

POPULAR WILL VERSUS THE EUROPEAN UNION?
ITALIAN AND HUNGARIAN POPULIST COUNTER-
MOVEMENTS AND THE RISE OF CULTURALIST POLITICS

By

Borbála Blanka Bretus

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ABSTRACT

Populist parties gain increasing support in the EU, offering an alternative to the traditional left and right political divide. The Italian Lega and Five Star Movement, and the Hungarian FIDESZ are particularly interesting cases since they are movement-parties with the ability to mobilize masses and incorporate them into politics, therefore the Italian and Hungarian populist trends are not limited to party politics. Rising populism is considered as a reflection of popular dissatisfaction, a counter-movement against the EU: the neoliberal values and market expansion on the economic dimension and the increasing emancipation, diversity, and multiculturalism on the cultural front. Both the literature on populism and the contemporary interpretations of Polanyi's double-movement concept argue for increasing importance of cultural motives to support populist parties besides economic ones. A culturalist discourse and policy actions targeting immigration and the bureaucratic elites in Brussels enable social mobilization in Italy and Hungary for a more sovereigntist and less neoliberal direction of the European integration. Through the analysis of political speeches and policy implications of populist arguments, this research focuses on clashing topics with the EU, as well as on the identification of similarities and differences between the two country cases and populist movements.

Keywords: populism, counter-movement, FIDESZ, Lega, Five Star Movement, culturalism, movement-party, triple movement

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter One: Populism as a Counter-movement?	5
1.1 Double-movements in the EU	5
1.2 Culturalist Populism and the Third Movement	8
1.3 Methodology.....	11
Chapter Two: Hungarian and Italian Populism	14
2.2 The Emergence of Populist Movement Parties	14
2.2.1 Italy: Lega and the Five Star Movement.....	15
2.2.2 Hungary: FIDESZ.....	18
2.3 Populist Rhetoric and Policy Actions.....	20
2.3.1 Italy: Political Communication	20
2.3.2 Policy-level	25
2.3.2.1 Immigration	25
2.3.2.2 Eurozone Membership	26
2.3.2.3 The European Bureaucratic System and Sovereignty Transfer.....	27
2.3.1 The Hungarian Case – Political communication	28
2.3.2 Policy-level	31
2.3.2.1 Migration Policy.....	31
2.3.2.3 Sovereignty Transfer and the Supranational Supervision of the EU.....	34
Chapter Three: Comparative Populism	35
3.1 Similarities between Italy and Hungary	35
3.1.1 Understanding the Popularity of the parties: Political Context	38
3.1.2 Economic Context.....	40
3.1.3 Social Context.....	41
3.2 Differences.....	43
3.2.1 Governing Coalition: Clash of Cultural and Economic Arguments	44
3.2.2 One Governing Party: Cultural and Materialist Populism within One Party.....	46
Conclusion:.....	48
Appendices:	51
Appendix I: Rubric Sample	51
Appendix II. Coding and evaluation results of the speeches	53
Bibliography	59

INTRODUCTION

Populist parties gain increasing support in Western societies, including the European Union (EU).¹ Traditional left and right political parties lost voters' support in several EU member states after failing to address the social challenges of the financial and economic crisis, that was followed by the migration crisis. As a response, populist parties emerged, addressing the crises in a popular way, often representing an EU-sceptic, anti-elitist, illiberal, nationalist or a social conservative approach against the neoliberal integration. The mainstream way of economic and social development is being questioned by these populist parties, and this research focuses on Italian and Hungarian populism as counter-movements against the EU and its neoliberal agendas, such as free trade, multiculturalism, or emancipation of LGBTQ minorities.

Karl Polanyi's concept of double-movements and its contemporary contextualization by Nancy Fraser help to understand the nature of political transformations that are taking place in Italy and Hungary.² Several scholars have used the double-movement concept for analyzing the Brexit phenomenon or the rising Greek Euroscepticism after the crisis, but the Hungarian and Italian post-crises political transformations were not yet been examined through a Polanyian perspective.³ Furthermore, this research builds on the literature on populism as well, with a special emphasis on voters' preferences and motivations for supporting populist parties. Four explanations are central in this thesis, namely the economic anxiety, cultural backlash, the tension between responsiveness

¹ Ronald F. Inglehart, Pippa Norris, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash" in *HKS Working Paper*, RWP16-026., published 26 July, 2016.

² Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, (Beacon Press, Boston) 1957., Nancy Fraser, "A Triple Movement? Parsing the Politics of Crisis after Polanyi" in: Burchardt M., Kirm G. (eds) *Beyond Neoliberalism: Approaches to Social Inequality and Difference*, (Palgrave Macmillan) 2017. 29-42.

³ Mathias Emerek, Nicolaj Fromm, "Double Movement in the UK? A "Polanyian" approach to Brexit" Aalborg University, accessed at: https://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/262030658/Double_Movement_in_the_UK.pdf; Maria Markantonatou, "Social Resistance to Austerity: Polanyi's 'Double Movement' in the Context of the Crisis in Greece", in *Journal Für Entwicklungspolitik*, vol. 30:1, 2014. 67-88., et al.

and responsibility, and (negative) partisanship and polarization concepts.⁴ While Polanyi in his analysis puts emphasis on economic reasons and the uncontrolled market economy for counter-movements protecting society from the market expansion, Fraser with her triple movement concept extends the scope of the double-movement and bridges the gap with the literature on populism by bringing culturalist arguments and a third movement, emancipatory movement into focus.⁵ The extraordinary range of emancipatory movements starting in the 1960s changed the landscape of politics and have become third decisive movements, fighting for feminism, LGBTQ liberation, multiculturalism, anti-racism, anti-war, environmentalism, which movements were increasingly associated with neoliberalism favoring marketization.⁶ Certain classes within the Italian and Hungarian societies feel that their social and economic status is threatened not only by economic factors, such as austerity measures, unemployment, or the lack of social mobility but the different cultural values of emancipatory movements, such as diversity, multiculturalism or gender equality. Therefore, populism in Italy and Hungary has two important dimensions, an economic and a cultural one, and populist movements are counter-movements both against the cultural and economic consequences of globalization and the EU integration. Furthermore, culturalist arguments play an increasing role in populist rhetoric.

To what extent populism in Italy and Hungary is a counter-movement against the neoliberal values of the EU, taking into consideration the economic and cultural dimensions of the populism in the two country cases? This research argues for the counter-movement nature of populism, since the three parties that are being analyzed – the Italian Lega and the Five Star Movement (M5S), and the Hungarian FIDESZ – are movement parties with the ability to mobilize masses and incorporate

⁴ Cas Mudde, Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, “Studying Populism in Comparative Perspective: Reflections on the Contemporary and Future Research Agenda” in *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 51:13, 2018. 1667–1693.

⁵ Fraser, “A Triple Movement?”

⁶ Ibid.

them to politics through materialistic and culturalist arguments. Furthermore, the emergence and increasing public support for these parties enable an alternative development path for the EU, since these populist parties represent a sovereigntist point of view and strong nation-states instead of further supranationalization and deeper integration.

The culturalist dimension of populism prevails over the materialistic one. In Italy, two populist parties govern in coalition: M5S representing materialistic-economic populism, and the Lega representing a culturalist approach. The Lega is becoming more popular than the M5S by building their campaign and politics on a culturalist base. Similar trends are identifiable in the Hungarian case: FIDESZ, being one governing party, has shifted its focus from materialistic populism to a culturalist discourse to maximize voters' support. Immigration and the sovereignty transfer are the key clashing topics with the EU concerning the culturalist dimension of Italian and Hungarian populism. A general trend of moving from economic-materialist dimension to a culturalist one is identifiable and the EU appears as a key enemy in the parties' rhetoric, which has important implications. Firstly, it demonstrates a transformation in politics, not only in Italy or Hungary but through increasing sovereigntist cooperation of populist parties, on a European level. A growing number of populist Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and a collaboration between the populist governments in the European Council and Council of the EU can shape the future of the EU into a more sovereigntist direction. Secondly, building campaigns on a culturalist, nativist, nationalist discourse can lead to radicalization against 'others' within the societies, such as immigrants or minority groups, that are targeted by populist rhetoric.

The first chapter of the thesis gives a more detailed literature review on Polanyi's double-movement theory, its contextualization to the contemporary EU and populism, and establishes links between the counter-movements and the culturalist and economic dimensions of the populist vote.

Rising populism can be explained by the clash of cultural values within the society, by the growing sense of economic and social insecurity after the crisis, and the mixed and often confusing political agenda of the traditional left and right parties.⁷ The triple movement concept argued by Fraser reflects a similar logic, therefore populism can be identified as a counter-movement both against neoliberal market expansion and cultural emancipatory movements.⁸

The second chapter elaborates more in detail on the two country cases and three parties, including the movement background of the Lega, M5S and FIDESZ, their history and key agendas. Coding speeches in four categories – international, campaign, famous, and ceremonial speeches – and identifying the level of populism in the parties’ rhetoric serve as the first pillar of the methodology. Secondly, clashing topics with the EU are being identified based on the speeches, and policy-analysis serves to drive conclusions about whether populist rhetoric against the EU has actual policy implications. The analysis covers a time period between 2013 and 2019 and drives conclusions about the nature of Italian and Hungarian populist counter-movements against the EU.

Last but not least, the third chapter identifies the similarities and differences between the two country cases and analyzes the characteristics of the two political configurations: in Italy two coalition partners separately represent culturalist and materialist populism, while in Hungary one party can successfully represent both dimensions. What are those political, economic and societal factors that lead to populist counter-movements and what implications do the success of these movements have for the future development of the EU?

⁷ Inglehart, Norris, “Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism”; Mudde, Kaltwasser: “Studying Populism in Comparative Perspective”, 1678-1681.

⁸ Fraser, “A Triple Movement?”

CHAPTER ONE: POPULISM AS A COUNTER-MOVEMENT?

Populist counter-movements have two important dimensions: a cultural and economic one and the first chapter validates this statement by reviewing the literature on Polanyi's double-movement concept, populism and Fraser's triple movement theory.⁹ Emancipatory movements and post-materialistic values, such as gender equality, environment protection or LGBTQ questions gained importance after the second world war and one important strand of analysis on populism suggests that the populist vote can be explained by the clash of cultural values within the society between conservative-traditional classes and the supporters of growing emancipation.¹⁰ A growing sense of social and economic insecurity after the crises and the mixed political agenda of the traditional left and right parties led to the increasing success of populist parties in Italy and Hungary.¹¹ Populism can be interpreted as a counter-movement against the neoliberal market rules of the EU on an economic dimension, and against the increasing emancipation and multiculturalism on the cultural front.

1.1 Double-movements in the EU

Karl Polanyi's double-movement concept provides a well-grounded explanation for the contemporary transformations within the EU, with a special emphasis on the economic-materialistic dimension of populism. The emergence of capitalist, liberal systems from the seventeenth century triggered social counter-movements as a response to the negative effects of the unregulated market economy and the commodification of labor, nature, and money.¹² Market mechanisms meant to subordinate the society itself to market rule and counter-movements

⁹ Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*; Fraser, "A Triple Movement?"

¹⁰ Inglehart, Norris, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism"

¹¹ Mudde, Kaltwasser: "Studying Populism", 1678-1681.

¹² Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 68-76.

appeared to protect the labor and natural resources from the negative consequences of liberal economic development.¹³ The belief in liberal, self-regulating market economy and capitalism was an unchallenged ideology by political elites and counter-measures started to prevent the destruction of human communities, habitats and to protect the society from the “Satanic Mill” that the self-regulating market caused.¹⁴ The Depression between 1873-86 ended the market utopia of *laissez-faire*: economic decline, and high unemployment rates resulted in protectionist measures and catalyzed class clashes between the working class and elites.¹⁵ As a result of social counter-movements, political rights were extended and mass democracies were established. Wider political participation of citizens provided control over capitalism by maintaining a minimum standard of living favoring the majority.¹⁶ However, the political transformations did not only result in positive outcomes. Polanyi also reflects to the extremes, such as Nazi Germany, and argues that the failure of the liberal systems resulted in radical institutional reforms and transformations, at the cost of personal freedoms.¹⁷ Understanding political transformation is a challenging task and what Polanyi offers by his interpretation of double-movements is a theory that is applicable to the contemporary political and economic transformations in the post-crises EU, where neoliberal values prevail, a cultural clash is present in the society, economic and social insecurity increased after the crises and populist parties question the mainstream agendas of the EU, offering an alternative political model.

The rise of populist movement parties and EU-sceptic agendas can be interpreted as counter-movements against the neoliberal market rules and multiculturalism promoted by the EU. The double-movement theory lives its renaissance in International Relations (IR) literature and

¹³ Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 68-76.

¹⁴ Ibid. 135-150.

¹⁵ Ibid. 209-219.

¹⁶ Ibid. 223-236.

