



T.C.

ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

**THE ENCOUNTERS OF POPULISM: AN EXAMINATION
OF THE ITALIAN FIVE STAR MOVEMENT**

MASTERS THESIS

SONAY CAMGÖZ

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION

Ankara, 2021

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The thesis, prepared by Sonay CAMGÖZ and titled “The Encounters of Populism: An Examination of the Italian Five Star Movement” is accepted as a master thesis at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Political Science and Public Administration by unanimous vote/majority vote.

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STATEMENT

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SONAY CAMGÖZ



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ABSTRACT

The Encounters of Populism: An Examination of the Italian Five Star Movement

This thesis investigates the case of the Italian Five Star Movement (*Movimento 5 Stelle*-M5S) within the context of the current rise of populism in Western European countries. The study evaluates the program, targets, aims, rhetoric, strategy and ideology of the Five Star Movement in order to answer why it is considered a populist movement.

The Italian Five Star Movement is a crucial example to study because of its differences from other populist movements, parties and politicians in Western European countries which are mostly rightist. The aims and program of the M5S contained arguments which were closer to the leftist political ideology during its first years of foundation but over the time, the movement accepted and defended thoughts, ideologies that have come closer to the right-wing ideology. Thus, the question what are the features of the M5S that makes it a populist movement.

The thesis adopts the ideational approach of Cas Mudde and Christobal Rovira Kaltwasser and situates the M5S within the political history of Italy focusing on the post WW2 period and its features conducive to prevalence of populism in the country. Through a discussion of the reasons for the emergence of M5S, its founding, its evolution into a political party, its involvement in Italian local and national governments through the years between 2005 and 2018, this thesis argues that M5S is populist movement, however it is actually a multi-faceted movement and demonstrates a unique example of populism.

Keywords: Populism, Populist Movements, Five Star Movement, Ideational Approach

ÖZET

Popülizmle Yüzleşme: İtalyan Beşyıldız Hareketi Örneği

Bu tez, Batı Avrupa ülkelerinde popülizmin mevcut yükselişi çerçevesinde İtalyan “Beş Yıldız Hareketi”ni (*Movimento 5 Stelle*) incelemektedir. Beş Yıldız Hareketi'nin programını, hedeflerini, amaçlarını, söylemini, stratejisini ve ideolojisini popülizmin özellikleri açısından değerlendirerek hareketin neden popülist olduğunu ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

İtalyan "Beş Yıldızlı Hareketi", Batı Avrupa ülkelerindeki diğer popülist hareketlerden, partilerden ve politikacılardan farklılıkları nedeniyle çok önemli bir örnektir. Beş Yıldız Hareketi'nin amaçları ve programları, kuruluşunun ilk yıllarında sol siyasi ideolojiye daha yakın iken zamanla hareket, sağcı ideolojiye yaklaşan düşünceleri, ideolojileri de kabul etti ve savundu.

Bu çerçevede tez beş bölümden oluşmaktadır. Girişin ardından, ikinci bölümde farklı bilim adamlarının “Popülizm Nedir?” sorusunun cevabı tartışılmaktadır. Üçüncü bölümde, olguyu kapsamlı bir şekilde anlamak için popülizmin tarihsel arka planı ve Avrupa'da son dönemdeki yükselişinin nedenleri ve mevcut durum üzerine bir bölüm yer almaktadır. Ek olarak, 2. Dünya Savaşı sonrası döneme ve popülizmin unsurlarına odaklanarak İtalya'nın siyasi tarihi anlatılmaktadır. Dördüncü bölüm Beş Yıldız Hareketini analiz eder ve hareketin ortaya çıkış nedenlerini açıklar. Beş Yıldız Hareketi'nin kuruluşunu, bir siyasi partiye dönüşmesini ve 2005 ile 2018 yılları arasında İtalyan yerel ve ulusal hükümetlerine katılımını tartışmaktadır. Bu kapsamda bu tez, Beş Yıldız Hareketi'nin popülist bir hareket gibi görüldüğünü, ancak aslında çok yönlü bir hareket olduğunu ve benzersiz bir popülizm örneğini gösterdiğini savunuyor. Beşinci ve son bölüm, sonuç bölümüdür. Bu bölüm, bu tezin bulgularının yanı sıra kendi yorumlarımı da içermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Popülizm, Popülist Hareketler, Beş Yıldız Hareketi, İdeal Yaklaşım

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ABBREVIATIONS

AfD	: Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)
CDU	: Christliche Demokratische Union (Christian Democrat Union)
DC	: Democrazia Christiana (Christian Democrats)
EU	: European Union
FI	: Forza Italia (Force Italy)
FIDESZ	: Magyar Polgári Szövetség (Hungarian Civic Alliance)
FN	: Front National
FPO	: Freiheit Für Österreich (Freedom for Austrian)
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
LN	: Lega Nord (Northern League)
M5S	: Movimento Cinque Stelle (Five Star Movement)
NATO	: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NF	: National Front
PCI	: Partito Comunista Italiana (Communist Party of Italy)
PD	: Partito Democratico (Democrat Party)
PdL	: Popolo della Libertà (People of Freedom Party)
PODEMOS	: We Can
PSI	: Partito Socialista Italiana (Socialist Party of Italy)
SYRIZA	: ΣΥΡΙΖΑ (The Coalition of the Radical Left)
UDCA	: Union of Defending the Craftsman and Merchants
UKIP	: United Kingdom Independence Party

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Figure 1. (<https://www.movimento5stelle.it/>) 51



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problem Statement

Populism is everywhere nowadays, populism is dangerous for democracy and populism is challenging to democracy. It is booming worldwide not only in the United States of America (U.S.A) or in Latin American countries but also in Western European countries. Some examples of populist leaders and parties which won or gained remarkable popularity in recent years are as follows:

Donald Trump, the U.S. President, Hugo Chavez, the President of Venezuela from 1998 to 2013 (www.cnn.com, 2017), Jean Marie Le Pen, the founder of the *Front National* (National Front-FN) and the leader of it from 1972 until 2011 (Melander & Carraud, www.reuters.com, 2018) and Nigel Paul Farage, the leader and founder of the Brexit Party since 2018 was the leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) from 2006 to 2009 and 2010 to 2016 (D'arcy, 2019), Juan Evo Morales Ayma (President of Bolivia from 2006 to 2019) was the leader of Movement for Socialism (www.bbc.com, 2019).

Along with the right-wing populist parties such as Front National in France, Alternative for Germany in Germany, Party for Freedom in Netherlands, UK Independent Party in the United Kingdom, The Danish's People Party in Denmark and The True Finns Party in Finland left wing populist parties/movements like the Five Star Movement (*Movimento 5 Stelle* -M5S) in Italy, PODEMOS in Spain and SYRIZA in Greece gained a widened support in politics. All these politicians and parties are described as populist. They differ in their ideologies, organizational structures and the context within which they have emerged. So, what is populism?

Ordinary people from all over the world are trying to find a simple answer for their problems and fears, emerged especially after worldwide economic crises after 2008. We hear slogans like "More Salary for Retired Persons", "Exit from the European Union (EU)" almost every day on the media. Incidents as the "Yellow Vest Movement" in France happens very often nowadays in Europe. Many people are not happy or satisfied with their economic and social conditions or sometimes both of them. They blame the governments and politicians in their country who are responsible from their point of view for their "bad" life conditions.

Correspondingly, more parties or movements, which can be defined as populist, are emerging and arising on the political scene. They promise changes to the unhappy great masses of people and to bring back the old fashioned and traditional lifestyle in order to enhance their economic and social life standards. Populists give these people what they are desperately looking for, which is a simple solution for their complex problems. They offer basic answers to complex problems and divide the world into two parts that consists of only bad or good. Different opinions and consensus do not find place in their perspective and understanding. From this point of view, it would be not wrong to say that populists gain votes and support actually through the fears of people. So, populist parties build their politics on separating the people instead of uniting them. Their existence is based on separation. Therefore; they are against globalization which has gained a huge speed in the early 1980s in the whole world and started to extinguish cultural and economic borders between countries. Populist parties achieve success in elections by the economic and social changes in the society caused by globalization (Ertürk & Taylor, 2015). These long term changes in society caused the loss of manufacturing sector particular in developing countries and as a consequence the new generation no longer has the economic prosperity of their parents' generation and that is being very pervasive. (Norris & Inglehart, 2016)

In this framework, globalization has not only economic consequences but also cultural. The cultural change is rooted back to the 1960's when progressive values were taking over caused by the liberalization of trade. This changed the values of the people especially amongst the young and the well-educated. These values were issues towards women gender equality, LGBT rights and cosmopolitanism etc. As a result of all these cultural changes in the world the new generations not only in the U.S.A, but also in the European countries felt connected to the rest of the world and populism is actually a backlash against all those changes. This is a backlash amongst older generation who are looking for the values of the 1950's and 1960's. Hence, they feel not familiar about these new values. According to them, the society has become more secular and it is more international than patriotic and more tolerant of diversity than ever before. So, they gain these tremendous cultural shifts which occur throughout their lifetime. This causes a big generational gap within the public on feelings about the present cultural landscape.

This is a case which has been going on for quite some time including in politics. Contemporarily, it become rooted and populists appeal to this dissatisfaction with the

amount of change and claim of bringing all past values back. For instance, the US President Donald Trump has claimed that he would “Make America Great Again” which means that America was already great in past and he is going to return America to those “great days” again. Another example for this topic can be the Brexit referendum happened on 2016 in Britain. The UK Independence Party (UKIP) which was in favor of Brexit promised also during its campaign to bring Britain back to the times when it was an empire and a commonwealth dominated the country. Economic dissatisfaction does exaggerate these issues (economic crises etc.) and these issues are a driving point for populism. Populists manage to succeed a lot by basically criticizing governments and the establishment by promising to those unsatisfied populations. This is actually a very powerful appeal. Of course, there are tremendous tensions as well as a result. Hence the other part of the society is not in favor of returning back to the economic and social conditions of the 1950’s and 1960’s. On the contrary they want to live in a society with the new values (Norris & Inglehart, 2016) .

Populists articulate the view of people who are not in favor of neoliberal/economic globalization. The reason behind the dissatisfaction has to do also with the fact that since manufacturing and industrial production has shifted from the West to the developing world, part of the population in Western countries especially with fewer skills who used to do manual jobs are now substantially out of work and have a hard time finding alternative jobs and feel left behind. On the other hand, a population with higher skills and part of the elite industry have done spectacularly well and gained high levels of salaries. Consequently, the unsatisfied in other words left behind population get pretty angry and this inequality feeling fuels populism very much. Populists especially the right-wing populists hold minorities responsible for every economic and social problem that happens in their country whereas left wing populists hold mainly responsible the big international corporations for abusing the working class which are established through globalization for the current economic and social problems. As a result of all that they support grassroots democracy; working class activism and egalitarianism. (Norris & Inglehart, 2016)

A common denominator for all populists however is claiming to have fast and simple solutions for all kind of economic and social problems. The trouble of these solutions is they are superficial and unreal. From their perspective they are not only fighting against the politicians who are governing the country very badly, but also express the feelings and

thoughts of the great masses. For instance, Donald Trump made a comment regarding the refugee problem: “When Mexico send its people, they are not sending their bests...They’re sending people that have lots of problems (...). They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists...” (Diamond, 2015)

As the said example shows populists especially right wing populist parties use every single opportunity to put on the agenda the refugee and security problem, but their real aim is to address another subject which is globalization. They deny the notion that globalization and the disappearance of the borders especially within the EU has benefited the citizens of these countries economically, socially and educationally. This is a common argument for both right- and left-wing populists which differentiation will be explained in the later on. In this context, populists use every convenient opportunity not only for the people that they are representing but also to gain advantage for themselves. For example, with the advent of the massive wave of refugees in summer of 2015 in Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel made a gesture that every refugee was welcomed in Germany. Following that gesture, more than one million migrants came to Germany. Then in July 2016 between 18-24, 4 terror attacks happened in Germany respectively in Würzburg, München, Reutlingen and Ansbach. Three of these attacks were claimed by asylum seekers and two of them were claimed by the terrorist organization ISIS. On the 18th of July 2016, an Afghan refugee namely Muhammed Riyadh injured 4 people on the train to Würzburg. The attacker managed to escape, but he was later shot by the German police. The perpetrator of the bomb attack in Ansbach on July the 24th was a Syrian whose demand for asylum was refused. His bombing resulted only in his death and no one else was hurt (Eddy, 2016). In addition to these attacks a sexual assault in the German city of Köln on New Year Eve in 2016 happened (McGuinness, 2016). These attacks only served to fuel the public opinion for the Alternative for Germany (*Alternative Für Deutschland- AfD*), the right-wing populist party which gained very much popularity abusing the fears of the Germans for refugees. Many voters got behind the xenophobic populist right wing party, the AfD which made an electoral breakthrough in the upcoming regional elections on 24th of September 2017 (Mudde, www.theguardian.com, 2017)

By abusing the topics of immigration and refugees and causing polarization in society, the right wing populist politicians and parties active in Europe have gained electoral successes. For instance, AfD snagged 23.4% of the vote on the Thuringia State Elections in 2019, making it the second-largest party in the assembly and pushing German Chancellor

Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union Party (CDU) into third place with 21.8% (www.dw.com, 2019). Another example is the Hungarian Civic Alliance Party (FIDESZ) which is also a right-wing populist party, gained 81.6% of the votes in the 2019 local elections for the city Budapest (Manzanaro, 2019).

On the other hand, the Italian M5S is a crucial example because of its differences from other populist movements, parties and politicians in Western European countries. The aims and programs of the M5S contained arguments which were closer to the leftist political ideology during its first years following its founding, but over the time, the movement accepted and defended thoughts, ideologies that have come closer to the right-wing ideology.

1.2. Main and Sub Questions

The current phenomenon of rising populism in the West raises many questions, such as: How do we differentiate the different types of populisms? Is populism a political ideology, a strategy or a style of communication? Based on these theoretical debates this thesis aims to answer the following questions: Is there a new populism, and if so, what is new about the new populism and what impact does it have on democracy? Why is the Italian Five Star Movement a populist one? What does the case of the M5S show about the phenomenon of a rising new form of populism and its impact of democracy in Western Europe in general and in Italy in particular?

1.3. Purpose of the Research

Most of the populist movements in West Europe are right-wing, there are only few left-wing populist movements. However, M5S does not fit in one of these categories. It has emerged as post-ideological movement, because of that it is a unique case. Can we understand with the current populism literature the M5S? The study aims to evaluate the program, targets, aims, rhetoric, strategy and ideology of the M5S in terms of the features of populism understood as a thin centered ideology.

1.4. Methodology

This thesis is a qualitative case study of the M5S. "A case study maybe understood as the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is -at least in part- to shed

light on a larger class of cases (a population)” (Gerring, 2007, p. 20). M5S has been selected for this thesis because it deviates from the many populist movements emerging around the world and more importantly in Western Europe that are considered to be right-wing or radical right. M5S presents an anomaly for the literature as it does not fit the description of leftist populist movements either as will be discussed in chapter two. Gerring points out, “deviance is model-dependent” (p.106). Thus, the analysis of M5S provides an opportunity to assess which of the existing models of populism provide an explanation for its uniqueness as well as contribute to understanding the newly emerging forms of populism.

In addition to the secondary literature on the concept of populism as well as the Five Star Movement, only a limited number of primary sources of the movement have been used. The primary sources of the Five Star Movement include, a few articles from the websites of the founding leader Beppe Grillo and the website of the movement. Articles from major Italian and English newspapers about the movement were also utilized. I utilized google translate’s English translation when examining Italian websites. This is a descriptive study.

1.5. The Contributions of the Study

Through the case study of the Italian M5S, this thesis aims to understand the nature of the newly rising populism in Europe. Although there have been studies of other cases of populist movements and parties in the Western European context, a search on the Higher Education Council’s thesis database has revealed no results on the M5S and Italian case. There is also a great question on whether M5S should be considered populist or not. This thesis will be the first that is devoted to this case in full in Turkey. It will also contribute to the theoretical debate on the best approach to understanding populist movements with different political programs ranging from left to right wing and organizational structures.

There are many studies by the Italian political scientists; most prominently the book edited by Phillippo Tronconi and titled “Beppe Grillo’s Five Star Movement: Organization, Communication and Ideology”. According to the book review made by Alessio Cagliardi, Tronconi argues that the rise of Grillo’s movement is a kind of extreme re-construction of the total political system, specified with a populist leaning that has the aim to remove the political limits. He continues that the M5S presents its own way through leaderism, personalisation, modest messages, refusing ideologies and bypassing institutions and the parliament (Cagliardi, 2016).

On the other hand, Lisa Lanzone and Dwayne Woods underline in their article with the title “Riding the Populist Web: Contextualizing the Five Star Movement (M5S) in Italy” that M5S utilizes different political thoughts and ideas. They say that it uses right wing cultural standpoints and opinions together with traditional leftist thoughts and ideas. Therefore, it has not only voters from the right-wing but also left-wing. For instance, it takes a Euro-sceptical political stance together with an anti-globalization one. In addition, it criticizes the government regarding its politics on the “refugee crisis.” So, the policy of M5S can be best described as a “undefinite” one, since it does not support a certain ideology, but utilizes aspects of divergent ideologies (Lanzone, Woods, 2015).

Moreover, Paolo Franzosi, Francesco Marone & Eugenio Salvati indicate in their article “Populism and Euroscepticism in the Italian Five Star Movement” that the political position of M5S regarding the EU is strategic rather than ideological. They add that M5S’s populism is mainly founded on a direct appeal to the “sovereign people” in contradiction to the elites. They mention that as a populist and anti-establishment party, M5S clearly criticizes the EU and its executive class. Finally they determine that M5S does not treat the people as a nation, unlike other populist parties and movements and reject pure nationalism. So, from their point of view the stance of M5S on national identity topic is based on its opposition to the governing style of the EU (Franzosi, Marone & Salvati 2015).

