Immigration and the Refugee Crisis in a New Immigration Country: The Case of Italy

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Italy has only recently become a country of immigration. However, Italy is widely considered to be an ideal case for studying populism and, more recently, populist parties with anti-immigration stances. Within the context of the refugee crisis of 2015, this article aims to identify the different ways immigration is understood in populist rhetoric in the case of Italy. The analysis begins with an overview of the context of reference (i.e. immigration flows and immi-

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gration-focused policies), and continues with a theoretical overview of populism and anti-immigration stances. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of two specific manifestations of populism: the Northern League (LN) and the Five Star Movement (M5S). While the LN can be interpreted as one of the first political entrepreneurs of xenophobia and anti-immigration sentiments in the Italian arena, the M5S represents a perfect example of strategic investment in the topic of immigration, with fluctuating positions that can be considered side effects of the M5S's attempts to synchronise its public stances with the voice of the people.

Keywords: Italy, populism, immigration, nativism, policies

1. Introduction

Throughout the postwar period, Western Europe experienced varying flows of immigration (Alonso & De Fonseca, 2011). However, European Union member states (MS) have witnessed a substantial increase in the number of immigrants in the last 40 years. According to Eurostat (2017), the number of residents in an EU country holding the citizenship of a non-member country represent 4.1% of the total EU-28 population (data on 1 January 2016). At the same time, the largest numbers of non-nationals living in a member state were to be found in Germany, followed by the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, and France. In view of this, while the economic boom of the 1990s led to an increased demand for immigration across Europe, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and most notably in the post-2008 economic crisis period, both the MS and European Union (EU) institutions have strengthened their efforts to promote policies of securitisation of migration and borders (Slominski & Traune, 2018). In an increasingly multicultural European society, the sudden post-2015 surge in refugee numbers (i.e., with multiple origins and reasons for seeking asylum) has further increased the complexity of the immigration phenomenon (Triandafyllidou, 2017; Slominski & Traune, 2018).

Beyond the pressure on the EU's institutional capacity to deal with these challenges, the literature has identified various consequences for national politics, including changes in electoral competition (Tarchi, 2015; Alonso & De Fonseca, 2011; Arzheimer, 2009; van der Brug et al., 2015; van der Brug & Van Spanje, 2009; Meguid, 2008; Ivarsflaten, 2005; Mudde,

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2007; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995). In light of this, the literature universally acknowledges the relevance of immigration for the populist family of parties (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Rydgren, 2008; Mudde, 2007; van der Brug & van Spanje, 2009). Across the EU, populist parties have succeeded in challenging the traditional topoi of the right, in terms of immigration and integration, to their electoral advantage, while simultaneously illustrating their ability to attract the blue-collar and unemployed votes that would otherwise go to the left of the traditional political spectrum (Bale et al., 2010; Van der Brug et al., 2015).

Based on the above, our analysis addresses a straightforward research question: how have Italian populist parties related to immigration in the Italian public discourse in the post-2015 period? In an attempt to provide a convincing answer, we have limited our analysis to testing our intuition that, within the same polity, populist parties employ different argumentation registers in order to relate to immigration. The choice of the parties under scrutiny is not arbitrary. Our analysis focuses on the two most relevant populist parties in the Italian context, the Northern League (*Lega Nord*, LN) and the Five Star Movement (*Movimento 5 Stelle*, M5S). The criteria of relevance are based on the number of seats they hold (in the most recent legislative elections the LN obtained 18 seats and the M5S 109 seats) and on their electoral appeal according to the most recent polls (i.e., an average estimate of a 27.9% likelihood to vote for the M5S and 14.9% for the LN according to Termometropolitico.it 2017). Moreover, in both cases, anti-immigration stances are considered part of their rhetoric. While the LN can be interpreted as one of the first political entrepreneurs of xenophobia and anti-immigration sentiment in the Italian arena, the M5S represents a perfect example of strategic investment in the topic of immigration, with its fluctuating position on our topic of interest. This shifting positioning can be connected to both the M5S's attempt to synchronise its public stance with the voice of the people in a sort of "live" political agenda and to their fluid organisational features.

Before proceeding with the analysis, one last caveat has to be mentioned. Following Gerring (2017), our comparison of two Italian sub-types of populist parties serves a descriptive function. The focus on the Italian case is linked to the widely held assessment in the literature that Italy has been a particularly fertile breeding ground for populist parties for over 30 years (Tarchi, 2015; Albertazzi & McDonnell 2009; Mudde, 2007). Indeed, Italy has been characterised since 1992 by the constant parliamentary representation of at least one populist party with a nativist discourse. Considering this last element, our descriptive case study focuses

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on two sub-cases that together are intended to capture the diversity of the populist phenomenon (Gerring, 2017). More specifically, the LN case has been chosen by virtue of representing the most common features of populist parties (i.e. a typical case), while the M5S represents a sui generis case.

Our research will make use of a qualitative content analysis of official statements and public discourse, as well as desk research. The analysis will be developed in four steps. The first two sections present an overview of the Italian context, providing the background information for the analysis of the evolution of policy-making on migration in Italy. The third part aims to provide an overview of the theoretical connection between populism and immigration. The fourth section focuses on the different definitions of immigration in the two cases under scrutiny. We conclude with an assessment of the implications of our findings.

2. From an Emigration to an Immigration Country: a Recent History

Italy can be described as a new country of immigration. Recent migration movements, whose origins can be traced back to the early 1990s, have been described as forms of "mass migration". Initially, it seemed improbable that Italy might become a major arrival point for international migrants and refugees. However, due to their geographical position, ports in southern Italy have become the first docking points for migrants from the North African coast. Within a few decades, Italy became the "European dock" for refugees and migrants. Overburdened by this sudden change, over the last few decades Italian governments have addressed constant appeals for support to EU institutions and other member states. Despite a significant number of Italian citizens who still live abroad and a renewed interest in new forms of emigration (Tintori, 2017), the image of Italy as a purely emigration country does not fit reality. As Bonifazi describes it (1998, pp. 78-79), since the beginning of the 1800s Sicily and the southern regions had experienced the phenomenon of immigration from Greek and Albanian colonies. Similar flows were documented in the north-eastern regions, which attracted unskilled Slavic and Albanian workers. Since the early 1970s, immigrants arriving in Italy have become more numerous than Italian expatriates (Pugliese, 2002). However, the contribution of these arrivals to Italy does not change the reality of Italy as an emigration country.