¹⁷ Ibid. 237-248.

several scholars frame European political transformations after the economic and financial crisis as counter-movements against neoliberalism and the EU.¹⁸ Research has been carried out about Brexit as a counter-movement against the EU and the free movement of labor.¹⁹ Greek movements emerged after the crisis as well against the EU and its institutions due to the rising unemployment level, social insecurity, and austerity in the country.²⁰

In terms of Italy, limited research has been carried out to explain the rising populism as a counter-movement against the neoliberal agenda of the EU, while in the case of Hungary, the spectrum of the available literature is wider but still limited. Bohle and Greskovits argue for neoliberal moments after the 1990s, and nationalist moments since 2008 in Hungary, that is being interpreted as populist counter-movements in this thesis.²¹ This research contributes to the literature by analyzing Hungarian and Italian populist movement-parties' ability to lead counter-movements against the EU since there is a gap in the literature and the rising populism raises several questions about the future of the European integration. Hungary is currently one of the most representative cases from Central and Eastern Europe to promote an alternative "illiberal" democratic model, harshly criticizing the EU and promoting a more sovereignist approach.²² In the case of Italy, the government coalition comprises of two populist parties, that promote Eurosceptic, protectionist and anti-globalization agendas. If Italy - being a populous country and the third economy of the

¹⁸ Jakob Feinig, "Beyond Double Movement and Re-regulation: Polanyi, the Organized Denial of Money Politics, and the Promise of Democratization" *Sociological Theory* 36, no.1 (2018), 67–87; Michael Levien, Marcel Paret, "A second double movement? Polanyi and shifting global opinions on neoliberalism" (2012) in *International Sociology*, 27(6), 724–744, et al.

¹⁹ Emerek, Fromm, "Double Movement in the UK?"

²⁰ Markantonatou, "Social Resistance to Austerity"; Alexander E Kentikelenis, "The social aftermath of economic disaster: Karl Polanyi, countermovements in action, and the Greek crisis" in *Socio-Economic Review*, vol. (16) 1, 2018. 39–59.

²¹ Dorothee Bohle, Béla Greskovits, "Polanyian Perspectives on Capitalisms After Socialism"

²² "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at the 29th Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp" Website of the Hungarian Government, published 29 July 2018 at: <https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-29th-balvanyos-summer-open-university-and-student-camp>

EU - follows the Hungarian model instead of its traditional pro-EU stance, it can restructure the power relations within the EU and catalyze a different development model for the EU, from a neoliberal direction to a more sovereignist, nationalist one. The double-movement concept is appropriate for analyzing the materialistic dimension of the Hungarian and Italian populist movements since political and social transformations are taking place, questioning the neoliberal rules of the EU, and experimenting with alternative models after the crises, that is similar to the context in the 1930s.

1.2 Culturalist Populism and the Third Movement

In order to understand the nature of Hungarian and Italian populism as a counter-movement, reviewing the literature on populism is needed. Four key explanations summarize the research agenda on populism: economic anxiety, cultural backlash, the tension between responsiveness and responsibility, and (negative) partisanship and polarization.²³

Inglehart and Norris explain the first two theories of populism well-in detail. Economic reasons for populist vote include the growing wealth and income inequality within societies, the fear from downward mobility and the loss of social status. Low-wage workers, who experience minimum job security and are vulnerable to social risks, technological advancements or the growing mobility of cheap labor are likely to support populist parties in hope of social adjustments.²⁴ Secondly, based on the cultural backlash thesis, representatives of the older generation, less-educated groups of the society or supporters of traditional, conservative values are not as tolerant toward post-materialistic, progressive values – such as diversity, social inclusion of immigrants, gender equality, cosmopolitanism or support for international organizations – as

²³ Mudde, Kaltwasser: “Studying Populism”

²⁴ Inglehart, Norris, “Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism” 10-12.

younger, more educated, social progressive groups. This generational and cultural gap causes an increasing social tension, and intolerant groups towards ethnic and racial diversity, gender equality, and cosmopolitan values provide a solid basis for xenophobic, nationalist, populist movements.²⁵

The third theory of populism is the rising tension between responsiveness and responsibility, meaning that international institutions and global markets limit the actions of political actors, the sovereignty of states, that might result in policies that are not favorable for the electorate. Under these limited scopes of actions and binding regulations, populist parties tend to explain the unfavorable conditions, or political decisions to the public by blaming the elites or international organizations for the failures of understanding the needs of the people.²⁶ Lastly, the partisanship and polarization theory provides an explanation for the populist vote by focusing on party segmentation. Traditional left and right parties abandoned their original political agendas and converged to the direction of neoliberal economic development, austerity measures if needed, multiculturalism, and pro-integration stance. Populist parties benefit from distancing themselves from the mainstream political agendas and converging between the left and right poles, depending on the voters' interests. The key argument is that segmentation from the traditional left and right parties and from political and financial elites favor populist vote.²⁷

Fraser's theory on triple movements bridges the gap between the literature of populism and the contemporary application of Polanyi's double-movement theory.²⁸ Fraser extends the scope of Polanyi by introducing a third movement, the emancipatory movement to explain the increasing

²⁵ Inglehart, Norris, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism, 13-16.

²⁶ Mudde, Kaltwasser: "Studying Populism" 1678-1681.

²⁷ Ibid. pp. 1682-1686.

²⁸ Fraser, "A Triple Movement?"

role of social actions and awareness towards post-materialistic, progressive values.²⁹ Fraser's emancipatory movement has a strong cultural aspect and is similar to Inglehart and Norris' arguments about the cultural backlash thesis.³⁰ Emancipatory movements affected the political agenda towards international integration, social inclusion, diversity, and gender equality. As a result, conservative, elderly and less-educated segments of the society feel threatened to lose from their social status and fear economic downward mobility.³¹ That is why conservative, materialistic voters, who feel economically and socially insecure, support populist movements, to counter-balance the emerging post-materialistic values and emancipation. Fraser – similarly to the material-economic dimension of the Polanyian capitalist-liberal movement and social counter-movement thesis – emphasizes the emergence of a new type of counter-movement that is taking place on the cultural dimension. Emancipatory movements are opposed by cultural backlash-type movements, primarily supported by populist parties and those segments of the society who fear the loss of their social status by increasing emancipation. Therefore, populism is not limited to political parties anymore, but populist movements have wider societal support against emancipatory movements and the negative consequences of neoliberal market rules represented by the EU.

To sum up, the contemporary interpretations of the double-movement theory is in line with the research agenda of populism and they complement each other. Adding a culturally driven third movement allows a deeper comprehension of populism and its cultural dimension. Fraser defines the third movement as primarily a cultural movement, and the literature on populist vote increasingly argue for the cultural dimension of populism against post-materialistic values. The underlying assumption is that there is a connection between the cultural dimension of populist vote

²⁹ Fraser, "A Triple Movement?"

³⁰ Inglehart, Norris, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism

³¹ Fraser, "A Triple Movement?"

against increasing emancipation and post-materialistic values, embraced by liberal political agendas, and the emancipatory third movement described by Fraser. Populist parties identify cultural diversity, feminism, gender equality or LGBTQ minorities as threats to national identity and traditional values, therefore populism is a counter-movement against the third movement as well. Furthermore, if populist parties are movement parties, they are likely to mobilize masses against emancipatory movements and catalyze counter-movements not only against the economic dimension of the supranational integration, but the third movements on the cultural dimension.

1.3 Methodology

The double-movement theory and literature on populist vote help to understand the contemporary political and economic transformations in Italy and Hungary. In both countries, nationalist-populist parties govern, which means an alternative political setting compared to the traditionally strong left and right divide since populist parties distance themselves from the political poles based on the partisanship and polarization thesis on populism.³² The brief history of the Lega, the M5S and FIDESZ is being described in order to contextualize their success and movement nature between 2013 and 2019. Populist parties gained the majority of votes in Italy and Hungary during the latest elections in 2018, which has not only an economic dimension, but a cultural one.³³

This thesis applies the methodology of the “Comparative Populism” research project from Central European University to identify the level of populism in speeches.³⁴ As a first step,

³² Mudde, Kaltwasser: “Studying Populism”

³³ “Országgyűlési képviselők választása 2018” [Parliamentary Elections 2018], Nemzeti Választási Iroda, accessed 16 May 2019 at: <http://www.valasztas.hu/ogy2018>; “Archivio storico delle elezioni” Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali, accessed 16 May 2019 at: <https://elezionistorico.interno.gov.it/index.php?tpel=S&dtel=04/03/2018&tpa=I&tpe=A&lev0=0&levsut0=0&es0=S&ms=S>

³⁴ “Comparative Populism Database”, Intellectual Themes Initiative, Central European University. The Comparative Populism research project was led by Central European University and carried out between September 2017 and August 2019. The aim of the project was to build a comparative database on countries across Europe on the varieties of populist politics and policies and to understand why it takes different dimensions.

speeches in four categories – famous, international, ceremonial and campaign speeches – are being coded between zero and one. If the speech scores zero, that means there are no or very few populist elements in the speech, and one means the speech includes most of the populist elements. Since the literature on populism has not yet agreed on a universally accepted definition, this methodology builds on populist elements instead of a general definition of populism.³⁵ These elements – adopted from the research project – include the (1) Manichean vision of the world, everything has a strong moral and dualistic dimension, everything is good or evil, right or wrong, and there is nothing in-between. The language is bellicose and highly emotional; (2) The moral dimension of topics mentioned are described with cosmic proportions, claiming that people are effected everywhere and across time, historical examples further justify the arguments, and national leaders are brought as examples to justify actions; (3) The good is described through the will of the majority, a unified whole, and the people are romanticized; (4) The evil is embodied in the minority, whose identity will differ according to the context, it can be the economic elite, the oligarchs, international organizations, capitalist institutions or an ideology, such as communism, neoliberalism or capitalism; (5) This evil minority was in charge recently and subverted the system to its own needs and interest, acted against the good majority of the people, the only way to change the system is through systematic change, a revolution or liberation is needed to free the people from oppression or repression; (6) Because of the moral arguments, non-democratic means are justified, the speech abuse data to support the arguments, the language is bellicose towards the opposition and shows no respect or worthiness towards them. Appendix I. summarizes the dimensions of coding, and the populist elements in the speeches.

³⁵ Szabolcs Pogonyi, “Nationalist Populism in Central Europe” Conference on the Re-Rise of Conservatism, held 12 February 2019 in New York, SUNY Global Center

Speeches are selected between 2013 and 2019 to cover two electoral cycles. The quality criteria for the speech selection are the following based on the comparative populism research project: (1) campaign speeches are the closest available to the end of the campaign period, (2) international speeches target an international audience, (3) ceremonial speeches have a wider, targeted audience, and (4) famous speeches provide a summary of the agendas and priorities, directed to a wider national audience. Eight speeches are selected from the Hungarian FIDESZ party, one from each category per electoral cycle. In Italy, since the two populist parties did not win elections in 2013, famous and campaign speeches are analyzed from this period, two per party. Two Italian campaign speeches are selected from 2018, one from the Lega and one from the M5S, and three further speeches from the coalition government in three categories: famous, international and ceremonial. Based on the selected speeches and populist elements identified, key clashing topics with the EU are identified.

After analyzing speeches between 2013 and 2019 and outlining clashing topics with the EU, this thesis looks at the policy level. The key question with this regard is whether political rhetoric reflects policy-making as well, or Eurosceptic speeches rather serve as a tool to maximize populist votes. Therefore, the second part of the methodology is to identify whether the populist movements are real challenges for the EU, or the Eurosceptic agendas are limited to political discourse.

CHAPTER TWO: HUNGARIAN AND ITALIAN POPULISM

After setting the theoretical framework, the next section focuses on the two country cases and the three populist ruling parties: The Italian Lega and M5S, and the Hungarian FIDESZ. This chapter analyzes the movement characteristics of the three parties and aims to understand the nature of populism by analyzing speeches between 2013 and 2019. Furthermore, the key clashing topics with the EU that appear in political discourse are being analyzed on the policy level in order to drive conclusions whether the parties' rhetoric reflect real actions, and their clashes with the EU are real concerns for the future development of the integration.

2.2 The Emergence of Populist Movement Parties

Clarifying movement-party relationship is needed to identify the increasing success of populist parties as counter-movement. Movements are networks of individuals, informal interactions often driven by an ideology or common aim. Social movements are not institutionalized, contrary to political parties that function in institutionalized forms.³⁶ Social movements and political parties interact and respond to each other, and can function in interconnected, merged forms. Furthermore, parties increasingly mobilize citizens to participate in social movements through the media and internet.³⁷ The informal non-institutionalized social movements are often supported or promoted by parties and vice versa.³⁸ Similar party-movement relationship is visible in the Italian and Hungarian cases since all three selected parties are movement-parties.

