

A comparative analysis of Left-Wing and Right-Wing Nationalist parties in Europe: the cases of France and Spain.

Prof. Michele Sorice

RELATORE

Matr. 098992 Giulio Mandarino

CANDIDATO

Index

Chapter 1: Defining Nationalism

1. Nationalism

1.1 Conditions for the rise of nationalist parties in France and Spain

1.2 Effect on political groups formation in European Parliament

Chapter 2: Nationalist Right-Wing parties

2.1 Common features Nationalist Right-Wing parties

2.2 The case of Front National

2.3 The case of VOX

Chapter 3: Nationalist Left-Wing parties

3.1. Common features of Nationalist Left-Wing parties

3.2 The case of Podemos

3.3 The case of La France Insoumise

Chapter 4: Comparison

4.1 Similarities between Left-Wing and Right-Wing Nationalist parties.

4.2 Differences between Left-Wing and Right-Wing Nationalist parties.

4.3 Electoral support for Nationalist Parties: A Demand-Side analysis

Conclusion

Bibliography

Summary In Italian / Sintesi in Italiano

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyze, study and compare differences and similarities that right-wing and left-wing nationalist parties display in Western Europe, particularly in France and Spain.

Even though nationalism played a fundamental role in international and domestic politics for great parts of the 19th and 20th century, after the second World War many argued that there was no room left for it in European parliament's due to what it had led to in countries such as Italy or Germany.

In the 1980s the famous historian Eric Hobsbawm assumed that the increased scholarly attention on nationalism was a sign that the phenomenon was past its peak. However, despite Hobsbawm's claim nationalism does not seem to have faded away; contrarily in Europe we are now experiencing a re-emergence of national identity as an important source of political identity (Custodi, 2021). Nationalism is usually incorrectly considered as being embedded only in far-right parties but, particularly in the last few decades, also left-wing parties have made use of nationalist rhetoric in their political campaigns, often but not only, framed under a Eurosceptic dimension.

We will therefore try to highlight nationalist features in party policies and party demeanor on both ends of the political spectrum. We will show where left-wing and right-wing nationalist parties converge and where they separate, which subset of the population appeal to and which parties have managed to achieve the best electoral results. We will do so by looking carefully at the cases of France and Spain. Through the first chapter we will try to provide a definition of nationalism, explain the conditions that allow nationalist parties to rise and look at the role that nationalism plays into political group formation in the European Parliament.

Differently, the second chapter will shift its focus to right-wing nationalist parties, we will firstly present the common features that these exhibit and then we will analyze more deeply the cases of the French party 'Front National' and the Spanish 'Vox'.

Later, the third chapter will do the same with nationalist left-wing parties: we will attempt to extract some key characteristics that describe these political organizations by looking in particular at the case of the Spanish party 'Podemos' and the French 'La France Insoumise'.

Successively, the fourth chapter will compare differences and similarities that these two kinds of parties show while being concerned with both the demand and supply side. Following the results of this comparison, the conclusions will try to summarize the most relevant links between right-wing and left-wing nationalist parties as well as the fundamental distances that exist between the two.

CHAPTER 1

NATIONALISM

1.1 Defining Nationalism

Defining nationalism is not an easy or straightforward task: it is considered by most as an ideology that revolves around the idea of greatness of the nation, or of the 'imagined community' as Benedict Anderson would put it. Nations are imagined because their members will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (Anderson, 2006). A national community can be imagined according to different elements and values different styles, according to Anderson's words. The political process that performs this imagination is what we call nationalism.

However, the way in which political actors have made use of it through the years have made it a blurry concept. One may instinctively associate nationalism with far-right beliefs and link it to nativism or conservatism, but the intent of this analysis is precisely that of presenting nationalism in all its different shades. Nevertheless, we will try for now to provide a broad definition of nationalism that highlights its main features.

Generally speaking, nationalism is intended as a sense of national consciousness that elevates one nation above the rest and emphasizes the promotion of its culture and history as opposed to those of other nations. For a nationalist everything is easy because he knows, or he thinks that he knows, his qualities, values, and abilities. That is, he knows the qualities of his nation, he knows his nation's ethical and political values. And of course, he is not interested in and does not care about the others. The others are 'hell', and he does not need any information about them (Kis, 1996). Nationalism can usually be identified with the use of terms and symbols around which the nation is imagined: patria, national pride, national identity (Custodi, 2021).

Furthermore, according to Sam Pryke and the entire 'modernist' school of nationalist theory, nationalism is essentially modern and shares a belief which insists that the political responsibilities of the citizen to their nation override all others. Likewise, Michael Mann defines nationalism 'as an ideology which asserts the moral, cultural and political primacy' of the nation (Mann, 1996); while John Breuilly explains that a nationalist stance is a political doctrine built upon three basic claims, one of which is that the interests and values of this nation overcome all other interests and values.

In a different way, Eric Hobsbawm uses the term nationalism in the sense defined by Gellner to mean ‘primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent’. Moreover, Peter Alter argues that nationalism means that ‘loyalty to that nation must override all other attachments and loyalties’ while Charles Tilly describes the ‘top-down’ nationalist’s ‘insistence that the nation’s collective interest, as interpreted by the state’s current rulers, should take priority over all particularisms’ (Millard, 2014).

Nationalism also has an important economic dimension that seemed dead after the end of the Second World War and the building of the Bretton-Woods regime based on free trade, deregulation, and liberalization. Yet, this economic facet that nationalism encourages is still relevant today and plays an important role within national economies. Economic nationalism has, in fact, been regarded as one of the three main ideologies of modern political economy together with economic liberalism and Marxism. Political economists have conventionally identified economic nationalism with mercantilism, statism, industrialism and trade protectionism. Its policy prescriptions have been associated with tariff protection, subsidies for firms, legal regulation of markets, reorganization of industries and many other industrial policies. (Nakano, 2004).

What emerges from all these different interpretations of the meaning of nationalism is that the feature that seem to appear constantly is the primacy of the nation over everything else. As we have seen, this applies also to economic affairs where the prevalence of the nation is corroborated by protectionist measures that shield the internal market and favor internal production over import and external competition. For these reasons, many argued that nationalism was dead post 1945. The defeat of fascism, which made nationalism one of its strongholds, the establishment of international institutions and the creation of the Bretton-Woods system were all events that led to the impression that the national dimension had lost its relevance at the expense of the transnational one in an increasingly more globalized world. As we have already said, all of this has proved to be wrong as many nationalist parties still enjoy popularity by large segments of populations for the reasons that we are going to analyze hereafter.

1.2 Conditions for the rise of nationalist parties in Europe

As mentioned earlier, we have witnessed in Europe an increase of electoral support for both left-wing and right-wing nationalist parties in the last decades that seems to be related to different factors. Also, it is interesting to register how nationalist parties gained consensus not only in Eastern Europe, where such attitudes are more expected, as the region has not had the privilege of Western Europe's peaceful development to ease its nationalist tensions.

In fact, many of the early European Union Member States have elected representatives to the European Parliament who support extremist, even violent, beliefs about other national groups within the Union (Padurean, 2010).

Just to mention some examples of European nationalist parties that have undergone a considerable growth, Marine Le Pen of the 'Rassemblement National' won 33.9% during the French presidential elections in May 2017 and increased it to 42% in her 2022 run for presidency. The candidate for the right-winged 'Freedom Party' gained 46.2% in the last Austrian presidential elections. Similarly, 'Alternative für Deutschland' received 12.6% of the vote in September 2017 and marked history as one of the most radical far right party to enter the Bundestag in recent years. The 'Lega', a party with a right-wing platform, running as part of a right of center coalition in the March 2018 Italian election under the leadership of Matteo Salvini emerged as the third largest party in Italy racking up 17.37% of votes. The same applies to Spain where 'Vox' became the third political force in the country after the 2019 general election, where it received 3.6 million votes corresponding to 52 seats in parliament. Also, the French nationalist left-wing party 'La France Insoumise' almost beat Marine Le Pen in the 2022 French presidential elections for a spot at the second round of voting against Emmanuel Macron.

As for the conditions and reasons behind the increased support for left and right nationalist parties it's necessary to look at different phenomena. Certainly, a factor that plays a key role here is the merger of populism and nationalism in the political arena. Both concepts draw on antagonistic relationships of society: populism builds an antagonistic relationship between 'us' the pure people and 'them' the corrupt elites. Populist beliefs hold that decisions made in society are both legitimate and morally superior only when they correspond to the general will of the people.

Similarly, nationalism draws on the antagonistic relationship between the in-group and the out-group, marking a clear distinction between citizens of that nation and the others. It thus focuses on national homogeneity and sovereignty and is, by definition, exclusionary of those who do not belong to the in-group (Halikiopoulou, 2019).

Also, strictly related to this and to the causes of increasing electoral success of nationalist parties, is voters' concerns over immigration. The immigration issue is especially relevant within the context of an emerging transnational cleavage, where a cleavage is a line of separation between groups of citizens with diverging views. The issue of immigration divides voters with cosmopolitan values who support multiculturalism, and those with nationalist values who reject it (Hooghe and Marks 2017). The fear of cheap labor coming from immigrants spreads mostly into the low-skilled and less-educated segments of society which are more attracted by the nationalist anti-immigration rhetoric.

Expanding this view, another reason behind this newly risen sense of nationalism is the intense process of globalization that the world has undergone in the last decades. The increasingly interconnected world that we now live in clearly creates opportunities for many but at the same time these opportunities translate into threats for others.

