

The Lega Nord: From Regional Protest to National Government

Marco Brunazzo (University of Trento) marco.brunazzo@unitn.it
& Christophe Roux (University of Montpellier 1, CEPEL) christophe.roux@univ-montp1.fr

Paper presented at the 7th ECPR General Conference,
Bordeaux, 4-7 September 2013

Section 30 – New Developments in Federalism and Regionalism
Panel 282 – Regionalist Parties in National Institutions

Introduction

This paper¹ deals with the “*Lega Nord per l’Indipendenza della Padania*” (Northern League for the Independence of Padania), usually referred to as the *Lega Nord* or simply the *Lega* (hereafter LN). “Padania” is the territory constituted as the Italian northern region around the Po river and, according to the status of the League itself, it would consist of the set of those North and Centre regions from Piedmont to Venetia and to Toscana. It is mainly in those regions that the LN is active with candidates participating in elections at various territorial levels.

The LN has received increasing academic attention in the international scientific literature (in Italian-speaking scholarship see, among others, Mannheimer 1991; De Luna 1994; Diamanti 1995, 1998; Biorcio 1997, 2010, in English-speaking literature Ruzza & Schmidtke 1993; Tambini 2001; Cento Bull & Gilbert 2001; Gomez-Reino 2002; Gold 2003; Huisseune 2006; Ruzza 2006, in the French-speaking debate Champeyrache 2002; De Matteo 2005, and in Spanish-speaking scholarship Aguilera de Prat 1999). Born in Northern Italy as a group of regional autonomist leagues which were gathered into one single political party in 1991, it transformed itself into one of the most prominent parties in the new Italian party system that emerged in that country in the early 1990s. Perceived as a weird and marginal political mobilization in the 1980s it has been able to shift with a rare ability from a peripheral protest movement into a key-component of central governmental coalitions. Located only in northern regions of Italy it has been able to build roots, to stabilize its electorate, to anchor itself into institutions and to have an impact on policy agendas and reforms. However, recent political events related to mismanagement of public funds, the birth of new political parties (like the Movimento 5 Stelle – 5 Stars Movements led by the comedian Beppe Grillo) and the destabilisation of the party system of the so-called Italian “Second Republic” have jeopardised the future of this party, which is now going through an unprecedented political crisis.

This paper is structured as follows. First of all, it will present the origins and structuration of the LN party and its political discourse; secondly, it will present its electoral performance, looking specifically at the Italian Second Republic period, to understand how it has been nationally relevant; thirdly, it will look at the role of the LN in central government

¹ It is based on a previous contribution we recently published elsewhere (Brunazzo & Roux 2012).

from two perspectives: the political personnel and the policy impact. The chapter will conclude with some considerations about the crisis of LN.

2. Origins and Structuration

When the LN was founded in the 1980s, it was not the first political party to promote specific territorial claims in Northern Italy. The *Union Valdôtaine* (UV) in Val d'Aosta (Massetti & Sandri 2012) and the *Südtiroler Volkspartei* (SVP) in Alto Adige/Südtirol (Pallaver 2012) had already been politically active since the end of World War II, and to a certain extent they inspired, in particular the first one, the mobilization embedded by the LN. Moreover, what soon became labelled as *leghismo* has older roots, which are even older than the formation of the first regional leagues in the late 1970s in Veneto and Lombardy. As soon as WWII ended there were intellectual movements which developed the idea that Northern Italy has an economic and “moral” unity and that this peculiar area suffers from its inclusion into the Italian State because of the economic burden of the South. It was possible to read one of the thinkers of the LN and future senator in the early 1990s, Gianfranco Miglio (1918-2001), writing as early as 1945 that the so-called “Padania”, though loosely defined, “has a specific *raison d'être*, its own historical economic and productive – and even linguistic – physiognomy, so it can ask – for its full development, also to the benefice of the whole nation – for a clear and specific position within the new emerging Italy. Italian unity will not be able to be made on an other basis. (...) The whole Northern Italy (...) constitutes a geographical, economic, ethnic and spiritual harmonic unity which deserves to be governed by itself”².