³⁶ Mildred A. Schwartz, "Interactions Between Social Movements and US Political Parties" in *Party Politics*, vol. 16:5, 587-607.

³⁷ Thomas Davidson and Mabel Berezin, "Britain First and the UK Independence Party: Social Media and Movement-Party Dynamics", in *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, vol. 23:4, 2018. 485 -510.

³⁸ Ibid.

2.2.1 Italy: Lega and the Five Star Movement

The Lega Nord (LN) – later Lega – is currently the oldest party in Italian politics and transformed its goals several times, especially after 2010.³⁹ The party grew out from a separatist social movement called Lombard League and initially had a strong, traditional, ethno-regionalist focus, promoting a federalist structure and independence for the Northern Italian regions.⁴⁰ The literature situated the party as a regionalist, populist, radical right party and promoted cultural protectionism, nativism and gradually anti-Europeanism.⁴¹ As most of the populist parties, the leadership was characterized by a strong and charismatic leader, Umberto Bossi, who remained the key figure until 2012.⁴²

The LN was primarily a movement-party, with loose institutional structure and a strong social movement activism to promote separatism: the party created independent institutions, symbols, media, schools, trade unions, and civil society organizations to promote their goals.⁴³ Building regional identity was a central element through a uniformed group of activists called Padanian Guards, the LN created national symbols for Padania, such as flags, anthems, and organized events and festivals to strengthen regional identity and the network of activists.⁴⁴ Therefore, the Lega put special emphasis on its movement strategy and was able to mobilize its voters quickly and successfully. Initially, using their own printed media and television was an

³⁹ Daniele Albertazzi, Arianna Giovanni, Antonella Seddone, “‘No regionalism please, we are Leghisti!’ The transformation of the Italian Lega Nord under the leadership of Matteo Salvini” in *Regional and Federal Studies*, 2018, vol. 28:5, 645.

⁴⁰ Carlo Ruzza, Stefano Fella, *Re-inventing the Italian Right: Territorial Politics, Populism and ‘Post-Fascism’* 2009, Routledge, 63-67.

⁴¹ Ibid., 44-50., 63-67.

⁴² Ibid., 44-50.

⁴³ Ibid. 75.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 76-77.

effective tool to locally mobilize members and supporters of the regionalist movement, which was later replaced by the extensive social media presence.⁴⁵

In 2012, a significant change took place, the former leadership was replaced by Matteo Salvini due to corruption scandals and the poor performance of the party since 2001.⁴⁶ The LN turned to nationalism from regionalism, extended its regional scope from the North to the whole country, started to address economic and social issues about the North-South divide, and instead of the Rome bureaucracy, Brussels and the EU became the key enemy of the people.⁴⁷ With the old priorities and the controversial leadership accused of corruption and fraud, the party needed a complete transformation to increase its popularity. Furthermore, the federalist, separatist agenda was not supported by other right-wing parties and coalition partners, therefore the party could not realize its key priority for decades. The party transformed both in ideological and generational terms, its name was changed to Lega and the slogan became ‘Lega Salvini Premier’.⁴⁸ The Lega built its electoral populist campaign on immigration, security, terrorism and Euroscepticism in 2013, which key topics remained the focus in 2018 as well.

The M5S is a relatively new movement party, being founded in 2009 by Beppe Grillo, a stand-up comedian who started a blog providing a platform for citizens to discuss topics such as ecology, internet, political participation or corruption within Italy, and continued with organizing meetup groups to discuss everyday politics.⁴⁹ The M5S did not identify itself as a political party, but a movement to critically engage with topics that are not properly addressed by the political elites. The party kept its movement characteristics: hundreds of meetups were organized all over

⁴⁵ Ruzza, Fella, *Re-inventing the Italian Right*, 76-77.

⁴⁶ “Archivio storico delle elezioni” Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali

⁴⁷ Albertazzi, et al. “No regionalism please” 646-648.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 649-650.

⁴⁹ Roberto Biorcio, Rossana Sampugnaro, “Introduction: The Five-star Movement from the street to local and national institutions”, in *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 2019, (vol. 11:1), 6.; Pirro, “The Polyvalent Populism” 6.

the country to provide a platform for citizens for discussion, and several online initiatives were launched to engage people in politics.⁵⁰ Direct participation of the people and activists are ensured in the political representation, the selection of the candidates for the general election, for example, was carried out through an online consultation.⁵¹

The Movement turned out to be extremely popular despite its short history. During the national elections in 2013, they won 26 percent of Parliamentary seats in House of Representatives and 24 percent in the Senate.⁵² Furthermore, they won the mayoralties of Rome and Turin during the regional elections in 2016, that challenged the movement in its political role.⁵³ These large municipalities were traditionally governed by the same administrations for a longer time period, and the radical changes on the agenda of the M5S were not easily adaptable with the old institutional structures.⁵⁴ In 2018, the party gained 33 percent of Parliamentary seats in the House of Representatives and 32 percent in the Senate, having 167 seats in total.⁵⁵ Becoming the most popular party by 2018, with a national network of activists and representatives, required some institutional changes within the party structure.⁵⁶ The movement started to depersonalize the party from the characteristic founder and Luigi di Maio took the lead. The blog was renamed, the logo was redesigned and the former party leader did not play a visible role during the electoral campaign in 2018.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Pirro, "The Polyvalent Populism", 5-14.

⁵¹ Ibid. 9-11.

⁵² "Elezioni 2013, Risultati Nazionali" Il Sole 24 Ore, accessed 11 May 2018 at:

https://www.ilsole24ore.com/speciali/2013/elezioni/risultati/politiche/static/italia.shtml?refresh_ce=1

⁵³ Pirro, "The polyvalent populism" 6.

⁵⁴ Biorcio, Sampugnaro, "Introduction" 7-8.

⁵⁵ "Elezioni 2018", Il Sole 24 Ore

⁵⁶ Biorcio, Sampugnaro, "Introduction" 12-13.

⁵⁷ Pirro, "The polyvalent populism" 6.

The agenda of the Five Star Movement is transformative and characterized by anti-establishment.⁵⁸ The M5S distances itself from mainstream politics, media or financial elites and reacts to topics that are important for the people regardless of the political pole.⁵⁹ The key focus is on direct democratic participation of the people through online consultations, referendums, and personal meetups.⁶⁰ The party successfully grew and gained popularity in the past ten years and its mobilizing capacity is strong due to its local activists, online consultations and increasing political importance.

2.2.2 Hungary: FIDESZ

FIDESZ also has a long history as a social movement and political party – similarly to the Lega - and is the oldest party among the three cases. FIDESZ started as a student movement in the 1980s with a strong anti-communist agenda protesting for a new political system.⁶¹ Its activism and mobilizing capacity have been strong since the beginnings, most of the leaders had participated in activism during the 1980s. Viktor Orbán has remained the charismatic figure of the movement-party since then and FIDESZ became leading force of the right.⁶²

Building a movement on national civic ideology was one of the success factors for the party, FIDESZ successfully built political alliances and incorporated the masses into politics.⁶³ The civic movement was a political tool and through associations and media, the movement reinvented “everyday life-styles, holidays, symbols, and heroes, and mobilizing their members in innovative

⁵⁸ Pirro, “The polyvalent populism”

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 7-10.

⁶¹ Máté Szabó, “From a Suppressed Anti-Communist Dissident Movement to a Governing Party: The Transformations of FIDESZ in Hungary”, in *Corvinus Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 2011 vol. (2), 47-66.

⁶² Ibid. 51-58.

⁶³ Brigid Fowler, “Concentrated Orange: Fidesz and the remaking of the Hungarian center-right, 1994-2002” in *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 20:3, 107.

ways for participation in cultural, educational, charity, and leisure activities.”⁶⁴ Civic circles became organizers of protests, started their database to coordinate a nation-wide presence, and established strong cooperation with allies from the civil society.⁶⁵ FIDESZ was divided into sections, such as workers, women, or pensioners, and movement activists were allowed and encouraged to join sections of the party, therefore there was a direct connection and mobility between the movement and the party.⁶⁶ Nationalist sentiments were in focus of the civic movement, building an imagined community of fifteen million Hungarians and therefore gaining further support from Hungarian minorities from neighboring countries.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the civic circle movement had close connections with the Christian communities and leaders as well, that allowed the establishment of church-based activism.⁶⁸

Orbán is a good example of being a popular leader; he visited remote villages and built up a strategy to develop an image to have direct links with the masses. He initiated national consultations and sent questionnaires to every citizen of the country.⁶⁹ Furthermore, his leadership is unchallenged and uncontrolled within the party.⁷⁰ Populism started to characterize FIDESZ after losing the elections in 2002; such as blaming the political elites to act against the will of the people; emphasizing the role of national and religious symbols and leaders; blaming institutions and Parliamentarism to be unjust and call for new elections.⁷¹ When riots started against the ruling Social-Liberal coalition in 2006, FIDESZ could massively mobilize masses and became the

⁶⁴ Greskovits, “Rebuilding the Hungarian Right,” 3-4.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 5.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 12.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 9-20.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 17-18.

⁶⁹ Szabó, “From a Suppressed Anti-Communist Dissident Movement,” 56-57.

⁷⁰ Fowler, “Concentrated Orange,” 85.

⁷¹ Szabó, “From a Suppressed Anti-Communist Dissident Movement,” 56-59.

most powerful political actor, thanks to its long-lasting civic movement activism and its leadership role as a right-wing party.⁷²

To sum up, all three parties are movement parties, that have strong mobilizing capacities, and put a great emphasis on incorporating the masses to the political decision-making by movement-building, public consultations, online participation, and organizing demonstrations. Therefore, these parties are able to mobilize citizens and lead social movements to reach their populist agendas. The upcoming sub-chapter analyzes more in detail the nature of populism in the parties' rhetoric, clashing topics with the EU, policy actions and drives conclusions about their effects of the future development of the EU.

2.3 Populist Rhetoric and Policy actions

After reviewing the background of the parties and their movement characteristics, political discourse of two electoral cycles between 2013 and 2019 is being analyzed. Applying a coding methodology, populist elements in speeches are identified and conclusions are drive about the nature of populism in the two countries. Furthermore, based on the speeches, the key clashing topics with the EU are outlined and more deeply analyzed on the policy level. Appendix II. summarizes the coding results of the speeches.

2.3.1 Italy: Political Communication

Interestingly, populist rhetoric in Italy became more limited during the 2018 campaign than in 2013. Furthermore, despite the concerns to have two populist parties in a coalition government, Giuseppe Conte, the Prime Minister is not a populist leader, he does not apply populist rhetoric in his speeches, either talking about international, ceremonial or famous speeches.

⁷² Szabó, "From a Suppressed Anti-Communist Dissident Movement," 56-59.

In the case of the Lega, the previous leadership, Roberto Maroni and Umberto Bossi, delivered a campaign closing speech in 2013 that was clearly populist. The financial and political elites were criticized to act against the will of the people, Lega appeared to be the only party genuinely representing the people of the North, and the key enemies of the country were presented to be the banks and the bureaucrats in Rome. Matteo Salvini, the new leader of the party continued with the populist rhetoric during the Federal Congress of the Lega in 2014, including bellicose arguments for a systematic change, fight against immigration and the bureaucrats in Brussels, and a dualistic, moralized vision of the world.⁷³ Furthermore, Salvini explicitly claimed that he is a proud populist leader if that means to represent the workers and people of the country, and not the thieving political elites. The key clashing topics with the EU were the bureaucratic system of Brussels, austerity measures, and the arguments were framed in a populist way to blame international political elites taking advantage of the Italian hard-working people and acting against the will of citizens.⁷⁴

The rhetoric of the Lega changed during the 2018 electoral campaign. Salvini in his campaign closing speech was rather conservative, the style is not bellicose, however, the elites and minority groups such as immigrants were still mentioned as primary enemies for the Italian society and acting against the will of the people.⁷⁵ Immigration and LGBTQ questions were presented as a threat to the traditions and Italian culture, and nationalism also appeared in an “Italians first” context. Economic arguments were present to protect Italian companies and products against the free market and globalization. The key clashing topic with the EU continued to remain the

⁷³ Lega Salvini Preimer, “Congresso Federale Lega Nord 2013,” Youtube video, posted 16 December 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNDUOrKTqZk>

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Populismo, “Matteo Salvini a Roma per la chiusura della campagna elettorale della Lega,” Youtube video, published 1 March 2018 at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9NAbSh6W9E>

bureaucratic system, and the German economic influence.⁷⁶ It is interesting that the concept of enemy has shifted from Rome to Brussels, and from Brussels to Berlin and the free market is increasingly framed as a threat on a culturalist basis: Salvini argued that mass exports of German products would result in different lifestyles for the Italians, free market rules want everybody to look and behave the same way, therefore Italian traditions would perish.⁷⁷ By turning to more culturalist arguments, the Lega mixed populism with social conservatism.