However, the matter of immigration is not only a cultural issue but an economic one too: economic crisis can lead to insecurity and instability which in turn can bring citizens to a loss of trust towards the institutions. One way to see whether this is true or not is to examine how the 2007 and 2008 financial crisis has affected Europeans' sense of belonging. The crisis was an international one that began with massive bank failure across Europe, followed by a tragic recession in almost all Member States of the European Union. The financial crisis later on began to become a test for how the Union's institutions and national governments would respond to economic shocks. During this time however, the EU was not able to collectively formulate solutions that considered the suffering of citizens in the worst hit countries.

Moreover, citizens in the more privileged states came to view the problems of those citizens as of their own making. This pushed to look to the nation and not Europe for solutions which resulted in a decreased a sense of European solidarity. It has been demonstrated that worst hit countries display now a lower sense of being European (Polyakova, 2016).

Regarding the supply-side dimension, nationalist parties have managed to thrive thanks to different things. One is the role of the media, which allows the nationalist narrative to reach a broader audience and spread its ideas. Another is certainly the electoral system, particularly the proportional one, that secures seats to every party that reaches an electoral threshold, allowing nationalist parties to enter parliament and even partaking in coalitions governments. (Halikiopoulou, 2019).

1.3 Effect on political groups formation in the European Parliament

To close off the first chapter that has introduced the concept of nationalism, provided a sum of its main pillars and then explained some of the reasons behind the rise of nationalist parties, we now take a look at the role that nationalism plays within the European Union Parliament and particularly how this has shaped the formation of political groups therein.

It is important to begin by saying that MEPs do not join a group based on their nationality, but rather because of their political inclinations. For a group to be formed no less than 23 Members from at least 7 different states are needed and it is not possible to take part in more than one group.

It is also non obligatory for Members to partake in one and the ones that do so are defined as non-attached. Today, the Parliament counts seven of these groups but here we are going to focus only on the nationalist ones.

The first nationalist political group that entered the European institutions was created by the French party of Jean Marie Le Pen and the neofascist Italian Social Movement in the late 1980s. This later acquired the name of 'Group of the European Right', and it lasted until 1989. In more recent times in 2007 'Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty' was founded and lasted for nearly eleven months until it collapsed in November of the same year due to internal divisions. A new nationalist group was then formed in 2015 under the name 'Europe of Nations and Freedom' and counted twenty-eight members. Afterwards, the group was replaced in the June of 2019 by 'Identity and Democracy' which has been founded by the Italian Matteo Salvini alongside the leader of the 'Front National' Marine Le Pen and the German party 'Alternative für Deutschland'. This was later expanded to include the nationalist Flemish party 'Vlaams Belang' and the 'Freedom Party' of Austria, as well the new Czech 'Freedom and Direct Democracy' party.

The nationalist basis upon which this group has come to exist can be observed through the redirection of working-class anger into fear of outgroups: immigrants, Muslims, or members of the LGBTIQ+ community which leads to increased racial, religious, and gender-related discrimination (Rivera, 2019). These nationalist political groups that have at times been created within the European Parliament represent for many an intrinsic threat to the existence of the Union. Many of the parties that have joined or formed these groups have in their past heavily criticized the effort of European integration and have supported Eurosceptic positions. Eurosceptics are stronger in wealthier northern European Union countries such as Sweden or Denmark and tend to oppose the idea of a federal Europe following the American model.

Furthermore, they accuse the Brussels of seeking to create a totalitarian European superstate. They tend to oppose the institution of a European public prosecutor, the extension of Europol to include enforcement powers, the harmonization of taxation or social security across member states, the abolition of national vetoes, to monetary union, and any EU measures they see as reducing the power of European Rapid Reaction Force. Eurosceptics, in embracing nationalism, are emphasizing the fragmentary aspects that the complex societies in Europe experience. Every group's effort to convince its state to draw into itself and protect its own national character pushes all the others to do the same.

So rather than moving toward a Europe where nations overcome Eurosceptics' nationalist tendencies many nations are pushing toward a xenophobic continent (Padurean, 2010).

CHAPTER 2

NATIONALIST RIGHT-WING PARTIES

2.1 Common features of Nationalist Right-Wing parties.

This second chapter, as we have previously announced, will center its focus on right-wing nationalist parties. We will begin by analyzing the characteristics that distinguish these, the issues that these parties emphasize and the subset of the population that they attract. Afterwards, we will take a closer look at the cases of parties in France and Spain, respectively Front National and VOX to validate our claims. We will consider party programs, policies and behavior to verify whether features of nationalist right-wing parties that we are going to present can be identified.

To begin with, we must acknowledge that in the Post World War II era right-wing mainstream political parties have distanced themselves from the most extremist views that characterized them the 1920s and 1930s. Even though there are nowadays parties in Europe that resemble those extremist positions, and some of them have even been able to gain a few seats inside national parliaments, the ones that we are going to observe are completely embedded in the liberal democratic system and do not fight for an authoritarian regime change like nationalist leaders did throughout the previous century.

With this being said, one of the fundamental traits that unite right-wing nationalist parties is surely ethnic nationalism. This refers to the belief of primacy of the nation over the rest, which is one of the main points that we previously mentioned. Nationalist organizations overall policy objective is to safeguard the nation's majority culture and to keep the nation as ethnically homogenous as possible. This ethnic nationalism is followed by an exclusionary attitude towards immigrants, especially refugees or people at risk coming from outside of Europe. The nationalist right-wing parties' political discourses have been heavily dominated by immigration and refugee issues, especially in Western Europe but in recent times in Eastern Europe as well. It is in fact the refugee and migration issue that primarily attracts voters to these parties to the point that the most distinguishing feature of nationalist right-wing parties' voters is that they want to restrict immigration to their country (Rydgren, 2017).

This aspect is strictly connected to the main aforementioned trait of nationalism. Nationalists tend to perceive nations as unequal, ranking theirs in front of all the others. Nationalist parties, especially the right-winged ones, place huge emphasis on the excellence of their nation, insist on glorifying their culture and history by mentioning the grandeur of their nation's past in their political narrative. This exclusionary view translates into a call for security, law and order, which is one of the themes that dominate the campaigning of nationalists right-wing parties.

The rhetoric builds upon the idea that criminality is linked to the openness of borders which allow migrants to enter the state irregularly therefore putting regular citizens in peril.

Thus, policies that these parties bring forward aim at lowering the criminality rate by increasing resources of law enforcement together with restricting criteria to cross national borders and enter the country. Another key element that unites right-wing nationalist parties is populism: populism has been intended and explained in different ways but here the definition that fits the most is that of a "thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people." (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2012).

As a thin centered ideology, populism needs a 'host' ideology, nationalism in this case, for support. Populism stresses the idea of a harmonious and homogenous people, which also implies nostalgia and reliance on the conception of a 'sacred heartland.' Populist ideology is fundamentally nostalgic and directed toward the past so we can see how this goes hand in hand with we have just observed regarding nationalism. Moreover, populists urge to speak in the name of 'the people', they present a dichotomy between 'the people' and 'the elite.' This helps to fuel those exclusionary policies that make a clear distinction between the 'in-group' and the 'out-group', citizens and immigrants. Similarly, populists argue that the political elite, including established political parties, is corrupt and out of tune with the wishes of the people, and that a new movement, which springs directly from the people, is needed (Rydgren, 2017). This is achieved through the personalization of politics where the party platform and communication revolve around the figure of the charismatic leader.

We are now going to observe more in depth the cases of the French political party Front National and the Spanish VOX to see how these parties resemble the characteristics that we just presented.

2.2 The case of Front National.

The French party Front National (FN) or Rassemblement National since its change of name, is a right-wing political organization created in 1972. The leader of the party at the time of its birth was Jean-Marie Le Pen and his daughter, Marine Le Pen, took his place in 2011. The Front National

quickly became a prominent actor in Europe's neofascist scene as it was able to capitalize on the topics treated by the French fascists during the Algerian War. It attracted support from right-wing populists, however, its electoral fortune was not attained until 1981 since its leader was not able to receive the necessary signatures to run for president of the French republic. FN then started to increase its popularity by the late 1980s when it came to win local elections and gain seats in the European Parliament. This tendency continued up until the 1986 legislative elections in France, where Le Pen's party managed to arrive at 10 % of the votes thus securing 35 seats in the French National Assembly. Later, Jean-Marie Le Pen improved this result during the 1988 presidential election, arriving at 15 % of the votes, and in 1989 its party was able to retain all the seats that had won in the European Parliament. By the 1990s the right-wing nationalist party Front National had come to cover an important role in the country's political scene.

Again, in 1995 Le Pen went for presidency and received this time more than 15 % of the popular vote, while its party also won some elections in the biggest cities in France. Yet, the best electoral result remains the victory of the first round of the election in 2002 which led to a harsh response of the French citizens who gathered their votes in favor of Jacques Chirac to make its victory the one with the largest margin in the history of the French presidency.

More recently in 2011, the leadership of the party passed from Jean-Marie Le Pen to his daughter who has tried to distance herself from the most extremist views that his father sustained. This process has been named 'de-demonization' and has helped the party to soften its image and broaden its electoral support. This has included replacing the of the organization from Front National to Rassemblement National. Thanks to this, Marine Le Pen managed to win the first round of the presidential elections in both 2017 and 2022 only to be defeated by Emmanuel Macron both times in the second round.

