

2. M5S and UKIP: A Comparative Discourse Analysis

2.1. Hypothesis

This chapter analyses in detail some of the speeches and/or blog posts and social media posts that accompanied the European Parliament election campaigns of both the Five Star Movement and UKIP. Such analysis mainly serves the purpose of corroborating the hypothesis on which this work is based. The assumption is that their alliance at European level, through the constitution of the EFD group, was based on a strategic objective and not on a similar ideological variety of arguments. In fact, as we will see later on, it seems that the two Eurosceptic parties have more in common in terms of using a similar communication approach than ideological level per se. In order to give a solid answer to such hypothesis, we will be conducting a comparative analysis using a discourse analysis approach. More specifically, this will involve gathering and carrying out a thorough analysis of their speeches, blog posts etc. in order to understand their views on Europe before, during and after the elections as well as the arguments that the Five Star Movement and UKIP later used to justify their European alliance to their electors. In this regard, a short final part will be dedicated to analyse and compare how their alliance in the European Parliament was received by their own national members, the public opinion and their electors, given the supposed different ideological views on Europe the two parties have.

2.2. Methodology

As mentioned above, the approach taken will be based on discourse analysis. Before going into detail as to the methodology used, it is worth defining what we intend to do through discourse analysis and exactly what this method is.

Discourse analysis is a common method that studies and, thus, analyses written, vocal or any communicative event through various levels or dimensions of discourse such as: gestures, syntax, the lexicon, style, rhetoric, meanings, speech acts, moves, strategies, turns, and other aspects of interaction. Its overall purpose is to have an understanding

of what lies behind those “levels” and, thus, explore the relation between discourse (choice of lexicon, syntax etc.) and the ideological message that is transmitted to the audience.

The link between language and politics, as well as the ability language has to bring about authority, legitimacy and consensus, as established by Plato and Aristotle. Linguistic structures have always been pivotal to get any politically relevant message across in order to fulfil a specific function and serve a given ideology. This is a very important aspect and constitutes the reason behind the choice of engaging here in an ideological analysis carried out through a critique of discursive practices. After all, we have seen that ideologies, though variably and indirectly, are expressed in text and talk, and that discourses similarly function to help construct persuasively new and already confirmed present ideologies. In both cases, this means that there may be discourse structures that are particularly relevant for a convincing expression or persuasive communication of ideological meanings²³. But to do so we need to examine in some more detail various structures and strategies of text and talk: in other words, we need to know how they are organized, structured, and expressed, and what kinds of possible influence or effects they may have on the political cognitions of the public at large. Some of these functions of discourse have briefly been indicated above, but need to be made more explicit. According to Van Dijk (1995: 22), these are:

- Surface structures of discourse, which refer to the variable forms of expression at the level of phonological and graphical realization of underlying syntactic, semantic, pragmatic or other abstract discourse structures;

- Syntax, the ideological implications of syntactic sentence structures are familiar as it has often been shown that word order as well as transactional structures of sentences may code for underlying meanings;

- Lexicon, a major and well-known domain of ideological expression and persuasion. For instance, to refer to the same persons, groups, social relations or social issues, language users generally have a choice of several words, depending on

23 Van Dijk, Teun, “Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis “, in *Language and pace*, C. Schäffner & A. Wenden (Eds.), 1995, pp. 22-30.

discourse genre, personal context (mood, opinion, perspective), social context (formality, familiarity, group membership, dominance relations) and sociocultural context;

– Topics, topics or semantic macro-propositions of discourse subjectively define the information in a discourse that speakers find the most relevant or important, meaning that topicalisation may also be subject to ideological management and to what the audience would like and support most;

– Rhetoric, specific rhetorical structures of discourse, such as surface structure repetition (rhyme, alliterations), or semantic figures such as metaphors, may be a function of ideological control when information that is unfavourable to us is made less prominent whereas negative information about them is emphasized. Many of the figures we know from classical rhetoric have, in fact, this specific effect as their main function.²⁴

Besides this, such dimensions of discourse structure also function and ensure the purpose of persuading. For instance, lexical items may be selected because they effectively emphasize or de-emphasize political attitudes and opinions, garner support, manipulate public opinion, manufacture political consent, or legitimate political power. The same may be true for the selection of topics, for the use of rhetoric figures, the pragmatic management of speech acts, the recurrent syntactic structure, interactional self-presentation, and so on. In other words, the structures of political discourse are seldom exclusive as they are always functional in the adequate accomplishment of political actions and ideologies in given political contexts.

In this analysis, we have examined the various levels and dimensions of discourse structure and see what typical structures and strategies seem to play a great role in obtaining support and in parties' 2014 European Elections ideologies and campaigns.

Due to limited scholarly account in the subject matter, a qualitative method is appropriate for an in-depth exploration. This approach will thus give more prominence on a data-gathering phase that involves only a small number of speeches and blogs or parts of them which, in turn, will be analysed in depth, emphasizing and highlighting all the ideological, linguistic and emotive features and nuances of the two parties' discourses.

²⁴ Ibid.

Specifically, the data to be analysed were chosen among different speeches and online posts of the two parties following criteria of relevance as to our research question. As the analysis is based on different analyses in different periods (such as before the 2014 European Parliament elections, during and after), the material chosen had to meet some slight different criteria according to the phase they were needed for.

The material chosen for the analysis before the 2014 elections had to feature the following:

- the party’s vision of the European Union at the centre of the speech/post;
- been said or written at least six months before the 2014 European Elections.

The data chosen for the analysis during the 2014 elections had to:

- explain the main points of the two parties’ manifesto for the European elections;
- be written or spoken during the four months prior to the day of the elections.

Those chosen for the analysis after the 2014 elections had to:

- feature explanations and/or justifications from both parties of their alliance at the European Parliament;
- be written or spoken after the two parties had formed an alliance or were about to officialise it.

The division of the overall analysis in three different periods is very useful for the purpose of this work as it will help to have a detailed and clear picture of the evolution of the ideological discourse on Europe of the two parties and their strategic alliance at European level. Through this, we will be better able to corroborate or reject our initial hypothesis as we will be presented with a clearer evolution of their Europe-related discourses and how close or far their ideologies are from each other.