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In order to understand this complex situation, it is necessary to look at the origins of the migration phenomenon in Italy. As a starting point, it is worth noting that the first systematic statistical data on emigration dates back to 1876. The total volume of Italian migration between 1876 and the beginning of the 1980s amounted to more than 26 million people (Bonifazi, 1998, p. 71). Between 1876 and 1885, most Italian migrants went to other European countries (i.e. France, Switzerland, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or Germany). Overseas migration evolved significantly after 1885, primarily geared towards the United States, Argentina, and Brazil.

Between the start of the new century and the beginning of the Second World War, Italian migration – both continental and overseas – developed into a stable process and reached a peak of 600,000 expatriations per year. Compared with the period before, the fluxes were no longer predominantly composed of northern Italians. Citizens from the southern regions became involved in these migration flows, which decreased progressively during the years of the Second World War. The economic crisis of 1929 represents another factor of contraction. It is also worth noting that, before the dramatic events of 1929, Italy had witnessed the rise of the Fascist regime, whose demographic politics were aimed at stopping these flows of migrants (Ballinger, 2016). Despite the official discourse, Italians continued to migrate, although to a lesser extent compared to the end of the 19th century. In addition, the destination countries progressively introduced restrictions on migration. The implementation of restrictive legislation towards illiterate migrants and the introduction of quotas per country dramatically reduced the chances of Italian citizens migrating to the United States. This change explains the predominant continental character of migrations in the years of the Fascist regime.

With the end of the Second World War, a new phase of Italian emigration began. Most of the flows of Italians occurred on the basis of bilateral agreements, for example with Germany, France, and Belgium. While in the previous century northern regions had contributed most to Italian emigration, at the beginning of the 1950s workers from the southern regions became the most prevalent emigrants (Panichella, 2014). The reason for this change is to be found in the dynamics of the Italian economic recovery, which was for the most part located in the north of the country. Between the beginning of the 1950s and the mid-1960s, roughly 1.5 million people changed residence every year in Italy. The city of Turin, for example, grew dramatically (from 719,300 inhabitants in 1951 to 1,247,140 in 1967); this increase was due to migration movements, predominantly from the southern part of Italy (Panichella, 2014, p. 66).

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The phenomenon of internal migration is of crucial relevance for post-war Italy. Movement from the south to the (richer and more developed) northern areas contributed to a radical transformation of major cities, with direct consequences for cultural aspects such as the feeling of belonging, the perception of territorial identity, and shifts in the traditional political cultures. These transformations eventually fed the rhetoric of the LN, starting in the late 1980s. Migrants from southern Italy became the main target of xenophobic stances.

The transformations in the Italian landscape are connected with global changes in this area. In the 1970s, the first signs of an economic recession and the 1973 oil crisis contributed to a general change of attitudes and policies towards immigration across Europe. Countries like Germany had to manage the complex effects of the so-called model of the *Gastarbeiter*, migrants who, it was intended, would leave the country of origin, settle down after a period of residence and eventually be joined by their families (Castles & Miller, 2003). Other countries, like France and Great Britain, whose high levels of migration were connected to their colonial past, were confronted with an abrupt rise in anti-immigration feelings. Similar reactions could be found in Scandinavian countries too. In this case, unfavourable economic situations fed the rise of anti-tax parties, which would eventually develop into populist parties with open anti-immigration stances. In light of our topic, these transformations also had an impact on Italian migration. Both the Italian economic recovery and this increasingly hostile environment to immigrants explain the further reduction of Italian migration in the 1970s and 1980s.

In Italy, for the first time since records began to be kept in 1875, immigration exceeded emigration in the 1970s (Pugliese, 2002, p. 60). However, these figures do not take into account the number of returnees (*emigrazione di ritorno*). Regarding the dynamics of internal migration, the 1973 oil crisis induced a considerable reduction of movement from the south of Italy to the north. In the mid-1970s, the flow of southern migrants to the big northern Italian cities stopped and was eventually replaced by migration towards the so-called area of the Third Italy (Bagnasco, 1977). This area was characterised by a particular setting of industrial development, centred on family-led small and medium manufacturing. All in all, by the end of the 1970s, Italian internal migrations had lost their predominant mass features. The new internal migration was more diversified, comprising medium scale movements. Meanwhile, migrations abroad had also ceased to represent a relevant phenomenon.

These transformations may be seen as a side effect of the introduction of increasingly restrictive legislation in Northern European countries (i.e.

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Great Britain (1971), Germany (1973), and France (1974)). There is no evidence, however, that the limited regulation in the Italian context might have contributed to the increased immigration. In most cases, the arrival of immigrants in Italy in the 1970s is connected with the collective entrepreneurship of groups of people driven by the image of Italian economic prosperity. The economic boom of the 1960s and 1970s had made of Italy a "sound candidate to migration transition" (Einaudi, 2007, pp. 57-59). A less visible, although highly important, phenomenon is constituted by demographics: a decrease in the overall population in parallel with an aging population with a growing income. Initially, this demographic aspect was not taken into account, having only been acknowledged in the mid-1980s.

The real change in the configuration of immigration to Italy happened in the 1980s. Many scholars agree that immigration to Italy was an unplanned phenomenon (Castelli Gattinara, 2016). Immigration to Italy did not result from a strategic decision to attract international workers, as in the case of the aforementioned German *Gastarbeiter*. The dynamics of immigration to Italy did not differ from the phenomena registered in other Southern European countries. The internationalisation and globalisation of markets along with the deepening of cultural exchange (Pugliese, 2002, p. 82) are among the triggers of an unexpected rise in the number of immigrants. Unsurprisingly, in the 1980s the increased number of immigrants rapidly attracted the attention of the media (Colombo & Sciortino, 2014).

From the mid-1980s until the beginning of the 2010s, Italy registered a constant increase of foreign-born population. However, the extent of the phenomenon is very difficult to assess. On the one hand, official statistics do not take into consideration the presence of irregular migrants, who have represented a considerable proportion of foreign citizens in Italy since the late 1970s. On the other hand, despite the use of mixed models (Birindelli, 1990), available data remain uncertain. The available statistical data show a constant increase from the end of the 1970s and again from the mid-2000s. With regard to 1977, research conducted by CENSIS indicates an estimated number of foreigners ranging from 280,000 to 400,000 individuals, out of whom 90,000 to 210,000 were irregular migrants. Almost thirty years later, according to the dataset collected by Blangiardo, 3,357,000 foreigners and 541,000 irregular migrants were recorded in 2005.

