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**Far-right party-movement interactions in times of crises (2009-2019):
The cases of Lega-CasaPound Italia in Italy and UKIP-EDL in the United
Kingdom**

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Abstract

Understanding how political parties and social movements interact and what are the results of these interactions is important for both scholars of Political Science and Sociology. This is particularly true for far-right actors since they are characterised by diverse ideological and organisational features. Understanding how parties and movements interact can help shed light on how these features develop and, ultimately, explain their success.

In the dissertation a novel conceptualisation of party-movement interactions is presented, as well as a theory that aims to explain when parties and movements are more likely to develop stronger interactions on three different dimensions, frames, actions and organisations. This theory is tested by looking at two sets of far-right parties and movements, Lega Nord and CasaPound Italia in Italy and the United Kingdom Independence Party and the English Defence League in the United Kingdom. The analysis is carried out through a Political Claim Analysis and a document analysis of parties and movements documents for the period 2009-2019.

The analysis finds that parties and movements have closer interactions on the frame dimension when issues they own gain prominence in the public debate and when political parties are weak electorally. In the actions dimension, interactions tend to be closer when parties are weak electorally and movement organisations moderate their repertoire of actions. Finally, in the organisational dimension, relations are closer when parties are weak electorally and in proximity of electoral campaigns.

This research makes two contributions to the study of far-right parties and movements. The first is theoretical, for the paper advances a new theory of party-movement interactions that could be tested in different scenarios. The second is empirical, for the paper provides indications on when parties and movements are more likely to have closer interactions and how through these interactions they change and develop their features.

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Introduction

The far right between ballots and streets

In December 2018, the “Brexit betrayal” march, led by the far-right activist Yaxley-Lennon – known with the pseudonym of Tommy Robinson – and the United Kingdom Independence Party, mobilised in the streets of London thousands of people to protest against the government’s inaction over Brexit. Few weeks before the march, Yaxley-Lennon, a former British National Party member and the founder of the far-right organisation English Defence League, had been appointed as personal advisor of the new UKIP’s leader Gerard Batten. Batten stated that Yaxley-Lennon is not far-right and that it was a “huge success” to get him to organise a Brexit march. (The Guardian, 9.12.18).

In October 2019, in Rome, a big demonstration organised by Lega was attended by over 100,000 people to protest against the government led by the left-wing Democratic Party and the populist party 5 Stars Movement. In the streets, along supporters of Salvini’s Lega, Meloni’s Fratelli d’Italia, and Berlusconi’s Forza Italia, there were members of extreme-right organisations such as Forza Nuova and CasaPound Italia. CasaPound Italia’s vice-president stated that he joined the protest because its organisation “has a wealth of nationalist ideas and our proposals have been copied by everyone in this square” (la Repubblica, 19.10.19). Salvini, the leader of the party that just few months won the European elections with over 9 million votes and 34 percent share, did not see any extremist at the demonstration, but only “people proud of being Italians” (la Repubblica, 19.10.19).

These two events are examples of joint mobilisation of parties and movement organisations that together take the streets to advance their claims. Next to each other, radical-right parties’ leader and movement organisations’ leaders mobilise their respective supporters and even if the two organisations differ from each other in many ways, in these events the

points they have in common are highlighted. Moreover, their supporters, next to each other in the streets, can together build a shared identity that contributes to facilitate future mobilisation.

These two events are also examples of how the far right has been able to successfully mobilise his supporters in the electoral and protest arenas. However, while the electoral success that European far-right parties achieved in the last decades have been vastly examined by an ever-growing body of literature, the mobilisation capacity of far-right movement organisations that managed to attract thousands of supporters in the streets of European cities is still less investigated. Moreover, little is known about how these two phenomena are linked. This research contributes to develop our understanding of the dynamics behind the success of the far-right by investigating how far-right parties and movement organisations interact and how through these interactions both actors develop their discourses, actions, and organisational characteristics.

As Goldstone argued, social movements and political parties, in contemporary democracies, both contribute to articulate citizens' interests and often the boundaries between the institutionalised practices of parties and the non-institutionalised practices of social movements are blurred (Goldstone, 2003: 2). Nevertheless, parties' scholars and social movements' scholars, have rarely crossed the boundaries of their relative disciplines. This is partly due to the division of labour that exists among social movements scholars, who have been more inclined to study progressive movements of the left, and party scholars, who have usually neglected non-institutional actors in their analysis of the political space (Rydgren, 2007: 257; McAdam and Tarrow, 2010: 532; Della Porta et al., 2017: 3). However, as argued by Goldstone, it is not possible to understand the functioning and evolution of legislatures, executives, and parties "without understanding their intimate and ongoing shaping by social movements" (2003: 2). This observation holds true in the case of the far right. In fact, it has been observed the role that movements and subcultural milieus play in mobilising support for

far-right parties and in shaping the cultural context in which parties are embedded (Minkenberg, 2003: 153; Mudde, 2007: 248; Caiani et al., 2012: 13; Pirro and Castelli Gattinara, 2018: 369). Although scholars have been trying to bridge this gap between party politics and movements studies by investigating the different organisational variants of the far-right (Caiani et al., 2012), the rise of movement parties that display movement-like characteristics (Pirro and Castelli Gattinara, 2018; Caiani and Císař, 2019), and the relations between the different arenas in which the far-right is engaged (Kriesi et al, 2012; Hutter, 2014), the relations that exist among *established* far-right parties and movement organisations are still a topic that has received scarce academic investigation. I contend that investigating the relations between established parties and social movements can help understand both the political and cultural context in which these actors are embedded, as well as the strategic choices they make in order to exploit or modify these contexts and achieve success.

The study of far-right parties has extensively investigated the effect that political, institutional, and cultural contexts (Kitschelt, 1995; Norris, 2005; Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2007; Mannucci 2020) and the internal characteristics of parties (Carter, 2005; Heinisch and Mazzoleni, 2016) have on explaining the emergence and success of far-right parties. However, it is still not known how the relations between established political parties and social movements contribute to the development of these organisations. The aim of my research is to fill this gap, by answering to the following questions: *Under which conditions are parties and movements more likely to have closer interactions? How do parties and movements mobilisation strategies, discourses, and organisational characteristics change depending on the strength of their interactions?*

By answering these questions, I aim to shed light on the under-studied and under-theorised interactions that occur between far-right parties and movements. I hold that parties and movements, through their relations and their strategic choices, actively shape their

environment in order to gain success in both the electoral and protest arena. By investigating their interactions during time, we can better understand what are the choices that they make in relation to the issues that they decide to focus on, their actions, and their organisational developments. The focus of this research is not on the structural determinants of the electoral success of the far right, but on the strategic choices made by parties and movements as well as their relational and dynamic features (della Porta et al. 2017: 2). The main argument that this research holds is that the relations between parties and movements affect their discursive, actions, and structural dimensions and that, in turn, through their interactions their mobilisation capacity in both electoral and protest arenas increases. This is because the interactions in the ideological dimension can contribute to the spreading and legitimisation of their discourses and frames in society; on the actions dimension, the relations can contribute to attract visibility and support due to the use of protest actions and the joint mobilisation in both electoral and protest arenas; and in the structural dimension the relations can contribute to increase the ranks of parties with new members and activists and create inter-organisational linkages that facilitate the cooperation among the two actors.

In order to answer the research questions and understand when and how far-right parties and movements are more likely to have closer interactions and how these can help explain the development of their discursive, actions, and organisational characteristics, I provide a novel conceptualisation of party-movement interactions.

Building on previous literature that investigated how parties and movements interact, I have conceptualised the interactions between parties and movements in terms of distance/proximity in three dimensions: frames, actions, and organisations. The distance/proximity of the interactions in the frames dimension can be observed when there is a convergence in parties and movements discourses and when there is a change in their discourses. Through this dimension is possible to grasp the discursive changes that occur in

movements and parties' narratives and if and how they become closer in their discourses. The second dimension in which parties and movement interactions may occur is that of actions. Through this dimension is possible to investigate if and how the two actors take part together in protests, rallies, or public events. The third dimension is the one that looks at the interactions that may occur at the organisational level. Links between the two organisations can be traced at the leadership level, through personal ties between leaders; at the middle level, through movement activists being members of parties and vice versa; and the rank-and-file level with supporters of the movement voting for the party and vice versa.

The hypotheses that guided the empirical investigation have been derived from various strands of literature. In order to hypothesize how the proximity in the idea dimensions can play out, I used the literature on the agenda-setting power of protest. The agenda-setting approach represent a "short-term" view of the mechanisms that link the protest and the political arena (Hutter et al. 2019: 326). This approach can help understand if and why far-right parties respond to the issues raised by far-right movements, at the same time, through this approach, it can be investigated if and how movement adapt their messages when they are closer to the parties. Drawing from previous studies that have adopted this approach, I expect that in the frames dimension far-right parties and movements are more likely to be closer when topics that they own, such as immigration and law and order, become more visible and when the party is electorally weak. This is because, parties can benefit from responding to issues that are at centre of the political agenda and around which movements are mobilising in the streets, increasing their visibility from mobilising next to movements. At the same time, movements can receive legitimisation for their claims and frames being used by institutional parties.

To advance some hypotheses on when the proximity in the action dimension is more likely to take place, the literature on the relations between protest and electoral arenas is the starting point. Drawing on this literature I expect that far-right parties and movements are more

likely to be closer in the actions dimension when parties are electorally weak and when movements moderate their repertoire of actions. This is because parties that are struggling electorally may rely on the militancy of the movements and mobilise in the streets next to the movements in order to attract more visibility and support. At the same time, movements need to moderate their repertoire of action, and more specifically their levels of violence if they want to be reliable allies of institutional actors.

Finally, in order to hypothesise when parties and movements are more likely to have interactions in the organisational dimension, the literature that informed the hypothesis is the one on declining membership of European parties and the one on far-right movement parties. Following these works, I expect to observe party and movements to become closer in this dimension when elections are imminent and when movements moderate their repertoire of actions. On the one hand, parties, in order to sustain the electoral effort, may rely on movements' militants and resources. On the other, movements, while moderating their repertoire of actions to legal protest, can gain access to the institutional arena by providing members to parties, or taking part themselves to elections.

To answer the research questions, I carry out a comparative analysis of two case studies: Italy, with *Lega Nord* (LN) as the political party, and *CasaPound Italia* (CPI) as the social movement organization; and the United Kingdom with the *UK Independence Party* (UKIP) as the political party and the *English Defence League* (EDL) as the social movement organization. I analyse their evolution and their interactions from 2009 to 2019.

The two cases were selected within a most-similar design strategy, as they are both Western European countries with representative democracies, both have been affected – although in different ways – by economic, cultural, and political crises. However, they differ with regard to some characteristics that have been highlighted in the literature to have an effect in explaining the emergence and success of the far right, namely: their institutional political

system, the presence of allies in power, and the legacy of a fascist past. The variety that these cases offer allows to investigate how and when the interactions between parties and movements take place and if the same dynamics hold beyond the specific characteristics of the national contexts.

To investigate the interactions in the three dimensions that have been conceptualised, those of frames, actions, and interactions, different methods have been used to gather data. First, through a Political Claim Analysis (PCA) I gathered data on the frames and actions dimensions. PCA is a development of the Protest Event Analysis that takes into account not only protest activities, but also conventional and discursive forms of actions. PCA has been designed with the intent to merge the two competitive paradigms of social movement studies: the more structural focused political opportunity model and the more discursive and cultural oriented framing process. In fact, it aims at extending the focus of the analysis beyond the protest dimension and broadening the analysis to the public context in which movements are embedded and therefore is the most suited to tracing the interactions that movements have with other institutional and non-institutional actors and the wide range of activities that they carry out (Koopmans and Statham, 1999). Through the PCA, data on all claim-making activities of parties and movements, from 2009 to 2019, have been collected so to empirically investigate what issues these actors focus on, the different forms of actions used to mobilise around different issues, and when and how parties and movements mobilise together. The data for the PCA have been retrieved through the digital archives of Factiva from the Italian newspaper *Il Corriere della Sera*, and the British newspaper *The Guardian*. The analysis of the frames dimension has been complemented by the analysis of parties and movements political manifestos and official statements. Two political manifestos for each of the Italian actors have been analysed, while four UKIP manifestos and two EDL mission statements have been analysed for the UK case study. Finally, the data to investigate parties' and movements'

organizations, the relations among their leaders, and overlapping memberships, are gathered through a document analysis of parties and movements' documents, newspaper articles, and academic literature.

The empirical analysis of the two case studies shows when parties and movements became closer in the frames, actions, and organisations dimensions, what are the main feature of these interactions, and how through these the actors have modified their discourses, repertoire of action, and even their organisational characteristics.

From the Italian case study, it emerged that the period when LN and CPI had closer interactions in all three dimension was the 2014-2015 period. In these years, changes affected both actors, as LN with a new leader – Salvini – elected at the end of 2013, decided to abandon its regionalist focus and adopt a new nationalist message. At same time, CPI, decided in 2013 to take part in elections and mobilise its supporter not only in the protest arena, but also in the electoral one. In this same period, the start of the so-called migration crises increased the salience of the migration issue in the public debate. Against this background, the interactions between the two actors increased in all three dimensions. In the frame dimensions, both actors increased their focus on the issues of migration and law-and-order, framing migration as a cultural and security threat to the Italian community. If the issue of migration had always ranked high in LN agenda, in these years received even more attention. While CPI, that had until that moment largely disregarded the migration issue, starts to increasingly mobilise its supporters against the arrival of migrants. Moreover, in the 2014-2015 period the two organisations took part to a series of joint demonstrations, mainly on the issue of migration, mobilising in the streets as many as 50,000 people in one rally called stop the invasion. LN and CPI, though, took also part jointly to public events, electoral campaigns, and to their respective national rallies.

In 2014-2015, a formal electoral alliance was in place between LN and CPI, showing an increased proximity also in the organisational dimension. In this period, CPI campaigned for the elections at the European Parliament of LN candidate Mario Borghesio who was successfully elected in the Italian centre district, and at 2015 local elections CPI had his members in LN electoral lists and presented its own list only where LN candidates were not running. After 2015, the alliance was not renewed and the interactions between the two actors considerably decreased in all dimensions. However, they did not disappear completely and links between LN and CPI had been observed throughout 2019, the end of the period analysed.

The UK case study, although analysing a very different set of party and moment and a very different political context, showed that also between UKIP and EDL interactions in all the three dimensions took place. For vast part of the period under investigation, no interaction between the two groups had been found. UKIP leaders, while winking at EDL and other extreme-right groups supporters to attract their votes, for long time have never had any open relation with EDL or any other far-right groups' leaders. This drastically changed in the last years of the period under investigation, when, after the achievement of its main policy goal – Brexit – UKIP started to look for a new message that would attract voters after losing its *raison d'être*. In doing so, the party relied on the mobilisation capacity and narratives of the far-right movement sector, where the EDL, long gone the years when it mobilised thousands of people against the supposed risk of UK's Islamification, was an active part of it. Under Batten's leadership, UKIP increasingly inserted into its political offer anti-Islam messages, and more specifically warning about the cultural threat Islam posed to the UK's way of life and the risk posed by Muslims grooming gangs. These issues were not completely new for the party, however, after Brexit they became the exclusive focus of the party and what favoured the development of relations also in actions and organisational dimensions with the far-right sector.

In fact, UKIP's majority of actions in the protest arena took place in 2018-2019, when Batten joined the protests organised by far-right organisations around the issues of free-speech, the spreading of Muslim grooming gangs, but also for the implementation of Brexit. At the end of 2018, Batten, breaking the long-standing UKIP's rule that banned members of the BNP and far-right organisations to enter the party, nominated the EDL founder Yaxley-Lennon as his personal advisor on Islam and grooming gangs. Soon after, a quartet of far-right activists, Paul Joseph Watson, Mark Meechan, Carl Benjamin, and Milo Yiannopoulos were accepted into the party in order to attract visibility online and involve younger people in the life of the party. Batten's strategy proved to be successful in one aspect: it managed to attract new members into the party. In electoral terms, however, UKIP completely collapsed, and it signed its return at the margins of British political life.

The data collected and discussed in the dissertation show how far-right party-movement interactions contribute to gather a better understanding of the dynamics behind these actors' strategic choices and how through their interactions the evolutions of their discourses, actions, and organisational dimensions can be explained. Even though only in the Italian case study electoral success has been accomplished after closer interactions with the movement sector, this research shows that both actors benefit from these relations and in more than one way. Through their interaction, parties can expand their political offers, mobilisation capacity, and organisational features, while movements can gain legitimacy, visibility, and see their claims being introduced in the institutional arenas.

This dissertation aims at providing a threefold contribution to the academic literature on far-right party-movement interactions. First, it makes a theoretical contribution by advancing a new conceptualisation of party-movement interactions and a new theory that explains how these interactions play out in the case of the far right. The theory I present is built on previous research on political parties and social movements, and it attempts to set forward an

explanatory model of party-movement interactions that helps make sense of when and how these actors have stronger or weaker interactions. My main argument is that parties and movements, being part of the same political context and of the same collective actor, shape through their interaction their discourses, actions, and organisational characteristics. In turn, the study of their interactions can shed further light on the dynamics behind the electoral and political successes and failures that the Far Right receives in both the electoral and protest arenas.

Second, it provides an empirically reach analysis of two sets of far-right parties and movements and examines all their claim-making activities, looking beyond only electoral dynamics for the parties, and beyond protest politics for the movements. Through the in-depth analysis of parties and movements documents, this dissertation provides a detailed account of the evolution of the four subjects of the study. Moreover, through a review of academic literature and newspaper accounts, the strategic choices made by these actors, their developments, and their successes and failures are accounted for and these accounts are situated in the wider political context in which they take place.

Finally, it contributes to the literature on the supply-side of the far right, by looking at the internal characteristics of parties and movements and more precisely at how the interactions between them can affect their discourses, activities, and organisational characteristics, improving our understanding of the far-right as a collective actor. Although the ever-growing literature on the far-right has examined a great variety of variables – both internal and external to the life of the parties – an empirical investigation of the interactions that occur between established radical-right parties and extreme-right movement organisations was still missing. I argue throughout this dissertation that by looking at the interactions between these actors we gain a better understanding of the dynamics behind the strategic choices made by both parties and movements: when and how different repertoire of actions are used; when and why different

mode of political participation are adopted by parties and movements; how new frames are adopted; how extreme discourses become normalised and enter the mainstream. Moreover, moving beyond the analysis of the electoral success of parties, the broader impact of the Far right can be examined and the links between institutional and non-institutional politics can help make sense of the political success, as well as failures, of this collective actor.

The following chapters are organised as follows. Chapter one, after defining the main concepts that are used in the research, it reviews the existing explanations available in the literature on the emergence and success of the Far Right. After reviewing works on far-right parties and movements, the research question and the argument of the research are presented. Chapter two lays out the theoretical foundations upon which the research is based. First, my conceptualisation of party-movement interactions is presented, then the hypotheses that guide the research are introduced. Chapter three outlines the research design of the study and the methods that are used to carry out the research. Chapter four and five constitute the bulk of the empirical research. Chapter four contains the analysis and discussion of the Italian case study with the interactions between Lega (Nord) and CasaPound Italia. In chapter five, the analysis of the UK case study is presented, with the analysis and discussion of the interactions between UKIP and the EDL. Finally, the conclusions chapter summarises the findings and explains how they contribute to existing research on the far right.

1. Understanding far-right party-movement interactions. Literature review

The electoral success of far-right parties in Europe over the last four decades has sparked the attention of scholars and has led to the development of a vast body of literature that examines causes and effects of the rise of far-right parties. Contextual factors and characteristics of parties have been investigated in order to explain what led to the far-right party family to achieve success across a variety of European countries. At the same time, far-right movements and subcultural milieus have mobilised their supporter in the streets, performing not only engaging in violent, but also performing vast manifestations. Following the terroristic attacks of jihadist nature that took place in some European countries – such as the Paris attacks in 2015 and the London Bridge attack in 2016 – and the so-called immigration crisis of the summer 2015, a variety of organisations mobilised in the streets in order to voice their concerns around issues such as immigration, law and order, and national identity. However, while the institutional side of the far-right (i.e. parties) has been investigated in depth, the non-institutional side (i.e. movements) has attracted less academic attention. Party scholars and social movement scholars have mostly travelled “along parallel paths with little conversations between them” (McAdam and Tarrow, 2010: 529). This has hindered a comprehensive understanding on the far-right as a collective actor with different organizational varieties and different means, beyond electoral/institutional, through which pursues its aims.

This research aims to contribute to fill this gap in the literature by investigating how both far-right actors – social movements and parties – interact in order to gain a better understanding of the dynamics behind the evolution of their discourses, repertoire of action, and organisational configurations. I contend that through their interactions, parties and movements shape each other’s discourses, gain a better ability to mobilise in the electoral and protest arenas, and are able to enhance each other organisational characteristics. In the next

chapter the dynamics and mechanism of the interactions between parties and movements will be discussed.

In this chapter, however, I review the existing explanations available in the literature on the success of the far-right to show that the interactions between parties and movements have not been taken into account as a factor that can help investigate the dynamics behind the political achievements of the far-right, understood as a collective actor. The first section defines the main concepts that are used in this research. Next, existing demand-side and supply-side explanations for the emergence and success of far-right parties are presented. In the third section, studies on the non-institutional side of the far-right are presented. Finally, building on the literature reviewed, the research question is presented at the end of the chapter.

1.1. Far-right parties and movements in Europe

The object of this dissertation is to investigate when and how far-right parties and movements interact, and how through these interactions parties and movements develop their discourses, repertoire of action, and organisational characteristics. In order to do so, the main concepts that are involved in the analyses need to be clearly defined. First it is defined the term far right and why this concept has been chosen. Second, I will define the key concepts of political parties, social movement, and social movement organisations. Finally, I discuss what is intended with the notion of *success* of the far right.

1.1.1. *The Far Right*

The first concept that requires a clear definition is that of the far right. Although the body of academic works on the subject has exponentially grown over the last two decades, there is still a debate about what is intended with far-right. A plethora of different terms have been used to investigate parties and movements that share common features and can be empirically

identified with parties such as the Front National, the Austrian Freedom Party, the Alternative for Germany, and the Swedish Democrats (Mudde, 2019: 6). The different terms that have been used to describe the phenomenon vary from radical-right (Kitschelt, 1995; Rydgren, 2007), extreme-right (Ignazi, 1992; Bale, 2003; Caiani et al., 2012), populist radical-right (Mudde 2007), far-right (Taggart, 2000; Halikiopoulou and Vasilopoulou 2018). The reluctance of parties and movements to identify themselves as populists, extreme, or radical, led to the categorisation of these movements and parties to be subject to the individual interpretations of academics and journalists (Mudde 2007: 11-13).

It is possible to identify a change over time of the terms that have been more frequently used to describe these parties and movements (Mudde, 2019: 6). In the post-war period, terms like neo-fascist and neo-nazi were used to describe parties and movements that shared ideological affinities with the Italian and German totalitarian regimes. In the 1980s – and with the birth of the parties of the “New Right” – the terms most commonly used became extreme-right, radical-right, and right-wing parties and identified parties on the opposite pole from the new post-materialist left, parties whose primary concerns were cultural and social issues that gain new space in light of the structural change that interested post-industrial societies (Minkenberg, 2003: 153). In the new millennium, the use of the expression populist radical-right or right-wing populism became more prominent, to grasp the importance that the anti-establishment frame acquired in almost all radical-right parties. Finally, in the last years the use of the expression far-right is spreading, in an attempt to bring back the attention on the characteristics of these parties and movements that go beyond populism. These developments, which obviously need to be taken with a pinch of salt, reflect the developments through which movements and parties underwent (Mudde, 2019: 6).

In order to explain why the term far-right has been chosen in this dissertation, this section will go step-by-step, following, Mudde’s ladder of abstraction of nativist ideology (2007: 24): first

it will be defined what is intended with the term right, then what is intended with radical and extreme and finally far-right.

Although also the concept of *right* is object of debate, there is a growing consensus in defining the right following Bobbio's conceptualisation of the right as being non-egalitarian (1996: 60). As Rydgren argues, what can help defines radical right parties is their hostility towards measures that are meant to lower inequalities "based on ethnicity, immigration status, or even gender" (2017: 4). The emphasis put on this characteristic is what in turn lead to a downplay of the importance of the traditional socio-economic scale to classify parties: the state-interventionism versus economic liberalism. In fact, if the initial studies on the rise of the new right in the 80's and 90's would emphasise how these parties were animated by neo-liberal economic positions (Betz 1994, Kitschelt 1995), these claims have been put to further test and proved not to be entirely true. More recent analyses show how the economic dimension is not the main dimension of contention of these parties – being subjugated to nativist and populist ideology – and that their economic positions are more centrist, being based on economic nationalism and chauvinism (De Lange 2007: 429, Mudde 2007: 136-137, Bornschier 2018: 217). Thus, right-wing parties are defined as those that see inequalities as being part of the social order, or, at least, not working toward eliminating them (Bobbio, 1996: 60; see also: Mudde, 2007: 26; Rydgren 2018: 3).

The concepts of radical and extreme are bounded to the political and cultural characteristics of different countries and they can be applied to a variety of different ideologies across the political spectrum (Mudde 2007: 25). However, since this study is concerned with far-right parties in Western Europe, these terms can be defined in relation to liberal democracy. Therefore, with the term radical-right are identified those parties and movements that, at least nominally, do not reject the democratic political system, but oppose some features of representative democracy, such as the respect of minority rights, and pluralism (Mudde 1996:

231; Rydgren, 2018: 2). While with the term extreme-right are identified parties that reject democracy tout court (Mudde, 1996: 230).

In this paper, with the term *radical-right* are identified those parties that share three defining features: nativism – an ideology that “holds that the states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (“the nation”) and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state” (Mudde, 2007: 19); – authoritarianism – “the belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely” (Mudde, 2007: 23); – and populism – “a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, “the pure people” versus the “corrupt elite”, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people” (Mudde, 2007: 23 emphasis in original).

Extreme-right actors share with radical-right parties two ideological features: nativism and authoritarianism, but not populism. This is because populism, in Mudde’s conceptualisation, is inherently democratic and it is “at odds with liberal democracy rather than with democracy per se” (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2018: 1670). Extreme-right actors, on the other hand, reject democracy tout-court as they oppose the principle of sovereignty of the people.

The term *far right* encompasses both extreme and radical variants of right-wing parties and movements (Mudde 2000: 181). The umbrella term far-right, is therefore used to identify both variants of parties and movements, those that oppose only some specific features of liberal democracy, and those that oppose democracy tout-court, and that sometimes even resort to the use of violence.

1.1.2. Parties, Social movement, and Social Movement Organisations

According to Minkenberg, the far right in Europe is better understood as a collective actor that has many organizational variants: the most studied variants are parties, but there are also social movements, social movement organisations, and subcultural groups (2003: 153). The different variants of the far-right all share the same core ideological features, but they pursue their goal by different means. While the main goal of parties is to influence politics through electoral means, movements and smaller groups aim at influencing politics through contentious actions and cultural activities. The object of this research are parties, social movements, and social movement organisations, and this section provides the definitions for these concepts.

The first actor that this research investigates is political parties. Political parties are “organizations that represent and aggregate citizen’s interests so that electoral majorities can be built to govern a country” (Hutter et. al, 323).

The second concept that requires a clear definition is that of social movements. Building on the definition of della Porta and Diani, social movements are defined as networks of groups and individuals, endowed with some collective identification, that pursue goals of social transformation mainly through unconventional forms of participation (2006: 20-21). As argued by della Porta and Diani, social movements can be seen as social *processes* in which “actors are engaged in political and/or cultural conflicts meant to promote or oppose social change” (2006: 21). The emphasis on the processual dimensions and the presence of dense and informal networks in conceptualising social movements is crucial as it allows to differentiate and, consequently, analytically investigate, social movement organizations.

Social movement organisations, the third central concept of this research, are organisations whose formalisation and professionalisation levels can vary, which identify with the social movement and aim to obtain the same goals as the movement and to influence policy-making mainly through non-electoral activities (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Kriesi, 1996).

Social Movements Organisations (SMOs) are therefore part of a larger network that pursue social change and whose organisational structures can vary, but they do not simply equate with the wider social movement in which they are embedded. The distinction between social movements and SMO has two main implications: first, SMOs are only one particular part of the movement's network, therefore by analysing SMOs we can focus on their strategical choices, leaderships, memberships and outcomes. These features, however, are peculiar of the SMO under consideration and do not necessarily equate to those of the wider social movement. Second, by analysing the specific features and strategic choices made by SMOs we can observe, as it is the case for some far-right SMO, that within their repertoire of actions there is also participation at election. However, as noted by della Porta and Diani, when such SMOs decide to take part in elections, this does not exclude them from being still part of the social movement, but "[r]ather, they will be part of two different systems of action (the party system and the social movement system), where they will play different roles" (2006: 27).

To sum up, in this research the Far right is understood as a collective actor made of variety of organisations: political parties that participate in elections; social movement organisations that pursue the objective of the broader social movement in which they are embedded, mainly through non-electoral activities; subcultural milieus that are part of the wider social movement but that do not have organizational structures (Minkenberg, 2003: 153). This last variant, will not be empirically investigated in this research.

Finally, as this research investigates how party-movement interactions may contribute to the success of the far right, what is intended with this concept is now clarified. In the literature the success of the far-right is usually understood in electoral terms. However, since this research is focused on both on parties and movements, the notion of success is not limited to the electoral results of parties, but also to the impact that movements have in the cultural and political context. As argued by Tilly, the notions of success and failure hardly describes the

effects of movements, but a broader range of outcomes are brought about by the activities of movements (1999, 268). By adopting an approach that looks also at the outcomes of movements and not only to the electoral results of parties, it is possible to investigate the broader impact that far-right parties and movements have on the political and cultural contexts in which they are embedded (Froio et al., 2020: 9). Since far-right movements seek to “affect the configuration of norms outside of the business of parliament [...] this means influencing social change by redefining cultural norms” (Minkenberg, 2003: 156) it can be considered indicative of success of the far right also when movements manage to bring about change in the cultural context, and not only the electoral performances of parties. Accordingly, this dissertation adopts a wider understanding of success that goes beyond the electoral results of far-right parties by including also the impact that movements have in shaping the cultural context in which they aim to bring innovation and change.

Now that I have discussed the definitions of the main concepts that are used in this research, I turn to review the main explanations for the success of the far right that have been proposed by scholars.

1.2. Explaining the rise of far-right parties in Western Europe

The electoral success of far-right parties has been the primary focus of scholars that have advanced explanations for its causes and consequences. Accordingly, this review will start by focusing on the explanations that have been provided for the electoral success of far-right parties and it will show how the role that social movements – more specifically social movement organisations – and the interactions between parties and movements has rarely been taken into considerations in explaining the development and success of the far-right.

Building on the work of Klaus von Beyme (1988), who identified three distinct waves of far-right politics since the end of the II world war, Mudde identifies four broad academic waves

of scholarship on the Far Right (2016: 3) since 1945. The first wave began at the end of World War II and lasted until the 1980s. The scholars of this first wave, mainly historians, focused on the historical continuity between the Nazi and Fascist parties of the pre- and post-war period (Adorno, 1950; Eisenberg, 1967). The second wave emerged following the success of the European parties of the 'New Right', such as the French Front National and the Austrian Freedom Party, and investigated the electoral 'demand-side' of these parties by looking at the characteristics and beliefs of their voters (Betz, 1994, Kitschelt, 1995, Ignazi, 1997). The third wave developed at the turn of the century and focused also on the parties' 'supply-side', by looking at the parties' structural characteristics, resources, and political opportunities (Eatwell 2000, Minkenberg 2001, Ignazi 2003, Mudde 2007). Finally, the fourth wave, is the one developing in the last few years, where far-right parties can no longer be considered – and therefore studied – as niche or outsider parties (Mudde 2019: 16). In this fourth wave, far-right parties have become normalised and mainstreamed, joining governmental coalitions, such the Italian Lega, the Austrian Freedom Party, or autonomously governing, such as the Polish Law and Justice and the Hungarian Fidesz. In this last wave, accordingly, far-right parties need to be studied as established and integrated parties of the political system (Mudde, 2019: 20; Zulianello, 2019: 17).

In order to review what are the main explanations that have been provided to account for the electoral success of far-right parties, this review will follow the chronological development of each wave, therefore will first, survey the demand-side explanations, next, the supply-side ones. Although empirically is not simple to clearly distinguish between supply-side and demand-side explanations, the next sections will follow this common analytical distinction to review the main explanations for the emergence and success of the far-right in Europe (Mudde, 2007: 202; Arzheimer. 2018: 144).

1.2.1. Demand-side Explanations

Demand-side explanations look at attitudes and characteristics of voters of far-right parties, that constitute the perfect “breeding ground” for these parties (Mudde, 2007: 201). The main theories that look at the demand-side are macro-level explanations that explain votes for the far right by looking at social, economic and cultural changes (Mudde, 2007: 202). The two most famous explanations that look at the demand-side are the “losers of globalisation” thesis (Ignazi, 1992; Betz, 1994; Kriesi et al., 2008) and the “cultural backlash” against the development of multicultural societies (Lubbers et al., 2002; Norris 2005; Inglehart and Norris, 2019). Although these explanations are treated as competitive rather than complementary (Inglehart and Norris, 2019), they could be better understood as complementary, as both theories contribute to define what constitutes the breeding ground of far-right parties.

The “losers of globalisation” thesis has its roots in the classical works of Kornhauser (1959), Lipset (1960), and Gellner (1983). These works underly the importance of societal changes and modernization in explaining the rise of fascist movements in the inter-war and post-war period. In its more modern version, the “losers of globalisation” thesis holds that the process of globalisation created new disparities that resulted in the creation of a new societal cleavage between winners and losers of these process (Kriesi et al., 2008: 4). The losers of globalisation are those unable to cope with the economic and social transformations that took place in the post-industrial society. Part of this “underclass” are the unskilled workers, the unemployed, the ones without higher education degree, but also those workers in sectors now exposed to global competition (Betz, 1994: 32; Kitschelt, 1995: 10; Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 170). The members of this underclass, who feel threatened by all these developments and who do not believe established political parties represented their interests, are those more likely to vote for far-right parties (Betz, 1994: 35; Kriesi et al., 2012: 4; Kitschelt, 1995: 10). Far-right parties, in fact, exploited the feelings of mistrust of citizens toward the established parties –

believed to be no longer able to protect citizens against a changing economy and global competition – and strategically addressed the demand for more economic protection and lowering the number of migrants (Betz, 1994: 171; Kitschelt, 1995: 3; Minkenberg, 2003: 150). These parties present themselves as the protector of national boundaries, economic regulations, and promise to limit – or halt – immigration, defending therefore the interests of all those who have been “left behind” from the new societal transformations (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 173). Immigration, according to this theory, is one of the key issues that concerns citizens and toward which far-right parties direct the anxieties of the “left behind” (Betz, 1994: 103). The reason why the “globalisation losers” theory should be read in conjunction with the “cultural backlash” thesis is that the economic anxieties of the “losers” are being framed in cultural terms by far-right parties (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2018: 1674). In fact, far-right parties are able to frame a variety of issues such as unemployment, crime, and social unrest as all linked to the threat posed by migrants (Rydgren, 2008). This cultural framing of the economic anxieties of citizens is the point that both theories share.

The cultural backlash thesis is also rooted in modernization theories (Mudde, 2007: 210). What this thesis holds, is that people vote for far-right parties as a response against the development of increasingly multicultural societies. Ignazi, at the beginning of the new century, argued that the rise of extreme-right parties in Europe is a function of the shifting of the value system in the post-industrial society and the polarisation of the party system (Ignazi, 2003: 203). The rise and prominence of new post-materialistic issues, such as environmentalism, multiculturalism, and immigration that have not been taken up by traditional parties, offered an opportunity for the emergence of new parties that could articulate these issues in the political space (Ignazi, 2003: 202-203). The rise of the Green parties, or those of the new left, brought about new changes. In fact, those that did not appreciate these new developments, and that felt threatened by the changes that were taking place in the society,

found a shelter in the ideology of the party of the new right, that promised the return of a simpler and mystified past in which the national culture would be defended (Minkenberg, 2003: 150). Extreme-right parties could address new issues such as immigration, multiculturalism, and national identity and garner support among voters who felt without representation by traditional parties and opposed the changes that were taking place in their societies (Ignazi, 2003: 202; Inglehart and Norris, 2016: 15; Inglehart and Norris, 2019: 35). In the cultural backlash thesis, as in the losers of globalisation one, the focus is on the relevance that the issue of immigration has for far-right parties' voters (Lubbers et al., 2002: 371). The growing numbers of refugees, asylum seekers, and more generally migrants, have been perceived as a "threat" by some part of the population that felt that these would represent competitors over scarce resources such as the labor market and welfare benefits (Norris, 2005).

The studies that have tested these demand-side theories have shown contrasting results. Looking at the economic explanations of this new conflict, studies have analysed the impact of unemployment, exposure to Chinese imports, and, more recently, the impacts of the Great Recession. A recent study shows that voters in European regions that have been more exposed to Chinese import shocks tend to shift toward more nationalist positions and vote for extreme-right parties (Colantone and Stanig, 2018). This has been confirmed also in the French context, where citizens who live in areas more exposed to Chinese imports tend to vote the Front National more than their fellow countrymen who live in different areas. (Malgouyres, 2017). However, when unemployment is taken into consideration, the results are conflicting. A study that investigates the contextual factors that can explain the rise of radical-right in Europe, has found that higher level of unemployment benefit radical-right parties where there is also a high level of immigration (Arzheimer, 2009: 273). Similar conclusions have been reached by Rydgren and Ruth in a study on Sweden, which shows that areas with higher unemployment rates tend to support the Swedish Democrats, a radical-right populist party (2013: 725).

However, other studies have found that unemployment rates do not affect the vote share for radical-right and populist parties (Lubbers et al., 2002). On a similar vein, Inglehart and Norris have found that levels of unemployment, and more in general economic insecurity, only partially explain the rise of populism, as they contribute to exacerbate cultural insecurities which are the main explanation (2019: ch 5). Moreover, in a recent study on the impact that the Great Recession had on populist parties in Europe, Kriesi and Pappas found that the crisis has had a positive effect on the success of populist parties, but it happened in countries that had experienced a combination of both political and economic crises that populist parties managed to secure more votes (Kriesi and Pappas, 2016: 303-305).

Even with the cultural variables, the results of the empirical investigations are conflicting. With regard to one of the most used variables, immigration, the results of studies are not conclusive. In fact, while the studies of Swank and Betz (2003), Arzheimer and Carter (2006), and Halla and co-authors (2017) found that to a larger number of immigrants present in a state corresponds an increase in the vote share of radical-right parties, the study carried out by Norris does not find such evidence (2005).

One of the reasons for these contrasting results is the difficulty to empirically specify the dynamics and characteristics that link these macro-level theories to individual-level attitudes (Mudde, 2007: 230), and partially to the differences among studies that use individual-level data and those that use aggregate-level data (Rydgern, 2007: 250). Even if these theses can explain the “potential electorate” of far-right parties, they do not explain who “actually votes for these parties” (Mudde, 2007: 230). Moreover, similar structural and political conditions, as the ones considered by the two different theses presented above, can be found in countries that did not experience successful far-right parties, such as Ireland or Portugal. Therefore, in order to better understand the dynamics that can explain why people vote for far-right parties, it is necessary to take into account also supply-side explanations and, most importantly, how supply

and demand-side factors interact among them (Golder, 2016: 493; Halikiopoulou and Vlandas, 2019: 431) These are the explanations that look at the specific characteristics that favours the emergence and persistence of these parties and the internal characteristics that these parties have and that can explain their success.

1.2.2. Supply-side Explanations

The supply-side explanations can be divided between those that look at internal factors, those strictly inherent to the strategy that parties adopt in order to achieve electoral success and those investigate the contextual opportunities that are available for parties. In the first category, the main variables that have been used to explain the success of far-right parties as ideology, the role of a charismatic leader, and party's structure (Ignazi, 1992; Kitschelt, 1995; Eatwell, 2000; Gunther and Diamond, 2003; Mudde, 2007). The ideology of the far-right has been proposed as some scholars as the main variable to explain their success (Mudde, 2007: 257). The main characteristics that build the ideology of these parties have already been seen in the first part of this chapter: nativism and authoritarianism. The ability of parties to propose an ideology that is relatively moderate compared to those of their fascist predecessors, has been seen by some as the key of their success (Ignazi, 2003: 21). However, the strength of ideologies to attract consensus and mobilise electoral support is strictly related to the national culture in which the parties develop (Mudde, 2007: 259; Mannucci, 2020: 42). In fact, while in some countries the extremist characteristic of parties' ideology can have room, depending on the wounds the II World War left, in others there is no space for them (Mudde, 2007: 259). Thus, the political culture of the countries must be kept into account. However, this observation is true also for the other internal characteristics that are used as explanatory factors. In fact, the structure that parties decide to give themselves, whether they choose to rely on a one-men party or in a more established and structured organisation, depends on the political environment in which these

parties act and also to the changes that they experience during their political life (Heinisch and Mazzoleni, 2016: 1).

In order to gain a better understanding of why and how far-right parties achieve success, is important to look also at what are the external opportunities available to them, what are the institutional or political factors that can facilitate or hinder their success, and how these parties can exploit them. In order to analyse the external factors that may facilitate far-right parties electoral and political success, the concept of political opportunity structures has been used. Although the concept of political opportunity structure has been developed by new social movement scholars, it has been used also in the study of radical right parties to explain their emergence and electoral success (Kitschelt, 1995; Koopmans et al., 2005; Mudde 2007). This concept has been developed in the late 1970s to investigate the political, social, and economic context from which a social movement arises, develops and declines (Tarrow, 2011: 26; Kriesi, 2004: 67). The concept of political opportunity structures, defined as “features of regime and institutions that facilitate or inhibit a political actor’s collective action” has been used to emphasise the relationship between the social movements and their wider context (Tilly and Tarrow, 2015: 238). By adopting the framework provided by the political process model, the activities of the movements can be analysed in connection with the political context in which they develop and not as a ‘marginal and anti-institutional expressions of dysfunctions of the systems’ (della Porta & Diani, 2006: 17).

Scholars working with the political process approach have mainly argued that social movements develop and adapt to their external environment depending on the degree of openness or closure of the political structure (Kriesi, 2004: 69). This same premise is what guides scholars that adopted this framework to the study of far-right parties. Different aspects of the institutional, political, and cultural context have been taken into account to determine whether the political opportunity structures in a country are open or closed. The main meta-

variables that have been taken into account in order to explain the emergence and success of far-right parties are the electoral system, federal or unitary systems, the convergence between established parties in the political space, the presence of allies in power, the legacy of fascist past, and the role of media (Koopmans et al., 2005: 184; Arzheimer and Carter, 2006: 422; Rydgren, 2007: 252-257; Mudde, 2007: 232).

With regard to the electoral system, it has been argued that majoritarian systems place more constraints for emergent parties, while proportional systems offer more opportunities to small parties to enter the electoral arena (Kriesi, 2004: 70). This is because not only smaller parties in majoritarian systems will be given less seats compared with their vote share, but also because voters would be discouraged to waste a vote for a small party and instead vote for one of the bigger parties (Rydgren, 2007: 254). With this variable too the evidences are contrasting: while Katz (2007) found that proportional systems are characterised by a greater presence of small and extreme parties, Norris (2005) found that proportional systems do not affect the success of radical-right parties, while Arzheimer and Carter (2006) found that there is a positive effect between majoritarian systems and votes for the far-right. In sum, and as argued by Mudde, if electoral systems have some impact in the political opportunities available to far-right parties, they do not help clarify the differences that are still observables among countries and periods (2007: 234).

Another structural characteristic that has been taken into consideration to define the degree of openness of opportunities for the far-right is the degree of centralization of the state. Scholars working with this meta-variable presented different and contrasting hypothesis. In fact, there is who maintains that federal and decentralised states provide more opportunity for far-right parties since these parties can enter the electoral competition at regional level and work their way up to the federal level, benefitting also by the fact that voters are more available to support extreme parties in second-ordered elections (Decker 2004). Conversely, there are

scholars who argue that the opportunity offered by this second-order elections can represent a “security valve” for voters, that consequently vote for established parties at federal level elections (Arzheimer and Carter, 2006: 423). Also in this case, successful far-right parties can be observed in both federal and unitary states and no clear answers regarding this variable can be provided (Arzheimer and Carter, 2006: 433; Mudde, 2007: 236).

Another meta-variable that contributes to the political opportunities available to far-right parties is the convergence between centrist stances by established parties. The convergence hypothesis maintains that when established parties tend to converge toward centrist stances, this opens new political spaces for far-right parties that can present themselves as something different from old parties that have become indistinguishable (Kitschelt, 1995: 17). The convergence hypothesis has been tested in a variety of studies and with again contrasting findings. In fact, Kitschelt found support for his hypothesis (1995: 275) and Arzheimer & Carter found that votes for far-right parties increase following a grand-coalition government (2006: 239). However, Lubbers et al. (2002: 364) found no support for this theory as well as Norris (2005). Even in this case, the contrasting results can be due to the specific differences among countries and what could matter are the specific strategies that far-right parties decide to follow (Norris, 2005: 196).

The last meta-variables take into account the “cultural context” and the opportunities that this could open for far-right parties (Mudde, 2007: 244). The presence of elite allies may affect the mobilisation of far-right voters. In fact, it has been hypothesised that if there are established parties available to collaborate with far-right parties, the latter could gain more legitimacy in the eyes of voters. In contrast, when established parties decide to exclude far-right parties by coalition governments or even parliamentary discussions, establishing a *cordon sanitaire*, the space for far-right parties is more limited and they will keep lacking legitimacy in the eyes of voters (Minkenberg, 2003: 158). However, a different hypothesis maintains that the presence

of established allies could empty far-right parties of the anti-establishment frame, one of the most powerful at their disposal. Even though there are no conclusive evidence in favour of neither of these hypotheses (Rydgren, 2007: 256), the importance of the attitudes of established parties must not be discounted as they contribute to define the cultural environment and the political milieu in which far-right parties can act.

The legacy of a fascist past has also been considered to explain the cultural context in which far-right parties emerge and how this past could affect their breakthrough and persistence (Mudde, 2007: 245). In fact, it has been argued that a fascist past can provide parties with interpretative frames that can resonate with the experiences and the pasts of their supporters. However, a fascist past is also a de-legitimization tool that political adversaries can use against far-right parties (Klandermans and Mayer 2005: 26). The role that a fascist past play depends on the specific characteristics that the fascist regimes had in a country. Klandermans and Mayer argued that in states where “history [...] can be framed independently from German Nazism” there is more space for far-right parties to exploit the legacy of that past, but in countries where this is not possible, the link with the past is a burden of which far-right parties must distance from (Klandermans and Mayer 2005: 27). A similar argument has been advanced by Mannucci, who argued that the success of populist parties can be explained by looking at different type of collective memory of their fascist past. To this past correspond different levels of stigma, that in turn determine the social acceptability of populism and therefore can explain the different level of success of parties (Mannucci, 2020: 50),

From the discussion above emerges that the cultural context is shaped by different actors and different dynamics, and that these contribute to define the specific discursive opportunities available to far-right parties. The concept of discursive opportunities has also been developed by new social movement scholars to indicate ‘what kind of ideas become visible for the public, resonate with public opinion, and are held “legitimate” by the audience’ (Kriesi 2004: 72).

Depending on the discursive opportunities available in the context, actors will frame their discourses in a way that resonates with the public and that motivates the audience to participate to their mobilisation (Benford & Snow 2000: 621; Koopmans et al., 2005: 188). This concept, applied to the study of far-right parties, can help identify when and why some ideas and issue become more visible and how the framing of these issue is held legitimate by the audience. Actors that actively shape the discursive opportunities are both established parties' and far-right parties' leaders that in their continuous "public process of negotiation" shape the perception of the public (Minkenberg, 2003: 158). However, in this process of negotiation, also the media have a critical role. Private media and commercial televisions tend to offer more visibility to far-right parties due to their ability to perform unconventional and controversial actions (Rydgren, 2007: 255; Mudde 2007: 248). The importance of the media lies in their agenda-setting role and, consequently, determine which issues are believed important by viewers (Mudde, 2019: 109). Therefore, the substantial time allocated to far-right parties and the adoption of their frame and issues, since these are the ones that attract more audience and interest, increases the perception of the importance of the issues owned by these parties, like immigration, terrorism, and law and order (Mudde, 2019: 110). It is a vicious circle, of which are part also established parties, since these parties are requested to offer solution to issues that have already been appropriated by the far-right.

In sum, the role of the media in allocating disproportionate airtime – compared to their electoral performances – to far-right parties results in a change of the issues perceived as most pressing by the audience and contributes to the spreading of far-right frames and discourses. However, how issues are framed and how successful the frames are, depends on the ability of these to resonate within the broader society and the national culture, that, we saw, is determined by a variety of factors, such as the legacy of a fascist past, the availability of allies in power, etc.

When looking at the elements that can affect the cultural milieu in which far-right parties act, we should take into consideration the activities of social movements. As Mudde has argued, the activities of social movements and subcultural organisations can contribute to the spreading of far-right discourses into society, represent allies in the electoral competition, and new personnel for the parties (2007: 248). However, the role that far-right movements have in altering the political opportunity structures available to the far-right and, most importantly, how these two different actors interact within the political space have been rarely taken into account. Although the role that movements play in political space is being increasingly recognised as important in order to understand the wider mobilisation of the far right, it is not being sufficiently investigated (Castelli Gattinara and Pirro, 2018).

This section reviewed the main explanations that have been provided for the rise and success of far-right parties in Western Europe. First, demand-side explanations have been reviewed and it has been argued how they are not sufficient to explain the success of these parties for two main reasons: on the one hand it is still unclear what are the mechanisms that link macro-level changes, like globalisation and cultural shifts, to individual-level attitudes; on the other, although these structural changes interested all Europe, the success of far-right parties is not evenly spread among all countries. In order to answer to these questions left opened by demand-side explanations, supply-side factors have been taken into account. In this second part, it has been shown how the constraints and opportunities of each national context are of extreme importance in order to understand the strategies that each party chooses. However, when examining the cultural context, the role that social movements play in shaping and changing the opportunities available for far-right parties, have not been adequately into account by party scholars.

In the next section, I turn to discuss the works that have analysed the activities of far-right movements and what are the explanations that have been provided to their emergence and success.

1.3. Far-right movements in Europe

While the electoral success that the far right has achieved in the last decades is at the base of the increased attention that scholars have dedicated to explain and understand its causes and effects, the activities of far-right non-party organisations, such as the English Defence League and in the UK or PEGIDA in Germany have attracted the attention of (few) social movement scholars that have called for a new conceptualisation of the far-right as a social movement phenomenon that goes beyond its electoral manifestation (Minkenberg, 2003; Caiani et al. 2012; Castelli Gattinara and Pirro, 2018). Although the sheer number of people that these organisations are able to mobilise in the streets is not particularly high nor constant, the attention that they are able to attract with their actions is significant. The upsurge in number and episodes of street protest following the so-called immigration crisis of the summer 2015, has brought some attention around non-party organisations in an attempt to broaden the focus from party to non-party organisations (Mudde, 2017).

The rise of counter-Jihad movements in Europe in the first decade of the new millennium, has attracted the attention of scholars that have tried to classify these new movements, which refused to recognise themselves as far-right or radical-right, but claimed to only defend the culture and identity of their people against the imminent threat represented by Islam. These movements spread quickly into many European countries, from the UK to France, to Sweden and Norway (Meleagrou-Hitchens and Brun, 2013: 9). These new street-based organisations, have been investigated by scholars to identify their ideological collocation, their strategy of actions, and the experiences of their supporters. In a recent study on the English Defence League, Busher investigated how and why people became involved in the life of the

organization and how they built a collective identity in a continuous tension between far-right ideology and anti-Muslim sentiments (2016). While the faith of the organization might be insecure, given its fragmentation and lack of structure, the EDL managed to provide a space for people that were far from being involved in politics, where issues like national identity and culture could be reinterpreted collectively through the participation in the activities of the organization, and these collective identities will not fade away with the organization (Busher, 2016: 176).

The study of these new counter-jihad and far-right movements and the commonalities that they share across Europe, is at the basis of the work of Zúquete (2018). In providing a wide account of the different organizations that collectively are identified as “The Identitarians”, he notices how the participants of these organizations have developed a “ethnocultural and multilayered” identity that goes from an attachment to the national culture, to an idealised European one, that needs to be defended against the threat of Islam, but also against the cultural homogenization that globalization brings with (Zúquete, 2018: 365). The strength of these organizations lies in their “headline-grabbing activism” that allows the spreading of their messages to the wider public and magnifies the real impact of their actions (Zúquete, 2018: 368). However, it is important to notice how these studies on far-right movements and street-based organisation do not take into consideration their institutional counterpart. In other word, if these studies contribute to shed light on the activities and discourses of far-right movements, they do not extend the analysis to how movements relate to parties, what are the connections between the different types of actors.

Although Minkenberg’s call to conceptualise the far-right as a collective actor composed of a variety of different actors who all contribute to its mobilisation and success, has remained for long unheard, recent developments in the literature have attempted to bridge this gap (2003: 153; 2018: 465).

In one of the first studies on different far-right organizational variants that analysed party and non-party organisations, Caiani, della Porta and Wagemann, found that by looking at contexts and organisational behaviour, it can be understood the reasons behind their mobilisations, the strategy that are being adopted and also why and how they are chosen. Another important finding of this study is that the repertoire of actions of the far-right goes beyond the two extremities of contesting elections and engaging in violent activities (Caiani et al., 2012: 209). activities span from festivals to petitions, from occupations to demonstrations. This broad range of actions helps understand how their collective identities is built through these different types of activities and how they are shaped by the context in which they operate. In fact, festivals and confrontational events can create and reinforce a collective identity, through the dynamics of in-group/out-group confrontation, while violent activities, occupations and blockades have the ability to attract media attention and spread their messages to a wider public (Caiani et al., 2012: 209).

The concept of *repertoire of action*, the “set of means [a group] has for making claim of different types on different individuals” (Tilly, 1986 as cited in Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 168) has been developed by social movement scholars to appreciate the variety of actions at the disposal of movements and how they are time and country specific. Different repertoires of actions are used in the two different arenas in which mass politics takes place, the electoral and the protest one (Hutter, 2014: 26). While in the electoral arena citizens express their positions through voting, in the protest one different actions, from violent actions to petition and street demonstration, are available. By investigating the different repertoires of actions that the far-right has at its disposal, we can better understand when, why, and how they chose to mobilise in the protest or in the electoral arena, and what are the ways in which these two arenas are complementary for the mobilisation of the far-right. By focusing on the different arenas of mobilisations, instead of the different far-right actors, Hutter found that the far-right acts within

a “different logic thesis” (Hutter, 2012; Hutter, 2014). This means that the far-right, at least in Western Europe, mobilises in the protest arena when is not strong in the electoral one and vice versa; the opposite of the congruence thesis, which seems at work for the left that “waxes and wanes at the same time in arenas” (Hutter 2012: 182). This behaviour is explained in two ways. First, although far-right parties are adverse to some of the features of representative democracy, they mainly compete in the electoral arena, producing what some see as the “political paradox of the populist right” (Hutter, 2014: 40; Taggart 2002: 74). This paradox has been explained by Hutter with the will of far-right parties to differentiate from their “chaotic” adversaries of the left (2014: 40) Second, rebels on the right hold “authoritarian and materialist values and prefer (orderly) conventional political action over (disorderly) protest politics” (Hutter, 2014: 40). However, these findings still do not shed lights on who are the different actors that use the different arenas, what are the relations between those actors, and how they differ or when and how decide to join forces.

Another important advancement in bridging the gap between party politics and movement studies on the far right has been the analysis of the movement-like characteristics of radical-right parties in an attempt to further bridge the gap in the study of these two different actors. While the movement party category has usually been used to describe left-wing parties that grew out of social movements – like the Green parties in the 1980s – this concept has been also used to grasp some of the characteristics that modern far-right parties display (Caiani and Císař, 2019: 12). Kitschelt defines movement parties as “coalitions of political activists who emanate from social movements and try to apply the organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition” (2006: 280). Although Kitschelt argues that European radical-right parties did not “grow out of movements”, he argues they are the initiator of disruptive events on issues like immigration and European integration and they show traits typical of movements, such as fluidity of their structure, the small formal

memberships, and their charismatic leaderships (2006: 286). The main characteristic of movement parties, remain their ability to shift between the mobilisation in the two different arenas, depending on their necessity (Pirro and Castelli Gattinara, 2018). However, the movement party organisational type is only one of the types of “mobilisation and political articulation, which is the transition from movements to parties” (Caiani and Císař, 2019: 232). Therefore, it does not grasp the different interactions that may occur beyond the institutionalisation process and the relations that exists between established parties and movements organisations.

From this review, two are the main takeaways to highlight. First, the (few) studies that have analysed the activities of far-right social movements have only looked at these non-institutional actors, focusing on the trajectories of their members, the reasons for their success, their ideologies, and discourses. Second, those studies that have bridged the gap between movement studies and party politics and have looked at movement parties of the far-right and the relations between the electoral and protest arenas, have not took into considerations the variety of interactions that may occur between established political parties and movements and how these interactions impact the success that the far right achieved in political and cultural terms.

1.4. Research Question

The literature review has discussed the main explanations that have been advanced for the rise and success of far-right parties in Europe. It has been argued that, while demand-side explanations can illuminate how structural societal changes can affect the attitudes of voters that can take comfort in the reassuring and simple solutions proposed by far-right parties, these explanations are still not sufficient. In fact, they cannot explain how these structural changes are able to affect individual choices of voters and why if these changes are widespread, the success of far-right parties is not. In order to fill this gap, scholars have started to analyse the

characteristics of parties and what are the opportunities that they can exploit. By looking at the contextual opportunities for far-right, a variety of meta-variables have been taken into account to explain how they can shape the political space in which parties develop, such as the electoral system, the convergence of established parties toward centrist stances, and the legacy of a fascist past. Examining the contextual explanations, it has been noted how the cultural context has a crucial importance since this is the main terrain in which far-right parties operate. However, it has also been noted how so far, the attention given to how social movements, street-based organisations, and youth-group, has been limited. It has not been taken into adequate account how these organisations can influence or shape the political opportunities available to parties by circulating new ideas, attracting media attention on new issues, and how they can provide resources to new parties.

The protest events and demonstrations organised by far-right movements in Europe in the last few years, especially following the so-called immigration crisis of the summer 2015, have attracted the attention of social movement scholars, who have investigated some of these organisations in order to understand what are the issues around which they mobilise and how people become involved in their participation. However, these studies fell short of investigating how these organisations cooperate with their institutional counterparts. Moreover, while the new development in the literature is represented by the analysis of the movement-like characteristics of far-right parties and the ability of these actors to adopt unconventional forms of protest, this analysis is still predominantly focused on parties and does not take into account the other actors that populate the political space.

The aim of my research is to fill this gap, by answering to the following questions: *Under which conditions are parties and movements more likely to have closer interactions? How do parties and movements mobilisation strategies, discourses, and organisational characteristics change depending on the strength of their interactions?* By answering these questions, this

research aims at shedding new light on the under-studied and under-theorized relations between parties and movements so to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and success of the far-right as a whole.

