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European Union – Russian Studies

European College

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Investigating the Features of three Italian populist parties (Lega Nord, Forza Italia, 5 Star Movement) in terms of Leadership and Party Claims

Master's Thesis

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Tartu 2014

This thesis conforms to the requirements for a Master's thesis

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Abstract

The General Italian elections in 2013 offered interesting outcomes, which were assessed as the continuation of populist success which started from the early 90s when the major Italian populist parties Lega Nord and Forza Italia appeared on the political field. Populism in general represents a multifaceted concept and the nature of it varies according to a number of dimensions. As Paul Taggart emphasizes, considering the different ways in which populism is studied[1], it represents a "highly chameleonic" phenomenon.[2]

The scholarly attempts to define populism as a concept offered a diverse and at the same time contradictious interpretations, which often consider populism from the different perspectives[3].

Italy is one of the relevant cases for the discussion of populism. The mentioned phenomenon has historically been successful in different regional contexts and managed to flourish in Italy as well in the early 90s. This period left remarkable trace in the history of the mentioned country, because exactly the Second Italian Republic witnessed the emergence of the three influential populist movements such as Lega Nord, Forza Italia and 5 Star Movement, which played and are still playing a significant role in the modern Italian politics.

Numbers of works are dedicated to the study of the circumstances which are vulnerable for populist emergence; however less attention is paid to the analysis of how particular populist parties reflect the idea of populism in general. Moreover, the peculiarities of Italian populist movements are not thoroughly explored, especially considering the General elections of 2013 and the new political actor, 5 Star Movement.

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[1] Populism as a syndrome (Wiles P, *Syndrome, Not a Doctrine*)
Populism as an ideology (Macrae D, *Populism as an Ideology*)
Populism as a movement (Minogue K, *Populism as a Political Movement)*
[2] Taggart P, Populism and Representative Politics in Contemporary Europe, Journal of Political Ideologies, 9(3), 269–288, 2004
[3] Populism as a syndrome (Wiles P, *Syndrome, Not a Doctrine*)
Populism as an ideology (Macrae D, *Populism as an Ideology*)
Populism as a movement (Minogue K, *Populism as a Political Movement)*

The following thesis aims to understand the nature of the three Italian populist parties and to find how they correspond to the major features of the populism phenomenon.

Based on the existing literature regarding populism, the author of the following work identified two general (leadership and political claims) and six specific (Strong appeal to people, Charismatic leadership, Active use of media, anti-elitist, anti-establishment, anti-party rhetoric) features of populism and according to the mentioned features analyzed three Italian populist parties. Considering the main findings of the research, Italian populist parties correspond to the majority of populist features, however still there are differences according the specific nature of the political organization.

Key words: Populism, Italy, Lega Nord, Forza Italia, 5 Star Movement;

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Introduction

It is indubitable that mapping modern Italian politics is not an easy task. Competition between centre-left and centre-right governments and the impasse that was reached during 2013 elections created a new and interesting level of discussion where the topic of populism is certainly among the most disputed ones. There are numbers of interpretations regarding the mentioned elections, which make this event relevant and riveting for the further discussion.

Italy has showed the tendency of having populist leaders and the populist waves. Historical experience of Italian populism during republican period, traces back to the late 1944 when the Fronte dell'Uomo Qualunque (The front of the Ordinary Man) was founded. The leader of the mentioned front, Guglielmo Giannini tended to focus on the strong appeal to the ordinary people however despite the positive resonance of this political movement, the success did not last for a long time[4]. Marco Tarchi acknowledges the numbers of similarities between Uomo Qualunque and the populist parties which emerged in 90s[5]. The mentioned similarities were mainly connected to the rhetoric against "greedy and corrupt" elite[6].

In general, the rise of populism in Europe is mostly considered as the logical response to the negative performance of the traditional political parties[7]. The reasons of flourished populism vary according to the county and its political, socio-economic or cultural backgrounds. The main focus in the populism studies is on the extreme-right political movements. A significant number of authors consider populism on the extreme right side of ideological vector, however in the modern populist cases centre-left ideology is also influential.[8] According to Margaret Canovan, the features which historically remain unchanged are the strong appeals to the people and the negative

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[4] Tarchi M, Populism Italian Style (Unpublished)
[5]*Ibid.*
[6]*Ibid.*
[7]Albertazzi D, McDonnell D, *Twenti-First Century Populism*, Introduction: The Sceptre and the Spectre, pp. 1-15, 2008
[8] Personal interview, Filippo Tronconi, Bologna 06.06.2013

attitudes towards elite[9].The strong identification of political party or particular leader with people often becomes the basis for gaining high number of support. The multifaceted concept of populism is based on the idea of people's superiority;[10] it means that one of the most crucial elements for populist success depends on how populists refer to the people and how strong they identify distrust of elites.

Italy, as already mentioned was among the European countries which faced wave of populist movements in 90s. Two of the main populist parties in Italy, Lega Nord and Forza Italia emerged exactly in 90s after collapse of First Italian Republic and played remarkable role in the modern Italian politics. Separatist ideas, numbers of undelivered promises, scandals or ineffective governance which was offered by populist parties in Italy, did not obstruct their success in the mentioned country. Moreover, modern Italian politics even witnessed the emergence of the new influential populist movement, called Movimento 5 Stelle (5 Star Movement), which gained significant support in the General elections of Italy in 2013. With 25% of votes, M5S became second most voted party in the country.[11]

Discussing the most favorable environment for populist parties most of the authors would agree that the weak political institutions and unfavorable economic conditions are the basic elements that create fertile ground for emergence of the populist movements[12]. For instance, influential authors Meny and Surel indicate three major conditions for populism emergence[13].

1.   "The crisis of the structures of political intermediation;

2.   The personalization of political power;

3.   The increasing role of the media in political life."[14]

As the author has already mentioned, numbers of authors, such as Yves Meny, Paul Taggart, Ernesto Laclau, are referring to the general preconditions for populist success however less attention is paid to the specific features of the particular populist parties,

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[9]Taggart P, Populism and Representative Politics in Contemporary Europe, Journal of Political Ideologies, 9(3), 269–288, 2004

[10] Personal Interviews: Paolo Pombeni, GianfrancoPasquino, Piero Ignazi

[11]Ministero dell'Interno 2013. 'Risultati Elettorali On-line.': elezioni.interno.it/elezioni/ind_elez.htm (accessed on 05.01.2014).

[12]Personal Interviews – Paolo Pombeni 11.06.2013, Piero Ignazi 17.06.2013 Bologna

[13] Albertazzi D, McDonnell D, *Twenti-First Century Populism*, Populism and Democracy, P.26   2008

[14] *Ibid.*

especially considering the case of new political actor, 5 Star Movement. That is why the author is aimed to understand which paradigms structure the concept of populism and to systematize them in order to further understand the peculiarities of Italian Populist parties. In the following research, first of all, based on the existing literature regarding populism, the author is describing the main characteristics of this phenomenon in general and later is analyzing the particular case of Italian populism in order to reach the answer to the main research question: *How do Italian populist parties reflect the general features of the contemporary populist phenomenon?*

Bearing to mind objectives of the research, the author of the following work, first of all is applying to the multifaceted nature of populism in order to offer the main characteristics of the mentioned concept and to illustrate the problems regarding the application of populism. The second step of the research is connected to the analysis of three Italian populist parties in the light of the major features offered in the literature connected to populism, with the aim to understand how Italian populism reflects the general features of the phenomenon and how parties in Italy differ from populism point of view.

In order to understand the research question, populism is reviewed from the two major angles: leadership and political claims. According to the significant authors such as Ernesto Laclau, Paul Taggart, Marco Tarchi, etc; the mentioned two elements reflect the rhetoric of political parties in a thorough way, as long as they represent the indivisible and important parts of any political movement.

The data are collected from secondary and primary sources:

• Discourse Analysis – The mentioned method is used in the theoretical part of research. The author is focusing on the literature offered by the major authors working on the populist concept, in order to understand the major features of the phenomenon.

Also considering the fact that the focus of research is connected to the latest elections, the political programs of three Italian populist parties for 2013 General elections will be reviewed in order to understand their populist rhetoric according to the major features of populism which will be adjusted in the theoretical framework.

• Interviews - As a primary source, the author conducted 10 semi-structured interviews with Italian experts and researchers working on populism in general and particularly on

the Italian case. The information gained through interviews is connected both to the theoretical and analytical parts of the research.

Focused on the above stated research question, the aim of the following study is to broaden and deepen the knowledge in the sphere of populism in general, through examination of specific case – Italy, which historically showed the tendency of having significant populist parties and leaders, who played and are still playing crucial role in today's Italian politics.

It should be mentioned that, most of the authors who are referring to Populism are over viewing the cases of Latin American countries however there is no doubt that populism is becoming more and more popular in European continent as well. The reason of being focused on Italian case is the latest election results in this country, which were successful for the populist parties. In general, existing literature or different media sources are not questioning the existence of populism in Italy; however they fail to explain the peculiarities of Italian populist parties and their level of match with general populist features.

The research shows that despite the numerous works devoted to the populist study, consensus regarding the key components for the mentioned phenomenon is still problematic to identify. It is argued that the populism develops in two major directions: leadership and political claims. The mentioned two aspects present the peculiarities of populist rhetoric of different political parties.

The structure of the research is based on the four main chapters. The first chapter refers to the populism as a phenomenon in order to give detailed explanation of what author is considering under the concept of Populism and identifies the main features of populism. Analysis of literature and interviews offers the most relevant understanding of populism, which gives the possibility to understand the populist phenomenon in general and particularly in Italy. The second chapteris devoted to the review of the methodology including discussion of interviews and in general the relevance of chosen methodological approach and possible limitations. The previously mentioned chapter is followed by the chapter discussing particular case of Italy and the main analytical part, where the major conclusions are presented. The author completed the work with the

summary of research in order to offer the deeper understanding of findings and for examining whether the main objectives of research were reached or not.

1. Populism as a Theory

Margaret Canovan mentions that contemporary populists tend not to call themselves 'populist'[15]. Therefore the concept of populism has to be carefully defined in order to understand first of all what are the general features of populism and later analyze whether one or other party directly corresponds to the populist idea or not.

The understanding of populism can provide valuable information regarding the peculiarities of relations between society and the government. Different authors had been discussing the meaning of populism. The attempts for finding the nature of party-based populism resulted in numerous scholarly works. In order to understand the peculiarities of populist political parties, first of all populism is conceptualized in the light of its key features identified in the literature and later the specific features are offered, which tend to be most obvious elements for populist parties.

Despite the increasing interest in the concept of populism and a number of scholarly contributions to the study of populism[16], identification of specific features of the mentioned phenomenon, still seems to be quite vague and finding *modus operandi* for the populist concept is quite challenging. "Populism - the political doctrine that supports the rights and powers of the common people in their struggle with the privileged elite"[17] – this is the definition offered by the dictionary. However the mentioned definition is not enough for understanding populism in a thorough way.

A number of interpretations cause even more confusion, as some of the authors use the concept of populism as an Ideology[18] and some of them consider populism as a political movement[19]. Going through the works on populism, we can even find authors who claim that populism can be overviewed in the framework of a particular syndrome

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[15] Albertazzi D, Mcdonnell D, *Twenty-First Century Populism*, The Spectre of Western European Democracy, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] Populism Definition, The Free Dictionary, *http://www.thefreedictionary.com/populism*

[18] Macrae D, *Populism as an Ideology*, in Ionescu G, Gellner E, *Populism: It's meanings and National Characteristics,* Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969, pp. 153-165

[19] Minogue K, *Populism as a Political Movement*, in Ionescu G, Gellner E, *Populism: It's meanings and National Characteristics,* Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969

rather than proper doctrine.[20] Wiles offered an approach which limits the populist in terms of "syndrome rather than a unity"[21]

The aim of the following chapter is to review the relevant literature and conceptualize our core research concept – populism, through the review of the existing literature regarding mentioned issue.

As we already mentioned, the support for populist parties is growing in Europe, which is the result of the process in which numbers of European countries have faced the success of populism in the recent years.[22] As one of the most influential authors referring to populism, Yves Meny mentioned in his work, the raise of populist parties is an indicator of the problems in the process of functioning of representative democracy. On the other hand John D. Hicks, in his work "the populist Revolt" underlines the progressive political nature of populist phenomena without any negative connotation.[23]

It becomes clear that the differences in the interpretation of the term are caused because of nonexistent adequately diverging definitions that adopt different analytical angles.