The 2010s have been marked by the so-called refugee crisis. The Syrian civil war induced the largest movement of asylum seekers since the Yugoslavian wars. As indicated by Eurostat data, in 2016 Italy was the second most affected country with regard to first-time asylum seeker ap-

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plications, while the top position was occupied by Germany. In 2017, these applications were linked to citizens originating from Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Ivory Coast, and Gambia. Needless to say, the most relevant phenomenon regarding Italy is the arrival of immigrants by sea.

In view of this, the framing of migration as an emergency is directly connected to 3 October 2013, when a boat carrying migrants from Libya sank near the Italian island of Lampedusa, with over 360 human casualties. Since then, countless shipwrecks have marked the political debates around this issue. The governments led by Enrico Letta (Democratic Party, PD) and later on by Matteo Renzi (both of them being Prime-ministers on behalf of the PD) have regularly referred to the need to invest in a common European strategy in order to induce EU member states to take joint responsibility. Across the EU, the failure of the European agenda on migration has further intensified the politicisation of migration (Bauböck, 2017).

In the aftermath of the domestic political crisis of 2016, a new government led by Paolo Gentiloni was appointed. A change in the management of immigration can be identified in the period that followed. First, a governmental decree on migration was approved in 2017 (the Minniti-Orlando decree), with the aim of curtailing illegal immigration. More importantly, there was investment in the externalisation of border control through the involvement of third-party countries, as exemplified by the agreement signed with Libya in the summer of 2017. The agreement confirmed the position of Libya as a buffer country, in charge of both stopping and deterring migration. At the same time, the Italian government put pressure on the NGOs operating in the Mediterranean Sea to sign a 13-point code of conduct, including a commitment not to enter Libyan territorial waters and to allow police to board and investigate vessels (Ministry of the Interior, 2017).

Considering these measures, the UNHCR (UNHCR Europe monthly report 2017) has identified a considerable drop in the number of refugees and migrants arriving by sea: as of 30 September 2017, there has been a 64% drop compared with the same period in 2016, predominantly among Nigerians, Guineans, Bangladeshis, Ivorians, and Malians. However, the political debate remains particularly lively on the issue of migration. This is illustrated by the clash between humanitarianism based elements and those elements that emphasise the pre-eminence of order and the rule of law.

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3. Legal Overview

The shift from a country of emigration to a country of immigration did not coincide with a political debate on the consequences of this transformation (Einaudi, 2007, pp. 100–101). During the late 1960s and 1970s, policy-making on migration was focused almost exclusively on issuing partial emergency measures. The lack of a specially designed law on migration implicitly encouraged the irregular features of migration. Most migrants entered Italy with a tourist visa and subsequently remained under unofficial working conditions. This situation exacerbated negative reactions towards irregular migrants and helps to explain the adoption of specific measures to combat migration adopted by local administrations (Einaudi, 2007, p. 105).

This situation continued throughout the 1980s, during which clear signs of growing hostility towards internal and international migrants emerged. The issue started to become politicised, although not yet targeted by a national law. The increased tension must be connected with the worsening of Italian economic conditions, such as increased unemployment, since the beginning of the 1970s. All in all, in a period when most EU member states took their first steps towards preventing further immigration, Italy was yet to start the drafting of its first harmonised legal provisions on this issue.

The first comprehensive legislative act on immigration was passed in 1986 (the Foschi Law 943/1986). The act enshrined the equality of treatment between Italian and foreign workers and was based on a highly unrealistic evaluation of the administration's capacity to manage the complex relation between supply and demand in terms of the labour force. The result was a wide amnesty towards irregular migrants (Melchionda, 2015, p. 29), which subsequently ended in 1988. Despite the regularisation act, during this period the number of illegal migrants grew substantially. Meanwhile, the issue of immigration gained increased public and media attention. This was also due to the agenda-building action of new political players; i.e., the regional leagues in northern Italy, the forerunners of the Northern League. These regional political forms of entrepreneurship put the topic of migration (both internal and from outside Italy) at the centre of their programmes.

The end of the 1980s was marked by international turmoil due to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Within a few years, Italy experienced the end of the party system that had characterised the so-called *Prima Repubblica* (First Republic, 1946–1994). At the same time, Italy had to deal with an unprecedented flow of migrants originating from former communist countries. The Italian collective memory was shaped by the arrival of the cargo ship "Vlora", packed with thousands of Albanians, on the coast of

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the Puglia region. From this moment onwards, Italy was to experience a profound change in the composition of its foreign population. The percentage of Eastern Europeans grew quickly, and the number of African migrants diminished.

Meanwhile, the social environment was changing rapidly. At the legislative level, there was the adoption of the Martelli Law (1990). Named after its promoter, Claudio Martelli, the Deputy Prime Minister (Socialist Party, PS) at the time, the new legal text aimed to balance the humanitarian stances endorsed by the Catholic Church, the network of NGOs working in the field of immigration, and the trade unions with the harsh criticisms voiced by the Italian Social Movement (*Movimento Sociale Italiano*, MSI) of the radical right and the Republican Party (*Partito Repubblicano*, PRI). Overall, the text of the law was largely favourable to irregular migrants, who were able to benefit from amnesty on the largest scale ever implemented in Italy. Moreover, the 1990 law abolished the so-called "geographical reserve" for asylum seekers, making it possible for a refugee to be recognised as such independently of his or her geographic provenance. With regard to the labour market, the Martelli Law introduced the concept of "sponsorship" by associations and institutions, issued an annual decree on immigration quotas, and introduced the practice of expulsion.

Part of the 1990 legal provisions were included in the organic law on immigration which followed, the so-called Turco-Napolitano Law, adopted in 1998. Issued by the centre-left government, the Turco-Napolitano Law aimed to regularise the position of immigrants: the text introduced a complex scheme for the deportation of illegal immigrants. Moreover, the 1998 legal text introduced a complex system of quotas and the legal framework for bilateral agreements (Einaudi 2007, p. 216). Last but not least, the Turco-Napolitano Law attempted for the first time to develop a large-scale system of integration.