The culturalist arguments against immigration, LGBTQ minorities and the bureaucratic system in Brussels and Berlin are in line with the literature on populism and Fraser's triple movement concept. Economic factors, such as austerity measures to comply with the Maastricht criteria, the negative effects of globalization on Italian companies, and immigrants receiving more social benefits than Italians were highly present in the arguments. However, cultural threats were emphasized even more actively, such as globalization and the four freedoms threatening the traditional Italian way of living or immigration threatening Italian culture, communities and individual security. The conservative approach to LGBTQ questions and to a multicultural society reflected the voters' social conservative approach to oppose post-materialistic values, and populism became mixed with social conservatism, due to the increasingly strong culturalist rhetoric of the Lega.

In the case of the M5S, a more sophisticated populist rhetoric is identifiable over time. Grillo delivered a populist campaign closing speech in 2013.⁷⁸ The financial and political elites were harshly criticized to act against the will of the people while the party's agenda was identified

⁷⁶ Populismo, "Matteo Salvini a Roma"

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Beppe Grillo, "Beppe Grillo, intervento in piazza San Giovanni, Roma - 22 febbraio 2013" Youtube video, published 22 February 2013 at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFtmJ106xTI>

with the unified will of the people. Grillo called for a democratic revolution to radically change the system, and Rome and Brussels were equally blamed for failures of the Italian economy and social system. The key clashing topic with the EU was the Eurozone and the need for a referendum to decide about Eurozone membership. In his New Year speech, the Eurozone appeared to be the key clashing topic with the EU as well, and the financial and political elites were harshly blamed for acting against the will of the majority. The arguments were framed against the EU in a bellicose way without actually proposing a solution for the long-lasting structural imbalances.⁷⁹

By 2018, the leadership of the party has changed, and Luigi di Maio took the leadership. His campaign closing speech was not particularly a populist one.⁸⁰ Blaming the elites continued to play a central role, and measures were emphasized to cut politicians' benefits in line with the popular will. However, the speech focused on the summary of the party's program, the EU did not appear as an enemy, only anti-austerity measures were mentioned. The M5S's arguments were characterized by a materialist-economic dimension, such as austerity measures and social spending, youth unemployment, pensions and institutional transparency to fight corruption. The Movement put emphasis on political reforms to create a democracy with the more direct participation of the people. M5S appears to be a movement in the Polanyian sense against the negative consequences of globalization and the neoliberal market expansion.

The two parties' coalition government is a particularly interesting case. Coding results show that the Prime Minister of the Lega-M5S coalition did not apply populist rhetoric. Giuseppe Conte's international speech at the European Parliament was concise, clear to the point, and

⁷⁹ Beppe Grillo, "Discorso di fine anno 2014 di Beppe Grillo #IoGuardoBeppe" Il Blog di Beppe Grillo, published 31 December 2014 at: <http://www.beppegrillo.it/discorso-di-fine-anno-2014-di-beppe-grillo-ioguardo-beppe/>

⁸⁰ Piccolo Jason, "Roma, Piazza del Popolo: Chiusura della campagna elettorale del MoVimento 5 Stelle" published 2 March 2018 at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6famKVJg6A>

arguments were justified with facts.⁸¹ The EU did not appear to be an enemy at all, clear ideas were presented how to improve the functioning of the EU and how to solve common challenges. Institutional reforms, better-coordinated migration and defense policies, more effective cohesion policy to tackle regional economic gaps and the geopolitical role of the EU had a central role in the speech. There was no sign of Euroscepticism in Conte's rhetoric. Conte's ceremonial speech at the Sapienza University was not populist either, equal access to education was emphasized regardless of social or economic background.⁸² Lastly, Conte's famous speech delivered at the Senate did not have any populist characteristics either.⁸³ Opposition and minorities were respected, and the speech was an excellent summary of the key points of the government's program. Progressive, revolutionary actions were mentioned, but limited to reforms and not framed in a bellicose way.

The two parties have different characteristics: while the Lega put emphasis on cultural arguments, economic factors play a central role for the M5S. It is true for both parties that during the 2018 electoral campaign, their populist rhetoric was more modest than the previous electoral campaign, the change in leadership resulted in more limited populism. However, there is a clear divide between the increasingly culturalist-social conservative arguments of the Lega and the economic focus of the M5S. Nevertheless, the Italian case shows that the two parties' populist rhetoric is limited to the electoral campaigns, and the coalition government's Prime Minister is not a populist leader. The different party leaders and country-wide agendas demonstrate a more

⁸¹ "Debate with the President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic, Giuseppe Conte, on the Future of Europe" European Parliament, published 12 February 2019 at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20190212+ITEM-018+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN&query=INTERV&detail=2-545-000>

⁸² "Il Presidente Conte all'Università La Sapienza" Governo Italiano, published 17 January 2019 at:

<http://www.governo.it/media/il-presidente-conte-alluniversit-la-sapienza/10724>

⁸³ "Il discorso integrale di Giuseppe Conte al Senato" Il Post, published 5 July 2018 at:

<https://www.ilpost.it/2018/06/05/testo-discorso-giuseppe-conte-senato/>

professional and less populist approach to politics, even though blaming the financial and political elites of the country and representing the will of the Italian people remain central in the arguments.

2.3.2 Policy-level

The two parties clash with the EU on economic and cultural fronts, in line with their populist arguments. Three key clashing topics can be identified against the EU: (1) immigration, (2) Eurozone membership, and (3) the European bureaucratic system and sovereignty transfer.

2.3.2.1 Immigration

After forming the coalition, migration remained a key agenda for Salvini as Minister of Interior. His policy actions and official declarations reflect a more radical approach to immigration than previously characterized the country. The most visible policy action was the so-called ‘Salvini Decree’ that aimed to restrict regulations against illegal migrants. However, the decree is criticized to have opposite results and raised several constitutional legitimacy concerns.⁸⁴ The decree allows restrictive measures against immigrants under “extraordinary situation of necessity and urgency,” even against refugees and asylum seekers, whose rights to asylum is granted by international law.⁸⁵ The decree makes it more difficult for asylum seekers to receive refugee status and makes it more easy for authorities to deprive refugees of their legal protection. Furthermore, the legal status expires more quickly, therefore, these measurements against illegal migration rather increase the number of illegal migrants in the country.⁸⁶ Also, Salvini closed Italian ports not to let ships dock

⁸⁴Cecilia Corsi, “Evaluating the ‘Salvini Decree’: Doubts of constitutional legitimacy” in *Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies*, Issue 2019/6

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ “Il decreto sicurezza, spiegato” Il Post, published 28 November 2018, accessed 11 May 2019 at: <https://www.ilpost.it/2018/11/28/decreto-sicurezza-spiegato/>

with immigrants on board.⁸⁷ Therefore, the harsh, culturalist rhetoric of the Lega against immigrants resulted in policy actions as well.

2.3.2.2 Eurozone Membership

One of the most important campaign agendas for the M5S in 2013 was a referendum on the Eurozone membership, however, it was not included into the contract between the Lega and the M5S concerning the coalition government's agenda in 2018.⁸⁸ Although, the Italian budget was a long negotiation process with the European Commission, that almost triggered an infringement procedure, since the Italian government presented a budget plan that was not in line with the Maastricht criteria and the Stability and Growth Pact, and allowed more public spending, further increasing the public debt of the country.⁸⁹ The plan included the reform of the pension system, and public investments on citizens basic income, fostering youth employment and supporting SMEs. The Ministry of Finance forecasted economic growth and better performance from 2020 due to the increasing consumption that would result from the revival of public investment and new social inclusion policies.⁹⁰ The European Commission requested supervision of the budget since the plans did not meet with the previous recommendations of the Council to improve its structural balance by 0.6 percent of the GDP.⁹¹ After two months of negotiations, Italy agreed to cut the

⁸⁷ Andrea Molle, "Religion and right-wing populism in Italy: using 'Judeo-Christian roots' to kill the European Union" in *Religion, State & Society* vol (47:1), 153-154.

⁸⁸ "Contratto per il Governo di Cambiamento" accessed 12 May 2019 at: http://download.repubblica.it/pdf/2018/politica/contratto_governo.pdf

⁸⁹ Gerardo Fortuna, "Italy's Conte admits defeat on budget, presents new plan to EU", EURACTIV.com, published 13 December 2018 at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/economic-governance/news/italys-conte-admits-defeat-on-budget-presents-new-plan-to-eu/>

⁹⁰ "2019 Draft Budgetary Plan Supplied to the EU Commission," Italian Ministry of Finance, accessed 12 May 2019 at: http://www.mef.gov.it/inevidenza/documenti/Trasmesso_alla_Commissione_Ue_il_Documento_Programmatico_di_Bilancio_201....pdf; "Italy's Draft Budgetary Plan 2019" Ministry of Economy and Finance, accessed 12 May 2019 at: http://www.rgs.mef.gov.it/Documenti/VERSIONE-I/Attivit--i/Contabilit_e_finanza_pubblica/DPB/2018/DRAFT_BP_2019-W-cop.pdf

⁹¹ "European Commission Opinion on the 2019 draft budgetary plan of Italy" European Commission, published 23 October 2018 at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-18-6175_en.htm

forecasted deficit to 2.04 percent, by introducing new taxes and selling government properties, therefore, the government could keep its plans on public spending and avoid stricter surveillance from the European Commission.⁹² The M5S, therefore, gave up its agenda on Eurozone referendum, but through the budget that was finally accepted by the Parliament and the European Commission, could keep their economic priorities, namely introducing policies to decrease youth unemployment, reforming the pension system and supporting SMEs.

2.3.2.3 The European Bureaucratic System and Sovereignty Transfer

Criticism against sovereignty transfer, the supranational institutions and monitoring of the EU appeared in the rhetoric of both populist parties during their campaigns. The Lega promoted a stronger voice for the nation states, the revision of the core treaties of the EU and the restoration of the pre-Maastricht period, while the Five Star Movement campaigned for more transparency and efficient procedures within Brussels, stronger role for the European Parliament allowing more direct participation of citizens, and better coordinated policies in the area of immigration and border control.⁹³

The coalition government represents a more moderate approach towards the EU than the campaign periods suggested. As Conte summarized during his speech at the European Parliament, liberal policies focusing on the mere economic dimension of governance caused an increasing development gap between the member states, and radical rethinking is needed to improve the performance of the EU.⁹⁴ Conte mentioned the collective responsibility of member states to tackle

⁹² Darin Graham, "Italy's parliament approves 2019 budget in confidence vote" Euronews, published 29 December 2019 at: <https://www.euronews.com/2018/12/29/italian-parliament-passes-budget-in-confidence-vote-averting-eu-fine>

⁹³ "Elezioni 2018: Programma di Governo, Salvini Premier" Lega, accessed 15 May 2019 at: <https://www.leganord.org/component/tags/tag/programma-elettorale>; "Unione Europea", Movimento 5 Stelle, accessed 15 May 2019 at: <https://www.movimento5stelle.it/programma/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Unione-Europea.pdf>

⁹⁴ "Debate with the President"

the immigration challenges, and stronger defense cooperation as two key important agendas for the upcoming years.⁹⁵

Radical, culturalist reforms for stronger nation states within the EU are not likely to pass the EU decision-making mechanisms, that the Lega was campaigning for. Any sovereigntist reform plans need to be supported by the majority of the countries and the MEPs in order to pass. The European Parliamentary elections in 2019 were decisive with this regard. The results show that there is no shift towards populist, EU-skeptic and sovereigntist agendas, the number of seats and political voice of both the M5S' Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group's, and the Lega's Europe of Nations and Freedom Group's remain limited in the European Parliament. The traditionally strong, pro-EU groups are still the majority.⁹⁶

2.3.1 The Hungarian Case – Political communication

Hungarian populism, contrary to the Italian case, intensifies over time. During the electoral campaign of 2014, the discourse was rather characterized by nationalism, however, some elements of populism were present, including demonizing financial and political elites, socialists, communists or the IMF. The EU was not presented as an enemy, clashing topics with the EU did not characterize the rhetoric in 2014.