There is little difference between the ideology of the old Front National under Jean Marie and that of the new Rassemblement National under Marine Le Pen. For much of its life, the party has advocated a simplistic rhetoric that focused on anti-immigrant, anti-establishment and nationalist claims. As such, the party depicts French society as infected by foreign influences and governed by corrupt elites. The FN includes these vices in an ethnocentric worldview, a worldview which argues that the nation should be primarily reserved for people of a certain type: individuals who share the same ethnicity, history, religion and identity (Hainsworth, 2008). Essentially, this ethnocentric worldview turns into a narrative that centers on anti-foreigner and anti-immigrant positions not rarely related to unemployment, instability and protectionism. Since the 1970s, anti-immigration has been the guide of the Front National's rhetoric, ideology and political campaigns. During most of Jean Marie Le

Pen's presidency, anti-immigration or xenophobia were the central themes of the party program; all other policy areas were seen through an anti-immigration lens.

However, there are also differences in the popular rhetoric between Le Pen father and daughter, the party under Marine Le Pen has in fact replaced her father's radical statements with a much more populist language. The variation in the degree of populism is visible in the two most recent presidential programs. For example, Jean Marie Le Pen's 2007 electoral platform adopted a pseudo-scientific style, presented numerous data and statistics and there were no direct references to Jean Marie Le Pen himself. (Stockemer, 2017).

On the contrary, Marine Le Pen's 2012 presidential program contained all the populist components. First, it was not presented as a party program but rather as Marine's 'personal' project, which presents Marine Le Pen as a 'crisis manager' and as a leader of the people who could rebuild France. This personification starts with the title of the program: 'My Project, for France and for the French people' and 'Marine Le Pen, the voice of the people, the spirit of France'. Throughout the program it is the charismatic leader who is the focus of all attention, and the party is not mentioned (Stockemer, 2017). Marine Le Pen's program also presents a strong anti-elitist stance, from claiming to crash away the corruption, to argue in favor of France's dependency from international organizations. In addition, the program contains other populist measures, including the rise in modest wages, the protection of France's economy against foreign influences and the reward of honest work. In sum, Marine Le Pen presents herself as an outsider to the political system and as an alternative political force promising to restore a genuine people's democracy on a nationalist basis. (Stockemer, 2017).

From this we can easily notice how the National Front resembles those features that we presented earlier while discussing right-wing nationalist parties. From the ethno-nationalist views, the focus on anti-immigration and the exclusionary policies that Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National encouraged, to the centralization of the charismatic leader and the populist measures Marine's Rassemblement National bring forward, we can surely argue that this party can be classified as right-wing nationalist.

2.3 The case of VOX

The case of Spain is a little different from the French example of Front National but nonetheless interesting to observe to have a better sense of nationalist right-wing parties. The party that we are going to analyze here is VOX which has a much more recent history compared to the FN. This party was in fact created in 2013 during a period of harsh economic crisis from the splitting of the Spanish main conservative party, Partido Popular (PP). The party presented itself as the answer to the multiple issues the state was facing. VOX criticized the PP for not being protective enough of Spain's national

identity and territorial integrity. This theme is crucial in Spanish politics where, because of its complex history, the call for local autonomy and devolution is particularly loud in some areas of the country. Catalonia, more than anyone else in Spain, has urged the central government to accept its requests for an official referendum that would allow the community to declare its independence. These requests have been denied multiple times by Madrid and have led to several street demonstrations in the region, but tensions have broken out all over the country.

These frictions became the central point upon which VOX would structure its entire party platform. However, VOX remained an electoral outsider until the regional elections of Andalusia in 2018, when it obtained more than 10% of the vote and became a fundamental player for the formation of a government. This electoral success was later confirmed in the 2019 general elections. In April 2019, in fact, VOX secured more than 2.5 million votes, an amount that increased substantially in the elections that took place later in November of the same year, reaching almost 15% of the popular vote making VOX the third political force of the country (Marcos-Marne, 2021).

The main trait that identifies this political party as right-wing nationalist is its defense of the unity of a single Spanish nation, the advocacy of patriotism and the appeal to Spanish symbols and culture. The party's core political battle revolves around the issue of political centralization of the Spanish state and shows particular contempt for Spain's own peripheral national identities and leaders in Catalonia, the Basque Country, and elsewhere. Therefore, VOX's primary antagonists are "those threatening their idea of Spain from the inside" (Marcos-Marne, 2021). The first 10 measures in its 2018 manifesto, come under the heading "Spain, Unity & Sovereignty", including the suspension of Catalonia's autonomy, the suspension of parties, associations, and organizations that seek to "destroy the territorial unity of the nation", the protection of national symbols, and the establishment of a unitary state (Barrio, 2021).

This clearly indicates the nativist character that VOX embraces. Nativism is "a movement whose main objective is to restrict immigrants flow to maintain the cultural, racial, religious or political status quo in a country, region or city". The requirements for it to be successful entail creating "an internal or external clear convincing enemy", eliminate "the internal differences at a social and ideological level in the heart of the "native" population and construct "a categorical and unchallenged narrative of belonging" (Guia, 2016). This is blatantly pursued by trying to antagonize regional actors that push for autonomy and decentralization, together with strong backlash in relation to closing borders and expelling migrants.

A clear example of this took place in the 2021 election for the Madrid regional parliament when the party hung a poster in the commuter train station that displayed an elderly, white woman and a hooded, masked, dark-skinned youth, with the false statement: "A MENA (a depreciative acronym

for unaccompanied foreign minors) 4,700 Euros a month. Your grandmother 426-euro pension/month. VOX. Protect Madrid. Vote safe” (Marcos-Marne, 2021). Differently from the National Front, VOX displays an inferior degree of populism in its political discourses even though it endorses a Manichean view of society that distinguishes between the in group, the Spaniards, and the out-group, everyone else. We can thus easily argue that VOX too fits in the category of right-wing nationalist parties for its nativist positions, the appeal to patriotism and the exclusionary policies that it endures.

CHAPTER 3

NATIONALIST LEFT-WING PARTIES

3.1 Common features of Nationalist Left-Wing parties.

Nationalism on the left side of the political spectrum is a relatively recent phenomenon worth investigating particularly for its dynamic relationship with right-wing nationalism. The third chapter will attempt to do so and will be structured just like the second one. To begin with, we will highlight different features that seem to pertain to nationalist left-wing parties, soon after, our attention will be directed towards the two political organizations, the French La France Insoumise and the Spanish Podemos, that will help us verify whether these display the characteristics that we are going to describe hereafter. This will allow us to carry out a comparison between left and right nationalist political parties to observe similarities and differences between the two.

Having said this, we need to remember that one of the main pillars of left-wing politics has traditionally always been the upholding of internationalism, especially in Western Europe following the end of the Second World War. The principle of cooperation between states, the promotion of international organizations such as the United Nations and the openness of borders are among the strongholds of internationalism which clearly break away from most of the ideas that nationalism endorses.

For these reasons, it may seem unlikely to find nationalist stances within left-wing parties but as we are going to see nationalism has come to be present also on the other side of the political spectrum due to different factors. A major role here is in fact played by the leftist opposition to the neoliberal system created with the institution of the Bretton-Woods regime and, even more, after the end of the Cold War.

The hostility towards this neoliberal economic model propelled by the United States has led in some cases to left-wing parties assuming nationalist positions framed under a Eurosceptic dimension. This corresponds to radical left-wing party positions on the European Union which they view as an imperialist power contradicting the basic principles of autonomy and self-determination. Some of these parties perceive the European Union as a mean for elite and great power domination at the expense of the lower social classes. (Halikiopoulou, 2012). They tend to support a foreign policy that connects the EU with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), denounce all military involvement as Western imperialism and oppose austerity measures enforced by European and other international institutions in the aftermath of the financial crisis that started in 2008.

Moreover, they are strong critics of all other political organizations which they describe as led by corrupt and privileged elites collaborating with the dominant imperialist powers of the European Union. Nationalist left-wing parties are in fact skeptical towards the Union as they perceive it to be a vehicle of great power intervention and imperialism and a threat to the territorial integrity of the nation-state. (Halikiopoulou, 2012). Thus, a first element from which we can observe the nationalist attitudes of left-wing parties is their Euroscepticism displayed under the form of anti-imperial, anti-neoliberal and anti-establishment arguments. This inevitably leads to the other key nationalist feature showed by left-wing parties which is populism.

Populism is fundamental to fully understand the nationalist narrative that left-wing parties have started to embrace. Here, leaders of leftist political organizations tried to overcome the traditional understanding of nationalism by proposing the idea of a new patriotism in progressive and social terms. This attempt to re-signify the term homeland, patria or nation is pursued through “a conceptualization of the nation or the political community with an explicit emphasis on social justice and equality”. (Custodi, 2017) Here, national pride and dignity are not linked to language or ethnic belonging, but rather to solidarity, hard work, and care for the common good. The patriotism endorsed by these parties is a form of non-ethnic nationalism that unites the leftist focus on social issues with the ‘people-elite’ dichotomy and the moral components of populism.

For this reason, many speak of civic nationalism when referring to the kind of nationalism expressed by these parties that diametrically opposes ethnic nationalism, usually associated with right-wing parties. Civic nationalism is concerned with the exercise of territorial sovereignty by people with a shared political identity. The focus here is on rights, duties, and values of citizenship with no regard for any ethnic or cultural divergences among the people. Ethnic nationalism, on the opposite end, is characterized by a sense of belonging based on culture, heritage and language. Shared cultural traits and traditions are seen as manifestations of familial connections, the most common cultural elements in this category are linguistic, religious, or racial forms of identity (Roshwald, 2018).

All of these are among the characteristics that we identified in relation to nationalist left-wing parties, and we are now going to seek hints of these in the political organizations that we picked to study.

3.2 The case of Podemos.

Podemos is a Spanish political party with an interesting history that deserves to be recalled in order to have a deeper understanding of the political organization led by Pablo Iglesias and the framework in which it was created.