In parallel with the electoral campaign for the 2001 legislative elections, the centre-right coalition successfully invested in anti-immigration discourse (Castelli Gattinara, 2016). Unsurprisingly, the Northern League was the dominant voice on this topic, supported by the National Alliance (*Alleanza Nazionale*, AN). As a direct consequence, Umberto Bossi (the leader of the Northern League) and Gianfranco Fini (the leader of AN) endorsed the next law on immigration. Passed in 2002, the law reduced the impact of the provisions of the Napolitano Law, particularly regarding the duration of residence permits, and introduced a more restrictive application of family reunification norms and a longer period of permanence in centres for the verification of migrant identity. Moreover, a link between

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the ownership of a residence permit and the possession of an employment contract became a necessary condition for the regularity of a migrant's stay. In September 2002, a decree-law issued by the government provided an opportunity for the regularisation of the position of two main types of irregular immigrants: caregivers and domestic workers. Despite increased restrictions, the general features of the earlier law had not been fully dismantled (Einaudi, 2007, p. 311). The legal framework still lacked a policy concerning refugees and asylum seekers.

Criticisms voiced by the national and international community increased in the context of the so-called "security package", a group of legal provisions introduced under Law 94/2009 by a new centre-right government. The promoter was the Minister of Internal Affairs at the time – Roberto Maroni, a leading figure of the Northern League. In a context generally characterised by an aggressive media discourse against migrants, the most problematic provision concerned the deployment of soldiers in cities, openly targeting Roma people. The legal text also introduced the crimes of illegal migration and illegal residence. The text was widely condemned by the Italian Church, the third sector, and European institutions, in particular the European Court of Justice. Eventually, the Italian Constitutional Court fine-tuned part of the most restrictive measures (Castelli Gattinara, 2016).

All in all, the Italian context was characterised by a constant tension between the pressure applied by NGOs, trade unions, and the Church in favour of the preservation of migrant rights on the one hand, and the critical stances of the political elites on the other, particularly regarding the limited capacity of the Italian labour market to absorb the migrants. Over the last two decades, the association between immigration and insecurity has shaped political discourse and legal provisions in this area.

4. Anti-Immigrant Stances and Populism: a Theoretical Overview

Having provided a general overview of migration in Italy, we can now move on to the specific topic of our analysis: populist parties. In order to depict the features of the two parties under scrutiny, an overview of the key assumptions in the literature is necessary. Over the last two decades, beyond the different empirical applications and nuances, one of the most consolidated lines of analysis has depicted populism as a "thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two ho-

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mogeneous and antagonistic camps, 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (Mudde, 2004, p. 543). Accordingly, populism pervades traditional ideological frontiers, includes left or right-wing ideological issues, the direction of this grafting and its intensity depending upon the socio-political context within which the populist parties mobilise (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). Thus, populism is intrinsically chameleonic (Taggart, 2000). The core issues of populist discourse change across time and space. References to the pure people, the corrupt elite, and the *volonté generale* are considered necessary and sufficient conditions to classify a phenomenon as populist (Kaltwasser, 2014, p. 479).

If we adhere to the definition of populism as a thin ideology or, in Tarchi's words, a way of thinking and feeling that values emotions over reason, most of the recent literature agrees upon an additional characteristic: the exclusionary nature of European populism (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). This exclusionary dimension is connected with the nucleus of populist discourse, meaning the homogeneous community and, on the other hand, a list of enemies that ranges from political to economic elites, as well as from national to international representatives. The European populist radical right family voices a xenophobic form of nationalism that praises the ideal of a mono-cultural nation-state in which non-natives are depicted as a source of threat to the community of reference. Furthermore, this nativism is connected with a belief in the need to promote a stringent enforcement of order and discipline within a neat and well-functioning society. Finally, it includes a Manichean vision of society, according to which it is divided between the pure people and the corrupt elite, and in which the general will of the people is to be worshipped (Mudde, 2007). In light of this, the prevalent representation of the migrant is based on a rather simplistic image of the other, alien to the organic groups of the national.

Populism's imaginary of the people's enemies is particularly rich. The populist rhetoric is intimately linked to whom it portrays as an enemy. The denunciation of immigration is combined with the request for increased law and order (Bale, 2003). Unsurprisingly, populist radical right parties have become major players in the electoral competition, boosting the salience of immigration issues beyond the political arena (Helbling, 2014; Koopmans et al., 2005). Their anti-immigration stances have been used by the literature in order to explain the electoral appeal of populist radical right parties to both traditional right-wing voters and left-wing blue-collars, who all feel increasingly threatened by cultural and economic globalisation (Bale et al., 2010; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995).

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5. There are Many Rooms in the House of the Italian Populists

Drawing on this general theoretical overview, we can now focus on the two cases of interest. Although they share the same veneration of the people and use the same rhetoric, based on the simplistic division of society into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, the populist genus provides different interpretations of the people and the menaces faced by the people.

5.1. The Northern League: The Nativist Interpretation of Immigration

The Northern League was founded in the 1980s in a context of increased disaffection with party politics dominated by a coalition between the Christian Democrats, the Socialist Party, and other minor parties on the one hand, and the Communist Party on the other (Cotta & Isernia, 1996). In the 1980s, the emergence of regional leagues, which eventually formed the LN in 1989, echoed the intensity of the dissatisfaction with the state of collusion between political parties and economic interests (Tarchi, 2015; Lazar, 2013; Fabbrini, 2009). The corruption scandal that shed light on the capillarity of the network of patronage and clientelism controlled by the main parliamentary parties further diminished the credibility of the parties that dominated post-war Italian politics and put an end to the so-called First Republic (1948 and 1993) (Lazar, 2013). The shift from a consensual democracy to a model of democracy based on competition (in the so-called Second Republic, from 1993 onwards) failed to be supported by a synchronised reorganisation of the system of interest representation or coherent institutional reform (Fabbrini, 2009). In view of this, the Northern League progressively reinforced its electoral relevance by voicing its resentment against the establishment and promoting a populist critique of the usual way of doing politics (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2010).

From a conceptual point of view, the populist features of the Northern League have been a subject of disagreement in the literature (Mudde, 2007). Mastropaolo acknowledges the complexity of the League's programme and considers it an anti-political party (2005). The founder of the League, Umberto Bossi, initially claimed that the League was a popular movement and not a party (Woods, 2014). All in all, we consider the

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League suitable for inclusion among the populist family and in particular within the sub-group of radical right populism characterised by a combination of nativism, authoritarianism, and populism (Mudde, 2007). Since 1989, despite changes in content, the LN has maintained its main line of argumentation: the opposition between the virtuous and homogeneous people and the corrupt elite (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2010).