We have thus selected small sections of different pieces (from 2 to 3 for each period and 1 or 2 for each party). Once selected, we have started our analysis by coding the material (that is to say, establishing and assigning the attributes or key themes in specific units of analysis), examining the structure of the text, identifying linguistic and rhetorical mechanics and finally interpreting them.

2.3. Before the Elections: Two Different Political Approaches

Well before the 2014 European elections campaign it was already clear that the view that the Five Star Movement and UKIP had on Europe were not very similar. If UKIP was created and now continues to be an anti-European party, that is not the case for the Five Star Movement. Beppe Grillo's movement has always adopted a softer stance on the European Union and never had such a tough talk on it compared to UKIP. In fact, unlike UKIP, which has always been against the European project as a whole, the Five Star Movement has always centred its discourse on criticising the governance of the European Union the way it is right now, with a particular focus on the failed Euro currency project and its related bad monetary union governance. Grillo has taken this line since the beginning of the financial crisis and the austerity measures "imposed" on Italy by Europe and implemented in the name of rescuing the "euro" – probably representing the only point in common with UKIP and Farage's ideology, at least during the years and months before the elections. Grillo himself has more than once reiterated that he is not against the European Union as a whole but rather against the treaties governing the Eurozone and especially the way they were conceived and imposed on Italy.

2.3.1. The M5S Narrative

As we shall see, by 2012 and 2013, the Five Star Movement was already condemning the failure of the European Monetary Union on the assumption that, built in the way it was and entailing the austerity measures put in place in Italy, it had only led the country to a deep and "strangulating" recession. This is why Grillo and his movement started to claim for a referendum on the Euro. As we will see, during 2012 and 2013 all Grillo's speeches and blog posts on Europe had as their main topic the movement's critique towards the Union's currency and its governance. An extract from

Grillo's blog post dating back to 2013 reads (the original post in Italian can be found in Annex I):

“Should we expect from our government, led by Enrico Letta, a firm position that would defend our country in Europe? Of course not. Letta, just like his predecessor Monti, is at the service of the Euro. One of Enrico Letta's latest books was entitled *Dying for Maastricht*. Today dying for Maastricht means respecting that iron cage imposed on us through the European Stability Mechanism and the so-called Fiscal Compact. With the former our state's coffers have already paid 40 billion euro, a sum that, in a recession period where the economy is struggling to recover, equates to a real strangulation; with the latter we are committing to take the ratio debt/GDP to 60% in twenty years' time. All this, in a time of deep crisis such as the current one, just leads to the impossibility of revamping our economy. There is much need of a government that is capable of slamming in Europe its fists on the table and threatening the exit from the Eurozone should it be denied the possibility of renegotiating from the beginning until the end these treaties that were imposed on us by foreign powers and that, Monti and then Letta have been executing. This is why it is necessary to take back to the people the power to express themselves in free elections. If the Five Star Movements should ever win them, we will go to Europe to renegotiate everything and from a powerful position, since Italy will take their turn of Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Italian people, just like the Greeks, the Spanish and the Portuguese, cannot die for the Euro. This currency has put on workers and pensioners adjustments of competitiveness with the other Eurozone countries, achievable only through austerity measures and unemployment. The media, in defence of such establishment, have been totally ignoring a legitimate debate on the Euro. They are guilty and complicit. The Five Star movement is the only one in Parliament that talks about monetary sovereignty. But citizens are starting to get informed. More Europe and fewer banks. A new concept of Europe is necessary: a Europe based more on solidarity and common goals. Italy's role in Europe is fundamental but we have to renegotiate the conditions we participate with, starting from: the emission of

Eurobonds that can protect the weaker economies, to a debt restructuring until the cancellation of the Fiscal Compact, a node that will hang out our country.”²⁵

What is more, a few months earlier Grillo gave a speech at Mirandola, a town in Northern Italy where he stated the following (the original speech in Italian can be found in Annex I):

“Europe needs to be rethought. We intend to inform people throughout this year and then announce a referendum of Yes/No on the Euro and Yes/No on Europe the way it is now. On this matter, the British are teaching us democracy. No one has the right to decide for 60 million people. I am pro-European; I just want the agreements to be renegotiated in a more advantageous way for Italy. We have invented the renaissance and should we now put ourselves to die silently in a corner with a debt of two thousand billion? No, thanks: we do not deserve this. My goal is to have you, Italians, decide on fundamental themes such as the Euro, instead of delegating your decisions and your future to a bunch of bankers or politicians.”²⁶

The recurrent themes (the economy, the Euro, the financial crisis, the recession, the rules governing the Euro) as well as the lexicon, the syntax, the metaphors employed in the post and the speech support and express the movement’s ideology of monetary sovereignty, of taking back the power to the people in economic matters, of renegotiating the conditions and agreements for Italy in staying in the Eurozone and, thus, a possible referendum on the Euro. To assert his views, Grillo uses a variety of discourse devices at lexical, syntax and rhetoric level that constitute a bold appeal to the people to take action. While addressing the people with strong statements and a series of assertive speech acts²⁷, Grillo also employs a number of rhetorical questions, all with the aim of not only persuading the audience but also encouraging them to take action along with his movement. Important, in this sense, is the repeated use of the inclusive pronouns “we” and “us” which function as the same goal of: appealing to

25 Free Translation from Grillo, Beppe, “Morire per Maastricht”, Beppe Grillo website, 26 September 2013, http://www.beppegrillo.it/2013/09/non_morire_per_maastricht.html (accessed on 26 July 2015).

26 Free Translation from Beppe Grillo’s speech at Mirandola, 24/05/2013 (retrieved on 26 July 2015).

27 Speech acts that commit a speaker to some future action, e.g. promises and oaths.

the unity of people to change Europe, renegotiating the conditions, ending austerity and putting back Italy's economy on track. Grillo's bold appeal is also highlighted by a fair use of metaphors ("iron cage", "a node that will hung our country") similes and slogans ("dying for the Maastricht", "More Europe, fewer banks") that emphasize not only the bad situation in which Italy is but, above all, the negative aspects of the current Euro governance and its terrible effects on national economies and sovereignties. These features serve the purpose of obtaining the audience's emotional involvement and reaffirming a narrative based on the bad consequences on the economies and citizens this Eurozone politics is having and on how the Five Star Movement would be the only one capable of renegotiating a better deal for Italy once in Europe, taking the country out of the recession spiral and giving back to the people the voice on this matter.

