



FEPS

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Young and Easily Allured?

**A Comparative Analysis on the Relationship between Populism and
Youth in Europe**

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FEPS YOUNG ACADEMICS NETWORK

The Young Academics Network (YAN) was established in March 2009 by the Foundation of European Progressive Studies (FEPS) with the support of the Renner Institut to gather progressive PhD candidates and young PhD researchers, who are ready to use their academic experience in a debate about the Next Europe. The founding group was composed of awardees of the “Call for Paper” entitled “Next Europe, Next Left” – whose articles also help initiating the FEPS Scientific Magazine “Queries”. Quickly after, with the help of the FEPS member foundations, the group enlarged – presently incorporating around 30 outstanding and promising young academics.

FEPS YAN meets in the Viennese premises of Renner Institut, which offers great facilities for both reflections on the content and also on the process of building the network as such. Both elements constitute mutually enhancing factors, which due to innovative methods applied make this Network also a very unique project. Additionally, the groups work has been supervised by the Chair of the Next Left Research Programme, Dr. Alfred Gusenbauer – who at multiple occasions joined the sessions of the FEPS YAN, offering his feedback and guidance.

This paper is one of the results of the third cycle of FEPS YAN, (the first one ended with three papers in June 2011, while the second one led to five papers in spring 2013), in which six key themes were identified and were researched by FEPS YAN working groups. These topics encompass: “*Precarious employment in Europe*”; “*Full employment: A progressive vision for Europe*”; “*Get the party started: Modernizing progressive politics*”; “*The 2014 European elections*”; “*Enhancing EU enlargement*” and “*Young and easily allured? A comparative analysis on the relationship between populism and youth in Europe*”. Each of the meetings is an opportunity for the FEPS YAN to discuss the current state of their research, presenting their findings and questions both in the plenary, as also in the respective working groups. The added value of their work is the pan-European, innovative, interdisciplinary character – not to mention, that it is by principle that FEPS wishes to offer a prominent place to this generation of academics, seeing in it a potential to construct alternative that can attract young people to progressivism again. Though the process is very advanced already, the FEPS YAN remains a Network – and hence is ready to welcome new participants.

FEPS YAN plays also an important role within FEPS structure as a whole. The FEPS YAN members are asked to join different events (from large Conferences, such as FEPS “Call to Europe” or “Renaissance for Europe” and PES Convention to smaller High Level Seminars and Focus Group Meetings) and encouraged to provide inputs for publications (i.e. for FEPS Scientific Magazine “Queries”). Enhanced participation of the FEPS YAN Members in the overall FEPS life and increase of its visibility remains one of the strategic goals of the Network for 2014.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Populism in Europe is not novel. Since the 1980s and especially the 1990s, much academic and political debate has taken place on this complex and controversial phenomenon. However, the social effects of the global economic crisis and of the Eurozone crisis have led to an upsurge of populism. The emergence of new movements and the decrease of consensus for traditional parties is striking and diffused. Therefore, although there are important country-specific differences, it is possible to argue for the spread of a 'second wave' of populism in Europe. Even if the emergence of populism may not be directly linked to the economic crisis, this appears to be a key factor that has contributed to its upsurge.

Our main research questions are based on these considerations. Since young people are one of the categories mostly affected by the crisis (high unemployment, increasingly precarious jobs, worsening of expectations etc.) it is unsurprising that a significant share of them look at populist parties or populist movements. In other words, this paper investigates potential connections between the youth's difficult socio-economic situation and the appeal of populist movements. This is achieved by analysing to what extent populist movements have utilized young people's hardships – such as youth unemployment and social exclusion – in their rhetoric in order to successfully mobilize young voters. The relationship between populist movements and youth is analysed in five European countries, asking how populist parties and movements have framed young people's issues and their role in society.

Recently published public opinion surveys show that populist parties are supported by young people in a varying degree in our selected countries: Finland, Hungary, Spain, Italy and Switzerland. An Italian survey conducted in March 2013 highlighted that Movimento 5 Stelle was the most popular party among young Italian voters in the age group of 18-34 (29.8 per cent of people aged 18-24 and 35.9 per cent of people aged 25-34 would vote for M5S).¹ According to the results of the recently released European Social Survey data from 2012², a remarkable ratio of young people voted for populist parties in Finland (15.1 per cent), in Hungary (11.4 per cent voted for Jobbik), and in Switzerland (28.7 per cent voted for Swiss People's Party). In the case of Spain this percentage is much lower (3.2 per cent).

¹ DEMOS Italy, *I giovani e la politica*, 2013. (<http://www.demos.it/a00848.php>, last accessed on November 2, 2013).

² The percentages were calculated using the data provided by the European Social Survey (Wave 6, 2012). The values were weighted by design weight.

Table 1.

How many percentage of different age groups voted for the selected parties within those who attended last national elections?³

Age groups	Italy (M5S)	Age groups	Finland (True Finns)	Hungary (Jobbik)	Spain (UpyD)	Switzerland (SPP)
18-24	29.8	15-29	15.1	11.4	3.2	28.7
25-34	35.9	30-44	12.3	7.0	6.2	24.8
35-44	36.1	45-64	13.0	3.8	3.0	27.9
45-54	30.6	65-	8.1	2.6	1.3	25.3
55-64	25.3	Total	11.7	5.5	3.6	26.7
65-	9.0	Chi-square Sig.	p=0.024 < 0.05	p=0.000 < 0.05	p=0.006 < 0.05	p=0.811 > 0.05
Total	25.6					

Sources: Italy: DEMOS Italy 2013. Other countries: Own calculations based on European Social Survey, wave 6, 2012.

Exploring the relationship between populism and young people is crucial for the rethinking of progressive politics. As the statistics above show, there are notable and contemporary European examples of how young Europeans are becoming infatuated with populist-like movements. It has been claimed that populism often thrives on young people's support. If this is true, what is the youth's support based on?

The populist parties' success to mobilize young voters can be seen both as a threat and an opportunity. The youth is a strategically important subgroup of society. It is the group that initiates change; it is flexible and open to innovations and new ideas. Even if the youth are not as large a demographic as they have been, young people are still the part of the society one should address if one wishes to change society. Involving young people in politics is necessary both for initiating a general process of political socialization and forming a new political élite that can lead the process of change.

However, nowadays young people are not attracted by progressive parties as much as they used to in the recent past. The emergence of populist parties is likely a sign not only of structural but also of strategic shortcomings within the social-democratic field. The development of new forms of popular populism should be regarded as a wake-up call for non-populist parties to start rekindling the interest of young voters. Analysing how populist movements frame their discourse towards and about young people can be useful to understand why young people are attracted by neo-populist parties. Getting an

³ In the case of Italian data the survey question was the following: *How many percentage of different age groups would vote for Movimento 5 Stelle on the elections in Italy?* Calculations were based on different age group categorization and no result of significance test was provided.

awareness of some of the underlying causes for the rise of the new European populisms can help reshape the progressive narrative and make it responsive to the needs of the youngest voting demographic.

Our paper has the following structure: Initially we clarify why the movements in question can be regarded as ‘populist’. Second, we give a comparative presentation of the situation of youth in the selected countries by using macro-statistical social-economic indicators provided by the EUROSTAT Youth Indicators collection. Third, we assess how populists address young people’s issues and role in society. Finally, we draw conclusions on our findings and attempt to spell a course of action for progressive parties to regain some of the lost electorate.

II. ON POPULISM

Populism is by no means a new phenomenon: its historical roots are deep and it has had several national manifestations in the past⁴. In South America, in India and in the Balkans major populist movements convincingly became the vehicles of anti-oligarchic protest and repeatedly gained access to government by democratic means during the latter half of the 20th century⁵. More recently, Adam Przeworski sketched some provocative parallels regarding a common pattern of populist politics in the post-transition to democracy phases between Latin America and East-Central Europe⁶. Europe witnessed the first rise and electoral success of neo-populist movements in the 1990s. These movements have often been described as being far-right, such as the FPÖ in Austria, but the European populists appear in all colors of the political spectrum⁷. In the late 2000s and early 2010s a new upsurge of populism has taken place. Among this second wave of populism are represented the parties and political movements analyzed in this paper: The True Finns in Finland, Jobbik in Hungary, Movimento 5 Stelle in Italy, Schweizerische Volkspartei in Switzerland and The Indignados in Spain.

Populism cannot be regarded as a unified political ideology or a political movement per se. What populists often have in common is the objective of gathering support by applying strong and affective

⁴ G. Ionescu and E. Gellner (eds.), *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1969; M. Canovan, *Populism*, London-New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1981.

⁵ N. Mouzelis, *Politics in the Semi-Periphery. Early Parliamentary and Late Industrialisation in the Balkans and Latin America.*, London: Macmillan 1986.

⁶ A. Przeworski, *Democracy and the market. Political and economic reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America.*, Cambridge University Press 1995, p. 191.

⁷ See: G. Mazzoleni, *The Media and the Growth of Neo-Populism in Contemporary Democracies* [in:] *The Media and Neo-Populism. A Contemporary Analysis*, Westport: Praeger Publishers 2003; C. Mudde, *The populist Zeitgeist* [in:] *Government and Opposition*, No. 4., 2004; P. Taggart, *Populism and representative politics in contemporary Europe*, [in:] *Journal of Political Ideologies*, No. 3., 2004.

rhetoric, in which salient political problems are being explained in a drastically simplified manner⁸. Through the simplification of social phenomena populists often portray the ones in power as being guilty for the various problems at hand and suggest replacing 'the elite' with the 'voice of the people' – namely the populists themselves⁹. The definition of populism is a contested one; in fact, there is no single definition of populism that can comprehensively describe all political phenomena that, over the last years, have come to be seen as driving a political agenda and employing a political rhetoric that is markedly different from how politics has been conducted in Europe over the last 60 years. In the context of this paper, where our aim is to study the effectiveness of certain new political movements in gathering the consensus of young people, we do not believe it necessary to formulate a new definition of populism, neither to welcome previously given definitions. Suffice it to say, for the purposes of this paper, that all the political parties/movements here examined share a number of common features: they are all strongly against established parties, what they perceive as the 'establishment', or in other words 'professional politicians'; they are all euro-sceptical in varying degrees; they are markedly anti-elitist, perceiving the 'elites' as having somehow betrayed the people and living in a reality that is alien to that of the 'common people'; linked to anti-elitism is a strong anti-intellectualism, with which they portray intellectuals and academics as working for the 'elites'; they lobby for severe and restrictive immigration policies, and in some instances they employ xenophobic discrimination against those who are not perceived as belonging to the 'national community' or to the same 'culture'; they mostly claim for a sort of 'national supremacy', although this nationalist element is not shared in all cases; they provide simplified answers to complex social and economic problems, to which they link a strong critique of bureaucracy and technocracy, claiming that political issues ought not to be solved by experts but by the will of the people; finally, populist movements claim that their countries have been overwhelmed by globalisation, perceived primarily as a pernicious phenomenon, and thus advocate for a return to the 'good old times', an imagined and undefined time in the past where everything was supposedly better for everybody¹⁰.

Populism is hardly appreciated outside of populist movements. Indeed, the notion of 'populism', albeit aspiring to acquire the status of a scientific concept, is biased by having become today an integral part of polemical rhetoric. Being assimilated to a pathology, populism is loaded with negative connotations. It usually depicts a sort of disease: far from referring only to a social phenomenon, it is associated to a political and moral problem too¹¹. Despite the shortcomings of populism as an analytical term, the political parties and movements reviewed in this paper are all regarded as populist in the sense that they all share characteristics described above.

⁸ M. Canovan, *Trust the people! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy*, [in:] Political Studies, No. 1., 1999.

⁹ Mudde, *The populist Zeitgeist*.

¹⁰ E. Laclau, *On populist reason*, London: Verso 2005, p. 5–6; M. Wiberg, *Mitä populismi on?* [in:] Populismi. Kriittinen arvio., (ed.) M. Wiberg, Helsinki: Edita 2011, p. 14–20.

¹¹ Canovan, *Populism*, p. 300.