Podemos emerged in an environment of economic and political crisis, of which the new party quickly took advantage. Spanish politics has been characterized in recent times by high levels of uncertainty thus allowing a new political party to rise by appealing to that fear and insecurity. We could link Podemos's electoral success to different reasons that enabled the party to increase its influence in a short amount of time. One of the motives was the economic crisis of 2008 which harshly hit Spain lowering the GDP of the country, skyrocketing the rate of unemployment while also widening the economic inequalities between the different social classes. Spain is in fact one of the countries in which social inequalities have increased the most, as the result of an underdeveloped and poorly redistributive welfare state (Sola, 2018).

This financial crisis gradually turned into a political one that in 2011 led to the birth of a social movement called 'Los Indignados' which firmly opposed the austerity policies passed in the years following the crisis. Together with anger and fear caused by the economic regression, a sense of mistrust invaded Spanish citizens who began to accuse the country's politicians of being corrupt and greedy. From this political and financial crisis Podemos was born as a political force years after in 2014, thanks to a group of academics, journalists and social activists.

They published a manifesto with the purpose of "converting the indignation into political change" by developing a political platform capable of presenting a candidacy at the European Parliamentary elections four months later. In March of the same year, the group was registered as a political party and by April Podemos had collected the required support to present their candidacy.

In only four months it was able to gain 7.9% of the votes, which resulted in five European Parliament seats (Pavia, 2016). Later on, it established itself as the third political force in the country during the general elections of 2015 and 2016, where it came only a few votes behind the Spanish Socialist Workers Party.

Now, turning our attention to the nationalist features of left-wing parties that we previously mentioned it appears clear how Podemos resemble those. Analyzing the party leader's discourses and the party platform it emerges clearly a patriotic and populist narrative associated with a strong anti-austerity and anti-imperialist dimension that manifests itself in the form of a sharp criticism of the neoliberal European Union (Chazel, 2021).

This has been clear since the first party conference in 2014, when the party leader Iglesias said that: 'it is not the political elite that makes the country work, nor does it make the trains run on time, or the hospitals and the schools work. It is the people. This is our patria. (Iglesias, 2014a).

The common Manichean populist distinction between the 'patriots', the working class and the lower social strata, and the tax-evading rich together with the corrupt politicians, thus began to be made with the latter being labelled 'enemies of Spain' (Iglesias, 2015c) and 'traitors of the patria' (Iglesias, 2019b) where patria is intended as 'the community that allows us to dream a better world' (Custodi, 2017). The role of pride is essential here since it is used to build a subaltern idea of nationality based on classic left-wing ideals such as the care for the welfare state.

The protection of welfare state policies is in fact the safeguard of equality for all citizens and of the integration of the poorest people in the homeland, according to Podemos. For instance, Iglesias says to be 'proud of being a Spaniard' because in his patria 'the best healthcare is public and looks after everyone' (Iglesias, 2015c). This is the typical way of articulation through which the concept of nationality is reformulated with left-wing values. Unlike right-wing populist parties, national recognition is not based on ethnicity, culture and the idealization of past national greatness.

The patria is seen as a community of citizens who decide to live together under one law, regardless of their background or their cultural roots. That is why Podemos chose "La patria eres tú" (The homeland is you) as its main slogan during the 2016 general election. (Chazel, 2021).

This also indicates Podemos' position on regional identities and the issue of territorial organization that are so relevant in Spanish politics as we saw in the case of VOX. The party, in fact, argues in favor of plurinationality, where the real patria in the words of Iglesias is: 'the community that ensures that all citizens are protected, and that national diversity is respected'. (Custodi, 2017).

The adoption of plurinationality lead Podemos to enhance regional political identities as indicated by the alliance with the Galician nationalists formed during the 2015 and 2016 general elections. Therefore, Podemos' reformulation of the concept of the nation corresponds to the idea of a community that protects its members from neoliberal globalization and against the collapse of social protections. This community should be understood in a more general framework of the opposition against austerity policies implemented in most European countries following the 2008 financial crisis

(Chazel, 2021). This is linked to the other nationalist attribute that we cited earlier concerning left-wing parties which is their skepticism towards the European Union.

In the case of Podemos this takes the form of an accusation of the suppression of southern European countries by northern Europe, especially Germany, included in the anti-establishment and anti-neoliberal party rhetoric. Podemos's leader Pablo Iglesias during his fifteen months as a member of the European Parliament has strongly criticized the functioning of the Union.

Among the reasons for this criticism, we find the role of European institutions in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the refugee crisis, the call for more transparency and more sovereignty for member countries to oppose the pressure for austerity measures coming from Bruxelles.

Hence, we can argue that the Spanish political party emerged in 2014 seems to adopt a nationalist rhetoric even though it is placed on the left side of the political spectrum. The attempt to re-signify the term "homeland", the patriotic narrative characterized by its anti-austerity dimension; and the anti-imperialist facet manifesting itself in the form of a heavy criticism of the neoliberal European Union are all indicators of Podemos's nationalism.

3.3 The case of La France Insoumise.

The French organization La France Insoumise (FI) shares with Podemos, among other things, its foundation as it originates from a movement that started to emerge in 2016. The front-runner of this movement, the former leader of the Socialist Party, Jean-Luc Mélenchon ran for the French presidency in 2012 with the Left Front gaining 11% of the popular vote, ranking fourth behind Holland, Sarkozy and Marine Le Pen. He ran again in 2017 and 2022, after the creation of La France Insoumise who had already won 17 seats in the National assembly and formed a parliamentary group, and even though he got defeated both times by Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen he was able to increase its share of supporters to 23% in the first round of voting.

To fully grasp the nationalist stance that this party displays we must take into account the French historical context that has led left-wing parties to a glorification of the nation which differs from the one based on plurinationality that Podemos endorses.

From the 1789 revolution onwards, national sovereignty in France started to assert itself in opposition to the absolute monarchic regime that ruled the country up until that point.

Thus, the French conception of the nation contrasts the more ethnic views of the nation based on culture, language and blood. The French left-wing parties have historically, but particularly during

the 20th century as a response to the Nazi threat, supported the idea of the nation characterized by its antifascist dimension, closely associated with the defense of the Republic. National sovereignty therefore supersedes regional identities that have much more political relevance in other states such as Spain. The leader of La France Insoumise is a member of this Republican left-wing tradition and is particularly committed to the respect of national sovereignty, the principle of secularism and to the equality of all citizens in the eyes of the law, which can be considered as the basic principles of the French conception of the nation (Chazel, 2021). Mélenchon sees the unity of the Republic, France's 'one and indivisible' according to the Constitution of the 5th Republic as untouchable, if not sacrosanct. (Marlière, 2019).

In France the mobilization of national symbols and references to the nation usually belongs to right-wing parties, such as the Front National, hence we can find here an attempt to redefine the concept of the nation just like we witnessed earlier in the case of Podemos.

For this reason, we can include La France Insoumise's nationalism in that anti-austerity and anti-imperialist leftist narrative that manifests itself under the form of a populist and Eurosceptic rhetoric. Like Pablo Iglesias, Jean-Luc Mélenchon appeals to the defense of welfare state policies as a mean to exalt the nation and to safeguard equality for citizens. Education and public health are thus considered for La France Insoumise a common heritage to be defended, and they are perceived as a reason for national pride (Chazel, 2021). La France Insoumise as we said strongly opposes austerity, and it advocates in favor of economic redistribution, public spending, and state intervention in the economy.

In 2017 Mélenchon's platform "L'avenir en commun" promised to cut socioeconomic inequalities, pledging to eradicate poverty and unemployment, to increase the highest tax rate at 90% and to push for a 100 billion euros state investment plan (Ivaldi, 2019). During the 2017 presidential campaign Mélenchon also developed a patriotic discourse to attract voters traditionally pertaining to Marine Le Pen, an example of this is the adoption of symbols typically used by the far right, the tricolour flag and La Marseillaise, the French national anthem.

This strategy is in fact based on a promotion of a democratic and inclusive conception of the nation that contrasts the ethnocultural nationalism praised by right-wing parties like the Rassemblement National. Regarding the populist attitude of left-wing nationalist parties, we can easily observe that La France Insoumise does not represent an exception.

Mélenchon himself, blatantly declared in an interview in 2010 before the birth of the social movement: 'I don't want to defend myself anymore against the accusation of populism. People are disgusted by the elites. Do they deserve anything better? They should all quit! Am I a populist? Yes I am!' (Mélenchon, 2010b).

The typical populist features can be traced in the leader's discourses: for instance, in the midst of the 2017 elections, Jean-Luc Mélenchon called upon the "era of the people" accusing the political class of being selfish and corrupt. Five years earlier, he had already run a strong populist campaign against the "financial oligarchy" and the "political elite," claiming that "all politicians should go away!" (Birnbaum 2012b).

After that in 2017, he promised to "sweep away the oligarchy and abolish the privileges of the political caste," notably denouncing political corruption and the collusion with financial powers. According to Mélenchon in fact, the elite consist of a homogeneous economic, political, and financial oligarchy. On the other hand, people are seen as a variety of social groups at the bottom of society and to these groups Jean-Luc Mélenchon appeals to in his discourses (Ivaldi, 2019).

Moreover, concerning the Eurosceptic dimension we notice that La France Insoumise often criticizes the Union adopting the same language as Podemos, framed in the shape of anti-imperialist and anti-austerity arguments.

France suffered greatly from the 2008 financial crisis as much as Spain did and was subject to budgetary rigor policies and policies of economic liberalization which are considered by FI threats to the social cohesion and national unity of the country. The criticism of austerity policies is therefore linked to a denunciation of European treaties, which are accused of trying to undermine national sovereignty, which as we have seen is central in Mélenchon's world view.

