaden its set of values and took a chance to open up to a nationalist dimension which tapped into Italians' concerns caused by austerity measures against the rise of the EU's "imperial power" (Celiksu, 2014, p.234).

Just like in the case of the EU, Lega Nord's moral duty was to expand its set of beliefs to a wider territory. However, at the same time, a national retreat was advocated for, in clear contrast with the European enlargement project. Such struggle for ethical re-territorialisation was exacerbated by M5S which, despite its short history, successfully engaged in the creation of an extra-territorial space. Such space coincides with the web and, with its peculiarities, it has been at the centre of discursive practices which identify it as a tool to rescue democracy and achieve a utopian, transparent reality of direct participation (Mosca et al., 2016).

6.4 Racism and othering practices

As seen in chapter 4, the biggest wave of European enlargement in 2002, accompanied by its master narrative outlined above, brought about a changing hierarchy of Others within the EU (Triandafyllidou & Spohn, 2003). Such change took place within Lega Nord's discursive practices as well. While on EU level Eastern Europeans started to be considered as less of a threat compared to Africans, Latin Americans and Asians, Lega Nord witnessed a shift to secessionism, radicalisation and racism (Triandafyllidou & Spohn, 2003 ; Biorcio & Vitale, 2010 ; Betz, 2016). Such shift favoured a change in

othering practices as Southern Italians were declassed in the hierarchy of Others in favour of a 'Christian West - Muslim Middle East' dichotomy that is still being perpetrated. This process, in fact, paved the way for the party's turn to Italian nationalism.

As the European and populist dynamics present similarities, one could argue that the European "project of non-domination" failed (Pellerin-Carlin, 2014, p.80). In fact, there are compelling arguments to put forward the idea that the EU has been increasingly engaging in discourse that is heavily pervaded by territorialism. Indeed, from a post-structuralist standpoint, it is only natural to construct an Other and transform it into a threat to create what Bteddini calls "rhetoric of insecurity" (Bteddini, 2008, p.114). More specifically, with the enlargement process, the EU has been furthering the creation of new boundaries through exclusionary practices that prove Campbell's vision of power as "disciplinary" extremely applicable (Campbell, 2013, p. 234).

As proof of the ongoing process of hierarchisation by the EU, one could argue that migrant and refugees, the so called "new Islamic reality", are currently being placed at the top of the hierarchical pyramid (Andre, 2015, p.188). It can be argued that this is so because of the policies that the EU has been developing to face the current refugee crisis. Indeed, as Karolewski highlights, border control policies such as Frontex, or more generally the common asylum policy, clearly ascribe the refugee matter as "the cornerstone of defensive collective identity" (Karolewski, 2010, p.148). Karolewski remarks that, indeed, some might argue that European policies concerning migration are rich with "Euro-racism" because of the iterated use of "biometrics" and "somatic" criteria (Karolewski, 2010, p.148).

Such distinction between Europeans and extra-communitarians is also retrievable in what Geddes calls an "integration problem" (Geddes, 2003, p.83). As discussed in chapter 4, through the introduction of European citizenship, the EU has been fostering a division between internal and external migrants (McLaren, 1999). Such division, specifically in the Italian case, represents a sensitive issue as Southern Italy, also due to the provisions laid out in the Dublin regulations, deals with the responsibility of welcoming extra-communitarians on the periphery of the EU (Albahari, 2009). This can be seen as reinforcing the core-periphery argument which both Lega Nord and M5S have tapped into to gather consensus in Southern Italy. In the case of M5S, such argument was further exploited to support the creation of an alliance of Mediterranean Member States to oppose austerity and, in a more concealed way, immigration (MoVimento 5 Stelle, 2014).