One of the most common explanations for the new rise of populist movements is the radical transformation of national politics. People have become more disenchanted by traditional political institutions and the actions of established political parties. Previously strong political alignments and ties to political parties have weakened. This has increased electoral volatility, political inaction, and reluctance to participate in representative democracy through voting¹². Traditional forms of political participation have decreased in popularity especially among the youngest demographics, even though young people have also discovered alternative ways of expressing their political views¹³. At the same time populist movements have increased in popularity. In this article we explore the relationship of populist argumentation, the youth's political problems and political mobilization. Through quantitative and qualitative case analyses, we aim to enlighten, to what extent young people's support for populist movements is related to the populists movements' agenda and rhetorical focus on young people's issues and concerns.

III. GENERAL ANALYSIS

We selected 5 countries (4 EU-countries¹⁴ and Switzerland) along two different dimensions. First, we selected countries in which populist parties or movements are quite popular and, second, in which the situation of the youth seems to be difficult. In this chapter we will describe the youth's troubles in the selected countries along different dimensions. In our analysis we define as young all the people between the age of 18-29; in some occasions we broaden this category into 15-34 because relevant indicators are calculated on that wider age group. We are relying on the so-called "Youth Indicators"¹⁵ collected and designed by EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators" are designed to describe the state of the youth in European countries by using macro statistical data along the lines of general context, education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, social inclusion and the use of Internet. We have made some modifications in the original indicators because we found that some of them are less relevant: we excluded the dimension of political participation and special problems of youth like housing shortage or will of migration.

¹² See: H. Betz, *The New Politics of Resentment. Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe*. [in:] Comparative Politics, No.4., 1993; Mudde, *The populist Zeitgeist*.

¹³ EACEA, *Political Participation and EU Citizenship: Perceptions and Behaviours of Young People*, European Commission 2013. (<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/tools/documents/perception-behaviours.pdf>, accessed March 2014); J. Forbrig, *Democratic politics, legitimacy and youth participation* [in:] Revisiting Youth Political Participation, (ed.) J. Forbrig, Strasbourg: Council of Europe 2005.

¹⁴ In our analysis we will talk about EU27 countries because statistics haven't been refreshed by Croatian data yet thus in many cases we couldn't find EU28 data.

¹⁵ EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"

(http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_social_policy_equality/youth/indicators last accessed on September 10, 2013).

“Youth Indicators” are calculated on different age groups within the cohort of young citizens. We always mark in the title of tables which age group is represented in a specific table.

First, we will give a general description of the situation of the youth in the selected countries in order to have an insight and become familiar with their actual problems. Then we will turn our attention to how populist parties address young people in their programs, political debates, and in the speeches of representatives, as well as in the programs and activities of their youth organizations. We are looking for evidence on how populist parties and movements try to give answers to the problem of youth and how they try to channel young people into their activities.

Table 2.
List of indicators

Dimensions	Indicators
I. Number and ratio of youth	1. Youth population, ratio of young people in the population
II. Education	1. Early leavers from education and training 2. Tertiary education attainment
III. Labour market and unemployment	1. Youth unemployment rate 2. Long-term unemployment rate 3. Young employees with temporary contract 4. Young people not in employment, education and training
IV. Social inclusion	1. At-risk-poverty or exclusion rate 2. Housing difficulties: ratio of those who are still living with his/her parents 3. Will of migration
V. Social and political participation	1. Participation in any listed activities, association memberships 2. Vote during the last 3 years 3. Young people using Internet for accessing or posting opinions on websites civic and political issues are discussed

Table 3.
Number and proportion of population aged 15-29 and 20-29 (2012)

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
Number of population aged 15-29	7.683.191	9.476.270	1.880.782	1.006.085	91.898.100	1.467.300
Number of population aged 20-29	5.504.413	6.570.195	1.312.561	678.319	64.186.419	1.019.406
Proportion of population	16.6	15.6	18.9	18.7	18.2	18.4

aged 15-29 within total population (%)						
Proportion of population aged 20-29 within total population (%)	11.9	10.8	13.2	12.6	12.7	12.8

Source: EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"¹⁶

Young people represent a significant amount within the total EU27 population (Table 3). The number of people aged 15-29 was more than 90 million in the EU27 countries in 2012. They consist of almost one fifth of the total EU27 population. If we take those who are surely eligible to vote (20-29 years old) their number is 64.2 million and their share is a little bit more than one eighth of the total population. In the cases of selected countries the difference between the ratio of youth is negligible: Hungary has the highest proportion of youth (18.9 and 13.2 per cent) while Italy has the lowest (15.6 and 10.8).

Education

Table 4.

Tertiary educational attainment, age group 30-34 (2012)

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
Male	35.0	17.2	24.7	36.7	31.6	47.2
Female	45.3	26.3	35.5	55.4	40.0	40.5
Total	40.1	21.7	29.9	45.8	35.8	43.8

Source: EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"¹⁷

The higher the level education one has attained, the higher the chance s/he has for decent and well-paid work. In Table 4 we collected the ratios of tertiary educational attainment in the age group 30-34. We are focusing on this cohort because we assume that most of these people have finished their studies or reached the highest educational level they wanted. More than one third of people aged 30-34 graduated in the EU27-countries. This proportion is higher among women than among men and it is true in every selected countries. Among these countries, the youth of Finland have the highest tertiary educational attainment (45.8) while Italian youths have the lowest one (21.7). This ratio is still high in Spain where one out of four people aged 30-34 has some kind of degree. It is moderate in Germany and Hungary, where one third of the same age group have a university degree.

¹⁶ EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"
(http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_social_policy_equality/youth/indicators last accessed on September 10, 2013).

¹⁷ EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"
(http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_social_policy_equality/youth/indicators last accessed on September 10, 2013).

Table 5.

Early leavers from education and training (proportion of population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training), 2012

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
Male	31.0	21.0	12.1	11.2	14.5	6.8
Female	20.8	14.5	10.7	8.1	11.0	5.3
Total	24.9	17.6	11.5	8.9	12.8	5.5

Source: EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"¹⁸

Early leavers face much more difficulties in the labour market and in the everyday life compared to those who continue their studies after the high school-leaving exams and have some kind of vocation. The proportion of early leavers from education and training among aged 18-24 is 12.8 per cent in the EU27 countries. This ratio is the highest in the selected Southern European countries (Spain and Italy) while somewhat lower in Finland, Germany and Hungary. Switzerland has less than a half of early leavers ratio than EU27 countries. It is worth mentioning that men tend to leave education earlier and in a higher proportion than women, thus they might have less stable future perspectives and might be more open to radical narratives.

Labour market and unemployment

Table 6.

Youth unemployment rate¹⁹ (aged less than 25), 2012

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
Male	54.4	33.7	28.8	19.9	23.5	NA ²⁰
Female	51.8	37.5	27.3	18.0	22.1	NA
Total	53.2	35.3	28.1	19.0	22.8	NA

Source: EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"²¹

The proportion of the unemployed youth within the economically active youth is more than one fifth in the European Union. This quite high ratio is even higher in Hungary (28.1) and dramatically higher in the selected Southern European countries: while in Italy one third of the economically active youth are unemployed, in Spain more than the half of them are. Germany has one of the lowest youth unemployment rate with its current 8.1 per cent (although Germany has been increasingly developing

¹⁸ EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"

(http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_social_policy_equality/youth/indicators last accessed on September 10, 2013).

¹⁹ Number of unemployed divided by the sum of employed and unemployed people.

²⁰ Not available.

²¹ EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"

(http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_social_policy_equality/youth/indicators last accessed on September 10, 2013).

the notorious system of the “400-euro jobs”, where workers earn only 400 euros a month, a sum that is scarcely sufficient to survive in Germany and that excludes the workers from receiving social contributions. The unemployment rate in Germany is therefore somewhat falsified by this labour arrangement). In Finland the rate is lower than the EU-average but still remarkable.

Table 7.
Youth long-term²² unemployment rate (aged 15-24), 2012

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
Male	38.6	49.9	33.9	NA	34.4	NA
Female	32.2	49.4	27.9	NA	29.8	NA
Total	35.6	49.7	31.2	4.9	32.4	NA

Source: EUROSTAT. “Youth Indicators”²³

Not only the high unemployment rate indicates serious economic problems among youth people, but the duration of it, too. One third of unemployed young EU-citizens suffer from this for more than 1 year. In the case of the selected countries the chance of becoming unemployed for the long-term is the highest among Italian unemployed youth: half of them are out of the labour market for at least 12 months. The youth long-term unemployment rate is close to the EU-average in Spain and Hungary while it is lower in Germany and close to negligible in Finland.

Just like in the case of early leavers, the ratio of long-term unemployment is higher among young men than among young women. It is another factor that might make young boys more open to radical voices.

Table 8.
Temporary employees as percentage of the total number of employees aged 15-24, (2012)

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
Total	62.4	52.9	22.4	42.0	42.1	52.5

Source: EUROSTAT. “Youth Indicators”²⁴

Even if young people have some kind of job in the world of work usually they gather in precarious positions. Almost half of the employed people aged between 15 and 24 have temporary employment in

²² 12 months or more.

²³ EUROSTAT. “Youth Indicators”

(http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_social_policy_equality/youth/indicators last accessed on September 10, 2013).

²⁴ EUROSTAT. “Youth Indicators”

(http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_social_policy_equality/youth/indicators last accessed on September 10, 2013).

the EU27 countries. This ratio is higher in Italy, Germany and much higher in Spain while similar to the average in Finland and lower in Hungary.

Table 9.

Ratio of young people not in employment and not in any education and training, 2012

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
Aged 15-29	22.6	23.9	18.8	10.4	15.9	7.6
Aged 20-24	26.1	29.5	22.2	12.7	18.6	8.8
Aged 25-29	28.7	28.9	26.0	13.7	20.6	9.0

Source: EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"²⁵

The situation of those young people who neither attend formal education nor have a job is among the most vulnerable because they have to face with the risk of marginalization. Between one seventh and one fifth of young people in the EU27 countries are out of the sphere of both education and employment. This ratio is higher in Spain, Italy and Hungary while lower in Finland and Germany.

Social Inclusion

Table 10.

At-risk-poverty or exclusion rate²⁶ of aged 18-24, 2011

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
Aged 18-24	25.0	24.9	18.9	26.5	21.7	13.4

Source: EUROSTAT, SILC-database²⁷

The exclusion rate consists three different sub-dimensions (see footnote) and represents those who have to face serious financial and economic difficulties in everyday life. The proportion of the young people who suffer from these difficulties is 21.7 per cent within the population aged 18-24 in the EU27 countries. This ratio is a bit higher among Spanish, Italian and Finish youngsters while a bit lower among their Hungarian and German peers.

Table 11.

Share of young adults aged 18-34 living with their parents by sex (2011)

²⁵ EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"

(http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_social_policy_equality/youth/indicators last accessed on September 10, 2013).

²⁶ Aggregated index of three sub-indicators: 1. At risk poverty rate (cut-off point: 60% of median equivalised income after social transfers) 2. Severe material deprivation 3. Young people living in households with very low work intensity.

²⁷ EUROSTAT, SILC-database

(http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/income_social_inclusion_living_conditions/data/database last accessed on September 10, 2013).

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
Male	59.1	67.9	69.0	25.6	54.7	48.6
Female	49.7	56.4	54.7	13.9	41.7	37.0
Total	54.5	62.3	61.9	19.9	48.3	42.9

Source: EUROSTAT, SILC-database²⁸

Almost half of the young people between 18 and 34 live together in the same household with their parents in the EU27 countries. In every (selected) country this ratio is higher in the case of young men than in the case of young women. Both financial and cultural reasons might explain these figures. The lack of enough money or salary for starting a separate and independent life from the parents can be an explanation for staying at home for such a long period just like the cultural traditions of “familism”.

There are remarkable differences between the selected countries along this indicator. While in Finland the ratio of the young who still live at home with their parents is lower than one fifth and in Germany it is a bit lower than the average, it is higher in Spain and much higher in Italy and Hungary.

Staying at home with parents and the lack of financial resources for starting an independent life might cause severe frustrations, especially among young men who might be more attracted to political forces that address this question in their party programs.

Table 12.