In consistence with the literature, at the centre of the LN discourse it is possible to identify the opposition between "us", the honest, hard-working, and simple-living northern Italians (McDonnell, 2006), and the corrupt elite in Rome. In the first two decades of its existence, the LN valorised the ethnic and linguistic distinctness of the northern community as the basis for justifying a broader project of administrative decentralisation (Tarchi, 2015; Woods, 2014). In this context, the criterion of exclusion mainly referred to the southerners. The organic community of the northerners, under the leadership of Umberto Bossi (1989-2012), was described as a homogenous group of hardworking entrepreneurs and people overburdened with taxes, whose efforts and sacrifices were being misused by the Italian elite to benefit the lazy southerners (Fella & Ruzza, 2010). The solution to this uneven distribution of northern wealth was portrayed in terms of the implementation of extensive federal reforms. This was the basis on which the topic of immigration gained progressive visibility.

Considering the context of immigration in the 1990s and the prevalence of immigrants from post-communist countries, LN discourse broadened its register of enemies by including a tough denunciation of the dangers of immigration (Tarchi, 2015). As illustrated by the literature on radical right populism, immigrants were depicted as the reason for all of society's ills, ranging from economic aspects such as unemployment and the reduction of wages to issues such as the proliferation of crime and insecurity. For a while, the Northern League mobilised resentment against the post-communist immigrants. Referring to vaguely defined non-EU citizens, the LN cultivated what Pappas calls a sense of victimhood (2012): the organic community of the natives being abandoned by cosmopolitan elites to an invasion of immigrants. Accordingly, the Northern League denounced the inability of the Rome based elites to meet the needs of the local community, meaning the northern community, and openly stigmatised immigrants as criminals. This was particularly true for the Roma community. In parallel, the denunciation of increasing the number of immigrants was offset by the so-called welfare chauvinism and the critique of the excessive use of Italian welfare state provisions for the immigrants (Del Vigo & Ferrara, 2015, p. 187). Hence while cultivating political stances in favour of fiscal decentral-

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isation and liberal policies in the economy (in particular in connection with the governmental collaboration with Forza Italia), the LN progressively included left-wing welfare economics on its agenda. However, it was made explicit that access to welfare was to be restricted to the natives.

In the aftermath of 9/11, a cultural denunciation of immigration was further included in the rhetoric of the LN. The cultural threat became increasingly synonymous with anti-Islam stances (i.e., opposition to the building of mosques, the denunciation of the veil, etc.). Without abandoning the previous characterisation of the threats posed by post-communist immigration, under the leadership of Salvini (from 2013 onwards) immigrants have increasingly been portrayed as a religious threat, a security menace, and last but not least, an economic burden. At the same time, the community of reference has been slightly amended. The original emphasis on northerners first has been abandoned in favour of a national definition of the virtuous and unified community. This national community has been regularly depicted as being "under threat" because its culture, religion, values, security, and economic benefits are betrayed by the corrupt elites in Rome conspiring with technocrats in Brussels. Since 2012, the party has increasingly used interconnected elements such as opposition to immigration and criticism of the European Union in order to both increase its resonance at the national level and reinforce its alliance with other radical right populist parties such as the National Front in France, the Freedom Party in Austria, and the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands. Meanwhile, in an attempt to shore up electoral support, the Salvini leadership lessened the emphasis on the northern community and in 2014 endorsed the creation of a southern counterpart, "Us with Salvini".

Under Salvini's leadership and in the period of chief interest for this paper, the post-2015 years, the League has preserved its virulent nativism towards immigrants, always accompanied by a denunciation of the Rome based elite's collusion with EU technocrats and criminal networks, which penalises the community of native Italians. However, a look at the official text "Immigration: General Guidelines, the North League", published in February 2015 by the head of the party's Federal Department of Security and Immigration, shows that the official discourse seems to have somehow diminished its virulence against immigration (LN, 2015). Indeed, out of the 18 pages of text in the document, the first seven place an emphasis on the Northern League's positive assessment of regular immigration (p. 3).

These stances are far from surprising, considering populists' great respect for order and discipline. In the first eight pages, the document provides an overview of the Italian legal context and presents different statistics on

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growing immigration in Italy. The second part of the document deals with illegal immigration and asylum requests, and provides details about the department in charge of immigration and security within the Northern League. On this last point, it is important to note the leading position of Tony Iwobi, a party member of Nigerian origin. The department coordinates a wide network of regional branches, present in 17 of the 20 Italian regions.

The core of the official position remains vague, with a general stance on the need to fight illegal corruption and the criminal networks acting in this field. As in the previous paragraph, the official position is straightforward. According to the party's official documents, it is time to say yes to those who respect Italian law and to say no to those who do not respect it; similarly, it is time to accommodate the demands of those who have an honest job and consequently the right to reside on Italian soil and the duty to contribute to Italy's economic and social growth. Last but not least, it is time to put a distinct stop to clearly irregular or clandestine immigration due to situations of extreme degradation and illegality (LN, 2015, p. 10).

Although it says little about immigration per se, the text is interesting because of its implicit reference to the importance of adapting and contributing to the well-being of the community of the native group. However, in this case, the nativist dimension does not include explicit xenophobic positions. Despite this, it is important to underline the focus on immigration that owes its obedience to the established authorities and has respect for the law. The predicted solutions include a denunciation of the EU's insufficient involvement in the refugee crisis.

These synthetic and even bland stances on immigration were already visible in the League's 2014 official electoral programme (LN, 2014). Of the 38 pages of text, only one is dedicated to the issue of immigration. In this case, the issue of immigration is directly connected with the denunciation of those who have usurped authority over the national territory from the national community: the elites in power and the European Union. Considering the context of reference, namely elections for the European Parliament, the League programme uses immigration as a proxy for asserting national sovereign control over national laws and institutions. The EU is consequently depicted as an organisation that hinders the ability of the native community, and thus the genuine will of the people, to control its territory and decide upon the rules of immigration therein.

