LUISS

Dipartimento
di POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY AND ECONOMICS

Cattedra Gender Politics

Women Representation in Populist Discourses: A Comparative Study of Europe and Latin America

Prof. Emiliana De Blasio

RELATORE

Matr. Magdi Nicoletta Vecchiet

CANDIDATO

Anno Accademico 2019/2020

L

Table of Contents

Introduction

In recent years, the question of the presence of populist leaders in the Western scenario is much debated. It examines how the model of **populist leadership** intersects and differs from **the concept of gende**r. Indeed, the study of populism encompasses a wide variety of research and has been widely explored in different contexts, while its relationship to gender issues remains mostly underestimated.

As **Paul Taggart** observed, populism was thought of as "the politics of *ordinary* people made by *extraordinary* leaders who build ordinary profiles." The "extraordinary" nature that all populist leaders have in common is their ability to present themselves as the "voice of the people," which means both political outsiders and the ordinary people's authentic representatives.

The greater the leader's ability to propose himself as *primus inter pares*, the stronger the link between **identification** and **representation** will become. The relationship between populism, gender symbolism, and contextualization then underlines how populism is a display of hegemonic masculinity that women leaders can implement and combine with performances of femininity. Populism thus provides the ground for building the personal political style of these leaders. It proposes an image of men and women linked to the heteronormative interpretation of gender and sexual identities, a notion of a traditional family, a division of gender, and a clear division of *public* and *private* according to what are defined the correct ways of acting, behave and think in the so-called 'common sense' policy.

The populist is generally approached to the figure of the strong and charismatic man, more or less assertively depending on the country's political culture in question. The contextualization of the populist subject generally accompanies the evolution of the conceptualization of leadership, particularly the figure of the populist leader, as a spokesperson for the group malaise and anti-institutional policies.

This study aims to identify the obstacles placed for women in reaching the highest positions; in particular, female leaders have the opportunity to exploit, in turn, the patriarchal vision that sees them qualified as leaders only as mothers. **The mother of the nation model** has the advantage of being a culturally endorsed female leadership model because it is rooted in the traditional values of nurturing and caring.

Secondly, **populist rhetoric** will be analyzed, focusing on the communication style aimed at fostering political polarization. Through the use of conversation analysis and paying particular attention to the statements and posts of the protagonists of this analysis, Marine Le Pen, Giorgia Meloni, and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, it will be highlighted how these leaders present

themselves to their electorate at the same time as *outsiders*, or innovators of a persuasive and distinctive leadership style, and *insiders*, women "victims" of gender stereotypes and, in particular, of the effects of *trivialization* and *double bind*.

Through the use of the **KH coder program**, it is shown how gender frameworks, expectations, the political history of a country, and a politician's history are all useful constituents in exploring how women presidents see themselves and how they want to be seen by the political elite and the general population. In addition to observing the communicative style, the emotion's hype, the dramatization, the informal and paternalistic language, some key themes of populist discourse are commented on. Among these, the relationship between **populism and religion** deserves a broader digression under its complexity. Where populists speak of "identity" and "belonging," the Church speaks of "faith." Furthermore, as Jonah Goldberg (2017) states, if Christianity is a religion, Christianity linked to populism is now a political program with nothing ethical or sacred.

In conclusion, through the comparative example of Marine Le Pen, Giorgia Meloni, and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, this thesis shows the peculiar characteristics of populist leaders. It identifies why they manage to become, even unconsciously, **the containers of projections**, tolerable by the community: voters delegate to the leader the function of judging, evaluating reality and behavior, in their stead. By analogy, the projected content could be accepted by the leader in its primitive form, with the newborn's material, "the equivalent of a good mother," which would thus help the formation of a more mature, flexible, and aware social system.

In an age in which no cultural model can authoritatively and effectively proclaim its superiority over antagonistic models, and in which the nation-building process and patriotic mobilization are no longer the main instruments of social integration and state affirmation, this research attempts to retrace the experiences of women who were able to invent, build, and implement new ways to establish themselves in the public sphere.

STATUS OF THE ART

Populism is one of the most controversial and debated concepts throughout the twenty-first century. The term is used to describe left-wing presidents in Latin America, right-wing challenger parties in Europe, and left and right-wing presidential candidates in the United States. Nevertheless, while the term has great appeal to many journalists and readers, its wide use creates confusion and frustration (Mudde, 2017). One of the first attempts to conceive populism as a uniform phenomenon dates back to Shils (1956). However, populism has been part of the academic debate ever since it is still a contested concept and has been described as a "notoriously vague term" (Canovan, 1999, p. 3).

The main reason why there is no universal definition of populism is the fact that it manifests itself differently according to contextual conditions (Priester, 2007). For example, the cases of agrarian populism in the aftermath of the American Civil War, populism in Latin America, or the Narodnik movement in Russia exhibit somewhat different characteristics than the modern populist parties present in contemporary Western democracies. Therefore, it is of fundamental importance to delimit this study's conceptual framework, namely the current political and media reality in which populism operates. However, even within these boundaries, populism can take many forms and facets.

Ernesto Laclau (1977) argues that populism can be "articulated" with any position on the political spectrum, albeit accompanied by a 'rhetoric capable of accommodating political doctrine changes.' The politician who engages in exploiting this illocutionary act of populism becomes a populist actor. In concrete terms, populist communication is manifested by emphasizing the people's sovereignty, supporting the people, attacking the elites, ostracizing others, and invoking the feelings of insecurity and disappointment of ordinary people. A well-established definition of populism was introduced by **Albertazzi and McDonell (2008**), who drew on Mudde (2004, p. 543). They conceive populism as an ideology that pits a virtuous and cohesive people against a mix of elites and dangerous "others". The so-called 'non-people' is portrayed as a threat to the sovereign people, as a source of deprivation of a homogeneous reality's rights, values, prosperity, identity, and culture.

According to this definition, populism can be understood as a 'subtle' (less elaborate) ideology that offers the protagonists the flexibility to enrich it with 'full' (more substantial) ideologies such as socialism, nationalism, or liberalism (Kriesi, 2014, p. 369; Mudde, 2004, p. 544**). In 2017, Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser** summarized this significant research body by stating that *'populism is a thin and centered ideology*.' *'Populism considers society separated into two*

homogeneous and antagonistic camps - "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite" - and which argues that politics should be an expression of people's will générale (general will).'

As previously mentioned, when attached to different ideologies, populism manifests itself in different forms. Therefore, left-wing populism in Latin America focuses on economic inclusion, while right-wing populism in Europe focuses on cultural exclusion, in a peculiar mixture of nationalism and xenophobia. In the case of the radical right-wing populist parties, populism is combined with authoritarianism and, above all, nativism. Mudde (2004) defines "nativism" as an ideology that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ("the nation") and that non-native elements (people and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogeneous nation-state. Such non-native elements, capable of undermining Western values, are frequently traced back to the Islamic religion. Islam is represented in contrast to liberal democratic values, such as the autonomy of the individual, democracy, the emancipation of homosexuals and women, gender equality, freedom of expression and the press and, separation of church and state.

Despite this abundant literature, research rarely focuses on the relationship between gender and populism. Cas Mudde again provides the broader literature review in the chapter 'Männerparteien' in his 2007 book *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Here Mudde discusses some studies on the subject. In particular, he cites **Helga Amesberger and Brigitte Halbmayr's (2002)** work, entitled *'Rechtsextreme Parteien — eine mögliche Heimat für Frauen?' 'Far-right parties: a possible home for women? '*. In this international study, the authors compare five European right-wing extremist parties and their attractiveness to the female electorate. The Front National in France, the National Alliance in Italy, the Slovak National Party, the "Republicans of Czechoslovakia," and the Freedom Party of Austria are analyzed. In order to shed light on women's involvement in far-right parties, party programs and publications are scrutinized, as well as the roles and importance that women assume within them (women's organizations, number of women in party organs).

A related topic that has received much attention in recent years is again the relationship between **gender and Islam** in these parties' programs. It highlights the growing emphasis of populist parties on defending democratic liberalism and Western traditions. Therefore, on the so-called "gender gap," i.e., why more men than women vote for the populist radical right. Of fundamental importance for studying **the intersection between gender and populism** comes from feminist historians, who have addressed **the gendered nature of nationalist ideologies**. An example of this is the work When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany by Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossman, and Marion Kaplan (1984). This collection of essays analyzes women's experience first in the Weimar Republic and then in Nazi Germany. The transition from

the period of crisis and polarization between right and left to affirm the single thought is underlined. The history documented in this book provides us with a perspective from which to analyze our time. In the history of Weimar and Nazi Germany, we see the issues surrounding women, family, and reproduction as powerful mobilizing forces of modern parties.

In the 1990s, feminist scholars criticized leading accounts of nation-building processes and nationalism for ignoring gender. Thus was born, in response, the nationalist feminist perspective that addresses the victimization of religious and minority women in Western European countries due to the growing influence of populist parties. In the article *Muslim Women and Foreign Prostitutes: Victim Discourse, Subjectivity, and Governance* Christine M. Jacobsen and Dag Stenvoll (2010) represent the ways and victimization in which "Muslim women" and "foreign prostitutes" are commonly constituted in the media and the policy. These female victims' role becomes the prototype and embodiment of the "problems of globalization" and of fundamental importance in strengthening the existing social and political structures.

"The discourse on victims, when linked to the global proliferation of the sex industry and (radical) Islam, has depoliticizing effects. It places non-individual causes of victimization outside our "politics and society" and places "the state as neutral protector and arbiter of global inequalities, marginalization, and social conflict" (CM Jacobsen, D. Stenvoll, 2010). Although this literature focuses on the public representation of immigrant or Muslim women in the media, on debates on integration and immigration, in politics or the national discourse, it does not explicitly examine the gender ideologies of populist parties. In the last decade, however, the social sciences, cultural sciences, and linguistics have become aware of the importance of gender equality of populist parties and movements, and some studies have given particular attention to the composition of the voters of these parties (Bartlett et al. 2011; Rommelspacher 2011).

Norocel (2013) and Mudde and Kaltwasser (2015) have examined the masculinity inherent in right-wing discourse. These studies show that hegemonic masculinity is deeply rooted in the populist worldview.

In 2017 Sara R. Farris published "*In the Name of Women's Rights: The Rise of Femonationalism.***"** The author analyzed the "politics of fear" of the right concerning "gender and body politic," showing how gender (in) equality is mobilized to construct a threat from the "Other" - mainly Muslim male immigrants - in order to create an atmosphere of general insecurity. In this work, the writer examines the demands for women's rights in an unlikely collection of right-wing, neoliberal nationalist political parties, in the debates of some feminist theorists and political leaders' speeches. Focusing on contemporary France, Italy, and the Netherlands, Sara Farris labels the exploitation and co-optation of feminist themes by anti-Islamic and xenophobic campaigns as

"femonationalism." It shows that by characterizing Muslim males as dangerous to Western societies and as oppressors of women and emphasizing the need to save Muslim and migrant women, these groups use gender equality to justify their racist rhetoric and policies.

Other studies have highlighted the use of **the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, and ethnicity** in populist debates.

> *In the 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the term **'intersectionality'** to point out the overlapping of multiple and interrelating systems of oppression and discrimination. Intersectionality is an important paradigm in academic scholarship, able to improve the dialogue between women's and gender studies on the one hand and Black, Latino and Post-Colonial Studies on the other[1].*

However, although these studies provide the glue that links **gender discrimination to populism**, it is often underestimated that symbolic gender repertoires are narrow straights within which a populist woman can operate. **Populism is, in fact, capable of allowing women leaders to enact hegemonic masculinity in the same way that they enact hegemonic femininity**. This method allows them to build a third way between adopting a male and paternalistic leadership model and promoting a stereotypical image of a caring and permissive woman.

---

[1] Baritono, Raffaella; Gennero, Valeria; Covi, Giovanna; Kessler-Harris, Alice; Muncy, Robyn; Roney, Ellen; Vezzosi, Elisabetta (2016), Gender, Women's and American Studies, RSA JOURNAL, ISBN: 978-88-6680-091-0

THE CONCEPT OF POPULISM

Since 1967, when the London School of Economics organized a congress under the direction of Isaiah Berlin and Richard Hofstadter, we have witnessed a flourishing body of studies, undoubtedly discontinuous and not homogeneous, on the phenomenon of populism.

Over the years, populism has been accompanied by terms such as ideology, movement, and syndrome. Populism tends to be compared, and sometimes confused, with widely distinct phenomena. Populism is a thin ideology – neither right nor left - encompass other doctrines, the so-called host ideologies (Taggart, 2002). In the European context, populism often refers to anti-immigration and xenophobia, while in Latin America, it alludes to clientelism and economic mismanagement. Through the populist phenomenon study, several authors have faced contextual differences and the intrinsic juxtaposition between Europe and Latin America.

In the defining process of populism, momentum was gained with the new acceptance of an everyday basis of each form of populism. This permitted the shift from the so-called "Cinderella's syndrome" explained by Isaiah Berlin -for which it would not have been plausible to imagine a satisfactory and acceptable definition of populism (Zanatta, 2018, p.10).

Paul Taggart argued that the key themes of populism include: aversion to representative politics, identification with a mythologized homeland and the connected exclusion of every alien element, the absence of a stable anchorage to essential values such as equality, freedom, social justice, the belief of the presence of an acute crisis context, the propensity to simplify political and institutional issues, a chameleon attitude (Taggart, 2000, p. 15). In this regard, the contribution of Matteucci appears significant in the debate. According to him, we can speak of 'populist insurgence' when «the appearance under the party system of **a new climate of simple ideas and elementary passions**, in radical protest against tradition and, therefore, against that culture and that political class which is its official expression[2]» Populism - continues Matteucci - «coagulates a new political synthesis, which cannot be defined according to **conservative or progressive**, parliamentary language. That is because it overcomes and maintains both positions, affirming, on the one hand, an authoritarian will, increasingly intolerant of the obstacles and hesitations imposed by the constitutional procedures of modern democracy. On the other hand, it manipulates the masses with generically revolutionary *slogans[3]*».

The concept of populism is therefore enmeshed with the figures of Marine Le Pen and Giorgia Meloni, the former featured in several editions of the American magazine *Time* among the hundred

---

[2] N. Matteucci, Dal populismo al compromesso storico, Edizioni della Voce, Roma 1976, p.75
[3] Ibidem

most influential people in the world, the latter included in *The Times* among the twenty characters who could "shape" the world. Both party leaders are characterized by a form of national conservatism, an appeal to order and authority, and an ill-concealed Euroscepticism. Lorella Sini, the author of *The Front National of "Marine Le Pen: analysis of the neo-frontist discourse,*" the French President's speeches, create a narrative that perfectly fits the so-called "national novel"- that is the emphasis on culture and political classes. With populism - continues Matteucci - «*It wants to be the incarnation of France and the nation. The re-enactment of the myths allows us to weld the belonging to national identit*y» The ancestors' visceral attachment to the land, the duty to transmit their memory and their ethical values, the defense of *the ius sanguinis*, and the opposition to the abrogation of the crime of illegal immigration are all issues equally detectable in the position taken by the leader of Fratelli d' Italia.

The European experience has witnessed the fusion between populism and nationalism, in a sort of tendency to laissez-faire and liberalism, with the rejection of social equality and egalitarianism. Instead, **in Latin America, the so-called left-wing populism has recovered themes as anti-capitalism, social justice, and anti-globalization**. An example is the figure of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, whose interpretation of the concept of nationalism goes beyond the focus on individual freedoms – as it is proper of the right-wing populism – and underlines the importance of the community. Cristina Fernádez de Kirchner, the senator from 1995 to 2005, later President of the Republic of Argentina from 2007 to 2015, has been the proponent of the Hispanic patrimonialism. It means that each institutional limit or independent control to the exercise of power appears as a **"vulnus to the sovereign people**." On the contrary, it should be regarded as a guarantee for minorities and individual freedoms, as in law (L. Zanatta, 2015).

Mudde and Kaltwasser, in "*Populism: A Very Short Introduction,*" underline that "*The fertile ground in which populism is rooted in precisely the discontent generated by the idea of a usurping elite or by the presence of an entity considered extraneous to the majority.*" It is a sort of 'mental map' through which individuals analyze and understand political reality.

The political analyst Mudde noted that populism is "moralistic rather than programmatic," encouraging **a binary view of the world**. Everyone has friends and enemies, with the latter considered not only as people who have different priorities and values but as fundamentally evil. In emphasizing its purity vis-à-vis the corruption and the immorality of the elite, from which the people have to remain pure and intact, populism prevents the compromise among different groups. And since the national political contexts are often strongly influenced by regional or even global developments, such a dichotomy between 'people' and 'not-people' has been proposed, throughout the years, in quite peculiar ramifications. **The first wave of Latin American populism**, which

dated back to the Great Depression of 1929 and ended at the end of the 60s, saw the flourishing of such a Manichean distinction. The elements that fed this discontent were: the influence of **Americanism**, the denouncing of the interferences of imperial powers, and the skillful use of the language of the leader as Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina, Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, and José María Velasco Ibarra in Ecuador on themes as 'the people', 'the job' and 'the class.' **The second wave of populism**, albeit shorter and less prolific than the first one, has emerged in the early 90s, and the most paradigmatic cases can be found in Argentina (Carlos Menem), Brazil (Fernando Collor de Mello), and Peru (Alberto Fujimori). Since at the end of the 80s, the countries in question suffered from deep economic crises. The populist leaders could win the elections, blaming it on the elite for the country's dramatic situation and proclaiming that the people had been stripped from its **legitimate sovereignty**. **The third and current wave Latin American populism** began with the electoral victory of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela in 1998, followed by Evo Morales (Bolivia), Rafael Correa (Ecuador), and Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua). Despite the return of Americanism and the anti-imperialism rhetoric, the third wave of populism introduces socialist ideas. A proof is the name of the party founded by Evo Morales – Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) – or of the party established by Hugo Chávez – Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (PSUV). Politicizing the question of inequality and condemning the elite in power, the populist actors of the third wave are also defined as *'ethno-populists*,' thus highlighting the multiethnic aspect of the country. It was only at the end of the 90s that populism became a real political power in Europe.