In the following chapter the period of 60s is considered as a starting point of studies on populism, when the huge contribution to the populist study and clarification of the nature of the concept was provided. In May of 1967, during a symposium at the London School of Economics different authors tried to make a step forward in the studies on populism and offered new definitions:

"Populism proclaims that the will of the people as such is supreme over every other standard[24]"

"Populism represents any creed or movement based on the following major premises: virtue resides in the simple people, who are the overwhelming majority, and in their collective traditions[25]".

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[20] Wiles P, *Syndrome, Not a Doctrine*, "Populism as a Political Movement". in Ionescu G, Gellner E, *Populism: It's meanings and National Characteristics,* Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969 pp. 166-179

[21] Bjerre-Poulsen N, Populism – A Brief Introduction to a Baffling Notion, American Studies in Scandinavia, Vol.18, pp. 27-36, 1986

[22] Kessel S.V, *Paths to populism: explaining the electoral performance of populist parties in Europe,* 2011

[23] John D. Hicks in Tarchi M, "Populism and Political science: how to get rid of the "Cinderella complex". (unpublished)

[24] Edward A. Shils, in "Populism - A Brief Introduction to a Baffling Notion" By Niels Bjerre-Poulsen, *American* Studies in Scandinavia, Vol. 18, 1986: 27-36

[25] Peter Wiles in "Populism - A Brief Introduction to a Baffling Notion" By Niels Bjerre-Poulsen, *American* Studies in Scandinavia, Vol. 18, 1986: 27-36

"Populism is the belief that the majority opinion is checked by an elitist minority.[26]"

The 1967 London conference was aimed to categorize populism however the result did not answer the main objectives. Though it should be underlined that during above mentioned symposium, the essential contribution was done by Isaiah Berlin in the study of Populism, who identified six basic features of populism:

"(1) the idea of a cohesive society closely related to the organic community;

(2) A trust related more to the society than to the State;

(3) The interest in bringing the people back to the lost harmony with the natural order;

(4) A tendency towards nostalgic emphasis on values linked to ancient times;

(5) The conviction that populism speaks in the name of the majority of the population;

(6) The tendency to occur in social contexts in which a process of modernization was already in progress or in an advanced stage of incubation"[27].

The idea of cohesive society is the first element among populist features according to Isaiah Berlin. The mentioned author underlines that the idea of cohesive society is linked to the idea of Harmony with the natural order, which refers to the natural harmony of interests in the society. In general Berlin's ideas regarding populism are connected to the "romantic nostalgia for a glorious golden past"[28], which means that in terms of organic society and harmony with natural order, populists should apply to *the better times in the past, comparing to the present unfavorable conditions*. However, Berlin also mentions that as long as populists differ according to their features, the elements mentioned above may not correspond to the essential features of populism, such as "freedom from imposed authority, fraternity,"[29]

While trying to find a proper approach to populism Ionescu and Gellner consider the idea of populism as controversial. Despite the different attitudes and understandings still, most of the authors are tend not to argue that populism is negative concept which is strongly, emotionally attached to the appeal to people.

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[26] Harry Lazer, "British Populism: The Labour Party and the Common Market Parliamentary Debate," in "Populism - A Brief Introduction to a Baffling Notion" By Niels Bjerre-Poulsen, *American* Studies in Scandinavia, Vol. 18, 1986: 27-36

[27] Berlin I, *To Define Populism,* Government and Opposition, 3(2) (1968): 137-80, *http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk/lists/bibliography/bib111bLSE.pdf*

[28] Berlin I, *To Define Populism,* Government and Opposition, 3(2) (1968): 137-80, *http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk/lists/bibliography/bib111bLSE.pdf*

[29] *Ibid.*

In the process of finding the relevant explanation for populist issue Nicola Matteucci, who focuses on the psychological aspects of mentioned concept and says: "dominated by the need for a reunion with the people, according to a sentimental image, if not stereotyped, by a rough and Manichean conception of social conflicts" encompassed as "eternal struggles between predators and prey, and by the desire to definitively eradicate Evil from the community within which it has been installed"[30].

The more definitions are distinguished the more confusion is caused, that is why Margaret Canovan in her work "Populism" didn't focus on finding the commonly approved explanation for the populist phenomena but decided to create the typology of populism which can be referred to many different populist cases all over the world. As a result Canovan offers the following types of populism[31]:

Agrarian populism

- Farmers radicalism

- Peasant movements

- Intellectual agrarian socialism

Political populism

- Populist dictatorship

- Populist democracy

- Reactionary populism

- Politicians populism

Margaret Canovan's populist typology elements can coexist in different cases. Canovan's populism types did not cause the huge debates between scholars; however an Argentine political theorist Ernesto Laclau calls Canovan's typology "a map of the linguistic dispersion that has governed the uses of the term Populism".[32] Laclau also criticizes the fact that Canovan does not give clear explanation how her categories can overlap and in which cases?

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[30] Nicola Matteucci, *Dal populismo al compromesso storico* Roma: Edizioni della Voce, 1976, 75-76.
[31] Canovan M, *Populism,* Houghton Mifflin Hmh, 1981
[32] Ernesto Laclau. "On populist reason", Verso 2005

Different categories can overlap because populism is not only considered as the element of political arena, but also it covers other fields of social or economic life. As Marco Tarchi mentions in his work "In economic field, populism accepts the formation of wealth built on work, intelligence and fatigue – essential components of its praise for the common people.[33]" However once again he goes back to the political nature of populism and mentions that: "As the populists are in fact driven by impatience and a cult of simplification in their distrust of politics and their depiction of it as a place where laziness, corruption and parasitism reign, they do not shy away from political competition for the achievement of consensus and the leverages of power."[34] Tarchi is focusing on populist essential aim of overthrowing the existing political group and replace with the person who is associated with common people. So that populist actions are named as anti-political and anti-establishment actions. In the light of anti-political and anti-establishment ideas, Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDunnell note that with the aim of spreading negative attitudes towards existing political class, "populists invoke a sense of crisis and the idea that "soon it will be too late".

Exactly anti-politics is the phrase which is probably most used by the modern populist authors. Anti politics and anti elitism represent concepts associated with populism and on which majority of the scholars commonly agree. For example, Donatella Campus, a scholar working in the field of populism agrees with Marco Tarchi and mentions that the language of anti-politics is the main characteristic of populist phenomenon which certainly takes different forms in different time, in different cases. Donatella Campus distinguishes three forms of anti-political language[35]:

- **Anti-party language**, which is focused on the idea that parties represent needs and wills of some particular group of elite and not the ordinary people.

- **Anti-governmental language**, which is considering the idea that the state intervenes in the life of ordinary people in the not reasonable way.

- **Against politicians** – rhetoric considering the idea of replacing politicians by the common people.

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[33] Tarchi M, "Populism and Political science: how to get rid of the "Cinderella complex".(unpublished)
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] Personal Interview, Donatella Campus, Bologna 30.05.2013

Besides anti-political language, Paolo Pombeni and Gianfranco Pasquino are stressing two more dimensions connected to the concept of populism as a concept[36]. The first, of key relevance, is the appeal to people, which makes populism as one of the pillars of modern democratic systems. Pombeni also underlines the fact that according to the mentioned aspect almost all the democratic systems in Europe are populists. The second issue is anti-elitist tendency, which as we already mentioned is based on superiority of ordinary people against governing groups of elite. Same applies to Acemoglu, Egrov and Sonin, who note that: "Populism refers to (some) politicians adopting policies that are harmful to the rich elite but are not in the best interest of the poor majority either."[37] Paul Taggart also focuses on the idea of people[38]. The main idea of Taggart is that populists always construct the phenomena of the "other". Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDunnell focus on the idea of "Us"(simple people) against "Others" and note that in the contemporaryEurope the main 'others' tend to be immigrants[39]. Taggart claims that the main characteristic of populists is that they are antagonists of representative politics which transfers the governance from people to politicians. Taggart underlines also the fact that populism is more likely to take a party form in times of deep political crisis.[40] Mudde totally shares the opinion of Taggart regarding the populist main idea: People VS the others. Mudde uses the concepts of "people" vs. "corrupted elites". So that the mentioned author claims that the politics should not be the business of elites anymore and must be the direct expression of the free will of people.[41] Populists tend to manipulate with the anti-elitist approaches of population and using this as the leitmotiv of their ideology. A number of works on populism result in the idea of populism as the phenomenon which includes two contradictory elements, on the one hand People and on the other hand – the others[42].

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[36] Personal Interview, Paolo Pombeni 11.06.2013, Gianfranco Pasquino 14.06.2013, Bologna
[37] Acemoglu G, Egrov G, Sonin K, *A Political Theory of Populism*, The Quarterly Journal of Economics (2013), 771–805
[38] Taggart P, *Populism*, Open University press 2000
[39] Albertazzi D, Mcdonnell D*, Twenty-First Century Populism*, The Spectre of Western European Democracy, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008
[40] Taggart P, *Populism*, Open University press 2000
[41] Mudde C, *The Populist Zeitgeist* , Government & Opposition 2004, 543
[42] Albertazzi D, Mcdonnell D*, Twenty-First Century Populism*, The Spectre of Western European Democracy, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; Taggart P, *Populism*, Open University press 2000

Besides the anti-political and anti-establishment nature of populism, there is one more thing on which modern scholars such as Alfio Mastropaolo, Piero Ignazi, Yves Meny tend to agree - Populism is a right wing phenomena and this is mainly because of the fact that the populist rhetoric is focused on right wing values and priorities such as religion, family etc. However Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell's work on populism says that they are trying to avoid the classification of populism phenomenon in one or other political dimension: "we view populism as being highly compatible 'not only with any political ideology (Left or Right, reactionary or progressive, reformist or revolutionary) and any economic program (from state-planned to neo- liberal), but also with diverse social bases and diverse types of regime."[43]

According to Marco Tarchi, one of the most essential elements of populism is Leadership phenomenon: "he or she (leader) exhibits uncommon qualities, but can never make the mistake of showing him/herself as being made of ingredients other than those of the common people he speaks to"[44], he mentions. Mudde and Rovia, stress the role of charismatic leadership as well, however according to the mentioned authors, charismatic leadership alone cannot be considered as the defining element of populism[45]. Laclau also identifies charismatic figure of leader as an effective tool for coordinating people.[46]

Bearing to mind the idea of Max Weber who notes that: "whether or not charismatic leaders really possess the qualities claimed is not so relevant, the important point is that their followers are convinced that they are their man"[47], it can be argued that leadership phenomenon has significant influence on people, especially in the light of the recent trend towards personalization of politics.

In the contemporary works of populism, considerable attention is paid to the phenomenon of media. In the modern globalized world the role of media is increasing.

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[43]Albertazzi D, McDonnell D, *Twenti-First Century Populism*, Introduction: The Sceptre and the Spectre, pp. 1-15, 2008

[44] Tarchi M, Populism and political science: how to get rid of the "Cinderella complex", (Unpublished)

[45] Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser in Kessel Stijn *The populist cat-dog: applying the concept of populism to contemporary European party systems*, Journal of Political Ideologies, 19:1, 99-118 To link to this article: *http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2013.869457*

[46] Laclau, E. On Populist Reason, London, Verso. 2005

[47] Weber (1978) in Albertazzi D, McDonnell D, *Twenti-First Century Populism*, Introduction: The Sceptre and the Spectre, p. 6, 2008

There are a significant number of media sources and the excess to them is easy. As Gianpietro Mazzoleni mentioned, the media, and especially television is playing one of the central roles in the political process. Nowadays, television and other media sources are used as a tool for political communication, so that it is obvious that media is used for spreading different political ideologies by different political parties or leaders[48]. The same author argues that many European countries even witness the appearance of new Media Populism. Beata Ociepka shares the opinion of Mazzoleni and mentiones that "populists often inspire media events by introducing issues into the public discourse in order to launch the process of opinion building", she also adds that "The relationship between the media and populist politicians is reciprocal. Both sides in the relationship are conscious of possible manipulation, but at the same time are fated to cooperate"[49].

The increasing role of media is also considered as one the most obvious elements of populism by Meny and Surel[50]. Cas Mudde is among the authors who recognize the role of media as well. According to Mudde media provides "perfect stage" for populist leaders[51].