Although Grillo's expression and style in the two extracts remain essentially populist and emphatic, it is worth noting that the choice of certain words, their phonetic stressing on the speech he delivered and a varied syntax structure made of long sentences and a few high-impact phrases suggest that the Five Star Movement's position on Europe is not so strongly anti-European as one could assume. Grillo's rhetoric and use of high-impact phrases and words are usually far more evident when it comes to expressing his views on national politics and policies. The syntax structure of both extracts, with the exception of some short and very emphatic statements and slogans, has mostly the features of an informative speech where long sentences and dependent clauses have prominence. This, again, conceals a certain reticence from Grillo and his movement to build a narrative that is only aimed to generate a totally negative propaganda of the European Union. In this regard, it is also interesting to highlight the stress put on "pro-European" and "advantageous agreements" in his speech as well as the reiterated selection of milder and mitigating words such as "solidarity", "more Europe", "common goals" when talking about Europe. This suggests that Grillo is clearly not against Europe as a whole project but only against the way Europe is dealing with the current crisis and the way the Monetary Union is being handled and governed. In this sense, he even goes further when mentioning the desire of "emitting Eurobonds", a fiscal union measure which obviously implies his support for a greater European Union: a greater European Union that can help, in his view, Europe's weaker economies and be more solidarity-based.

2.3.2. The UKIP Narrative

Unlike Grillo and his movement, UKIP's narrative and views on Europe are far stronger and aggressive: since 2013 and even beforehand, Farage had already adopted a very strong line on immigration, one of the strongest arguments against the European Union he would later put at the centre of UKIP's 2014 European Elections campaign. As we shall see in the passage below taken from Farage's speech at the UKIP 2013 Conference, the party's discourse becomes extremely populist and rhetorical, appealing to themes (such as immigration) that are sure to attract people's support and make their resentment grow towards Europe and particularly its immigration policy (Farage's strategy aims to appeal to some people's fear and beliefs that immigrants would steal their jobs and live off the taxpayers). But Farage's narrative does not omit the usual topics and arguments that have for so long characterized the party such as: the need to hold a referendum on the European Union, the fact that Britain would be better off without being bound to the EU trade agreement, the necessity to regain national sovereignty, the affirmation that the Euro project had led many Europeans into poverty and so on. Here is an extract from the aforementioned Farage's speech:

“When we launched our party just 17 per cent of British people agreed we should withdraw from the European Union. Today, that figure is 67 per cent. The British Social Attitudes survey shows how much Britain has been moving UKIP's way. On many different areas of our national life. On the European Union. On immigration. It's the biggest single issue facing this country. It affects the economy. The NHS. Schools. Public services. The deficit. But the establishment has been closing down the immigration debate for 20 years. UKIP has opened it up. We need to. From the 1st of January next year the stakes are rising dramatically. Let's have that debate! Openly. We need to talk about it! We are a nation that has always been open-minded about immigration. But more people came to this country in one year, 2010 than came in the thousand years before it. I'm not against immigration. Far from it. Migrants have qualities we all admire. Looking for a better life. They want to get on. I like that. We admire that. So I'm speaking here as much as for the settled ethnic minorities as for those who have been here forever. Half a million new arrivals a year! It's just not sustainable. And UKIP is the only party that isn't afraid to talk to them about it. UKIP is a freethinking, egalitarian party opposed to racism, sectarianism and extremism. UKIP is dedicated to liberty, opportunity,

equality under the law and the aspirations of the British people. We will always act in the interests of Britain. Especially on immigration, employment, energy supply and fisheries. But only by leaving the union can we regain control of our borders, our parliament, democracy and our ability to trade freely with the fastest-growing economies in the world. (...) Because the fact is we just don't belong in the European Union. Britain is different. Our geography puts us apart. Our history puts us apart. Our institutions produced by that history put us apart. We think differently. We behave differently. I always believed since 1999 that Britain was a square peg in the round hole I've come to realize something bigger than that.

The union is not just contrary to our interests but contrary to the interests of Europe itself. The Commission has hijacked the institutions of Europe by adopting a flag, an anthem, a president, and through their mad euro project they have driven tens of millions into poverty. Their refusal to listen to the people will lead to the very extreme nationalisms the project was supposed to stop. We are the true Europeans. We want to live and work and breathe and trade in a Europe of democratic nations. But in the last ten or fifteen years this country has seen astonishing change. There has been a phenomenal collapse in national self-confidence. When we signed up to government from the Continent, most Britons didn't know what they were letting themselves in for. Our laws have come from Brussels – and what laws. What directives. What a list of instructions. (...) No one knows for sure exactly how much of our law comes from Brussels. Could be 70 or 80 per cent. Our civil rights grew and kept pace with the times and expanded through the Common Law into the modern world – Europe has supplanted it with their Human Rights charter. How did they do that to us? They lied to us. (...) Let's make May 22nd as our referendum on EU membership, let us send an earthquake through Westminster. Let us stand up and say: Give us our country back!"²⁸

The language used, the choice of words, the construction of sentences, the phonetic stress on certain words, the ironic nuances in the style as well as the large use of

²⁸ Nigel's Farage speech at the 2013 UKIP Conference, 20 September 2013, full speech <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/2013/09/nigel-farages-speech-full-text-and-audio/> (accessed 27 July 2015).

different rhetorical features are key to the construction of UKIP's ideology on Europe. They reflect, in fact, Farage's strong criticism of the EU and function as the essential means to persuade the electorate in believing in what he says. The style of the extract is not very factual but rather assertive with an extensive use of directive (for instance "Let's make May 22nd as our referendum on EU membership, let us send an earthquake through Westminster"), assertive and declarative speech acts coupled with ironic rhetorical questions (such as "How did they do that to us?"): the large employment of these features serve Farage's purpose to involve people emotionally and persuade them into believing in UKIP's strong critique of the EU and engage them into action by voting for them. In this sense the choice of very colourful expressions as well as words that have a strong anti-EU negative connotation plays the same role as it reinforces the ideas and views that are the basis of the speech: with the use of words such as "lie", "refusal", "hijack", "collapse", "poverty" and ironic expressions such as "What laws. What directives", all strongly relating to the EU, Farage highlights and reiterates the resonating argument that Britain is better off outside the European Union. This becomes even more evident when analysing Farage's large use of a high-impact syntax structure made of clear-cut and short sentences (and thus independent clauses) constructed mainly with the imperative mood or with future or present tenses. This, of course, makes them simple, easy to understand and to be remembered by the audience.