As a consequence of the frustrations for the effects of society's transformations, as European integration and immigration, the populist radical right-wing parties emerged throughout the continent, albeit with different levels of electoral and political success. These parties combine populism with the other two ideologies – **authoritarianism and nativism**. The former refers to the belief in a strictly ordered society and is expressed in emphasizing questions of 'law and order.' The second hints to the idea that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the same native group (the nation), and those non-native elements (aliens) are threatening the nation-state. Therefore, the current xenophobic nature of the European populism derives from a particular conception of the nation based upon an ethnic and chauvinist definition of 'people' (S. Edwards, 2010).

In his book "*Populism Theories and problems*" (2017), **Manuel Anselmi** opts for the "minimal definition" path - an operational concept of populism useful for identifying the phenomenon and comparing its various manifestations. Considering populism as a social configuration, he identifies **three analytical characteristics** that define it, which unfold as it follows. **The concept of people,** understood as a cohesive organic community, such as to delimit a people and a non-people,

confining any political alterity within the latter discriminating category. **The concept of leadership** aims to identify the leader and its followers in terms of aspirations, of idem sentire: 'I am one of you' is one of the most common phrases associated with the populist leaders. Lastly, he explains the importance of **rhetoric**, a discursive, argumentative, and communicative style. The 'we' coincides with a community and the 'they' with external to it - rhetoric aimed at promoting political polarization.

As **Ernesto Laclau** explains, "to get the 'people' of populism [...], we need plebs that you claim to be the **only legitimate populus** - that is, a partiality that claims to serve as the whole community ". Thus, as the leader Marine Le Pen affirms, an exclusionary reality, to the traditional right / left dichotomy, prefers to juxtapose the binaries elite / people, dominant / dominated, high/low.

It is necessary to build a shared, national identity, capable of legitimizing power through the principle of sovereignty. A general will – echoing the theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau - used to resolve the contradiction inherent in political society, between the public decision-maker, the sovereign, and the other members of the community, which delegate their rights to this figure, seen as the guarantor of freedom.

To understand populism, after the idea of 'construction of people,' it is necessary to identify a second fundamental element: *leadership*.

Leadership refers to an individual's ability to gather citizens' support based on his or her fascination. Think of Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Beppe Grillo in Italy, Ross Perot in the United States, or Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand.

Finally, the analysis of the stylistic characteristics of political leaders and their dominant styles is a fundamental element for understanding the concept of 'Populism.' It is the use of an 'anti-elite / anti-institutional rhetoric.' Populists often argue that there is an elite that is not merely ignoring their electorate's interests, but that is even working against parts of their own country. Within the European Union (EU), many populist parties accuse the political elite of putting the EU's will before that country. Similarly, the Latin-American populists have blamed for decades the United States for many controversies, "Please, if something happens to me, and I am very concerned about it, that no one looks to the Middle East. Look to the North (the USA, ed.), please" is the alarm launched by the President of Argentina, Cristina Kirchner, in a speech that she gave at the Casa Rosada, the presidential residence. She accused the United States and various Argentine financial circles of plotting to overthrow her government and threaten her.

As **Marco Tarchi** states, populism is a 'mentality which identifies the people as an organic totality artificially divided by hostile forces.' Populism attributes people's natural, ethical qualities, contrasting realism, laboriousness, and integrity with hypocrisy, inefficiency, and corruption of

political, economic, social, and cultural oligarchies. It claims the priority as a source of legitimacy of power, above all forms of representation and mediation'.

II.1 Populist Rhetoric and Gender Identity

Rhetoric, namely the ability to communicate eloquently and persuasively, has always been perceived as a fundamental and essential feature to become a leader. The behavior of populist leaders tends to stylize and unfold according to a script conforming to the dominant cultural expectations. They employ symbols, rites, and myths of a government to mobilize society's ultimate common beliefs and feelings. Consider, in this regard, the choice of Marine Le Pen to rename *the Front National party to Rassemblement National*. This choice not only was addressed a broader electoral base and "mark a change of an era" compared to paternal politics but to insert already in the party's name calls for the "Rassemblement Bleu Marine." The Rassemblement Bleu is an electoral association created by the French leader for the 2012 legislative elections. The "bleu marine," or navy blue, is the navy's color and the first of the French flag's three colors. «In the language of flowers - explains Le Pen - the blue rose means making the impossible possible. » The populist leader must exploit its communicative talent to propose himself as the spokesman of the social inclusion of those who are resentful towards the government's oligarchies.

The use of anti-institutional rhetoric aims to obtain approval and consensus to reach a rupture of the existing system (Ernesto Laclau, 2008).

The populist leaders' speeches are imbued with vibrant images that invoke feelings of solidarity and belonging and have the ultimate goal of creating a direct tie with what they consider their people. Therefore, the relationship they want to establish with their followers is charismatic, personal, and emotional.

According to **Edward Shils,** populism "is based on two fundamental principles: the **supremacy** of the will of the people and the **direct relationship** between the people and the leader" (Shils, 1956, p. 98).

This can be seen in populist leaders' meetings, whose speeches are designed to receive an immediate response from the audience and their frequent use of the mass media. In fact, on the one hand, media are strongly criticized because they are considered enemies of the people, in the hands of the caste. On the other, they are used by those same leaders to communicate personally with the citizens.

È evidente la discriminazione dei mass media nei confronti di Fratelli d'Italia. Presenteremo nuovamente in Commissione Vigilanza RAI una richiesta di verifica per ottenere adeguata visibilità per le nostre battaglie. La Rai la paghiamo tutti e pretendiamo

il rispetto delle regole. (Giorgia Meloni's Facebook page)

[It is clear the mass media's discrimination against Fratelli d'Italia. We will again present a request for verification to the RAI Supervisory Committee to obtain adequate visibility for our battles. We all pay for Rai and demand respect for the rules. (Giorgia Meloni's Facebook page)][4]

It is also important to note that populists in their speeches make recurrent use of colloquial language, ignoring conventions and using a personal linguistic style that is close to the ways of thinking and speaking of the people they want to represent. A striking case can be considered the '2 *minutes with Giorgi*a', Giorgia Meloni's web series in pills, where the president of Fratelli d'Italia briefly discusses its politics and economics metaphors. An innovative format allows the FdI leader to discuss Italian agriculture's defense against European Union measures by preparing a Caprese, with tomatoes imported from Spain and Italian mozzarella. Another characteristic frequently found in populist leaders' speeches is their paternalistic behavior, proposing themselves as *fathers and mothers of the homeland,* as those who have the wise task of protecting their citizens.

We already begin to divine that the mutual tie between members of a group is like an identification, based upon an essential emotional standard quality; and we may suspect that this standard quality lies in **the tie's nature with the leader**. Another suspicion may tell us that we are far from having exhausted the problem of **identification**. That we are faced by the process which psychology calls *'empathy'* \Einfuhlung\ and which plays the largest part in our understanding of what is inherently foreign to our ego in other people. (Freud, 1949).

An example is also the case of the slogans used in the 2017 presidential campaign of Marine Le Pen' *Au nom du peuple'* (Genga, 2017, p. 71). André Taguieff defines, for this reason, the frontist populism as an identitarian one, referring to that Manichean connotation mentioned by Mudde.

As has been anticipated, the question of identity is of crucial importance in the context of this research.

In sociology, **the concept of identity** is often used as a sort of umbrella term. It would be nothing other than how individuals "label" themselves as members of a social group (whether it is as broad as the "nation" or "social class" or more restricted and defined as ethnicity or **gender** it does not

---

[4] Giorgia Meloni's Facebook page, accessed April 26, 2020:
hhttps://www.facebook.com/giorgiameloni.paginaufficiale/posts/10153134612597645/

matter) (De Blasio, 2012). Besides, "Beyond the foundational fictions that support the notion of subject," says Judith Butler in her famous novel *Questione di genere. Il femminismo e la sovversione dell' identità,* "Feminism faces a political problem when it assumes that the term women denotes a common identity."

In *Understanding the Populist Shift*, conducted by **Giovanna Campani and Gabriella Lazaridis, three types of discourses** are identified: far-right populist parties and movements are used to employ when tackling gender and sexuality. Those who refer to "nature" - the natural roles of women and men - defend the traditional family model but recognize everyone's right to live their sexuality as they wish, as long as it remains private. Furthermore, some defend gender equality, sexual freedom, the rights of minorities as characteristic values of the West, as opposed to the "other," unassimilable culture of Islam, mainly Muslim men.

Although the phenomenon of populism is nowadays abundantly examined by various social sciences experts, less known is the study of **Femonationalism**, defined by **Sara Farris**, as the "convergence" of feminism with nationalist and neoliberal positions, in the name of defense of women's rights.

In contrast to Muslim communitarianism, for example, Marine Le Pen compares Muslims who pray in the street to the Nazi occupation in a way as to become the interpreter of a conflictual dialectic between French republican modernity, intended as an update of the Christian heritage, and the Muslim tradition (Genga, 2017, p. 174). A post-materialist patrimonial populism emphasizes Western values of secularism and secularization and an ethno-socialism based on the chauvinist vision of welfare (Genga, 2017, p. 175).

On the one hand, therefore, radical right-wing populism has acquired the conservative agenda's themes on so-called *gender issues*. It has become the medium through which express the values of a patriarchal and heteronormative family through demonstrations such as **Family Day** (organized, mainly in Italy, in collaboration with traditional Catholic groups and associations in opposition to the extension of rights to homosexual couples). On the other hand, these parties' women leaders have contributed to breaking down the *glass ceiling*, encouraging leaders and activists' participation.

As contradictory as this increase in participation may seem, think of the paradoxical women's collective actions in **Latin America** in the 1960s and 1970s, when there was the introduction of the values of 'social feminism,' the spread of the "image" of *mother and woman* - in what is commonly called a policy of "difference." Namely, the deployment of "special feminine attributes" as a path to public and political life. Indeed, this dualistic vision of women and leaders inside the populist debate suffers from the different Western regions' historical divergences.

To think in terms of Latin American women's gender identity also means turning our view to the path of conquest, of colonization. To how peasant women have been forced into submission, to the slavery of black women, to the historically rooted isolation of middle-class women, to the effects of these and other crises in women's lives, to the strong presence of the traditional Catholic church in the lives of many women. In sum, to the traces, each and all these experiences leave upon the minds and bodies of this heterogeneous category of women. (V. Vargas, 1990)

The dialectic of *machismo and marianismo* undoubtedly characterizes populism in South America. **Machismo**, commonly associated with high rates of male violence against women, should not be understood as a mere synonym of male chauvinism, but as a specific way of interpreting and living virility in a pathological and stereotypical exaltation of the term.

The cult of force, aggressiveness, and non-affectivity in peer relations and, at the same time, the possession and alleged passionate violence in affective relations, strictly heterosexual, is then opposed **to a complex mechanism of construction of femininity**. The phenomenon of *Marianismo* is particularly crucial in this process. The term comes from the Catholic cult of Mary in her ambivalent role of mother and virgin. The cult of *virgencita* has deep roots in the cultural colonization of Hispanic influence, particularly in the secularization and settlement of the ancient mystery of motherhood acquired in the South American socio-cultural models.

As we have already mentioned, instead, in the European populist tradition, the traditional female clichés are represented in the debate on **immigration**, in a way neither clearly traditionalist nor progressive. At the same time, on the one hand, is underlined the (liberal) equality between men and women as a national value and, on the other hand, it is emphasized women's role as the principal deputy in the care of the home and the family 'because of their natural reproductive capacity.'

This contrast also reflects the two feminist macro-categories, highlighted by Ann Taylor Allen in *'Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe 1890-1970. The Maternal dilemma'*. While post-structuralist theorists criticize feminists of the past and present for having purified "universalistic claims" based on "apparently transcultural structures of femininity, motherhood, sexuality" (J. Butler), thus creating a category "Normative and exclusive" of women, ignoring the differences in class, race and sexual orientation, supporters of the so-called "post-feminism" accuse feminists of a lack of respect for the "real concerns of women."

The members of the European Union have witnessed the lively debate of **maternists** such as the Swedish writer **Ellen Key**, who praised the respect for family values as the 'most perfect realization

of the human potential that the species has reached,' in an essentialist view of motherhood as a biological destiny or moral imperative and, **individualists**, including the famous French philosopher **Simone de Beauvoir**, who equally boldly rejected such values as "a strange mixture of narcissism, altruism, idle daydreaming, sincerity, bad faith, devotion, and cynicism."

Western European governments now agree that parenthood is an individual decision motivated by desire rather than duty. They have made significant progress towards objectives such as equal opportunities in education and the workplace, universal access to contraception and sex education, the right to abortion, the elimination of disadvantages suffered by single-parent families.

Nevertheless, the growing weight of radical right-wing voices and the sense of "gender fatigue" have negatively affected EU governments' commitment to gender equality.

A new study by the **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)** shows that the Member States devote less attention to the institutional structures that have helped reduce the gap between women and men. "Progress on gender equality cannot be taken for granted, "said **Virginija Langbakk,** director of the EIGE. "Governments must increase power and provide adequate resources for institutional mechanisms that promote **gender equality**."

In conclusion, populist and extremist mobilization builds an 'exclusive, ambiguous, and somewhat flexible intersectionality' (G. Campani and G. Lazaridis, p.7). Populism proposes an image of men and women linked to the heteronormative interpretation of gender and sexual identities. It proposes a notion of the traditional family, a gender division of labor, and a net division of *public and private* according to what is defined as the correct ways of acting, behaving, and thinking the so-called 'common sense' policy.

Yet, while they criticize feminism, gender equality, and LGBT rights movements for being too radical and disconnected from their essential interpretations of gender and sexuality, populists use the concepts of equality and respect for human rights as important elements of liberal and "western" values, at odds with the backwardness of the "Other."

Therefore, whether as an "imagined" (Anderson 1991) or "invented" national identity (Gellner 1983), or as a privilege of a "natural" community (Smith 1991), the promotion of a monolithic and homogeneous group legitimizes a sense of territoriality within the boundaries of the political community (G. Campani and G. Lazaridis, p.6). The dichotomy between *insider-outsiders* (Kofman et al. 2007) has an immediate impact on the rhetoric not only of race but also of gender.

II.2 Leadership Modelling
When it comes to populism, it is necessary to refer to the one who believes to be not only the spokesperson of its people, but also its personification - the leader.

As it follows, in order for the leader to gather consensus and be acclaimed as such, he/she must have a **charismatic personality** capable of making all those who feel excluded and oppressed by the ruling class feel integrated into a community. For this reason, populism is considered a means of **identity creation**, as it is capable of generating feelings of belonging for those who feel a sense of marginalization and political abandonment.

However, the extreme complexity of the leadership phenomenon and the plurality of approaches in the various disciplines have hampered ambitious attempts to achieve an organic synthesis of the concept. The systematic study of leadership had to deal with multiple social and cultural realities, which challenged any attempt to reach a general theory and transforming research on leadership, in large part, into research on the leader, as **the protagonist of an unequal, asymmetrical social relationship called leadership.** Therefore, leadership is considered a social relationship that takes shape in a situation that requires choices of principle and behavior. The leader is the one who has a motivated will to choose and the means to assert its choices among the other participants of the social relationship, motivating a compliant group behavior[5].

In the tripartite classification of Max Weber (1922), the figure of *the charismatic authority,* together with *the traditional one and the rational-legal one*, is used to create an emotional community formed by individuals who recognize their authority guide as legitimate, based on a fascination relationship. In his writings on the subject, Weber applies the term charisma to " a certain quality of the personality of an individual of which he rises from ordinary men and is treated as one endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least powers or qualities specifically exceptional.[6]" Charismatic authority is based on recognizing a person's superiority over the community in which he lives and works. It is based on a sort of rare devotion to someone's ability in heroism or holiness or ruthlessness (De Blasio, Sorice 2011 p. 14). Furthermore, **as Pellicani states, we cannot read Max Weber, except in the background of Friedrich Nietzsche. The "superman" theorist (Ubermensch)** provides us, in fact, with a more mythical than concretely possible image of a man who has a Dionysian disposition towards life, who sins of hubris - arrogance -, who is able to emancipate himself from morality and which rises above the masses posing himself as a "will to power" - a continuous impulse to go beyond oneself. The leader must not only trace the directions and determine the objectives, but he must also be able to fuel the "enthusiasm", producing mass moral mobilization.

In 1978 George Burns identified five different types of leaders: *the bureaucratic leader* - who

[5] *Leadership*, in *Treccani.it – Enciclopedie on line*, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana. URL consultato il 29 aprile 2020

[6] Weber, Max. *Theory of Social and Economic Organization.* Chapter: "The Nature of Charismatic Authority and its Routinization" tradotto in inglese da A. R. Anderson e Talcott Parsons, 1947.

has power in organizational systems and performs a control function - *the party leader* - the one who holds a whole series of political offices - ***the opinion leader*** - the subject capable of evidently influencing public opinion - *the legislative leader* - who has large inconspicuous power and advised the "prince" - and finally *the executive leader* - represented by the prime minister, the chancellor. The opinion leader, subject capable of decisively influencing public opinion, is the closest expression to the role that Katz and Lazarsfeld attach to the opinion leader in their known model of the *two-step flow of communication* (Katz, Lazarsfeld, 1955; Sorice, 2009)

According to Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser in their work "Populism A Very Short Introduction," populism is, above all, a whole set of ideas, which can be used by very different actors. For this reason, there is no prototype of populist leaders. Generally, it is approached to the figure of the strong and charismatic man, in a more or less assertive way, depending on the country's political culture in question.