Would you be willing / would you like to work in another European country in the future? (Aged 15 to 35, 2011, %)

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
Yes, for a limited time	36	24	31	48	31	NA
Yes, for longer term	32	14	34	23	26	NA

Source: European Commission, *Youth on the move*²⁹

More than the half of the young people aged 15 to 35 plan to work in another European countries. Again, the reasons behind this can be either financial or adventurous (or both). In the case of Hungary and Spain in which the proportion of those young people who would like to work abroad even for a longer or limited time is higher than the EU27 average financial reasons are among the most important ones. In Finland almost half of the young people would like to work abroad for a limited time. It means that they would like to collect some experiences but later would go back and settle down. In Italy the ratio of those willing work abroad is lower and this is possibly because of: 1) A relatively lower propensity

²⁸ EUROSTAT, SILC-database

(http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/income_social_inclusion_living_conditions/data/database last accessed on September 10, 2013).

²⁹ European Commission, *Youth on the move* Analytical report, Flash Eurobarometer 319b, 2011, p.55

(http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_319b_en.pdf last accessed on September 10, 2013).

to speak foreign languages, when compared with their European peers; 2) An excessive and pathological attachment to family ties, which has been termed “*familismo amoral*” by Edward C. Banfield in 1958³⁰ (a phenomenon that can be explained as an amoral attachment to family bonds, which are given precedence over everything else, especially over the State and the public good, thus causing a grave lack of civic virtue and public spirit. The Sicilian Mafia, in fact, has relied for decades on an extremisation of this glorification of the family to create an oppositional structure to the democratic State).

Social and political participation

Table 13.

Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organizations?³¹ (Aged 15 to 30, 2013, %)

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
Any of these	58	47	37	58	56	NA
A political organization or a political party	5	6	1	7	5	NA

Source: European Commission, *European Youth: Participation in Democratic Life*³²

More than half of the European young people aged between 15 and 30 participated at least one out of the listed seven social organizations. This participation rate is lower in Italy and much lower in Hungary where young people tend to be apolitical and less interested in politics than middle aged or elderly people. It is also clear from the ratio of participation in the activities of political organizations or political parties. Hungary is the only one country among the selected in which the ratio is much lower (1 per cent) than the EU27 average (5 per cent).

Table 14. During the last 3 years, did you vote in any political election at the local, regional or national level?
(Aged 15 to 30, 2013)

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
yes	61	71	39	64	56	NA

Source: European Commission. *European Youth: Participation in Democratic Life*³³

The low level of political activity among Hungarian young people is also quite remarkable if we take a look at the self-stated participation rates in last elections. While 39 per cent of youngsters living in

³⁰ E.Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*, (with Glencoe Banfield), The Free Press, 1958.

³¹ 1. Sports club 2.youth club/organisation 3. Local organisation 4. Cultural organisation 5. Organisation promoting human rights 6. Organisation promoting environmental issues 7. Political organisation or political party.

³² European Commission, *European Youth: Participation in Democratic Life*, Report, Flash Eurobarometer 375, 2013, p.8 (http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_375_en.pdf last accessed on September 10, 2013).

³³ European Commission, *European Youth: Participation in Democratic Life*, Report, Flash Eurobarometer 375, 2013, p.13 (http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_375_en.pdf last accessed on September 10, 2013).

Hungary voted in the last elections this proportion is higher in every other selected countries. Members of younger generations seem to be the most active in Italy: 7 out of 10 Italian young people reported that s/he voted in the last elections.

Table 15.

Internet activities in the last 3 months: reading and posting opinions on civic and political issues via web (Aged 16-24, 2011)

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	EU27	Switzerland
activity	27	35	16	50	25	NA

Source: EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"³⁴

Radical populist parties tend to use Internet as an alternative public place in order to spread their ideas about different social and political issues, for example, if they haven't got enough media coverage in the offline world. While younger people still spend more time by surfing on the Internet compared to elderly people they are usually less engaged in political discussions via the web. However, the sphere of Internet can be a place where radical populist parties can easily access to younger people and can address their problems. If we take the age group between 16 and 24 every fourth European youngster read or posted his/her political opinion on the web in the last 3 months. This proportion is the lowest (again) in Hungary (16 per cent) while the highest, more precisely double in Finland.

Summary

Table 16.

Summary table

	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Finland	Switzerland
Education	Higher rate with higher early leavers	Lower rate with higher early leavers	Lower rate with average early leavers	Higher rate with low early leavers	Higher rate with low early leavers
Labour market and unemployment	High unempl. Higher risk of marginalization	High unempl. Higher risk of marginalization	Average unempl. Higher risk of marginalization	Low unempl. Low risk of marginalization	NA
Social inclusion	Higher risk of poverty Higher housing diff.	Higher risk of poverty Higher housing diff.	Moderate risk of poverty Higher housing diff.	Higher risk of poverty Lower housing diff.	Lower risk of poverty Lower housing diff.
Social and political participation	Higher	Average	Very low	Higher	NA

³⁴ EUROSTAT. "Youth Indicators"

(http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_social_policy_equality/youth/indicators last accessed on September 10, 2013).

All in all we can conclude that the relative situation of young people tend to be worse in Spain, Italy and in some aspects in Hungary, too, while in Germany is close to the average (that is also risky in some aspects). Finnish young people have the relatively best life conditions from the selected countries.

The question is whether radical populist parties address these difficulties in their programs in order to get closer to the younger generations and receive their votes.

IV. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC SECTIONS

Finland

The True Finns was a smallish party until the 2011 Finnish parliamentary election, when it surprised nearly everyone by gaining 19.1 per cent of the national vote and becoming the third largest party in Finland. Dissatisfied youths are often seen as a significant driving force behind the rise of populist parties³⁵, and this has also been somewhat the case in the True Finns' phenomenal success – yet it's not evident in the party's political rhetoric and agenda. Even though the core of the party's supporters are middle-aged, after the 2011 election the True Finns became the most popular party among the youngest voters in the nation³⁶.

By analysing the True Finns' political programs and the party's parliamentarians' blogs, this segment illuminates the relationship between the party's political rhetoric and youth. The analysed material consists of the party's official political programs between the years 1995–2012 and the party's current 39 parliamentarians' blogs between the years 2010–2013. The material was analysed in Atlas Ti by using a word search with words deriving from the Finnish word "youth". The relevant texts were analysed by focusing on the following questions: What are the youth's most important problems according to the True Finns and how does the party frame those problems? What are the roles of young people in Finnish society according to these frames? Can the young people's support for the True Finns be explained by an agenda focused on topics relevant especially for young Finns?

³⁵ P. Krekó, *Dangerous harbours: Populism, extremism and young people*, Policy Network 11.1.2013. (http://www.policy-network.net/pno_detail.aspx?ID=4312&title=-Dangerous-harbours-Populism-extremism-and-young-people, last accessed on November 2, 2013).

³⁶ K. Grönlund and J. Westinen, *Puoluevalinta*, [in:] Muutosvaalit 2012 (ed.) S. Borg, Helsinki: Oikeusministeriö 2012, p. 159.

Rural roots and new enemies

After the Cold War, dissatisfaction among young Finns has manifested itself politically mostly in leftist civic action such as anti-globalization, environmental and animal rights movements³⁷. These reflexive political movements have also had significant representation in the Finnish parliament and even in government through the Left Alliance and the Green party, whose supporter-profiles are among the youngest³⁸. The ideological base upon which the True Finns is founded is quite far from these young, urban and active forms of political action.

The roots of the True Finns go back to 1959 when the predecessor of the *Finnish Rural Party* (SMP) was formed: SMP's populist, left-centrist, anti-elitist and strongly agrarian politics and rhetoric resulted in significant election victories in the 1970s and 80s. Still, the rural party lost its support due to taking part in government during the years 1983–1990 and was finally disbanded in 1995. The party was re-founded as the *True Finns*, who still carry SMP's populist legacy as being anti-bureaucratic, anti-elitist and anti-establishment. The party has also gained new ideological strands, most significant of which are outspoken euroscepticism and opposition to immigration³⁹.

The average True Finns supporter is a 35–64-year-old, decently-paid male with lower education⁴⁰. The most valued political issues for the party's supporters are EU-politics, immigration-issues, unemployment, language politics and poverty⁴¹. In its programmatic work and rhetoric the party has constructed its profile as a nationalist party which strives to help the less fortunate and the elderly while defending the nation against liberal immigration laws and the EU⁴². The most prominent political issues discussed by True Finns themselves are national sovereignty, poverty, immigration and language politics⁴³. In the media, the party and its politics have been portrayed as something new in Finnish

³⁷ See: J. Rinne, *Henkilökohtaistuva politiikka. Tutkimusmatkoja refleksiiviseen kansalaistoimintaan*, University of Tampere, 2011.

³⁸ K. Grönlund and J. Westinen, *Puoluevalinta*, p. 159.

³⁹ I. Ruostetsaari, *Populistiset piirteet vennamolais-soinilaisen puolueen ohjelmassa*, [in:] *Populismi. Kriittinen arvio*, (ed.) M. Wiberg, Helsinki: Edita 2011.

⁴⁰ S. Borg, *Perussuomalaiset*, [in:] *Muutosvaalit 2012*, (ed.) S. Borg, Helsinki: Oikeusministeriö 2012, p. 195; P. Suhonen, *Mistä perussuomalaiset tulevat?* [in:] *Populismi. Kriittinen arvio*, (ed.) M. Wiberg, Helsinki: Edita 2011, p. 66–69; J. Rahkonen, *Perussuomalaisten ruumiinavaus. Onko työväen protestipuolueen kannatus saavuttanut vielä ylärajaansa?* [in:] *Yhteiskuntapolitiikka*, No. 4., 2011, p. 427–430.

⁴¹ Borg, *Perussuomalaiset*, p. 201, 204–205.

⁴² See: T. Raunio, *Missä EU, siellä ongelma: populistinen Eurooppa-vastaisuus Suomessa*, [in:] *Populismi. Kriittinen arvio*, (ed.) M. Wiberg, Helsinki: Edita 2011; M. Niemi, *Timo Soini perussuomalaisen identiteetin isäntänä* [in:] Jytky. Eduskuntavaalien 2011 mediajulkisuus, (eds.) V. Pernaa and E. Railo, Turku: Kirja-Aurora 2012; N. Hatakka, *Journalismin perussuomalainen uudelleentulkinta sosiaalisessa mediassa*, [in:] Jytky. Eduskuntavaalien 2011 mediajulkisuus (ed.) V. Pernaa and E. Railo, Turku: Kirja-Aurora 2012.

⁴³ Ruostetsaari, *Populistiset piirteet vennamolais-soinilaisen puolueen ohjelmassa*; Raunio, *Missä EU, siellä ongelma: populistinen Eurooppa-vastaisuus Suomessa*.

politics – yet at the same time – unrefined and unsophisticated, backwards and outdated, xenophobic and even racist⁴⁴.

The youth with problems or the youth as a problem?

In the True Finns' rhetoric, young people have an important role to play in society, but the available frames in which the youth can apply themselves are quite limited. Firstly, the youth are seen as the future of the conservative nationalist ideology shared by the middle-aged core of the True Finns. Secondly the youth are seen as the foundation of society – as tax-paying (heterosexual) families with children. Thirdly the young are seen as the nation's defence, both culturally and militarily. Therefore in the party's rhetoric the role of young people in Finnish society is quite conservative.

The True Finns' programmatic work and political rhetoric is typical of populist parties; it aims to point out social problems in order to use them to mobilize discontent against the ones in power. This often happens without providing realistic alternative policy options.

In its political programs and rhetoric the party mentions issues related only to young people quite sparingly. In the True Finns' political manifests and programs, the most salient political problems related to young people are long-term unemployment, drug abuse, lack of mental health care and inaccessibility to education. These most visible problems boil down to the frame of unproductivity; the idea of young people not having anything sensible to do with their lives. The party's message is not aimed merely at young people who've faced struggles in life and who might be on the verge of being secluded or cut off from the rest of society. More often the message is aimed at older people, who are or should be concerned about the young "who are not feeling well" and "whom nobody cares for".