However, Roberto D’Alimonte emphasizes on its article “How the Populists Won in Italy How the Populists Won in Italy” that the M5S contains lots of contradictions and it is a catchall party whose charismatic founder is now an almost invisible leader. According to Dilamonte M5S criticizes the media, but at the same time it protects the judiciary which is a diverging feature from other populist parties in Europe. He states that M5S defends democracy. He concludes that the idea of M5S to use the internet aims to bypass the elites in order to realize direct democracy and its final target is not only the national, but also the international technocracy since they are considered to be the enemies of the people (D’Alimonte, 2019).

Apart from these thoughts and ideas, Christopher J. Bickerton and Carlo Invernizzi Accetti argue in “Techno-populism as a new party family: the case of the FiveStar Movement and Podemos” that M5S can be best explained under a new type of party phenomenon which is identified as ‘techno-populist’. This type of parties distinguish by their manner in which members of it mix ‘anti-system’, ‘antiestablishment’ and ‘populist’

elements with a seemingly irreconcilable ‘technocratic’ discourse that shuns explicit ideological confrontation, insisting instead on the ‘competent’ resolution of practical problems (Bickerton, Acetti 2018).

While the literature discussed here has greatly contributed to this research by providing details, facts, opinions regarding the M5S, what these studies lacked was an analysis of the movement within its national context. Although effort is made by these scholars to compare the M5S to other new populist movements in Western Europe, this thesis brings into the discussion the Italian political history and culture. Thus, it examines the M5S within the Italian national context in order to determine the causes of its uniqueness.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

In the course of dealing with this complex topic, I encountered some obstacles, which will be briefly explained in the following. Since the M5S has been part of the governing coalition in Italy since 2018, the movement has been undergoing change rapidly making the academic analysis very difficult, the present work therefore represents a snapshot of movement as it showed itself up to the beginning of 2018. As a non-speaker of Italian, a linguistic barrier arose for me, so that I could only fall back on a small number of selected Italian language primary and secondary sources.

1.7. Organization of the Chapters

In order to be able to answer the research questions of this thesis, the following chapter provides an overview of the most influential and known academics' thoughts and ideas in the field of populism. Moreover, the three main political approaches about populism are discussed in order to understand the term populism and the associated question is populism an ideology or a strategy and the ambivalent relationship of populism to democracy. Chapter Three presents first the history of populism in general, which includes not only the historical background of populism in the U.S. and Russia but also and most importantly the history and current rise of populism in West European Countries. This is followed by a discussion of the political history of Italy through stressing its political culture and the connection with the perception of democracy, in order to understand the underlying historical and political reasons that make the M5S movement so attractive to citizens. Against this background, chapter four focuses on the presentation of the M5S and its history, objectives, organizational structure and self-image. Building on this, the critique of the existing democratic practice in Italy is discussed in order to show the similarities and differences between M5S's predecessors and M5S's own alternative populist democratic concept to the Italian citizens. Finally, an evaluation of the results was made in the conclusion.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter introduces the conceptual and theoretical framework of the thesis. It examines the debates on the concept of populism and the various approaches to the understanding of this political phenomenon that is observed to be rising in the current context globally. Based on this discussion, the chapter argues for adopting the ideational approach to populism of Cas Mudde and others (Christobal Rovira Kaltwasser, Ernesto Laclau, Jan-Werner Müller, Benjamin Moffit, Paul Taggart, Nadia Urbinati) in order to analyze most effectively the Italian M5S movement whose ideology is said to have swung from the left towards the right.

2.1. What is populism?

Populism is a contested concept without a consensus reached among scholars. In this regard there is lot of confusion about the meaning of populism. It is often used as a synonym for racism or opportunism. There are many classifications. One comprehensive list of typologies is offered by Benjamin Moffit who divides the approaches to populism into four: populism as ideology (Mudde, 2012), political strategy (Weyland, 2001), discourse (Canovan, 1999) and political logic (Laclau, 1977, 1980) before introducing his own explanation based on political style (Moffit, 2016 P.38-52). Another prominent scholarly work, Oxford Handbook of Populism (Kaltwasser et. al., 2017) divides the most recent literature on populism into three main approaches; namely ideational, political-strategic and socio-cultural. In what follows, I discuss first Ernesto Laclau's work that has influenced many others in the field. I then briefly touch upon the strategic and socio-cultural approaches before focusing on the ideational approach that is adopted in this thesis.

For Ernesto Laclau, populism is a political logic constituted via popular participation to politics. He handles populism as a positive power to develop a communitarian model of democracy and to mobilize ordinary folk. For him, populism is a vehicle to bring back again conflict into politics and support motivating the outsiders of the society in order to change the status quo (Laclau, 2005, 2006).

Another approach claims that populism is actually a political strategy implemented by personalistic politicians whose main proponent is Kurt Weyland. In the framework of this approach, populism is a connection between the rise of a strong, powerful and charismatic

politician who connects directly with the masses who are not formally organized. In addition, Weyland does not consider the right-wing parties in Europe as populist (Weyland, 2017), because of their institutionalized structures and firm ideological leanings. This approach does not seem to be useful to understand M5S movement. As will be discussed in chapter four, the Five Star Movement has been organized well online and as a political party later on.

The socio-cultural approach theorized by Pierre Ostiguy incorporates Moffit's approach to populism as a folkloric style of politics implemented by the leaders and parties in order to mobilize masses. In addition to that populism is an unprofessional political behavior aiming to increase the support of the media and the people, because populist actors usually wear casual clothes and use a slang language with the purpose to show themselves as one of the people. Their real aim is actually to address the argument that they are not one of the elites on the contrary they are against the elites and bold leaders who are standing by the people (Ostiguy 2009, Moffit 2016 P.75-76)

One of the common definitions of populism in political science belongs to the political scientists Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser and Cas Mudde (2017). They define populism as a "thin-centered" ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, the "pure" people and the "corrupt" elite, and which argues that the politics should be an expression of the "general will" of the people. According to this definition, the populists believe in the general will which means that the people have actually one will and it functions through an actor, movement or a party that is going to speak against the establishment and the elites. In this context, it can be determined as a clash between ordinary people and the elites and the establishment. This core aspect can be summarized as "us (the people) versus them (establishment and the elites). This is a characteristic feature of populism valid for all populist leaders, parties and politicians. Another feature of populism is that it does not set up aims or objectives like the other "isms" (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

Based on the ideational approach, populism is a thin centered ideology which must embody the polity based on the general will of the people and which separates the society into two homogenous camps; namely the "pure" people against the "corrupt" elite. On the contrary to the other "complete" ideologies like fascism, liberalism or socialism, thin-centered ideologies like populism have a limited morphology and therefore they are most of

the time accompanied by another ideology. In fact, populism emerges most of the time added to another ideology which is very important to encourage political projects attractive to a big part of the people. From this perspective, populism can appear in different forms whose fundamental features are accidentally connected to another concept. In this regard, it can cause attractive and different evaluations of it. Populism can also be described as a mind map of individuals to understand and conceive political reality. Moreover, being emerged together with consistent and sometimes even contradictory ideologies, it is also more like a collection of ideas. Therefore, populism is rarely pure. It exists rather together with the help of other concepts.

For Mudde and Kaltwasser, populism needs to be thought of in opposition to elitism and pluralism (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). According to elitism, similar to populism, the society is divided into two homogenous parts, however the good and the parts have switched places. Basically, elitism argues that the bad part of the homogenous society namely the people are really dangerous, imposter, and rude. On the other hand, the homogenous good part of the society are the elites, who are not only morally, but also culturally and intellectually superior to the bad part. Hence, elitists require that politics is not for the people; on the contrary it is for the elites. So, while they sometimes partly believe in democracy and mostly they completely refuse it. (Mudde, 2017). Pluralism is a concept that is totally the opposite perspective of populism and elitism, because it argues that the society consists of various and partly crossing groups who have different opinions and interests. According to the pluralists, a society must include many power centers and politics must reflect as many interests, ideas and actors as possible through a consensus. Hence the core idea of pluralism is that the political power has to be allocated into all kinds of groups, minorities existing in society independent of their gender, ethnicity, economic or social power etc.

According to the ideational approach to populism defined as a thin centered ideology, populism emerges not only in different places or times in the world, but also has different subtypes based on the movement or a mobilization of various social classes and accompanied by a thick centered ideology. So, political actors and populism itself are compound with a range of thin and thick centered ideologies (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

Furthermore, populism is something that exists in representative democracies, because there is always a possibility that an actor will object to the powerful elites and claim that he/she speaks on behalf of the people. Basically, populists accept the representative

principle, but they insist that they are the only legitimate representative of the people (Muller, 2016). The main specialties of the populists are that they are not only against the “elites” but also pluralism. So, the actual and main claim of the populists is that they are the only true representative of the people. From that point of view, all other political parties are not legitimate, and their supporters cannot be a part of the people. In addition, when populists are in the opposition they claim that the elites are corrupt and the people are moral. So, populists claim to emerge from the general will of the people and representing something good in that sense. Correspondingly, the main aim of the populists is creating a common good for any part of the society, because they are excluding the elites as being the bad part of the society. The most important thing for them is to create a symbolic “real people” which can cause important political outcomes. Hence, they always refer to the so-called “silent majority” or “real people” after any kind of elections (Muller, 2016). Although all populists are frequently in favor of a referendum it does mean that they want to create a democratic will. Actually, they want to use referendums as a tool in order to approve the “people’s will”. In that concept, populism does not mean more participation to politics. Populists can actually govern based on their fundamental belief that they are the only representatives of the people. They want to govern in order to extinguish corruption, favoritism and any kind of critical civil society initiatives. From their point of view, these intentions have been already approved morally by the people. So, there is no need to hide them. Moreover, they can also establish a constitution but the outcomes of it will be exclusive for some of the society. These kind of initiatives helps to the populists to stay in power. However, at the end a conflict will be inevitable. Populists are in fact a threat not only to the democracy but also to the liberal democracy. So, populism cannot be seen as something that gives the opportunity to liberal democracy in order to correct its deficits in the framework of giving the chance to the folk to rebuild their sovereignty again (Muller, 2016).

The core idea of populism is that it is anti-elitist. Therefore, populists tries to pitch the nation against some kind of elite which could be a liberal or a cultural elite. For example, populists usually blame the urban or commercial elites who live in metropolitan cities for not knowing the worries of people who live in the countryside. As a result, populists attack big companies for exploiting the people and moving jobs overseas or they attack directly the political elite. In this framework, populists are claiming that traditional mainstream center parties are too progressive and are ignoring the will of the people.

Populism has also to do with rhetoric. On the one hand most of the time populists do not have the answer for the fears of the people, since these are some key issues nobody has straightforward and simple answers to, such as economic inequality. On the other hand, populists claim to have solutions to complicated problems. What is more is important though is the populist argue that the elites do not share of the same concerns and fears of the people, and because of that they are logically do not support the populists. Through their language of taking the people and their concerns seriously, populists are able to get support for their parties. Most of the populists are good demagogues. Sometimes, populism is adopted by those demagogues so profoundly that today populists can be recognized as democrats. They appeal not to reason, but to the feelings and especially to irrational beliefs, prejudices, emotions, hatreds and fears of the people. Hence, it can be predicted as a passion activity, which is based on ideas, beliefs and connections and an interpretation of reality. Whether from the right or the left, the populists use most of the time the same tactics to advance their position and even to find a common ground. Since they present them as the adversaries of the system whatever the system is. However, populism achieves and preserves power by polarizing societies. Populists polarize societies in presenting the world as a ground for confrontation between good and evil. They claim that there is “the people” which is identified as “us” and represented by the populist and the others which is in most cases the elites and consist only few amounts of the society. They can easily choose and decide who these “others” in the society are. Sometimes it can be a specific ethnic group, immigrants, labors, socialists, liberals, conservatives, capitalist, homosexuals, women, men and of course, the free press. The list is endless for the populists (Moffit, 2016 P.38-52).

In conclusion, populism can be described basically as a set of ideas that makes a moral distinction between the elites and the people, and choosing the side of the people. It blames the political establishment for not listening carefully enough to the requirements of the people and ignoring the popular will. Populists claim to speak for the people but it is always only some part of the people. There is most of the time a charismatic leader who argues to speak for the people, but even as in the discourse itself it is always very much about breaking taboos and sort of separation (Urbinati, 2019) From this point of view, it is also an appeal to the idea of popular sovereignty which means that the decision-making power should lie in the hands of the people at least on the hands of the politicians that represent the will of the people (Kessel & Hauwaert, 2018).

2.2. The Relationship of Populism and Democracy

There are three main approaches trying to explain the relationship between democracy and populism in contemporary literature. The first approach claims that populism is something completely negative, whereas the second one argues that it has some positive contributions to democracy and the last one stays in middle of these two approaches (Moffit, 2016, p:197-221)

Many academics say that populism ruins democracy (Taggart, 2006). This approach, locates populism as dangerous and apart from democracy or a suppressed feedback (Arditi, 2007). The background of these arguments lies on the approach which was trendy during the 19th century that describes the “public” as ungovernable and left behind masses. So, in this framework populism must be treated with concern and fear (Laclau, 2005). Another source of this approach is the conflict of the two main fundamentals of liberal democracy. While stressing the importance of pluralism and popular sovereignty liberal democracy also supports to limit the absolute authority of the state via law in order to protect the basic human rights of the people. In the framework of the democratic theory this can be defined as “democratic paradox” (Mouffe, 2000) or “the two-column democracy.” Actually, these two columns control each other. Liberal column secures the human rights based on a constitution from the threats of the state, whereas the democratic column gives the sovereignty to the people and gives them the opportunity to make constitutional changes (Canovan, 2004). According to the supporters of the approach which claims that “populism is a threat to democracy” populism bends the curve very much to the democracy column. Consequently, important issues of the liberal democracy like protection of the minority rights and checks and balances could be under threat. Nowadays, populist leaders show these mechanisms as signs that liberal democracy is incapable of realizing the democratic ideal of “popular sovereignty” (Meny & Surel, 2002). If we consider that the uncontrolled call against pluralism which can also target the minority rights than populism can be taken under control or beaten in order to make democracy working again. This is the only way to provide again the balance between democracy and liberalism (Moffit, 2016, p:197-221). Although this approach explains the concerns of the people that some types of populism can cause negative effects on the structure of societies it can also be wrong to evaluate populism from a pathologic perspective, because, the term pathology only makes sense if there is a situation that can be identified as normal. (Meny & Surel, 2002).

The second approach treats populism as positive power for democracy. In the framework of this approach populism must be seen as the fundamental aspect of democracy because of its severe criticism to the ones who harm democracy and its structures with addressing the sovereignty of the people and majority assertion. For example, populist figures like Eva Morales, former President of Bolivia and Hugo Chavez, former President of Venezuela be seen from their people as “heroes” because of the support they have provided to the poor. Moreover, Beppe Grillo, the founder of the M5S has been treated as someone who gave back the governing power to the people via the grassroot movement. This approach has been submitted by the Argentinian political theorist Ernesto Laclau. He called populism as a political logic. Laclau has defended a normative democracy model which was created and named by himself as “radical democracy”. He claimed that radical democracy is always populist. Because the creation of a people is compulsory for a working democracy (1985, 2005). So, according to him without populism the component people will not be existing and without the people democracy cannot exist. As a result, this approach treats populism not as a pathology. On the contrary, it sees populism as an essential part of democracy. This kind of positive perspective about populism has been formulized as part of the critics of liberalism. The supporters of this perspective say that the liberal part of liberal democracy has damaged the democracy part via its individual rights and rule of law aspects. According to this approach supra-national institutions like the UN or EU decreasing or removing the power of the folk sovereignty in each member states which is an essential feature of democratic legitimacy. Therefore, they describe liberalism as a method who limits democratic participation or a tool of the elites to control the political platform and populism emerges as an opportunity to solve this problem (Moffit, 2016). But there are some problems about this approach. A populist leader could behave like a voice of different demands. On the other hand, s/he can define him or herself as the voice of the people which is unchangeable and unbeatable. This can cause an authoritarian personality cult or demagoguery (Arditti, 2010). So, this kind of perspective has the negative side effects that it can induce a power struggle platform which forbids or suppresses the opposition because it claims that it is the one and only voice of the people. Consequently, this approach sees populism as some kind of a tool which will help to reach radical democracy. Therefore, it must be treated accordingly (Moffit, 2016).

Thirdly, Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser and Cas Mudde, pioneers of the ideational approach are suspicious about building a positive or negative relationship between

democracy and populism. Similarly, they say that populism has a mutant character which can be a threat or corrective for democratic politics (2012). Moreover, Mudde and Kaltwasser defend the idea that populism is not only pathological, but at the same time normal regarding democracy. In other words, populism can be described as an extremist form of democracy. So, populism can play a positive role in encouraging democracies. On the other hand, it has also more negative role in developing a comprehensive liberal democracy (2012).