Another important feature of Farage's speech above is the employment of a variety of rhetorical features that make the narrative far more impressive, emphatic and vehement. These are: bold and high-impact metaphors ("Britain was a square peg"), catchphrases ("Let us stand up and say: give us our country back!"), antithesis ("UKIP is a free-thinking, egalitarian party opposed to racism, sectarianism and extremism"), hyperboles ("let us send an earthquake"), repetitions ("We think differently. We behave differently", "What laws. What directives. What list of instructions"). All of them are brought into play to sustain Farage's ideology and highlight it even further to the audience. These features have all their own specific functions which, following Farage's ideological line, serve the purpose of transmitting and persuading of: the EU dictatorship, the lack of EU democracy and thus national sovereignty, the positive attributes and vigour UKIP has in bringing these problems to the public attention and to solve them, the need to act and take back the UK to the people and so on. Along with the aforementioned rhetorical features, phonetic elements are used to serve the same purpose of giving emphasis and stress to certain words. Some key thematic

words (immigration, referendum, trade) as well as other words with negative connotations on the EU (“mad” referring to the euro, “hijack”, “earthquake”, “collapse”, etc.) are phonetically stressed in order to reiterate even at a more “vocal” level the key concepts behind UKIP’s vision of Europe. All in all, although being a rather factual speech at content level, the overall approach and style of Farage’s discourse is very much emphatic and powerful: a distinctive feature of a populist narrative²⁹ which, in this particular case is far more evident than in Grillo’s speech.

2.4. During the Elections: When the Campaigns Got Stronger

During the five months before the 2014 European elections, both parties began to take tougher positions on Europe with their speeches, slogans and campaigns becoming bolder, more populist than ever and “aggressive”. If the communication approach that UKIP and the Five Star Movement take was very similar, their programmes appeared to be very distant from one another. In this sense, both denounced the lack of democracy at EU level (and, thus, a lack of national sovereignty) and the euro currency governance but they proposed different solutions: if Grillo was very well committed to entering the European Parliament and change the EU from the inside, Farage affirmed that the only possible solution for the UK to stop being “subject” to Brussels’ impositions was to exit the European Union.

2.4.1. The M5S Narrative

On January 3, Grillo published in his blog a first presentation of The Five Star Movement’s programme for the 2014 European Elections which consisted of seven main points: the abolition of the fiscal compact, the adoption of Eurobonds, the abolition of the balanced budget limits, an alliance among the Mediterranean countries to have a common politics, investments in innovation and research to be excluded from the yearly 3% limit, funding for agricultural and breeding activities directed at the internal national consumption and a referendum on the euro. Below is Grillo’s

²⁹ Populism is based on a narrative that appeals to the interests and rights of the general population in their struggle with the privileged elite. Grillo himself described the Five Star Movement as being populist in nature during a political meeting he held in Rome on October 30, 2013.

presentation post that accompanies the downloadable leaflet of the programme (original version in Annex II).

“Europe. What does an Italian citizen know about it, the EU, the ECB apart from the usual stereotypes? Are there any Italian MEPs in Brussels? Yes, of course but no one knows what they do, what they deal with and who they are. The European Parliament is like a Five-star hotel where one stays until the first electoral opportunity in Italy, just like what happened with D’Alema, or, rather a sumptuous cemetery of the elephants of fucked politicians. The communication of the europarlamentarian works is non-existent. Let those who can draw the bottom line of last years’ works raise their hands! They never discuss about Europe, only about the Euro, which should represent the whole European economy while it doesn’t represent anything anymore. Europe is an alibi. “It’s Europe that is asking this” has become a mantra to cover all kinds of bullshit, from the Fiscal Compact to any balanced budget policy. Who is this Europe, mythical and far away, that sends its messages through the mouth of Napolitano and the couple of parrots Captain Findus Letta and Renzi? Give us a name. Who decides what and why over our heads? We are in the grip of a collective hallucination that has transformed a European Central Bank and the bureaucracy into an ideal of Europe that doesn’t exist. We are governed at national level by bankers and bureaucrats who use prime ministers as waiters or dogsbodies. All decisions made in Europe have devastating effects on the future of the next generations but no citizen can interfere, often they are not even aware of those decisions.

Europe will either be political and participatory or it just won’t be. Europe is not a mixer of different nationalities with the aim of making them homogenous. This is a project meant to fail. An impossible exercise. We are not the United States of Europe made of heterogeneous populations looking for a homeland. We are different people with millenary cultures and traditions. Such Europe that is so much invoked has turned into a modern dictatorship that uses the democratic etiquette to legitimise itself. The Five Star Movement will enter Europe to change it, make it democratic, transparent, through shared referendum-based decisions. Today Europe is a Club Med plagued by the power of the

lobbies. The Five Star Movement manifesto comprises 7 points: in Europe for Italy with the Five Star Movement!”³⁰

The speech aptly clarifies Grillo’s idea of Europe. For him (and thus his movement) Europe resembles a modern dictatorship where all decisions are only made by bureaucrats, bankers and their lobbies; decisions of which citizens are not even aware and on which they cannot even interfere at all. Here Grillo condemns the way Europe is governed nowadays, a form of governance that, according to him, lacks a political and participatory approach and, thus, does not match with the objective for which the European Union was once created. This critique of the European Union and its institutions is the main topic on which this presentation speech is centred on: a critique well-argued and explained with references to a variety of national personalities and examples at national and European level. Such references are built on a massive use of rhetorical figures of speech such as hyperboles, similes and metaphors (“The European Parliament is like a Five-star hotel”, “a sumptuous cemetery of the elephants of fucked politicians”, “Europe is an alibi”, “the couple of parrots Captain Findus Letta and Renzi”, etc.) which convey negative yet ironic connotations, serving the purpose of affirming and reinforcing Grillo’s views explained above. In this sense, it is interesting to highlight “colourful” and humorous nuances throughout the speech through the employment of colloquialisms and vulgar adjectives and nouns such as “fucked” or “bullshit”.