In Latin America, the **populist leader's figure** is generally associated with that of the *caudillo*, a type of military leader with a charismatic personality that uses demagogically promises of reforms to gain political consensus, and that makes use of the cult of personality. While there is a close association between populist leaders and strongmen, it is important not to conflate the two. Only a minority of strongmen are populists, and only a minority of populists are strongmen. (Mudde, p. 63) Vladimir Putin and Recep T. Erdoğan initially established themselves as transgressive outsiders with a humble past and ostentatious virility, while later, they assumed a more paternal, conservative role.

> This Janus-faced masculinity of outsiders-yet-insiders, bad-boys-yet- good-fathers thus combines performances that both breach *the conventional gender norms* and uphold, even reinforce them, establishing that this leader is both the same as other men and also different from them, standing above the citizenry, mediating and fostering a conservative political order. (Betul Eksi & Elizabeth A. Wood, 2019)

Another characteristic generally detectable in populist leaders' images is the detachment from the intermediate bodies. The parties are distant from their fundamental role of representation, and the personalization of political power becomes more and more evident. This discrepancy between representation and portrayal (in Italian, ***"rappresentanza" and "rappresentazione"***) is often described as a form of **democratic deficit**, which can be more or less evident depending on the form of government taken into consideration and depending on the level of electorate'selectorate's distrust towards the establishment.

Representation ("rappresentanza") can be defined as the capacity of a subject to act in others' places and interests. It is carried out in the results' tangibility reasonably obtained; it presupposes the freedoms of choice and control. The elector votes for the candidate he considers politically better, who best embodies his/her ideas and seems to have the greatest ability to implement them. He/she then observes and judges the candidate's behavior and verifies what he has implemented during his term of office, and eventually supports him in subsequent elections. **The representation ("rappresentazione")**, on the other hand, presents itself as the ideal and metaphorical transfiguration of the programmatic line of policy, and it is the main objective of the populist leader, the maximum possible resemblance between rulers and governed, regardless of whether the election promises are met.

Based on **Paul Taggart's** original observation, populism can be thought of as "the policy of ordinary people made by *extraordinary* leaders who build *ordinary* profiles". The "extraordinary" nature that unites all populist leaders lies precisely in their ability to present themselves as the "voice of the people', which means both as political outsiders and as authentic representatives of the common people. The greater the leader's ability to present himself as a *primus inter pares*, the stronger the link between identification and representation will become.

> The range of this variability is, however, limited by the obligatory respect of certain parameters. Since the populist people are pushed to look for a leader who resembles them by the feeling of the distance they feel with respect to professional politicians, they demand the direct government of a known man who is supervised - as he must act in the light of day and continue to maintain direct contact with those who have chosen him and consult him, whether this happens through the rhetorical questions addressed from a balcony to the crowd by Perón or by Chávez (and before them by Mussolini) or whether it occurs through a referendum - which sometimes takes on the guise of a plebiscite[7].

The characteristics described so far seem to belong to baggage attributable exclusively to the innate qualities that a man possesses and the relationship between *leadership and power*. However, in the progressive development of the new social sciences and, of sociology, in particular, the tendency to focus attention on the *structure of society* and groups, on the statistical uniformity of behavior, and on **collective processes**, which already in Durkheim's influential work are the real protagonists of historical change. An example of this is **Moreno's sociogram**, also called a sociometric survey,

---

[7] Marco Tarchi. "Italia populista: Dal qualunquismo a Beppe Grillo (Contemporanea) (Italian Edition)". Apple Books.

a method of indirect observation used to analyze an individual's position within a group, which provides information on the situation of the group and identifies leaders and marginalized people. Moreover, if for centuries, scholars have tried to establish the traits and behaviors that determine effective leadership, more recently, the attention has shifted to uncovering the difference between **transformative leadership and transactional leadership.** The former is based on rewarding (transitions) to direct actions and behaviors of a group; instead, the latter is based on the leader's ability to be an inspirer to transform the operating methods of the group thanks to his charisma. In a parallel between the vision of *power* in terms of resource allocation and the definition of power provided by Joseph S. Nye, Jr., of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, to describe the ability to persuade, convince, attract and co-opt, through intangible resources such as " culture, values , and political institutions," transformative leaders are inspiring. Visionary leaders who earn the trust of their followers create common strategies and goals and are known primarily for their ability to inspire change in the values and needs of individuals so that personal interests are included in the organization's collective goals (Burns, 1978). Besides, transformative leaders are also encouraging leaders and are committed to developing their followers to their full potential (Burns, 1978). On the contrary, transactional leaders offer rewards to those who conform to the dominant style and strive to achieve the set objectives (Avolio, 1999; Bass, 1998).

II.3 The woman leader

Her novel *'L' Immagine della Donna Leader'* Donatella Campus seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the perception of female political leadership by citizens?
2. What is the image of leading women in mass media representation? Are there still prejudices about the ability of women to exercise power?
3. Are there any differences? If yes, are they 'real' (based on empirical outcomes) or socially constructed?

A further question is derived from her observations:

4. In what way do female populist leaders differentiate and fit in it?

Numerous studies sought to deepen the knowledge on the gender differences in the leadership style. In an analysis by Careless (1998), female leadership types are delineated within the boundaries of the definition mentioned above of **transformative leadership.**

The public tends to see women as compassionate, sincere, kind, and warm, while men are seen as strong, assertive, aggressive, persistent, and emotionally balanced (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Kahn 1996).
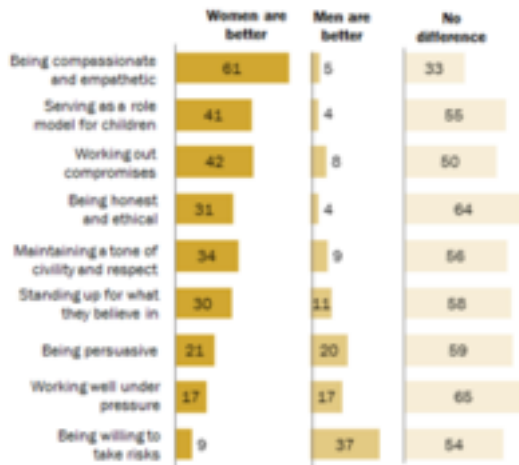
The awareness that there are still prejudices that hinder women's rise to the top of decision-making is widespread. There are even large gender gaps in the views themselves on the issue of women leaders.

As can be seen from a 2018 research conducted by **the Pew Research Center**, titled **'Women and Leadership**,' about seven out of ten women say that there are too few women in high political office and company management positions. Only five out of ten men say the same. Women are much more likely than men to see structural barriers and unequal expectations that keep them from aspiring to more prestigious positions. The survey finds out that Americans mainly consider men and women to be equally capable when it comes to possessing certain vital qualities and behaviors essential to managing executive positions. The majority (57%); however, say that men and women in business and politics top executives' positions have different leadership styles. Among those who say men and women approach leadership differently, 62% say neither is the best. Women are still described as compassionate and empathetic and as more adept at compromising. Men are seen as having a relative advantage in being willing to take risks and negotiate profitable deals.

When asked whether certain personality traits or characteristics would immensely help or harm men and women trying to succeed in business or politics, about seven out of ten adults say that being assertive and ambitious would primarily benefit a man's chances in both fields. While an attribute considered more useful for women than for men is being physically attractive. Six out of ten adults say this helps women get ahead in politics, and an even larger share says it helps women succeed in business.

Women have a relative advantage over men on several aspects of political leadership

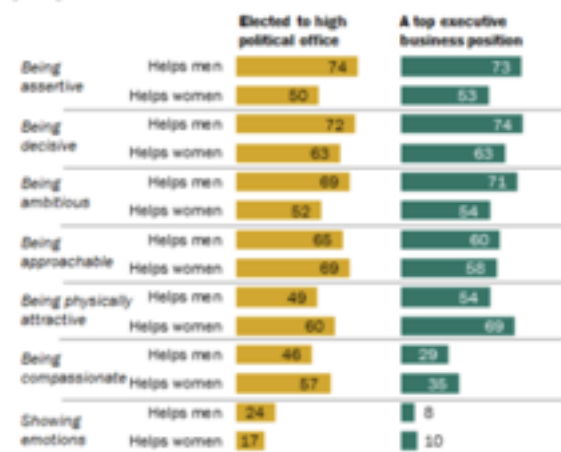*% saying women/men in high political offices are better at ...*

	Women are better	Men are better	No difference
Being compassionate and empathetic	61	5	33
Serving as a role model for children	41	4	55
Working out compromises	42	8	50
Being honest and ethical	31	4	64
Maintaining a tone of civility and respect	34	9	56
Standing up for what they believe in	30	11	58
Being persuasive	21	20	59
Working well under pressure	17	17	65
Being willing to take risks	9	37	54

More say being assertive and being ambitious help men get ahead than say the same for women

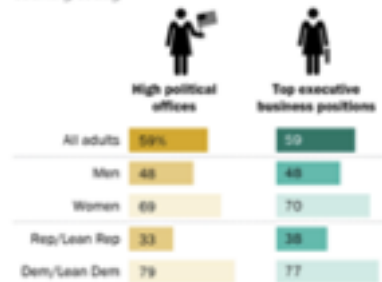*% saying each of the following mostly helps a man's/woman's chances of getting ...*

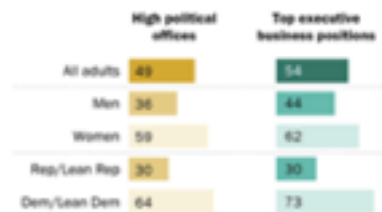|		Elected to high political office	A top executive business position
Being assertive	Helps men	74	73
	Helps women	50	53
Being decisive	Helps men	72	74
	Helps women	63	63
Being ambitious	Helps men	69	71
	Helps women	52	54
Being approachable	Helps men	65	60
	Helps women	69	58
Being physically attractive	Helps men	49	54
	Helps women	60	69
Being compassionate	Helps men	46	29
	Helps women	57	36
Showing emotions	Helps men	24	8
	Helps women	17	10

Wide gender and partisan gaps in views on women in leadership

% saying there are too few women in _____ in the country today

	High political offices	Top executive business positions
All adults	59%	59
Men	48	48
Women	69	70
Rep/Lean Rep	33	38
Dem/Lean Dem	79	77

% saying gender discrimination is a major reason why there aren't more women in ...

	High political offices	Top executive business positions
All adults	49	54
Men	36	44
Women	59	62
Rep/Lean Rep	30	30
Dem/Lean Dem	64	73

Among those who say men and women have different leadership styles, most say neither has a better approach

% saying that when it comes to the leadership styles of people in top positions in business and politics ...

Men and women are basically SIMILAR 43%

Men and women are basically DIFFERENT 57%

- 22% — Women generally have better approach
- 15 — Men generally have better approach
- 62 — Neither is better

Many see uneven expectations, gender discrimination as major obstacles for women seeking leadership roles

% saying each is a major reason why there aren't more women in ...

	High political offices	Top executive business positions
Women have to do more to prove themselves than men	61	60
Women get less support from party leaders	52	--
Women face gender discrimination	49	54
Not ready to elect/hire women leaders	45	47
Women aren't encouraged to be leaders from an early age	42	43
Sexual harassment makes it harder for women to succeed	38	42
Women are held to higher standards than men	37	34
Family responsibilities make it harder for women	36	44
Not as many women are interested in these positions	27	17

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Men and women who see a gender gap in styles of leadership differ on who has a better approach

% saying that when it comes to the leadership styles of people in top positions in business and politics ...

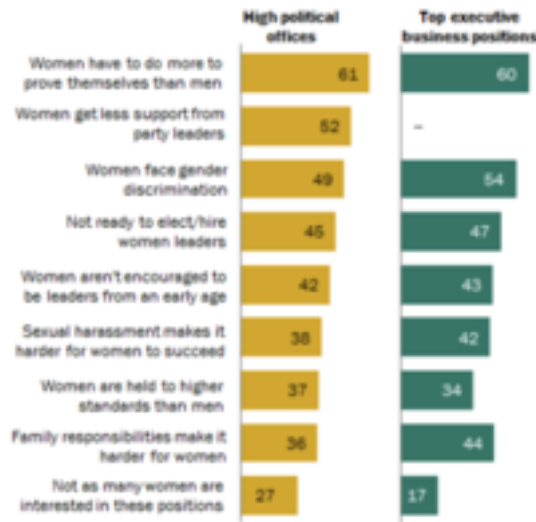|	Men and women are basically similar	Men and women are basically different	Among those who say men and women are basically different		
			Women generally have a better approach	Men generally have a better approach	Neither is better
All adults	43	57	22	15	62
Men	49	50	15	22	62
Women	37	63	27	10	62

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.
"Women and Leadership 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Stereotypes are perceptions of the quality of groups or categories of people. They are generally considered to be over-generalizations that can apply to any order that society considers essential, from gender to caste to religious affiliation, and have been recognized in the literature since the early twentieth century. Lippmann's (1922) original work on public opinion applied the word "stereotype" to the "images in our heads" that shape our beliefs and points out how the word "stereotype" even appears in some seminal studies conducted at Princeton in 1920 (Katz and

Braley, 1933). People use stereotypes as cognitive shortcuts to anticipate others' motives, abilities, and behaviors. Instead of having to "understand" every person they meet, people routinely use stereotypes for reasons of expediency (Macrae et al., 1994; Schneider, 2004, p. 363) and as energy-saving devices (Allport, 1954). This convenience factor increases under the pressure of time and contributes to the persistent human phenomenon of clichés (Fiske, 1998). Stereotypes are further reinforced by various social mechanisms, such as **the "spillover effect**," which suggests that social gender roles can contaminate organizational roles and lead to different expectations. As for gender stereotypes, the picture is further complicated, as Kathleen Jamieson (1995) points out in her book *Double Bind.*

In summary, **the core of Jamieson's argument is that women must be aggressive not to be branded as weak and, therefore, not qualified to be the boss. However, if they act too decisively, they are criticized as too aggressive** (D. Campus, 2010). Marine Le Pen was undoubtedly not spared by this kind of question. Nevertheless, she was able to untie herself from a leadership model strongly marked by masculine values, showing how her more calm figure as a young woman could, on the contrary, strongly contribute to the new image of the party, giving it a "human face" (Lévy, 2010). The French leader presented herself as a woman with three children but multi-divorced. In her book *Controcorrente* (2011), she talked about the effort of raising children alone, celebrating the strength and courage of women who take on a double load, public and private.

As Schwartzenberg (1977) states, female leaders who cannot or do not want to conform to the male leadership model have only one other option: the role of **the mother of the nation.**

However, the construction of the image of the *vox populi* takes place not too far from the concept of 'strong man' that populist leaders pursue. The only difference is the traditional detachment from the ruling elite, from the immigrant, from the 'other' - populist women leaders already have their biological sex to build their outsider status.

The mere fact that a populist leader is a woman, while the overwhelming majority of the (political) elite is male, reinforces her image as an *'outsider'* and allows her to generate a bond with the colleges that feel ignored by the establishment.

Another frequent stereotype that women leaders are subjected to is **the phenomenon of trivialization,** that is, the attention to less important and indeed more banal details in the political figure's life in question. There are at least two aspects to be taken into consideration.

The first aspect concerns private and family life; the second one concerns a woman's image from an aesthetic point of view and from a physical perspective to dressing. On 25 February 2020, just two days after the first decree-law on the containment and management of the epidemiological

emergency from COVID-19, The Italian Times publishes an article entitled: "Giorgia Meloni: daughter Ginevra, age, height and weight, who is the partner, why she is not married." Andrea Giambruno, Giorgia Meloni's partner, fave the interview to the director of *Libero*, Pietro Senaldi, who was also very famous. In it, he states: "It does not bother me to be associated with Giorgia, but I have my personality, my job, and I have not ever asked for anything. In the couple, I am the man; **I do not act like a mom**; I do not even know how to cook".

Women have identified stereotypes as a significant obstacle to overcoming the so-called crystal ceiling (Catalyst, 2002), and scholars have echoed this view for years (Antal and Izraeli, 1993; Heilman, 2001; Schein, 2001). Furthermore, this was also consistent in the analysis of the intersection of stereotypes and self-fulfilling prophecy.

When there is a negative (or positive) stereotype about a particular group, the group members perform in a way that confirms this stereotype. For women leaders, this may involve internalizing the idea of being less able to take on decision-making roles. As such, they do not identify with potential leadership positions, considered male territory, thus undermining their motivation and potentially leading to lower performance.

The concern related to evaluating their performance is often more significant than the opportunities that learning could bring in career advancement (Ely and Rhode, 2010). Therefore, the growth of Marine Le Pen among French women has specific reasons, explains sociologist Nonna Mayer, who has been studying Front National for 25 years.

In conclusion, on answering the questions Donatella Campus had posed to herself in her masterpiece '*L'immagine della Donna Leader'*, we can argue that:

1. The perception of female political leadership by citizens can be seen in the identification and ability of women to present themselves as innovators, 'outsiders' and agents of change

2. Women leaders' image in the representation of the mass media seems to have identified the conditions for a leadership style different from the male counterpart, despite the further exploitation of **the stereotypical female image**; "**Women are the key**," Mayer says. "These women who often abstained today support Le Pen to protect their jobs and safety."

3. Are the differences, if they exist, "real" (based on empirical findings) or socially constructed? From the literature, it is now possible to frame female leadership **in the transactional - transformative dichotomy**, in which the two opposite approaches determine different reflections on the organizational structure. While in the first case, there is a conservative disposition of the dynamics already present in the organization. In the second case, we face an evolutionary intervention that can change the "rules of the game."

4. How do populist leaders differ and fit in it? To this question, we could answer by looking at

the words **of Paul Taggart**; populism can be thought of as 'the politics of *ordinary* people made by *extraordinary* leaders who build ordinary profiles.'