After the migration crisis, however, the rhetoric against the EU in connection with its incapacity to tackle the migration challenge intensified. When Orbán spoke at the European Parliament in 2015, the discourse was not particularly populist, but migration appeared to be a central issue as a threat against the will of Hungarian people.⁹⁷ The popular will was embodied

⁹⁵“Debate with the President”

⁹⁶ “2019 European election results” European Parliament, published 28 May 2019 at: <https://election-results.eu/italy/>

⁹⁷ “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s Speech in the European Parliament” Website of the Hungarian Government, published 20 May 2015, at: <https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-in-the-european-parliament>

through a discourse of defending the people by representing their unified interests not to make Hungary an immigration country. By 2016, the rhetoric became clearly populist: the popular will was embodied through a discourse about refusing migration and the prime minister called for a revolution to protect the country, similarly to 1848 and 1956, within the battlefield of the EU this time.⁹⁸ The Manichaeon vision of the world characterized the speeches, assigning a moral and highly emotion dimension to the challenge: migrants being criminals compared to the hard-working Hungarians. Lastly, blaming the European elites was clearly present, key clashing topics with the EU included the migration policy and the federalist, supranational bureaucratic elites acting against national sovereignty.⁹⁹

The campaign in 2018 and the rhetoric of FIDESZ afterwards has become more populist. The minority groups and key enemies to blame in a bellicose way became international organizations, such as the IMF, the EU, or the United Nations, as well as financial and political elites such as George Soros or the Hungarian opposition. Furthermore, liberal ideology, multiculturalism, and globalization also appear to be a threat to the Hungarian people.¹⁰⁰ Speeches demonstrate the governing party's devotion to protecting the people against the "undemocratic" and bureaucratic EU, and reference to history is often made to support populist arguments. History is being distorted to justify political actions now and calling for a revolution or fight are central elements. Orbán goes as far as comparing Soviet imperialism with Brussels and the EU.¹⁰¹ The key

⁹⁸ "Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on 15 March" Website of the Hungarian Government, published 15 March 2016 at: <https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/speech-by-prime-minister-viktor-orban-on-15-march>

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at the final Fidesz election campaign event" Website of the Hungarian Government, published 7 April 2018 at: <https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-final-fidesz-election-campaign-event>

¹⁰¹ "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech on the 62nd anniversary of the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight" Website of the Hungarian government, published 23 October 2018 at: <https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-on-the-62nd-anniversary-of-the-1956-revolution-and-freedom-fight>

clashing topics with the EU continue to remain migration, the question of sovereignty transfer, and institutional reforms to strengthen nation states within the EU.¹⁰²

Cultural arguments dominate Hungarian populism with marginal materialist arguments between 2014 and 2019. The following quote perfectly summarizes the logic of Hungarian culturalist, populist arguments against the EU:

Those who want to mold the European Union into a European empire are all, without exception, supporters of immigration. They have made the admission of migrants the litmus test of being European, and expect every country and nation to become multicultural without delay (...) They see it as a chance to replace the European Union of nation states with a multicultural empire of mixed populations, smoothed into a unity: a Europe without nation states; an elite separated from its national roots; an alliance with multinational power groups; a coalition with financial speculators. This would be a paradise for George Soros.¹⁰³

Migration dominates the political discourse since 2015. Migration is framed as a threat to identity, culture, individual security, traditions and religion, completely refusing the post-materialistic concept of living in a multicultural and diverse society. As Orbán states, “mass migration fundamentally changes Europe’s cultural make-up. Mass migration destroys national culture.”¹⁰⁴ International and domestic actors, political and financial elites supporting immigration are presented as enemies and a moralized, dualistic vision dominates the speeches, between those who represent a pro-migration view destroying national cultures, and Hungary protecting national identity, European culture and Christianity on the other side. The rhetoric is clearly culturalist since 2016 and the counter-arguments against post-materialistic values are framed explicitly.

¹⁰² “Address by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in the debate on the so-called “Sargentini Report” Website of the Hungarian Government, published 11 September 2019 at: <https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/address-by-prime-minister-viktor-orban-in-the-debate-on-the-so-called-sargentini-report>

¹⁰³ “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s speech on the 62nd anniversary”

¹⁰⁴ “Viktor Orbán’s presentation at the 27h Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp” Miniszterelnok.hu, published 23 July 2016 at: <http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/viktor-orbans-presentation-at-the-27h-balvanyos-summer-open-university-and-student-camp/>

2.3.2 Policy-level

Based on the speeches, two clashing topics are identifiable against the EU: (1) migration policies, and (2) the sovereignty transfer and the supranational supervision role of the EU.

2.3.2.1 Migration Policy

Immigration is central in political discourse since 2014 and is framed as a primary concern and security threat for Hungary from demographic, religious and cultural aspects.¹⁰⁵ Due to its geographic location, Hungary is transit, source and destination country for regular and irregular migration. In 2014 the number of registered asylum seekers in Hungary was 42,777 that number increased more than four times by 2015.¹⁰⁶ Including illegal migrants, the recorded border crossings in 2015 were 411,515, that was an unprecedented number of immigrants on Hungarian territory, and the government was not prepared to tackle this huge amount of people from third countries within the limited time frame.¹⁰⁷ Policy actions were taken to radically address the challenge. A wire fence was built on the Southern border to physically stop migration, and damaging or climbing the fence were criminalized by the law.¹⁰⁸ This rather controversial border politics of Hungary was framed by the Hungarian government as a bastion and last chance to protect the Western civilization and European Christianity, however, EU stakeholders highly criticized Orbán's direct and radical actions.¹⁰⁹ Legally criminalizing migration is another

¹⁰⁵ "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's address at Mathias Corvinus Collegium's international conference, 'Budapest Summit on Migration'" Official page of the Prime Minister, published 23 March 2019 at:

<http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/prime-minister-viktor-orbans-address-at-mathias-corvinus-collegiums-international-conference-budapest-summit-on-migration/>

¹⁰⁶ Attila Juhász, Csaba Molnár, Edit Zgut, "Refugees, Asylum and Migration Issues in Hungary" commissioned by the Prague office of the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2017. 7.

¹⁰⁷ "Migration Issues in Hungary" International Organization for Migration, accessed 14 May 2019 at: <http://www.iom.hu/migration-issues-hungary>

¹⁰⁸ Daniel Gyollai, Anthony Amatrudo, "Controlling irregular migration: International human rights standards and the Hungarian legal framework" in *European Journal of Criminology*, 2018. 1-20.

¹⁰⁹ James W. Scott, "Hungarian Border Politics as an Anti-Politics of the European Union" in *Geopolitics*, 2018. 10-14.

important part of the policies that were adopted, besides the border politics. “Unauthorized crossing of the border closure (fence), damaging the border closure, and obstruction of the construction works related to the border closure” became punishable offenses that might result in three to six years of imprisonment.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, transit zones were established at the border areas, which would serve as space to temporarily accommodate refugees and immigrants until their status is determined, however, the procedures take longer than set in the law and immigrants are not allowed to enter the transit zones due to the lack of capacity.¹¹¹ Furthermore, the conditions in transit zones are critical and equal to be detained, for which the Hungarian authorities reacted the following way: “applicants are not detained since they are free to leave the zones whenever they wish in the direction they came from.”¹¹² Besides policy and legal actions, the Hungarian government actively shapes the public opinion about immigration, and uses the theme as a political tool to gain citizens’ support. A billboard campaign was organized with slogans such as migrants need to respect the Hungarian culture, or migrants taking Hungarian jobs.¹¹³ Furthermore, national consultation questionnaires on Immigration and Terrorism was sent to every household in 2015, in which migration is clearly associated with terrorism and aimed to legitimize the detention of migrants and more restrictive measures.¹¹⁴

Concerning the EU, the European Commission drafted the European Agenda on Migration, including the Emergency Relocation Mechanism. The Member States agreed to share the burden and relocate 31,500 peoples in need of international protection from Italy and Greece. Hungary,

¹¹⁰ Gyollai, Amatrudo, “Controlling irregular migration” 8.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 11.

¹¹² Ibid. 12-13.

¹¹³ Ibid. 8.

¹¹⁴ “Nemzeti konzultáció a bevándorlásról és a terrorizmusról” [National consultation on immigration and terrorism] The official page of the Hungarian government, accessed 15 April 2019 at: <http://www.kormany.hu/download/4/d3/c0000/Bev%20konzult%C3%A1ci%C3%B3%20eredm%C3%A9nyi.pdf>

despite its legal commitment to accept 1,294, did not accept any of the refugees.¹¹⁵ These policy actions show that the Hungarian approach to migration does not only appear on the discourse level, but there is a real clash with the EU.

It is interesting to observe that meanwhile the migration policy is the number one clash for Hungarian populism with the EU, and harsh measures were introduced against asylum seekers and immigrants “not to become an immigration country”, double standards are being applied. The Orbán government started a settlement bond program in 2013, allowing legal settlement for third-country citizens, who invest 300,000 EUR in government securities.¹¹⁶ Secondly, the Hungarian government made it easier with a simplified procedure for non-EU citizens to legally work and stay in Hungary for up to three months, within those areas that fall in the labor shortage category.¹¹⁷ 14,000 such cases were reported between January and April of 2018.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ “Progress report on the Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration” European Commission, published 15 May 2018 at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20180516_progress-report-european-agenda-migration_en.pdf; “Relocation: EU Solidarity between Member States” European Commission, accessed 14 May 2019 at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20171114_relocation_eu_solidarity_between_member_states_en.pdf

¹¹⁶ Romhányi Balázs, “A letelepedési államkötvények szerepe a magyar állam finanszírozásában Korruptió és közpénzvesztés állami kivitelezésben 2013-2017. között” [The Role of Settlement State Bonds in the Hungarian State Financing: Corruption and Loss of Public funds during the implementation period 2013-2017] Költségvetési Felelősség Intézet, 2018. Accessed 14 May 2019 at: https://transparency.hu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Imak_tanulmany_final_HUN.pdf

¹¹⁷ “Munkavállalás Magyarországon: Pénzügyminisztérium tájékoztatása,” [Working in Hungary: Information from the Ministry of Finance,] The official webpage of the Hungarian Embassy in Kiev, accessed 13 May 2019 at: <https://kijev.mfa.gov.hu/page/munkavallalas-magyarorszagon>

¹¹⁸ Tamás Wiedemann, “Megháromszorosodott két év alatt a külföldi munkavállalók száma” [The number of foreign workers tripled in two years] published 3 October 2018, accessed 15 May 2019 at: <https://g7.hu/kozelet/20181003/megharomszorozodott-ket-ev-alatt-a-kulfoldi-munkavallalok-szama/>

2.3.2.3 Sovereignty Transfer and the Supranational Supervision of the EU

Another clashing topic with the EU is the sovereignty transfer and its supranational, monitoring power. The FIDESZ government is against the supranational, federalist, United States of Europe concept and argues for stronger nation states as a future scenario. As Orbán summarized in his Speech at the Bálványos student camp in 2016:

We have made at least three bad decisions within the European Union in the past few years. The first one was to enhance the role of the European Parliament. (...) The second bad decision we made was to allow the European Commission to declare itself a political player – contrary to the European Treaty, which points out that the Commission is the guardian of the Treaties, and as such is politically neutral. (...) And as a result, it is inducing a crisis of democratic legitimacy within the European Union. And it was likewise a bad decision when we concluded that we should improve the efficiency of the functioning of the European Union by discarding the need for unanimity and allowing collective decisions on the basis of two-thirds majorities – even on issues of existential significance to nation states.¹¹⁹

It is hard to drive conclusions about the Hungarian policy towards the institutional reforms of the EU, without analyzing deeply the FIDESZ members' behavior in the European Parliament, or the Ministers participation during Council meeting, which is not the focus of this thesis. It is identifiable from the discourse that Hungary promotes strong nation states and a sovereigntist approach. The European Parliamentary (EP) elections in 2019 were decisive, the Orbán government needs to find new ways of representing their interests and reform plans, since their relationship with the European People's Party is full of tensions, and right-wing populist parties did not win a significant number of seats in the EP.¹²⁰ Orbán's reform plans are not likely to pass the pro-EU majority in the EP.

¹¹⁹ "Viktor Orbán's presentation"

¹²⁰ "2019 European election results" European Parliament

CHAPTER THREE: COMPARATIVE POPULISM

There are several similarities and differences between the two country cases. Based on the speech and policy analysis, we could clearly identify that in Italy while the Lega puts culturalist arguments to the fore, the M5S is characterized by materialist populism. The Lega-M5S coalition government's rhetoric and policies, however, is not particularly populist, unless talking about anti-immigration policies, that belongs to the Ministry of Interior under Salvini's supervision. It is also a conclusion that campaign periods are characterized by more populist rhetoric than governing the country, although the 2018 electoral campaign was less populist than the campaign in 2013. In Hungary, the trends are different: populist rhetoric intensifies over time and the electoral cycle in 2014 was less populist than in and after 2018. FIDESZ alone represents both materialistic and culturalist populism, however, the culturalist rhetoric is more prevalent in Orbán's speeches. The policy-level reflects more direct actions in line with the party's populist rhetoric than in the case of Italy.

The upcoming chapter analyses in detail the similarities and differences between the two country cases, including the political, economic and social aspects, as well as the characteristics of the two different configurations: in Italy two parties represent the culturalist and materialist dimensions of populism in the governing coalition, while in Hungary FIDESZ alone is characterized by both, with more intense culturalist approach over time.