These were local movements born in the province of Como and Bergamo and if on the one hand they had a very limited political impact, on the other hand they built the first ideological corpus which converted the anti-Southern prejudice into an effective political message that can be supported by an actual mobilization (Bouillaud 1998). The fact is that this early *leghismo* was unable to challenge the domination of Christian Democracy in Northern Italy from the late 1940s to the early 1980s. From the moment that the DC became weaker and tended to lose its connection with citizens from Northern Italy – a trend that did happen and which is central in most relevant analysis of the LN (Diamanti 1995) – a potential political space was liberated. To be successfully occupied it required a work of political mobilization (Diani 1996) which was done through the creation of regional leagues,

² *Il Cisalpino*, 22 luglio 1945.

dominated by one of them, the *Lega Lombarda* run by Umberto Bossi, until the gathering of most of them into one single political party, the *Lega Nord*.

This work of political mobilization takes place in different parts of Northern Italy, but the main movement is the *Lega Autonomista Lombarda* created in 1982, with the manifesto “Lombardia Autonoma” and it participated in local elections in 1985 with a modest impact, less weak in the Lombardy province of Varese. In the general election of 1987, the *Lega Lombarda* obtained its first *deputato* (Giuseppe Leoni elected with 6.7% of votes in the local circumscription of Como-Sondrio-Varese,) and senator (Umberto Bossi himself, 7% in the *collegio* of Varese). United regionalist and autonomist movements of Northern Italy, already members of an electoral coalition in the European elections of 1989, decided to merge into one single movement, the LN, during its founding congress in Milan on 7-9 December 1989. It was made official with the first congress of the LN held in Milan on 8-10 February 1991.

There are three basic assumptions in the discourse of the LN which constitute the pillars of its ideology. First, from a cultural and identity viewpoint, there is a Northern people (from “Padania”) made up of several regional elements that, however, share fundamental common features distinct from the rest of Italy: common historical roots, relative linguistic specificities, same ethos of good workers and a tradition of local freedom. Second, from an economic perspective, the North, within Italy, is a loser in the game since it produces a lot but pays too much tax providing the South with money that is not well used. Third, politically, the Italian unitary state is the source of problems because of its incapacity to govern well and its corrupted political class which does not take into account the real needs of northern citizens. As a consequence, northern regions need a political emancipation under the minimal form of federalism which can turn into secession if northern claims are not satisfied. Protest against fiscal policy, state centralism, southern and then foreign immigration and European integration are progressively combined into a distinctive political programme supported by an efficient aggressive and populist tone and a rigorous party organisation (from the party itself to its many satellite-organizations like trade-unions, journals, youth organizations and so on).

Many authors have pointed out the inconsistency of this political programme, especially for what regards the field of culture where the artificiality of the identity-building process (the invention of the “Padania”) has been underlined. Moreover, its relative heterogeneity has fuelled a debate on how to correctly label the party itself: regionalist, autonomist, federalist or secessionist because of its territorial appeal and in spite of its tendency to play a role in the Italian political game? Populist, because of the way it shapes its political discourse? Extreme-right, because of its elements of racism (first against southern

Italians, then against immigrants who became more and more numerous in Italy in the 1990s)? Actually all these elements are not exclusive and it is the very ability of the LN's leaders to have been able to combine them all together in order to propose a single and distinctive political offer. This plasticity can explain many of the ideological shifts promoted by the LN as exemplified by the EU issue (Huysseune 2010).

However, this ability was greatly helped by the sudden vacuum provoked by the breakdown of the so-called "First Republic", i.e. the system of powers that lasted from the late 1940s to the early 1990s. It is not the place here to discuss the relative weight of each of the factors that have been proposed to explain this crisis (the end of the Cold War and of communism, the increase in public debts and then financial pressure partly imposed by Europe, the wave of judiciary inquiries for illegal financing of all governmental parties that undermined the legitimacy of the whole political class). In any case, its consequence was the disappearance of all governing political parties that dominated post-war Italian politics (notably Christian Democrats and Socialists) in the years 1992-1993. It provided the League with new political opportunities that it was able to exploit, both as a promoter and a beneficiary of the crisis.

