

Chapter 3

AN ANALYSIS OF RECENT ELECTION DATA IN THE RED REGIONS OF ITALY¹

Marco PALMIERI²
Fabrizio MARTIRE³
Gabriella D'AMBROSIO⁴

THE CRISIS OF LEFTIST PARTIES

The crisis of the leftist parties in the so-called red regions in Italy is a phenomenon framed in a more general electoral dynamic. The leftist parties' crisis is a generalized trend in many countries and it has also been confirmed in the last European elections. Both the center-left parties and radical ones reduce considerably their representation in Europe compared to the 2014 elections.

There are many and heterogeneous theories and empirical researches implemented to explain electoral trends; an in-depth review of them goes beyond the objectives of this paper. However, it can be useful to distinguish two large categories of factors for analytical purposes, which can affect, obviously not exclusively, election results. One of these refers to the so-called "retrospective voting": people's electoral choices are strongly influenced by processes of attribution of responsibility, on the basis of which citizens establish a connection between the social situation in which they live and the role that the parties had in determining it (Lewis-Beck and Whitten, 2013).

The research line of retrospective voting is very faceted and, to some extent, empirical studies lead to not consistent results. However, three basic aspects can be single out: a) retrospective voting theory is mainly focused on the parties that, alone or in coalition, have had government positions; voting as a decision-making process is simplified in terms of "reward / punishment" of those who had-in the perception the voters-the opportunity to influence the general social situation;

¹ The paragraph 1 "The crisis of leftist parties" and the paragraph 2 "The research design" are written by Fabrizio Martire. The paragraph 3 "Data analysis" and the paragraph 5 "Conclusion" are written by Gabriella D'Ambrosio. The paragraph 4 "From the Red Zone to the Red Region" is written by Marco Palmieri.

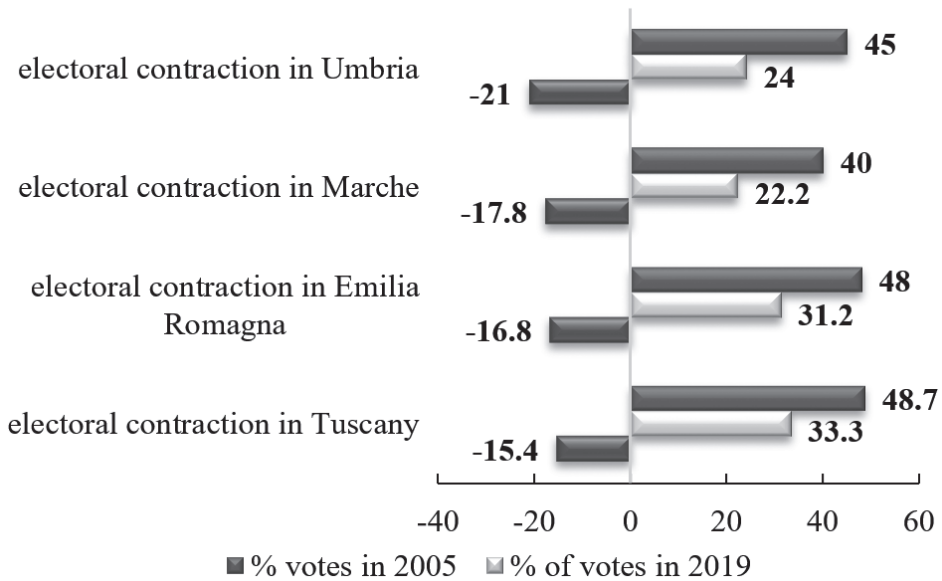
² Dr., Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, marco.palmieri@uniroma1.it

³ Pr., Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, martire.fabrizio@uniroma1.it

⁴ Dr., Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, gabriella.dambrosio@uniroma1.it

CONCLUSION

This our statement is also supported by the fact that the electoral contraction, from 2005 to 2019, of the main center-left party in Tuscany (-15.4%) is lower than in Emilia Romagna (-16.8%), Marche (-17.8%) and Umbria (-21%). Graph 6 shows the electoral swing from 2005 to 2019 of the main center-left party in (ex) Red Zone.



Graph 6. The swing from 2005 to 2019 of the main center-left party in Umbria, Marche, Emilia Romagna and Tuscany

In conclusion, we state that the Red Zone does not exist anymore, but one Red Region still exists; this region is Tuscany, where the red political culture, despite the electoral difficulties, is still alive.

REFERENCES

1. Trigilia, C. (1981). Le subculture politiche territoriali. *Quaderni della Fondazione Feltrinelli*, 16.
2. Baccetti, C., Messina, P. (2009). *L'eredità. Le subculture politiche della Toscana e del Veneto*. Torino: Liviana.
3. Bernhard, L., Kriesi, H. (2019). Populism in election times: a comparative analysis of 11 countries in Western Europe. *West European Politics*, 42(6): 1188-1208.
4. Caciagli, M. (2017). *Addio alla provincia rossa*. Bologna: Carocci Editore.
5. Giuliani, M., Massari, S. A. (2019). The economic vote at the party level: Electoral behaviour during the Great Recession. *Party Politics*, 25(3): 461-473
6. Lewis-Beck, M. S., Whitten, G. D. (2013). Special symposium. Economics and elections. Effects deep and wide. *Electoral Studies*, 32(3): 391-562.

Social Sciences II

7. Mudde, C. (2004). The Populist Zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition*, 39(4): 542–63.
8. Ramella, F. (2005). *Il cuore rosso. Viaggio politico nell'Italia di mezzo*. Milano: Donzelli.
9. Ruiz-Rufino, R., Alonso, S. (2017). Democracy without choice: citizens perceptions of government autonomy during the Eurozone crisis. *European Journal of Political Research*, 56(2): 320–345.
10. Singer, M. M. (2013). The global economic crisis and domestic political agendas. *Electoral Studies*, 32(3): 404–410.