3.1 Similarities between Italy and Hungary

There are several similarities between the three-party cases. Firstly, all three parties are movement-parties, that put a big emphasis on mobilization of masses and establishing more direct participation of people in politics, therefore they justify their actions by arguing to genuinely

represent the will of the people. The primary mobilization strategy for the Lega used to be demonstrations, protest events, festivals, and the media, but after 2010, social media has become the key mobilization tool. In the case of the M5S, country-wise meetups, online consultations, and social media are the basis of their movement mobilization. For FIDESZ, national consultations, billboard and media campaigns, and the so-called “Peace Marches” serve as mobilizing tools.¹²¹

Secondly, all three parties promote popular democracies, with the more direct involvement of the citizens and they are proud of representing the unified will of the people. However, the reality is that in the case of the Lega and the M5S, 16.4 million voted for the two parties, out of the 46.5 million electorate in 2018, that is not the majority of the population.¹²² In the case of FIDESZ, 2.8 million Hungarians supported the party out of the 8.2 million electorate, which is not the majority of the population either.¹²³ Therefore, loud rhetoric of representing the unified will of the people is not actually the reality.

Thirdly, all three parties are shifting between political poles, they cannot be traditionally situated to the left or right, their agendas react to challenges, such as the economic and financial or the migration crisis. In terms of Italy, the Lega’s agenda reflect right-wing policies, however, protecting local SMEs, and increasing social spending is promoted as well. The party’s campaign on pension policies or anti-globalization does not necessarily reflect right agendas either.¹²⁴ Concerning the M5S, the party represents both left and right agendas, however, the left is more prevalent, such as welfare social spending, environmentalism, or introducing a basic income for

¹²¹ “Peace March Demonstrations” The Orange Files, accessed 16 May 2019 at: <https://theorangefiles.hu/pro-government-peace-march-demonstrations/>

¹²² “Archivio storico delle elezioni” Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni

¹²³ “Országgyűlési képviselők választása 2018” [Parliamentary Elections 2018], Nemzeti Választási Iroda

¹²⁴ “Orbán Viktor és Matteo Salvini Nemzetközi Sajtótájékoztatója” [International Press Conference with Viktor Orbán and Matteo Salvini] HírTV, accessed 16 May 2019 at: <https://hirtv.hu/video/223020>

citizens. On the other hand, their rhetoric against immigration reflects right agenda.¹²⁵ FIDESZ situates itself to the right pole, however, some of their policy actions are left-wing policies, such as market protectionist measures, the attacks on the IMF, foreign banks and retail companies, cutting utility costs or the minimum wage policies. Furthermore, the nationalization of strategic sectors to increase state ownership, including the bank, energy, transport, publishing, catering and telecommunication sectors does not reflect right-wing policies either.¹²⁶

The parties address challenges loudly, that the traditionally strong left and right governing parties failed to tackle in a popular way. The Lega and FIDESZ, for example, responded to the migratory challenges in a culturalist, populist way: blaming the political and financial elites in Brussels for the crisis, demonizing migrants and describing it as a dualistic moral issue against national culture and traditions, as well as applying a bellicose language against migrants and refugees as a threat for the country to fight against. The M5S and FIDESZ addressed the economic and financial crisis in a materialist, populist way: blaming international organizations and institutions, such as the European Central Bank or the IMF for the failures of the countries' economic policies, framing arguments as representing the unified popular will against the financial elites, and claiming ideologies, such as liberalism or globalization to be a threat to the welfare of the people.

Lastly, all three parties represent a sovereigntist point of view against the EU and call for reforms to strengthen the role of nation-states. The meeting of Salvini and Orbán before the European Parliamentary elections in May 2019 demonstrated that there is an increasing cooperation between the populist governments, since several agenda points are common, including the

¹²⁵ Pirro, "The polyvalent populism"

¹²⁶ Éva Voszka, "Nationalisation in Hungary in the Post-Crisis Years: A Specific Twist on a European Trend?" in *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol 70:8, 2018. 1281-1302.

nationalist-populist approach to migration, the protection of Christian values, and the need for stronger national states within the EU.¹²⁷ Orbán would establish of a Council of Ministers of Interiors from Schengen countries, to make decisions about migration and defense policies, instead of the European Commission drafting proposals to tackle migration.¹²⁸ The Lega would strengthen the role of the EP and increase the power of the democratically elected MEPs.¹²⁹ The M5S is similar to the Lega in this regard: their reform plans include more power for the EP, therefore more direct involvement of the citizens, and would change the mandates of the European Central Bank to have more limited monitoring power over national governments.¹³⁰

3.1.1 Understanding the Popularity of the parties: Political Context

Populist parties gain increasing support due to the political context and mixed agendas of the traditional parties. Fraser's explanation on triple movements is in line with the polarization and partisanship thesis of populist literature and argue that traditional left and right parties in the EU mixed their agendas, "political elites are explicitly or implicitly neoliberal."¹³¹ Liberal, right-wing parties embrace social questions and promote social protection, while socialist, left-wing parties promote liberal economic policies. The emerging populist parties offer an alternative, they embrace both left and right agendas and they distance themselves from political elites.

In Italy, the Christian Democratic Party governed the country for decades and the party system collapsed in 1992 after corruption scandals erupted.¹³² Since then, a long-lasting political crisis characterized the country between the two competing political forces: the center-right

¹²⁷ Voszka, "Nationalisation in Hungary"

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ "Nouva Europa: Piu Democrazia Diretta e Stop Privilegi" Official page of the M5S, accessed 16 May 2019 at: <https://continuarexcambiare.it/programma/>

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Gianfranco Pasquino, "Disappearance of Political Cultures in Italy" in *South European Society and Politics*, 2018, vol (23) 1, 133-146.

coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi, and the center-left coalition led by the Democratic Left Party.¹³³ Low productivity, high public debt, corruption, lack of institutional reforms, the South-and North divide characterized the country for decades, and the competing left and right coalition parties failed to successfully implement reforms to address challenges.¹³⁴ The fact that Italy had fifteen prime ministers between 1992 and 2019 explains the political instability of the country.¹³⁵ As a reaction, the Lega and the M5S, through their critical anti-elitist rhetoric against the political and economic leadership of the country and their anti-establishment politics, could gain the majority of votes and become more successful than the former left and right-wing governing parties.¹³⁶ The Lega abandoned the right-wing coalition after its electoral success in 2018, while the M5S distanced itself from any former political parties since the beginning of its establishment.

The Hungarian case is different, but the transition from the traditional two-party system plays an important part as well. FIDESZ is a strong right-wing party in Hungarian politics since the 1990s, and a right-left divide characterized Hungarian politics until 2006, when a speech by the prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány leaked out, admitting the complete failure of their economic policies and messing up the Hungarian economy, that resulted in anti-government protests demanding the resignation of the prime minister, who refused to do so.¹³⁷ The Gyurcsány government was replaced by a technocratic government, austerity measures and fiscal stabilization measures were introduced to manage the crisis, unemployment rose, and an IMF-EU bailout saved

¹³³ Umberto Gentiloni Silveri, "Italy 1990–2014: the transition that never happened", in *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 2015, vol (20) 2, 171-175.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ "List of prime ministers of Italy," Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed 17 May 2019 at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/list-of-prime-ministers-of-Italy-2067327>

¹³⁶ Piergiorgio Corbetta, Pasquale Colloca, Nicoletta Cavazza, Michele Roccato, "Lega and Five-star Movement voters: exploring the role of cultural, economic and political bewilderment" in *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 2018, vol 10:3, 279-280.

¹³⁷ Attila Ágh, "The Transformation of the Hungarian Party System: From Democratic Chaos to Electoral Autocracy in Southeast Europe" in *Journal of Politics and Society*, 2015, vol. 2, 201-205.

the Hungarian currency from hyperinflation. It is not surprising that FIDESZ won the elections with a two-third majority in 2010 in that particular economic and political context, and continued to do so in 2014 and 2018.¹³⁸ Furthermore, the opposition parties are segmented with limited electoral support, the position of FIDESZ is not challenged since then.¹³⁹ The key enemy of its populist rhetoric and policies became the EU – having the power to constrain the actions of the government. The domestic political context and the growing distrust in the traditional left parties contributed to the success of populist parties.

3.1.2 Economic Context

The economic and financial crisis starting in 2008 hit both countries' economies heavily, unemployment rose, austerity measures were introduced and in Italy, the North-South economic gap further increased.¹⁴⁰ Italy, being a member of the Eurozone, needs to comply with the Maastricht criteria, the recommendations of the European Central Bank and the Council, therefore, the Italian government has limited capacities to increase social welfare benefits if the economy is not performing well. In populist rhetoric blaming the European institutions, political and economic elites in Brussels and Germany appear as a central element. The rising level of economic insecurity of individuals resulted in increasing support for the populist parties in line with the economic anxiety thesis of populism.¹⁴¹ Lega and M5S voters perceive more economic difficulties now than

¹³⁸ Ágnes Bátor, "Election Briefing No. 51: Europe and the Hungarian Parliamentary Elections of April 2010, in European Parties Elections and Referendums Network, accessed 17 May 2019 at: http://archive.ceu.hu/sites/default/files/publications/no51epernhungary2010_0.pdf

¹³⁹ "Országgyűlési Választások" [Parliamentary Elections] Nemzeti Választási Iroda, accessed 17 May 2019 at: <http://www.valasztas.hu/orszaggyulesi-valasztasok>

¹⁴⁰ Raffaele Lagravinese, "Economic crisis and rising gaps North–South: evidence from the Italian regions" in *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 2015, vol (8), 331–342.

¹⁴¹ Inglehart, Norris, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism"

before the crisis in terms of income, economic self-placement and social mobility, which are important aspects of the populist vote.¹⁴²

Hungary, not being a Eurozone member is free to control its own monetary policies and European institutions have less monitoring power over economic decisions, which made possible for the FIDESZ government to introduce unorthodox fiscal measures and increase public spending.¹⁴³ This can be an explanation why in Hungarian populism economic, materialistic arguments against the EU do not prevail over the culturalist ones, while in Italy, the populism of the M5S focuses mostly on materialistic, economic populism and European elite blaming. The Orbán government, balanced the budget after the crisis by nationalizing the second pension pillar, allowing more room for economic policies and public spending.¹⁴⁴ The welfare policies of FIDESZ contributed to the success of the party after the crisis.

3.1.3 Social Context

Based on the explanatory theories on populism, these segments of the society vote for populist parties, who fear social insecurity, loss of economic status, downward mobility, who feel threatened or frustrated by the progressive cultural ideologies of gender equality, inclusiveness, cosmopolitanism, who would not support any other parties but the populist one promising better and more protective and nationalist political agendas, and who feels that international organizations force sovereign states to apply policies that are not favorable for the ‘people’, such as austerity measures. In the case of Italy, during the 2018 elections, Northern regions voted for the Lega, while the South and the islands voted for the M5S, therefore a clear South-North divide

¹⁴² Corbetta, et al. “Lega and Five-star Movement voters” 286-287.

¹⁴³ Alen Toplišek, “The Political Economy of Populist Rule in Post-Crisis Europe: Hungary and Poland” in *New Political Economy*, 2019, 7-8.

¹⁴⁴ Bohle, Greskovits, “Politicising embedded neoliberalism: continuity and change in Hungary’s development model” in *West European Politics*, 2018.

characterized the electoral results. The culturalist populist rhetoric of the Lega is more popular among the less educated, religious, working class and housewives in the North from an older generation between 50 and 64.¹⁴⁵

The electorate of the M5S is not the typical populist voter. Public servants, men and women equally, a younger electorate with diverse employment and education background characterized the supporters of the M5S during the 2018 elections, however, the unemployed voted for the party as well.¹⁴⁶ This difference in voters' preferences between the Lega and the M5S can be explained by the materialist nature of the M5S' populism: Southern regions of Italy are poorer with high unemployment rates among the youth, therefore the younger electorate with more diverse education and occupational background equally feel insecure. The economic, materialistic populism of the Movement attracted a more diverse electorate than the literature on the populist vote would predict, which trend originates from the Italian economic context and development gap between the North and the South. Young, educated citizens equally feel insecure as public servants, teachers or entrepreneurs in the South.¹⁴⁷

In the case of FIDESZ, every layer of the society votes for the party, but among rural, less educated, older, religious working class, FIDESZ is particularly popular, and more women vote for the party than men. On the other hand, it is true that FIDESZ has more voters with university degree than all other parties together, which originates from the segmentation of the opposition parties, however, students and young graduates are not FIDESZ supporters. Furthermore, there is a divide

¹⁴⁵ "Elezioni politiche 2018: analisi post voto" IPSOS, accessed 18 May 2019 at: https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2018-03/elezioni_politiche_2018_-_analisi_post-voto_ipsos-twig_0.pdf

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

between the capital and the rest of the country: Budapest do not vote for FIDESZ.¹⁴⁸ These trends show that the capital and the youth are less open to the culturalist-materialist, nationalist-populism, meanwhile the party could successfully address the needs and fears of the rural citizens by promoting anti-EU, anti-immigrant sentiments.