3. LN electoral performance and territorial settlement

What is the impact of the LN in the framework of the "Second Republic" and what are the main features of its evolution in the most recent period? This section provides a synthetic account of the League's electoral performance and chooses to focus more specifically on its territorial settlement and its evolution.

Table 1 gives a general view of the electoral performance in general (both Parliamentary Chambers) and European elections held in Italy between 1992 and 2013.

Table 1. Electoral performances of the LN in Italian general and European elections (1992-2013)

Year	% <i>Camera</i> *	% <i>Senato</i>	% European
1992	8,65	8,2	-
1994	-	-	6,6
	8,4	19,9 (with FI)	-
1996	10,1	10,4	-
1999	-	-	4,5
2001	3,9	42,5 (with FI and AN)	-
2004	-	-	5,0
2006	4,6	4,5**	-
2008	8,3	8,1**	-
2009	-	-	10,2
2013	4,1	4,3	-
<i>Mean</i>	<i>6,9</i>	<i>N.A.</i>	<i>6,6</i>

Source: our elaboration on data from the Italian minister of Interior, various years.

Note: * proportional share for 1994, 1996 and 2001. ** Val d'Aosta and Trentino Alto-Adige excluded.

Several general observations can be made about these figures. First, the League is a stable political competitor in the Italian political game. It has been able to participate in all major elections and to obtain a significant number of votes. The reader should bear in mind that the LN presents candidates only in Northern regions. Given its absence from Rome southwards and the high number of political parties which compose the Italian party system it is worth underlining that the LN is without doubt one of the major political parties of the “Second Republic”.

Second, the electoral dynamics is not linear: it is rather cyclical. After a surprisingly high score in the 1992 and 1996 general elections, electoral results were more modest in 2001 and 2006 before a good performance in 2008 – the election after which the League was one of the only five political parties present in the Italian Parliament, i.e. a dramatic change compared to the previous fragmentation – and eventually an electoral setback in 2013. This is a feature which may have something to do with the populist style of the LN as suggested by some scholars (Corbetta 2010). This is clear when the LN is compared to its main counterparts from both centre-right (FI, AN and then PDL) and centre-left (PD). Moreover, it is important to underline the League’s strategic shifts according to the electoral cycles. While it has been a traditional ally of the centre-right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi’s party (Forza Italia and its other allies and then the *Popolo della Libertà*), in 1996 it competed outside the two broad gatherings after the provisional break-up of this political alliance. The most recent general election in 2013 further confirmed the LN’s cyclical electoral pattern. It was characterized by a genuine political failure (4.1% at the state-wide level). In that occasion the whole Italian party system was challenged by the Five-Star Movement (M5S, *Movimento 5 Stelle*) led by Beppe Grillo, a comedian who created a populist and anti-system movement

(Biorcio 2013, Corbetta & Gualmini 2013) that obtained a huge success and that became the first Italian party.

Traditional mainstream parties but also protest parties such as the LN were equally challenged. Studies on electoral mobility shows that the LN (and the Democratic Party - PD, *Partito democratico* – lost votes in favour of the M5S (Tronconi 2013). Moreover, the League probably paid the scandals related to the financial mismanagement involving its leaders, and mainly the Bossi family.

Third, some specific features of the LN electorate can be identified, though not always easily due to methodological difficulties. Following the global assessment proposed by Piergiorgio Corbetta (2010) it is possible to state that: (i) a clear feature is that the LN is a Northern party which is quite more well rooted in small towns and villages than in cities though that element is less marked in the late 2000s than it was in the early 1990s. (ii) In terms of socio-economic and cultural profile, LN voters tend to be less educated and to be autonomous workers active within small firms and, to a lesser extent, small employers. However, those elements derived from opinion data which are those normally used in this field – including the analysis of the rise of the LN (Mannheimer 1993) – are relatively fragile³. (iii) Differently from what has been often said, there is no robust empirical evidence that a specific know-how of LN local administrators can explain its electoral success in Northern Italy. (iv) LN voters do not show a strong pattern of party identification but they do express a strong sense of belonging to local identities which is a genuine originality compared to those citizens who vote for other parties.