The True Finns portray this unprivileged young people's dismay not only as a strain on municipal and national economies but as a cause for insecurity and even violence. The explanations for the youth's problems are portrayed as two-fold: On the other hand the problems are displayed as something that the young people have no power over – according to the True Finns' view, a troubled youth is thus often a victim. For example the lack of mental health care is often portrayed as deriving from unnecessary budget cuts made in the early 90s during the big Finnish economic depression. But on the other hand especially in the true Finns online discourse, the youth are often also seen as the cause for the problems themselves. In most extreme cases the young are portrayed as lacking in initiative, work-ethic and persistence.

⁴⁴ N. Hatakka, *Perussuomalaisuuden kuva kolumni- ja pääkirjoitusjulkisuudessa* [in:] Jytky. Eduskuntavaalien 2011 mediajulkisuus, (eds.) V. Perna and E. Railo, Turku: Kirja-Aurora 2012.

In many cases young peoples' political issues are mentioned in the context of other larger and – according to the True Finns – more important problems. For example, the party has supported higher government funded child-benefits for students with children. The logic and argumentation behind the suggestion is that by providing young people the possibility to start families early in life lowers the need for work related immigration in the future. Therefore income redistribution for young families is used more as a tool of immigration politics than a tool for improving young people's lives. Students' issues are hardly present in the party's programs at all – most often students are mentioned in lists of multiple groups of people such as this: *"We have to give special care for the well-being of the unemployed, the long-term-ill, the handicapped, families with children, students, pensioners, family caregivers, the ones in high debt and the ones backing the loans and other people fighting hardships and the ones close to them."*⁴⁵

Not even the party's youth organization, *Perussuomalaiset nuoret* (PSN)⁴⁶ has focused on topics especially relevant to young people. The organization has mainly addressed the same topics as the main party has: PSN has for example demanded the abolition of Swedish as the second national language, highlighted problems related to "multiculturalism", and opposed European integration. One evident difference is that most of the SMP's rural rhetoric is absent from the youth organization's discourse.

Gripping regardless of the topics

In its programs and rhetoric, the True Finns has highlighted conservative values which usually have had highest support among older generations of voters. Young people's issues have received relatively little attention not only within the main party but also within the party's youth organization. All in all, the True Finns' political message has not been directed specifically at the young and the party hasn't been very active in addressing political issues relevant especially to young people. Still the party enjoys significant support among the youngest demographic of voters. Therefore in the Finnish case, the explanation for the populists' ability to mobilize young people is not explained by a focus on young people's issues.

The Finnish youth are quite disillusioned with politics and have just as poor knowledge of political issues as the youth in many other European countries. Despite Finland has relatively high a proportion of young people aged 15–29 who are relatively well-educated, young Finns are quite uninterested in politics. According to a study by the Finnish Ministry of Education, over twenty percent of the 15–29 demographic are not at all interested in politics. Under 30-year-olds are also significantly less likely to vote than the older population and more than half of the demographic has very poor knowledge of

⁴⁵ The True Finns' municipal election program 2000 & 2004.

⁴⁶ Translates into "The True Finns Youth" or "The True Finns Youngsters".

politics⁴⁷. The proportion of politically passive young Finns has been on the rise since the early 1990s⁴⁸ increasing the amount of fertile soil for the populists to utilize.

Populist rhetoric has many characteristics that are especially alluring for the politically passive youth. Most evident are the simplification of complex issues and the providing of easy-to-understand causal explanations, which negate the need for further studying of the subjects at hand. The party's strong and compelling eurosceptic and anti-immigration rhetoric have made EU-issues and immigration the most inviting and mobilizing topics also among younger True Finns' supporters⁴⁹. These topics have also been the most salient issues in the party's online-discourse⁵⁰. So in the end, the party's young supporters have more likely been mobilized by the fact that they can identify themselves as nationalists, anti-federalists and critics of immigration – not because they rationalize that the True Finns Party would strive to make things better specifically for their own demographic.

Italy

Historical background

The Italian case is often considered particularly interesting in the analysis of populism. From this point of view, the turning point is the beginning of the 1990s. Until the end of the '80s, populism was not a feature of the Italian political system, except in some cases.

After the Second World War, populist politics, being often associated with fascism, was highly stigmatized. The most significant exception is the case of Guglielmo Giannini's movement "*Fronte dell'uomo Qualunque*", which was founded in 1946 but declined sharply after a relatively good election result (4.4%) in the same year⁵¹. Anyway, populist politicians or movements did not manage to achieve a strong nation-wide success until the end of the '80s because of the strong party system and of the *cleavage* communism/anti-communism, particularly strong because of the geopolitical position of Italy in the context of the Cold War and thus offsetting other potential populist cleavages (for instance people/politicians).

⁴⁷ L. Rapeli, *Tietääkö kansa? Kansalaisten politiikkatietämys teoreettisessa ja empiirisessä tarkastelussa*, University of Turku 2010, p. 122.

(http://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/59408/Annales_C_Lauri%20Rapeli.pdf?sequence=3 last accessed on March 20, 2014).

⁴⁸ S. Myllyniemi, *Nuorisobarometri 2008*, Helsinki: Opetusministeriö 2008.

(http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Nuoriso/nuorisoasiain_neuvottelukunta/julkaisut/barometrit/liitteet/Nuorisobarometri2008.pdf last accessed on March 20, 2014).

⁴⁹ S. Borg: *Tärkeimmät asiakysymykset ja vakavimmat ongelmat*, [in:] Muutosvaalit 2012, (ed.) S. Borg, Helsinki: Oikeusministeriö 2012.

⁵⁰ Hatakka, *Perussuomalaisuuden kuva kolumni- ja pääkirjoitusjulkisuudessa*.

⁵¹ M. Tarchi, *L'Italia populista. Dal qualunquismo ai girotondi*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2003.

However, in the '90s, after the international context changed because of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the series of investigations and trials called “Mani Pulite” led to the dissolution of most of the traditional Italian political parties (first of all the *Democrazia Cristiana* and *Partito Socialista Italiano*). Two important factors that countered the emergence of populism came almost contemporarily to an end. Furthermore, along with the institutional crisis a severe economic crisis spread.

Thus Italy became a sort of “laboratory” for populism⁵². At least three different types of populism spread. The first was the ethno-regionalist populism⁵³ of the *Lega Nord*. At its beginnings, this movement claimed for the independence of northern regions of Italy from the national State. Then they abandoned this claim asking for federalism. The rhetoric of the founder Umberto Bossi and of all politicians of this movement made intensive use of populist frames by identifying several polemical targets: the State bureaucracy, the “Roman” politics, the inhabitants of the southern regions, the immigrants. There was also an effort of creating the myth of an imagined country of North Italy (“Padania”) by inventing a history, a tradition, recovering dialects etc.

The second type of populism that arose in the 1992-1994 crisis was Berlusconi's “telepopulism”⁵⁴. A central element of Berlusconi's narrative was to present himself as a “*self made man*”, as a successful entrepreneur that came from a modest household and achieved great material success, in opposition to the discredited political class, considered responsible for the critical situation of the country. At the time, aversion towards professional politicians was widespread.

It was also crucial in the third type of populism which was particularly successful between the left-wing voters. The core element of this populism was the opposition between an honest and virtuous “civil society” and a corrupted politics. This rhetoric was closely related to the “Tangentopoli” scandal and “*Mani Pulite*” trials. In fact the main representative of this populism was Antonio di Pietro, a prosecutor in those trials who later resigned from the judiciary and became a politician.

The “new wave” of populism: Movimento 5 Stelle

Even if Lega Nord, Forza Italia and Italia dei Valori (Di Pietro's Party) remained to some extents populist they underwent a process of stabilization and institutionalization in the past 20 years.

Hence, the recent success of Beppe Grillo's “Movimento 5 Stelle” could be considered as part of a “new wave” of populism that spread across Europe in the last years after the world economic crisis began.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ P-A.Taguieff, *L'illusion populiste: de l'archaïque au médiatique*, Paris, Berg International Éditeurs, 2002.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Movimento 5 Stelle was founded in 2009 but Grillo's political engagement started in 2005⁵⁵.

Previously Beppe Grillo was a comedian who began his career in the '70s, appearing on variety shows. He became quite popular, but in 1987, after he made a joke about the widespread corruption in the Italian Socialist Party, he was effectively banished from publicly owned television. Later, he performed on stage starting to deal with topics like finance, environmentalism, critique of corruption and technology.

In 2005 he founded his own blog (beppegrillo.it) that became quickly the most visited Italian blog. Through the blog Grillo organized campaigns on different topics. At the same time he encouraged the creation of local groups of political discussion and initiative on the platform Meetup. Some of those groups (called at first "Friends of Beppe Grillo") were later in 2009 changed into Movimento 5 Stelle local civic lists.

The topics of Internet, new technology and e-democracy were always crucial in the rhetoric of Movimento 5 Stelle. According to the narrative of the movement the increasing use of Internet among the society will make it possible to transform representative democracy into direct democracy.

This topic, along with the stress on environmentalism and with a critical attitude towards finance, plays a significant role in shaping the identity of the movement (the "five stars" that are part of the name and of the logo of the movement refer to five issues which are public water, sustainable transport, development, connectivity, and environmentalism). Under this point of view the movement seems to have links and similarities to the left-wing radical and environmentalist movements of the "green wave"⁵⁶.

At the beginning this element was somehow prevailing, but, with the development of the movement, populist issues gained increasing importance.

At the same time, the figure of Grillo acquired an autocratic character as the leader of the movement together with the emergence of a more traditionally right-wing attitude towards immigration, a stronger euro-scepticism and anti-intellectualism. Within the movement the conflict between the claim for direct and digital democracy and the leadership of Grillo became ever more evident. Prominent members of the movement such as Valentino Tavolazzi and Giovanni Favia were banned from the movement after they openly expressed criticism towards Grillo⁵⁷.

⁵⁵ R.Biorcio and P.Natale, *Politica a 5 Stelle. Idee, storia e strategie del movimento di Grillo*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2013; P.Corbetta Piergiorgio and E.Gualmini, *Il partito di Grillo*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2013; L.Mosca Lorenzo and C.Vaccari (eds.), *Nuovi media. nuova politica? Partecipazione e mobilitazione online da MoveOn al Movimento 5 Stelle*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2011.

⁵⁶ P.Corbetta Piergiorgio and E.Gualmini, *Il partito di Grillo*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2013.

⁵⁷ Ibid.; F.Bordignon, *Il partito del capo. Da Berlusconi a Renzi*, Rimini, Maggioli Editore, 2013.

The very idea of “*digital direct democracy*” seems to be more a populist claim than a realistic proposal. Even if Grillo and the members of the movement insist very much on transparency of institutions the internal decision-making process of Movimento 5 Stelle appears to be non-transparent and non-democratic. The very use of Grillo's blog is unidirectional. Decisions on which content to publish are taken by Grillo and his staff and there is usually no answer to comments⁵⁸.

Even if the movement has elected many candidates in local and national elections, the type of participation proposed by Movimento 5 Stelle is not an active effort to change politics and institutions, but an attitude towards control, protest and critique against other politicians considered part of an unrecoverable system. The very concept of political representation is considered wrong: the members of Parliament and of local government elected by the Movimento 5 Stelle consider themselves as “employees” of the citizens. This results in the systematic refusal of Movimento 5 Stelle to join any government with other parties.

Other classical element of populist movements, like xenophobia and anti-immigration positions, are present even though are not central in the ideology of the movement.

The narrative about young people

Beppe Grillo dealt with topics related to young people condition also before founding the Movimento 5 Stelle. In 2006 he published online an eBook, *Modern slaves*⁵⁹, that was a collection of accounts sent by young people to Grillo about the working conditions that they experienced (low salaries, underpaid or free internships, precarious employment). According to Grillo this situation was due to the so-called “*Legge Biagi*”, an Act of Parliament approved in 2003 that was intended to enhance flexibility in the labour market. Generally speaking, topics related to young people are often cited in Grillo's blog⁶⁰ and speeches. For instance, in 2007 in the so called V-Day (the first great public political event organized by Grillo) he said: “These politicians don’t know what they are talking about. They talk about the future. They are seventy years old and they talk about a future they will never see. We need young blood”⁶¹. Young people are perceived to be the ones more capable to initiate change as opposed to the Italian situation of crisis and immobility: “Young people are changing the world in this moment. The whole Maghreb is burning [...] Bill Gates invented Windows when he was Just nineteen [...] Shall we let a 74-year old man with no hair plan our future?”⁶². Young people's aptitude to change is also related to their ability in using new technologies and Internet which are a crucial theme in the narrative of the

⁵⁸ P. Corbetta Piergiorgio and E. Gualmini, *Il partito di Grillo*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2013.