In order to understand the features of party-based populism, considering the major pieces of works on populism the following research will base on the populism understanding not as a syndrome or ideology by itself but as a theory, which offers the features for understanding political movement or particular political leader. Bearing in mind the information provided in this chapter, two major dimensions could be identified: nature of the leadership and political claims, which are analyzed in the light of the features identified in the literature (Table 1).

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[48] Albertazzi D, McDonnell D, *Twenti-First Century Populism*, Mazzoleni G, Populism and The Media, pp.49-64, 2008

[49] Ociepka, B. *Populism and Media Democracy*, Wroclaw: Wroclaw University Press. 2005

[50] Albertazzi D, McDonnell D, *Twenti-First Century Populism*, Populism and Democracy, P.26   2008

[51] Mudde, C. *The Populist Zeitgeist*, *Government and Opposition*, 39(4), 2004, 541−563.

Table 1:

Leader	Strong appeal to people
	Personalized / Charismatic leadership
	Active use of Media
Political Claims	Anti-elitist
	Anti-establishment/politics rhetoric
	Anti-party rhetoric
	Organic community
	Trust in society vs. state
	Harmony with natural order
	Us vs. others

The mentioned features will be used as the features identifying the populism in Italian politics, particularly the three major populist parties: Lega Nord, Forza Italia and 5 Star Movement.

2.   Methodology

The work regarding the study of populism features of Italian populist parties represents the research with the objective to explore the mentioned topic and aims to pave the way for the larger scale researches regarding the populism issue.

Qualitative methods better match with the aims and objectives of the following research. As long as the work is connected to the study of populism features the aims and objectives, it does not require quantitative information. The qualitative methods are usually focused on asking the question why, which helps to understand the research object in the thorough way. The research consists of both secondary and primary researches; particularly the specific qualitative methods used by the author are discourse analysis of the existing Literature and interviews, with the competent experts who could offer valuable information regarding the research topic. The information used for the study was collected from the official sources which were directly referring to the timeframe of the work, so that the reliability and validity was guaranteed. Furthermore, the diversification of sources helped to check the credibility of information.

The secondary data includes different articles, books and web sources. As for the primary research, it is conducted through the interviews.

The case selected for the research is Italy and in particular three Italian populist parties: Lega Nord, Forza Italia and 5 Star Movement. The decision of researching Italian party based populism is connected to the General elections of 2013 in Italy where populists not only gained support but Italy also witnessed emergence of new populist movement - M5S. As long as populism in Italy is not considered as a new phenomenon, the author of the following research referred to the period when the major populist parties Lega Nord and Forza Italia appeared on the political field. The mentioned period is connected to the beginning of Second Italian Republic. The background information is offered from the period of early 90s however later the special attention is paid to the 2013 General Elections in the light of the features of populism, identified by the author in the chapter regarding the mentioned concept.

As the author already mentioned, the research in general is based on qualitative methods. The background work connected with the concept of populism is based on the review of existing literature. The part of Italian populist party studies is covering three major and most successful populist parties such as Lega Nord, Forza Italia and 5 Star Movement, again focused on the existing scientific works and the interviews with researchers who devoted their works to the populism study in Italy and to the peculiarities of Italian political parties.

Populism was associated with "an essential impalpability, an awkward conceptual slipperiness"[52].The fact that scholars does not agree on the common definition of populism, caused the conceptual vagueness of the phenomena which makes difficult to find the methods of its study. The methods of research are highly depended on the perspective from which populism is understood. There are three main understandings of populism: populism as a thin ideology, as organizational form and as a style. The analysis of the understanding of populism as already mentioned is based on the existing literature devoted to the mentioned concept. As for understanding populism in Italian case - in order to measure this concept in the case study of Italian right wing political parties, the author decided to focus on discourse analyses. The empirical range of the populism will be reviewed through the discourse analysis of general information on official documents regarding the programs of right-wing populist movement in the 2013 elections.

After understanding the populism case in Italy the author will move to the research question regarding the populist features of Italian populist parties and their match to the general populist characteristics.

Despite the rationally grounded decision of conducting qualitative methods, there were numbers of limitations as well.

The problem connected to the primary research was connected to the accessibility of the people working in the field of the research. Most of the interviewees were having overloaded schedule that made the process of appointing interviews challengeable.

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[52] Taggart P, *Populism*, Open University press 2000, p13

The second limitation was accessibility of the sources, especially considering the subject area of research. The numbers of researches were conducted in the field of populist study however information regarding particular case of Italy, especially from the glance of specific populist features and the latest general elections, were quite limited.

The understanding populism from the theoretical perspective helps the author to identify what are the main features of populist parties in general and analyze these features in the case study of Italian populist parties.

3. Populism in Italy

The idea which is considered as the less arguable about populism is that a populist phenomenon is more tend to appear in the right wing movements[53]. According to this, the following chapter will be dedicated to the right wing policy analysis in Italy, with the exception of 5 Star Movement, which is considered both as left and right wing movement. Italian political history does not lack the populist leaders, so the obvious question appears: where do we start from? Second Italian Republic witnessed the emergence of populist parties in Italy, however in order to offer thorough understanding of contemporary Italian populism, the author of the following study decided to focus on the latest general elections, but on the other hand also provides information regarding the historical emergence of the three populist parties.

This chapter will be devoted to the three main populist movements in Italy: Forza Italia with the leadership of Silvio Berlusconi, Lega Nord and its founder Umberto Bossi and Five star movements with the leadership of Beppe Grillo.

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[53] Albertazzi D, Mcdonnell D, *Twenty-First Century Populism*, The Spectre of Western European Democracy, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008

3.1. Lega Nord

The period between 1980s and 1990s witnessed the emergence of new radical right political movements in European countries (Austria, Denmark, France, Italy etc).[54] The popularity of the radical right parties is explained by a number of factors. The emergence of one of the most relevant party actors of the second Italian republic – Lega Nord is also connected to the mentioned period. The party was founded in 1991 by Umberto Bossi and soon emerged as a leading political actor, representing nowadays the oldest party group in Italian Parliament. Throughout years the problem of immigration has been among the major claims of the mentioned political movement. The leitmotif of Lega Nord's political platform has always been federalism. Federalist ideas were the main basis for the foundation of the mentioned party. The name of the party clears the picture by itself – ***Lega Nord per l'indipendenza della Padania*** – North league for the independence of Padania[55].

The regionalist party of northern Italy definitely faced scepticism from the very beginning. However the results showed the opposite. Lega Nord became junior coalition partner of the first second republic government. The most visible peculiarity of the populist Lega Nord has been the stabile electoral success throughout years.

Firstly, April 5, 1992 General elections should be emphasized. Lega Nord participated as the independent political party and gained 8.65% of votes (3,396,013 votes) at the national level[56]. The elections of the 11th parliament became the first major success for the newly born federalist party. According to the results Lega Nord got 55 seats in the chamber of deputies and 25 seats in the senate.[57]

The success of newcomer radical right political party was the revolutionary change in Italian politics and definitely became the very outset of the future populism in Italy, though the radical right nature of Lega Nord is questioned. Cas Mudde mentioned that

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[54]Albertazzi D, Mcdonnell D, *Twenty-First Century Populism*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008

[55] Lega Nord Official Page, *La Storia Della Lega Nord,* http://www.leganord.org/index.php/il-movimento/la-nostra-storia/la-storia-della-lega

[56] Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 05.4.1992 election results http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=05/04/1992&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S

[57] *Ibid.*

"while populism has always been a core feature of the Lega Nord, the party's qualification as radical right is more complicated."[58]

Already in 1994 Lega Nord joined the first second republic government; however this time this party established the alliance with Forza Italia under the leadership of Berlusconi. This year Lega Nord gained 8.36% of votes[59]. Despite the coalition between two parties, the tensions emerged between the two leaders – Berlusconi and Bossi. This disagreement led to the isolation of Lega Nord. This isolation policy resulted in decrease of support in the late 90s and decreasing support became the basis for rebuilding the relations between the two leaders. During 1996 general elections Lega Nord gained 10.07% of support, in total 39 seats in Chamber of deputies and 18 seats in senate.[60] During the mentioned elections the centre-right coalition lost against the Olive Tree coalition, which won the elections with 34.4%. The People of Freedom, which included Forza Italia, National Alliance and CCD-CDU (Centro Cristiano Democratico – Cristiani Democrati Uniti) got 40.3% of votes.[61] The main idea of rapprochement between Berlusconi and Bossi was Lega Nord's major populist ideas regarding federalism and immigration.

Later on in 2001 general elections Berlusconi was presented again as a coalition leader. This time coalition House of Freedom got 45.2%, so that with 282 seats in chamber of deputies and 176 seats in Senate, won the elections. 3.94% of population supported Lega Nord. [62]

After the re-cooperation parties did not perform well in 2006. Lega Nord received just 4.58% of votes[63]. This time the coalitions called The Unions succeeded. In 2008

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[58] Bartlett J, Birdwell J, McDonnell D, *Populism in Europe: Lega Nord,* Demos 2012

[59] Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 1994 election results http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=27/03/1994&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S

[60] Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 1996 election results http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=21/04/1996&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 2001 election results http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=13/05/2001&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S

[63] Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 2006 election results http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=09/04/2006&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S

Romano Prodi's government was again replaced by centre-right government. The new coalition of Berlusconi, People of Freedom which won the elections, gained 46.8% of votes. From the total percentage Lega Nord's share was 8.3% in chamber of deputies and 7.9% in the senate[64].

The most difficult times for Lega Nord came in 2011 after the fall of Berlusconi's government. The results showed that the number of supporters declined till 5%.[65] The unfavourable electoral results of 2011 were followed by resignation of Umberto Bossi in 2012 after 30 years of his political career.[66] The resignation was connected to the scandal on party funding, however despite unfavourable situation still Bossi tried to present resignation as his personal will: "I am resigning for the good of the movement and its activists."[67]

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[64]Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 2008 election results
http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=13/04/2008&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S
[65] Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 2013 election results
http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=24/02/2013&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S
[66] Umberto Bossi resignes as leaer of Northern League amid funding scandal, The Guardian, Thursday 5 April 2012 17.55 BST http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/apr/05/umberto-bossi-resigns-northern-league
[67] *Ibid*.

Figure. 1: Electoral results 1994-2013

3.2. Forza Italia

The key Populist Party in the recent Italian history has been possibly Forza Italia (FI) under the leadership of Silvio Berlusconi.

Forza Italia which was founded in 1993 emerged as the key winner of the 1994 general elections. It characterized itself as a centre right - moderate party with an ideological basis combining Christian democratic, liberal and social democratic elements[68].

The case of Forza Italia is particularly interesting considering the high personalization of its leadership as the party perfectly reflects itself with its "unchangeable" leadership of Silvio Berlusconi, who was often named as "a leader with party and not party with a leader"[69].

Forza Italia emerged following the collapse of the party system centered on the Christian democrats as pivot party during the first Republic. The main focus was on presenting itself as a new force which could give new solutions and do the new changes for the improvement of the situation in the country, left by previous party system. Furthermore Berlusconi often stressed his success in business and connected is to the equally possible success in politics as well.

It was right moment for emergence of new political movements, especially after the famous scandal regarding corruption in 90s. The collapse of the party system that ruled the republic for over 40 years was a logical process which ended with disappearance of most of the political parties who later on faced the judicial investigation of corruption called "Mani Pulite", meaning clean hands. The domination of Christian Democratic Party and its allies came to the end and paved the way for new vision of future political system.[70]

Numbers of politicians were officially accused and jailed, so Italians based their hopes on the new political movements. Therefore the aim of Forza Italia was to attract people

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[68] Hopkin Jonathan, *New Parties in Government in Italy: Comparing Lega Nord and Forza Italia*, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2004

[69] Raniolo F, *Forza Italia: A leader with Party*, South European Society and Politics, Volume 11, Issue 3-4, 2006

[70] Pasquino G, Valbruzzi M, *Post-electoral Politics in Italy: Institutional problems and Political Perspectives*, Journal of Modern Italian Studies, Vol. 18:4, pp. 466-484, 2013 *http://dx.doi.org/10.1080 /1354571X.2013.810805*

who were disoriented after the negative experience of First Italian Republic and unsure in their political choice.

Forza Italia's first success was connected to 1994 elections, when FI participated along with coalition called People of Freedoms including political parties such as: National Alliance, Lega Nord, Christian Democratic centre and Union of Centre. The leader of coalition was Forza Italia. However it should be underlined that two separate alliances were formed by Berlusconi, including Polo Della Liberta (Pole of Freedoms) which operated in north and Polo Del Buon Governo (Pole of Good Government) in south.