However, the virulence of the discourse on immigration has increased in interviews with the press. In a radio interview in May 2017, Salvini, the

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LN's leader, pointed to the need for legal action against immigration, framed as an invasion, a clear attempt towards ethnic cleansing, the ethnic substitution of those who live in Italy. A culturally based denunciation of immigration is increasingly a part of the League's discourse. Regarding the proposal to amend the Italian citizenship law, Salvini ostentatiously declared his opposition to the Pope's endorsement of the proposed amendment of the law on citizenship. Provocatively, he invites the Pope to apply the amended version of the law in the Vatican State. Moreover, Salvini places an emphasis on his Catholic faith and his understanding that Italy cannot host and sustain the whole world. His public statement concludes with a challenging quotation of *Give to God what belongs to God, and to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. Amen* (Ius soli, Salvini, August 2017). Salvini's staunch anti-immigration stances emphasize an exclusionary vision of Italian culture by explicitly appealing to Catholicism and thereby targeting the unwanted "alien" elements, the immigrants, as dangerous for the culturally/religiously homogenous community of the natives.

The nativism of the League has increasingly become a combination of nationalism, xenophobia, and anti-immigration stances. Following this logic, immigrants are the agents of an invasion that violates, dismantling the "natural" ethnic and cultural order. Consequently, the League portrays itself as the only legitimate defender of the community of the natives, protecting not only its economic and social well-being but also its cultural integrity and purity from this massive invasion of foreigners. The League connects these dangerous foreigners mainly with Islam.

This link made by the League between Islam and an "invasion" is illustrated by a declaration of Salvini's in early 2017. He provides a very simple and simplistic metaphor: if you come to my house, you knock and ask for permission; if I agree I'll let you in, otherwise I will not let you in. The opposition to this wave of immigration is justified by the fact that too many Muslims interpret the Koran as a book of war and violence. He openly assesses Islam as the public danger number one. Moreover, he states that, because of their faith, the Muslim community is lagging behind centuries. He roughly concludes that they should stay at home and no new mosques should be opened in Italy (Salvini: "*Islam pericolo numero uno, restino a casa loro*", 2017 January, 31).

The League's discourse increasingly employs an Islamophobic repertoire and emphasizes the role of Catholicism in the community's history. Islam is portrayed as opposed to both the community's Christian roots and Italian democracy (Salvini, 2016, p. 107). Salvini openly declares that the only religion he has an issue with is Islam, because it brings problems to

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Italy (del Vigo & Ferrara, 2015, p. 206); Muslims are portrayed as those that make use of the system in order to dismantle the native culture and induce a reversal to a mediaeval way of life. In his 2016 autobiography, Salvini declares that the "problem of Islam" has to be tackled by "jealously protecting our values and our traditions" (Salvini 2016, p. 107).

It should also be noted that over the past year, anti-immigration discourse has increasingly included a denunciation of the connection between organised crime and illegal immigration, with a stronger focus on the negative role of the NGOs acting in this field.

Over time, without abandoning the discourse based on the community of the northerners, the League has broadened its community of reference by strategically including all native Italians in direct connection with a combination of economic, social, and political threats that continue to be located at the level of Rome based elites and technocrats in Brussels. On this basis, while immigration was initially targeted as an economic, social, and cultural menace to the community, the cultural – namely religious – dimension has become prevalent. "Anti-immigration" has become synonymous with "anti-Islam", although it is worth mentioning that not all other negative types of impact have been abandoned. Immigration regularly emerges as a polyhedric concept used as a proxy for contemporary problems in society. Immigrants are blamed for negative effects on the uniqueness of the native civilisation and values, on the future of liberal democracy in Italy, on the economic system, and in particular, on the availability of welfare for the native population.

5.2. The Five Star Movement

The Five Star Movement (*Movimento Cinque Stelle*, M5S) represents one of the most relevant changes to the Italian party system since the collapse of the First Republic. There is no universal agreement on the ideological features of the party within the literature. The circumstances of its birth and evolution represent a serious obstacle to understanding the aims of the movement. Uncertainties concerning the policy goals of the M5S are also widespread, because the official party programme is mostly represented by the contents of the political blog of Beppe Grillo – the founder of the movement. Among these uncertainties, the positioning of the M5S on the issue of immigration is particularly evident.

The M5S was variously described as a representative of a kind of "left populism" in an earlier stage of its evolution, during which a considerable

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part of its voters came from the ranks of traditional left-wing voters (Pedrazzani & Pinto, 2013, p. 105). Later on, as it gained 25% of the electorate in the most recent parliamentary elections, held in 2013, the basis of the party began to be described as composed of protest voters, mostly interested in sending a clear anti-establishment message to the traditional parties. There is no general agreement on the movement's identification as a populist party. Tarchi (2015, 355) does not share the interpretation of other authors who describe the party as purely populist. Chiapponi (2017) defines the M5S as the latecomer of the Italian populists. Other academics point to particular elements of a populist mobilisation (Biorcio & Natale, 2013; Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013; Cosenza, 2013), which underlie the effect of a sort of a composition of protest created by the use of Manichean language, the charismatic leadership of Beppe Grillo and Giandomenico Casaleggio (the "ideologue" of the movement, who died in 2016), and the use of anti-establishment topoi.

Leaving behind the disputes regarding the populist character of the M5S, it is worth briefly describing the circumstances of its creation and evolution in order to depict the role given by Beppe Grillo to the sharing of the programmatic points with the people of the movement (the party members) on a variety of issues, including immigration. Beppe Grillo is a well-known Italian comedian. Since the 1980s, his shows have focused on an irreverent representation of Italian politicians and political parties. After he was "banned" from national TV channels, Grillo continued his activity in theatre shows, where his denunciation of the political class extended to the economic elite and major economic scandals in Italy. A dual rhetoric characterised Grillo's activity in this period (Corbetta & Gualmini, 2013, p. 31): the call for citizen mobilisation, and the contraposition between the political class and the concepts of innovation and renewal of the political and economic elite.

The name of the party stands for the most important issues promoted by the Movimento since its early appearances. The five stars stand for the five top issues of the movement: public water management, sustainable mobility, development, connectivity, and the environment. A collaboration with Gianroberto Casaleggio, an influential entrepreneur in the field of marketing and communications, was crucial for the promotion of these issues. Within a few months after Beppe Grillo's famous blog (2005) www.beppegrillo.it was set up, it was receiving an average of 150,000 visits daily, and this rose to 500,000 in 2007 (Scanzi, 2012, p. 204).