⁵⁹ Accessed at <http://grillorama.beppegrillo.it/schiavimoderni/>, last accessed on November 1, 2013.

⁶⁰ The number of search results for the keyword “giovani” (“youngsters”) in Grillo's blog is 104.000.

⁶¹ A speech by B. Grillo, *Speech for the local elections in Siena*, May 13, 2011.

⁶² Ibid.

Movimento 5 Stelle ("The net is wonderful, world is changed by young people, not by seventy years old people" ⁶³).

The cleavage old/new is crucial in the narrative of Movimento 5 Stelle, while the left/right one is considered as misleading and irrelevant. In fact, according to a common pattern of populism, both left-wing and right-wing parties are seen as parts of the establishment (the so called "*Casta*") as opposed to the people, the citizens. Populist movements aim to a global regeneration of the society, taken as a whole ⁶⁴. Allegedly, the existing parties are all involved in a system of power which is old, corrupt (Grillo quite often stresses the fact that a lot of MPs have been convicted), and exploiting common citizens. On the one hand, some people benefit from the system – the insiders. On the other, some people are excluded and have to pay its cost – the outsiders.

The cleavage old/young people overlaps at least partially with this distinction between insiders and outsiders. It is worth mentioning that in Italian common perceptions and public debate everybody is considered to be "young" almost till the age of 40. This has to do with the difficulties young people experience in finding a good job: unemployment and precarious employment among young people are significantly higher than the average. The condition of instability and the difficulty to start a family lead to the common perception of a "prolonged" youth. The narrative of Movimento 5 Stelle stresses the issue of labour market dual structure quite significantly, where quite stable and well-paid jobs are common among older people while unemployment and precarious employment are the rule among the youth. The job market issue is thus presented as a "generational clash": the "baby boomers" generation leveraged on good opportunities, spending money and making debts that young people have now to pay. This explanation reinforces the antipolitical speech of the Movimento, according to which the political system is a "gerontocracy" and the politicians old men and women... even "dead" ("They are dead and the didn't even notice" Grillo often says). In contrast young people are depicted as the victims of the system. They are "without future" and "without hope". They are forced to emigrate or to accept mini jobs in conditions of exploitation. The responsibility for this situation lies entirely with the ruling (and past) political class that behaved as "fathers that go whoring" squandering the heritage destined to their sons. According to this ideology, the only solution is to erase the existing political class completely and replace it with young outsiders, who have nothing to share with the existing party system.

Portraying young people as innocent victims of a political system that is conceived as an enemy prevents them to engage actively in politics in order to change the status quo. Yet, the M5S fosters citizen's participation. But this kind of participation deals mainly with single and local issues. General topics are discussed more in a denunciatory tone than in order to elaborate proposals ⁶⁵. The main political

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ L.Zanatta, *Il populismo*, Carocci, 2013.

⁶⁵ P.Rosanvallon, *La contre-démocratie. La politique à l'âge de la défiance*, Paris, Seuil, 2006.

decisions and the choices regarding the structure of the Movimento itself are taken by Grillo and Casaleggio. Moreover, M5S supporter engagement has often the form of “clicktivism”.

These forms of engagement, though inadequate, are perhaps a sign of a need for participation. A progressive politics should address and counter this “passive” type of participation, finding the way to foster a more active engagement of young people in the political arena.

The vote for Movimento 5 Stelle among young people

Young people have always been an important part of the M5S electorate. Still, there is a significant evolution in the pools data⁶⁶. Actually, the share of young voters was even higher in the earlier elections in which the movement took part. For instance the share of over 45 voters group was 45 per cent after the 2012 local elections while in 2010-2011 was around 30 per cent⁶⁷. In a first phase (going roughly from 2007 to 2011) the typical supporter of Beppe Grillo's initiatives was young, university-educated, lived in a medium or large city and had good IT skills. In a second phase (after the 2012 local elections) the pool of voters became more balanced, both in terms of demographics and in terms of political orientation.

According to the electoral data of the 2013 political elections, the voters for Movimento 5 Stelle are quite evenly distributed between different regional areas, socio-economical categories and age classes. The most significant exception is older and retired people. Among these, the share of voters for Movimento 5 Stelle is dramatically lower than between the rest of the population.

The share of M5S voters among young people (18-29) is 31.6 per cent⁶⁸. This is above the average (25.6 per cent) of the other parties. Is it worthy mentioning that this average is highly affected by the very low number of votes among older people. The highest share of votes (36.2 per cent) is instead to be found among the age class 30-44⁶⁹.

The share of young people diminished compared to what it was in the early phases of development of the movement⁷⁰, but remains high. Even though a shift in themes and political positions has taken place, the Movimento seems still able to voice the anxiety and anger of new generations, but even more the delusions of the generation that entered the labour market in the '90s. These people, who are now in

⁶⁶ F.Bordignon and L.Ceccarini, *Five Stars and a Cricket. Beppe Grillo Shakes Italian Politics*, [in:] South European Society and Politics, No.4., Fall 2013, p. 427-449.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ I.Diamanti (ed.), *Un salto nel voto. Ritratto politico dell'Italia di oggi*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2013.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

their 40s, were told that globalization was an opportunity. Eventually, however, they either found a precarious job or remained outside of the labour market altogether.

Hungary

Background

Already from the early history of Jobbik one finds evidence that the party has always maintained strong links to young people. Indeed, Jobbik was established in 1999 in Budapest as a youth civil organization composed mainly of university students. The name of Jobbik is an abbreviation of “Jobboldali Ifjúsági Közösség”, translatable in English as “Right-wing Youth Community”. The organization became a party officially in 2003. In 2006, representatives of Jobbik cooperated with the radical right and former parliamentary party, MIÉP by running together for the parliament. Their common list received only 2.2 per cent of the votes, thus they remained outside of the parliament⁷¹. Three years later and after a complex period of Hungarian history because of the effects of the global financial crisis and the local political trust crisis⁷², Jobbik presented an own list at the 2009 European Parliamentary elections and received 14.8 per cent of all the Hungarian votes. Thence, Jobbik expanded its support further, resulting in a 16.7 per cent share of all the votes in 2010 at the Hungarian parliamentary elections.

From the early beginning Jobbik emphasized its anti-establishment and anti-elitist attitudes and mobilized its supporters by anti-EU rhetoric. Jobbik is characterized by opposing immigration, arguing for the protection of nation and national culture, and often being critical towards globalization and exploitative working conditions. Important and particular characteristics that Jobbik shares are strong anti-Romani, anti-Semitic and homophobic discourses used in the everyday rhetoric of party representatives. By giving this brief description we argue that Jobbik fits into the group of populist parties either based on the previously given definitions (see ‘On Populism’) or by others⁷³.

In February 2013 one of the most widely circulated Hungarian daily newspapers, the leftist *Népszabadság*, published a research report about the party affiliation of university and college students. The report shocked the Hungarian public by claiming that one third of students in higher education

⁷¹ The threshold was 5 percent.

⁷² Shortly after the parliamentary elections in 2006 a secretly recorded speech of Ferenc Gyurcsány, Prime Minister and member of the Hungarian Socialist Party, was published. In this long speech, Gyurcsány admitted that they had tried to hide facts about the real economic and social situation of Hungary during the campaign and before. Afterwards, vigorous protests began and the radical right-wing groups played a significant role – among them there was also Jobbik.

⁷³ J. Bartlett et al., *Populism in Europe: Hungary*, London, Demos, 2012, p. 13.

(http://politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/Demos_Hungary_Book_web.pdf, last accessed on September 13, 2013).

eligible to vote at the 2014 national parliamentary election would vote for Jobbik⁷⁴. This result reflects the findings of other recent studies which claim that one of the most important social groups that overwhelmingly supports Jobbik is the country's youth. As Gergely Karácsony and Dániel Róna highlight it in their article on the rising success of Jobbik, the Hungarian radical party is more popular among young people than among elder voters (Karácsony and Róna 2011, 70). According to József Jeskó, Hungarian political scientist and analyst, Jobbik's rapid success is built on five pillars and one of them is a generational one (Jeskó et al. 2012, 82): they address the disappointment of young generations credibly since the representatives of Jobbik are members of this generation. A recent report of a well-respected Hungarian research institute has also shown that one third of Hungarian voters below the age of 37 would vote for Jobbik (TÁRKI 2012).

Karácsony and Róna similarly argue that Jobbik voters are overrepresented among those who use the Internet for news consumption due to the fact that Jobbik voters are younger⁷⁵. Thus Internet is a very important platform through which Jobbik advertise their own political ideas on different issues. Jobbik uses different media tools in quite a professional way: it does not only use the most important social media platforms like Facebook or Twitter but it also has its own online TV channel⁷⁶. According to Melani Barlai, it is very remarkable how Jobbik constructed and currently maintains an "online universe" in which the party can "combine the previously segregated social groups with extremism attitudes"⁷⁷. Barlai also claims that not just simply young people but young people from the working class are more likely to support Jobbik⁷⁸. It is also important to note the role of Hungarian nationalist and radical popular music scene which provided a platform for potential supporters to get acquainted with the belief and value system of these groups – that are strongly linked to the Jobbik⁷⁹. To explain this

⁷⁴ D.Ónody-Molnár, *Tarol a Jobbik. az egyetemisták körében az LMP veri a Fideszt* [in:] Népszabadság, February 16, 2013. (http://nol.hu/belfold/20130216-tarol_a_jobbik-1367357 last accessed on March 16, 2014).

⁷⁵ G.Karácsony Gergely and D.Róna, *The Secret of Jobbik. Reasons behind the rise of the Hungarian radical right* [in:] Journal of East European and Asian Studies, No. 1., Spring 2011, p. 72-73.

⁷⁶ A.Bíró Nagy, T.Boros and Z.Vasali, *More Radical than the Radicals: the Jobbik Party in international comparison*, [in:] Right-Wing Extremism in Europe, (eds.) Melzer Ralf and Sebastian Serafin, Berlin, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2013, p.243 (http://fesprag.ecn.cz/img_upload/3403f47f1c75ee9d75621c7be5f8ebdd/right-wing-extremism-in-europe.pdf, last accessed on September 13, 2013).

⁷⁷ M.Barlai, *Jobbik on the Web*. [in:] CeDEM12 Proceedings of the International Conference for E-Democracy and Open Government, (eds.) Parycek, Peter and Noella Edelman, Krems, Edition Donau-Universität Krems, 2012, p. 229. (<http://m.epractice.eu/files/CeDEM12%20Proceedings%20of%20the%20International%20Conference%20for%20E-Democracy%20and%20Open%20Government.pdf#page=231>, last accessed on September 13, 2013).

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 231.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 231.

Szele Áron, *Nationalism. Racism. Internationalism: The White Power Music Scene in Hungary and Romania* [in:] White Power Music: Scenes of Extreme-Right Cultural Resistance (eds.) Shekhovtsov Anton and Paul Jackson, Islington, Searchlight Magazin Ltd. and Radicalism and New Media Research Group, 2012.

phenomenon, Barlai introduces the term “subcultural right-wing extremism”⁸⁰: young people are more open towards subcultural activities since being a formal or informal member of these groups holds some kind of rebel attitude that is attractive to its supporters.

A recent research of Dániel Róna and Anett Sörös conducted on a sample of Hungarian college and university students highlighted that those younger respondents were more likely to vote for Jobbik who were single, active members of right-wing subcultures, didn’t have longer working experience than 3 months, agreed with idea of need of an authoritarian leader, shared the idea of the possible acceptance of dictatorship when it is needed, had strong anti-Romani and nationalist attitudes and distrusted leading state institutions⁸¹ (Róna and Sörös 2012). The authors emphasize the importance of the effect of national-radical subcultural belonging: younger Jobbik-voters are less embedded in their social relations, they have less social responsibilities in their interpersonal context while the joint groups, frequent meetings, camps, free-time activities organized by Jobbik and its youth organization, Jobbik IT give a possibility of self-realization and self-empowerment⁸².