In 1994 Silvio Berlusconi served as a Prime Minister. Though his leadership did not last for a long time in 1994, he came back to the power several times and established himself as an influential governor[71].

Berlusconi came to politics from business and his fellow companions were from the business sector as well, that is why Forza Italia was usually called "partito azienda" – Business firm Party, because he used business structure to organize the party.[72]

Since 1994 Forza Italia had both successful periods and times of failure, however despite electoral results throughout years, this political party has always remained one of the most influential forces.

In 1994 Silvio Berlusconi's political campaign was successful. His focus on disillusioned voters brought high electoral support to Forza Italia. Strategically rational was also collaboration with different regional parties and creation of alliance People of freedoms. Establishment of the coalition was definitely the key to success in elections[73].

One of the most significant characteristics of electoral campaign of Forza Italia, which is also often considered as the most vivid feature of populism, was the active use of Media sources, as long as Berlusconi was a media tycoon. So that it is logical that from the very beginning of political life Forza Italia could be considered as a political party with the most significant use of media propaganda.

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[71] Paolucci C, *The nature of Forza Italia and the Italian Transition*, Journal of Southern Europe and Balkans, Vol. 8:2, 2006

[72] Diamanti (1995) Hopkin, Paolucci (1999) *in* Hopkin J, New Parties in Government in Italy: Comparing Lega Nord and Forza Italia, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2004

[73] Pasquino G, Valbruzzi M, *Post-electoral Politics in Italy: Institutional problems and Political Perspectives*, Journal of Modern Italian Studies, Vol. 18:4, pp. 466-484, 2013 *http://dx.doi.org/10.1080 /1354571X.2013.810805*

Other distinctive features of Forza Italia are the slogans used by the political leader, which by themselves had strong emotional and psychological foundations. For example during 1994 electoral campaign Silvio Berlusconi promised one million new jobs. The result was logical – Pole of freedoms gained 46.1% of votes in the Chamber of Deputies, which included 302 seats in total. Forza Italia gained almost the half of common votes – 21%. 42.5% of votes were gained by the coalition in the Senate.[74]

From the very beginning Berlusconi managed to characterize himself as a regular man, not different from other normal people. Even though his glamorous life style and economic capacities proved the opposite, electorate still kept perceiving him as a "one of them", self-made man promising "a new Italian miracle".[75]

Despite the rapid success in 1994, in 1996 Italian General Elections has not been as successful as the previous one for Berlusconi's political movement. Right wing coalition was defeated by the left wing coalition called the olive tree coalition. The major reason for the unsuccessful results was the disagreement in the right wing alliance, and LN's decision to run elections alone against Berlusconi and Prodi. In 1996 Forza Italia ran the elections without the collaboration with Lega Nord. While the Olive Tree Coalition was strongly based on the cooperation between 5 forces: Democratic Party of the left, PPI(Italian People's Party)-SVP(South Tyrolean People's Party) - PRI(Italian Republican Party)-UD(Democratic Union), Prodi, Dini list and Federation of the Greens. They managed to gain 42.2 % of votes so that won elections against People of Freedoms which was left by Lega Nord at that time[76].

The results of 1996 General Elections of course were not only caused by the collapse of coalition. As we already mentioned in 1994 Berlusconi gave numbers of promises to population, such as, low taxes, millions of new jobs etc. Most of the promises were unrealistic and vague. Also should be underlined that along with unrealistic promises Berlusconi faces the problem by himself as well, that affected the results of election.

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[74] Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 1994 election results
http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=27/03/1994&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S
[75] Gundle S, Parker S, The New Italian Republic, Routlage 1996, pp. 122-123
[76] Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 1996 election results
http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=21/04/1996&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S

The leader who came to power with anti-corruption rhetoric connected to the politics of the First Republic, faced corruption investigation by himself.

Berlusconi's electoral campaign in 2001 was not different from his previous electoral campaigns. Again using media sources, Berlusconi delivered his promises to people, including once again simplification of Tax system and fight against unemployment problem[77].

Despite the fact that difference in the percentage of support between House of Freedoms and The olive tree Coalition was 2%, still the right wing coalition won and people somehow forgot Berlusconi's first government and decided to trust him again[78]. Silvio Berlusconi's strategy included the so called "contract with Italians", which was officially signed during the TV program "Porta a Porta". This contract included five points for the new centre-right government to achieve. First among them was again Tax system. Another important point was protection of citizens and active policy against crime. This time Berlusconi promised new jobs again, but this time number of promised places was 1,5 million. The most important in the contract was the last sentence saying: "Il contratto sarà reso valido e operativo il 13 maggio 2001 con il voto degli elettori italiani"[79], meaning *the contract will come into force on 13 May 2001 by the votes of Italian electorate*.

Berlusconi was re-elected in 2006. Despite the long term governance of Forza Italia, which lasted till 2006, should be mentioned that the effectiveness of the government was decreasing year after year. Despite the strong economic difficulties of the country Berlusconi's focus during the 2001-2006 government was on enforcement of different laws, including egittimo sospetto and Lodo Alfanomainly connected to the protection of his business empire, so that the success in the economic field was quite low during these four years. The main problem was that the economic performance of the centre-right government was way lower than the economic performance of previous, centre-left

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[77] Bellucci P, *Government accountability and voting choice in Italy, 1990-2008*, Dipartimento di scienze storiche, giuridiche, politiche e sociali, Centre for the Study of Political Change – CIRCaP, Electoral Studies, Vol. 31, pp. 491-497, 2012

[78] Ministero Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 2001 election results *http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=13/05/2001&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S*

[79] Berlusconi S, Contratto con gli Italiani, *http://www.tgcom24.mediaset.it/documenti/contratto.pdf*

government. The slowly progressing improvements in different field of socio-economic life in Italy created a fertile soil for the fail of Berlusconi's promise delivered to the people through "contract with the Italians"[80].

The economic survey of Italy 2005 says that "In the years of 2000s Italy's GDP growth was below the euro-area average and total factor productivity growth has been very weak and even negative."[81] According to the mentioned survey in 2001-2004 the process of new job creation was definitely obvious but not enough to change the overall employment rates in Italy which remained quite low.

The most critical situation appeared in 2005 with the resignation of the minister of finance Domenico Siniscalco who expressed his dissatisfaction with Berlusconi's government, especially in regard to the market liberalization process which was not affective at all, during centre-right government[82].

The Italian economic field was becoming more and more disappointing for Italians, so that the economy which was the main factor for electing centre-right, turned to be the main factor for replacing centre-right with centre-left government in 2006[83].

49, 8 percent against 49, 7 % - centre-left coalition with the leadership of Romano Prodi came to the power[84]. Prodi's pre-election rhetoric willing the peace, unity, economic recovery and harmony gained success over centre-right's populist ideology. However the results were extremely close to each other so that two different majorities were presented in chambers.

During the 2006 general elections Berlusconi decided to use already experienced method of using media sources for political promotion, but this time in difference from the previous electoral campaign the role of television was intensified. Berlusconi started intensively using TV as a best way to show not only the achievements of centre-right government but also showing himself as a simple man. The vivid example was his participation in different non-political talk shows where he was able to promote himself

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[80] Berlusconi S, Contratto con gli Italiani, *http://www.tgcom24.mediaset.it/documenti/contratto.pdf*
[81] Economic Survey of Italy 2005, *http://www.oecd.org/italy/economicsurveyofitaly2005.htm*
[82] BBC NEWS, 22 September 2005 Italy economy minister resigns, *http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4270436.stm*
[83] Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 2006 election results *http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=09/04/2006&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S*
[84] *Ibid.*

not as a political personality but Italian who talks publicly about family, hobbies, music, sport etc. His new strategy of propaganda was definitely new technique of political communication with electorate in Italy.

Despite the fact that Berlusconi lost the elections, it should be mentioned that, bearing to mind on the one hand the low level of support of this leader in the very beginning of the pre-election campaign and on the other hand the increased support gained through the media based propaganda in the end of the electoral campaign, we can say that 0,1% difference between the left and right coalitions could be overviewed not only as a victory of Prodi and his coalition but also as a victory of Berlusconi and his new approach of the political promotion.

Another wave of new electoral campaign appeared in 2008. New elections were the result of the dissolution of Parliament on 6 February and the defeat of Romano Prodi's government later on. Italian electorate still had a choice of both centre-left and centre-right coalitions. Right wing leader was Silvio Berlusconi, whose alliance included the following political parties: People of Freedom, Lega Nord and Movement for Autonomy. As for the left opposition, it was presented with the new leader Walter Veltroni whose coalition consisted of Democratic Party and Party called Italy of Values. In difference from 2006 General Elections, 2008 elections ended with almost 10 percent advantage of right wing coalition[85].

The success of right wing coalition had been quite logical while considering the left wing government performance. Berlusconi was sure in his victory during the General elections and that is why the left wing pre-election campaign was as active as never before. However, still the electoral campaign 2008 was viewed as "dull and boring" by Gianfranco Pasquino[86]. The "tradition" of previous campaigns continued in 2008 as well and the reduction of taxes, effective immigration and anti-criminal polities were the main cornerstones of electoral propaganda.

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[85] Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 2008 election results
http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=13/04/2008&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S
[86] Personal interview, Gianfranco Pasquino, Bologna 14.06.2013

Berlusconi's third government was called "most cohesive government coalition in the history of Second Republic"[87]. This time right wing government faces serious challenges caused not only by the tense situation in Italy but also by the international economic crisis.

Berlusconi faced problems within his own coalition. 2009-2010 were the years of tensions inside the right wing alliance because of the appearance of new internal opposition lead by Gianfranco Fini, the then President of the Chamber of Deputies. His main focus of criticism was the populist leadership style offered by the prime minister and the lack of coordination inside the alliance. This active wave of opposition led to creation of opposition groups both in the Senate and in the Chamber of Deputies, called Future of Freedom, which reduced the size of Berlusconi support in the Parliament. Tensions finally resulted in resignation of Prime Minister Berlusconi.

Despite the fact that Berlusconi lost his positions against the newly born oppositional force, he still decided to participate in 2013 General Elections through the collaboration with Lega Nord. He started his political campaign again with the intensive use of media. "*I have always wanted the good of the country I love and I have never had any personal political ambitions*[88]" mentioned former prime minister and so that the new wave of political propaganda of right wing coalition started.

2013 was significant year for the centre-right coalition because of the official announcement of re-foundation of Forza Italia. It should be mentioned that in 2013 new centre-right coalitions was founded by Angelino Alfano, who served as a minister of Interior since April 2013[89]. The populist promises were still in centre-right's political agenda. One of the most vivid populist steps done by Berlusconi was the promise given to the people regarding the refund of the property tax. The key to refund, as Berlusconi mentioned, was voting in favor of People of Freedom alliance[90].

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[87] Chiaramonte A, D'Alimonte R, *The Twilight of the Berlusconi Era: Local Elections and National Referendums in Italy, May and June 2011,* Southern Europe, 2010–11, pp. 261-279, 2012
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2012.701793

[88] Mackenzie James for The World News, *Italy's Berlusconi says may not stand in 2013, 09.10.2013,* *http://mobile.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSBRE8980QD20121009*

[89] Kevin L, "What the Alfano-Berlusconi split means for Italian politics". *Suffragio*. http://suffragio.org/2013/11/18/what-the-alfano-berlusconi-split-means-for-italian-politics/ 2013.