Nowadays we hear arguments claiming democracy is in crises not only in Europe, but also in other regions as well. These crises arise mostly on political accountability, because politicians have their own agenda and pursue their own agenda. The argument is that agenda other than those of the constituency leads to the inequality problem where wealthy groups and citizens have unproportioned influence over the political system, for law and policy making and over the elected officials. This is a mutually reinforcing problem of political and economic inequality, because, especially economic inequality is fostering and driving these accountability crises. From this point of view, populism is a symptom and a solution to the potential crises. It is inevitable that we would get populism in modern democracies, because modern democracies promise something they do not deliver. Modern democracies at the beginning promised that the people would rule and according to the people this had not happened. Rather, their experience is that somebody seems to be ruling for them. Therefore, populism is the response to the political disinfection and disempowerment, because modern citizens need something outside the ruling institutions to make and feel heard. Hence, populism is an obvious symptom of these problems (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

Accordingly, there are reasons why we can think that populism can be a corrective form of democracy. The first reason is as soon as populist actors have the power they are going to talk in the name of the people. They are normally very appealing to the people whether we like it or not. They are arguing that the political establishment is not paying attention to the ideas and interests of the people and this is very often the case in Latin American countries and in West Europe. Those who argue that the relationship between populism and democracy is positive see especially left-wing populism in the European context today as cure or vehicle to correction of democracy if populist movements take as their goals the institutional, political, social reforms encourage the people to govern

themselves. For example, new institutions of direct democracy can be constituted for strict surveillance of the political and economic elites. The argument is that those populist movements that have these reforms as their goals, can be a vehicle to a new and empowered democracy.

Populism emerges from the non-working parts of a contemporary democratic system. The most commonly used way to implement populism is revealing the corruption involved by the elites and to glorifying popular sovereignty on behalf of the people. In the framework of Latin American experience populism can be seen as a logical reaction to a corrupt and exclusionary democratic system whereas in Europe many EU opponent populist actors expose effectively the democratic emptiness of the project of the elites (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Taggart, 2004). From this perspective, the demand of the populists for accountability is very much understandable. Furthermore, citizens are more likely to see the representatives with their voting behavior as incapable politicians who are not meeting their demands (Meny, 2003).

Populists not only show the damaged parts of representative democracy, but also structural deficits of a democratic systems. Accordingly, they make important critiques about the non-effectiveness of the people. In a representative democracy, the people cannot do in general constantly the day-to-day work of governing, but there are appeals to the people directly in the form of plebiscite votes that everyone takes part. Votes for changes to the constitution can be implemented in some states but not in all. For example, in “Occupy Wall Street Rally” or in a political protest in general, there are some leaders who express opinions in the name of the people but all the laws in a country cannot be passed by plebiscites and government cannot be run that way. Therefore, a governing structure, a legislative body, usually an executive, and a legislative body have been set up in the name of the people. That is the pragmatic side of governing. The notion that government has to be available for the people provides always a room for a direct appeal to the people and that is the redemptive side of politics (Canovan, 1999). So, populism helps to create a view that is more than legislative politics in the framework of a limited democratic perspective. Populism reveals also the fact that democratic politics is just limited with a voting procedure of the citizens which lasts not more than ten minutes in order to determine their representatives. As will be discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis, the M5S can be treated as an indicator of the people’s discontentment from the Italian political system. Therefore, populists shine a light on the

fact that the democratic system cannot develop a comprehensive answer to the needs of the people.

While populism aims to demonstrate that democratic politics is actually nothing more than a play among the elected representatives, it also targets the so-called elites as the “others. In addition, populists claim that the people are “moral” but the elites are “corrupt” and they do not really work for the people, but rather the national elites are working for the EU or other international organizations or institutions.

On the one hand, populist leaders see economic competition due to globalization as dangerous. They are claiming that the mainstream political parties and their values are disconnected from the people. They can protect the people from the “evil globalization” phenomenon through an authority. That is the wholemark actually of populist discourse (Rodnik, 2018). For example, in Latin American countries the populist actors claim that there is an economic system which is generating inequality and poverty. From this point of view, they claim that not all members of society are represented fairly and equally by the establishment. So, they give voice to the actors who are not represented in this way. Moreover, populism can be corrective to democracy once in power by its enactment of certain policy reforms which are in favor of certain groups in society that have not been represented by the establishment. For instance, the immigration topic (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2011). These reforms will have a positive effect in the future on the political system. As such, it will start to be responsive precisely, because the capacity of these populist political leaders saying something very important for them can be huge possibility (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). On the other hand, however, populist actors can use the opportunity given by democracy to generate a polarization between the people in the political system. These parties are telling that they are worried about the immigrants in Europe. Contrary to this, the mainstream parties are not able to consider this problem. Therefore, these right-wing populist parties politicizing something that the other political parties were not considering. However, their arguments are mostly related to racism and ethnicity especially those by the populist right wing parties (Kaltwasser, 2012).

Populists refuse the fact that the “people” are heterogenous and has also the tendency to be more personal (Moffit, 2016). Populism does not have a meaning without an opponent “other”, because in populism the people indicates only a certain political community of the society which is the representative of the whole society (Laclau, 2005). Although populism

can create a platform for new democratic subjects, illegitimizing certain identities and rejecting that they are part of the society can also cause the discrimination of the others and sometimes even acts of violence in a society (Moffit, 2016). For example, some attacks took place in Australia, New Zealand against Asian, African and Arab migrants. According to the attackers these groups were nothing more than opponent groups which have to be eliminated or discriminated just because of their ethnicity or religious belief (Betz, 2004, 2007).

The refusal of the complex society reflects itself also on the homogenous and coherent people myth. Populism denies the facts of differentiation and division within “a people”. Hence populism can be understood also as a challenge to pluralism (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). This demonstrates that contemporary populism is a real problem in a contemporary political platform which includes differentiations and is heterogenous. Global capital flows, immigration, international identities and formations engendered complex identities which are making impossible to have homogenous political communities (Moffit, 2016). What we are seeing more and more today is a basic conflict of the structures. It is a conflict between those who want more openness, and cultural and economic globalization, but also being more open to ethnic, religious or sexual minorities. This kind of conflict helps populists to say “we have the answers,” “we tell you who truly belongs to the people” and “who does not belong to the people”.

Extreme personalization can also be treated as an anti-democratic tendency of populism. It tends to stand on the one leader figure which contains all the requests, demands and hopes of the people. The leader and the people become symbolically integrated. From this point of view, the populist leader can be seen as the expression of the people who actually knows what the people really wants. In other words, he/she is the appearance of the people. That kind of personalization can have two kinds of problematic conclusions: decisive dichotomy of the political arena and monopolization of a dangerous political power on one leader. In the first case, the people will be divided on two parts namely supporters and non-supporters or ally and enemy and in the second case, when a leader tends to see his/herself as the constant voice of the people than the threat of authoritarianism is on the stage. (Arditi, 2007, p.63-67) Furthermore, populists can be very dangerous to democracy, because they usually criticize the results of the elections or trying to cause disbelief on the existing democratic system. For instance, in the 2016 Austrian presidential elections, the narrowly beaten Freedom Party claimed that the Austrian people cannot select a candidate who does

not really represent the real people on the opposite the elites. Moreover, they argued that the elites had something done in order to influence the elections or to prevent the winning of the so-called silent majority. According to their argument if the silent majority had the chance to express themselves than the populists would be on power. The fact that they had been condemned to silence is a sign that the elites interfered with the elections. Even if populists do not win the elections or get not enough votes to get on power, they still effect negatively the dmocratic system because when a rumor is spread among the people that something happened behind the closed doors, this will have a negative effect on the democratic system, as is the case in the latest U.S. presidential elections. As in the case of Trump, populists usually say if they lose the elections than it is something wrong with the results and this is not a democratic argument.

Moreover, popularly elected leaders use their popular support to essentially emphasize majoritarian features, so that the current majority gets their requests. That is essentially undermining the liberal and pluralist features of democracy, such as that minorities have to be protected. Also, pluralism and political opposition have to be also protected. As a result of these features of democracy, populists use the majoritarian support in order to squeeze out and put pressure on the opposition to undermine the safeguards of criticism for opposition within a democracy. Suddenly there will be a current majority taking advantage of its political hegemony in order to freeze itself in places undermine competitiveness in order to establish a political hegemony. This kind of majoritarian populism bring out over liberal pluralism in and beacon the competitiveness which is very important to democracy. At the end what we are seeing is that Hugo Chavez was very successful in using the constituent assembly of 1999 to essentially undermine and destroy the opposition and to put his own political hegemony in place that caught on as a recipe. Another example we saw in Bolivia with Evo Morales and Rafael Correa in Ecuador doing the same thing. They are essentially pushing for constituent assemblies and getting strong support for these considering assemblies and then using them to beacon liberal safeguards to beacon the checks and balances in the institutional system. So, the so-called Chavez recipe for establishing political hegemony has caught on and has inspired other leaders to follow the same route to this political hegemony (Weyland, 2001).

Populists are mainly against liberal democracy. The main reason why they want to get on power is actually to undermine judicial independence, reduce freedom of press, and

control the press and that sort of thing. Populists can misuse even traditional political instruments. Issues in any case become so complex that politicians can use any argument that can always work. For example, if populists get on the power or win the elections accidentally, they forbid the freedom of press and independence of the judges especially those on the constitutional courts etc. They are completely and principally against legitimacy and immediately standing on against the media or other institutions if they are trying to object the realization of the will of the folk. This is actually the antidemocratic fact that we always experience when the populists are in power. Therefore, populists are on power, they will govern their land to an authoritarian direction. All other expectations from the populists would be naive. (Muller, 2016).

The basic pattern of populism is always the same but the causes of it is not always the same even if we now seem to be confronted of an image of a populist wave washing across the globe as a whole. The national context still matters. For instance, why populists like Marine Le Pen, Victor Orban became powerful and influential in different countries are still significantly different.

As we see from the discussions mentioned above regarding the relationship between democracy and populism it is hard to differentiate both of these concepts from each other. Populism is not external to representative democracy but it is competing within it about using the strategy of representation for claiming, imaging the will of the masses. In this case, populism is within the representative democracy as it is stretching its borders. Populism develops within representative democracies as a fight over the meaning and representation of the people, an extreme expression of intense majority politics, and thus a straining of constitutional democracy to its extreme limits, beyond which a change of regime (tyranny or dictatorship) could occur. In fact, all populist movements exhibit hostility to the mechanism of representation namely to political parties in name of almost anonymous, collective affirmation of the will of the people under a leading figure and above party pluralism. Populists emphasize the political directness, sincerity and transparency of the people versus the indirection and opacity of representative institutions. They oppose the purity of the political purpose because of the many bargaining games by politicians who are part of the few and the elite according to them. They complain about the time consuming decision-making in parliamentarism based on compromises, procedural formalism and institutional obfuscation. In addition, they criticize the heaviness of the work of compromise.

They use the language of an organic unity of the people rather than the artificial and abstract language of intellectuals and scholars. Furthermore, they stress the priority and homogeneity of the whole versus pluralism and the conflict of interest. They make the character of populism overlap with that of democracy and propose to see both of them as the best expression of politics. The art of persuasion in decision means the people has to construct their community according to their own will. Although it is not plural or diverse, populism develops within representative democracies not merely in democracies because it is a fight over the meaning and representation of the people. (Urbinati, 2019).

2.3. Right-Left Wing Populism

Populism can go hand in hand with nativism and authoritarianism or with different kind of socialist approaches to influence the society. From this point of view, populism can be left or right wing. The right-wing political parties' ideology especially in Europe are based not only on authoritarianism but also their approach to immigration. Issues having to do allegedly protecting the ethnic group from the arrival of outsiders. These are the ideological similarities of right-wing populist parties. We have seen a ground of growth in the popularity in Europe not least of the radical right. Actually, not all populist parties are radical right. But the most successful populist parties in Europe are those that combine populism with ethno-nationalism. They usually dislike immigration. In addition, they claim that they are worried about traditional culture being undermined. They don't like the disappearance of borders. For the populist radical right parties economic issues are on secondary level. Their agenda is much more related cultural issues like immigration although the immigration issue is not necessarily disconnected from their economic agenda. Right wing populist parties want to sustain welfare for the needy natives and pensioners for instance. On the other hand, they want to exclude immigrants from welfare. So, there are economic and cultural agenda arts somewhat interwove in that regard. In terms of more general economic positions they tend to vary a little bit across countries. They have less consistent economic agenda. If we look at comparatively across countries their cultural agenda is more consistent in that regard. That recent economic issues are not necessarily of primary importance for such parties. Hence there is more diversity throughout countries or across borders in that regard (Kessel, 2015). In contrast with that, the characterization of the left-wing parties is far more open and inclusive compared to the right-wing forms which are exclusive and keeping the people out. The perception of the people from the right-wing parties has an ethnic component based on

nativist politic which aims to “protect the homeland from these invaders to some extent” (Moffit, 2016).

The root of populism is the question how we can attract the people to politics. What kind of message should we convey in order to get the attention of the people to the party program? The disadvantage of populism is that the reality functions over a simple display. In general, it is simplifying our challenges although we have to confront us every single day with more complex structured problems in our society. In this framework, the effect of populism in our society and over the people is too much. Because populism responds, unites certain people and has control over the citizens who wants to feel to be part of a society (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

So, we can also describe populism as a set of ideas. It is not a full-blown ideology like liberalism, socialism or conservatism it can be either on the right or on the left direction. Second, one of the best ways to think about populism is to opposite to pluralism or liberalism both of which value the differences of opinions and emphasize institutions and laws that protect minority rights against majority will. Another important characteristics of populism is that its definition varies from national context to national context. The one thing that parties, movements, politicians who are described as populists tend to share is the insistence of those traditional elites and institutions are ignoring the demands and the needs of the masses. There is very “us versus them” quality to populism. They are really a consequence of other parties and institutions failures, rather than the cause of them. For instance, no liberal politician in anywhere in the world would call the press the enemy of the people whereas the populist will do it. For them the critical the press might be the enemy of the folk. The question here is how the populists will cope with the corrupt or experienced politicians. Therefore, populism is a movement in which democracy is used against democracy. The populists say: “We the people want to take back control from the elites who have corrupted the political system.” Consequently, it is a democratic argument used against the democratic system (Kaltwasser & Taggart, 2014).

Populism by itself does not necessarily come with a political ideology. It is anti-elitism coupled with some “ism”. If we consider the right-wing populism than we see it is mostly coupled and related with authoritarianism, which favors pulling power towards the executive. Populism cannot be identified in singular as a very specific ideology or discourse. There is not a populism in singular but rather subtypes of populism. In order to identify the

subtypes of populism we have to distinguish populism into one hand inclusionary populism and on the other hand to an exclusionary populism which is very often related to left- and right-wing populism. The main difference between inclusionary or exclusionary populism is whether including certain institutions into the political systems or trying to exclude certain constitutes from the system. There are two levels of inclusion or exclusion first one is material inclusion or exclusion and the second one is political inclusion or exclusion and third one is symbolic exclusion or inclusion. The actors of an exclusionary party will be going to exclude certain constitutes at these three levels. Material, symbolic and political. For instance, the populist right parties in Europe, which are an example of exclusionary form of populism, reject the idea of political rights for immigrants in order to exclude them from the political scene. According to the material analysis many of these right-wing political parties are not necessarily right wing from their economic perspective. They are in favor of the welfare state and they developed the term so called “welfare chauvinism”. They want the welfare state only for the natives and claiming immigrants are not allowed in their country. Therefore, they should not receive welfare (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

The third way of exclusion is symbolic. The argument of this kind of exclusion is that the immigrants do not belong to the community as such are not related to very specific notion of the nation. In addition, inclusionary populism has also these three levels of analysis to include certain constitutes. The typical example is in Latin America but there is another example in Greece and the case of SYRIZA, which can be seen as a type of inclusionary populism, or PODEMOS in Spain. On this type, there is always first of all a political inclusion. Either constituencies with certain sense have political rights but they do not have the capacity to really enact them or they were included to a populist movement or sometimes they got the political rights. There are examples in some Latin American countries like Argentina where a populist party offered a law to give more franchisee to women. This means as soon as you have a populist actor who are going to moralize constituencies very poor they are going to participate in politics. Than you have a process of inclusion through this way. The possibility of developing policies, which are targeting the poor folk or folk from the middle class, will automatically increase through the material inclusion. Because these policies will not only help the folk to have an access to certain resources but also a new way of redistribution will be created in the community. Moreover, a symbolic incorporation or integration of these will broaden the ideology in many constituencies and will be a part of the nation or the political community. Although they have been seen in the past as dangerous

groups. Their aim is actually, to take the power away and constraining it to a legislative prime minister or to a president. It means taking away the power of independent courts who constrain, stop governments from abusing their power. It is about shutting down independent media, so that the only message that the media carry belongs to government. It is about taking away rights of minorities, reinstalling inequality and traditional social hierarchy, putting women back home and to the kitchen. Moreover, it is about taking away marriage equality for LGBT folk. Generally, it is about limiting human rights, getting rid of the right to protest, to go out and criticize the government, prioritizing security over privacy, prioritizing punishment for prisoners and putting folk behind bars rather than rehabilitation. From this point of view, it is actually the antithesis of civil liberties and human rights and democratic pluralism. For example, during the French revolution Robespierre and its supporters came into power in the name of the folk, after a while Robespierre started saying "I am the folk and act in the name of the folk" while of this is happening there was an interesting debate in France they want to erect a statue of the folk. But the problem was how to decide who must be picked up within the folk to be as a statue. Is it a man, a woman, is it old, is it young or fat, and is it thin? From this perspective, populism is an illusion that the folk is a homogenous whole. Secondly, populism likes to act as if the elites are also a homogenous whole. In fact, I think that populists do not have a problem with the elite as long as they are the elite. Therefore, the populists, especially the right-wing populist representatives are usually claiming that if we go back to the past we will be safer because we used to live in the past in small and homogenous societies. The nostalgia for a kind of imagined past that the folk think they remember, was not nearly as great as it was at the time, is a technique that is been used by quite a lot of populist leaders over the decades. Accordingly, they are teaching or propaganda to spread over the idea that sameness will bring safety. Although we all know and experienced in the past many times (World War II etc.) That this is an illusion and therefore it is not true at all. Because sameness does not bring safety. On the other hand, populists believe and claim that the elites design policies that benefit themselves and hurt many ordinary folks and if the so-called elites don't solve some of these underlying anxieties we've goanna keep getting populism. Because populism just represents in a certain sense a democratic voice, which speaks all the critics out. The elites have to understand that populism is driven by real fears of the ordinary folk. In this framework, it is important that elite's recognize that there is some legitimacy of the complaints made about the elite which is that they failed in the financial crises happened in 2008, on Wall Street and in the Euro crises that emerged in 2009 and 2010. Hence, populism

can be a problem for democracy when it is exploited by essentially demagogic leaders that want to use it for their own purposes, power, position and influence and to undermine the institutions. It is very obvious that in a democratic culture or system it will not be precisely very helpful when some figures with certain political authorities say that some groups or minorities with certain specialties do not belong to the folk. In this context, how can only populists represent the real folk with a proportion of %11 or %25 gained in elections. In conclusion, right wing populists try to do use this idea of democracy and say that democracy is the will of the majority. But it is not really what democracy is as we all know. Democracy is actually a system in which all voices are heard. Therefore, it is not about one voice and it is not about the voice of the %51 on the contrary it is about the voice of the whole society and right-wing populist politicians and parties try to shut down all of those different (Kaltwasser, 2012).