III.1 Using Conversation Analysis to intersect Populism and Female Leadership

In methodology, **qualitative analysis** allows the collection of visual information not in numerical form, but through labels or classifications. It allows us to express the qualities of a specific object of investigation in the form of textual information, focusing above all on collecting verbal data.

The data are usually descriptive data, usually acquired through a diary, an open questionnaire, interviews, or observations. The information collected is then analyzed in an interpretative manner, often with statistical tools that allow for accurate and reliable results.

Like all research methods, however, qualitative research has distinctive strengths and weaknesses. While on the one hand, field research seems to provide more significant **validity** measures than numerical and experimental measurements; on the other hand, qualitative research presents a potential **reliability** problem.

Among the various qualitative research methods, **conversation analysis (CA)** is an approach to the study of social interaction, which embraces both verbal and non-verbal conduct in everyday situations. Inspired by Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology and Erving Goffman's conception of the order of interaction, conversation analysis was developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s primarily by sociologist Harvey Sacks and his close collaborators Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson. Today, CA is a widelyused humanities method. It is particularly influential in interactional sociolinguistics and speech analysis.

To describe **populism**, it is necessary to resort to the qualitative research tool and, in particular, to analyze the **rhetoric** used by populist leaders. Conversation analysis allows us to analyze the themes and characteristics of the speeches of populist leaders. Through the transcription of their speeches and statements, debates during press conferences, and election campaigns, the CA allows us to observe the populist communication style, full of inspirational images and intimidating, with an informal register and a compelling style.

In order to understand the main themes of the populist leaders, thus analyzing their speeches, I thought it appropriate to use the data collected through the co-occurrence network (CON) based on the centrality index of the KH Coder 3.0 program.

KH Coder is an open-source software used for the analysis of qualitative data. It is mainly used for the quantitative analysis of the frequency of a given content and text mining, an artificial intelligence technique that uses natural language processing to transform free, unstructured text into structured and normalized data. The KH Coder program also supports the processing and etymological information of the text in different languages. This made it possible to analyze the speeches of Giorgia Meloni, Marine Le Pen, and Cristina Fernández in their original languages,

respectively Italian, French, and Spanish, in such a way as not to alter their lexical and semantic specificities.

After correcting some coding rules (the exclusion of some logical operators such as "and," "o," "non," demonstrative adjectives, and some adverbs), CON took into account the co-occurrence relationships between the terms, thus highlighting the most debated topics by populist leaders.

III.2 Common Themes in the Populist Debate
Speech delivered by Giorgia: "Political Elections 2018: Press Conference of Fratelli d'Italia",

held in Rome on Monday 5 March 2018

*Good afternoon everybody. Thanks for being here. Press Conference to analyze the vote of Fratelli d'Italia. This is an election that essentially gives us a revolution in the political landscape. **All government parties are punished.** By governing parties, I mean the parties that have been firmly in government in recent years and those who have somehow participated in governments in recent years. So a great demand for discontinuity by the citizens has soundly punished **a left insensitive to Italians' problems**, entirely self-referential has made even in this electoral campaign. The themes used by the left were absolutely **light-years away from what people needed.** That is the idea of left now closed in living rooms to tell about a reality that no longer exists, unable to collect the needs and requests from citizens. And I mean the whole left, in short, that of the Democratic Party but also that of Boldrini. And it seems to me that overall the left is at an all-time low and, on the other hand, **a large part of the left electorate has chosen to take refuge** in the 5-star Movement. Confirming the thesis that Fratelli d'Italia has repeatedly advanced; namely, that good or bad, Movimento 5 Stelle is a bit the other side of the left. That in the central issues of our time, issues of **immigration**, and **relationship with the family** and **non-negotiable values**, rather than the relationship with **Europe**, there is contiguity between the choices of the Democratic Party and the 5 Star Movement choices. And this is confirmed by what happened in these elections, by the result of the 5 Star Movement, which objectively made up for the Democratic Party's shortcomings.*

*The fact remains that we are happy with this. The Italians indicate the **center-right** as the primary government option. This, until a few months ago, was an unthinkable result, and we must be absolutely proud of this. It is a responsibility that we feel upon ourselves, a responsibility that as Fratelli d'Italia, we will do our best to **honor** an absolutely **excellent** result of Matteo Salvini's League within the center-right. I called Matteo to pay him my compliments. We chatted a bit on the phone. We will obviously see us in the next few hours in the next few days, and obviously, I'm here to communicate these: good Fratelli d'Italia too. In short, the party's result, in this case, is probably less visible than the other of the two main winners of this competition: the 5 Star*

Movement and the League.

*The fact remains that, net of these two indisputable winners of the elections, the only growing party is the Fratelli d'Italia. Which grows and which grows by a significant percentage of more than 100 percent in absolute votes in 2013 for having taken 660,000 votes. This time around 1,400,000 citizens chose us, therefore more than double. But the data I am happiest with is, in short, t**he parliamentary patrol.** The growth of our parliamentary patrol will be 500 percent from the last election to this legislature. We went out, and in 2013 we had nine parliamentarians elected who did a very very, very important job. I was able to boast in this election campaign that I had the smallest parliamentary group and, at the same time, the parliamentary group that had produced the most in these five years. Imagine what we can do with the approximately 50 or more parliamentarians between the two chambers in this legislature.[8]*

---

[8] http://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/535020/elezioni-politiche-2018-conferenza-stampa-di-fratelli-ditalia/audio
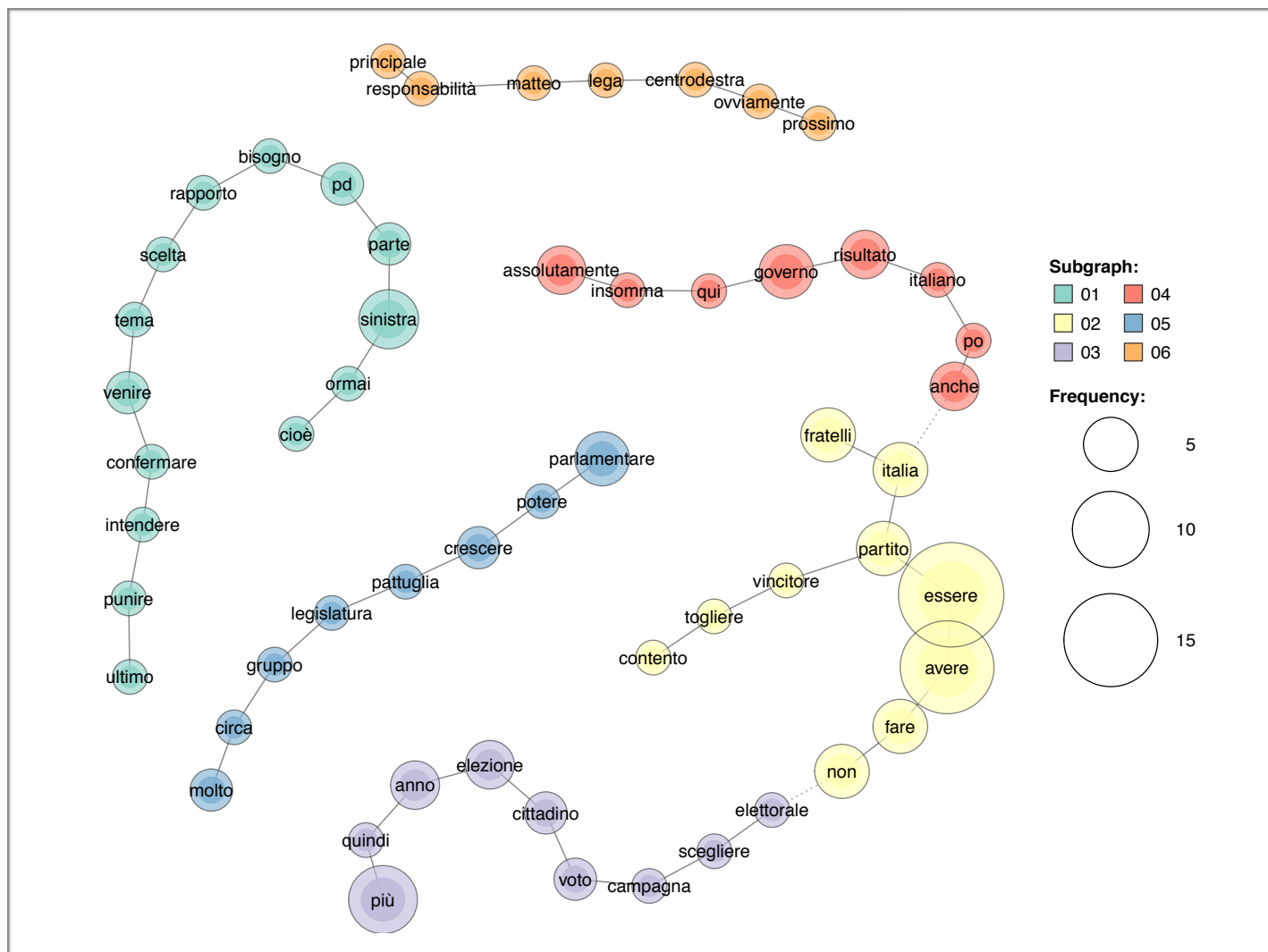
Figura 1, Speech delivered by Giorgia: "Political Elections 2018: Press Conference of Fratelli d'Italia", held in Rome on Monday 5 March 2018, graph by Magdi Vecchiet, 20 September 2020

The speech delivered by Fratelli d'Italia leader following the election results of 2018 highlights some of the main formal features of populist rhetoric. In a 2014 article titled "Rethinking Populism: Politics, Mediatization and Political Style," Benjamin Moffitt and Simon Tormey define political style as a series of "performance repertoires used to create political relationships." According to the authors, the populist actor can adopt a level of informality, allowing him to use a direct and straightforward style and propose equally immediate and pragmatic solutions.

In the image obtained from the KH Coder program analysis, Giorgia Meloni's speech's simplicity and clarity are demonstrated by the scarcity of connections between the terms used to describe her party and the political counterpart. Where verbs like "confirm" and "punish" are placed side by side with the Italian left, the connections and positive adjectives increase alongside the name of "Fratelli d'Italia."

We also refer to the frequent use of adverbs such as "obviously" and "absolutely" to confirm the president's speech's incisiveness and assertiveness.

Marine Le Pen speaks after her defeat in the second round of the presidential election, Paris, 7 May 2017

*My dear **compatriots** in metropolitan France, overseas and abroad, the French have chosen a new President of the Republic and have voted for **continuity**. I called Mr. Macron to congratulate him on his election and because I have the country's best interests at heart. I wished him success in the face of t**he immense challenges France is facing.** I want to thank the 11 million French people who have given me their voice and confidence and the activists who have supported and accompanied me throughout this campaign. I also thank Nicolas Dupont Aignan and his movement Debout la France and the personalities who supported me for their courageous and founding choices. By this historic and massive result, the French designated the Patriote and Republican Alliance as the first force of opposition to the new president's project. Political **parties that have taken the responsibility of electing Mr. Macron have discredited themselves** and have lost all legitimacy to represent a force of alternation or even of credible opposition. The first round brought about a major decomposition of French political life by eliminating the old parties. This second round is organizing a large-scale political recomposition around the cleavage between the patriots and the globalists. This great choice, by constituencies, will be submitted to the French during the legislative elections. **I will be at the head of this fight** to bring together all those who want to choose France, to defend its independence, its freedom, its prosperity, its security, its identity, and its social model. So much we are worried about the prospects as offers this new five-year term. The National Front, which is committed to an alliance strategy, must also deeply renew itself to live up to this historic opportunity and the French's expectations during this second round. Therefore, **I will propose to initiate a profound transformation of our movement** to constitute a new political force that many French people are calling for and which is more than ever necessary for the country's recovery. I call on all the Patriots to join us to participate in the decisive political fight, which begins this evening. More than ever, in the coming months, France will need you. Long live the Republic, long live France![9]*

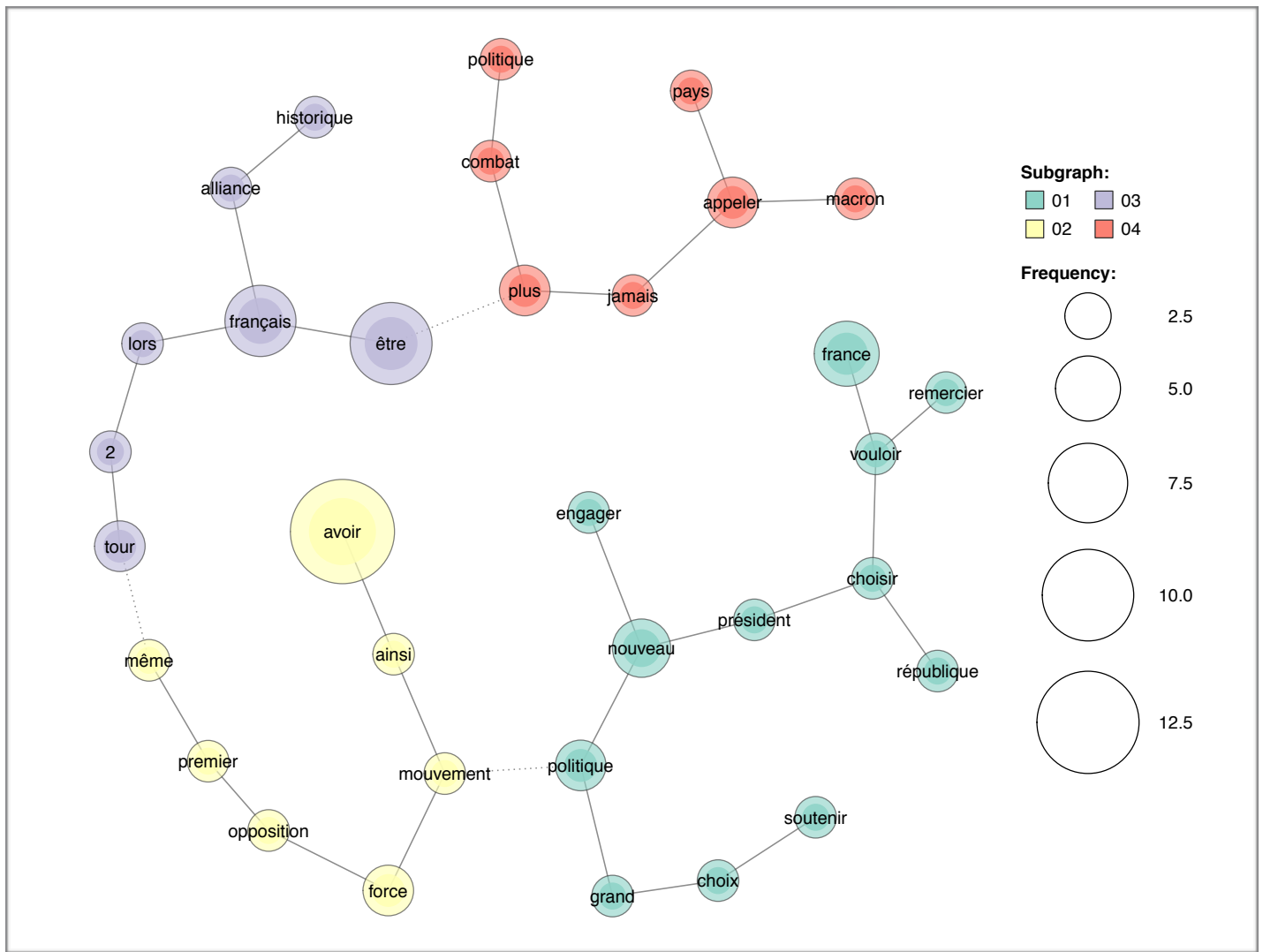---

[9] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nvuyTBr0yw

Figura 2, Marine Le Pen speaks after her defeat in the second round of the presidential election, Paris, 7 May 2017, graph by Magdi Vecchiet, 20 September 2020

Although the similar circumstances that preceded the speech of Marine Le Pen and that of Giorgia Meloni, the conference held by the leader of the Rassemblement National presents elements of detachment from the statements of the Italian leader.

Beyond the usual ritual formulas, thanks, and congratulations to the winning party, Marine Le Pen denotes a more paternalistic attitude. The periods are more extended, and the emotional references to a France of 'compatriots' and, not only of voters, are more frequent. Marine Le Pen's speech thus provides us with new elements for observing some characteristics of populist rhetoric. The stylistic characteristics attributed to populism are extensive: dramatization, polarization, moralization, immediacy, ordinariness, colloquial, and vulgar language. Marine Le Pen adopts three main dimensions: **simplification, emotionality, and negativity.**

If initially, the French leader presents herself as the **victim** of an electorate and a political system unable to grasp the importance of a change and, which therefore loses 'all legitimacy to represent a force of alternation or even credible opposition,' in conclusion Marine Le Pen recalls his love for his country and states that his only interest is that of the good of France.

The theme of choice, the 'choix,' is thus a central node of the conference, as can be seen from the image obtained by KH Coder. Most authors have stressed the importance of anger, fear, and resentment of populist discourses (Caiani & Graziano, 2016, p. 260; Hameleers, Bos, & de Vreese, 2016, p. 7), while Sven Engesser, Nayla Fawzi & Anders Olof Larsson (2017) highlight the role of hope. Marine Le Pen manages to grasp both elements. She highlights, on the one hand, the difficulties that the country will encounter in this mandate. On the other, **she proposes herself as the future guide of this 'struggle,' capable of 'bringing together all those who want to choose France, defend its independence, freedom, prosperity, security, and identity and its social model.'**

President Cristina Fernández thanked the national network for the support she received during her husband's funeral, former President Néstor Kirchner. "This is my most painful moment, not the most difficult," said the Nation's host. Broadcast by Vision Siete, Argentine Public TV newscast, on Monday, November 1, 2010.

