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POPULIST PARTIES IN ITALY

--comparing and contrasting the Five Star Movement and the

Northern League

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Introduction

Populism has already became a ubiquitous phenomenon in the political stage worldwide. It is tricky to define it in a homogeneous pattern since it demonstrated different traits in the relative contexts. Although populism is chameleonic, there are several core concepts and consensus of scholars about populism that it sets a wall between the "united us" (the people) and the "different others" (the elite). And it always ties with the democratic situation, generally reflecting the complex background in the society.

Italy is an interesting case in the 21st century since the first populist government came out in 2018, and one of the two coalition parties was just built before a decade. The prevailing populism in Italy is an epitome of its historical roots and disappointment of the traditional political parties which seem feeble to deal with the tricky domestic problems. On the other hand, the governing populist parties, the Movimento Cinque Stelle (M5S, Five Star Movement) and the Lega Nord (LN, the Northern League), which follow different developing paths but also share some typical characteristics of populism.

In the next chapters, I will introduce the general concepts and the cores of populism in the reference of populism scholars and analyze the specific populism case in Italy. The main part will compare and contrast the M5S and the LN so that I can conclude several differences and similarities of these two parties. The differences will focus on the utilization of the Internet, the organizational structure, the membership, the electoral base, the policies and their positions in the political spectrum. On the other hand, the similarities will contrast the parties through the leadership, the use of mass media, Eurosceptic and other relevant populist features. At last, the latest public poll shows the LN overtaking the M5S, receiving more support after entering the government. The EU election result reflected this trend as well. These two populist parties are coalition partners as well as competitors. Considering the M5S is in the process of institutionalization and the LN changed its focusing policy, how the populist parties will shape Italian politics is still unknown.

Chapter 1. Defining Populism

1.1 Definition

When it comes to populism, it could be a flexible mode of persuasion, an ideology, a social movement, and even a zeitgeist. Populism is becoming one of the most popular political words in the 21st century. The first use of this term can be dated from the 19th century with the People's Party in the United States and the agrarian socialist Narodnik movement "going to the people" in the Russian Empire. It is also used to describe the activities in Argentina and Chile in Latin America region in the 20th century. Nowadays, populism has so many kinds of manifestations and has been a worldwide trend, and it can be both left-wing and right-wing in the United States and mostly right-wing challengers in European politics. Because there are so many populism cases took place in specific regions with different certain characteristics, most of the previous studies are fragmentary, concerning on the national or regional specificities while its concept is seldom generalized to a consensus.

It is hard to give a clear and exclusive definition to populism, not only because it occurred in various cases so scholars have different views of attributes about populism, but also it is 'an essentially contested concept'[1] and scholars have different methods to conceptualize it. The debate of populism is not just about what it is, but whether it really exists or not, since the organizations and people that we consider tightly linking to populism seldom claim themselves with this populism label. From this perspective, the label is originally made by outsiders rather than the actual participants.

Cas Mudde defines populism as a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, namely 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people.[2] This severe antagonism is perceived as a zero game so that populists could gain more support and power from criticizing the elite enemies continually. As a "thin-centered" ideology, populism is not like "full" ideologies, such as fascism, liberalism, socialism and so on, but showing the tendency to combine with or affiliate some kinds of these ideologies. It makes populism hard to define but at the same time, populism easily appears attached to other ideological

[1] Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser: Popilism -- A very short introduction, Oxford University Press, p.2.
[2] Cas Mudde (2004) The Populist Zeitgeist, Government and Opposition, 39(4), p.543. DOI: 10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x

elements and increase the attraction to the broader people. Consequently, due to this parasitic feature by itself, populism can offer neither complex nor comprehensive answers to the political questions that modern societies generate.[3] Except the lack of core values because of the thin-centered feature, populism is chameleonic in various contexts. Although most of the time it is episodic and short-lived, populism is still 'a potential barometer'[4]of the health of representative politics. Cas Mudde argues, populism, so defined, has two opposites: elitism and pluralism. In elitism, politics presents the interests of a limited number of people instead of being concentrated in the hands of the mass, which means that it does not take the people as the ground of authority in the state. On the other hand, pluralism rejects the homogeneity of both populism and elitism, taking society as a various gathering consisting of individuals and groups alongside different perspectives. At the same time, only populists can fully represent "the people", which rejects "other people" on the moral level.

Canovan's article is concerned to the structural considerations of populism, which is seen as an appeal to 'the people' against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society.[5] With this sense populism challenges not only established powerholders but also the general elite values, it shows hostility to the establishments, even including the opinion-formers in the academy and media. Obviously, the concrete manifestation of populism changes according to a different context, and its content depends on the nature of the elite and the dominant political discourse.

Weyland defines populism as a political strategy which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers.[6] The charismatic leaders win intense support from an unrepresentative mass who feel excluded or marginalized from national politics. The popular mobilization against the political and intellectual elite made a movement, a social mood, drawing normally unpolitical people into the political arena. They are not only against ossified established organizations and parties, both politically and economically, but calling for transparency and simple, direct way to deal with problems, denouncing black-box operation, complicated procedures, and technicalities that only experts can understand. Meanwhile, a personalized leadership makes populist activities more attractive and persuasive, building a closer connection between leader and followers and diminishing the sense of power distance.

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[3] Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser: Populism -- A very short introduction, Oxford University Press, p.6.
[4] Paul Targgart (2003) The Populist True in the Politics of the New Europe, p.9.
[5] Margaret Cavanon (1999) Trust the people! Populism and two faces and democracy, *Political Studies*, XLVII, p.3. DOI: 10.1111/1467-9248.00184
[6] Kurt Weyland (2001) Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 34, No. 1, p.14.

1.2 Core Concept

Since the proposals of populism are always changing, it is much clearer and easier to know what and who populists are against. The anti-party sentiment is prominently based on the thinking that the corruption links the political parties leaders and their supporters, but making artificial divisions within the homogeneous people, and putting their own interests above those of the people. When populist leaders draw their power from criticizing, especially from the conventional political parties, it appears a dangerous tendency that it is attractive for populists to define a different "them" by the exclusion through region, nation ethnic or any other differences, and setting a wall between a united "us" and a different "them" with radical and seditious propaganda. Although there is lack of the consensus of defining populism, the agreement is general that all forms of populism include some kinds of appeal to "the people" and a denunciation of "the elite"[7].

There is a debate on whether 'the people' means a united people which democratic legitimacy depends on. On one hand, populists frequently claim that the people can use their wisdom and rule themselves only if they mobilize, unify and participate in politics. Populists always use 'the people' to justify their claims and at the same time, they believe that the will of people is singular, which can be fully represented directly by a populist party and imposed to the whole society even with the price of individual freedom. Under this circumstance, people are considered as a united group and democratic politics are only legitimate if they follow the people's will otherwise there should be another more direct way to represent people's real needs. The only legitimate way to make political policies since populists make an exclusive claim to represent and embody the will of the people and feel entitled to push political decisions into practice. Considering this feature, to some degree, populism has a collectivism feature. Conceived as a homogeneous community with a shared collective identity, it also contributes to shaping scholars' perspectives of populism through their perceptions of 'the people' and its role in a contemporary democratic order.[8] On the other hand, some people argue that no actual group can fully represent the whole people because it undermines minorities' or partial individuals' rights in practice. According to this view, "the people" is more likely to "an ideal reference to guild legislation"[9], being used to win advantage in the competitive elections but cannot be a substantial entity in the real world. On this account,

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[7] Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser: Popilism -- A very short introduction, Oxford University Press, p.5.
[8] Paulina Ochoa Espejo (2017) Populism and the Idea of People, in The Oxford Handbook of Populism, p.2, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198803560.013.30
[9] Paulina Ochoa Espejo (2017) Populism and the Idea of People, in The Oxford Handbook of Populism, p.2, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198803560.013.30

"the people" is constructed hypothetically by totally free and equal individuals who act rationally to establish a form of government that protects the rights of all. These two rival perspectives were mediated by a third perspective, the 'people as process', in which the people are conceived dynamically and openly to the future, not settled and stable, not homogeneous once and for all. The people are not a determinate group of persons, but rather, the interplay of political movements and legal constraints itself.[10] They can not only gain enough power and create solidarity from both momentous events and mundane events but also generate less exclusion and xenophobia due to its changing and potentially unlimitable feature.

Similarly, Paul Taggart uses the description 'heartland'[11] instead of 'the people' to present populists' idealized conception of the community they serve, which is constructed retrospectively from the past. According to him, the heartland is a place 'in which, in the populist imagination, a virtuous and unified population resides'.[12] Cas Mudde supposes the concept of the heartland is actually 'a mythical and constructed sub-set of the whole population'[13], the people of the populists are like the nation of the nationalists, both are an 'imagined community'. In a word, "the people" is the defining signifier of populism and the most crucial part of populism, although scholars explain it with different approaches and descriptions.

1.3 Populism and Democracy

Populism renewed generally both on the theoretical level and the practical level, especially after the advent of the information era. In the theory, how people perceive populism is generally more comprehensive, but still emphasizing the interaction between populism and democracy. Normally, populism is considered in the context of liberal democracy, and the scholars' definitions and judgments of populism always depend on how they conceive the people and its role in a contemporary democratic order.[14] How people think about the legitimacy and value of democratic politics shapes the image of populism. Arditi describes this relationship between populism and democratic politics as an internal periphery, indicating populism can remain within the bounds of democracy but can also reach the point where they enter into conflict and perhaps even go their own

[10] Paulina Ochoa Espejo (2017) Populism and the Idea of People, in The Oxford Handbook of Populism, p.10, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198803560.013.30
[11] Paul Targgart (2003) The Populist Ture in the Politics of the New Europe, p.6.
[12] Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser: Popilism -- A very short introduction, Oxford University Press, p.95.
[13] Cas Mudde (2004) The Populist Zeitgeist, Government and Opposition, 39(4), p.546. DOI: 10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x
[14] Paulina Ochoa Espejo (2017) Populism and the Idea of People, in The Oxford Handbook of Populism, p.2, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198803560.013.30

separate ways.[15] In recent cases, it shows a more paradoxical relationship between populism and liberal democracy, since populism could be a method to gain the people's direct democracy and could appeal to a recognized authority as well. The latter feature normally links with a charismatic leader. Kaltwasser discusses populism with different opinions that populism is regarded as a threat or corrective for democracy. On one hand, from the liberal approach, people who adhere to the model of liberal democracy will consider populism as a democratic pathology, while from the radical approach, people who support radical democracy tend to take populism as a positive force to improve political representation, as an integral part of democracy rather than a pathological expression. From this perspective, the question is not about the populist threats to democracy, but rather about to what extent a particular democracy is populist.[16]

Populism is increasingly prevalent across different regions and shows its strong adaptations. It rooted in a belief in democracy, especially popular sovereignty. Mudde describes it as a "pathological normalcy" since populism appears where democracy is widely embraced. Kaltwasser[17] distinguished how populism interacted with democracy: it well represents a democratic corrective in terms of inclusiveness, also might become a democratic threat concerning the public contestation, as it is mentioned above. Similarly, according to Canovan[18], democracy has two faces, one redemptive (people are the only source of legitimate authority, with taking salvation through politics and strong anti-institutional impulse), the other pragmatic (supporting government form to cope conflicts with rules and practices, and democracy means institutions), in between where populism is liable to appear. In other words, populism is recognized both a benefit and a threat. From a positive view, the virtues of populism can shape and reinforce a corrective democracy which overcomes the defects of liberal elitism. From a negative view, the authoritarian tendencies of populism make it considered as a threat to democracy, manifesting delegitimizing their opponents and ignoring parts of the people who hold different voices.

In practice, one interesting feature is, at the beginning, for some right-wing populist parties in Western Europe such as Italy the Northern League, Swiss People's Party and Freedom Party of Austria, their supporters are mainly technical workers who did not experience professional trainings since the parties claimed to deduct

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[15] Benjamin Arditi (2003) Populism, or, politics at the edges of democracy, *Contemporary Politics*, 9:1, p.30, DOI: 10.1080/1356977032000072486

[16] Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (2012) The ambivalence of populism: threat and corrective for democracy, *Democratization*, 19:2, p.189, DOI: 10.1080/13510347.2011.572619

[17] Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (2012) The ambivalence of populism: threat and corrective for democracy, *Democratization*, 19:2, p.184, DOI: 10.1080/13510347.2011.572619

[18] Margaret Cavanon (1999) Trust the people! Populism and two faces and democracy, *Political Studies*, XLVII, pp.2-16. DOI: 10.1111/1467-9248.00184

taxation, privatizing and simplifying bureaucratic procedures. Supporting these kinds of policies proposed by populist parties is a reasonable choice because less-educated workers looked forward to going back to the era when they can be protected by national protectionism with fewer migrations and less competitive working environment.

Workers were the most crucial basis for populism, when we see Berlusconi, a successful entrepreneur to be a political leader. He is the "outsider", not just in terms of Kenney's definition (which refers to politicians who have become politically prominent from outside of the national party system)[19], meaning someone who gains political prominence not through or in association with an established, competitive party, but his social identity is far from the main supporters. The similar paradox can be also seen at Trump. From this perspective, populist party leader, or we can say, the person whom populists admit can represent "the people" is not necessary to be in line with the majority, and outsiders could use populism as a tool to attract a different type of voters.

Except the special relationship between the populist leaders and their supporters, de-extremalization is a new characteristic seen in the development of populist parties[20]. For example, the National Rally (Rassemblement national, RN) has transformed from a far-right anti-semitism party to a moderate right-wing populist party. The leader Marine Le Pen tries to avoid racialism and advocates the value of Separation of church and state especially for the Muslim immigrants. The similar trend can be also seen in the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) and Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna, SD) cases. In the Italian case, the LN turned its stance from regionalism to nationalism after Salvini's leadership, gaining more voting support even from the southern part where it rarely gained political existence before. Therefore, there is a general tendency that populist parties turned to take a more moderate stance to win in the elections.

What is more, the other interesting characteristic or misconception of populism is, the people want to rule themselves through real political participation. Cas Mudde argues that populists want to be heard in the case of fundamental decisions, but first and foremost they want leadership,[21] which means that they desire politicians know their needs automatically rather than listen to, at best, coming up with the policies which are in line with their interests without any direct participation. But on the contrary, the prevalence of the Internet

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[19] Kenney, Charles D. (1998). Outsider and Anti-Party Politicians in Power: New Conceptual Strategies and Empirical Evidence from Peru. *Party Politics*, 4(1), p.59. DOI: 10.1177/1354068898004001003
[20] Dirk Jörke: 欧洲政党政治中的右翼民粹主义(The Right-wing Populism in European Party Politics), available at: https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1691719 (accessed by 11/04/2019)
[21] Cas Mudde (2004) The Populist Zeitgeist, Government and Opposition, 39(4), p.558. DOI: 10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x

brings populism new vitality since it provides more opportunities for individuals to join the political process (even though just discussion). It contributes to a systematic displacement of power that moves from the vertical level (the government and congress) to a vertical dimension, which populists will perceive as a victory of the people. In the case of Italian populist party, the Five Star Movement, the Internet plays an important role and pushes the whole movement. As a crucial element, "the web is not just a form of communication and mobilization—the web is the movement."[22] Comparing these two arguments, they both have evidences and there is a possibility to explain it together. If "the people" were outraged and lost the patience to the existing politicians, they would find a way to resist and express their own voices which is likely to the populism.

As we know, sometimes populism is taken as a normative response to perceived crises of democratic legitimacy. For example, compared to the economic recession, the emergence of populism is always related to the malfunctioning of representative democracy, especially by the deficiencies of the party system.[23] The failure of political parties when they face the problems of the Great Recession is not the main trigger of the populist wave, and certainly, the Great Recession has not prompted a uniform wave of populism across Western Europe. The main reason contributes to the deficiencies of the party system is the background of elite corruption, which is so typical in the Italian case. However, collusions could also happen in the countries where populists are less radical and even win office with strong governance, such as Norway, Switzerland, Austria and Netherlands. Meanwhile, in countries with better governance and more responsible parties, populist parties tend to be more moderate.

Anyway, it is worthy to note that populism is not a traditional ideology or natural consensus in citizens' minds, although it is widespread all over the world. In every case, it is in its own growing situation and caused by various elements which need people to refer to different cases.

1.4 Populism in Italy

Populism rooted in the history of Italy, it can be dated back to 1940s which I will analyze it in the background part of the next chapter. The full-fledged populist party came out with the birth of the LN before the

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[22] Roberto D'Alimonte (2019) 'How the Populists Won in Italy', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.20, No.1, Jan 2019, p.118, DOI:10.1353/jod.2019.0009
[23] Hanspeter Kriesi and Takis S. Pappas (2015) European Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession, the ECPR Press.

transformation period. The anti-corruption operation Mani Pulite (clean hands, sometimes also referred to Tangentopoli) and the strong political and economic crises happened in the late 1980s and early 1990s, caused an earthquake of unprecedented force and shook the foundations of Italy's political establishment mightily. The scandal resulted in the Christian Democracy Party and the Socialist Party disappeared in Italian elections, which both played important roles in domestic politics but after that, were almost wiped out. Instead of these two traditional parties, it contributed to the rise of Forza Italia (FI, Forward Italy) and the Lega Nord (LN, the Northern League). This crisis happened in the late last century made the consequences which were not only ending a rapid pace to recover after World War II, but making Italian political structure topple and have to rebuild it from scratch. The radical changing in both economy and mindset offered the void, providing populism opportunities to develop fast. In 1994, Silvio Berlusconi founded FI and won the electoral victory, announcing 'liberal' revolution. After two years, FI was relegated to the opposition with a short life in power. By the twists and turns, it merged in the Popolo della Libertà (PDL, People of Freedom) in 2009 and separated to revive in 2013. However, as populists are reformist rather than revolutionary, they do not oppose political parties per se.[24] Populists in Italy, like the Northern League leader Umberto Bossi, claim to strive for "a revolution", which does not want to change people itself but in fact looking for radical changes within the existing democratic system.

After the financial crisis in 2008, the ascent of the Five Star Movement caught more and more attention. It is hard to convince that the economic crisis caused populism directly, but there is no doubt that traditional parties failed to fix internal problems such as the sluggish economy, high rate of unemployment and the anger of corruption, which fueled dissatisfaction of people and increased the gap between "the people" and "the elite". The M5S gained unpredictable victory in the 2013 general election which was its first time to join the election for this young party. In 2016, the constitutional referendum was held with a clear victory of "NO" vote and resulted in Matteo Renzi's resignation as Prime Minister. Since then, Italian politics was full of uncertainties. Gianfranco Pasquino[25] argues, nowadays, Italy is lack of real political culture. Although populism is regarded as an alternative, it is not in a position to aspire to fill the role of political culture. In fact, populism Italian-style has made no attempt really to shape a new political culture, but remaining quite satisfied with the winning of votes.

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[24] Cas Mudde (2004) The Populist Zeitgeist, Government and Opposition, 39(4), p.546. DOI: 10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x
[25] Gianfranco Pasquino (2018) The Disappearance of Political Cultures in Italy, *South European Society and Politics*, 23:1, pp.133-146, DOI: 10.1080/13608746.2018.1432299

What is interesting is except the populist parties themselves, to some degree, mainstream political parties also show some populist features. For example, the former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi made the slogan as "wrecking the system" with an obvious populist tone, which could manifest the spread of populism and its influence to mentalities in Italy.

Besides, some scholars explain populism by linking the social situation. Liza Lanzone and Dwayne Woods conceptualize populism as "a strategic power game aiming to transform potential majorities into real ones by creating or reframing social cleavages."[26] For instance, Berlusconi took advantage of the vacuum left from the dominant Christian Democratic Party (DC) out of mainstream. Umberto Bossi caught the crisis of the institutional status quo to propose a new form of political and social representation. More recently, Beppe Grillo seized the opportunity that the internal problems such as economic recession, unemployment, the unstable electoral and party systems cannot be figured out by traditional parties and called for the young blood and direct participation of the people. The M5S reframed social cleavages through a radical overhaul of the political system and a connection between the local issues and national themes. Takis S. Pappas admits the importance of the emergence of "cleavage" as well, "populism obtains when a certain political entrepreneur is able to polarize politics by creating a cleavage based on the interaction between 'the people' versus some establishment, thus forging a mass political movement."[27]

In the next chapter, I will introduce a brief history of the developing path of populism in Italy. With the historical reason, social reason and mentality reason, we could realize the reasons why populism can gain such an unexpected success in Italy where the first populist party came out in western Europe.

Chapter 2. The Rising Populist Parties in Italy

Nowadays, populist parties controlled the central power in the Italian government. The coalition between the Five Star Movement and the Northern League resulted in the first populist government ever in European

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[26] Liza Lanzone and Dwayne Woods (2015) Riding the Populist Web: Contextualizing the Five Star Movement (M5S) in Italy, *Politics and Governance*, Vol.3, Issue 2, p.54, DOI:10.17645/pag.v3i2.246
[27] Takis S. Pappas (2012) Populism Emergent : A Framework for Analyzing it Contexts, Mechanics and Outcomes, EUI working papers, RSCAS 2012/01, p.2.

history. Before comparing and contrasting these two political parties, it is imperative to date back from the history (both of the parties and Italian populism) to the recent election results.