The methodological and theoretical differences that still remain between party scholars and social movements scholars have impaired a fruitful collaboration between the two strands of literature that have continued to work on parallel lines. Although important advancements to fill this gap have been made in recent years, as the above review has shown, the analysis of the interactions that occur between established radical-right parties and extreme-right movements is still missing. I argue that by looking at the interactions between these actors we gain a better understanding of the dynamics behind the strategic choices made by both parties and movements and how these achieve both electoral and political success, but also how they can contribute to their failures. By looking at the interactions between parties and movements it can be investigated how different mode of political participation are adopted by movements and parties, and more specifically when they decide to mobilise in the electoral and in the protest arena. Moreover, this research contributes to analyse the dynamics that link institutional and non-institutional politics, and therefore to explain how ideas, actions, and people travel from the margins into the mainstream of politics.

By bridging the scholarships on party politics and social movements and by looking at both parties and movements, this research aims at explaining how far-right parties and movements interact and how through these interactions both actors change and adapt their mobilisation strategies, discourses, and organisational characteristics. I argue that ultimately, the interactions between parties and movements may contribute to explain the success that parties gain in the electoral arena and that of movements in the protest one. By considering how and why far-right social movements act in the protest arena, what are their strategies of actions, and how they interact with established political parties, we could gain a better

understanding of what is the context in which the far right develops and how it manages to achieve success.

2. Far-right movement-party interactions: an explanatory model

This chapter lays out the theoretical foundations on which the empirical research is based. In order to explain party- movement interactions and understand under which conditions these are more likely to happen, and in turn how through these interactions affect the development of each actors' frames, actions, and organisations, the research builds on both social movement's and party politics' studies. In the last years attempts have been made by various scholars to bridge the two scholarships to explain the emergence and success of new actors that occupy the political space. Some have focused on the movement-parties that arose after the economic crisis (Della Porta et al, 2017), while others have investigated how the electoral and protest arenas have been reshaped by the impact of globalisation (Kriesi et al. 2008; 2012; Hutter, 2014); or on the movement parties of the far-right (Kitschelt, 2006; Castelli Gattinara and Pirro 2018; Pirro and Castelli Gattinara 2018; Caiani and Cisar, 2019). The common starting point of all these studies is the need to explain how protest and electoral politics are linked, how the protest and the electoral arenas communicate, influence, and shape each other. My research builds on this literature and attempts to further it in two ways: first, I provide a new conceptualisation and operationalisation of movement-party interactions, that can be useful in investigating other case studies. Second, I develop a theory of party-movement interactions that can explain when parties and movements are more likely to have closer interactions and how through these interactions these actors shape each other's frames, actions, and organisational characteristics. My main argument is that parties and movements interact in the political space and that through these interactions they shape their frames and discourses, adopt different forms of actions, and share members. The relations that exist between parties and movements can in turn contribute to explain the support that the Far Right receives in both the electoral and protest arena. The relations on the frame dimension can contribute to the

spreading and legitimisation of the frames that these actors adopt; the relations on the actions dimension can contribute to attract visibility due to the adoption of a wider repertoire of actions; and the relation in the organisational dimension can contribute to increasing the ranks of parties with new members and activists and create inter-organisational linkages that facilitate the cooperation among the two actors and therefore facilitate the mobilisation of their supporters.

2.1. Party-movement interactions, a new conceptualisation

In order to analytically investigate the interactions between far-right parties and movements, I have conceptualised the interaction in terms of distance/proximity in three dimensions: frames, actions, and organisations. In this section I first review existing conceptualisations of party-movement interactions and I argue why I choose to build a different one. Then, I present my conceptualisation, what these dimensions are, and how they are fundamental to understanding both parties and movements characteristics. Then I will explain what is meant by distance/proximity and how I will analytically assess it.

My conceptualisation of party-movement interactions builds on previous literature that has investigated this phenomenon, and further it. As Hutter and colleagues have argued, party-movement interactions have been usually explained within four main strands of literature (Hutter et al., 2019). I will very briefly present them and explain why their conceptualisation has not been adopted in this dissertation. First, the first way in which party-movement interactions have been studied is through the lens of the political process approach, where parties represent one of the possible allies of movements (Tilly, 1978). In this view, political parties – especially those ideologically close to the movement – may decide to pick up the causes of movements in order to advance the claims also in the institutional arena (della Porta and Rucht, 1995). While this mechanism certainly plays a role in how issues that emerge in the protest arena are then brought into the electoral one, I argue that is a too static conceptualisation

of relations as it sees the party leading the relation and, moreover, it considers how parties in government can further the claims of the movements, but not what happens at the interactions when parties are in opposition or electorally weak.

The second strand of literature, is the one on how new cleavages are politically articulated between electoral and protest arenas (Kriesi et al. 2008; 2012; Hutter 2014). These works have shown how the integration-demarcation cleavage has been articulated by political parties in the different arenas and found that different logics are at play depending on the actors involved: in Western Europe “the left waxes and wanes at the same time in both arenas, while the right alternatively turns to one arena or the other, but not to both at the same time” (Hutter et al., 2019: 326). While the theoretical and empirical contributions of these studies is of undoubted importance, I argue that their conceptualisation of party-movement interactions does not grasp the actual interactions between parties and movements, but the linkages between the two arenas. Thus, leaving unexplored the analysis of the interactions that occur between the different actors and why and how they turn to the different arena.

The third strand of literature is the one that investigates the agenda-setting power of protests (Walgrave and Vliegenthart, 2012). These studies have found that issues that gain prominence in the protest arena are then picked up by political parties in the institutional arenas, thus protest acts as signal sent to elites in powers (Vliegenthart et al., 2016). These works offer an invaluable tool to analyse the effect of protests and how mobilisation in the protests arena affects political parties. However, I would argue that it investigates only a part of the interactions between parties and movements, and more specifically the dimension of actions and discourses. But it does not take into account who is protesting. Parties can mobilise in the streets alongside movements and movements may decide to take part to elections and further their own claims in the electoral arena. Interactions between parties and movements may exist

also in the organisational dimensions and this strand of literature does not grasp the variance of organisational forms and the actors that are involved in the protest arena.

The fourth strand of literature is represented by the works of McAdam and Tarrow that propose a mechanism-based set of linkages between movement actors and political actors in electoral campaign: (1) movements introduce new forms of collective action that influence election campaigns; (2) movements join electoral coalitions or, in extreme cases, turn into parties themselves; (3) movements engage in proactive electoral mobilization; (4) movements engage in reactive electoral mobilization; (5) movements polarize political parties internally; (6) Shifts in electoral regimes have a long-term impact on mobilization and demobilization (McAdam and Tarrow, 2010). While these processes all shed light on the electoral outcomes of party-movement relations, they do not grasp the interactions that occur between different organisations. How party and movement interact is not explained by these mechanisms beyond their – surely most important – electoral outcome.

Finally, Hutter and colleagues present their own conceptualisation of party-movement interactions in times of a crisis of representation (2019). They argue that in period of crisis, the boundaries between movements and party politics are blurred and the interactions between parties and movements are more frequent and sustained, giving rise to hybrid actors (Hutter et al, 2019). Movement-party interactions may therefore result in (1) movements transforming existing political parties, (2) in movements transforming themselves into political parties, (3) movements forming “anti-party” – organisations that mobilise against established parties but competing into elections (Hutter et al., 329-330). While their conceptualisation of party-movement interactions grasps exceptionally well the complexity of new actors that emerged in the last decades and how vague the distinction between institutional and non-institutional politics are in times of political crises, this conceptualisation is still party-focus as it puts a great deal of attention in how movements evolve and take part to electoral politics. However,

does not clarify what are the specific dimensions of parties and movements that are shaped through their interactions and how to empirically assess them.

Building on this extensive literature, I have conceptualised party-movement interactions in terms of distance/proximity in three dimensions frames, actions, and organisations. Although these dimensions constitute the main dimensions of the study of social movement (Della Porta et al., 2017: 21), they are also of relevance to political scientists that used them to investigate political parties.

The framing approach, although born within the field of general sociology (Goffman, 1974) and then developed by social movement scholars (Snow et al., 1986), it is being increasingly used also by political scientists to investigate how parties change their discourses depending on contextual changes, to understand how parties promote their own framing of issues, and how citizens respond to different framing of same issues (Helbling et al., 2010; Slothuus and de Vreese, 2010; Urso, 2018). This approach, has been chosen because it “zooms in how particular ideas/ideologies are used deliberately to mobilise supporters and demobilize adversaries vis-à-vis particular goal” (Lindekilde, 2014: 200) This is particular useful in this research because although it investigates actors that share a common ideological ground, it allows to look beyond the ideological commonalities and grasp the evolution, changes, and similarities of their frames.

The action dimension rests on the concept of repertoire of actions, a concept that has been developed by social movement scholars, but I argue that its usefulness it is of high importance also in the study of political parties as it allows to grasp the variety of actions performed by political parties beyond electoral participation and electoral campaign. This aspect is also being increasingly investigated by scholars of movement-parties, who assess the movement-like repertoire of these actors as well as their non-institutional activities (Kitschelt, 2006; Pirro and Castelli Gattinara, 2018; Caiani and Cisar, 2019).

Finally, the organisational dimension looks at the organisational features of both parties and movements and it constitutes one of the longstanding aspects that has been investigated both by social movement scholars and political scientists (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Katz and Mair, 1994; Mair and Van Biezen, 2001). More specifically, in the study of populist parties and radical right parties, this aspect has more recently received increased attention in the attempt to understand the relative importance in the emergence and success of these parties of various characteristics such as their leadership, their member organisations, and their institutionalisation process (Heinisch and Mazzoleni, 2016).

Turning to the conceptualisation and operationalisation, the first dimension of the party-movement interactions is that of frames. I adopt this concept to analyse the discursive and relational characteristics of the ideological features of the far-right. This concept derives from social movement studies, where frames are defined as “schemata of interpretation that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large” (Snow et al., 1986: 464). The concept of framing entails a relational process through which activists and leaders of a movement shape and construct their messages so that these messages can “inspire and legitimate” the activities of the movement (Benford and Snow, 2000: 614). This concept is not a substitute of ideology, as it is at the same time a more flexible and generic “cultural product” that helps make sense of the world outside, but it does not have the internal coherence and rigidity of ideology (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 79). In order for frames to be effective they have to resonate with the cultural environment in which a movement develops, and therefore the role of culture and the discursive opportunities available to movements have a fundamental impact on what is held to be legitimate in any given time. The adoption of the concept of frames makes it possible to understand what are the ideas and issues around which parties and movements mobilise their supporters, how frames may change over time due to the issues and ideas that are held to be legitimate in the wider cultural and political

context, and also can help grasp the “fragmentation of the extreme-right discourse” (Caiani and Cisar, 2019: 21). I argue that a proximity in the frames dimension can be observed when (1) there is a change in the issue focus of parties and movements, and (2) there is a convergence in parties and movement discourses

The second dimension pertains the actions of parties and movements. With this dimension I aim to grasp the variety of actions that movements and parties perform. Social movement scholars have developed the concept of repertoire of action, defined by Tilly as the “whole set of means [a group] has for making claims of different types on different individuals” (1986: 2). Movements actions vary from petitions to rallies, from marches to violent clashes (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 169; Snow, 2004: 398). By adopting this concept, the broad set of actions at the disposal of both parties and movements can be analysed without focusing on just electoral or protest manifestations.

By looking at the variety of forms of actions that take place in both the electoral and protest arena it is possible to investigate whether and how movements and parties mobilise together, along which issues, and what are their preferred forms of actions and, therefore, making it possible to assess their proximity/distance in this dimension.

The third dimension is that of organisation. This dimension looks at the organisational characteristics of both movements and parties and how they influence each other in this respect. While political parties are usually characterised by a formal organisational structure, social movement organisations rarely rely on formal memberships and are constituted by dense networks of activists that share a collective identity (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). However, party organisations can be themselves embedded in dense networks of groups and individuals with which they share a collective identity and common political goals (Heaney and Rojas, 2007: 453; Davidson and Berezin, 2018). In order to grasp the interactions that occur at the organisational level, links can be traced (1) at the leadership levels, through personal ties

between leaders of the organisations; (2) at the middle level, with members of parties having multiple affiliations and being supporters or activists of the movements, and vice-versa; (3) at the rank-and-file level with connections between the support bases of the two organisations.

In order to operationalise this conceptualisation of party-movement interactions as distance/proximity in the three dimensions of frames, actions, and organisations, I assess the distance proximity in each of the dimensions as follows. In the frames dimension, I investigate what are the issues that receive more focus in parties and movements' claims and documents and their positions. By investigating how the issue salience changes overtime, it can be traced how their discourses change and through the issue salience if there is a convergence in the positions of the two actors. Moreover, the proximity/distance on frames will be assessed also, more qualitatively, by looking at which frames are used the most by the parties and movements and how they change over time.

The proximity in the actions dimension is assessed by analysing how often parties and movements organise, or participate, together to protest events, what are the most used forms of actions (i.e. rallies, blockades, vigils), what are the issues around which these actors mobilise together and if there are changes over time.

The proximity in the organisational dimension is assessed by tracing possible relations at the leadership level – looking at statements that leader have released about each other organisations – at middle level – by tracing multiple affiliations of parties and movements members in electoral lists or in public events and demonstrations – and at the rank-and-file level by examining if supporters of the parties mobilise with the movements and vice versa if movements activists electorally support the parties. Unfortunately, I was unable to carry out the investigation of this last aspect of the interactions in the organisational dimensions. As it will be explained also in the methodological chapter, the inability to carry out interviews and field-work was due to breakout of the COVID pandemic.

Having presented the conceptualisation and operationalisation of party-movement interactions, the chapter now turns to lay out the hypothesis that guided the empirical research. A hypothesis for each dimension of the interactions is discussed, starting from the frames dimension, then turning to the actions dimension, and finally the organisational dimension.

Table 1: Party-movement interaction

Dimensions of party movement interactions	Conceptualisation	Operationalisation
Frames	1. change in the issue focus of parties and movements 2. convergence in parties and movement discourses	1. issue-salience: to measure changes in discourses 2. issue position: to assess the convergence in positions 3. frames: qualitatively assess the discourses of how similar discourses are
Actions	joint mobilisation	(protest) events where parties and movement mobilised together
Organisations	1. <i>leadership level</i> : personal ties between leaders of the organisations 2. <i>middle level</i> : with members of parties having multiple affiliations and being supporters or activists of the movements, and vice-versa 3. <i>rank-and-file level</i> : connections between the support bases of the two organisations	1. Leaders' personal relations and formal appointments 2. movement activists in electoral lists or formal roles in organisations 3. shared base of supporters and voters

2.2. Frames dimension

In order to hypothesize when interactions in the frames dimension are more likely to take place and how through these interactions parties and movement change their frames and discourses, the literature on the agenda-setting power of protest is the starting point. The agenda-setting approach represent a “short-term” view of the mechanisms that link the protest and the political arena (Hutter et al. 2019: 326). This approach can help understand if and why far-right parties

respond to the issues raised by far-right movements in the protest arena and when proximity in this dimension can be observed. Previous studies that investigated the agenda-setting power of protest, have found that parties do respond to street protest and that the closer are they ideologically, the more they tend to respond to the issues raised in the protest arena (Schwartz, 2010: 590; Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2015). Moreover, opposition parties, those that do not hold governmental positions, are more likely to respond to protests (Hutter and Vliegenthart, 2018). The reason why parties respond to protests is, as argued by Vliegenthart and colleagues, that protest is a particular type of information about societal problems and parties engage with the issues raised by movements, especially if they get media attention (Vliegenthart et al. 2016). Concerning the far-right movements, it has been shown that far-right movements that mobilize in the protest arena around issues that they own such as immigration, law and order, and cultural identity, are able to successfully attract media attention (Castelli Gattinara and Froio, 2018). It is therefore reasonable to hypothesize that also radical-right parties respond to the issues raised by movements and that they benefit from the increased visibility of issues already at the center of their agenda – immigration, law-and-order, cultural identity. I expect that parties are more likely to respond to issues being raised in the protest arena when they are in opposition or electorally weak, so to benefit from showing proximity to the protest arena. This proximity can be mutually beneficial for parties and movements, since the former can exploit protest to achieve electoral success, and the latter receive legitimization and visibility from their relations with institutional actors (Kriesi, 2015: 671; Davidson and Berezin, 2018). Therefore, the main hypothesis regarding the framing dimension is that: *far-right parties and movements are more likely to be closer in the frame dimension when topics that they own, such as immigration and law and order, become more visible and when the party is electorally weak* (H1).

2.3. Actions dimension

In order to hypothesize when interactions between far-right parties and movements may take place and how they can affect the two actors, the literature on the relations between protest and electoral politics is the starting point. There are not many studies that investigate the relationships between protest and electoral politics in the case of the far-right. This lack is in part due to the belief that the right prefers the electoral channel of participation over the protest one (Hutter, 2014: 40). However, in the context of the political, cultural, and economic crisis that have affected Europe in the last two decades, far-right street politics has seen a resurgence (Castelli Gattinara and Pirro, 2018: 2). The main findings of the studies that have investigated the relationships between the protest and electoral arena in the case of the far-right, can be summarized in three strands. First, authors working within the cleavage theory and that have attempted to answer to the question of who is being organized into politics by whom, have found that the new populist right has mobilized the cultural anxieties of the “loser of globalizations” not only in the electoral, but also in the protest arena (Kriesi et al. 2008; 2012; Hutter, 2014). These authors have found that, in Western Europe, the relationship between the protest and electoral arena responds to a substitutive effect (Hutter, 2014; Hutter et al. 2019). However, these findings seem not to hold in a few case studies where it has been shown that the electoral success of far-right parties has not been matched with a decrease in protest politics (Weisskircher and Berntzen, 2019; Peterson, 2019).

Second, authors who have adopted social movement theory to investigate the far-right and the relations between electoral and protest politics, have found that the presence of an institutionalized far-right party corresponds to a less disruptive and violent mobilization of the far-right movement sector (Koopmans and Statham, 1999: 248; Koopmans et al., 2005: 203; Minkenberg, 2003: 166). These findings reflect the main tenets of the political opportunity model that maintains that the configurations of institutional and discursive opportunities are

key in explaining the form of mobilization of the far-right (Kitschelt, 1995; Minkenberg, 2003; Rydgren, 2007; Caiani et al. 2012; Minkenberg, 2018).

Third, authors that investigate how far-right actors manage to attract media attention, found that more disruptive forms of protests are those that achieve higher coverage in the news and therefore guarantee more visibility to the actors in the street (Walgrave and Vliegenthart 2012; Castelli Gattinara and Froio 2018).

Drawing on this literature, I expect that the interactions between far-right parties and movements are more likely to be observed when parties are in opposition, or electorally weak, so to advance their claim and attract even more visibility in the media. Parties, that are usually focused on competing for elections, may learn from movements their broader repertoires of actions and unite forces in order to gain more attention. In fact, we know that protest size matter more than quantity of protests, and that unconventional actions attract more attention (della Porta and Diani, 2006: 171-176). At the same time, movements can gain further legitimacy from protesting next to a party and see their claims being furthered into the electoral arena. However, an important caveat must be made regarding the more violent and extremist forms of protest. I expect, in fact, to observe interactions when the movements moderate their repertoire of actions and, more specifically, moderate their violent claims. Following this discussion, therefore, the hypothesis concerning the second dimension maintains that: *far-right parties and movements are more likely to be closer in the actions dimension when parties are electorally weak and when movements moderate their repertoire of actions (H2).*

2.4. Organisational dimension

In order to hypothesise when far-right parties and movements may have closer interactions in the organisational dimension, two strands of literature are the starting point. The first strand has described how parties in contemporary European democracy suffer from declining membership and the problem of recruiting and mobilizing people (Mair and van Biezen, 2001; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2002; Heidar, 2006; Whiteley, 2010). Studies on far-right parties' organization have shown, however, that even those characterized by strong centralized leadership, develop "complex and durable organization" which are closer to the mass party model (Heinisch and Mazzoleni, 2016: 241). Therefore, those parties have to solve the problem of mobilizing and recruiting members in order to guarantee their functioning even in a period of declining membership. Studies have shown how movement supporters can be party members and vice versa and how multiple affiliations facilitate the development of networks that can help, in turn, increase the mobilization capacity of movements (della Porta and Diani, 2006: 127; McAdam and Tarrow, 2010; Davidson and Berezin, 2018). Members of social movement organizations may be linked by personal friendship or acquaintances to members in other organizations, creating the typical informal networks characteristic of movements. In addition, movements' members, which have high level of commitment as they are involved in time consuming and riskier actions, would sustain comparatively lower costs by also participating in the activities of parties, respect to people external to the movement (Piccio, 2016: 268). The second strand of literature is the one that investigates movement parties of the far-right. The concept of movement party has been defined by Kitschelt as "coalitions of political activists who emanate from social movements and try to apply the organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition" (2006: 280). Kitschelt also notes that in the case of the far-right, movement parties are characterized by fluid organizational structure and informal membership that "create or displace social movement practices" (2006, 286). The

transition from the protest to the electoral arena however needs not to be understood not in permanent terms, as a movement party may either fully institutionalize and remain in the electoral realm, or retain their movement characteristics and decide to focus primarily on contentious actions and cultural goals (Pirro and Castelli Gattinara, 2018; Caiani and Cisar, 2019; Froio et al. 2020).

Drawing on these two strands of literature, I expect to observe party and movements to become closer in the organizational dimension when elections are imminent and when movements moderate their repertoire of actions. On the one hand, parties, in order to sustain the electoral effort, may rely on movements' militants and resources. On the other hand, movements, while moderating their repertoire of actions to legal protest, can gain further legitimacy and access the institutional arena by providing members to parties, or taking part themselves to elections. Therefore, I expect that: *far-right parties and movements are more likely to be closer in the organisational dimension when elections are imminent, and when movements moderate their repertoire of actions* (H3).

Table 2: Hypothesis Far-right party-movements interactions

Dimensions of party movement interactions	Hypothesis
Frames	Far-right parties and movements are more likely to be closer in the frame dimension when topics that they own, such as immigration and law and order, become more visible and when the party is electorally weak
Actions	Far-right parties and movements are more likely to be closer in the actions dimension when parties are electorally weak and when movements moderate their repertoire of actions
Organisations	Far-right parties and movements are more likely to be closer in the organisational dimension when elections are imminent, and when movements moderate their repertoire of actions

The next chapter discusses the research design and the methodological choices made in order to investigate when far-right parties and movements are more likely to have closer interactions and how these interactions may affect their frames, actions, and organisations.

3. Research design and methods

In order to investigate what are the conditions under which far-right parties and movements are more likely to have closer interactions and how their frames, actions, and organisations change through these interactions, I carry out a comparative analysis of two case studies: Italy, with Lega Nord as the political party, and CasaPound Italia as the social movement organization; and the United Kingdom with the UK Independence Party as the political party and the English Defence League as the social movement organization.

In this chapter, first, are discussed the ontological and epistemological considerations on which this project is based. Second, the research design and the case selection. Next, the methods that are used to gather and analyse data: a Political Claim Analysis to investigate frames and actions dimensions, and a content analysis of parties and movements' documents to investigate the organisational dimension.

3.1. Ontological, epistemological, and methodological considerations

This research project rests on the ontological assumption that social phenomena are constructed through the interpretations and meanings that people attach to them (Corbetta, 2003: 24). Therefore, by looking at how people make sense of the world and interpret social phenomena, reality can be understood (della Porta and Keating, 2008: 24-25). In line with the interpretivist approach, this research looks at the way social movements and political parties interact between them and with their external reality. The aim is to uncover how social movements and political parties interpret their external reality and what are the meanings that they attach to what is happening around them. From these ontological and epistemological considerations follows that a small-N comparative analysis of cases is the most suited methodological choice. The choice of carrying out a small-N analysis allows to better investigate the details of the single cases and take into account the broader context in which political parties and social movements

are embedded and the cultural and social processes in which they are involved (della Porta, 2008: 204). However, the methods that this research adopts to empirically investigate the case studies are both qualitative and quantitative. The choice to triangulate techniques is based on the fact that different methods are used to investigate different aspects of the relationships between political parties and social movements. The triangulation of methods does not stand in contrast to the epistemological and methodological choices, since the combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods serves the purpose of addressing different aspects of the research question (Snow and Trom, 2004: 150; della Porta and Keating, 2008: 34; Caiani et al., 2012: 22; Goertz and Mahoney, 2012: 3). In the next sections the different methods that are adopted to both collect and analyse data are discussed and the rationale behind their choice explained. Before, in the following section the research design and the three cases that have been chosen to carry out this research are presented.

3.2. Research design and case selection

This research consists of an in-depth comparative analysis of two case studies, which are analysed over a period of 11 years, from 2009 to 2020. The choice of adopting a comparative case study strategy is based on the fact that it is necessary to take into consideration the whole context in which far-right parties and movements are embedded in order to examine how these actors interact (Yin, 2003: 13). The longitudinal analysis allows for an examination of the changes over time of the relations between parties and movements within broader political and cultural processes. The choice of the year 2009 as the starting year of the research is because it is the year in which the English Defence League – the “younger” social movement organisation object of the analysis – was founded. CasaPound Italia was officially established only one year before, in 2008, even if the group had been active before that moment. Therefore, 2009 is the

year in which both movement organisations were present at the same time and that is way it has been selected as the starting point of the investigation.

The two sets of party-movement have been chosen for two main reasons.

This eleven-year timeframe allows for an investigation of the changes and relations among far-right parties and movements within the broader political context of Europe. During these 11 years, in fact, several crucial events have occurred, such as the 2009 financial crisis, the 2015 terroristic attacks, the 2015 migration crisis, and the 2016 Brexit vote, that have inevitably shaped the discourses and strategies of far-right actors. Accordingly, considering the importance for the development of far-right actors of these events, the length of the timeframe was chosen so to include all these crucial moments of recent European history. The analysis ends at December 2019 and the rationale behind this choice is twofold. First, 2019 is the year when I began collecting data and I had to make a choice as to when to end my data collection. Second, 2019 is also the last year that has not been affected by the COIVD pandemic, a new crisis that is still unfolding at the time of writing. This would have requested to take into account yet another crisis into the analysis, whose effects could not be taken properly into consideration due to its new and unparalleled development throughout the course of the writing of this research.

In order to answer the question of how far-right movements and parties interact and how these interactions shape the life of the actors, I selected two cases that, although within a most-similar design, differ significantly with regard to some of their political, institutional, and cultural characteristics (della Porta, 2008: 212). The strategy of the case selection is most-similar for all the cases selected are European countries, representative democracies, and have all been affected – albeit in different degrees – by the economic and cultural changes that have been proposed by the literature as explanations for far-right emergence and success, namely the effects of globalization and the 2008 economic crisis and rising levels of immigration.

However, the cases vary with regard to some characteristics that have been found in the literature to have an impact on the success that the far right achieves: the institutional system, political instability, allies in power, and the legacy of a fascist past. The variance among these important features of each case, allows for an investigation of how the interactions among political parties and social movements vary depending on these characteristics and to draw conclusions that can hold true beyond the specific cases under investigation.

The two cases selected are Italy, with the *Lega Nord* (LN) – after 2017 just *Lega*– as the political party, and *CasaPound Italia* (CPI) as the social movement organization; and the United Kingdom with the *United Kingdom Independence Party* (UKIP) as the political party and the *English Defence League* (EDL) as the social movement organization. The first reason as to why these cases were selected is because they are both European countries. Although the presence of far-right political parties and movements is well established beyond this regional context, I selected European countries as they allow to control for the broader cultural, institutional, and economic context. By selecting these two cases I can focus on the relationships among far-right parties and movements that have emerged and developed in similar contexts (Sartori, 1991: 250). For example, by taking into consideration countries of the post-soviet space, variables such as the different understandings of nation and nationalism, the issues of borderlands, and majority-minority relations would have also required attention (Minkenberg, 2015: 38-40). The second reason for the selection of the two cases is that they are all established representative democracies. If the analysis had also included authoritarian countries, or recently emerged democracies, the comparability across cases would have been significantly hindered because the analysis would have also needed to take into account the role of previous regimes, the stability of the political and institutional environment, and the role of the military and paramilitary militias.

Third, the two cases have all undergone similar political and cultural transformations in the last decades, which makes it easier to control for the broader context. Both countries have experienced, although not to the same extent, the political and economic crises that have affected Europe in the last decades (Kriesi and Pappas, 2015: 17). The term political crisis refers to the phenomenon described by Mair as the increasing tension between responsibility and responsiveness of political parties (2009). The term economic crisis refers to the three set of intertwined crises that started in 2008: the competitiveness crisis; the banking crisis; and the sovereign debt crisis (Kriesi and Pappas, 2015: 1). Kriesi and Pappas built a typology of European countries based on the incidence of the economic and political crises and the two case studies selected in this research were affected by them (Kriesi and Pappas, 2015: 10-19).

Finally, although the possible cases that I could have selected based on the aforementioned conditions are several, potentially including all the Western European states, in order to carry out the empirical analysis, the selection was also limited by my language proficiency.

The adoption of a most similar research design limits the generalizability of the findings, but by looking at cases in a similar context will help this research to reach more solid and reliable inferences about the dynamics and mechanism under study. However, although within a most similar strategy, the cases selected offer some variance on significant aspects that have been highlighted by the literature as determinants of far-right emergence and success and that offer the opportunity to test the reliability of the findings beyond these aspects.

The two cases differ with regard to the political and cultural opportunities available to far-right political parties and movements. As discussed in the literature chapter, the concept of political opportunity structure includes several variables that have been singled out to have an effect on the emergence and success of parties and movements and the mains are the

institutional system, political instability, allies in power and the legacy of a fascist past. With regard to these characteristics, all the three cases offer significant variance.

In fact, regarding the institutional framework, and more specifically the electoral systems, the two countries differ from each other. The UK has a majoritarian electoral system – first-past-the-post system – that inhibits the competition in the electoral arena of radical and new parties (Eatwell, 2000: 422). In Italy the electoral system has changed during the time-frame under analysis, but has roughly remained a proportional one, which allows minority parties to gain representation in the electoral arena. Following the introduction of a new electoral law in 2005, a proportional system with bonus seat allocation to the winning coalition of parties has been in place. However, in 2017 a new mixed electoral law has come into force in which a third of the national MPs is elected through a majoritarian system, while two thirds are elected with a proportional system.

With regards to the second and third variables – political instability and allies in power – the two cases differ considerably. The United Kingdom has traditionally been lacking a strong far-right party. Before 2010, no far-right party has ever achieved significant electoral success. The British National Party has constantly remained out of Parliament since its foundation and the United Kingdom Independence Party – UKIP –, from its founding in 1993 has remained a fringe party. Only in 2010 UKIP began to achieve significant electoral support, however, winning only ever one seat in the 2015 general election (Goodwin and Dennison, 2018). France and Italy, on the other hand, have had far-right parties that have received parliamentary representation for decades. In Italy, the Movimento Sociale Italiano, MSI, has contested elections and elected representatives in the Parliament since 1948. Moreover, far-right parties have also been part of government coalitions and recently also led government.

Looking at the legacy of a fascist past, the two cases present great variability. The UK has not experienced a fascist regime and the role of the country in fighting the Nazi and Fascist

regimes during WW II has been depicted with a heroic connotation (Mannucci, 2020: 122). The collective memory of the role of the UK during the war has left very little space for the acceptance of fascist and authoritarian ideas. Therefore, political parties and movements that openly recalled these ideas have always been marginalized from institutionalized politics. Italy, on the other hand, experienced the twenty—years long Fascist regime under the dictatorship of Mussolini. However, the stigmatization of its fascist past has remained low in the Italian collective memory (Mannucci, 2020: 112). In fact, the collective memory of its past can be defined one of victimization where the fascist regime represents a temporary and minor sin and Nazi Germany bears all the guilt of the war horrors, while the Italian have been the victims of Hitler's propaganda and decisions. The denial of its fascist past, has allowed to leave room for fascist and far-right ideas to circulate since the end of WW II, resulting in the Movimento Sociale Italiano, that explicitly linked itself with the Fascist regime ideas, to seat into Parliament since 1948.

In conclusion, although the two cases have been selected within a most-similar strategy, the variance that they offer in respect to some institutional, political, and cultural characteristics, can prove useful to demonstrate whether the relationships between far-right political parties and movements and their effect on the support of far-right is idiosyncratic to each case or if more general conclusions can be drawn.

Turning to the selection strategy of the two set of party-movement that are analysed in this research – Lega (Nord) and CPI for the Italian case and UKIP and the EDL for the UK case – the choice has been made following to main criteria: (1) one radical-right party and one extreme-right movement organisation for country; (2) select the actors that have been established for longer so to have more data and carry out a longitudinal analysis.

The research aims at investigating the relations between radical-right political parties and extreme-right movement organisations to understand how through these interactions far-right

actors shape each other's discourses, actions, and organisations. In both countries – Italy and UK – the organisational variety of the far-right milieu offered a number of different radical-right parties and extreme-right organisations that could have been chosen as the subject of the analysis. I will describe the selection process for the Italian case study and next the one for the UK case.

First, however, it is necessary to explain why I chose to analyse a single set of party and movement in each country. This decision was made because in order to carry out the in-depth analysis required for each case study and collect data for all the three dimensions of the relations, I had to limit the analysis to only one set per country of parties and movements. The data collection and analysis process required by using Political Claim Analysis as a method is burdensome and due to time constraints for the research, I could not extend the analysis to more actors. By limiting the analysis to one movement organisation and one political party, the relations that parties and movements may have with different actors is, unfortunately, not taken into account. However, I believe that the advantages deriving from an in-depth analysis of two set of parties and movement still outweigh the losses. By carrying out the analysis of one set of party-movement it is possible to uncover the dynamics behind their specific relations and it is possible to grasp the changes occurring to the two actors and the context in which they operate, irrespective of the relations they may have with others actors. The 11-year timeframe allows to follow the developments of the actors through a long period of time and assess when they do and do not interact and how these interactions shape their political course.

Turning to decision to empirically investigate Lega and CPI for the Italian case, the choice was made because these two actors are among the most visible and long-established actors in the Italian far-right. The organisational variety of far-right actors in Italy offered multiple subjects for the purposes of this research, from political parties to sub-milieu organisations and the varieties in-between of movement-parties and movement organisations (Castelli Gattinara

and Pirro, 2019; Froio et al., 2020). However, as political party I chose Lega (Nord) as it represents the oldest party present in the Italian parliament, and one of the most successful radical-right party in the Italian scenario. The other political party that could have been chosen for the analysis is Fratelli d'Italia (FdI) – *Brothers of Italy* (Rooduijn et al.; 2019). However, the party has not been selected as it has been founded only in 2012. Although FdI has its root in previous Italian far-right parties – such as MSI and AN – its foundation date would leave only 7 years of analysis, reducing the time-frame and preventing an extensive analysis of the relations between parties and movements.

Regarding the choice of the movement organisation, CPI was chosen as the social movement organisation as it has a national presence throughout the Italian territory that allows a symmetric analysis with the political party. The other “most visible” actors that constitute the Italian far-right milieu are Movimento Sociale - Fiamma Tricolore (MS-FT) and Forza Nuova (FN) (Catelli Gattinara, 2019: 82). However, these two actors have not been selected because they identify themselves as political parties, have a high degree of institutionalisation, and consistently took part to elections throughout their history (Catelli Gattinara, 2019: 82; Caiani et al., 2012: 28). Although MS-FT and FN are increasingly being identifying as movement-parties, due to their reliance on protest activities, their identification as movement organisation would have been more problematic. On the other hand, CPI explicitly identifies itself as a movement, took part only for a period of its existence to elections, and it is embedded in the wider far-right cultural and social milieu of the far-right, resulting in a less controversial designation as social movement organisation. Moreover MS-FT and FN are extreme right parties that have not received any electoral breakthrough, while the aim of the research is to investigate the relations that occur between radical-right parties and extreme-right organisations.

Other extreme-right organisations active in Italy have not been chosen because they are characterised by a prominent local or regional presence, that would prevent a symmetric analysis at the national level between the party and the movement organisation. Lealtà Azione (Loyalty Action) is a far-right organisation active predominantly in the Lombardy region and more specifically around Milan. The same holds true for the neo-fascist organisations Generazione Identitaria (Generation Identity) and Skin4Skin, active predominantly in Milan. Other far-right movements organisations, such as the Veneto Fronte Skinheads and Fortezza Europea (European Fortress) are active almost exclusively in the Veneto region.

Turing to the UK case study, the same selection strategy used in the Italian case was made. UKIP was the only possible decision, as it is the only radical-right party in the country (Rooduijn et al.; 2019). The British National Party (BNP) has not been selected as it is widely regarded as an extreme-right party and not a radical-right one (Copsey, 2007; Ford and Goodwin, 2010; Goodwin and Evans, 2012). On the other hand, the extreme-right movement sector is more variegated and different movement organisations could have been selected. However, the same rationale used for the Italian case study has been adopted. The English Defence League is one of the oldest movement organisations in the UK, it managed to mobilise a great number of supporters across the country, and it has been consistently present on the far-right UK scene since its establishment in 2008. The other major organisations active in the British streets were later established and would have limited the temporal scope of the analysis: Generation Identity UK – established in 2017; the Football Lads Alliance – established in 2017; the Justice for Women and Children – has been established in late 2017 (Hope not hate; 2019). Furthermore, other organisations are characterised by a local presence: the South East Alliance – active mainly in the London area and Essex; Casuals United – active mainly in London and the South Coast. Finally, Blood&Honour has not been selected as it is an umbrella group of

bands united by Nazi ideology and whose classification of social movement organisation is problematic.

In conclusion, the two sets of party-movement selected allow an in-depth and longitudinal analysis that examines if and when interactions between these two actors occur and how their interactions have played out during the eleven years of the analysis. Moreover, they allow to analyse the interactions between radical-right party and extreme-right movements so to grasp the relations that occur within the far-right sector of the two countries selected.

3.3. Methods

In order to empirically investigate the interactions between far-right parties and movements, these have been conceptualized in terms of distance/proximity in three dimensions: frames, actions, and organizations. In order to investigate each of these three dimensions, an appropriate method will be used. To investigate how movements and parties frame their discourses and assess how they have changed in the period under investigation, I use a Political Claim Analysis and a content analysis of parties and movement documents. The Political Claim Analysis (PCA) is also adopted to investigate the actions dimensions. Finally, the data to investigate parties' and movements' organizations, the relations among their leaders, and overlapping memberships, are gathered through a document analysis of parties and movements' documents, newspaper articles, and academic literature.

However, before illustrating in more details what are the methods that have been adopted, it is important to discuss why they were chosen and why other methods were not used in this research. In order to investigate the interactions between far-right parties and movements, I could have adopted different tools that have been used in similar social enquires and more specifically in the study of movements and parties. The method that could have helped to

answer the question set out by this research is Social Network Analysis (SNA). SNA has been consistently used by social movement scholars to investigate the organisational structure of movements and to systematically assess the characteristics of the networks that constitute social movements (Caiani et al., 2012: 30).

This method has also been used to specifically investigate far-right online and offline networks in an attempt to map and understand how different groups and actors interact with each other and how these interactions further contribute to the building and development of the groups' identity, repertoire of actions, and recruitment process (Tateo, 2005; Caiani et al., 2012; Caiani and Parenti, 2016; Froio and Ganesh, 2019; Pirro et al., 2021). However, this research is not only interested in mapping the links that may exist between movements and parties, but how their interactions evolve over time in order to assess when they are closer in the three dimensions under analysis. As it has been argued by Diani and Mishe: "Network analysis has traditionally focussed on presenting static snapshots of relations, often with an implicit (usually black box) claim that these have durability over time" (2015: 308). Although attempts to bridge structural and relational approaches into social network analysis have successfully been made (Diani, 2007), for the purpose of this research this method would not allow for a longitudinal and in-depth analysis needed to trace the different forms of interactions that may exist between parties and movement organisations.

In line with the ontological, epistemological, and methodological considerations made at the beginning of this chapter, two methods to carry out the analysis in this research would have been particularly appropriate: participant observation and in-depth interviews (della Porta, 2014; Balsiger and Lambelet, 2014). Through these methods, important data could have been gathered on the action and organisational dimensions. In fact, through participant observation to party and movement events – protests, sit-in, commemorations, party rally – I could have gathered data on the participants, if members of both party and movement were in attendance,

on what issues were the events that both actors attended. Moreover, through in-depth interviews with party and movement's leaders, first-handed explanations on how leaders understand, interpret, and perform interactions with movements/parties, what is the role of personal ties, and what role these interactions play in their political strategies would have been provided. The appropriateness of these methods and the invaluable quality of the data that would have been gathered were at the basis of my original decision of including these methods in the research design. However, when I started the data collection, in February 2020, few weeks later the COVID pandemic disrupted my research plans and I was unable to carry out my field work. Nevertheless, the need to understand from the own voices of the subjects of the research their understanding of the interactions with party/movement remained. This is why I have done an extensive search for interviews in which party and movement leaders, as well as members, released interview on this subject and I have extensively used quotations from these interviews to account for their own interpretation of movement-party interactions.

3.3.1. Political Claim Analysis

In order to investigate frames and actions of parties and movements, I carry out a Political Claim Analysis. Before discussing how the empirical analysis has been carried out, what are the sources used, and how I coded the claims, I will discuss why this method has been chosen.

To study the actions dimension I had two options: to use Protest Event Analysis or Political Claim Analysis. Protest Event Analysis, PEA, has been developed as a method to systematically map the protests activities of movements by using newspapers and police reports (Koopmans and Rucht, 2002: 231). Political Claim Analysis, PCA, is a development of PEA that takes into account not only protest activities, but also conventional and discursive forms of actions. PCA has been designed with the intent to merge the two competitive paradigms of social movement studies: the more structural focused political opportunity model and the more

discursive and cultural oriented framing process. In fact, it aims at extending the focus of the analysis beyond the protest dimension and broadening the analysis to the public context in which movements are embedded and therefore tracing the interactions that movements have with other institutional and non-institutional actors and the wide range of activities that they carry out (Koopmans and Statham, 1999). This methodological innovation, combines the more quantitative aspect of PEA with the more qualitative characteristics of frame analysis, allowing to carry out an analysis on relatively big number of data but retaining some of the qualitative complexity of reality.

PCA has the advantage, over PEA, to record not only protest events, but all relevant forms of political claim making (Koopmans and Statham, 1999). The choice to use PCA instead of PEA is threefold: first, this research aims to investigate two different actors, not only movement organisations, but also political parties, whose main activities are not protest based and a PEA of political parties would not allow to gauge the activities undertaken by the latter. Second, this research wants to investigate the interactions between the two actors and these interactions lay at the intersection of institutional and non-institutional activities, PEA would not allow to register these activities due to the focus on the protest-arena (Castelli Gattinara, 2019: 83). Third, through the PCA I can also gather data on the frames that the actors under investigation use. In fact, claims, in their full form, have also frames attached that justify the reasoning behind the actors' actions. Therefore, the choice to use PCA over PEA is based both on epistemological and methodological considerations.

The unit of analysis of PCA is the claim. It consists “*of the purposive and public articulation of political demands, calls to action, proposal, criticism, or physical attacks, which, actually or potentially, affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors*” (Koopmans et al., 2005: 254). According to this definition, a statement must have two characteristics in order to be considered an instance of claims making. First, it needs

to contain a reference to an actual and purposive action, therefore attitudes and opinions attributed by media to the actors are not considered. For example, “CasaPound Italia is considered a fascist-type organisation” is not a claim, but “CasaPound Italia occupied a building in the outskirts of Rome” is an instance of claim-making. Second, a claim “needs to be political in nature” and therefore relate to collective issues and not only individual strategies (Koopmans et al., 2005: 258). For example: “Lega Nord’s secretary, Bossi, has been sentenced to 2 years in prison for stealing party money” is not a political claim, while “Bossi said that migrants have rights only in their own countries” is a political-claim where the action is clearly identifiable.

In order to empirically carry out the analysis, this method too takes inspiration from Franzosi’s story grammar (2004) and the claim is broken down into seven elements (Koopmans et al., 2005: 254):

1. The location of the claim (when and where)
2. Subject actor (who makes the claim)
3. Form of the claim (how?)
4. The addressee of the actor (to whom is the claim addressed)
5. The issues (what the claim is about)
6. Object actor (who is affected by the claim)
7. The frame of the claim (why?)

In reality it is rare to find a claim that has all these elements and the majority of them can be missing elements of this typical structure. Moreover, recording only the claims made by the two actors object of this research, the who made the claims must be explicit, it must be the organisation or single leaders that speak on behalf of the organisations.

Adopting this technique, I created a codebook in which for the claims – the single unit of analysis – I recorded, first, the issues on which parties and movements focus and I identified seven broad categories that correspond to the main themes of the far-right: *socio-economic*, *cultural*, *(anti) Europe and EU*, *migration*, *law and order*, *organisation identity*, and the residual category, *other* (Castelli Gattinara, 2019: 83). These meta categories have been further divided into smaller issues that allow a deeper analysis. In the appendix the full codebook can be found, with all the sub-issues categories.

Then, the actors. For this variable, I have recorded the subject actors, that is subsequently divided into two main broad categories single politician/movement member and collective actors. Next, the object actor, who undergoes the action, with the same singular or collective specification and also if the object is an enemy or an ally of the subject actor. Since I am interested on who is actually making the statement, the passive form of the sentences has been made active so that the object actor is always a far-right party or movement, or leaders speaking on their behalf. For example, the sentence “Muslim men and woman were being shouted by EDL protester outside a mosque in London because EDL was protesting British Muslims that have joined ISIS in Syria” has been recorded in its active form with the EDL as the subject actor, Muslims as the object actor, and the issue in the cultural category. The variable object actor was coded on the basis of an open-ended coded that could be expanded every time a new one was found. This choice was made in order to maintain the complexity and multiplicity of the real statements and grasp its more qualitative form. Fourth, actions. This variable has five categories, *conventional actions* (electoral campaign and petitions), *demonstrative actions* (authorised demonstrations, protests, sit-it), *expressive actions* (commemorations or national party rallies), *confrontational actions* (occupations, unauthorised marches, blockades), *violent actions* (both symbolical and physical) (Caiani et al. 2012; 79; Castelli Gattinara, 2019: 83).

Moreover, I also record when the actions are being undertaken jointly by parties and movements object of my research.

With the data of the Political Claim Analysis, I also measure the issue position of the actors under investigation (Kriesi et al., 2012: 55). Following Kriesi and colleagues, I have coded every relationship between the political actor and the political issue. So, for each claim recorded, has been assigned a value that ranges from +1 to -1, with intervals of 0.5. All the categories of the issues have been operationalised as to measure the position of the actors regarding the issues. So, the socio-economic issues category has been operationalised as expressing support for economic liberalism and opposition to expansion of welfare state, scoring +1, and claims in the opposite direction as -1. The same for cultural issues, +1 has been given for claims that express support for traditional values and -1 for claims that support progressive values. And so on for each issue. In the appendix, the complete codebook is provided. However, the discussion of the analysis of the issue position will be discussed only for the Italian case study, as for UK one, not enough claims on issues other than EU and Cultural have been collected. The graphs with the issue positions of the UK case study, can be found in the Appendix.

Below, an example of a complete and incomplete claim and how it is divided into its elements.

Table 3: Examples of complete and incomplete claims

Subject actor (Who)	Form of claim (How)	Addressee (At whom)	Issues (What)	Object actor (For/against whom?)	Frame (Why)	When	Location (When and where)	With other actors
The EDL	occupied a construction site	calling local authorities	to not allow the building of a new mosque	(against) for Muslims	because the Islamification of Britain needs to be halted	2010	London	NO
Borghesio	called [...] for a manifestation	[LNvoters]		against the arrival of migrants		2015	Milano	NO

The data for the PCA have been retrieved through the digital archive Factiva and one quality newspaper from each country and using as keywords the name of the two different types of organisations. Although PEA has been fruitfully used as a method to investigate the emergence and evolution of contemporary social movements (McAdam, 1982; Tarrow 1989; Kriesi et al., 2018; 2012,) the adoption of this method, and its “offspring” PCA, has been the subject of criticisms regarding the type of sources on which the data collection is based. More specifically, since the majority of studies that adopted PEA have based it on newspapers, the two main criticisms have regarded the selection bias – what type of events are reported by newspapers – and the description bias – the accuracy of the coverage (Earl et al., 2004). It has been noted how newspapers are more likely to report on events that attract larger number of people and that are more disruptive, disregarding smaller and peaceful events (Earl et al., 2004; Hutter, 2014a: 350). Moreover, it has been noted how, generally, newspapers report more on protests regarding issues that are at the centre of attention cycle, disregarding protests concerning issues at the border of the political agenda (Hutter, 2014a: 351). Notwithstanding this important criticism, newspapers are still being used as the primary source of data for PEA and PCA, as they provide bigger advantages over other potential sources, such as activists and police archives or news agency reports, and they have been proven to be an effective and systematic resource to gather data to analyse claim-making activities (Koopmans et al., 2005: 261; Kriesi et al., 2012: 47; Hutter, 2014a: 351; Andretta and Pavan, 2018; Castelli Gattinara et al., 2021; Pirro et al., 2021).

The main advantages of using newspapers that have been highlighted are: “access, selectivity, reliability, continuity over time, and ease of coding” (Hutter, 2014a: 349). In fact, newspapers are regularly published, they have the interest – if quality newspapers – to report events accurately, and guarantee the comparability of the data across time and also across space (Kriesi et al., 2012: 47; Hutter, 2014a: 349). These advantages are all of great value for my

research, since it focuses on national level; on national actors; on a long period of time (11 years); on all type of issues that the actors may deal with. This is why I have chosen to use one newspaper per country that respect the following characteristics: their archives were digitally available; have a continuous publication record for the period under investigation; have national coverage; and they are not either extremely right-wing or left-wing. For these reasons, the selected newspapers are: *Il Corriere della Sera*, for the Italian case and *The Guardian* for the British case. The choice to use only one newspaper for country to collect the data for the PEA is twofold. On the one hand, based on previous studies that have adopted PEA and PCA, it has been shown how adding more sources does not limit or mitigate the *selection bias* problem, as other newspapers have different selection bias and that “using additional sources to include more events does not necessarily lead to more reliable results” (Kriesi et al., 2012: 47; Catelli Gattinara et al., 2021). On the other hand, to control for possible bias in the newspaper selection, I have carried out, for the Italian case study a sample study using data from the newspaper *La Repubblica*. The data gathered show a trivial difference, from a quantitatively point of view, with those collected through the use of *Il Corriere*: in the period 01.01.2009-01.09.2010, for Lega, 165 claims have been gathered through Repubblica and 147 with Corriere. For CPI, for the 11-year period: 317 claims have been collected with *La Repubblica* and 347 with *Il Corriere*. In appendix C, the data collected using La Repubblica newspaper are available.

In conclusion, although being aware of potential problem relating to selection bias and recognising that the data collected do not represent the entire universe of claims being made by the far-right actors analysed in this research, the choice to use only one quality newspaper per country is based on both empirical and methodological considerations.

The newspaper articles have been retrieved through the digital database of Factiva, searching all articles mentioning the actor under investigation from 01.01.2009 to 31.12.2019.

For the Italian case study, I have searched for articles, within the time frame that mentioned CasaPound (or Casa Pound) and 1,603 articles have been read, out of these 345 claims have been recorded. For the party, I have searched for all articles that mentioned Lega Nord, from 01.01.2009 to 31.10.2017, and for Lega and Salvini from 01.11.2017 to 31.12.2019. The different search has been necessary since the party changed its name in October 2017, dropping the Northern from its name. For Lega, over 12,000 articles have been read and 1,552 claims collected.

For the UK case study, I have searched on Factiva, for the same time period 01.01.2009 – 31.12.2019, with the key word UKIP and the search produced 9,242 news articles that have provided 860 claims. For the movement organisation I have searched for all articles mentioning EDL or English Defence League and 700 articles have been found, with 112 claims recorded.

3.3.2. Document Analysis

In order to investigate frames and discourses of parties and movements, as well as the organisational dimension of the interactions, I have collected data through the analysis of parties and movements' documents, newspaper articles that have been retrieved for the PCA, and secondary sources that investigate parties and movements organisations.

With this research I have complemented the investigation of the frames dimension by analysing, for the Italian case study, two LN manifestos that have been produced for the national elections of 2013 and 2018, and two CPI manifestos that have been produced for the same occasions. While, for the UK case study the analysis has been carried out on four UKIP electoral manifestos: Empowering people, 2010 (UKIP, 2010); Believe in Britain, 2015 (UKIP, 2015); Britain Together, 2017 (UKIP, 2017); and Save Britain, 2020 (UKIP, 2020). Although this last document is called the 2020 manifesto, it has been presented to the public in December 2019, for the snap general elections, and for this reason it has been included in the analysis.

For the EDL, two mission statement, 2012 and 2016 (EDL, 2012;2016), and posts from their website have been analysed (2016b; 2016c; 2018). EDL's website was closed in 2019, therefore I have retrieved the data through the web archive *waybackmachine*.

Document analysis is “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents” and it is often used together with other qualitative methods in order to “gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (Bowen, 2009: 27). By analysing parties and movement documents I triangulate the data gathered through the PCA so to better assess the issues that are being dealt by the actors and how the focus changed over time. In order to maintain comparability between the data collected through the PCA and those of the document analysis, I have coded the documents using the same categories of the PCA. Quasi-sentences are the basic unit of analysis used by the Manifesto Project: “One quasi-sentence contains exactly one statement or message. In many cases, parties make one statement per sentence, which results in one quasi-sentence equalling one full sentence. Therefore, the basic unitising rule is that one sentence is, at minimum, one quasi-sentence” (Werner, Lacewell, and Volkens, 2011) . For each quasi-sentences I have coded the issue and sub-issue using the same categories already discussed in the PCA section.

The document analysis has been carried out also to gather data on the interactions that took place in the organisational dimension. the data have been collected through the following steps: First, a review of parties and movements documents has been carried out to gather information on their organisational characteristics. Then, these data have been analysed also with the support of academic literature on the same topic, so to have a complete picture of the organisational characteristics of these actors. After setting the background, through newspaper articles I have gathered data that allowed me to trace the interactions in the organisational dimension, and more specifically in the three different features that I have discussed in the

theoretical chapter: (1) leaders' personal ties; (2) multiple affiliation of parties and movements' members; (3) common supporters.

The data have been collected through the following steps: first, while carrying out the PCA, I have highlighted the newspapers articles where party starting point first data through which I traced their interactions. Next, I also highlighted the newspaper articles that reported on joint events of mobilisation and, besides recording the claims accordingly for the PCA, I have also run an additional search on Factiva and Google to search for other reports of the same events searching for interviews and comments that the participants gave regarding their presence at the joint events. This further search has been carried out not only on Factiva but also on Google so to find sources whose archives are not present on Factiva. It is important to note that the data that have been gathered through these additional searches have not been recorded in the PCA, but they have been only used for the analysis of the organisational dimension. Finally, I have also used party and movements documents where they have openly referenced the alliances or support granted to each other's. However, the majority of the data were gathered through the analysis of movements' websites and social media accounts, as parties' websites and documents did not contain any mention of the movements.

Although the data that would have been gathered through interviews and participant observation would have given a more complete picture of the interactions on the organisational dimension, I believe that the data collected offer a solid base on which the analysis is then carried out. The table below summaries the methods that have been used for each dimension of the interactions.

Before turning to the next chapter, it needs to be clarified also that the in order to assess when the issues owned by the far-right become more visible in the public debate, the data have been gathered by using the standard Eurobarometer for the 11-year of the analys (Eurobarometer, 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019). In fact,

respondents of the Standard eurobarometer are always asked what are the most important issue facing their country. Being these data available throughout the period of the research and for both Italy and the UK, they have been used to assess when the issues of immigration and law-and-order become more visible in the public debate.

Having discussed the research design and the methods, the dissertation turns now to the empirical analysis of the two case studies. The next chapter examines the Italian case study, and the following the UK one with the interactions between UKIP and the EDL.

Table 4: Summary of methods

Interaction dimension	Methods	Sources
Frames	<i>Political Claim Analysis</i> <i>Document Analysis</i>	News articles retrieved through Factiva; electoral manifestos; party and movements documents
Actions	<i>Political Claim Analysis</i>	News articles retrieved through Factiva
Organisations	<i>Document analysis</i>	Parties and movements documents; secondary literature

4. Far-right party-movement interactions. The case of Lega and CasaPound Italia

In this chapter the analysis of the interactions between the party Lega Nord and the movement organisation CasaPound Italia is carried out. First, a brief history of the two actors is carried out to set the stage of the analysis. The next three sections contain the analysis of the interactions in each of the three dimensions to test the hypotheses set out in the theoretical framework. First, the analysis of the interactions in the frames dimension; then, the analysis of the interactions in the actions dimension; third, the analysis of the interactions in the organisational dimension. Finally, a discussion of the data concludes the chapter.

4.1. Lega Nord, from Padania first to Italians first

Lega Nord (LN – Northern League) has been founded by Umberto Bossi in 1991, who brought together a variety of autonomist movements that demanded autonomy for the productive “north” of Italy. Since its establishment, LN has been in government six times and it has extensively administrated some of the wealthiest regions of Italy. At the time of writing, LN is the oldest party in the Italian Parliament and in the 2019 European elections gained over the 34 per cent of the national vote share, becoming the first Italian party in terms of electoral support.

The history of the LN can be divided into two main parts, the “Bossi era” and the “Salvini era” (Albertazzi et al., 2018: 647). The transformations that LN underwent during the leadership of Matteo Salvini concerned even the name of the party that dropped the “nord” from its title, becoming only Lega (the League). The name change represented only the formal adjustment to the new, de facto, ideological and organisational characteristics of the party.

4.1.1. Lega Nord under Bossi's leadership (1991-2012)

As argued by McDonnell, the most useful term that describes LN under Bossi's leadership is "regionalist populism" (2006:126). The two most important ideological characteristics of the party were its regionalist character and its populist discourse. Bossi advocated for a territorial cause: autonomy, independence, or devolution of the northern part of Italy – depending from the circumstances, whether in government or in opposition – from the central Italian state (Albertazzi et al., 2018: 648; Mazzoleni and Ruzza, 2020: 70). The articulation of these regionalists demands was made through the use of a populist message that pitted the honest, hard-working people of the north against the corrupt elites of the central government in Rome that did not have the interests of the northern people at heart. (McDonnell, 2006: 127). The efficacy of the populist frame for the electoral fortunes of the LN is linked to the political context of the years 1991-1992. As Tarchi argued, the electoral success of LN is due to a conjunction of factors that facilitated its emergence and success, such as the declining strength of traditional ideological parties – the Christian Democratic, the Communist Party, and the Socialist Party – that lost their mobilisation capacity and diminished their territorial presence; the economic crisis that followed the end of the 1980s; an increase in the number of immigrants – a phenomenon that until the 1980s was almost non-existent (2008, 87-88; Albertazzi and Vampa, 2021: 8). However, a decisive role was played by the corruption scandals and judiciary investigations that took place in 1991-1992 and ended the "First Republic". In fact, these scandals increased the distrust of citizens toward established parties and allowed the populist frame adopted by LN to widely resonate with the daily lives of disaffected citizens that saw the politicians in Rome as wasting the resources that the productive north was producing (Tarchi, 2008: 87). In this political context, the first striking electoral success of LN took place. In the 1992 general elections, LN gained 8.7 per cent of the national vote share, resulting the fourth party in the Italian parliament.