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. History of Populism

Europe is at a crossroads. Populist far-right movements are challenging the premises of an integrated European Union. Anti-immigration rhetoric is coalescing with anti-EU politics to challenge the liberal ideals of the European integrationist project. In this chapter, we will explore the interwoven history of populism in the world and the far-right parties and movements regarding populism especially in postwar Europe-both East and West.

Populism has a more than one hundred years of history. The first ever known populist movement happened in Russia between 1874 and 1875. The movement called itself as the Narodniks. The Narodnik movement targeted to reach the people, however the initiators of this movement were not the people itself. On the contrary they were aristocrats, college students, intelligentsia etc. So, they were individuals from the upper classes of the Russian society. The origin of this movement lies in the fact of lifting up slavery in Russia. In 1861, slavery was lifted up and forbidden in Russia. Upon this development, some intellectuals claimed that the political power has to be given to the Russian people. In addition, they claimed that the political power should not only belong to the czar. So, those people were also against the autocracy. Based on that idea, they defended and demanded also a constitutional power or popular sovereignty. The Narodniks visited Russian villages and met the people in order to convince to support their movement, but the reaction of the Russian peasants was negative to the, because, from their perspective the intellectuals were using a language, wearing different clothes which were obvious signs that they were not part of them and are actually from a different social class. The aim of this intelligentsia was actually to convince the Russian people in order to rebel against the czar, but the peasants started to be suspicious about them. Consequently, they captivated these intellectuals and delivered them to Tzar's agents. So, the movement ended up without really starting (Kalaycioglu, 2020).

Another movement in the history which can be called as a populist is the “People’s Party” movement. This movement emerged in the U.S.A in the late 19th century. At the end of the 1890’s, the small farmers in the United States especially in states like Kansas, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Chicago and Minnesota had to confront with severe economic conditions. The prices of agricultural products started to fall down. Increased production drove down agricultural prices and caused a time period of prolonged price deflation.

Farmers blamed banks, commission merchants, railroads and the monetary system for these bad economic conditions. In this concept they complained about railroad companies charging less for long hauls in areas with little or no competition. The construction of the railways was newly completed and cost of the transportation of their products was very high and not affordable for these small farmers. So, transportation became very expensive because the owners of the railroads demanded high transportation costs. Hence, the small farmers were unable to transfer their products to the big cities like New York or Chicago. Consequently, many of those small farmers had to go bankrupt. Accordingly, these farmers decided to make a collective revolt in order to change the gold standard economic system. So, they protested especially big financial companies, banks and industries whose centers were located in Wall Street. After a while these protests turned into a movement. The most important feature of this movement is that it is a movement launched by a group, which can be called the people itself. On the other hand, in Russia the small farmers were not at the center of the so-called Narodnik movement. So, this is the difference between both of these two movements. For instance, the leaders of the People's Party movement in the U.S.A were themselves people who were speaking the same language, sharing the same social values, knowing the problems of the farmers and were originally from the same region unlike the Narodnik movement in Russia. The process of turning into a political party from a movement happened automatically. They formed the populist or the People's Party in order to fight their cause in 1892 to represent the problems of small farmers and find a solution for them. The party put up candidates for the following first general election in 1896 and won several states and influenced policies. None of the existing political parties (Republican or Democrat Party were already founded and active on the political platform) active on the political stage at that time were interested in the problems of these farmers from the perspective of those farmers. Nevertheless, the big parties took their position and this movement became by time a somehow sub-movement of the Democrat Party until the 1940's and then it disappeared inside the Democrat Party.

Later on, populism in the US emerged in late 20th century as more right-wing movement which was against the African Americans. Lately, they turned into a movement called the Tea Party which was active on 2010's. This movement was against the Barack Obama presidency. They emerged on the more right-wing part of the Republican Party. So, they do not have the structure of a political party. At the beginning, the movement initiated with the major aim of white race superiority but later on, they became also interested in

economic issues and discussions. Accordingly, they published a manifesto on 2010, which included basic economic analysis. They claimed in the framework of this manifesto that Barack Obama is somebody, purposely brought from Africa to destroy the American economy since he is Muslim and socialist. Of even date, 99 % movement also emerged in the U.S.A which was a left-wing movement. Their claim was that only 1 % of the American population get wealthy and the rest which contains the 99 % of the population left behind from this prosperity. So, the unfair distribution of income must be changed. Consequently, they demanded that the incomes of those rich 1 % of the population must be excised more comparing with the rest of the 99 % of the population. This movement was actually from this sense a democratic movement. Unfortunately, this movement did last long. Nevertheless, these movements made some protests in the area of Wall Street on 2010 and separated later on into two movements. (Kalaycioglu, 2020)

3.2. The Rise of Populism in Western Europe

This part of thesis explains the historical background of populism in Western Europe. It starts with a short political history of Europe after World War II in order to understand the reasons lying behind the current rise of populism in Western European countries. Then, it explains the historical development process of the first populist parties founded these countries. Later, it discusses the other populist parties founded in West Europe between 1972 and 2018.

After World War II, there was an overriding sentiment not only among the elites but also among the public. According to this sentiment this kind of a war should never happen again. (Mudde, 2000). So, it supposed to be the beginning of a period where there would be no world war and the future generations would be spared this war. Thereby nationalism had to be to some extent suppressed (Kemp, 1999) since, Europe was divided by nationalism and devastated by war. Furthermore, there were resentments within Europe against anything that smelled of fascism and communism or similar ideas. These ideologies were seen as fundamentally elitist ideologies and regimes. After the Second World War, Eastern Europe was under the control of communist regimes which preferred an ineffective bureaucracy instead of a powerful leader like Stalin. On the contrary, Western Europe was rebuilding its democracies based on a modest ideology caused by a fear from fascism and communism. Accordingly, some isolated populist movements emerged as conservative, rural reactions f

the agricultural sector opposing generally the centralization politics in Western Europe. One of them was the Union for Defending the Craftsman's and Merchants (UDCA) in France, which was also called in short as the Pujadas's. Pujadas's had actually only one successful election result on 1956 general elections. In fact, the term "Poujadism" became similar to populism even beyond France (Mudde, 2000).

During 1950s, division Europe into two ideological blocks was a political, economic and cultural reality. The 1957 Treaty of Rome transformed six member nations of European Coal and Steel Community into European Economic Community. In August 1961 Iron Curtain had symbolically divided Europe into two part. The building of the Berlin Wall embodied this separation. Hereby Eastern European countries closed themselves from rest of the world whereas West European countries opened them. A labor force mobility process began for some European countries. For instance, laborers from Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Greece migrated to Germany, Belgium and France. The reason for demanding more labor force in Western European countries was the supply and demand gap regarding the labor force between 1950s and 1960s. Among these arrived "guest workers" were people from countries most notably Turkey and Morocco (Mudde, 2000).

In total 12 million guest workers together with non-white workers from Commonwealth countries arrived Europe. Europe was experiencing an unprecedented boom. The European Economic Community observed these guest workers' arrival process whilst keeping Britain out of its increasingly wealthy club. So, the British government sought out integration with Europe. Some considered the integration of new arrivals to Britain as the root of ruin (Stone, 2016) . In 1968, John Enoch Powell, a former British Minister and a serving member of the conservative shadow cabinet delivered a vision of a multicultural Britain and handed the far-right a new legitimacy. Powell introduced a legislation regarding migration which contained a far-right narrative. According to this narrative, "Britain was a white country and this white Britain have the authority of the entire political system in Britain". Legitimizing this perspective was the starting point of a fascist movement which found an opportunity to cross-over into much more mainstream place (Kundnani, 2018). Simultaneously, a group called the National Front (NF) began to run a campaign in London and in the middle and northern towns of Britain. These parties and groups offered racism and xenophobia and anti-Semitism within their campaign to the English people. (Goodwin & Eatwell, 2014). On the other hand, in France in 1972 a party

named *Front National* (FN) was founded by Jean Marie Le Pen. Le Pen's FN was a well-organized populist radical right-wing party. In fact, according to Cas Mudde, FN is the first radical right-wing populist party founded in Europe. Le Pen claimed "I say what I think" and attacked the four institutionalized political parties active in France in 1972. FN, compounded nativism and populism together and was against the idea of having an integrated Europe. FN accused the elites for tearing down a wealthy state (France) in order to include the migrants. FN claimed that these migrants were the voters of the elites. National Front in Britain and Front National both demanded to have "wealthy state" at first for their "native people". Both of these parties accused their own national elites for serving only Europe.

In 1973, Britain along with Ireland and Denmark joined the European Economic Community. The European Economic Community had grown to nine member-states. Later that same year OPEC shocked the world and forced Europe to face its migration challenge. The oil crises caused recession of the European economy. This recession brings an end to the guest workers program and induced legal and economic integration of European countries. The "guest workers" lost their jobs. They went back to their homeland, but came back with their families (Mudde, 2000). The guest workers were more visible because of their wives, and children. It was clear that these guest workers were not going back to their homeland. Hence it was clear that the guest workers going to stay in Europe and will be part of the Western European societies (Mudde, 2000). Tensions appeared within the society and politics. Correspondingly, a political process appeared and started within the West European societies. This politicization process appeared mainly within the white working class. Hence, radical right-wing parties started to emerge.

In France, various far right groups disputing with each other and with different roots came together in 1972 in the framework of the FN under the leadership of Jean Marie Le Pen. (Mudde, 2000). Jean Marie Le Pen was a former military commando and was carrying the features of a populist leader. He was charismatic and essentially able to dominate the space (Goodwin & Eatwell, 2014). Jean Marie Le Pen transformed FN from a kind of anti-elitist, no backward looking far-right party with anti-democratic tendencies into the prototype of a "modern populist radical right party". He said that he was the "voice of the people". Moreover, he claimed that his words were actually those of the people and described himself as the "taboo breaker" and the big taboo was migration (Mudde, 2000). Jean Marie

Le Pen was long before the foundation of FN within the French nationalist movements, but he had failed to achieve any populist success. His views about non-European cultures was considered to be racist. Anti-Semitism was already a current theme of his politics. Since, the “guest workers” were seemingly a new feature of the French society, Le Pen saw this new problem of migration as an opportunity. Explained this very new situation with his own words “I had the feeling that France was losing its territory and that as a consequence of these failures it would know other hardships, in particular due to decolonization. And after that I engaged myself from that moment on to conduct a political campaign of resurgence if you will.” (Atabong, 2018) On the other hand, this self-proclaimed resurgence of far-right sentiment emerged not just French soil. The far-right groups in other countries also looked to take an advantage of anti-migrant sentiments and the economic uncertainty to achieve a victory. Mainstream politics started talking about restricting migration, particularly of non-white migration, in order to steal the role of the far-right movements and parties. These parties used these tactics to challenge with the radical right. Accordingly, adopted a more variable radical right wing politics. These attempts shifted the political discourse in general to the right (Stone, 2016).

In Britain, the NF increased its support during the decade of economic and political turmoil caused by 1973 oil crises. In the run-up of 1979 general elections, the Conservative Party (CP) leader Margaret Thatcher tried to “steal the cloth” of the far-right groups including the NF. She made a statement on a TV program by saying “I think that the British people might be afraid that this country might be swept with people of a rather different culture” (Thatcher, 1978). This was the first time that the British people heard the allegation that culture is being the dividing line and aiding culture is becoming to overwhelm the sense of British national identity. (Kundnani, 2018). The victory of CP in 1979 in the general elections in United Kingdom (UK) marked a turning point in European politics. This turning point caused a social and economic shift and lead to the far right being both battled and emboldened. Consequently, 1980s started with a reinstructing period of the European economy and this reinstructing period led to a huge transformation (Stone, 2016). In fact, it was the beginning of neoliberalism. The free market dominated and organized the society (Kundnani, 2018). The deregulation of the banking system, the opening up of financial markets, financial services and the shift from the car and ship building as the primary industries of the post-war period to the service sector were enormous economic changes caused by neoliberalism. The government established by the CP in Britain was the first

government that initiated these economic transformations in Europe through radical reforms. The shift to right of mainstream politics that side lined the British far-right was matched by changes to the economy, which were decisive and divisive. Britain influenced also other European countries and the far-right movements exploited within Europe. Many communities in the northeast of England or in the northeast of France placed their reliance on single industries and this caused a massive decline, which allowed for those incubating far-right movements of “post-war” period a kind of opportunity (Stone, 2016). For instance, Force Italy (*Forza Italia* - FI) in Italy and UK Independence Party (UKIP) and Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ). These parties can be identified as more neoliberal parties which are not comfortable with higher taxes and increasing costs of a welfare state. Therefore, these parties started not only criticizing the political system and the elites but also demanding and defending a free neoliberal trading system with lower taxes. Furthermore, these parties alleged the current political system of being profitable only for certain groups. These groups are usually the elites, immigrants and civil servants. So, these parties accuse those groups for disturbing ordinary people with unnecessary legislations and higher taxes. As a result there was an under current in every society which was that every society had some “fringe extremism”. These radical right populist parties and movements emerged a move of wave and the working class was a cleavage in this process. The first radical right-wing parties, particularly FN in France and the FPÖ in Austria was founded in 1956 as a Germanic National Liberal Party. Until 1986, it embraced only radical right-wing features. After 1986 it transformed into a radical right-wing populist party (Polykova, 2015).

On the center of the political spectrum, there will be always parties with labor tendencies. People get upset when they were unemployed caused by economic instabilities and crises. This causes anger in people not only in France but also across the other European countries. Moreover, politicians like Le Pen from the FN used this opportunity to come onto the political scene and abuse this anger for blaming the migrants to be reason of unemployment (Polykova, 2015). For example, the right-wing opposition nearly defeated the former French President François Mitterrand’s socialist coalition in the 1983 municipal elections in France. On the other hand, the television appearance by the leader of the FN, Le Pen in 1984, helped Mitterrand to reclaim lost ground and led critics to question the opportunistic timing. Le Pen got one of the most watched programs on the debate in French television history and it was the first time that everybody realized that Le Pen was actually a “fantastic speaker”. In addition, the party made a good propaganda targeting pretty much

the “guest workers” and the elites for either not discussing or for allegedly siding with the “guest workers” (Mudde, 2000). A democratic development is not possible without an access available to the media, especially to the mainstream media. FN was largely absent from mainstream TVs in France. However, his TV appearance in 1984 was a milestone that helped him four months later to secure 2.2 million votes on the European parliamentary elections. The FN grabbed right wing votes away from mainstream right-wing parties which caused a huge anxious on the leftist President Mitterrand. In 1985, Mitterrand changed France’s election system to proportional representation what is called to be the cynical manipulation of national politics. This move helped the following year for FN to claim 35 seats in French National Assembly. Mitterrand used the FN in order to damage the center right and booster his own electoral prospects but this move helped FN and to gain credibility (Goodwin & Eatwell, 2014). The FN had representatives in the French National Assembly because of the change that Mitterrand had introduced on the political system. Following this revolutionary moment, other populist parties in various Western European countries entered their national parliaments simultaneously. Respectively the Flemish Bloc won 5 seats in the 1994 general election in Belgium, the Center Party won 1 seat in the 1982 general elections in the Netherlands. The FN played the major role of inspiration for other populist’s parties (Mudde, 2000). So, the radical right-wing parties were emerging the political scene on the 1980’s while the European Economic Community was enlarging to include Spain, Portugal and Greece.