One could argue that the idea of openness and "borderless world" promoted by the EU is fundamentally vain (Nougayrède, 2016, para.3). In fact, as argued by Albassam, recent policy developments within the EU have proved to be untrue to its core value of solidarity (Albassam, 2015). They have also remarked the elitist character of the EU as a polity and justified the rise of anti-establishment arguments characterising the EU as an "anti-democratic cage" (Geddes, 2003 ; Salvini, 2014b). However, there is a substantial difference between the EU and the populist parties considered in this dissertation. While the EU uses othering practices to prioritise widening driven by a "historic pledge", populism has been othering in favour of deepening with Lega Nord pushing for federalist reforms and M5S advocating for direct democracy (Archick, 2016, p.4 ; Marraccini, n.d ; Floridia & Vignati, 2014).

Nevertheless, othering practices across the EU, Lega Nord and M5S present striking similarities, Lega Nord generally presenting a more overtly racist stance and the EU focusing on constructive discourse. As proof of this, it is enough to focus on the 1990s, when both the EU and Lega Nord were carrying out territorialising othering. As stated above, through the introduction of the Copenhagen Criteria, the EU was in fact constructing a boundary separating an economically virtuous West from a backwards East. In the same way, Lega Nord was opposing the wealth and productivity of Padania against the Southern inertia. Both practices were dictated by the same motivations: economic backwardness and a fundamental fear of mass migration.

As Turkey's accession to the EU became a more concrete option, both the EU and Lega Nord engaged in geopolitical othering. The Italian party, in fact, dropped its North-South dichotomy to embrace a categorisation of society based on a 'valiant Christianity/uncivilized Islam' dichotomic order (Betz, 2016). Once again, both othering practices were driven by the same motivations: cultural differences and geographical positions (Diez, 2006). However, Lega Nord added a more radical component by using discourse to create an anti-European, nationalist reality capable of linking migration to health issues and unemployment, as specified earlier in this paper. Such vision of reality has been naturalised among the party's supporters and has been taken up by rising M5S as a way to gather increasing consensus across all strata of society. Indeed, it is possible to state that, despite the different discursive practices adopted, nowadays, both the EU and populist parties are fundamentally sharing the same Other at the basis of their identity, territorial strategies and systems of values.

6.5 Territoriality through values

As Castells remarks in Foucault's words, unless a concept is "internalised by the subject, its demise is only a matter of time" (Castells, 2010). As a result, in order for territorialising strategies to be effective, they need to be supported by a compelling set of values. As shall be seen below, the prevailing value that pervades the EU's, Lega Nord's and the M5S's discursive practices is that of active citizenship, though not always candidly stated.

6.5.1 Mobility in the EU

Core values that have been characterising the EU are undoubtedly solidarity, respect for diversities, equal opportunities and, certainly, a free market (Ntampoudi, 2014 ; *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, 2000). Through the value of solidarity the EU has furthered the idea of enlargement as an ethical commitment. Moreover, as Murphy remarks, association agreements stand for the utmost expression of the EU's territorialism as the polity seeks to extend its economic benefits to weaker countries and, consequently, establish new borders (Murphy, 1999). Such borders are reinforced by the Union's respect for diversities which fosters a system in which the Union presents itself as a benevolent, Other-oriented entity.

The values of equal opportunities and free market might appear as contradictory. However, the first justifies many of the policies regarding the welfare state that the EU has been pursuing such as the integration, albeit only to a certain degree, of pension and healthcare policies. In fact, these allow European citizens not to be hindered from moving and residing freely within the Union at any stage of their lives (European Commission, 2015). Without the initiatives taken for the sake of equal opportunities, the free market would probably not constitute much of a compelling ideal within the EU, thus making the polity unable to justify the deepening of European policy-making and the introduction of the four freedoms of movement.

All of the above mentioned values seem to converge towards one defining aspect: mobility. As remarked in chapter 4, freedom of movement has contributed to create a social divide in which only some strata of European society have been able to travel, work abroad or speak multiple languages (Fligstein, 2014). Such aspect recalls the core-periphery argument laid out in previous sections of this chapter by adding a social dimension to it which shapes yet another border that separates active

citizens from static ones. This, once again, hints at the elitist character of the EU and the policies furthered by it by creating a dichotomic order in which mobility is regarded as valuable and desirable.