[90] Press TV, Berlusconi vows to refund housing tax, abolish property tax, Mon Feb 4, 2013
http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/02/04/287151/berlusconi-vows-to-abolish-property-tax/
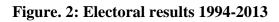
People's support of centre-right was weakened not only by the unrealistic promises given throughout years but also by the personal sex scandal of Berlusconi and the public accusations.
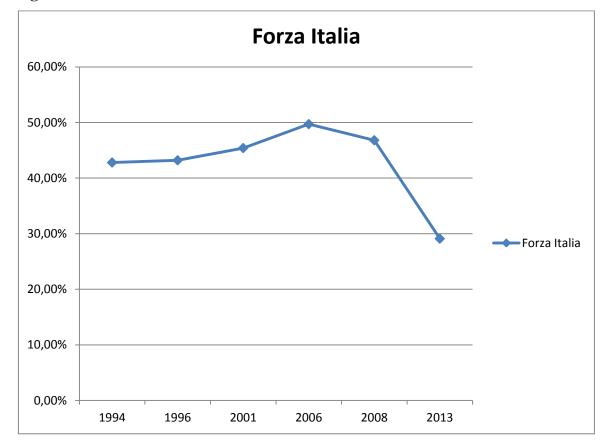
2013 elections were significantly important because they might mark a new third phase for the Italian Republic. During 2013 General elections Italians had wider choice of political parties and their leaders, than they had before. The centre-left alliance was presented by the alliance Italia Bene Comune – Italy common good, including Democratic Party, Left Ecology Freedom, Democratic Centre, Italian Socialist Party, South Tyrolean Autonomist Party, Union for Trentino, Moderates. The mentioned coalition was headed by Pier Luigi Bersani. The centre-right was traditionally presented by the People of Freedom, Northern League, The Right, Brothers of Italy, Great South-MPA, Italian Moderates in Revolution, Popular Agreement and Pensioner's Party. Coalition was headed by Silvio Berlusconi. Definitely successful newcomer in Italian politics was Five Star Movement and their leader Beppe Grillo. As for the centrist ideology, it was presented by Marco Monti's alliance called With Monti for Italy[91].

Elections ended with left wing victory with 29.5 %, followed by right wing coalition with 29.1%. 25.5% was gained by Five Star Movement and 10.5% by Monti's coalition. Despite the success of left wing coalition, Right gained the majority in Senate with 39%[92]. The mentioned electoral results were connected to the so called "porcellum" law, which has been adopted in 2005 and refers to the electoral system when the electorate is voting for the list of party leaders instead of electing candidates directly. This law had negative responses by a number of politicians.[93]

One of the most vivid peculiarities of 2013 general elections were the troubles in the process of government formation which finally ended with appointment of Enrico Letta as a prime minister, who was the representative of centre-left Democratic Party.

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[91] Pasquino G, Valbruzzi M, *Post-electoral Politics in Italy: Institutional problems and Political Perspectives*, Journal of Modern Italian Studies, Vol. 18:4, pp. 466-484, 2013 *http://dx.doi.org/10.1080 /1354571X.2013.810805*
[92] Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 2013 election results *http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=24/02/2013&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S*
[93] Moody B, *Italy's instability deepened by "pigsty" law, http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/23/us-italy-instability-law-idUSBRE87M15620120823* 2012

Figure. 2: Electoral results 1994-2013

Forza Italia

Y-axis: 0,00% to 60,00% in 10% increments
X-axis: 1994, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2008, 2013
Legend: Forza Italia

3.3. Five Star Movement

The third populist Party considered is 5 Star Movement (M5S), leaded by comedian and artist, Beppe Grillo. M5S was founded in 2009 and became second largest party in Italy after general elections 2013.[94] This political movement is the first party in Italy which used social media on the large scale. First of all social media was the main tool for coordinating the activists. One of the elements which makes M5S different from any other traditional political party is first of all non-party organizations. M5S is considered as a non-party movement with political program which is also different from the traditional political programs.

2013 General elections were very successful for the new Populist Party. 5 Star Movement gained 25% of votes, equaling 163 seats both in Senate and Chamber of Deputies[95].

The ideological platform of 5 Star Movement is arguable because of the mix of different political rhetoric of both left and right[96]

Grillo was often repeating that the main aim was to create a new political movement and not a political party in particular. The anti-party rhetoric is one of the most significant features of populist parties; however M5S is party which is not only based only on traditional populist ideas[97].

Social media was not the only tool for pre-electoral propaganda for 5 Star Movement. Another most important component of Grillo's successful campaign was the local meetings of supporters[98]. Meetings in the local communities helped mentioned movement to coordinate and link people; also to spread the political ideology of 5SM and to be more aware about electorate's needs and wills.

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[94] Turner E, *The 5 Star Movement and its discontents: A tale of blogging, comedy, electoral success and tensions*, A journal for and about social movements Article Vol. 5(2): 178-212, 2013

[95] Ministerio Dell'interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, 2013 election results *http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=24/02/2013&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S& ms=S*

[96] Personal interview, Filippo Tronconi, Bologna 06.06.2013

[97] Turner E, *The 5 Star Movement and its discontents: A tale of blogging, comedy, electoral success and tensions*, A journal for and about social movements Article Vol. 5(2): 178-212, 2013

[98] Bordignon F, Cecarini L, *Five Stars and a Cricket. Beppe Grillo Shakes Italian Politics, South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 18:4, pp. 427-449, 2013 *http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2013.775720*

One of the major rhetoric of 5 Star Movements and its leader Beppe Grillo is connected to the idea of "direct" e-democracy. This idea is becoming more and more popular all over Europe (mention the case of German *Piraten*) and refers to the increased level of participation of people in the political life with the help of free access to the internet. Political participation according to Grillo is not only voting but also active involvement in drafting laws using the new online tools and selecting candidates in the same e-participatory way[99].

Grillo started presenting himself as a leader, way before the creation of 5 Star Movement, in 2005 when he started actively using his blog: www.beppegrillo.it. This blog soon became one of the most visited sites in Italian internet sphere. Grillo gathered people around him, who were presented as independent from any political belongings[100].

Grillo's announcement of participation in elections was quite critical towards other political parties and their leaders. First of all Grillo made clear that he is not one of the political leaders who is taking the reimbursement of electoral expenses, which in some cases is a source of income for political organizations. Also one of the most important point which should be mentioned is that Grillo's main motivation according to him, was to be a representative of simple people and to act according to their real needs in order to overcome the crisis which was left by the old political parties.

Beppe Grillo blamed previous governments for economic crisis in Italy and said: "it's the parties that have created the debt, with the PDL and PD minus L leading the way, and they are making the citizens pay for it with an increase in taxes, with unemployment and with cuts to services"[101]. Grillo's one of the most obvious strategies was attack to the previous inefficient governments and on the political and economic elite in general (la casta).

As for the political program in particular, Grillo's movement was quite often accused of not having program at all. The leader of 5SM again used his blog to answer to everyone

[99] Ballatore A, Natale S, *The web kill them all: new media, digital utopia, and political struggle in the Italian 5-Star Movement*, Media Culture Society, 2013

[100] M5S programma Stato e cittadini Energia Informazione Economia Trasporti Salute Istruzione
http://www.beppegrillo.it/iniziative/movimentocinquestelle/Programma-Movimento-5-Stelle.pdf

[101] Grillo B, *Political Press Release number Fifty one*, 2012
http://www.beppegrillo.it/en/2012/06/political_press_release_number_36.html

who had had been confusing the population and speculating with Grillo's electoral program. First of all, Grillo started answering with remembering the weak political action plans of other political leaders. For example he called Prodi's program for 2006 elections "a bible that no one even managed to read right to the end. Perhaps even Prodi didn't manage it"[102]. To the same argument was used against the Lega Nord which according to Grillo, never managed to deliver on the promises along with Silvio Berlusconi who promised millions of new jobs and ended up with the highest unemployment rate ever existed in Italy since the war. That's why Beppe Grillo considered electoral program as a guideline which could be changed any time according to people's will, directly with their personal interaction.[103]

5 Star Movement's political program is easily accessible for everyone[104]. The program consists of 15 pages and is easily understandable for everyone because of the easy structure. One of the first points in the program is abolition of "lodo Alfono" – law which was introduced in 2008 regarding the special immunity of high rank officials in Italy against the prosecutions. Also Grillo's action plan underlines the abolition of de-facto monopolies in the country, reduction of public debt and "alignment of prices charged for energy, connectivity, telephony, electricity, and transport with prices in other European countries."[105]
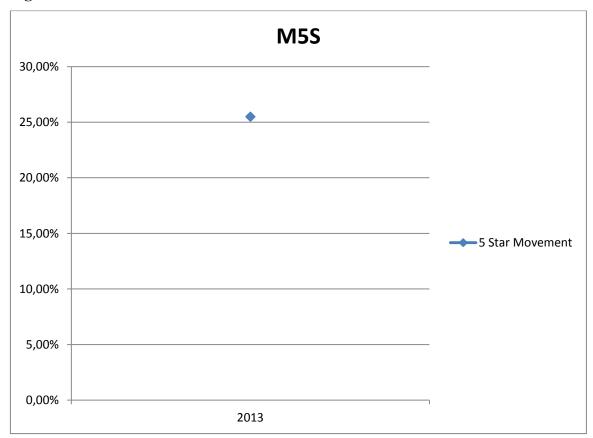
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[102] Grillo B, *5 Star Programme*, 2012, *http://www.beppegrillo.it/en/2012/04/*

[103] Grillo B, 5 *Star Movement Program, http://www.beppegrillo.it/iniziative/movimentocinquestelle/Programma-Movimento-5-Stelle.pdf*

[104] *Ibid.*

[105] *Ibid.*

Figure. 3: Electoral result 2013

M5S

- 30,00%
- 25,00% ◆
- 20,00%
- 15,00% ──◆── 5 Star Movement
- 10,00%
- 5,00%
- 0,00%

2013

3.4. Populist Features of LN, FI and M5S

In the very beginning of the chapter the author referred to Lega Nord as a populist party. Despite the fact that most of authors consider mentioned political party as one of the most obvious examples of populism in Italy, the clarification is still needed. As long as there is a huge debate regarding the populist nature and its characteristics, it is logical that naming one or other party "populist" is also challenging.

As already mentioned Lega Nord is a political party which is devoted to the federalist ideals. The reality of Italy shows that the economic gap between south and north is significant.[106] The northern part is contributing to the common budget while the southern people are migrating to the north for the employment reasons. That is why there is a feeling of separatisms between two regions. Exactly this separatist idea was basis for creating the Northern League. The very beginning of the Northern League was especially radical while claiming the independence of Padania with capital city of Milan. This idea was shared by the numbers of people whose main argument was that North was contributing way more to the common Italian budget than the southern part; however the budget was divided in the same way both to the south and north[107].

Along with the existing cultural and historical differences Northern people were against subsidizing the southern part, so that the pragmatic basis for Northern League was exactly the mentioned attitude. "Roma la'drona" – Rome the Thief – that's how leaders of Northern league referred to the capital[108]. As Bossi mentioned, Roman officials were the ones to be blamed for the economic problems existing in the south, because the only thing they do is benefiting from North without incentivizing their own, southern economy. Lega Nord offered reform, which should have transformed Italy into the

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[106] Cento Bull A.; *the Lega Nord and Fiscal federalism: functional or postfunctional?* University of Bath, UK, Modern Italy Vo. 16:4, pp. 437-447, 2011

[107] Hopkin J, *New Parties in Government in Italy: Comparing Lega Nord and Forza Italia*, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2004

[108] *Ibid.*

federal state, where the legitimacy in numbers of spheres, such as Healthcare, education, defense etc. had to be delegated to the local powers[109].

While discussing the nature of populism the author has already mentioned that the idea – "Us VS other" is dominant almost in every populist movement. In the case of Lega Nord is the same. The leaders of Lega Nord used the less developed, Sothern Part of Italy as "the other" who is "stealing" the money from North.

Another concept of "other" in Northern League's rhetoric was "the immigrants". "Stop Immigrants", "They underwent immigration. Now they live in reservations. Think about it."- mentioned slogans are just few examples of anti-immigration rhetoric[110].

Though it should be mentioned that Lega Nord is only opposing the illegal immigrations; however still party which claims to be against only illegal immigrations still in fact is not tolerant towards even legal immigrants. Northern League claims that Muslim communities are wishing more rights than they should have. For example they claim the removal of crucifixes in schools, banning of pork in canteens etc[111].

The separatist ideology has weakened after collaboration with Berlusconi. If throughout years Northern League was striving against South, now the focus was shifted to Rome, while blaming the capital for inefficient work to resolve common Italian problems. Again, Northern League was faithful to the populist ideology and the phenomenon of - people VS Other. For instance during 2006 electoral campaign, the leader of the league Umberto Bossi used typical populist rhetoric though promising creation of new working places, reestablishment of the traditional Italian values such as –Family and the Church. Northern League is conservative party from the public point of view and liberal in the economic issues. The league first of all focuses on the middle class[112].