In this paper we have decided to pay a specific attention to the territorial distribution of the League's electoral support by considering the League's electoral performance in national and regional elections in three different territorial sub-groups: Northern ordinary regions (Piemonte, Liguria, Lombardia and Veneto), Northern special regions (Val d'Aosta, Trentino Alto Adige composed of the two autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano, and Friuli Venezia Giulia) and Central ordinary regions (Emilia-Romagna, Toscana, Umbria and Marche). We are well aware that these subgroups do not correspond to traditional territorial divisions on geographical lines (Alpine vs. non-Alpine), administrative lines (such as the ISTAT territorial divisions⁴) or even socio-political lines (with former 'white' and 'red' regions referring to specific subcultures and their transformations under the "Second

³ See Corbetta (2010, 115-116).

⁴ In the ISTAT nomenclature, "North" refers to all Northern regions including Emilia-Romagna that we consider a 'Central' region here; "Centre" also includes Lazio, which we do not take into consideration here.

Republic”; see Diamanti 2009). However, it seems to us that this simple division we use in this analyse is useful to our purpose.

Electoral results obtained in Northern ordinary regions are indicated in table 2 (general elections) and table 3 (regional elections).

Table 2. Electoral performance (%) of the LL/LN in ordinary Northern regions at general elections (*Camera*), 1992-2008.

Year	Region			
	Liguria	Piemonte	Lombardia	Veneto
1992 (LL)	14,3	16,3	23,0	17,8
1994 (LN)	11,4	15,7	22,1	21,6
1996	10,2	18,2	25,5	29,3
2001	3,9	5,9	12,1	10,2
2006	3,7	6,3	11,7	11,1
2008	6,8	12,6	21,6	27,1
2013	2,3	4,8	12,9	10,5
<i>Mean</i>	7,5	11,4	18,4	18,2

Source: our elaboration on data from Italian Ministry of Interior.

Note: in 1992 Piemonte stands for the constituencies of Torino-Novara-Vercelli and Cuneo-Alessandria-Asti; ‘Lombardia’ stands for the constituencies of Milano-Pavia, Como-Sondrio-Varese, Brescia-Bergamo, Mantova-Cremona; Veneto stands for the constituencies of Verona-Padova-Vicenza-Rovigo and Venezia-Treviso plus the province of Belluno included in the Udine-Belluno-Gorizio-Pordenone constituency (mostly in Friuli Venezia Giulia). From 1994 to 2008 Piemonte consists of the two constituencies called ‘Piemonte 1’ and ‘Piemonte 2’; ‘Lombardia’ of ‘Lombardia’ 1, 2 and 3; Veneto of ‘Veneto’ 1 and 2.

Table 3. Electoral performance (%) of the LN in ordinary Northern Italian regions at regional elections, 1995-2013.

Year	Region			
	Liguria	Piemonte	Lombardia	Veneto
1995	6,5	9,9	17,7	16,7
2000	4,3	7,6	15,4	12,0
2005	4,7	8,5	15,8	14,65
2010	10,2	16,7	26,2	35,2
2013*	-	-	23,2*	-
<i>Mean 1995-2013</i>	6,4	10,7	19,7	19,6

Source: our elaboration on data from Italian Ministry of Interior.

Note : regional elections in Lombardy were anticipated only in Lombardy in 2013. The LN had two lists within the centre-right coalition (Roberto Maroni’s so-called ‘civic’ list and the official LN one).

It appears clearly that in these ordinary regions there are at least two Norths: one of the old Lombard-Venetian which is the place where the LN is a leading political party that represents one out of four valid votes on average; and one in Piemonte and Liguria where it is rather less successful. Even electorally this part of Northern Italy proves to be quite diverse and fragmented. In Liguria and Piemonte the LN is successfully challenged by centre-right and centre-left Italian state-wide parties (Forza Italia / PDL on the centre-right, PDS/DS/Partito Democratico on the centre-left).

Tables 4 and 5 provide the same kind of data in special Northern regions.

Table 4. Electoral performance (%) of the LL/LN in special Northern regions at general elections (*Camera*), 1992-2013.