In fact, populism became a remarkable political power by the end of the 1990’s as a disappointing reaction for the consequences of the European political and social transformations, i.e. the EU integration process and migration wave. These disappointments caused the emergence of radical right-wing populist parties in different western European countries. These right-wing populist parties had differing levels of electoral and political success, however they combined populism with two different ideologies, namely authoritarianism and nativism. Authoritarian right-wing populist parties believed in a social structure based on a solid organization whereas the nativist right-wing populist’s parties were in favor of a state based native citizens. According to the nativist right-wing populist parties only native citizens must have the right to settle down in their country. These parties are in favor of a more homogenous nation. From their perspective non-native peoples are a threat for a homogenous state. Hence, the xenophobic nature of the European populism is based on the ethnic and chauvinist definition of a nation. So, populism in Europe has a logical

relationship with authoritarianism and nativism (Mudde, 2000). As the European common currency Euro was launched in 1999 a debate of anti-Euro sentiments started. Accordingly, newly invigorated populist nationalist parties which were against an integrated Europe established. For example, the True Finns Party in Finland (founded in 1995), the Sweden Democrats in Sweden (founded in 1998) and the Danish Folks (founded in 1995) party in Denmark, which were all vehicles for anti-Euro sentiments. Moreover, at the same time in France the FN focused on a nationalist manifesto against a supranational union, while in Britain the UKIP began to campaign to get Britain out of Europe. Likewise, FPÖ under the leadership of Joerg Haider (known for his fascist sympathy, anti-immigration thoughts) received %26.9 of the votes in 1999 parliamentary elections in Austria and the second most popular party. Sharp attacks on traditional political parties, along with bursts of xenophobia and immigrant bashing by Haider and his associates powered his party into the Austrian government in 2000. The reaction of the EU on that result was to impose diplomatic sanctions to Austria. In the framework of these sanctions, the EU demanded from Austria to prove that this party endorses the values of Europe, rights for minorities and quality for all. Correspondingly, EU did not remove those sanctions until Austria fulfilled the demands. Haider stepped down as a party leader in 2000 to ease the diplomatic pressure on Austria. Haider's subsequent attempt to run things from the sidelines provoked early elections, alienating huge numbers of supporters who switched to other parties. Therefore, the coalition of government ended up within months after the entering of FPÖ in the coalition of governments (Mudde, 2015). From this point of view we observe that the people from Western countries were much more concerned about sociocultural issues, identity etc. From that point of view people from countries like Denmark, Austria and later on in Netherlands were much busier with radical right and national identity issues (Mudde, 2015)

In 2002, Le Pen reached the second round of the presidential elections in France against a member of the French establishment Jacques Chirac who served between 1995 and 2007 as the President of France (Goodwin, 2014). The result of the first round of the presidential elections was in favor of Le Pen. As a reaction to the first election round results big masses of French people protested against Le Pen not only because of his first election round victory but also his participation into this election. Following these protests, a coalition was built between center rights, liberals and leftist parties, labor unions and non-governmental organizations. Jacques Chirac win the second round of the election with a quote of % 82. (www.theguardian.com, 2002).

In 2004, the EU embarked a big enlargement process. The EU included 10 new countries, 8 from central and 2 from east Europe. This process was a start of a new era of immigration because the “poorer” people from central and eastern European countries were moving to the “rich” west European countries in search of work. The major issue was the free movement of labor and the influx of cheap labor mostly from Poland and Hungary. This new situation disturbed the people of Western European countries (Mudde, 2015). The UKIP in Britain used this suitable environment and put itself forward to set-up for the instincts of “native people” of the UK. UKIP used the concerns over immigration and the EU within the people. Moreover, UKIP realized that it could do much better as a radical right-wing party. Accordingly, UKIP entered British politics quickly, turned itself into a serious political force and became the most popular third party in the country (Goodwin & Eatwell, 2014). UKIP was actually founded as central mainstream liberal democratic party in 1993 to protect the parliamentary heritage of UK from the EU. The party was not against the minorities in their first years. Then, Nigel Paul Farage, the so-called “Brexit leader” and leader of UKIP between 2006 to 2009 and 2010 to 2016, brought elements of radical right support. Farage accepted ex-NF candidates and allied with ex-NF supporters. Moreover, he allied with ex-criminals in order to be candidates of the party. UKIP’s only big electoral breakthrough came in 2009 European Parliament election, the party received 9% of votes. In 2013, UKIP turned its best domestic performance with 23 % of the vote in local elections. UKIP slipped a bit in 2014, but gained 27,4 % the most votes in the parliament elections. In the general elections held on 2015, UKIP have got 13% and 3.8 million votes. But on the 2017 local elections after the Brexit referendum, UKIP projected vote share was just 5% and suffered big losses. The aim of the party was to instrumentally make sure that the Brexit referendum will take place and its results will be in line with the parties target (Sked & Cook, 1993).

So, populism has a right-wing tendency in Western European countries. However, there are also left- wing populist parties as well. After the economic crises of 2008, a big recession penetrated Europe. Following this economic crisis, left-wing populism spread over the Western European countries. For instance, in Greece radical left-wing populist parties came together under a coalition called the Radical Left Coalition (SYRIZA) and in Spain the so-called Furious (Indignados) protests transformed itself into a party namely PODEMOS which means “we can”. These parties are very much similar. Nevertheless, these parties define different groups or institution as to be the “enemy” of the people. For example, SYRIZA defined the EU bureaucratic elites as the real enemy of the people whereas

PODEMOS in Spain described the national elites as the “enemy”. Most of the left-wing populist parties in Europe are against supra-national organizations for socialist reasons rather than national. For example, all of them were against the “bitter recipes” imposed by the European Commission (EC), European Central Bank (ECB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Venizelos & Stavarakis, 2020)

3.3. Political History of Italy

The political history of Italy has a chaotic, unstable and unreliable image. Italy was even before its unification fragmented into numerous small states followed by its late nationalization process in 1861 called the “Risorgimento”. The era of the fascist rule between 1922 and 1943 ended up with a defeat in World War II was in fact the starting point of an unstable timeline in the Italian political system. Hence, the post war era between 1946 and 1994 contains changes and developments, especially the end of the first republic era, in the political system which can be determined as the preliminary reasons for the emergence of the Five Star Movement (M5S). In this framework, this chapter explains the main turning points in Italian political history beginning with Risorgimento, but mostly focusing on the developments after 1946 (Duggan, 2014).

Italy played always a special role among European democracies: 60 governments in 63 years between 1945 and 1993 which is a record and indication of Italy’s political instability. Moreover, the political party Christian Democrats (DC) was continuously the strongest fraction within the governments between 1945 and 1993. In fact, the disappearance of almost all relevant parties in the wake of the so-called Clean Hands (*Mani Pulite*) corruption investigation period in early 1990’s and the rapid emergence of new political formations were one of a kind events in the democratic history of Europe. Despite the numerous reforms made in the electoral law, the instability of the governments remains a constant feature of Italian politics today (Diamanti, 2014).

3.3.1. Risorgimento and Unification of Italy

Risorgimento, refers to the various movements who inspired Italy’s independence and unity. Until the beginning of the 19th century, there could be no talk of an Italian state. The Italian peninsula was ruled by European primordial powers from France, Spain and Austria. The political situation in Italy in the 18th century, especially between 1815 and 1848 was a

period of restoration and resistance. In 1848, the Italian independence war started and ended up with building a constitutional monarchy in Italy in 1861. This was not only a unification, but also becoming a nation process, which was called Risorgimento. However, Italy remained an “unfinished” nation. Due to the economic, cultural and social differences, the majority of the population, especially in the south, was more or less neutral to the unification process. A nationwide acceptance of the new nation-state never took place, because the Vatican together with the faithful population stratum of the church never recognized the new Italy (Duggan, 2020).

3.3.2. The Fascist Period

The economic and political consequences of World War I intensified and finally exacerbated the dissatisfaction of the Italian population with the system and encouraged the fight alliances of Benito Mussolini which developed itself in 1921 to a mass movement. The political and economic elites tolerated the seizure of power by Mussolini. The development of the Italian fascism was emerged with the Lateran treaties which caused not only the equalization of power but also the consolidation of the regime. The aggressive foreign policy and the approach to the National Socialist Germany led Italy into World War II. In 1943, the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini collapsed due to the war. As a result, two Italian states faced each other in a civil war. The crimes of the fascist era quickly fell into oblivion after 1945 (Duggan, 2020).

3.3.3. The First Republic (1946-1994)

After the Second World War, the Christian Democratic (*Democrazia Cristiana*, DC) Party was in every government formed between 1946 and 1994, for almost 48 years. During these years in power, the DC became a state party. This unusually long period of government was also called as *Partitocrazia*, which can be translated as the “rule of the party”. The main reason for this long period of the DC governments were the Cold War and the accompanying necessity of preventing Italy from communism. The pressure of the Catholic Church and the USA on Italian politics has supported the DC for almost fifty years in the exercise and expansion of its power (Duggan, 2020).

The beginning of the seventies established a different system of bribes in Italy, which received the name Bribesville scandals (*Tangentopoli*) from journalists. During the mid-

seventies, the Italian parties represented in the parliament decided to distribute bribes between the political parties according to their party proportions in the parliament. This meant that the bribes are distributed to all parties according to a certain key, so that even smaller parties benefited from the illegal payments and thus all are guilty, so that no party can take legal actions against the governing parties. In the seventies, the parties were also divided between the public broadcasters. The DC was controlling the state television channel RAI1 whereas the socialists were controlling the RAI 2 and finally the communists, a little later, the RAI 3. Some journalists blamed, especially RAI 1 and 2, for serving as a government television station. Hence this helped the parties of the first republic to hold onto power (Duggan, 2020).

In the beginning of the nineties, global political situation changed dramatically with the Cold War era coming to an end. Italy, too, was not unaffected by this global political upheaval. Most experts agree that the collapse of the old party system in Italy is at least an indirect consequence of these events. Against the background of the relatively relaxed situation in the early nineties, Italians were increasingly turning their attention to the domestic political situation in their country. Italy was and still is one of the most indebted states within Europe and corruption is visible everywhere. In fact, the most important development happened after 1992. When Mario Chiesa, a local politician of the Italian Socialist Party [Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI)], was caught by the “Clean Parliament” investigators for receiving bribes. This incident was the beginning of the end of the first republic. Hence, 12 parliamentarians were excluded from the party. This incident made extensive statements about the bribery system, which eventually lead to the resignation of the most powerful politicians (Bettino Craxi, Giulio Andreotti, and Arlando Forlani) of the Italian politics at that time. As a result of the investigation, 447 parliamentarians were put on trial in 1992 (Bettino Craxi, prime minister from 1983 to 1987, for example, was sentenced to a total of over 20 years in prison). Consequently, this caused the disintegration of the existing party system and thus the collapse of the First Republic. As a result of this, most parties renamed themselves. Accordingly, in the 1994 parliamentary elections, 71.3% of Italian parliamentarians were elected for the first time. However, since staff changes at lower levels of administration (civil servants and state employees) was never carried out as seriously as with the political establishment, the existing politics of Italy did not really change as much as expected. (Duggan, 2020).

3.4. Italy's Difficult Relationship with Democracy

The Italians difficult relationship with democracy is closely linked to their distrust and distance from the state and political elites, called *la casta*, the political caste. The problematic relationship between the Italian people and their democratic representatives goes back to the founding of the nation-state in the course of the *Risorgimento* in the 19th century. When Italy was territorially united only a fraction of the population could vote and participate in the elections. Eventually, only this fraction of the population participated in the political system. This elite policy disadvantaged the broad masses of the population, kept them away from shaping politics and thus laid a foundation for the characteristics of the parochial culture of Italy. Moreover, after World War II, Italy's political system was in a period of upheaval, in which it tried to establish democratic structures at the national level after monarchy and fascism. However, during the post-war period Italians lost their trust in politics. Consequently, they were not only socially isolated but also alienated from politics. At the end of 1950s Italians were divided between Catholicism and Communism, which in particular shaped the party system of the first republic. The period of relatively stable relations of the Italian party politics ended up in the early 1990's, but there was no constitutional change in the course of the subsequent restructuring of Italy's party landscape. At the same time, because of the great distance between the Italians and the state and its institutions, there was a strong local and regional orientation of the Italians (Caciagli, 2017).

3.4.1. Catholicism versus Communism

The politics of Italy in the postwar period was determined by the struggle of the two separate camps, Catholicism and Communism which lasted more than 40 years. In this framework the Catholic-influenced Christian Democrat Party (*Partito Democratico Chrriano*-DC) and the Italian Communist Party (*Partito Comunista Italiano* -PCI), combined more than 70 percent of the votes and thus significantly shaped the political (cultural) landscape of Italy (Caciagli, 2017). This dualistic aspect of the Italian politics has its origin in the history of the country and goes back in both Catholic and Communist traditions to the Resistance (*Resistenza*) which was a mainly the Northern Italian resistance movement at the end of World War II. The anti-fascist consensus of both ideologies in the fight against the German occupying powers united both camps and represented a massive political factor of integration, which had an effect until the 1980s (Duggan, 2020).

During the period of the first republic from 1948 until the collapse of the party system in 1994, both the DC and the PCI were able to gain the most votes together. The election results of the DC at the national level were always unsurpassed. The Catholic camp represented by the DC had always the hegemonic position in the Italian party landscape (Caciagli, 2017). The construction and maintenance of the DC's hegemonic power over the entire period of the first republic was to be favored by certain factors of the Italian politics. The DC embodied in the minds of the voters not only anti-fascist values and the Western integration of Italy into NATO and to the then EEC but also the bulwark against communism and its anti-democratic rhetoric. The DC benefited from the fear of large parts of the population from the communists, organized under PCI. This made up a significant part of the success of the DC at the ballot boxes. Moreover, the DC offered a political home to all electorate stratas which enabled it succeed in penetrating the political worldview of the people equally.

PCI was one of the strongest communist party organizations within the Western democracies. This fear from communism was fueled above all by the anti-democratic rhetoric of the PCI, which not only benefited DC and secured it a wide electorate spectrum, but also led to a systematic exclusion of the communists from governmental positions by those parties which supported the Italian political system and its democratic values of governmental responsibility. Although both camps were opponents, these ideologically based horizontal and vertical dividing lines significantly shaped the Italian politics and society and compromises could be worked out - if necessary - especially at the political level. On the one hand, this practice created a short-term consensus between the opposite camps, but at the same time it cemented the primacy of the DC over the PCI, since there were no changes in overall policy. The economic upswing of the country, the accompanying modernization and improvement of the living standards steered the loss of votes in both camps. Accordingly, in almost all areas of social life the integrating effect of Catholicism and communism and the former strong party loyalty, along with the previously existing strict political milieus, dissolved. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the once profound lines of conflict between Catholicism and communism and the political parties DC and PCI, which represented them at the political level disappeared from the political picture or redefined themselves at the latest in the course of the restructuring of the Italian party system following the uncovering of the far-reaching party corruption in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, their influence to the present day still remains nowadays in the

Italian political system. As part of the political concept, these two ideologies played an important role in ensuring the democratic involvement of Italians at various social levels for decades (Caciagli, 2017).

3.4.2. Regional Fragmentation

Against the background of Italy's national and economic history, the historical-political difference between the Northern and South regions of Italy becomes quickly apparent, which manifests itself in different political mentalities and different levels of economic development. The problematic relationship between the North and the South of Italy goes back to the time of its national unification in 1861 in the wake of the Risorgimento (Caciagli, 2017). During its first years as a nation-state, Italy waged a war in its south to subdue the population there, which in turn was regarded by the south to be the occupier of the new central power in Italy. Hence, the south revolted against new taxes and new rulers. Already in the 19th century, the north of Italy approached the industrialization tendencies of Central Europe due to its geographical position and could reach relatively high literacy rates, while in the south agriculture was still predominantly carried out with the simplest devices and illiteracy was widespread. The hope of the southern Italians for an improvement of their social situation was destroyed by the strict suffrage census. Since it gave only %2 of the population the right to vote and thus supported those political elites who benefited from the unification of Italy under a central government (Crainz, 1995). Still, there are huge infrastructural differences between the strong industrialized north and only agriculturally strong south which can be also understood in particular by the propaganda of locally oriented parties such as the Lega Nord (LN). One of the main program points of the LN is the desire for independence of the rich north from the perceived lazy south Italy. In addition, the party calls on the central government to give more individual decision-making power for regions which is a driving force for the federalization of the country (Caciagli, 2017).

However, it is not only these serious differences at the economic level that play a role in the formation of two different political approaches of Italy. The mentalities of both regions also stand out from each other, thus cementing the country's lack of political unity. Due to the negative experiences with the Italian central state during the unification of Italy (Crainz,1995), the southern Italian population relied less on the weak state institutions, but turned increasingly to traditional figures such as the family or self-organizations in local

communities, which further exacerbated the mentality differences between the north and the south. Consequently, clientelism was prominent instead of a strong state up to the present in the south of Italy. Clientelism is a political practice that is particularly common in the south, but has always been practiced by all parties. By taking informal and unofficial courses of action, the state further eroded its already weak position and thus simultaneously promoted the emergence and spread of alternative, non-state power structures in Italian society, most importantly the fast development of organized crime as well as corruption. Clientelism reached its maximum extent in the Bribesville scandal period. The bribery scandals were disclosed at the beginning of the 1990's (Caciagli, 2017).

A final striking difference between the heterogeneous ideologies of north and south Italy is the reverberation of dualism between the Catholic and Communist ideologies. The existing internal division of the country into north and south on political level became also evident in the 1946 referendum, when the Italian people decided democratically the new form of government. With only 54.3 % and a relatively narrow majority, the Italians voted for the republican form of government and against the monarchy. Especially in the more traditional south of Italy, the people mainly wanted the monarchy as a future form of government, while the more progressive north favored a republican Italy. The former geographical location of the Catholic and communist ideologies is still visible today in the voting behavior. Former red communist centers in the south tend to belong to the leftist parties, while the 'White' north, formerly a stronghold of the DC, now sees its political representatives in the center-right alliances (Caciagli, 2017).

In summary the internal north-south division of Italy is based on socio-economic as well as political differences of their respective historical paths. Thus, it forms a cause for the heterogeneous structure of the Italian polity in general. While the north-south fragmentation continues to pervade the country's history, Italy's politics has changed significantly in recent years with its orientation towards the European Union. In the past, a European-friendly attitude prevailed with regard to Europe, which is associated with the lack of a common national identity. In 1995, nearly 70 % of Italians said they were close to Europe, which was due, among other things, to the economic upswing caused by EU subsidies and the integration of political fringe parties into the political system. However, a change in the attitudes of the Italians took place from the turn of the millennium onwards. The introduction of the Euro caused the cost of living to rise, while salaries remained at the previous level. In

addition, the enlargement of the EU to the East caused an adjustment of the aid to the detriment of Italy, which from now on had to be content with smaller proportions. At the same time, the influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe fueled the Italians concern about over-alienation, the loss of jobs and social status, which in turn was exploited by right-wing populist parties such as the Northern League (*Lega Nord*-LN) the center-right electoral alliance around Berlusconi and Beppe Grillo's populist movement Five Star Movement (Mastrobuoni, 2012). In addition, the political scientist Fabio Serricchio sees an indication of the dwindling European support in the relatively longer, more stable governments compared to the first republic (Serricchio, 2013).