*It's 5:40 p.m. on Monday, but for a few moments more, I'm going to receive the credentials of new ambassadors in the Argentine Republic. One more day of government management. But obviously a different day in my life. My life, well as everyone knows, changed definitively. I have read or heard that this is my **most challenging** moment it's actually something else. It is my **most painful** moment. Pain is something different; difficulties or adversities I have had in political life and my government, in particular, many difficulties and many adversities. But pain is something else. And it is the greatest pain that I have had in my life. The loss of who was my partner for 35 years, life partner. It is a part of the struggle of ideas, and that was with him. He is in the Galician river. Well, **there is no time to use the national channel for emotional therapy but to give thanks**. I wanted to use these few and brief minutes to thank everyone and all the men and women who mobilized, that they wanted to see him, that they tried to fire him, that they prayed for him, that they cried for him, that they could not get here perhaps because they lived far away, but they met in other places, that they gave me **rosaries**. I have the rosaries hanging in my house upstairs to thank him, the flowers, the letters, and the racing shirts. From the racing that I adored to the other t-shirts that they gave me, which were not from others, they created from other games alike. He liked football a lot and the flags that were also delivered. Thank you very much for that immense*

*and formidable show of affection and love that you deserve. I'm not going to take away his **humility** because, as a very important leader who has already passed away said, you have to be very big to be humble. I'm not big, so you want to be humble, I'll just say that he deserved it and let me give special thanks to the tens to the tens of thousands of young people who sang and marched with pain and with joy—singing for him. I want to tell all those young people that I saw the face of when I met him in each one of those faces for the country. There was the face of my actions, and I want to tell those young people that they have much luckier than when he was young because they are in a country a lot, a lot better. In a country that did not abandon them. In a country that did not condemn or persecute them. On the contrary, in a country that summons them. In a country that loves them, that needs them. In a country that we will continue to make different. Between all of us and the millions and millions of Argentines who seem to be more than 40 million, we were also lucky to Have helped the descent go very well. I want to tell all Argentines that I had always had a great sense of responsibility in all the functions I performed when I was a provincial legislator. When I was a national legislator and even more so as president because I feel that **all Argentines' fate depends on me**. But let me tell you that since this Wednesday, in addition to that immense **responsibility** that I always felt and exercised with a lot of love, with a lot of heart, with a lot of conviction, with a lot of passion, I feel another great responsibility, which is to honor his memory and honor his government. That transformed and changed the country. Thank you very much to all.*[10]

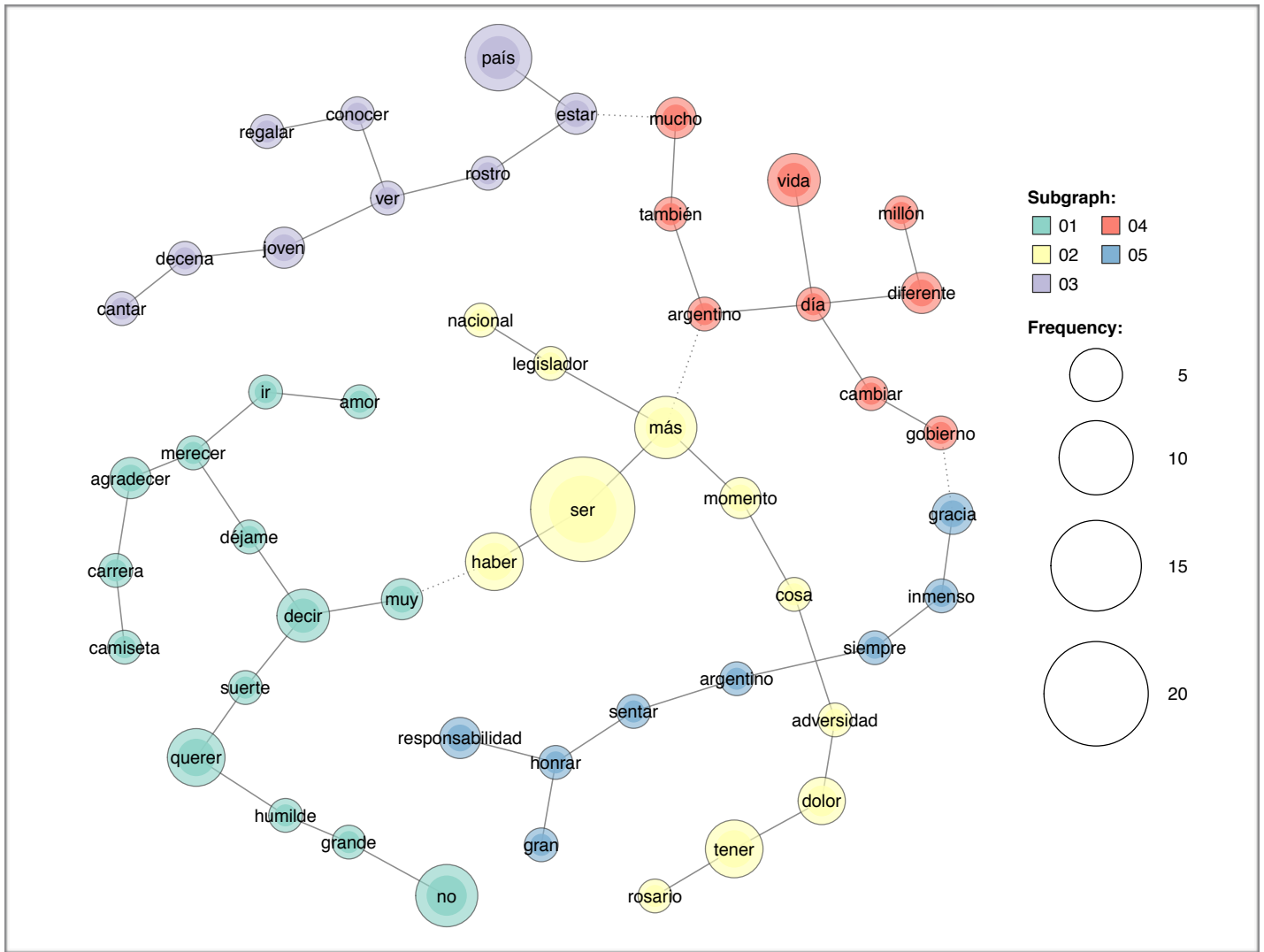[10] https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=9&v=s5WHx8WJqMI&feature=emb_logo

Figura 3, President Cristina Fernández thanked the national network for the support she received during her husband's funeral, former President Néstor Kirchner on Monday, November 1, 2010, graph by Magdi Vecchiet, 20 September 2020

President Kirchner's inauguration speech is nothing short of different and unique from the two previous leaders' press conferences. The extreme emotionality, the dramatization, the informal and paternalistic language are all very incisive elements of the style adopted by the leader of Frente para la Victoria. **The 'adverisadads' intersect with 'pain.'** However, at the same time, they are not far from the acquisition of the position of political responsibility and the decision to honor the nation in memory of its loss. The distinctive theme of this speech is the personal thanks to all those who, in addition to offering condolences, took care to deliver the **'rosary**,' a religious symbol referring to the devotional and contemplative prayer addressed to the Virgin Mary.

The relationship between the Church and populist leaders is controversial, and the relationship between Cristina Kirchner and Pope Francis is certainly no less. From gay marriage to social and economic policies, the former archbishop of Buenos Aires has never spared harsh criticism of the Argentine governments led by Mr. and Mrs. Kirchner.

In 'Saving the People: How Populists Hijack Religion' (2016), edited by Nadia Marzouki, Duncan McDonnell, and Olivier Roy, the authors argue that religion is 'more about belonging than about belief' for populists. The identities and religious traditions used by populists allow them to define who can and who cannot be part of the 'people.'

An example of this is the interview with Marine Le Pen in the Catholic-inspired daily La Croix, where Le Pen defined herself as "extremely Catholic." However, she also said to be "angry" with the Church, for the words of the Pope on the reception of migrants: «I think he interferes with everything except what concerns you. This - she explained - does not mean that I do not have respect for some religious". Closeness to Christian culture has allowed many leaders to argue that native Christian communities are currently under threat from a disturbing and highly dramatic Islamization process. Literature has thus had to reaffirm the importance of distinguishing the Church and populist movements. Where populists speak of 'identity' and 'belonging,' the Church speaks of 'faith.' If Christianity is a religion, Christianity linked to populism is now a political program, which has nothing ethical or sacred (Goldberg 2017). The relationship with religion is too meaningful a theme to be omitted in the construction of a solid sovereignist thought, but less complicated and debated in Italy at the time of Pope Benedict XVI. Even today, Giorgia Meloni posts on the website of the Brothers of Italy to want to affirm 'the right not to emigrate as taught by the Church and by Ratzinger.'

*Sull'immigrazione sono pienamente d'accordo con don Dante: dobbiamo aiutare gli africani a non emigrare. Una posizione chiarissima e in linea con l'insegnamento della Chiesa e **le parole di Papa Benedetto XVI**: "Prima ancora che il diritto a emigrare, va riaffermato il diritto a non emigrare, cioè a essere in condizione di rimanere nella propria terra*
[On immigration, I fully agree with Don Dante: we must help Africans not to emigrate. An absolute position and in line with the teaching of the Church and the words of Pope Benedict XVI: "Even before the right to emigrate, the right not to emigrate must be reaffirmed, that is, to be able to remain in one's land[11].

In conclusion, two main concepts intersect the populist rhetoric of the Church: the theme of **restoration and that of battle.**

Restorationism, or Christian primitivism, believes that Christianity was or should be restored along the lines of what is known about the early apostolic Church, which restorers see as the pursuit

---

[11] https://www.giorgiameloni.it/2018/07/21/affermare-diritto-a-non-emigrare-insegnato-da-chiesa-e-da-ratzinger/

of a purer and older form of religion. For populists, culture can be reduced to a simplistic and easily recognizable series of codes of conduct and symbols (the crucifix, the rosary). The restoration is then accompanied by the idea of an essential **battle** to defend local spaces from "alien" religions and to keep indigenous religious symbols in public places: in that Manichean discourse of 'us' against 'them.'

THE COMPARISON BETWEEN

EUROPEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN FEMALE POPULISM

Every event, phenomenon, and political path can be traced back to social, political, and cultural contexts - populism is no exception. Populism takes on its connotation concerning the context in which it operates. The populist phenomenon differs in a varied spectrum of forms, in an interpretation of the concept of 'people' and 'elite.'

The link with the dominant social complaints of the political region in which it arises, the interests of the groups, and the specific combination with so-called host ideologies are fundamental for categorizing populism.

Although populism is generally related to the national context, political scientist Cas Mudde has observed how particular regional phenomena can create waves of **quite similar populist actors.** Think about the radical right-wing populist parties in contemporary Europe or the current variant of populists of the extreme left in Latin America. (Mudde, p. 40)

Despite the difficulty of summarizing regional governmental experiences in a single category, in most post-modern populist regimes, the presence of hegemonic conflicts and the complexity of building *a homogeneous demos* has generally been noted. In Latin America, this difficulty is often traced back to the phenomenon of colonialism in Europe; however, the exaltation of the supremacy of *a single legitimate populus* who then witnessed the radicalization of fascist and Nazi ideologies. In Latin America, the combination of high levels of socioeconomic inequality and relatively long periods of democratic rule explain to a large extent why the populist ideology is successful.

On the one hand, the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a small minority makes populist discourse particularly attractive, since it helps to identify the existence of an *oligarchy* that acts against the wishes of the people (el pueblo). On the other hand, the periodic holding of relatively free and fair elections provides a mechanism through which voters can channel their dissatisfaction with the state of affairs and build a specific narrative around perceived social grievances.

In Europe, radical right-wing populist parties accuse the *elite* of having destroyed the welfare state in favor of immigration policies - thus, undermining the interests of 'their people'. As for European foreign policy, populist leaders attack the national elite for allegedly "selling off" their country to the Union, while in their economic agenda, European populist leaders show traits of welfare chauvinism or neoliberal support policies of lower taxes and free trade.

The contextual heterogeneity, both European and South American, is particularly noticeable in **gender issues.**

It is not far-fetched to suggest that the views on gender issues and roles in Northern Europe are much more emancipated than those in South America. This means that we are **comparing populist forces** working in very different cultural settings, particularly when it comes to gender norms. Accordingly, we argue that given that populist actors roughly express the 'popular' views on gender issues and roles—as described in their respective country—they adopt **a masculine position in South America** and a **relatively gender-equal approach in Northern Europe.**[12]

In contrast to **the post-war OECD's** family situation, **in Latin America**, there has been an accentuation of **the polarization of the two genders.**

An important aspect **of Latin American feminism** comes from the revolutionary movements that arose in the 1960s and 1970s, in response to economic inequality and imperialist interventions, with the Cuban revolution representing the epicenter. Catholic activism also played a role, promoting various forms of "progressive-populism" or "left-wing." **The militant young women of the revolutionary left** became the so-called "feminists of fire," engaged in a 'double militancy,' active both in left parties and in women's groups. In opposition, the military dictatorships promoted the rhetoric of the good housewife, disinterested in social issues and politics.

Meanwhile**, in Europe**, different ways of expressing oneself were identified concerning gender and sexuality arguments. These arguments are presented in *Understanding the Populist Shift* by Gabriella Lazaridis and Giovanna Campani and placed in two macro-areas.

The first macro-area, highlighted by the researchers, is the **'biopolitical argument**,' which expresses the ideas, mostly essentialist and nationalist, which define the 'correct' concept of gender and sexual roles, seen as "natural." "Anyone who is constructed in such a way as not to fit them is seen as a potential threat to the purity of the people," say Konsta and Lazaridis. The main point of reference is the preservation of the family and motherhood. In employing this logic, a member of the National Front French stated that to ensure the nation's protection:

We are for a mother's income because we have many women nowadays who must work in jobs they don't like [...]. We realize that a mother's income would be a way to solve it. On the other hand, it is a way to enforce nativity. Because today you often hear: 'I can't have kids, I could not feed them.' (Benveniste and Pingaud 2013)

The second macro-area discussed by Gabriella Lazaridis and Giovanna Campani is **the concept of 'morality**,' which presents itself in a very heterogeneous way compared to the previous one, given the countless variety of interpretations. This argument includes the (neo) liberal argument of choice and free will, which argues that women should be given the right to choose and decide between the private sphere of the family - that is, being a mother - and **the public obligation** of wage labor. Yet, as can be seen from much of the literature, women were strongly conditioned to take on a position in the private, family sphere - as division's public and private indicators.

Only through a reworking of more contemporary writers can the figure of women, gender, and free will take on new expressions, such as **Habermas's** theory of discourse (1985). According to which public discussion on issues of collective interest should be free, open to all, in conditions of institutionally guaranteed equality between citizens. However, this perspective's realization is still strongly hindered today by the differences between classes, sexes, ethnicities, and cultures, as highlighted by **Nancy Fraser**. Fraser's (1997) reconstruction thus presents an alternative normative model of democracy based on social equality.

The American philosopher proposes a rethinking of the democratic public sphere based on the presence of conflicts and pluralism. This critique contains four main points:

1. Habermas's liberal model idealizes the bourgeois public sphere, which is still based on the exclusion of gender and marginalized social groups

2. the Habermasian approach neglects the analysis of competing public spheres based on unequal power relations, where "weak publics" oppose dominant "strong" audiences without evaluating and deepening the study of their interrelations

3. it neglects the plurality of public spheres and the possibility of elaborating alternative styles of political behavior and alternative norms of public discourse

4. it ignores the fact that the public sphere is made up of conflicts and is based on the separation between public and private, civil society, and the state.

Therefore, women have had to struggle to gain access and find a legitimate voice in the public sphere, developing particular expression patterns mainly based on the articulation of lived experiences. The possibility of creating an alternative style of public discourse has led women to deepen the historical contributions of the rhetoric and available address traditions. The current populist leaders have thus built their image from their homeland's historical roots, identifying the "feminine style" of discursive interaction.

Campbell (2005) discusses female style as a performative tradition that emerged in the nineteenth-century women's public discourse. There is no doubt that some women have imitated male

leadership models. Think of using the term "Iron Lady" coined for Margaret Thatcher and soon used by the minister herself, as a slogan to express her determination and wisdom. (D. Campus, p.61) The most common image used by female leaders and, in particular, by populist leaders is that of "mother of the nation." Schwartzenberg (1980, 115ff.) pointed out the concept of the mother of the nation is one of the few alternatives available to women for not adopting the typical male leadership model. It permits to propose an image of power that is not based on the concept of authority (stereotypically associated with the father figure) but on care.

IV.1 The idea of the mother of the homeland
Political leadership can be seen as the art of seducing voters and followers. It is the ability to influence a group thanks to one's charisma to attract and motivate a mass's conscience. However, charismatic leadership attributes are often adjectives concerning a man's image, a healthy, vigorous, and assertive male leader. This demonstrates that communication continues to combine a masculine idea with charismatic leadership, underestimating gender issues, and female leaders (Meret, 2015).

Existing literature generally considers female leadership unrelated to charisma (see, for example, Mudde 2007). Think even of the relationship between power and personal charm always seen as a positive factor for a man and not for a woman. Indeed, under certain conditions, the mix of beauty, sexual attraction, and seduction can even be counterproductive for female political leaders. (D. Campus, p. 88). It is almost pleonastic to note how the body represents a sensitive metaphor from a political perspective. In general, **the body** is an almost infinite matrix of metaphors. Through the body, the reality is made understandable; the symbols with which it is represented and known are structured. The function of the body's metaphor is even more vital if transported to the political sphere, an area in which the network of concepts, images, metaphors with which reality is expressed, described, and illustrated. For this reason, the body of the political leader assumes substantial importance, as it inherits that **representative function** already outlined by Kantorowicz - it is through this body that the entire political community is represented. (G. Parotto, 2007).