It is also interesting to observe that Italians, in general, evaluate the EU more negatively than Hungarians and trust the institutions less, both domestic and international ones. Furthermore, voters' preferences also reflect a shift from materialistic dimensions to culturalist ones: the key topics that European citizens, both in Hungary and Italy, found the two most important to address were unemployment and the economic situation in 2014, while in 2018 immigration and terrorism became the primary concerns.¹⁴⁹ This shift contributes to the explanation of why culturalist arguments of the Lega and FIDESZ in the two countries gain increasing support and why the materialistic arguments of the M5S result in fewer votes and are not emphasized by FIDESZ anymore.

3.2 Differences

Differences can be identified between the two country cases, that originate from the two configurations: in Italy there is a divide between the governing parties: M5S has a rather left agenda and promote materialist populism, the Lega is situated to the right promoting culturalist, populist

¹⁴⁸ István Riba, "Kik a Fidesz szavazói és mi az, ami már nekik is sok? [Who are the voters of Fidesz and what topics are too much for them as well?]" in *HVG*, 2018 vol (11), accessed 18 May 2019 at:

https://hvg.hu/itthon/201811_kik_afidesz_szavazoi_neppart_kameleonprofil_a_part_es_anep

¹⁴⁹ "Standard Eurobarometer 90 Autumn 2018: Public Opinion in the European Union" European Commission, accessed 18 May 2019 at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2180>; "Standard Eurobarometer 81 Spring 2014: Public Opinion in the European Union" European Commission, accessed 18 May 2019 at:

http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb81/eb81_first_en.pdf

argument. In the case of Hungary, FIDESZ alone represents materialistic and culturalist populism with the prevalence of culturalist arguments.

3.2.1 Governing Coalition: Clash of Cultural and Economic Arguments

Within the Italian coalition government, the Lega represents culturalist populism during campaign periods, targeting immigration and globalization as primary threats to Italian culture and identity. The M5S, on the other hand, is characterized by materialistic populism, such as the Eurozone threatening the wellbeing of the people through austerity measures and international elites blocking social spending. In terms of EU policies, both parties represent a sovereigntist point of view, with less supranational monitoring and more power for the democratically elected MEPs. On an EU level, the M5S is more moderate, its campaign includes better European cooperation in the areas of innovation, the establishment of an EU minimum salary, or the revision of the Dublin Treaties. The Lega represents a harsher, Eurosceptic standpoint, primarily focusing on immigration, defense, and greater national independence.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, the two parties participate in different political groups within the EU: while the Lega is forming a right-wing alliance with Eurosceptic parties involved, called European Alliance for People and Nations (EAPN), and aims to work for greater national independence, the M5S participated in the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy political group.¹⁵¹

Culturalist populism is getting increasingly successful, that is demonstrated not only by those challenges and threats that European citizens consider the most important, namely shifting from

¹⁵⁰ “Nuova Europa: Piu Democrazia Dirette e Stop Privilegi” Movimento 5 Stelle

¹⁵¹ Luigi di Maio, “Nasce l’Europa della democrazia diretta: il nuovo gruppo europeo del MoVimento 5 Stelle” in Il Blog delle Stelle, published 9 January 2019, at: <https://www.ilblogdellestelle.it/2019/01/nasce-leuropa-della-democrazia-diretta-il-nuovo-gruppo-europeo-del-movimento-5-stelle.html>; Alexander Sarti, “European Alliance of Peoples and Nations: What we know so far” in Europe Elects, published 8 April 2019 at: <https://europeelects.eu/2019/04/08/european-alliance-of-peoples-and-nations-what-we-know-so-far/>

economic hardships to immigration and terrorism but the increasing popularity of the Lega. While the party received 17% of the national votes during the general elections in 2018, during the European Parliamentary elections in 2019 their popularity reached 34%.¹⁵² The shift from regionalism to nationalism, the changing enemy from the bureaucratic Rome to Brussels, and the harsh rhetoric against immigration and its security implications proved to be successful, as well as targeting Brussels on a culturalist front. Italy has been a country of immigration for decades, and the migration crisis affected the country heavily.¹⁵³ It seems that Italian population has more emotional connections to the migration crisis now than to the economic and financial one and mobilizing citizens on the culturalist dimension resulted to be more successful.

On the other hand, the popularity of the M5S decreased: while it received 33% of national votes in 2018, they gained only 17% during the EP elections.¹⁵⁴ These results suggest that the M5S is better in mobilization than governing in hard times, especially when being in coalition with a right-wing counterpart with loud culturalist agendas. The welfare social plans of the M5S seems to lose popularity over the culturalist arguments of the Lega against immigration. The M5S is less populist than it used to be, and the coalition government is not particularly populist either. The divide and tensions between the Lega and the M5S intensify, and in general, the two parties' position in the Italian Parliament and their coalition is more fragile than in the case of the Hungarian FIDESZ due to different agendas and priorities. The two parties have different reform plans with regards to the EU, the Lega primarily campaigns against immigration, while the M5S targets corruption and economic issues as primary concerns. The initially more popular M5S clashes

¹⁵² “Archivio storico delle elezioni: 2018”; “2019 European election results” European Parliament

¹⁵³ Corrado Bonifazi, Frank Heins, Salvatore Strozza, Mattia Vitiello, “Italy: The Italian transition from an emigration to immigration country” in *IDEA Working Papers*, 2009.; “The Mediterranean and Migration: Postcards from a Crisis” European Council of Foreign Relations, accessed 24 May 2019 at: https://www.ecfr.eu/specials/mapping_migration

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

increasingly with the Lega, who has become the most popular party in Italian politics by 2019 and Salvini's loud culturalist rhetoric against immigration seems to dominate the government.¹⁵⁵

3.2.2 One Governing Party: Cultural and Materialist Populism within One Party

In Hungary, FIDESZ has an unchallenged role within the national Parliament with their two third majority since 2010, and they won 52% of the European Parliamentary seats as well in 2019.¹⁵⁶ The party's rhetoric is characterized by both culturalist and materialist populism, however, the cultural arguments intensify over time. In 2015, the billboard campaign of the government was focusing on economic and culturalist arguments equally against immigration, namely messages such as "If you come to Hungary you need to respect our culture" and "You cannot take Hungarian jobs" were actively promoted all around the country.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, the materialistic dimension included harsh rhetoric against the elites in Brussels, centered around the household utility and employment policies, claiming that the EU aims to interfere in Hungarian economic policies by increasing household utility expenses through the liberalization of the energy sector and Brussels attacking Hungarian job-creation measures.¹⁵⁸ The national consultation in 2017, titled "Stop Brussels" included statements such as "Brussels is attacking our job-creating measures," "Brussels is attacking our country because of tax cuts" and "Brussels wants to force us to abolish the reduction

¹⁵⁵ George Vergara, "The Trick of Perception" James Madison University, published 20 November 2018 at:

<https://www.jmu.edu/news/eupolicystudies/2018/11/the-trick-of-perception.shtml>

Agenzia Vista Alexander Jakhnagiev "Sea Watch, Di Maio: "Problema non è immigrazione ma corruzione". Poi attacca Salvini: "Arrogante come Renzi"" Il Fatto Quotidiano, published 17 May 2019 at:

<https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2019/05/17/sea-watch-di-maio-problema-non-e-immigrazione-ma-corruzione-poi-attacca-salvini-arrogante-come-renzi/5187935/>

¹⁵⁶ "2019 European election results" European Parliament

¹⁵⁷ Tamás Németh, "Megvan a kormány menekültellenes kampányának két újabb szlogenje", Index, published 4 June 2015, accessed 20 May 2019 at:

https://index.hu/belfold/2015/06/04/megvan_a_kormany_menekultellenes_kampanyanak_ket_ujabb_szlogenje/

¹⁵⁸ "Stop Brussels": European Commission responds to Hungarian national consultation" European Commission, published 27 April 2017, accessed 20 May 2019 at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/stop-brussels-european-commission-responds-hungarian-national-consultation_en

in public utility charges”, which further demonstrates the economic-materialistic nature of Hungarian populism.¹⁵⁹

Hungary, being a small, FDI dependent, open economy is friendly towards FDI, therefore Germany taking advantage of the Hungarian economy is not present in the rhetoric since it is in the country’s core interest to keep the country an attractive destination for investors.¹⁶⁰ Loud rhetoric characterized the government against IMF, and exposure of Hungarian businesses to globalization, while more quiet policies reflect a neoliberal approach to a market economy and FDI.¹⁶¹ On the other hand, the culturalist dimension of Hungarian populism intensifies over time, targeting primarily immigrants as a threat to cultural, religious and national identity and individual security. Political rhetoric and policy actions increasingly reflect the culturalist populist nature of FIDESZ, described more in detail in the second chapter.

A general trend is identifiable in the two countries of moving towards more culturalist politics, that is increasingly supported by the citizens and realized on the policy level as well. Meanwhile, economic populism is present in both cases – in Italy M5S representing economic populism and in Hungary FIDESZ framing materialistic arguments against Brussels – a culturalist, populist fight or “revolution” against post-materialistic values, such as globalization, immigration and diversity are increasingly prevalent in Italy and Hungary. Culturalist counter-movements against post-materialistic values are embodied in populist agendas in the two country-cases. The neoliberal market expansion, globalization, and cultural diversity are being questioned and challenged by the populist parties, who actively promote a different model: a culturally protectionist, nationalist alternative, that is not necessarily liberal on the political level.

¹⁵⁹ Stop Brussels”: European Commission responds”

¹⁶⁰ Bohle, Greskovits, “Politicising embedded neoliberalism”

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

CONCLUSION:

This thesis compared Italian and Hungarian trends of populism and their counter-movement characteristics against the neoliberal values of the EU. Populist movements do not only have a materialist, economic nature anymore based on Polanyi's counter-movement concept, but a culturalist dimension plays an increasing role, that Fraser argues for, as emancipatory third movements. Populism can be interpreted as a counter-movement both against neoliberal market rules on the economic dimension, and against the emancipatory movements advocating diversity, multiculturalism, and gender equality, on the cultural dimension, and certain political, economic and social factors contributed to the success of the increasingly popular parties. All three populist parties, the Italian Lega and M5S, and the Hungarian FIDESZ are movement parties, with strong mobilizing capacities, therefore they are capable of leading social movements in line with their populist agendas against the EU, post-materialistic values or neoliberal market expansion.

Italian and Hungarian populism clash with the EU both on the economic and culturalist fronts, however, materialist clashes are becoming marginal. The Lega-M5S government managed to negotiate with the EU concerning the Italian budget, therefore the EU does not appear anymore as a number one enemy to blame for the lack of social spending. Hungary – not being part of the Eurozone – can maneuver more freely concerning domestic fiscal and monetary policies and in general, support neoliberal economic policies. On the other hand, clashes on the culturalist dimension intensify. Immigration in the discourse is addressed as the primary threat to national culture, identity, religion and security. Bureaucrats in Brussels, political and financial elites appear to be the key actors to blame for acting against the will of the people and blocking the protection of national borders and cultures.

On the policy-level, the sovereignist reform plans that the three parties campaign for would need to be supported by the majority of the member states and members of the European Parliament to be implemented. Until populist, Eurosceptic governing parties do not become the majority in EU countries, it is not likely that reforms will pass favoring more sovereignist, stronger nation-states, as a future scenario for the EU integration. On the other hand, increasing popular support is visible around culturalist arguments, which means that the EU should pay more attention to the social concerns and voices of the citizens.

Culturalist politics is rising in the two countries. In Italy, there is a divide between the governing coalition parties, with the Lega representing the culturalist, and the M5S the economic dimension of populism. The Lega is becoming increasingly popular advocating culturalist arguments against the EU and immigration, meanwhile, the M5S lost from its support. In Hungary, FIDESZ alone represents both dimensions, however, culturalist arguments intensify over time and materialistic ones become marginal. A trend of shifting from the economic-materialist dimension to a culturalist one is identifiable in both countries.

The findings of this thesis contribute to the wider literature of academic works and scholars, who are concerned about the political transformations of our time. Identity politics on a culturalist basis is rising, that Fukuyama writes about.¹⁶² Inglehart and Norris connects the cultural backlash within societies with authoritarianism.¹⁶³ Culturalist politics raise several concerns, and parallels can be drawn between our contemporary transformations and the 1930s. Experimenting with new models and illiberal state-building can result in the exchange of personal freedoms, radicalization,

¹⁶² Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*, 2019. (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux)

¹⁶³ Ronald Inglehart, Pippa Norris, *Cultural Backlash and the Rise of Populism: Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Authoritarianism Populism*, (Cambridge University Press) 2018.

and a shift from openness to closure. The role of the EU is especially interesting with this regard. Is it possible to keep united in diversity, if the core values contradict, if sovereignist, culturalist actors increasingly question the foundations of the integration?