Since the beginning of the financial and Euro crises in 2008, the EU used to provide Italy with guidance and incentives to achieve social and economic stability and to carry out important reforms under the pressure from Brussels. In fact, the aspect of coercion plays a positive role for the parties which are against the EU. The prescribed hard austerity curbs the enthusiasm of Italians for the EU. The Italian population's support for the EU and the common currency is dwindling (Mastrobuoni, 2012).

In fact, the development of the Italian political spectrum until 2011 has three phases:

- the “Christian Democrats” stable predominance phase (1948-1991),
- the complex transitional phase (1992-1996),
- the open competition bifocal phase (between center leftist and center rightist) (1996 to 2011).
- Within the last span of time (1996 to 2011).

The general elections caused indeed always a change of power. Hence the center leftist and center rightist “camp” displaced their responsibility on the government. The 2008 global economic crises and its results and the resignation of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (Prime Minister from 1994-1995, 2001-2006, 2008-2011) in 2011 and the subsequent technocratic government of Mario Monti between 16 November 2011 and 21 December 2012, caused many changes in the Italian political system (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). The technocratic government of Mario Monti was one of the few non-partisan governments within the political history of the Italian Republic. This technocratic government was the

61st government of the Italian republic (Giannetti, 2013). It was a cross-camp coalition government between the center-rightist and center-leftist (Gianolla, 2018). This changed the relationship between the forces within the two camps and caused crises on the bipolar political system. For instance, the stormy renewal of the two political camps and the measures implemented to combat with economic crises and several scandals regarding utilization of public money through small and big sized parties caused a growing resentment among Italians over the politic system

3.4.3. Dissatisfaction with Political Institutions

In addition to the above-mentioned ideological and territorial lines of conflict, another dividing line that runs through Italian society is the characteristic of the Italian politics which refers to the dissatisfaction of Italians with the state and political institutions of their country. This is a constant point of the Italian politics. Even today the confidence of the Italian people in state and political institutions are low. One of the reasons for the frustration of Italians with the state institutions is the lack of transparency of the Italian bureaucracy. The slow-working, overburdened administration, the underpaid employees as well as the non-transparent interplay of conflicting laws and their arbitrary interpretation offer a fertile basis for bureaucratic corruption (Caciagli, 2017).

In particular, Silvio Berlusconi, a prominent politician, making use of the manipulation of state institutions in his favor, influenced the Italian politic to a considerable extent and weakened the reputation of the institutions (Donovan, 2003). As previously described, the distance between Italian citizens and the state is also based on the negative experience of Italians with their state apparatus that goes back to the past. Especially the south of the country suffered for a long time after the unification of Italy in 1861, under the installation of the nation-state from above. Furthermore, the experience of fascism under Mussolini with the enforced political conformity of the Italian people through unifying nationalist propaganda denied to give positive connotation the concept of nation in favor of the population in the long term. For Italians political leadership is an important hub of the Italian political system. Even in times of crisis such as the still existing euro crisis, the politic elites are pushing their own well-being and intra-alliance power struggles more than the effective solution for the country's political problems. In this way, the trust of the electorate to the democratic representatives continues to erode.

In the 2013 general elections, turnout fell below the 80 % mark for the first time with almost three quarters of the votes of all eligible voters. In view of the high participation values up to 93 % in the past, a significant decline in participation can be observed here. This is due, among other things, to the lack of integration of the population into the party structures that permeate society, as well as to a massive loss of confidence and a high level of frustration towards the political cast. Similarly, Italian democracy was undermined by the appointment of the technocratic government between 16 November 2011 and 21 December 2012 under the non-partisan economist Mario Monti rather than by democratic elections, which led to violent protests against this technocratic government in times of austerity politics (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014). This considerable influence of the technocratic government on the Italian democracy is articulated in the democracy index of the Economist from the year 2012. The five aspects of this index, which determines since 2006 the quality of democracies worldwide, are as follows, electoral process and pluralism, a functioning government, political participation of citizens, political culture and civil liberties and the quality of democracies. According to this index, between 2008 and 2012 Italy was downgraded from the status of a complete democracy to an incomplete one (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2013).

Since the beginning of the financial crisis in 2008, the functioning of the government and the political participation of citizens in particular have seen declining values (Economist Intelligence Unit 2008, The Economist Intelligence Unit 2013). In the course of its history, Italian democracy has already survived numerous crises and faced threats from terrorism, organized crime, anti-systemic currents, political and economic stagnations and coup attempts.

4. THE ITALIAN FIVE STAR MOVEMENT

This chapter will first address the origins and developments of the populist M5S. To do this I will start stressing the conditions of the Italian political scene in order to explain the origins of the movement. Following this, I will look at the political program, objectives and traces of the electoral successes of M5S until 2018. In addition, the internal hierarchies and organizational structures, important players of the movement will be explained together with the specialties of its voters. Finally, the self-image and ideology of the movement will be outlined and a theoretical classification of the M5S is undertaken.

4.1. History of the Five Star Movement

Based on the remarks of the previous chapter, we can say that parties always existing in the Italian political scene which were specific to their respective political era and shaped it. During the era of First Republic, which was between 1948 and 1992, the dominant party the DC with its opponent PCI shaped the political scene, whereas the Second Republic era was tailored by the parties Force Italy (*Forza Italia*- FI) and Freedom for People (*Popolo Della Liberta*- PdL). On the other hand, the Five Star Movement registered as M5S (*Movimento 5 Stelle*), is part of the Europe-wide success of populist movements (Dokos, Poli, Rosselli, Soler i Lecha, & Tocci, 2013)

The history of M5S is closely connected to the biography of its founder Beppe Grillo and can be roughly divided into two sections. The first period is between 1986 and 2005, in which Grillo was excluded from Italian state television following a joke about the then corrupt government. Following that exclusion, he appeared as a comedian and satirist in public squares, theatres and sports arenas, holding critical-satirical monologues about the political situation, economic, governmental events and scandals. He informed himself in advance about the current political conditions in 2005 in order to take up these in his lectures. As one of the first politicians in this context, he saw the internet as a way of communicating with citizens. A return to state television became impossible for him during this time, especially due to the massive control of the parties over the state media sector. Finally, he voluntarily withdrew from the private sector, where he had been on the air for several years. During this period Grillo's critiques against the ruling political class increasingly intensified and politicized. In the following phase of mobilization, Grillo wanted to use the potential to

organize the fans of his performances who shared many of his views and ideas for During the period of the first republic from 1948 until the collapse of the party system in 1994, both the DC and the PCI were able to gain the most votes together (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). On January 26, 2005, Grillo opened his blog www.beppegrillo.it on the advice of the internet strategist Gianfranco Casseleggio with aim of connecting better with his supporters, which in the same year became one of the ten most important blogs worldwide (Grillo, 2005). In addition to free advertising for his performances, Grillo found a forum available at any time and potentially anywhere, in which he could express his views regarding public issues and put them at his disposal without having to fear a censorship and repression by regulated media such as the state television (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). Through his blog, Grillo started an online petition against the then President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi in 2005, with the aim of bringing back the Italian troops from Iraq. In addition, in November 2005, he raised funds in order to place an advertisement in the international newspaper International Herald Tribune (Grillo, 2005). In this advertisement, an entire page was dedicated to 23 members of the Italian parliament who had been convicted of various crimes and who, although not named, were publicly listed online via a reference to Grillo's blog. In this appeal, Grillo and his supporters as innocent citizens refused to be represented by criminals. In the framework of legal investigations to clarify the case of Clean Hands operation (*Mani Pulite*) – Bribesville (Tangentopoli) scandals, Grillo gave the initiative the name Clean Parliament which is being used until today (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2013).

With the integration of MeetUp's, a kind of online organization forum into his blog, Grillo chimed a new stage of development of the M5S. He formed not only critical assemblies of concerned and interested citizens but also organized mobilizations of individual MeetUp cells. This phase culminated on 8 September 2007 in the first V-day of M5S, which was named after the Italian insult "Fuck Off" (*Vaffanculo*). This nationwide event of gathering was thematically directed against the Italian political leaders. Grillo used the huge gathering of many participants and introduced three direct democratic legislative initiatives. The most favor initiatives are as follows;

- convicted citizens should not be allowed to run for an office in the parliament elections
- parliamentarians should be elected only for two terms of office

- the voters should be allowed to select candidates by direct election and not through politic parties as it is the current case.

Topics such as freedom of the press and “let’s go further” (*Andiamo Oltre*) (Grillo, 2013) followed and brought the movement a nationwide attention and demonstrated the influential organizational structures of M5S, which made the movement a serious new player in the Italian politic scene. In addition to internet and online meetings, M5S was now able to establish itself offline (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2013). The entry into the active politics arise from the MeetUp groups formed in 2007, through some of the citizens participated in these MeetUp’s groups under the name “Beppe Grillo’s Friends” (*Amici di Beppe Grillo*).

M5S participated for the first time on the local elections held on 2008. Many of the movement supporters were skeptical of this development, as they wanted more a critical observer role for the movement rather than act like the existing traditional political parties. In 2009, Grillo attempted to stand as a candidate of the Democrat Party (*Partito Democratico*-PD) in the general elections, but this failed due to the rejection by the party. This prompted Grillo to officially found the M5S on 4 October 2009 and give the movement the formal status of a party with a challenge to the existing political system and its representatives (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2013). This completed the transformation process of the movement towards a formally constituted party and laid the important foundation for an official political action at the local and national levels. The initiator of the movement and founder of the de facto party M5S Grillo, experienced, as a satirist and a comedian, the two deep crises of the political system in Italy in the last thirty years:

- the increasing party crises which blocked the democracy in the 1980’s, as well as the *Tangentopoli*, the political corruption scandals of the early 1990’s and the collapse of the party system of the First Republic.

- the Euro crisis and the technocratic government of Mario Monti. This technocratic government fueled not only the inability of the elected and profoundly fractious professional politicians in the eyes of most Italians but also strengthened the party crises and deep financial cuts at the end of the ‘zero’ years (De Rosa, 2013).

In fact, this massive distrust of Italians to the “political cast” as the representatives of the Italian democracy is the main characteristic of the Italian political culture (Diamanti, 2014). Since the establishment of the technocrat government under the leadership of Mario

Monti founded after Silvio Berlusconi's resignation in autumn 2011, M5S has gained more voters from different political backgrounds and filled the deepening gap of political trust among these voters (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2013; Diamanti 2014). Italy reached the highest point of its political crisis through the coalition government constituted by the social democratic PD and the traditional conservative PdL. Hence, Grillo provoked this government, through disinterment of coalition negotiations (De Rosa, 2013).

The movement benefited very much during its development process from Grillo's biography and the unstable political situation which continued for some years. (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013, De Rosa, 2013).

4.2. Political Program and Objectives



Figure 1. (<https://www.movimento5stelle.it/>)

Originally, the five-star symbol of the movement represents the five primary main topics of the movement which are environment, water supply, development, network and communication policy as well as transport and traffic. After some reconstructions of the primary program of the movement it also comprises seven additional topics which are education, health, information, transport, state and citizens, energy and economy. The striking red 'V' in the lettering of MoVimento refers to the previous three V-Day's. In this framework it symbolizes a constant recall to the traditional parties and the press to give themselves up to the devil (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2013). The complexity and depth of every single topic written on the statue varies considerably. While some topics, such as the demand for the promotion of local production, remain unclear in their design, other proposals

are characterized by concrete goals, such as the rejection of the high-speed train between Turin and Lyon (M5S non-statue, 2009).

The linguistic design of the individual program items, such as digital citizenship from birth, with free web access for every Italian citizen reminds the voting proposal for referendum (M5S non-statue, 2009). The individual points were submitted online by members and sorted among the seven program points mentioned (Diamanti, 2014). Intuitively, the sentence structure of the individual proposals appeals to the reader of the program to either agree with or reject the respective statement, but without offering any compromises. In doing so, it simplifies complex political issues into a polarizing yes and no scheme. Due to the movement's characteristic version regarding the state and institutional organization of Italy, the program points relevant to the present relationship between the state and the citizen. It addresses that the current organization of the Italian state as excessively bureaucratic, expensive and inefficient. In addition, it mentions that the citizens are not allowed to vote in the elections, but only parties and the parliament is no longer a direct representation of the citizens. Moreover, it claims that the Italian constitution is suspended. Consequently, the will of the parties has supplanted not only the will of the people but also evaded the control and judgment of the people (M5S non-statue, 2009).

The program also stresses the importance of political education and citizens free access to information. It adds that, information pluralism is one of the cornerstones of democracy and individual existence. Since, information is controlled and regulated by few actors, an anti-democratic drift is inevitable. Moreover, it claims, the media industry relates to the interests of economic players rather than citizens and the interests of multinationals and powerful business circles prevail over those of citizens. In this framework it underlines the fact that information is for the social interest in every area. By reason of uninformed or ill-informed citizens, whether out of disinterest or lack of access to information cannot decide and cannot freely choose (M5S non-statue, 2009). Both of these aspects also reflected in the first two V-Day's against the politic parties and the press which is according to M5S under the regulation of politic parties (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013).

M5S member Laura Ferrari insists that one of the most important and strong point of the movement is indeed local participation and the activism of their members whether or not they have been elected in some public body. She says that the movement mobilized their capacities in order to be social actors rather than passive subjects. From this point of view

each of them committed to manage the resources, make decisions and control the activists' actions that effect their political and social lives by applying the principle one by one. In this connection the members of the movement are every weekend present in their territories in order to listen to the people and to explain their parliamentary or administrative activities to decide together what actions has to be taken to face both local and national problems. Therefore, the ties between citizens, activities and spokespersons elected in the institutions at every level are strong and vital (Ferrara, 2020).

According to Laura Ferrara some of the goals of the movement in the framework of the coalition government built together with the Lega Nord (Northern League) in 2018

were as follows:

- Arranging public water supply for all Italian citizens (which is also one of the stars of the M5S meaning that protection of the water is a common good).

- Constituting a green economy with zero waste and ensuring environmental sustainability through decarbonized economy and energy efficiency and renewable sources.

- Developing and promoting a circular economy, creating banks for investments and savings (establishing an investment bank for small and medium enterprises), saving protections and separating credit and investment banks from each other.

- Introducing a minimum hourly wage, reduction of the tax wage and simplification of bureaucratic procedures. Strengthening employment centers and work training pathways in contrast to the precariousness and the effects of the Jobs Act of 2015 (Italian labor reform)

- Introducing a citizenship income as a basic income for Italian citizens aimed at job reintegration, in the amount of 780 euros per month per person.

- Strengthening the funds for public healthcare service and protection of autonomy in their organization of the health services, fighting against waste, corruption and inefficiencies.

- An investment of 2 billion euros for the reform employment centers. Introduction of the pension of citizenship in order to guarantee for minimum pension wage for those living below the minimum poverty line.

- Rationalization of resources in military expenditure with reference to reform of the abandoned real estate assets and reviewing the international missions in relation to the actual national interest.

- Acknowledgement of the membership of the North Atlantic Alliance of Italy as well as of the alliance with the United States of America, while strengthening the trade relations with Russia based on a rapid and efficient justice.

- Reforming the judicial system through increasing penalties for sexual violence theft, robbery and fraud and fair compensation for victims of violent crimes, speeding up of trials.

- Respecting the principle of fair sharing responsibilities between EU countries of immigrants and refugees etc. and preparing repeated procedures for verifying the rights to refugee status. Realizing a transparency of public funds for the reception system and working in cooperation between countries.

- Predicting conflict of interests and preventing such conflicts between the public and private interest.

- Fighting against corruption, increasing penalties for corrupt public officials, strengthening of the national anti-corruption authority and providing more protection for whistleblowers.

- Creating more autonomy and democracy in the framework of institutional reforms. Reducing number of the members of the parliament. Introduction of the mandate to constrain for the members of the parliament. Strengthening of direct democracy, regional autonomy in favor of local authorities. Introduction of a proactive referendum, quorum suppression for abrogated referendums and strengthening of the legislative initiatives. Transparency, on the financing of foundations connected to political parties. Evaluation of the performance of the public administration managers, spending review laws and simplifying the public administration.

- Increasing the funds, the number of staff and the equipment of law enforcement and reorganization of the local police force.

- Speeding up of evictions for illegal occupants and repatriation of foreign illegal abuses.

- Cutting costs of political and public institutions and their pensions, through equalization of the social security system of parliamentarians and regional councilors etc.

- Reduction of the vehicles powered by diesel and petrol engines. Incentives of hybrid and electric vehicles. National infrastructure plan for the recharge of vehicles powered by electricity. Strengthening of electric car sharing, developing of urban and extra urban cycle networks. Investment of resources to equip ports and modernization and upgrading of railroads (Ferrara, 2020).

The above mentioned targets could not be labeled under a certain left or right wing ideology. At first it seems like targets in the fields of economy and social policy are mostly related with leftist ideologies but there are also issues like the acknowledgment of the membership of Italy to the North Atlantic Alliance and eviction illegal immigrants which could be determined as an aspect of rightist ideology. So, from that point of view it is obvious that M5S political position is fuzzy. The political program presented above indicates one of the most important features of populism according to Mudde and Kaltwasser's "ideational approach" which is not supporting or promoting a certain ideology. In addition, we see lots of superficial solutions for very big economic problems which is also a main aspect utilized by populist parties. However, most of the targets contain anti-elitist features which is also a major characteristic of populist parties. Hence, we can determine the M5S as a populist party.