Then, the media world, as a privileged vehicle through which iconic bodies, normative models, and even counter-types are presented, represents and reinforces the trivializations of the genre. The way of representing men and women leaders is, in fact, profoundly different, despite the recognition of the power that the media possess in the decision-making processes. Firstly, the amount of media representation of female politicians is significantly less than the male counterpart; secondly, the quality and the consequences that a female politician must suffer after being the media subject are not the same as her male counterparts.

The media operate within social, economic, and political contexts, which means that they reflect common perceptions and, at the same time, influence how people perceive problems. The representation of electoral candidates is an example. According to the publication *Unseeing Eyes: Media Coverage and Gender in Latin American elections* (Llanos, 2011), in 2009, in Bolivia, female candidates accounted for 47% of all candidates but obtained only 27% of the media coverage of the card print, 14% of television coverage and 34% of radio coverage. Unequal media coverage of female candidates causes them to be perceived as less legitimate, thus reducing their chances of being elected.

Therefore, a crucial factor is the role of the media in portraying candidates from a gender perspective. The fact that a woman fulfills widespread expectations by marrying and having children is a crucial aspect of any candidate's media coverage, regardless of her personal history and leadership style. It can be hypothesized that the mass media want to reassure their public that a qualified candidate for political work could also be a traditional woman (Braden 1996, 65). Most empirical research shows that information on marital status and the number of children is made available in most cases to female candidates. Simultaneously, the private lives of male politicians of the same rank are generally ignored unless they are it is they who choose to shape their public image through the details of their private life (Jamieson 1995; Falk 2010). In Jamieson (1995, 168), "Motherhood remains more relevant than fatherhood to those who put the news pages together." (D. Campus, p.94).

As we have previously mentioned, female leaders, therefore, can exploit in their turn the patriarchal vision that sees them qualified as leaders only as mothers. The concept of "mother of the nation" allows them to refer to a matriarchal order, which, in contrast to the patriarchal one, should be characterized by the so-called soft power. The mother of the nation model has the advantage of being a culturally approved female leadership model because it is rooted in the traditional values of nurturing and caring. What Saint-Germain (1993, 969) observes for Latin American countries - "it is only on their cultural authority as mothers that women can acceptably venture into the political sphere"- is virtually extensible everywhere. In her role as mother of the nation, a female populist leader can be seen as the embodiment of radical right-wing nationalist ideas while at the same time representing a populist idea of representing "the people."

Furthermore, populist women can turn to familiar, caring images to signal their identification with people (D. Geva, 2018). Such symbolic motherhood also has the dual function of representing female leaders not only as kind and supportive, who care for the family and its values, but also as authority figures who look out for their husbands and children (Schwartzenberg 1980).

"The nation is a mother, and populist leaders are its natural representatives," says Nadia Urbinati,

a political scientist at Columbia University. "For mothers, all children are the same, and above all, the sons and daughters are privileged over the occasional guests of the house. Therefore, they are portraying inclusivity towards one's own and not caring towards others - a radical nationalist vision, rather than simply populist ". The mothers of the nation are also not exempt from the rigorous control of dominant expectations. The need to demonstrate their abilities and their combativeness are accentuated precisely under **"the purity of motherhood"** (Hoogensen and Solheim 2006, 65). Any mistake or irresponsibility receives harsh criticism that perhaps would never be directed at a man.

While attention to family life can, therefore, have positive consequences as it helps women to establish a direct and almost intimate bond with their citizens, on the other, leaders are subjected to the most diverse interventions. Being married but not being a mother, for example, can raise indiscreet speculation. It is suspected that women choose this type as a calculated career move or the lack of 'natural instincts.' This is why women leaders usually allow the media to inform themselves about their home life and sometimes use the good mother's image for their political advantage. This also happens to the three populist leaders whose profile this research seeks to outline - Giorgia Meloni, Marine Le Pen, and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. The following will be highlighted:

1. the relationship between women politicians, political power, and gender in different national contexts
2. the differences between populist parties
3. the relationship between populist women leaders, their presentation in the media, and their self-representation is a description of personal characteristics and their rhetoric.

IV. 1.1 France: Marine Le Pen and Rassemblement National
Marine Le Pen, President of the Rassemblement National since January 16, 2011, and member of the French National Assembly since June 20, 2017, was MEP from 2004 to 2017. She is a law graduate, lawyer, and the third child of Jean-Marie Le Pen.

The leader introduces herself as a multiple divorcee and mother of three children. A woman, not very young but still young, (to refer to those superficial descriptions highlighted by Donatella Campus) who gave a smooth turn to the Front National (FN) program, re-founding it based on the rhetoric of republican France and combining the objectives of national defense and resistance to the "oppressor" with a language of equality, freedom, and secularism.

As can be seen in her book and political manifesto *Pour Que vive la France*, printed a year after she was elected leader of the FN, Marine Le Pen criticizes current French politics and the elite,

which is held responsible for national and national decline which the author sees as the imminent death of **French national sovereignty**. In this same book, she discusses the effects of globalization, French identity, and its values and expresses her views on the country's political priorities.

The overlap between populism's emphasis on being "of the people" and against elite professional politicians and radical right-wing nationalist and nativist ideologies, which emphasize blood kinship, are characteristics that allow us to situate Marine Le Pen not only as a representative of her party's past and conservatism but also as a modern woman with **a maternal ethic of care**, who cares about the future.

About the points of the National Front program, first of all, there is the exit from the Euro to reacquire national sovereignty to be maintained with protectionist measures, the withdrawal from NATO in a Eurasian perspective "from Brest to Vladivostok," the strengthening of the "Paris-Berlin-Moscow" axis, the rejection of austerity policies, the centralization of state power under the banner of republican values and secularism, strategic planning of re-industrialization, the access to quality healthcare for all French citizens, national priority and a public debt relief plan. At the FN congress in Tours, the President openly formulated her mission for **an "alternative society" based on French "national sovereignty"** and contrasting the challenges of Islam and **globalization** promoted in France by the "totalitarian positions of left Islam.".

Le mondialisme est en effet une idéologie, qui a pour trait principal de nier l'utilité des nations, leur adaptation au monde «postmoderne», et qui vise à façonner un nouvel homme, sorte d'homo mondialisus, vivant hors sol, sans identité autre que celle du consommateur global, rebaptisé «citoyen du monde» pour masquer le caractère profondément mercantile de cet objectif. Le mondialisme est une alliance du consumérisme et du matérialisme, pour faire sortir l'Homme de l'Histoire et le précipiter dans ce que Gilles Lipovetski nomme «l'ère du vide».

[Globalism is indeed an ideology, whose main feature is to deny the usefulness of nations, their adaptation to the world "Postmodern," and which aims to shape a new man, a sort of homo mondialisus, living above ground, with no identity other than that of the global consumer, renamed "citizen of the world" to mask the deeply mercantile nature of this objective. Globalism is an alliance of consumerism and materialism, to bring Man out of history and plunge him into what Gilles Lipovetsky calls "the era of the void."]

Also, the *Front / Rassemblement National* proposes a revision of the Schengen Agreements on people's free movement, **limiting the flow of immigrants** by privileging talent and innovation and expelling illegal immigrants. It opposes the *"multicultural model*," the "positive discrimination"

and "differentialism" that would affect the equality of all citizens, the veil, and other religious symbols in public places.

*"If religiou*s freedom is constitutional and must be respected, it must also be done within the legal framework," reads an article of July 28, 2020, on the party's official website entitled "Aïd-el-Kebir: la Loi, cadre incontournable de la liberté religieuse "("Aïd-el-Kebir: the law, essential framework for religious freedom "). The same article continues by stating: "*the ritual of slaughter already constitutes an exception to the general prescriptions, where it can be considered that religious practices must adapt to national legislation and not vice versa*." This brings us back to **Sara Farris'** study, as mentioned earlier on the concept of **Femonationalism**, the "convergence" of feminism with nationalist and neoliberal positions, which took place to defend women's rights instead of the 'other' culture of the Muslim community.

Marine Le Pen's background and leadership style are generally described as heavily influenced, but fundamentally different from her father. **The gender issue is evident in the apparent dichotomy between the masculinity** associated with Jean-Marie Le Pen's **legacy and the feminine attributes** associated with Marine Le Pen's strategy of restraint. The leader is presented as the architect of a new course for the FN, who led the party from the margins to the mainstream of French politics. Note how the qualities considered specific to Marine Le Pen - those that allow her to follow new strategies by constructing her as different from her father - are the adjectives generally associated with the majority of women in politics.

If Jean-Marie is remembered as a strong and impulsive leader, with a tendency to aggression and extremism, it is believed that Marine Le Pen has, on the contrary, self-control, and kindness. Several articles evoke her ability not to give in to provocations and to "control herself, her feelings and anger" in opposition to her father and the majority of the deputies of the FN (Forcari, 2011). These factors also seem to have influenced his media representations. Her experience and greater familiarity with the mainstream media and the press give her "a more consensual and moderate image than that of her father, [countering] the repulsion to vote for the Front National" (Forcari, 2011). In this sense, Marine Le Pen's gender representations are built on the similarities and differences with her father, rather than the fact that she is the FN's first female leader.

Yet Marine Le Pen is not just the media world; she is a prolific autobiographer. In 2006 he published À Contre flots (Against the Waves), a book that seems driven by the desire to bridge the gap between public and private that women leaders feel overwhelming. Marine Le Pen describes her life from childhood to adulthood and delves into family affairs, such as her relationship with her parents, their divorce, her mother abandoning the family when she was young, the beginning of her career politics, and her divorced life mother. The style of the book is intimate, direct, and

detailed. The critical role of the narrative, expressed in a more or less natural way, is held by his father and leader of the FN.

Being the daughter of what she describes as a demonized and politically marginalized man becomes the leitmotiv behind her political commitment, motivations, and reactions. The resulting image is that of a woman formed and strengthened in an environment threatened by general hostility and misunderstandings from the outside world, represented by traditional society and politics:

> My status as a daughter of Le Pen was a burden on the men of my life. Sharing my life meant supporting everything I had [...] been through since I was a child - the attacks, the details, the election campaigns, Carpentras, the torture, the naked mother in Playboy and all [...] that to hang out with Le Pen's daughter may mean, take her to a friend's house, introduce her to her family [...]. It takes a powerful character.

This self-experienced form of marginalization becomes a way to bring Marine closer to socially and economically marginalized people in society. Likewise, her experiences as a divorced mother of three are examples of a real-life that allows her to bond with many other single mothers in the French community.

> My children's birth, divorce, and the time I was alone with them made me almost a feminist because it's true that women are fearless. After all, their situation is often and objectively more complicated than that of some men. Women have to endure a "double punishment" - hard work and family life, and all with a smile! When you are a woman, you don't know the "35 hours a week" rule.

In conclusion, many scholars also traditionally regarded the Front National party itself as a 'men's' party, led by a man who primarily addressed a male electorate with his "combative manhood and outrageous and scandalous conduct" (Lagrange and Perrineau 1997). Instead, Marine Le Pen has attempted to free herself from the anti-Semitic, masculine, and firmly conservative image of the National Front. She used political symbols and platforms to give her party's anti-immigrant and Eurosceptic positions a modern edge. Under Le Pen's leadership, the National Front no longer proposes to limit abortion and has softened its approach to LGBTQ issues. It still opposes same-sex marriage, but several LGBTQ people have recently ascended to high-profile positions within the party.

As Nonna Mayer puts it, if initially one of the first and best discoveries about electoral support for

radical right-wing populist parties is that they attract more men than women, this finding may no longer apply to France. In 2012, in the presidential elections, Marine Le Pen achieved almost the same score among female and male voters.
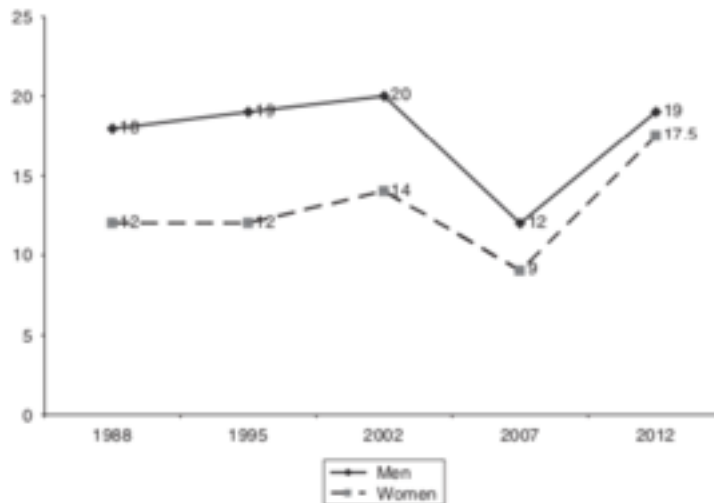

Figure 1: Votes for Le Pen in 1st rounds of presidential elections by gender.
Data: Cevipof electoral surveys 1988–2007, French Election Study 2012, weighted by official results

IV.1.2 Italy: Giorgia Meloni and Fratelli d'Italia
"Roman, class of '77. Politician and journalist. Always, everywhere and first of all, Italian. "This is how Giorgia Meloni introduces herself in the 'bio' on her social media. Minister for Youth in the fourth Berlusconi government, the youngest in republican history, and President of Giovane Italia, after being president of Youth Action and Student Action. Giorgia Meloni, not sharing the support given by the Popolo della Libertà to the Monti Government, in December 2012, left the movement to found, together with Guido Crosetto and Ignazio La Russa, the political movement "Fratelli d'Italia - Centrodestra Nazionale" of which she has been President since March 8, 2014.

The party, of the national-conservative press, was able to attract part of that "social right" which, according to Giorgia Meloni's words, was succumbing to the 'temptation of disengagement, apathy, and indifference disguised as a fight against the Caste' and has gradually increased the consensus, going from 4% at the beginning of the legislature to about 10.6%, in December 2019. On April 21, 2016, the day of Rome's birth, Giorgia Meloni opened the electoral campaign for mayor of Rome's candidacy, challenging another national record. The first time that a pregnant woman competes for the post of mayor in the capital of Italy. She collects 20.6% of the votes, and today she is a counselor in the Capitoline Assembly and President of the "Con Giorgia" group. Although less verbose than the French leader, Giorgia Meloni also published in 2011 a book - published by Sperling & Kupfer

- entitled 'Noi crediamo. Viaggio nella Meglio gioventù d'Italia' recounts part of her political vision through the experiences of boys and girls who live with courage, determination, and passion - that is, what she defines as a' harmony of values.'

Questa è la mia storia. Questo è ciò in cui credo. In un momento come l'attuale - in cui la crisi è una crisi della politica, dell'economia, dei valori - serve ricordare chi siamo, da dove veniamo, qual è il nostro patrimonio di cultura e di ideali. La nostra identità. La nostra forza. La riserva di entusiasmo, passione, talento, creatività e tenacia alla quale attingere quando abbiamo la tentazione di cedere al pessimismo e alla sfiducia. La nostra è una grande Nazione, nata nel segno del coraggio più audace e più generoso.
[This is my story. This is what I believe in. At a time like the present - in which the crisis is a crisis of politics, economy, values - we need to remember who we are, where we come from, and our heritage of culture and ideals. Our identity. Our strength. The reserve of enthusiasm, passion, talent, creativity, and tenacity to draw from when we are tempted to give in to pessimism and mistrust. Ours is a great nation, born in the sign of the boldest and most generous courage.][13]

Giorgia Meloni criticizes the lack of Italian social mobility, adjusting it as a real 'blocked society,' bound by 'old patterns' that no longer find space for correspondence in a profoundly changed reality. It highlights its adherence to the principles of popular sovereignty, freedom, democracy, justice, social solidarity, merit, and fiscal equity, all issues that can also be seen within the party program. It is inspired by a spiritual vision of life and the national, liberal, and popular tradition's solid values. The leader also states that it is young people in Italy who pay the highest price for institutional rigidity, 'forced to live in a present of precariousness' and imagine an 'even more uncertain future.'

Il merito, e non le rendite di posizione. È questa l'unica, vera, possibilità di cambiamento e di rinascita. [...] è tra i venti e i quarant'anni che ti giochi il grosso della tua vita, che sei portato a dire il massimo per costruire la tua carriera. La società deve metterti in condizione di farlo, non mortificare il tuo talento perché tu possa lasciare il passo a chi è più anziano di te e metterti pazientemente ad aspettare il tuo turno.
[Merit, and not position rents. This is the only real possibility of change and rebirth. [...] it is

---

[13] G. Meloni (2011), *Noi crediamo,* Sperling & Kupfer, Milan, Italy [PAGINA XXVI]

between the ages of twenty and forty that you play the bulk of your life, that you are led to do the utmost to build your career. Society must put you in a position to do so, not mortify your talent so that you can give way to those who are older than you and wait patiently for your turn.]

Her party, Fratelli d'Italia, now supports right-wing positions, with references essentially attributable to national conservatism and sovereign theses. In economic matters, arguments are supported regarding the protection of Made in Italy and strategic state bodies for the national economy. This also affects the positions adopted in foreign policy, proposing the: "Defense of our national sovereignty. Re-discussion of all EU treaties starting with the fiscal compact and the Euro. More politics and less bureaucracy in Europe. Supremacy clause in the Constitution to block agreements and directives harmful to Italy starting with the Bolkestein and the Dublin Regulation". There is also clear opposition to same-sex marriage, civil unions, adoption for gay couples, and the law against homosexuality. The party also expresses opposition to the introduction of the ius soli and the abrogation of illegal immigration. It proposes "naval blockades" in the Mediterranean, privileged access to the welfare state for Italians only, associated with the "Promotion of an international plan of investments in Africa to fight hunger and poverty and limit the push towards emigration." The project, which includes the Northern League, of "let's help them at home." It suggests increases in wages and equipment for law enforcement, increased military use as a crime-fighting measure, and a new law on self-defense.