Year	Region			
	Province of Trento	Province of Bolzano	Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta	Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia
1992 (LL)	13,9	3,6	-	17,4*
1994 (LN)	12,5	2,3	17,2	16,9
1996	20,65	4,3	8,1	23,2
2001	6,6	0,6	22,0 (with FI)	8,2
2006	7,9	0,9	2,0	7,2
2008	16,4	2,0	3,1	8,3
2013	7,3	0,9	3,3	6,7
Mean	12,2	2,1	NA	12,6

Source : our elaboration on data from Italian Ministry of Interior.

Note: data for 1992 in Friuli Venezia Giulia do not take into account the record of the Venetian province of Belluno (see table 2). For elections held from 1994 to 2001, the score of the LN in each province was calculated at the weighted mean of its performance in each constituency of each province.

Table 5. Electoral performance (%) of the LN in Northern autonomous regions at regional/provincial elections (1993-2013).

Year	Region/province			
	Province of Trento	Province of Bolzano	Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta	Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia
1993	16,2	3,0	7,6	26,7
1998	8,8	0,9	3,4	17,4
2003	6,1*	0,5*	-	9,3
2008	14,1*	2,1*	-	12,9
2013	-	-	- (no list)	8,3
Mean	11,3	1,6	NA	14,9

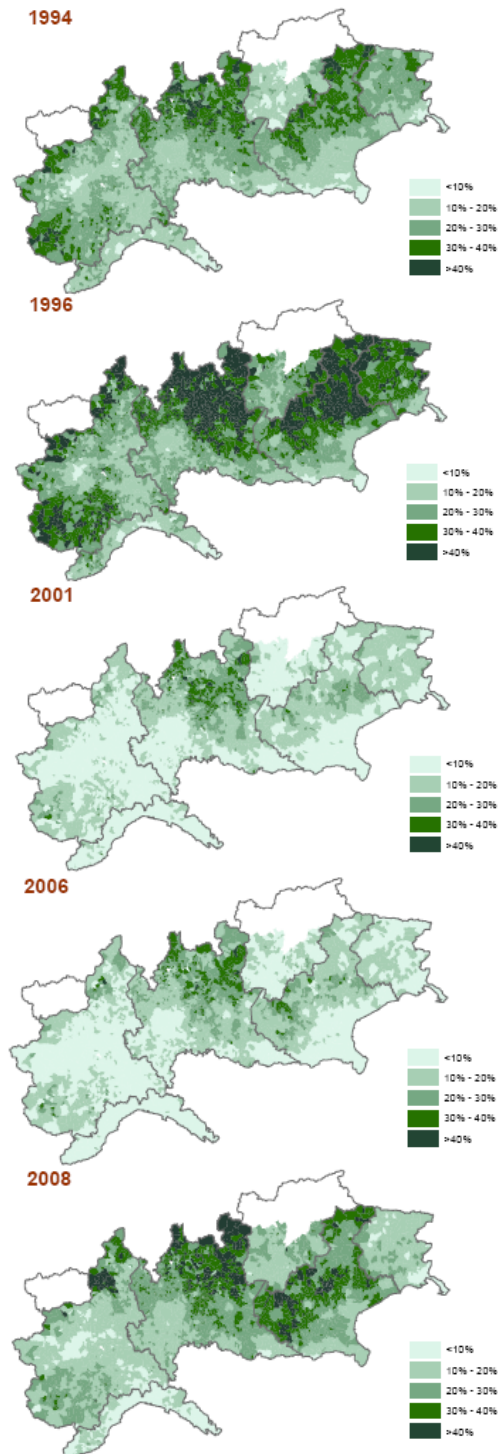
Source: Istituto Cattaneo (1993-2003) for Val d'Aosta and Friuli Venezia Giulia; after 2003: Regione Autonoma del Trentino Alto Adige (1993, 1998) and autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano/Bözen for 2003 and 2008.

Note: * From 2003 no regional elections held; provincial elections held in each of the two autonomous provinces.