In the next section, we will present an overview of some recent activity of Jobbik and its youth organization, Jobbik IT,⁸³ in order to give an insight into the spheres in which Jobbik addresses the problems of the youth and shows alternative solutions for them. We have two primary sources. First, we will analyse the party program of Jobbik in which there is a small section concerning youth politics. Second, we will analyse the content of the website of Jobbik IT in order to discover how they address the main problems (perceived and real) of the Hungarian youth.

Elements of the party program of Jobbik that concern young people

Jobbik’s party program was published in 2010 shortly before the last national elections in Hungary.⁸⁴ Only one and a half page deal explicitly with youth politics, and they do so in a rather general manner⁸⁵.

⁸⁰ M. Barlai, *Jobbik on the Web*. [in:] CeDEM12 Proceedings of the International Conference for E-Democracy and Open Government, (eds.) Parycek, Peter and Noella Edelmann, Krems, Edition Donau-Universität Krems, 2012, p. 231.

(<http://m.epractice.eu/files/CeDEM12%20Proceedings%20of%20the%20International%20Conference%20for%20E-Democracy%20and%20Open%20Government.pdf#page=231>, last accessed on September 13, 2013).

⁸¹ Róna Dániel, and Sörös Anett, *A kuruc.info nemzedék. Miért népszerű a Jobbik a fiatalok között?* [in:] Racionálisan lázadó hallgatók 2012. Apátia-radikalizmus-posztmaterializmus a magyar egyetemisták és főiskolások körében I. (ed.) Szabó Andrea, Szeged, Belvedere, 2012.

(<http://aktivfiatalok.hu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Racionaliasn-lazado-hallgatok--BCE-Belvedere.pdf> last accessed on November 2, 2013).

⁸² Ibid., p. 145.

⁸³ Jobbik IT = Jobbik Ifjúsági Tagozat (Jobbik Youth Section).

⁸⁴ Program of Jobbik: Radikális változás (Radical change) Accessed at <http://jobbik.hu/sites/default/files/jobbik-program2010gy.pdf> last accessed on July 30, 2013.

⁸⁵ In the almost 90-page-long party program the most important topics were the strength of Hungarian economy,

According to these few paragraphs there are only a few pillars on which Jobbik's youth politics stand. Jobbik treats young people as an important future human resource of the Hungarian nation: allegedly, if the nation wastes them it wastes its future as well. This is a well-known discursive element of nationalist narrative, namely how younger generations represents the future of the nation: if the social and economic condition of younger people tends to worsen, the whole future of the nation will be worse than it was before. The first pillar treats younger people as human resources whose financial situation should be stable in order to have families and children hence increasing the number of national citizens. They criticize the existing family-support social system because it doesn't help young people to start a family. As a second pillar Jobbik also argues for a better and qualified education, stable social security, enough workplaces and decent working conditions. They highlight that thousands of young Hungarian people have migrated to other countries because they could not feel that Hungary valued them. In this sense they claim that this form of migration is a forced one, forced mainly by economic and emotional reasons. The basic assumption of Jobbik is that most of the Hungarian youth would work in Hungary and for the nation if they had sufficient and decent work (third pillar). Besides better working conditions, as a fourth pillar Jobbik also argues for better first-home buying possibilities for young people.

Jobbik IT: youths of youth

Jobbik is not just the youngest parliamentary party with the lowest average age amongst its MPs,⁸⁶ but it also has a very strong and popular youth organisation. If we take the Facebook websites of youth sections of every Hungarian parliamentary party and the number of followers of these sites as an indicator of the popularity we register a dramatic difference: while Jobbik IT had 21,000 followers in December 2013,⁸⁷ the governing party Fidesz's youth section, Fidelitas had 5,000,⁸⁸ and the Hungarian Socialist Party's youth section Societas had only 1,800.⁸⁹ In other words: the radical populist Jobbik's youth organization seems to be 10 times (!) more popular than its socialist counterpart and 4 times more popular than the current governing party's. This impression of popularity is confirmed by the Facebook-website itself: almost every second recent news of Jobbik IT is about a newly formed local group of Jobbik IT and it lets the reader have the impression that this youth organization and Jobbik are really popular among the youth. Even a recent cover picture of Jobbik IT advertises the popularity of Jobbik among young people by representing the most important and popular public figures of the party and containing two slogans: "The future cannot be stopped! The most popular among young people."⁹⁰

the boost of agriculture and rural Hungary, the fight for a just and growing society and a strong and proud nationalist value system, and the importance of security and order in the society.

⁸⁶ I.M.Szegő, *Megfiatalodik a parlament a második forduló után* [in:] HVG.hu, April 20, 2010,

(http://hvg.hu/itthon/20100420_atlageletkor_parlament_valasztas last accessed on September 10, 2013).

⁸⁷ Facebook-website of Jobbik IT (<https://www.facebook.com/JobbikIT> last accessed on December 20, 2013).

⁸⁸ Facebook-website of Fidelitas (<https://www.facebook.com/fidelitas.hu> last accessed on December 20, 2013).

⁸⁹ Facebook-website of Societas (<https://www.facebook.com/Societas> last accessed on December 20, 2013).

⁹⁰ Updated as a cover picture on 3 October, 2013.

(<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=733799323313035&set=a.393214144038223.110022.1293821637547>

The website of Jobbik IT⁹¹ collects all of the youth related news from the main webpage of Jobbik. In this sense visitors can quickly have an impression on how Jobbik cares about specific problems of young people. According to their own short description,⁹² Jobbik IT's main goal is to mobilize apathetic and pessimistic young people who are disappointed in politics but would like to be proud of being the members of the Hungarian nation. Besides this, Jobbik IT would like to provide a community for these youths by organizing camps, short trips and other free-time activities that satisfy the communal need of this generation. In the macro-statistical part we highlighted that Hungarian young people have limited interest towards politics and they are less likely to be active members in different groups or social organizations. Jobbik IT targets young people who are interested in everyday public and political issues. The organization provides a sphere where these youths can meet their peers and discuss matters of public concern.

It can be argued that Jobbik IT is an "issue-organization". It singles out exact and delimited problems of young people from everyday life. For example, it pays special focus on mistreatment of student workers: they run a separate subpage through which student workers can report unfair employers and bad working conditions or abuse and they forward it to one of Jobbik's MPs who will report the case to the authorities. Jobbik IT also advertises Jobbik's proposal to build social flats-for-rent for young people who could rent these flats for a reduced price. Jobbik also criticises the higher education policies of the government for cutting back financial resources for universities and the number of admitted students. They argue that it is unfair for those who would like to attend universities but cannot. This opinion is not new to the Hungarian public life: during the winter of 2012 and 2013 many students' protests were organized by an autonomous student group called "*Students' Network*" (Hallgatói Hálózat) that borrowed some of its ideological features, forms of mobilization and working elements from the so-called Occupy movements. When it comes to higher education policies Jobbik IT uses the same arguments and by doing this they weaken these autonomous and informal movements while attracting more and more university students.

Jobbik IT published a so-called Hungarian Youth Code in which they outline general ideas on different concepts and issues like nation, politics, faith, marriage, even sports or progressive topics like environmental protection⁹³. The 36-page-long text seems to be widely circulated since it has been printed in 10,000 copies. The codex is more a guidance for young people on what they should think about these issues than a kind of party program.

In this sense the grassroots and visible activity of Jobbik IT reproduces a possible and meaningful source of resupply of not just voters and sympathizers but also future new political figures of the Hungarian

57&type=1&theater).

⁹¹ Jobbik IT (<http://jobbikit.hu> last accessed on September 10, 2013).

⁹² Jobbik IT. *Mi a célunk?* (<http://jobbikit.hu/mi-a-celunk> last accessed on September 10, 2013).

⁹³ Magyar Ifjúsági Kódex [Hungarian Youth Codex] <http://www.jobbikit.hu/kodex> accessed September 2013.

radical-right and populist party. They successfully channel young people who want to take part in public and social activities. Representatives of other parties and different experts on youth should pay attention to these phenomena because these personal attachments can influence the basic political values of a whole generation and might result in the penetration and diffusion of anti-democratic opinions and attitudes.

Spain

General context

Spain, among the members of the European Union, is probably the most fragile country after Greece. The main parties (PP – Popular Party and PSOE – Socialist Party –) are paramount actors in the country's economic and social field: they have control upon public economy bodies, communications and media, universities, partly the judicial system and also in a recent past savings banks (cajas de ahorro). In spite of the crisis, their funding is still almost totally public.

At the beginning of 2013, the newspaper El País revealed a shocking case of corruption inside Partido Popular (which is now the governing party): the former treasurer, Luis Bárcenas, used money received by large companies to increase the salaries of some politicians in exchange for favours (especially building permits). The politicians accused of corruption are more than 700 and also Iñaki Urdangarin, Princess Cristina's husband, has allegedly transferred to his own bank account public money assigned to the organization of some sporting events.

Political corruption has contributed to the weakening of Spanish representative democracy and the pluralistic party system no longer reflects the people's will. Spanish citizens seem to have lost all their faith in politics and political parties. In particular, the youngest generations are not interested in politics, as a consequence of the economic crisis and of the scandals and deficiencies of the democratic system and parties alike.

However, Spain still represents a special case and that is why someone calls it the "Spanish exception"⁹⁴. Spanish current social and economic conditions are similar to those of other Southern European countries (for example, Italy, Greece and Portugal). But populist forces do not have any direct representation or expression within political parties (as it happened with Italy's Movimento 5 stelle), since they only emerge in demonstrations and street protests.

⁹⁴ O. Bartomeus, *La excepción española*, de Oriol Bartomeus en *Agenda Pública de eldiario.es*, Caffè Reggio, March 22, 2013.

(<http://www.caffereggio.net/2013/03/22/la-excepcion-espanola-de-oriol-bartomeus-en-agenda-publica-de-eldiario-es/>, last accessed on March 20, 2014).

The first cause of the lack of transposition of protests in the political arena lies in the electoral system, because it promotes a two party system (even if it is not perfectly dual). Little districts create an almost first-pass-the-post system and so voters usually choose the best option between the two aforementioned main parties. Thus, party managers succeed in maintaining a strong control over local sections and Autonomous Communities and this apparently immovable system may well increase the citizens' lack of confidence in the political system.

The second element consists of the ideological dimension of the PP and PSOE: any voter can identify himself or herself "in something of one or the other party" and it is hard to create radical groups (this is demonstrated by the fact that *Izquierda Unida* is a small party and there are no significant far-right parties).

The third factor derives from Spanish history, as there was no transition from a tradition of mass-based parties (because of the Francoist period...) to the new system of postdemocracy⁹⁵ and television democracy. According to this theory, "sin este colchón de intermediación entre élite y base, sin la tradición organizativa básica y sin tejido social, es muy difícil cristalizar una opinión, por muy mayoritaria que sea, en una propuesta organizada"⁹⁶.

The lost generation (la generación perdida)

It has been said several times: "Europe is not a place for young people". Spain is even less so.

In Europe a young person out of four is unemployed, but unemployment among youth is higher in some countries: France, Slovenia and Hungary are close to 30%, Italy to 40%, Spain around 55% and Greece beyond 64%. The youth guarantee program is only the starting point to address the problem, since the six billion euros allocated to the whole of Europe have been concentrated in one year instead of the initial seven year period.

According to Eurostat statistics, in 2012 in Spain there was a 24,9% of early leavers from education and training (among population aged 18-24): the rate was higher than the one of other countries monitored in this paper and almost double the one that refers to the EU27 countries (12,8%).

⁹⁵ C. Crouch, *Post-democracy*, London, Polity Press, 2004.

⁹⁶ Bartomeus, *La excepción española, de Oriol Bartomeus en Agenda Pública de eldiario.es*. 2013. English translation: "without this buffer of intermediation between the elite and the electoral base, without a basic organizational tradition and without social texture, it is very hard to translate an idea, though widely-shared, into an organized proposal".

Again, in 2012 Eurostat youth indicators, another problem was given by precarious jobs: in fact, it was calculated that the 62,4% of employees aged 15-24 held temporary positions.