2.1 The General Election Results of the M5S and the LN

The formal organization, the Five Star Movement was founded by Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto Casaleggio in 2009. After a few years later, the M5S gained unprecedently success in its first local and regional election in Sicily, then the national election in 2013 when it won 109 seats in the Chamber and 54 seats in the Senate. "This was the best electoral showing ever by any first-time party in Western Europe. Historically, populist parties have tended to lose ground in their second election, but not the M5S—in 2018, it doubled its share of seats in Parliament."[28] With 227 seats in the Chamber and 112 seats in Senate in its second election in 2018, the performance of this populist party was shocking. As an independent candidate party, the M5S became the largest party with 32.68% of the votes in 2018 which is perceived as the evidence that Italian political system is undergoing huge turbulence with the rising trend of populism. Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the election results of the main parties as below.
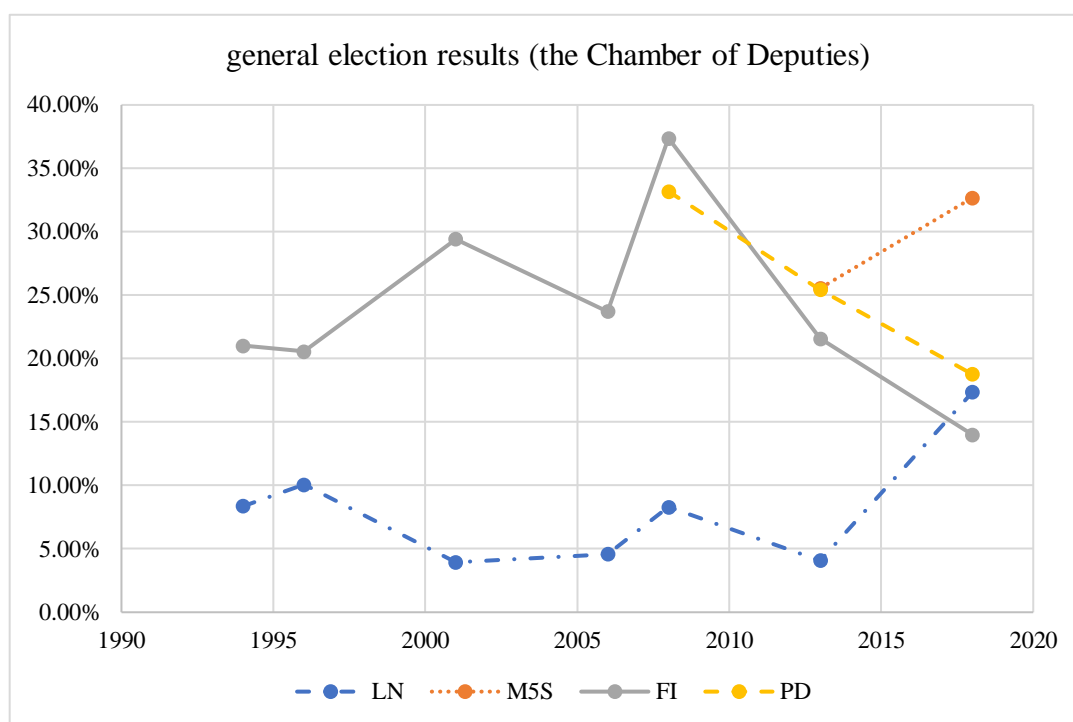

Figure 1 general election results[29]

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[28] Roberto D'Alimonte (2019) How the Populists Won in Italy, *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 20, No.1, Jan 2019, p.117, DOI: 10.1353/jod.2019.0009
[29] Data from Italian government-ministry of the interior, election archieves
Available at: https://elezionistorico.interno.gov.it/   (accessed by 30/04/2019)

general election results (chamber)				
	LN	M5S	FI	PD
1994	8.36%		21.01%	
1996	10.07%		20.57%	
2001	3.94%		29.43%	
2006	4.58%		23.72%	
2008	8.30%		37.38%	33.18%
2013	4.09%	25.56%	21.56%	25.43%
2018	17.35%	32.68%	14%	18.76%

Figure 2 general election results(the Chamber of Deputies)[30]

* From 2006, the result of Italy does not include VALLE D'AOSTA

**In 2008 and 2013, FI was merged into The People of Freedom (*Il Popolo Della Liberta'*, PdL) with another famous ally - National Alliance (*Alleanza Nazionale,* AN), while AN quitted PdL in 2012 and others remained then found the new Forza Italia (FI) in 2013.

Compared to the M5S, the LN has a longer history and more experience in government. Form its founding, its election performance underwent ups and downs in the national elections then reached its historical new peak in 2018, experiencing its golden era now. In the 2018 election, the LN was in the center-right coalition with the FI (as it did several times before), and it surpassed the FI the first time according to the votes. Meanwhile, populist parties became the real winners in 2018 election, and the M5S and the LN together received over 50 percent of the total votes both in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate. According to the new electoral law, the *Rosatellum*, parties should have better to yield a clear majority, while none of the coalition or individual parties achieved this goal which means the options were limited and they need to find now cooperation partners. After three months of negotiation, the anti-establishment M5S and the right-wing LN went into a coalition, entering in the central government led by Giuseppe Conte in June 2018. To analyze

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[30] Data from Italian government-ministry of the interior, election archieves
Available at: https://elezionistorico.interno.gov.it/   (accessed by 30/04/2019)

the reasons why the first populist government came out in Italy, it is worth to note its historical and social background which would help us understand the reality better.

2.2 The Background of Rising Populism

2.2.1 Historical Roots – Fascism Heritage and Political Changes

In Italy, populism and its related roots can be dated from at least seventy years ago. During the fascism period, it encouraged the people to claim their needs, desires and preferences while the opponents who gained the final victory must overturn the claim of the people with monopoly. Then the people rapidly used to accept this thinking pattern and still keep it work today. Marco Tarchi mentioned this feature in his book, "it must remain united and compact, showing it endowed with the noblest virtues, as well as starting from sacrifice, to show the anti-fascist struggle, precisely, "a people's struggle" that goes beyond calls, culture, place…but with a political conscience of the opposite color."[31] Before the Northern League and the Five Star Movement recently, the mass populist movement came out first with the Common Man's Front (Fronte dell'Uomo Qualunque, UQ) led and inspired by Guglielmo Giannini before the end of the World War II. It won 5.3 percent of votes in the 1946 elections and 3.8 percent of the votes in 1948, using humor to address the people's dissatisfaction with Italy's dramatic socioeconomic conditions. The party ended before 1950, albeit it was short-lived, its stance like opposing professionalization of politics has a refusal long-lasting influence. After that, Marco Pannella founded the Radiacal Party (Partito Radicale, PR) in the 1970s. Although the party is not considered as a populist party[32], it was classified as a "tendential and pioneering" populism[33], showing many similarities with the M5S. For instance, Pannella attacked the party politics with violent tones, opposing the representative democracy and supporting the direct dialogue without mediation. Besides, he "deliberate broke the strictly formal linguistic and behavioral codes where politics founded its authority" and "reduced the distance of politics from the man in the street,"[34] which we can see in the M5S as well.

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[31] Marco Tarchi (2015), *Italia populista: Dal qualuismo a Beppe Grillo*, Bologna: il Moulino, p.185.
[32] Due to the fact that it recognizes the legitimacy of the centrality of law, despite the fact that radicals also fight to change many policies and laws. Instead, populist parties and movements do not recognize the role of law, which they publicly contest and which they try to delegitimize. From Gianluca Passarelli, (2015) Populism and the Lega Nord, The Oxford Handbook of Italian Politics
Available at: https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199669745.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199669745-e-18 (accessed by 20/05/2019)
[33] Marco Tarchi (2015), *Italia populista: Dal qualuismo a Beppe Grillo*, Bologna: il Moulino, p.237.
[34] Marco Tarchi (2015), *Italia populista: Dal qualuismo a Beppe Grillo*, Bologna: il Moulino, p.238.

The fascist heritage and political indifference considerably influenced Italian politics, which contributed to the progressive development of populist tendencies. In the post-Second World War period, generally, the growth of disaffection towards the political parties was so obvious, considered as one of the reaction of a pathological degeneration of Italian democracy. For example, the election abstention accentuated from 8.4% in 1976 to 19.1% in 1990 on the occasion of local elections,[35] and the over doubled data partly showed the growing dissatisfaction to the predominant parties. Meanwhile, there were some outsiders like the Greens and the Northern League, outside from the professional political system, received a substantial percentage of votes. Compared to marginal sectors, it was clear that the continuous discontent generally turning into an expression of protest against the functioning politics. The refusal of the vote, the rising trend of the political outsiders, and the desire to renew with the political system expended the space of political competitions. Thus, the political climate as a whole is imbued with some of the most typical populist themes: "the refusal of the concentration of powers in the hands of the party oligarchy, the controversy against the bureaucratization of public life, the demand for a return of democratic political legitimacy to the its natural popular source even at the cost of having to resize the role of institutions, the call for a rapprochement between the governed and the rulers, which is expressed especially in localism. "[36]

The judicial storm, Tangentopoli, broke out in February 1992, which played an important role in the progressive growth of Italian populism. It revealed the entire corruption running through not only the government parties but opposition sectors as well. This corruption scandal was originally disclosed by the Milanese judge, Antonio Di Pietro, then provoked an extensive and strong reaction of public opinion, giving a chance to the populist growth. The prevailing disappointment and sense of uncertainty made an irreparable fracture that resulted in a profound change in the party system. In the 1992 elections, seven ministers of the incumbent government were forced to resign due to the judicial proceedings. Nearly 70% of the political professionals were expelled from the parliamentary arena with the judiciary intervention. People who think parties are not necessary for democracy were increasing with a dizzying pace. The emotions of getting justice and taking revenge on politicians and politics were prevailing, which highly depended on the judiciary. The obvious shortcomings of the public administration gave so much pressure of discontent on the domestic level. Figure 3 below shows the turnout percentage in Italy since 1948, and the decreasing trend of Italians' political

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[35] Marco Tarchi (2015), *Italia populista: Dal qualuismo a Beppe Grillo*, Bologna: il Moulino, p.245.
[36] Marco Tarchi (2015), *Italia populista: Dal qualuismo a Beppe Grillo*, Bologna: il Moulino, p.245.

participation demonstrates the dissatisfied and passive emotion of the government.
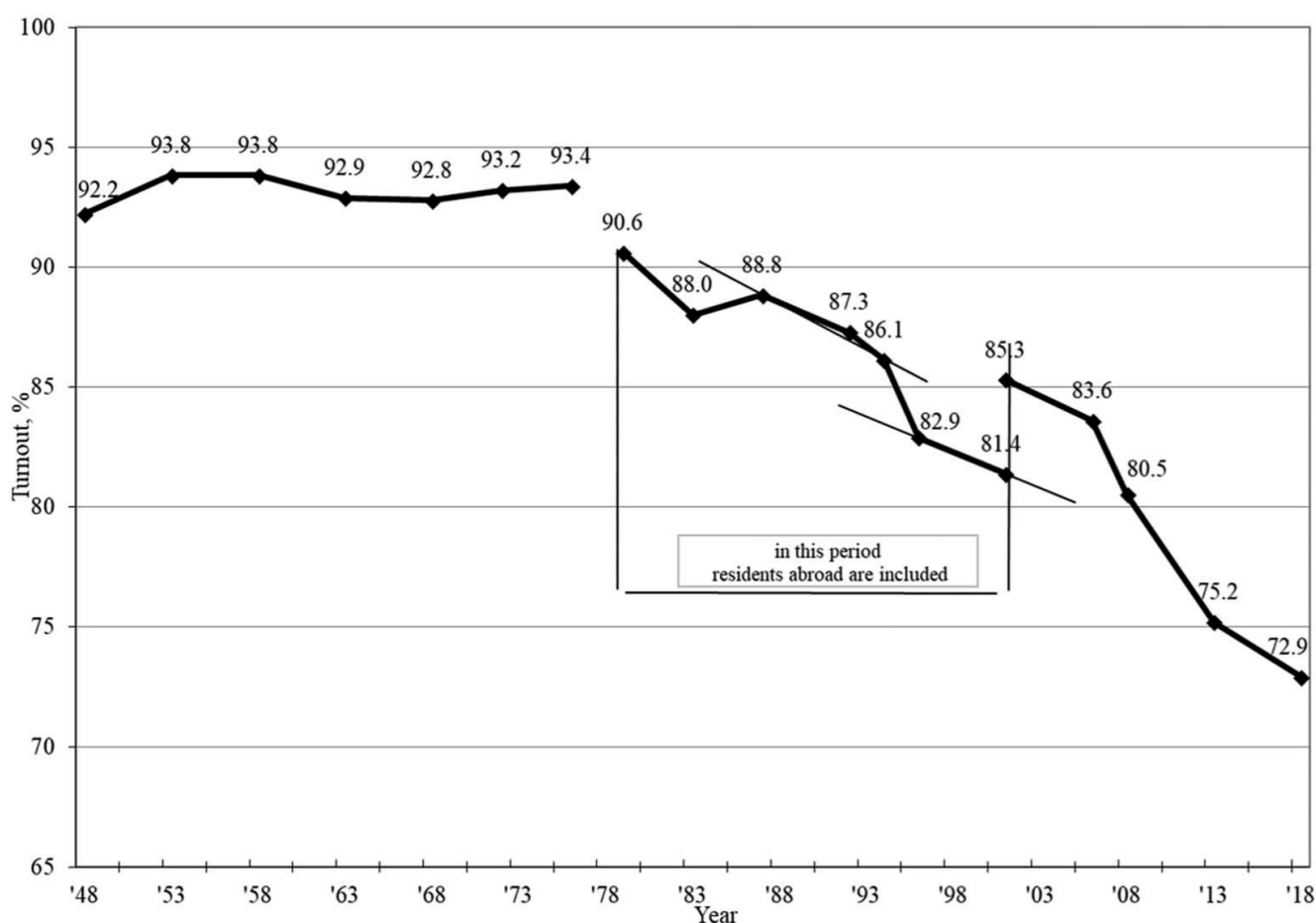

Figure 3 Turnout in Italy Since 1948[37]

* Percentages refer to the whole set of registered voters between 1979 and 2001, and only to registered voters living in Italy until 1976 and since 2001. For 2001, we report both percentages: 85.3 is relative to Italian residents only, 81.4 is relative to the whole set of registered voters (thus both those living in Italy and abroad). This is done to show the negative effect on turnout which the inclusion of the latter constituency had in the previous period.

Martin Rhodes[38] analyzes the potential reasons caused Tangentopoli. The crucial element is the extraordinary power of the Italian prosecuting magistrates who had absolute determination as well. The background with the

[37] Alessandro Chiaramonteo et al (2018) Populist Success in a Hung Parliament: The 2018 General Election in Italy', South European Society and Politics, 23:4, p.8, DOI: 10.1080/13608746.2018.1506513
[38] Martin Rhodes (2016) Tangentopoli—More than 20 Years On, in The Oxford Handbook of Italian Politics, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199669745.013.24, available at:
https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199669745.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199669745-e-24#oxfordhb-9780199669745-e-24-note-773 (accessed by 15/05/2019)

economic crisis and an intensification of the war between the Italian state and the mafia contributed to a context of political tumult and disorder. The end of the Cold War, the subsequent erosion of the cross-party consensus on keeping the Italian Communist Party out of power and the expansion of political corruption mingled internal factors and international elements together and paved the way to the breakthrough of Tangentopoli. It should be noted that Tangentopoli was not the first systemic corruption in Italian contemporary history. Just two decades earlier, the "oil scandal" exposed the illegal transaction linking the fixed price in the oil derivatives and a large oil producer interest group, including the state electricity company (ENEL) and the parties of governing coalitions.

The government would be weak when it is lack of direct electoral legitimacy, which would be a great opportunity for a populist party to take power. The two recent cases are Ciampi and Monti who both did not experience the formal electoral process but appointed directly by the President. The Northern League performed well in the national election in 1994, with the non-partisan government led by Carlo Azeglio Ciampi. Similarly, the Five Star Movement gained the unexpected victory in the national election in 2013 when Matteo Monti was the head of the government.

Besides, the electoral system is another significant factor in the domestic area. The fourth electoral system in Italy was approved on 26th October 2017, which gained the most support from the mainstream political parties without the M5S. The new electoral reform based on two systems designed by judges not by the parliament— for the Chamber, there are 37% seats decided by FPTP (first-past-the-post) and SMDS (single-member districts), including a majority prize and a 3% threshold for winning seats; for the Senate, 61% seats are distributed according to PR (proportional representation) and MMDs (multiple-member districts), with an 8% threshold but no majority prize. Other 2% belongs to the overseas constituencies. Besides, the elections of two chambers are separated and the voters from 18-24 years old could only for the Chamber rather than the Senate.

2.2.2 Anxiety of Economic Recession and the Corruption Scandal

Except for the political earthquake Tangentopoli, the economic growth in Italy did not perform well, becoming one significant element for the growth of populism. Like the Figure 4 below shows, experiencing a sluggish

recovery from the Great Recession, Italian economy grows slowly, lower than the average level (both EU 28 countries and Euro area countries).
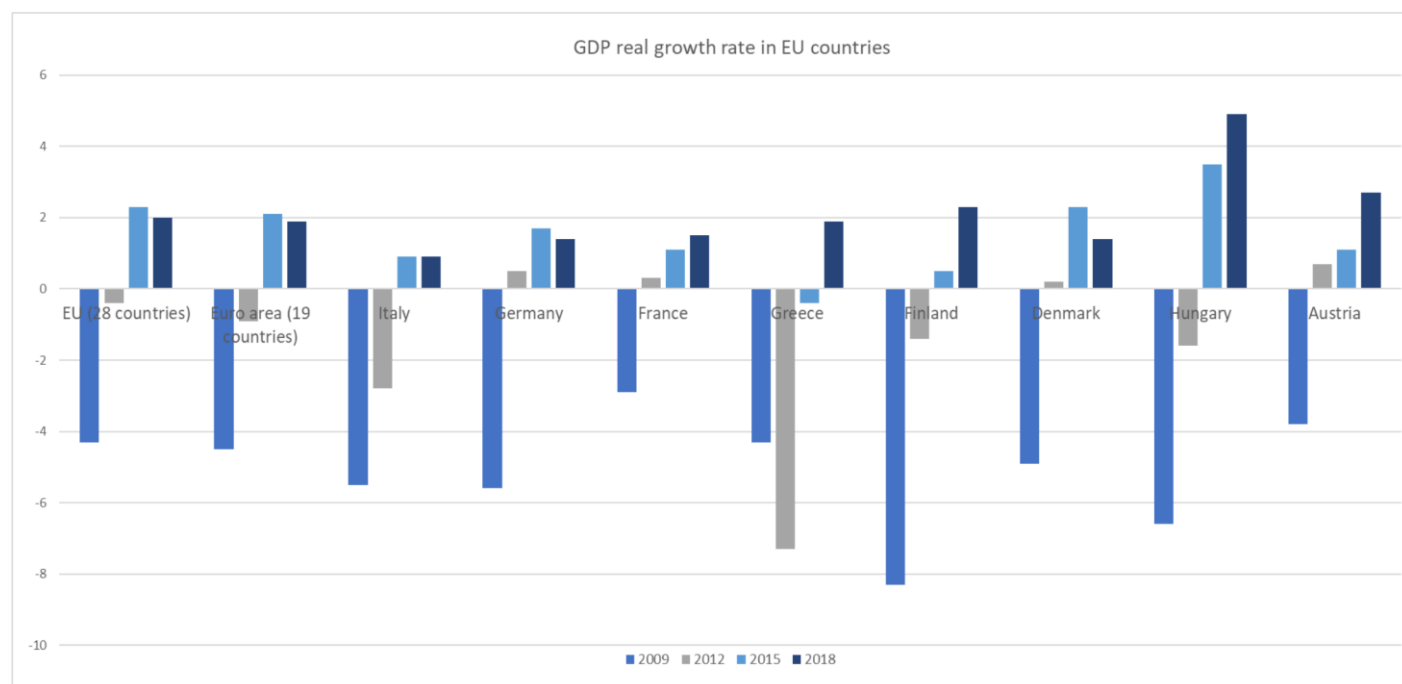
Figure 4 GDP real growth rate[39] (unit: %)

As for employment, the situation is not optimistic, either. Figure 5 demonstrates the unemployment problem in Italy. Compared to other EU countries where populism is prevailing as well, Italy keeps a high rate of unemployment, especially in the latest decade. The economic crisis added a sense of material insecurity all over the whole society. Besides, the unemployment rate in Italy is over the average level (6.5% in 2019) and became the third highest just behind Greece and Spain in all EU countries. Considering Italy is the fourth biggest economy and one of the original founders in EU, high unemployment would influence both domestic solidarity and European market expectations. However, confronting the anxiety and insecurity of the mass, the conventional political parties did not come up with appropriate solutions to deal with these severe problems, which provided a fertile ground to the populist growth.