This is again, another way of emphasizing Grillo’s ideology as well as the negative emotions and connotations related to Europe and showing his anger and thus provoking the anger of the audience towards those MEPs, bureaucrats and bankers. What is more, the text is filled with rhetorical questions and assertive speech acts, short clauses and slogans that only strengthen Grillo’s aim of impressing the audience with high-impact messages and reiterating the poor status quo of the European Union and the Movement’s commitment in changing it. To further support this, it is interesting to look at the slogan spoken by Grillo on the video of the Movement’s “We will win” campaign (Original speech in Annex II). He says:

30 Free translation from Grillo, Beppe, “Europa così vicina, così lontana”, Beppe Grillo’s website, 3 January 2014, http://www.beppegrillo.it/2014/01/europa_cosi_vicina_cosi_lontana.html (accessed on 28 July 2015).

“Incomprehension. 28 languages. We don’t even understand each other! 500 million of people who don’t know what Europe is. Let’s change this Europe then! Let’s change it to turn it into a real community and not a union of financial banks and spread. On May 22 you don’t have a pen in your hand, you have an atom bomb! On May 25 let’s change Europe to change Italy! Italians, we will win!”³¹

The video campaign follows the themes of the Five Star Movement as well as its discursive and communication approach with a large use of slogans encouraging the Italian people to vote for a change. Particular emphasis is here put on the audience with the use of the form “let’s” and the inclusive pronoun “we”, a way of showing unity and persuading the audience in their power (“You have an atom bomb”) of changing the status quo in Europe through the action of voting for the Movement. It is, of course, a well-rounded and functional populist technique that puts the audience at the centre of the discourse by appealing to their desires and ensuring they feel that they can take an active part in the changed pledged by the movement. Here, the use of directives speech acts is, in fact, fundamental.

All in all, the techniques as well as the lexical choices employed are similar to Grillo’s speech analysed above. Particularly, they are both focused on the word “change”, which constitutes the key message of the two speeches. The Five Star Movement programme’s main goal is to change Europe (its economical governance, its submission to those strong powers embodied by the banks and the lobbies, its lack of democracy, its austerity policies) and promote a functioning of Europe that, as they put it, has community and solidarity-based principles at its heart. An illustration of The Five Star Movement’s campaign whose slogan is “Vinciamo noi” (Translation, “We will win”) is shown below.



31 Free translation from The Five Star Movement campaign video on YouTube published on 7 May 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdU83j5F9Qs> (accessed on 28 July 2015).

2.4.2. The UKIP Narrative

In the run up to the elections, UKIP's discourse also became bolder and more striking as it continued to focus on immigration and on a betrayed working class that was being robbed of their own jobs by immigrants or by some EU policies (such as the Fishery Policy). The UKIP manifesto called "Create an Earthquake", summed up the main points of UKIP's programme for the 2014 European elections. The manifesto stated that, by leaving the EU, the UK would save 55 million pounds a day and the damage caused by the Westminster's politicians could start to be repaired. The main points of a programme centred on the UK's EU referendum, explained all the benefits the country would have outside the EU. These were: cutting and controlling immigration, reducing fuel poverty, lighter regulations for small businesses, no more votes for prisoners (contrary to what the European Court of Human Rights which now obliges all member states to do), saving taxpayers' money as the EU brings enormous costs, taking back control of the UK waters and fisheries, prioritisation of social housing for those with parents and grandparents born locally, negotiating the UK's own trade deals globally only in their own interest, reducing fuel duty and the disparity in price between diesel and petrol³². The manifesto commenced with Nigel Farage's following statement:

"It's time to decide. We don't need to wait until 2017 to have a referendum: let's have one right now. Use the European Elections on 22 May to tell them what you think about the EU. It's time for the truth. A lot of lies have been told about the EU. We're frequently told that we'll lose 3 million jobs if we leave – a shameless lie. No sensible commentator has ever predicted this, because the EU countries have far more to lose by interfering with our trade with them, than we do. We're more likely to gain jobs. A few big businessmen are regularly wheeled out to say they want to stay in; but when the EU is geared to help big businesses and prevent small ones from challenging them, that's not surprising. It's our 4.8 million smaller businesses that suffer from the burden of EU laws and regulations. They say our car industries will suffer if we leave: yet the EU sells us more cars than we do them – by up to 800,000 a year. They won't put that at risk by hampering our manufacturers. They say that the EU is the

³² "Create an earthquake" UKIP manifesto for the 2014 Elections, 1 March 2014, downloadable from www.ukip.org.

future, and that we couldn't survive outside it: but we're the world's 6th largest economy, and while the EU share of world trade is shrinking, our prospects are very good indeed. What UKIP will do for you with your help, we'll continue to work for the UK's withdrawal from the big political project that is the EU – the project, as a long-serving commissioner said recently, to create a United States of Europe. With your help, we'll succeed. In the meantime, your UKIP MEPs will continue to go to Brussels and Strasbourg with a mission unlike that of any other party. We don't go there to make the EU better, more powerful, and help it pass more laws. We go there to find out what it's up to, and let you know. Some of us spend a good deal of time there, unfortunately, making sure we know what they're cooking up, creating an 'Opposition' and voting against the EU's encroachment on our democracy. Others spend more time back here, spreading the word and campaigning to get us out. All UKIP MEPs, though, have one over-riding goal: to make ourselves redundant, by getting Britain out, and returning to the UK the power to govern ourselves. We want our country back. Don't you?"³³

Farage's presentation of the manifesto introduced the main themes of UKIP's campaign by stressing the need of a EU membership referendum, all the negative aspects that such membership entailed and all the positive consequences that a British exit would have for the country. Here Farage focused particularly on jobs creation and the EU lack of help towards small businesses and trade: the choice to address these themes has been well thought of since, as previously explained, in the 2014 European elections UKIP had as one of its goals the attraction of the left-wing working class as a way to enlarge its electorate. This becomes very clear by looking closely at Farage's message. But, at the same time, Farage continued to reiterate his old narrative based on the necessity to regain national sovereignty and get the country back to its people: a view, probably one of the very few, that is shared by Grillo too.