The lack of rights and jobs explains why some talked about a *generación perdida*⁹⁷. The group of young people under 35 is not homogeneous and it can be divided by one half according to education: with/without secondary education.

Youth unemployment and temporary contracts are a dangerous combination, and are marginalizing a generation. Having studied does not give much advantage to get a stable position and the few stable jobs are more likely to unskilled ones⁹⁸. A new movement recently created, *Juventud sin future*, points out to the paradox that the most educated generation in Europe (in Spain they usually say: “*la generación mejor preparada de nuestra historia*”) is at the same time the one with less employment and the worst salaries. We can’t exclude that it will eventually decide to form a party and participate in the elections, against what they see as the “*partidos del Régimen*”.

The reactions of young Spanish did not lead to “classical” expressions of populism⁹⁹. On the contrary, we can talk about generic manifestations of “*apelación a la unidad de la gente, a la nación o al país y en contra de los partidos o facciones que intentan dividirla*”¹⁰⁰ and less of a “*apelación al hombre común, el miedo extranjero [Germany] o la promesa de un futuro idílico*”¹⁰¹.

The figure below¹⁰² shows the political preferences of the so called *generación perdida*:

⁹⁷ P. Simón, *Los que de verdad pierden en la generación perdida*, Politikon 22.11.2012.

(<http://politikon.es/2012/11/27/los-que-de-verdad-pierden-en-la-generacion-perdida/>, last accessed on March 20, 2014).

⁹⁸ B. Jiménez et al., *La emancipación precaria*, Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas 2008.

⁹⁹ Canovan, *Populism*.

¹⁰⁰ English translation: “call for unity of people, nation, country and against parties and factions aiming at divide it”.

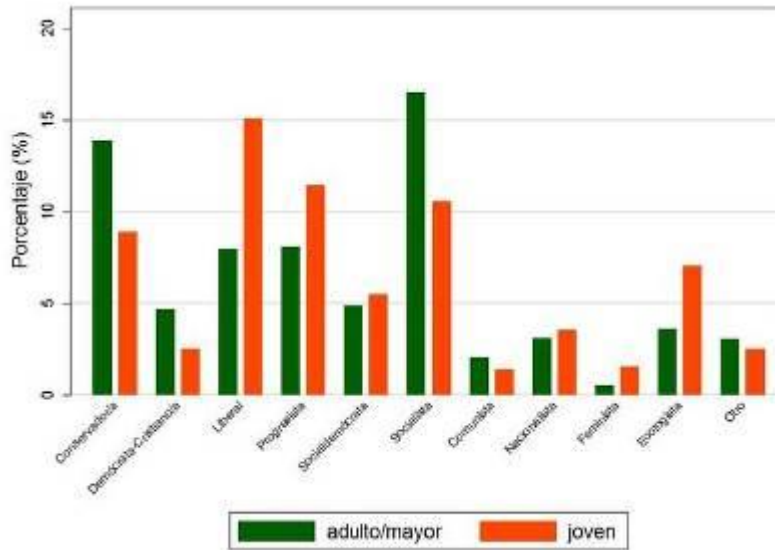
¹⁰¹ E. Güell, *Populismo, una posibilidad estructural*, Agenda Pública 2.4.2013.

(http://www.eldiario.es/agendapublica/blog/Populismo-posibilidad-estructural_6_117648261.html, last accessed on March 20, 2014). English translation: “call for the common man, the fear of foreigners and the promise of idyllic future”.

¹⁰² A. Falco-Gimeno and P. Simón, *La ideología de la generación perdida*, Agenda Pública, January 1, 2013.

(http://www.eldiario.es/agendapublica/blog/ideologia-generacion-perdida_6_95600447.html, last accessed on March 20, 2014).

Figure 1



Young people vote differently, when compared to adults, because of two factors: the vital cycle effect – *efecto ciclo vital* (vote changes according to experiences) and the context effect – *efecto cohorte* (the voter is influenced by his/her social environment, such as democracy or Francoist regime)¹⁰³.

The table shows clearly the preference of the youngest towards liberal and progressive ideas, while the '80s generation identifies itself in traditional parties (and conservative and socialist ideas).

Younger generations are generally more educated than the older ones and they do not identify themselves in institutions and parties, since those do not represent nor protect them. How is this different political involvement manifested?

The Indignados

Spanish citizens, and especially young people, are distancing themselves from politics; less than 4% of them are affiliated to a party and often their involvement is reduced only to demonstrations and strikes¹⁰⁴.

But in the last few years, some new (more or less organized) civic movements have raised to express social issues and, as a consequence, there is a new debate on populism in Spain¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰³ Falco-Gimeno and Simón, *La ideología de la generación perdida*.

¹⁰⁴ Studio Fundación BBVA, *Valores políticos-económicos y la crisis económica*, 2013.

(<http://www.fbbva.es/TLFU/dat/Presentacionvaloreswordwidel.pdf>, last accessed on March 20, 2014).

The main protest movement that occupied streets in 2011 is called *Movimiento 15-M* or the *Indignados*. It is not very organized yet and did not compete in the last political elections, even if it has an enormous magnitude: it seems that between 6,5 and 8 million Spanish people (out of a total of 47 millions) participated in these protests, started on the 15th of March 2011 in 58 cities.

The *Indignados* are young (75%), they hold university degrees (70%), they dislike corrupt politicians and traditional parties, “*tienen conciencia conocimiento e interés por la política. Y votan. Pero no lo hacen de manera cohesionada*”¹⁰⁶.

The following table shows a clear preference for leftist parties, but there is a huge voter dispersion (10% UPyD, 6% Equo-Compromís) and «*la abstención es la primera opción para los más jóvenes*»¹⁰⁷.

Table 17

Tabla 1: Ideología (escala 1 – 10) de los participantes en el movimiento 15-M			
	Participantes 15M (encuesta CIS)	No participantes (encuesta CIS)	15-M Salamanca (Calvo et al. 2011) (1).
(extrema izq)	10,4%	3,6%	10%
2	13,5%	3,7%	20%
3	30,1%	13,1%	35%
4	15,5%	14,8%	13%
5	14,0%	20,9%	5%
6	4,5%	11,2%	0,8%
7	2,5%	9,2%	1,2%
8	2,0%	6,9%	1,2%
9	0,7%	1,9%	0,8%
(extrema dcha)	0,7%	2,3%	0,8%
No Sabe/No contesta	6%	13,5%	11,8%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Claims from the street are also canalized through civic organizations and associations such as change.org, acces-info.org or Acció per La Democracia (at the regional level), which act as pressure groups in order to

¹⁰⁵ X. Casals, *El pueblo contra el Parlamento*, Madrid: Pasado y presente 2013; J. Sauquillo, *El riesgo de populismo en España*, Cuartopoder, August 4, 2012.

(<http://www.cuartopoder.es/soldeinvierno/el-riesgo-de-populismo-en-espana/2466>, last accessed on March 20, 2014).

¹⁰⁶ K. Calvo, *El voto indignado*, [in:] Agenda Pública, December 13, 2012.

(http://www.eldiario.es/agendapublica/blog/Voto-Indignado_6_78452183.html, last accessed on March 20, 2014).

English translation: “they have consciousness knowledge and interest for politics. And they vote. But they do not vote in the same way”.

¹⁰⁷ I. Urquizu, *Los jóvenes y la política*, [in:] El País, July 16, 2012.

(http://elpais.com/elpais/2012/06/06/opinion/1338999189_330694.html, last accessed on March 20, 2014).

English translation: “abstention is the main option for the younger”.

change the access to information or promote electoral reform. At the same time, we can observe the raise and strengthening of other alternative parties that are launch populist messages.

Towards a new political system?

The Spanish political system is in crisis. According to some polls, in case of elections, today the PP would obtain more or less 24,5% (44,6% in 2011) and PSOE 21,5% (28,7%).

The areas of abstentions and blank votes are growing, while some votes lost by the main parties will be probably given to the leftist party *Izquierda Unida* (around 17%) and the centrist party *Unión Progreso y Democracia* (13,5%). Both parties would double their consensus compared to the last elections results.

Young people seem to identify themselves more and more with UPyD, a party founded in 2007 in opposition to the two-party system in order to regenerate Spanish democracy. Liberal and progressive ideas are useful only to catch the claims for change (for example, a new electoral law) and to place the party in the middle of the political offer (in opposition to PP and PSOE).

The main criticism of UPyD is the populism of arguments used by its leader, Rosa Díez (a former PSOE MEP) and the lack of internal democracy (a tendency evident in other populist movements across Europe, such as in Italy's Movimento 5 stelle). The political crisis and the weakness of parties incentivize the growth of UPyD, which can support both liberal proposals and projects in favour of a Welfare State according to present-day needs, and it is getting more and more locally structured.

With a dramatic economic crisis and a rapidly changing political system, we can't rule out that there may be accelerations towards populist movements or an immense increase in abstention.

Switzerland

Background

Europe has seen, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, the re-emergence of right-wing extremism and populism. New political parties with charismatic leaders have advanced xenophobic, nationalist, and communitarian discourses that have altered the nature of the post WWII policy consensus and have become a threat to European integration. Instead of opening society to foreign influences, European citizens are increasingly adopting a hostile attitude to foreign influences and rejecting those who to them represent an imaginary "Other." Prominent examples are France, with the neo-fascist party *Front Nationale*; the Netherlands, with the party of the assassinated Pim Fortuyn and the rejection of the EU

Constitutional Treaty; the *FPÖ* of the late Jörg Haider in Austria; the *Lega Nord* in Italy as well as Beppe Grillo's *Movimento Cinque Stelle*; and the *Vlaams Belang* in Belgium.

However, also Switzerland, despite its longstanding democratic credentials, has been gravely affected by populism. Over two decades, the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP), under the leadership of Christoph Blocher, has become the largest party in the National Council (lower house) with 26.7% of the vote in 2004, 29% in 2007, and 26.8% in 2011. Blocher was also President of the officially non-partisan Action for an Independent and Neutral Switzerland and played a dominant role in the campaign against Switzerland's joining the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1992. As elsewhere in Europe, euroscepticism is but one manifestation of right-wing populism.

Xenophobia as populist recipe for electoral gain

Yet, populism in Switzerland is particularly worrying, since it not only presents all the features that are commonly associated with right-wing populism, but in recent years has assumed characteristics and stances that are in open contrast with a democratic society. The peculiarities of Swiss populism, which we are about to examine, are a constant source of concern and embarrassment for most other Swiss parties (both in the centre-right and centre-left fields), because they seem to be continuously developing in the direction of right-wing extremism. The SVP peculiarities, in fact, are mainly two: 1) A growing tendency to use manifestly xenophobic and chauvinistic propaganda to win the votes of the inhabitants of the most rural parts of Switzerland, by inventing an imaginary enemy that is allegedly threatening the Swiss way of life (whatever that may be) and even the integrity of the Swiss confederation: The *Ausländer* (this is the standard German word for 'foreigner' which, however, in Switzerland is rapidly assuming an extremely negative connotation and is beginning to be used as a swearword and a term of abuse). Therefore, xenophobia is currently openly and proudly adopted by the SVP, which do not even try to masquerade it into something that may appear more respectable, but instead make of xenophobic convictions the basis of their electoral appeal. In fact, seen the success that extreme chauvinistic ideas have brought to the Swiss People's Party, their leadership does not hesitate to make the further step into the field of racism, depicting all 'Others' (those who do not conform to the stereotype of Swiss white person) as disturbing elements that should be deported at the earliest opportunity. A first tangible result of SVP's anti-immigration campaign was the success of the referendum, held in February 2014, with which a majority (albeit small) of Swiss citizens voted to reintroduce quotas for EU-citizens who intend to move to Switzerland.¹⁰⁸

Racism amongst the rural and urban youth

The second worrying peculiarity of the SVP, although this is shared with other populist parties across

¹⁰⁸ V. Löscher, *Wacht auf!*, Tages Anzeiger, February 13, 2014. (<http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/kultur/diverses/Wacht-auf/story/23587060>, last accessed February 20, 2014).

Europe, is their growing appeal among the rural youth. Much of their electoral basis lies in agricultural and mountainous areas of Switzerland whereas in the cities they fare poorly. However, the little votes that they get in cities such as Zurich, Geneva, and Basel come predominantly from young people who are between 18 and 26 years old, on whom the xenophobic propaganda seem to work better than on the older urban population.