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[39] Data from Eurostat, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00115 (accessed by 20/04/2019)

Figure 5 unemployment rate in several EU countries[40]   (unite:%)

2.2.3 Social Factors
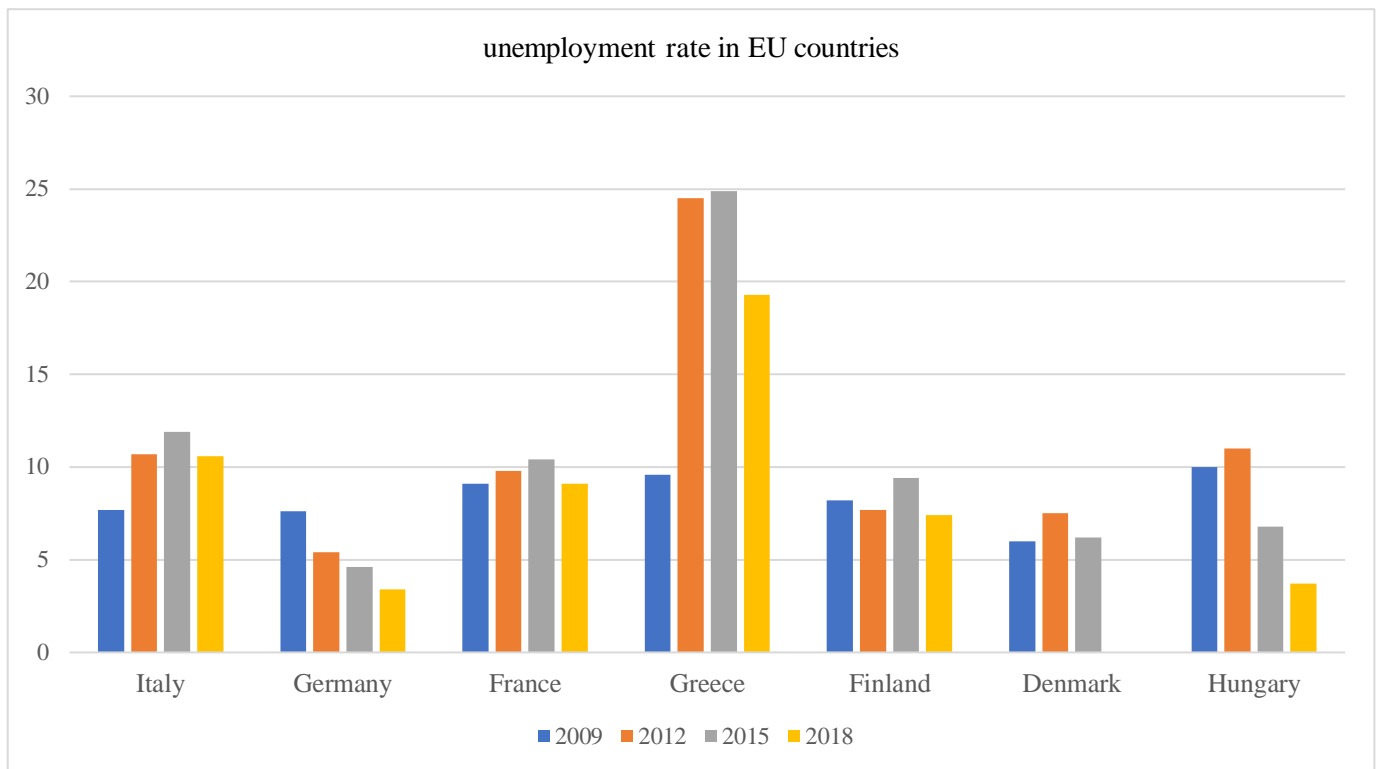
From another domestic perspective, Italy did not shape democracy with normal experience, on the contrary, the democratic consolidation relied on the voters' loyalty on several mass parties (i.e. the Christian Democrats, the socialists, and the Communists). The loyalty became the ballast of domestic democracy instead of welcoming it enthusiastically. With this fragile foundation of democracy, it finally turned into a crisis of democratic legitimacy after the national scandal. Since then, the images of political parties were completely damaged, spreading a corrupted and self-interested political class impression. From Figure 6, we can see the highest figure came out after the corruption scandal and another increasing trend appeared in the early 21st century after the Great Recession. This Figure shows Italians' low satisfaction level of democracy. The people who hold a comparatively optimistic opinion (including 'very satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied') are just half of the mass. The worst situation happened in 1993 when this amount slumped to under 20%, showing the terrible consequence of Tangentopoli.

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[40] Data from Eurostat, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tipsun20
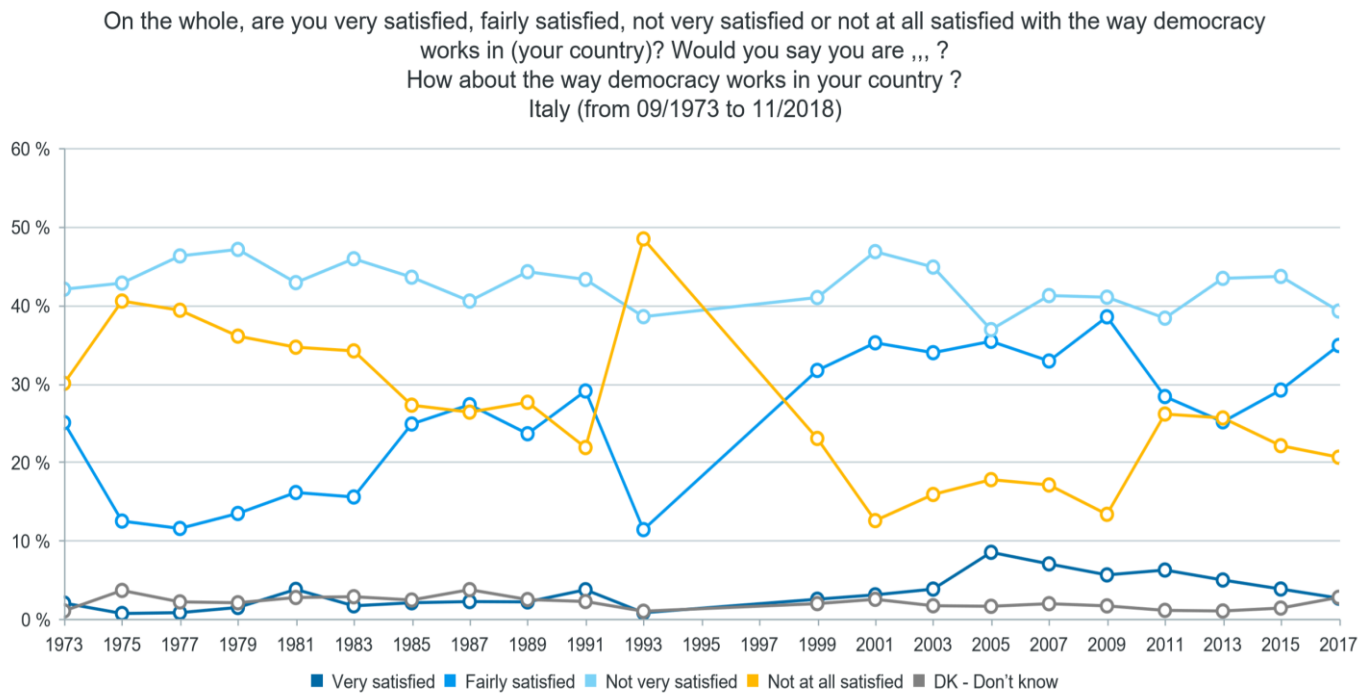(accessed by 22/04/2019)

On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (your country)? Would you say you are ,,, ?
How about the way democracy works in your country ?
Italy (from 09/1973 to 11/2018)

Figure 6 Investigation of Democracy Satisfaction in Italy[41]

We live in the era which is full of "media complicity", the mass media gave the floor to the accusers of the establishment in front of millions of people and used the television polls showing the de-legitimization of the political class. "The mass media, whether intentionally or not, are the powerful tool of mobilization for populist causes."[42] Due to the criticism of the parliament and the parties with a mass base, there was an almost blatant acceptance of personalized politics. In the most acute period of the Tangentopoli crisis, between 1992 and 1993, presidentialism became the most pleasing political formula to Italians, according to the data emerging from the opinion polls.[43]

At the mass level, the psychological transition from anti-establishment protest to the cultivation of openly anti-political sentiments is now done, thanks to the wildfire spread of that mood, improperly defined by journalists as "justicialism" with a strong distortion of meaning originating from the term.[44] Following the classical populism method, some people started to see the society as a whole, using their own way and set it with the

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[41] Data from Eurobarometer, available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Figure/getFigure/themeKy/45/groupKy/226 (accessed by 29/04/2019)

[42] Gianpietro Mazzoleni (2008) Populism and the Media. In: Albertazzi D., McDonnell D., Twenty-First Century Populism, London: Palgrave Macmillan, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230592100_4

[43] Marco Tarchi (2015) *Italia populista: Dal qualuismo a Beppe Grillo*, Bologna: il Moulino, p.257.

[44] Marco Tarchi (2015) *Italia populista: Dal qualuismo a Beppe Grillo*, Bologna: il Moulino, p.257.

institutions they were against. With the promotion of mass media, only one authentic voice of the popular will can be accepted and any kind of mediation would be refused. A new version of "general will" was shaped and linked with the concept of "the people" which could be incarnated by someone, namely, personalization. The prevailing trend of mass media under the circumstance of the severe revealed corruption fueled anti-elitism and paved the path to the blossom of populism in the near future. Of course, the populist expansion "was limited by its own strategic errors on the part of leadership and by competition from the forces of conservatism, but its influence as a political style and as a conception of politics was, however, much more persistent and conspicuous."[45]

2.2.4 Others

On the other hand, at the international level, there was a huge systematic transformation that was the ending of the bi-polar world with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the former political structure, the political competition was in an ideological pattern, especially the competition between the Christian Democratic Party (Demoncrazia Cristiana) and the Communist Party (Partito Comunista Italiano) in the First Republic. Moreover, the anti-system parties were limited out of the mainstream and had no access into the cabinet, like the Communist Party and the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement. Christian Democrats became the predominant party and controlled the government continuously from 1948 until 1989 with different coalition partners. The former voting stability was resolved due to the disappearing bi-polar system and voters became more issue-oriented and less ideology-oriented. With the collapse of hegemony of the Christian Democratic Party and the Communist Party, Italian political system underwent an endogenous transformation. On the other hand, Liza Lanzone and Dwayne Woods[46] argue that if Tangentopoli was the defining moment for the final demise of the old system, the two largest parties had already begun losing their electoral centrality long before, according to the electoral support for the largest parties relative to the rise of "protest" parties. Then, during the transformation to the First Republic to the Second Republic, political legitimacy became a tricky problem to Italian society, stemming from the corruption scandal. The changing international power structure made Italy relieved from the constraints of the two big powers conflict, having more choices out of the well-established and consociational system. The more freedom of voting the people have after the post-cold war

[45] Marco Tarchi (2015) Italy: the promised land of populism?, *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 7:3, p.276, DOI: 10.1080/23248823.2015.1094224
[46] Liza Lanzone and Dwayne Woods (2015) Riding the Populist Web: Contextualizing the Five Star Movement (M5S) in Italy, *Politics and Governance*, Vol.3, Issue 2, p.56, DOI:10.17645/pag.v3i2.246

and more issue-oriented they are made them more disappointed about Italian politics, which fueled to result in the conspicuous populist development.

2.3 Brief History of Italian Populist Parties

Bertjan Verbeek and Andrej Zaslove argue that contemporary Italian populism began with the arrival of the regionalist leagues in the late 1980s[47], which led to the formation of the Northern League in 1991. The period 1992-1994 was regarded as a historical discontinuity and a dividing boundary between the First Republic and the Second Republic (used in the journalistic area). Since then, the mass media started to play a crucial role in the anti-political campaign. The most popular shows were criticizing the parties, the government and the establishment. The "electronic square" was born with people's desire to a "parallel process". Radios, newspapers, TV in particular, "put on the show of the process to the parties almost every night. Millions and millions of Italians are increasingly fascinated by the small screen transformed into a sort of 'tribunal of the people' where the guests fight each other, while the audience in the studio is cheering from the stadium for one or the other"[48].

Thanks to the power of mass media, Berlusconi effectively gave an impression with his paternalistic rhetoric, showing a new pattern of Italian populism and versatility itself. He found the most popular and successful method to communicate in the transition period between the First and the Second Republic. In fact, populism was not rare at that time since it was considered as "a common feature of the politics of Western democracies, being used by opposition actors and outsiders, but also by governing parties as a tool to fend off the challengers."[49] For example, plenty of populist parties were built or attended to the national elections, such as Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*, SD), Freedom Party of Austria (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, FPÖ), National Rally (*Rassemblement national*, RN) in France, Progress Party (*Framstegspartiet,* FrP) in Norway and so on. The influence of these populist parties is expending from the end of the last century and shaping today's western populism as well.

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[47] Bertjan Verbeek and Andrej Zaslove (2016) Italy: a case of mutating populism?, *Democratization*, 23:2, p.306, DOI: 10.1080/13510347.2015.1076213

[48] Simona Colarizi, La crisi del consenso e il tramonto della prima Repubblica, in Setta, Italiani contro gli uomini politici: il qualunquismo, p. 163. In Marco Tarchi (2015) Italia populista: Dal qualuismo a Beppe Grillo, Bologna: il Moulino, p.253.

[49] Cas Mudde (2004) The Populist Zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition*, 39(4), p.551, DOI:10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x

The Northern League, a classic right-wing populist party, established by Umberto Bossi as a federation of regional parties of northern and north-central Italy. It rooted in a series of regionalist movements which merged later in 1991 into the Northern League. As the party founder, Bossi has the absolute authority in the party in the first two decades of its existence. His leadership was strongly influenced by the misappropriation scandal of party public fund and the party faced a turning point and changed a lot since then.

To have a general idea of the Northern League, some crucial factors such as its history of development, organization structure and advocated policies are what I would emphasize later. To achieve a general idea of the party's claims, it is reasonable to divide the developing history of the Northern League according to different election phases. From its foundation at the early stage around two years, the LN experienced a rapid increase period until Tangentopoli. The political vacuum happened in 1993-1994 (also the transformation period between the First Republic and the Second Republic) influenced all political parties. After that, in 1994, the LN participated in the center-right coalition and enjoyed its first time to enter into the national government. In September 1996, a document called "DICHIARAZIONE DI INDIPENDENZA E SOVRANITÀ' DELLA PADANIA" (Declaration of Independence and Sovereignty of Padania)[50] was published and proclaimed to establish the "Federal Republic of Padania" which encompasses most region in the Northern and Central Italy. The new secessionist stance triggered problems in the next enduring years. Within the organization, it provoked internal divisions about the federalism-secession issue. From calling for the full independence of Padania, some moderates in the party voiced their doubts and were driven out of the openly secessionist movement. On the other hand, the radical stance made the political coalition impossible to continue, in the 1996 general election, the Northern League ran alone and received 10.1 percent of votes, but not entering in the office again. After 2000, LN's federal secretary, Umberto Bossi claimed to abandon the secessionist stance and go back to the center-right camp led by Silvio Berlusconi in 2001. In the periods 2001-2005 and 2005-2006, the LN was generally accumulating national governance experience and taking a strategy described by scholars as the strategy "one foot in and one foot out"[51] which means it must not be seen as part of 'Rome', which will make it lose credibility and support. Except being a partner of Berlusconi in the government, the Northern League kept critical to at least some 'professional' and 'national' politicians, and chose its friends

[50] Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20060511193255/http://www.leganord.org/ilmovimento/momentistorici/venezia_settembre96.pdf (accessed by 25/04/2019)
According to the declaration, Padania is composed of 14 "nations" including Lombardy, Veneto, Piedmont, Tuscany, Emilia, Liguria, Marche, Romagna, Umbria, Friuli, Trentino, South Tyrol, Venezia Giulia, Aosta Valley).
In fact, it is not a new initiative proposed by Northern League. The person used this term and created the concept of Padania is Guido Fanti, a member of the Italian Communist Party in 1975.
[51] Daniele Albertazzi & Duncan McDonnell (2005) The Lega Nord in the second Berlusconi government: In a league of its own, *West European Politics*, 28:5, pp,952-972, DOI: 10.1080/01402380500310600

and enemies within the right-wing coalition (i.e. taking Forza Italia led by Berlusconi as friend, while take the post-Fascist Alleanza Nazionale (National Alliance, AN) and the former Christian Democrats of the Unione dei Democratici Cristiani e Democratici di Centro (the Union of Christian and Centre Democrats, UDC) as enemies). It may explain the reason why the LN avoided to lose support after it took office (which was seen inevitable before). In 2008, the LN got conspicuous progress with almost doubled votes (8.3%, compared to 4.6% in 2006). This electoral success led the LN to take its fourth governance until it fell in November 2011, then the party went in opposition. The recent crisis took place in April 2012, LN's founder and highest leader, Umberto Bossi was prosecuted due to the misappropriation with the money earmarked for the party. According to the Guardian, the money had been spent on improvements to his house and favors for members of his family.[52] Consequently, the illegal using party funds behaviors let Bossi be sentenced to two years and three months in jail, meantime, the former League Treasurer Francesco Belsito was sentenced to two years, six months behind bars.[53] Although Bossi quickly resigned and gained the honorary position of party President, there is no doubt that 'Bossi era' had been already gone and the LN was at a crossroad. After Bossi, Roberto Maroni took his succession, leading the party from July 2012 to December 2013. Matteo Salvini is the incumbent who won the party election and started his second term of office as the Federal Secretary. Tarchi argues, "the electoral and organizational growth of the Northern League constituted a subsequent and more mature phase: for the first and so far the only time, populism expressed itself not only as protest, but also as a kind of identity and the stimulus for political mobilization aimed at a change of regime, albeit one within the parameters of democracy."[54]

The LN gave vent to feelings of opposition to the 'centralized' state in the name of the right of ordinary people to take back the government of the common weal, seeking to weld the mood of rebellion of the petit and middle-level northern bourgeoisie to the charismatic personality of its leader and aiming at the promotion of a unified model of the popular community, which is held together by local traditions and immunized from the contagion of outside elements (such as immigrants from the southern regions or from abroad, and the parasitical mentality of the 'parties of Rome'). Tangentopoli marked a further decisive turning point in the spread of populist outlooks in Italian society and politics. Although the performance of the Northern League

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[52] Umberto Bossi resigns as leader of Northern League amid funding scandal, *the guardian*, available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/apr/05/umberto-bossi-resigns-northern-league (accessed by 26/04/2019)
[53] Founder of Italy's Northern League found guilty in fraud case, *Reuters*, available at: https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-italy-bossi/founder-of-italys-northern-league-found-guilty-in-fraud-case-idUKKBN19V1WI?il=0 (accessed by 26/04/2019)
[54] Marco Tarchi (2015) Italy: the promised land of populism?, *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 7:3, p.277, DOI: 10.1080/23248823.2015.1094224,

fluctuated over time, it was never excluded from taking seats at regional, national, and European levels. Its legislative stability helped it maintain a presence in the Italian parliament.

From a secessionist to nationalist stance, the political advocacies changed a lot. The main proposal was Padania before, however, nowadays, there are two themes to be seen as the main advocacies of the LN—immigration and federalism. It takes an anti-immigration stance and calls for strict restrictions to protect Italy' interest and to face this issue at the European level. As a 'regionalist populist' party, the LN advocates the transformation of Italy to a federal state and a better regional autonomy at the beginning, while this feature tended to be moderate with nationalism after the leadership shifted under Salvini, focusing on Euroscepticism, opposition to immigration and construction of mosques.

The other populist party, Five Star Movement, was built up later than LN but definitely should not be ignorant. The M5S, one of the most popular populist party in western Europe now, officially born in 2009. It rose with an unexpected pace and gained striking success in the 2013 and 2018 general elections. In order to analyze its success and make a comparison in the next chapter, taking a brief introduction of it is necessary.

When it comes to the Five Star Movement, no one will deny the pivotal role of the party's leader -- Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto Casaleggio. In particular Beppe Grillo, whose innovative utility of Internet to political propaganda even coined the concept of 'web-populism'.[55] Although the party was just established a decade ago, Grillo's political activities could be dated back much further. In his early career, he became famous as a comedian and one of television's most successful celebrities, while his comedy seldom mentioned politics issues but around the themes of the 'custom'. Grill's entry into politics was not just a coincidence but a general process. It is clearer to divide his personal political life into three parts. The first could be dated from November 1986, since the turning point of his personal career happened when he was expelled from the national television on account of a gag aimed at the Socialist Party, branding Socialists as thieves. From then on, Grillo found his ideal position in the theater and arenas where he gained more freedom and criticized the political class and economic powers with no scruple. In the turbulent year 1993, Grill showed his political proposal on his TV show, targeting at entrepreneurs in finance and making politicians as scapegoats for the social unease. The relevant descriptions of the 'dead' government and the active role of the citizens have already shown in his

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[55] Corbetta Piergiorgio (2013) Conclusioni : *un web-populismo dal destino incerto*, Partito di Grillo. Bologna : Il Mulino, Contemporanea, pp.197-214.

television show and characterized for the future movement. Besides, He arranged a collective action against the state telephone company (SIP) for charging high prices for certain services. At last, the company announced to deactivate the numbers in question. The success of this protest proved this method effectively to pursue a common objective then adopted it to other occasions later. In the early two decades, Grillo kept his active intervention into issues such as biotechnologies, information and multinationals. Although his activity was independent, his position was "undoubtedly located on the left of the political spectrum, influenced by the themes of critical consumerism, ecology and a certain anti-capitalist stance of a Catholic stamp."[56]

The decisive operation was launched on 26th January 2005 when the foundation of the blog (www.beppegrillo.it), which soon became the most popular blog in Italy and was frequently quoted by foreign media. Its influence was admitted by *Observer*, which rated it as the ninth influential blog in the world, and also *Time* included it in its 'the world's 25 best blogs list' in 2008.