6.5.2 Christian conservativism as active citizenship for Lega Nord

As stated in chapter 5 of this dissertation, the system of values promulgated by Lega Nord is strikingly close to traditional Southern Italian attachment to church, family and land (Biorcio & Vitale, 2010). Indeed, the value of Christianity itself has been repeatedly wielded by the party throughout the years to justify its anti-Islamic position. For instance, celebrating episodes such as the victory of Christians against the Muslims in Lepanto or advocating against the secularisation of educational institutions have been some of Lega Nord's effective discursive practices. Indeed, despite clearly countering Christian ethics, they helped naturalise the idea that all that is migrant is Muslim, and that all that is Muslim is to be attacked and destroyed.

Deriving from the Christian tradition are also the party's values of fairness and respect towards previous generations. Tapping into their death and the hard work that they carried out, Lega Nord normalised a national retreat and fiscal federalism as the only feasible and ethical option to counter European institutions. The latter are characterised as entities that "think and reflect" in a state of inertia against Lega Nord that, on the contrary, furthers action and defence of citizens (Salvini, 2015). The party's self-perception as laborious and upright is mirrored in the iteration of the values of hard work and economic entrepreneurship. These are mentioned in order to justify arguments against fiscal policies and the Euro, as well as against migrants' permanence on Italian soil. Once again, the 'activity-inertia' dichotomy is stressed to territorialise the Lega's discourse. At the same time, the healthy, honest and Christian Italian worker is opposed to the Muslim criminal carrier of diseases ("Centomila in piazza", 2014).

6.5.3 Web communities as active citizenship for M5S

As previously mentioned, M5S's territorialising goal is, paradoxically, to establish the internet as an extra-territorial space in which citizens can interact freely, guided by the value of direct democracy in what Fornaro calls a "telematic agora" (Fornaro, 2012, p.2). Within such space, according to the party, citizens can form a compelling anti-government, outside of the traditional political realm, to achieve active citizenship against an ill government characterised by "apathy and passivity" (Floridia & Vignati, 2014, para.4 ; Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). By escaping a physical territory, M5S undoubtedly brought

about an innovation on the Italian political landscape. However, this gave the movement more freedom to refuse all labels, be them geographical, cultural or political and develop silently to constitute a threat to the Italian political system.

M5S indeed developed an uncertain set of categories which will be discussed later. However, by radically opposing the media and political elites, it managed to give legitimacy to a new web-based information apparatus to which people feel bound and from which citizens gather motivation to go to the polls, express their vote and organise their local political life. Such participation has been ennobled through reversed discursive practices that characterised it as a fight for freedom and citizens' participation against the media and the caste's wish to enslave them (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013 ; Tronconi, 2013).

6.6 The "emotional power of territory" (Penrose, 2002, p.288)

Penrose highlights that establishing borders through discourse is a "very powerful form of territoriality" as it is a both uniting and strongly divisive practice (Penrose, 2002, p.285).Indeed, territorialisation is a glaring example of post-structural accounts concerning the presence of the Other within the Self, hence their interdependence and ethical relationship. Such relationship is the one that discourse aims to construct. In the case of territorialisation, this is done, as Penrose remarks, through emotionality, a skill both Lega Nord and M5S have proved to master (Penrose, 2002).

Beyond mere words, both movements have strived, through their leaders, to establish a very close relationship with their followers, based on or aided by face-to-face contact, even in the smallest centres. Such contact is characterised by a down-to-earth attitude, simple and concrete language and a range of epithets capable of arousing emotions and turning them into legitimacy (Celiksu, 2014, p.247). It is enough to think of M5S's and Lega Nord's iterated attacks on political elites drawing from imagery related to sexuality, mental health and physical disabilities (Sala, 2007 ; Pucciarelli, 2016). The involvement of citizens into "direct and personal experience", as Penrose reports, is one powerful way in which territoriality can be exercised, an attitude that the EU is yet to acquire given its elitist nature and the social divide deriving from it (Penrose, 2002, p.281).