The first national government experience came only two years later, in 1994, when LN entered the government in coalition with the newly founded party of Silvio Berlusconi, Forza Italia. Three important Ministries were assigned to LN: the Ministry of the Interior, the Minister of Industry, and the Minister of Budget. However, the cohabitation came to a swift end only 8 months later, in December 2001. The inability to impose its own issues on the government agenda and the risk of compromising ruining the anti-establishment rhetoric of the party, made Bossi withdraw its support, bringing to an end the first Berlusconi government (Bulli and Tronconi, 2011: 57). LN then decided to support the transitional government of Lamberto Dini and in the following 1996 general elections decided to run alone against both centre-left and centre-right coalitions. This decision proved to be successful in terms of votes as it gained 10.1 per cent of the vote share, the best result until the Salvini era. Despite the electoral results, a left-wing coalition gained the control of both chambers and LN remained in the opposition. The following five years will see the LN outside not only the national government but also in the northern regions in which it was the biggest party, as it was unable to gain a majority on its own. The inability to gain power forced Bossi to moderate its aims and to re-enter talks with Berlusconi in order to form a coalition (Albertazzi and Vampa: 2021: 10).

The LN returned in government in the summer of 2001. Bossi joined the centre-right electoral coalition led by Berlusconi with the promise that should they gain the majority, the new government would reform the constitution in order to grant more autonomy to the regions. The shift from advocating independence of Padania, to regional autonomy is what allowed the LN to return in power and overcome its marginalisation from the other centre-right parties (Albertazzi and Vampa, 2021: 11). At the same time, the LN increased its focus on new issues such as immigration, law-and-order, and culture, positioning itself in line with the other European radical-right parties (Bulli and Tronconi, 2011: 70). This second government experience has been more successful in terms of impact for LN as the “devolution” was

approved by the Parliament in 2005 – but later rejected by a referendum – and more stringent immigration law was introduced in 2002, the “Bossi-Fini” law. While in government, the LN was able to retain its populist narrative and continued to present itself as an outsider of the political mainstream. The attacks against the corrupt nature of the Italian party system and the inefficiency of the national government, limited by supra-national organisations such as the Central European Bank, remained part of Bossi’s rhetoric repertoire throughout LN’s time in power (Tarchi, 2008: 92).

The LN remained in government during all the Berlusconi’s government from 2001 to 2006 and returned in Government beside its ally also in 2008, after the two years of the centre-left government led by Romano Prodi. The merge between Berlusconi’s Forza Italia and Fini’s Alleanza Nazionale into the newly created Popolo della Libertà (PdL - People of Freedom) in late 2007, meant that the new right-wing coalition was made of only two parties, the PdL and the LN. The LN secured the 8.3% of the vote and 2 key Ministries: Roberto Maroni as the Interior Minister, Luca Zaia as minister of agricultural policy. This period in office saw the LN increase even more its focus on the issues of migration and Euroscepticism, that acquired renewed salience in the public debate following the start of the financial crisis. During this third time in government, the “Maroni” law was approved in 2009 on the issue of law-and-order and other laws on the fiscal federalism. Moreover, during this period in power, the LN achieved the 10% of the vote at the European elections in 2009 and the government of two northern regions, Veneto and Piedmont, in the 2010 regional elections (Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2015: 37). LN period in power ended in November 2011 when the Berlusconi government fell and the new technocratic government of Mario Monti was established. The LN strongly opposed the creation of the Monti’s government, seen as an imposition from the EU, and moved into opposition.

After the end of the time in power, for the LN a new and difficult phase begun. Bossi's leadership came to an end on the 5th of April 2012 following the financial scandals that saw Bossi himself and his family accused of appropriation for personal use of party's funds. Soon after the news of the scandal, party members as well as supporters, called for the resignation of the leader that built much of its political career on the accusation of corruption of other parties (Albertazzi and Vampa, 2021: 11). Bossi presented its resignation as party leader and a new national party congress was called. In July 2012, the congress elects Roberto Maroni as new party leader. Under Maroni's leadership, the LN takes part to the 2013 political elections in coalition again with Berlusconi's PdL. LN attracted only the 4% of the vote and the centre-right coalition did not achieve the majority of the vote, due also to the presence of a new political actor in the Italian Parliament, the Movimento 5 Stelle that gained over the 25% of the vote.

Following the disappointing electoral results of the national elections, party primaries were called to elect a new leader. The elections saw two candidates: Bossi, who attempts a comeback into the life of the party, and Matteo Salvini, a party-member since 1990 and LN's Member of the EU Parliament since 2004. The primary saw Matteo Salvini being elected new leader of the party with over 80% of the preference and under its leadership the LN will undergo significant transformations from its ideology, to its strategy, to its party name.

4.1.2. From Regionalism to Nationalism – Salvini's Lega (2013– present)

Few days after his election as party leader, Salvini apologised for his past remarks toward southern people – defined during its career up until that moment as parasites, lazy, and culturally incompatible with Northern people (La Repubblica, 1.12.17) – and begun the transformation of the party from a regionalist populist, to a fully-fledge populist radical right party (Albertazzi et al., 2018: 649). Salvini, since the first weeks of his leadership, attempted

to shift the focus from the traditional “internal enemies” of the party – namely Southern and the political elite in Rome – to “external enemies” – migrants and the EU political elites (Froio, 2021: 253). This ideological shift corresponded to the creation of a sister party established with the aim to contest local and regional elections in the south of Italy: Noi con Salvini (NcS; Us with Salvini) (Zulianello, 2021: 230). The focus on migration and Euroscepticism is not an innovation introduced by Salvini, as these issues were already high in the agenda of Bossi’s LN, but under Salvini the regionalist element of the party is underplayed until it disappears completely, and its new main ideological features are populism, nativism, and authoritarianism, in line with other radical-right parties in Europe (Albertazzi et al., 2018: 650; McDonnell and Vampa, 2016: 110).

The first elections that the new party leader had to contest, were the EU elections in May 2014. These elections sign an important turning point that highlight the shift of the party from its regionalist character to a nationalist, populist radical-right one. On the one hand, the LN presented a candidate in the centre district (in Italy, for the EU elections, the country is divided into five districts: North-east, North-west, Centre, South, and Islands) and it forged an alliance during the electoral campaign with the extreme-right organisation, CasaPound Italia. As a result of the alliance, Mario Borghezio, a long-standing member of the LN is elected in the European Parliament. On the other hand, following the EU elections – where the LN achieves 6% of the votes and 5 MEPs are elected – Salvini forges an alliance with other radical-right parties in the European Parties, establishing the Europe of Nation and Freedom (ENF) group in the European Parliament (McDonnell and Werner, 2019: 127). With these two moves, Salvini shifted the party toward more radical-right positions, abandoning the regionalists ideology of its predecessor and positioning its party along other European populist radical-right parties such as the French Front Nationale, the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), and the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV).

The electoral alliance with CPI will be discussed and analysed throughout the chapter as it constitutes the period of stronger interactions between the party and the movement organisation, but at this point suffice to say that it represented an innovative strategic choice made by the new LN leader. The choice to contest the EU elections in the Centre district when the party did not have any local presence, and the affinity with some of the ideological positions of CPI made the alliance possible. Short after the EU elections, the alliance will be interrupted and the LN will build a more consistent presence in the centre and south of Italy due to the creation of the party *Noi con Salvini*.

After the 2014 EU elections, LN worked to build a presence for its party throughout the country while also focusing on the next national elections in 2018. In these years, Salvini lays the foundations for the electoral campaign that will see his party as the most voted within the centre-right alliance. He increased his own presence on all social media, from Facebook to Twitter and Instagram, as well as the online presence of the LN. Salvini and its social media manager, Luca Morisi, used these platforms with a precise strategy that, as it has been argued by Zulianello, bridged the physical and digital activism of the party (2021: 234). The strategy “TV, rete, territorio” (TRT - Television, online, territory) consisted in coordinating the activities of the party on the ground, online, but also on traditional networks, amplifying its messages and showing the party leader and activists as being present and active in the territory (Zulianello, 2021: 235).

Beside the activities online, Salvini also published a book in which he presented its “dream to change the country” where he presented his political offer while narrating everyday life anecdotes (Salvini, 2016: 10). An entire chapter of the book is dedicated to the anarchist songwriter Fabrizio de André, where Salvini has an imaginary dialogue with the late author and tries to convince him of the fact that migrants and Roma people are at the most pressing issue in the country and that the money that the Italian government spends on migrants could

instead be used to help unemployed Italians and those without a house, and those who decide to work abroad (Salvini, 2016: 46-55). In Salvini's book the key issues that will constitute the focus of the new LN are discussed: the increased focus on migration and the so called refugee crises depicted as an "invasion" that needs to be stop (La Repubblica, 18.10.14); the campaign for the closure of Roma camps, the attacks against the Euro currency and the EU, the attacks against Islam; the requests to increase the money for police and change the law for the self-defence. As previously stated, these are not new themes for the LN, but they became the party central ones and the traditional theme of federalism disappears completely.

Few weeks prior to the 2018 elections, the term "Nord" was dropped from the party symbol, whose name changed in Lega. The party name change does not only reflect the new nationalist ambition of the party, but was made also for bureaucratic and administrative reasons. In fact, at the end of 2017 a new party was registered by Roberto Calderoli, Lega per Salvini Premier (Lega), in an attempt to limit the effects of the judicial investigation that regarded the misappropriation of funds under Bossi's last years of leadership (Zulianello, 2021: 230). The creation of this new party entity meant that in the north of Italy the organisation of the old LN now corresponded with those of the new Lega, while in the South of Italy the Noi con Salvini Premier dissolved into the new Lega (Zulianello, 2021: 231).

The 2018 elections saw Lega taking part to the elections in coalition with the other right-wing parties. After years during which Salvini distanced its party from Berlusconi's FI – mainly due to the support that the latter granted to the Monti's government – a new electoral alliance for the 2018 elections was built between LN, FI, the newly created party of Giorgia Meloni Fratelli d'Italia (FdI), and minor centre-right parties. The establishment of the alliance was no easy task due to the reluctance of Salvini to "obey" to Berlusconi and his adversity to accept the leadership role of the old ally. In the end, Salvini entered the coalitions but first made a deal with the other party leaders that the role of prime minister will go to the leader of the party that

gets the most vote. Salvini will result the leader of the right-wing party that achieved the most votes in the coalition.

At the 2018 national elections, Lega gathered 17,4 % of the vote, the best electoral result of the party since its establishment. Moreover, the party received significant results in the central and southern regions of Italy, territories that until that moment had never supported the party (Albertazzi et al., 2018: 645). However, the centre-right coalition did not achieved the majority of the total votes. After a brief stalemate, Salvini reached an agreement with the M5S, the most voted party, and the Lega returned in government. This time, not as “Berlusconi’s junior partner”, but as an equal ally with the M5S (Albertazzi and Vampa, 2021: 63). The new Giuseppe Conte government, saw Salvini with the role of Vice-Prime Minister and Interior Minister. Lega had also the control of other key ministerial offices such as Agricultural Policy, Education and Research, Public Administration, and Family. Salvini and his party had a great influence on the policy-making process of the government and after only few months an important decree-law for Lega was approved, the so-called “decreto Salvini” on immigration and security. This decree gave Salvini the opportunity to present himself as an effective policy-maker since it was on the key themes Salvini had been campaigning and also to appear like the most efficient of the two coalition partners. In fact, polls and opinion surveys showed how after just few weeks into government Salvini increased his popularity and his party popularity. On the wake of Lega renewed strength, the party went into the 2019 EU elections as the most popular party and it achieved an impressive 34,3% of the vote.

Table 5: Lega (Nord), Vote share in National and European elections 2008-2019

National elections	LN vote share	EU elections	LN vote share
2008	8,3%	2009	10,2%
2013	4,1%	2014	6,1%
2018	17,4%	2019	34,3%

Table 6: *Lega (Nord) in opposition and in power 2008-2019*

Government	Start date	End date	LN Government/opposition
Berlusconi IV	08/05/08	16/11/11	Government
Monti	16/11/13	28/04/13	Opposition
Letta	28/04/13	22/02/14	Opposition
Renzi	22/02/14	12/12/16	Opposition
Gentiloni	12/12/16	01/06/18	Opposition
Conte I	01/06/18	05/09/19	Government
Conte II	06/09/19	13/02/21	Opposition

After the EU election results, Lega resulted the most voted party in Italy and the popularity of Salvini increased even further. Salvini convinced himself that he was strong enough to govern the country without the M5S partner and withdrew the support to the Conte government, believing that new elections would be called. However, things went differently. The M5S, the Democratic Party (PD), and other minor parliamentary groups reached an agreement to form a new government, led again by Giuseppe Conte. Salvini's bid failed and Lega went back into opposition. The data collection for this dissertation end at this moment, the end of 2019, when Lega is again outside national government.

4.2. CasaPound Italia. The Fascists of the Third Millennium

CasaPound Italia (CPI) was officially established in 2008, when its leader – Gianluca Iannone – announced the creation of a new political group after he and his supporters were expelled by the party Movimento Social-Fiamma Tricolore (MS-FT). However, the roots of the group can be traced a decade earlier, in 1997 with the creation of the rock band ZetaZeroAlfa (ZZA), whose leader (and singer) was Iannone himself. The band would have a pivotal role in the creation, identity-building, and socialisation of the extreme-right ideas of the group. The lyrics of ZZA's songs represented the first ideological manifesto of the group were the issues of

globalisation¹, violence², fascism³, and politics all found space (Castelli Gattinara et al., 2013: 243). During the concerts, that at the beginning mostly took place in the pub Cutty Sark, dozens of extreme-right youngsters of Rome and its outskirts meet and had the chance to socialise and share their thoughts on the main issues discussed also in the songs, from politics to history, from love to war, and revolution. In the words of CPI, ZZA “worked as a conglomerate of souls” and thanks to ZZA the group of activists that followed the band “grew bigger and more cohesive” (CasaPound Italia, 2021).

As stated clearly in CPI ‘s website, since the establishment of the ZZA, the group led by Iannone was more interested in expressive and symbolics acts that could give voice and space to the young activists, than to institutional politics (CasaPound Italia, 2021). Accordingly, the group led by Iannone begun to carry out a series of demonstrative actions, such as the attempt to disrupt the emission of the Italian “Big Brother” in 2008 and violent protests led by the student-wing group *Blocco Studentesco*, the Student Block, that could catch the attention of the media (Castelli Gattinara et al., 2013: 244).

One of the most important events for the development of the group was the occupation in July 2012 of an abandoned building in the suburbs of Rome that the group renamed *CasaMontag*. The group used this building as a place to gather, carry out concerts, and cultural events. The occupation of *CasaMontag* was the first of a series of buildings occupations that the group named *Occupazioni Non Conformi*, Non-Compliant Occupations, and that

¹ The song *Boicotta* states: “Nestlé, Coca-Cola,/Revlon, Nike,/Virgin, De Fonseca,/Jaffa, Del Monte,/Superga, Golia,/Ariel, McDonald’s,/W.W.F., Benetton,/Shell, Calvin Klein!/all faces of a monstrous project/All children of a perfect world/ /Under the mask of your altruism/Millions of victims of neoliberalism!/Reject homologation!!/Boicot hypocrisy!/Fight the multinational of the New World Order!” (Full text available at: <https://zetazeroalfa.org/testi/>)

²The song *Nel dubbio mena* states: “No, don’t worry/when in doubt, hit/and you’ll live longer”; the song *Accademia della sassaiola* states: “It’s raising the rage/ to destroy the cage/ the window has shattered/ now someone is crying”; the song *Chinghiamattanza* states: “first: I’ll grab my belt/ second: the dance begin/ third: I’ll aim the target/ fourth: massacrebelt” (Full text available at: <https://zetazeroalfa.org/testi/>)

³ The song *Rose rosse dale camicie nere* states: “It’s only red roses from the black shirts/ look at how the wind is blowing/ and how inflated the sails are! / It’s only red roses from the black shirts/ they’re born on the marble of thousands springtime”. (Full text available at: <https://zetazeroalfa.org/testi/>)

constituted a pillar of the political development of the group (Froio et al., 2020: 28). This is for two reasons, on the one hand the occupied building served as a space for the group to build their community and offer a space to its supporters to meet and discuss. On the other hand, the occupations served the purpose of attract media attention and therefore visibility by using a tactic that was usually used by left-wing social-centres. The strategy of buildings occupation continued in the months that followed the establishment of CasaMontag and in December 2003 a group led by Iannone occupied an abandoned building in the centre of Rome, in the *Esquilino* neighbourhood. This time the building was named *CasaPound*, the House of Pound, but the aim of the occupation had a different political nature. In fact, this time the occupation had a housing purpose and served to house 23 families, among which also the ones of the group leaders Iannone and Di Stefano (Froio et al., 2020: 29). CasaPound became the headquarter of the group that became known to the wider public with the same name.

Building occupations soon became the most used tactic of the group that at that moment focused almost exclusively on the housing crisis in Rome and campaigned for the housing rights of Italians. The reference in CasaPound is to Ezra Pound, the American poet who believed that rent was “usury” and who was sympathetic toward the Italian Social Republic (Castelli Gattinara et al., 2014: 161). Other buildings in Rome were occupied with the same housing purpose in the following months – Casa d’Italia Parioli, Casa d’Italia Boccea, and Casa d’Italia Torrino – but they had been soon cleared out by police forces (CasaPound Italia, 2021). However, the Esquilino building, CasaPound, is still at the time of writing being occupied by the group, 19 years later.

Following the occupation of CasaPound, the group led by Iannone made its first contact with institutional politics, by entering the party Movimento Sociale-Fiamma Tricolore (MS-FT). However, this partnership lasted only few months. In December 2008, Iannone occupied the headquarters of MS-FT and requested a party congress to discuss what he thought the party

needed: more focus on movement actions and the requests of the younger activists and less attention to party-politics and institutional activities (Froio et al., 2020: 29). The occupation of the MS-FT led to the expulsion of Iannone's group from the party. Immediately after, Iannone formally registered a new charitable organisation⁴: CasaPound Italia.

CasaPound Italia was formally established and since the beginning it identified as a movement organisation rather than an institutional party, focusing exactly on what Iannone claimed MS-FT was lacking: street protests, cultural and expressive events, space for youth activities, and violence. In the first years since its formal establishment, CPI activists continued to focus mostly on the issue of the housing crisis in Rome and the related campaign for the *Mutuo Sociale* (social mortgage). However, within few years the political agenda of the organisation widened to include also migration, economy, welfare, European Union, Environment (Froio et al., 2020: ch 3). Parallely to the broadening of the political agenda, CPI rapidly developed a net of local branches throughout the Italian territory, as well as thematic organisation that spanned from the already mentioned student organisation *Blocco Studentesco*, to the environmental one (*La Foresta che Avanza*), the sport one (*La Muvra*), and the civic protection one (*La Salamandra*). Within few years, CPI went from having 60 local branches in Italy in 2013, to more than 150 in 2018, covering most of the national territory (Froio et al., 2020:30).

Although CPI has adopted throughout its life the repertoire of actions typical of a movement organisation, by mixing confrontational, demonstrative, expressive, and violent actions, it has also entered the electoral arena and took part to local and national elections. As Froio and colleagues have argued

⁴ CasaPound Italia is formally registered with the legal status of a non-profit association (*Associazione di promozione sociale*) and this allow the organisation to have financial benefits, donations and yearly donations from taxpayers. (see: Froio et al., 2020:63).

“CPI is still torn between the need for legitimization required by engagement in electoral politics, and the propensity toward social movements’ ‘logic of damage’ (Della Porta and Diani 20016: 170). CPI’s hybrid approach to mobilisation implies that while protest activism is important, this does not exclude electoral participation, so that contentious actions coexist with conventional forms of political engagement” (2020: 97).

In 2013, CPI presented its own list of candidates for the national elections, and Simone Di Stefano, vice-president and spokesperson of the organisation, ran as a candidate for the mayor of Rome and president of the Lazio region. The lists presented by CPI at the national, regional, and local elections did not reach even 1% of the vote share. The national list reached only 0,13 percent of the votes. However, the leader of CPI, Iannone, emphasised how for CPI the most important aspect was to be able to collect the signatures necessary to present the lists on all different levels of competition and the visibility that their candidates had on national media, emphasising the organisational effort that the group has made, as well as the possibility for CPI candidates to revendicate on national media “the pride of being fascist” (CasaPound Italia, 2013).

The 2014 European elections saw CPI active again in the electoral arena. This time the extreme-right group supported the election of LN candidate, Mario Borghezio. Although in March 2014, Di Stefano claimed that CPI could not ally with the LN as that party was “unable to even pronounce the word Italy” and it was “anti-EU only in words” because concretely the party had always “signed and governed with those who have enforced EU treaties” that damaged Italy (CasaPound Italia, 2014), few weeks later a collaboration between the two groups was reached. CPI actively participated in the electoral campaign of Borghezio that ran for EU parliamentary seat in the centre district of Italy and who was successfully elected at the EU parliament. During the weeks and months that followed the EU elections, CPI and LN took part to a series of events together – as the data collected for this research will later discuss in

more details – the biggest of which the demonstrations against the national government that took place in Milan in October 2014 and in Rome in February 2015. The partnership between LN and CPI was renewed also in occasion of the local elections that took place at the end of May 2015. For this elections, candidates of CPI were either inserted into the lists of LN or Noi con Salvini (in the South of Italy), or into a list called “Sovranità” created specifically for the 2015 elections (CasaPound, 2015). However, later in 2015 the partnership between the two organisations terminated. Salvini never clarified what led to the distance himself from the extreme-right group, and also CPI never issued any clear statement on the matter, beside an interview where Di Stefano claimed Salvini preferred to preserve the alliance with Berlusconi and the centre-right parties, over the relations with CPI.

Beside the engagement in the electoral arena, in the years 2014-2016 CPI had also been active in the streets protesting mainly against the national governments – Monti’s, Letta and Renzi’s – and the austerity cuts they implemented and increasingly against immigrants. Although the issue of migration has not been central for the group at its beginning, following the start of the so-called immigration crisis with the increase in the numbers of refugee arriving in Italy as well as the increased salience of the issue in the public debate, CPI capitalised on this situation and increasingly mobilised on this issue (Froio et al. 2020: 113; Castelli Gattinara, 2017).

The mix between contentious and institutional politics characterised CPI in the following years. In fact, next to the street protests, occupations, and violent clashes with police forces and opponents, CPI also continued to run for local and national elections. In 2016, CPI list received 7% of the vote in the city of Bolzano and elected one representative in the city council (CIT). In 2017, the best electoral perform of CPI list took place in the city elections in Rome, where Luca Marsella obtained more than 9% of the votes in the suburb of Ostia and was elected in the municipal council (La Repubblica, 06.11.17). At the 2018 national elections, CPI went

from the 0,13% and 48,000 votes of 2013 to almost 1% and 600,000 votes. In absolute numbers the results are insignificant within the bigger picture of the Italian party system, but for CPI they represented a big success and the vice-president Di Stefano claimed that “other political parties and institutions needs to take us into account” (CasaPound Italia, 2018). Unexpectedly, however, in June 2019, CPI leader Iannone announced that his organisation would no longer take part to elections and instead would focus exclusively on contentious politics (CasaPound Italia, 2019). This decision, though, was set aside in case of the 2020 communal elections in Bolzano, where CPI run with a list of candidates. The decision was said to be “an absolute exception” in the new course of the organisation and that although they tried to “delegate to someone else our proposals”, ultimately the decision was “necessary” and inevitable (CasaPound Italia, 2020). At the time of writing, may 2022, the elections in Bolzano, result the only exception to the decision taken by CPI in June 2019.

Table 7: CPI, Vote share in National and European elections 2013-2019

National elections	CPI vote share	EU elections	CPI vote share
2013	0,13%		
2018	0,95%		
		2019	0,33%

The data collected in this research end in 2019, with CPI focusing on its movement-type activities and terminating its electoral experiences. Since then, CPI has gone through a period of internal turmoil and it is also under a judicial process that could lead to its outlawing. In fact, in February 2022, Di Stefano, the vice-president and one of the historical leaders, announced his exit from CPI without specifying the reasons behind his decision. CPI commented that the Di Stefano was only interested in institutional politics and not the “revolutionary spirit” of the group (CasaPound Italia, 2022). At the same time, CPI is under investigation in Bari, for “attempting to reconstituting the Fascist Party”. If the investigation will find the group guilty of this, CPI could be banned under Italian law and its experience end (La Repubblica, 21.1.22).

The chapter turns now to the interactions that have occurred between the two organisations in order to understand when these interactions took place and how these interactions affected UKIP and EDL's frames, actions, and organisations.

4.3. Lega Nord and CasaPound Italia interactions in the frames dimension

This section investigates the interactions that have occurred between LN and CPI in the frames dimension. The data collected through the PCA and the content analysis of party and movement manifestos are presented in order to test the hypotheses advanced in the theoretical chapter about the proximity in the frames, which posited that: *parties and movements are more likely to be closer in the frame dimension when topics that they own, such as immigration and law and order, become more visible and when the party is electorally weak*. First, the data that have been collected through the PCA for both actors are analysed, next the data collected through the analysis of LN and CPI's manifestos and documents are discussed. The section concludes with a discussion of the results.

The claims of the PCA have been retrieved through the digital archive Factiva and all news articles, for the period 2009-2019, from the daily newspaper Corriere della Sera with mentions of CasaPound Italia (CPI) and Lega Nord (until November 2017 and then only Lega)

Table 8: Lega, total claims by issue focus 2009-2019

Issue Type	Number of claims	Percentage
Socio-economic	426	27
Cultural	149	10
Europe and EU	79	5
(anti) Migration	335	21
Law & Order	200	13
Organisation Identity	245	16
Other	118	8
N	1552	100

Table 9: CPI, total claims by issue focus 2009-2019

Issue Type	Number of claims	Percentage
Socio-Economic	62	18
Cultural	65	18
EU	2	1
Migration	62	18
Law & Order	22	6
Organisation Identity	132	39
Other	0	0
N	345	100

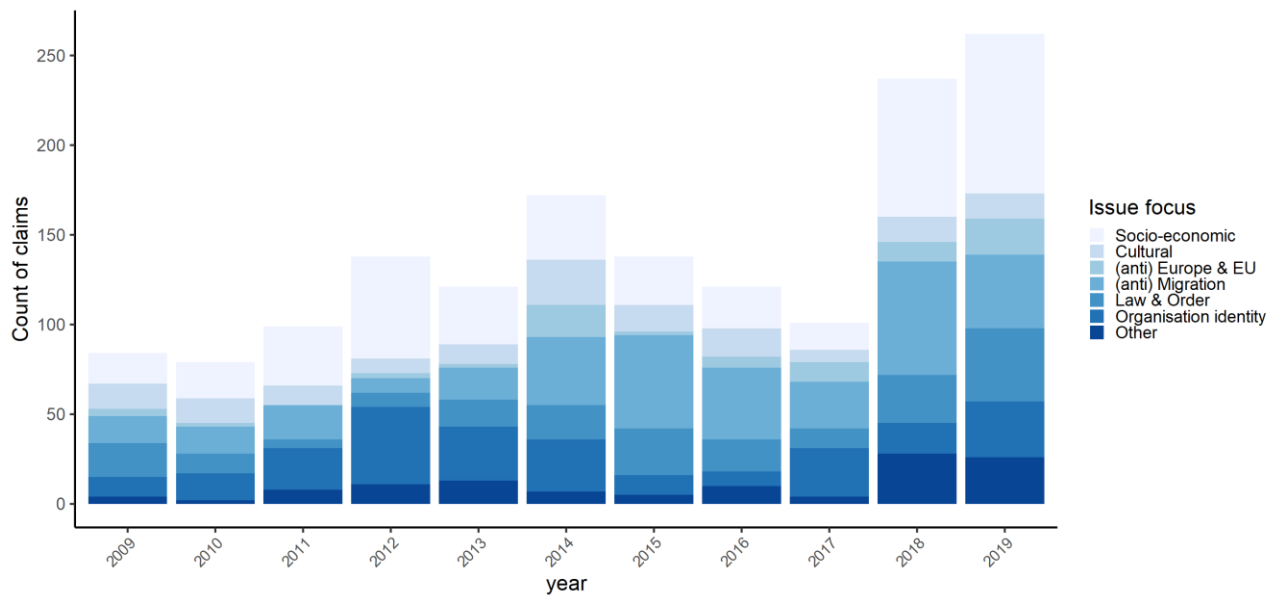
have been analysed. There are 1,897 claims for the Italian case study: 1,552 claims for LN and 345 for CPI.

By looking at Table 8 and 9, it can be observed how neither LN nor CPI are single-issue party, instead they both deal with a variety of issues. We can expect that different issues will dominate the discourses of the actors depending both on the external opportunities (economic crisis, migration crisis), but also strategic and ideological choices of the actors (when they are in government or opposition, for the party and contesting elections or engaging in street-based activities for the movement).

From an aggregate level, the most important issue overall for Lega is the socio-economic, it represents 27 percent of the total share of the claims of the party. The second most important is the migration issue with 21 percent of the total and the third the law-and-order issue with 13 percent of claims. Cultural issues and the European Union receive far less attention than the other issues. A total of 245 claims where of an ideological nature, meaning they do not express a position on a policy issue, but rather they reaffirm their main ideological tenets, such as the independence of Padania or the shift from a regional to a national identity.

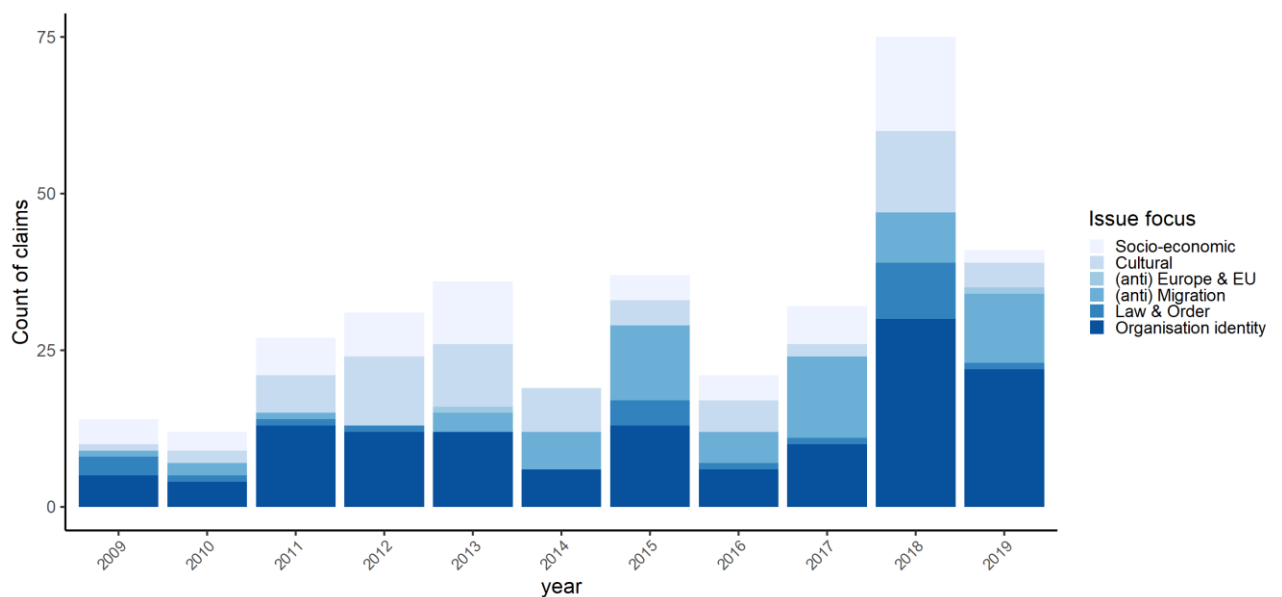
CPI is also not a single-issue movement, and although the majority of its claims are of an ideological type, in which mostly they reaffirm some sort of connection with the Fascist era

Figure 1: Lega, Issue focus by year 2009-2019



or Fascist figures, all the other issues are represented in the claims of the movement. Socio-economic issues, mostly restricting welfare benefits to Italians, cultural issues, migration and law and order are all high in their agenda, while they do not really talk about the European Union, which is only identified in 2 claims out of 345.

Figure 2: CPI, Issue focus by year 2009-2019

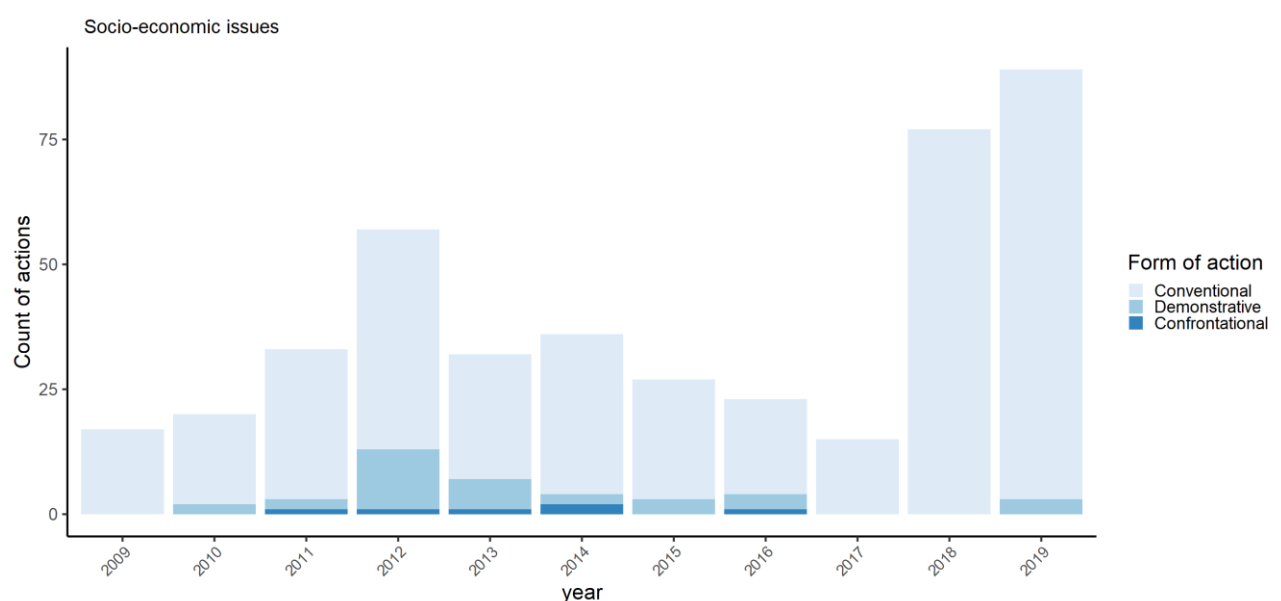


The aggregate data already provides a clear data: neither of the actors under investigation is single issue. In order to understand how the focus on the issues changes over time and when the party and the movement are closer in the frames dimension, the rest of the section presents an analysis of the claims by issue type and by year. First socio-economic issues are discussed, then cultural issues, Europe and European Union, migration issues, and law-and-order issues. Each sub-section on issues presents first an analysis of the single actors and then how they compare to determine when they are close.

4.3.1. Socio-economic issue

The socio-economic issue is the main focus of Lega's claims. 85 per cent of the claims are around socio-economic matters, such as welfare, taxes, budget, and institutional reforms. For CPI, the socio-economic issue represents 18% of the total claims and the vast majority of the claims involve requests for improved welfare measures for Italians only and more specifically exclusive access to council houses. The issue position is recorded for each claim on a scale

Figure 3: Lega, Socio-economic issues by year 2009-2019

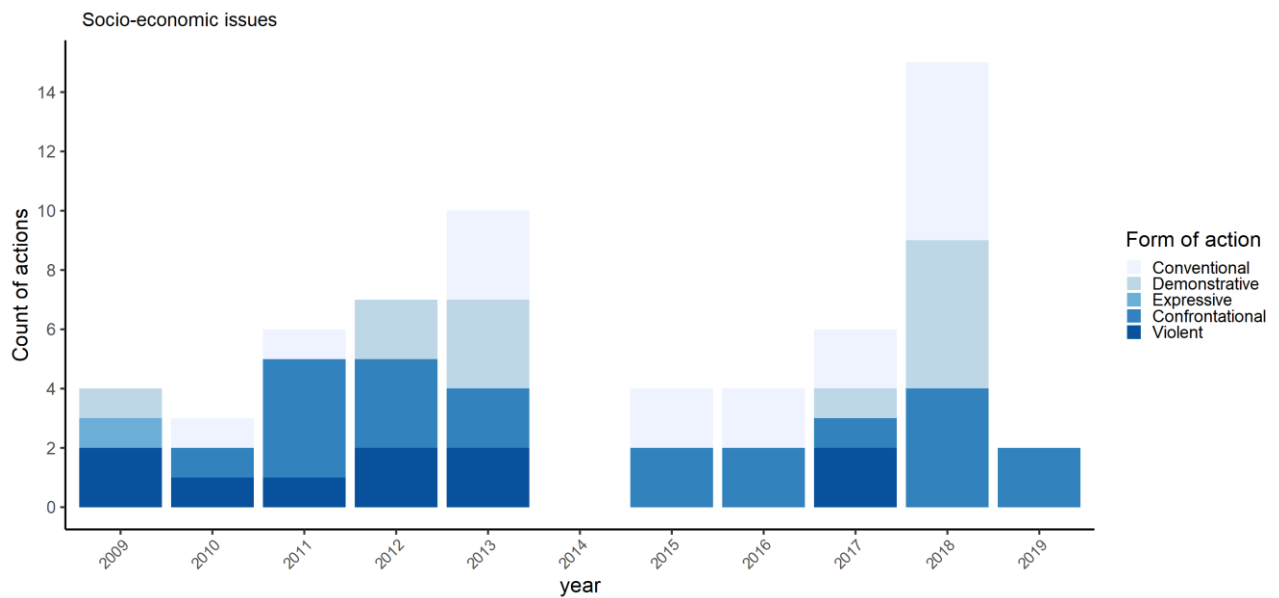


from -1 (support for welfare state and state intervention) to +1 (opposition to welfare, economic liberalism) with 0.5 intervals.

The focus on socio-economic affairs changes over time for both actors. For Lega's period in government from 2009-2010, the claims for this issue represent slightly more than 20 percent of the total. However, the share increases to 33 and 44 percent in 2011 and 2012 due to the break out of the economic crisis and the protests directed toward the Monti government's budget cuts. The issue focus on this issue decreases from 2013, the year in which Salvini became the new secretary of the party and until 2018, when Lega returned to government in alliance with the 5 Star Movement. Beside the years of the Monti government when the protest against its budget cuts represented a large share of claims of Lega, the focus on this issue is greater when the party is in government and it is predominantly around the need to cut taxes for the middle class (the battle for the flat tax becomes the central socio-economic issue in the years of the yellow-green government), the need to create new infrastructures, and tackle unemployment.

As shown in Figure 5, the mean value of the socio-economic issue is stable around the value of 0. This is not surprising since this party has fought against the austerity measures declared by the Monti government, but their opposition was always been limited to the opposition toward the cuts directed to regions and provinces of the north. In fact, the majority of their claims are specifically about how unfair it is for northern administrations at the city, provincial and regional levels to have their budget cut as for the southern regions even if only the latter were in debt, while the formers were "virtuous" giving to the state more than what they were receiving back. From 2013, there is a slight increase in the issue position that is disrupted only in 2016 due to the forceful opposition campaign launched against the Renzi constitutional reforms. From 2017, and the development of the electoral campaign for the 2018 general elections, the issue position increases again as the attention dedicate to this issue. The

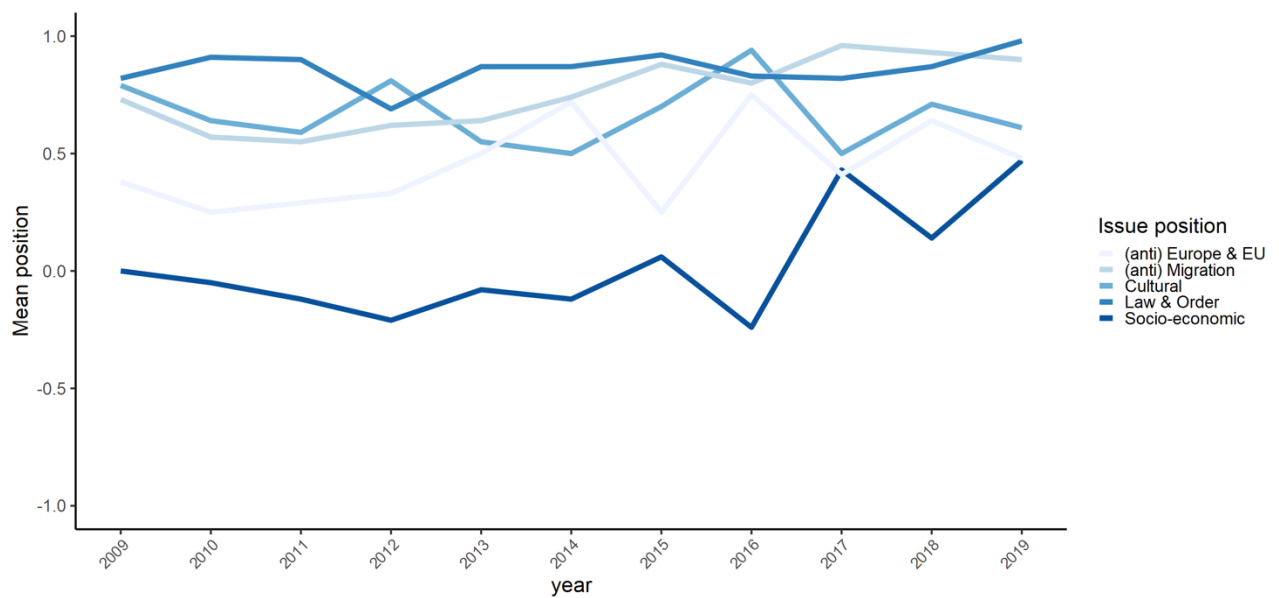
Figure 4: CPI, Socio-economic issues by year 2009-2019



ardent campaign for the building of the high-speed train line Turin-Lyon and imposition of the flat-tax contributed to the increase of the issue position.

Turning to CPI, a similar pattern is observable as the party. During the 2009-2013 period, the socio-economic issue represents the predominant focus of the movement with 25 percent out of the total claims dedicated to this issue. This is in line with the identity of the movement born out of the occupation of a building for housing purposes. In fact, the main claims in this period are for housing rights and welfare provisions – only to Italians – and opposition toward the Monti government and its austerity measures. In 2014 there is a drastic cut in claims on this issue, it disappears completely. This drastic change in 2014 coincides with the begin of the “migration crisis” and also the formal alliance with Lega. Both factors play a role in this: the migration crisis is exploited and performed (Moffit, 2015) by CPI that shifts most of its focus toward that issue. However, the formal electoral alliance with Lega and the different position on the issue contributed to the neglect of this issue, since when the alliance is broken and in 2018 CPI is again occupied with a new electoral campaign of the local elections, the attention given to the socio-economic issue sparks again. The difference in measures proposed by CPI

Figure 5: Lega, Issue position 2009-2019

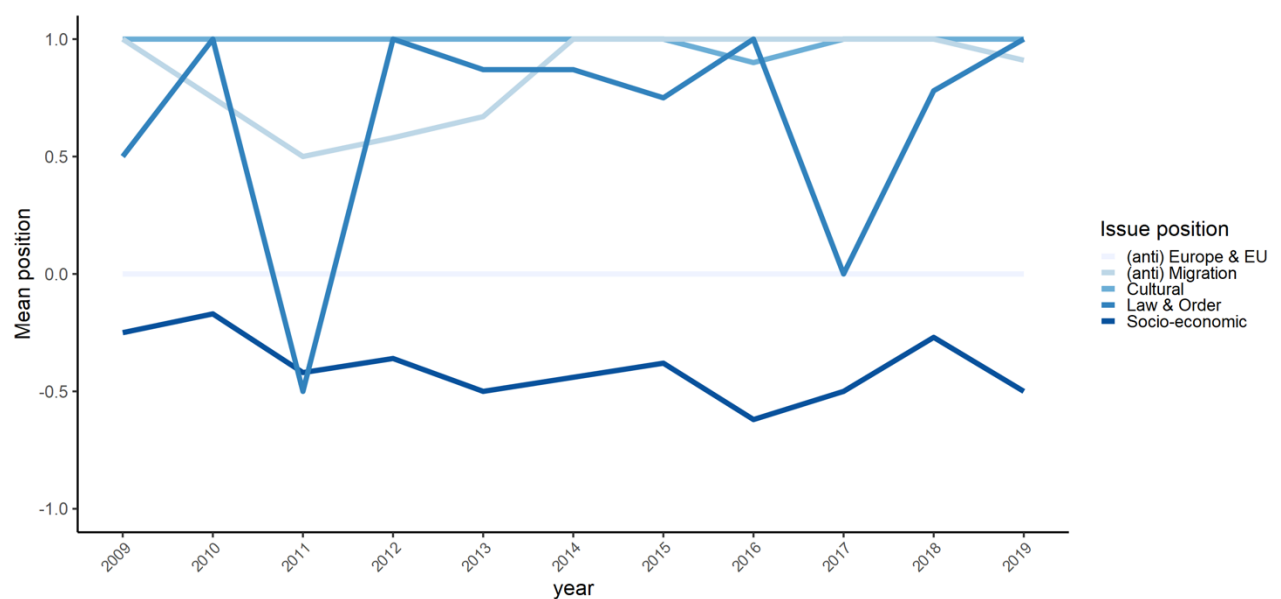


and LN on the socio-economic issue and the relative strength of the party over the movement, led CPI to overlook for the 2014-2017 the economic issue.

The mean position on the socio-economic issue of CPI, as shown in Figure 6, is constantly in the negative part of the graph. This is unexpected, as already mentioned above, the support for more welfare provisions, council housing, and facilitated loans, make CPI constantly stay in the lower part of the graph. However, they are never beyond the -0.5 as all these provisions should be for Italian only and not for migrants that should have access to welfare measures only in a residual capacity. There is a slight increase in 2018, and this is due to the support to the creation of the high-speed train line Turin-Lyon.

In order to draw some conclusion on the socio-economic issue and compare the position of the two actors, it can be affirmed that the issue is of central importance to both Lega and CPI across all years. However, Lega focuses far more on it when it sits in government, with the exception of the two years of the Monti government. CPI dropped completely the issue during the years of the electoral alliance with LN and the migration crisis, but it remains a central tenant of its discourses and identity.

Figure 6: CPI, Issue position 2009-2019



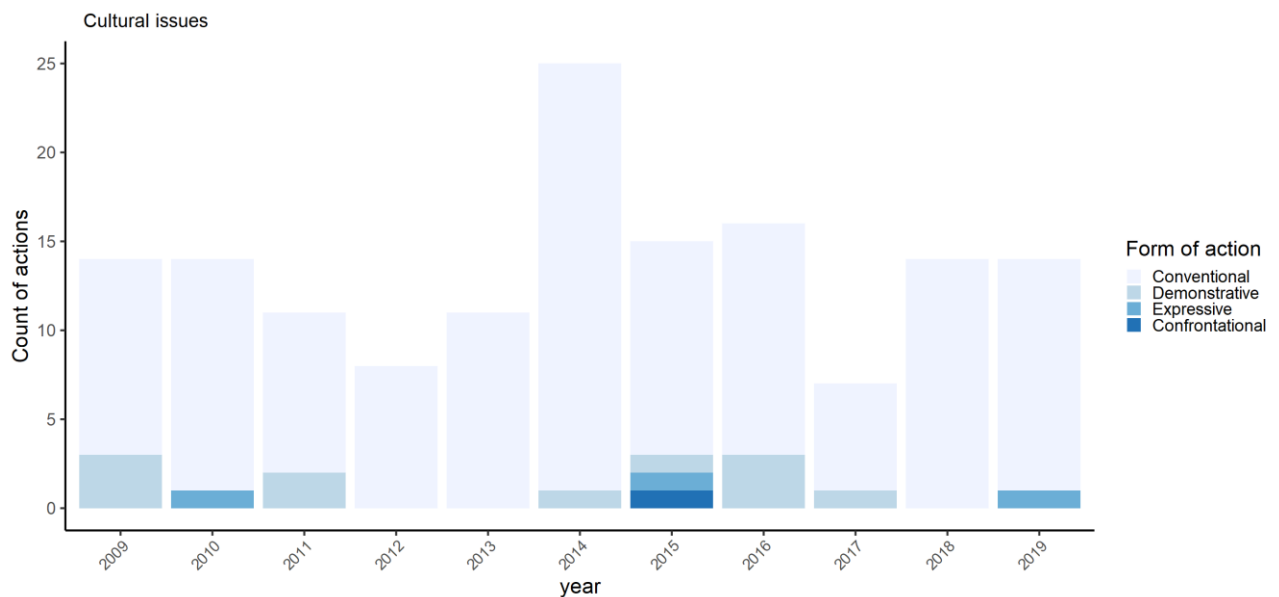
4.3.2. Cultural issue

The meta-issue cultural includes claims about the topics of religious traditions and festivities, national festivities and traditional moral values, “gender issues”, ethics (right to abortion and euthanasia), and inclusion of minority religion. The issue position is recorded for each claim on a scale from -1 (support for more progressive position) to +1 (support for traditional positions) with 0.5 intervals.

10 percent of all the claims of Lega are dedicated to this issue, however the focus changes over the 11-year timeframe of the investigation. It is high during the last years of the Berlusconi government, then decreases when LN sits in opposition to the Monti government, next increases again in the middle of the migration crisis, finally halves its share in the years of the yellow-green government. For CPI the focus on cultural issue is constant and represents the 18 per cent of the total share of claims. This is in line with the aim of the movements and has the purpose to contrast left-wing movements and organisations on this terrain. The contents of the claims of the two organisations are different as Lega focuses predominantly on Islam and the

cultural threat posed by migrants, while CPI focuses more on the traditional national festivities and the remembrance of the idealised past. To understand and explain similarities and differences along these claims, the analysis of the issue for each actor is needed.

Figure 7: Lega, cultural issues by year



As already stated, cultural claims represent 16 percent of the total claims. In the 2009-2011 period, the share is 17 and 18 percent respectively and the majority of the claims are in opposition to the creation of mosques and cemeteries for Muslims, and palaces of worships for Roma people. Then there is a decrease in issue focus in the years 2012-2013, the years of internal disruption for Lega with the corruption scandals and the Maroni interregnum, but still the few instances of claim-makings are around preventing Muslims to have spaces. LN's frames Islam in its claims mainly as a cultural threat against the homogeneity of the nation. In fact, by looking at the frames that

Next, there is a new increase and the peak is in the year 2016 with the forceful opposition to the “Cirinnà law” on civil rights for same-sex couples. The attention on the issue decreases

again during the years of the yellow-green government, with only 5 percent of claims dedicated to cultural issue.

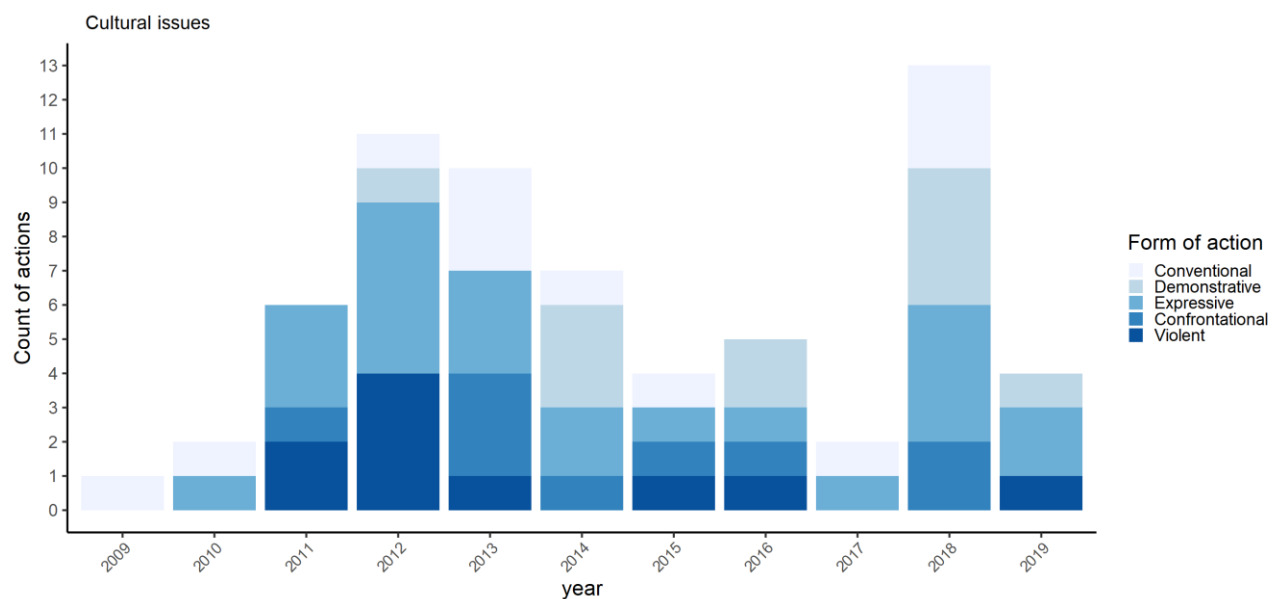
The mean position of Lega on the cultural issue is constantly high, Figure 5 shows, always above 0.8, with the exception of 2010 and 2011 where LN opposes more fiercely the celebration for the 2nd of June – the Republic day – and the anniversary of the Unity of Italy. A small decrease in the mean position is observable also in 2013-2014 when LN organised a petition to abolish the Merlin law, which criminalised prostitution. In general, the position of the party on the cultural issue is very conservative, however its opposition to the celebration of national festivities, in line with their regional identity, is what contributes to its small decrease.

The cultural issue is constantly important for CPI, in line with the traditional and ideological values of the movement. With the exception of three years, the share of claims on cultural issues, is above 20 per cent and in 2012-2014 is above 30 per cent. The vast share of claims is around an idealised “greatness” of Italy and the necessity to protect its traditions and assertiveness with foreign powers. An example of this is the mobilisation for the two marines (marò) detained in India following the killing of two Indian fishermen off the coast of Kerala. CPI in 2013 and 2014 mobilised for the liberation of the two marines and blamed the Renzi government for the inability to make its voice heard and bring back the two “heroes”.

The mean position on the cultural issue is constantly around 1, although there is a very slight decrease (0.9) in 2016 because CPI vice-president declared that CPI is not against same-sex couples but against adoption rights. However, CPI took part, next to Lega, to the great rally organised in 2016 in support of traditional families, the “family day”.

In conclusion, the focus on cultural claims is high for both actors. However, there are important differences between the two as CPI is mainly concerned with traditional values and the protection of an idealised greatness of the country, while LN is mainly concerned with the protection of traditional Christian values and vehemently against any space for new rights to

Figure 8: CPI, Cultural issues by year 2009-2019

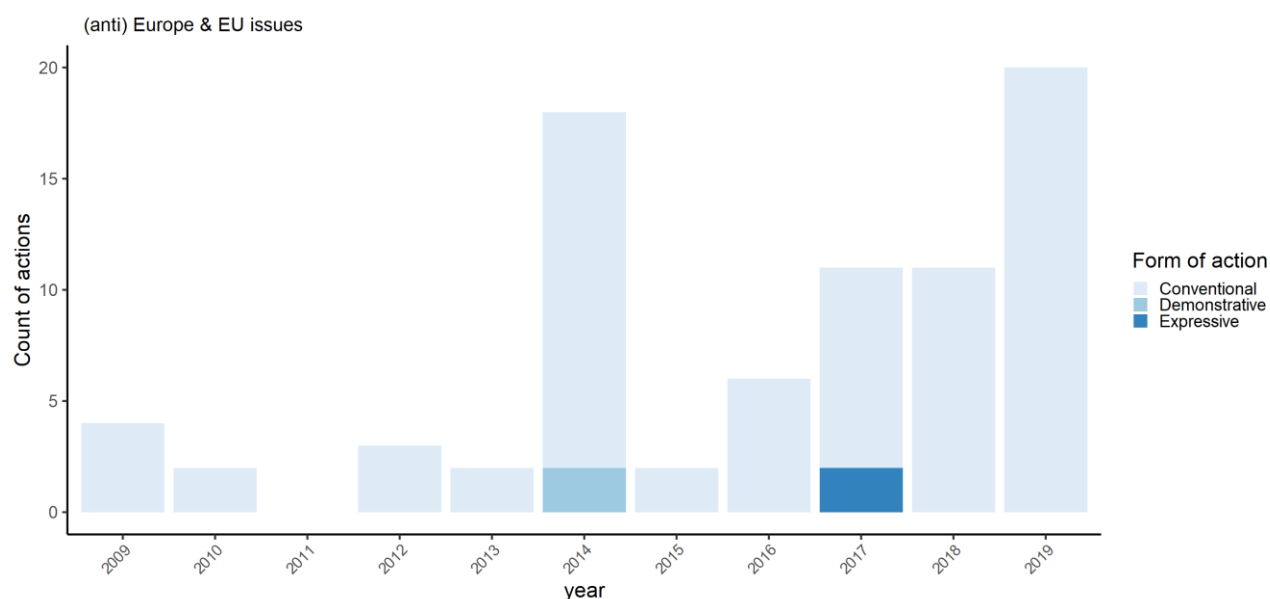


Muslims, ethnic minorities, and same-sex couples. Despite the differences among the agenda of the two actors, both keep the focus high on the cultural issue even when they are allied, in contrast to what has been observed for the socio-economic issue, where CPI dropped the issue. This might be because the importance associated with the issue is higher than the value associated to the alliance or simply both actors know that their position are somewhat complementary (even if on traditional festivity and Christianity in open contrast) and they aim at different audiences.