Grillo was not naturally distrusted the government and his relationship with the institutional politics and representative democracy changed. Initially, the goal of the blog was to make voices heard by the politicians, making a mechanism that took the blog as a tool for the collection of citizen' petition then let politicians know the objectives they need to pursue. In this process, the citizen' primaries would concern about the political issues and then deliver their results to Prime Minister Prodi. For instance, the most famous case was three laws proposed by popular initiative, which triggered the movement (V-day). The letter 'V' here is the first letter of 'vaffanculo' (bugger off), "an imperative resoundingly addressed to Italian politicians". These three laws were: 1.) to forbid people convinced with a crime to enter into parliament election; 2.) to limit MPs with a maximum - two terms in the parliament; 3.) to modify the election law which was limited to individual candidates and provided 'fixed' choices. However, the proposal did not achieve attention from the government which fueled the movement. In 2007, Grillo himself turned up in Bologna and launched the activity to collect signatures from who supported these three laws. At last, it became a conspicuous success with 336,144 signature instead of the 50,000 required by the constitution for laws proposed by popular initiative. The culmination of this event shaped Grillo's image: who let the people's voice be heard by the government. Although the attempt to trust the politicians failed in the end, Grillo gained his personal success as the 'amplifier' of the people. What really matters is, it marked a schism: "from then on, it was no longer possible to hope for anything from this

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[56] Filippo Tronconi (2015) *Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organisation, Communication and Ideology*, England: Ashgate, p.16

political class. Citizens had to become directly engaged and no longer delegate."[57]

In his blog, he continuously put his focus on temporary employment, state finance issue, environment protection, etc. Tronconi used more evidence from Grillo's publication:

"In the booklet (*Un anno di blog*) accompanying the DVD *Incantesimi* (2006), Grillo defined the blog as 'the tool that we have for creating true democracy' - a new form of democracy that has been called 'direct democracy'. People can now keep themselves informed, at all times and from different resources, about the issues that concern them: energy, water, health care and the government; and they can express their opinions without going through the filters of the party mandarins and newspaper editors. We are moving away from giving the politician *carte blanche* and towards the participation of the citizen'."[58]

Although Grillo takes his blog as a tool and a camp to 'direct democracy', the criticized commenters argue it is more like a solo performance since Grillo never replies the comments on Facebook. The people have a misconception that their voice is shown publicly by comments, but to some degree, they are still invisible and ephemeral.

The birth of the blog owed to the indispensable cooperation between Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto Casaleggio, the latter who presided a company of web marketing and strategies and was professional at information technology. Compared to Grillo, Casaleggio rarely addressed public statements or speeches, but he was also a utopian theorist and made a crucial contribution to Grillo's blog and the Five Star Movement. Although Grillo stood in the spotlight and he remained behind the scenes, Casaleggio's role is absolutely not of mere technical support. He is considered to be responsible for some swings of Grillo to the right.

A fundamental step from online activities to constitute a real political base was the creation of the local discussion groups by means of the platform Meetup. It offered blog followers a chance that they could meet others and discuss initiatives. The increasing numerous local meetups day by day combining with Grill's online media events cultivated a mass base and paved the way to build up a political party. Another provocation was Grillo attempted to run as a candidate in 2009 open elections for the post of secretary of the Partito

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[57] Filippo Tronconi (2015) *Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organisation, Communication and Ideology*, England: Ashgate, pp.20
[58] Filippo Tronconi (2015) *Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organisation, Communication and Ideology*, England: Ashgate, pp.18

Democratico (Democratic Party, PD), but failed. It enabled Grillo to be a real representative of common citizens who was rejected by the conventional parties from the 'monopolized' political sphere.
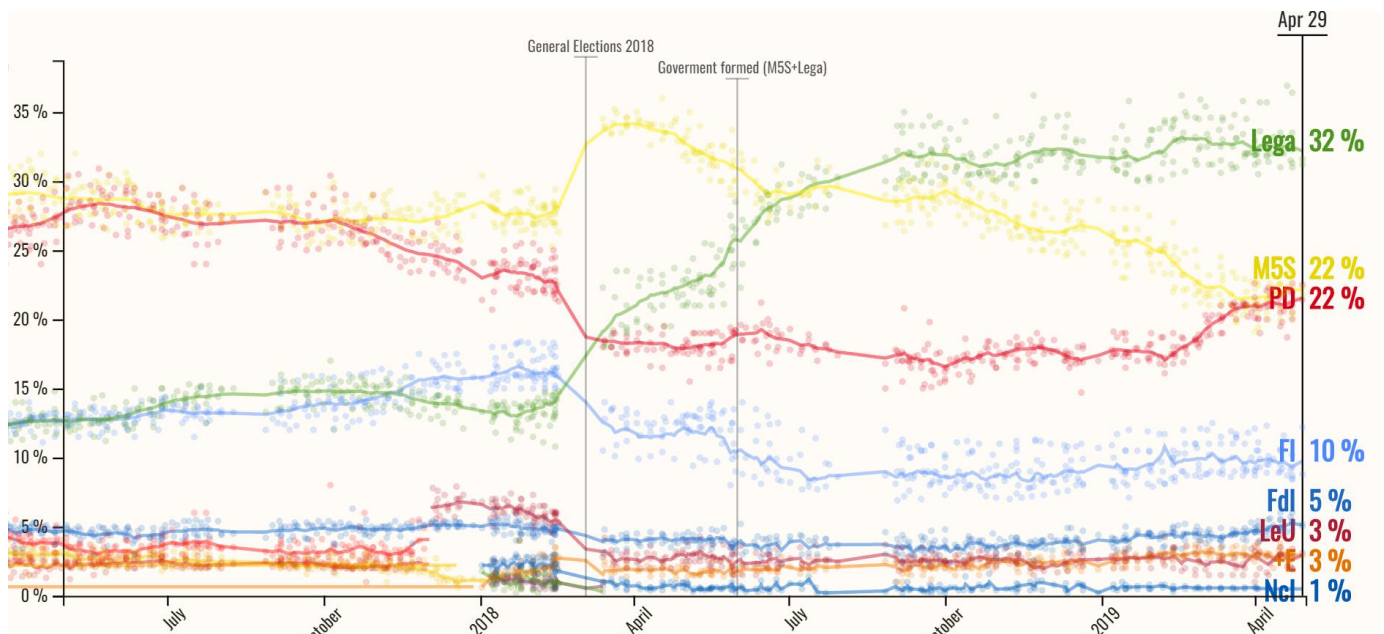

Figure 7 public opinion poll[59]

There is always a dilemma when populist parties enter into central government from the "periphery". It is tricky to keep the balance between being representative of "the people" and being a part of the central government. Since the "purity" is a crucial resource of populist parties' attraction, they have to take the risk of losing their credibility and support being a part of professional politics that they were against before. From the public opinion polls (Figure 7) in the last two years, it is clear that the support of these two parties is changing.

For the LN, the side effect of taking in the office does not show effectively since it not only keeps its influence but also attracts more support than before, even overtaking the M5S in the survey. However, for the M5S, the support rate of public opinion polls decreased around 10 percent compared to its peak in general election last year. It seems these two parties' position was exchanged. To analyze this reason, both historical and realistic reasons cannot be missed. In the next chapter, I will compare and contrast these two parties to dig their differences and similarities.

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[59] Data from *poll of polls*, available at: https://pollofpolls.eu/IT (accessed by 30/04/2019)

Chapter 3. Comparing and Contrasting the Five Star Movement and the Northern League

To compare and contrast the Five Star Movement and the Northern League, I address these following issues to conclude the differences and similarities between these two parties. They are not only the most influential populist parties in Italian history but also showing interesting characteristics in its specific national context. In the first section, I will analyze the differences of the M5S and LN through different aspects, including the role of the Internet, organization structure, membership and deputies in the chamber, electoral base, positions in the political spectrum and policies. The second section will focus on the similarities, such as leadership, the use of mass media, Euroscepticism and so on. These two populist parties represent a significant part of Italian politics presently, showing similar populist features but also following their own developing path.

3.1 Differences

3.1.1. The Role of the Internet in the Party

In the last two decades, traditional media such as TV and the press were considered to be orchestrated by the dominated parties, and also under the influence of particular private interests. The media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi who owned the private TV network, Mediaset, could be seen as a typical case. The M5S thrust web-politics to the central arena in Italy and made it as an indispensable approach to attract voters. Grillo described the old media and its related representatives of the political establishment as "the walking dead" in the blog and the book[60], predicting "the end of old media" is coming when the non-digital media would disappear. The web became a useful tool to fight against the 'old' politics, "The web, as a mythical panacea, can and 'wants' to cure the social and economic ills of Italy, leading the nation towards a more desirable future."[61] Roberto D'Alimonte argues, "Today every party uses the internet, but in the case of the M5S, the web is not just a form of communication and mobilization—the web is the movement."[62] The digital revolution and the political changes interwove together, providing a utopian image that the movement will take place both the old, dead media and the establishment on the back. In other words, the old media was

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[60] Casaleggio G and Grillo B (2011) Siamo in guerra. Milano: Chiare Lettere. In Simone Natale and Andrea Ballatore (2014) The web will kill them all: new media, digital utopia, and political struggle in the Italian 5-Star Movement, *Media, Culture & Society*, 36(1), p. 116, DOI: 10.1177/0163443713511902

[61] Simone Natale and Andrea Ballatore (2014) The web will kill them all: new media, digital utopia, and political struggle in the Italian 5-Star Movement, *Media, Culture & Society*, 36(1), p. 112, DOI: 10.1177/0163443713511902

[62] Roberto D'Alimonte (2019) How the Populists Won in Italy, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.20, No.1, Jan 2019, p.118, doi:10.1353/jod.2019.0009

controlled by the establishment and not represented real Italian citizens. That is populists' logic to explain why the movement is irresistible.

Although the Internet plays an important role in both the M5S and the LN, they use it in different ways. The M5S puts the Internet in a crucial position that it is not only a communication tool but also an organizational tool. As the M5S defines itself as a 'non-party', it based on a network of movement activities rather than a stable and visible office like the common parties do. The only exception could be Grillo's blog previously, but its web bases were extending from the founder's private web space to the party's public online discussion. For instance, the first and online magazine website, 'Il Blog delle Stelle' (Stars Blog) [63] is the official blog of the party where updating relative news and concerned themes every single day. For the daily participation and management of the members, Rousseau provides the platform to make proposals then fulfill them. This most innovative web platform was officially launched in April 2016, which was described as the beating heart of the M5S, giving the people "the opportunity to develop direct democracy". The idea based on the evolution of the democratic system and a new relationship between the citizens and their representatives. Instead of direct participation of the people, the current democracy operates on the principle of delegation. This brought a confirmative consequence that the candidates exhausted voters' trust and would only implement policies which are beneficial for themselves. Rousseau is a symbol of the image future where the elected representatives act as spokesmen, developing the electoral program and keeping the commitment they made with those who voted to them. In order to ensure this, allowing full access to information in real time about the measures or processes made by the government is imperative.

Gianroberto Casaleggio designed Rousseau on the purpose of making direct democracy possible through the Internet, thus introducing the centrality of the citizens. The platform is expanding its functions, like Lex registered/regional/Europe (the original and main functions, which allows the registered members of the platform participate in the formation of bills by making their own proposals directly or voting for the existing ones, released in May 2016), E-learning (provides training through distance learning to all citizens who want to be spokesmen or just be active and aware citizens, then realizing a better service to citizens within the institutions. Released in August 2016), sharing (allows the sharing of municipal and regional documents between spokesmen of different local authorities of the M5S, released in January 2017), and call to action (allows all citizens to participate, socialize and collaborate through the network on shared projects. Members

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[63] Available at Beppe Grillo's blog: https://www.ilblogdellestelle.it/ (accessed by 05/05/2019)

could create a proposal to the public and with a minimum number of people, everyone could participate in the group with the common interest. The typical case is Meetup, the aggregation tool used since 2005. Rousseau released it in June 2017).[64]

It should be noted that compared to its original version, Grillo's blog changed a lot. It contains not only Grillo's personal articles but also the viewpoints from other scholars, journalists even officials. Grillo's articles are placed in the category "IO GRIDO", keeping an update frequency with two or three times a week. There is no remark anymore at the end of the article and no other languages except Italian. Besides, everyone could download the monthly magazine which contains essential articles this month. These changes probably show a shrinking trend of his online camp, transforming from an interactive model to a single output model and stressing more on the Italian audience.

To sum up, the M5S uses the Internet as both an organizational and a communication tool, while the LN mainly uses the Internet as a communication tool. The latter was not born with the Internet as the former, but increasing its utilization to mobilize the people especially under Salvini's leadership. However, the M5S shows a deeper link with the Internet since the party regards it as the core to realize true democracy and popular participation.

3.1.2 Organizational Structure of the Party

To contrast the organizational structure of the M5S and the LN, I conclude all departments/positions in these two parties according to the statutes of the M5S and the LN.

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[64] From Rousseau website, available at: https://rousseau.movimento5stelle.it/rousseau.php   (accessed by 05/05/2019)

Organization Structure Contrast

The Northern League	The Five Star Movement
• **Federal Congress** representative body of members, , being convened every three years • **Federal Secretary – Matteo Salvini** elected by Federal Congress, political and legal representative of LN, 3 years, no max. term • **Federal President – Umberto Bossi** permanent identity unless renounced • **Disciplinary and Guarantee Committee** taking disciplinary measures to ordinary militants • **Federal Administrative Control Body** supervising the provisions of the law • **Federal Administrative Committee** economic-financial management - • **Federal Council** determining general action of LN • **Federal Political Secretariat** • **Federal Legislative Office** technical/legal/political support • **Federal Organization and Territory Manager** • **The Statute and Regulations Commission** • **The Manager of Regulations and Membership** • **The person in charge of processing personal data** • **Federal Coordination of the Young Padanians Movement**	• **The Assembly** all members, being convened at least once a year • **Political Head -- Luigi Di Maio** political and legal representative of M5S, 5 years max.2 terms • **Guarantor – Beppe Grillo** permanent identity, but could be revoked by the Guarantee Committee with absolute majority • **Guarantee Committee** supervising application of provisions • **Board of Arbitrators** monitors compliance with the duties of members and taking disciplinary measures • **Treasurer** legal representative of M5S in economic-financial activities

Figure 8 Organization Structure of the M5S and LN[65]

Compared to the LN, the structure in the M5S is more simplified, just having six sectors in total. The main one is the assembly which allows every registered member to attend. The function of the assembly is similar with the federal congress in the LN, but the latter is a body of representatives. The political head, the role Luigi Di Maio is playing now, is the real political leader in daily executive activities. In the LN, it shows in the way of the federal secretary who is elected by the federal congress, while the political leader in the M5S is elected through online consultation. The guarantor in the M5S equals with the federal president in the LN, both being a permanent position due to its symbolic significance. Unlike Umberto Bossi only having 'rights' in three departments, Beppe Grillo is more active in the party, having more 'power' since some positions need the proposal of the guarantor. The supervising activities are taken by the guarantee committee in the M5S. With a similar name, the disciplinary and guarantee committee in the LN has the function to take disciplinary measures, and its counterpart in the M5S is the board of arbitrators. The federal administrative control body is composed of three permanent members and two substitutes appointed by the federal council, managing the

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[65] Collected and elaborated by the author, according to the statutes of the M5S and the LN.

supervisions, which has a more overlapping character with the guarantee committee in the M5S. As for the economic-financial management, it is in the charge of the federal administrative committee in the LN, which is composed of one/three members (must be militants with minimum seniority of 10 years) appointed by the federal secretary. The manager in the M5S is the treasurer, who is elected by the assembly every three years on the proposal of the guarantor. As for the other sectors in the LN, the federal council determines general actions of the party, being convened and presided by the federal secretary and implementing the decisions made in the federal congress. The federal organization and territory manager presides over the disciplinary and guarantee committee, having rights in four different divisions due to the responsibility of coordinating general actions of the party. Most of the managers of the remaining sectors could be appointed or revoked by the federal secretary.
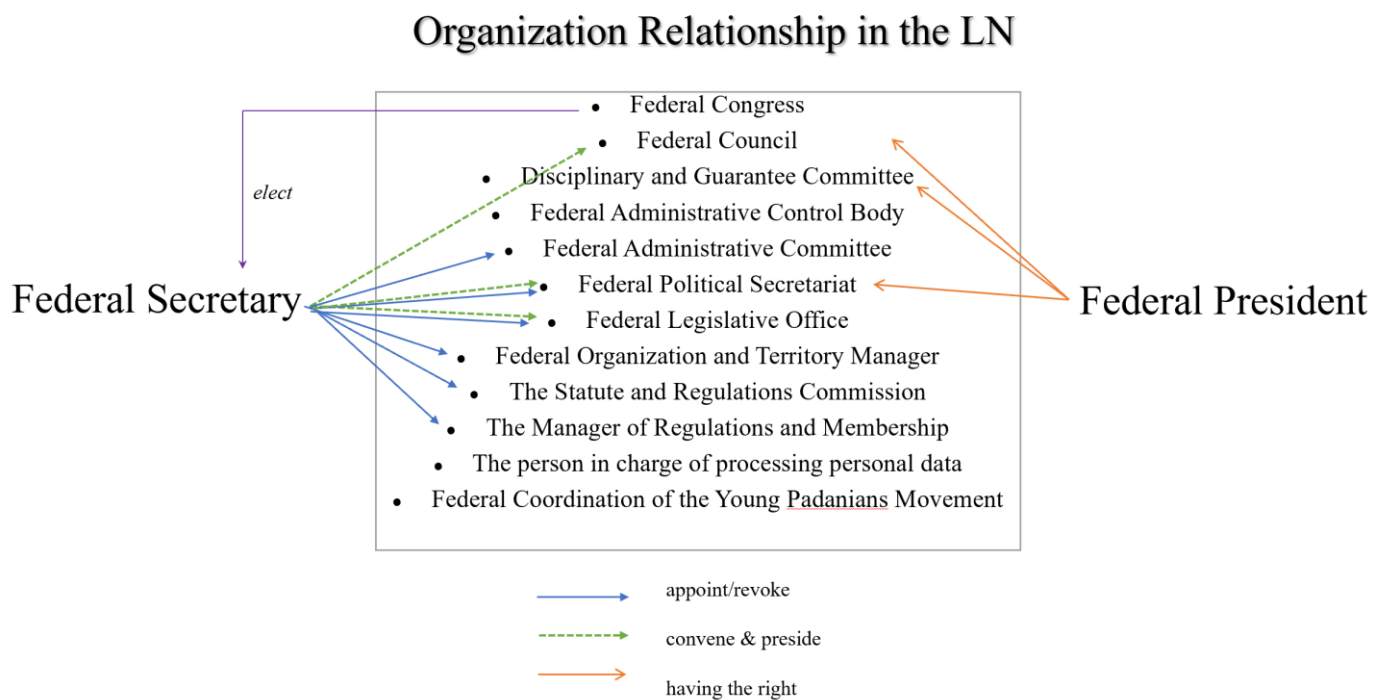

Figure 9 the organization relationship in the LN[66]

Figure 9 shows some relationships among different divisions with the federal secretary and the federal president. It is obvious that the former has the actual authority and the latter is more like a participatory role. Since the divisions themselves having subordinate relations, in fact, the federal secretary holds the power to preside over main sectors through direct management (political secretariat) or appointing the department leaders.

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[66] Collected and elaborated by the author, according to the statutes of the LN.

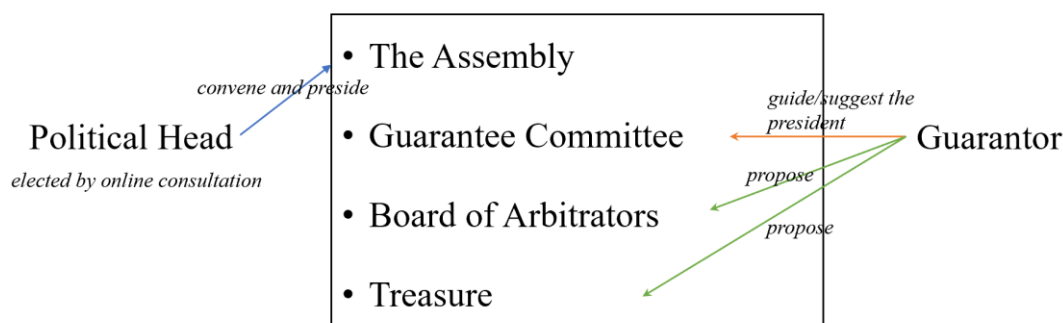# Organization Relationship in the M5S

Figure 10 the organization relationship in the M5S[67]

Indeed, the organizational relationship in the M5S is different from it in the LN. The political head mainly convenes and presides over the assembly, having "all necessary powers of ordinary administration", while the guarantor is the custodian of the fundamental values of the party, proposing candidate lists to some divisions. Certainly, the organizational structure is so simplified since it does not have a long developing history and still in the process of institutionalization. But still, the power gap between the political head and the guarantor is smaller than its counterpart in the LN, although the political head arranges daily activities authoritatively. However, the new statute of the M5S entrusted the political leader and guaranteed his governing responsibilities. The original idea of 'non-association' has been abandoned with no expression in Grillo's blog, and the 'non-statute' drawn up has taken place by the new statute which represented an important milestone on the path towards the party's institutionalization[68].