Although the title "Create an Earthquake" suggests a revolution and a hard-hitting approach to come, Farage's introduction remains mainly factual and not as striking and rhetorical as one could think. It mainly consists of assertive speech acts that express the party's views but have a pure informative and factual connotation and commissive speech acts which describe what UKIP intends to do while at the European Parliament

33 Ibid.

and represent, thus, the promises to which Farage commits. There are, of course, a few directive speech acts that aim at persuading the audience to vote for UKIP and, thus, expressing a clear “no” to the European project but, all in all, Farage uses a lot of factual information to reach his objective of getting more votes. This time the rhetoric is more factual than ever and the few rhetorical figures of speech encountered (such as the extensive use of the antithesis that is used to compare two different views of the European Union and enhance Farage’s own vision of it) relate almost throughout the text to very factual information that helps corroborate the UKIP leader’s affirmation. Farage, thus, prefer to use another technique here and give prominence to real facts rather than only to typical populist and rhetorical discourse expressions. This is also true when looking at the syntax (built on a very simple sentence structure that helps the reader to better understand and focus on the informative facts and ideological views described) and the lexical choices made (which are obviously linked to themes developed in the text but do not have the usual strong connotations seen elsewhere in Farage’s speeches). They are more factual and explanatory as they are intended to inform the electors of the current situation and how it would be improved without staying in the European Union especially at job and trade level. A small final part is, however, also dedicated to explain and inform about what the UKIP MEPs will do if elected in the Parliament: this is where the climax of the discourse is reached and where Farage reasserts his powerful and tough stance of leaving the European Union and giving back to the UK its full national sovereignty. This is enhanced by the concluding rhetorical question that reads: “We want our country back. Don’t you?”

However, UKIP reached its aggressive and populist peak when it launched its billboard posters campaign. One billboard depicted a man dressed as a builder begging for spare change next to the words: “EU policy at work. British workers are hit hard by unlimited cheap labour.” Another poster read: ”26 million people in Europe are looking for work. And whose jobs are they after?” alongside a giant hand pointing at the viewer.



Others complained that 75 per cent of British laws were made in Brussels, and that UK taxpayers funded the “celebrity lifestyle” of EU bureaucrats. Although being in line with UKIP’s ideology and programme for the 2014 elections, the posters were sometimes condemned as racist and excessively anti-immigration. Their content was surely hard-hitting and provocative; with such posters, built on a high-impact mix of facts and clichés (immigrants stealing British people’s jobs, the UK having only to obey a great majority of laws decided by Eurocrats, etc.), UKIP appealed to the prejudice and fear that people have in times of crisis. Farage justified this by saying that the posters were meant as “a hard-hitting reflection of reality as it is experienced by millions of British people struggling to earn a living outside the Westminster bubble”. These posters functioned as a reaffirmation of UKIP’s commitment to the great cause, as Farage put it, “of restoring Britain’s ability to be a self-governing nation”³⁴ as the political earthquake mentioned in the manifesto was on its way.

2.5. After the Elections: Towards an Alliance

The 2014 European elections resulted in a surge of the Eurosceptic parties in many countries. With regard to the Five Star Movement and UKIP, the former managed to arrive in second position (behind the left-wing party governing Italy), scoring 21.15%, whereas the latter, with 26.77 % of votes, won the elections with Labour second and Conservatives pushed into third. Undoubtedly it was a great success for Farage’s party as, for the first time, it came on top of the poll with 24 seats. As for Grillo’s movement, the 17 seats won was a result that was not as enthusiastically good as the Five Star Movement expected since Italy’s ruling party (Partito Democratico) scored twice as much. Tough negotiations started straight away in order to decide the make-up of the various political alliances that formed the European Parliament. But these alliances (particularly the smaller ones) all had the same objectives: to be officially recognised as a “parliamentary group” according to the rules of the European Parliament. With official recognition comes prestige and (more importantly) increased funding, presidency and vice presidency posts in some of the Parliamentary Commissions and

³⁴ UKIP, “UKIP has just launched its biggest ever advertising campaign as the European parliamentary elections battle gets underway in earnest”, UKIP website, 21 April 2014, http://www.ukip.org/ukip_has_just_launched_its_biggest_ever_advertising_campaign (accessed on 1 August 2015).

guaranteed speaking time. The threshold for recognition, however, is tough: all groups must include at least 25 MEPs from seven different EU Member States.

The influx of populist and anti-establishment parties that have entered the parliament includes over 60 new MEPs (including the Five Star Movement) who have yet to declare their political alignment. It is these MEPs that the more established parties (such as UKIP) try to woo over. Despite all of them being against the EU to varying degrees, many of the Eurosceptic parties do not want to sit with parties considered “extremists” by their national constituencies. So, UKIP refuses to sit with the French Front National and the Front National cannot stomach the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn from Greece. This jostling lead to the most unlikely of allies and this explains why Grillo, among other parties such as the Sweden Democrats, the Party of Free Citizens of the Czech Republic, was contacted by Farage to start negotiations about joining forces.³⁵ What is more, with the arrival of Grillo’s movement into the EFD, the group would become the fourth most important and biggest group in the Parliament: an opportunity Farage does not want to miss. Therefore, negotiations between the two parties start. However, it seems to many to be a strange partnership: Grillo campaigns against the privatisation of water utilities whereas Farage supports free markets with minimum state interference; Farage denies climate change whereas Grillo favours ecological sustainability; Grillo supports same-sex marriage whereas Farage does not; Farage wants the exit from the European Union, Grillo does not (they want a better governance of the Eurozone, a possible referendum on the euro and the sharing of the debt through the adoption of the Eurobonds); Grillo asks for a European Tobin tax, Farage is against and so on.³⁶

2.5.1. What Is in It for the Five Star Movement?

Despite having very little in common from an ideological point of view, the two parties started negotiations and Grillo, who was expected to go for an alliance with the

35 “Should Beppe Grillo join forces with UKIP’s Nigel Farage?”, Debating Europe website, June 6 2015, <http://www.debatingeurope.eu/2014/06/02/beppe-grillo-nigel-farage/#.VcEpUfntmkp> (accessed on August 3 2015).