4.3.3. Europe and European Union

The main finding from the claims on this issue is that does not have any relevance for neither one of the two actors under investigation. While for Lega only 5 percent of the claims are dedicated to this issue, for CPI only 2 claims out of the 345 are on the EU. Here is important to recall that the data on issues have been recorded to note only the main issue focus of the claim. Therefore, there are instances where the two actors have dealt with the issue of Europe and EU but not as the central focus of their claims, for example, when LN and CPI opposed

Figure 9: Lega, (anti) Europe and EU issues by year 2009-2019

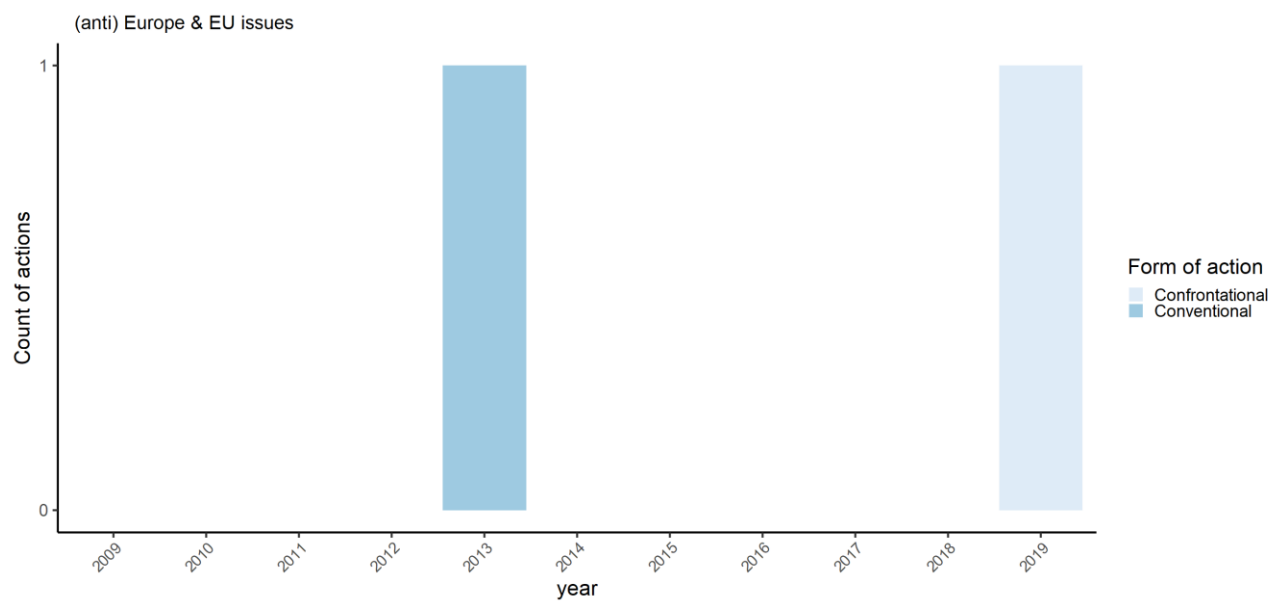


the budget cuts of the Monti government, they also blamed the EU for asking/imposing the cuts, but in their claims the economic reforms and the cuts were the main objects of their claims.

Despite the limited focus on this issue, it can be observed how Lega deals with the issue of Europe and EU mostly during the EU elections years. In 2009 the claims on EU reach 5 per cent of the total share, in 2014 10 per cent and in 2019 7 percent. However, there is a spark in the issue focus in 2017, when Salvini decided to launch a very vocal campaign against the Euro and appointed Borghi and Bagnai, two vocal anti-euro academics, as the directors of the economic department of the party.

The mean position of Lega for the EU issue is always in the positive part of the graph – opposition to more integration – however there are fluctuations, as shown in Figure 5. This is because when in government, Lega tends to be less confrontational toward EU institutions and compliant with the requests of deficit cuts and spending review. Moreover, during the Maroni interregnum, the debate on the “Europe of Regions” was very much alive. The aim was to position the northern regions of Italy in a federalist Europe of Regions where only the more economically advanced regions would be part of it and maintain the euro. With the end of the Maroni leadership, this debate within the Lega disappeared and Salvini adopted a more adverse

Figure 10: CPI, (anti) Europe and EU issues by year 2009-2019



position toward the EU and the euro, mainly during electoral campaigns. However, when in government, even Salvini moderated its claims toward the EU and complied with the requests of Brussels.

CPI, instead, does not deal overtly with the issue of Europe and the EU, it is never its main concern. Only two statements have been recorded on the issue. One in 2013, when CPI vice-president Di Stefano climbed the palace of the EU offices in Rome to steal the EU flag and put instead the Italian flag, for which he has been arrested and later sentenced.

From a comparative point of view, the analysis of the claims on the EU shows that both actors do not focus extensively on the issue. However, it is important to notice how, during the 2014 EU electoral campaign, when CPI and Lega were formally allied, the issue of EU was not central in their narration, especially for CPI that continued to focus on migration and cultural issues. This is an interesting finding as it shows that even when the two actors are allied and the main effort is the EU electoral campaign, the EU issue is only tangentially dealt with and the EU is only seen as a limitation to the power and initiatives of Italy but not as an institution worth fighting for changing it.

4.3.4. (anti) Migration issue

The migration issue, in line with the literature on far-right movements and parties, is central for both actors. In fact, it represents 20 percent of their claims and in the year of the migration crisis it represents over 30 percent of their focus. Around the migration issue the two actors show the most similar pattern of issue focus as well as issue position. In fact, they both exploit and perform the migration crisis by putting at the forefront of their agenda the migration issue and the threat deriving from “the invasion” that Italy was experiencing.

Table 10: Italy - Immigration issue (2009-2019).

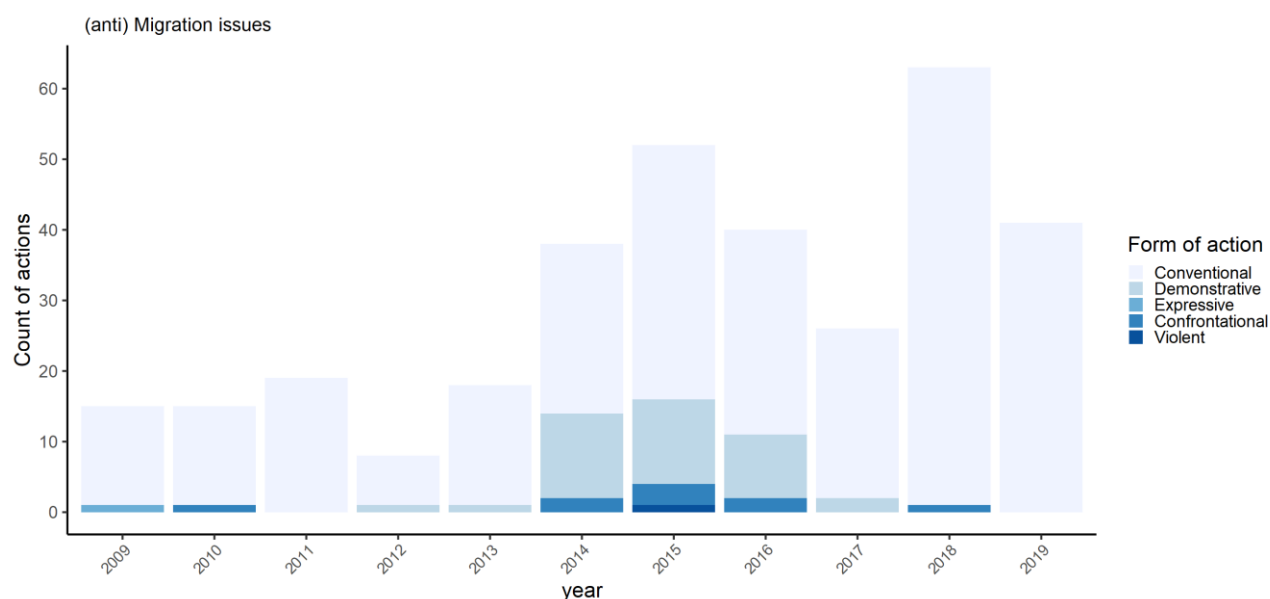
(Ranking in the Eurobarometer survey and percentage of respondent believing it is the most important issue their country faces)

Immigration	Rank	Percentage
2009	6th	10%
2010	7th	10%
2011	4th	21%
2012	9th	2%
2013	7th	8%
2014	3rd	18%
2015	2nd	30%
2016	2nd	42%
2017	2nd	33%
2018	2nd	32%
2019	2nd	25%

Source: Elaboration of the author based on the standard Eurobarometer 2009-2019 (Eurobarometer, 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019)

In fact, from 2014 the issue of immigration is at the forefront of the public debate, as the Eurobarometer data show, it goes from being the seventh most important issue for the public in 2013, to being the third in 2014, and the second in 2014. The attention that the immigration issue receive in the public debate is expertly channelled by both actors, as If it is true that no new frames or messages are developed in these years, as both CPI and Lega propose their same

Figure 11: Lega, (anti) migration issues by year 2009-2019



standard message, it can be observed a shift from economic related messages to predominantly cultural ones, especially for Lega. In fact, the narration of the migration crisis is all devoted to present the threat to the Italian culture and way of life deriving from mass migration.

Looking at Lega, the share of claims devoted to migration issues has been over 15 percent in 10 out of 11 years. The only year when the share of claims dropped to 5 per cent, was 2012, the year of the corruption scandal and Bossi's demise. During the migration crisis, the share of claims on migration increases to 22 percent in 2014 and 37 and 33 percent in 2015 and 2016 respectively.

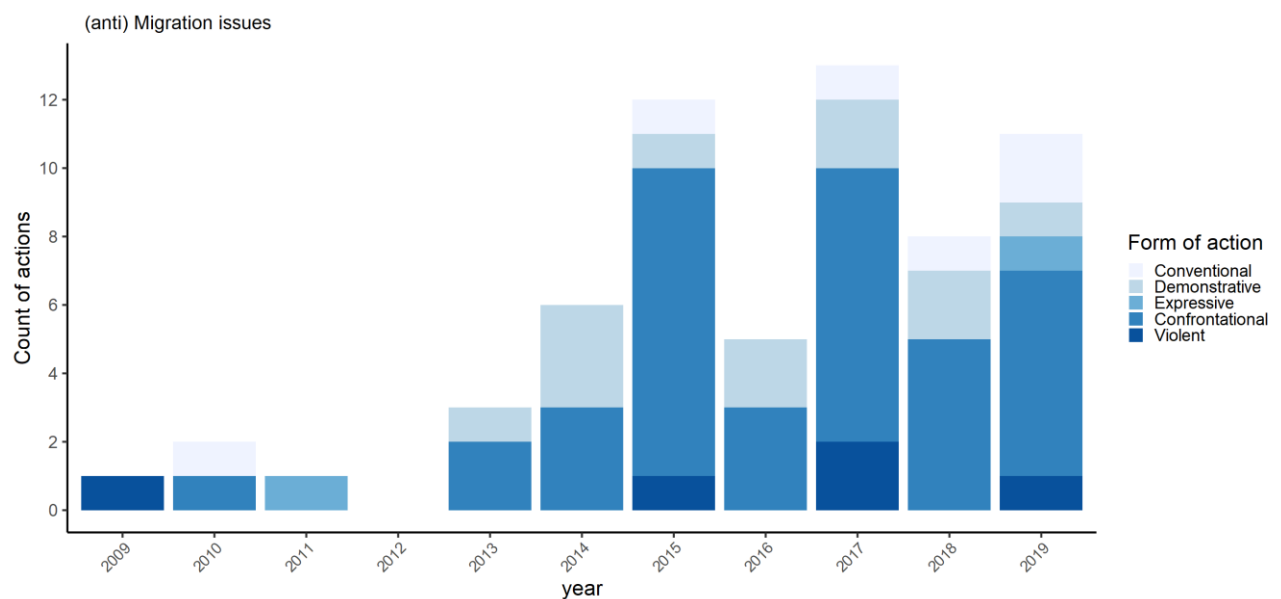
In 2013, half the claims on migration are around the opposition to the "ius soli" a law proposal that would grant Italian citizenship to children of migrants living in Italy from at least 5 years. The Lega has forcefully fought against this proposal, petitioning against it in all norther cities and describing the law as an attack against Italian moral values, Christian religion, and traditions. The campaign against ius soli was characterised also by racist claims against the integration minister, Cécile Kyenge, defined by Lega leaders as an "orangutang", a "differently white housekeeper" and "bonga bonga minister". In the following years, the migration crisis dominated Lega's claims on the issue. During this period, the narrative of the party consisted

in claiming that an “invasion” from Africa and Muslim countries was taking place and that the left-wing government and the Non-Governmental Organisations rescuing migrants in the Mediterranean Sea were putting at risk the Italian culture and values. More limited, but still present, the economic argument that public money should be invested in helping Italians only and not migrants and that it was “immoral” to spend “35 euro per migrant per day” while Italians were struggling with high level of unemployment and high taxation. The share of claims on the migration issue dropped again to around 25 percent in 2017 and then even lower to 16 percent in 2019. This numbers need to be interpreted in conjunction with the ones on the socio-economic issue, in fact while in government, but also during the electoral campaign, the focus on socio-economic issue increases.

The mean value of the migration issue is always high for Lega, as figure 5 shows. An increase of about 0.15, 0.5 to 0.65, is observable from 2013 when the campaign against the *ius soli* law proposal is launched. The value keeps growing up to 0.97 in 2017 and remains stable also in the years of government. The mean position confirms what the more discursive analysis of the claims has argued, that once more radical positions and frames are adopted, they tend to remain part of the discourses even if the issue is not central for the party.

The same pattern observed for Lega is visible also in the claims of CPI. While in the 2009-2011 period the interest is limited, around 10 percent of the total claims – with the lowest point in common with Lega in 2012 where there are no claims being recorded on migration – from 2013 there is an increase to 8 percent. Then in 2014 the share of claims on migrations rises to 32 percent, 33 percent the next year and the highest value is recorded in 2017 with the 40 percent of the claims on migration. As it has been observed with Lega, in 2018 and 2019 the focus decreases. The migration crisis and the mobilisation against the arrival of migrants in the outskirts of Rome have been the main focus of the movement in 2014-2016 and the main frame used by its leaders and supporter has been the cultural one: the invasion of migrants

Figure 12: CPI, (anti) migration issues by year 2009-2019



represents a threat to the national identity of the country. A poster showed during a demonstration against *ius soli* in late 2014 summarise the stance of the movement on the issue:

“CasaPound Italia will fight to defend the national identity and the sense of belonging to the history, the traditions, and the community of Italy: a sense of belonging does not come from being born on Italian soil, but comes from deeper roots in the national and historic identity that must be defended” (Corriere, 5.9.13).

The battle against migration is the battle for the defence of the integrity of the nations, its history, and its traditions. However, and surprisingly, CPI uses, more than Lega, the economic frame to tackle the migration issue. In fact, during all the migration crisis the argument that the money spent on migrants are money that is being illegally stolen to Italians is made. The mobilisation that takes places in the outskirts of Rome and Bergamo against the arrival of migrants focuses on the already poor economic conditions of the people living there and how the money devolved to the hospitality of migrants could be used to improve the lives of natives. From a general perspective, the cultural argument is used when contesting the migration issue in general, it represents the master frame of the movement against the arrival of migrants.

However, the economic argument is used in concrete to mobilise the supporter, it represents the motivational frame.

The mean position of CPI is stable at 1, as shown in Figure 6. The only exception is in 2010 and 2011 when the movement invites migrants to speak to its event and mitigate its position by stating that they are against illegal migration, not against migration tout court. Beside these few instances, the position of the movement on the migration issue is clear and unmistakable, they oppose migration as it represents a threat against the cultural homogeneity of the country, its history, and its traditions.

In conclusion, on the migration issue the same patterns, both in terms of issue attention and issue focus, are visible in the two actors. Both Lega and CPI increase the focus on the issue during the years of the migration crisis and then a crease in the years of the yellow-green government. Surprisingly, it is Lega who uses more the cultural argument against migration, while CPI uses both the cultural and the economic arguments but with different aims. The cultural argument is the master frame, it is used to frame the migration issue in general, while the economic argument is used as the motivational frame to mobilise its supporter during the protests aimed at preventing the arrival of migrants in the outskirts of the big cities like Rome, Milan, and Bergamo. The position of both actors is high, constantly above 0.5 for Lega and at 1 for CPI. For the party is interesting to note that from 2013, the discussion of the *ius soli* law proposal, constantly increases. Even when in government and when the migration issue is not the highest in their agenda, the more radical frames are retained.

4.3.5. Law and order issues

Authoritarianism, “the belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely”, is one of the three characteristic ideological features of far-right

actors (Mudde, 2007: 23). Therefore, it is somewhat unexpected see that the law-and-order issues represent just 13 percent of the total claims of Lega and only 6 percent of CPI claims.

The focus on law-and-order issues for Lega varies during the 11-year timeframe under investigation. In fact, in 2009, they represent 23 percent of the total claims, the highest share for the party. Half of the claims concern the call for less stringent self-defence laws and the need to introduce chemical castration as a punishment against perpetrator of sexual violence. The other half are about the immigration-criminality link. This issue becomes the predominant in the claims on law-and-order of Lega in the following years. In fact, even if the focus on law-and-order decreases, in 2011 and 2012 is only 5 per cent of the total for the year, the vast part of them is about crimes committed by immigrants and the need to close down Roma camps, which are believed to cause insecurity and criminality.

Table 11: Italy - Crime issue (2009-2019)

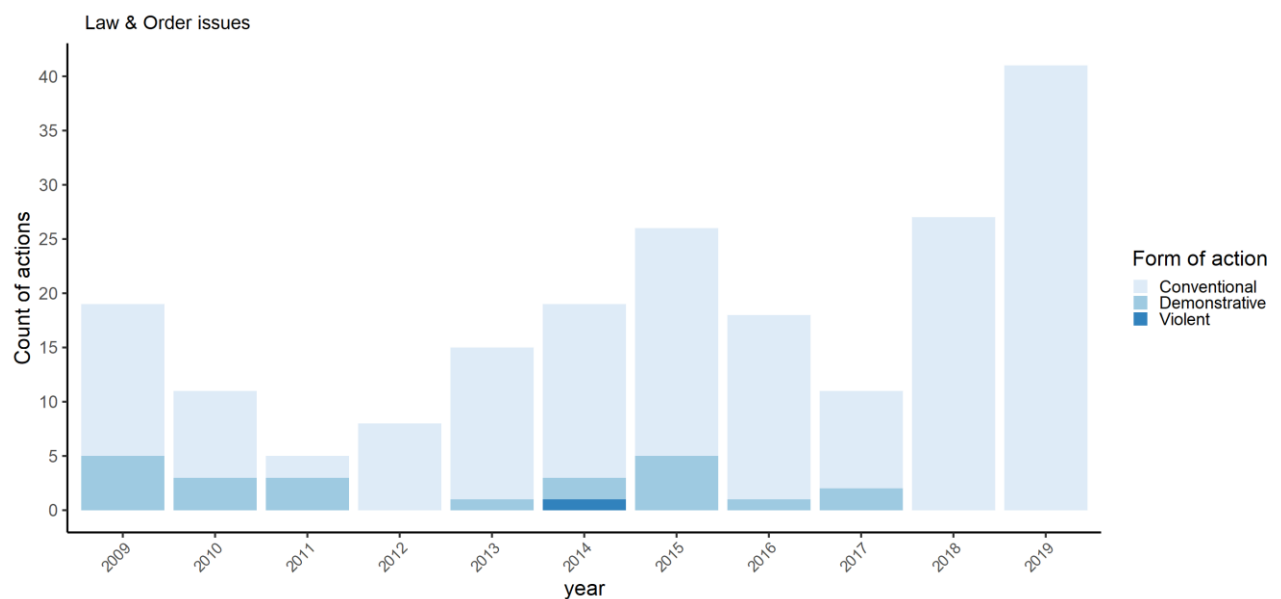
(Ranking in the Eurobarometer survey and percentage of respondent believing it is the most important issue their country faces)

Crime	Rank	Percentage
2009	4th	18%
2010	4th	14%
2011	5th	12%
2012	6th	6%
2013	8th	6%
2014	8th	7%
2015	5th	12%
2016	8th	11%
2017	6th	10%
2018	6th	8%
2019	7th	9%

Source: Elaboration of the author based on the standard Eurobarometer 2009-2019 (Eurobarometer, 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019)

Differently from immigration, the issue of law-and-order the salience in the public debate remains stable during the years, with the exception of an increase at the highest of the migration

Figure 13: Lega, Law and Order issues by year 2009-2019

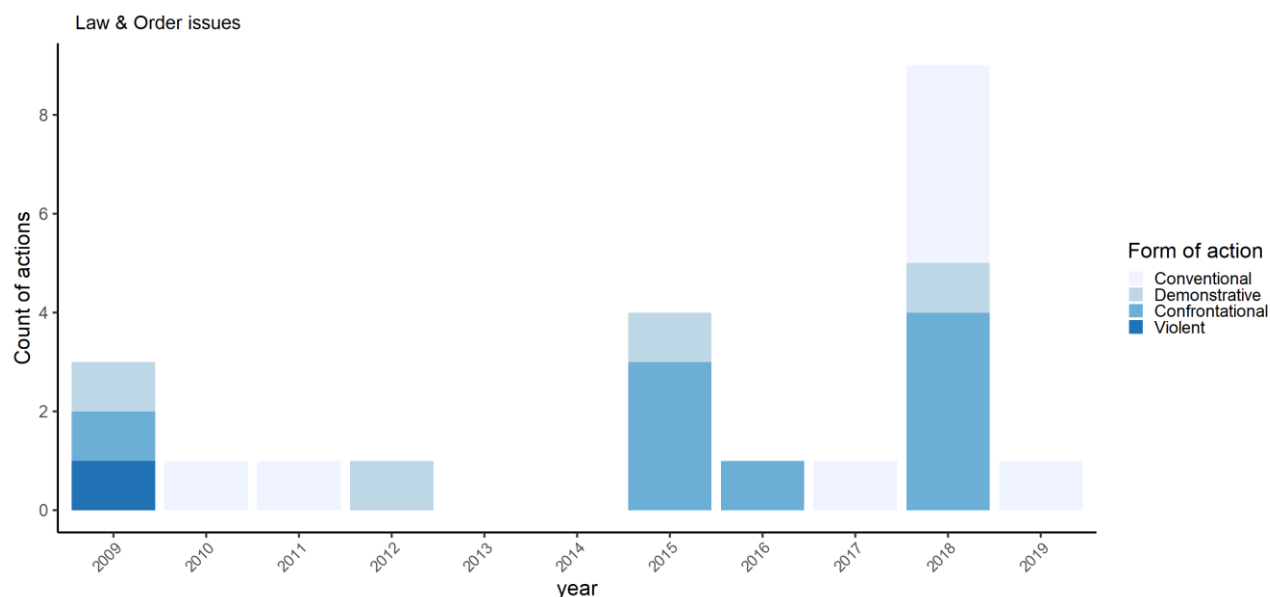


crisis in 2015, when for the 12% of Italians this issue is the most pressing for the country. It can be argued that also in the public the link between migration and criminality is felt and it can be one of the reasons why its salience increases. And it is in this period, from 2014 to 2016, that Lega increasing frames criminality as strictly linked with migration.

As a further proof of the link, in Lega claims, of the existence of an immigration-criminality link, the number of claims on this issue increases again in 2014-2016 during the migration crisis. Moreover, following the Charlie Hebdo terror attacks that took place in Paris in January 2015, the attention shifted more specifically on Muslim communities and Muslim immigrant, which represented “the inside enemy” that threatened “our way of life” (Corriere della Sera, 9/1/2015).

The focus on law-and-order issues and more specifically on the immigration-criminality link remained high also when Lega got back into government in 2018 and 2019. With Salvini as Minister of the Interior, law and order issues remained high on their political agenda. However, the frame mostly used by the party and its leaders is that of the immigration-criminality link. None of the claims recorded during the yellow-green government was about Mafia or organised crime, 8 about buildings occupied by left-wing centri sociali (community

Figure 14: CPI, Law and Order issues by year 2009-2019



centres), and left-wing terrorism.

The value of the issue position on law-and-order issues is constantly around 1, with almost no variation during opposition or government periods.

More surprisingly is the relatively low focus of CPI on law-and-order issues. In 2009, the share of claims on this issue is the 22 per cent, but it drops to only 8 per cent in 2010 and disappears completely in 2013 and 2014. In 2015 it grows back to 10 per cent, and in this case, as for Lega, the reason is to be found in the migration crisis and on the frame that this movement does of the it by linking immigration with security. The frame that immigration causes criminality and insecurity is the one mainly used by the movement and no reference to mafia, organised crime, and other illicit organisations is to be found. In 2018 there is a spark in the attention devoted to law-and-order issues due to the terror attack that took place in Macerata, when a far-right supporter, Traini, shoot 6 African migrants in the streets of Macerata. The terrorist later stated that he did so in revenge toward the killing of a young woman, Pamela Mastropietro, perpetrated by a Nigerian immigrant. Following the terrorist attack, CPI organised a demonstration in Macerata, asking for the death penalty for the killer of Pamela, stating that

“who steals, sexually abuse, does not have the residence permit, must be kicked out of Italy” and no mentions at all of the terror attack (Corriere della Sera, 8/2/2018).

The value of the issue position of CPI on the graph shows fluctuations toward more moderate positions, but this is due to two specific issues where the movement opposed stricter laws that were being implemented, ironically by a Lega Minister of Interior, Maroni. The first law that the movement opposed was the introduction of the *tessera del tifoso*, a document that identifies football supporters and aimed at reducing hooligan violence. The second law, proposed again by Maroni, aimed at making more difficult to obtain the permit to demonstrate in the streets by requiring a down payment, a sort of insurance, in order to give the authorization to a demonstration. CPI, whose main activity consists of street-based mobilisation, opposed the law.

In conclusion, the analysis of the claims about law-and-order issues showed that it is of relatively limited interest for the two actors and this is in contrast with the literature on far-right parties and movement. The second main finding that emerged is that the main frame used by both CPI and Lega is the immigration-criminality link, which depicts immigrants as a security threat to the Italian community. During the migration crisis, the focus dedicated to these issue increases for both actors who oppose the arrival of migrants to protect the security of the country. In contrast, the traditional security issue that affects Italy, organised crimes, is largely ignored by both actors.

The value of the issue position for Lega remains constantly around 1. In contrast, CPI mean value on this issue fluctuates during the 11 years due to the opposition of specific laws introduced by Maroni, Lega’s interior minister, and the absence of any claim for some years. However, despite these exceptions, also CPI has a very conservative position.

4.3.6. Organisation Identity Issue

The share of issues on ideological claims is 16 percent for Lega and 39 per cent for CPI. Lega focuses more on ideological claims when in opposition. This means that when in opposition the space to debate its own ideological foundation or delineate their ideological sphere of influence is greater. While, when in government, being always been in coalitions, cannot discuss divisive topics.

For CPI the ideological claims are the majority of the total. Except for the year 2016, the share of ideological issue is well above 30%. In 2016 a bit less because more focus on the migration issue.

Both LN and CPI devolve a lot of space to ideological claims. LN shifted the focus of its claims from regional identity to national identity. The majority of their claims are about these issues and another considerable part are about racism. CPI majority of ideological claims concern the reaffirmation of fascism as one of their main ideological tenet and link to this, their opposition to anti-fascism and anti-fascists. Few ideological statements are dedicated to the “prima gli italiani” the only ideological topic that they share with LN.

Figure 15: Lega, Organisation identity issues by year 2009-2019

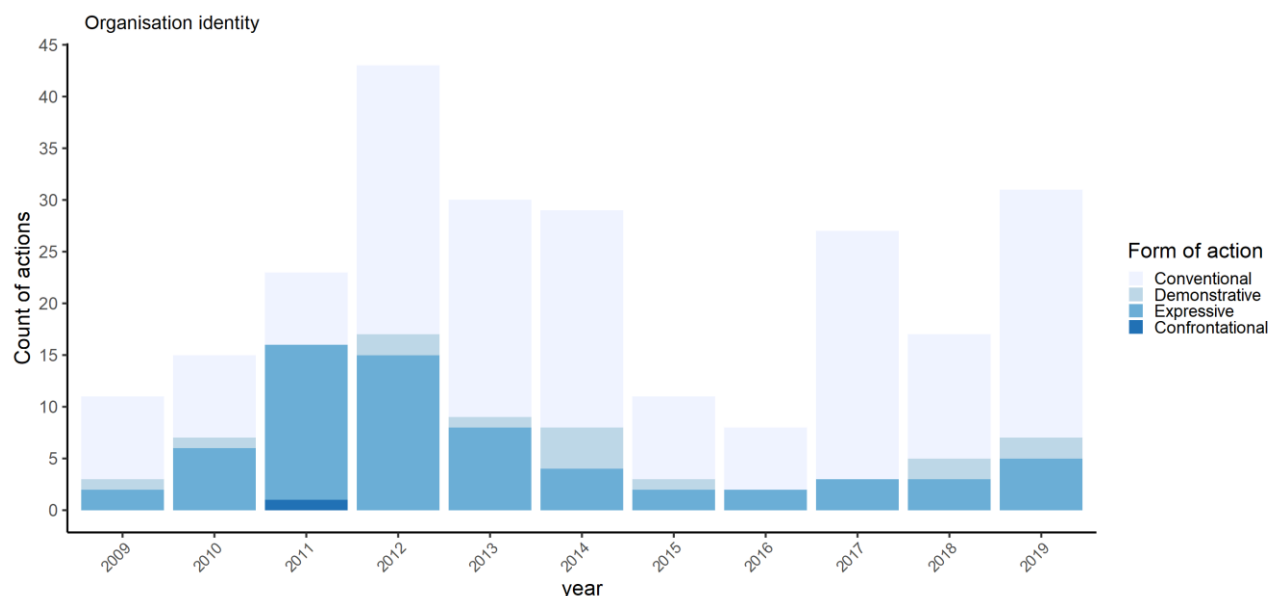
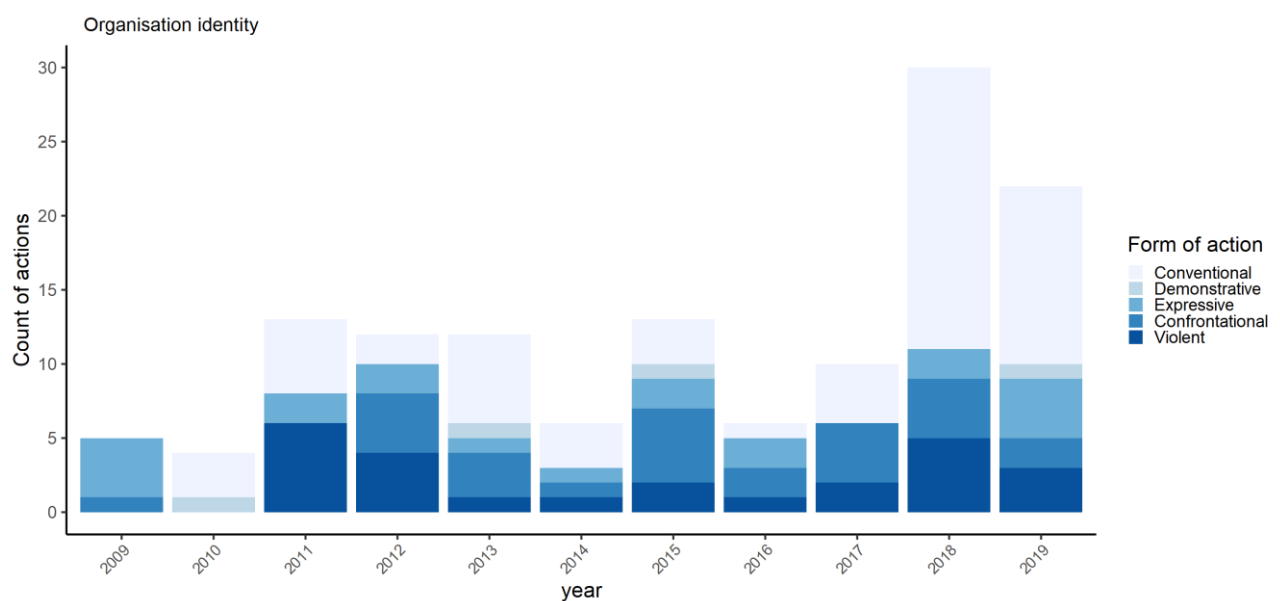


Figure 16: CPI, Organisation identity issues by year 2009-2019



4.3.7 Frames and Discourses in Lega and CasaPound Italia's Manifestos

The analysis of the frame dimension is complemented by a content analysis of the two organisations electoral manifestos. For LN I have analysed the 2013 and 2018 national election manifestos and the 2014 EU elections manifesto. For CPI, the content analysis is carried out on the 2013 and 2018 national elections.

For the content analysis I have adopted the same categories used for the PCA so to maintain consistence in the analysis and comparability with the results of the PCA. The manifestos allow to trace the evolutions of the organisations and to understand if and how the issues on which the two actors focus change and also to investigate if there are differences between the formal political offer that is presented to their voters and the public claims that have been gathered through the PCA. Moreover, by looking at the documents produced by the two actors is possible to grasp what are – if any – the points on common between the two organisations and if they have changed in the eleven-years under analysis.

Table 12: LN and CPI's electoral manifestos

Party	Lega Nord	Lega	CPI	CPI
Year	2013	2018	2013	2018
Name Manifesto	<i>Programma elezioni politiche</i>	<i>La Rivoluzione del buonsenso</i>	<i>Una Nazione</i>	<i>Una Nazione</i>
Number of pages	11	74	18	21
Number of words	3,106	34,984	5,433	6,244
Number of quasi-sentences	210	1299	243	295

Starting with LN, the table below shows the results of the analysis that has been carried out using the program ATLAS.ti. The table reports in percentage the analysis of the quasi-sentence coded for each manifesto, for the seven categories that have already been discussed above.

Table 13: Lega Nord, Issue focus in national elections manifestos

issues	Elections 2013	Elections 2018
Socio-economic	76%	67%
Cultural	8%	5%
Europe and EU	4%	3%
Migration	0%	5%
Law-and-order	11%	15%
Organizational identity	0%	0%
Other	1%	5%
Tot	100%	100%

The two manifestos are very different documents despite the similar distribution of issue-focus among the main meta-issues. In fact, the 2013 manifesto is an 11-page document with very synthetic policy provisions and almost no graphic decoration beside the party symbol, the 2018 document is a 74-page document, more discursive, and with a much-improved graphic. All the sections are organised in smaller subsections with clear headlines and before the policy responses Lega promises to implement if given power, there are data and arguments that question the previous government laws and (lack of) actions. Turning to the contents of the manifestos, the analysis of the manifestos confirms the changes that have been found in the

PCA in the discourses and ideology of the party. The main changes that are shown in the table above concern the increased attention devoted to the two new pillars of Salvini's Lega, compared to Bossi's LN era: migration and law-and-order.

The issue of migration is absent in the 2013 manifesto – if not for a couple of reference only in connection with the issue of law- and-order – while a dedicated section can be found in the 2018 document. The section is three-page long and deals with all aspects of migration, from the need to have tougher laws that would prevent migrant people to arrive in Italy, to the role of the EU in managing migration, the hospitality network in Italy, and the ban for migrants to receive welfare benefits. Moreover, a sub-section is dedicated to the risk of Islamic radicalisation among migrants and the incomparability between the Italian culture and some Islamic practices. In this sub-section, called “relations with Islam”, Lega calls for the ban of polygamy – already illegal in Italian law –, the ban to occupy public soil for Muslims to pray, the automatic failing of Muslims students who “do not show the due respect” to women teachers, and the ban on provisions that could accommodate Islamic prescriptions in public places (eg: schools and hospital should not provide a different menu). (Lega, 2018: 7). In short, also in the manifestos the focus dedicated to issue of migration has increased from the one just five years older. “Mass migration” is defined as a threat to the national security and there is a call to favour migration from “countries with a similar culture [to the Italian one] and to select people with the professional skills most required [in Italy]” (Lega, 2018: 22).

Migration, even in the manifesto, is strictly linked with the meta-issue law-and-order. While the variation of just 4 points in the attention dedicated to this meta-issue may not look as a big change, the breakdown of the analysis into the more specific topics that are included in this category offer an interesting view into how Lega has changed in just five years. In fact, as the table below shows, the focus dedicated to mafia and organised crime has significantly dropped, while the attention devoted to the need to increase the funds to police forces and the

link between migration and criminality has remained stable. A topic that was in 2013 completely absent and that has in 2018 document a dedicated sub-section is that of terrorism. Although a brief introductory note is made that the threat is both domestic and international terrorism, the sections is largely dedicated to international terrorism and more specifically to jihadist violence. There is, in fact, the call to ban imams to receive money from foreign countries, to use only Italian language in mosques and no Arabic, and limit the creation of new mosques. Finally, a new issue that appears in the 2018 document is that of unlawful possessions of properties and occupations of buildings as well as the closing down of all Roma camps present on Italian territory. During the electoral campaign, Salvini often went into Roma camps seen as a “serious social problem” that contributes to rough living conditions of those that live next to the camps and some of the joint protest events of CPI and Lega were directed against Roma people living in camps. Although the aversion of Roma camps is something that CPI and Lega share and has been one of the first point of contact between the two organisations, the issue of building occupations represents the first and most important political battle of CPI. The organisation was born out of the occupation of buildings and they are still occupying a building in the centre of Rome which is also the organisation headquarters.

Table 14: Lega, Law-and-order issues in national elections manifestos

Law-and-order issues	2013	2018
Mafia and organised crime	19%	3%
Migration-criminality link	15%	13%
Prison and police	59%	46%
Self-defence	7%	2%
Terrorism	0	9%
Violence against women	0	7%
Building occupation and protests	0	20%
Total	100%	100%

In sum, the analysis of Lega's manifestos has shown the same trends already seen with the PCA: the shift of the party from a regionalist party, toward a fully-fledge radical-right party. Even if in the 2018 manifesto there is a brief mention of the issue of federalism and regionalism, these issues do not represent any longer the core message of the party, and the policy provisions are very generic and vague. On the other hand, the focus dedicated to the issues of migration and law-and order have increased, representing a significant part of the manifesto. However, the main differences between the PCA and the manifestos can be found in the attention dedicated to the socio-economic issue – a category that includes a variety of issues such as welfare, infrastructures, budget and institutional reforms – that in the PCA represented only 27 percent of the total claims, while in the manifestos represents 76 percent of the quasi-sentences of the 2013 document and 67 percent in the 2018. The other difference can be found in the lack, in the manifesto, of sentences dedicated to the identity of the organisation, while in the PCA the 16 percent of the claims are dedicated to comment, clarify, or highlight the ideological characteristics of the organisation. The differences found between the analysis carried out on the manifestos and the one of the PCA help illustrate that, while the changes in the ideology of the party emerge in both analyses, the emphasis given to different issues on the everyday public debate is different than the formal offer presented to voters in the electoral manifesto.

Turning to CPI's electoral manifestos of 2013 and 2018, the two documents are very similar in both their lengths, 17 and 21 pages, and contents. Even the name of the manifesto remained the same in both versions: "Una Nazione" (A Nation). The table below shows that CPI, as already emerged in the PCA, is not a single-issue organisation and all issues are represented in its manifestos. Although the distribution of the focus varies greatly between the two distributions, the analysis of the manifesto can shed a light on the different issues on which the organisation focuses in the electoral arena and the protest one and, more importantly, on

Table 15: CPI, Issue focus in national elections manifestos

issues	Elections 2013	Elections 2018
Socio-economic	60%	57%
Cultural	9%	9%
Europe and EU	0%	5%
Migration	7%	8%
Law-and-order	8%	7%
Organizational identity	16%	14%
Other	0%	0%
Tot	100%	100%

the points in common the manifesto has with the LN's ones and how these can shed light on the relations between the two actors.

Differently from what has emerged from the PCA, the meta-issues that received the greatest attention in the manifesto is the socio-economic one. And more specifically, the issues of monetary policies and protectionism are discussed in details, while they are mostly absent from the claims collected through the PCA. In both manifestos there are calls to nationalise strategic industries – such as the energy, transports, and communications ones – and to enhance welfare measures – such as public schools and universities and increase pensions. However, the issue that has been at the core of the group political activities since its foundation, that of housing shortage, is not discussed at large in the manifestos. This is another difference compared to the findings of the PCA where it has been observed that CPI often occupies building and organises protests around this issue.

Looking at the changes between the two manifestos, while in the document prepared for the 2013 elections the issue of the EU is overlooked and there are references to it only when criticizing austerity measures imposed by governments that have “dismantled the welfare state build during the Fascist era”, in the 2018 manifesto there is a section dedicated to the EU and calls to quit immediately the Italian participation to it (CasaPound Italia, 2013: 2). Instead of the participation to the “cage” represented by the EU, CPI proposes to strengthen the

partnership with Russia and Japan to better defend the Italian strategic and economic interests (CasaPound Italia, 2018: 4). While in the protest arena CPI does not mobilise on this issue – as the PCA has shown – in the electoral one the EU has more space. It is worth recalling that it is in occasion of the 2014 elections that the partnership with LN was created and that since then the group has increased its attention to this issue. The dedicated section to the EU in the 2018 manifesto can be interpreted as one of the traces left by the short-lived electoral alliance with LN.

Another change that can be interpreted in light with the past activities with LN is the difference on how the two manifestos deal with issue of migration. While in 2013 there are generic calls to end migration and to stop organisations profiting from the business of refugees’ reception, in the 2018 document, there is a whole section dedicated to the issue called: “stop immigrazione, no ius soli, rimpatrio” (stop migration, no citizenship, repatriation) (CasaPound Italia, 2018: 5). This section has a number of policy provisions similar to the ones that can be found in the 2018 Lega manifesto and that represented the key themes of the protests organised together by CPI and LN in 2014-2015: the opposition to the conferral of automatic citizenship to people who are born in Italy (*ius soli*), the revocation of Italian citizenship to those that committed serious crimes (such as terror related crimes), and the repatriation of migrants through the creation of bi-lateral treaties with countries from which migrants come from. The increased focus on migration is certainly caused by the increased salience of the issue in the public debate during the so-called migration crisis, and it has already been noted in the discussion of the PCA how CPI increased his mobilisation in the protest arena around this issue. However, it is worth noting how the main changes in CPI manifestos on migration are exactly around the themes that saw the movement and the party protest together in the streets and mobilise in the protest arena.

Finally, the focus on the issue of law-and-order is relatively low also in the manifestos of CPI, as it has already emerged in the PCA. Although authoritarianism is one of the ideological tenants of far-right organisations (Mudde, 2007), CPI focus on this issue is limited and it is mainly link to migration. The migration-criminality link constitutes the main focus of CPI, while organised crimes and mafia are not even mentioned in the manifestos. Other themes that can be found in the group manifesto, and are very similar to policy provisions that can be found in the LN manifestos, are the calls to enhance the laws on self-defence, and the criticisms of the structural limits of the Italian judiciary system, seen as too politicised and too invested in preserving its privileges rather than serving citizens. CPI calls also for an amnesty of all political crimes committed in the 1970s and to cancel all laws that punish the “ideological crimes”. This last point needs to be interpreted in relation to the Italian laws that forbids the restoration of the Italian Fascist party and that are seen by CPI as an intolerable limitation of their liberties. Overall, the limited focus of CPI on law-and-order issues can be explained with the movement nature of the organisation whose mobilisation is made mainly by protests, confrontational activities, and occupations and therefore being the organisation itself the one not strictly respecting the law.

4.3.8. Frames dimensions. Far yet close

In conclusion, the analysis of the issues and frames adopted by LN and CPI showed that they are closer in the frame dimension when issues that they own – such as migration and crime – become more visible and when the party is electorally weak, confirming the initial hypothesis. Migration issues are central for both of them but also socio-economic, cultural, and ideological issues are dealt with. With regards to the closeness in the frame dimension, it has been observed that the Lega and CPI got closer from 2013, when Lega was at its minimum electoral performance, changed the secretary, and a new era begun for the party. During the 2014-2016

migration crisis, the migration issue dominated the claims of both Lega and CPI as it did in the public debate. However, it has been observed that they remain distant in the socio-economic issues and that in the period when they were closer, CPI to set aside completely these issues, while Lega, continued to focus on it.

The other difference that has been noted is on the framing of the cultural issues. Here the differences between the two actors' frames are major, as CPI is mainly focused on traditional values linked with the fascist past and an idealised greatness of the nation, while Lega is mainly focused on protecting Christian traditions, contrast the acquisition of rights to Muslims and other ethnic minorities, and the forceful defence of traditional family values. In the case of cultural values has been observed how, in contrast with what happened in the case of socio-economic issues, neither actor set aside its claims on the issue, but kept expressing their positions and mobilising on the issue despite their differences. Both actors during the migration crisis increased the focus on the cultural issue, linking it with the cultural one, but CPI framed the issue as a threat to the cultural homogeneity of the country that endangered the moral tradition of its past, while Lega focused more on the threat posed by Muslim migrants specifically and the reaffirming the necessity to "help migrants in their own countries".

Neither CPI nor Lega deal consistently with the issue of Europe. Lega increased its focus during the years of EU elections, while CPI simply disregarded the issue. Even for the electoral campaign for the 2014 EU elections, when the two actors were formally allied, the main issues tackled were migration and cultural ones.

The migration issue is the one where more similarities between the two actors are present both in terms of focus and frames. However, interesting differences have been noted in the frames adopted by the two actors. Lega frames more consistently migration as a cultural threat to the "European way of life" and only residually the economic argument, while CPI uses both arguments with different aims. It is important to note that when Lega goes back into

government in 2018, the focus on the migration issue decrease, but the frames adopted remain the same.

Finally, the analysis of the law-and-order issue showed that it is of relatively limited interest for the movement organisation and this is in contrast with the literature on far-right parties and movement. However, both actors frame the issue mainly as linked with migration and do not concern themselves with mafia and organised crime at all. The increased attention that the issue of crime receives in the public debate increases in the years of the migration crisis corresponds to an increase of the attention given by the two actors that link it strictly with the phenomenon of migration.

The hypothesis that the proximity in the frames dimension would be greater the weaker the party and when issues owned by the far-right acquire visibility has been confirmed . It has been observed how after the judicial “heart quake” that involved Bossi and its management of the party, Lega tried to reinvent itself by embracing new frames, from the ideological level where the regionalist identity has been set aside to embrace the national one with CPI slogan “prima gli Italiani” to the increased focus on migration and security issue linked with migration. However, even when the alliance with CPI came to an end, the frames that had been adopted in the alliance phase did not disappear from Lega claims. This is important to note as it shows one mechanism through which new frames - frames of far-right movements – enter institutional politics and become part of mainstream discourses. At the same time, CPI during the electoral alliance with Lega disregarded socio-economic issues that whose frame was incompatible with that of the party as well as limited its ideological claims.

The next section analyses the actions dimension by looking at the form of actions adopted by both actors and how they change over time.

4.4. Action dimension

The analysis of the forms of actions adopted by CPI and Lega is the most innovative part of the research as it explores the repertoire of actions, beyond the conventional ones, in which Lega, an established political party engages. Moreover, it analyses when and how the party and the movement mobilise together, around which issues, and what are the most used forms of actions. The overall aim of the analysis carried out in this section is to test the hypothesis on the actions dimensions that posited that the party and the movement are closer in the action dimension the weaker electorally the party and the more moderate the movement. The hypothesis is confirmed, as the data show that Lega and CPI mobilise together in the streets when Lega is in opposition and weaker electorally, and that CPI moderates its repertoire of actions when it mobilises with Lega. The analysis shows also that different forms of actions are adopted depending both from external opportunities (economic and migration crisis, opposition vs. government role for the party) and strategic and ideological choices of the two actors.

Since PCA allows to collect all claims that are made in the public debate, not only verbal claims, but also different forms of actions, these have been coded accordingly to their degree of moderation: conventional actions (electoral campaign and petitions), demonstrative actions (manifestations), expressive actions (commemorations, national rallies – feste di partito – cultural events), confrontational actions (unauthorised demonstration, sit-in, occupations, blockades), violent actions (both symbolical and physical) (Caiani et al. 2012; 79; Castelli Gattinara, 2019: 83).

This section follows a structure similar to the previous one. First an overview of the aggregate data, then the analysis by form of action by year, and, finally, the discussion on the results of the analysis.

Table 16: Lega, Total claims by type of action

Form of action	Number of claims	Percentage
Conventional	1336	86
Demonstrative	123	8
Expressive	73	5
Confrontational	18	1
Violent	2	0
N	1552	100

Table 17: CasaPound Italia, total claims by type of action

Form of action	Number of claims	Percentage
Conventional	102	29
Demonstrative	43	12
Expressive	46	13
Confrontational	103	31
Violent	51	15
N	345	100

The aggregate data on the form of actions used by Lega and CPI show that all different forms are used by the two actors, with major differences between the two. Table 16 shows that the overwhelming majority of the claims of Lega are of a conventional type, 85 percent. However, the remaining 15 percent is made up of conventional, expressive, confrontational and, very few, violent actions. This is already an interesting finding: the 8 percent of the claims in the 11-year time frame are demonstrative acts. An established and institutionalised actor, protested in the streets 123 times between 2009 and 2019. Another 5 percent of the claims, are of an expressive nature. Finally, 1 percent of the actions are confrontational, and only 2 instances of physical violence.

For CPI, the aggregate data show a completely different picture, but this is in line with the nature of the movement organisation. Table 17 shows that 29 percent of the claims are of a conventional form, meaning that one third of all their repertoire of actions is made of verbal statement, electoral campaign, and petitions. Only 12 percent of their actions is demonstrative.

One third of their repertoire of actions is made of confrontational actions, and, finally, 15 percent is made of violent actions.

The aggregate data show that the repertoire of actions used by CPI and Lega is diverse. The party does not only operate in the realm of conventional politics, but is also engaged also in demonstrative actions, while the movement organisation utilises all types of repertoires and almost a third of their actions is of a conventional type. In order to understand when different types of actions are used by the two actors, if different repertoire of actions are used depending on the issues being dealt with, and when they join forces and mobilise together.

4.4.1. Conventional forms of actions

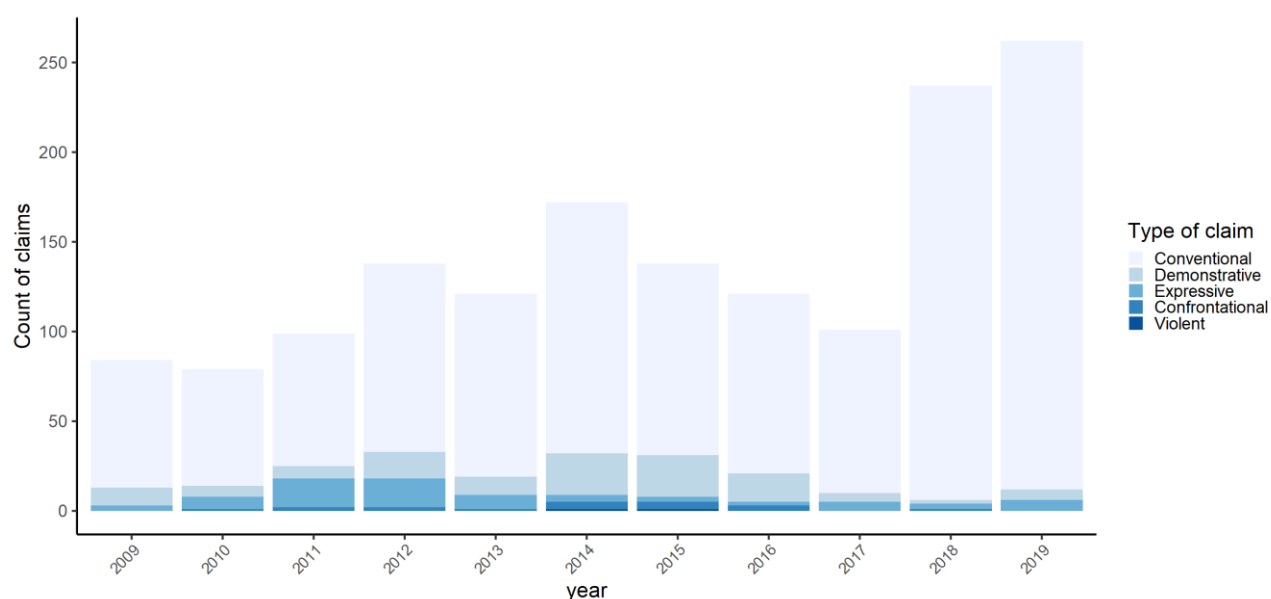
The conventional form of action is the most used form used by Lega. This is unsurprising as Lega is a fully institutionalised party. Conventional actions represent 85 percent of the overall claims. While for CPI the conventional form is used the 28 percent of times (98 out of 345).

The conventional form of actions represents almost the totality of the actions when in government. In fact, Figure 17 shows in the 2009-2011 period, the share of conventional actions is above 85 percent and in the 2018-2019 is above 95 percent. However, when the party is in opposition the share declines to 76 percent in 2012 and 77 percent in 2015.

Figure 17 shows that the conventional form of action is used for all issues and across all years. When in government, the economic issue is dealt with exclusively with conventional actions. The same holds also for cultural and law and order issues as well as Europe

Figure 18 shows that CPI uses conventional actions when they decide to contest elections. In fact, 2013 the year of the first general elections contested by the organisation and 2018, the year of general and local elections, the share of conventional actions increases to 22 percent and 44 percent. The conventional form of actions is used mainly to discuss socio-economic issues, while cultural, migration, and law and order issues are rarely tackled with conventional

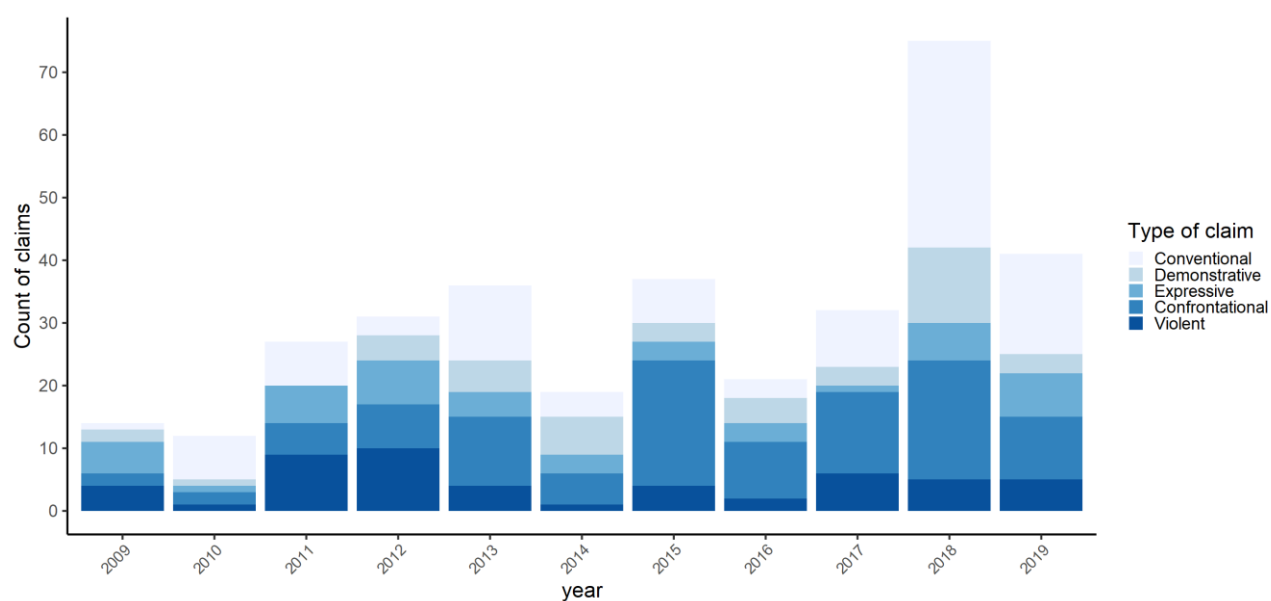
Figure 17: Lega, claims by form of action 2009-2019



actions. The exception being the year 2018 when, during the electoral campaign for the general elections, there are conventional actions also on migration and law and order issues.

Overall, CPI started to use more the conventional form of actions when decided to contest elections, in 2013. It is also interesting to note that during the last two years of the analysis, when Lega is back in government with the 5 Star Movement, the number of conventional actions remains high, it is around 30 percent of their actions.

Figure 18: CPI, total claims by form of action 2009-2019



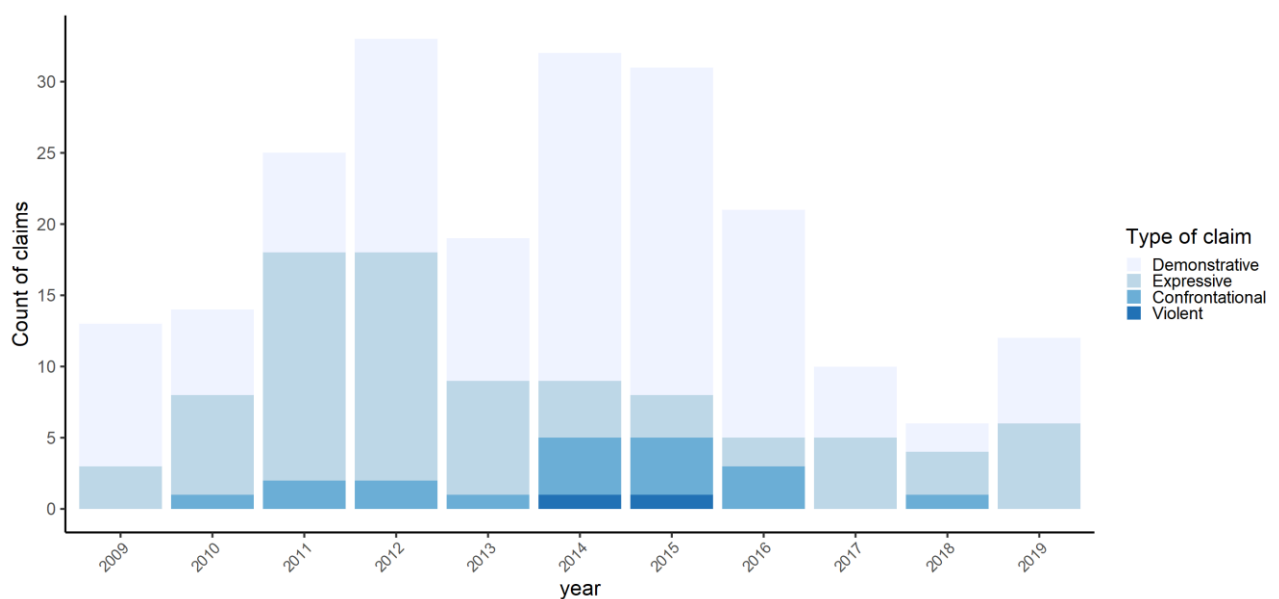
4.4.2. Demonstrative form of action

The demonstrative form of actions includes rallies, authorised protests and marches, torchlights, and authorised sit-in. The data show that Lega used this form of action in 123 cases in the 11-year time frame under investigation, amounting to 8 percent of its total share of actions. CPI used this action form 98 times, amounting to 12 percent of their total.

Lega uses demonstrative forms of actions almost exclusively when in opposition. This is in line with works on protest arena that found that “[t]he left waxes and wanes at the same time in both arenas, while the right alternatively turns to one arena or the other, but not to both at the same time” (Hutter et al., 2019: 326). However, there are differences between the 2009-2011 government period and the 2018-2019 period. In fact, few instances of protests in the former period have been recorded, in contrast to the latter period where this form of action has been completely disregarded.