In autonomous Northern regions the picture is nuanced too. The LN tends to underperform in the autonomous Province of Bolzano compared to what it obtains in the autonomous Province of Trento and the results are rather good in Friuli Venezia Giulia while they are very weak in Valle d'Aosta – to such a degree that the LN sometimes does not propose a distinct candidate to elections in this region. In Bolzano and Aosta the LN is successfully challenged by regional nationalist parties, first of all by the SVP (which scores around 50% of the votes in Bolzano but is marginal in the province of Trento; see Pallaver 2006) and the UV in Val d'Aosta. Those parties were able to resist the “green wave” much more efficiently than the old Italian state-wide parties which disappeared in the early 1990s.

The following maps (1 to 5), borrowed from the elaboration made by researchers from Demos & Pi (2008, 7-9), provide a synthesis of the territorial distribution of votes collected in each general elections held in Northern Italy since 1994 (the 2013 picture is not available).

Maps 1 to 5. Geographical distribution of LN voters (*Camera*) 1994-2008 in Northern Italy.



Source: Demos & Pi (2008, 7-9).

Note: the white areas represent the autonomous region of Valle d'Aosta and the autonomous province of Bolzano. It includes the autonomous province of Trento and the autonomous region of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

The overall picture shows that the LN is a “Northern” party more than a truly “Alpine” one. It is a marginal political actor in those regions where territorial claims are efficiently supported by ethno-regionalist parties.

A last note should be devoted to the third territorial group we consider here, i.e. Central Italy. Those regions are not only located in the Italian *centro-nord*: they also correspond to those regions where a “red” subculture has been identified by previous scholarship (with minor nuances in Emilia-Romagna, Toscana, Umbria and, on its Northern side at least, Marche). In these regions centre-left political parties are constantly dominant within the political landscape, and post-communist, post-socialist and left-wing Christian Democrats followed under the Second Republic the successes obtained by the PCI and the PSI under the First. Though not belonging to “Northern Italy”, the LN proposes candidates in these regions. It is interesting to have a look at its success in these regions in order to better understand the territorial logics of the League’s electoral settlement (tables 6 and 7).

Table 6. Electoral performance (%) of the LL/LN in Central Italy at general elections, 1992-2008.

Year	Region			
	Emilia-Romagna	Toscana	Umbria	Marche
1992 (LL)	9,6	3,1	1,2	1,3
1994 (LN)	6,4	2,15	-	-
1996	6,7	1,8	1,5	1,5
2001	2,6	0,6	-	-
2006	3,9	1,1	0,8	1,0
2008	7,8	2,0	1,7	2,2
2013	2,6	0,7	0,6	0,7
Mean 1992-2008	5,6	1,6	NA	NA

Source: our elaboration on data from Italian Ministry of Interior, various years

Notes: for 1992, “Emilia Romagna” stands for the weighted mean between the two constituencies of Bologna-Ferrara-Ravenna-Forlì (7,0%) and Parma-Modena-Piacenza-Reggio Emilia (13,2%); “Toscana” stands for the three constituencies of Firenze-Pistoia (3,0%), Lucca-Massa-Carrara (3,7%) and Siena-Arezzo-Grosseto (2,4%); “Umbria” stands for the Perugia-Terni-Rieti constituency; “Marche” stands for the Ancona-Pesaro-Macerata-Ascoli Piceno constituency.

Table 7. Electoral performance (%) of the LN in Central Italy at regional elections, 1995-2010.

Year	Region			
	Emilia-Romagna	Toscana	Umbria	Marche
1995	3,4	0,7	-	0,5
2000	3,3	0,6	0,25	0,3
2005	4,8	1,3	-	0,9
2010	13,7	6,5	4,3	6,3
Mean 1995-2010	6,3	2,3	-	2,0

Source: our elaboration on data from Italian Ministry of Interior, various years, except for Toscana 2010 (Profeti 2010, 148) and Marche 2010 (Prontera 2010, 173-5).

It clearly appears that while the LN faces electoral failure in most central regions, it has a relative impact in Emilia-Romagna which is actually comparable to the one observed in Liguria on average, especially in the last period 2008-2010.