As we already underlined, northern league has enjoyed huge success throughout years and since 90s there has been always supporters of Northern league in Italy. The case of

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[109] Giordano Benito, *The contrasting Geographies of Padania: the case of the Lega Nord in Northern Italy*, pp 27-37, 2001

[110] Richardson J, Colombo M*; An analysis of visual propaganda of Lega Nord*, Journal of Language and Politics 12:2 2013

[111] Bartlett J, Birdwell J, McDonnell D, *The rise of populism in Europe can be traced through online behavior...* Populism in Europe: Lega Nord, *http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Lega_Nord_-_web.pdf?1349354875* 2012

[112] Cento Bull A; *the Lega Nord and Fiscal federalism: functional or postfunctional?* University of Bath, UK, Modern Italy Vo. 16:4, pp. 437-447, 2011*http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2011.611221*

Lega Nord becomes more and more interesting especially considering the ethno-regionalist nature of the mentioned political organization.

Lega Nord's main focus has always been migration issue. In northern league's rhetoric migration has not only been considered from the external point of view but also internal migration, mainly from the less developed south to the developed north Italy. Northern league clearly determined the geography of voter's location, from the very beginning of party's establishment[113]. Obviously anti-immigrant, anti-south rhetoric was aimed to gain support mainly from the northern Italy. Mentioned attitude was becoming obvious not only in leader's speeches or general political program but also in posters, underlining the features of Northern people that make them superior comparing to the rest of Italians. Numbers of posters which were giving both visual and verbal stimulus for people to make their decision involved the following phrases:

1.   *Quando un popolo come quello Padano cammina piega la storia!* – When the people like people from Padania are in progress then the history starts.

2.   *Corragio e passione per il Nord!* – Courage and passion for the North.

3.   *Milano capitale della Responsibilita!* – Milan, the capital of responsibility.

4.   *Mai Mula tegn Dur, contro Roma Ladrona!* – Never weaken stay hard against thiefing of Rome.

5.   *Piu Lontani da Roma piu vicini a te!* – Farther from Rome, closer to you.[114]

Anti elitist ideas, obvious clarification of northern people against the "others"- southern people and strong appeal to people were the crucial components of Northern League's ideology.

The ideology and the priorities of Lega Nord were strongly concentrated in the Northern regions of Italy and the election results on 1992-2013 showed the clear peculiarity of Lega Nord's supporter's northern geographic location.

While over viewing populism through the case study of Forza Italia the first and the most obvious peculiarity is the exaggerated role of leader, that's why mentioned political party is usually considered as the leader with a party not the party with a

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[113] Giordano B, *The contrasting Geographies of Padania: the case of the Lega Nord in Northern Italy*, pp 27-37, 2001

[114] Richardson J, Colombo M*; An analysis of visual propaganda of Lega Nord*, Journal of Language and Politics 12:2 2013

leader. Silvio Berlusconi is definitely significant figure in Italian politics and not only from the populist point of view.

In his interview Filippo Tronconi mentions: "being populist is such a phenomenon, when you offer people everything what they want and when people give you the legitimacy and you come to the power you certainly fail because of not delivery on the unrealistic promises of pre-electoral campaign."[115] The mentioned issue was one of the major problems for Forza Italia. While considering the socio-economic situation of that time Italy, Berlusconi's promises were over-exaggerated and not realistic. It was obvious that country still suffered from the structural weaknesses of economy left by the First republic. As Gianfranco Pasquino mentions that despite the attampts of centre-left government, for new centre right government the economic issues were still the main aspects for being concerned (Public debts, budget deficit, general economic management etc)[116]. Forza Italia's appearance on the Italian political field was focused less on emotional aspects and more on the political demands that were occurring in Italian society. Berlusconi's first steps in politics were carefully planned and were not the spontaneous ones. It should be mentioned, that before coming to politics Berlusconi organized a survey to find out the level of support and the most significant expectations that people are having. Berlusconi, who built his political party from the workers, manly involved in the business sector, never missed a chance to underline the fact that Forza Italia's main aim was to come to the government not for governing for forever but for saving country from the left-wing legacy and whenever the job was done he would go back to business with his followers. Of course this was strategically new approach to electorate, leaving strong psychological sense of trust. Berlusconi delivered himself as a common Italian man for whom coming to politics is not the way for making his life better but for making others lives better. His ideas have anti-political leitmotiv, while stressing the fact that most of politicians come to politics to make their personal political career and forgetting about their moral duties.

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[115] Personal interview, Filippo Tronconi, Bologna 06.06.2013
[116] Personal interview, Gianfranco Pasquino, Bologna 14.06.2013

The obvious nature of 5 Star Movement, which answers the populist criteria, is anti-establishment, anti-elitist idea. This political movement opposed the traditional Italian political parties.

The leader of 5 Star Movement appeared to be first among Italian politicians to use internet sources as the direct way to spread the information and mobilize people. Grillo's blog gained unexpected success.

Grillo is famous for his rhetoric directed against the ruling class and this is one of the main features which make this movement similar to the other populist parties. Grillo's policy is considered as the typical way of telling people exactly what they are expecting to hear.

4. Analysis of Italian populist Parties according to the Major Populist Features

The following chapter analyzes Italian populist parties from the perspective two major populist features – Leadership and Political claims.

4.1. Leadership

The role of leader is crucial element for populist parties, however in Italian case two out of three reviewed populist parties used the phenomena of leader, and sometimes even in the exaggerated ways. Numbers of authors agree that the most interesting peculiarity for Italian populism, especially when talking about long term populism, is the delegation of political party's full responsibility to the particular leader. Silvio Berlusconi and the newcomer in Italian politics, Beppe Grillo, are the vivid examples for understanding how important the role of leader is for the future success.

As Anthony King mentions "leaders' personalities and personal characteristics play a larger part in determining how individuals vote in democratic elections"[117]. There are commonly approved general characteristics which determine the charismatic leadership. In his work regarding voters and leaders strong correlation, Diego Garzia stresses the fact that the list of leader's personal characteristics, which most probably could be sympathized by people, is quite long. Different authors offer wide range of categorization of leader's "must have" features. In order to understand whether Italian leaders are tend to play significant role in populist parties, it is important to understand what are the features which determine the leaders as charismatic ones? The author mentioned above Diego Garzia, offers the general personality qualities which could be generalized on any particular case study:

Competence - The competence of the particular leader shows the level of awareness and qualification. It means that during the pre election campaign leader should fully

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[117] King, Anthony. (2002) Leaders' personalities and the outcomes of democratic elections
Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. In *http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2013.837303*

express the knowledge of country's current situation in political, economic, social or other fields and also show the awareness of people's needs, wills and expectations.

Leadership – this element is focused on leadership qualities, especially on charismatic leadership, which is always strong advantage for gaining people's attention and support.

Integrity – in this particular case integrity refers to the moral values of leader, such as honesty, conscientiousness etc.

Empathy – this is probably the most important element, because empathy shows how strongly leader is linked to people. The feeling that leader is one of them, makes people strengthen the trust in the particular leader. [118]

The above listed qualities will be used in order to analyze whether Lega Nord, Forza Italia and M5S leaders could be reviewed as charismatic.

Starting from Umberto Bossi the founder of Lega Nord, it should be emphasized that he was more tend to spend time on promoting party priorities than promoting himself as a leader. Lega Nord's ideology was limited with the ideas which could be preferable only for the North of Italy. Umberto Bossi along with his accomplices was stressing emotionally vulnerable issues for Northern people, such as immigration problem, Northern self-identification aspects and not focused on the common Italian problems. That's why it is difficult to assess the element of competence of Bossi. As long as election results of 1992-2013 showed that Lega Nord's support was limited with supporters mostly from north we can assume that for the rest of the regions of Italy Lega Nord's leader's performance of competence was not satisfactory enough. The second most important element for leader is leadership quality, mostly charisma. In this case, Bossi definitely used emotional and charismatic slogans underlining the superiority of Northern people; however again, Northern League was focusing on ideology more than on the leader. Furthermore, usually media sources are used for showing the charisma through charismatic speeches, however Northern League's leader was not as famous for their attitudes towards media, as Forza Italia or 5 Star Movement.

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[118] Kinder, D., R. Abelson, and S. Fiske. (1979). Developmental research on candidate instrumentation: Results and recommendations. Report Submitted to the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan in
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2013.837303

As for Integrity and Empathy, Lega Nord should be mentioned that this political party was promoting integrity and empathy of party in general and not from the leader's point of view.

Another populist party Forza Italia and its leader Silvio Berlusconi is a case where no one could argue that a leadership phenomenon was not a crucial element in party's success. Considering the 4 basic qualities for leader, offered by Kinder, Abelson and Fiske, Berlusconi answers to all of them. Starting with competence, during the electoral campaigns, the leader of FI has always been focused on the most problematic issues that Italy was coping with. Berlusconi never failed to offer the alternative to the corrupted and unproductive first government. Definitely his business background affected his political program, where economic issues have always been on the leading positions. The vivid characteristic of the mentioned leader was that he was always ready to offer people what that wanted in the particular period of time.

The leadership component, most probably has been the key element for Berlusconi's success throughout years. Berlusconi was the first leader in Italian politics to start using active propaganda through Television. The importance of Television is in the globalized world is high. People start knowing different famous personalities from TV and in some cases people start believing that they know people whom they never met in the real life. Despite the fact that nowadays there is wide choice of media sources, TV still remains one of the most influential ones[119]. Should be mentioned, that for Berlusconi TV was not only a source for spreading political ideology of Forza Italia but also a way for promoting himself. He often participated in apolitical TV shows and delivered himself to the public as a common Italian man, talking publicly about family, hobbies etc. Same applies to the aspects of Integrity and Empathy; however Berlusconi didn't manage to maintain his positive assessment by people. Exactly above mentioned two elements became cornerstones for decreasing support. Personal scandals and high number of undelivered promises resulted in final fall of Berlusconi Government in 2010.

Despite the fact that Berlusconi could not manage to retain successful policy in all 4 leadership qualities, still we cannot avoid the fact that his leadership techniques

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[119] King, Anthony. (2002) Leaders' personalities and the outcomes of democratic elections
Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. In *http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2013.837303*

guaranteed success for Forza Italia. First of all Berlusconi paved a way for usage of TV propaganda and offered innovative methods for promoting political program. With his charisma he always managed to make majority of people believe even in the most unrealistic promises.

The last of three leaders, Beppe Grillo, the founder of 5 Star Movement represents interesting phenomena in modern Italian politics. The mentioned leader started political career with his internet blog. Grillo established himself as a political personality and later announced the official creation of M5S. Through social media sources he managed to gain high level of support. This support was result of Grillo's ideology, which was freely spread in social media or through his personal blog.

Grillo's past, connected to show business makes him a great show man, who knows the techniques how to apply to audience. As Bordignon and Ceccarini mention:"Comedy is the first weapon he uses to take on his political adversaries, to make fun of them and to show, finally that the emperor has no clothes."[120]

From the very beginning of his political career Grillo started applying to different socio-economic or political issues. His main strategy was critique of existing political establishment. Grillo has actively been presenting his attitudes and opinions regarding different issues, but the significant factor is that along with most important economic problems he paid attention also to environment, transport, and internet democracy etc., issues which never received enough attention from other Italian populist parties. With this strategy Grillo managed to show people that besides unemployment, low incomes etc, there are numbers of other problems, which should definitely be solved. Grillo's criticism has always been grounded with strong argumentations so that the level of people's trust was quite high during the elections.

Having artist background, with long term experience of working as a comedian, Beppe Grillo definitely distinguished himself as a charismatic leader, who first of all was simple Italian man and not a politician in prior. When, in one of the interviews he was asked about his status, he answered:" I'm still comic, a fantastic one (...) I'm always the

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[120] Ballatore A, Natale S, *The web kill them all: new media, digital utopia, and political struggle in the Italian 5-Star Movement*, Media Culture Society, 2013

same. My shows, now they call the speeches"[121] with the anti-politic and anti-elitist rhetoric Grillo presented himself not as a politician but a person who clearly sees the problems existing in Italy and has realistic solutions for them.

In the case of Beppe Grillo, leadership plays a crucial role, first of all because of the easy access of simple people to him, through his social media sources, his personal Blog or frequent meetings with electorate. His political language as well, which is far from complicated ideas, gives opportunity to everyone to understand his strategy. That's why his political program is radically different from any other political programs in Italy, it is written in the simple way and leaves space for changes directly by people.