From 2013 an increase in the instances of street mobilization is observable, until the 2014-2016 period that sees the highest share of demonstrative actions, reaching the 17 percent of all actions in 2015. This increase occurs during the migration crisis. In fact, the vast majority

Figure 19: Lega, total claims by form of action without conventional ones



of the actions are around the migration issue. In these 3 years, a total of 36 demonstration against migrants have been recorded, including a major demonstration, organised by Lega in October 2014, where around 50,000 gather people in Milan with the slogan “stop the invasion”. Demonstrative actions are rarely used around the socio-economic issue, the only exception being the 2011-2012 period with mobilisation against the austerity measures of the Monti government. The issue of Europe and EU is also rarely taken to the street. Demonstrations have been recorded for the law-and-order issue, but these instances are linked somehow with the migration one and the same is valid for the cultural one. In fact, the mobilisations around these issues have been made to protest against the creation of Mosques or cemetery for Muslims, criminality in suburbs caused –the party claimed – by irregular immigrants, the creation of Roma camps, and Muslim migrants after the Charlie Hebdo terror attacks in Paris. However, no demonstrative events have been recorded to protest against Mafia or other organised crimes. CPI used demonstrative form of actions starting from 2013, when they enter the electoral arena. Before this date, this type of action was almost non-existent. However, they use it more from 2014, when alliance with Lega. This is important because it shows that the movement moderates its repertoire of action when contesting elections and when it is allied with the party. It is also interesting to note that there is a new increase in the use of demonstrative actions in 2018, when Lega is in power. This finding is important for two reasons. First, it shows that differently from what the party does, when a right-wing government is in place, CPI continues to mobilise in the streets and this holds true for all the form of actions from the confrontational to the violent ones. Second, in relation to the other forms of actions the share of demonstrative actions still increases in 2018 when they contest elections, and this shows that when they participate to elections, they moderate their repertoire of actions.

In the years 2012-2013 the demonstrative form of action is used to tackle socio-economic issues, mainly austerity measures and budget cuts of the Monti government, while in the 2017-

2018 protests concerned the requests of reserving welfare measures to Italians only. Concerning cultural issues, demonstrative actions are used in the 2014 to demand the liberation of the Italian marines (marò) detained in India. The migration issue is rarely tackled with demonstrative actions, with the exception of the 2014-2016 period, when CPI organises or take parts to demonstration with Lega. Out of 12 demonstrative actions on migration issues, 7 are in conjunction with Lega. This is important to note as it shows, again, that the movement moderates its repertoire of actions when it mobilises together with the party.

In conclusion, by analysing the demonstrative form of action, it is possible to note that for Lega it represents the most used form beside the conventional one. They use it mainly when in opposition and more from 2014 onward, the years of the migration crisis and the new Salvini leadership. Lega mobilises in the streets mainly around the migration issue, both with small protests that aimed at preventing the arrival of migrants in designed places, but also big rallies like the national rally against migration that took place in Milan in October 2014 and saw the participation of CPI.

The general trend of the demonstrative form of actions follows the expectation that in periods when LN is in government, or a right-wing government is in place, the protest events of the right decrease sensibly. However, it can also be observed how it is not until 2014 and the start of the migration crisis that the majority of the demonstrative events take place. In the 2014-2016 years, 62 demonstrative events have been recorded and in 10 instances CPI and Lega took the streets together, this is the 16 percent of cases. Moreover, CPI took part to all the biggest rally (10,000+ people) organised by Leg and CPI continued to be welcomed to Lega events even after the end of formal alliance in 2015.

4.4.3. Expressive actions

This form of action includes annual rallies of Lega and CPI (*feste di partito* and *feste nazionali*), commemorations and cultural events (book presentations, seminar, political schools.). These kinds of events represent 5 percent of the total actions of Lega and 13 percent of CPI.

As the Figures 19 shows, Lega vastly used expressive actions in the years 2011-2012. These are the years of the downfall of Bossi, the drop in electoral results and the search for a new leader, new program, and new identity. Although the local national rally like Pontida or the Berghem fest are the biggest and more participated (both from MPs, leaders, as well as supporters), in the years 2011-2013 these kinds of events increased and attracted more attention because it was in these occasion that the leaders would discuss their plans for the future of the party, their positions, and also test their new ideas with their followers. In the years 2010-2012 this form of action represented more than 10 percent of the total actions and in 2011 the 16 percent. This signals also the internal struggles but also internal debate that was happening inside the party. This form of action drops significantly from 2013 to around 2-3 percent of the claims.

For CPI this type of form represents 13 percent of its total share of actions. This form is used constantly during the time-period under analysis, mostly to tackle cultural and ideological issues. For example, commemorations of historical figures important for history of the movement, such as the annual commemoration of the killing of Ramelli, their visit to Piazzale Loreto, but also the reinstatement of the DUX sign on the Giano Mountain, represent fundamental events for the movement. These are formative moments for the militants, when their identity is built and their emotional bounds strengthen.

These types of actions are used by both party and movement but for slightly different purposes. In this category, have been recorded only 3 instances of shared actions and all 3 are meetings organised by CPI, 2 during its national rally, where leaders of Lega took part to the

events. For CPI these events are formative moments, but they are also needed to attract attention by inviting “controversial” or “left-wing” figures, as well as spark a debate on the cultural hegemony of the left, a terrain in which they aim to contrast the left. While Lega use this form of action more during the years of internal disputes and innovations.

4.4.4. Confrontational form of actions

Confrontational forms of actions consist of unauthorised rallies and demonstrations, blockades of streets and public places, and disruptive blitz. There are only 17 confrontational acts recorded for Lega, amounting to less than 1 percent of the total acts. In contrast, confrontational acts are the most used type of actions by CPI, representing the 30 percent of their total (100 instances out of 345).

Lega used the few instances of confrontational actions only when in oppositions and mostly around the immigration issue. The majority of the claims are against the arrival of migrants and therefore they organised the blockade of streets or the storming of city councils that were discussing migrations measure. Only 4 cases of this form being used for socio-economic issues has been recorded.

CPI constantly uses confrontational forms of actions for its claims. They represent one third of all the issues and the amount stays constant among the years. There is only a slight decrease in 2014. For CP, also, the vast majority of confrontational claims are around the migration issue even if the 20 percent are around the socio-economic issue. When mobilising on socio-economic issues, confrontational acts are used to tackle one of the movement main battle, the right to a council house, therefore they often use occupations of buildings, disruption of city councils, and blockade of street to tackle the issue. However, even if they say that the socio-economic issue is their main focus, then concretely they do not devote that much actions on this issue. The vast majority, in fact, is on migration, and the high amount of share does not

decrease following the “end” of the migration crisis, but it stays stable over time. The majority of actions are sit-in aimed at preventing the arrival of new migrants in the outskirts of Rome and other cities in the north. Moreover, a considerable number of confrontational actions is directed against Roma people to ask the closure of their camps. On the law-and-order issues there are very few confrontational events being organised by the movement and almost all of them are linked by them to immigration, therefore they organised patrols or “walks” in the outskirts of big cities where there is a bigger share of immigrant population. Finally, there are also few instances of confrontational actions about ideological issues and this happens because often happens that they do not receive an authorisation for their events.

In conclusion, and in order to draw a comparison between the two actors, it can be observed how this type of actions is used by both actors around the migration issue. While for Lega is a very residual type of actions, it represents one third of all the actions used by CPI. Moreover, while Lega adopted this form of action only when in opposition, CPI used this form throughout the period under analysis. There is a decrease in 2014, the first year of electoral alliance with Lega, but thereafter confrontational claims are constantly used by the movement, even when involved in electoral campaign in 2018 and also when there is a Lega in government.

4.4.5. Violent form of actions

Violent actions include both acts of physical and symbolic violence as well as violent statements. For Lega only 2 violent actions have been recorded. For CPI. In contrast, violent actions represent the 17 percent of their total actions. The two instances where physical violence has occurred in Lega PCA regard two protests: one in 2014 when Salvini visited a Roma camp and clashes broke out between Roma people and Lega supporters; and in 2015 when Lega took part to protests, alongside CPI, against the arrival of migrants in the outskirts of Rome and the protests escalated into clashes with the police.

CPI adopted violent actions throughout the 11 years under analysis. The episodes of violence are almost all physical violence. 29 out of 58 episodes of violence are registered around ideological claims. This is because there are a lot of instances where violence is used against political opponents that organise counter-demonstration and therefore it is more likely that clashes with counter-demonstrators and the police that aims at preventing contacts between the opposite factions. However, violence is used also when protesting economic issues like school reforms – in 2009 and 2012 – and the budget cuts of the Monti government. On the issue of Europe there is only one violent act that has been registered, but costed a penal sentence to CPI vice-leader Di Stefano. In fact, in 2013, di Stefano climbed the buildings where there are the offices of the EU and tears up the EU flag and puts an Italian one instead. Violence is used also around cultural issues and migration. For the migration issue, violence takes place more often when the movement mobilises in the outskirts of Rome and oppose the arrival of migrants, like it happened in Casal San Nicola in 2015 or Torre Maura in 2019.

The use of violence by CPI is one of the most interesting findings for the purposes of my research as it can be observed how there is a decrease in the years during which it is closer to LN, the years of the formal alliance. This proves the hypothesis that the relationship is going to be stronger when LN is weak electorally and CPI moderates its extremism. The level of violence diminishes, in 2014 when only one episode of violence has been registered. In 2015, only 5 violent actions have been registered and 3 in 2016. Then an increase again in 2017-2019.

It needs to be noted that although this new increase in violence of CPI, when the alliance with 5stars ends and Lega organises protests against the new government in September 2019, CPI participates to both rallies and Lega does not discourage the participation of the movement. This shows that once the relations are in place, it is hard to break them completely and that links remain even if they are weaker and more sparse.

4.4.6. Actions dimension: united against immigrants

In conclusion, the two main findings emerge from the analysis of the action dimension. First, Lega and CPI are closer in this dimension when the party is weaker electorally and the movement moderates its form of actions, confirming the main hypothesis proposed in the theoretical chapter. In fact, it has been observed how even if the increase in the demonstrative actions is contingent upon the breakout of the migration crisis and that the crisis has been exploited by both actors to mobilise supporter against the arrival of immigrants, Lega and CPI organised protests together. 16 percent of demonstrative events organised by Lega saw the participation of CPI. Moreover, and most importantly, in the first year of the formal alliance between Lega and CPI, the movement organisation has dropped almost completely the use of violence. This shows how the alliance had a moderating effect on the movement.

Second, external opportunities and internal strategic choices affect the repertoire of actions used by the actors. It is true that an increase in the protest actions of the party takes place when they are in opposition, but the increase in demonstrative actions is particularly high during the years of the migration crisis, when the new leadership decided to exploit this issue by focusing increasingly on it, as it was observed in the section on the frames dimension. In the case of CPI it has been observed how they moderated their repertoire of action when they decided to take part in elections in 2013, however, the year of the formal alliance for the EU elections with Lega is the one during which the use of violence almost disappears. This choice is not permanent, in fact the relations between the movement and the party grow distant, but they do not completely disappear. In fact, in 2019, when Lega organises protest against the newly established government, CPI takes part to them.

As it has been noticed for the frame dimension, the hypothesis that claimed that the relations between Lega and CPI would be stronger when the party is weak electorally and the movement moderate its repertoire of actions, is confirmed. But once the relations have been

established, the repertoire of actions internalised and new frames adopted, the changes are not easily undone.

4.5. Organisational dimension

The last dimension of the relations between parties and movements that this research investigates, is the organisational dimension. In order to test the hypothesis advanced in the theoretical framework – *far-right parties and movements are more likely to be closer in the organisational dimension when parties are electorally weak and elections are imminent, and when movements moderate their repertoire of actions* – I use newspaper articles with interviews to party and movements leaders and academic literature that has investigated the organisational characteristics of the two actors under investigation. The newspaper articles that have been used in this section have been found while carrying out the PCA and therefore can aid in assessing when and how LN and CPI had stronger relations within their organisational dimension.

Both actors under investigation in this study, LN and CPI, are characterised by high degree of centralisation and a strong role played by the leaders. This is true for both the old LN under Bossi's leadership and the new Salvini's Lega. In fact, the party has maintained during his transformation from a regionalist party to a national one, a high level of centralisation and little space for internal democracy (McDonnell and Vampa, 2016; Albertazzi and Vampa, 2021: ch5; Zulianello, 2021). The Lega Nord statue attributed most of the decision-making powers to the three federal bodies: federal secretary – the leader of the party – the federal council, and the federal congress. The federal council is composed by the leaders and representatives of each regional council, while the federal congress should take place every three years. However, since the party establishment, the leader – Bossi – has been able to override the decision-making process and only one party congress took place between 2002

and 2012 (McDonnell and Vampa, 2016: 114). The same configuration of powers has been kept also by the new Salvini's Lega (Lega per Salvini Premier) whose statute has been approved in December 2019 (Zulianello, 2021: 231). The new Lega is characterised by even more "disproportionate concentration of power in the three federal bodies" and the ability of the party leader to override the decision-making process and having the power to enforce his strategies and decisions (Zulianello, 2021: 236). In fact, the federal secretary and the federal council define the political strategy of the party, the financial management, and enforce the internal discipline. The hierarchy of the party is maintained also through a strict top-down control of the local branches and this has been even more visible with the expansion of Salvini's Lega in the South of Italy where northern and trusted members of the party were sent to guide the new branches and overview the local party activities and strategies (Zulianello, 2021: 236).

Moving to CPI, this organisation too is characterised by a high degree of centralisation and it lacks any internal democracy as it is "cantered on the figure of its founding leader, Gianluca Iannone, and on an advisory body made up of a few individuals in charge of the core activities and ideas of the group" (Froio et al., 2020: 63). Beside Iannone uncontested leadership, the next in line in the leadership chain was Simone Di Stefano (he has left the organisation in late 2021) who acted as the institutional face of the group and has stand as candidate for the party in both national and local elections in the 7 years CPI has contested elections. Di Stefano represented the public face of the organisation, while Iannone remained the point of reference for the activists due also to his involvement in all social and cultural activities of the organisation, most notably the leader of the ZetaZeroAlfa (Froio et al., 2020: 65). The group central headquarter is in Rome, in the occupied building of the Esquilino that gave the name to the organisation itself, CPI, and it is then organised in local and thematic branches throughout the national territory that are under the strict control of the central leadership.

The high degree of centralisation of both LN and CPI and the powers held by the leaders allow to trace the relations that have occurred between the two actors by looking at the official declarations made by the party leaders and interviews released to the press. A more complete picture of the relations that occurred in the organisational dimension could have been provided by interviews with party and movement leaders as well as party and movement local leaders. However, due to the outbreak of the COVID pandemic, I could not carry out those and I have, thus, relied on previous academic works that have investigated the organisational features of the two actors, party and movement's documents, and newspaper articles.

From the analysis of the data, I have identified a periodisation of the timeframe under investigation that is useful to explore how the relations in the organisational dimension have changed. First, the 2009-2013 is the period of no interactions; second, the 2014-2015 is the period of a semi-formal electoral alliance; third, the 2016-2019 is the period of low and informal interactions.

4.5.1. 2009-2014: no interactions

In the first period, 2009-2014, no interactions in the organisational dimension have been observed. In these years LN was experiencing electoral seatbacks and a leadership crisis. 2009-2011 saw the party still in government with the centre-right coalitions led by Berlusconi. However, this experience ended early due to the fall of Berlusconi's government and the establishment of the new technocratic government of Mario Monti that had transversal political support in parliament, but not LN support. Shortly after the end of the government experience, in April 2012, LN faced also a leadership crisis when Bossi, at the centre of a corruption scandal, was forced to leave the leadership of the party (McDonnell and Vampa, 2016: 109). During the party congress that took place in July, Bossi was awarded the honorary title of "Life President", and Roberto Maroni was elected the new leader of the party. The electoral results

that the party achieved under Maroni's leadership were disappointing, with LN achieving just 4 % in the 2013 national elections. However, Maroni was successful in being elected the new president of the Lombardy region in March 2013. Following his elections at the presidency of the region, Maroni resigned as leader of the party, triggering a new leadership contest in less than two years. The party primaries were held in December 2013 and Matteo Salvini was elected the new leader with 82 % of the votes. The new LN leader will bring about substantial changes to the party, and it will be during this period that the majority of the interactions in the organisational dimension with CPI can be observed.

In the 2009-2014 period, CPI was busy building and developing the structure of his organisation that was formally born only in December 2008. These first years have been dedicated to expand the organisation beyond Rome, where Iannone's group had been active for over a decade, by creating and organising thematic organisations that varied from a youth association, to solidarity associations (La Salamandra and Solidarietà Identità Onlus), to an environmental one (La Foresta che avanza), as well as local branches throughout the national territory. As the study carried out by Froio and colleagues has showed, in the period 2009-2013 CPI created local branches throughout the national territory and in 2013 60 local sections could be found in Italy (2020:30). The expansion of the CPI local branches will continue in the following years and in 2018 the group could count over 150 sections in Italy.

4.5.2. 2014-2015: intense relations and political alliance

The second period, 2014-2015, is the period where the more sustained interactions in organisational dimension have been observed. The increased relations in this dimension have been observed both in the interactions between party and movement leaders, as well as semi-formal electoral alliances and shared memberships among candidates in the electoral lists of

the two organisations. Each of these two aspects of the organisational dimension is discussed in depth.

First, concerning the personal relations between the leaders of the two organisations, in the years 2014-2015 the leaders of LN and CPI have attended each other events, shared stages in protests, and organised electoral campaign. At the start of 2014, only few weeks after Salvini was elected the new LN leader, a change in the party strategy took place and the first attempts to expand the electoral base of the LN from the northern regions to the rest of the national territory was made. For the 2014 European elections, LN's candidate Mario Borghezio run and was successfully elected in the centre district, and the electoral campaign was run with the help of CPI leaders and activists. Mario Borghezio was a key figure in the LN since its establishment in the early 1990s and was in national Parliament from 1992 to 2001 when he was elected as European Member of Parliament, where he remained until 2019. Borghezio has claimed to be the one that has always worked to bring to LN the votes of the far-right and has kept international links with far-right leaders in Europe well before Salvini (Corriere, 24.5.2019). Borghezio had a key role in bringing together CPI and LN and it is thanks to him that the partnership between the two organisations was forged. Although no formal electoral alliance between CPI and LN was in place during the 2014 EU electoral campaign, Borghezio has recognised the role that CPI had in mobilising support and voters and CPI leader – Iannone – has highlighted the electoral effort put in place by his organisation for Borghezio's campaign. In Borghezio's words:

“We were disorganised, but we have been successful even in the most remote parts of Lazio, in towns like Ostia and Fregene. I went to all markets [looking for votes] and I’ve

been greeted by everyone. I have to thank the Magic Portal of Rome⁵ and Ezra Pound who accompanied me throughout the electoral campaign”.

When the journalist asked Borghezio if he was thanking the “fascists of CasaPound” he answered by claiming that “they are all clean faces, decent guys who helped me with the electoral campaign” (Linkiesta, 26.5.2014). After Borghezio’s successful election, Iannone stated:

“I invited our members to vote for Lega Nord and Borghezio. I’m happy he has been elected as he is an honest and brave man, he deserves our respect. He did not talk about secession or Padania, but he has, instead, focused on ending usury, defending the poorer social strata and the national borders from migration, bringing back the marò, and protections of national goods. A nationalist discourse” (Libero, 31.5.2014).

From these interviews emerge the clear involvement of CPI in LN’s electoral campaign that emerged also from the PCA and that is confirmed from the voices of the political leader themselves. The 2014 EU electoral campaign opened the doors to two years of intense relations between the two organisations that planned joined protests, events, and attempted to build a united electoral list for the 2015 local elections. The central role of Borghezio in building this alliance remained visible throughout 2014 when he took part to a series of anti-migration protests in the outskirts of Rome that were organised by CPI. The protests took place to prevent the arrival of underage migrants in the Infernetto neighbourhood and Borghezio took the lead of the protests, talking of the need to “keep migrants outside our forgotten suburbs”

⁵ In Italian is La Porta Magica, is a monumental door built in the XVII century by the alchemist Palombara and it is believed that who can decipher the inscriptions on it can found the secrets of the Philosopher’s stone. It is the place where Borghezio made the concluding speech of the electoral campaign and is near CPI’s headquarter.

and closed his speech with “hooray for Lega Nord, hooray for CasaPound and the patriotic youth it mobilises in the suburbs” (Corriere, 22.11.2014).

In October 2014, the first big demonstration organised by the new LN’s leader Salvini took place in Milan, where 40,000 people gathered in the central Duomo square asking to end migration. In this instance, CPI provided the security service (*servizio d’ordine*) of the protest. Just before the start of the demonstration, a journalist asked Salvini what he thought about the fact that an openly fascist organisation was joining his protest and he responded that “talking of fascism and communism in October 2014 is talking about the past” and that CPI militants are decent people who “did not leave even a cigarette butt in the streets” (Corriere, 29.10.14). After the demonstration Iannone proudly claimed that he brought “over 2,000 Italians to Lega’s demonstration against the invasion the nation is experiencing due to the savage migration and the hunger of foreign firms who are colonizing our economy” (CasaPound Italia, 2014).

Few months later, another big street demonstration was organised by LN in Rome to protest against the Renzi governments and the political reforms it was introducing. This demonstration gathered 30,000 people and it represented the first time the two political actors, LN and CPI, shared the stage and address together their supporters, since in Milan CPI did not speak from the stage. This demonstration had a big resonance in the public debate due to the presence of an openly fascist organisation joining forces with the new Salvini’s Lega. CPI’s leaders spoke on the stage next to all LN leaders – such as Salvini, Calderoli, Giorgetti, and Borghezio – and they clearly highlighted the point in commons between their political agenda and the Salvini’s new political offer. On the stage, Di Stefano stated that CPI “shares every Matteo Salvini’s single word. No to Euro. Stop migration. Italians first” (Corriere, 1.3.15). Di Stefano also stated that “Salvini is the only leader that could stand a chance against Renzi, there is no one else in Italy today and we need to support him with all our strength. I am sure we will win” (Corriere, 28.2.15). The demonstration was attended also by Iannone who claimed that

“We share with Matteo [Salvini] a political path. Are we violent? It has been 11 years that we try to convince you that we are the good guys” (Corriere, 1.3.15). The only reference made by Salvini to CPI’s presence at the demonstrations can be found when he proudly spoke about the lack of violence at the demonstration: “I don’t fear turmoil. Rome is a civil city, beautiful, colourful, furious, but peaceful” (Corriere, 28.2.15). On the other hand, Borghezio welcomed the right-wing shift that LN was taking under Salvini’s leadership and proudly declared the demonstration as “the day of Salvini’s triumph” (Corriere, 28.2.15).

Since the February 2015 Rome demonstrations, the interactions between the leaders of the two actors remained sustained. In May 2015, Salvini attended an event organised by CPI at the Brancaccio theatre in Rome, just next to CPI headquarter. Salvini’s speech was attended by over 1,000 CPI militants all proudly showing fascists symbols and chanting fascist slogans such as “duce, duce, duce” (Dux, Mussolini) and calling themselves camerati (comrade) (Corriere, 12.5.15). Salvini announced his presence at the event by inviting his supporters to join him and “many decent Romans to work for a safer and calmer future” (la Repubblica, 11.5.15). During his speech Salvini focused on all the issues his new political agenda had in common with CPI, the same that have been already found through the PCA: the EU, defined as a “criminal organisation”; migration, “I would help migrants but I would not allow anyone of them on Italian soil, I would sink all boats used by human traffickers in the Libyan harbours”; Roma camps, “no other country in Europe has them, they need to be close down”, and pensions, “I will not move from the Ministry office until someone gives me answers” (la Repubblica, 11.5.15). After the event, Salvini and CPI’s leaders went to dinner together to Iannone’s restaurant and selfies capturing the event were shared online (la Repubblica, 11.5.15).

In September 2015, the annual rally of CPI took place in a small town just outside Milan and also in this instance important members of LN took part to the event. The LN member Stefano Volpi opened the celebration for the CPI rally, while Paolo Grimoldi and Gianluca

Buonanno, both LN member of Parliament, gave speeches during the event (Corriere, 12.9.2015). This is the event that ends the period of sustained interactions between the two organisations and after this moment, the relations between the two organisations and their respective leaders waned.

Turning to analysing the more institutional aspect of the relations in the organisational dimension, in the 2014-2015 period, a semi-formal alliance between CPI and LN was in place for the 2015 local elections. When the new LN strategy was launched by Salvini, an electoral list that could gather votes in the centre and south of Italy, and did not mention the party name Lega Nord, was created: Noi con Salvini (NcS - Us with Salvini). In December 2014, Salvini presented the new list symbol and name during a press release attended by all LN high-ranking members, but not the ex-leader Bossi who warned about the risks of profiteers and criminals joining the lists (la Repubblica, 19.12.14). Bossi's warn needs to be understood in light of the lack of party presence and organisation in the southern parts of Italy and, thus, the chances of letting people not known to the party inside its lists was high. While Salvini will be able to export the mass-party model of LN to the south of Italy (Zulianello, 2021), the first attempt saw the creation of regional electoral lists named Noi con Salvini, plus the name of the region. In this chaotic and transformative times for LN, a helping hand was lent by CPI that just few weeks after Salvini's announcement, revealed its own new electoral lists. In January 2015, CPI vice-president Di Stefano announced in a press conference the creation of an electoral list called "Sovranità. Prima gli Italiani" (Sovereignty. Italians first) that explicitly aimed to support Salvini's electoral efforts in the local elections. Di Stefano stated that

"Matteo Salvini has launched its [political] project for the centre and south of Italy and his political manifesto is clear and we totally embrace it. Unfortunately, in this first phase he [Salvini] will need to fight against opportunists and infiltrates, but I'm sure in the end he'll be able to organise the many decent people that see in his project the hope for Italy."

As far as I'm concerned, the best way to unite and organise all those that love the nation and want to seriously collaborate with Salvini from the North to the South of Italy, this is the new political organisation: Sovranità” (Fanpage, 12.1.15)

It is worth noting how also in Di Stefano's word is present the same warning issued also by Bossi, the risk that profiteers could jump into Salvini's lists due to the lack of a proper party organisation outside the centre of Italy. CPI helped Salvini's new electoral effort by providing lists of local candidates made by trustworthy activists of the group and that could carry out the electoral campaign in the territories.

In the 2015 local elections, Sovranità was present only where no LN or NcS candidate was standing, otherwise CPI candidates were included directly within the party lists. Few days after the participation of Salvini to the CPI event in Rome at the Brancaccio theatre, CPI announced on his website the names of all its candidates that were standing in the elections and how to vote for them (CPI, 2015). The name of the online post is “how to vote for the candidates of CasaPound and Sovranità at the local elections” and contains all the names of CPI candidates standing in LN or NcS lists and the few cases where the symbol of Sovranità is present – medium and small towns in the centre and south of Italy. About this post, it is worth noting the comments section and the opinion of CPI supporters that welcomed the strategy of voting Salvini's lists and how they were going to support those even in places where no CPI candidate was present (CPI, 2015).

The electoral alliance between the two organisations did not last long as it ended after the local elections. On the one hand, neither Salvini nor any LN member released any statement about the termination of the alliance. Salvini stated in early 2016 that “I do not have anything to do with CasaPound. I haven't seen them in over a year” (Corriere, 30.3.2016). While this statement is empirically false as LN and CPI in September 2015 were taking part to joined

events, it shows the change in Salvini's strategy and the increased distance between the two organisations. On the other hand, CPI explained only a year later why the group did not work any longer with Salvini. In a Facebook post, dated 21 march 2017, CPI claimed that Salvini invited CPI to join the centre-right coalition – Berlusconi's Forza Italia and Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia – but they did not want anything to do with Berlusconi's and with those that do not defend the interests of the nation:

“‘Italians fist’ is now a registered trademark and symbol and only CasaPound Italia will be able to use it. We did this to avoid voters being cheated by those that speak about national preference and then bring votes to the centre-right coalitions that is a slave of the European Popular Party and Angela Merkel. We are referring to Matteo Salvini, who asked us to join a political ‘federation’ with FdI and FI with the name ‘Italians first’ for the upcoming national elections. An operation that sees Lega’s leader and his friend Giorgia Meloni bending down in front of Silvio Berlusconi, who is already working to a new coalition government, the same as 2013, selling out the nation for a seat in Parliament”. (Next, 21.3.27).

The reasons behind the cooling down of the relations can, therefore, be found in the unwillingness of Salvini to leave the centre-right coalition and distance himself from Berlusconi, saw by CPI as all the worst politics could offer. However, the tension between following a new far-right partner and remaining into the centre-right coalition has been present since the start of Salvini's leadership. Already during the 2015 demonstration in Rome, Umberto Bossi when asked about the presence of CPI to a LN demonstration and the electoral alliance in place between the two groups stated that “there is no alliance, this is just a transitionary alliance. Salvini needs not to break the relations with Berlusconi” (Corriere, 28.2.15).

4.5.3. 2016-2019: low interactions

The period of sustained interactions finished already at the end of 2015. After the local elections, the relations between the two organisations became sparser and more informal, however they did not end completely. In fact, the third period that I have identified, 2016-2019, is the period where interactions in the organisational dimension can still be found, even if less formal and less visible. This is true for both the aspects of the relations, the interactions between the leaders and the presence of movement candidates in the electoral lists of the party.

The rising popularity of Salvini and its party, the 2018 national elections, and the return of Lega in power characterised this last period of analysis and shaped the nature of the relations. In fact, in this last period, contrarily to what it has been observed in the former one, it is Salvini's leadership and charisma that lead the relation and CPI that tries to more quietly tries to exploit the spaces left for its organisation in the new political context. While in the 2014-2015 joined events took place, and leaders and members of the two organisations spoke from the stages of the each other events, in this phase it can be observed CPI that more silently follows Salvini's steps. At the same time, Salvini does not do anything to distance himself from the far-right organisation. During more than one occasion the door open for the communication between its party and the movement organisation.

After CPI's alleged refusal to join the centre-right federation for the electoral campaign, the relations between LN and CPI's leaders drastically diminished. However, there are few instances that can illustrate the more quiet nature of the relations. An example is the ending act of the 2018 electoral campaign. Both CPI and Lega (few weeks before the 2018 elections, the term Northern was dropped entirely from the name of the party) closed their campaigns in Milan, the same evening, in two squares just few meters away from each other (Corriere, 25.2.18). Both leaders used the same slogan "Italian firsts", both declared to be respectfully of the Italian constitution and to the Italian people, both claimed to be shocked about the presence

of the counter-demonstrations organised by left-wing protesters and argued they were the violent and dangerous ones that posed a threat to their peaceful events (Corriere, 25.2.18; MilanoToday 25.2.18). The events were entirely separated, however, the proximity in space and the similar contents used by both leaders lend support toward the argument that the intention behind this choice was to gather more visibility and speak to similar groups of voters. This is further supported by the statements that Di Stefano made when presented CPI manifesto for the election, claiming that he aimed at gathering support from non-voters and Lega voters (Corriere, 10.2.18).

Another example of the more tortuous nature of the relations between the two organisations can be found in the episode that draw a lot of mediatic attention and took place just few weeks after the national elections, when Lega was working with the 5 Stars Movement (5SM) to form the an alliance that would bring Lega back into power and its leader would be the new Interior Minister. In may 2018, during a football match, Salvini wore a jacket of a brand owned by one of CPI leader (La Repubblica, 10.5.18). The brand Pivert is owned by a longstanding CPI militant, Francesco Polacchi, who was the leader of the CPI youth organisation Blocco Studentesco, arrested and convicted twice for aggression, and now an entrepreneur with businesses linked to its militant activities. Privert's clothes do not display fascist symbols or slogans, instead the logo is a white woodpecker and on the brand website its explained that this choice is due to the will to difference those who wear it "from all the other pigeons around" (Pivert, 2021). The website states that the clothes are designed for "a community of man that shares ideas and values" and for "a man with his strengths and weakness, a man who knows what values and sacrifices are, and who is willing to fight for his ideas and the conquest of his future" (Pivert, 2021). The brand is not available in general shops, but it is sold only in 11 stores in Italy and, as it has been shown by the quotes above, no mystery is made about who the target of the brand is and who usually wears it. Salvini has refused to

comment on this episode. On the other hand, Polacchi thanked Salvini for “the free advertising to his brand” and remarked how Salvini has the approvals of CPI, that he went to protests at his side, and how he hopes that Salvini will manage to form a coalition government with the 5 Stars Movement and defend the interests of the Italian people (La Repubblica, 10.5.18b).

Polacchi was not the only CPI militant who welcomed the formation of the Lega-5SM government. After the establishment of the government, Di Stefano released an interview greeting this new government, described as “the best possible option, if they [Lega and 5SM] keep the promises made to the public, they will finally break the relations with the EU”, and praised Salvini for “having the courage to stand up against international powers and organisations that are working against the establishment of this government” (Il Fatto Quotidiano, 23.5.18). Salvini did not comment on any statement made by CPI leaders, and neither did any Lega member, trying to keep a distance from the movement organisation now that the party was in power and with institutional representation. However, a year after the Pivert jacket, a new episode saw Salvini near CPI and its leaders.

In May 2019, when Lega was in power, Salvini was the Interior Minister, and the EU elections were approaching, the Lega leader drew again the attention of the public debate to his relations with CPI. This time, Salvini decided to publish a book-interview with the publishing house Altaforte, owned by Francesco Polacchi – the same owner of the Pivert brand. The book was going to be presented at the Turin book fair, but due to writers withdrawing their participation and refusing to take part to an event where a fascist publisher was admitted, the event did not take place. When asked about why he decided to publish his book with Altaforte, Salvini said:

“Is Altaforte close to CasaPound? Who cares! Is CasaPound illegal? In Italy there is the Communist Refoundation Party, I have a laugh about it, but I don’t think it should be

banned. I am scared that someone is not allowed into the Turin book fair, this is not how democracy works” (Corriere, 13.5.19).

This statement is in line with previous ones made by Lega leader who does not see any distinction between the Italian Fascism and the Communism and who does not see as problematic his relationship with a proudly declared Fascist organisation as CPI. The same argument is used again by Salvini when he announced two protests against the newly established M5S-Democratic Party government and CPI joined them. After the electoral success that Lega achieved in the 2019 EU elections, gathering over 34 percent of the votes, Salvini decided to exit the Government with the 5SM, believing that new elections would be called. This did not happen and a new coalition government was established between the 5SM and the left-wing Democratic Party. In both demonstrations organised by Lega leader, that took place in September and October 2019, CPI leaders and activists were in the streets among Lega and Fratelli d’Italia protesters. Although Iannone and Di Stefano were in the streets among the demonstrators in the September protest, and CPI militants joined with flags and t-shirts of the organisation, Salvini stated that at the demonstration took part only honest people and when asked about what he thought about a fascist organisation joining him in the protest he replayed “Is this a subversive protest? How many mums are here? Please raise your hand” (Corriere, 10.9.19).

CPI joined Lega also during the October demonstration, when over 50,000 people gathered in the streets to protest against the 5SM and Democratic Party government. This time as well CPI leaders and activists were in the streets showing flags and symbols of their organisation and Di Stefano released a brief interview where he stated that CPI “has a wealth of nationalist ideas and our proposals have been copied by everyone in this square” (la Repubblica, 19.10.19). Salvini replied to those questioning once again the presence of CPI in

his protest that “this is not the protest of extremists, but of Italians who are proud to be so” (la Repubblica, 19.10.19).

Turning to the other aspect of the relations in the organisational dimension and looking at shared memberships and electoral lists of the two actors, the 2016-2019 period is characterised by the absence of any formal electoral alliance between the two organisations. However, also in this case the interactions between Lega and CPI did not end completely. In May 2016, CPI candidates were present in LN electoral lists for the Milan local elections (NextQuotidiano, 31.3.2016). In April 2018 a local councillor from Cologno Monzese, a town near Milan, elected within LN joined CPI few weeks after its election (Corriere, 1.4.18). During the same round of local elections, in Brescia, in the Lombardy region, the local CPI candidate Davide di Cesare, stated that “in March, the majority of our supporters voted Lega to help Salvini winning the election, but at the second turn this is not going to happen again and we aim at entering the town council” (Corriere, 19.4.18). In May 2019, in another town near Milan, Cormano, another CPI militant, Andrea Segalli, was in the electoral list of Salvini’s Lega (la Repubblica, 6.5.19).

While the data collected are not comprehensive and limited, these events show how the relations between the two organisations were not completely severed. The instances of shared memberships and CPI activists in Lega electoral lists remained, however weak also in this last phase of the analysis. The relations in the organisational dimensions can be further observed also after CPI announced its intention to drop out of the electoral arena and focus only on being a movement organisation. When CPI announced on its website that it would not take part anymore to elections, di Stefano said that the decision was due to the poor electoral results gathered in the EU elections, less than 0.4 percent, and that their supporters were voting for other parties, mainly Lega and FdI (Open, 1.7.19). Di Stefano also said that CPI will continue to carry out cultural and militant activities and that its supporters “will be free to participate or

not in elections and free to vote either Lega or Fratelli d'Italia” (Open, 1.7.19). And it is the importance of the local branches and the presence throughout the national territory the strength of the organisation and what makes it appealing to other political parties that can exploit the activities and presence of CPI militants for their electoral gains. This point is clearly highlighted by Iannone who stated that “our 140 local branches [...] will remain valuable political outposts to carry out our battles” (CasaPound, 27.6.19). Another CPI leader from Turin, Marco Racca, also highlighted this point by stating that

“Salvini has intercepted our votes, but he has only those. We have militants, branches, places where to meet, they do not. We are going to fill this gap. We are going to talk with all nationalists and we’ll be free to do what we want without the pressure of the electoral campaign [...] We could strike deals with Lega, Fratelli D’Italia, or a right-wing list. We have many possibilities no ties, only opportunities” (Corriere, 29.6.19).

Although outside the time-frame of this research, in the 2021 local elections, CPI militants had been placed in Lega’s electoral lists in Rome, and in the 2022 local elections, in Lucca, an electoral alliance between a CPI activist and Lega was reached in the second turn of the elections (la Repubblica, 7.9.21; Corriere, 18.6.22).

4.5.4. Organisational dimensions, between formal alliances and friendly indifference

The data gathered in this section show that even in this last period, 2016-2019, when the relations between the two organisations are not as strong as the ones found in the previous period, they did not disappear completely. Even when the party was at the highest of its electoral strength, after the 2018 national elections and the 2019 European elections, the relations between the leaders of the two organisations remained, although less publicised, more informal, and occasional. Relations have been observed also in terms of shared memberships

and CPI militants in Lega electoral lists in local elections and the electoral success of Lega has been advanced, by its own leaders, as one of the reasons for CPI leaving the electoral arena, as its supporters were voting mainly for the more institutional and less controversial party.

In conclusion, the analysis of the interactions in the organisational dimension between Lega and CPI has highlighted three different moments in which the strength of their relations has varied significantly. During 2009-2013 no interaction between the two organisations has been found. In this period, in fact, LN was still a regionalist party with an exclusive electoral focus on the North of Italy, while CPI was only beginning to develop its organisation beyond the Capital. The second period, the 2014-2015, the data showed a completely different picture with the presence of an informal alliance during the 2014 EU electoral campaign, a formal electoral alliance during the 2015 local elections, and sustained and public relations between the leaders of the organisations. Following Salvini's election as party leader in December 2013, LN started a period of transformation into a fully-fledge national radical-right party (Albertazzi et al., 2018). It is in this transition period that the relations between the two organisations increased and strengthen. The mass-party nature of LN, with a strong local presence and a highly centralised organisation (McDonnell and Vampa, 2016; Albertazzi and Vampa, 2021: ch5), made the lack of any party presence in the centre and south of Italy an obstacle to be overcome in the shortest time possible. While Salvini in late 2014 launched its own electoral lists to export the organisational model of the party in the north, also to the south (Zulianello, 2021), the first months of this transition period made LN rely on the organisation that CPI built in the years, especially in Rome and in the centre part of the national territory. It is in this light that the electoral effort put forward by CPI to get LN member, Borghezio, elected to the EU parliament in the centre district can be understood, and in the same way can be interpreted the more formal electoral alliance in the 2015 local elections.

The ideological affinity between the two actors certainly helped the creation of a communication channel, as the new nationalist radical-right LN found a coherent partner in the extreme-right wing organisation. As it has been argued in the analysis of the frames dimension, in this same period the focus of both organisation on the issues of migration, cultural identity, and law-and-order increased and it is on these issues that the two organisations found a common ground around which build their alliance. Moreover, the analysis of the actions dimension showed that is exactly on the issues of migration and law and order that the two groups jointly mobilised in the 2014-2015 period and that during this period CPI moderated its repertoire of action with a significant drop of the violent acts.

In light of the above, the initial working hypothesis that maintained that far-right parties and movement would be closer in the organisational dimension when, on the one hand, parties are in electorally weak and elections are imminent, and, on the other, movement moderate their repertoire of actions, is confirmed. In fact, it is especially when Lega is in opposition and in a transition phase from a local to national party, 2014-2015, that the interactions in this dimension increase. Moreover, this period sees also a moderation of the repertoire of actions on the part of the movement. The last part of the hypothesis, the imminent presence of elections is also confirmed. In fact, from the analysis it emerged that even the formal electoral alliance for the 2015 local elections had a short and immediate function and did not reflect any long-term and programmatic joint effort of the two actors. While CPI statements on why the alliance with LN ended blame Salvini for his decision to prefer the other centre-right parties – FI and FdI – over CPI’s company, Bossi’s statement from early 2015 showed how the alliance had a precarious nature and it was indented to be short-lived.

The two organisations benefitted from each other relations as they allowed, on the one hand, the party, to show a local presence in the streets where it did not have one yet, before it successfully exported mass-party model to the centre and south of Italy. The TRT formula (TV,

Rete, Territorio – television, network, territory) – highlighted by Zulianello as the trademark of Salvini's new Lega (2021: 234) – was possible to achieve in the centre and south of Italy, in the first months of the new party course, by the alliance with CPI and its activists and supporters. LN, and Salvini's more specifically, need to show itself as present on the ground and next to the more stringent issues of citizens made necessary to find a partner that had a local presence and militants that could help in the new national course of the party. On the other hand, the movement organisation benefitted from the legitimacy deriving from the proximity with the institutional actor. Previous studies have already highlighted how CPI uses the electoral arena as a vehicle to obtain more visibility and legitimacy (Pirro and Gattinara, 2018: 377; Froio et al., 2020: 116), and this effect is further increased by the presence of an institutional party that in the years of closer interactions was rising in the polls and able to gather the attention of the media thanks to his leader's strategy.

The analysis, however, has shown that even when the party is and back in power, the relations do not disappear. In fact, the 2016-2019 period has shown that more informal and less visible relations remained between the two organisations, both in terms of contacts between the leaders and shared memberships between the militants. Even when CPI returned to increased level of violent activities – as the analysis of the action dimension as shown – and when the party is at its highest in electoral terms, the relations between the two actors persist. This finding is important, as it shows that once opened a channel of communication between the two actors, it is harder to close it down and when personal relations exist between the leaders of the groups is easier that collaboration remain.

Even if no formal electoral alliance, or joint event is organised, the relations between the two actors are still visible and affect the life of the two organisations. On the one hand, the movement organisation can revendicate how issues and ideas that have been at the centre of their political agenda are now mainstreamed thanks to the success the party achieved in the

electoral arena. On the other hand, the party can count, especially during local and council elections, on the votes of the far-right militants. This phenomenon has been recognised by Lega members – Borghezio in 2019 stated that “I look with sympathy to those of CasaPound and Forza Nuova because I know that their electorate has been absorbed by Lega” (Corriere, 24.5.19) – and by the movements leaders themselves as Iannone and Di Stefano quotes above have shown. Additionally, and more importantly, the party can still count on the reservoir of militants and activists that can carry out the campaign activities in the streets and convey the sense of proximity in everyday life. This aspect is, in fact, underlined by CPI leaders when their decision to exit the electoral arenas is announced, as well as party members.

In a recent journalist inquiry on the links between radical-right parties and extreme-right organisations in the city of Milan, a Lega member – Max Bastoni – and a far-right activists with personal connections to high-ranking far-right parties – Jonghi Lavarini – underline how important it is to have good relations with extreme-right organisations as “we [Lega] have the institutional party and the brand, but they [the extreme-right organisations] have the militants on the streets” (Fanpage, 7.10.21).

As it has been noted for the previous two dimensions of the interactions, also in the case of organisational dimension the working hypothesis is confirmed. The relations between Lega and CPI are stronger when elections are imminent, and the movement moderates its repertoire of actions. However, the relations do not disappear once these conditions are no longer present but are instead less visible and formal but still present and continue to shape and influence both the party and the movement lives.

4.6. Conclusions

Summing up the analysis of the interactions between LN and CPI, the data gathered through the PCA and party and movement’s documents have shown when and how the two actors

became closer in the frames, actions and organisations dimension. In the first dimension of the analysis, the two characteristics of the interactions in the frames dimension - a change in typical discourses of the organisations and a convergence of the frames – has been observed in the period 2014 – 2016 when the party changed its political offer and during the highest period of the so-called migration crisis, when the issues of migration and crime received more attention also in the public debate. In this period, the party was recovering from one of its poorest electoral results, having achieved only 4 percent of the votes in the 2013 national elections, and going through a change of leadership after Bossi forced resignation. In the same period, CPI entered the electoral arena and started to contest elections. In 2013, the organisation announced its participation to the national elections as well as local and municipal elections. It is in this moment that the two organisations became closer in the frames dimension with the both the party and the movement organisation increasing their focus on the issue of migration – an issue that CPI until that moment had largely disregarded – and on that of law-and-order as strictly linked to migration. In the same period, the two organisations diminished their focus on the socio-economic issues, traditionally the most important for both LN and CPI, and the ones around which major differences persisted in the two organisations. As it emerged from the analysis, the hypothesis set out in the theoretical chapter that maintained that far-right parties and movements would be closer in the frame dimension when topics that they own become more visible and when the party is electorally weak, has been confirmed. However, beside the relevance of the migration crisis, the proximity in the frames dimension can be explained with the need of the party needed to reinvent its narrative from a regionalist to a nationalist one and it is in this period that the convergence with the already nationalist ideology of CPI happened. The party had the opportunity to embrace some of CPI's already used messages, most notably Italians first, and at the same time CPI benefitted from the increasing visibility deriving from an institutional party using and further spreading its messages.

In the actions dimension, the data showed that CPI and LN mobilised in the streets together, took part to each other protests, and that this happened in the same period of proximity of the frames dimension, the 2014-2015. During these years, the two organisations largely mobilised on the issue of migration, organising sit-in against migrants' arrival as well as large demonstrations that gathered in the streets over 50,000 people, such as the 2014 Milan demonstration called "stop the invasion" and the 2015 Rome demonstration. The hypothesis concerning this dimension maintained that interactions were more likely to take place when the party was electorally weak and when the organisation moderated its repertoire of actions, and the data provided support to it. In fact, the period of closer interactions was surely the 2014-2015 period, when LN was electorally weak and CPI moderated its repertoire of actions. However, interactions on this dimension have been observed also when the party was at its highest electorally – after the 2018 national elections and 2019 EU elections – and when CPI's level of violent claims was back at its usual levels. Once the relations between the two organisations have been established, they do not disappear and when appropriate the protests in the streets could be attended by both organisations. In this dimension, the interactions provided mutual benefits to the both actors, as on the one hand LN was able to mobilise in the streets in places of the country where its presence was still not established and exploit the mobilisation capacity of CPI. This happened for the protests against migration that took place in Rome outskirts and in Italy's central regions, as well as the protests against Roma camps and criminality. On the other hand, CPI benefitted from the increased visibility and legitimacy deriving from mobilising next to the party.

Finally, the analysis of the interactions in the organisational dimension highlighted three different periods during which LN and CPI interactions have changed. In the period 2009-2013 no interactions have been found, in the period 2014-2015 a formal electoral alliance was in place between the two actors, and in the 2016-2019 few and less visible interactions were

observed. The data supported the hypothesis that the relations in the organisational dimension would be stronger when the movements moderate its repertoire of actions and elections are imminent. From the analysis of the actions dimension emerged how in the period 2014-2015 CPI moderated its repertoire of actions and it is in this moment that also in the organisational dimensions the interactions with LN were stronger. In fact, in 2014 CPI supported the electoral campaign of LN European candidate Mario Borghezio, and in 2015 a formal alliance was in place between the two organisations for the local elections. Interactions have been observed both in terms of relations between leaders of the party and the movement, as well as shared affiliations with jointed electoral lists or members of CPI members in LN electoral lists. Through newspaper articles and party and movement documents, it has been showed how the interactions between the two actors involved also the organisational dimensions and how both have benefitted from this. In 2014, LN did not have any local presence beyond the north of Italy and through the alliance with CPI the party was able to carry out the electoral campaign in the streets of Rome through the mobilisation of the movement organisation. The same happened also during the 2015 elections, when CPI presented the list “Sovranità” where LN was not present with its own list, otherwise CPI members were directly included in LN lists. The alliance ended after the 2015 local elections and the relations between the two actors became weaker, but did not disappear altogether. In the period 2016-2019, Salvini released a book with CPI publishing house, wore CPI brand, and instances of CPI candidates in LN electoral lists or LN members joining CPI have been observed. The interactions in the organisational dimension, as well, benefitted both actors, as on the one hand the party was able to use the militancy of movement activists that was lacking before building its own presence. On the other hand, CPI could proudly revendicate how its ideas and policy issues had made it into the political mainstream thanks to its alliance with LN.

The interactions between the party and movement sector are not episodic and temporary phenomenon, and it has been showed how trough these both actors have adapted their frames, actions, and organisations, and how they have benefitted from it.

5. Far-right party-movement interactions. The case of UKIP and the EDL

This chapter analyse the interactions between two UK actors, UKIP and the EDL. As for the Italian case-study, this chapter follows a similar structure, first a brief history of the two groups is presented in order to identify the key moments of their evolutions and understand the wider political context in which the actors have emerged. Next, three different sections analyse the interactions in each of the three dimensions that have been identified as the most meaningful ones to uncover the relations between the two actors and the working hypotheses set out in the theoretical framework chapter are tested. First, the analysis of the frames dimension is carried out, then the actions dimension, and third the organisational dimension. Finally, a conclusive discussion of the data presented is carried out.

5.1. UKIP, from the margins to the mainstream of British politics, and back

5.1.1. *From a party of academics to the electoral breakthrough (1993-2004)*

The United Kingdom Independence party was founded in 1993, by Alan Sked, a history lecturer of the London School of Economics, with the exclusive aim to push for the withdrawal of UK from the European integration project. For years the party has been at the margins of the British political and party system and only during European elections its voice grew louder in the political debate (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 20). During its first years, the party has been regarded as a classic single-issue party, concerned only with the opposition of EU (Bale, 2018: 268). Toward the end of the 1990s, the party underwent major leadership change. In 1997 Sked resigned from the leadership claiming the party was being infiltrated by British National Party (BNP) members (Usherwood, 2008: 256) The leadership of Sked was, in reality, opposed by both activists of the party – that did not appreciate the intellectual minutes of the leader –

and by other party members – that did not share the strategy proposed by Sked to refuse any eventual sit in the European Parliament (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 37).

The party found more stability with the leadership of Michael Holmes and, later, Jeffrey Titford (Usherwood, 2008: 256). However, only under the leadership of Roger Knapman the party found the stability and organisation that allowed a proper electoral effort (Usherwood, 2008: 256). Knapman became leader of UKIP in 2002 and was the “first UKIP leader with serious mainstream political experience” (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 51). He had been a Conservative MP for 10 years and one of the most vocal Eurosceptic voices within the party. He reorganised and expanded the party infrastructure beyond London and worked to increase the party membership. During Knapman leadership, Nigel Farage, already a of the longstanding member of the party, became the leader of the European election committee. Through a reorganisation of the party and a broadening of its political offer, UKIP went from a niche and little known organisation to achieve the first electoral breakthrough in the 2004 EU elections, when it received almost 2.5 million votes, amounting to 16% of the total votes, and elected 16 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 52).

The electoral success of the 2004 European campaign was due not only to the more effective reorganisation of the party put in place by Knapman leadership, but also the adoption of a simpler and more straightforward message, as well as a big advertisement plan. The party spent almost the 70% of its budget of advertisement and making finally itself known to the wider public (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 52). The focus of UKIP discourses in the 2004 European election was not only the urgent withdrawal of the UK from any European integration project, but also a more marked populist attitude (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 52). An important role in this change of direction of UKIP message toward a more populist attitude is to be ascribed to the arrival into the party of Robert Kilroy-Silk, a former Labour MP and a TV presenter, whose popularity and charismatic appeal to voters, made him the main UKIP’s figure in public

debates. Kilroy-Silk made large use of populist rhetoric to argue how voters were being left unheard by the metropolitan elite that controlled the main political parties and he was the one that introduced the link between the expansion of the European Union to the East and the influx of 73 million migrants coming to Britain (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 54). The link between EU, migration, and populism would become in the following years the core of UKIP discourse and electoral program, favouring the transition from a single-issue – anti-EU – party, to a fully-fledged populist radical right party.

5.1.2. Into the mainstream of politics (2004-2009)

The successful advertisement campaign and the enlarged message – not only EU, but also migration and populism – increased the visibility of the party and its membership. As Ford and Goodwin highlighted, the membership tripled from 8,500 in 2001 to 26,000 in 2004 (2014: 56). All this translated in the biggest electoral result since the party was established. At the EU elections, UKIP resulted the third most voted party, ahead of the Liberal Democrats and behind only Labour and Tories. The optimism over these impressive results, however, was soon tempered by the scandals and in-fight that took place within the party soon after the EU elections.

Kilroy-Silk tried to gain the leadership of the party even if Knapman had two years left of his term and the prominence gained by the newly found public face of UKIP soon became a problem for much of the old guard of the party. His attempt to become leader was also frowned upon by activists of the party that did not trust a man who just joined four months prior to know the mechanisms of the party, to have the personal connections with the other prominent figures of the party, and to understand the effort put into the party by activists (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 58). The leadership bid launched by Kilroy-Silk failed and he left the party. However, UKIP was left scarred by the in-fighting, the inability to maintain visibility on the media and

as a result donations as well as the membership numbers plummeted. All this translated in mediocre electoral results in the 2005 general elections, with UKIP gaining only 2.2 percent of votes. After the disappointing results, the party – now under the Chairmanship of David Campbell Bannerman – tried to review its domestic agenda and broaden again its focus beyond the EU (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 73). But these attempts did not prove to be successful.

The turning point for UKIP's history was the appointment in 2006 of Nigel Farage as the new leader. A long-standing figure of the party, he was the obvious choice to lead UKIP and his charismatic leadership "marked the start of an effort to mainstream UKIP into British political life" (Usherwood, 2008: 256). During the first years of his leadership, Farage worked to broaden the domestic agenda of the party and to reinforce its organisational structure, trying to build a local presence that could allow the party to achieve representation in local government and some gains in national elections (Usherwood, 2016). However, the efforts put into the renovation of the party agenda and organisation, did not seem to be very fruitful. UKIP's share of vote in local elections remained low and it still struggled to gather attention from the media. Moreover, another competitor from the right outperformed UKIP in local elections in the same years, the British National Party (BNP). The BNP, under the leadership of Nick Griffin, renewed its agenda and tried to distance itself from its fascist ideology to try to give a more respectable look at the party. It has been argued that this process was more formal than substantial, and the party never really managed to achieve the electoral breakthrough that its leaders believed was just around the corner (Copsey, 2007: 77-78). For the wider public, the party remained too extreme and its tainted past did not make it appealing to large part of the electorate. Nevertheless, the BNP still received more votes than UKIP in the 2006, 2007, and 2008 local elections.

During the first years of the Farage leadership, the media and think-tank started to show how the UKIP and the BNP were drawing from the same pool of far-right voters and pression

was mounting on Farage to strike a deal with Griffin. However, Farage dismissed these claims and described its party as being at “poles apart really on virtually all aspects of policy” (Farage as cited in Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 75). Accordingly, Farage refused any electoral deal with the BNP for the 2009 European elections even if the polls for the party did not seem favourable and put the party 7 percent less than what the party obtained in the 2004 EU elections.

Unexpectedly, just a month before the 2009 EU elections an opportunity present itself to UKIP: the parliamentary expense scandal involving MPS of all three main parties. An investigative report of The Daily Telegraph exposed a series of abuses perpetrated by MPs sitting in Parliament through claiming false expenses. This “heaven-sent opportunity” (Bale, 2018:267) for a populist party to criticise the three major national parties sitting in the Parliament arrived just in time for UKIP to spin the EU elections in a revolt against the established, corrupted, politicians and present itself as the only resistance of the pure people against it. The populist message that UKIP had been crafting in the previous years, finally resonated widely with the public and the scandal provided an incredible opportunity to be exploited. The mediatic visibility of UKIP increased significantly during the last weeks of the electoral campaign and its message mixing Euroscepticism, anti-immigration – linked explicitly to the EU and EU migrants – and populism proved to be successful in the electoral effort (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 78). UKIP received 16 percent of votes, electing 13 MEPs and coming second just behind the Conservative party, but ahead of both Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

5.1.3. The road toward Brexit 2009-2016

The 2009 EU elections represented the definitive breakthrough of UKIP and its entry into the mainstream of British politics. However, just two months after the elections, Farage resigned from the leadership of the party bringing about new turmoil. He left UKIP in better conditions

than when he took the leadership, with an increased membership of more than 16,000, more funds in the party register and 13 MEPs in office in Brussels (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 80). Farage's decision to leave the party's leadership was mainly due to his desire to focus on winning a seat in Westminster by running against the Speaker of the House – John Bercow. Traditionally the seat of the Speaker of the House is not challenged by candidates of the other parties as the Speaker is considered to be outside party politics. However, Farage broke this tradition and decided to run against Bercow in the 2010 General Elections. The opportunity to win a seat against Bercow, who Farage thought embodied all that was wrong in politics – part of the established Euro-sympathetic political elite – could finally bring him into Westminster. However, he will not be successful.

In the meantime, the leadership role of the party was filled by Lord Pearson, the candidate endorsed by Farage, but not a unifying figure, as some members and activists believed that his past as a Conservative and his link with banks and insurance companies made him a symbol of the establishment they were trying to fight. Pearson's leadership was soon put into question when his availability to strike a deal with the Conservative party emerged: UKIP would not put candidates up in the 2010 General Elections if the Tories promised to hold a referendum for the withdrawal of UK from the EU (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 80). Even if Cameron – the leader of the Conservative party – never confirmed the possibility for such an alliance, Pearson's leadership resulted compromised in the eyes of his party members and supporters that regarded this move as a gift to the establishment that they wanted to bring down. Besides this unsuccessful deal, Pearson attempted to broaden the agenda of the party and widened the focus of his discourses beyond Euroscepticism, migration, grammar schools, and tax cuts, he brought into UKIP agenda a strong opposition to Islamism (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 80). This shift in focus will be better examined later in the chapter, for the moment it will suffice to say that Pearson is the first, within the party, to consistently deal with the issue of Islamism and

the supposed threat that Islam represented for the British democracy. While opposition to Islamism was a long-standing battle of Pearson (The Guardian, 3.2.10), this issue gained in the same year prominence due to the emergence in the streets of the other subject of this research, the English Defence League (EDL). The impressive mobilisation of the EDL in the early phases of its existence, draw the attention of the media and the wider public. Even if the anti-Islam views were not widely shared by all members and activists of the party that feared a new convergence on extremist grounds with the BNP and the EDL, Pearson campaigned staunchly on anti-Islam and demanded a ban on burkas from all public places and for the curtail of Sharia courts. Anti-Islam was strictly linked to anti-immigration messages that became more prominent for UKIP in the campaign leading to the 2010 General Elections. The tensions between Pearson's new message and the more traditional issues and positions of UKIP members and voters increased, creating confusion among the party and even embarrassment among lead figures. These tensions and mixed messages lead to yet another unsuccessful electoral result for the 2010 General Elections with UKIP dropping from the 16 percent of the EU elections to the 3.1 percent of votes and no MP elected in Westminster. UKIP failed again to build a solid and clear campaign with a domestic agenda, gathering less than a million votes.