There is another detail that should be neglected, the utilization of the election fund. As the M5S claims, it points the purpose of the donation is "to guarantee the operation of Rousseau and new features that make the platform more robust and useful to the members of the Five Star Movement."[69] In the "Fundraiser" webpage of the M5S. Concretely, the donation would be used for managing and maintain the Rousseau system rather than election campaigns. In particular, it emphasizes the transparency of the donation. The costs would be

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[67] Collected and elaborated by the author, according to the statutes of the M5S.
[68] Roberto Biorcio & Rossana Sampugnaro (2019) Introduction: The Five-star Movement from the street to local and national institutions, *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 11:1, p.13, DOI: 10.1080/23248823.2019.1576997
[69] Available at: https://rousseau.movimento5stelle.it/fund_raising.php (accessed by 04/05/2019)

reported annually to the public and never be used to the elections. The party wants to build an image that politics is not necessary to have a link with funds. Like the official statement from the M5S, it has renounced 42 million euros of electoral reimbursements for the current legislature. As for the LN, as a 'traditional party', they have the membership fees to support relative activities including elections.

There is the other perspective of organizational structure which includes three different but complemented faces of contemporary parties: the party on the ground, the party in central office, and the party in public office, which respectively means the local branches, the central organization of the party and the elected representatives at each level. In the M5S case, it is organized with three pillars: Meetup, Grillo's blog and Rousseau, and each of them could explain with a corresponding level. In addition, Grillo's blog was the core engine of the M5S and the instructional tool in the initial phase, which represents "the party in central office". In this framework, the web becomes a powerful instrument to influence the third level, the party in public office. By encouraging grassroots participating in policy programs through Rousseau, citizens could utilize the web to discuss the bills proposed by Five Star MPs or made by themselves then guide and control the political progress at "the party in public office" level. Besides, a "communication group" which are directly appointed by Beppe Grillo is ensuring the accuracy and effectiveness of the communication. It does not subject to any division so that it is more likely to play an autonomous role, guaranteeing the 'general will' of the people could be heard appropriately by the representatives. In fact, according to the statute of the M5S, Five Star legislators are bound by the decisions made by majority vote in the M5S assembly (including all Five Star deputies and senators, the core of the M5S's parliamentary party), and thus must follow the instructions that the members provided on the web. This method that those who are elected into the parliament ought to be directly accountable for their voters is dubbed 'imperative mandate'[70]. However, there is an explicit clash between this rule and the constitution. According to The Article 67 of the Italian Constitution, "Each Member of Parliament represents the Nation" (that is to say, he or she represents all the citizens of the country and not just his or her electors) and "carries out his or her duties without being limited by his or her mandate."[71] In other words, the constitution forbids the imperative mandate so that the MP's decisions are made freely and are not constrained by the need to fulfill a specific task. Further, according to Article 68 of the Constitution, "Members of Parliament cannot be held accountable for the opinions expressed or votes cast in the performance of their function."[72] For the M5S, the legal constraints of the statute might result in problems in

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[70] Filippo Tronconi (2015) *Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organisation, Communication and Ideology*, England: Ashgate, pp.103.
[71] Data from Italian national camera website, available at: http://en.camera.it/4?scheda_informazioni=3 (accessed by 07/05/2019)
[72] Data from Italian national camera website, available at: http://en.camera.it/4?scheda_informazioni=3 (accessed by 07/05/2019)

practice.

In short, the LN shows a more complicated and integrated organizational structure compared to the M5S. In the LN, most of the power is held by the federal secretary who convenes and presides major departments while the federal president is more like an honorary title with rights to attend rather than decide. For the M5S, the situation is not so explicit since it is in the process towards institutionalization. But one thing is clear that Beppe Grillo is generally seceding his full connection with the party's daily management, which is presided by the political head, Luigi Di Maio. However, compared to the LN, the Guarantor has more power of making proposals. Besides, the principle of the "imperative mandate" of the M5S may conflict with the national constitution in practice which may influence the internal structure as well.

3.1.3 Membership and Deputies in the Chamber

This section is devoted to summarizing the membership in the M5S and the LN. After the 2012 scandal, the LN took significant steps towards institutionalization. Before Matteo Salvini was elected, it underwent a transitional phase, struggling with building up a new party identity and a big loss of both membership and votes.

Figure 11 illustrates the members' profile of these two parties, from which we can make a conclusion that the majority member in both parties is male and young generation. The education level of most members is not so high, and at the same time a quarter of members are not employed. As for the attendance in activities, in general, the M5S members are more active than the members in LN at the party level, especially showing enthusiastic participation through the web which is in line with the character of their party. However, the LN members show more concerns about attending meetings at the local level(meetings, political events or electioneering).

Socio-demographic profile and level/type of engagement of M5S and LN members (%)		
	M5S	LN
Gender		
Male	79.4	81.1
Female	20.6	18.9
Age		
<35	27.7	15.2
>35	72.3	84.8
Education		
Primary/Secondary	75.4	70.7
Higher	24.6	29.3
Occupation status		
Employed	73.4	73.9
Not employed	26.6	26.1
Time devoted to party activites per week		
None	20.6	29.9
1-5 hours	41.5	55.2
>5 hours	37.9	24.9
Number of meetings attended at local level in the last year		
Never	27.2	25.6
1-5 times a year	42.0	21.7
>5 times	30.8	52.7
Frequency of participation in political events/demonstrations organized by the party		
Never	37.3	27.8
1-5 times a year	21.7	40.6
More than 5 times	41.0	31.6
Frequency of participation in party political web forums		
Never	11.4	45.4
1-5 times a year	21.1	23.9
More than 5 times	67.5	30.7

Figure 11 Socio-demographic profile and level/type of engagement of M5S and LN members[73]

Indeed, these two party members profile has some similarities, but they are organized in a completely different way. At first, according to the statute, the LN members are divided into two types, members and supporters ((associati ordinari militanti e associati sostenitori)). The latter is restricted to participate in the internal life of

[73] Gianluca Passarelli and Dario Tuorto (2018) The meanings of party membership. A comparison of three parties, *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 10:2, p.180, DOI: 10.1080/23248823.2018.1474566

the party and does not have specific rights and duties but straightforward to donate to the party. In contrast, the ordinary members could vote and participate in almost all the party's political activities. They need to experience one year of 'probation', after that, their identity of being a member and membership rights would be confirmed by the local and national secretaries. It should be noted that LN members generally express clear ideological positions: leghista[74], which is oriented toward the extreme right. As a mass party, the LN membership follows a traditional way, which means the members are organized in a hierarchical system while the supporters get little access to the general activities. Passarelli and Tuorto think these features "acted positively as a strategy to limit the potential for conflict arising from the larger presence of the party on the ground…and also acted as an efficient form of control that filters access, and that has survived Umberto Bossi's departure (for personal rather than political reasons) because the new leadership/dominant coalition have been faced with an organization that is resilient."[75] Last but not least, all ordinary members must pay the membership fee annually, and the amount and its use would be reported publicly in the financial report. Paying membership fee and committing themselves to the observance of the duties according to the statute are crucial principles for the LN members.

Compared to this top-down organization of the LN, the M5S adopted a bottom-up way to manage its membership. Since the M5S is configured as a movement-based, non-hierarchical party, its party organization is different from the traditional parties. With the full use of the Internet, the M5S simplified the internal organization and the decision-making process. The membership registration could be easily done online and it is not necessary to pay the membership fee. The e-democracy not only makes the election process more visible and transparent but also facilitates communication between the representatives and the citizens. There is no division for the membership in the M5S, all M5S members could use Rousseau to take the policy discussions and vote to the candidates they support.

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[74] Passarelli, G., and D. Tuorto. 2012a. Lega E Padania. Storie E Luoghi Delle Camicie Verdi. Bologna: Il Mulino. In Gianluca Passarelli & Dario Tuorto (2018) The meanings of party membership. A comparison of three parties, *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 10:2, p.181, DOI: 10.1080/23248823.2018.1474566
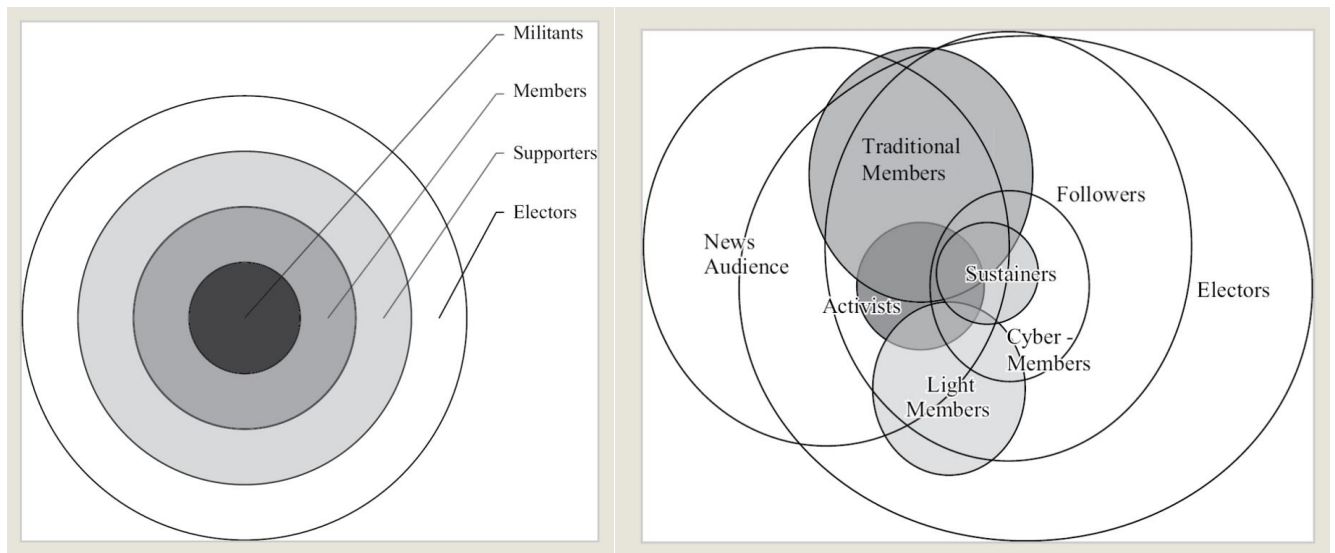
[75] Gianluca Passarelli & Dario Tuorto (2018) The meanings of party membership. A comparison of three parties, *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 10:2, p.184, DOI: 10.1080/23248823.2018.1474566

Figure 12 Party affiliation: Duverger's bulls-eye model and the multi-speed model[76]

In theory, Maurice Duverger's bulls-eye model could explain the membership in the LN. These four concentric circles divide different partisan commitment and participation into the mass parties, "distinguishing from other members by their activities the strength of their partisan sympathies"[77]. Militants occupy the center of this model and in the LN, the militants are the loyal members with the minimum seniority with ten years. The identity next to the militants is the members, which could fully participate in the party activities while the supporters in the LN are just the donators and have no actual right in the party. At last, electors occupy the outermost ring which does not have a direct link with the LN but give their votes to the party in elections. On the other hand, the party affiliation model is developing as the multi-speed model. The striking difference is the overlapping circles rather than as a bulls-eye. This model demonstrates the fluid feature of the general supporters of the party since individuals are free to shift between these different identities and some of them could be non-citizens and never vote for them actually. The flexible model is to some degree applying in the

[76] Scarrow, Susan E.(2015) Motives and Modes of Party Membership. In Beyond Party Members: Changing Approaches to Partisan Mobilization, by Scarrow, Susan.. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Oxford Scholarship Online, DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199661862.003.0002.

Available at: https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199661862.001.0001/acprof-9780199661862-chapter-2 (accessed by 13/05/2019)

[77] Scarrow, Susan E (2015) Motives and Modes of Party Membership. In Beyond Party Members: Changing Approaches to Partisan Mobilization, by Scarrow, Susan.. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Oxford Scholarship Online, DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199661862.003.0002.

Available at: https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199661862.001.0001/acprof-9780199661862-chapter-2 (accessed by 13/05/2019)

M5S membership, presenting an attractive way with multiple choices to engage the supporters.

To sum up, In the LN case, the membership includes clear affiliation and has different rights and duties, following a top-down organizing way as a traditional party. In contrast, although the mobilizers who present at the beginning and assist to build up the party represent the highest level of the membership, all members of the M5S have a direct access to the internal discussions. The membership of LN needs to be accepted by the party secretary with a phase of activism and a formal decision, while the process in the M5S is simplified thanks to the Internet. The bottom-up organization of the M5S shows a web-oriented feature, which has little constraints and limits to the members to attend political activities. Nevertheless, the horizontal model of organization in the M5S has influenced by the leader sometimes, which might cause the members polarized to two factions, namely the leaders' supporters and opponents. As a newborn political party that just underwent its first decade, its organizing mode is still changing.

Except for the profile of the members in both parties, their representatives namely the Chamber of deputies situation is worth to note as well. To have an explicit profile of the representatives, from Figure 13, we can compare the deputies in the Chamber from the M5S and the LN in the recent two terms with several factors: gender, age, education, profession and previous parliamentary experience. First, in 2013, all the LN deputies were male and this became more balanced in the next term (certainly, we should pay attention that the LN only had 20 deputies in 2013, and the few samples could be one reason of the male-dominated deputy group). This situation did not happen in the M5S, the M5S deputies kept it relatively in balance. Second, we can see the age of the M5S deputies in 2013 shows an extreme young tendency, over half of deputies (56.6%) were under 35 and others were under 45, while it changed in 2018 and distributed to every age group with a majority with 35-44. On the contrary, the LN deputies distributed in every age group, demonstrating a middle-aged trend. Third, the education level has no obvious difference between the two parties. Both of them have the trend that deputies have a higher education level compared to this category in 2018 with it in 2013. Interestingly, the M5S has more well-educated deputies than the LN as a populist party. As for the deputies' profession, the differences are shrinking. For example, white collar, lawyers and entrepreneurs are the top three professions the deputies devoted in 2018 in both parties. The M5S has 13.2% deputies who were students, much higher than the LN, but the gap decreased in 2018. Even so, we can still observe that the LN has a higher percentage of deputies working as party official/local administrator and entrepreneur/executive, while in the M5S case, deputies who are white collar and teachers/professors (maybe including the unemployed as well). Finally,

according to the previous parliamentary experience, the LN has a higher percentage (84%) of deputies who became a deputy at the first time in 2018, which increased radically compared to the data in 2013 (55%). The new leadership of Salvini and the general transformation of the LN may account for this change. Apparently, the M5S entered in the Chamber the first time in 2013 and all deputies were the newcomers. 26% of them keep being a representative of the party in the next term. As a newborn political party without so long history, it does not have deputies who have over two terms of parliamentary experience.

Profile of the members of the Chamber of Deputies from the M5S and LN(%)

	2013			2018	
	M5S	LN		M5S	LN
Gender					
Female	34.0	0.0		44.0	30.0
Male	66.0	100.0		56.0	70.0
Age					
25-34	56.6	15.0		31.0	11.0
35-44	43.4	35.0		48.0	39.0
45-54	0.0	30.0		13.0	31.0
55-64	0.0	10.0		7.0	16.0
65+	0.0	10.0		1.0	3.0
Education					
Lower	0.9	0.0		2.3	3.3
Intermediate	32.1	55.0		23.5	40.2
Higher	67.0	45.0		74.2	56.5
Profession					
Architect	0.9	0.0		0.5	2.4
Lawyer	2.8	5.0		13.4	12.1
Businiess consultant	0.0	15.0		2.8	5.6
Retailer	1.9	5.0		0.0	1.7
Public official	0.9	0.0		2.3	2.4
Party official/Local administrator	0.0	15.0		0.0	11.3
Journalist	0.9	0.0		1.8	3.2
White collar	37.7	10.0		24.9	20.1
Enterpreneur/Executive	3.8	25.0		10.0	15.3
Engineer	5.7	0.0		1.8	0.8
Teacher/Professor	7.6	5.0		10.1	2.4
Self-emlpoyed	9.4	15.0		2.3	5.6
Doctor	2.8	0.0		4.6	0.8
Sodier/Policeman	0.0	0.0		1.8	0.0
Worker/Craftsman/Farmer	4.7	5.0		0.5	4.0
Trade unionist	0.0	0.0		0.9	0.8
Student	13.2	0.0		1.8	0.8
Others*	6.6(unemployed)	0(unemployed)		20.5	10.7
Previous Parliamentary Experience					
Newcomer	100.0	55.0		74.0	84.0
Up to 2 legislatures	0.0	40.0		26.0	6.0
Up to 4 legislatures	0.0	10.0		0.0	9.0
More than 4 legislatures	0.0	5.0		0.0	1.0
(N)	106	20		217/220	124/128
Total	100	100		100	100

* "others" in 2018 includes unemployed and retired deputies and those whose career status is not mentioned

**the gap between the nominal total number of deputies and the real number caused by those deputies who stopped their work and quitted in the term.

***education level: lower – middle school; intermediate – high school; higher – university and above.

In short, combining the profile of members and deputies from these two parties, we can see that the gender situation is more balanced in the deputy group though male representatives still occupy the big portion in the LN. The middle-aged members are the main actors in both parties and the M5S shows a younger trend, especially in the Chamber. This is because the M5S has an age limitation of the representatives elected to the Chamber which must be under 45. As regards the education level, it is obvious that the education level of most ordinary members is lower/intermediate, while the higher education (university and above) deputies are the majority in the Chamber, illuminating a higher education tend to be a representative. Generally speaking, the members in the M5S are more enthusiastic to attend political activities, due to relatively easy access to join. In terms of Tronconi's survey, the M5S deputies are generally active in the local activities, "a significant proportion of elected M5S representatives in parliament and local assemblies originate from the social movement and the leading positions in local mobilizations."[79]

The collective nature and its rotation are two special features of the M5S parliamentary leadership. Following the principle of rotation, the collective leadership is held by one president and four deputy presidents (together with the treasurer and the secretary constitute the 'directive committee') both in the Chamber and in the Senate. The president who is the legal representative of the parliamentary group is elected every year, while the deputy presidents have a different rule. The first deputy president holds the formal political power, acting as the chairman, but his position would be taken place by the second deputy president in three months. The remaining two deputy presidents coordinate in the one year and could be reappointed.

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[78] 2013 data is cited from Filippo Tronconi (2015) *Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organization, Communication and Ideology*, England: Ashgate,p.107.
2018 data is collected and elaborated by the author
Source available at : www.camera.it; www.openparlamento.it. (accessed by 09/05/2019)
[79] Filippo Tronconi (2015) *Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organisation, Communication and Ideology*, England: Ashgate, p.171.

With these features about membership and organization, it is possible to place these two parties into the module Scarrow came up with[80]. The M5S is categorized into the *Political Process Pary*, which emphasized supporters' direct involvement in party decisions and in terms of membership, it belongs to the *Cyber-members* category since registered party supports are recruited through the party's web page or other online portals. In contrast, the membership of the LN mixes the features of the *traditional individual membership* (confers the most political rights within the party, and carries the heaviest obligations) and the *light membership* (a second class membership, designated "party friend/sympathizer" and ineligible to stand as candidates, namely supporters in the party). In the party classification, the LN is categorized into the *Cleavage Representation Party*, having strong party membership organization and acting as defenders of pre-existing interests. Since it reinforces the political implications of group identity, members could be viewed as Community Members.

In a word, considering the political experience the party entered in the central government, the LN is more well-fledged party than the M5S, in particular, it became more balanced in the structure of deputies after Slavini's leadership. Meanwhile, the M5S is none the less in the transformation which is not over now.

3.1.4 Electoral Base

Figure 14 shows the main four parties' performance in the 2013 and 2018 general elections. We can geographically analyze the electoral base of the M5S and the LN, contrasting with other two mainstream parties. To begin with, generally speaking, the LN gained its major support from the northern regions (especially in 2013) and the M5S is more balanced but with more votes from the southern area. Although both PD and FI lost a big proportion of votes on the national level, according to their average and respective data, PD influences more in the middle area and FI is more active in the south. Then, focusing on the M5S, if we consider the top three regions, the trend is from Liuria (north, 32.1%), Marche (middle, 32.1%), and Sicily (south, 33.6%) in 2013 to Campania (south, 49.3%), Sicily (south, 48.7%), and Molise (south, 44.8%) in 2018, which demonstrates a more south-leading pattern of voting results. The counterparts in the LN range from Lombardia (north, 12.4%), Veneto (north, 10.4%), and Friuli (north, 6.7%) in 2013 to Veneto (north, 32.2%),

[80] Scarrow, Susan E (2015) Motives and Modes of Party Membership. In Beyond Party Members: Changing Approaches to Partisan Mobilization, by Scarrow, Susan.. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Oxford Scholarship Online, DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199661862.003.0002.
Available at: https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199661862.001.0001/acprof-9780199661862-chapter-2 (accessed by 08/05/2019)

Lombardia (north, 29.5%), and Friuli (north, 25.9%), keeping the same top three regions and all in the northern part. It should be noted that this analysis could illuminate the M5S and the LN have different electoral region bases (respectively, south and north) rather than they are completely regionalist parties. What is more, although the M5S and the LN achieved obvious progress in the final result, it should be not neglected that over half of the northern regions showed a slight decrease trend for the M5S. Considering the stronger performance of the LN in the north and the voting proportions of other regions for the M5S, these two parties show a higher competitive level in the north. Last but not least, we can make a comparison in terms of the increasing extent. In the northern part, the LN possesses an absolute advantage while the M5S keeps its performance in general. Both parties show an increasing trend in the middle regions, but the growth rate of the LN is much higher. The exception for the M5S in the middle emerges in Abruzzo (10% increase), but still much less than its increase in the south, which is almost over 20%. Therefore, in the south, the opposite situation actually is more severe compared to it in the north. The voters to the M5S in the south rocket with an original advantage base, demonstrating the party's invincible dominance in this part. Meanwhile, although the LN gains more support in the south than before, it cannot be comparable with the M5S. On the contrary, PD and FI lose support from all regions.