The popularity of the SVP among the Swiss youth points to an utter failure of the schooling system, the very place where attitudes of tolerance and respect for other cultures ought to be taught. It is a malaise that is reflected in the constantly diminishing rate of scholars attending the *Gymnasium*, the only real secondary school in the country (the other are vocational and technical schools), which is currently chosen by only some 15% of young Swiss. Philippe Sarasin, Professor of Modern History at the University of Zurich, has been fighting a long battle against the prevalent conviction in Switzerland, for which studying at the *Gymnasium* and going to university is pointless and a waste of time, since more rapidly remunerative occupations in multinational companies, banks, and heavy industry provide an alluring albeit ephemeral alternative.¹⁰⁹

SVP's consistent utterance of racist abuses has made its way into diverse sectors of the population.¹¹⁰ A few years ago, a man from Kosovo who had lived in Switzerland for more than 12 years and had seemingly perfectly integrated in his local community, was denied citizenship by a popular vote (naturalization in Switzerland can only be granted following a favourable vote of the citizens of the city and of the canton in which the applicant lives). Despite the federal authorities had given their assent to the naturalization, the local council voted against and gave the following reasons: citizenship is denied because the applicant is 1) a Muslim; and 2) a disabled person.

After this evidently racist decision, Swiss federal judges spoke against the practise of naturalisation via a city and cantonal vote, deeming the procedure seemingly unconstitutional and possibly contrary to basic principles of international law. The SVP, however, came out loud and clear in favour of the maintaining of the practice, mounting a large media campaign that obtained the desired result: this peculiar procedure of naturalisation still stands. In 2007, the whole of Switzerland was covered with large posters and banners by the SVP, that had recently proposed a new law to the Swiss Parliament that would compel the Swiss authorities to deport all foreigners who commit a crime, regardless of the entity or gravity of the crime, and regardless of the country to where they would be deported. The posters depicted the map of Switzerland with a few white sheep on top, one of which was kicking a black sheep out of the country.

¹⁰⁹ P. Sarasin, *Wieso die Sweitz so bildungsfeindlich ist*, Tages Anzeiger, October 24, 2011.

(<http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/Wieso-die-Schweiz-so-bildungsfeindlich-ist/story/18585508>, accessed September 2013).

¹¹⁰ Blocher, when he was still a member of the Federal Council (the body that in Switzerland holds the executive power and represents the state) called two Albanians 'criminals' simply because they had applied for political asylum.

The black sheep was, naturally, a much-hated ‘foreigner’. After having been accused of racist overtones, the SVP proposed the abrogation of the crime of racism from the Swiss criminal code, arguing that it is a limitation of the freedom of speech. This is a campaign that they are still supporting strongly, and it includes the abolition of the parliamentary commission against racism, deemed useless and, again, a curtailing on the freedom of expression which, apparently, ought to include racist remarks.

Swiss and “foreign” youth

In 2004 the Swiss ‘Confederation Commission Against Racism’ (which the SVP wants to abolish) published a report titled *Black People in Switzerland: A Life between Integration and Discrimination* (published in German, French, and Italian only). The report strongly denounced the pervasiveness and diffusion of racism in Switzerland arguing that discrimination based on skin colour in Switzerland is not exceptional, it is instead very common and widespread and it affects most immigrants decades after their immigration. ‘They look at you like you’re a devil’ – complains a 17-year-old girl of African background – ‘If you’re on a tram and any white person sits near you, you know that they’re a foreigner, too’. And if young immigrants think that official refugee status or even a Swiss passport will help to change such perceptions, they are likely to be disappointed according to Ezzeldin Abdalrahman, an asylum centre social worker: ‘I came to Switzerland from Sudan ten years ago and was fortunate to be recognised as a legitimate refugee within three months’. Abdalrahman recalls ‘I later married a Swiss woman and was able to take up Swiss citizenship’. However ‘I am still made to feel like a foreigner in Switzerland just because of the colour of my skin’.¹¹¹ James Philippe, a 28-year-old Haitian who has lived in Switzerland for 14 years and works for Streetchurch, a Protestant storefront community organization, as well as a hip-hop dance instructor, said that he is regularly stopped by the police and required to show his papers and submit to body searches. He speaks German, French, Creole and English but has yet to receive a Swiss passport. ‘The police treat me like I’m somehow not human’ – he said at the Streetchurch headquarters in Zurich – ‘Then I open my mouth and speak good Swiss German and they’re always shocked.’¹¹²

A UN Human Rights Commission (strongly denounced by the SVP with abusive language) has expressed fear for the xenophobia that characterizes Switzerland and has condemned laws that target the country’s immigrants as unjust and racist. The United Nations special rapporteur on racism, Doudou Diène, has observed that Switzerland suffers from racism, discrimination and xenophobia. The UN envoy explained that although the Swiss authorities recognised the existence of racism and xenophobia they did not view the problem as being serious. Diène has shown how representatives of minority communities have said

¹¹¹ M. Ledsom, *Black bear the brunt of racism in Switzerland*, Swissinfo (http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/archive/Blacks_bear_the_brunt_of_racism_in_Switzerland.html?cid=3023446, last accessed on September 7, 2013).

¹¹² E. Sciolino, *Immigration, Black Sheep and Swiss Rage*, [in:] New York Times, October 8, 2007. (http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/08/world/europe/08swiss.html?_r=2&pagewanted=all& last accessed on September 7, 2013).

to have experienced serious racism and discrimination, notably in regard to access to public services (eg. health care), employment and lodging.¹¹³

Clear evidence of the extreme right-wing features of Swiss populism came in June 2010 when the Swiss People's Party proposed the creation of a 'Greater Switzerland', a sort of anti-European Union or competitor to the European Union, where instead of Switzerland joining the EU, the border regions of Switzerland's neighbours would join Switzerland.¹¹⁴ With this outlandish initiative, critics of the SVP began to accuse the party of neo-Nazism, as the parallels with Adolf Hitler's 'Greater Germany' were evident and were not even strongly denied by the members of the party.

Conclusion

To conclude, populism in Switzerland is comparable to most other populist movements in Europe, however it presents elements of extremism that are exceptionally widely shared by the Swiss population. Whereas racist and neo-fascist movements and ideas exist at varying degrees in most European countries and are commonly held by various populist groups, those are often extremely minoritarian and usually do not even take part in elections or, if they do, their electoral success is very scarce or non-existent. In Switzerland, instead, the extreme right-wing ideas held by the SVP are endorsed by 29% of the population, making it by far and large the biggest party in Parliament. The situation is not set to improve either, since it appears that the Swiss youth is enthusiastically welcoming the hyper nationalist recipes of the People's Party and is entering adulthood with dangerously xenophobic, intolerant, and even racist ideas, not only towards extra-European peoples, but also towards their neighbours of German, French, and Italian descent.

Comparison with other successful populist parties does not seem to hold ground, since for example the Italian *Movimento Cinque Stelle* also presents worrying elements of chauvinistic supremacy, but it has not (or not yet) adopted overtly racist and anti-immigration stances such as those of the SVP. Likewise, the Norwegian *Progress Party* may hold 'extreme' views when compared with the admirable moderatism that characterises Norwegian society, however, as Ketil Solvik-Olsen, a deputy leader and finance spokesman for the party, has remarked: 'In a Norwegian sense we are far right. But in the UK we would

¹¹³ See: C. O'Dea, *UN envoy calls racism in Switzerland a reality*, SwissInfo January 14, 2006. (http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/archive/UN_envoy_calls_racism_in_Switzerland_a_reality.html?cid=246798, accessed September 2013); I. Foulkes, *Swiss row over black sheep poster*, BBC News September 6, 2007. (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6980766.stm>, accessed September 2013).

¹¹⁴ V. Capodici, "Kanton Baden-Württemberg": Für Deutschland ein herber Verlust, *Tages Anzeiger*, July 22, 2010. (<http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/Kanton-BadenWuerttemberg-Fuer-Deutschland-ein-herber-Verlust/story/25003005>, last accessed on March 20, 2014); E. Henckel, *SVP will Baden-Württemberg der Schweiz angliedern*, *Die Welt*, June 11, 2010. (<http://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article8001661/SVP-will-Baden-Wuerttemberg-der-Schweiz-angliedern.html>, last accessed on March 7, 2014).

be to the left of the Conservatives. And in the US the Republicans would call us damn socialists.’¹¹⁵

From wherever you may look at the Swiss People’s Party, however, they would invariably look as an extreme right-wing chauvinistic political movement. That they have recently adopted openly racist ideas, as well as fanciful neo-fascist ‘dreams’, should be a cause for consternation not only for the sound part of the Swiss political spectrum but for Europe as a whole. To conclude, populism is a plague for a country, Switzerland, that has for long been an example of well-functioning democratic institutions and, as such, it points to the failure of moderate parties of both the center-right and center-left to understand the needs and wishes of an evolving electorate. Fighting and eradicating populism has become one of the greatest challenges for the Swiss Socialist Party. Likewise, if they do not work to prevent it from becoming a major political and societal issue across Europe, it will become a serious problem for European progressive and socialist parties in the years to come.

V. CONCLUSION

The analysis of different countries (Hungary, Finland, Switzerland, Spain, Italy) has showed a complex situation. This is understandable. Populism has always been considered as something difficult to describe and to give an account of, because of the differences between its forms. Populism has assumed different forms depending on the country where it has arisen and developed, which is due to various reasons: the legitimization of political parties, the depth of the economic crisis, and the electoral system, as well as national history and other factors. Also with regard to the relationship between populism and the youth we have observed sharp differences. We have seen cases like the Hungarian Jobbik, where the relationship exists and is very sharp, and other, like the Finnish one, with almost no relationship.

A common element can be found in the (more or less acute) opposition to immigration and the dislike for the European Union. In fact, according to the ideas of the parties analysed, immigration and Europe are the main causes of the economic crisis and of the high rate of unemployment.

Another common element is (with the exception of the Spanish case) the electoral success of the parties analysed and their rapid growth. In fact, within a few years they have increased votes and at the same time they have reached a significant stability: of course, the consensus for populist parties is different in each country, but it is usually between 10 and 30%.

¹¹⁵ R. Milne, *Populist right seeks pivotal role as Nordic left retreats*, Financial Times, August 30, 2013. (<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a30b7a50-1168-11e3-8321-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2wWT9iBtC>, last accessed on March 20, 2014).

In this conclusion, we will be comparing the use of media (Internet, TV), the relationship between populism and youth and the presence of xenophobic and right-wing elements in the narrative of populist parties.

Use of media

In Hungary the “Movement for a better Hungary”, called Jobbik, uses the Internet, has its own online TV channel and employs social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. In Italy one can observe two different uses of the media: “Berlusconi’s telepopulism” (that focuses on the use of television and addresses mostly old people) and the use of the web by the “Movimento 5 stelle” (through the blog beppegrillo.it and the use of Internet and new media). In Finland, many politicians from the party “True Finns” spread their ideas through their personal blogs. In Spain, although there was not any classical populist party that participated to the elections, the movement of Indignados made a massive use of the Internet. In the Swiss case, propaganda videos and posters with openly racial overtones are used to propagate fear and resentment towards “foreigners”.

Populism and the youth

As said before, the Hungarian Jobbik enjoys a strong success amongst the youth. This is also partially true for Movimento 5 Stelle, even if young people (18- 29) are not the age class with the highest share of voters for the movement. Youth is also a significant part of the Spanish movement of the Indignados. The Swiss SVP has a growing appeal among the rural youth. Instead, True Finns party seems not to have a particular appeal on youth. Therefore, it may be fair to conclude that only some forms of populism have a special relationship with youth. Still, unemployment and disillusionment with politics are widespread among young people and hence they can easily lead to votes for populist parties, although this depends also on the narrative of said parties.

Xenophobia and right-wing elements

Some of the populist movements and parties adopt traditional right-wing arguments and stress the topic of national identity and pride. This is the case of the Finnish, Swiss and Hungarian case. To a lesser extent also the Movimento 5 Stelle is critical towards immigration but without xenophobic accents. In the Spanish case this element seems not to be particularly relevant.

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