As for **gender issues,** Fratelli d'Italia not only encourages the campaign in favor of the "natural family" but also proposes tax reliefs and a welfare state aimed at those who start families or working mothers. An example of this is the proposal to include a family allowance of € 400 per month for the first six years of a child's life or the deductibility of domestic work. This brings us back to the leader-mother's theme, who defends her children and loves them first of all. The threshold of home and family coincides with the country's geographical borders and the cultural borders of a people. The issue of gender identity often emerges in press releases. For example, Vladimir Luxuria's ironic wish to the leader of Fratelli d'Italia has become famous after the announcement of her pregnancy, during the January 2016 Family Day: "Greetings and trans children!", To which Giorgia Meloni replied: "If my son were gay, trans, bisexual, quadrisexual, I would love him as any mother loves her child, but I would continue to be against homosexual unions."

Despite the recurrence of some issues relating to the fulfillment of the so-called "equal democracy," and therefore connected to the rights of equal opportunities, incentives to support working women, and policies for children, Giorgia Meloni presents herself on the subject of female political

participation in a very radical way and close to the positions adopted in the last Berlusconi cabinet. As Comes wrote already in 2011 in his novel "We Believe" [*Noi Crediamo]*:

Vorrei che il PdL fosse il movimento delle donne. Capace di riconoscere che troppo spesso consideriamo la partecipazione femminile in politica solo da un punto di vista numerico, ma così perdiamo di vista la qualità di questa partecipazione. Quando ero consigliere della Provincia di Roma, ho più volte espresso tutta la mia contrarietà all'esistenza di una Commissione delle elette. Mi è parsa una sorta di parcheggio dove discutere 'tra donne' di cose meno serie di quelle di cui parlano i maschi. Non siamo una specie in via da estinzione da proteggere, io voglio confrontarmi da pari a pari.

[I want the PDL to be the women's movement. Able to recognize that too often, we consider female participation in politics only from a numerical point of view, but thus we lose sight of the quality of this participation. When I was a councilor of the Province of Rome, I have repeatedly expressed all my opposition to a Commission of the elected. It seemed to be a sort of parking lot for discussing less severe things 'between women than those men talk about. We are not an endangered species to be protected; I want to compare myself as an equal.]

Lastly, what is very present in the gender discourse adopted by the leader of FdI is, again, the "feminist and femocratic nationalism" theorized by Sara Farris. It is about the exploitation of feminist themes by nationalist parties and politicians in campaigns against migrants. In Italy, this relationship is to be considered further complicated, given not only the politicization of **religion** but also the evident **influence of religion on politics**. Fratelli d'Italia, therefore, proposes itself as a defense of God, Country, and Family and declares itself as opposed to the Islamization of Europe is, in its opinion, of two thousand years of the Christian tradition.

In this regard, we recall the declaration by Giorgia Meloni on the occasion of the day against violence against women of November 25, 2015, in which - she wrote in Libero - "the cultural backwardness that foments machismo and in the most serious cases violence against women is an objectively regressing phenomenon, but we cannot underestimate the drama that Islamic women living in Italy are sometimes forced to live with." As above - gender equality in an anti-Islamic function.

IV.1.3 Argentina: Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Frente para la Victoria
Cristina Elisabet Fernández Wilhelm married Kirchner (CFK) is an Argentine politician and

lawyer. She became President of Argentina on October 28, 2007, with 45.29% as leader of the Front for Victory, a left-wing Peronism party and supported by a coalition center-left, Concertación Plural, has been vice-president of Argentina since December 10, 2019. She has been a senator from 1995 to 2005 and was also *Primera Dama* from 2003 to 2007, as the consort of the Nation's President, Néstor Kirchner.

She is the second woman to serve as the country's President, the fourth to win free presidential elections in a South American country after Nicaraguan Violeta Chamorro (1990), Guyanese Janet Jagan (1997), and Chilean Michelle Bachelet (2005) and the first to be reconfirmed for a second term in the presidential elections on November 3, 2011, winning with 54.11% of the votes. During her tenure, three women assumed industry, defense, and social development ministers - in national, provincial, and municipal institutions, women, held almost a third of political offices. Cristina Fernández's administration is generally remembered as a period marked by significant economic difficulties, but at the same time by incredible social transformations. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) ranks Argentina's 2011 gender equality index as the highest in Latin America (ranked 67 out of 146 countries), taking into account access to education, health, economic activity, and political participation.

The decision to raise taxes on grain export profits has generated a long-standing strike by farmers, leading to food shortages. Some economists have even gone to explain the Kirchner administration as "export-oriented populism," the first combination of increasing exports and investing returns in the urban poor. (N. P. Richardson, 2009).

Her party, **the Front for Victory (Frente para la Victoria, FPV**), identifies with Kirchnerism - that is, left-wing Peronism. The principles on which the party's program and government action are based are made explicit by the motto *"Argentina, convicción y capacidad para construir un nuevo país"* (Argentina, convictions, and capacities to build a new country), declared by Cristina Kirchner herself in her book 'Sinceramente' (Sincerely).

Soy Cristina. Una mujer... con todo lo que implica ser mujer en Argentina. Con una vida en la que se cruzaron éxitos y frustraciones, aciertos y errores, pero que fue honestamente vivida sin declinar convicciones. Sé que lidero las esperanzas de millones de hombres y mujeres que padecen la cotidiana frustración de vivir y ver su país a la deriva. Son los mismos que alguna vez, en los dias en los que fui su presidenta, se sintieron parte de un colectivo social que los amparaba y los trasladaba a una vida digna y de una Argentina que, aun con dificultades, estaba en marcha y funcionando.

/I'm Cristina. A woman... with everything that being a woman in Argentina implies. With

a life in which successes and frustrations, triumphs, and mistakes were crossed, but that was honestly lived without declining convictions. I know that I lead the hopes of millions of men and women who suffer the daily frustration of living and seeing their country adrift. They are the same people who once, in the days when I was their President, felt part of a social group that supported them and transferred them to a dignified life and an Argentina that, even with difficulties, was up and running.]

Cristina Fernandez considers the country's social inequality intolerable and proposes a profound renewal of existing institutions. Both Kirchners made use of the "us and them" approach, identifying the enemy as the country's traditional economic interests and blaming the conventional parties for conspiring against the interests of the people and being responsible for the 2001 crisis. Cristina Kirchner's significant interest in social equality issues has produced remarkable results during her mandates - the passing of a law on gay marriage (Ley de Matrimonio Igualitario), the creation of a universal monetary allowance for the child (Asignació́N Universal por Hijo), the nationalization of the pension system, the transferring of workers who were in the private network to the National Social Security Administration (ANSES) and the right to gender identity which became law in May 2012 allowing the right to choose how to identify themselves in legal documents. The latter law was internationally acclaimed for being based on the interested party's request, without the need for the support of "experts."

President Cristina Kirchner has repeatedly addressed gender-based violence in Argentina and expressed her closeness to the #NiUnaMenos mobilization, a movement against femicide and violence against women born in Argentina in March 2015: "*It's not just a judicial or police problem. We are facing a culture that devastates the female gende*r," she wrote on Twitter.

On May 28, 2019, on the occasion of the *Día Internacional de Acción por la Salud de las Mujeres* (International Day of Action for Women's Health), a bill aimed at guaranteeing health was presented for the eighth time in Argentina - it proposed legal abortion for all women. Submitted with the signing of 70 female and male deputies from different camps, the bill does not differ much from the one voted last year at the *Congreso de la Nación,* approved by the Chamber, but later rejected by the Senate. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner has repeatedly expressed herself on the subject, declaring herself against legal abortion. *"I am a Catholic, but also because of deep personal convictions,*" - she claimed in 2005.

Also, on other occasions, Kirchner has declared herself against it. In her eight years of the presidential mandate - from 2007 to 2015 -she has always prevented legal abortion from being discussed in Parliament. However, as we have seen, the draft law was being presented several times

by supporters of *Campaña*. In 2019, however, the Peronist leader had an afterthought - according to what she claims, due to her daughter's confrontation - arriving to vote yes when the project was discussed in *Congreso*.

The image of woman, mother, and believer is just one of the media representations that have characterized Cristina de Kirchner. In *Exploring Media Representations of Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchne*r, Celina Van Dembroucke identifies three "roles" that the national media have assigned to the Argentine leader - the Stupid Girl, who explains the questions about her validity as a candidate, the Wicked Widow, who talks about CFK after her husband's death in 2010 through the aim of exploiting the stereotype and finally a role that arises from the moment in which CFK attracts media attention by becoming the first lady in 2003, the Frivolous Diva.

> "Cristina is nothing more than Kirchner wearing skirts" (Raúl Castells cited in Carlos Pagni 2007); ". . . the essential question that Mrs. Kirchner must ask herself has to do with whether she is a candidate in her own right or only a substitute for her husband" (Dick Morris, interviewed by Fernando Laborda 2007).

Although Latin America has seen several women accepting prestigious political positions over the past decade, far from being treated on a par with their male counterparts, these leaders still suffer from biased **media coverage about their status.** Interestingly, if "gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences" (Butler 1988, 522), the media seem to implement a series of normative controls to keep these arbitrary social fictions in check. Thus, news reports feed the stereotype of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner as a spoiled woman whose primary interest is to look good, symbolically trivializing the importance of her political performance (Anne Stevens 2007, 139).

When it comes to political women, the news often focuses on their appearance (D. Bystrom, 2006) and the illegitimate relationship established between their sense of style and competence (K. Ross 2000). Such attention is so widespread that it constitutes one of the persistent criticisms that feminists make of women politicians' media coverage. Women in positions of power invariably feel the burden of complying with the etiquette of "proper" clothing. The media representation of CFK, on the other hand, provides a particularly interesting case given her choice to conform to a stereotyped female image. Much has been said, both nationally and internationally, about her looks, her makeup, her extensions and her lengthy hair, her love of high heels, her being overly sexy. Instead of trying to separate herself from the figure of her husband and avoid the stereotype of an addicted woman conditioned by the presence of a strong and assertive man, Cristina Fernandez had

frequently referred to him, from her inaugural speech in 2007 until the swearing-in of her second term in 2011, when she concluded the ceremony by thanking "God, the nation and the Gospel." In conclusion, she added: "if I hadn't done it, my God and he ask me", alluding to the late Nestor Kirchner.

In *Negotiating Gender Discourses*, Jane L. Christie refers to Cristina Fernandez's historical background as a political subject in Argentina. The author pays particular attention to the role that women-led human rights organizations have played in women's history as political subjects in Latin America and their relationship to today's political discourse. Jane L. Christie's focuses on Argentina's *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, which provides a formidable backdrop for discussing gender issues and the different ways of expressing "femininity" as a form of legitimization of the presence of women in the public sphere. The author argues that entering the political arena as female characters (mothers, wives, widows, and daughters) allowed Cristina Fernández to enter politics through a "**maternal legacy**", a leadership style already shared and accepted in Argentina.

IV.2 Psychoanalytic Reflections on Gender and Populism
Populism, as an anti-pluralistic political perspective, is the ability of a leader to attract vulnerable groups. The populist phenomenon also relies on the psychoanalytic aspects of human identity. We all use various defense mechanisms to promote adaptation in daily life (A. Freud, 1936). A vital element of the essence of the human being in the mix of self-exaltation and illusion, which populism mobilizes and accentuates, as Martin Kemp states in his *article "First They Came for the Muslims: Psychoanalytic reflections on the threat and the challenge of contemporary populism* ".

The increased interest in the phenomenon reflects what Martin Kemp always defines as "the surprisingly apparent emptiness of traditional attempts to bridge the gap between the needs of an **economic system** based on capital and a **political system** that claims to represent and express the aspirations of people regardless of their access to personal wealth ".

Populist propagandists have the easy task of finding simple solutions to complex problems and feelings (M. Kemp, 2018). The search for scapegoats allows us to project and accentuate the collective vulnerability generally perceived in modern societies. The message offered by these leaders is the possibility of identifying with **a political system seen as a protection against the insecurity** that the system itself has produced.

As Martin Kemp puts it in place of a decrease in "real" anxiety, in recent years, we have seen an intensification of paranoia: a race to war, particularly in the Middle East, the elevation of Muslims to the status of the main threat to democracy, economic and financial instability and an intensified sense of perpetual emergency. Some argue that this reveals that the presence of an enemy is simply

a psychological necessity.

The formation of national identity has generated solidarity and socialization based on **eliminating local differences**, linguistic heterogeneity, and the discovery and dissemination of legitimately traditional political structures. The British historian and writer, Eric Hobsbawm characterized **nationalism** by delineating it in two forms: the first type aims "to extend the scale of human social, political and cultural units: to unify and expand rather than narrow and separate" (Hobsbawm, 1996, p. 257).

Nationalism is "an empty category" that requires "retrospective mythology." Ethnicity works not so much by binding together those who share a culture or language, but by violently disregarding actual differences in the process of creating an illusion of shared community. Though we are now accustomed to Europe's idea as a collection of nation-states, Hobsbawm reminds us that the imposition of the principle of "national self-determination" after World War I came "at the cost of forcible mass expulsion, coercion and genocide, that was subsequently paid." (Hobsbawm, 1996, p. 259)[14]

And just as the previous process of creating new nation-states based on a mythology of ethnocultural uniqueness - articulated on the opposition of a people to external and internal enemies - has deep roots in the human need for emotional mobilization, the 'appeal' of populism lies in the Manichean distinction between 'us' and 'them'.

The literature also highlights a plethora of investigative reports on social changes that are believed to have contributed to deep and widespread feelings of discontent, anger, loneliness, insecurity, and cynicism and, consequently, an approach to populist ideology. In particular, some highlighted the disappointment by some groups of expectations on living standards, or on job security, as a cause of political disaffection.

Populist leaders appeal to these groups by blaming others for their plight and deny the complex sources of the difficulties that need to be addressed. Psychologically, members of vulnerable groups can be drawn into **the illusion of restoring an idealized past** that prevents them from fully recognizing how to deal with problems in the present.

The impetus provided by the civil rights movement and **anti-colonialism**, particularly by the continuing experience of discrimination between whites and blacks in Western cultures, has led to a significant psychoanalytic concern with the concept of racism. **Racialization has been explored**

---

[14] Kemp M. "First They Came for the Muslims": Psychoanalytic reflections on the threat and the challenge of contemporary populism. Int J Appl Psychoanal Studies. 2019; 16:20–43. https:// doi.org/10.1002/aps.1589

as an element of our collective unconscious, a remnant of our colonial past and our socially divided present, evidenced in both institutional discrimination and individual psychic functioning (M. Kemp, 2018).

Psychologist Christina Wieland points out the psychological consequences **of mass social trauma** and national humiliation, and the regression in the individual under these circumstances.

The study of trauma and its psychological consequences has been the subject of continuous research, precisely attempting to reformulate and redefine the diagnostic categories and symptoms attributable to adverse events. In general, **psychological trauma is defined as the consequence of a highly harmful and life-threatening event.** This event generates an emotional "fracture" in the individual, such as undermining the sense of stability, security, identity, and physical and psychic continuity of the person who has found himself facing it**. The conscious belief that she has been the victim of a national trauma could be the consequence of adhering to a particular political narrative, rather than its cause** (M. Kemp, 2018). But experiencing trauma is a perceptible event not only by an individual but by entire groups who feel vulnerable and threatened by intolerable emotional states.

Defense mechanisms help all of us control our impulses and cope with trauma. We all use various defense mechanisms to promote adaptation in daily life (A. Freud, 1936). These defenses have been summarized based on maturity (Vaillant, Bond, and Vaillant, 1986) and, characterized by the psychologists' Cohen, Solomon, and Kaplin (2017) in three broad categories: **denial, projection, and identification.**

But while the combination of a vulnerable group and a leader who foments discord between groups strengthens the maladaptive defense mechanisms of denial and projection (Leon Hoffman, 2018), the identification has much deeper sediments. 'As adults, we feel our identity. We feel unique. And instead of feeling like passive victims of our internal and external world, heterodirect, defenseless and weak, we recognize ourselves as responsible agents and determining forces of our life '(Judith Viorst, 1986). Yet, as US journalist and writer Judith Viorst puts it, there is a drive to repeat our past's meaningful relationships, including the pain and deprivation, resentment, and buried anger, that we experienced as children. We try to reproduce those bonds and to search for them in our daily choices. And although every action of life is determined, indeed overdetermined, by many different forces, our life today is partly determined by what we learned in our childhood. (Judith Viorst, 1986) And so **politicians become**, even unconsciously, **the containers of difficult projections** for the community to tolerate.

The voters' delegate to the leader the function of judging, evaluating reality, and behavior, in their stead. The projected content could be accepted by the leader in its primitive form, by analogy with

the material cast by the infant. Therefore, it can be returned or reflected on the voters in a moderate and more acceptable, less threatening, less crude, and archaic form. This would happen with a moderate leader, **"the equivalent of a good mother**," who would thus contribute to creating a more compassionate, mature, flexible, and permissive social system. 'The mother's love and her intimate identification with the child', writes the psychoanalyst Donald Woods Winnicott, 'makes her aware of the needs of the child, to provide him with what he needs, more or less, in the right place and at the right time'.