In the lead-up to the 2017 presidential elections, Mélenchon went even further into a harder Eurosceptic standpoint, promising to renegotiate European treaties and threatening to take France out of the European Union if negotiations failed. The 2017 platform opposed what was deemed the 'tyranny' of the Union, suggesting that France should disobey the European treaties to 'preserve the national sovereignty of the French people' (Ivaldi, 2019).

Also, the euro criticism of FI is based on the desire to reaffirm the centrality of France in the European political scene, dominated by Germany. According to Jean-Luc Mélenchon, France should be at the heart of the renegotiation of the European treaties because of its importance and its historical role in the European Union's construction (Chavel, 2021).

For the reasons that we have just presented, it is fair to consider La France Insoumise a left-wing nationalist organization. The Eurosceptic position combined with a strong populist attitude and the effort to glorify the nation through typical left-wing arguments indicates La France Insoumise's closeness to nationalism and will allow us out to carry out a comparison with right-wing nationalist parties in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

COMPARISON

4.1 Similarities between Left-Wing and Right-Wing Nationalist parties.

Our analysis has focused on the use of nationalism that Western European political parties that sit at opposite ends of the political spectrum do. We have in fact noticed that nationalist rhetoric is present also within left-wing parties even though it is widely considered to be a feature of the far right only. To observe nationalist party behavior, we have looked more closely at the cases of France and Spain, two of the most influential Western European countries.

In particular, we have centered our attention around two right-wing and two left-wing French and Spanish political parties that show nationalist traits: VOX, Rassemblement National, Podemos and La France Insoumise. After having demonstrated that all of these display some characteristics of nationalism, we are now in the position to compare right-wing and left-wing nationalist parties allowing us to identify the differences and the similarities between the two.

In this paragraph, we will concentrate on the things that the right and left-wing nationalist parties that we have talked about seem to have in common while later we will focus on the differences. Successively, before considering the conclusions we will carry out the same comparison from a demand side perspective. We will attempt to distinguish which subsets of the population are drawn towards right-wing or left-wing nationalist parties by looking at different indicators such as the economic conditions or the degree of education.

With this being said, it is important to recall one of the first definitions of nationalism that we provided in the early beginning of this work. We referred to Michael Mann's account of nationalism that he defines: 'as an ideology which asserts the moral, cultural and political primacy' of the nation (Mann, 1996). This entails that nationalists consider the idea of the nation as sacred and as such its role in party discourses, campaign and party platform is central within nationalist political parties.

In turn this means that every political organization that refers to the idea of the nation putting its interest first in their party platform is very likely to be nationalist.

Regardless of the way in which the nation is intended, which as we have seen can be based on ethnocultural beliefs in the Rassemblement National's views or on civic values like in Podemos, all these parties refer to the idea of the homeland and its people as the main recurring theme in their political narratives.

Furthermore, the idealization of the nation and the care for its citizens very often lead nationalist parties to not only overlook the transnational dimension, but to go even further criticizing intergovernmental institutions and the European Union, perceived as a fundamental threat to national sovereignty. From Podemos's idea of plurinationality to Melenchon's republicanism left-wing nationalist parties endorse the idea of a strong nation that contrasts the process of eradication of borders that globalization and internationalism sustain.

As we have noted earlier, Eurosceptic arguments are necessary for nationalist left-wing parties to fuel that anti-austerity and anti-imperialist narrative that is based on the oppressive power of the European Union. On the other hand, for Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National and VOX the protection of national borders is essential to shield the state and its citizens from illegal immigration. For this reason, they hold a sceptic position with regards to the European Union, arguing that their countries should make no sovereignty concessions to Bruxelles since national sovereignty is vested in the Spanish and French people, from whom derive the powers of the state.

For nationalist right-wing party leaders, is much more preferable to have a Europe of strong and sovereign states that defends its borders, its roots and opposes multiculturalism, freedom of movement and mass immigration. In this direction goes the declaration signed this year by fifteen right-wing European parties among which we find VOX and Rassemblement National who publicly criticized the European Union for its federalist ambitions which they argue inevitably lose sight of the people. From this, it is impossible not to mention the last and most important similarity between left-wing and right-wing nationalist political parties: populism.

As we have noted before, populism is defined as a "thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people." (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2012).

As a thin-centered ideology populism needs something to latch on to and in this case nationalism is the perfect match. We have encountered the typical people-centered populist rhetoric in all the different parties that we have analyzed regardless of them being left or right-winged.

Populism is thus the ultimate binding force among nationalist parties; however, it manifests itself under different forms based on the party's priorities and political orientation. We are going to investigate how the use of populism changes from left to right in the next section as it represents an important differing feature between nationalist parties.

For now, it is important to recall the main identifying characteristics of populism put forward by Mudde that all nationalist parties share. People-centrism refers to what extent "the people" are put in the focus of attention in a politician's discourse and the belief that politics should follow their 'general

will'. The other fundamental aspect of populism is the Manichean view of the world, the dichotomy between the two extremes, the 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite'.

To sum up what we have just said in this section, the key element that links nationalist left and right-wing European parties, even though it assumes different forms from one political party to the other, is populism together with sceptic positions on the European Union and the belief in the primacy of the nation over every other political aspect.

4.2 Differences between Left-Wing and Right-Wing Nationalist parties.

After having discussed the things that right-wing and left-wing nationalist parties share, it has now arrived the moment to reflect upon the differences between the two.

One of the biggest divergences that arise here is without a doubt the way in which nationalist left-wing and right-wing parties understand the concept of the nation from which the whole of their party policies stem. Right-wing parties tend to favor the idea of ethnic nationalism that sees the nation as something created by a shared ethnic and cultural identity. In practice, members of a community with the same language, religion, customs, and traditions are united and give life to the nation. This in turn means that within ethnic nationalism the state must necessarily identify with a single ethnic group, represent it and advocate for its interests.

Inevitably this understanding of the nation leads to exclusionary policies that distinguish between citizens and immigrants on a purely ethnic basis. These exclusionary policies are central in nationalist right-wing parties' political campaigns and correspond to proposals such as shutting off national borders, making the process for acquiring citizenship harder and refusing to host migrants rescued in the Mediterranean Sea. We have witnessed this especially when looking at the case of the Front National in France but also in Spain VOX exhibits an exclusionary attitude versus the non-Spanish. Contrarily, left-wing nationalist parties tend to endorse a different interpretation of the concept of nationalism.

Civic nationalism, in fact, ignores the ethnic dimension and develops the notion of nationhood as a political identity built around shared citizenship in a liberal-democratic state. A "civic nation," in this sense, does not need to be brought together by things such as language or culture.

It simply requires willingness from the citizens to uphold their political institutions, and to embrace the liberal principles on which they are funded. Citizenship is open to anyone who shares and lives up to these values. In a civic nation, the protection or promotion of one national culture over others is not an interest of the state (Stilz, 2009). This inclusive approach leads to the safeguarding of human rights, the defense of liberal-democratic values and the support for welfare state policies, as we have noted in the cases of Podemos and La France Insoumise.

The last fundamental difference that we have encountered between left and right nationalist parties is, as we were stating before, the form that the populist rhetoric assumes through the different party discourses. For instance, within Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National, populism presents itself in the form of a communication that is less party-centered and more personalized.

That is, focused on the party leader as a person and which, in turn, emphasizes the 'charismatic' relationship between the leader and the voters of the party (Stockemer, 2017).

Also, the typical populist Manichean view of the world of right-wing parties differs from the one on the supported by the left. As we have said, in the case of Marine Le Pen her party makes the clear distinction between the French people and the immigrants, defining the idea of the nation based on values such as culture, language and ethnicity. Likewise in the case of VOX, populism merges with nativism, hence people are essentially divided into two groups: those who belong to the national community, the Spaniards, and those who do not. The second ones are perceived as a real threat to the homogeneity of the native group and the attention on ethnocultural values is essential here too (Vampa, 2020).

Furthermore, on the other end of the political spectrum populism plays an essential role for party platforms and language too even though under different forms. For Podemos, the Manichean dichotomy is in fact not between citizens and immigrants but between the tax-evading billionaires and the 'patriots', the Spanish citizens belonging to the poorer social classes. The emphasis on ethnicity and immigration is thus here abandoned and substituted by an idea of the nation based on social leftist values such as the support for the welfare state. Similarly, for La France Insoumise the distinction does not follow ethnocultural values but social ones. Mélenchon in facts stresses the division between the so-called financial oligarchs, the 'elite' and the poorer French citizens, the 'people'.

4.3 Electoral support for Nationalist Parties: A Demand-Side analysis

After having identified similarities and differences between left-wing and right-wing nationalist parties we now turn our attention towards the electoral support that these parties enjoy. We are going to carry out an analysis from a demand-side perspective: we will attempt to distinguish which segments of the population vote for left-wing or right-wing nationalist parties and why. Starting off with nationalist right-wing parties, concerning the demand side many studies have been conducted to explain the electoral support that these parties seem to receive.

Regarding the sociological model, that consider individual background characteristics as essential for right-wing voting, across Western European countries, unemployed people were particularly more likely to vote for nationalist right-wing parties. (Lubbers et al, 2002).

By looking at the economic conditions in which a state find itself, such as the rate of inflation or the level of unemployment, it is found that the bigger the share of non-European Union citizens living in a country, the higher the number of votes for the right-wing parties. Also, people who recognize immigrants as competitors are more likely to express exclusionary reactions including voting for the right. (Scheepers et al, 2001).