The M5S has not included the subject 'gender equality' in its party program as a problem that needs to be solved. Although, the M5S may have some female members in important posts such as the mayor of Rome, Virginia Raggi, the mayor of Turin, Chiara Appendino and others, at the same time, gender equality in politics is also not a real issue for the movement and the men who are really important, from the national perspective, are also there in the end. So, the M5S shows the same picture like the other political parties in Italy regarding gender equality in politics in the parliament. They are, in fact, relatively many women within the movement, but always in the second row (Saraceno, 2018).

On the other hand, Grillo stressed that the primary objective of M5S is the awakening of conscience, with the help of free access to information which is required within the movement's program. The use of the internet will help to form an uncensored picture of the political situation, to empower the sovereignty of citizens and to actively take back their popular rule from the hands of party rule (Rosanvallon, 2008). The final goal of M5S is

therefore a political-cultural change, the removal of dusty institutions and the picking apart of the rigid constructed ideas of the old parties (Biorcin, 2015). To achieve this, the political style of the future, as the M5S presents, will support a participatory democracy focused on citizens and provided through internet. The citizens-oriented policy concept of the M5S forms a sharp contrast against the background of the recent party crisis outlined in the previous chapter. The lack of credibility of parties and their anchoring is dwindling within society. By providing the citizens with important information and the necessary tools to translate this information into direct political action through the medium of the internet will dismantle the criticized striking contrasts between simple citizens who are perceived as innocent and the corrupt representatives in the parliament. For these reasons, the theory of M5S is that the citizens should replace the political representatives in order to renew the concept of domination (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014).

The rapid success of the M5S at the polls since its entry into local and national elections is based on the deep crisis of the political party system that Italy has been experiencing since the economic and euro crisis which the traditional parties and alliances have not managed to control (De Rosa 2013; Biorcin, 2015). Grillo, as a non-professional politician and spokesman of the movement, and as a man of the people, stood alongside with the citizens in his proclaimed struggle against the political class and offered a new political style to the disappointed Italians to have an alternative to the ineffective center-left and center-right alliances (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014; Diamanti, 2014).

4.3. Electoral Success

Although the movement has been increasingly represented in local and municipal parliaments since 2008, it was only in 2011 and 2012 that the wave of success of the M5S began to roll due the worsening democratic deficit and citizens' dissatisfaction with the technocratic government of Monti (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). Within just few months, the movement representatives poll numbers and election results jumped from an estimated 4 % at the end of 2011 to almost 9 % on the following years local elections. The participation of the M5S in the regional elections in 2012 in the traditionally shaped island Sicily brought special and surprising success. The candidates of the movement were able to bring 15 % of the votes and represented formally the strongest party (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014; Diamanti, 2014). This strong gain was caused due to Grillo's symbolic politics. In the run-

up of the regional elections, Grillo, swam through the strait of Messina to protest in the media against the construction of a bridge between Sicily and the mainland. With this action Grillo demonstrated to the Italians, consistency, determination and ambition within concept of every Italian can do everything at any age with sufficient perseverance. Indeed, this concept was his new public-oriented political understanding (Rotondi, 2017).

The M5S made its surprise breakthrough in the general elections held on 2013 after Grillo's election campaign tour of Italy which significantly shake the Italian political landscape. Since Grillo's antipolitical drive against the entire party-based system of Italy became a fundamental and attractive battle cry in a period of open delegitimization of the politics. Thus, it is not surprising that up to the present, two thirds of all voters see the movement as a protest against the existing political conditions (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014). The M5S managed to become the country's strongest single party with almost 25.6 % of the votes, outside the two alliances of center-left around Pere Luigi Bersani and center-right around Silvio Berlusconi. With this result, M5S was the third strongest force on its own and without alliance partner after the pooling of political forces in the country. This significant share of votes happened also due to a strong change among the electorates in a very short time. Initially, the supporters of the movement were mainly composed of young, web-minded men with a tendency towards left-wing political orientation. However, the electoral success of 2012 also resulted in gaining voters from the center-right which brought with it increased heterogeneity. This suggests that the movement had abandoned its political niche and had become increasingly established in the Italian society. The movement offered an alternative to the disappointed and disillusioned Italians from both previous political camps and the different political parties by the numerous issues addressed in the program of the movement and the passionate, charismatic leader Beppe Grillo although it was only through expressing the anger of the masses or protesting the current political system of Italy (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014; Diamanti, 2014).

The previous wave of electoral success of the movement stalled with the great electoral success after the general election held on 2013. The formal founding of M5S as a party in 2010 caused not only a massive setback and distrust of Grillo but also the movement's poll numbers dropped rapidly. This leads to the conclusion that the approach of the Italian population to politic showed the same distrust to Grillo. From their perspective Grillo will

now act as a party leader under the party symbol, as it did the former parties. So, he was formal but equal to these parties (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2014).

4.4. Organizational and Communication Structures

M5S is a populist movement unique in Europe emerged from the society and established itself as a party. The growing political success of Grillo and the increasing number of its supporters helped M5S to enter the parliament in 2013. On the other hand, the expansion of the movement caused a demand within the movement to reconstruct the infrastructure of M5S in order to ensure an efficient information flow and organization. Since Grillo's influence began to transform itself to a more radicalized political approach beyond the reach of his appearances, the request of his followers and like-minded people to exchange their opinions became stronger. Hence through the implementation of his weblog a central collection point of information was created. Since his internet appearance in 2005, the website [www. beppegrillo.it](http://www.beppegrillo.it) has been the heart of the movement. On this website views and opinions regarding the current political situation in Italy are published without the threat of censorship and alone or together with Gian Roberto Casaleggio (Grillo, 2013). Nevertheless, major political events in public places play an important role in the organizational structure of M5S. Moreover, an offline organization of M5S exists in addition to the V-Day's in the local MeetUp's groups, which Grillo has integrated into his blog since 2005 via the platform MeetUp, in order to give the friends of Beppe Grillo a forum and to expand the online communication carried out so far via the blog to a personal level away from the internet. The platform offers its members several functions of self-organization, starting with a calendar with directories of national MeetUp meetings, access to online forums, as well as the possibility to search for a group in the area or to set up a MeetUp group on the site. Before the general elections on 2013 in total 708 MeetUp groups were existing in 574 cities worldwide. The majority of these existing Meet Up groups were from Italy (Grillo, 2005). The city with the most members is Naples with approximately 4000 members, followed by Catania and Bologna. Generally, the size varies from several thousand members to a few. In total, almost 100,000 members were registered and organized in the local groups in January 2013 (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014). Internally, MeetUp groups marked through formal flat hierarchies between the participants. The posts of the organizer and the deputy who are elected by the members in their area carry out the coordination of appointments, moderation of discussions, and maintenance of the connection to Grillo and

his co-workers. The organizer allows, in consultation with Grillo's co-workers the access of new members to the individual groups (Milic, 2008)

The aim of the MeetUp groups is to disseminate at the local level the theses presented by Grillo in his blog and to inform interested citizens about M5S and to use the information collected to implement projects. At local level, MeetUp groups achieved rapid success as these peripheral levels were often disadvantaged by the traditional parties because offline meetings at local and regional levels are irregular, information can only be distributed through traditional media such as flyers, posters etc (Milič, 2008).

The program of the movement supports, under all main points, the expansion and improved accessibility of this infrastructural mediums (M5S Program, 2009). The MeetUp groups represent the roots of the movement and its concrete social anchoring by passing on information and connecting it to the headquarters of the M5S around Grillo. In addition to the successful application of the MeetUp's for the organization of M5S, Grillo and his friends experimented other online tools for organization, information and knowledge management. These tools could not be maintained due to too little traffic. For instance, the project of "Grillipedia" failed, as well as the local TV and video portals of the MeetUp's (Biorcin, 2015). Meanwhile, large parts of the organization and communication have shifted to the social network Facebook since this platform is internationally known and ensures a great range of posts. Furthermore, images, videos and other internet pages can be easily linked and made available to other interested parties. Hence, the online package of M5S completed by various accounts on the short news service, Twitter (Diamanti, 2014). So, the essential role within the organizational structure of M5S belongs to Grillo's blog (De Rosa, 2013; Biorcin, 2015). Therefore, all other online and offline components of the M5S organization are grouped and connected around Grillo. In this framework it is written on the statute of M5S, which they refer to as non-statute since the movement rejects being labeled as a traditional political party, the only possibility to contact the M5S can be made through Grillo's blog. Donations and contributions from interested parties to the movement are also handled centrally via Grillo's blog (M5S Program, 2009). This is also an evidence of Grillo's significant symbolic role within the movement, which has closely merged with his earlier artistic and now political actions. However, Grillo's position within the movement is not unchallenged. His self-image and the views of the M5S supporters diverge sometimes considerably in the middle of the heterogeneous base of the movement. Grillo, sees himself

as indispensable for the movement as he has stated that “I must calm myself, because if I have a heart attack, we are all ruined, eh! You must love me!”(Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014). On the other hand, only 7% of his voters are convinced that the success of the movement is directly related to him. In fact, a great number of Italians sees M5S as a protesting idea to the existing politic system (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014).

M5S's voter spectrum changed significantly within the movement's short official history. In the early years of M5S, the voters were rather manly, well-educated and employed. Currently, the movement had a voter spectrum which includes every age groups. M5S, was underrepresented among housewives and retired persons comparing with the other parties in its first years on political scene. On the other hand, from the geographical perspective M5S succeeded to be represented equally within the country (Vincenzo & Maggini, 2013).

In the 2018 general elections, some changes were observed. M5S was represented almost in all age groups. With 35% of the votes, M5S held the first place in the general election held in 2018, while PD received 16% and Lega 18%. Only among the age group of 65+ was the voting percentage on 27,1 (PD:27,3; Lega: 14,6). This time experienced the M5S something different. Its voter spectrum changed again. Every second voter in southern Italy and in the islands voted for M5S independent from his\her strata in the population class, gender, age, economic condition, profession etc. On the other hand, only one third of the population in central and a quarter in northern Italy voted in favor of M5S. There is not a special stratum within Italian population which can be identified as the permanent voter class of the movement. In fact, the most important and common feature of the voters of these movement is that they are disappointed and disillusioned Italians from the current political system of Italy (www.ilsole24ore.com, 2018).

At the beginning, most voters of the M5S stated that they were originally politically based on the left-wing of the political spectrum, but with the breakup of the center-right alliance in 2012/2013, many disappointed voters from the right-wing turned to the new movement (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014). As we mentioned before, the M5S rejects to position itself as traditional party on the left-right political spectrum. From this point of view M5S rejects to position itself whether on the left or right wing. In this concept, no contradiction arises from the heterogeneous voters compared with the traditional political parties with regard to the original political orientation of the voters. The difference of M5S

from the previous traditional parties on the left-right axis is that it underlines potential and hope for change from the perception of its voters. The interested people can support M5S in three different ways:

1. Sympathizers, who are generally interested in the ideas of the M5S. Although they are not allowed to run for office, they have free access to the public pages of the MeetUp's or the citizens' lists of the movement.

2. Authentic members, must be certified by Grillo and his co-workers. They can participate in online voting upon showing their identity cards of the movement. However, they are not allowed to run for a political office.

3. Activists, must be officially registered to participate in local actions and must have participated in at least three internal actions and one initiative. They have the right to vote in the active members assembly, visit the forum www.listabeppegrillo.it and open discussion contributions, set agenda items and run for an office after at least six months of activity within the M5S (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2013; Diamanti, 2014).

According to the non-statute, every Italian citizen of legal age and is not already a member of another party and shares the same aims of M5S can become a member of M5S. The applicant's personal details are validated via the Internet (M5S program, 2009). Finally, the membership competence of the applicant will be decided through his/her orientation to the values of the movement.

The heterogeneity of voters with regard to their political characteristics contains a potential for conflict, which sometimes causes challenges for Grillo to handle. In this framework Grillo's rhetoric encourages a constant resentment against the common enemy which is the Italian political elite in order to ensure the internal unity of the movement and bind voters beyond their former political orientation (Biorcio, 2015). With the help of this populist rhetoric, Grillo draws a black and white opposite image between the Italians and the "political cast" to strengthen the internal sense of identity of the movement. He uses a unique vocabulary, which can be identified as revolutionary, works repeatedly with pairs of opposites such as life and death, truth and lies, small and great (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). In addition, he draws the rhetoric of a populist from the fundus of the Italian politic besides these pairs of opposites, which imply a positive outcome for the movement (Diamanti, 2014). Initiatives such as Clean Parliament or the second V-Day, which

symbolically took place on the National Day of Liberation from the Nazi Germany, lend meaning and historical legitimacy to the actions of M5S. Moreover, these actions appeal to the inner core of people's attitude towards the political system in order to change it. In fact, it was the aim of M5S. The festival Woodstock 5 Stelle, which took place in Cesena at the end of September 2010 and attracted almost 200,000 participants symbolizes the message of M5S (Biorcio, 2015). The movement lived in Cesena for two days its vision of a different, new political future.

Grillo gained additional credibility not only because of his life story but also as an outcasted comedian from the television for politic reasons. His professional background as a comedian and satirist opened the possibility of criticisizing political opponents or dissenters within the movement with the traditional device of political satire. Thereby he completed his strategy of laughter, counter-information and political action (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2014). Grillo revaluated himself and the movement through creating derogatory nicknames to his political rivals such as “Psycho Dwarf” for Silvio Berlusconi, the long time leader of Forza Italia and “Valium” for Romano Prodi from the Democratic Party (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2013).

In summary, M5S would hardly have formed itself and developed in a way that it has done up to the present (Biorcio, 2015). On the other hand, the initiator and co-founder Casaleggio established the M5S in many ways on the internet and made the online and offline present movement to what it has become today. However, the movement is centered on the formal leader Beppe Grillo, which also underlines the immense importance of his blog as an organizational center for the movement (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2014; De Rosa, 2013). The movement is also characterized to have a weak management through the fabricated online managing structures. Hence, the movement can be criticized for doing the same things of the traditional parties. Nevertheless, M5S rejects any kind of financing through public funds (Grillo, 2013).

4.5. Digital Platforms as Identity Sources of the M5S Members

Gian Roberto Cassaleggio who was the co-founder of the movement was a web designer and recognized early the potential of internet for developing a political movement. The web entrepreneur recognized the distant and impersonal effect of an exclusive digital movement on the people and invested consequently on Grillo as the main analog figure

(Marc, Padis, & Guiliano da Empoli, 2017). With the services of his company Cassaleggio Associatize Cassaleggio convinced Grillo to create a blog in order to propagate his ideas and accompanied the construction of the movement through a digital architecture which was explained previously.

After the death of Cassaleggio in 2016, his son Davide Cassaleggio took over the management of the family business and developed the online-platform *Rousseau* with the aim to promote an online democracy platform. In fact, *Rousseau* is a communication tool with numerous functions. Such as, facilitating the participation on central decisions, dispersal of bills and fund raising for M5S and notification of information to local groups. On the other hand, the online-platform act as an identity source for M5S. Hence, M5S has not party centers and does not organize regular meetings of the movement participants; it creates its identity and power significantly through its e-platform. The online-platform and private foundation *Rousseau* is partly financed by the salaries of the M5S parliamentarians, since, they have to transfer part of their salaries to this online-platform. Without a positive result of the online questionnaire made on this online platform, the formation of the current coalition government would not be possible (Gianolla, 2018) .

4.6. Post-Ideological Thematic Components

The movement has two main characteristics, which are being anti-establishment and identifying itself neither as right or left wing. Grillo and its supporters criticizes the old and distant “political cast” for disturbing and forgetting the Italians. The frontal attack of Grillo to the political class was a reaction of a prevalent feeling of disillusion and disappointment about the corrupt political system. One of the first messages of M5S was the demand of a clean parliament. The post-ideological aspect of its proposition was also relevant to be the third pole of Italy’s political system. M5S frequently addresses that it espouses neither rightist nor leftist ideas and insists that it has only good ideas. This enabled M5S to win an overlapping electorate. Moreover, topics related to eco-politic, minimum wage, basic security, and political reform through a direct democracy oriented to citizens, allowed M5S to be known as a populist movement and convince later the voters of other parties as an opponent force (Corbetta, 2017).

4.7. Self-Conception and Classification

When we access the website of the M5S even today, we can encounter the following words: “The M5S is not and will not be a political party in the future. The main target of the populist movement is to realize an efficient, effective and democratic exchange of opinions outside the associative and political connections, without the interference of governing and representation bodies” (www.movimento5stelle.it). In fact, the M5S has fulfilled already the constitutional conditions to be labeled as a political party in the framework of the current political system in Italy, since it has stood for candidacy in local, regional and national elections. The general disfavor within the Italian population against the term political party is intensified through a general negation of the political systems construction and its representative parties (Grillo, 2013).