One of the most interesting peculiarities of Grillo as a leader is also the body language. Fabio Bordignon and Luigi Ceccarini in their work regarding Grillo's phenomena in Italian politics, mention that the mix of his verbal and body languages is certainly a key to success. With is enthusiastic speeches Grillo delivers his emotions to people: " The shouts, the wide-open eyes and the sweat on his brow in the shows and meetings suggest the indignation, exasperation and suffering of the citizen in the face of a degenerate system."[122]

In the chapter regarding the general features of populism, the author identified leadership phenomenon as one of the elements which determines one or other party as the populist one. The leadership was subdivided into three major aspects:

• Direct appeal to people

• Personalized / Charismatic leadership

• Active use of Media

Considering the populist elements stated above can be concluded that leadership in general plays significant role in politics, however different political parties use the leadership phenomenon on different scales.

Bearing to mind the information offered regarding the three Italian populist parties, first element of direct appeal to people can be considered as the most universal element. Superiority of common people has always been stressed by Lega Nord, Forza Italia and M5S. However, still there are differences according to the nature of political

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[121] Interview with Beppe Grillo, interviewer Stephan Faris, Bloomberg Businessweek 2013
[122] *Ibid.*

organizations. As long as Lega Nord is strongly regionalized party the geographic area of people, towards whom the LN's rhetoric was directed, was mainly concentrated in North. The importance of people's needs was also connected to the northern people. Considering the regionalist nature of LN, it is difficult to assess whether element of strong appeal to people, however if we analyze this component particularly in North, then it becomes obvious feature for LN.

If Lega Nord is challengeable for understanding the populist element of strong appeal to people, in the cases of Forza Italia and 5 Star Movement the influence of mentioned aspect becomes obvious. The leaders of both FI tried to identify themselves with common people. Leader of FI, Silvio Berlusconi often stressed the superiority of people:" We want the people to lead the state, not the state to lead the people. We want the popular spirit to fill these institutions".[123] Same applies to M5S and its leader Beppe Grillo who numbers of times mentioned that he is aimed to "give more power to ordinary people".[124]

While analyzing Italian populist parties from the perspective of charismatic leadership, Lega Nord has always been famous with political slogans and general ideology rather than with leaders. Based on the arguments offered in the research, the leader of mentioned political party, Umberto Bossi cannot be considered as the charismatic leader, who can be the central figure while considering LN as the populist party, however Forza Italia and 5 Star Movement claim for success first of all for their leaders. Both, Silvio Berlusconi and Beppe Grillo are leaders with charisma who were not only the innovators in the sphere of political promotion in Italy but have always presented themselves to the public as common Italians.

The last feature of populism, among the three features offered by the author is the use of media. The term media has wide understanding and includes numbers of elements such as, TV, radio, printed media, social media etc.

As already underlined couple of times, Forza Italia and 5 Star Movement are the pioneers in the active use of different Media sources. For the both mentioned parties media was essential element to gain success. Caterina Paolocci mentions:"Charismatic

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[123] Albertazzi D, McDonnell D, *Twenti-First Century Populism*, Italy a Country of Many Populists, pp.84-99 2008

[124] Scurtu B, *Funny Corruption Fighter: Italy's Five Star Movement,* Global Security Studies 2014

leader has more chances to succeed by reaching out to the electorate via Television and the media"[125], so that Silvio Berlusconi's ownership of TV channels obviously played a crucial role in creating his image as a leader and delivering party ideology to people.

In terms of Social media, as McDonnell, Birdwell and Barlett mention Italian political parties are not tend to use social media[126], however there still is an exception of M5S. According to the mentioned authors party representative pages in social networks often start being active during pre election campaigns[127], however Lega Nord was actively using daily newspapers like Lega Nord's La Padania, which was controlled by the mentioned party and used as the platform for spreading and supporting LN's ideology.[128] Opposite to Lega Nord, the leader of 5 Star Movement Beppe Grillo started his career as a showman on TV and later established himself as a political leader. After TV he focused on social media and with his blog www.beppegrillo.it he gained significant support which finally resulted in success during 2013 general elections.

Considering arguments stated above, the three Italian populist parties tend to use different media sources as a way for promotion. However M5S and FI show the tendency of promoting leaders as well, while LN used media communication as a tool for promoting party by itself.

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[125] Paolocci C, *The nature of Forza Italia and the Italian Transition,* Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans,Volume 8, Number 2, 2006

[126] Barlett J, Birdwell J, Mcdonnell D, *Populism in Europe: Lega Nord*, Demos 2012

[127] *Ibid.*

[128] Albertazzi D, McDonnell D, *Twenti-First Century Populism*, Populism and The Media, p. 57 2008

4.2.   Political Claims

As the author already mentioned in the very beginning of the research, the latest 2013 general elections offered interesting outcomes for populist parties, especially considering 5 Star Movement and its leader Beppe Grillo, whose success in the elections has been compared to the first success of Berlusconi's Forza Italia in 1994.[129] So that in order to understand how the claims of Italian populist parties correspond to the general populist political claims, the political programs of the three Italian populist parties will be reviewed in the light of the populism features determined previously in the research.

Political program of Coalition people of Freedom which included both Forza Italia and Lega Nord consisted of 35 points, touching the most important elements for the country. The very first focus of the program is directed on development of democratic institutions. Considering Berlusconi's rhetoric connected to economics throughout general elections in the Second Italian Republic, it was not surprise that the second crucial element for the program was economy, particularly cut of costs[130].

Strong appeal to the people becomes clear already in the 5th paragraph of the program which is devoted to the family. "persona e la famiglia sono al centro del nostro programma" – "The person and the family are the central elements in our program", with the mentioned idea the importance and superiority of people is underlined. Political program by itself does not have the strongly determined populist elements, in terms of leadership and political claims. Program is mainly based on the economic promises in the different spheres of life; however the introduction speech of Silvio Berlusconi for the program draws more attention from the populism perspective[131].

The anti-elitist and anti-establishment ideas become obvious from the beginning while Berlusconi mentiones: "Il governo tecnico di Monti ha scelto di seguire la politica di austerità imposta dall'Europa germanocentrica e i risultati deprimenti sono sotto gli occhi di tutti,"[132] – with the mentioned words Berlusconi reffered to Monti government

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[129] Italy 2013, posted 03.03.2013, *http://welections.wordpress.com/2013/03/03/italy-2013/*
[130] FI/People of Freedom Program 2013 *http://www.pdl.it/speciali/programma-elettorale-2013.pdf*
[131] *Ibid.*
[132] *Ibid.*

blaming him in the negative outcomes for Italy. Berlusconi also, stressed the fact that he cannot leave the Italians hopeless. Berlusconi first of all underlined the inefficiency of existing government and later stressed the fact that Italians are hopeless and disappointed with the current government. Berlusconi referred to the oppositional leaders numbers of times and expressed the negative attitude to their tax policy[133].

All in all political program of Coalition People of Freedom with the leadership of Forza Italia offered the promises which have been mainly concentrated in the economic sphere, however still the elements of anti-elitist and anti-establishment ideas had their affect both in the introduction and main parts of the program.

The political program of 5 Star Movement is considerably shorter than the program of Coalition people of Freedom. The program starts Anti-elitist, anti-politics and anti-establishment ideas while referring to the current organization of state as inefficient[134].

The anti-elitist rhetoric was strongly expressed in the suggestions given regarding MPs:

• No more than two parliamentary mandates for MPs and for any other public affairs office.

• Elimination of all special privileges for MPs, including the right to retire after completion of one full mandate regardless of pension contributions paid.

• Prohibition for parliamentarians to engage in any other professional activity during the mandate.

• MPs salary aligned with the average national wages.

• Impossibility to hold more than one public office for MPs (eg, Mayor and MP)[135].

The idea of superiority of people can be considered as the leitmotif of the program and one of the most crucial elements: "The parties have taken over the popular will and escaped from voters' control and judgment."[136]

The elements of *Trust in society vs. State* and *Us vs. Others*, which are considered among the features of political claims, are closely linked to anti-establishment, anti-elitist ideas and also to the *Strong appeal to people*. The idea of *trust in society* is connected to the idea of acknowledging the superiority of simple people over existing

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[133] *Ibid.*
[134] 5 Star Movement, Program 2013
[135] *Ibid.*
[136] *Ibid.*

government, which is also considered as an elite class. As for *Us vs Others,* this element gives more space for interpretation, because the concept of "other" can vary according to the party's ideology.

Considering the 2013 General election's political programs Italian populist parties offered a number of interpretations of the concept of "other"[137]. Starting from electoral programs of Lega Nord and Forza Italia, the very first "other" is identified in the preamble of the program which is connected to the ruling political class, while stressing inefficiency of Monti's Govenrment. One more "other" are immigrants. In the electoral program it is underlined (Paragraph 20. Security), the importance of fight against illegal immigrations is crucial element. As the author mentioned a number of times, Lega Nord in general has historically showed a tendency of expressing anti-immigration ideology, so the political program logically referred to this issue.

As for 5 Star Movement the main "other" for the mentioned movement is elite, which included the ruling political class and is the reason for the problems both in economic and political fields.[138]

In the light of *Organic community* and *Harmony with natural order,* which, as already mentioned, are connected to the nostalgic attitudes towards past, Italian populist parties tend to have rhetoric connected to the past, however in the negative context. In the political programs for 2013 General Elections it is emphasized that they offer a better alternative to the past which is connected to the previous ineffective governance[139].

All in all the populist rhetoric in the light of political claims is expressed in the political programs of populist parties, however not all of them expressed the tendency of populist claims on the same level. Coalition People of Freedom (FI, LN) tend to express populist rhetoric in the speech of Silvio Berlusconi in the very beginning of the program and less attention was devoted to populism in the major part of program, while 5 Star Movement was tend to express anti-elitist, anti-establishment and anti-political rhetoric mainly in the major part of program. As for the elements connected to organic community and harmony with natural order, none of political organizations applied to the past in terms

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[137] *Ibid.*
[138] *Ibid.*
[139] 5 Star Movement, Program 2013 / FI/People of Freedom Program 2013 *http://www.pdl.it/speciali/programma-elettorale-2013.pdf*

of nostalgia, but on the contrary they referred to the past in terms of offering better solutions than the previous governments offered.

Table 2: Populist features and Italian populist Parties

		Lega Nord	Forza Italia	5 Star Movement
Leadership	**Strong appeal to people**	People's superiority was one of the core elements for both for political program and general rhetoric.	People's superiority was a Central idea in FI's rhetoric	Leadership rhetoric and political program are based on the direct appeal to people.
	Charismatic leadership	Special emphasis on party's ideology. Less efforts for leadership promotion	Charismatic leadership: Leader with a party and not a party with the leader.	Party based on leader who founded M5S through his personal blog-post
	Active use of Media	Focus of printed media (newspaper, posters)	Active use of TV	Active use of social networks (blog posts, facebook)
Political Claims	**Anti-elitist rhetoric**	Anti-elitist rhetoric mainly expressed through accusing existing political ruling class for the problems faced by Italians	Rhetoric directed against political class of the First Italian Republic and emphasis on the superiority of simple people	Rhetoric based on the ideas against the ruling class
	Anti-establishment rhetoric	Rhetoric against central	Against inefficient governments	Against all previous political powers

		government in Rome	existing in Italy	
	Anti-party rhetoric	Against traditional party system	Against traditional party system	Against traditional party system
	Organic community	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Trust in society vs. state	Appeal to people	Appeal to people	Appeal to people
	Harmony with natural order	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Us vs. others	Anti-immigration / anti-elitist ideas	Anti-elitist, anti-government	Anti-elitist, anti-government

Conclusion

The socio-economic and political establishment of the First Italian Republic paved a way for the appearance of the new political parties which started active campaign for the voter's support in the very first years of the dissolution of First republic. The methodology for gaining votes was quite diverse, depending on the ideological priorities of particular political organization. Populist's rhetoric was definitely one of the most successful tools for right wing parties to attract the attention of voters suffering from numbers of economic or social problems.

Three main Italian right wing parties were reviewed and all of them were considered as the populist ones; however all of the mentioned parties indubitably used their own, unique approach to gain support.

Lega Nord, Forza Italia and 5 Star Movement had different approaches towards the voter; however we can still find the common feature, caused by their populist nature. For instance Lega Nord's regionalist and nationalist attitudes have not been tolerated by Forza Italia and M5S however all of them shared the anti-elitist and anti-establishment ideas.