Moreover, we notice once again that economic element that is more closely linked to the success of nationalist right-wing parties is unemployment (Jackman, 1996). As we have mentioned earlier, the attention of nationalist right-wing parties has for the most part revolved around immigrants and foreign workers. This concern towards immigrants leads to a political scapegoating that finds more ground when jobs are scarce, and the immigrants can more easily be depicted as the ones 'stealing' jobs. For example, through an impactful political slogan, 'two million immigrants are the cause of two million French people out of work', the French National Front criticized the French political class for its ineffective reaction to the problem of unemployment (Jackman, 1996).

Next, with regards to the political explanations of variations in right-wing voting we notice once again that where the political climate towards immigration is more restrictive, consensus for nationalist right-wing parties is significantly larger. (Lubbers et al, 2002).

Moreover, it has been well documented that some socio-demographic groups have demonstrated to be more likely to vote for the parties of the far right than others. A first example in fact is the significant gender gap in the support for the far right that has been reported, with male voters exhibiting a greater inclination to vote for right-wing nationalist parties than their female counterparts (Harteveld,2015).

Similarly, previous studies have indicated there exist that age plays a role here, with both younger and older voters more willing to vote for far right than other age groups. An explanation of this willingness of both young and old voters to vote for these parties could be related to these people's interests and their access to welfare. Since young and old voters have a different weight on the

welfare system, they tend to see immigrants as competitors more than people of other age groups do. Moving our focus now to the other end of the political spectrum, it is very interesting to see which segment of the population feels represented by nationalist left-wing parties and how this differentiates from the right. A first element that characterizes supporters of these parties is the high level of Euroscepticism that voters display. It is hence legitimate to say that nationalist left-wing parties seem to benefit from the fear of globalization and modernization (March, 2015).

Furthermore, studies have found that in some cases unemployed people or citizens with a lower or middle income may be more likely to vote for nationalist left-wing parties than employed people and those with a higher income. The same holds for members of the working class that traditionally support left-wing ideologies, since reducing income inequality is at the core of their political belief (Visser, 2014). The level of education here too plays an interesting role; lower educated individuals are less likely to support the left than the more educated. This may reflect the tendency of people with a higher education to subscribe to values that are more progressive or promoted by green parties compared to the lower educated. (Visser, 2014).

In the same way, another thing that emerges here is that non-natives are more likely to support the radical left than natives. Similarly, the absence of religiosity appears to be an important determinant of support for radical left ideologies. Non-religious people are more likely to support the radical left, compared to religious people (Visser, 2014).

Conclusion

Throughout this work we have tried to carry out a comparison between left-wing and right-wing nationalist parties in Europe using as case studies two countries, France and Spain, where nationalist parties play an important role in the national political scenario.

France and Spain, besides being among the biggest and most relevant Member States of the European Union, are two very interesting cases to study due to the presence of nationalist parties on both sides of the political spectrum. These left-wing and right-wing nationalist parties allow us to describe the characteristics that makes us label them as nationalist and then to compare them to identify the similarities and the differences that characterize the two.

We have begun this comparative analysis by providing a general definition of the concept of nationalism, which is essential to fully understand the nationalist stances that the parties that we have decided to study show. Through the first chapter we have, at first, mentioned some of the main scholars that have attempted to provide an interpretation on the meaning of nationalism in politics.

From this, we were then able to outline the main component of nationalism which we identified as the principle of the primacy of the nation over every other political aspect.

Following the general definition of nationalism that we provided, we have gone more in depth trying to understand the political support that nationalist parties seem to enjoy.

Here, we summarized the electoral fortunes of European left-wing and right-wing nationalist parties in recent times and saw how their popular consensus increased in the last years. In the same paragraph we have cared to explain why these parties seem to increase their popularity so much and we have found the 2008 financial crisis to be one of the key reasons behind this.

We have also learned that the insecurity and fear that citizens started to feel after being more economically unstable in the period following 2008 has played an essential role in the electoral success of nationalist parties.

Next, we turned our attention on to right-wing nationalist parties in the second chapter where we started off by tracing the main features that help us recognize these parties as being both right-winged and nationalist. Here, we argued that one of the main things that characterize these kinds of parties is their ethnonationalism which corresponds to an idea of the nation based only on ethnic belonging. This entails an exaggerated support for exclusionary policies and a party rhetoric extremely centered on the issue of immigration. We saw how these parties revolve their party campaigns on topics such as law and order or security often embedded in a party narrative that appeals to the fear and mistrust of citizens.

Another element that we have found to be critical for right-wing nationalist parties is populism that due to its Manichean view of the world facilitates the distinction between citizens pertaining to a certain ethnicity and immigrants. Populism on the right side of the political spectrum also assumes the form of a leader-centered communication where the party's relevance almost fades away in favor of the charismatic leader.

Additionally, we looked closely at the French case of Front National or Rassemblement National to validate our claims. We pointed out, in fact, how the party formed by Jean Marie Le Pen and now led by his daughter present the aforementioned characteristics. The communication of the party is so centered around the leader that the party program came to be presented in the last elections as Marine Le Pen's personal project. Also, Rassemblement National addresses the issue of immigration with regular frequency in its party discourses and advocates for a protection of the French citizens' interests against refugees and irregular migrants.

We carried out the same type of analysis for the Spanish party VOX and saw how this party too fits in the categorization that we did earlier. The populist attitude displayed by VOX comes under the form of a distinction between the Spaniards and the rest. The dichotomy here rather than being

between immigrants and the Spanish citizens is between these and the members of regional communities that advocate for devolution and more autonomy. The issue of decentralization is fundamental in the Spanish political debate and VOX takes advantage of this by assuming a strong position on the topic. The party has always called for a solid central government and has justified its standpoint with strong nativist arguments.

After that, we shifted our focus on to nationalist parties on the left side of the political spectrum in the third chapter and we picked as case studies La France Insoumise and Podemos.

We attempted to extract the key features that make these parties left-wing and nationalist just like we did for the right in the chapter before. We found that the traditional far left opposition to the neoliberal economic model plays a major part here in the nationalist attitude of left-wing parties.

The hostility towards neoliberalism necessarily leads to the other characterizing element of these parties which is their Euroscepticism. The European Union is in fact perceived as an incarnation of those neoliberal values and as such is seen as an oppressing power that has the goal of undermining the national sovereignty of Member States.

Together with Euroscepticism we have also found populism to be essential for the success of left-wing nationalist parties and the effectiveness of their party's rhetoric.

Populism is important as it enables left-wing parties to try and create a new idea of the nation that overcomes the traditional ethnic view supported by the right and builds a new understanding of the concept of the nation based on left-wing values such as the care for the welfare state.

Next, we have looked for a confirm of these features in the parties that we have picked to examine. In the case of the Spanish party led by Pablo Iglesias, Podemos, we have recognized a populist narrative associated with strong anti-austerity and anti-imperialist arguments in the form of harsh critics towards the neoliberal European Union. The typical Manichean populist distinction is hence here between the working class, the lower social classes and the 'enemies of Spain': the tax-evading rich members of society mixed with the corrupt politicians.

Within Podemos we have also found the effort to reformulate the idea of the nation that here corresponds to the idea of a community that protects its members from neoliberal globalization and against the collapse of social protections.

Similarly, the case of La France Insoumise is very interesting as here too the elements of left-wing nationalist parties can be identified rather easily. Mélenchon's nationalism like Iglesias' one exalts welfare state measures and is embedded in a populist strategy of communication.

La France Insoumise's discourse is full of references to "the people" which corresponds once again to the French working class opposed to the financial elite, identified as the enemy to defeat. Moreover, the movement party of Jean-Luc Mélenchon also tries to redefine the idea of the nation by substituting

the ethnic and blood-related claims of the right with a glorification of the Republic characterized by its anti-fascist dimension. The veneration of the French Republic comes through the adoption of national symbols traditionally used by the far right and utilized by Mélenchon to deprive right-wing parties of the patriotic narrative.

From this we can quite straightforwardly see how the Eurosceptic arguments come as a natural consequence of this blatant Republicanism. The European Union is in fact harshly criticized and accused to be an oppressing power that threatens the French national sovereignty.

Finally, the fourth and last chapter deals with the comparison of the two kind of nationalist parties that we described, left-wing and right-wing.

This is arguably the most important part of this work as it allows to observe differences and similarities that nationalist parties demonstrate in France and Spain.

Among the similarities encountered between the two we have noticed how the first big element that left-wing and right-wing nationalist parties share is the sceptic attitude toward the European Union. Albeit with different motivations, we have come across Eurosceptic position on both ends of the political spectrum. For the right-winged parties the Union is a danger especially for its federalist aspirations that represent for VOX and Rassemblement National a threat to the national homogeneity of their countries. They also argue against the freedom of movement and the openness of borders that are two founding principle of the European Union. On the other hand, for left-wing parties, as we said, criticizing the EU is necessary to fuel that anti-austerity and anti-neoliberal narrative from which Podemos and La France Insoumise were firstly built.

Another massive similarity that we met is populism which is the ultimate link between nationalist parties: populism. This allows a people-centered rhetoric that distinguishes between citizens and non-citizens and builds on the fear and insecurity that members of society feel.

Regarding the differences, we have stressed the concepts of civic and ethnic nationalism to underline the interpretative differences that left and right parties provide when defining what is the nation. The other major point of departure is the way in which populism is interpreted and utilized to breach into people's feelings and appeal to very specific subsets of the population.

In conclusion after having examined different nationalist parties very different from one another, is fair to say that these share some important characteristics and although they are sitting at opposite ends of the political spectrum, they have much more in common that one would expect.