The disappointing results of the 2010 General elections did actually open a new and more favourable political scenario for UKIP. The 2010 General Elections saw the Conservative Party's return to power, after 13 years. However, the Conservative Party did not achieve the 326 seats needed for a majority and entered a coalition government – the first for Britain in peace time – with the Liberal Democrats lead by Nick Clegg. Cameron, elected leader of the Conservatives in 2005, was a “socially liberal modernizer”, whose agenda focused on issues such as climate change and equal marriage, that left many Tories voters disappointed for its lack of attention towards issues such as the 2004 EU enlargement and the consequent influx of migrants in the UK, cultural and demographic change, and the EU (Bale, 2018: 267). On the

right-end of the British political spectrum, the 2010 General Elections saw also the BNP gather only the 1.9 percent and the vanishing of the imminent breakthrough of the party that Griffin had promised to his supporters. This void on the right, could be exploited by UKIP that could now present a more right-wing agenda focused not only on opposition to the EU, but also anti-immigration, the preservation of the British identity and culture, but differentiating itself from the extremism of the BNP and the moderate and liberal approach of the Conservative Party.

Moreover, the formation of a coalition government between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats – the first in over 70 years of the British parliamentary life – showed that voters would not unconditionally support the two traditional parties but that there was space for outsider parties even with the difficulties of the first-past-the-post electoral system (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 88). The two-party system could be challenged by challenger parties since both Labour and Conservatives were not able to mobilise the same support that they had for the last 60 years and this provided a further opportunity for UKIP to exploit. In addition, the effects of the 2008 financial crisis were starting to show. Surveys showed a substantial increase of the percentage of people becoming more concerned about the economy and unhappy on how the government was dealing with economic issues (Clarke et al., 2016: 141). If the Labour party's removal from Government in the 2010 General Elections after thirteen years in power, has been the first to pay its management of the financial crisis, the approval for the newly established Government on the economy dropped significantly after few months in power (Clarke et al., 2016: 142).

All these factors, despite the disappointing results of the elections, provided a new window of opportunities for UKIP that was soon exploited by Farage, who was re-elected party leader in the November party convention, and that now saw the opportunity to bring UKIP at the centre of the political scene. Farage, exploited the void on the right and expanded its agenda to include more substantially the issues of immigration, cultural identity, and economy. All those

issues, however, were used in “an opportunistic manner” as strictly linked with the issue of European Union (Usherwood, 2016: 5). The increase in the number of migrants was a direct consequence of the 2004 EU enlargements; the issue of law and order and criminality was in turn linked to this mechanism and in the end was the EU with its abolition of controls at the national borders at fault for letting criminals entering the UK; and, also the economic crisis could be resolved by withdrawing from the EU and be free “to spend our own money to save the Post Offices, car plants or power stations, or to negotiate our trade deals and determine our destiny” (UKIP, 2010: 3). The party’s messages were not only directed toward Eurosceptics, but could also appeal voters on the right more broadly (Vampa, 2021: 212). UKIP, after 2010, not only broaden its agenda, but also more consistently organised its participation not only in European Elections but also in local elections.

The new political strategy of the UKIP, the dissatisfaction of voters over how migration and economy were being dealt with by the government, the spreading rumours that Farage was talking with some Eurosceptics Conservatives MP, and the impressive electoral results that UKIP was collecting in by-elections, lead the Prime Minister to promise a referendum on the UK membership in the UE. During the now famous Bloomberg speech, in January 2013, Cameron promised that he would hold a referendum on the status of the UK within the EU, but that he was firmly convinced that the UK was better staying in the EU. (Farrell and Goldsmith, 2017: 213; Bale, 2018: 272). This promise was made with the intention to appease some of the more vocal Eurosceptics Conservatives MP and to reduce UKIP’s appeal with its voters. However, he achieved neither of these things. Tories Eurosceptics begun to pressure the Prime Minister into taking concrete action immediately, ignoring that the government was shared with the Liberal Democrats and that they would not back any of these actions. Moreover, Farage gained increase visibility in the media and portrayed the promise of the referendum as his success resulting from putting pressure on the Conservatives. Farage also increased his

focus on the migration issue and how the only way to control the increasing numbers of migrants from Eastern Europe coming into the UK was to regain control of the national borders by exiting the EU. This message resonated widely with the public as net migration began to rise and the attempt of Theresa May – the Home Secretary – to keep it under control proved to be ineffective (Bale, 2018: 273). The strength of UKIP new strategy and agenda proved successful in the 2013 in the 2013 local elections when the party gained 140 seats in local governments, with an average 26 percent of the vote (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 92). But more importantly, in 2014, UKIP elected 163 councillors in the local elections, and in the European elections, the party came first, collecting over four million votes and the 26.6 percent of the vote share, coming ahead of both the Labour and the Conservative Parties.

During the 2015 general elections, UKIP adopted a strong and effective narrative that focused strongly on exiting the EU, migration, and the link between migration and criminality. Surveys in 2015 showed that UKIP was the most trusted party on the issue of migration and, conversely, trust on Conservatives was falling (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2015: 280; Clarke et al., 2016: 142). As Bale noted, if Tory-supporting media had decided to focus more on the issue of migration, UKIP could have achieved even higher results than what in the end did (2018: 274). Migration and economy were the two most salient issues during the electoral campaign, and UKIP electoral strategy consisted in targeting seats held by the Conservative Party, hoping to exploit the growing dissatisfactions toward the Cameron's government and to gain more representation in Parliament (Cutts et al., 2017). However, the traditional limits of UKIP organisational infrastructure and lack of experienced candidates resulted in another electoral disappointment (Cutts et al., 2017; Vampa, 2021: 213).

At the 2015 general elections, UKIP received more than 3.8 million votes and the 12.6 percent of share, four time more of what it achieved in the previous General Election and making it the third most voted party. Nevertheless, these results meant that only one UKIP's

MP was re-elected – Douglas Carswell – and the most voted party was still the Conservative with a very small overall majority of 12 seats. Farage, having failed to win the seat of South Thanet from the Conservatives, offered his resignations from the leadership of the party and complained about the “flawed nature of Britain’s electoral system” since his party “gained nearly as many votes as the SNP, the Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru added (The Guardian, 11.5.15). Farage withdraw his resignation only four days later, but the party experienced tensions, especially at the leadership level, with rumours about Carswell probably leaving the party and a new leadership contest being called by the party’s treasurer. (The Guardian, 14.5.15).

The party’s internal turmoil was kept under control because of the new imminent electoral effort: the referendum for the status of the UK in the EU. Farage’s words were very clear on the matter:

“I tell you where this leaves UKIP, going into this referendum campaign – unlike the other parties – united, 100% united We have, for over 20 years, fought hard to make the EU an issue. We were told we were the mad men from the hills for even considering whether Britain could have a future outside of political union and we now have a referendum on this subject. We are united, the other parties are very, very divided” (The Guardian, 20.5.16)

The results of the 2015 General Elections and the victory of the Conservatives opened a new set of opportunities to UKIP to established once again its centrality. The victory of the Conservative Party meant that a referendum for the status of the UK within the EU was to be held. The Conservative manifesto had among its provisions the promise to held a “straight in-out referendum of the European Union by the end of 2017” (Conservative Party, 2015: 32). Cameron, the re-elected PM, begun to negotiate a new settlement regarding the UK in the EU

with the other 27 EU leaders with the aim to provide UK voters with a reformed status of its country in the EU that could convince them to vote to remain within the EU. The negotiations were concluded in February 2016 and Cameron got significant concessions from the other EU leaders on issues such as no legal commitment to further political integration, the exemption of the UK to fund euro bailouts, limitations to access to benefits to EU workers, and more power to block EU Commission proposal (Hobolt, 2016; Menon and Salter, 2016). Cameron's deal however, did not get support neither from his Conservatives MPs, nor the press, and eventually the it did not play any substantial role in the referendum campaign (Hobolt, 2016: 1261). Farage immediately highlighted how the "disastrous deal won't bring down migrant numbers" (Guardian, 10.2.16). As soon as Cameron's new deal was announced, so was the date of the referendum: 23 June 2016.

The year leading to the EU referendum saw UKIP campaigning for the referendum under the umbrella group Grassroots Out (GO). Although GO was not designed as the official campaign for the Leave side – the official one was Vote Leave – the campaign mobilised thousands of activists and grassroots associations (Clarke et al, 2017: 17). Farage led the campaign with the slogan "I want my country back" and kept arguing for the need to regain control of the borders to limit immigration and re-establish the supremacy of British laws

Table 18: UKIP, electoral results 2009-2019

Year	Elections	Votes	%
2009	EU Elections	2,498,226	16
2010	General Elections	919,546	3.1
2014	EU Elections	4,376,635	26.6
2015	General Elections	3,881,099	12.6
2017	General Elections	594,068	1.8
2019	EU Elections	554,463	3.2
2019	General Elections	22,817	0.07

(Hobolt, 2016: 1262; Menon and Salter, 2016: 1311; Clarke et al., 2017: 17). On the morning of the 24 June 2016, the results of the referendum were announced and the Leave side won the referendum with the 51.9% of votes.

5.1.4. After Brexit. The decline of the party (2016-2019)

Farage claimed the 23 June 2016 was Britain's "Independence Day" (The Guardian 24.6.2016). The main goal of UKIP since its establishment 23 years earlier was finally reached. The result of the referendum represented an indisputably success for the party, even if it meant losing its primary core demand. After Brexit, UKIP began a long, and unsuccessful, process of reconfiguration that resulted in the party trying to build a new political offer for its supporters and in doing so, moving further to the right of the political spectrum (Davidson and Berezin, 2018; Klein and Pirro, 2020).

After the referendum, the long process to implement the result begun. Before the final act that saw the definitive exit of the UK from the EU, the entire British political system underwent major turmoil and the same happened with UKIP. Few weeks after the referendum, in a press conference, Farage announced its resignation from the leadership of the party, stating that after wanting "my country back, now I want my life back" (The Guardian, 4.7.16). He also stated that he would remain a member of the party and that his role would be to "steer UKIP away from the temptations of becoming an angry nativist party" (Ibid). His effort would not be successful, as the 5 different leaders of the party that would follow one another over the next 3 years all took steps in that direction.

Immediately after Brexit, Cameron resigned and a new government under the leadership of Theresa May succeeded but it stayed in office just less than a year. In June 2017, a new general election was called by May with the hope of receiving a stronger mandate, and a stronger majority, to enforce the Hard Brexit that she had in mind (Heath and Goodwin, 2017).

The electoral results, however, saw the Conservatives lose thirteen seats and the majority. May had to lead a minority government with the external support of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

The snap election saw the “collapse” of UKIP who received just 1.8 % of the vote (Heath and Goodwin, 2017: 2). The party, led by Paul Nuttall, arrived at the elections without his only ever elected MP – Carswell left the party and run as an independent – as well as the other previous MP Reckless – who left few weeks after his colleague. Internal divisions, a weak leadership, and without a clear message, resulted in UKIP collecting less than 600,000 votes, the worst electoral result since 2001. After the disastrous election, Nuttall resigned and a new leadership contest took place. This time, the two candidates represented the two opposing factions of the party: on one side Anne Marie Waters wanted to transform the party into a fully-fledged far-right party, opened to members of the BNP and EDL and with an agenda focused on cultural issues and anti-Islam sentiments. On the other, Henry Bolton represented the traditional Eurosceptic faction of the party and run the leadership contest with the aim of making UKIP central in the process of implementing the result of the Brexit referendum (Hanna and Busher, 2019: 59). Bolton narrowly won the leadership election and UKIP spent the next few months mainly focused on the issue of Brexit and its implementation.

Bolton leadership, though, lasted less than a year. In February 2018, the party passed a vote of no confidence to remove the leader and a new leadership election was held in April. But first, UKIP went through a financial scandal that was avoided last minute by the interim-leadership of Gerard Batten, who raised £300k in few weeks (The Guardian 3.4.18). After his election as leader of the party, Batten knew that UKIP was in troubled waters from an ideological, organisational, and financial point of views and stated that he would be happy if his party would take between “5% and 7% of the vote where it was fighting seat” and the reasons why his expectation was set so low, were that “number one, is an awful lot of people

Table 19: UKIP leaders 1997-present

Leader name	In office	Out of office
Alan Sked	September 1993	July 1997
Michael Holmes	September 1997	January 2000
Jeffrey Titford	January 2000	October 2002
Roger Knapman	October 2002	September 2006
Nigel Farage	September 2006	November 2009
Lord Pearson	November 2009	September 2010
Nigel Farage	November 2010	September 2016
Diane James	September 2016	October 2016
Paul Nuttall	November 2016	June 2017
Henry Bolton	September 2017	February 2018
Gerard Batten	April 2018	June 2019
Richard Braine	August 2019	October 2019
Freddy Vachha	June 2020	September 2020
Neil Hamilton	September 2020	in office

thought UKIP’s job was done after the referendum, and secondly, we spent the last two years shooting ourselves in the foot” (The Guardian, 1.5.18). Batten’s attempt to renovate the party resulted in its transformation into a fully-fledged far-right party focused primarily on an anti-Islam agenda – Batten defined Islam “a death cult” (The Guardian, 1.5.18)– and with closer ties with street-based extreme-right organisation and far-right social media influencers.

Under Batten’s leadership, UKIP slightly increase his membership, after it fell dramatically under Bolton’s time, however, most of the party MEPs and historic leaders left the party. Following Batten’s appointment of Stephen Yaxley-Lennon– founder of the EDL and far-right activist – in November 2018, Nigel Farage left UKIP after 25 years, claiming that the party was now “unrecognisable because of the “fixation” with the anti-Muslim policies of its leader” (The Guardian, 4.12.18).

Three different sets of elections took place in 2019 and all three saw UKIP perform poorly. In the local elections, the party lost over the 80% of the seats it was defending, and at European Elections, it collected less than 4% and no MEP elected. After the disastrous EU

elections, Batten resigned and a new leadership contest was called. This time, the newly elected leader was Richard Braine, who held similar political views as Batten and who tried to appoint the latter as his deputy leader. Braine leadership too lasted few weeks and UKIP took part to the December 2019 general elections with the party completely imploded due to infighting, the exodus of all the senior leaders, and pessimistic polls (The Guardian, 30.11.19). UKIP's performance at the general elections was the worst in the party history – collecting fewer than 23,000 votes and 0.1% share – relegating the party at the margins of the political system and its irrelevance on British politics few weeks before the definitive exit of the UK from the EU on the 31 January 2020.

5.2. The English Defence League. Emergence and decline of the organisation

5.2.1. *From Luton to the streets of England*

The English Defence league is an extreme-right movement organisation that emerged in 2009. In March 2009, at Luton airport, members of a local Islamist organisation protested against British soldiers coming back from Iraq. Following this episode, local anti-islamist activists organised a counter protest (Jackson and Feldman, 2011: 12; Barlett and Litter, 2011: 10; Busher, 2016: 18). Following this spontaneous event, a variety of small organisations with similar interests, such as March for England – a patriotic group with links with the hooligan scene in London – and the Welsh Defence League – a patriotic and anti-islamist group – coalesced together into what from June 2009 took the name of English Defence League (EDL) (Copsey, 2010: 9).

After a demonstration held in Birmingham the 8 August 2009, the man who was believed to be the leader of the organisation, Paul Ray, left due to the organisation evolving into an extremist one. Ray claimed he made the decision after it was decided to held the Birmingham on the 8 August, a date with a highly symbolic value for the extreme-right as the date 8/8

represent the eighth letter of the alphabet: HH, Heil Hitler. Ray claimed: “It was a pivotal moment, not just for me pulling out but the movement as a whole because going out onto the streets in protest on 8/8 was always going to bring Nazis onto the streets, which it did” (as quoted in Copsey, 2010:13).

Following Ray’s departure, another figure emerged as the leader of the organisation: a then-masked activist who claimed to be called Tommy Robinson. After the rally in Birmingham, 35 people were arrested and Robinson spoke publicly to defend the public image of the EDL as a non-racist, non-violent, and not extremist organisation. In the first few instances he always spoke with his face covered and using the pseudonym because he claimed that showing his face would put him in physical danger since he lived in a neighbourhood with a high number of Islamist extremists (Jackson and Feldman, 2011: 46). However, when his true identity has been exposed in 2010, and his true name – Stephen Yaxley-Lennon – disclosed, it emerged that he had been a member of the BNP, of a football hooligan firm – Man in Gear – and that he had already been sentenced to 12 months in jail for attacking a policeman (Copsey, 2010: 13; Jackson and Feldman, 2011: 46). Yaxley-Lennon’s right hand in the organisation was his cousin, Kevin Carroll. Carroll as well had a very similar history of activism in far-right organisation and convictions for violence (Jackson and Feldman, 2011: 48). Yaxley-Lennon was the more vocal leader, while Carroll represented the more moderate figure. However, missing the EDL a formal structure, even these two leaders were often referred by activists as being spokesmen, with no more decisional power than the other leaders of the regional divisions (Pilkington 2016:59). Beside these two prominent figures, the EDL has been described as having a “flat structure” (Pilkington 2016: 43), typical of a social movement organisation, with no formal membership, and with different perception of what being a member is.

Since its foundation, the EDL has presented itself as a single-issue street movement whose main aim was to raise the issue of Islamism extremism and call the government to take actions against the increasing threat posed by Islam to the British culture (EDL, 2012). During the first months of its activity, the EDL managed to organise over 50 demonstrations, throughout the country, mobilising in the streets large numbers of people on the issue of anti-Islam and British identity. At the beginning of 2011, Barlett and Litter approximated that 25,000 people participated at least one demonstration organised by the EDL, but that no more than 5,000 members and 750 hard core activists made the group (2011; 14). Moreover, from 2010 a division of the EDL was present in any major English and Welsh city (Busher, 2016: 21). From the end of 2011 a decline in the number of demonstrations and participants has been observed. In fact, if the EDL managed to organise demonstrations with over 2000 participants throughout 2010, from 2011 these numbers dropped significantly since an average of 600-1000 people attended EDL demonstration. (Copsey, 2010: 27; Busher, 2016: 22). A resurgence of its activities has been observed after the murder of British soldier Lee Rigby in the streets of London. Soon after the terror attack, the EDL organised protests and demonstrations in the London and across England and the group seemed to have gained new momentum.

However, on October 2013 Yaxley-Lennon and Carroll left the EDL following a conference organised by the think-tank Quilliam foundation. The unexpected resignation of the leaders came as a surprise to local leaders and grassroots militants, just when the movement was regaining traction and support (Pilkington, 2016: 41). Moreover, the words used by Yaxley-Lennon in a BBC interview to explain why he decided to leave the organisation came across as a bit of a shock, as he stated that the EDL was now home to extreme elements (Pilkington, 2016: 41).

Even if the resignation of the two leaders represented a strong blow to the life of the organisation, the EDL managed to remain active and even if the number of demonstrations and

the number of participants decreased in the following years, the organisation did not disappear. The organisation continued to organise demonstration against Islam and to disseminate its ideas and content through its website and its Facebook page. As the data I have collected will show, the EDL continued to organise its own demonstration, but also to join protests organised by other right-wing organisations and parties, such as the protests against Yaxley-Lennon's arrest and the Brexit protests. In 2017 the group was banned by Twitter, that closed the EDL profile page and in 2019 the same happened to its Facebook page. These two even represented a major setback in the life of the organisation that through those two social media organised its supporters and disseminated its content. A year later, in 2020, also the official website was closed.

5.2.2. The decline of the EDL

Different reasons have been advanced in the literature to explain the decline of the EDL. Some accounts focus on the resignation of the two leaders, Robinson and Carroll, in October 2013, as a determinant of the EDL decline (Goodwin et al. 2016: 5, Pilkington 2016: 41). Others have pointed to the internal conflicts over ideological and tactical issues (Busher 2016:130), while others focused on the structural characteristics of the EDL and the inadequacy of its strategy of self-governance (Morrow and Meadowcroft 2018: 12). Finally, some scholars have highlighted the increasing efficacy of policing measures adopted by the police (Allchorn 2018: 22). I believe that is the mix of all these aspects that can better explain the reasons for the organisation decline.

The departure of Yaxley-Lennon and Carroll from the organisation left supporters feeling leaderless and even if a rotating leadership was put into place by the regional organisers, none of the regional remaining leaders had the same appeal on the supporters as Yaxley-Lennon and Carroll (Pilkington 2016, 45). Even if the two activists left the organisation, they remained the

point of reference of the EDL supporters. From the ethnographic work of Pilkington, it emerged how Yaxley-Lennon in particular remained the symbolic leader of the movement, praised by EDL supporters as a down-to-earth leader able to speak the truth to established politicians (Pilkington 2016, 45).

The lack of any movement infrastructure and the heavy influence Yaxley-Lennon had on the organisation has been advanced by Morrow and Meadowcroft as the reason for EDL's decline (2018). The "indiscriminate recruitment" and high number of participants in the demonstrations with low levels of commitments to the organisation coupled with the lack of self-governance allowed the quick entry but also exit of members. (Morrow and Meadowcroft, 2018). They argued that on the one hand, the absence of discipline in the streets scared away activists that hoped for a more non-violent and less extremist organisation. While on the other, the persistence of multiple affiliations of EDL activists in hooligan groups and other far-right organisations has allowed the creation of tensions and rivalry within the organisation. However, while these tensions played a role in the decline of the organisation, the presence of multiple affiliations is a common trait of movement organisations (della Porta and Diani, 2006: 127) and what allowed the organisation to survive, even with very limited number. The presence of multiple affiliations and shared memberships among EDL activists allowed the group to maintain a presence in the streets and join the protests of other far-right groups in 2017 and 2018 with the mobilisation in favour of Brexit and Yaxley-Lennon, when the organisation was far from the levels of mobilisation of its first period.

Busher advanced another reason for the decline of the organisation: the difficulty to build a collective identity among the militants once the number of demonstrations and participants to demonstrations began falling (2016, 152). A "tactical impasse" arose once the demonstrations began to fade in numbers and participants: the inability to keep attracting media and political attention led to more difficulties in attract new recruits as well as keep the moral

high for the few that continued attending the demonstrations, contributing to falling out from activism (Busher, 2016: 152). The importance of maintaining alive the collective identity of the EDL is a crucial point in assessing the whole life of the organisation and how important the demonstrations are for fuelling this identity. Through big, street protests, the EDL managed to attract media and political attention, and these events have also been crucial in favouring the creation of a collective identity among activists. Through chants, symbols, slogans, and clashes with opponents, activists have built and maintained their collective identity. When the demonstrations begin to fade, also the sense of community, commitment, and ability to attract new members faded (Busher 2016, 155). However, sub-group identity, mainly regional and local branch association, and previous affiliations – such as anti-jihadist groups and football groups - continued to play a role in the mobilisation strategies of the EDL (Busher, 2016: 160, Plikington, 2016: 55).

Finally, another reason that can be advanced in explaining EDL's decline is linked to the one that has been given in explaining its emergence, the competition of other organisations of the far-right. Goodwin and Dennison argued that the EDL provided a new outlet for the disappointed supporters of the BNP, dissatisfied with the new turn of the party, which removed marches and street protests from its repertoires (2018: 526). The EDL became the new home for far-right supporters frustrated with the poor electoral results of the BNP and at the same time of those concerned with the threat posed by Islam to British values, an issue that when the EDL was founded remained outside the political agendas of the established political parties. However, the choice to limit its repertoire of actions to street-based activities can also be interpreted as one of the causes of its decline, as activists became frustrated with the inability of the movement to have an impact. Moreover, the EDL did not remain for long the only political organisation that put anti-Islam in its political agenda. The broadening of UKIP's political offer to include anti-Islam positions starting from 2010, provided a credible alternative to disaffected

EDL activists. Studies have shown how EDL supporters were more likely to vote for UKIP than any other party (Goodwin et al. 2016: 10) and the presence of a credible and increasingly successfully institutional party provided a new home for EDL members.

This last point will be more thoroughly investigated in the remaining of the chapter that now turns to analyse the interactions that have occurred between the two organisations in order to understand when these interactions took place and how these have affected UKIP and EDL's frames, actions, and organisations.

5.3. UKIP and EDL interactions in the frames dimension

The analysis of the interactions in the frames dimension follows a similar structure as the one carried out for the Italian chapter: first, the analysis of the data collected through the PCA for both organisations is carried out, next the analysis of the data collected through the analysis of UKIP's manifestos and EDL website is discussed. The analysis is carried out with the aim of testing the working hypothesis set out in the theoretical framework that maintained that: parties and movements are more likely to be closer in the frame dimension when topics that they own, such as immigration and law and order, become more visible and when the party is electorally weak.

The claims have been retrieved through the digital archive Factiva and all news articles, for the period 2009-2019, from the daily newspaper The Guardian with mentions of UKIP (and UK independence party) and EDL (and English Defence League) have been analysed. 972 claims have been collected and analysed, 860 claims for UKIP and 112 for the EDL.

From an aggregate level, the data of the PCA show how both actors devoid the majority of their attention to the issue for which they both are well known: the EU for UKIP and the cultural issue for the EDL, and in particular Islam. Conversely from what emerged in the Italian

Table 20: UKIP, total claims by issue focus 2009-2019

Issue Type	Number of claims	Percentage
Socio-economic	83	10
Cultural	78	9
Europe and EU	334	39
(anti) Migration	99	11
Law & Order	15	2
Organisation Identity	196	23
Other	55	6
N	860	100

Table 21: EDL, total claims by issue focus 2009-2019

Issue Type	Number of claims	Percentage
Socio-economic	2	2
Cultural	79	70
Europe and EU	4	3
(anti) Migration	1	1
Law & Order	1	1
Organisation Identity	22	20
Other	3	3
N	112	100

case-study, the two UK organisations are both single-issue actors. It is important to recall that in data collection only the predominant issue has been identified and recorded.

This means that the claims may be dealing with more issues at the same time, but that from the context of the wider article only the main issue has been recorded. The analysis of the frames used by the actors helps shed light on the other issues that the actors are engaging with in connection to their main one. For the UK case study this is even more important than the Italian one since the single-issue nature of the two organisations. Therefore, the analysis of their claims and the frames used shows how opportunistic is their engagement with other issues and how their engagement stems from their core single-issue identity instead than a coherent political ideology.

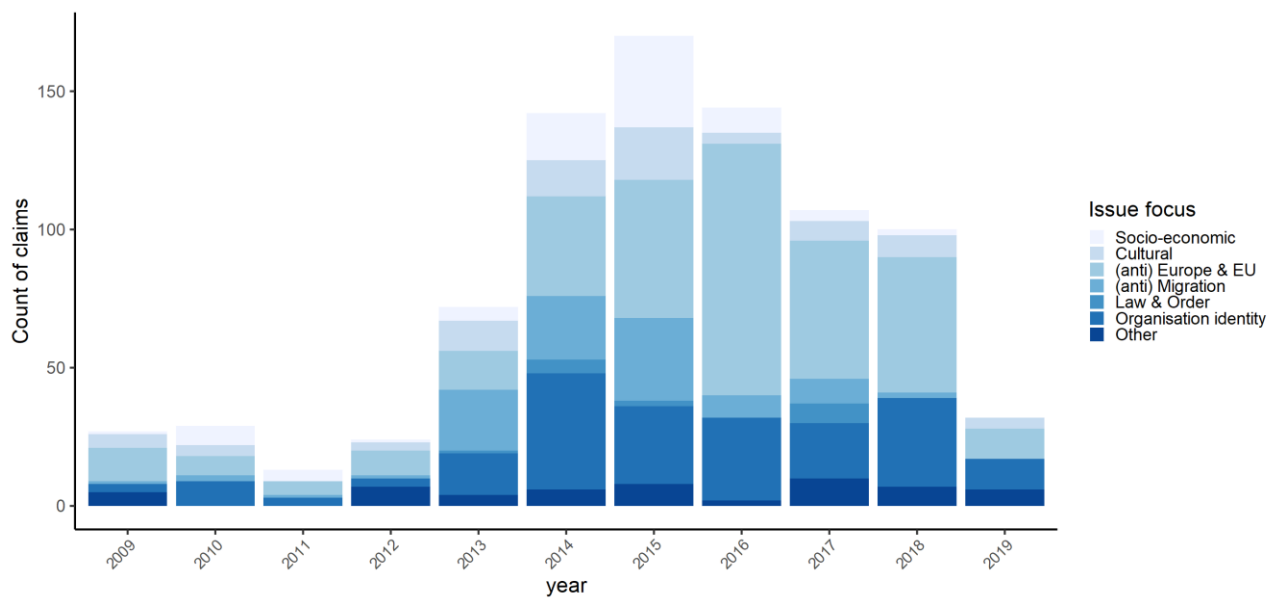
In order to understand how the focus of the issues changes over time and when the relations in the frame dimension are closer between the two actors, I will focus more

specifically on the two issues that are of the core of the two organisations – Europe and the EU and Cultural. This is strictly linked to the single-issue nature of the organisation. The predominant focus on these issues, and consequently the scarce number of claims collected for the others, makes the analysis of the claims on the other issues not feasible. The graphs with all the claims per issue can be found in the appendix. How the actors focus on issues such as migration, law-and-order, and organisation identity, will be discussed in the second part of this section, through the analysis of their manifestos and documents.

5.3.1. UKIP's discourses and frames

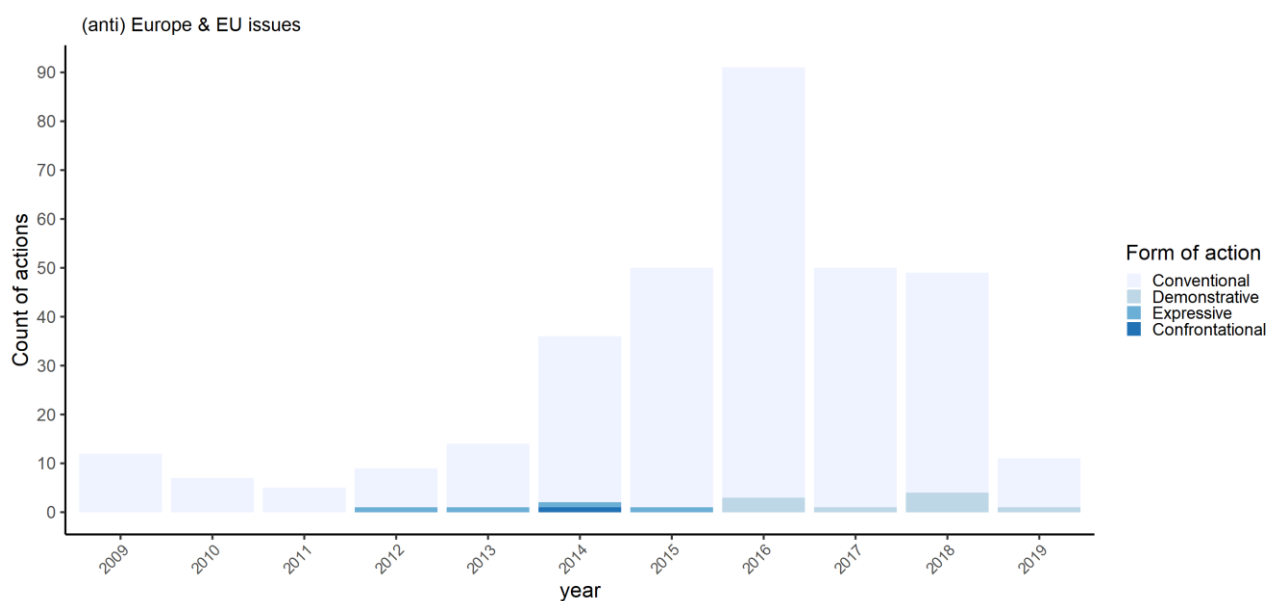
The PCA of UKIP during the 11-year period I have analysed shows how the biggest focus for the party has consistently been on the issue of Europe and the EU. In the first years of the analysis, 2009-2012, few claims have been collected due to the fact that UKIP was still experiencing difficulties to establish itself as a visible and consistent actor in the public debate (see Ford and Goodwin, 2014: ch 2). If the results of the 2010 General Elections (GE) for UKIP left many voters and members of the party feeling demoralised, Farage saw actually an opening of opportunities for his party. By expanding the party's political agenda and strategy to include a more coherent set of policies and contesting local and by-elections, UKIP increased his political weight in both the public debate and the British political landscape. Moreover, the 2010 GE saw the British National Party (BNP) gather only the 1.9 percent and the vanishing of the imminent breakthrough of the party that Griffin had promised to his supporters. This void on the right, was exploited by UKIP that offered a new agenda focused not only on opposition to the EU, but also anti-immigration, the preservation of the British identity and culture, but differentiating itself from the extremism of the BNP and the moderate and liberal approach of the Conservative Party.

Figure 20: UKIP, Issue focus by year 2009-2019



It is in the 2010-2013 period that UKIP builds a consistent presence in the political mainstream and finally manages to make its voice heard. From 2013 the number of claims recorded spikes also because of the increased visibility that the issue of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU gains in the British debate. During the famous Bloomberg speech in January 2013, Cameron

Figure 21: UKIP, (anti) Europe and EU issues by year 2009-2019



promised that he would hold a referendum on the status of the UK within the EU, but that he was firmly convinced that the UK was better staying in the EU. (Farrell and Goldsmith, 2017: 212; Bale, 2018: 272). This promise was made with the intention to appease some of the more vocal Eurosceptics Conservatives MP and to reduce UKIP's appeal with its voters. But his plan was not successful. Tories Eurosceptics began to pressure the Prime Minister into taking concrete action immediately, ignoring that the government was shared with the Liberal Democrats and that they would not back any of these actions. However, this resulted in UKIP gaining visibility in the media and Farage portraying the promise of the referendum as his success resulting from putting pressure on the Conservatives. Farage also increased his focus on the migration issue and how the only way to control the increasing numbers of migrants from Eastern Europe coming into the UK was to regain control of the national borders by exiting the EU. This message resonated widely with the public as net migration began to rise and the attempt of the government to control the phenomenon proved to be ineffective (Bale, 2018: 273). As the data from the Eurobarometer show, the issue of immigration became the

Table 22: UK - Immigration issue (2009-2019)

(Ranking in the Eurobarometer survey and percentage of respondent believing it is the most important issue their country faces)

Immigration	Rank	Percentage
2009	2nd	30%
2010	3rd	26%
2011	3rd	24%
2012	3rd	24%
2013	2nd	33%
2014	1st	38%
2015	1st	44%
2016	2nd	25%
2017	4th	20%
2018	5th	14%
2019	5th	27%

Source: Elaboration of the author based on the standard Eurobarometer 2009-2019 (Eurobarometer, 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019)

most felt issue for the public, with over 30% of respondent believing it was the most pressing issue in 2013 and reaching the 44% 2015.

In the electoral campaign toward the 2013 local and 2014 EU elections, UKIP's focused mostly on how inextricably linked the issues of migration and EU were between each other: "We can't have any control over who comes to Britain all the while we're members of the European Union and it's as simple as that" and how the leader of the Conservatives was not the right one to deal with these issues "The reasons the Tories won't win a majority at the next general election is not because of Europe, it's because their own voters don't see David Cameron as a Conservative" (The Guardian, 2.3.14). Farage also clearly stated how the party needed a more coherent political offer, but that it will provide its voters with one only after the elections:

"The challenge for Ukip is after the European elections to put a manifesto together that is not like the last one that resembled War and Peace, that has some numbers and will add up, and we will be working on that. It's coming but not coming until after the European elections. Because over the next few days we want to focus on who governs the country and why cannot we get back control of our borders" (The Guardian, 2.3.14).

UKIP's strategy proved to be a successful one. In the 2013 local elections the party gained 140 seats in local governments, with an average 26 percent of the vote (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 92). In 2014, elected 163 councillors in the local elections, and in the European elections, the party came first, collecting over four million votes and the 26.6 percent of the vote share.

After the 2014 EU elections, UKIP's focus remained predominantly on the issue of EU. However, more space is also dedicated to socio-economic issues – mainly reforms of the NHS and social housing reforms – as well as cultural issues – such as the preservation of English pub, smoking, and rejection of political correctness. Migration as well received increasing

attention and Farage linked to any kind of issue. Following an event where the leader arrived late, he blamed the fact on migration:

“It took me six hours and 15 minutes in the car to get here. It should have taken three-and-a-half to four. That has nothing to do with professionalism. What it does have to do with is a country in which the population is going through the roof, chiefly because of open-door immigration, and the fact the M4 is not as navigable as it used to be” (The Guardian, 8.12.14).

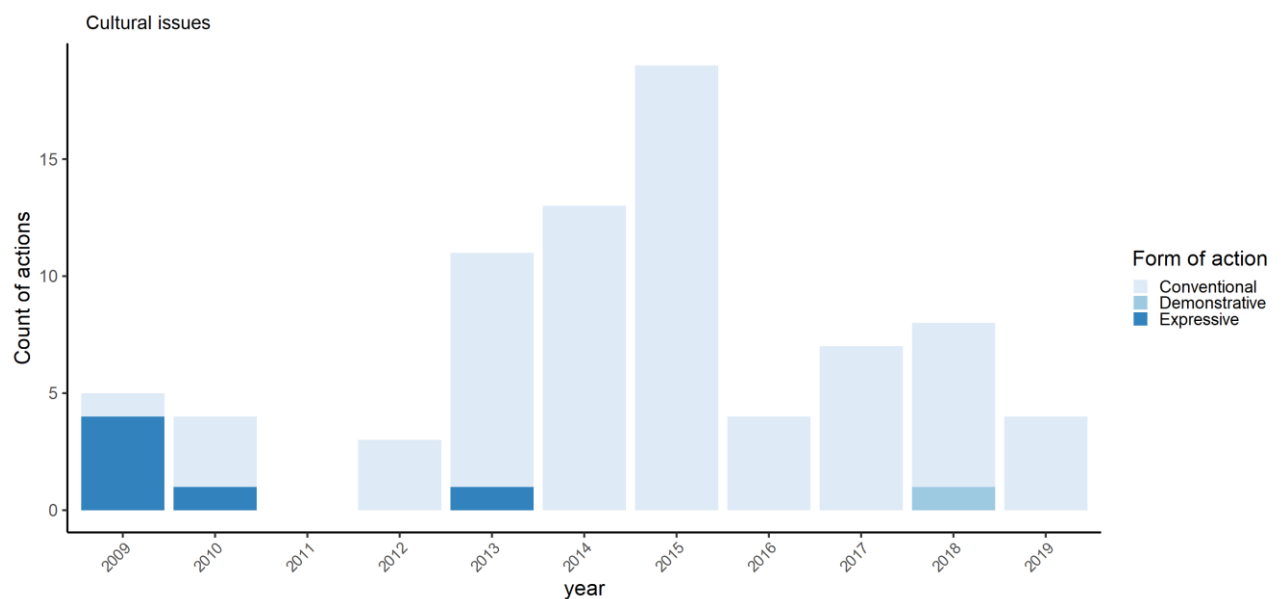
Another example is how Farage managed to link migration to the NHS being overworked:

“We should do what America does, what Australia does, what every country in the world does. We want people who have trade and skills. But we do not want people with criminal records and we cannot afford to have people with life threatening diseases. We have leading cancer experts in Britain saying the burden now of treating overseas people is leading to huge shortages in the system. I do not think those (immigrants) with life threatening diseases should be treated by NHS” (The Guardian, 10.10.14).

However, the presence of the UK in the EU was, in Farage opinion, what caused the problem of migration. In the same interview about the NHS, he also stated that “They [skilled non-EU citizens] are discriminated against because we have an open door into Europe. Today, if you’re an Indian engineer, say, your chances of admission are limited.” (The Guardian, 10.10.14). The opposition to EU remained the overarching issue that shaped how all of the other issues were being dealt with by the party. This kind of frames and focus were used throughout the period that led to the Brexit referendum.

Following Brexit, UKIP’s main aim was accomplished and it struggled to build a new identity and to find a new message. If much of the period 2016-2018 was still dedicated to get

Figure 22: UKIP, Cultural issues by year



Brexit accomplished, the struggle to find a unifying leadership and message resulted in the party losing most of its electoral strength, as well as political relevance in the British political system. Following Farage departure in September 2016, 4 different leaders have guided the party over the next three years. One thing, however, they had all in common, their efforts to shift even more to the right the party and the growing importance that the issue of Islam gained in their agenda. The analysis of UKIP’s claims dedicated to the cultural issue show how from 2017, their claims are almost exclusively focused on Islam and the threat it poses to the British cultural identity. Before 2017, the majority of the claims on the cultural issue focused on opposition to same-sex marriages, the preservation of the “pub culture”, the freedom to smoke, and the preservation of grammar schools. Anti-Islam was present, but it was not the central pillar of UKIP’s discourses.

The 2012 campaign against same-sex marriages was an example of how UKIP used cultural issues and still managed to link them with the EU:

“David Cameron's proposal has the potential to rip apart the traditional rural Tory vote. While Ukip wholly respects the rights of gay people to have civil partnerships, we feel the prime minister's proposals will present an affront to millions of people in this country for

whom this will be the final straw. The division between city and rural is absolutely huge. Ukip is not a one-issue party, But the gay marriage case is closely interwoven with the European court of human rights. Ukip will be seen to be a party campaigning not just about who governs Britain but about how we think that Britain should be governed." (The Guardian, 12.12.12).

The same type of discourses, the overarching EU theme as the basis for framing all other issues, can be observed in UKIP's opposition to limit smoking: "the amount of money spent trying to stop people smoking is massive and yet when the market provides an alternative to tobacco the EU tries to legislate against it" (The Guardian, 15.8.13).

However, following Brexit, the total of the claims in the meta-issue cultural are about the issue of Islam. All UKIP's leaders that have succeeded one another at the top of the party have spoken against the threat Islam posed to British culture and how to limit this problem. From Paul Nuttall's war to ban face veil (The Guardian, 23.4.17), to Anne Marie Waters – one of the frontrunners for the Ukip leadership in 2017 – whose manifesto asked that UKIP "publicly acknowledge that Islamic culture is simply not compatible with our own" (The Guardian, 7.8.17), to Gerard Batten's belief that Islam is a "death cult" (The Guardian, 18. 2.18).

The increased focus on Islam took place when UKIP, while searching for a new unifying strategy for its electorate, strengthened its collaboration with the far-right movement sector, where the EDL was still present. As will be discussed in the analysis of the actions and organisational dimensions, the interactions between UKIP and far-right activists and groups under Batten's leadership brought the party increasingly near the positions of these organisations also terms of frames and discourses. An example is Batten's obsession with Muslims grooming gangs, a theme that has been the central one for the EDL and the main theme of its demonstrations. Batten claimed that grooming gangs, are "one of the greatest social

scandals in English history” and that they have been covered up for year due to “political correctness and the fear of identifying the vast majority of the perpetrators as Muslims” (The Guardian, 21.9.18).

As it will be shown in the rest of the chapter, the shift of UKIP’s focus toward anti-Islam and collaborations with extreme-right organisations did not prove successful in the electoral arena and contributed to the majority of UKIP’s senior members and activists to leave the party.

5.3.2. EDL’s discourses and frames

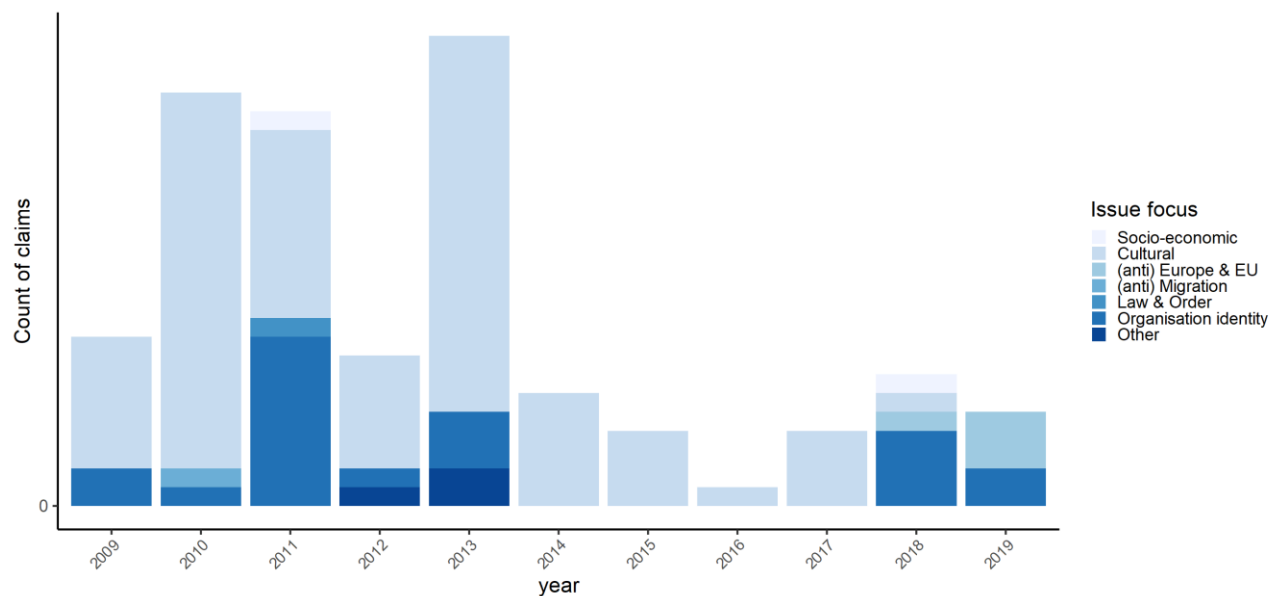
Turning to the analysis of EDL claims, the graph below shows the overwhelming predominance of the cultural issue, and more specifically Islam, in their claims. The organisation itself has claimed that

“the EDL stands opposed to the creeping Islamisation of our country, because intimately related to the spread of Islamic religion is the political desire to implement an undemocratic alternative to our cherished way of life: the sharia.” (EDL, 2012).

In terms of varieties of claims and frames, the PCA of the EDL offers almost none. All their messages are directed toward the problem of Islam and how it is linked with issues such as British cultural identity, the building of new mosques, terrorism, migration, and occasionally animal welfare.

The vast majority of their claims in the period 2009-2013 are directed toward the terrorist threat that Islamic terrorism represent for the UK and defending themselves from being defined as a racist organisation. As one of organiser of one of the first protests that took place in Birmingham in August 2009, stated: “We would march alongside Muslims and Jews who are against militant Islam. There were none on Saturday and an all-white group doesn't look good. But they can join the EDL as long as they accept an English way of life. It is the people who threaten with bombs and violence and threaten and bomb our troops - they don't belong here.”

Figure 23: EDL, Issue focus by year 2009-2019



(The Guardian, 11.8.09). The tensions between trying to present themselves as a non-racist and non-violent organisation and then organising demonstrations specifically in neighbourhoods with high concentrations of Muslims have often led to violence and rioting with counter-protesters and police. Moreover, in different occasions EDL marches have been attended by activists wearing Nazi flags and performed Nazi salutes (The Guardian, 19.10.09).

By adopting the approach used by Froio to analyse the French online far-right network, I have coded for each claim, if the EDL adopts a cultural frame – when Islam “is primarily seen as a threat to the cultural homogeneity of the natives’ country and Muslims are judged unable (or unwilling) to assimilate into the culture of the host country” – or a religious frame – in which the organisation stresses the “religion-related characteristics of the national community, such as state-religion relationships” (Froio, 2018: 699)¹. From the analysis emerged how the majority, the 58 percent of the claims on Islam, adopt a cultural frame, the 21 percent a religious one, and the remaining 21 percent of the claims did not have a frame.

¹ In her work, Froio uses also the Race frame, “it emphasizes primordial characteristics of the national community to create antagonism between the ingroup and the outgroup”. However, none of the claims collected used an openly racist frame.

The cultural frame is used when Islam is represented as incompatible with the British way of life and the inability of Muslims to integrate within the community where they live is for them proof of this. From this point, derives their strategy to target neighbourhoods and towns where large Muslims community are located. The religious frame, on the other hand, is used in the 21 percent of the claims collected. The adoption of this frame is more evident when the organisation mobilised against the East London Mosque in August 2011, an area they believed was “subject to sharia law” (The Guardian, 7.9.13). Another example of the adoption of the religious frame can be observed when the organisation invited the controversial US preacher Terry Jones to their rally in Luton called “the evils of Islam” to speak “against the evils and destructiveness of Islam in support of the continued fight against the Islamification of England and Europe” (The Guardian, 13.12.10).

A change in the otherwise single focus of the claims of the organisation can be observed in 2011, almost half the claims recorded concerned the organisation identity and this is in relation to the terrorist attack that took place in Oslo and Utoya carried out by Anders Breivik. The EDL was in the spotlight after this atrocious attack because of the online links that emerged between the organisation and the perpetrator. The EDL tried to distance themselves from Breivik’s views and manifesto and tried to underplay the fact that he had contacts with the leaders of the EDL and explicitly refers to them in its manifesto (The Guardian, 26.7.11).

Another change takes place in the last two years of the analysis, the ones that are the most interesting in terms of exploring the relations between UKIP and the EDL. It is in these years that the organisation tries to diversify its message and engages also with the issue of Brexit and free speech. The EDL saw Brexit as a “catalyst for change in the UK” and in the last two years of the analysis, 2018 and 2019, it has mobilised in the streets for the first time on an issue that was not linked to Islam. How this issue has been framed is better discussed on the next section, where the analysis of the party document is discussed.

From the analysis of the claims of the EDL it emerged not much variety on the issues being dealt with by the organisation and the only significant change can be traced in how the organisation took up the issue of the EU during Brexit. This is one of the points of contact between the organisation and UKIP as the mobilisation of the EDL on this issue will take place at the side of the party in the streets of London.

5.3.3. Frames in UKIP's manifestos and EDL's official statements

The analysis of the frame dimension is complemented also for the UK case study by the analysis carried out on UKIP electoral manifestos and EDL mission statements. For UKIP, four electoral manifestos have been analysed, while, for the EDL, two mission statements that were presented on their website and retrieved through waybackmachine have been examined.

For the UK case study, as for the Italian one, I have carried out the content analysis of UKIP and EDL documents by adopting the same categories used for the PCA so to maintain consistence in the analysis and comparability with the results of the PCA. Therefore, the analysis of the party and movement organisation documents is presented also here by the breakdown in percentage of the quasi-sentences identified for the seven categories that have guided the whole empirical analysis.

The aim of the document analysis is to uncover if the same patterns found in the PCA for the discourses of the actors under investigation hold also in the documents produced by the actors themselves and if the changes overtime uncovered in the previous analysis can be observed also here.

The table below contains an overview of the four manifestos analysed for UKIP. Starting with UKIP, the table below shows the issue focus for each of the seven categories for the 4 electoral manifestos. Although the analysis carried out in this dissertation considers the period 2009-2019, the last electoral manifesto that has been analysed for UKIP is the 2020 one.

Table 23: UKIP's electoral manifestos 2009-2020

Party	UKIP	UKIP	UKIP	UKIP
Year	2010	2015	2017	2020
Name Manifesto	Empowering people	Believe in Britain	Britain Together	Save Britain
Number of pages	16	76	64	42
Number of words	7986	28168	25768	13810
Number of quasi-sentences	484	1038	930	660

This document, however, was already prepared and presented to the public for the December 2019 general elections (BBC, 2.12.19). Therefore, it has been included in the analysis in order to have a complete picture of the evolution of the party and how the changes it underwent in its leadership since the Brexit referendum have found place in the official manifesto.

Table 24: UKIP, Issue focus in national elections manifestos

issues	Year 2010	Year 2015	Year 2017	Year 2020
Socio-economic	76%	75%	69%	60%
Cultural	5%	8%	7%	10%
Europe and EU	5%	6%	5%	6%
Migration	9%	8%	4%	3%
Law-and-order	5%	2%	7%	6%
Organizational identity	0%	1%	6%	6%
Other	0%	0%	2%	9%
Tot	100%	100%	100%	100%

The electoral manifestos of UKIP show a different distribution of issue-focus from the one found in the PCA. However, they show the attempt that have been made by the party to offer a variegated and complete political offer that went beyond the issue of Europe and EU. In fact, in the manifestos the sections dedicated specifically to the issue of EU are never above the 5 percent of the total. But, as it has been already argued by scholars, even when dealing with socio-economic issues, or migration, or law-and-order, the references to the EU are ever-

present and the engagement with the other issues stem for their core anti-EU identity (Ushewood, 2016).

By looking in more details at the documents, the meta-issue that receive the most attention is the socio-economic one. In fact, in all four manifestos there are sections on Tax, Budget, Welfare, and Jobs. Depending on the manifestos, the sections are more or less detailed: the 2010 is a very short document with only concise policy provisions and approximate estimations of costs, while the 2015 and 2017 are longer and more detailed document with longer and more comprehensive policies. Often the sections on the socio-economic issue, especially those of the 2015 manifestos, start with the “outside the EU, ...” or “scrapping EU regulations”, and then go on outlining the policies that UKIP would implement once outside the EU or how the UK would benefit from withdrawing from the EU, the money that could be spent on reducing taxes once outside the EU, and so on. The EU, and more specifically the need to withdraw from the EU, is the overarching theme of the first three manifestos, the glue that keeps all the political offer together. The 2017 one, even if prepared after “UKIP’s dream” of leaving the EU was reached through the referendum, was still focused on the need to make the dream become reality after the triggering of Article 50 (UKIP, 2017: 5).

The 2017 manifesto tries to balance the need to provide a new political offer to its voters and to present itself as the most adequate party to implement the exit from the EU. In fact, on the one hand there are calls to commit to zero migration, reduce taxes to small businesses, and solving housing shortage, on the other hand there is the call to implement the Brexit referendum decision without compromise, to make the 23rd June Independence Day and a bank holiday, to repel the EU’s Common Fisheries Policy, to reinstate the blue British passport, and to “take back control of those important areas of economic policy we have been forced to surrender to the EU” (UKIP, 2017: 10). The 2017 document tries to set the stage for the new direction of the party, but in the end the main focus remains the EU prefiguring all the limitations that UKIP

will face in the next years in trying to forge a new coherent message devoid of the EU one. This problem is even more evident in the 2020 manifesto – prepared when the party had already collapsed in terms of votes and organisation – and that shows the lack of a coherent political offer that could justify the appeal of the party to voters.

The 2017 and 2020 manifestos have less space dedicated to the issue of migration than the previous documents. In fact, if the previous two texts analysed had about 8% of their space dedicated to migration and how to limit this phenomenon, in the last two the focus is halved. This is because, as with all the UKIP's policies and claims they were strictly linked to EU and so also migration was mainly framed as an issue that could be solved by withdrawing from the EU. Having reached this objective, also migration became a less important issue in the new party strategy. At the same time, the issue of law and order received more attention and the space dedicated to clarify their identity and ideological stances increased. The increased focus dedicated to the law-and-order issue correspond also to an increased salience of this issues in

Table 25, UK - Crime issue (2009-2019)

Ranking in the Eurobarometer survey and percentage of respondent believing it is the most important issue their country faces

Crime	Rank	Percentage
2009	3rd	29%
2010	4th	21%
2011	3rd	24%
2012	4th	21%
2013	5th	15%
2014	10th	9%
2015	9th	7%
2016	7th	10%
2017	8th	12%
2018	2nd	27%
2019	2nd	24%

Source: Elaboration of the author based on the standard Eurobarometer 2009-2019 (Eurobarometer, 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019)

the public opinion. As the data from the Eurobarometer show, the issue crime acquired increased salience also among the public, with crime that went from the 9th most important issue in 2017 to the second most important in 2018 and 2018.

In the 2017 manifesto, UKIP defines itself as “the only party prepared to put its faith in imprisonment and a strong police force as the bedrock of our criminal justice system” and it argues that both the Conservative and Labour parties have put the rights of the offenders before those of the victims and this has compromised the ability of police to protect the public (UKIP, 2017: 39). In this document, there are calls to reintroduce the Stop and Search powers of police as well as increase the number of police officers in the streets and in prisons. The conditions of prisons and the powers of police are the two the most addressed issue within the law-and-order meta issue. In both the 2017 and 2020 document and UKIP calls to increase the powers of police, reduce the conditions of overcrowding, and address the spread of “Islamist Extremism” in prisons (UKIP, 2017: 41).

Although the socio-economic issue is the one to which the more attention is dedicated, the focus dedicated to it declines overtime while others acquire more space. The one that gradually acquires more space in the manifestos is the cultural meta-issue. As it has already been found with the claims collected through the PCA, after the Brexit referendum and the changes in the leadership of the party, UKIP has increasingly shifted its focus to the issues of anti-Islam and the preservation of British traditions and culture, and this is confirmed also in the electoral manifesto. The focus in the cultural issue increases from 5 percent in the 2010 to 10 percent in the 2020 and more specifically is the focus on Islam the determines this change. The table below reports, in percentage, the focus on the specific issues that are comprehended within the cultural meta-issue and it can be noted how the topic of Islam has increasingly acquired more attention, as well as the ethics and the preservation of “traditional” families,

Table 26: Cultural issues in UKIP manifestos

Cultural issues	2010	2015	2017	2020
Christianity	0%	0%	0%	0%
Ethics	0%	0%	0%	8%
Traditional family	0%	6%	49%	42%
Drugs	0%	0%	16%	0%
National festivity and identity	78%	89%	0%	48%
Islam	22%	5%	35%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

while the focus on the preservation of British identity has always been high in the agenda of the party.

In the 2010 manifesto, there is the promise to “tackle extremist Islam by banning the burqa or veiled niqab in public buildings” (UKIP, 2010: 14). In 2015 there is no reference to this ban and only a generic call to fight the ideology of “Islamic extremism” at home “where we have significant problems of radicalisation and incitement to terrorism” (UKIP, 2015: 67). However, is the 2017 manifesto that contains the most provisions on the subject, from the ban to the “wearing of the niqab and the burqa in public places”, to “ending Islamism in our schools”, to “give prison governors new powers to impose measures to combat Islamic extremism and gang violence in prisons”, “tougher action on honour crime and grooming gangs”, and a variety of provisions on how the Muslim community can be “better integrated” (UKIP 2017: 37-40). It is important to mention here, that many of these policies have constituted the bulk of the claims made by anti-Islamist organisations – the first being the EDL – that after Brexit became closer to the party both in the streets and in offices, where a number of far-right activists were nominated as party consultants. The 2017 program, produced under the leadership of Paul Nuttall, is the first to contain the new political offer of UKIP after the Brexit referendum and is the one that signs an important turning point for the party that will pursue this new agenda in the following year under Batten’s leadership. As it emerged from the PCA, UKIP’s discourses after the Brexit referendum – and after Farage left the leadership

– have shifted toward more radical positions especially on cultural issues by adopting anti-Islam discourse, defending free-speech and criticizing political correctness.