From the very beginning Lega Nord presented small regionalist movement which finally transformed into one of the most influential European Populist Parties. The main aim of mentioned party was to coordinate the Northern People against centralized political authority. For unifying the Northern people, it was important to create the collective identity. This task was reached through Lega Nord's rhetoric stressing the unique nature and superiority of Northern People over the rest of Italians, especially the southern people. Umberto Bossi the leader of Northern League mentioned: "Ethnic consciousness is very strong in the North…and the basic problem is that those of the North know that they are very different".[140] Exactly the identification of Northern people as the different from other Italians became the basis for establishment of strong regionalist political party.

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[140] Spektorowski A, *Ethnoregionalism: The Intellectual New Right and the Lega Nord*, Tel Aviv University The Global Review of Ethnopolitics Vol. 2, no. 3, 2003, 55-70, *http://www.ethnopolitics.org/ethnopolitics/archive/volume_II/issue_3-4/spektorowski.pdf*

Stressing the superiority of Northern identity, definitely, was not enough for the large scale support of people, so that another strategic step from Lega Nord was identification of "Other". One of the interesting peculiarities of Northern League was the both internal and external "Others" were specified. From the internal point of view, existing political elite was considered as the main authority carrying the responsibility regarding the socio-economic or political problems faced by the North. So that, the political elite was reviewed as the first enemy.

Another crucially important "Other" for North was the Southern people. Lega Nord focused on the electorate residing in the economically developed and successful industrial regions including Veneto, Lombardy etc. According to Northern League's rhetoric, productive North was exploited first of all by the ruling elite and secondly by the less developed south. Lega Nord's strategy of stressing economic factors was rational choice, considering the fears of the northern population in the early 90s, which were stimulated by the fiscal criteria introduced in the Maastricht Treaty.[141] In this case LN was stressing exactly the issues that the northern people wanted to hear.

Under the third "Other (enemy)" was considered the immigrants. Anti immigrant position was strongly underlined in the electoral campaigns. Besides the economic threat coming from immigrants, the LN mentioned that immigrants could also be the main sources for assimilation of northern ethno-cultural traditions.

The ideological directions of northern league were obviously directed to gaining the support from the Northern People, that's why LN's supporter's geography was strictly limited and consisted of the most developed Northern Italian Regions.

The Geographical limit mentioned above, definitely, was not the case for Forza Italia. If Northern League's review is mainly associated with regionalism and anti-immigration policy, Forza Italia could be considered as more famous with its leader than from the ideological point of view. Silvio Berlusconi, the founder and the leader of FI, is quite interesting phenomena not only in Italian politics but also worldwide. Businessmen with strong charisma managed to come to the power several times and served as the prime minister for the longest period than anyone else during the second Italian republic.

As mentioned, Berlusconi's political rhetoric was not focused on any particular Italian region or ethnic group, however still the social class of voters was specified[142]. The socio-economic priorities stressed during pre-election campaigns were strictly focused on the small and large business, including middle class and self-employed people[143].

The General rhetoric of Berlusconi was typical expression of populist ideas, first of all including anti-elitist attitudes and strong appeal to people. Mentioned approach was not novelty for Italian electorate, especially considering the experience of Lega Nord's anti-elitist nature, however Forza Italia could be considered as unique, because of its innovative approach towards people through the media sources. Media definitely played crucial role in the process of image building both for Silvio Berlusconi personally and for his party. The active use of media sources, especially television was certainly new method for propaganda in Italy. Media was used first of all for spreading FI's electoral promises and promoting Berlusconi from different points of view, as common Italian, family man etc.

One of the most obvious features of Berlusconi's political rhetoric was promises close to unreal. His pre-electoral campaign has always been focused on solving unemployment issues and tax policy. Despite the unrealistic nature of Berlusconi's promises his political parties had always had a high level of support. He almost always managed to find the way even during the periods when party's support was extremely low. One of the most obvious examples was 2001 pre-election campaign when he publicly signed "contract with the Italian People" including numbers of promises which have not been delivered during his previous government. The future of Italy offered by Berlusconi was definitely attractive for people however the number of undelivered promises and personal scandals resulted in the decline of Berlusconi's popularity.

The 5 Star Movement is the new player on Italian political field, comparing to the above listed populist parties. Charismatic leadership is the element that 5SM definitely has in common with Forza Italia; however there are way more differences than the common features between 5 star movement and any other Italian centre-right or centre-left wing

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[142] Tarchi, 2008, pp. 85–86

[143] Fella S, Ruzza C, *Populism and the Fall of the Centre-right in Italy: The End of the Berlusconi Model or a New Beginning?!* Journal of Contemporary European Studies, Vol. 21:1, pp. 38-52, 2013

parties. "This is not a party. It's, for the first time, citizens that are not tied to a party. They unite themselves in a movement born without public funds,"[144] mentioned the leader of 5SM, Beppe Grillo in one of his interviews. Certainly, the first and important peculiarity of 5SM is that it is not a classical political party but a political movement whose aim is to overthrow the traditional political parties.

The five starts, meaning the five priorities of the mentioned movement were water, environment, transport, connectivity and development[145]. Those priorities leave the space for the ideological dispute of 5SM; however the populist features of this party are not questioned. "The image of ordinary man for people and against political elite and establishment" is the dominant idea for 5 Star Movement's rhetoric.

If Silvio Berlusconi was the pioneer in using the media, especially television as the main source of propaganda Beppe Grillo became the pioneer in the usage of social media, which gave a good opportunity for direct communication with people.

Taking to consideration on the one hand the major populist features and on the other hand the nature of Italian populist parties we can conclude that their leadership and political claims correspond to the general populist characteristics, however considering the nature and priorities of different parties, their populist nature varies.

The very first element of Leadership and its sub element, *direct appeal to people* is the core feature for all the reviewed political parties, which was used both in general rhetoric and in particular political programs of 2013 general elections. As for *Active use of media* and *Charismatic Leadership*, these elements are used in different ways by Italian populist parties. Should be mentioned that the both mentioned features are more connected to Forza Italia and 5 Star Movement, than to Lega Nord, which was focused on promoting party ideology rather than leader and was not using media on the same scale as FI and M5S.

As for Political claims and particularly *anti-elitist, anti-establishment and anti-party rhetoric,* the rhetoric of all reviewed political parties were based on the mentioned elements, considering both particularly 2013 election political programs and the general rhetoric used by Italian populist parties throughout years in the Second Italian Republic.

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[144] Interview with Beppe Grillo, interviewer Stephan Faris, Bloomberg Businessweek 2013

[145] Ballatore A, Natale S, *The web kill them all: new media, digital utopia, and political struggle in the Italian 5-Star Movement*, Media Culture Society, 2013

It should be emphasized that features offered by Isaiah Berlin, in particular *organic community* and *Harmony with natural order,* which according to the mentioned author are connected to the nostalgic attitudes towards the past, are not relevant for three Italian populist parties, as long as all of them refer to the past in the negative context.

Bearing to mind the argumentations offered above, the author concludes that the populist features identified in the research in general, are universal for all three Italian populist parties; however considering their different ideological approaches, they reflect populist features in different ways.

Abbreviations

LN- Lega Nord (Northern League)

FI – Forza Italia (Go Italy!)

M5S – Movimento 5 Stelle (5 Star Movement)

CCD- Centro Cristiano Democratico (Christian Democratic Center)

CDU - Cristiani Democrati Uniti (United Christian Democrats)

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Appendix 1

Questions for Interview

1.   What is your personal understanding of populism?!

2.   How topical is populist discourse in Italy?

3.   At what level does populism exist in Italy and what are the peculiarities?!

4.   How is Italian populism applying to the general principles of the populism as a concept?!

5.   What are the particular features of Italian populisms that makes is different from other populist regimes?

6.   How would you evaluate the centre-right governance?

7.   What are the features distinguishing Italian centre-right as a populist one?

8.   How vulnerable is Italian society towards populist ideas?

9.   Are any particular social groups in Italy which are more tend to support populist parties rather than others?

10.   Do you think that there are specific factors (economy, leadership, social belonging) influencing Italian electorate to vote for populist parties such as Lega Nord, Forza Italia and 5 Star Movement?

11.   What are the reasons of populism? Should we search for it in the historical past?

12.   What are the reasons of people's support towards populism? Could you offer particular factors that push society to be influenced by populist ideology in Italy?

Appendix 2

Description of the interviews

10 semi-structured Interviews were conducted in order to make a step forward for reaching the main objectives of the research. The target group of interviewees was selected according to their professional profiles. Influential professors working on the topic on populism and in general on the Italian internal politics were interviewed. The majority of them were representatives of the Faculty of Political sciences of Bologna University.

The interview questions were sent to the interviewee beforehand for giving general picture of the research and to avoid unpredicted consequences. The interviewees were also informed regarding the semi-structured style of interview and expressed their readiness to devote their time to the additional questions.

There were not technical or other types of problems during the interviews, however, as long as the thesis was connected to the one of the most problematic topics in Italy – populism and had highly politicized nature not all of the interviewees agreed to express their political attitudes without using the right for anonymity. Of course, their request was taken to the consideration and only the contact information of the interviewees who agreed to be quoted is presented below. Four interviewees out of ten preferred to be anonymous.

The time frame of the interviews varied between 40 minutes and one hour.

The first interview was conducted on 26.05.2013 with associate professor of Political Science at University of Bologna Gianfranco Baldini. He has numerous works in the field of electoral studies of Italy and regarding internal politics of the country. The interview took place in the Building of Political Science faculty in Bologna. The aim of this particular interview was to gain information regarding the general understanding of populism, historic background of this issue in Italy and understand the peculiarities of populist support in Italy on the example of three main right-wing political parties. The interview gave valuable information regarding above mentioned aspects, offered his personal attitudes and also information that is difficult to get from English sources.

The second person interviewed was Donatella Campus, associated professor at University of Bologna, teaching also at Dickinson College, Bologna Centre, was Fellow at the Italian Academy at the Columbia University, New York and Fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford University. She is particularly specialized in the sphere of populism and her latest work is devoted to the populist rhetoric in Italy. The interview took place on 30.05.2013 and completed without obstacles. The information shared by Donatella Campus was especially important for understanding the nature of Italian populism and analyzing the category of people who are tend to support three major populist parties in Italy.

The third interview was conducted with Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Bologna filippo tronconi. His main research interests are in the territorial aspects of political competition, party politics and political elites. His recent publications include "*partiti etnoregionalisti. La politica dell'identità territoriale in Europa occidentale*" (*Ethnoregionalist Parties. The politics of Teritorial identity and …. Europe),* (Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009) and "*From Protest to Power. Autonomist Parties and the Challenges of Representation*" (Wien, Braumüller, 2011, edited with Anwen Elias). The interview took place on 06.06.2013 in campus of Bologna University in Forli. This interview was particularly beneficial for understanding the ideology of three major populist parties in Italy and general electoral behavior.

The fourth interview was conducted with Paolo Pombeni, Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Bologna and Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies. The interview took place on 11.06.2013 at the Political Science Faculty of Bologna University. His major research fields are connected to political history of 19th and 20th centuries in Europe. He is the head of editorial board of the "Ricerche di Storia Politica" and member of the editorial board of the "Journal of Political Ideologies", Oxford. During the interview Paolo Pombeni shared the information regarding the historical insights of populism in general and particularly in Italy. He gave valuable direction for understanding the reasons for populist support.

The fifth interview took place also at the University of Bologna, with one of the most influential professors of Bologna University and Senior Adjunct Professor of Political Science of Bologna Center of Johns Hopkins University - Gianfranco Pasquino. He is

visiting professor of numbers of universities worldwide, including Harvard Summer School (1980, 1981, 1983, 1985); School of Advanced International Studies (1982, 1994), University of California Los Angeles (1998), Institute Juan March di Madrid (1999), Christ Church College of Oxford (2001), Clare Hall, Cambridge (2003), Oxford University (2005), Salford University (2005), St. Antony's College of Oxford (2007). The works written or coordinated by Gianfranco Pasquino are among the major sources for understanding Italian party politics and obviously important part of my MA thesis as well. The interview took place on 14.06.2013 and was highly beneficial for the research.

The sixth interviewee was Piero Ignazi, Full Professor of Comparative Politics, Faculty of Political Science, University of Bologna and visiting professor at numbers of universities worldwide, including the Nuffield College, Oxford University, Université de Montréal, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Lille, Universitè Tunis II etc. He has significant contribution to Italian populism studies, so that conducting interview with him was crucially important. This interview took place on 17.06.2013 in the Building of University of Bologna.

The rest four interviewees as already mentioned used the right for anonymity. They were representatives of the field of social and political sciences and provided very useful and constructive information regarding populism and voting behavior n Italy.