According to the Italian social scientists Pier Giorgio Corbetta and Elisabetta Gualmini, it is essential for M5S to insist on this strict distinction between party and movement, since M5S ensure an internal and adequate mobilization of its activists and members through this way. At the same time, the sense of togetherness is evoked via Grillo's rhetoric. All these issues are essential in the struggle against the politic conditions in Italy (Corbetta, 2017). Grillo says that M5S places itself above or below other parties and operates as a group of companies with a new approach to the Italian politics instead of positioning itself within the classical political spectrum which is consisted of the left-right axis (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). Grillo, as the owner of all trademark rights and internal authority of the movement stipulated in the non-statute of M5S, public acts as a kind of political entrepreneur who centrally transports ideas and goals of the movement according to the franchise system on the local level via his Blog and MeetUp groups (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2013: Orazi, Socci, 2008). In addition, as it is written on the non-statute, M5S rejects uniformed ideologies represented by the traditional parties. In fact, the movement relies on the idea of every individual of the society under the condition to be discussed and selected through an online grassroot democratic voting process (Casaleggio, Grillo, 2011: Movimento 5 Stelle, 2009: Orazi, Socci 2008). Moreover, he does not distinguish the two largest party's Democratic Party (*Partito Democratico*-PD) and People of Freedom Party (*Popolo della Libertà*-PdL) in Italy from the left and right-wing spectrum according to their orientations. Since both of them represent equally the abolishing, outdated political system of Italy. The M5S shape as a whole the politic system into kind of revolutionary avant-garde

spearhead. Since, it offers new politic action possibilities via internet and transforms the politic system from a representative of elite politic to a grassroot democratic civic politic. However, this kind of intention is criticized within the movement (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). Here, are some statements in a respective order from both Grillo and Casaleggio regarding it: “We should change the whole system” and “If you want to change the system, you have to change the people” (Grillo and Casaleggio in Grillo, 2013). The political objectives and approaches of M5S drawn by Grillo and Casaleggio have strong echoes of the freedom fighter and national democrat Giuseppe Mazzini. As an offshoot of the French Revolution, Mazzini appealed in the framework of Risorgimento especially to the young Italians to establish Italy again according to his ideal image which is a confident and sovereign Italy. Indeed, this is a requirement implicated also by Grillo especially when he denounced Italy’s loss of sovereignty not only to the EU but also to Germany (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013).

Mazzini, like Grillo and Casaleggio, envisioned a completely different image of Italy from that existed then. With the help of far-reaching politic and social restructuring and re-education, the equal and committed participation of all citizens was an essential goal of Mazzini and his followers. Grillo also stressed the Italian youth during the first V-Day in 2007 the importance of participation and shaping the politic by citizens: “These politicians don't know what they are talking about. They talk about the future. They are seventy years old and they talk about a future they will never see. We need young blood” (Grillo in Bordignon & Ceccarini 2013). So, Grillo stand not only for a protest of the current politic relationships but also promise to implement a new politic order and to reevaluate the role of the citizens within the politic system. The Italian politic scientist Ilvo Diamanti speaks of a “clash between movement and institution” (Diamanti ,2014). Since the movement rejects to be identified as a party. On the other hand, M5S is against the idea to describe a party as the representative of the will of citizens. From this point of view the movement claims that a party has to follow the existing politic and institutional guidelines of the Italian political system and its organization. Since it already declared the politic parties dead in 2009, accepting a party as a mediator between the citizens and the politic system does not correspond to M5S’s understanding of politic and democracy. Moreover, M5S refused in advance the idea that a party is the representative body of the citizens according to the article 4 of its non-statute. (Grillo in Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). In fact, M5S wanted always, actively participate into the politic on different levels in the framework of its objectives since

its establishment. For this reason, it was necessary for Grillo to formally transform the movement into a party according to the legal rules to present the movement as an actor of the Italian politic system and to form an electable alternative for the traditional parties (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). Diamanti describes the M5S as a vehicle of new politic ideas and protests which offers temporary lift for the disappointed Italians from traditional politic system as a 'catch-all party' (Diamanti, 2014)

4.8. The Main Factors of M5S Success

The success of M5S lies on serious social and political developments. The high rate of youth unemployment and precarious works even within university graduates and corruption and decline of the Italian political system through the disintegration of the general and leftist politic.

It is also based on the extensive works done on social media platforms, online and real political activities and campaigns. For instance, Grillo promoted on his blog that “every vote is as good as the other one”. This has the meaning that M5S supports the participation of every Italian to democracy. This slogan brought not only the expression of a democratic election principle of “one vote, one person”, but also it assumed the equality of M5S members. (Diamanti, 2014)

In fact, the main factors of M5S could not be understood without a short summary of Italy's political history which was the topic of the previous chapter. So, the development of the Italian political spectrum until 2011 has three phases:

- the “Christian Democrats” stable predominance phase (1948-1991),
- the complex transitional phase (1992-1996),
- the open competition bifocal phase (between center leftist and center rightist) (1996 to 2011).
- Within the last span of time (1996 to 2011).

The general elections caused indeed always a change of power. Hence the center leftist and center rightist “camp” displaced their responsibility on the government. The 2008 global economic crises and its results and the resignation of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi

(Prime Minister from 1994-1995, 2001-2006, 2008-2011) in 2011 and the subsequent technocratic government of Mario Monti between 16 November 2011 and 21 December 2012, caused many changes in the Italian political system (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). The technocratic government of Mario Monti was one of the few non-partisan governments within the political history of the Italian Republic. This technocratic government was the 61st government of the Italian republic (Giannetti, 2013). It was a cross-camp coalition government between the center-rightist and center-leftist (Gianolla, 2018). This changed the relationship between the forces within the two camps and caused crises on the bipolar political system. For instance, the stormy renewal of the two political camps and the measures implemented to combat with economic crises and several scandals regarding utilization of public money through small and big sized parties caused a growing resentment among Italians over the political system.

M5S used this political environment as an opportunity and found itself a place within the political system. So, pivotal reasons of its emergence were not only economic but also ethical. As a new political force, the M5S used this suitable political environment for its success. In fact, the political success of M5S, is a combination of digital, analog (the term has been used as a description for being identical) and thematic components. (Maggini, 2013) .

4.9. Populist characteristics of M5S

At first sight, M5S looks like a populist movement. Hence it contains most of the typical features of a populist movement or party. Respectively, it has a hostile manner towards the political class and elites and it is in favor of a direct democracy. Moreover, M5S rejects to support a certain ideology and right or left-wing political schemes and demands simple solutions for complex subjects. In addition, it emerges opposing identities like “we against the others” and it favors a dualistic thinking which means thinking in categories. For example, positive (good) versus negative (bad) etc. Finally, M5S includes the tendency for having a charismatic leadership and claims to represent the people.

In fact, M5S is a multi-faceted populist movement, compared with the other populist movements. The elements of the movement demonstrate that it is a special movement. In this concept it could be described as a unique movement. Besides, M5S cannot be categorized as right or left-wing populist movement. It does not contain nationalist or

xenophobic tendencies of right-wing populist parties, like AfD (Alternative for Germany) in Germany, FPÖ (Freedom for Austria) in Austria and the FN (Front National) in France. On the other hand, M5S focuses on social messages as the radical left-wing populist parties SYRIZA in Greece and PODEMOS in Spain which is written in its program. Indeed, it claims economic and environmental policies which could be described as leftist policies. In this framework M5S supports not only the ecologic reconstruction of the society but also combatting with poverty and privatization through social reforms and the introduction of a minimum wage and a basic social security system. All these features play an important role in the program of the M5S. As a non-ideological movement, it criticizes also the migration policy. In fact, the concerns related to the mass immigration threat in Italy are based on economic reasons rather than cultural damages caused by mass immigration (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013).

Although Grillo is the undisputable founder and the charismatic leader of it, the movement is different from other populist movements in that sense. Since, it has two charismatic leaders, Beppe Grillo and Gian Roberto Cassaleggio. Grillo and Cassaleggio allocated respectively the analog and digital missions of the movement and were not politicians. In fact, Grillo and Cassaleggio appeared only as guarantors instead of first figures of the movement. On the other hand, in a populist movement the opinion of a charismatic leader should be indisputable. However, the members of M5S voted on the e-platform *Rousseau* in many occasions against the position and without their faith to Grillo.

Another major unique element of the movement is the concept of citizen in the framework of their roles within the networks of the movement. Meanwhile, M5S also claims like the other populist movements to represent not only part of the Italian people rather all Italian people. However, M5S goes one step forward and demands to remodel the whole democratic process. From this point of view, Grillo and Cassaleggio used M5S not only as a political offer but also as a vehicle to construct a new political order in Italy (Marc, Padis, & Guiliano da Empoli, 2017). In fact, the target of Grillo and Cassaleggio is to have a direct democracy based on the internet without the attachment of the union parties and intermediation of the governing and representative bodies (Movimento 5 Stelle, 2009). According to them, ideally, Italian people should make their own decisions about important subjects. Hence, M5S can be accepted as an example of democratic populism which demands to improve participatory democracy and makes it as the main concern of the

movement (Canovan, 1999). In this concept, M5S will act as a spokesman in the institutions not only to defend the demands and requests of the Italian people caused by the privatization of water supply and public schools but also labor rights and extensive infrastructural investments.

Moreover, M5S is a movement, which has the target among others to combat with the classic methods of politics to foster the bottom-up participation of citizens. M5S used the post-ideological elements, frequent usage of internet and the charismatic leadership as a tool for having a horizontal organization structure.

Since its establishment, the organizational and conceptual structure and the fundamental features of the movement gone through a transformation. In the framework of this transformation process the old political forms of the movement are not important anymore. In fact, the movement converted into a traditional party with strong basic democracy elements. In fact, M5S was presented on the non-statute of the movement, approved on 2009, as a non-association which has the aim to forward democracy and put again the Italian citizens at the center of the political discourse and decision process. However, M5S institutionalized itself gradually and changed its profile to a large extent between the electoral successes 2013 and 2017 (Porta, Fernandez, Kouki, & Mosca, 2017).

M5S changed recently the profile of the movement extensively. The non-statute of the movement, embodied and superseded via new formal documents the behavior mode of the members and selected ones. Consequently, the non-association was registered as an independent civic group. M5S had always refused to constitute governing bodies at local and national levels. On the other hand, a national operational committee was constituted after the resignation of Grillo on 2014. Hence, M5S was formally new established. In this framework, organization charts of different committees were generated. Accordingly, Luigi Di Maio took over the political chief role of the movement on 2017. In addition, the functions of member meetings and the online-platform *Rousseau* were formalized. Grillo, was appointed as the guarantor of the movement and represented independently the role as the guardian of fundamental values of the movement regarding its politic promotion. In this framework, Grillo has the last word of important decisions which could be described as a basic democratic understanding of a right-wing peculiar construction. For instance, Grillo said the last word regarding the coalition government of M5S and right-wing populist party Lega Nord (2018).

M5S had reformed its nature gradually and disclaimed many of its principles since its establishment. On the other hand, the movement targeted the main features of populism since its foundation. The movement was and still is an anti-establishment movement and against the political cast. Moreover, the movement claimed to combat with corruption and clientelism. However, M5S dropped down many of its other core principles including the limitation of the parliamentary mandate into two legislature period and refusing to be a part of a coalition. For instance, after the general elections held on 2018, M5S made a deal with the right-wing populist party *Lega Nord* to build a coalition government.



5. CONCLUSION

The M5S, founded in 2009, is part of the Italian parliamentary spectrum since 2013. It has established itself as one of the relevant political forces besides the right-wing populist party *Lega Nord* and the social-democrat party *Partito Democratico* (Democrats Party-PD). It has experienced a very fast boost within a decade which facilitated the governmental power on 2018. No other political force in Italy experienced such a boom within the last decades. In the last general elections held on 2018, M5S gained 32.7 % of the votes. In fact, it was the most voted party. After a difficult government building process M5S succeeded, on June 2018, to build a coalition government with the right-wing populist party *Lega Nord*.

M5S is a unique populist movement. It became the strongest party of Italy and the coalition partner of the current government in Italy after ten years since its establishment. The success of M5S is based primarily on the crises of the political system in Italy and on the charismatic leadership of Beppe Grillo, who is the founding figure of the movement. According to Grillo, M5S was founded in the framework of an experiment containing post ideological and e-democracy components. In this framework, M5S looks like a populist movement, however it is actually a multi-faceted movement and demonstrates a unique example of populism.

M5S remarkably set itself high goals to abolish the existing political system of Italy through its understanding of democracy which is the direct orientation towards the implementation of a web-based networking of local MeetUp groups. Only the future will show which impulses initiated by the movement have the chance to survive and which will quickly be forgotten. The conception of the M5S, has problem areas in several points that could be fatal to the movement as a party. The movement sees direct democracy which is implemented in the ancient Greek cities, as great role model in the framework of supposedly free, equal and comprehensive exchange of opinions and values with regard to shaping the common policy of Italians. Even if the MeetUp meetings can compensate the lack of a comprehensive coverage with an internet connection, large parts of the population are still excluded from online voting. In addition, access to the MeetUp groups is regulated, which contradicts the grassroots democratic claim of the movement. Moreover, direct democratic questions according to the yes-no scheme served bite-sized by Grillo's staff could be

dangerous for the debasement of democratic processes since citizens do not have to think seriously about it.

Realistically, the direct democratic concept implemented in the ancient Greek cities was not so marked by civil freedom and equality as the movement likes to present. For instance, the Agora, which was an open space that served as a meeting ground for various activities of the citizens, was also subject to censorship, party cluelessness and propaganda and was vulnerable to manipulation. Therefore, the possibility of technical difficulties up to the censorship or manipulation of election results cannot easily be tracked and controlled. This problem continues also in the online-based agenda setting of the M5S. Since the entire infrastructure of the movement is organized through Grillo's blog and the threads converge here. Hence, a necessary change of the political system, as Grillo's M5S intends, takes time. The political system rests on clusters of the political history which extends far into the past. (Caciagli, 2017). The successful results of M5S on the general elections held in 2013 and 2018 is therefore questionable whether these successful results are sufficient to break up the relatively rigid patterns of political history and to permanently rearrange these fragments around the alternative concept of democracy.

The implementation of direct participation of citizens at national level is difficult in the dimension envisaged by the M5S in its political program. When in a party democracy the complexity of political facts is discussed against the background of the respective party line, the movement, which does not pursue an ideology, provides only decisions of factual questions.

Basically, the movement is confronted with a credibility dilemma. Since, it is formally elected through the conditions and rules of representative democracy system and must play by the rules of this system which in fact it wants to abolish through its new political order. In societies no pure forms of political culture exist. It is therefore impossible to break down the complex political and social reality of a country through a pure dualism, as Grillo's populist rhetoric regarding the M5S and its political goals on the one hand and the current political system on the other hand with its political parties.

How adaptive and permanently stable the demands and ideas of the M5S are in the longer term will only become apparent over time, when the movement had to assert itself in political reality. Democratic societies are characterized by pluralism of ideas, attitudes,

norms and values, so that it should be impossible for the movement to ever achieve the 100% of the seats in the parliament that Grillo hopes to achieve for the movement (Grillo in an interview with Farris & Bibbona 2013). On the other hand, the longer it takes to implement the utopian notions of the complete changes in the democratic practice of the Italian political system, the more the movement loses confidence among its supporters, who have been and will be united to a large extent by the protest character of the M5S which was propagated by Grillo against the system and the traditional parties. On the contrary, in this case, distrust is increasingly strengthened and the reliability of the movement is questioned.

There are two ways of how the movement could continue within the existing politic system:

1. the M5S will not make any - which is presumably in view of the self-conception presented in this work and the radical objectives and wishes of the movement, without any changes in its demands and compromises. In this case, sooner rather than later it will fail, because of the complexity of the politic issues, which cannot be reduced not only to direct democratic yes-no schemes, at least not all of them especially on national level.

2. In the second scenario, the M5S is on the game of representative democracy rules. In this case, there is the possibility to establish oneself, to set important impulses and also to gain the voters votes. However, drastic voting losses and ultimately the disappearance of the M5S in its current form are more likely. With every month, every week and every day that passes for the M5S in the parliament, without the words of the movement actually being followed by the deeds that it has previously promised its voters, the mistrust of its voters, rooted in Italy's politic history, becomes stronger. Tendencies towards this politic cultural loss of confidence in the Grillo movement were already evident immediately after the impressive victory in the 2013 general elections due to clear slumps in the polls (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2014). This leads to the conclusion that the still young M5S cannot endure on a regular electorate, but to a large extent represents a pool of disappointed and disillusioned, as there are no intrinsic holding forces.

The Italian political system is often a platform of new tendencies and somehow a scene rehearsal for new developments or events that could take place at somewhere else in Europe. For instance, fascism in Italy can be interpreted as the first of national socialism. In addition, Silvio Berlusconi and the radical right-wing party Lega Nord are examples of populism

throughout Europe not only within the last two decades but also currently. Therefore, M5S and its e-democracy experiment could be a pattern in short-term for another movements or parties in Europe. Undoubtedly M5S is an interesting populist formation nowadays in Europe. Not least because of its internal organizational structure but regional and national successful election results.

In the past, revolutionary movements such as the French Revolution maybe fall apart from their original radicalism, but they provided important impulses and triggered Europe-wide democratic developments, which led to a liberalization of society and developed the status of citizens. Moreover, these former revolutionary movements opened the way for cooperative participation opportunities for citizens.

However, a daring outlook to future of the movement is worthwhile, against the background of the given fast pace of politic and social processes which is what will remain of the movement if it has possibly failed? Matteo Renzi from the Democrat Party in Italy once said that “If his party had done everything Grillo is talking about now, then the 5-Star Movement would not exist” (Grillo in Grillo et al. 2013).

With the new democratic approaches of the movement, the transformation of political system is possible. By making citizens understand and providing opportunities for participation to give them joint responsibility for the state could be characterized by voluntary, self-evident acceptance of politic responsibility and an interest to the community.

Grillo and Casaleggio provided an instrument with the internet, not only for the citizens to actively participate in shaping the politic system but also create a network with like-minded people around Europe. Perhaps this is the greatest merit of the movement. It was an evidence that a change in the political system is not only theoretically possible. Moreover, it has shown that the citizens of Italy can be activated and that the administration of the existing political system can be countered by a new civic consciousness. Direct democratic elements are popular not only among the frustrated voters of Italy, but also in other European states. However, dealing with them is not easy given the complexity of political issues in a globalized and networked world. Nevertheless, there will probably be no way around a stronger consideration of these elements in the future, as the pressure and expectations of today's digitally influenced, network-experienced and network-loving society are too great.

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