Following Mosca (2014), the evolution of the M5S can be summarised in 4 phases: latency online (2005/2007); visibility through mass protests

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(2007/2008); entry into the electoral arena (2008/2011); and electoral boom and institutionalisation (since 2012). During the latency online phase, Grillo's fame increased both nationally and internationally. In 2005, *Time* listed Grillo among the "European Heroes [of] 2005" for his constant battle against corruption and financial scandals. In 2008, *The Guardian* included Grillo's blog among their list of the world's most visited blogs. At the same time, Grillo's online community presence led to an overwhelming increase in citizen online activism. The 2005 creation of the "meet-up" network, platforms at the local level for the discussion of problems and issues to be brought to public attention, represented a crucial step in the development of the movement (Lanfrey, 2011; Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013). During the second phase, the denunciations of Beppe Grillo obtained national visibility through the organisation of provocative rallies held in various Italian cities, where the denunciation of the political and communication elites reached its peak. The third phase represented the entry into the electoral arena, beginning with single candidatures at the municipal and regional level (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2015, p. 456). Promising electoral results were achieved in local elections of 2010 and 2011. The 2012 local elections confirmed this positive trend with the success of the M5S mayor of the city of Parma (Biorcio & Natale, 2013). These successes signalled the transition to the fourth and current phase, characterised by the 2013 general election result (25.6% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 23.6% in the Senate). The party firmly declared its intent to remain in opposition, refusing any real negotiations with the centre-left party. Administrative elections in 2016 represented a very good result for the party: in the capital city of Rome and in Turin the candidates of the M5S –Virginia Raggi and Chiara Appendino respectively – both became mayors.

The electoral result in Rome was particularly indicative of the anti-establishment sentiment widespread in the city after the discovery of a deep-seated system of corruption and links among politicians and persons variously associated with organised misappropriation of funds allocated by the city administration to manage important city services – one of which was immigration reception. The misappropriation of public money in this sector constituted a very important segment within the criminal network operating under the system that would later be defined as "*Mafia Capitale*". As a consequence, the M5S exploited the situation with a broad campaign against the candidates of traditional parties. The administrative elections of 2016 were not the first time the MS5 faced the issue of immigration. Although the M5S programme is very synthetic, immi-

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gration, due to its very sensitive nature and its polarising potential, soon became an issue at the centre of the movement's positioning. As early as 2012 Beppe Grillo had expressed his position on the issue of the change in Italian regulations from the *ius sanguinis* principle to the *ius soli* principle – a proposal then being debated by parliament. On his blog, he stated that the idea that citizenship should be accorded to people who were born in Italy even if their parents were not Italian citizens, "is senseless" (Beppe Grillo's Blog 23rd January 2012 quoted in Tarchi 2015, p. 344). At that time, it was still too early to foresee how the debate on this issue would become relevant in the final months of the current legislature.

The migration issue soon became relevant not only per se, but also with regard to the party's organisation. The debate regarding the abolishment of the crime of illegal migration introduced in the "security package" mentioned earlier in the text (2009) revealed the sensitiveness of the issue. The 2013 parliamentary initiative of two M5S Senate members to decriminalise the crime of illegal migration was censored by Grillo and Casaleggio, who defined the two senators' actions as a private initiative. A declaration of the leaders of the M5S made it clear that the party did not have a settled position on this relevant issue, and pointed at a lack of internal democracy within the movement. Political debate on both aspects of the issue grew heated until Beppe Grillo's decision to invoke the voice of the people online, which calmed tensions. Consultations were held, followed by an online referendum on the issue. Nearly 25,000 voters participated out of all the M5S members entitled to vote (80,383). Nearly 16,000 voted in favour of the depenalisation of the crime, while around 9,000 voted against.

The movement celebrated the decision to resort to an online referendum as a victory for online democracy. However, the unclear positioning of the party on migration would soon emerge again. One of the reasons for swinging between the populist rhetoric of Grillo ("immigration is a taboo", "immigration is a business") and the more differentiated positions of the party base can be interpreted in light of the antagonism towards the Northern League. The traditional issue of the LN's ownership of immigration made it difficult for the M5S to identify the correct balance of their immigration rhetoric to avoid the risk of being labelled a radical right populist party.

The right occasion was represented by the peak of the refugee crisis and its management by the Italian government. In 2015, Beppe Grillo's blog hosted a straightforward post. In his words, the clandestine people a por-

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trayed as the new black gold for the mafias and for the cooperatives. They remain unidentified for years, remain on Italian land at a cost of 1,050 euro a month, most of which end up in the pockets of the mafias and politicians. Accordingly, for Grillo, the immigration has become a sort of clandestine financing for political parties and the mafia (Beppe Grillo's blog August 6th, 2015).

The official positions of the Five Star Movement are represented in the document "*Programma immigrazione. Movimento 5 Stelle. Programma Parziale 27.07.2017.*" The cover of the document shows a ship on the open sea, accompanied by the slogan: "Immigration. Objective Zero Landings. Italy is not the refugee camp of Europe". The document begins with a suggestive introduction regarding the scandal of "*Mafia Capitale*". It quotes a telephone interception of one of the criminals involved in the scandal, saying: "I make more money from refugees than from drugs". The document goes on: "The greater the chaos, the more powerful the mafia. For the Movimento Cinque Stelle the establishment of fast and reliable procedures for the recognition of the legal status of the refugee is crucial".

The traditional enemies of the people (the mafia, and implicitly the European Union and the bureaucracy of current asylum policies) are immediately invoked in the document, in order to create a Manichean distinction between good and evil. The document argues Italy should remove the causes that determine the flows of migrants. Selling arms to countries affected by a civil war is proposed, along with the cessation of Third World country exploitation, and the establishment of real international cooperation. The allocation of responsibilities to the Italian parties is also clear. The Partito Democratico allowed the creation of the Triton programme, and the centre-right parties signed the Dublin agreement when they were in government.

An investigation of the positions expressed by the M5S in the European Parliament (Franzosi et al., 2015, p. 120) shows that the MEPs of the M5S have distanced themselves from the votes expressed by the other parties of their parliamentary group (i.e. the United Kingdom Independence Party) regarding immigration. Nonetheless, the recent denunciations by one of the party's most prominent politicians – Luigi Di Maio – of the collusive action of the NGOs working in the field of refugee reception and the party's decision not to support the proposed law on the passage to the *ius soli* reinforce the image of an instrumental approach to migration issues.