Another way to reinforce territoriality, according to Penrose, is to establish "territories (…) as natural divisions (…) through naming" and highlighting their long history (Penrose, 2002, p.287). Lega Nord provides an excellent example of how such attachment can be generated as it created Padania's own

history and set of symbols. On the contrary, as will be seen below, it can be argued that the EU did not manage to construct a compelling history. Moreover, because of its exclusionary practices, as previously discussed, it can be argued that the EU might not be conceived of as a real union as its name states.

Finally, Penrose argues, it is important that the "relationship between people" and the places that sustain them is established in a clear way (Penrose, 2002). Once again, early Lega Nord provides a good example as it managed to create a strong attachment between people inhabiting Padania and their land as a source of labour and dignity ("Carta dei Valori", n.d,). On the contrary, the EU, possibly because of the multiple changes in outlook that it witnessed, did not manage to create such a bond, though the premises in the creation of the ECSC might have been valuable.

6.7 The relevance of identity markers

As highlighted in chapter 1 of this dissertation and as remarked in the previous sections, it is possible to construct and naturalise categories through discourse. Such categories allow the creation of cultures and norms for subjects to identify with (Caterino, 2008 ; Borg & Diez, 2016 ; Carta & Morin, 2013). In this regard, populism can be seen as reversed discourse stemming from general confusion and need for belonging which promotes what Nevola calls "glocalism" (Nevola, 2011, p.35). As seen in chapter 1, reversed discourse is vital to oppose mainstream discourse and produce new compelling fields of knowledge and perceptions of reality (Weedon, 2004 ; Finkelde, 2013). This section will analyse the reasons why one could argue that the EU is not managing to build a compelling narrative against the rise of populist movements.

6.7.1 Politics

Politically speaking, as previously stated, the EU is neither a state, nor an international organisation which has serious repercussions on its policy-making process. Such process per se represents a potential tool for powerful discursive practices and therefore for strong identity building. As a result, it is difficult for the EU to shape identity markers. In such situation, one could retrieve patterns typical of M5S as the movement presents itself as a non-party, with no position in the political left-right or the geographical North-South. However, on the contrary, by strongly denying all labels, M5S has built strong attachment using negation as an identity marker. At the other side of the spectrum is Lega Nord which has built a compelling Padanian identity, which even came to signify Italian national identity.

Unlike M5S, Lega Nord uses strong affirmations to create identity markers. What is common to both movements is a strong, quasi-despotic leadership which might be seen as a powerful identity marker itself.

6.7.2 Culture and mutual trust

Culturally speaking, as previously highlighted, the EU competes with national identity over the same symbols (Cinpoes, 2008). In order to differentiate itself, Kovacev believes, the EU needs to construct a set of "postnational" identity markers, such as values (Kovacev, 2006, p.3). Lega Nord seems to have taken account of it in its switch from regionalism to nationalism. Through the party's set of values, Lega Nord has managed to identify compelling outsiders and to promote a set of rights and values which have granted a greater pool in its electorate (Biorcio & Vitale, 2010). Such switch to nationalism has also helped the movement unsettle the typical East-West divide in Europe by creating affiliations with Putin, as well as Le Pen and Wilders, against Islam (Riva, 2015).

In this regard, if one is to stick to the premise that the construction of the subject happens outside of the subject itself, it is possible to notice how difficult it must be for the EU to envisage a clear set of values and generate a clear set of 'enemies'. In fact, because of its frequent changes in outlook, both when it comes to enlargement and to institutional changes deriving from the treaties, the EU has not been able to state its values overtly. What seems to have remained common to European rhetoric is a certain elitism and an economy-centred discourse. Indeed, the Euro can be seen as the EU's strongest identity marker. However, Weedon argues, in the wake of migration issues and financial crunches, it does not seem to be enough as identity issues are being brought back on the table by populist parties (Weedon, 2004).