Geographical election results (2013 and 2018)								
	M5S		LN		PD		PLI (FI)	
	2013	2018	2013	2018	2013	2018	2013	2018
Average	25.6	32.7	4.1	17.4	25.4	18.8	21.6	14.0
Piemonte	27.5	26.4	4.9	22.8	25.0	20.4	19.9	13.5
Lombardia	20.6	20.6	12.4	29.5	26.1	20.7	21.0	13.6
Trentino	14.6	19.5	4.2	19.2	16.7	14.7	10.9	7.0
Veneto	26.5	24.5	10.4	32.2	21.6	16.9	18.5	10.5
Friuli	27.2	24.6	6.7	25.9	24.7	18.8	18.6	10.7
Liguria	32.1	30.1	2.3	19.9	27.7	19.7	18.7	12.7
Emilia Romania	24.7	27.5	2.6	19.2	37.1	26.4	16.3	9.9
Toscana	24.0	24.7	0.7	17.4	37.5	29.6	17.5	9.9
Umbria	27.2	27.5	0.6	20.2	32.1	24.8	19.5	11.2
Marche	32.1	35.6	0.7	17.3	27.7	21.3	17.5	9.9
Lazio	27.7	33.5	0.2	14.0	24.5	17.9	24.7	13.9
Abruzzo	29.9	39.9	0.2	13.9	22.6	14.3	23.9	14.5
Molise	27.7	44.8	0.2	8.7	22.6	15.2	21.1	16.1
Campania	22.1	49.3	0.3	4.3	21.9	13.2	29.8	18.2
Puglia	25.5	44.9	0.1	6.2	18.5	13.7	28.2	18.7
Basilicata	24.3	44.4	0.1	6.3	25.7	16.2	19.1	12.4
Calabria	24.9	43.4	0.3	5.6	22.4	14.3	23.8	20.1
Sicily	33.6	48.7	0.2	5.1	18.6	11.5	26.5	20.7
Sardinia	29.7	42.5	0.1	10.8	25.2	14.8	20.4	14.8

Figure 14 Geographical general election results in the Chamber (2013 and 2018)[81]

（unit:%）

* the regions with color are divided on the basis of three geographical divisions: north, middle, and south area respectively

** the results do not include Valle D'Aosta and the overseas electorate

Abandoning emphasizing the party's characteristics, the astonishing electoral success could be explained from the voters' motivation, namely *protest voting* in which "unsatisfied voters may abandon their most-preferred candidate even though he or she has a good chance of winning, in the hope that this signal of disaffection will

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lead to downstream improvements in that candidate's performance."[82] This motivation expresses a protest attitude by voting. In fact, Tronconi narrows down the field of interest to a vote, with the features of "against the establishment" and "not driven by policy preference"[83]. The behavior of those electorates who cast protest voting expresses their criticism and dissatisfaction of the established system or the professional elite. Identifying the supporters of the M5S with 'protest voting' feature is plausible since the M5S voters are protesting more active and politically engaged. Focusing on this, the M5S attracted them because of a closer relationship, expressive voting against the establishment and a pattern with no intermediate body.

In sum, compared election results in 2013 and 2018, the M5S gained a striking surge in the south in 2018, a slight increase in the middle and little progress in the north, while the north is the major supporting actor for the LN, and the party also performed well in other regions compared to the previous one, showing a voting increase in all regions.

3.1.5 Policies

Although the LN is classified to the populist party, its claims still differ from the M5S, especially before Salvini's leadership. In the beginning, the original political discourse of the LN was regionalism, focusing on defending the economy and culture interests of northern Italy. The central government was seen as an obstacle of Padania independence. Brunazzo and Gilbert[84] argue there were three key pillars to the LN's ideology at that time. The first pillar was the Padania that shared fundamental common cultural features distinct from the remaining parts of Italy. Second, the economic contribution of the north was considered unfairly high and it did not profit from it at all. Most of the resources were used to finance the south which also fueled the discontent emotion. The last one was perceiving the unitary government was incapable to govern Italy effectively due to its highly diverse territorial reality and corruption. The central government was lack of competence and neglected the rights of northern citizens. To conclude the policy variation of the LN, it always links with the separation from Rome. Starting with its federalism and "ethno-regionalist" features, *leghisti*,

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[82] Daniel Kselman and Emerson Niou (2011) 'Protest Voting in Plurality Elections: A Theory of Voter Signaling', *Public Choice*, 148(3–4), p. 395. DOI: https://link.springer.com/journal/volumesAndIssues/11127.
[83] Filippo Tronconi (2015) *Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organization, Communication and Ideology*, England: Ashgate, p.181.

[84] Marco Brunazzo & Mark Gilbert (2017) Insurgents against Brussels: Euroscepticism and the right-wing populist turn of the Lega Nord since 2013, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 22:5, p.627, DOI: 10.1080/1354571X.2017.138952

which was discarded its first entry in the government in 1994. Then *Panania*, the defense of a new territory entity claimed until the party re-joined the center-right coalition at the beginning of this century. After being a member of the government led by Berlusconi in 2001-2006, the party took a less divisive proposal, namely *devolution*. After that, the party generally began to move its position from a moderate position towards a more rightist one，considering its claims of some topics such as immigration, the EU, religion, civil rights and so on. From "Prima il Nord" (northern first) to"Prima L'italia" (Italy first)，the change of slogan and the disappearance of the word 'nord' in the party logo demonstrate Salvini's nationalism, which varied conspicuously from the original images. Therefore, the policy tendency of the LN always changed with the strategic needs, influenced by entering the office, coalition or the transformation requirement. On the other hand, the LN is a party that its goal is to go into the government while it keeps antagonistic rhetoric to the system at the same time. For this reason, "the Lega has been identified as the only Italian party successfully able to walk the fine line between playing the role of the 'opposition in government' and showing that it can be trusted with power, and be a political force capable of governing alongside other mainstream political actors."[85]

In regard to the policy of the M5S, it closely links with the social conflicts, as Tronconi argues, the M5S "has captured activists, grievances, claims and action form from social movements of the past decade."[86] Its proximity to social movements made its opposition containing various content, ranging from protecting the environment to condemning of acts of violence by the police, from opposing large-scale infrastructures to protecting consumers. All the activities carried out are based on the will of the members to change the country better. Neither a "campaigning party" or a "party of government", the M5S is more like a "party of movement" in its initial phase. After its entry in the government, its proposals mainly focus on the promises it made in the election competitions, such as the environmental issues, the health system as well as the pledge for a universal basic income.

3.1.6 Positions in the Political Spectrum

[85] Albertazzi, D., D. McDonnell, and J. Newell. 2011. "Di lotta e di governo: The Lega Nord and Rifondazione Comunista in Office." *Party Politics*, 17 (4): pp.471–487. In Marco Brunazzo & Mark Gilbert (2017) Insurgents against Brussels: Euroscepticism and the right-wing populist turn of the Lega Nord since 2013, Journal of Modern Italian Studies, 22:5, p.629, DOI: 10.1080/1354571X.2017.1389524
[86] Filippo Tronconi (2015) *Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organisation, Communication and Ideology*, England: Ashgate, p.171

Considering the "ideology" feature, populism could be divided into three types: right-wing populism, left-wing libertarian and anti-establishment parties. The last one has no specific position in the political spectrum but could combine with both right-wing and left-wing claims. Normally, the right-wing populism focuses on the safety issues, paying attention to possible "threats" outside, such as the opposition against immigration and Islamic activities, as well as disadvantages of the euro. On the other hand, leftist populism stresses the deliberative and participatory democracy, setting the goal to guarantee the people's direct participation who have been excluded out of the decisional arena.

To place the political position of the M5S, we ought to understand its core claims. "Five Star" in the Five Star Movement means five topics: public water, transportation, development, internet connection and availability, and the environment. Due to the emphasis of environmental themes and refusal of organizing the party with a traditional hierarchical structure, the M5S shared similar traits with the green-wave and achieved support from it. On the other hand, the anti-establishment stance (which refers to a rhetorical appeal based on opposition to those who wield power within the state[87]) brings some features of neo-populist parties to the M5S, such as the criticism of the 'old politics' and grassroots participatory practices.

Personally, Beppe Grillo himself regularly attended in the "festa dell'Unità" (an annual social-democratic celebration in Italy, left-wing) before 2008. Besides, he was influenced by consumerism, ecology and a certain stance of anti-capitalist stance. At that time, he was considered by the left as a traveling companion, whose position was close to the leftist parties. According to many observers, the voters were attracted to the M5S with a big portion of the left-libertarian parties before, in particular, in the very early phase. However, Grillo harshly criticized the center-left government and launched V-Day, which marked "a definitive split and, therefore, the conquest of an autonomous political position, separate from the traditional parties."[88]

On the website of the M5S, it defines itself as "a free association of citizens" which is so utopian since it is not a political party nor to be such one in the future. It describes clearly that it has no ideology of left or right and put itself beyond the political spectrum. The party keeps emphasizing the anti-establishment stance, blurring its position on the left-right dimension of competition, which could attract more potential electorates.

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[87] Robert R. Barr (2009). Populists, Outsiders and Anti-Establishment Politics. *Party Politics*, 15(1), p.44. DOI: 10.1177/1354068808097890

[88] Filippo Tronconi (2015) *Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organisation, Communication and Ideology*, England: Ashgate, p.21.

It sets the goal that realizing a 'true' democracy without any mediation representative bodies, forming an efficient and effective 'new' political system in terms of the general will of the people. Indeed, this strategy received electoral victory in 2013 and 2018 elections. Except blurring its position, the M5S rejected to build a coalition with the existing traditional parties to keep its potential constituencies as wide as possible. However, it may be effective in specific scenario when there is a space of political vacuum the traditional parties cannot satisfy the voters so that blurring its position can appeal to leftist voters with the emphasis on the environmental issues or the pledge for a universal basic income as well as possible rightist voters who are small entrepreneurs and self-employed workers or those who hold a critical perspective of the EU. When the party needs to take more institutional responsibilities, the governing capability would be a considerable factor for the voters. But before that, blurring political position is a great electoral strategy.

Compared with the M5S, the LN "self-located at the middle of the political spectrum, consistent with the LN's view of itself as being a 'super parties' party with regard to the 'old' parties, with 'neither a left nor right' position typical of many populist parties."[89] However, the party generally moved its "moderate" position toward a more rightist position, emphasizing the dangers from the immigrants and a multicultural society. Holding a strong Eurosceptic stance to the euro and the European elites demonstrates its radical feature as well. Andrej Zaslove[90] describes the LN as a radical right populist party. Mény and Surel conclude the people are characterized in three main interconnected ways, all of which relate with safety and threat: the people as a class (small northern enterprises under the threat from big business and globalization), the people as a nation (identity and culture at stake), and the people as sovereign (betrayed by the corrupt Rome and Brussel).[91]

3.2 Similarities

3.2.1 Leadership

When it comes to populism, the leader plays an important role in it. Normally, a charismatic and centralized leadership shows a trait that the leaders are seen as the 'unifying symbol' of the party. For instance, La Padania,

[89] Gianluca Passarelli, (2015) Populism and the Lega Nord, The Oxford Handbook of Italian Politics
Available at: https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199669745.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199669745-e-18 (accessed by 20/05/2019)
[90] Andrej Zaslove (2011): *The Re-invention of the Eurioea Radical Right: Populism, Regionalism, and the Italian Lega Nord*, Mcgill-Queen's University Press, London
[91] Mény, Y. and Y. Surel (2004), Populismo e Democrazia, Bologna: Il Mulino. Original edn: Y. Mény and Y. Surel (2000), Par le Peuple, Pour le Peuple, Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard. In McDonnell, D. (2006) A Weekend in Padania: Regionalist Populism and the Lega Nord, *Politics*, 26(2), p. 128, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9256.2006.00259.x.

the internal publication of the LN, used the following descriptions to elevating the leader's position: "let us not forget that Bossi is the true interpreter of the mood of the Lega Nord". The secretary of the LN in Veneto talks of the "far-sightedness of Umberto Bossi, who has always had the ability to see things long before everyone else".[92]

Two types of leadership in democracy

	ORDINARY *(Legal-rational)*	*EXTRAORDINARY* *(Charismatic)*
Rulership	Impersonal	Personal
Rule aims	Moderation	Radicalism

Figure 15 two types of leadership in democracy[93]

Max Weber outlined three types of legitimation: traditional, legal-rational and charismatic (traditional authority is validated by custom; legal-rational authority by impersonal rules; charismatic authority by the extraordinary qualities of the leader)[94]. Normally, the head of populists is a charismatic leader but not vice versa. Pappas concludes Figure 15[95] to show the corresponding relations between the personal character of rule and its radical nature. According to this, Pappas defines political charisma "as a distinct type of legitimate leadership that is personal and aims at the radical transformation of an established institutional order."

Michelangelo Veercesi describes the LN as an "owner party"[96] in which the leader behaves like an owner without significant counterweights and he or she benefits from almost entirely undisputed support from followers. He argues, broadly speaking, "an owner party has a personalist leadership and a formal organization that is ineffective on its own, that is, an organization whose very functioning crucially depends on the leader."[97]

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[92] La Padania, 19 June 2005, p. 6 and 18 June 2005, p. 7. Both in McDonnell, D. (2006) A Weekend in Padania: Regionalist Populism and the Lega Nord, *Politics*, 26(2), p. 130. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9256.2006.00259.x.
[93] Takis S. Pappas (2011) "Political Charisma Revisited, and Reclaimed for Political Science." EUI Working Papers RSCAS 2011/60, p.3.
[94] Max Weber (1978), Economy and Society. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
[95] Takis S. Pappas, 2011. "Political Charisma Revisited, and Reclaimed for Political Science." EUI Working Papers RSCAS 2011/60, p.3.

[96] Michelangelo Vercesi (2015) Owner parties and party institutionalization in Italy: is the Northern League exceptional?, *Modern Italy*, 20:4, p.399, DOI: 10.1080/13532944.2015.1094733
[97] Michelangelo Vercesi (2015) Owner parties and party institutionalization in Italy: is the Northern League exceptional?, *Modern Italy*, 20:4, p.399, DOI: 10.1080/13532944.2015.1094733

When there are disputes or radical criticism within the party, the leader would take measures to expel the opponents, remaining the leadership strong and the dependent relationship of the organization. If the succession of the leadership occurred, the party would not be an "owner party" again. In order to be more 'rational-legal', it is more likely to establish more institutionalized power.

Similarly, the M5S shows the charismatic characteristic as well. As Rinaldo Vignati mentioned in his article, "66 percent of Italians (including M5S voters) believe that 'without Beppe Grillo, the M5S would be severely weakened and would break up' and 55 percent agree with the statement that 'there is little democracy within the M5S because all decisions are taken by Grillo and Casaleggio.'"[98] He argues, although the M5S displays some ambivalent features, its 'leaderist' character still prevails over the 'leaderless' rhetoric.[99] He mentions several evidences to prove the party's leaderism, the first is Beppe Grillo owns the absolute ownership of the party brand, which was ratified by its statute. Second, the fact that Grillo expelled 19 out of the 163 MPs in 2013, which ensured his power in the party without limitation. Besides, the political agenda of the party is actually decided by the leader, Beppe Grillo, who gives priority to the topics through making a proposal or publishing it on his blog, with no actual debate. Last but not least, the unexpected victory in 2013 general election did not last to the subsequent local elections where Grillo did not play an important role, indicating that "the electoral consensus of the M5S depends to a great extent on the words and deeds of its leader rather than on its territorial roots."[100]

Furthermore, the leaders of the M5S and LN always played a role of victim, "strengthening the party's cohesion and stressing the fight between 'friends and enemies' through visualizing the intolerance of the old parties against the general will of the people. On the other hand, the highly centralized power has deliberately shown under the name of defending the people, in order to "normalize dissent and to strengthen the adversarial model of politics".

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[98] Rinnaldo Vignati, Beppe Grillo and the Movimento 5 Stelle (2015): A Brief History of a 'Leaderist' Movement with a Leaderless Ideology, in Filippo Tronconi Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organization, Communication and Ideology, chapter 1, England: Ashgate, p.9.
[99] Rinnaldo Vignati, Beppe Grillo and the Movimento 5 Stelle (2015): A Brief History of a 'Leaderist' Movement with a Leaderless Ideology, in Filippo Tronconi Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organization, Communication and Ideology, chapter 1, England: Ashgate, p.11.
[100] Rinnaldo Vignati, Beppe Grillo and the Movimento 5 Stelle(2015): A Brief History of a 'Leaderist' Movement with a Leaderless Ideology, in Filippo Tronconi Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organization, Communication and Ideology, chapter 1, England: Ashgate, p.11.

3.2.2 Utility of Mass Media

Nowadays, almost every political party uses the Internet as a tool of propaganda. Like we mentioned before, we live in a mass media era when the media is used as a major way of mobilization, especially for the young. We can see the conspicuous change that the dramatic increase of people under 30 getting news from media in Figure 16. Compared to the traditional media like TV, radio and newspaper, websites and social media generally become the major approaches to perceive the world for the young generation.
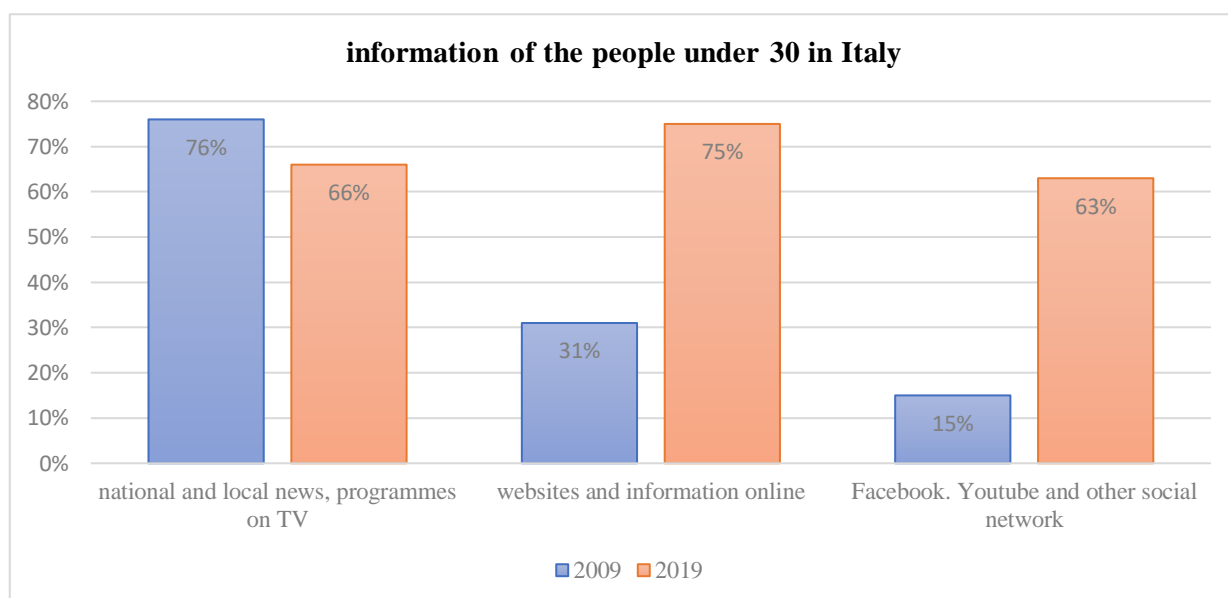
Figure 16 information of the people under 30 in Italy[101]

If we compare the numbers of the followers of the party leaders and their party account, we will find that the leaders are more attractive for the public rather than the party per se. According to Figure 17 , Salvini has most fans and he is regarded as the most active Italian political leader on social media, especially on Facebook. Likewise, as the political leader of the populist party, Di Maio has fewer fans than Salvini. Besides, according to the data, leaders have more followers than their parties and the gap is so striking between Salvini and the Northern League.

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[101] Data from *Demopolis*, available at https://www.demopolis.it/?p=5771 (accessed by 05/05/2019)

Leader/Party	Followers （until 13/05/2019）
Matteo Salvini	3,735,048
LN	500,802
Luigi Di Maio	2,374,687
M5S	1,452,236

Figure 17 Followers of the LN and M5S and their leaders on Facebook[102]

Giuliano Bobba found that most Salvini's Facebook posts contain the populist messages, and the most prevailing elements are anti-elitist populism, excluding populism and contentious populism.[103] Followers are active to give a like and remarks below the posts, which is beneficial for strengthening the bond between the populist leaders and the people. With the traits of disintermediation, immediacy and interactivity in the social media, the leaders built up their images based on the personal appeal and spread messages with an incredible speed. The utilization of social media contributes to shaping a charismatic leader and at the same time, the leader is promoting it to be a more mainstream method to participate in political life.

3.2.3 Euroscepticism

Literally, as Taggart argues, Euroscepticism in its widest sense "expresses the idea of a contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration"[104]. He supposes Euroscepticism incorporates three different positions towards the EU[105] – the anti-integration position, not in principle opposing to European integration but skeptical because it is too inclusive/diverse, and the last one has similar premise with the second but skeptical due to its geographical or social exclusion. Furthermore, he broke down Euroscepticism into 'hard' and 'soft' varieties. 'Hard'

Euroscepticism "implies outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration, and opposition to one's country joining or remaining a member of the EU."[106], by contrast, 'soft' Euroscepticism "involves contingent or qualified opposition to European integration."[107], taking the form of 'policy' Euroscepticism or 'national-interest' Euroscepticism. As for the sources of Euroscepticism, cultural threat and economic loss can directly motivate the Eurosceptic feelings as well as the institutional distrust. On the other hand, Hooghe and Marks[108] mention another significant factor is how Europe is constructed in political debate since Euroscepticism results from efforts by political actors to relate European integration to latent public feelings of cultural threat and economic loss.