Further research should be carried out about populism as a counter-movement involving a longer time-frame, a deeper and comprehensive analysis of populist parties' actions in the European institutions, and involving more country-cases could further complement the findings of this thesis. One thing, however, is sure: the popular will and the EU does not have any irresolvable clashes or conflicts since the decision-making of the EU is in the hand of democratically elected MEPs and governments, therefore whatever decisions are made on an EU level are voted and supported by national governments and representatives.

APPENDICES:

Appendix I: Rubric Sample

Country:
 Name of speaker:
 Title of Speech:
 Date of speech:
 Type of speech:
 Place of speech:
 Year of Election:
 Grader:
 Date of Grading:

Final Grade (delete unused grades, add decimal grade if necessary):

0 A speech in this category uses few if any populist elements. Note that even if a manifesto expresses a Manichaeian worldview, it is not considered populist if it lacks some notion of a popular will.

Populist	Pluralist
It conveys a Manichaeian vision of the world, that is, one that is moral (every issue has a strong moral dimension) and dualistic (everything is in one category or the other, “right” or “wrong,” “good” or “evil”) The implication—or even the stated idea—is that there can be nothing in between, no fence-sitting, no shades of grey. This leads to the use of highly charged, even bellicose language.	The discourse does not frame issues in moral terms or paint them in black-and-white. Instead, there is a strong tendency to focus on narrow, particular issues . The discourse will emphasize or at least not eliminate the possibility of natural, justifiable differences of opinion.
<p>The moral significance of the items mentioned in the speech is heightened by ascribing cosmic proportions to them, that is, by claiming that they affect people everywhere (possibly but not necessarily across the world) and across time. Especially in this last regard, frequent references may be made to a reified notion of “history.”</p> <p>At the same time, the speaker will justify the moral significance of his or her ideas by tying them to national and religious leaders that are generally revered.</p>	The discourse will probably not refer to any reified notion of history or use any cosmic proportions. References to the spatial and temporal consequences of issues will be limited to the material reality rather than any mystical connections.

<p>Although Manichaeism, the discourse is still democratic, in the sense that the good is embodied in the will of the majority, which is seen as a unified whole, perhaps but not necessarily expressed in references to the “voluntad del pueblo”; however, the speaker ascribes a kind of unchanging essentialism to that will, rather than letting it be whatever 50 percent of the people want at any particular moment. Thus, this good majority is romanticized, with some notion of the common man (urban or rural) seen as the embodiment of the national ideal.</p>	<p>Democracy is simply the calculation of votes. This should be respected and is seen as the foundation of legitimate government, but it is not meant to be an exercise in arriving at a pre-existing, knowable “will.” The majority shifts and changes across issues. The common man is not romanticized, and the notion of citizenship is broad and legalistic.</p>
<p>The evil is embodied in a minority whose specific identity will vary according to context. Domestically, in Latin America it is often an economic elite, perhaps the “oligarchy,” but it may also be a racial elite; internationally, it may be the United States or the capitalist, industrialized nations or international financiers or simply an ideology such as neoliberalism and capitalism.</p>	<p>The discourse avoids a conspiratorial tone and does not single out any evil ruling minority. It avoids labeling opponents as evil and may not even mention them in an effort to maintain a positive tone and keep passions low.</p>
<p>Crucially, the evil minority is or was recently in charge and subverted the system to its own interests, against those of the good majority or the people. Thus, systemic change is/was required, often expressed in terms such as “revolution” or “liberation” of the people from their “immiseration” or bondage, even if technically it comes about through elections.</p>	<p>The discourse does not argue for systemic change but, as mentioned above, focuses on particular issues. In the words of Laclau, it is a politics of “differences” rather than “hegemony.”</p>
<p>Because of the moral baseness of the threatening minority, non-democratic means may be openly justified or at least the minority’s continued enjoyment of these will be seen as a generous concession by the people; the speech itself may exaggerate or abuse data to make this point, and the language will show a bellicosity towards the opposition that is incendiary and condescending, lacking the decorum that one shows a worthy opponent.</p>	<p>Formal rights and liberties are openly respected, and the opposition is treated with courtesy and as a legitimate political actor. The discourse will not encourage or justify illegal, violent actions. There will be great respect for institutions and the rule of law. If data is abused, it is either an innocent mistake or an embarrassing breach of democratic standards.</p>

Overall Comments:

Appendix II. Coding and evaluation results of the speeches

<i>Speech</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Date of speech</i>	<i>Title, Place, Speaker</i>
<i>Hungary_1_Campaign</i>	0,3	This speech has a few populist elements; however, nationalist discourse is more dominant. The European Union is not mentioned, the key enemies are the IMF, the leftists, socialists, and communists. Clashing topics with the EU are not present in the speech.	31 March 2014	Campaign Closing Speech, Budapest, Viktor Orbán
<i>Hungary_1_International</i>	0,4	This speech has a few populist elements, however, pluralist ones too. People are not romanticized, and the popular will of people only appears when talking about Hungary not to become an “immigration” country. A clash with the EU is present in this speech, focusing on immigration.	19 May 2015	Speech in the European Parliament, Strasbourg, Viktor Orbán
<i>Hungary_1_Ceremonial</i>	0,9	This speech has several populist elements, such as the Manichaeon vision of the world concerning migration and the European Union, the populist will is embodied through the discourse about migration and the Hungarian government’s approach to protecting the will of people. A revolution against migration is mentioned to protect the country, similarly to 1848 and 1956, however, the key battlefield is the European Union. Two clashing topic appears in the speech against the EU: the (1) sovereignty and the federalist vision of the United States of Europe, and the (2) migration policy.	15 March 2016	15th of March Speech, Budapest, Viktor Orbán
<i>Hungary_1_Famous</i>	0,6	This speech has populist elements, including the elite blaming within the European Union, the representation of popular will against the EU bureaucracy, cosmic proportions about Europe and the simplified “right and wrong” mindset about migration. However, references	23 July 2016	Bálványos Summer University, Tuzsádfürdő, Viktor Orbán

		are made to statistical data and the arguments are focused around EU reforms and the migration challenge. Several clashing topics can be identified, including the sovereignty argument, the migration challenge and institutional reforms for supranational EU.		
<i>Hungary_2_Campaign</i>	1	This speech is populist, with all the populist elements present. The key enemies mentioned in this speech are international organizations such as the IMF, the UN, and the EU and George Soros, representing the liberal, multicultural world, and the key clashing topic against the EU is the migration.	6 April 2018	Campaign Closing Speech, Székesfehérvár, Viktor Orbán
<i>Hungary_2_International</i>	0,7	This speech has several populist elements, such as the demonization of the opposition parties, blaming of the European Union bureaucracy to act against the Hungarian people's will and the reference to history in the context of supporting the populist argument. This speech has two clashing topics with the EU: the migration and the "undemocratic" functioning of the EU.	11 September 2018	Sargentini Report debate in the European Parliament, Strasbourg, Viktor Orbán
<i>Hungary_2_Ceremonial</i>	1	This speech has most of the populist elements, there is a clear framing of the enemy in the European institutions, George Soros and those who advocate globalization. Several references are made to the historical past, that is being used to justify actions in the 21st century. Migration appears as a clashing topic in this speech, however, the focus is on sovereignty concerns and the Brussels "imperialism". In this speech, the will of people appear to be free from imperialism and oppression from Brussels.	23 October 2018	23rd October speech, Budapest, Viktor Orbán

<i>Hungary_2_Famous</i>	0,9	<p>This speech has most of the populist elements and is particularly interesting from an EU point of view. Clashing topics continue to remain the migration and sovereignty issues, however, concrete names, such as Timmermans are mentioned as well. The EU is the key external enemy, and the arguments are framed to justify actions as necessary needs to protect the Hungarian people's will. The speech includes data to justify certain arguments, however, several oversimplifications and false information are also present in the speech.</p>	10 February 2019	Evaluation Speech of the Year, Budapest, Viktor Orbán
<i>Italy_1_Campaign_M5S</i>	0,6	<p>This speech has several populist elements, there is a big emphasis on blaming the financial elites, the corrupt political parties of the country and the Eurozone and Germany for the failures of the Italian economy. Furthermore, the speaker mentions the need for a systematic change, a democratic revolution, and the society is romanticized in a way that if decent Italians work, they need to have a chance to enjoy the benefits of their hard work. The party is being identified with the people in the speech. The key clashing topic with the EU is the question of the Eurozone, and the need for a referendum to leave the Eurozone is emphasized.</p>	22 February 2013	Campaign Closing Speech, Rome, Beppe Grillo
<i>Italy_1_Famous_M5S</i>	0,4	<p>The elite and opposition blaming are highly present in this speech, however, cosmic proportion and the representation of people's will are not particularly a characteristic of this speech. There are a few populist elements, but they are limited to blaming the elites. Concerning the EU, the key clashing topic is the Eurozone.</p>	1 January 2014	New Year speech, Palermo, Beppe Grillo

<i>Italy_1_Campaign_LN</i>	0,6	This speech has several populist characteristics, such as to call for a revolution, a systematic change against Brussels or Rome. The bureaucratic elites, the European Central Bank, and banks are presented as the key enemies for democracy and the speech calls for a democracy where people lead instead. Lega is depicted as the only party capable of guarantee real democracy, the people's democracy, and the future. The clashing topic with the EU is focusing on the bureaucratic system.	22 February 2013	Campaign Closing, Bergamo, Roberto Maroni, Umberto Bossi
<i>Italy_1_Famous_LN</i>	1	This speech includes most of the populist elements, including the Manichaean vision of the world, deciding over the wrong and good decisions, the harsh criticism of the elites in the country (calling the journalists parasites and politicians thieves), the framing of the arguments in a bellicose way and making cosmic statements about migration. Migration and the fight against Rome and Brussels representing bureaucrats have a central role in the speech, against which Salvini calls for a fight. Furthermore, he explicitly states to be a proud populist, if that means to represent the hard-working people of Italy and not criminal politicians.	15 December 2014	Lega Nord Federal Congress Speech, Turin, Matteo Salvini
<i>Italy_2_Campaign_M5S</i>	0,3	This speech is not particularly a populist one, however, the financial and political elites are highly criticized and several measures are mentioned to cut the benefits of politicians in line with the popular will. The speech is centered around three topics: pensions, youth unemployment and transparent institutions that enable political participation for the citizens. The European Union or the Eurozone is not mentioned, only to stop austerity measures. The speech ends with reading two	02 March 2018	Campaign Closing Speech, Rome, Luigi di Maio

		letters received from the citizens, which makes a direct connection with the crowd.		
<i>Italy_2_Campaign_LN</i>	0,3	This speech is rather conservative than populist, the people are not romanticized, the opposition and minority groups are criticized but not in a bellicose way, and the speech is focusing on central issues that are present in the election campaign. The key clash with the European Union is the different institutional structure and the sovereignty argument focusing on economic issues. Italians should decide about their own countries policies, Brussels should focus on Brussels, etc. The negative aspects of globalization are mentioned in an EU context as well, the free market destroying local enterprises and Germans destroying Italian culture and products. It is interesting that Germany is the key "enemy" within the EU, not Brussels. Mention is made to immigration as well, but not in an EU context, rather the "Italians first" concept is dominant. Furthermore, LGBTQ rights are depicted as a threat for diversity, "children have the right to have a mother and a father."	01 March 2018	Campaign Closing Speech, Rome, Matteo Salvini
<i>Italy_2_International_PM</i>	0	This speech is not populist, the arguments are objective, clear to the point, and populist elements are not present in the speech. The European Union is not presented as an enemy for Italy, but clear and concise arguments are made how to improve the future of the integration. Issues, such as economic gaps, migration, defense, geopolitics and institutional reforms are mentioned.	12 February 2019	Debate with the President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic, Giuseppe Conte, on the Future of Europe, Strasbourg
<i>Italy_2_Ceremonial_PM</i>	0	This speech doesn't have populist characteristics, it is clear to the point, objective and mention is not made to internal enemies, elites or minority groups. On the other hand, equal access to education regardless of social	12 January 2019	New Year Inauguration speech, Sapienza University,

Italy_2_Famous_PM

0

background is emphasized several times. The EU does not appear in this speech.

This speech is not a populist one, the democratic rights are formally respected, the opposition and minorities, as well as the elites are mentioned in a respectful way and the speech clearly summarizes the key plans for the next government. There are progressive elements, and some revolutionary actions are mentioned, but they are limited to reforms and are not framed in a bellicose way of a domestic revolution. The EU is not mentioned as an enemy either, Conte calls for reforms and mutual solutions for common challenges.

05 June
2018

Rome,
Giuseppe Conte

Senate Confidence
Vote speech, Rome,
Giuseppe Conte

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