Indeed, as laid out previously in this dissertation, the Euro is identified as a cultural identity marker. European elites consider it as the synthesis of "United in Diversity" and scholars see it as the entitativity of European identity to build relationships of mutual trust (European Commission, 2013 ; Risse, 2002; Kaelber, 2004). What this symbol currently faces, though, is an existential crisis due to the lack of unitary economic and political strategies across Member States, the same reason why the North-South divide seems to have generated (Lichfield, 2012). The EU's response to this have been austerity measures which are seen by many as "punitive solutions" (Held and McNally, 2015, para.7).

On the contrary, populist parties have focused on firstly building trust among their followers in order to legitimise their advice to return to the Lira as a national currency (MoVimento 5 Stelle, 2014 ; "Basta Euro Tour", n.d.). As a result, such discourse is highly supported and isolationism is ultimately seen as beneficial (Davidesera, 2012). Indeed, populist parties have seen a window of opportunity for unification and nationalism in the EU's struggle to fortify the Euro as an identity marker. Consequently, discourse based on themes related to social protection developed. Accordingly, Lega Nord characterised the Euro as a "criminal currency" and "poverty tool" and M5S united its followers as brothers fighting for the greater good of society (Salvini, 2014a ; La Terra, 2012).

6.7.3 Common history

Historically speaking, it has been argued that the EU "lacks a pre-modern past" (Smith, 1992, p.62). Rather, it is the result of a variety of influences such as the Christian one, Illuminist thinking and a long tradition of trade. However, ascribing the cause of the EU's identity crisis to lack of historicity might be reductive. In fact, the polity has developed a set of symbols and rituals such as an anthem, logo, slogan and day which were shaped on previously institutionalised values. On the contrary, populists built themselves a compelling history and set of values through rituals: it is enough to think about Lega Nord's celebration of the oath of Pontida. Such rituals were discursively used to determine identity markers that would be modified over time to shape a connection among followers.

By building a strong history of ethnic exclusion, heroism and hard work, Lega Nord managed to turn ethnicity into its primary identity marker. However, M5S stands for the proof that a common past is not enough to bind citizens together. In fact, rather than focusing on the grandeur of past times, the movement managed to bind its followers by envisioning a utopian future based on ancient Greek traditions of direct democracy (Biancalana & Tronconi, 2014 ; Biorcio, 2015). Just like in politics and party structure, by looking up to a future based on a distant past, M5S seems to be promoting identity markers that are 'either and both'. This is a strategy that is similar to the EU's as the polity supports seemingly incompatible national and European identities (Clark & Jones, 2008).

6.8 New media to renew identity markers

As highlighted previously in this dissertation, there is a set of "disembodied communication technologies" that constitute a valid opportunity to create new identity markers to contrast what Prentoulis calls "European dystopia" (*Identity Politics,* 2016 ; Prentoulis, 2016, para.10). Indeed,

Castells remarks, politics is nowadays carried out in a "network society" and increasingly turning into "media politics" (Castells, 2010). Upon such concept, both Lega Nord and M5S have elaborated, though each in different ways. In fact, Lega Nord has strengthened its social media presence to reach for a wider audience and reinforce the newly created identity of the "Young Padanian"("Carta dei Valori", n.d, para.1). However, M5S has built its entire success on its innovative use of media (Mosca et al., 2016).

Through the web, M5S has built its utopia of web populism, it has turned the internet into a powerful identity marker capable of creating an extra-territorial space in which renewed political engagement takes place thanks to techniques of "viral marketing" (Fornaro, 2012, p.4). Indeed, the internet was constructed by M5S as a redemption tool of purification to achieve freedom and transparency in a 'real world' made of corruption and gossip (Bobba & Legnate, 2017). Thanks to the web communities that the movement has managed to unite, followers pursue real-world engagement, exchange of ideas and, ultimately, "active citizenship" (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, p.438).