The first use of the term 'Euro-sceptic' can be dated from 1986 in the UK to describe British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In the beginning, the meaning of it was simple, namely the skeptical attitude or opposition to the powers of the EU, and this trend was considered to be margins. As the EU was continuously increasing its competence, taking enlargement and pushing the single currency—euro, "with the advent of the Eurozone crisis, Euroscepticism has become increasingly 'embedded' within European nation states."[109] The economic recession made Euroscepticism more salient and legitimate, which could be seen on various levels: the public opinion of the EU, Eurosceptic civil society groups, Eurosceptic rhetoric occurring in the traditional pro-EU mainstream parties, more transnational cooperation within the EU institutions(i.e. the European Parliament), and for sure, most European populist parties which are hostile to the European elites. The prevailing discontent emotion and hostility caused by a series of crises brought Euroscepticism from the margin to the mainstream. Lauren McLaren[110] found two main sources of Euroscepticism, a general hostility toward other cultures and the utilitarian concerns (influence of self-interest).

Nowadays, both the M5S and the LN hold the attitude of Euroscepticism to the European integration and put the hostility as one of the heart rhetoric. Rome is no longer the enemy but Brussels threats the national sovereignty. To some extent, Euroscepticism shares a similar developing path with populism. André Krouwel and Koen Abtsb describe this relationship as follows: "Populists not merely tap into existing dissatisfaction,

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[106] Paul Taggart and Alerks Szczerbiak (2004) Contemporary Euroscepticism in the party systems of the European Union candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe, *European Journal of Political Research*, 43:1, p.3, DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-6765.2004.00143.x

[107] Paul Taggart and Alerks Szczerbiak (2004) Contemporary Euroscepticism in the party systems of the European Union candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe, *European Journal of Political Research*, 43:1, p.4, DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-6765.2004.00143.x

[108] Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks (2007) Sources of Euroscepticism, *Acta Politica*, 2007, 42, p.124, DOI:10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500192

[109] Brack, N. and Startin, N. (2015) 'Introduction: Euroscepticism, from the margins to the mainstream', *International Political Science Review*, 36(3), p. 239. DOI: 10.1177/0192512115577231.

[110] McLaren, L. (2002). Public Support for the European Union: Cost/Benefit Analysis or Perceived Cultural Threat? *The Journal of Politics*, 64(2), pp.551-566. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2691861

but that they increase the level and scope of discontent by transforming the level of reflexivity and by transferring negative evaluations of singular actors or institutions to the entire national and supra-national political system."[111]
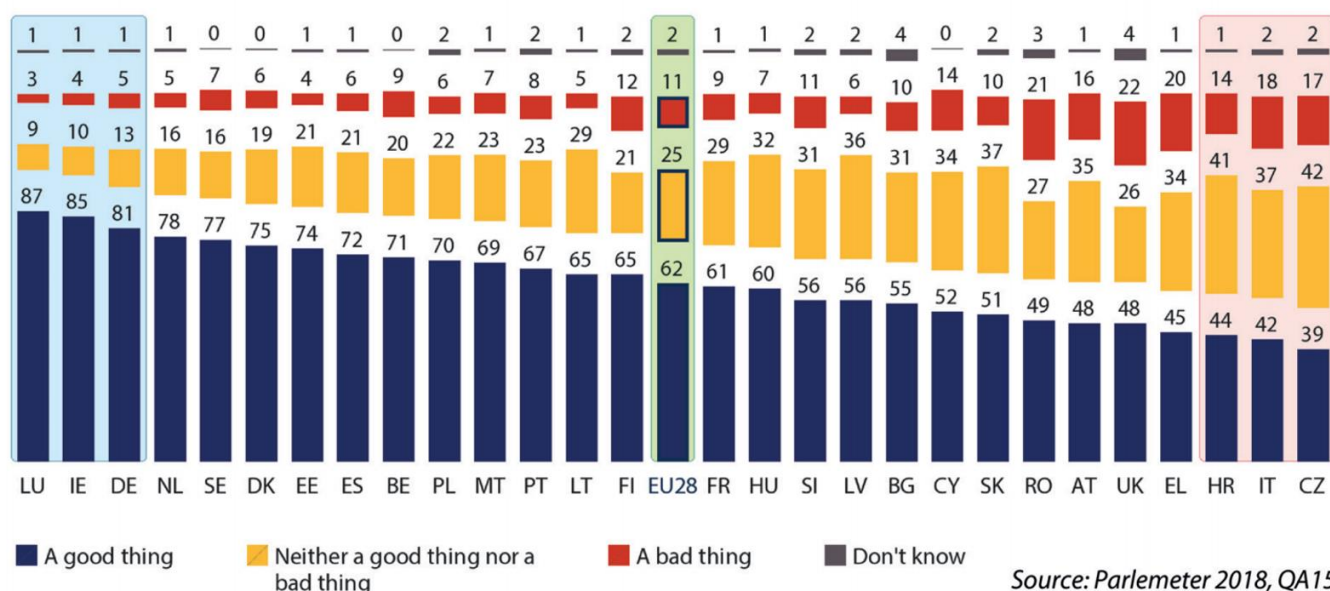

Figure 18 Eurobarometer Survey 1[112]

As for the concrete data to the Eurosceptic emotion, according to the Eurobarometer Survey, we can see the figure that Italians who hold a positive perspective of the EU is only 42%, ranking second last in all 28 EU countries. Those do not have a clear tendency of the EU occupy 37% and the figure in the people who hold negative feelings is 18%. Linking Figure 18 and Figure 19 together, to some extent it shows why over half of them have a Eurosceptic stance. 45% of Italians in the sample do not think the country benefited from being a member of the EU, which is the highest in all 28 countries. The distrust and unsatisfactory emotion probably contribute to the growth of populism, on the other hand, the populist rhetoric places the EU (at least the euro) as a propaganda focus, which fuels the negative feelings of the people.

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[111] André Krouwel and Koen Abtsb (2007) Varieties of Euroscepticism and Populist Mobilization: Transforming Attitudes from Mild Euroscepticism to Harsh Eurocynicism, *Acta Politica*, 42:2-3, pp. 252-270. DOI: 10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500187

[112] Parlemeter 2018 Taking Up the Challenge, Eurobarometer Survey 90.1 of the European Parliament, a public opinion monitoring study, p.18. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2018/parlemeter-2018/report/en-parlemeter-2018.pdf (accessed by 20/05/2019)

Q Taking everything into account, would you say that (OUR COUNTRY) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the EU? (%)
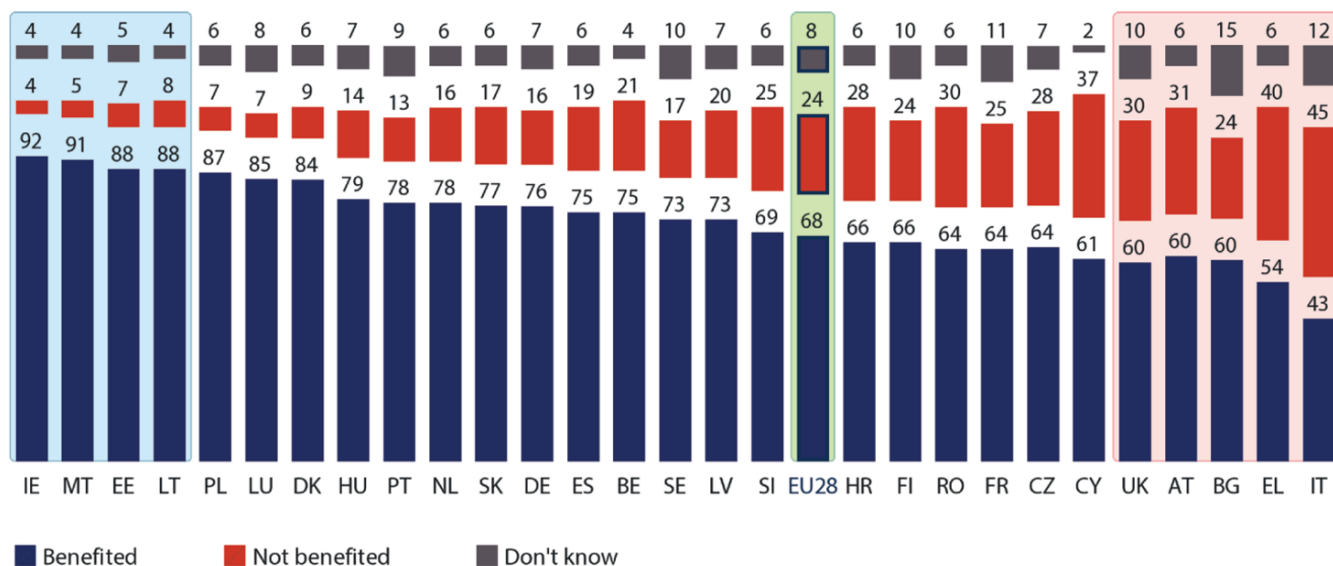
Figure 19 Eurobarometer Survey 2[113]

The Northern League is not naturally against the EU. Brunazzo and Gilbert[114] divided its attitude into three different phases. The first period started from its emergence until the end of the last century, prior to Italy's entry into the common currency. At that time, the LN was in favor of European integration and institutions since the EU was regarded to create the condition for a stronger Padania in a weaker Italian state. The EU meant modernity, and for the LN, Padania fully reached the European standard, not only considering the economic gross but the entrepreneurial skills even the "protestant entrepreneurial spirit". When the EU refused to recognize Padania as an independent state and Italy entered the Economic and Monetary Union, the LN started to use a Eurosceptic tone and got into the second phase. Bossi argued the membership of the EU would damage Italy's flexibility and ability to remain competitive. Although the attitude towards the EU changed, it was not radical. And the LN voted in the Italian parliament to ratify both the Nice and Lisbon treaties, under pressure of its allies and the center-left opposition. The last period came out with the disappointing election result in 2013 (when LN only received 4.1% of the vote). From then on, Euroscepticism became one of the

main themes in the propaganda of the LN. On one hand, the party itself underwent a transformational phase and leadership change, losing plenty of credibility and support because of Bossi's appropriation scandal. On the other hand, the M5S performed unexpected well in its first general election and some claims of it overlapped with the LN. The internal new integration and the external competitor forced the LN to deliberate its future stance. One clear manifestation is the LN took a much more explicit and aggressive stance of Euroscepticism, which has never shown in the previous history. For instance, the LN launched a series of anti-EU campaigns, such as the 'No-Euro Day', publicly describing the EU as a 'dictatorship'. Salvini even called the single currency 'a crime against humanity'. On the party level, the LN closed its connection with the National Rally (National Front) and joined the European Alliance for Freedom in the European Parliament. Indeed, the choice of taking Euroscepticism stance has a realistic consideration that Italian electorates disillusioned with the economic austerity of EU due to the sluggish economy. The LN added new content to its goal under Salvini's leadership -- it calls for the independence from Brussel. The rhetoric of Salvini to denigrate the EU is matching his political strategy, "to launch a Trump-style outsiders' revolt against all Italy's established political force".[115]

Paul Taggart[116] classified four forms of political parties on the grounds that how they relate to the Euroscepticism. They are single issue Eurosceptical parties, protest based parties with Euroscepticism, established party with Eurosceptical position, and Eurosceptical factions. According to this classification, the M5S belongs to 'the protest based parties with Euroscepticism' which take an anti-Eu position as an adjunct to their general opposition to the functioning of the political system. In contrast, the LN is under the 'established party with Eurosceptical position' category, since it has been one of the parties in government and adopted the Eurosceptical position.

The latest collision between Italy and the EU was the budget dispute. The populist government submitted a proposed budget with a 2.4% of GDP deficit which is three times as large as the one offered by its predecessor. The European Commission rejected it with instructions to cut it lower, considering Italy's public debt was already 131% of its GDP. The anxiety is reasonable since this level is more than double the eurozone limit and the bank system is fragile in Italy. However, the argument of the populist government based on a universal

income plan, including an enormous unemployment program (known as the 'citizens' wage', the government needs to pay €780 a month to 1.7 million of Italy's poorest families, being forecast to cost €7.1bn). This project is on the promise of the M5S that would assist and support the south, increasing the welfare to the poor. Nevertheless, the leader of the LN, Salvini, opted a flat tax policy, a proposed cut of 15 percent for small businesses and individuals, which is pleasing the electoral northern base. This initial budget was considered as "the first real, and not just rhetorical, assault on the established order of the bloc."[117] Although Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has hailed the budget as "the first step of a broad and ambitious plan of reform"[118], EU and financial market het up with the budget since Italy combining high debt and low growth simultaneously may spill over into the rest of the eurozone.

Experience drastic negotiations, a compromise finally reached with the deficit target 2.04% in Italy's 2019 budget, achieving without changing the key budget proposals. Consequently, Italy successfully averted the sanctions from the EU and kept the main proposals. On the other hand, the EU gained a symbolic victory since the populist government compromised in the end and settled down the fear of the financial market temporarily. However, the battle between the EU and Italian populist government just started, as Salvini said that jobs and pensions matter more to him than the views of 'EU bureaucrats'.

3.2.4 Others

In fact, the LN and M5S both somewhat born with the downfall of the traditional political system in Italy. As two typical models of Italian populist parties, they show some similar elements with populist features, including the political distrust, the provocative propaganda, anti-system attitude, closeness to the people and a clear separation between "us" and "them" (normally, elites). Albertazzi and McDonnell[119] offer a more precise definition of the populism which fits the Northern League: "An ideology which pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous 'others' who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice." Obviously,

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[117] Stimulus Plan or Populist Giveaway? Italy's Budget Sets Up Clash With E.U., *the New York Times*, available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/12/world/europe/italy-budget-european-union.html?module=inline (accessed by 15/05/2019)
[118] Italy budget: Parliament passes budget after EU standoff, *BBC*, available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46710472 (accessed by 15/05/2019)
[119] Albertazzi, D., and D. McDonnell. (2008) *Twenty-First Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

the elites and dangerous "others" the LN defines and opposes are (at least partly) from the EU.

The former captured the transformation period between the First Republic and the Second Republic as a developing opportunity and benefited a lot from the systemic collapse in its initial stage. The prevailing disappointed emotion and the perceiving of the ineffectiveness of the political and financial leadership offered more space to the growth of populism. The leghisti appealed to the northern people against the corruption of "them", including a corrupt Rome government (condemnation of Roma ladrona, namely thieving Rome) and a lazy south. Recently, the LN stressed its radical stance to anti-immigrant, showing a more skeptical stance to EU issues especially about the euro.

In summary, there are many differences between the M5S and the LN. The Internet is a core of the M5S, being an organizational and communication tool, while for the LN, it is mainly as a mobilization tool. Then, the ideological coherence and tight organization of the LN enabled it to survive from the turbulent period, evolving to a more institutional party. Compared to the LN, the M5S has a more simple structure and still in its institutionalization process. As for the membership and deputies, since the LN has a more tight organization, the membership management is strict and shows a clear hierarchy feature. Supporters, members, militants are divided according to their seniorities with different duties and rights. However, the situation in the M5S is different. There is no cleavage within its membership. The majority of the members are the young generation, and they are more enthusiastic to attend online political activities. The deputies in the M5S also represent a younger trend than the LN. As for the electoral base, the LN is more predominant in the north while the M5S is influential in the south, which is reasonable due to its historical roots and proclaimed policies. Finally, the M5S self-defines itself as a movement without ideology, so it cannot be placed in the political spectrum. However, the LN self-located itself at the middle of the political spectrum, it already moved to a radical right position with its extreme Euroscepticism and strict immigration policy.

On the other hand, the M5S and the LN share some populist similarities. For example, their leadership is charismatic, having a personal attraction to their supports. And the leaders are good at using mass media especially social media to mobilize and widen their influence. Besides, both parties are holding a Eurosceptic stance. They take the EU as the enemy, placing it to the other side of the people. For the LN, nowadays, the party has already changed its "enemy" from Rome to Brussel, with a radical Euroscepticism attitude, and at the same time, focusing on immigrates instead of the south, which could also explain its stance from

regionalism to nationalism. For the M5S, it also shows a Eurosceptic tendency but their proposals are mainly focusing on domestic issues, such as a universal minimum income and environment issues.

Chapter 4. Conclusion

In short, although populism is considered as "mass rebellion", it is not a new phenomenon, it can be dated back to the 19th century, generally developing and showing a chameleonic feature. It has a different meaning in the reference of scholars' definitions and approaches, but there are some consensus of its characteristics. For example, populism always sets a wall between a united "us" and a different "them", focusing on these "threats" with an antagonistic attitude in order to attract support. Besides, populism emphasizes the concept of "the people" to justify their claims and set the goal to express the realize the "general will". As for the relationship between populism and democracy, there are two quite different opinions. On one hand, populism became a "pathological normalcy" since it came out even where democracy embraced deeply. Populism is considered as an authoritarian threat to democracy, manifesting delegitimizing their opponents and ignoring parts of the people who hold different voices. On the other hand, the virtues of populism are seen to shape reinforce a corrective democracy which overcomes the defects of liberal elitism. The redemptive and pragmatic traits made populism as a double-edged sword.

What is more, "populism draws upon the deeply-rooted original values of democracy, which citizens have internalized and perceived as being betrayed, and which are activated in particular societal conditions."[120] Both structural and social conditions could trigger the populist wave. For example, the bureaucratization of the traditional parties with the systematic malfeasance made the mass lose their trust and patience because of the corruption and collusion and the lack of governing capability. Besides, some social conditions such as the sluggish economy, high unemployment rate, the perceived immigration crisis fueled the threat feelings and appealed to a new change. On the other hand, preserving a radical stance towards democracy could mobilize the people more easily under the name of the general will. Charismatic leaders could make use of the prevailing disappointment at traditional politicians, shaping their images who are against the "outside threats" and "inside others" with the swift information spread.

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[120] Piergiorgio Corbetta, Pasquale Colloca, Nicoletta Cavazza & Michele Roccato (2018) Lega and Five-star Movement voters: exploring the role of cultural, economic and political bewilderment, *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 10:3, p.290, DOI: 10.1080/23248823.2018.1524678

As mentioned before, populism came out as a common phenomenon in Europe not only in Italy. However, the first populist government is the incumbent Italian government and populism developed with some unique features in Italy. Indeed, populism rooted in the history of Italy. Fascism made a profound influence and encouraged the people to claim their requirements. The Common Man's Front led by Guglielmo Giannini started to use humor to address the people's dissatisfaction with Italy's dramatic socioeconomic conditions in the 1940s. Then Marco Pannella founded the Radical Party in the 1970s, which was regarded as a "tendential and pioneering" populism. The full-fledged populist party, the Northern League, came out in the 1990s with the background of the corruption scandal and exposed to populist anti-establishment politics through its activities. The LN suffered the transition period between the First Republic and the Second Republic and became a long-lived party with full experience of government compared to other existing parties. After the LN, the Five Star Movement gained unexpected success in 2013, and constituted a coalition government with the LN in 2018 as the first populist government in Europe.

To compare and contrast the Five Star Movement and the Northern League, I will summarize several similarities and differences. To start with, although these two parties both use Internet especially social media as a propaganda tool, the difference is the M5S take the Internet not only a communication tool but also an organizational tool. It holds "a blind faith in the virtue of the Internet"[121], believing that the real democracy will realize through Rousseau, the direct way which represents the general will. Then, the LN demonstrates a more delicate and integrated organizational structure which has more divisions and most of them are convened and presided by the federal secretary or the leader of the department is appointed by the federal secretary. By contrast, the organizational structure of the M5S is much more simple since it is in the process towards institutionalization. The guarantor has more power than its counterpart – the president in the LN, but the daily management of the party is in the charge of the political head as well. As a catch-all party, the institutionalization level of the LN is higher than the M5S. As for the membership, the LN is a traditional top-down pattern, distinguishing members clearly with different duties and rights according to their seniorities and loyalty. However, the M5S adopted a bottom-up way to manage its membership since it is configured as a movement-based, non-hierarchical party. Its membership is open and accessible thanks to the Internet, which has little constraints and limit to the members to attend political activities. The lower participation cost and

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[121] Filippo Tronconi (2015) *Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement: Organisation, Communication and Ideology*, England: Ashgate, p.3
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the easier accessibility appeal to support from the mass and the supporters of the M5S are more enthusiastic to attend activities especially online ones. Besides, observing the profile of the members of the chamber of deputies from the M5S and the LN, the differences of a newborn party and a full-fledged party are clear. The M5S deputies show a more balanced gender and younger trend than the LN. Interestingly, more the M5S deputies have a higher education level though they may lack of governing experience while the LN is striving to overcome the defects of a traditional party, making the party more balanced representative not only in age but also in profession. What is more, the election results of these two parties show a striking geographical difference. The LN is predominant in the northern area while the M5S is appealing in the southern part. At last, the claiming policies vary from these two parties. The LN changed its priority according to its strategic needs ranging from federalism, regionalism to nationalism. The party leader Salvini now claims a strict limit of immigration and the tax policy with a fixed 15%, which helped him gain popular support. Compared to the LN, the M5S is struggling with its commitment in the election to fulfill a minimum income system and improve the employment situation.

