

# Conclusion

Despite only analysing a limited number of speeches and written posts from the two parties, from the study we have conducted, it is clear that the Five Star Movement-UKIP alliance is a pure strategic marriage for the benefits of both parties. In fact, although they have a very similar communication approach based on a populist technique, M5S and UKIP have little in common as to their ideological views on Europe. The discourse analysis we have conducted showed very clearly how the linguistic structures (choice of lexicon, syntax etc.) chosen by the two party leaders convey two ideological messages, which have only few points in common. The Five Star Movement and UKIP use a similar general communication approach and tools but, when analysing their discourse more in depth, we see that the different linguistic structures they employ are functional and serve their own specific ideology.

Through such analysis we have seen that UKIP's discourse confirms the party's total rejection of the European Union while the Five Star Movement's narrative seems to be less Eurosceptic and solely against the current governance of the European Union, notably the Euro and its related austerity measures. Our investigation confirms, thus, our initial hypothesis, which posited that the alliance that the two parties stroke to form the EFDD in the European Parliament represents a pure strategic move as the two parties seems to be quite distant in terms of ideology. The reasons behind such strategic move are multiple on both sides.

As for Grillo, joining the EFD group would have been much more convenient than forming an alliance with the Green group: it would have given the Five Star Movement a much more influential position as the movement would have been the second biggest party inside the group, leading, thus, to gain more important posts inside the group and in the Parliament Commissions. This would have been less likely to happen with the Greens given that Grillo's movement would have represented a small party in terms of number of MEPs inside the group. Moreover, the European Green party had already declared and reiterated more than once that an alliance with the Greens would be fairly unlikely due to the major differences between the two leaders of the two parties and a few divergences in themes such as the immigration. However, the Greens had not totally excluded to meet with Grillo and the Five Star Movement (they said

that if Grillo asked them to meet, they would not reject such invitation) but Grillo, in reality, had already decided that he would prefer continuing talks with UKIP.<sup>43</sup>

In fact, as we have seen in Chapter 2, Grillo, in order to persuade his electorate to support an alliance with UKIP (which seemed, therefore, far more fruitful for the Five Star Movement) started campaigning for UKIP and against the Greens. Beppe Grillo launched an online survey of Five-Star members and activists on his blog and, as seen above, 78% of votes went for Nigel Farage's EFD group. The survey, however, drew criticism from the Italian press, but also from some Five-Star MPs, for a number of reasons: only 29,584 votes were cast, a microscopic amount when compared to the almost 5.8 million votes the Five-Star Movement won in the European Parliament elections; the survey only offered three options: EFD (UKIP's group), ECR (the UK Conservatives' group) or non-attached. Other groups that could have been more natural allies of the Five-Star Movement, notably the Greens and the European Left of Syriza and Podemos, were not even included; all three options were presented on Grillo's blog in a way that appeared to privilege Farage's group. The description of the ECR was shorter and less enthusiastic in tone. As regards the non-attached group, the blog warned that being part of it would mean "limited or no influence on the legislative activities of the European Parliament", and would therefore prevent the Five-Star Movement from pushing its political agenda in Europe.<sup>44</sup>

It is clear that Grillo adopted a well-rounded communication strategy in order to present the UKIP alliance as the best option and thus convince the electors to support his strategic view. Grillo's communication strategy seemed to work very well as the electors chose to support the UKIP alliance. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that only a small amount of the electorate cast a vote and many Five Star Movement's national MEPs, as well as electors, openly expressed their opposition to such an alliance: they would have preferred joining the Green group. This last option would have been far more difficult to achieve given the Greens' reluctance to accept some "extremist" traits of the Five Star Movement.

---

43 Bianchini, Eleonora, Verdi Ue, Frassoni: "Nessuna chiusura a M5s, ma no a chi sta con Farage o Le Pen", *Il Fatto Quotidiano* website, 20 May 2014, <http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/05/30/se-m5s-chiama-i-verdi-li-incontriamo-piu-problematico-vedere-farage-o-le-pen/1006928/> (accessed on 14 August 2015).

44 Open Europe Blog, "Grillo joins Farage, but UKIP's group in the European Parliament is not a done deal yet", *Open Europe* website, 13 June 2014, <http://openeuropeblog.blogspot.be/2014/06/grillo-joins-farage-but-ukips-group-in.html> (accessed on 8 August 2015).

Taking all of this into account, it is worth wondering if Grillo had other options. Certainly, the alliance with UKIP would have probably been the only one that would have guaranteed the group more weight and influence as well as a greater possibility of gaining important posts in the Parliamentary Commissions; however, it is also certain that Grillo, instead of going straight for an alliance with UKIP, could have explored more the different possibilities that were on offer, such as the Greens and the European left of Syriza and Podemos by starting talks with them and including them in the online referendum: this would have meant listening more to his electors' will and being in line with Grillo's core concept of direct democracy. Instead, the Five Star Movement preferred to decide alone, like a sort of a "dictator", on strategic grounds, which have little to do with ideological affinities that one party should have with another.

As for Farage, leader of the EFD group, he had of course many valid reasons to begin negotiations with the Five Star Movement and convince Grillo to join the group. First of all, given that various member parties and MEPs of the previous EFD had either defected to different parliamentary groups or failed to be re-elected and given UKIP's refusal to sit with parties considered "extremists" such as the Front National or the Lega Nord, Farage had to find and woo other Eurosceptic parties that could be more ideologically acceptable. Secondly, having topped the polls and having 24 MEPS, Farage wanted to form a more consistent and larger EFD that could become the fourth biggest group inside the European Parliament and the Five Star Movement was, certainly meeting the criteria to a great extent as it would have brought 17 MEPs single-handedly. Grillo's movement did not share the same extreme views as UKIP on Europe but this did not seem to matter to Farage, as the UKIP leader's aim was to ensure the constitution of a bigger EFD Group. What's more, not only would UKIP always remain the largest party inside the group and have, thus, its presidency but the

Five Star Movement could also vote separately on the issues it would not be in line with UKIP or the group. Therefore, Farage's move appeared very plausible and reasonable from a strategic point of view. This also explains why he did not need to say much publicly on this possible alliance, apart from a few comments and press releases that were not judged as critical by the British public opinion and the UKIP electorate.

All in all, this alliance only sparked negative reactions among the Five Star Movement, its electorate and the Italian public opinion but Grillo managed to be particularly good in persuading his electorate, justifying his decision and containing any opposition coming from the electorate and the Movement's members. Grillo, through his persuasive communication approach, was, in fact, particularly astute in making the electorate and the Movement's national members accept this alliance, even at a later stage, reuniting the movement and avoiding any further conflict among the party.

Therefore, the final result of this work not only allows us to validate our initial hypothesis but also gives us the in-depth explanations that lie behind the two leaders' choice in strategic alliance.