But just as for the child, maternal identification allows him to develop the value of ethics between justice and morality, in the same way, the voter lingers in the face of the reassuring simplicity of a leader capable of proposing a universe of right-wrong, right -wrong, yes-no, working-not working. A rigid, extremist leader would, therefore, not only be unable to mitigate such projections but would thrive on them. It would use them to exasperate a conflict situation, polarize attitudes, and dramatize situations in a demagogic way (J. Sandler, 1989). *In the Fascist State of Mind and the Manufacturing of Masculinity* (2014), Christina Wieland even suggests that the ideologies and behaviors of fascist movements reflect the unconscious fantasies that blackmail the psychic residues left when **the child emerges from the vortex of the pre-Oedipal relationship with the mother.**

Although it is believed that the split-individuation from the mother figure is accomplished by everyone in the first months of life, the reality is that when we face our daily encounters with our wives and husbands, with our children and our parents, our friends and our enemies, we frequently attribute to them some of our unconscious desires and separate effects, our prescriptions, and our aspirations. Similarly, as we listen to the election speeches of candidates with whom we disagree, such projections appear (R. Moses, 1989). It is up to the populist leader to grasp and exploit this link.

Conclusion

The study of populism encompasses a wide variety of research and has been extensively explored in different contexts, while its relationship to gender issues remains mostly underestimated.

Attention has focused on the populist female leadership through the example of Marine Le Pen, Giorgia Meloni, and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. At the same time, it has been observed how the definitions of populism ignore the substantial and symbolic elements that emerge from a populist gender discourse.

Moreover, in the path to understanding the relationship between gender and populism, we also focused on **citizens' perception of female political leadership**. It is detectable in women's **identification** and capacity to present themselves as innovators, "*outsiders*," and agents of change. The image of women leaders in the representation of the mass media seems to have identified the conditions for a leadership style different from the male counterpart. However, it may require further exploitation of the **stereotyped** female image and the adoption of **the model of the mother of the nation.**

As US journalist and writer Judith Viorst puts it, there is a drive to repeat our past's meaningful relationships, including the pain and deprivation, resentment, and buried anger we experienced as children. We try to reproduce those bonds and to search for them in our daily choices. Furthermore, although every action of life is determined, indeed overdetermined, by many different forces, our life today is partly conditioned by what we learned in our childhood (Judith Viorst, 1986). Even unconsciously, **the politicians become the containers of projections** that are difficult for the community to tolerate.

From the literature, it is now possible to frame female leadership in the **transactional - transformational dichotomy**, in which the two opposite approaches determine different reflections on the organizational structure. While in the first case, there is a conservative disposition of the dynamics already present in the organization. In the second case, we face an evolutionary intervention that can change the "rules of the game." Moreover, how do populist leaders differ and fit in? To this question, we could answer by taking up the words of Paul Taggart; populism can be thought of as "the politics of *ordinary* people made by *extraordinary* leaders who build *ordinary* profiles."

In this study, the question of the presence of populist leaders in the western scenario was observed. The HK coder program study's schemes examined how the populist leadership model intersects and differs from the concept of gender.

Riassunto

Negli ultimi anni la questione della presenza di leader populiste nello scenario occidentale è molto dibattuta e si esamina come il modello di leadership populista si intersechi e si differenzi rispetto al concetto di genere. Lo studio del populismo comprende, infatti, un'ampia varietà di ricerche ed è stato ampiamente esplorato in diversi contesti, mentre la sua relazione con le questioni di genere rimane in gran parte sottovalutata.

Come ha osservato **Paul Taggart,** il populismo è stato pensato come 'la politica di gente comune fatta da leader *straordinari* che costruiscono profili *ordinari*'. La natura 'straordinaria' che accomuna tutti i leader populisti risiede nella capacità di presentarsi come la 'voce del popolo,' il che significa sia come *estranei politici* che come autentici rappresentanti della gente comune. Maggiore sarà la capacità del leader di proporsi come *primus inter pares,* più forte diverrà il legame tra **identificazione e rappresentazione.**

Una definizione ben consolidata di populismo è stata introdotta da **Albertazzi e McDonell (2008)** che hanno attinto a Mudde (2004, p. 543). Essi concepiscono il populismo come un'ideologia che contrappone un popolo virtuoso e coeso a un insieme di élite e di "altri" pericolosi. Il cosiddetto 'non-popolo' viene raffigurato come minaccia al popolo sovrano, come fonte di privazione dei diritti, valori, prosperità, identità e cultura di una realtà omogenea.

Nel suo libro *Populismo. Teorie e problemi* (2017), **Manuel Anselmi** opta per la strada della "definizione minima"; un concetto operativo di populismo utile all'individuazione del fenomeno e alla comparazione delle sue diverse manifestazioni. Considerando il populismo come una configurazione sociale – egli individua **tre caratteristiche** analitiche che la definirebbero: la concezione del *popolo*, inteso come comunità organica coesa, tale da delimitare un popolo e un non-popolo, confinando entro quest'ultima categoria discriminante ogni alterità politica; la concezione della *leadership*, che mira all'identificazione fra il capo e il popolo in termini di aspirazioni, di i*dem sentire:* 'sono uno di voi' è la frase che il leader populista predilige rivolgendosi al suo pubblico; uno stile discorsivo, argomentativo e comunicativo dove il *noi* è coincidente con la comunità popolo e il *loro* con tutto ciò che è esterno a essa e, infine, una *retorica* tesa alla promozione di una polarizzazione politica.

Il populista viene generalmente accostato alla figura dell'uomo forte e carismatico, in maniera più o meno assertiva a seconda della cultura politica del Paese in questione. La contestualizzazione è di fatto di fondamentale importanza per tratteggiare e caratterizzare il soggetto populista.

Il populismo è stato anche definito come **un'ideologia snella (thin ideology)** – né di destra né di sinistra – capace di fare da contenitore ad altri tipi di ideologie, le cosiddette ideologie ospiti (Taggart, 2002). Nel contesto europeo il populismo si riferisce spesso all'anti-immigrazione e alla

xenofobia, mentre in America Latina allude al clientelismo e alla cattiva gestione economica.

La relazione tra populismo, simbolismo di genere e contestualizzazione sottolinea poi come il populismo sia un'esibizione di mascolinità egemonica che le donne leader possono però implementare e combinare con performance di femminilità. Il populismo fornisce così il terreno dove edificare il personale stile politico di queste leader. Esso propone un'immagine di uomini e donne collegata all'interpretazione eteronormativa del genere e delle identità sessuali, una nozione di famiglia tradizionale, una divisione del lavoro di genere e una divisione netta di *pubblico e privato* secondo quelli che vengono definiti i corretti modi di agire, comportarsi e pensare nella cosiddetta politica del 'buon senso'.

Nello studio *Understanding the Populist Shift di* **Giovanna Campani e Gabriella Lazaridis** sono state individuate **tre tipologie di discorsi** che partiti e movimenti populisti di estrema destra utilizzano per parlare di genere e sessualità: quelli che si richiamano alla "natura", ai ruoli naturali di donne e uomini; quelli che difendono il modello della famiglia tradizionale ma riconoscono il diritto di ognuno di vivere la propria sessualità come crede, purché resti nel privato; quelli che difendono l'eguaglianza di genere, la libertà sessuale, i diritti delle minoranze come valori caratteristici dell'Occidente, a cui si contrappone la cultura "altra", inassimilabile, dell'Islam, in particolare dell'uomo musulmano.

Obiettivo di questo studio è individuare quali sono gli ostacoli posti alle donne nel raggiungimento delle posizioni al vertice, in particolare, le leader donne hanno la possibilità di strumentalizzare a propria volta la visione patriarcale che le vede qualificate come leader solo in quanto madri, poiché **il modello della madre della nazione** ha il vantaggio di essere un modello culturalmente approvato di leadership femminile, perché radicato nei valori tradizionali di nutrimento e cura.

In secondo luogo, questa tesi cerca di analizzare la retorica populista, lo stile comunicativo volto a favorire la polarizzazione politica.

Attraverso l'utilizzo dell'**analisi della conversazione** e prestando particolare attenzione alle dichiarazioni e ai post delle protagoniste di questa analisi, Marine Le Pen, Giorgia Meloni e Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, si evidenzia come queste leader si presentino al loro elettorato al contempo come *outsider*, ovvero innovatrici di uno stile di leadership persuasivo e distintivo, e *insider*, donne "vittime" degli stereotipi di genere e, in particolare, degli effetti della banalizzazione e del doppio vincolo.

Tramite gli schemi del programma KH Coder viene mostrato come i quadri di genere, le aspettative, la storia politica di un Paese e la storia di un politico siano tutti fattori utili ad esplorare il modo in cui le donne presidenti vedono sé stesse e come vogliono essere viste dall'élite politica

e dalla popolazione in generale. Oltre ad osservare lo stile comunicativo, l'estremizzazione dell'emotività, la drammatizzazione, il linguaggio informale e paternalistico, vengono commentati alcuni temi chiave del discorso populista. Tra questi la relazione tra *populismo e religione* merita una digressione più ampia in virtù della sua complessità.

Laddove i populisti parlano di 'identità' e 'appartenenza' la Chiesa parla di 'fede'. E come afferma Jonah Goldberg (2017) se il cristianesimo è una religione, il cristianesimo legato al populismo è ormai un programma politico, che non ha nulla di etico o sacro.

In conclusione, attraverso l'esempio comparativo di Marine Le Pen, Giorgia Meloni e Cristina Fernández de Kirchner questo elaborato mostra le caratteristiche peculiari delle leader populiste e individua i motivi per i quali queste ultime riescano a divenire, anche inconsciamente, i **contenitori di proiezioni difficilmente tollerabili dalla comunità:** gli elettori delegano al leader la funzione di giudicare, valutare la realtà e i comportamenti, in propria vece. **Come afferma la giornalista e scrittrice statunitense Judith Viorst,** c'è una spinta a ripetere i rapporti significativi del nostro passato, inclusi i dolori e le privazioni, i risentimenti e le rabbie sepolte, che abbiamo sperimentato da piccoli. Si cerca di riprodurre quei legami e di ricercarli nelle nostre scelte quotidiane. E sebbene ogni azione della vita sia determinata, anzi sovradeterminata, da molte forze diverse, la nostra vita di oggi è in parte determinata da ciò che abbiamo appreso nella nostra infanzia (Judith Viorst, 1986).

Per analogia, il contenuto proiettato potrebbe così essere accettato dal leader nella sua forma primitiva, con il materiale proiettato dal neonato, "**il corrispettivo di una buona madre**" che contribuirebbe così al formarsi di un sistema sociale più maturo, flessibile e consapevole.

Pertanto, in un'epoca in cui nessun modello culturale può proclamare autorevolmente ed efficacemente la propria superiorità sui modelli antagonisti, e in cui il processo di costruzione della nazione e la mobilitazione patriottica non sono più i principali strumenti di integrazione sociale e di affermazione statale, questa ricerca tenta di ripercorrere e sottolineare le esperienze di donne che al contrario sono state in grado di inventare, costruire e mettere in atto nuove modalità per affermarsi nella sfera pubblica.

Bibliography

Monographs.

Allen, A. T. (2005) *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe, 1890-1970,* First published in 2005 by Palgrave Macmillan 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y.

Butler, J. (2013) *Questione di genere. Il femminismo e la sovversione dell'identità*, Laterza.

Campus, D. (2013) *Women Political Leaders and the Media,* Palgrave Macmillan.

Campus, D. (2010) *L'immagine della donna Leader,* Bononia University Press.

Chiarelli, R. (2015) *Il populismo tra storia, politica e diritto*, Rubbettino Università.

De Blasio, E., Hibberd M., Sorice, M. (2011) *Popular politics, populism and the leaders Access without participation? The cases of Italy and UK,* Rome CMCS Working Papers.

De Blasio, E. (2012) *Gender Politics Media, gender e politica: un'introduzione,* Rome CMCS Working Papers.

De Blasio E., Gentile, F. D. (2013) *Cose da donne? La leadership di gender raccontata ai media*, Rome CMCS Working Papers.

Edwards, S. (2010) *Left Behind Latin America and the False Promise of Populism,* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Fernández de Kirchner, C. (2019) *Sinceramente,* Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial. S.A. Humberto 1555. Buenos Aires.

Krook, M. L., Childs, S. (2010) *Women, Gender and Politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Krook, M. L., Mackay, F. (2010) *Gender, Politics and Institutions. Towards a Feminist Institutionalism.* London: Palgrave McMillan.

Laclau, E., (2005) *On populist Reason*, Laterza.

Lazaridis, G., Campani G. (2017) *Understanding the Populist Shift. Othering in a Europe in crisis*, Routledge.

Le Pen, M. (2012) *Pour que vive la France,* Éditions Grancher 98, rue de Vaugirard – 75006 Paris.

Meloni, G. (2011) *Noi crediamo,* Sperling & Kupfer, Milan, Italy.

Mudde, C. (2007) *Populist radical right parties in Europe,* Cambridge University Press.

Mudde, C., Kaltwasser C.R. (2017) *Populism: A Very Short Introduction,* Oxford University Press Inc.

Radcliffe, S.A., Westwood S. (1993) '*VIVA' Women and popular protest in Latin America,* Routledge 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon 0X14 4RN.

Sandler, J. (1989) *Projection, Identification, Projective identification*, H. Karnac (Books) Ltd, London.

Tarchi, M. (2015*) Italia Populista. Dal qualunquismo a Beppe Grillo*, Società editrice il Mulino, Bologna.

Zielonka, J. (2015) *Disintegrazione. Come salvare l'Europa dall'Unione Europea*, Bari, LaTerza.

Journal Articles.

Alvares, C., Dahlgren, P. (2016) Populism, extremism and media: Mapping an uncertain terrain. European Journal of Communication. (31:1, s. 46-57).

Brubaker, R. (2017) Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective, Ethnic and Racial Studies, 40:8, 1191-1226, DOI 10.1080/01419870.2017.1294700

Burke, S., Collins, Karen M., (2001) Gender differences in leadership styles and management skills *Women in Management Review;* 2001; 16, 5/6; ProQuest Research Library pg. 244

Cristina, B. Gibson (1995) An Investigation of Gender Differences in Leadership across Four Countries, Journal of International Business Studies, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1995), pp. 255- 279 Palgrave Macmillan Journals https://www.jstor.org/stable/155540

de Lange S. L.,Mügge L. M., (2015): Gender and right-wing populism in the Low Countries: ideological variations across parties and time, Patterns of Prejudice, DOI: 10.1080/0031322X.2015.1014199

Dembroucke, C. V. (2014) Exploring Media Representations of Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, Feminist Media Studies,Vol. 14, No. 6, 1056–1070, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2014.882858

dos Santos, P. G. (2017) Negotiating gendered discourses: Michelle Bachelet and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, by Jane L. Christie, International Feminist Journal of Politics, 19:2, 268-270, DOI: 10.1080/14616742.2017.1327216

Eksi, B., Wood E. A., (2019) Right-wing populism as gendered performance: Janus-faced masculinity in the leadership of Vladimir Putin and Recep T. Erdogan, Theory and Society (2019) 48:733–751 https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-019-09363-3

Engesser, S., Ernst, N., Esser, F., Büchel F., (2017) Populism and social media: how politicians spread a fragmented ideology, Information, Communication & Society, 20:8, 1109-1126, DOI 10.1080/1369118X.2016.1207697

Engesser, S., Fawzi, N., Larsson, A. O., (2017) Populist online communication: introduction to the special issue, Information, Communication & Society, 20:9, 1279-1292, DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2017.1328525

Gardiner, M., Tiggemann, M., (1999) Gender differences in leadership style, job stress and mental

health in male- and female-dominated industries Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology (1999), **72**, 301–315 Printed in Great Britain 301 Ó 1999 The British Psychological Society

Geva D., (2018) Daughter, Mother, Captain: Marine Le Pen, Gender, and Populism in the French National Front, *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, Volume 27, Issue 1, Spring 2020, Pages 1–26, https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxy039

Hoffman L., (2018) Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Populism, Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 54:2, 266-289, DOI: 10.1080/00107530.2018.1458347

Horowitz M. J., Igielnik R., Parker G., (2018), Women and Leadership 2018. Wide gender and party gaps in views about the state of female leadership and the obstacles women face, Pew Research Center, Social and Demographic Trends

Kemp M. (2019) "First They Came for the Muslims": Psychoanalytic reflections on the threat and the challenge of contemporary populism. International Journal Psychoanalitical Studies; 16:20–43.

Mayer N., (2015) The closing of the radical right gender gap in France? Macmillan Publishers Ltd. 1476-3419 French Politics Vol. 13, 4, 391–414

Moffitt B., Tormey S., (2014), Rethinking Populism: Politics, Mediatisation and Political Style, POLITICAL STUDIES: 2014 VOL 62, 381–397, doi: 10.1111/1467-9248.12032.

Mudde C., Kaltwasser C. R., (2015) Vox populi or vox masculini? Populism and gender in Northern Europe and South America, Patterns of Prejudice, 49:1-2, 16-36, DOI: 10.1080/0031322X.2015.1014197.

Spierings, N., Zaslove, A., Mügge L. M., de Lange S. L., (2015) Gender and populist radical-right politics: an introduction, Patterns of Prejudice, 49:1-2, 3-15, DOI: 10.1080/0031322X.2015.1023642

Newspapers.

Il Fatto Quotidiano, *Argentina, il presidente Kirchner: "Se mi succede qualcosa guardate agli USA"* di Gisella Ruccia | 8 OTTOBRE 2014
https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/10/08/argentinail-presidente-kirchner-se-mi-succede-qualcosa-guardate-agli-usa-non-al/300287/, accessed 14 August 2020

Il Sole 24 Ore, *Marine Le Pen contro Papa Francesco sui migranti* | 14 aprile 2017
https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/marine-pen-contro-papa-francesco-migranti-AEMVGi5,
accessed 19 September 2020

Websites.

Fratelli d'Italia. Il movimento dei patrioti in 15 priorità, programma elettorale del 2018, https://www.fratelli-italia.it/programma.pdf., accessed 17 August 2020

GENDER STATISTICS MANUAL, integrating a gender perspective into statistic, https://unstats.un.org/unsd/genderstatmanual/The-media.ashx?HL=media, accessed 18 July 2020