In contrast, Jensen and Richardson report, what the EU proposes is what they call a "monotopia" in which, as highlighted previously in this paper, mobility represents the ultimate goal in Europe, in a space that is "organised, ordered and totalised" (Jensen & Richardson, 2004, p.3). That is why, this paper argues, the EU is going through a very distinctive phase of territorialism through which it is attempting to build new, more powerful identity markers in the light of the populist rise. Indeed, such rise stands for an Other that, for better or for worse, lives in the European Self and contributes to shape its identity.

Conclusions

The central research question which this paper has attempted to answer is "How can the post-structuralist theory of the Self/Other dichotomy explain the European Union's current identity crisis?". In order to achieve meaningful results and a comprehensive vision, research was broken down into a series of sub-questions. Firstly, research focused on laying out post-structuralist theory and closely relating it with the field of IR. This was done in order to explain the relevance of the Self/Other dichotomy to states' identity. Secondly, views on the meaning and causes of the European identity crisis were examined in order to provide a more concrete context for a topic as nebulous as European identity. This was also achieved by performing an analysis of European discourse concerning European identity and its symbols. Thirdly, the phenomena that the crisis generated on national level were reviewed with the help of a case study on Italian populist discourse.

The poststructuralist approach was chosen as it represents a critical tool to look at reality, question its meaning and understand dynamics of power through discourse (Campbell, 2013). In fact, post-structuralism poses the question of what it means to identify oneself and what ethical relations this entails towards an Other that exists both outside and within the Self (Fagan, 2013). Indeed, post-structuralism sees an inescapable relationship between the Self and the Other which coexist and constitute each other in a dichotomic order based on discursive practices (Diez, 2004). Such model, as Campbell points out, is extremely reliable when applied to IR dynamics as it is through discourse that political decisions are justified and social relations are shaped (Campbell, 2013). The task of exploring how such practices came to be established by the powerful is delegated to deconstruction, archaeology and genealogy. These provided a valid path for this dissertation to expose the ways in which the EU came to acquire legitimacy through othering practices.

After performing the genealogy of European identity, research pointed out that there are three main recurring tropes in European elites' discourse: the Christian tradition, the rational force of the Enlightenment and the economic rationale of the European free market (Cinpoes, 2008 ; Smith, 1992 ; Winn, 2000 ; Kølvraa, 2010 ; Sidaway & Pryke, 2001). Such themes are referred to as a way to build cohesiveness among European citizens in the wake of globalisation. However, they are also at the basis of much of the EU's policy making and system of values. It is enough to think of the values of solidarity and equal opportunities which present clear connections with Christianity (Ntampoudi, 2014). One more example is the establishment of the four freedoms of movement as pure expression of the EU's

economic character. Beside such values, research showed that throughout its existence, the EU has been systematically carrying out othering practices, firstly towards the Balkans and its own past and currently towards Turkey and the waves of Muslim migrants and refugees (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009 ; Biegon, 2013 ; Diez, 2006 ; Öner, n.d. ; Petersson & Hellström, 2003).

However, as assumed in the central research question, what the EU is currently facing is an identity crisis which this dissertation has identified as a crisis of narratives, values and territoriality. Six factors have been determined as the possible causes for such situation:

1. the lack of a compelling narrative capable of really uniting all cultures in the diversity of the European Union (Fukuyama, 2012 ; Cinpoes, 2008) .
2. The hybrid nature of the EU which does not allow the polity to shape and execute policies effectively (Manners, 2001 ; Schmidt, 1999) .
3. The EU's waves of enlargement which have been presented to citizens as a "moral necessity" and a peaceful project of non-domination (Vobruba, 2003, p.43).
4. The current refugee crisis which has shown the frailty of the values of solidarity and equal opportunities in favour of instances of racism and national retreat (Triandafyllidou & Spohn, 2003).
5. The sovereign debt crisis which has uncovered the weaknesses of the Euro, previously presented as a common currency capable of binding Europeans in relations of mutual trust (Kaelber, 2004 ; Lichfield, 2012).
6. Citizens' detachment from the European democratic process in favour of nationalism, populism and Euroscepticism which are currently constituting a considerable, yet overlooked, threat to the European project (Weedon, 2004 ; Hooghe, 2004 ; Trenz, 2012) .