36 Pisanò, Alessio, “Europee. Nucleare, immigrati e mercati: programmi M5S, Verdi e Ukip a confronto”, Il Fatto Quotidiano website, 1 June 2014, <http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/06/01/ue-programmi-a-confronto-nucleare-immigrati-e-mercati-le-idee-di-m5s-verdi-e-ukip/1008636/> (accessed on August 3 2015).

Greens given the ideological affinity with the group, supported instead an alliance with UKIP. Entering the EFD would give the Five Star Movement much more weight, as it would be the second biggest party inside the group, obtaining, thus, more important posts inside the group and in the Parliament Commissions. This would be unlikely to happen if Grillo's movement chose to strike an alliance with the Greens since it would be one of the smallest parties inside the group, putting the Five Star Movement in a less influential position.

The Five Star Movement's leader offered its activists a limited-choice online referendum to choose the European Parliament group for the party: the three choices to vote for were the EFD, the ECR and the Non-attached group. The Greens were not considered. 78% of participating activists voted for the EFD. This result, however, appears to have been very much influenced by Grillo who, as we shall see below, in order to convince his electorate, began to campaign for an alliance with UKIP by writing in his blog and giving speeches which firmly denied Farage's racist and xenophobic views and depicted him as the only real defender of democracy in the Parliament and the only one who opposed the austerity-driven politics of the European Union. What is more, in order to further support his affirmations, he posted a series of videos of Farage's past speeches at the European Parliament where the UKIP leader backlashed at former European Commission's President Barroso and former European Council's President Van Rompuy and took a stance in favour of the Italian sovereignty. Below is an extract from one of Grillo's posts explaining why the Movement supported a possible alliance with UKIP (the original text can be found in Annex III).

“Apparently for the Italian journalists, Nigel Farage is Hitler's new successor, stamped by xenophobic, misogynous, racist and homophobic beliefs. And everyone, I say, everyone is taking part in this murder game against the UKIP leader in order to go against the Five Star Movement. An alliance with UKIP in Europe is necessary for us. Unlike in the Italian parliament, due to an internal rule those MEPs who do not manage to sit in a group would be very much limited in participating in all debates. The Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD), as the UKIP press office reminds us, allows, unlike the greens and many other groups in the European Parliament, the national delegations to vote as they deem right, according to their ideology, political preferences and national interests. For the EFD it is a marriage of convenience for mutual benefits. Of course there are differences between the Five Star Movement and UKIP in

the programmes they would like to implement in their own countries. But the point that most of the time people miss is that, embracing a common project, a project of struggle, in Europe doesn't mean sharing the ideas of internal politics. In this sense, the EFD rules are just perfect: the Five Star Movement will always be able to vote against the group's positions on decisions that are not aligned with its internal programme, such as the energy policies, remaining, thus, coherent with its own national programme. (...) Therefore, we don't have other alternatives than accepting, as soon as possible, Nigel Farage's proposal. Why UKIP? Because during the past five years it was the only real opposition in Brussels and Strasbourg, delivering the most striking speeches against the European austerity and wars during those years when all the other parties were arming up the Troika and NATO against the people (...) Our objective in Europe needs to be that of contrasting with all our powers, the Troika's agenda (...) No one better than UKIP can be a good ally in this struggle".³⁷

The first remarkable feature of Grillo's blog post above is its persuading-aimed style crafted and hidden in a factual and explanatory form that distances the text from Grillo's usual pervasive and powerful populist dialectics. The topic addressed relates mainly to the possible alliance between the Five Star Movement and UKIP, a choice that Grillo discusses by pinpointing all the positive outcomes that this alliance would lead to. Firstly, he attempts to defend Farage by blaming the Italian press for blackening him with negative attributes (such as homophobic, racist, misogynous, etc.) with supposedly the only aim being to go against the Five Star Movement. This is one of the very few parts of the text where Grillo's discourse turns more "aggressive" and dramatic and this is reflected in the use not only of nouns and adjectives with strong connotations but also by the use of a high-impact metaphor ("murder game") when referring to the way the Italian press has been representing the UKIP leader's image. The rest of the text is largely built on a more factual style where Grillo gives arguments on why according to him an alliance with Farage is necessary.

Grillo explains that, due to the European Parliament's rules, not sitting in any group would limit their chance of being heard and participating in the debates. But, most

37 Free translation from Grillo, Beppe, "In Europa per contare qualcosa", Beppe Grillo's blog, 1 June 2014, http://www.beppegrillo.it/2014/06/in_europa_per_contare_qualcosa.html (accessed on August 3 2015).

importantly, by using a well-crafted antithesis, he highlights that, unlike the greens and many other groups in the European Parliament the EFD would allow them to vote freely and according to the Movement's specific political positions. This is a well-thought strategy to convince its electorate in backing his position as Grillo plays on the electorate's lack of information about the European Parliament's rules: the aforementioned and emphasised freedom of vote is, on the contrary, true for every group inside the Parliament, and, just a strategy used by Grillo as a way of justifying his position and convincing his electorate with a factual and non-contestable argument.³⁸

Nonetheless, Grillo recognises that this would be an alliance based on mutual benefits and admits that there are differences between the two parties, however, he stresses, only in the way they would like to implement their programmes at national level. Grillo here purposely omits that there are also many differences on the parties' vision on Europe and continues his discourse by emphasizing the reasons why he deems that accepting Farage's proposal is necessary. He justifies this by arguing that, during the past five years, UKIP has been the only real opponent of Europe's austerity politics and, as such, there cannot be a better ally in fighting the Five Star Movement's anti-austerity battle. This final part is where the climax of Grillo's narrative reaches its peak as the tone raises, the lexical choices concern figurative terms relating to the war sphere ("war", "struggle", "arming up", "powers", "contrasting" and references to NATO) and rhetoric takes prominence again.