Bibliography:

- Kis, Danilo. "On nationalism." *Performing Arts Journal* 18.2 (1996): 13-17.
- Hutchins, Rachel D., and Daphne Halikiopoulou. "Enemies of liberty? Nationalism, immigration, and the framing of terrorism in the agenda of the Front National." *Nations and Nationalism* 26.1 (2020): 67-84.
- Custodi, J. (2017). *Populism, left-wing populism and patriotism*. Master thesis, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain
- Halikiopoulou, Daphne, Kyriaki Nanou, and Sofia Vasilopoulou. "The paradox of nationalism: The common denominator of radical right and radical left euroscepticism." *European journal of political research* 51.4 (2012): 504-539.
- Custodi, J. *Nationalism and populism on the left: The case of Podemos*. *Nations and Nationalism*. 2021; 27: 705– 720. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12663>
- Florian Bieber (2018) *Is Nationalism on the Rise? Assessing Global Trends*, *Ethnopolitics*, 17:5, 519-540, DOI: [10.1080/17449057.2018.1532633](https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2018.1532633)
- Millard, Gregory. "The jealous god: A problem in the definition of nationalism." *Ethnicities* 14.1 (2014): 3-24.
- Chazel, Laura, and Vincent Dain. "Left-Wing Populism and Nationalism: A Comparative Analysis of the Patriotic Narratives of Podemos and France insoumise" *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 15.2 (2021): 73-94.
- Nakano, Takeshi. "Theorising economic nationalism." *Nations and Nationalism* 10.3 (2004): 211-229.
- Halikiopoulou, Daphne, and Tim Vlandas. "What is new and what is nationalist about Europe's new nationalism? Explaining the rise of the far right in Europe." *Nations and nationalism* 25.2 (2019): 409-434.
- Polyakova, Alina, and Neil Fligstein. "Is European integration causing Europe to become more nationalist? Evidence from the 2007–9 financial crisis." *Journal of European Public Policy* 23.1 (2016): 60-83.

- Rivera, Ellen, and M. Davis. "Dissecting Identity & Democracy, the EU's new far-right super group." *IERES Occasional Papers* 3 (2019): 27
- Rydgren, Jens. "Radical right-wing parties in Europe: What's populism got to do with it?." *Journal of Language and Politics* 16.4 (2017): 485-496.
- Padurean, Patricia. "The European Union and Nationalism." *International Studies* (2010).
- Lubbers, Marcel, Mérove Gijsberts, and Peer Scheepers. "Extreme right-wing voting in Western Europe." *European journal of political research* 41.3 (2002): 345-378.
- Stockemer, Daniel, and Mauro Barisione. "The 'new' discourse of the Front National under Marine Le Pen: A slight change with a big impact." *European Journal of Communication* 32.2 (2017): 100-115.
- Barrio, Astrid, Sonia Alonso Sáenz de Oger, and Bonnie N. Field. "Vox Spain: The Organisational challenges of a new radical right party." *Politics and Governance* 9.4 (2021): 240-251.
- Marcos-Marne, Hugo, Carolina Plaza-Colodro, and Ciaran O'Flynn. "Populism and new radical-right parties: The case of VOX." (2021)
- March, Luke, and Charlotte Rommerskirchen. "Out of left field? Explaining the variable electoral success of European radical left parties." *Party politics* 21.1 (2015): 40-53.
- Sola, Jorge, and César Rendueles. "Podemos, the upheaval of Spanish politics and the challenge of populism." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 26.1 (2018): 99-116.
- Roshwald, Aviel. "Civic and ethnic nationalism." *Willy Online Library* (2015).

- Pavía, José M., Anselm Bodoque, and Joaquín Martín. "The birth of a new party: Podemos, a hurricane in the Spanish crisis of trust." *Open Journal of Social Sciences* 4.09 (2016): 67.
- Iglesias, P. (2014a). Speech at the opening session of the first party congress (Asamblea ciudadana Sí se puede). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S24WziuL84w>
- Iglesias, P. (2015c). Speech at the closing rally of the Podemos national campaign for the 2015 general election. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n52IF2_J9_I&t=1344s
- Iglesias, P. (2019b). Speech at La Rioja Podemos rally. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIY77xQT_n8
- Mélenchon, Jean-Luc (2010b) *Populiste Moi? J'assume!* L'Express, 16 September. Available at: http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/melenchon-populistemoi-j-assume_919603.html (28 August 2017).
- Marlière, Philippe. "Jean-Luc Mélenchon and France Insoumise: the manufacturing of populism." *The populist radical left in Europe*. Routledge, 2019. 93-112.
- Ivaldi, Gilles. "Populism in France." *Populism around the world*. Springer, Cham, 2019. 27-47.
- Mann, Michael. "The emergence of modern European nationalism." *Poznan Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities* 48 (1996).
- Stockemer, Daniel, and Mauro Barisione. "The 'new' discourse of the Front National under Marine Le Pen: A slight change with a big impact." *European Journal of Communication* 32.2 (2017): 100-115.
- Vampa, Davide. "Competing forms of populism and territorial politics: the cases of Vox and Podemos in Spain." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 28.3 (2020): 304-321.

- Stilz, Anna. "Civic nationalism and language policy." *Philosophy & public affairs* 37.3 (2009): 257-292.
- Jackman, Robert W., and Karin Volpert-"Conditions favouring parties of the extreme right in Western Europe." *British Journal of Political Science* 26.4 (1996): 501-521.
- Hartevelde, Eelco, et al. "The gender gap in populist radical-right voting: examining the demand side in Western and Eastern Europe." *Patterns of Prejudice* 49.1-2 (2015): 103-134.
- Visser, Mark, et al. "Support for radical left ideologies in Europe." *European journal of political research* 53.3 (2014): 541-558.

Summary In Italian / Sintesi in Italiano

L'obiettivo di questo elaborato è quello di studiare ed analizzare differenze e similitudini che partiti nazionalisti sia di destra che di sinistra mostrano, prendendo come esempi due paesi fondamentali all'interno del panorama europeo come la Francia e la Spagna.

In Europa il nazionalismo ha ricoperto un ruolo centrale durante il secolo scorso mentre invece dopo il 1945 e ancor di più in seguito alla caduta dell'Unione Sovietica nel 1991 molti esperti si sono precipitati a considerarlo come un fenomeno politico appartenente al passato.

All'interno di questo lavoro viene però argomentato il contrario, si sottolinea infatti il recente maggior seguito dei partiti nazionalisti e si citano i successi elettorali di questi i quali hanno recentemente accresciuto il proprio consenso in Europa, rendendo il nazionalismo un argomento di nuovo centrale all'interno dei dibattiti pubblici nazionali. Inoltre, i partiti politici nazionalisti sono spesso associati erroneamente solo con la destra, nonostante, anche se sicuramente in maniera minore, anche a sinistra abbiamo visto emergere e vincere seggi parlamentari a partiti nazionalisti.

Per questo si è ritenuto fosse utile condurre un'analisi su questi partiti per osservare quali segmenti della popolazione attraggono, su quali temi si concentrano ed infine quali differenze sussistono tra i

due. Per facilitare tutto questo abbiamo deciso di scegliere come riferimenti due partiti nazionalisti francesi e spagnoli, di destra (Front National, VOX) e di sinistra (France Insoumise e Podemos) per vedere quali elementi avessero in comune e quali invece no.

Il primo capitolo prova a dare una definizione concreta del termine nazionalismo: vengono riportate le interpretazioni degli studiosi più influenti che negli anni si sono cimentati nel definire questo concetto.

Dopo aver sottolineato le maggiori componenti del nazionalismo e le principali definizioni che diversi autori hanno dato nel corso del tempo, viene identificata come caratteristica fondamentale la supremazia della nazione su tutti gli altri aspetti politici. Di conseguenza questo sottintende un'attenzione maggiore verso gli interessi dei propri cittadini e una minor considerazione della dimensione transnazionale.

Al tentativo di definire il concetto di nazionalismo segue un'analisi delle ragioni dietro il crescente seguito dei partiti nazionalisti registrati negli ultimi anni in Europa. Qui vengono identificati diversi fattori legati alla crescita di questi partiti e si può notare come uno di questi sia senza dubbio la crisi finanziaria del 2007/2008. Questa sembra aver diffuso soprattutto nei membri appartenenti alle classi sociali meno abbienti e meno istruite un senso di paura e rabbia che corrisponde sul piano politico ad una maggiore attenzione al tema dell'immigrazione e ad un rinnovato desiderio di lotta a quest'ultima. Questo clima ha inoltre contribuito a generare anche un senso di sfiducia nei confronti dell'Unione Europea ed in generale delle istituzioni internazionali, rinvigorendo la dimensione nazionale e la retorica nazionalista.

Altri elementi legati alla crescita di partiti nazionalisti di destra e di sinistra sono il sistema elettorale, in particolare il proporzionale che rende più facile ottenere seggi a partiti più radicali rispetto al sistema maggioritario ed il ruolo dei media che aiuta la narrativa nazionalista a diffondersi sfruttando il malcontento popolare.

Il terzo ed ultimo paragrafo del primo capitolo si concentra invece sul ruolo del nazionalismo nella formazione di gruppi politici all'interno del Parlamento Europeo.

Qui vengono ripercorse tutte le varie trasformazioni che il maggior gruppo politico nazionalista del Parlamento Europeo ha subito nel corso degli anni fino ad arrivare al gruppo chiamato 'Identità e Democrazia' fondato da Marine Le Pen e Matteo Salvini nel 2019.

Questo gruppo si distingue per il suo marcato Euroscetticismo che si articola in un'opposizione all'allargamento delle competenze della UE e una critica verso le cosiddette velleità federaliste che Bruxelles sembra nascondere agli occhi dei membri di questo gruppo.