The case study on Italian populist parties Lega Nord and M5S proved the validity of the sixth factor and the ways in which nationalism is tapping exactly into the issues that are causing the EU's standstill. Though characterised by different dynamics, both Lega Nord and M5S present a very strong component of territoriality which, this paper argues, has given both movements strength. Lega Nord engaged in promoting traditional values of honesty and hard work to legitimise the existence of Padania, a fictitious "Republic of the North" pressing for Northern Italy's secession from the South (Balocco & Maggiora, 2014). With the passing of time, Padanian identity opened up to an Italian nationalist stance and nowadays it has come to naturalise an anti-Muslim, anti-European stance to which even a considerable

number of Southern citizens relate (Porcellato & Rombi, 2014 ; Bussoletti, 2009 ; Celiksu, 2014 ; Emanuele & Maggini, 2014).

Similarly, M5S has been constructing an ideological apparatus which has broken all geographical and political barriers to bring together Italian citizens from all strata of society (Corbetta & Vignati, 2013). Research has shown that M5S's strength is protest which is expressed by a disdain for political labels and elites (Tronconi, 2013). Indeed, the movement asserts its identity by expressing what it is not and gathering supporters in an extra-territorial space which coincides with the web. Through the web, communities are built which share a sense of belonging, take action on local level and participate in political processes for the sake of a utopian future of direct democracy (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013 ; Fornaro, 2012 ; Biorcio, 2015).

In the light of the results obtained, it was possible to compare European and populist discourse to conclude that they can be located at two sides of a dichotomic order in which populists are promoting an anti-European national retreat while the EU works to establish common identity markers to bind Europeans in a community of cultures. However, there are underlying themes of territoriality and active citizenship which denote both the EU's and populists' strategic efforts to exert power on a given geographical area. While Lega Nord has always overtly stated this through the iteration Padanian identity, M5S has sought such territoriality in an unexplored land: the web. On the contrary, the EU has been adopting more concealed ways to exert its territoriality and carry out its othering practices through the creation of the Eurozone, the enlargement process and what some would define as racist policy-making.

As a matter of fact, the EU has been promoting the idea of a "borderless world" and putting its enlargement project forward as a "moral necessity" to rescue Eastern Europe from economic backwardness and conflict (Nougayrède, 2016, para.3 ; Vobruba, 2003, p.43). This clearly denotes an effort to establish new boundaries, which, together with the introduction of European citizenship, have contributed to establish a hierarchy of Others which lives on nowadays. Such hierarchy is reflected on the way the EU has been handling the migrant and refugee crisis: though expressing Europe's welcome through the Common Asylum Policy and the Dublin regulations, the EU has furtherly contributed to draw a boundary between extra-communitarian and intra-communitarian migrants while highlighting Southern European countries' condition as European periphery (Karolewski, 2010 ; Vobruba, 2003).

Indeed, binary oppositions pervade the discourse of populist parties but they do not spare the 'virtuous' EU in the attempt to exert territoriality and establish a compelling narrative for citizens to internalise. As a result, it can be concluded that indeed the EU and Italian populist parties are at two different sides of a dichotomic order. However, they constitute each other, shape each other's discourse and compete over narratives. What this paper has carried out is an example of deconstruction to highlight how in the 'EU/populist parties' dichotomic order, neither the EU nor populist parties can be rightfully attributed greater value without compelling discursive efforts to substantiate such choice.

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