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6. Conclusions

Despite the centrality of the public debate on immigration, a detailed comparative analysis of international migration flows to Italy shows that Italy is not the European country most affected by the consequences of international migration. Long established immigration countries, including all those who experienced the arrival of migrants much earlier than Italy, have been confronted with the phenomenon for a significantly longer time. Despite the relative novelty of this issue, international migrations have rapidly produced a visible politicisation in the Italian party system, in the media, and in broader public opinion. The combined effect of the international economic crisis and the rising trend of migrants arriving on the Mediterranean coast has exacerbated the salience of the issue, making migration one of the primary citizen concerns, as revealed by recent Italian and international opinion polls.

Considering the above, our analysis has focused on two populist parties: the LN and the M5S. Since the early 1990s and even earlier, if we consider the LN's anti-southern rhetoric, the party has considered anti-immigration stances to be a key element of their political message. The Lega's increased focus on immigration coincides with both the post-9/11 landscape (McDonnell, 2006) and the Eastern enlargement to the point that it is possible to identify a total rejection of foreign influence, regardless of ethnicity, culture, or religion. The LN operates a so-called "selective exclusion" (Betz & Johnson, 2004, p. 318 quoted by McDonnell 2006, p. 129), considering immigrants to be not only aliens but also a cultural and an economic threat. Particularly in the post-economic crisis period, migrants have assumed the role of scapegoats in a discourse increasingly based on welfare chauvinism. Since 9/11, the Islamophobic message of the LN has grown louder, together with the exaltation of the virtues of Christianity. The M5S, on the contrary, makes use of the veneration of the people, the denunciation of the corrupt elite, and the myth of the people's sovereignty (Tarchi, 2015), without any visible radical right element. In contrast to the LN's manifest use of nativism, the M5S's stances on immigration are essentially filtered by their emphasis on the people's will. There is no a priori exclusion either in terms of welfare chauvinism or in terms of a cultural or religious threat. It is mainly the denunciation of the way immigration is managed by the corrupt national elites and/or the technocratic elites in Brussels that characterises the M5S discourse.

The political relevance of these parties and their presence in the coalition government has succeeded in broadening the coverage of anti-immigra-

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tion stances in the media, rendering nativist positions more credible in society (Koopmans & Olzak, 2004). As identified by the literature, immigration has become one of the most loaded policy fields in Italian party politics. In parallel to more or less tense debates within the institutional arena at the local and national level, alarmist news about immigration has multiplied in the media and become a central issue in electoral campaigns since the early 1990s. Increasingly, Italian politics has come to turn on the opposition between inclusive and exclusive attitudes towards immigration. While the literature widely acknowledges the relevance of immigration for the populist family, and the LN confirms this assumption fully, the analysis of the M5S demonstrates the ability to switch from inclusivist to exclusivist stances and to strategically valorise this fluid position as the *vox populi*.

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IMMIGRATION AND CRISIS IN A NEW IMMIGRATION COUNTRY: THE CASE OF ITALY

Summary

Despite the centrality of immigration in public debates, sheer numbers clearly demonstrate that Italy is far from being the main destination country for immigrants in the EU. However, as emphasized by recent surveys, immigration represents one of the main preoccupations of Italians. The combined effects of the two major crises of the last decade – i.e., the economic crisis and the so-called refugee crisis – have induced an increased level of politicisation of immigration. Note that immigration has been assessed as one of the most important determinants for the successful communication of populist parties since the 1980s. Within this context, the Italian case is specific: Italy has only recently become a country of immigration. Until the 1970s, the number of Italians emigrating was higher than the number of people immigrating to Italy. The reversal of this situation has had consequences on two levels. At the legislative level, all attempts to regulate immigration have been characterised by a constant tension between humanitarian-based reasoning and elements in favour of the reinforcement of the rule of law and, more specifically, a focus on security and order. At the political level, since the early 1990s, the position of the radical right, populist Northern League has regularly been synonymous with xenophobia and welfare chauvinism. According to their most recent official stances, the Northern League has become increasingly characterised by a full rejection of multiculturalism and immigration. Since 2010, a new populist party has joined the Italian arena: the Five Star Movement. In their case, the topic of immigration has only recently become a central element of the populist agenda. The M5S features unclear and often conflicting positions on the topic of immigration. These hesitations are connected with both the complexity of the M5S as an organisation and a strategic approach that aims to link their political agenda to the voice of the people.

Keywords: *Italy, populism, immigration, nativism, policies*

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IMIGRACIJA I KRIZA U NOVOJ IMIGRACIJSKOJ DRŽAVI: SLUČAJ ITALIJE

Sažetak

Tema useljeništva prednjači u javnim raspravama u Italiji. Iako brojke jasno pokazuju da Italija nije glavno odredište useljenika u Europsku uniju, nedavna istraživanja govore o velikoj važnosti ove teme za Talijane. S obzirom na učinak dviju najvećih kriza posljednjeg desetljeća – ekonomske i tzv. migrantske – tema useljeništva postala je uvelike politizirana. Također, ta se tema pokazala iznimno važnom za uspješnu komunikaciju populističkih stranaka još od osamdesetih godina. U ovome je kontekstu slučaj Italije specifičan jer je ta država tek nedavno postala useljenička, s obzirom na to da se do sedamdesetih godina više Talijana iseljavalo nego što je bilo doseljenika u zemlju. Preokret u brojkama utjecao je na dvije sfere: zakonodavstvo i politiku. U sferi zakonodavstva sva su nastojanja da se useljavanje regulira obilježena neskladom koji vlada između humanitarnog pristupa i onoga koji ide u prilog vladavini prava, tj. usmjerenosti na sigurnost i red. U sferi politike stajalište koji zastupa radikalno desna populistička stranka Sjeverna liga još je od ranih devedesetih godina istoznačno s pojmovima ksenofobije i šovinizma socijalne zaštite. Najnovija službena stajališta Sjeverne lige svjedoče o sve izraženijem potpunom odbijanju multikulturalizma i imigracije. Nova populistička stranka Pokret pet zvjezdica (M5S) osvanula je na talijanskoj sceni 2010. godine te je u njezinu slučaju tema useljeništva tek nedavno uvrštena na populistički raspored. Stajalište stranke M5S o pitanju imigracije nejasan je i često proturječan. Nesklonost jasnom stajalištu povezana je kako sa složenom organizacijom stranke tako i s njezinom strategijom usklađivanja političkih stajališta stranke s glasom naroda.

Ključne riječi: *Italija, populizam, imigracija, nativizam, politike*