These discourses have characterised the party in the years post Brexit and the 2020 manifesto is the one that dedicates, in proportion, the more attention to the cultural meta-issue. However, it has only one reference to Islam: “UKIP will end arms sales from the UK to nations that have low standards in human rights and/or export Islamist or Marxist ideology around the world” and a more generic call to end the legal recognition of Sharia courts (UKIP, 2020: 15, 31). Instead, the manifesto focuses on measures that would protect what they believe are traditional families, defined as “stable, active and intact two-parent families with a mother and a father are the bedrock of a robust society” (UKIP, 2020: 28). There are calls to repel the Equality Act 2010 – which protects people from discrimination in the workplace – and the shutting down of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the Government Equalities Office so to “end their Cultural Marxist social engineering” (UKIP, 2020: 31) and the promise to “end political correctness in schools and introduce a specific Act to prevent damaging political propaganda being passed off as fact” (UKIP, 2020: 10). Moreover, there is a section called “Culture and Media” where there are a variety of policies that would, in UKIP’s view, “promote a unifying British culture”, by rejecting multiculturalism, promoting English language, and dismantling the BBC that is “brazenly biased on political and social issues” (UKIP, 2020: 37).

This manifesto, prepared for the 2019 general elections, is the latest attempt, so far, prepared by UKIP to present itself as a valid political alternative after achieving its *raison d’être* – Brexit. However, the document resulted in a mix of a varieties of policies that do not clarify the new direction or agenda of the party. Instead, it represents a provisional attempt to bring together the new discourses that have become dominant in the party – anti-Islam, law-and-order, preservation of British culture – with the old agenda made of tax reduction,

privatisations, cuts to welfare state – that lacks coherence because the glue that kept all together, Brexit, was now gone.

Turning to the EDL, the two mission statements that have been examined are shorter documents than the one that have been analysed for the other actors that are object of the study, however they can offer meaningful insight in the discourses of the organisation. The table below reports the main characteristics of the two mission statements.

Table 27: EDL, mission statements

Organisation	EDL	EDL
Year	2012	2016
Name	Mission Statement	Mission Statement
Number of words	1818	2309
Number of quasi-sentences	59	62

Table 28: EDL, Issue focus in mission statements

issues	2012	2016
Socio-economic	0%	7%
Cultural	82%	53%
Europe and EU	0%	0%
Migration	0%	15%
Law-and-order	5%	6%
Organizational identity	13%	18%
Other	0%	0%
Tot	100%	100%

Although the two documents are similar in terms of length and number of quasi-sentences, there are significant differences between the distribution of issue focus. In fact, while the first one from 2012 focuses almost exclusively on the cultural meta-issue, and more specifically, on Islam, the 2016 version has a more variegated focus and includes reflections also on the issues of migration, law-and-order, and even socio-economic. The distribution of issue focus found

in the 2012 document is similar to the one emerged through the claims collected in the PCA of the organisation. The single-issue nature of the organisation emerges clearly from the first mission statement and the EDL revendicates its mission to fight Muslim extremists, the role of Sharia law and Islamic courts on British soil, and the incompatibility between the Islamic traditions and British culture.

The first mission statement contains calls to ask the Government to limit the rights of Muslims that adopt an extremist view of their religion and that put at risk the national security of the nation, and the EDL believes that “the proponents of radical Islam have a stranglehold on British Muslims. These radicals dominate Muslim organisations, remain key figures in British mosques, and are steadily increasing their influence” (EDL, 2012). However, there is more nuance in their mission statements than the claims that have been collected through the PCA. In fact, while through the PCA usually the claims made during demonstrations and protests depicts Muslims as a homogenous group that threatens the British security and culture², in the mission statements is recognised that there are British Muslims that do not ascribe to the extremist views and are the main victims of Islamist extremism. However, the EDL believes that “the onus should be on British Muslims to overcome the problems that blight their religion and achieve nothing short of an Islamic reformation” and therefore the responsibility to distance themselves from the acts of terrorism and violence falls entirely on Muslims (EDL, 2012).

Another similarity to what emerged from the PCA is the space devoted to specify the ideological characteristics of the organisations, what they stand for, and what they are not. Both documents devote space to their own organisation identity and with similar shares to what has

² See second claim collected through the PCA: “Kelway denied the league was racist. “We would march alongside Muslims and Jews who are against militant Islam,” he said. “There were none on Saturday and an all-white group doesn't look good. But they can join the EDL as long as they accept an English way of life. It is the people who threaten with bombs and violence and threaten and bomb our troops - they don't belong here.” (The Guardian, 11.08.09)

been found in the PCA – around 20 percent – and the second documents does so more than the first one. As it has been found on the PCA, the EDL tries to describe itself as “human rights organisation”, open to draw supports from people of “all races, all faiths, all political persuasions, and all lifestyle choices” that want to fight for the preservation of British culture and institutions (EDL, 2012). While the 2012 document does not contain any reference to the role of violence and the characteristics of their activities, the 2016 version specify also that the organisation is committed to peaceful activities and to non-violence (EDL, 2016).

The second document, the 2016 statement, contains important differences that can be interpreted in light of the different political context in which it has been released and the evolution of the organisation itself. In fact, the new mission statement contains sections that refer to the issues of migration, border control, rule of law, police, and free speech. The issue of migration, that did not feature in the first document is now discussed and linked to the need to restore border control and to grant citizenship “only to those who have good prospects of becoming good British citizens” (EDL, 2016). The section on migration, although does not openly mention Brexit, contains references to the imminent referendum. In fact, the mission statement was released on the 3 January 2016, few months before the referendum and states “that immigration to the UK be under the 100% control of the UK Parliament and that Parliament’s laws be enforced by a 100% effective border force. We do not object in principle to all immigration, but we insist that the UK has the unfettered authority to determine who will enter this country and the conditions under which they can continue residence” (EDL, 2016).

An even clearer position on the matter was expressed on a blog post uploaded on their website on the 19 June 2016 titled “The Remainers’ Project Fear is claiming victims across England” which claimed that “the “Remain” camp spread exaggerated claims about what our leaving the EU would mean” and that openly calls its supporters to vote leave to preserve British independence and the autonomy of its Government, to control immigration, and to

regulate the granting of citizenship to those that do not deserve it (EDL, 2016b). Brexit, has it has already been argued in the discussion of the results of the PCA, has provided an opportunity to mobilise on a different issue than Islam and also in a different arena than the protest one. It is during Brexit that for the first time the EDL has offered its take on an issue other than Islam and Islamism terrorism. In 2016, the organisation was already in decline and unable to attract high numbers of people in the streets or to organise the same number of demonstrations as it did just three years before, but it tried to use the increased salience that the issue of migration and Brexit were having in the British public debate, to mobilise around a new issue. Although this small change of strategy did not prove to be extremely successful, as EDL mobilisation did not increase significantly, I would argue that it is due to the organisation broadening of its agenda that the participation to the implementation of Brexit marches was possible. In fact, the organisations and its members had been active online and offline throughout the electoral campaign for referendum and when the moment came to join forces in the streets to request a swift implementation of the vote, the EDL was prepared. The demonstrations that took place in 2018 and 2019 in London to request the implementation of Brexit were attended by a variety of far-right organisations as well as UKIP, who had a leading role in the organisation and that welcomed members and activists from all groups to join the streets with them, even the more extreme as the EDL. The messages used by the EDL to support Brexit were very similar to those that had been used by UKIP during the referendum campaign and the emphasis put on regaining border control, limit the number of migrants, and more strict criteria for granting citizenship, were not used for the first time in the occasion of the demonstrations, but were already part of the EDL discourses and fit easily within the narrative of the demonstrations and allowed the group to be ready to join the streets for the occasion.

5.3.4. Frames dimensions. United against Islam and EU

Summing up the discussion for the interactions in the frame analysis, the data gathered through the PCA and the analysis of the party manifestos and the movement official statement, confirmed the first hypothesis. The two actors became closer, sharing common frames and discourse from 2017, when the party was struggling electorally, having gained only half million votes and 1.8 percent share, from the 12.6 achieved in the 2015 general elections. In the UK case, differently than the Italian one, the “crisis” that brought together the two organisations was Brexit and not the migration crisis. In fact, it has been observed how following the Brexit referendum the party needed to reinvent its message and increased its focus on the one that was already the most contentious in the far-right sector, Islam.

UKIP, in the period 2017-2019 has tried to change its message by shifting the focus of its political offer from the EU to Islam and by adopting extreme messages – such as the ones on grooming gangs and the Cultural Marxist social engineering attempts of government offices. In the same period, the issue of crime became also a more salient issue among the public and the party increased its focus on this issue picking up on the fight against Muslim grooming gangs, a long-standing concern of the EDL. At the same time, the EDL, had found in Brexit and even more in the transitionary period, a new chance to gain visibility by mobilising also on the issue of Europe that was until that moment completely neglected by the organisation. Brexit and the two years that followed provided the EDL with an opportunity to link their message on the preservation of British identity and opposition to Islam, to that of Britain finally free from the legislative burdens of the EU and in control of his own destiny.

5.4. UKIP and EDL interactions in the actions dimension

For the UK case study, as it has been the case for the Italian one, the analysis of the forms of actions adopted by UKIP and the EDL is the most innovative part of the research as it shows

Table 29: UKIP, form of actions 2009-2019

Form of action	Number of claims	Percentage
Conventional	803	93
Demonstrative	22	3
Expressive	32	4
Confrontational	2	0
Violent	1	0
N	860	100

Table 30: EDL, form of actions 2009-2019

Form of action	Number of claims	Percentage
Conventional	23	20
Demonstrative	41	37
Expressive	0	0
Confrontational	21	19
Violent	27	24
N	112	100

the repertoire of actions used by the actors, around what issue the mobilisation takes place, and when the two organisations mobilise together. The aim is to test the hypothesis that maintained that far-right parties and movements will be closer in the actions dimensions when parties are electorally weak and when movements moderate their repertoire of actions. Through the PCA, a total of 972 claims have been collected and tables above reports the aggregate data for all the claims divided by form of action.

The aggregate data shows that the overwhelming majority of the claims made by UKIP are of a conventional type, the 93 percent. However, there are instances in which UKIP has mobilised in the streets and are these instances the most interesting to analyse to understand the relations with the EDL and the wider far-right British movement sector. In fact, if only 22 instances of demonstrative actions and 2 confrontational ones have been recorded for the party, it needs to be noted that the majority of them, 17 instances, happened after the Brexit referendum, and 14 of them just in the period 2018-2019, during Batten's leadership. For the

EDL, the data show how the organisation's repertoire of actions is very variegated: 20 percent of its claims are of a conventional type, 37 percent demonstrative, the 19 percent confrontational and 24 percent are violent. In order to understand when the two actors adopt different forms of actions and when they mobilise together, the section turns now to investigate the distribution of the claims overtime. The discussion of the expressive form of action is not carried out as it is a type of action used only by UKIP, it refers to claims that refer to commemorations and party national rallies and does not add to the investigation of the relations between the two organisations.

5.4.1. Conventional form of actions

The conventional type of action represents the absolute majority of all the claims used by the UKIP, across all the years. There is no difference between when the party is successful and when is electorally weak as the majority of the claims are represented by speeches, interviews, formal statements made during press conference, and electoral campaign.

Figure 24, UKIP, claims by form of action 2009-2019

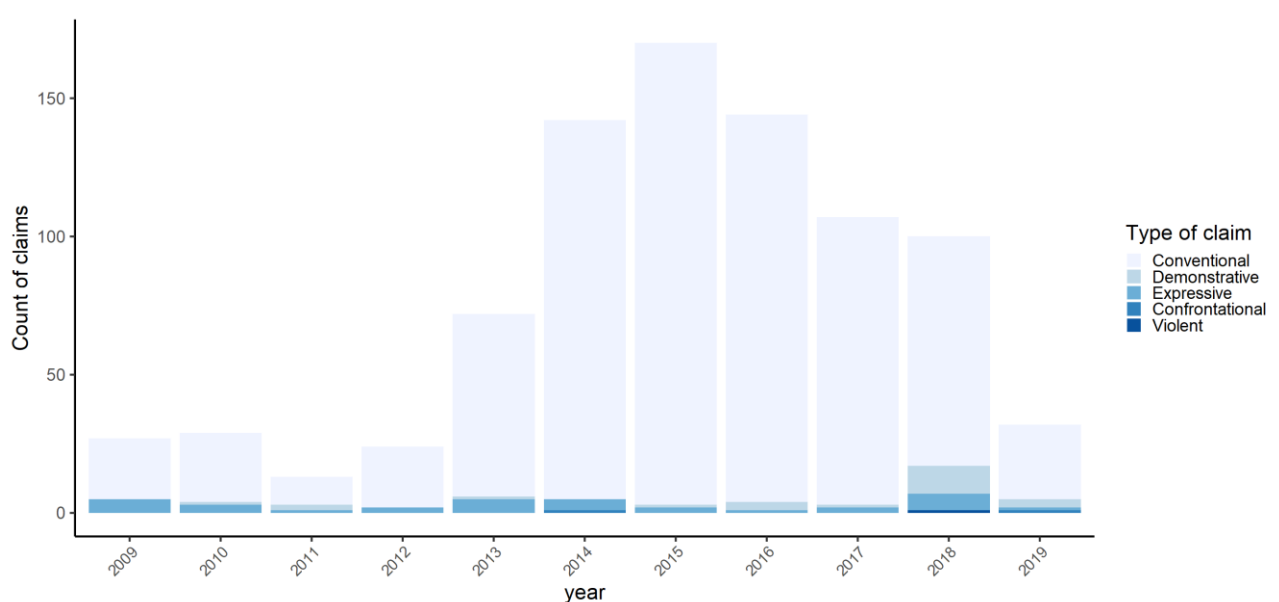
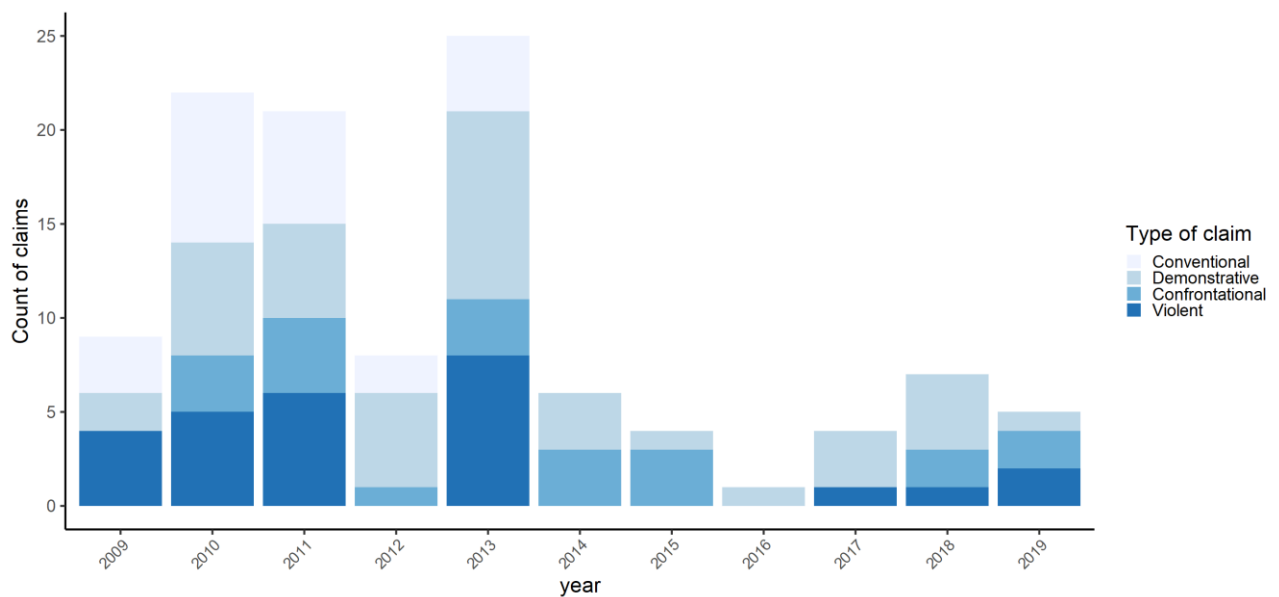


Figure 25: EDL, claims by form of action 2009-2019



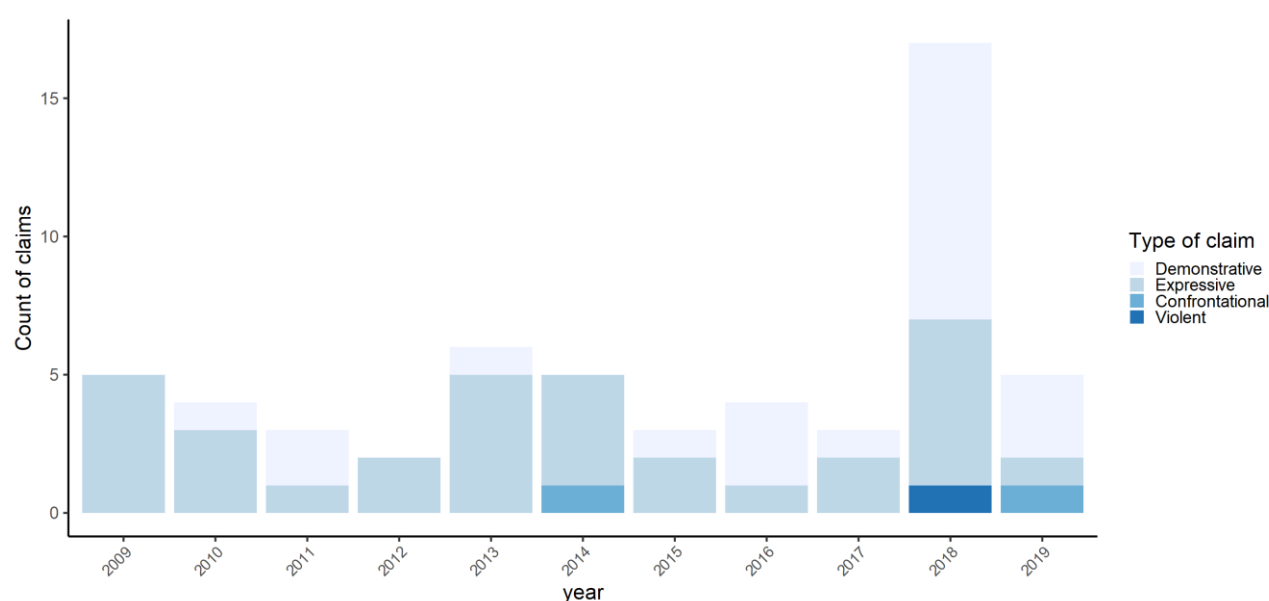
The situation is different for the EDL. The conventional form of action represents only the 20 percent of its repertoire and it has been used only in the first years of its mobilisation, when the organisation was able to attract media attention due to the big demonstrations it organised. In the period 2009-2013, EDL leaders were interviewed by the media and press statements were released. This changed drastically after 2013 and the decline of the organisation that lost its ability to attract media attention. In fact, from 2013 no conventional claim has been recorded.

5.4.2. Demonstrative form of action

The demonstrative form of action includes rallies, marches and authorised sit-in. The graph below shows UKIP's claims without the conventional ones and shows how little the party has used this type of actions in the years under investigation.

The demonstrative form of action, however, has been increasingly used by the party after 2016 and more specifically after the Brexit referendum. The majority of the demonstrative claims are around Brexit and its implementation. In fact, 9 out of the 14 demonstrative claims in the 2016-2019 period regard Brexit and examples are the “flotilla protest” that was led by Farage up the Thames and involved over 35 boats and coincided with the Prime Minister

Figure 26, UKIP, total claims by form of action without conventional ones



question time (The Guardian, 28.6.16). Another example is the small protest that UKIP MEPs, led by Farage, organised outside the European Parliament the day article 50 was triggered by the UK. The event involved a small gathering of MEPs and UKIP supporters that celebrated the event and requested a small and swift process to the EU institutions (The Guardian, 29.3.17).

The majority of UKIP's demonstrative claims in the period 2018-2019, under Batten's leadership, were larger demonstration attended by the party but also by far-right organisations, and the EDL was also in the streets. The June 2018 and March 2019 demonstrations for the implementation of Brexit were attended by UKIP members and supporters, but also by leaders and supporters of different far-right organisations such as Pegida UK, the Football Lads Alliance, and the EDL (The Guardian, 23.6.18). UKIP and the EDL were side by side also in another series of demonstrations that took place in 2018 and 2019 and concerned the far-right activist and EDL founder Stephen Yaxley-Lennon. The first rally to request the release of Yaxley-Lennon – that had been arrested few days before – was actively promoted by Batten that invited UKIP supporters to the protest. Six rallies were organised within few months to

show support to Yaxley-Lennon and they all saw the active participation of UKIP's leader and supporters.

Turning to the EDL, the demonstrative form of action represents the most used by the organisation. The graph above shows how the EDL effective the organisation has been in mobilising its supporters in the first years of its life, but how since 2013 the group has gone through a rapid decline. The rallies and demonstrations organised by the group up until 2018 have concerned the issue of Islam and the threat posed by the Islamic extremism, in line with the single-issue nature of the organisation. This changed in the 2018-2019, when the organisation – far from the strength of its first years and largely collapsed – mobilised on the issue of Brexit and free speech, joining UKIP in the streets. The resurgence of EDL activities in this period can be ascribed to the new opportunity to mobilise in the streets around these set of issues and that saw the wider UK far-right sector rally under the leadership of Yaxley-Lennon and at the side of the party.

5.4.3. Confrontational and form of actions

Confrontational forms of actions consist of unauthorised rallies and demonstrations and blockades. While only two confrontational claims have been recorded for UKIP, this form of action represents the 19 percent of all EDL's claims. The organisation has often used this type of action when mobilising on the Islam issue. When their demonstrations have been not authorised by local authorities or the Government, the EDL has often gone ahead with its plan and carried out the rallies. This has happened throughout its history. The EDL would plan marches in proximity of mosques, or in neighbourhood where Muslim communities resided and due to the security threat that this demonstration represented, the police would not grant the authorisation. However, the EDL would turn the marches in "static sit-in", still unauthorised and that would often lead to clashes with counter protesters and tension with the

police. Examples are the events that took place outside a community centre used by Muslims in Leicester where EDL members left a pig's head and later a rally (The Guardian, 29.12.12), or when they occupied a small square in Rotherham where a Muslim man was under investigation for sexual assault (The Guardian, 30.8.14).

Confrontational claims have been recorded also in the last two years of the EDL activities and two of these instances saw also the presence of UKIP in the unauthorised rallies. Both instances were about Yaxley-Lennon's arrest. The blockade in London, around Trafalgar Square, few days after Yaxley-Lennon's arrest, were attended by EDL supporters, far-right organisations, and by Batten, who invited UKIP's supporters to attend the event (The Guardian, 11.6.18).

5.4.4. Violent form of actions

The violent forms of actions include symbolic and physical acts of violence. Only one violent claim has been recorded for UKIP and it took place in 2018, when three members of its party attacked a socialist bookshop in London. The three were soon suspended from the party (The Guardian 7.8.18).

On the other hand, violent actions represent the 24 percent of all EDL actions and the group has used this form of action since the outset of its mobilisation. In August 2008, in Manchester, during one of the first demonstration organised by the EDL, clashes with Unite Against Fascism activists took place. The same happened in Birmingham just few days after (The Guardian, 10.8.09).

The EDL has often clashed with members of left-wing organisations and anti-fascist groups, as well as members of the organisation Muslims against Crusades, and police forces. Many rallies ended with arrests of EDL members and even its leaders, as in September 2011 when Yaxley-Lennon was arrested for breach of bail after attending an EDL demonstration in

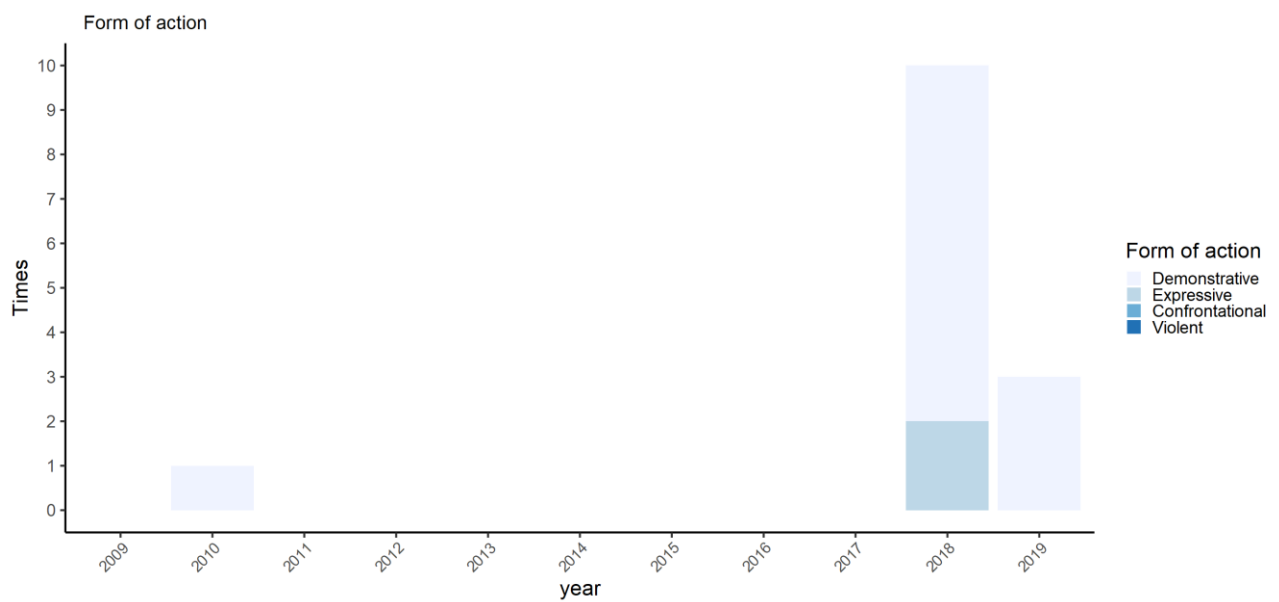
London along with 61 other EDL members after clashes with the police. In November 2011 when over 170 EDL members were arrested after threatening the lives of Occupy protesters outside St Paul's Cathedral on Armistice Day (The Guardian, 12.11.11).

The decrease in mobilisation of the organisation meant also a drop in the violent claims, in fact in the period 2014-2016 no violent claim has been recorded. However, from 2017, when the EDL mobilises in the streets alongside UKIP, the level of violence remained low. The resurgence in the activities of the movement organisation in the 2017-2019 period did not correspond to an increase in its violent actions, only 4 violent claims have been recorded. This is extremely important because in the years of UKIP and EDL joint mobilisation, the movement organisation kept the level of violence under control and moderated its form of actions even if its level of mobilisation increased.

5.4.5 Actions dimension: with Tommy against Islam

Summing up the analysis of the interaction in the actions dimension, two main findings emerged from the data collected. First, UKIP and the EDL mobilised together when the party was electorally weak and when the organisation kept its level of violence relatively low, confirming the hypothesis that was set out at the beginning of the investigation. Out of the 13 instances of protests being recorded for UKIP in 2018-2019, 11 were also attended by the EDL members. This happened when UKIP was really weak in the electoral arena, having performed poorly at the 2017 general elections, and after a leadership crisis that saw four different leaders within less than 2 years. Gerard Batten, who took the leadership of the party in April 2018, completely disregarded UKIP's historical tradition of separating from extreme-right organisations and decided to bring his party in the streets next to British far-right galaxy, where the EDL was still a small but active part of it. The EDL, on its part, kept the level of violence under control and to a resurgence of its activities did not correspond an increase of violent claims.

Figure 27: UKIP and EDL joint actions



Second, the UK case study, as the Italian one, offers mixed support for the different logic thesis of far-right mobilisation (Hutter et al., 2019: 326). In fact, the data showed how when the far-right organisation was active and successful in the protest arena, the party was collecting its first electoral success too. 2009, the year of EDL establishment, is also the year of UKIP's success in the EU elections gathering the 16 percent of the votes. However, EDL mobilisation started to decrease in 2014, when the party achieved another important electoral result at the EU elections, coming first in the race with over 4 million votes. After Brexit, when the party's collapse started to unfold, UKIP increased its mobilisation in the protest arena. The strategic choices made by UKIP leader to mobilise alongside a far-right organisation, though, did not prove successful as the party kept losing its senior members and voters did not find the new party's political offer appealing. UKIP has always presented itself as the more moderate and inclusive party of the British right, even if "racist outbursts" have often involved party members (Turnier Sol, 2015: 146). When the party started to mobilise in the streets with extreme-right organisations and activists, its traditional line of no-affiliation with violent and racist organisations was interrupted. The move did not bring any vote to the party. However,

organisations that were largely collapsed, such as the EDL, find in the new party strategy a new opportunity to mobilise and the protests provided new visibility and spaces for the far-right, contributing to the spreading of its messages.

5.5. UKIP and EDL relations in the organisational dimensions

The last dimension of the relations between parties and movements that this research investigates, is the organisational one. The hypothesis advanced in this aspect is that *far-right parties and movements are more likely to be closer in the organisational dimension when parties are in opposition and elections are imminent, and when movements moderate their repertoire of actions*. In order to test this hypothesis, the data have been gathered through the analysis of party and movement documents, newspaper articles, and academic literature. The same premise that has been made for the Italian case-study also applies here: a more comprehensive and detailed picture of the relations that have occurred between the two actors in the organisational dimension could have been provided by carrying out interviews with leaders and activists of the two organisations, however, due to the outbreak of the COVID pandemic, I could not carry out those and I have, thus, relied on other sources, such as primary sources, newspapers, and academic works that have investigated the organisational dimensions of UKIP and EDL.

Before discussing the relations in the organisational dimension, it is worth just briefing recalling the organisational characteristics of the two actors under investigation and how these have evolved in the period under investigation. Both UKIP and the EDL are characterised by a weak degree of organisation, the presence of a charismatic leaderships, and a weak local presence (Ford and Goodwin, 2014; Busher, 2016; Pilkington, 2016; Usherwood, 2016; Vampa, 2021).

UKIP has always suffered a lack of a strong organisational infrastructure and the timid attempts to build a local presence – that could strengthen its electoral support beyond European elections – have been made only after 2010 and lasted just until the Brexit referendum. The quick collapse of the party after the referendum can be explained also by the lack of any serious party infrastructure and stable local presence (Hanna and Busher, 2019; Vampa, 2021). As Ford and Goodwin have shown, UKIP attempts to expand its territorial presence beyond London corresponded with the broadening of its political offer beyond the anti-EU issue, starting from 2009 (2014: 106-110). However, both strategies proved to be limited and temporary rather than substantive and permanent. In the same vein as the broadening of the political offer saw the use of issues other than anti-EU be used in an opportunistic manner and all strictly linked to their main issue, the building of a local structure was a temporary effort where no real consideration of the peculiarities of the local areas and without working on forming party activists and members (Hanna and Busher, 2019: 49). The lack of a proper party infrastructure affected also UKIP's ability to form a leadership class within the party that could direct its strategies and lead it once Farage stepped down. In fact, after Farage announced its resignation from the party after the Brexit referendum, UKIP changed 5 party leaders within 3 years and all of them had different strategies and different ambitions for the party. The tensions in the party between the hardcore Eurosceptics and those that wanted to turn UKIP into a radical-right anti-Islam party contributed to the weakening of the leadership class – with many senior members leaving the party in 2017 and 2018 – and the inability to find a unifying political offer after the referendum. It is against this background that UKIP saw its party lose both its voters and influence in the political debate and is now at the margins of British politics after having contributed to bring about one of the most important political changes in UK contemporary history.

Turning to the EDL, the group has been characterised by having a “flat structure”, in line with its movement organisation nature, and with no formal membership and with different perception of what even being a member involved among its supporters (Pilkington 2016: 43). The movement organisation, since its establishment, has drawn most of its members from the London metropolitan area and the majority of its supporters was London-based (Goodwin and Evans, 2012:13). Pilkington, in her ethnographic study of the EDL, found that EDL activists organised themselves in 19 Regional Organisations that were geographically delimited and that in turn presided a “myriad local ‘divisions’, which are the basic unit of grassroots activism” (2016: 42). The local divisions could cover cities, neighbourhood, or even counties and were very fluid and rapid changing entities. This is true both in terms of number of activists involved in the life of the division, that could vary from week to week, but also in divisions themselves that could open and close in different areas with relatively rapidity (Pilkington, 2016: 43; Busher, 2016: 34). This organisational fluidity, makes it difficult to ascertain the number of members/activists/supporters involved in the activities of the EDL. However, past researches have used a variety of tools to estimate the size of the EDL members or supporters: the social media engagement and followers, online surveys to self-identified members, and participants to the demonstrations organised by the EDL.

According to Barlett and Litter’s survey, one of the first study on the EDL, the number of “active members” in 2011 was between 20,000 and 35,000 (2011: 16). This number is an estimate that the authors do through an online survey and by active they intend people that consider themselves as being part of the EDL and as being active on Facebook in sharing, commenting, and creating contents of the EDL page (Barlett and Litter, 2011: 17). However, if the number of people that actually attended one of the EDL demonstrations is to be counted, the numbers change significantly. Copsey’s account of EDL protests sees around 1,000 to 2,000 people taking part to the demonstrations staged by the EDL in the 2009 and 2010 period

(2010: 29). This number then decreased to 800 – 1,000 from 2011 (Pilkington, 2016: 39). Then a new increase in the attendance of people at the demonstration is observable in 2013 following the killing of Lee Rigby (Pilkington, 2016: 39). These numbers are confirmed also by the data that I have gathered through the Political Claim Analysis. After the peak of mobilisation in 2013, the organisation saw the departure of the two people that emerged as its leaders, Yaxley-Lennon and Carroll, and its mobilisation capacity decreased significantly.

A new increase in the activity of the organisation can be observed during the protest to make Brexit happen and against the arrest and trial of Yaxley-Lennon in 2017 and 2018. However, these demonstrations were attended also by the EDL, but not exclusively and were not organised by them. Therefore, the number of active militants until 2019 cannot be ascertained. But if we take into account the number of residuals “likes” to the Facebook page, that was closed down in 2019, 2,728, the number of active chapters throughout the UK, according to the EDL website, 17; and the still active website that continued to spread communication and information to its supporters, the activities of the EDL have significantly decreased but not completely disappeared. At the time of writing, July 2022, the EDL is still active with 1,000 followers on the social network Gab; it has an online radio program – the English Defence League show, on BlogTalkRadio, with over 1,108 episodes and 300 followers

From the analysis of the data, I have identified two different periods during which the relations between the relations in the organisational dimension between the two actors have changed. The first period is the 2009-2016, where no interactions have been found, while the second one, the 2017-2019 is the period where relations have been observed.

5.5.1. 2009-2016: no interactions

During the period 2009-2016, no formal relations between the EDL and UKIP had been found. However, few episodic and limited instances of interactions between the two actors can be

found. Just few months after the emergence of the EDL, a London millionaire from London, Alan Lake, emerged as a key figure of the movement organisation, speaking to many of its rallies about the need to mobilise against the threat of Islamism and Jihadism (Copsey, 2010: 16). Lake was believed to financing the emerging organisation and working on the establishment of a British version of the US Tea Party Movement (Copsey, 2010: 17). He has stated:

“The EDL has a lot of support and is growing quickly and crucially what it has done is deliver an activist movement on the streets. These people are not middle-class female teachers, if they continue to be suppressed it will turn nasty in one way or another. We have put bodies on the streets, writing letters to the Times does not work. Of we are going to have a mess that is so much grist to the mill” (The Guardian, 29.5.10).

In early 2009, Lake has worked to bring together the EDL and UKIP as he saw “some synergy” between the two groups (The Guardian, 29.5.10). Lake also brought to the EDL a UKIP candidate to the 2010 general elections, Magnus Nielsen, who spoke to one of the organisation’s demonstrations. Lake clearly stated that he was “really working on the UKIP thing so we can offer people an alternative” (The Guardian, 29.5.10). It is important to remember that between November 2009 and August 2010 UKIP was led by Lord Pearson and in these few months, he embraced the anti-Islam rhetoric that was being used by the EDL in the streets. Pearson has been very vocal in his anti-Islam stances, speaking against the threat of Sharia law, the incompatibility between British values and those stated in the Koran, and the treatment of women by Muslims. Pearson, while UKIP leader, invited Geert Wilders, leader of the Dutch Party for Freedom, to show his anti-Islam documentary to the House of Lord (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 82). It is against this background that Lake’s attempt to bring the two organisations closer took place. However, these remained just attempts and no alliance or even

channel of communication between the two organisations was created. The day after Lake's declaration on his intention to bring UKIP and the EDL closer, a UKIP spokesman denied such plans and stated that the party "would not form any alliance with the EDL or any other extremist group" (The Guardian, 29.5.10). A UKIP activist interviewed by Ford and Goodwin recalled the attempts that had been made in early 2010 to establish an alliance with the EDL, but how this could not happen due to the extreme nature of the group:

"When the EDL were first set-up ... they got in touch with one of our MEPs ... I looked at what I'd seen so far, and at that point they seemed perfectly ok. A bit extreme, but nothing wrong with them. This was before the riots. So I said 'Yeah go down and meet, see what they are like, and sound them out' He [the MEP] came back and said: 'No they're not. They're fucking nutters'" (as quoted in: Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 80).

The unavailability of UKIP to appear close to extreme-right groups has characterised all of Farage leadership. UKIP has always remarked its non-racist and non-violent nature and has remarked these characteristics in particular with respects to the British National Party (BNP). In fact, after extreme-right activists tried to join the party in the past, UKIP already in 2012 enforced a ban that forbade members and ex-members of the BNP to join UKIP (Turnier-Sol, 2015: 146). However, UKIP shut completely its door to BNP members and party personnel, but not to his voters, to whom Farage has always looked at sympathetically. Farage understood the importance of local activism and saw in the BNP activists and sympathisers a pool of voters that could support UKIP as the party provided a less controversial, more moderate, and non-racist alternative to the BNP (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 91).

Beside these timid attempts in the first months of EDL emergence, no relations between the two organisations have been found throughout 2015. The EDL, as the data collected in the PCA have shown, experienced its peak of mobilisation in 2013, but in the same year its decline

began and so did its relevance in the public debate. The EDL, however, after the departure of its leaders – Yaxley-Lennon and Carroll – even if with less frequency, kept organising demonstrations and being active online, especially on social media, but no interaction with UKIP in the organisational dimension have been found until 2016 and the campaign for the Brexit referendum. In fact, the Brexit campaign is the other moment where small and volatile interactions between the two organisations have been found. As it has already been stated, the Brexit campaign saw the EDL mobilise on an issue other than anti-Islam and for the first time mobilise also in the electoral arena. Brexit represented for the movement organisation a chance to mobilise its supporters, however few, on an issue that had the paramount attention in the public debate and that saw the mobilisation of wider part of British public. The mobilisation of the EDL on the Brexit issue has been declared by the organisation itself on its website, in a statement posted on the 19 June 2016 the organisation said:

“In the lead-up to the referendum vote, the “Remain” camp spread exaggerated claims about what our leaving the EU would mean. Because these claims came from prominent people, they were believed. But it was all politics: grandstanding and scaremongering [...] People who are here legally have no reason to fear anything. The EDL and all the “Leave” voters we know are law-abiding and support legal and controlled immigration. [...] we must remember that our vote for Brexit was a vote for British independence and the autonomy of the British Parliament. After Brexit (likely in 2018 or 2019), whatever the future holds, it will be a future decided by the people we elect as MPs, not foreign rulers in the Council of the European Union or Brussels bureaucrats negotiating weak compromises that cave in to the EU’s most powerful members” (EDL, 2016a).

Further claims of EDL support and mobilisation for the Brexit referendum are also present in the organisation’s yearly review, where they recall their main activities throughout the year. In

May the organisation claimed that “we also gave Brexit a burst, as the referendum was just a month away” (EDL, 2016a). Moreover, during the Brexit campaign, their Twitter profile had a message asking its supporters to register and vote for the referendum, “the major event of this year”, as it represented the possibility to choose “between two visions: 1. A confident, secure independence to pass on to future generations. 2. Being locked into Europe’s permanent immigration crisis and bossy rule” (EDL, 2016b). Involvement of EDL activists in the Leave campaign have been reported also by newspapers. For example, in Daily Mail investigation ascertain the participation of “a former EDL leader who was jailed after attacks on police. He posed with a pro-Brexit Ukip banner alongside the gravestone of the notorious Kray twins” (Daily Mail, 24.6.16).

The mobilisation of far-right activists – not only EDL supporters, but BNP members, British First activists, (Daily Mail, 24.6.16; The Times, 10.7.16; Davidson and Berezin, 2018: 496) – was favoured by the divisions present in the Leave camp and the different campaigns that cut transversally the political parties involved. UKIP saw its leader, Farage, led the campaign Grassroots Out and campaigned alongside Conservatives and Labour MPs; one of the UKIP’s major donors – Arron Banks – founded Leave EU; and, finally, the only UKIP MP – Douglas Caswell – joined the official campaign Vote Leave (Hanna and Busher, 2019: 44). This complex picture, and the divisions that it created within the party, allowed the campaigns to be infiltrated by far-right groups that saw in Brexit an answer to some of their claims, most notably the need to cut back on the numbers of migrants allowed within the country and regaining control of the national borders. However, also in this case, as it has been observed in late 2009 and early 2010, although there is the involvement of EDL activists in the leave campaigns, no formal or durable relations between the two organisations have been found. The relations between UKIP and the EDL during the Brexit campaign can be described as “Unreciprocated Support”, an expression used by Davidson and Berezin to explain the relations

between UKIP and British First in the months leading to the referendum (2018: 495). UKIP – and most forcefully its leader – declined any formal support from these extreme-right organisation and did not want to appear close to their leaders, continuing to propose the party as a moderate and reasonable alternative to other British far-right organisations.

5.5.2. 2017-2019: interactions and official alliances

UKIP's unavailability to build any relationship with the far-right sector ended after Brexit. Soon after the historical result of referendum, UKIP began its decline both in electoral terms and organisational ones. Few days after the referendum, Farage announced his intention to resign as leader of the party, and this meant that the party lost within weeks the two only things that had kept it together that far: the withdrawal of the UK from the EU and the leadership of Farage. The result of the referendum took by surprise even most of UKIP activists and high-ranking members that find themselves divided about the new course the party should pursue. The tensions between those that wanted the party to remain focused only on the implementation of the electoral results, and those that wanted to move it toward the far-right and transform it into an anti-Islam party eventually wore out UKIP that saw his electoral support and its party infrastructure collapse within few years.

The number of leaders that succeed one another and the electoral failures the party scored in all level elections attested UKIP inability to find a new unifying strategy that could replace the anti-EU issue and keep together not only its members, but also its supporters. It is in this complex scenario that the relations between the party and the far-right British movement sector, and more specifically the EDL, have been found. The data gathered show how from the end of 2017 and throughout 2018 and 2019 the two organisations have been closer in the organisational dimension.

The first leadership contest was won, in September 2016, by Diane James, a long-standing UKIP member and MEP. In her leadership campaign, James recognised the low levels of professionalisation of the party and the need to enhance the party infrastructure, but only two weeks after her elections, she resigned without ever being appointed leader. The reasons for her resignation were that she did not “have sufficient authority, nor the full support of MEP colleagues and party officers to implement the changes I believe are necessary” (The Guardian, 5.10.16). In November 2016, Paul Nuttall was elected new party leader and he promised to be the one that could provide new stability to the party. Nuttall focused predominantly on the implementation of the referendum results – “Brexit needs to be clean, decisive and rapid” (The Guardian, 3.12.16) – but also announced some stronger anti-Islam positions to ban burqas and sharia courts, in an attempt to keep the two factions of the party together (The Guardian, 23.4.17). Nuttall, however, failed in this attempt and after the poor results of the 2017 local elections and snap general election, he resigned as party leader.

Another leadership contest took place and this time the favoured contestant seemed to be Anne Marie Waters, a relatively new UKIP member – joined the party in 2014 – and a divisive one due to her attempt to bring UKIP and the far-right BNP and EDL within the party. In fact, Waters was widely known for her anti-Islam positions, as she was the founder of Pegida UK, an anti-Islam group that took inspiration from the German Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident), a movement organisation that mobilised on the issue of anti-Islam and migrations (The Guardian, 27.7.17). Waters established Pegida UK, with the ex-EDL leader Yaxley-Lennon, and openly supported members of the BNP and the EDL to join UKIP (Hanna and Busher, 2019: 48). For the first time a UKIP candidate leader tried to swing the party agenda completely toward anti-Islam and open the doors to far-right activists. Waters’ positions, however, attracted the complaints of many UKIP members that claimed they would leave the party if she was elected as leader. MEPs announced that Waters was using the party

“as a vehicle for the views of the EDL and the BNP” (The Guardian, 27.7.17) and Farage had to intervene again in the leadership contest stating that “If Ukip goes down the route of being a party that is anti the religion of Islam, then frankly it’s finished. “I don’t think there’s any public appetite for that. There’s some, but it’s tiny in this country. The party would be finished” (The Guardian, 27.7.17). In the end, the leadership contest was won by Henry Bolton, who once again won promising to keep the focus of the party prominently on the implementation of Brexit and Eurosceptics positions. Once again, the attempts to bring the two organisations, UKIP and EDL, closer was halted. However, as Waters has shown, the party had already inside members who had multiple memberships and were affiliated to far-right movement organisations and personal contacts with far-right leaders.

Bolton remained leader of the party for only four months. In February 2018, after Bolton’s involvement in a scandal due to his personal life, he was removed as party leader after an emergency party meeting where the majority of UKIP members voted in favour of a no-confidence vote (The Guardian, 18.2.18). The new party interim leader was Gerard Batten, who will also win the fifth leadership election in less than two years. Batten represented the first UKIP leader who was elected on a predominant anti-Islam agenda and he did not hide his thoughts on the religion: defined it as a “death cult” and that non-Muslim should have a “perfectly rational fear” of Islam (The Guardian, 18.2.18).

Under Batten’s leadership, the majority of the interactions between UKIP and the EDL – as well as the wider far-right movement sector - in the organisational dimension took place.

On 24 March 2018, when Batten was still acting-leader, he joined and spoke at a demonstration organised by The Football Lads Alliance (FLA), a far-right, anti-Islam, movement that emerged in London after the Westminster Bridge attack, founded by Tottenham Hotspur supporters, and with links to the EDL (The Independent, 8.10.17). The rally, organised to protest against militant Islam, took place in Birmingham and among its speakers there were

Anne Marie Waters, who claimed that “millions of decent British people are offended by this religion the poison it’s causing within our culture”, and the EDL founder Yaxley-Lennon (The Guardian, 17.3.18; BBC, 9.5.18). The relations between Yaxley-Lennon and the new UKIP leader would last throughout Batten’s leadership and will cause the exit of party members and MEPs.

Yaxley-Lennon, is a very active far-right activist having established not only the EDL, but also the UK chapter of Pegida in 2016, and being active on all social media, from Twitter to Facebook, to Instagram, to YouTube (since late 2019 he has been banned, or has restricted access, to these social media). Although Yaxley-Lennon resigned from the EDL at the end of 2013, he remained a point of reference for the organisation and its supporters and, reciprocally, Yaxley-Lennon has defended the EDL on its social media long after his resignation. For example, in 2017, after a violent demonstration in Birmingham where supporters of the EDL gathered to protest against the local Muslim community believed to be involved in the Westminster Bridge attack, a picture of a Muslim young woman who stood up against the protester went viral on the Internet. The picture was tweeted by Yaxley-Lennon stating that the picture was “embarrassing” and misleading, he contacted EDL supporters who were in Birmingham and confirmed with them that the story being told to the papers was not accurate and that “the picture is just embarrassing” (The Guardian, 10.4.17). It is exactly the key role that Yaxley-Lennon had in the far-right sector that made his proximity to the new UKIP’s leader controversial and the reasons why he was chosen by Batten as his personal advisor in November 2018.

After the Birmingham demonstration in March 2018, Batten gave an interview to Yaxley-Lennon on his YouTube channel where he urged people to educate themselves on the threat posed by Islam and that as a religion it is “inherently anti-semitic” (The Guardian, 1.5.18). In May 2018, Batten appeared again at Yaxley-Lennon’s side for a demonstration organised by

the far-right activist himself after Twitter banned him from its website after tweeting that “Islam promotes killing people” (The Guardian, 6.5.18). The event was attended by over 3,000 people who wanted to defend “freedom of speech” and Yaxley-Lennon deemed the event a success thanks to the number of participants and the speakers that rallied up in his favour. Beside UKIP’s leader, Anne Marie Waters, the far-right youtuber Carl Benjamin, and the Breitbart editor Milo Yiannopoulos were among the speakers of the demonstration (The Guardian, 6.5.18). The event was attended also by the EDL that on its website published a post called “The Dying of Free Speech in the UK” and lamenting that the UK government does not defend its own citizens:

“Churchill’s advice was ignored. ‘An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile, hoping it will eat him last.’ The ‘crocodile’ in the national room is of course Islam [...] We are reaping today what we sowed 30 years ago. The delay in responding to these threats has made the task today all but impossible. Indeed, the Government no longer gives the pretence of defending centuries old principles. It has all but capitulated to the Islamic crocodile that never sleeps and will never stop. [...] Tommy Robinson is routinely harassed by the forces of the State in an effort to shut him up. [...] We can only echo the warning issued by the President of the United States in 1962: ‘Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable’.” (EDL, 24.4.18).

Later in May 2018, Yaxley-Lennon was jailed for contempt of court after using his Facebook page to broadcast details of a trial on a grooming gang case, in Leeds, subject to reporting restrictions. This time, Batten actively promoted a rally called to release the activist in a Tweet “Today I will be speaking at the Free Tommy Robinson Rally at Whitehall” (The Guardian, 11.6.16). His tweet was sent when the rally was already taking place and violence was being used by far-right activists. During the clashes 9 people were arrested and 5 policemen injured, but Batten blamed the violence on “a few idiots and provocateurs” and went on with his plan

to take part to the rally (The Guardian, 11.6.16). The rally was attended also by the EDL that in a long post on its website accused the government and journalists of spreading fake news and that

“The public know that not all trials and convictions of Muslim groomers, rapists and child sex abusers are reported. The public sense they are being conned and they depend on Tommy Robinson and the EDL to get information out which otherwise goes unreported or under-reported.” (EDL, 2018)

Batten’s presence and role in this event raised the concern of senior UKIP members who did not endorse the turn took by the leader and its proximity with the far-right movement sector. Farage did not openly criticize Batten, however, he spoke to UKIP activists and recognised the risks of this new party strategy and how it would risk alienate support from the more moderate sectors of society (The Guardian, 11.6.16). The same fears were expressed by senior party members that worried about Batten’s relation with Yaxley-Lennon, and stated: “These are the people we spent years trying to keep out of the party, and so this isn’t making a lot of people happy. It’s really upset what you might call the more old-school party members” (The Guardian, 11.6.16b). These fears proved to be right as an increasing number of UKIP’s MEPs and members left the party in the following weeks and months. Batten’s transformation of the party did not involve only relations with Yaxley-Lennon, but he brought officially into UKIP far-right online activists with the aim of increasing the party online visibility and engagements. Paul Joseph Watson, Mark Meechan, Carl Benjamin, and Milo Yiannopoulos were accepted into the party to and their controversial opinions were deemed useful “to be seen by a much younger audience all over the country” as the chair of UKIP’s youth wing stated. (The Guardian, 29.6.18). During September and October 2018, other rallies being organised in support of Yaxley-Lennon by far-right activists and groups took place in London and they were

all attended by Batten (The Guardian, 27.6.18), who kept the door of his party open to new members and supporters without worrying about the old membership growing disaffected with the party.

The series of rallies in support of Yaxley-Lennon were not the only instances where UKIP and the EDL joined the streets together. In fact, demonstrations in support of Brexit and a quick and effective implementation of the vote, were also attended by UKIP members and far-right movement organisations, including EDL supporters. In June 2018, a pro-Brexit march was organised in the streets of London and Batten once again urged far-right activists to join the party as UKIP was the only party really fighting for a full Brexit: “There is a real danger we will leave in name only, MPs don’t care how many people go on this march, it doesn’t affect them, the only thing that affects them is losing their seats” (The Guardian, 23.6.18). In December 2018, two pro-Brexit marches were organised in the same day. One was led by Farage and UKIP old members, while the other was led by Yaxley-Lennon and had the support of Batten and the far-right movement sector. The “Brexit betrayal” march was attended by over 5,000 people and Yaxley-Lennon urged all the participants to join UKIP and that he did not want to appear to “jumping on the Brexit bandwagon” but that his supporters “need a political voice” (The Independent, 9.12.18). Batten, thanked Yaxley-Lennon for mobilising his supporters on the Brexit issue and that that the rally was to be considered “a huge success” (The Independent, 9.12.18).

The “Brexit betrayal” march was the first rally organised by Yaxley-Lennon after his official appointment as Batten personal advisor in November 2019. Batten himself announced it:

“I have appointed Tommy Robinson to be a personal special adviser on two subjects which he has great knowledge. It is not necessary for him to be a party member in order to assist me in this role. I am looking forward to working with him.” (The Guardian, 23.11.18)

Following this move and after 25 years of membership, Farage left the party. He recognised Batten's "fixations" on anti-Muslim policies had steered the party completely away from its original aim and that Brexit was still to be accomplished (The Guardian, 4.12.18). Batten defended his decision and, in an interview released to the BBC, affirmed that Farage had no right in questioning the appointment of Yaxley-Lennon, as Farage himself "employed a member of the National Front for several years" (BBC, 14.4.19). He also added:

"I take the view that Tommy Robinson is not far-right. If you had him on an interview and ask him for his view you would find out that he does not have far-right views. He is somebody who can give me information and research that would be useful to me- As is he ever becomes a member of UKIP that would be subject to a vote of all UKIP membership" (BBC, 14.4.19).

Yaxley-Lennon never formally joined UKIP and despite Batten's pressure to let him into the party, the founder of the EDL decided to run in the 2019 EU elections as an independent. He arrived eighth in the Warrington seat with only 2.2 percent of the votes, losing his £5,000 deposit. The humiliating defeat was blamed by Yaxley-Lennon on the government who, in his view, pressured social media companies to ban him from their website: "Trump won his campaign on social media. Brexit was won on social media. I'm banned from social media. So, my ability to fight a fair campaign is gone, orchestrated and organised by the government. I feel like I have been fighting with my hands tied behind my back" (The Independent, 27.5.19). Yaxley-Lennon was not the only one who failed to win a seat in the EU elections, Batten failed to win a seat in London, as did the Youtuber Carl Benjamin. The sound defeat in the elections led to Batten's resignation and the end of Yaxley-Lennon collaboration with UKIP.

After Farage's announcement to end his time in UKIP, in December 2018, other UKIP members – MEPs, local councillors, local organisers – left the party as well. In early 2019, of

the 24 UKIP elected MEPs, only 7 were still in the party. However, despite losing experienced and senior members of the party, under Batten's leadership the overall membership rose of 50 percent with 8,000 new members joining the party. (The Guardian, 3.3.19). A journal investigation found that the majority of these new members were attracted to the party by the new far-right social media activists that Batten brought in, and that they were all younger and more extreme than the old party members (The Guardian, 3.3.19). On the one hand, Batten's strategy was successful in revitalising the party organisation and structure. On the other hand, the surge in membership did not correspond to an increase in the polls or the ballots. UKIP achieved less than 4% in the 2019 EU elections and at local elections lost over the 80 percent of the seats that was defending. The collapse of the party was confirmed also in the December 2019 snap election where the party gathered less than 23,000 votes and 0.1% share. Following Batten's resignation in May 2019, UKIP experienced again infighting and the inability to elect a leader. The lack of Batten's investment in improving the party infrastructure and form a new group of party leaders after the old guard left, contributed to the dismissal of the party, now at the margins of British politics.

5.5.3. Organisational dimension: the party midst the movement

In conclusion, the analysis of the interactions in the organisational dimension between UKIP and the EDL has highlighted two moments where the strength of their relations has varied significantly. For vast part of the time under investigation, no relations between the two organisations have been found. In the 2009-2016 period, only feeble attempts when the EDL emerged as "the biggest populist street-protest movement in a generation" (Barlett and Litter, 2011) were made to bring together the two organisations. The data gathered have shown how no relation was established between the two organisations due to the firm refusal of UKIP's leader, Farage, to open his party to members of far-right organisations. The only moment when

a channel of communication was opened was late 2009 and early 2010, when the party was led by Lord Pearson, who in his first attempts to widen UKIP's political offer beyond Euroscepticism, increased the focus on the issue of anti-Islam. Being the EDL the strongest and loudest voices in the streets in those months, some attempts have been made to connect the group to the party. However, no collaboration ever happened due to the extremist and violent nature of the organisation and its demonstrations. During Brexit, some interactions between the movement and the party has been found. The EDL, whose organisation was in decline, tried to mobilise his supporters on the issue of Brexit and some links between the various Leve campaigns and EDL activists and supporters have been found. The concept of "Unreciprocated Support" has been used to describe the nature of these relations (Davidson and Berezin, 2018: 495). The party, also in this instance, distanced itself from any association with any far-right organisations and tried to preserve his respectability and moderation that represented its point of strength until Brexit.

A different scenario set the stage for the second period of the relation in the organisational dimension between the two actors. In the period 2017-2019, sustained and even formalised interactions between the two organisations emerged. The Brexit referendum "both robbed the party of its central policy issue and of its leader" (Usherwood, 2019: 1224), leaving the party in organisational disarray and struggling to find a new coherent narrative that could keep its electorate together. As Usherwood and Bale had argued, while the Brexit referendum represented a success for UKIP that finally saw its main issue at the forefront of British politics, it also meant that the other parties had to take a position on the it, closing down the political space available to Farage's party (Usherwood, 2016b; Bale, 2018; Usherwood, 2019). With the Conservatives adopting similar narratives to the ones used by UKIP, both on EU and the related migration issue, UKIP struggled to find a new message and a new strategy for its survival. Moreover, UKIP's traditional lack of a strong party infrastructure and unstable local presence

were exacerbated by Farage's decision to leave the leadership and in late 2018 leave the party altogether. It is in this context that the relations between the party and the movement organisation became more sustained and even more formal. The issue of anti-Islam was chosen by the leaders that guided the party after Farage as the most important one after anti-EU. Batten in particular was the two who shifted the focus of the party toward mainly anti-Islam position and he worked to forge an alliance with the far-right movement sector that saw the EDL still an active part of it. Batten took the party in the streets and opened its doors to far-right activists, welcoming the EDL founder Yaxley-Lennon – whose enduring links with the EDL had been shown – and other far-right online activists. This unprecedented move in UKIP's history, on the one hand, determined a surge in the numbers of new members. On the other, it contributed to the further dissolution of the party, with long standing members and activists that did not approve the extremist turn it took. Moreover, and most importantly, Batten's strategy resulted in a series of electoral defeats that left the party in total decline.

Considering all the above, the working hypothesis that guided the analysis of the organisational dimension is partially confirmed as UKIP and the EDL became closer in the organisational dimension after 2017 when the party was electorally weak and all levels elections were approaching. At the same time, as it already emerged in the analysis of the actions dimension, the EDL moderated its repertoire of action and only very limited instances of violence were registered after 2016. It is important to note again how Batten worked at convergence between his party and the wider far-right galaxy of movements, hoping to revitalise the party membership and discourses, regardless of elections. The EDL, in 2016 was far from the successful organisation of only few years back, however, it found in the protests for Brexit and for "free speech" a new resurgence of its activities. The closer relations between the party and the movement, on the one hand, allowed the party to mobilise in the streets thanks to the far-right activists and their organisation, something the party lacked. On the other, the

movement organisation(s) increased their visibility and for the EDL corresponded also to a resurgence of its activities. In a time when most British organisations and activists saw their social media account being closed due to their extreme views, UKIP provided a platform to far-right activists and allowed their ideas to enter the mainstream (Klein and Pirro, 2020: 14). The closer relations with far-right movements did not pay out in electoral terms for UKIP that scored a sound electoral defeat of the party at local, European, and national elections led to Batten's resignation, the dismissal of the party, and the end of the relations between the organisations.