Proseguendo, il secondo capitolo è dedicato ai partiti nazionalisti appartenenti al lato destro dello spettro politico. Il primo paragrafo fornisce una descrizione delle caratteristiche principali che questi partiti mostrano e che li contraddistinguono come nazionalisti di destra.

Una piccola introduzione viene fatta per sottolineare come le organizzazioni politiche di destra che abbiamo scelto di analizzare si differenziano da quelle del secolo scorso per essere molto meno radicali e molto più inserite nell'ordine liberal democratico del proprio paese. Il primo elemento caratterizzante che viene menzionato è la visione etnonazionalista che partiti come VOX o Front National sposano.

Il termine etnonazionalismo si riferisce ad una concezione dell'idea di nazione basata soltanto su caratteri etnici e culturali ignorando tutto il resto. Questo inevitabilmente comporta politiche esclusioniste che differenziano tra i membri appartenenti alla etnia maggioritaria e tutti gli altri, principalmente gli immigrati.

Da questa visione deriva gran parte della retorica nazionalista tipica di questi partiti che si concentra molto sui temi della sicurezza e dell'ordine pubblico, messo a repentaglio da un alto tasso criminalità legato all'immigrazione. L'altro elemento che più definisce questi partiti è legato a questa interpretazione del concetto di nazione ed è il populismo.

Questa caratteristica è fondamentale per il successo della retorica nazionalista che è costruita su di una visione del mondo manichea. La tipica dicotomia populista in questo caso non è necessariamente tra il popolo e le 'élite' ma tra immigrati e cittadini 'regolari', inoltre, nel caso dei partiti nazionalisti di destra la componente populista prende anche la forma di una comunicazione 'personalizzata' incentrata sul leader del partito piuttosto che sul partito stesso.

Dopo aver brevemente introdotto queste organizzazioni politiche, i paragrafi seguenti analizzano i casi di VOX e Front National per trovare conferma di ciò che è stato appena detto.

Nel caso dell'organizzazione francese si può osservare facilmente la componente etnonazionalista vista la storica opposizione del Front National all'immigrazione, la libertà di movimento e una spiccata xenofobia mostrata soprattutto dal fondatore del partito, Jean Marie Le Pen.

Anche la matrice populista può essere individuata rapidamente soprattutto per quanto riguarda il caso della figlia di Le Pen, Marine.

Durante la campagna elettorale per le ultime elezioni francesi il programma politico di Rassemblement National è stato presentato come il programma personale della leader e non del suo partito.

Per quanto concerne VOX, la visione manichea del mondo differisce leggermente perché incentrata sulla distinzione tra spagnoli e membri delle comunità che nel paese lottano per una maggiore autonomia, come ad esempio la Catalogna.

Inoltre, nel caso di VOX si è parlato di nativismo, concetto molto vicino al nazionalismo etnico, con il quale si intende un desiderio di proteggere gli interessi degli abitanti nativi contro quelli degli immigrati, il tutto unito a politiche volte a restringere l'immigrazione nel paese.

Una struttura simile può essere trovata all'interno del terzo capitolo che conduce lo stesso tipo di analisi per i partiti nazionalisti di sinistra.

Qui, vengono identificati vari tratti che saranno poi essenziali e necessari per permettere un confronto tra nazionalismo cosiddetto di destra e di sinistra.

Un elemento chiave, dunque, all'interno di queste organizzazioni politiche è il loro Euroscetticismo inteso come atteggiamento critico verso l'Unione Europea per il suo carattere, a detta di questi partiti, imperialista e oppressivo.

La narrativa di organizzazioni come Podemos e France Insoumise, infatti, ruota attorno ad una critica del neoliberalismo come ordinamento politico ed economico all'interno del quale la UE è vista proprio come l'incarnazione di questi valori. Un altro attributo determinante per questi partiti è il loro populismo unito al tentativo di riformulare il concetto di nazione per sottrarlo alla destra ed usarlo a proprio vantaggio. Tradizionalmente, infatti, l'uso di simboli patriottici come la bandiera, l'inno o l'idealizzazione della storia passata sono strumenti storicamente sempre appartenuti ai partiti di destra ma negli ultimi tempi anche partiti di sinistra hanno provato a indebolire il consenso dei propri rivali appellandosi agli stessi temi ma con diverse interpretazioni.

A conferma di questo abbiamo preso come esempio il partito spagnolo Podemos, nato da un movimento popolare del 2011, 'Los Indignados', e guidato da Pablo Iglesias.

Iglesias nei suoi discorsi pubblici fa sempre riferimento alla patria ma a differenza della destra non in termini etnici bensì appigliandosi a valori tipicamente di sinistra come il rispetto dei diritti umani e il sostegno per il welfare state. Per questa ragione abbiamo parlato qui di nazionalismo civico, in completa opposizione con quello etnico supportato dalla destra.

Il nazionalismo civico si distingue per non prendere in considerazione la componente culturale o di sangue ma anzi si sviluppa da un'idea di nazionalità derivante dal pensiero liberale basata sull'ordine democratico.

È da inserire in questa cornice, dunque, il riferimento che il leader di Podemos fa alla patria, la nazione e la sua gente nei suoi interventi pubblici.

Per quanto riguarda la retorica populista, questa è articolata nella distinzione che Iglesias fa tra la 'gente', intesa come la classe operaia spagnola, contro la classe politica corrotta e i ricchi evasori. All'interno del pensiero politico di Podemos si può trovare anche l'altro elemento caratterizzante dei partiti nazionalisti di sinistra, che riguarda lo sguardo critico verso Bruxelles.

L'atteggiamento scettico verso l'Unione Europea da parte di Pablo Iglesias è parte fondante di quella narrativa anti-neoliberale e anti-establishment che critica soprattutto il comportamento della UE in risposta alla crisi economico finanziaria del 2008.

Un discorso simile è stato fatto per quanto riguarda France Insoumise, organizzazione francese guidata da Jean-Luc Mélenchon.

Anche qui si è osservata una posizione estremamente scettica nei confronti dell'Unione, criticata per essere troppo asservita alla Germania e per non lasciare abbastanza spazio alla Francia che a loro detta, per via del suo ruolo storico nella creazione dell'organizzazione, dovrebbe avere un peso maggiore nelle decisioni europee.

Inoltre, si possono notare all'interno della retorica di Mélenchon gli altri elementi tipici dei partiti nazionalisti di sinistra che abbiamo citato in precedenza. La dimensione populista assume qua una forma simile a quella di Podemos che distingue la classe operaia e le 'élite' dominatrici ed oppressive. È anche facilmente identificabile il tentativo di sottrarre il tema della grandezza della patria alla destra esaltando la nazione attraverso una spiccata idealizzazione della Repubblica.

Il nazionalismo di La France Insoumise, infatti, è caratterizzato da un amore per la Repubblica basato sulla sua natura antifascista e liberale dove la marsigliese o la bandiera tricolore sono simboli utilizzati da Mélenchon per descrivere proprio lo splendore francese.

Dopo aver descritto le caratteristiche principali che appartengono a partiti nazionalisti di destra e sinistra ed aver guardato più in profondità a casi specifici per aver conferma di queste, il quarto capitolo si concentra sul confronto tra i due tipi di partiti.

Iniziando dai punti in comune, la prima ovvia considerazione che si è fatta riguarda il carattere nazionalista. In quanto nazionalisti, la supremazia dell'idea di nazione sovrasta tutto il resto, compreso la dimensione internazionale.

Da questo, dunque, deriva la prima grande affinità tra la destra e la sinistra nazionalista, l'Euroscetticismo. Anche se per motivi diversi, si è potuto osservare come partiti nazionalisti appartenenti a parti opposte dello spettro politico siano d'accordo nel criticare Bruxelles: la destra per ragioni di sicurezza dei confini in chiave anti-immigratoria, la sinistra per la sua natura antimperialista e anti-neoliberale.

La seconda grande analogia riscontrata è l'atteggiamento populista dimostrato e impiegato nella strategia comunicativa di tutti i partiti analizzati all'interno di questa analisi.

Anche se in modi diversi, con sfumature ed accentuazioni su temi differenti, si è descritto il carattere populista che è presente da ambo i lati e utilizza la visione del mondo manichea per dividere tra diverse fasce della popolazione ed appellarsi a quelle classi sociali più in difficoltà ponendogli davanti un 'nemico' da sconfiggere.

In relazione alle differenze tra partiti nazionalisti di destra e di sinistra invece la prima cosa che emerge è la distinzione tra nazionalismo etnico e civico di cui abbiamo parlato precedentemente. Questa implica una diversità tra le varie concezioni dell'idea di nazione che per la destra coincide con l'ereditarietà, la cultura e la lingua laddove la sinistra invece sostiene una visione più inclusiva, universale e basata sul rispetto dei diritti.

La seconda differenza principale è la forma in cui si manifesta la retorica populista di questi partiti. Se per Marine Le Pen il punto di demarcazione è etnico e quindi gli immigrati sono il gruppo da antagonizzare, per Iglesias la dicotomia si concentra sul fattore economico-sociale e dunque si parla di distinzione tra lavoratori più in difficoltà e membri più ricchi della società spagnola.

In conclusione, questo elaborato si è interessato a condurre un'analisi comparata tra partiti nazionalisti di destra e sinistra in Spagna e in Francia. Dopo aver esposto i principali tratti distintivi che questi partiti sembrano possedere, i casi di Front National, VOX, Podemos e La France Insoumise sono stati esaminati più nello specifico.

Questo ha permesso di trovare prove tangibili alle argomentazioni fatte, di effettuare un confronto e di osservare concretamente come partiti posizionati ai lati opposti dello spettro politico condividendo l'elemento nazionalista abbiano poi più cose in comune di quanto uno non si possa immaginare.