All in all, the overall style of the text remains fairly toned-down as compared to Grillo's usual distinct way of communicating. This, however, does not imply that the message sent is in any way less resonant since he only employs a different communicative technique in order to achieve the goal of having his electorate vote yes for an alliance with UKIP. By using a factual style and a great amount of assertive speech acts, Grillo intends to convince his electors by showing them real facts and views that reflects the current state of play and could appear more credible and logic. Grillo commits to the truth of the expressed visions appealing, more than once, to a sense of real necessity that does not leave any other choice to the Five Star Movement. A strategic

38 Pisanò, Alessio, "Europee. Nucleare, immigrati e mercati: programmi M5S, Verdi e Ukip a confronto", *Il Fatto Quotidiano* website, 1 June 2014, <http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/06/01/ue-programmi-a-confronto-nucleare-immigrati-e-mercati-le-idee-di-m5s-verdi-e-ukip/1008636/> (accessed on August 4 2015).

choice that worked very well as more than 70% of the total number who voted in the mini referendum supported the M5S-UKIP alliance.

2.5.2. What Is in It for UKIP?

The elections resulted in a big success for Farage's party, topping all rivals in Britain with a large 31% and having, therefore, 24 MEPs in the European Parliament. Farage, leading the EFD group, began negotiations with several Eurosceptic parties in order to form a more consistent group. Farage's strategy was, in fact, to form a stronger and larger EFD that could become the fourth biggest group inside the European Parliament. The reason behind this was very simple: the bigger the group was, the more chances it had to be assigned presidency and vice presidency posts in the 20 parliamentary Commissions. In order to achieve such a high goal, he had to regroup a consistent number of Eurosceptic MEPs coming from seven Member States. The Five Star Movement met the criteria as, alone, it would have brought 17 MEPs. This is why Farage, refusing any possible negotiations with right-wing Eurosceptic parties, contacted Grillo and asked him to meet in order to discuss a potential alliance between Eurosceptic parties in the European Parliament. Grillo accepted and during their meeting they agreed on the importance of direct democracy in Europe and that the parties in a potential new group should be able to campaign and vote as they choose within a framework of basic agreements, as an official UKIP statement stated.³⁹

In this regard, Farage preferred to say little publicly, releasing very few official statements on this possible alliance and waiting for Grillo to hold the online referendum. One of his very few short statements was the following: "If this works out it would be magnificent to see a swelling in the ranks of the Peoples' Army. If we can come to an agreement, we could have fun causing a lot of trouble for Brussels."

A statement that reaffirms UKIP's firm position in having the Five Star Movement on board (or "in his People's Army", an eloquent metaphor expressing Farage's intent to fight for the "people") in his fight to oppose the European Union's politics. Upon the results of Grillo's online referendum on the alliance, Farage reiterated his satisfaction in reaching his objective, having the Five Star Movement in the EFD and, thus,

³⁹ UKIP, "Rebels with a cause. When Nigel met Beppe", UKIP website, May 2014, http://www.ukip.org/rebels_with_a_cause_when_nigel_met_beppe (accessed on 6 August 2015).

ensuring a larger and heavier group in the European Parliament. Here were his first words: "I am extremely satisfied with the result. I will be more than happy to work with the Five Star Movement and be together a real voice of dissent at the European Parliament"⁴⁰

2.5.3. Voters' Feedback

After the verdict of Grillo's electorate, which approved the Five Star Movement alliance with UKIP with 78% of votes, the reactions from the Italian and British press as well as those from Grillo's electorate and some Five Star Movement parliamentarians showed perplexity, bafflement and opposition.

If UKIP's electorate approved and stuck to their leader's strategy for the sake of gaining much more weight in the European Parliament through a larger UKIP-led EFD group, Grillo's electors expressed their concerns as to forming an alliance with a party that had so little in common with them in terms of ideology. As a matter of fact, the UKIP electorate, due also to Farage's scarcity of public announcements about his strategy to take Grillo's movement on board, showed a certain degree of acceptance as to the European parties Farage was wooing: what really mattered to UKIP and its electors had already been achieved as they had already come first in the polls. Therefore, whatever party would enter the EFDD, UKIP would remain as the biggest delegation and, thus, the leading party of the whole group.

As for the Five Star Movement, things were of course very different. Many electors expected, in fact, to see the group form an alliance with the Green due to the prominence the movement had always given to the environment. Journalists, Five Star Movement's activists and electors and some Five Star Movement parliamentarians protested, either by openly expressing their dissent through the blog or newspapers or simply by abstaining from voting. Some criticised the fact that the results had been very much influenced by Grillo and the pro-Farage campaign which he had been leading for more than two weeks. These critics also dared hinting at a possible

40 Cerami, Gabriella, "Grillo lancia la propaganda pro-Farage e getta fango sui Verdi. Deciderà il blog, ma intanto avverte: "State buoni...", Huffington Post website, 31 May 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2014/05/31/grillo-lancia-la-propaganda-pro-farage_n_5422824.html (accessed on 6 August 2015).

split inside the movement if it was to form an alliance with UKIP. For instance, soon after the online referendum sealed the alliance with UKIP, Vittorio Bertola, a Five Star Movement member declared:

“Since the very beginning, Grillo made it very clear that UKIP was the only option for him. He did everything in his power to make it digest it to the electors. Some of them followed him in liberty; others were much more influenced by him. To me, this alliance was not the best option and it may cost us many votes, but I accept what the people have chosen and we will see where this street takes us”.⁴¹

However, despite many perplexities and concerns from the electorate, voters and members of the Five Star Movement ended up accepting this compromise, avoiding a split in the Movement itself and continuing their battle all united.

41 “Grillo-Farage, gli iscritti online scelgono alleanza Ukip. Polemica nel Movimento”, Il Fatto Quotidiano website, 12 June 2014, <http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/06/12/grillo-farage-gli-iscritti-online-scelgono-lalleanza-con-ukip/1025362/> (accessed on 7 August 2015).