5.6. Conclusions

Summing up the analysis of the interactions between UKIP and the EDL, the data gathered through the PCA and party and movement's documents showed when and how the two actors became closer in the three dimensions under investigation: frames, actions, and organisations. In the frames dimension, it has been observed how for the vast part of the 11-year analysed, no interactions between the organisation took place. The single-issue nature of UKIP and the EDL meant that they both focused almost exclusively on anti-Islam and EU respectively. On the one hand, UKIP, under Farage leadership, work toward expanding its political offer and include a wider range of issue, they were always used in an opportunistic manner as they were all strictly linked to their core policy issue, the withdrawal of the UK from the EU. On the other, the EDL focused for long part of its life exclusively on the issue of anti-Islam, framing Islam as an existential threat to the British way of life and Muslims as unable to integrate within the country due to their commitments to their religion. However, changes in the discourses of the two actors have been traced in the last years of the analysis. In fact, for the EDL has been showed how during Brexit, for the first time since its emergence, has dealt with the issue of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU, seen as an opportunity to out immigration and borders under national

control. This shift in focus favoured the consequent mobilisation alongside UKIP in the streets in the last year of the analysis. UKIP discourses too have changed in the period 2017-2019. After Brexit was accomplished, the party needed a new message to keep the party together and the new focus of the party became anti-Islam. The frames adopted by the party were very similar to those used by the EDL, claiming that Islam is a “death cult” (The Guardian, 1.5.2018) incompatible with the British culture and the fixation with Muslim grooming gangs, one of the major focuses of the movement organisation.

The data gathered have shown how both two characteristics of the interactions in the frames dimension were present: a change in typical discourses of the organisations and a convergence of the frames used. The interactions took place when the party was electorally weak and the crisis that brought the two actors closer was Brexit. Brexit has been exploited by the EDL that mobilises for the first time on a different issue that was at the centre of the political agenda, but has also left UKIP in search of a new message once the its core policy had been achieved. The hypothesis that maintained that far-right parties and movements would be closer in the frame dimension when topics that they own become more visible and when the party is electorally weak, has been confirmed. However, as it has been noted in the Italian case study, an important role in bringing the two organisations closer has also been played by the necessity of the party to reinvent its offer and the organisation provided a set of ready-to-use messages.

The analysis of the actions dimension has also found that the interactions between the UKIP and the EDL took place when the party was electorally weak and when the organisation moderated its repertoire of actions, confirming the hypothesis that was set out at the beginning of the investigation. UKIP and EDL took part to joined demonstrations in the period 2018-2019, when Gerard Batten decided to mobilise the party in the streets alongside far-right organisations. The EDL, that was largely collapsed, took part to the series of protests in favour of Brexit and in support of its founder, Yaxley-Lennon, and a resurgence of its mobilisation has

been observed. The interactions between the two actors in this dimension served both organisations. On the one hand, UKIP exploited the activism and militancy of the far-right sector to establish its presence in the streets in a moment when it was struggling to maintain its relevance in the electoral arena and the public debate. On the other, the EDL saw in the joint protests an opportunity to receive visibility after years in which struggled to keep the organisation barely alive. Taking part in big-scale demonstrations that strongly contributed to the formation of the party collective identity (Busher, 2016) represented a chance to reinvigorate its organisation and its membership.

Finally, the analysis of the organisational dimension of the two actors also found that interactions between UKIP and EDL took place in both aspects of links between leaders of the organisation and shared affiliations of members. The interactions in this dimension took place in the same period, 2017-2019, as the frames and actions dimensions. The working hypothesis that guided the analysis is confirmed as UKIP and the EDL became closer in the organisational dimension when the party was struggling in the electoral arena and elections – local, general, and European – were approaching. Batten, breaking the long-standing UKIP rule that banned members of the BNP and far-right organisations to enter the party, nominated the EDL founder Yaxley-Lennon as his personal advisor on Islam and grooming gangs. A week later, a quartet of far-right activists, Paul Joseph Watson, Mark Meechan, Carl Benjamin, and Milo Yiannopoulos were accepted into the party in order to attract visibility online and involve younger members in the party. The interactions in the organisational dimension did not produce any electoral effect for the party that continued to lose voters. However, this strategy brought into the party 8,000 new members, a 50 percent more than when Batten took the lead of the party. Moreover, the far-right sector benefit from the relations as well. In a moment when far-right activists and organisations were being banned from social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, depriving the organisations of one of their recruitment and propaganda instruments,

through the relations with UKIP these same actors had the chance to maintain their visibility in the media and use the party's platform to diffuse their messages.

Conclusions

The research aimed at answering the questions of under which conditions parties and movements are more likely to have closer interactions, and how these actors adapt their movements mobilisation strategies, discourses, and organisational characteristics through their interactions. At the core of the research, there is the idea that the far right is better understood as a collective actor and investigating how parties and movements interact is fundamental in understanding the dynamics behind its developments.

In order to answer the research question and carry out the empirical investigation, I proposed a novel conceptualisation of party-movement interactions that allows to analytically investigate different aspects of their relations and to systematically assess when their interactions are stronger/weaker or non-existent. I have conceptualised the interactions between parties and movements in terms of distance/proximity in three dimensions: frames, actions, and organisations. The distance/proximity of the interactions in the frames dimension can be observed when there is a change in the issue focus of parties and movements, and when there is a convergence between their discourses. Through this dimension is possible to grasp the discursive changes that occur in movements and parties' narratives and if and how they become closer in their discourses. The second dimension in which parties and movement may have interactions that of actions. Through this dimension is possible to investigate if and how the two actors take part together in protests, rallies, or public events. The third dimension of the interactions is that of the organisations. Links between the two organisations can be traced at the leadership level, through personal ties between leaders; at the middle level, through movement activists being members of parties and vice versa; and the rank-and-file level with supporters of the movement voting for the party and vice versa.

Two case studies have been carried out in order to respond to the research question. The first case-study, the Italian one, investigated the interactions between Lega (Nord) and

CasaPound Italia, while the second case-study, the UK one, investigated the interactions between UKIP and the EDL.

The cases have been chosen because, although within a most similar design, they offer some variance in respect to features of their political and cultural opportunity structure that have been found to have an impact in explaining the emergence and success of the far right. Both Italy and the UK have experienced, albeit to different extent, the political and cultural crises that have interested Europe in the last decades, both are established representative democracies, and both are Western European countries. However, they present different electoral system. With the UK characterised by a majoritarian electoral system – first-past-the-post – that is traditionally considered to hinder the chances of new and radical parties to establish a presence in the electoral arena. While Italy has adopted in its post-wars history roughly always a proportional system, a more favourable system for new and extreme parties to gain representation in institutions (Eatwell, 2000). The two countries differ also for the presence of possible allies in power as Italy has experienced radical-right parties gaining even governmental positions. While in the UK, far-right parties have constantly remained out of Parliament. Moreover, the two countries differ in regard to their relations with a fascist past. While Italy has experienced the 20-year Fascist dictatorship, but has nonetheless a low-level of stigmatisation for its past, the UK is characterised by very low lev of acceptance of fascist or authoritarian ideas (Mannucci, 2020).

Against these differences in the political and discursive opportunity structure of the two countries, this conclusion turns now to discuss the findings of the empirical analysis and assess them in a comparative manner.

Interactions in the frames dimension

The first dimension of the interactions that has been analysed is that of frames. The hypothesis on this dimension maintained that parties and movements are more likely to be closer in the frame dimension when topics that they own, such as immigration and law and order, become more visible and when the party is electorally weak. The hypothesis has been confirmed by both case studies.

In the Italian case study, the data showed how both actors have a multifaceted political offer and they deal with a variety of different issues. The changes in party and movements discourses and the convergence between them has been observed in the period 2014-2015. In this period, LN was trying to reinvent its political offer after its historical leader had to leave the party leadership in 2012, and after reaching only 4% of the votes in the 2013 – against the 8% achieved in 2008 – national elections. The newly elected leader, Matteo Salvini, after only few days in office, began the process that would stir the party away its traditional regionalist populism (McDonnell, 2006), and transform it into a fully-fledged nationalist populist radical-right party. It is during this period that the discourses of the party change significantly and a new nationalist message is being used. As it was shown, in the years 2014-2015, the party has also close interactions in the actions and organisational dimension with CPI, and is one of CPI registered slogan, *prima gli Italiani* – Italian firsts – that becomes one of the new LN's main slogans. Moreover, 2014 saw the beginning of the so-called migration crisis, with over 170,000 migrants arriving by sea, against 43,000 in 2013 (UNHCR, 2022) and both LN and CPI significantly increased their focus on the migration issue. Migration was already present in LN's political agenda, while up until that moment CPI largely disregarded the issue. Starting in 2014, both actors began mobilising increasingly against migration and it soon became one of the most prominent issues, as the data gathered through the PCA showed. The increased visibility of the issue of migration – confirmed by the Eurobarometer data – and the poor results

of the 2013 elections, represent the two conditions stated in the hypothesis that would result in a proximity in the frames dimension. Both actors increased their focus on migration, both liked it strictly with security issues, framing migration as a law-and-order issue. Moreover, both presented it as a threat to the cultural homogeneity of the state, even if CPI in its claims uses also an economic frame against migration, especially when it mobilises its supporters in the streets.

However, it has also been noted, that the issue positions and the frames adopted by the party remain in use even when no close interactions have been observed in the other two dimensions of party-movement relations. I argued that the proximity in the frames dimension between parties and movements represents one of the mechanisms through which extreme ideas enter the political mainstream. The legitimacy that frames and discourses proposed by movements gain by being adopted by the party contribute to the spreading of more extreme ideas. In fact, it has been shown how movement's leaders have continued to hold, long after the 2014-2015 period, that some of their ideas and policy proposals had been "stolen" by the party and that they were the first to propose them.

The same dynamics have been observed also in the UK case study. Although the empirical investigation concerned two very different set of party and movement organisation, the hypothesis that closer interactions would be observed when issues that they owned receive increased visibility and when the party is electorally weak. Both actors of the UK case-study are single-issue organisations. On the one hand, UKIP's ideology and political offer was built around the core policy demand of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU and even if during the long Farage leadership, it broadened its political agenda, all the other issues were intrinsically linked to their opposition to the EU. On the other hand, the EDL was born with the aim of opposing the "creeping Islamification" (EDL, 2012) of the UK and maintained this focus throughout the period under investigation. However, the data gathered through the PCA

and the analysis of the organisation's statements, has shown how during Brexit the organisation for the first time has mobilised its supporters on a different issue. Brexit was framed by the organisation a "catalyst for change in the UK" and the chance "to secure independence" and escape "Europe's permanent immigration crisis" (EDL, 2016b). Moreover, after the Brexit referendum, and while UKIP struggled to find a new political offer for its voters, a change in the discourses of the party and convergence toward the movement's frames has been observed. In fact, after Brexit, UKIP increased its focus on anti-Islam, until it became the "fixation" of its leader Gerard Batten.

The changes in EDL's discourses during the Brexit campaign and the shift of UKIP's focus from anti-EU to anti-Islam allowed to observe increased interactions in the frames dimension between the two actors. In the period 2018-2019 strong interactions between UKIP and the EDL have been observed also in the other two dimensions, and this was made possible by the vicinity in the frames dimensions that began short before and that set the stage for their joint mobilisation in the streets. It has been argued that even if the EDL was declining and far from its mobilisation capacity of the first years, the organisation remained active online and offline and it was part of the variegated networks of organisations and activists that constituted the British far-right movement sector that took the streets with the party in the last two years of the analysis.

As for the Italian case study, a "crisis" brought the two organisations closer. Brexit, on one hand, saw the EDL shift its focus on the issue of the EU. On the other, after the referendum, left the party without its unifying policy proposal and in search for a new message, that was found on anti-Islam. As for the Italian case, closer relations have been observed when the party was electorally at its weakest, having gathered only 1.8% of the votes in the 2017 general elections.

It has been argued, during the discussion of both cases, how even more than crises, a significant role in bringing the two organisations together in the frames dimensions was the need of the party to offer a new political offer to its voters and the movement provided them with claims and narratives that were already being used by them in the protest arena. At the same time, the movements, as well, broadened the focus of their claims so to include the more contentious issues of the political debate. The interactions in the frame dimension benefitted both actors, as on the one hand the party could exploit narratives that had already been tested in the protest arena, and on the other the movements could see their claims being brought into the electoral arena. However, while in the Italian case Lega's strategy.

Interactions in the actions dimension

The second dimension of party-movement interactions analysed is that of actions. The data gathered through the PCA showed how stronger interactions could be observed, in both case studies, when the party was electorally weak and the movement organisation moderate its repertoire of action – especially its level of violence – confirming the hypothesis advanced by the theory.

In the Italian case-study, closer interactions have been observed in the period 2014-2015 when Lega and CPI mobilised together mainly against the arrival of migrants and cultural issues. In the UK case study, the UKIP and the EDL have taken part jointly to demonstrations in the period 2018-2019, protesting against the arrest of Yaxley-Lennon and for the implementation of Brexit. In both cases, the movement organisations, when mobilising with the party, moderated their repertoire of action and the level of violent claims recorded was lower.

In the Italian case study, it has been observed how Lega has mainly used demonstrative forms of actions when in opposition, and more rarely when in power, and that the majority of

its demonstrative claims took place in the period 2014-2016 when mobilising on migration and often jointly with CPI. The data showed how CPI, on the other hand, maintained high levels of mobilisation irrespective of whether in power there was a right-wing coalition or not, and disproving the different logic thesis that would see the far-right turn alternatively to the protest or the electoral arena, but not both at the same time (Hutter et al., 2019: 326). The thesis holds only in the case of the party, but if the broader context is taken into consideration, it has been shown how CPI remained active in the streets when right-wing parties were in government. A more nuanced picture emerged from the UK case study, where the party mobilised in the streets almost exclusively when outside of Parliament, and mostly in the last few years under investigation when it mobilised in support of Brexit and Yaxley-Lennon. On the other hand, EDL's mobilisation was at the highest when the party started to collect its first electoral success, at the 2009 European elections and 2013 local elections. However, the rapid decline of the EDL began when the party achieved its more significant electoral results, at the 2014 EU elections and 2015 general elections. In the UK case, as well, the different logic thesis seems to hold only for the party, and not for the movement organisation. This is an important finding because it lends support to the argument that the far-right is as a collective actor and that its mobilisation needs to be investigated beyond the actions of the parties, as the wider variety of organisations may be active in the streets while right-wing government are in power.

In both case studies it has been argued how the interactions in the actions dimension benefitted both actors. This is because, on the one hand, the parties were able to protest in the streets even when their organisational infrastructure was lacking and still be part of demonstrations of considerable size, exploiting the mobilisation capacity of the movement organisations. On the other hand, the movements readily took the chance to mobilise next to the party, gaining visibility and legitimacy for their ideas and organisations. In the UK case study, this last point was even more visible since the large mobilisation of the British far-right

sector has ment a resurgence of EDL activities, very far from its prime, but still active among the British far-right movement galaxy.

Interactions in the organisational dimension

Finally, the last dimension of the interactions between parties and movements that has been investigates is that of organisations. The data for the analysis of this dimension have been collected through a document analysis of parties and movement documents, such as their official statements and websites' news section, newspaper articles, and secondary literature. Although the conceptualisation of party-movement interactions that I proposed in the theory section considered three different levels at which interactions can be observed – leadership, middle, rank-and-file –, I was not able to gather data for the last level. This was due to the inability to carry out interviews and fieldwork during the COVID pandemic. The data, therefore, have been collected only for the first two levels. Notwithstanding this limitation, the data discussed in the empirical chapters have shown interactions between parties and movements happening also in the organisational dimension.

In both cases a periodisation of the interactions between party and movement has been proposed depending on how close the two actors were in the two levels of the dimension. In the Italian case study, closer relations have been observed in the period 2014-2015, when even a formal alliance was in place between LN and CPI. While in the UK case study, the closer interactions between the two organisations have been observed in the period 2017-2019. In the Italian case study, the working hypothesis that maintained that closer interactions would be observed when the movement moderated its repertoire of action and when elections are imminent has been confirmed. In fact, the closer interactions took place when CPI mobilised for the election of LN candidate Borghezio, and later when a formal alliance was in place for the 2015 local elections, and this was the period during which CPI largely moderated its violent

claims. In the UK case study, however, the hypothesis has been only partially confirmed as the closer interactions took place when the movement moderated its repertoire of action, but regardless of the proximity of elections. Batten's decision to nominate Yaxley-Lennon as its personal advisor and its statements on the matter denoted a long-term design to bring UKIP closer to the far-right movement sector.

While in the Italian case, LN only momentarily relied on CPI local presence and militancy, when the party was just starting to expand its infrastructure in the centre and south of Italy. In the UK case, the traditional lack of UKIP's organisational infrastructure has made the party rely completely on the movement sector mobilisation, becoming completely engulfed in it. In the Italian case study, LN had actively worked to expand its mass-party organisational model from the north to the south of Italy and only in the few months it took to export its infrastructure it relied more heavily on CPI mobilisation capacity, never appearing as the party had become the movement organisation. In the UK case study, this did not happen and the lack of any party structure and a weakened leadership – after mostly of its senior members and MEPs had left the party – resulted in the party being completely absorbed into the movement sector.

In the Italian case, the relations in the organisational dimension had an instrumental nature and both actors benefit from it. On the one hand, LN had the chance to show a local presence in places where it still lacked its own infrastructures, laying the foundations for the electoral success that would arrive in the years ahead. On the other, CPI benefitted from the legitimisation and visibility deriving from such electoral alliance and from the mobilisation in the streets next to the party. In the UK case study, however, the lack of a proper infrastructure of both the party and the movement – as not only the EDL was characterised by a flat and weak organisation, but the same holds for the other far-right groups part of the galaxy, such as the FLA or Pegida UK – resulted in the party becoming part of the movement but without the ability to difference himself from it or lead it. The increase in UKIP's membership that took

place under Batten's leadership did not result in any electoral gain, but in electoral defeats at the local, national, and European level, relegating the party back at the margins of the British political context.

Conclusive remarks and avenues for future research

Summing up the discussion of the findings, the research has shown when and how far-right parties and movements have closer interactions and how through these interactions they adjust and develop their discourses, actions, and organisational characteristics. The analysis has also shown how these interactions have benefitted or damaged the organisations, looking beyond the electoral results of the political parties. It has been argued, in fact, that the understanding the far right as a collective actor, characterised by different ideological and organisational manifestations (Minkenberg, 2018: 465), calls for a consequent understanding of the far right beyond its electoral form and an assessment of its success beyond the electoral one.

The two cases analysed in this research has shown how through the proximity in frames, actions, and organisational dimensions, both actors have incorporated each other's features and that, once these features enter their repertoire, they do not disappear when the interactions are fewer and weaker. This is an important finding, as it has been argued that the interactions represent one of the ways in which extreme discourses and organisations receive visibility and legitimacy, entering the political mainstream.

In the Italian case, it has been observed that the oldest party sitting in Parliament had no qualm in forming an electoral alliance and mobilising together with an organisation that explicitly takes inspiration to Fascism and whose repertoire of action consist in significant part of violent actions. Even if the electoral alliance lasted only few months, and the distance between the two organisations increased, the messages that had been adopted during the period of joint mobilisation remained and links between the two organisations persisted. Even if the

electoral results of CPI – in the electoral arena – have been negligible, its mobilisation capacity, the militancy, and its capillary presence on the national territory, made the organisation appealing to the party that needed these features in a moment it did not have it of its own. Through these interactions, Lega found a way to circumvent its momentary lack of party infrastructure and mobilisation capacity and compete in the central and southern regions few months after the party abandoned its regionalist focus and turned to a national one. CPI, on the other hand, saw its claims enter the realm of institutional politics, its slogan being used by an established party, and its organisation receive more attention. All important achievements that go beyond the electoral weight of the organisation, and that reinforced its cultural and political impact on the Italian political context.

In the UK, although with a very different set of parties and movements, and in a country that traditionally has adverse political and discursive opportunities available to the far-right, the interactions between UKIP and EDL have shown how the same dynamics are at play. The party, when electorally weak and in need to reinvent its political offer, has turned to the movement sector to increase its mobilisation capacity in the electoral arena, as well as establishing its presence in the protest one. The EDL, that was largely collapsed, and the whole British far-right sector, readily took the opportunity to join the party in the streets. The loose network of groups and activists that constituted the British far-right sector, united itself in the streets and some of the largest far-right demonstrations of British contemporary history took place. Although the interactions between UKIP and the far-right movement sector did not lead to any electoral success, it has been shown how they managed to attract new members into the party, and visibility for extreme claims. It has also been shown how UKIP offered far-right activists and movement organisations a platform when they were being banned from social media for their hate speech. I have argued that UKIP's inability to build a party infrastructure and provide a coherent political offer after Brexit had led the party to turn to the movement

sector as an ultimate desperate resort, a short-cut to their internal problem. In doing so, the party lost the credibility and electoral appeal it had left and became completely enveloped by the movement sector. The sudden decision to break UKIP's rule that banned BNP and far-right activists from entering the party did not only lead to the exit of senior members, but to the complete collapse of the party seen as an unreliable and weak actor.

Taken together, the findings of the research had made a threefold contribution to the academic literature on the far right. First, it provided an empirically reach assessment of the interactions occurring between the two set of far-right parties and movements. The extensive data collected and discussed allowed to analyse all the claim-making activities of parties and movements, going beyond an analysis of only institutional actions for the parties, and only protest activities for the movement organisations. Second, a theoretical contribution has been made by proposing a new conceptualisation of party-movement interactions that allows to analytically assess the strength of the relations between the two actors. Moreover, an original theory has been developed that could be put to further test in different case studies. Third, the research contributed to the literature on the supply-side of the far-right by investigating how far-right parties and movements develop and adapt their internal features by interacting between each other and how eventually these interactions may contribute to explain their successes and failures.

What could further research go? Two avenues seem to be the most interesting: the first entail consolidations the findings of this research, and the second calls for a broadening of the scope of the research.

The first avenue of research addresses one limitation of this study: the lack of analysis of interactions among supporters of the organisations. Future research could investigate this last aspect of the interactions in order to gain a more complete understanding of the dynamics behind the support of far-right actors and to explain if and how supporters of different

organisations, such as the parties and movements analysed here, mobilise together, if a collective identity is being built or if single and exclusive affiliations are more common, and how different members affiliations coexist within an organisation outside periods of strong interactions. Moreover, the results of the study can be consolidated by including more case studies and test the proposed theory on set of far-right party-movements in cases beyond Western Europe, beyond consolidated democracies, and affected by different set of crises.

The second avenue of research entails the broadening of the scope of the research by applying the proposed conceptualisation of party-movement interactions beyond the far right. The conceptualisation, in fact, could be useful to analytically investigate the interactions between established parties and movements that do not belong to the far-right family and test its analytical validity in other party-movement families. Although the theory would not travel well outside the study of far-right actors, the conceptualisation may hold analytical power.

Finally, the research has provided a new set of tools and concepts to study the far right and investigate it beyond its most studied electoral and institutional aspects. This research has responded to the call to investigate the far-right as a collective actor whose manifestations are ideologically and organisationally variegated. I believe that the dynamics that have been investigated in this research have contributed to provide a nuanced and in-depth analysis of the two national cases, but more are needed in order to fully understand the political, cultural, and sociological challenges this actor poses to contemporary politics.

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Appendix A

Codebook Political Claim Analysis

1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

11 Economic liberalism: Opposition to market regulation; opposition to economic protectionism in agriculture and other sectors of the economy; support for deregulation, more competition, and privatization (*-1 support to market regulation and +1 opposition to market regulation*)

12 Welfare: Support for expansion of the welfare state; objection to welfare state retrenchment (*-1 support to expansion of welfare state and +1 opposition for more welfare and redistributive taxation*)

13 Budget: Support for rigid budgetary policy; reduction of the state deficit; cuts on expenditures; reduction of taxes without direct effects on redistribution (*-1 opposition to budget cuts, +1 support to budget cuts and less taxes*)

14 Army: Support for the armed forces (including NATO), for a strong national defense, and for nuclear weapons (*-1 opposition to strong army, +1 support for strong national defence*)

15 Environment: Opposition to nuclear energy; support for environmental protection (*-1 support to environmental protection, +1 opposition for environmental protections*)

16 Institutional reforms: Support for various institutional reforms, including making modifications to the structure of the political system (*-1 opposition to institutional reform. +1 support for institutional reform*)

17 Infrastructure: Support for improving the country's roads, railways, and other physical infrastructure (*-1 opposition to new infrastructures, +1 support to new infrastructures*)

2 CULTURAL ISSUES (CULTURAL TRADITIONS)

21 Christianity: support for Christian values, traditional Christian festivities (*-1 opposition, +1 support*)

22 ethics: opposition to right of abortion and euthanasia (*-1 support for the rights, +1 opposition to the rights*)

23 traditional family: opposition to same-sex marriages and support of “traditional family”, opposition to more power and rights to women (*-1 support for seme sex marriages, support for more woman rights, +1 opposition to same sex marriages opposition to more woman rights*)

24 Drugs: opposition to use of drugs/ liberalisation of drugs (*-1 support for light drug liberalisation, +1 opposition to drug usage liberalisation*)

25 National festivities and traditional moral values: support to national festivities, patriotism (*-1 no interest in preserving these festivities, less patriotism and +1 support for festivities patriotism*)

26 Islam: Religion as a threat for the national culture, link between Islam and terrorism, opposition to creation of Mosques (*-1 support for more right for Muslims, +1 support for less right for Muslims*)

3 (anti) EUROPE AND EU

31 EU: support for more EU integration (*-1 support to EU integration, +1 opposition for EU integration*)

32 EU elections

4 (anti) IMMIGRATION

41 Immigration laws: support for tougher law on migration (*-1 opposition to tougher laws; +1 support for tougher laws*)

42 migrant's arrival and hospitality: opposition to arrival of new migrants and hospitality in the country (*-1 support for more hospitality; +1 opposition to new arrivals and hospitality*)

43 civil and political rights to migrants: opposition to civil, political, and welfare benefits to migrants (*-1 support for more rights; +1 opposition to more rights*)

5 LAW AND ORDER

Support for more law and order

51 mafia and organised crime: support for more force against mafia (*-1 opposition to tougher stances; +1 support for tougher stances*)

52 migration-criminality link: support for tougher stances against crimes committed by migrants (*-1 opposition, +1 support*)

53 prisons and police: opposition to prisons' conditions improvements and to more controls on police tactics (*-1 support for improvements, +1 oppositions for improvements*)

54 self-defence: support for self-defence right (*-1 opposition to self-defence, +1 support*)

55 anti-terrorism: support for tougher measures against terrorism (*-1 opposition to tougher laws, +1 support for tougher laws*)

56 violence against women: support for tougher laws against who commits crimes against women (*-1 opposition to tougher laws, +1 support for tougher laws*)

57 left-wing building occupation/protests support for tougher laws against building occupation and protest

6 ORGANISATION IDENTITY

Support for reaffirmation of party main ideological tenets

61 fascism (*-1 opposition and distance themselves from this ideology, +1 ambivalent positions and silences*)

62 party identity

621 national identity

622 regional identity

63 party organisation/events

7. OTHER

Residual category

Appendix B

UKIP and EDL additional figures

This section contains additional figures from the UK case study. They have not been used due to too few observations to be indicative or too few to carry out a comparison between the movement organisation and the party.

Figure 1: UKIP, mean issue position 2009-2019

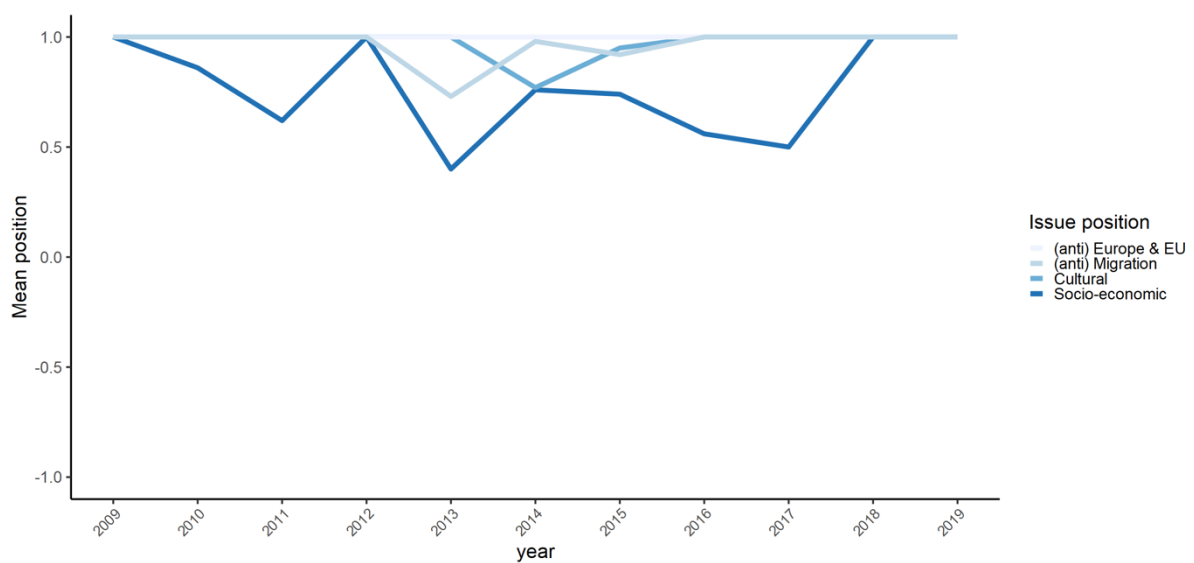


Figure 2: UKIP, Socio-economic issues 2009-2019

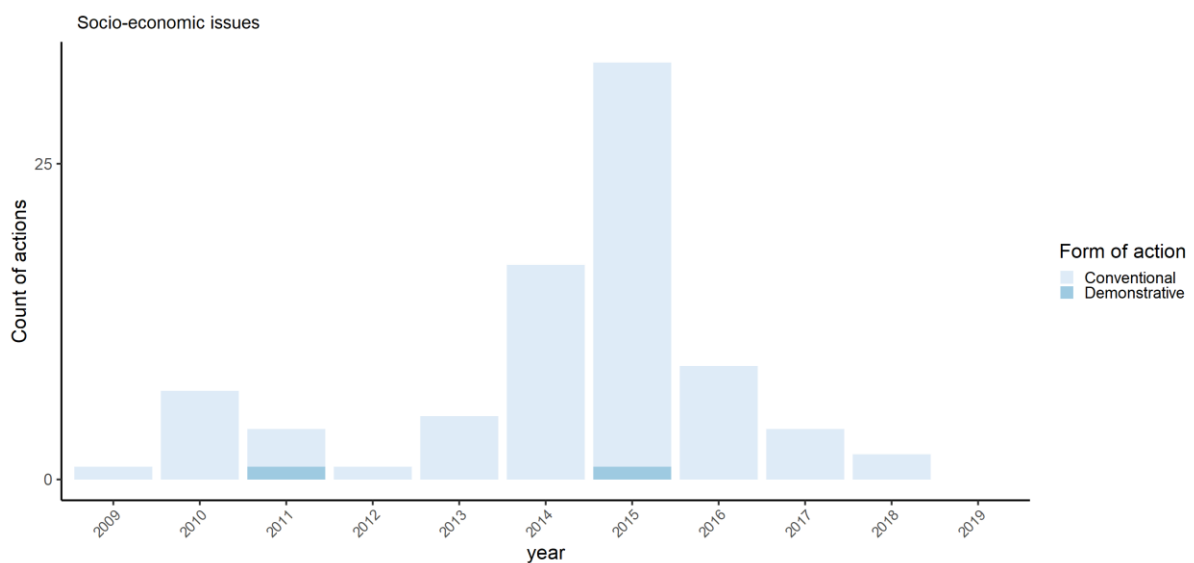


Figure 3: UKIP, Cultural Issues 2009-2019

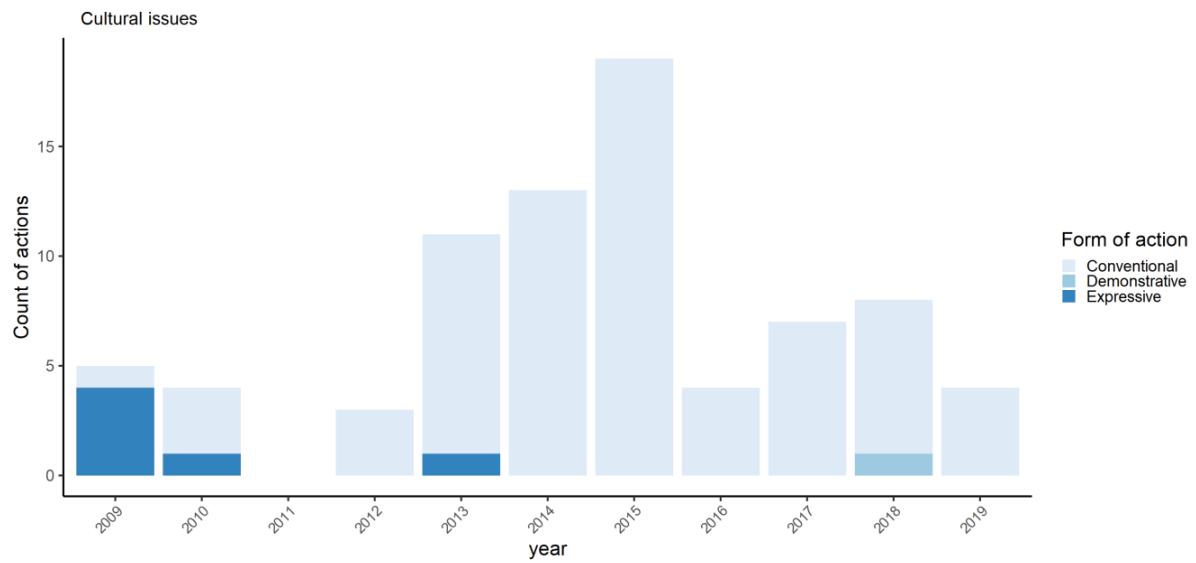


Figure 4: UKIP, (anti)Europe and EU issues 2009-2019

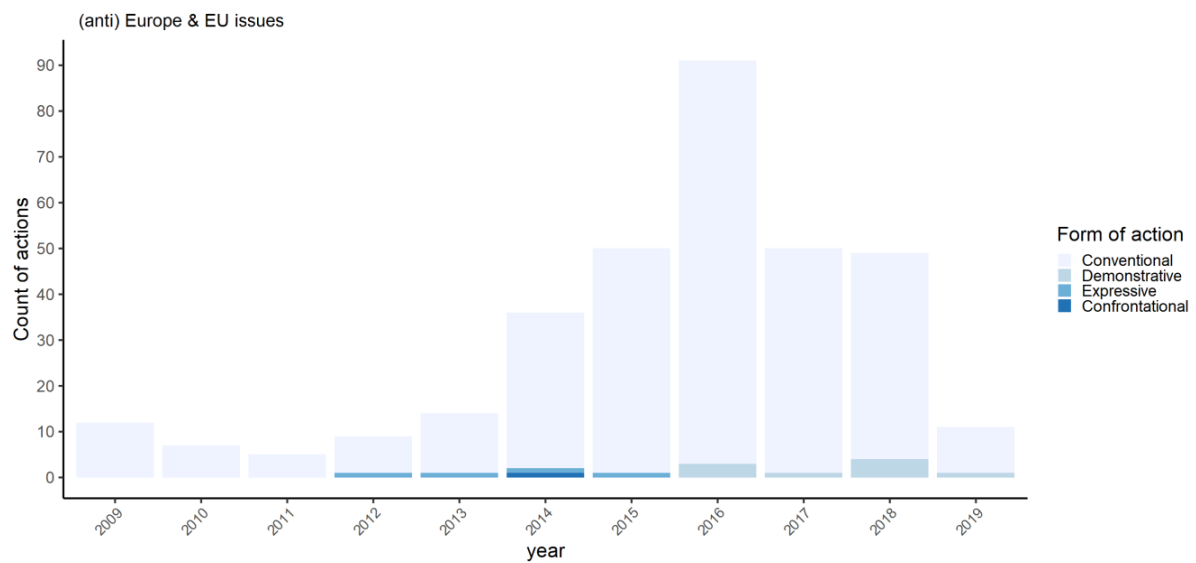


Figure 5: UKIP, (anti) Migration issues 2009-2019

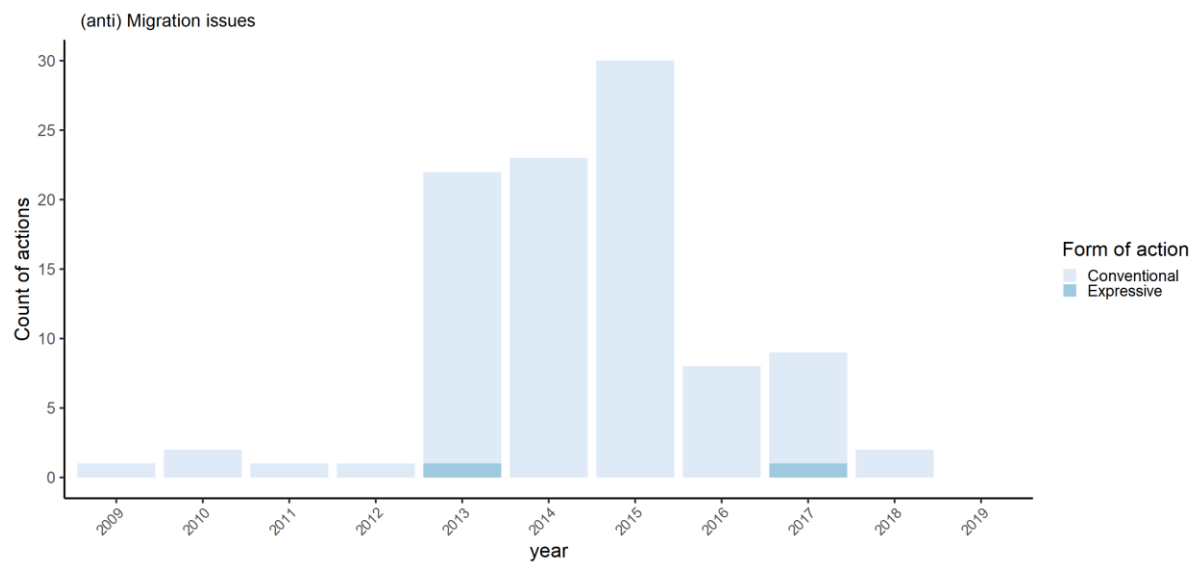


Figure 6: UKIP, Law-and-order issues 2009-2019

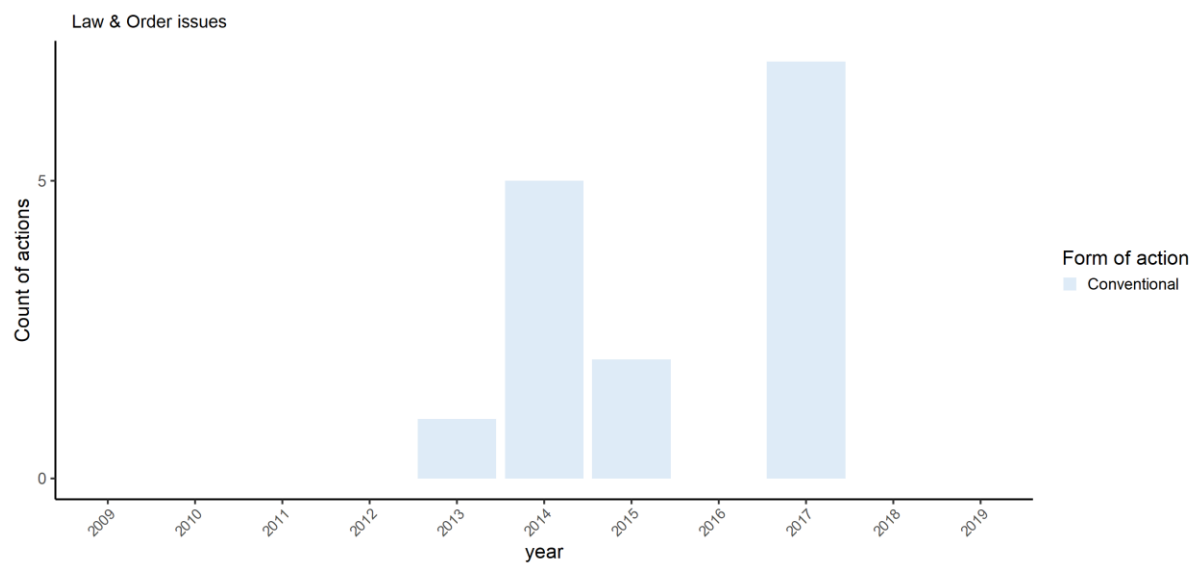


Figure 7: UKIP, Organisation Identity issues 2009-2019

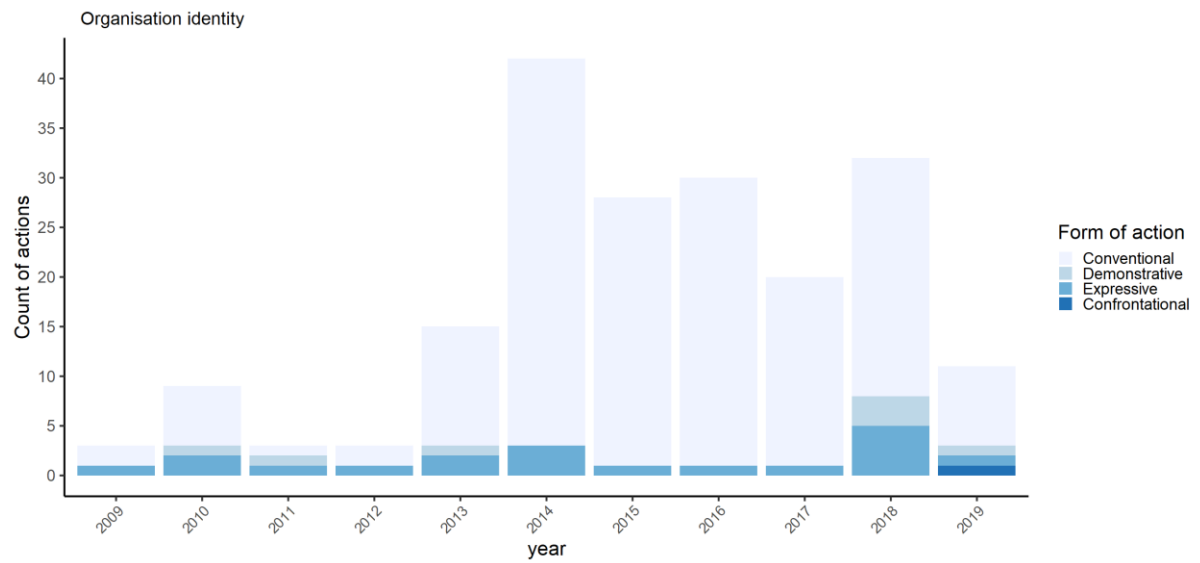


Figure 8: EDL, Socio-economic issues 2009-2019

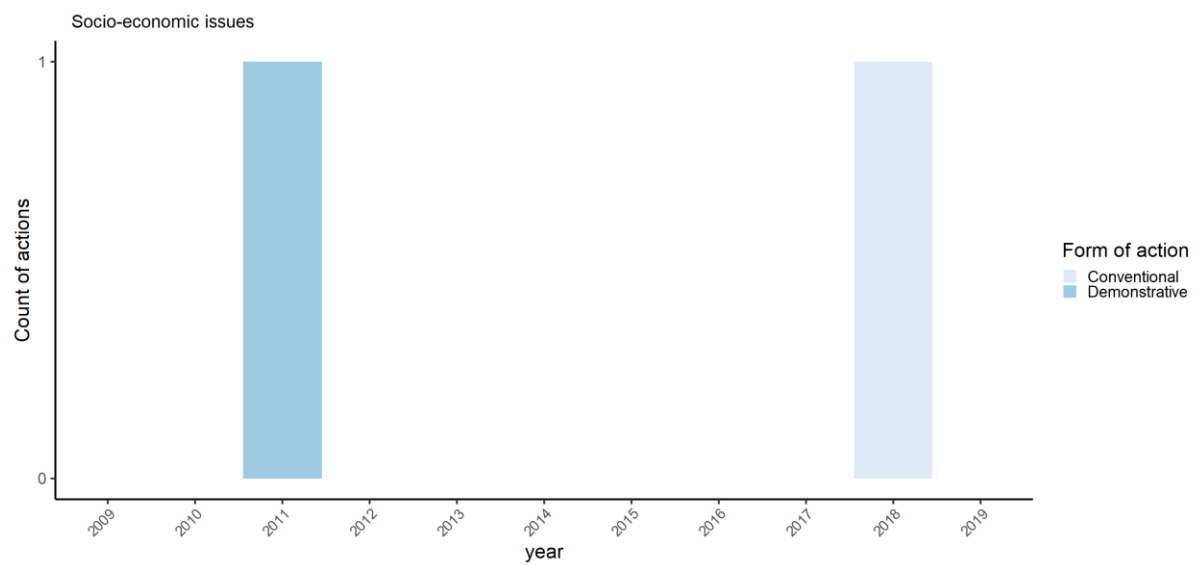


Figure 9: EDL, Cultural issues 2009-2019

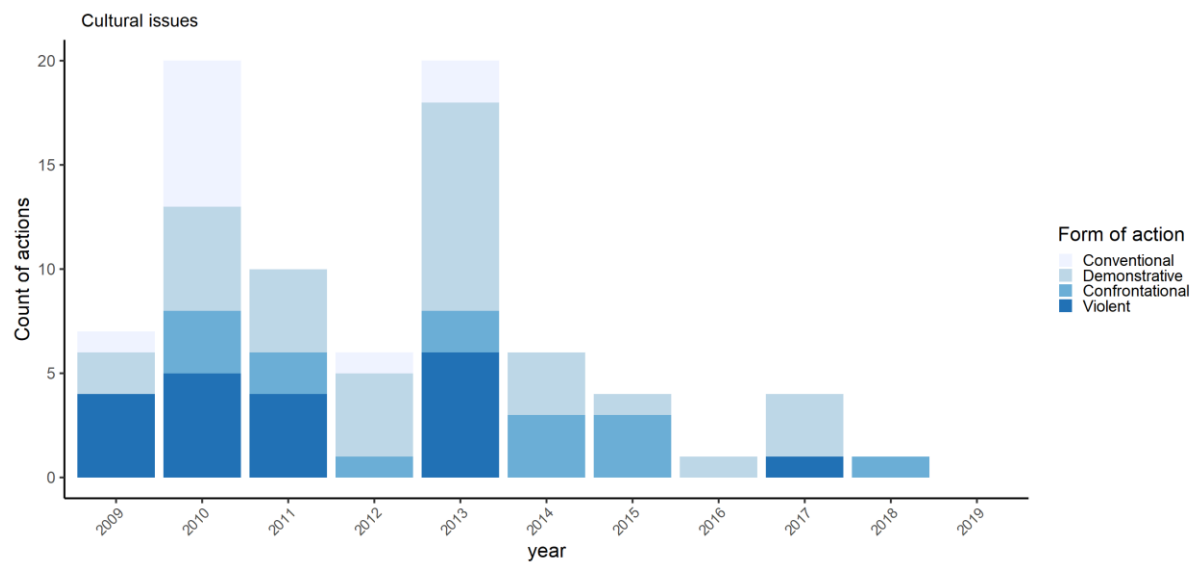


Figure 10: EDL, (anti)Europe and EU issues 2009-2019

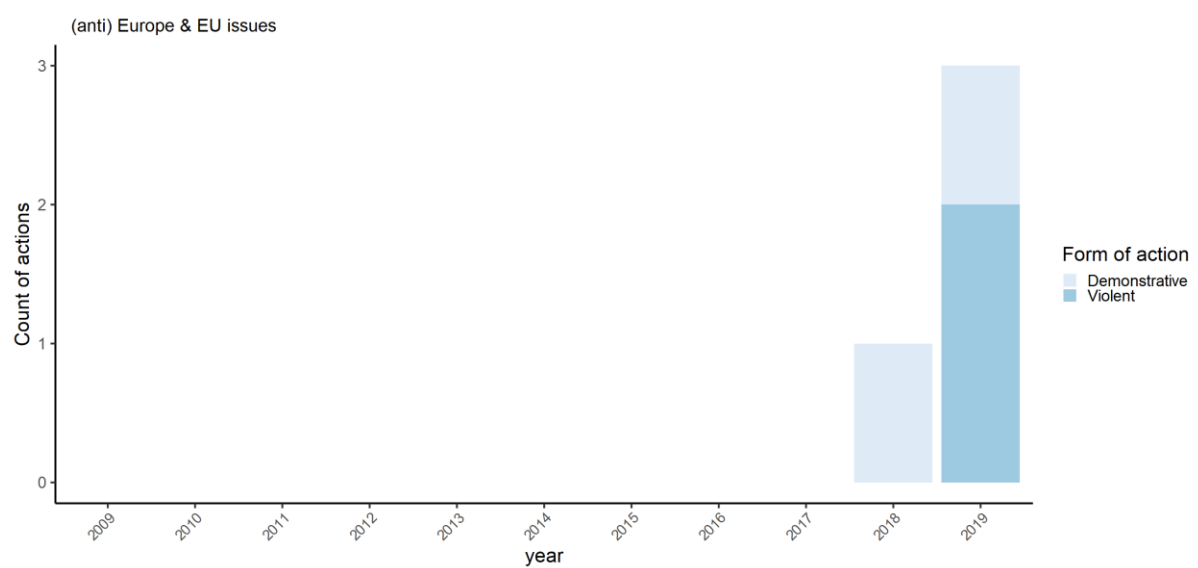


Figure 11: EDL, (anti) Migration issues 2009-2019

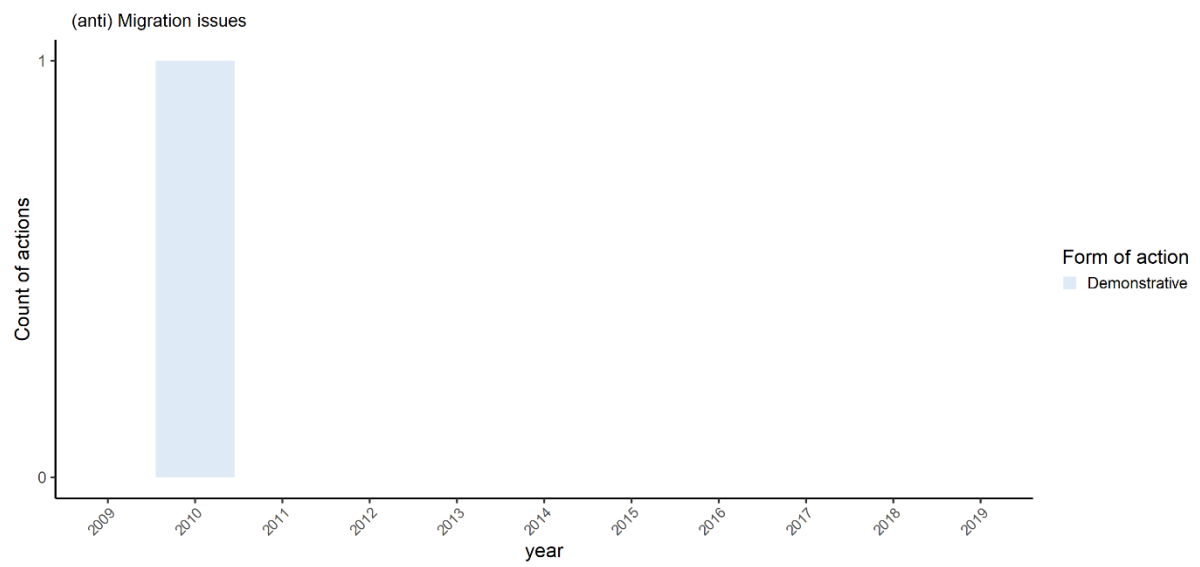


Figure 11: EDL, Law-and-order issues 2009-2019

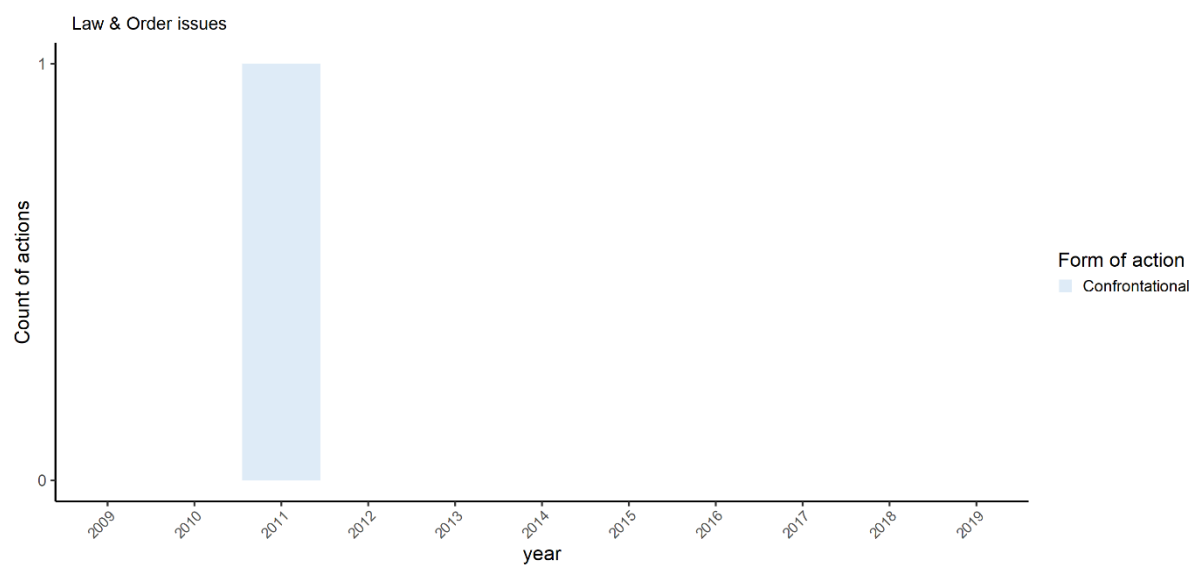
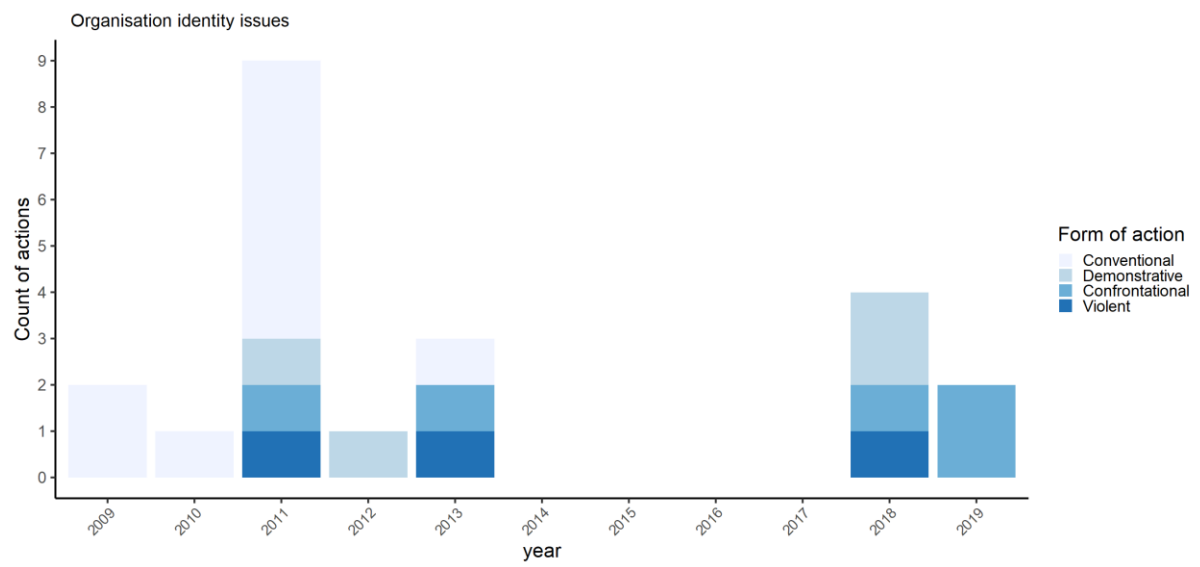


Figure 13: EDL, Organisation identity issues 2009-2019



Appendix C

Selection Bias and PCA. Sample project using La Repubblica

In order to test for the potential sources of bias due to the political leanings of the newspapers selected as the source for the PCA, a small test, for the Italian case study has been run by gathering data using the newspaper La Repubblica.

For CPI, claims have been collected for the entirety of the period under investigation (01.01.2009 – 31.12.2019); while for Lega the first 18 months of the research (01.01.2009 – 31.09.2010) have been covered. The table below shows how from both a quantitative and qualitative point of view the claims collected do not significantly differ depending on the newspapers (less than 10% change in issue distribution). In line with previous studies that have found the addition of a newspaper not to add a net value to the data gathered compared with the additional effort needed to carry out the data collection (Koopmans et al., 2005: 261; Kriesi et al., 2012: 47; Hutter, 2014a: 351; Andretta and Pavan, 2018; Castelli Gattinara et al., 2021; Pirro et al., 2021).

Table 1: Lega, claims collected using Il Corriere della Sera and La Repubblica (01.01.2009 – 31.09.2010)

Newspaper	Claims
Il Corriere	147
La Repubblica	165

Table 2: CPI, claims collected using Il Corriere della Sera and La Repubblica (01.01.2009 – 31.12.2019)

Newspaper	Claims
Il Corriere	345
La Repubblica	315

Table 3: Lega, Claims by Issue focus using il Corriere della Sera

Issue	# Claims	Percentage
Socio-economic	31	21
Cultural	25	18
Europe and EU	6	4
(anti) Migration	25	17
Law & Order	30	20
Ideological	25	17
Other	5	3
Total	147	100

Table 4: Lega, Claims by Issue focus using La Repubblica

Issue	# Claims	Percentage
Socio-economic	44	27
Cultural	38	23
Europe and EU	3	1
(anti) Migration	32	19
Law & Order	24	15
Ideological	21	14
Other	3	1
Total	165	100

Table 5: CPI, Claims by Issue focus using Corriere della Sera

Issue	# Claims	Percentage
Socio-economic	62	18
Cultural	65	18
Europe and EU	2	1
(anti) Migration	62	18
Law & Order	22	6
Ideological	132	39
Other	0	0
Total	345	100

Table 6: CPI, Claims by Issue focus using La Repubblica

Issue	# Claims	Percentage
Socio-economic	58	19
Cultural	41	13
Europe and EU	10	3
(anti) Migration	54	17
Law & Order	17	5
Ideological	135	43
Other	0	0
	315	100