The similarities focus on the leadership, the utility of the mass media, the stance of Euroscepticism and other populism similarities. As first, both these two parties demonstrate a high level of dependence of their leaders. The LN is described as an "owner party" and Grillo occupied the dominant role in the party's first decade. Meanwhile, populist leaders tended to play a role of victim, strengthening the party's cohesion and stressing the fight between 'friends and enemies' through visualizing the intolerance of the old parties against the general will of the people. The full utilization of the social media is the second similarity between the M5S and the LN. With the traits of disintermediation, immediacy and interactivity in the social media, the leaders built up their images based on the personal appeal and spread messages with an incredible speed. The utilization of social media contributes to shaping a charismatic leader and at the same time, the leader is promoting it to be a more mainstream method to participate in political life. Besides, both the M5S and the LN hold the attitude of Euroscepticism to the European integration and put the hostility as one of the heart rhetoric. Rome is no longer the enemy but Brussels threats the national sovereignty. The M5S and the LN also show some similar elements with populist features, including the political distrust, the provocative propaganda, anti-system attitude, closeness to the people and a clear separation between "us" and "them".

In the latest EU election, the LN gained most seats and became the biggest winner in the domestic stage. It surged nearly 30% votes and quintupled its seats compared to the last election. The result strengthens Salvini's

political position and shows the party's higher acceptance and the prevalence of Eurosceptic feelings. Although the populist government showed a clear Eurosceptic stance, they finally compromised with the EU about the financial budget. According to Figure 20 and Figure 21, we could observe the more fluctuating changes in the EU elections.
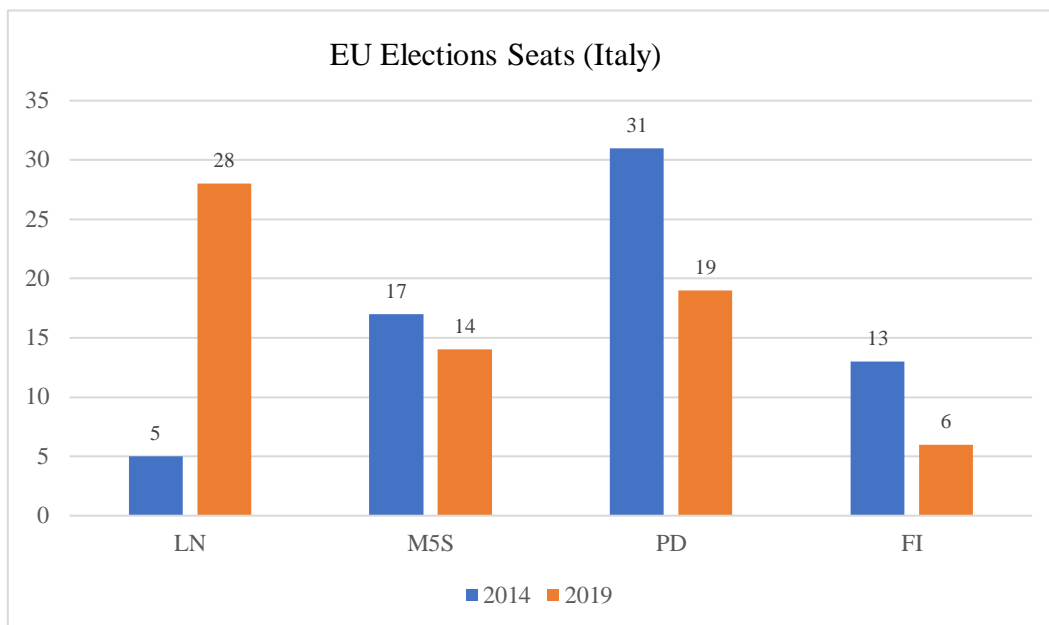

Figure 20 Italy EU elections seats result (main actors)[122]
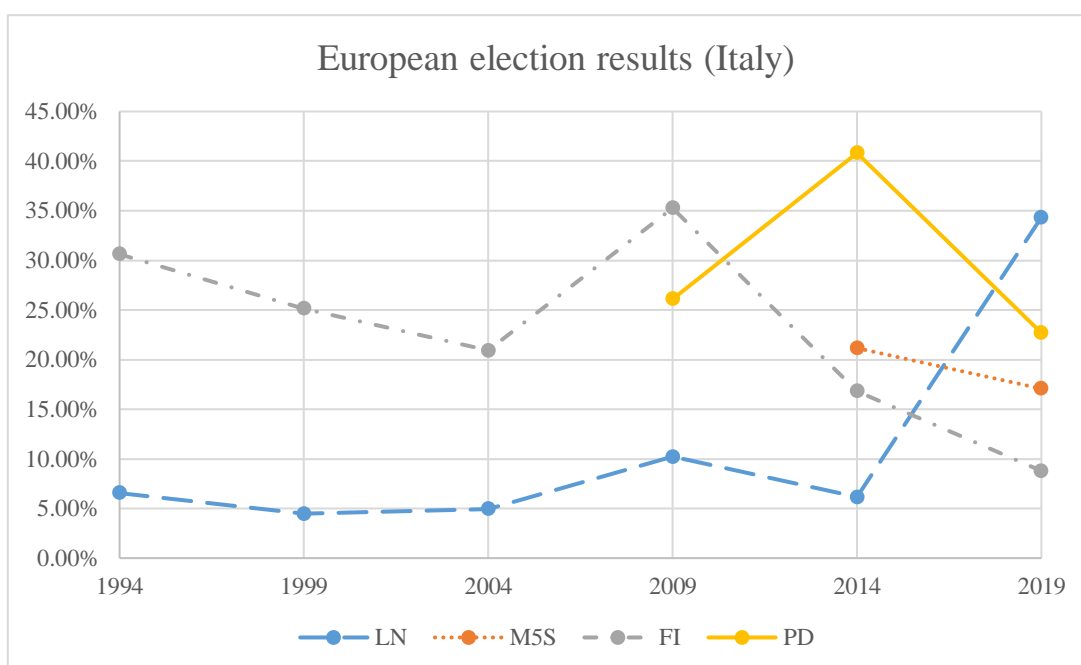
Figure 21 Italy EU election results (main actors)[123]

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122 Data from Politico, available at: https://www.politico.eu/2019-european-elections/italy/ (accessed by 01/06/2019)
123 Data from Politico, available at: https://www.politico.eu/2019-european-elections/italy/ (accessed by 01/06/2019)

After the non-ideal European election result at the end of May 2019 (around 17%, just half of the LN, even behind the PD), the M5S leader, Di Maio's leadership was challenged. However, the party held an online vote for the party members to take the confidence vote of the party leader and Di Maio was confirmed by a landslide with 44,849 votes in favor and 11,278 against[124]. It seems that the interior stability of the party is at a high level though its public support is decreasing all the time after the party entered into the central government. On the contrary, Salvini strengthens his power and public support of the LN is growing and overtaking the M5S. These two populist parties are not only public partners but also mutual competitors. They are trying to expand political influence and to realize the commitments as they claimed which would make the country get out of trouble. However, the domestic policies encountered some barriers in practice and the constant quarrel with the EU may exhaust the confidence of the people. Considering the M5S is still in the process of institutionalization and the LN generally changed its policy emphasis, their future performance is unpredictable.

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[124] Italy's Fading Five Star Movement Puts Its Leader on the Block, *the New York Times*, available at:
https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/30/world/europe/italy-five-star-di-maio-confidence-vote.html (accessed by 01/06/2019)

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Summary

When it comes to populism, it could be a flexible mode of persuasion, an ideology, a social movement, and even a zeitgeist. Populism is becoming one of the most popular political words in the 21st century. In the first chapter, I collect some typical definitions of populism to obtain a general idea of its concept and changes. It is hard to give a clear and exclusive definition to populism, not only because it occurred in various cases so scholars have different views of attributes about populism, but also it is 'an essentially contested concept' and scholars have different methods to conceptualize it. For example, Cas Mudde defines populism as a thin-centered ideology, while Weyland defines it as a political strategy. Canovan's article is concerned to the structural considerations of populism.

It is necessary to seize the core concepts of populism which mainly focus on "the people" versus "the elite" (or a united "us" versus a different "them"). "The people" is the defining signifier of populism and the most crucial part of populism, although scholars explain it with different approaches and descriptions.
Populist leaders draw their power from criticizing, especially from the conventional political parties. Populists frequently claim that the people can use their wisdom and rule themselves only if they mobilize, unify and participate in politics. Populists always use "the people" to justify their claims and at the same time, they believe that the will of people is singular, which can be fully represented directly by a populist party and imposed to the whole society even with the price of individual freedom. Under this circumstance, people are considered as a united group and democratic politics are only legitimate if they follow the people's will otherwise there should be another more direct way to represent people's real needs. On the other hand, there is the other perspective that no actual group can fully represent the whole people because it undermines minorities' or partial individuals' rights in practice. According to this view, "the people" is more likely to "an ideal reference to guild legislation", being used to win advantage in the competitive elections but cannot be a substantial entity in the real world. On this account, "the people" is constructed hypothetically by totally free and equal individuals who act rationally to establish a form of government that protects the rights of all. Similarly, Paul Taggart uses the description 'heartland' instead of 'the people' to present populists' idealized conception of the community they serve, "in which, in the populist imagination, a virtuous and unified population resides''.

Indeed, how people perceive populism is generally more comprehensive, but still emphasizing the interaction between populism and democracy. Meanwhile, it is worthy to note that populism is not a traditional ideology or natural consensus in citizens' minds, although it is widespread all over the world. In every case, it is in its own growing situation and caused by various elements which need people to refer to different cases. In the theory, normally, populism is considered in the context of liberal democracy, and the scholars' definitions and judgments of populism always depend on how they conceive the people and its role in a contemporary democratic order. How people think about the legitimacy and value of democratic politics shapes the image of populism. In recent cases, it shows a more paradoxical relationship between populism and liberal democracy, since populism could be a method to gain the people's direct democracy and could appeal to a recognized authority as well. Besides, according to Canovan's view, populism is recognized both a benefit and a threat. From a positive view, the virtues of populism can shape and reinforce a corrective democracy which overcomes the defects of liberal elitism. From a negative view, the authoritarian tendencies of populism make it considered as a threat to democracy, manifesting delegitimizing their opponents and ignoring parts of the people who hold different voices. In practice, one interesting feature is, populist party leader, or we can say, the person whom populists admit can represent "the people" is not necessary to be in line with the majority, and outsiders could use populism as a tool to attract a different type of voters. What is more, the other interesting misconception of populism is, the people want to rule themselves through real political participation. Cas Mudde argues that populists want to be heard in the case of fundamental decisions, but first and foremost they want leadership, which means that they desire politicians know their needs automatically rather than listen to, at best, coming up with the policies which are in line with their interests without any direct participation.

Populism rooted in the history of Italy, it can be dated back to 1940s. The fascist heritage and political indifference considerably influenced Italian politics, which contributed to the progressive development of populist tendencies. Before the Northern League and the Five Star Movement recently, the mass populist movement came out first with the Common Man's Front (Fronte dell'Uomo Qualunque, UQ) led and inspired by Guglielmo Giannini before the end of the World War II. After that, Marco Pannella founded the Radiacal Party (Partito Radicale, PR) in the 1970s. Although the party is not considered as a populist party, it was classified as a "tendential and pioneering" populism, showing many similarities with the M5S. Thanks to the power of mass media, Berlusconi effectively gave an impression with his paternalistic rhetoric, showing a new pattern of Italian populism and versatility itself. The full-fledged populist party came out with the birth of the

LN before the transformation period. The anti-corruption operation Mani Pulite (clean hands, sometimes also referred to Tangentopoli) and the strong political and economic crises happened in the late 1980s and early 1990s, caused an earthquake of unprecedented force and shook the foundations of Italy's political establishment mightily. It revealed the entire corruption running through not only the government parties but opposition sectors as well. The LN gave vent to feelings of opposition to the 'centralized' state in the name of the right of ordinary people to take back the government of the common weal, seeking to weld the mood of rebellion of the petit and middle-level northern bourgeoisie to the charismatic personality of its leader and aiming at the promotion of a unified model of the popular community, which is held together by local traditions and immunized from the contagion of outside elements (such as immigrants from the southern regions or from abroad, and the parasitical mentality of the 'parties of Rome'). After the financial crisis in 2008, the ascent of the Five Star Movement caught more and more attention. It is hard to convince that the economic crisis caused populism directly, but there is no doubt that traditional parties failed to fix internal problems such as the sluggish economy, high rate of unemployment and the anger of corruption, which fueled dissatisfaction of people and increased the gap between "the people" and "the elite". The M5S gained unpredictable victory in the 2013 general election which was its first time to join the election for this young party.

To analyze the background of the growth of populism, except Mani Pulite, the economic perform became one of the main causes. The economic crisis added a sense of material insecurity all over the whole society. As for employment, the situation is not optimistic, either. Compared to other EU countries where populism is prevailing as well, Italy keeps a high rate of unemployment, especially in the latest decade. Considering Italy is the fourth biggest economy and one of the original founders in EU, high unemployment would influence both domestic solidarity and European market expectations. However, confronting the anxiety and insecurity of the mass, the conventional political parties did not come up with appropriate solutions to deal with these severe problems, which provided a fertile ground to the populist growth.

From the international perspective, there was a huge systematic transformation that was the ending of the bi-polar world with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the former political structure, the political competition was in an ideological pattern. During the transformation to the First Republic to the Second Republic, political legitimacy became a tricky problem to Italian society, stemming from the corruption scandal. The changing international power structure made Italy relieved from the constraints of the two big powers conflict, having more choices out of the well-established and consociational system. The more freedom of voting the people

have after the post-cold war and more issue-oriented they are made them more disappointed about Italian politics, which fueled to result in the conspicuous populist development.

At the domestic level, Italy did not shape democracy with normal experience, on the contrary, the democratic consolidation relied on the voters' loyalty on several mass parties. The loyalty became the ballast of domestic democracy instead of welcoming it enthusiastically. With this fragile foundation of democracy, it finally turned into a crisis of democratic legitimacy after the corruption scandal. The mass media gave the floor to the accusers of the establishment in front of millions of people and used the television polls showing the de-legitimization of the political class.

I compare and contrast the Five Star Movement and the Northern League in Chapter 3 with several similarities and differences. "Differences" is the first section and "similarities" is the second section. To start with, although these two parties both use Internet especially social media as a propaganda tool, the difference is the M5S take the Internet not only a communication tool but also an organizational tool. It holds "a blind faith in the virtue of the Internet", believing that the real democracy will realize through Rousseau, the direct way which represents the general will. The M5S shows a deeper link with the Internet since the party regards it as the core to realize true democracy and popular participation.

Then, the LN demonstrates a more delicate and integrated organizational structure which has more divisions and most of them are convened and presided by the federal secretary or the leader of the department is appointed by the federal secretary. By contrast, the organizational structure of the M5S is much more simple since it is in the process towards institutionalization. The guarantor has more power than its counterpart – the president in the LN, but the daily management of the party is in the charge of the political head as well. As a catch-all party, the institutionalization level of the LN is higher than the M5S. Besides, the principle of the "imperative mandate" of the M5S may conflict with the national constitution in practice which may influence the internal structure as well.

As for the membership, in the LN case, the membership includes clear affiliation and has different rights and duties, following a top-down organizing way as a traditional party. In contrast, although the mobilizers who present at the beginning and assist to build up the party represent the highest level of the membership, all members of the M5S have a direct access to the internal discussions. The membership of LN needs to be

accepted by the party secretary with a phase of activism and a formal decision, while the process in the M5S is simplified thanks to the Internet. The bottom-up organization of the M5S shows a web-oriented feature, which has little constraints and limits to the members to attend political activities. Nevertheless, the horizontal model of organization in the M5S has influenced by the leader sometimes, which might cause the members polarized to two factions, namely the leaders' supporters and opponents. As a newborn political party that just underwent its first decade, its organizing mode is still changing.

Besides, observing the profile of the members of the chamber of deputies from the M5S and the LN, the differences of a newborn party and a full-fledged party are clear. The gender situation is more balanced in the deputy group though male representatives still occupy the big portion in the LN. The middle-aged members are the main actors in both parties and the M5S shows a younger trend, especially in the Chamber. This is because the M5S has an age limitation of the representatives elected to the Chamber which must be under 45. As regards the education level, it is obvious that the education level of most ordinary members is lower/intermediate, while the higher education (university and above) deputies are the majority in the Chamber, illuminating a higher education tend to be a representative. Interestingly, more the M5S deputies have a higher education level though they may lack of governing experience while the LN is striving to overcome the defects of a traditional party, making the party more balanced representative not only in age but also in the profession. Generally speaking, the members in the M5S are more enthusiastic to attend political activities, due to relatively easy access to join.

What is more, the election results of these two parties show a striking geographical difference. The LN is predominant in the northern area while the M5S is appealing in the southern part. Compared election results in 2013 and 2018, the M5S gained a striking surge in the south in 2018, a slight increase in the middle and little progress in the north, while the north is the major supporting actor for the LN, and the party also performed well in other regions compared to the previous one, showing a voting increase in all regions.

The claiming policies vary from these two parties. The LN changed its priority according to its strategic needs ranging from federalism, regionalism to nationalism. The party leader Salvini now claims a strict limit of immigration and the tax policy with a fixed 15%, which helped him gain popular support. Compared to the LN, the M5S is struggling with its commitment in the election to fulfill a minimum income system and improve the employment situation.

As for the position in the political spectrum, the M5S describes clearly that it has no ideology of left or right and put itself beyond the political spectrum. The party keeps emphasizing the anti-establishment stance, blurring its position on the left-right dimension of competition, which could attract more potential electorates. However, the LN is in a more rightist position, emphasizing the dangers from the immigrants and a multicultural society. Holding a strong Eurosceptic stance to the euro and the European elites demonstrates its radical feature as well.

The similarities focus on the leadership, the utility of the mass media, the stance of Euroscepticism and other populism similarities. As first, both these two parties demonstrate a high level of dependence of their leaders. The LN is described as an "owner party" in which the leader behaves like an owner without significant counterweights and he or she benefits from almost entirely undisputed support from followers. In the M5S case, Beppe Grillo owns the absolute ownership of the party brand, which was ratified by its statute. The fact that Grillo expelled 19 out of the 163 MPs in 2013, which ensured his power in the party without limitation. Besides, the political agenda of the party is actually decided by the leader, Beppe Grillo, who gives priority to the topics through making a proposal or publishing it on his blog, with no actual debate. Furthermore, the leaders of the M5S and LN always played a role of victim, strengthening the party's cohesion and stressing the fight between 'friends and enemies' through visualizing the intolerance of the old parties against the general will of the people.

The full utilization of social media is the second similarity between the M5S and the LN. With the traits of disintermediation, immediacy and interactivity in the social media, the leaders built up their images based on the personal appeal and spread messages with an incredible speed. The utilization of social media contributes to shaping a charismatic leader and at the same time, the leader is promoting it to be a more mainstream method to participate in political life.

Nowadays, both the M5S and the LN hold the attitude of Euroscepticism to the European integration and put the hostility as one of the heart rhetoric. Rome is no longer the enemy but Brussels threats the national sovereignty. The latest collision between Italy and the EU was the budget dispute. Experience drastic negotiations, a compromise finally reached with the deficit target 2.04% in Italy's 2019 budget. However, to fulfill their proclaiming policies, more conflicts between Italy populist government and the EU may happen

in the future.

The M5S and the LN also show some similar elements with populist features, including the political distrust, the provocative propaganda, anti-system attitude, closeness to the people and a clear separation between "us" and "them".

In summary, there are many differences between the M5S and the LN. The Internet is a core of the M5S, being an organizational and communication tool, while for the LN, it is mainly as a mobilization tool. Then, the ideological coherence and tight organization of the LN enabled it to survive from the turbulent period, evolving to a more institutional party. Compared to the LN, the M5S has a more simple structure and still in its institutionalization process. As for the membership and deputies, since the LN has a more tight organization, the membership management is strict and shows a clear hierarchy feature. Supporters, members, militants are divided according to their seniorities with different duties and rights. However, the situation in the M5S is different. There is no cleavage within its membership. The majority of the members are the young generation, and they are more enthusiastic to attend online political activities. The deputies in the M5S also represent a younger trend than the LN. As for the electoral base, the LN is more predominant in the north while the M5S is influential in the south, which is reasonable due to its historical roots and proclaimed policies. Finally, the M5S self-defines itself as a movement without ideology, so it cannot be placed in the political spectrum. However, the LN self-located itself at the middle of the political spectrum, it already moved to a radical right position with its extreme Euroscepticism and strict immigration policy.

On the other hand, the M5S and the LN share some populist similarities. For example, their leadership is charismatic, having a personal attraction to their supports. And the leaders are good at using mass media especially social media to mobilize and widen their influence. Besides, both parties are holding a Eurosceptic stance. They take the EU as the enemy, placing it to the other side of the people. For the LN, nowadays, the party has already changed its "enemy" from Rome to Brussel, with a radical Euroscepticism attitude, and at the same time, focusing on immigrates instead of the south, which could also explain its stance from regionalism to nationalism. For the M5S, it also shows a Eurosceptic tendency but their proposals are mainly focusing on domestic issues, such as a universal minimum income and environment issues.

Considering the latest result of the EU election and the public opinion poll, the support of the Northern League has surpassed the Five Star Movement. These two populist parties are not only public partners but also mutual competitors. They are trying to expand political influence and to realize the commitments as they claimed which would make the country get out of trouble. However, the domestic policies encountered some barriers in practice and the constant quarrel with the EU may exhaust the confidence of the people. With the chameleonic feature of the populist parties, how the populist government will behave is unpredictable.