4. The LN in Government

Many scholars have tried to define the nature of the LN. Is it a regionalist, right-wing extremist or populist party? Recently, looking at the party manifestos and to a post-electoral survey on the LN's electorate, Bulli and Tronconi (2012) have concluded that the LN is "a multifaceted party, where elements of localism and regionalism are present alongside traits of populism and characters common to other European far-right parties, especially as far as immigration policy is concerned". Emphasising the role the LN has played in the Italian political system in the last fifteen years, other authors (Albertazzi & McDonnell 2005) have tried to understand if the LN is a "*partito di lotta*" or "*di governo*", concluding that these two souls are inextricably interlinked in this party: if, on the one hand, the LN is a party which wants to be in government in order to realise its political programme, on the other hand it uses a language typical of parties characterized by antagonist and anti-systemic positions. For this reason, the LN can be considered the only Italian party successfully able to walk the fine line between playing the role of the "opposition in government" and showing that they too can be responsible members of government, capable of governing as mainstream political actors (Albertazzi, McDonnell & Newell 2011).

The ability of the LN to combine at the same time all these aspects together is the result of a long process of adaptation to the different phases of the Italian political system, in which this party has behaved in an apparently schizophrenic way. Represented in government for the first time in March 1994 supporting the first Silvio Berlusconi cabinet, in December of the same year it decided to abandon this experience refusing to approve a reform of the pension system and a decree signed by the then Minister of Justice, Alfredo Biondi, modifying the legislation concerning the preventive custody for corruption offences, considered too evidently close to the personal needs of Berlusconi. The exit from the government in 1994 was not only due to their wish of not being "corrupted" by "Rome" (the Italian capital in the LN rhetoric is synonymous with old-style politics, corruption and unclear agreements) but also by the need of maintaining a distinction from the party of Berlusconi, Forza Italia, in direct competition with the LN for the consensus of the Northern electorate (Bulli & Tronconi 2012; Biorcio 2010).

Between 1994 and 1998, LN preferred to renounce being part of a stable coalition, triggering the electoral defeat of the centre-right coalition. However, if at national level the LN opted for loneliness and independence from the other parties, at local level it pursued the political line of “free-hands”, choosing its allies according to its specific interests and to the local political dynamics. During this period, at national level the LN radicalised its position and argued in favour of the independence of Padania, a non clearly defined region in the Northern part of Italy. However, in September 1998 Bossi addressed the militants at the traditional summer meeting in Venice calling for a new attempt at creating a coalition with the centre-right parties. The new coalition would win the 2001 general election and the LN would play a relevant role in the second Berlusconi government.

Between 2001 and 2006 the LN backed the reform of the judicial system requested by Berlusconi, asking for devolution in return which was finally approved in 2005 (but rejected in the 2006 confirmative popular referendum). At the same time, it played the role of the anti-system party severely criticising its junior coalition partners, the Christian-democrat UDC (*Unione dei democratici di centro*, Union of the central democrats) and the post-fascist AN (*Alleanza nazionale*, National Alliance). Playing this double role of credible ally of Berlusconi and severe critic of the more traditional parties, the LN preserved its distinct identity within the CDL (*Casa della libertà*, House of Freedom) alliance. At the same time, the LN “was able to establish a certain ‘issue ownership’ and high visibility on questions regarding immigration (particularly Islamic), constitutional reform (particularly devolution), protectionism (mainly against Chinese products), the Euro and the European integration process (with the LN vehemently against the single currency and both widening and deepening of the integration process)” (Albertazzi, McDonnell & Newell mimeo, 14-5).

In opposition during the 2006-2008 period, the LN went back in government in 2008, as part of a Berlusconi led coalition. The new government composition reflects very well the changed attitude and strategy of the LN in terms of governmental positions. If, in the past, the party tried to maximise its numerical presence in terms of governmental posts, in 2008 Bossi’s party decided to increase its qualitative presence occupying ministries focused on issues highly salient for the party (table 8). Recording more or less the same electoral results, in 1994 the LN obtained five ministers and ten junior ministers, while in 2008 it had just three ministers, one vice-minister and four junior ministers.

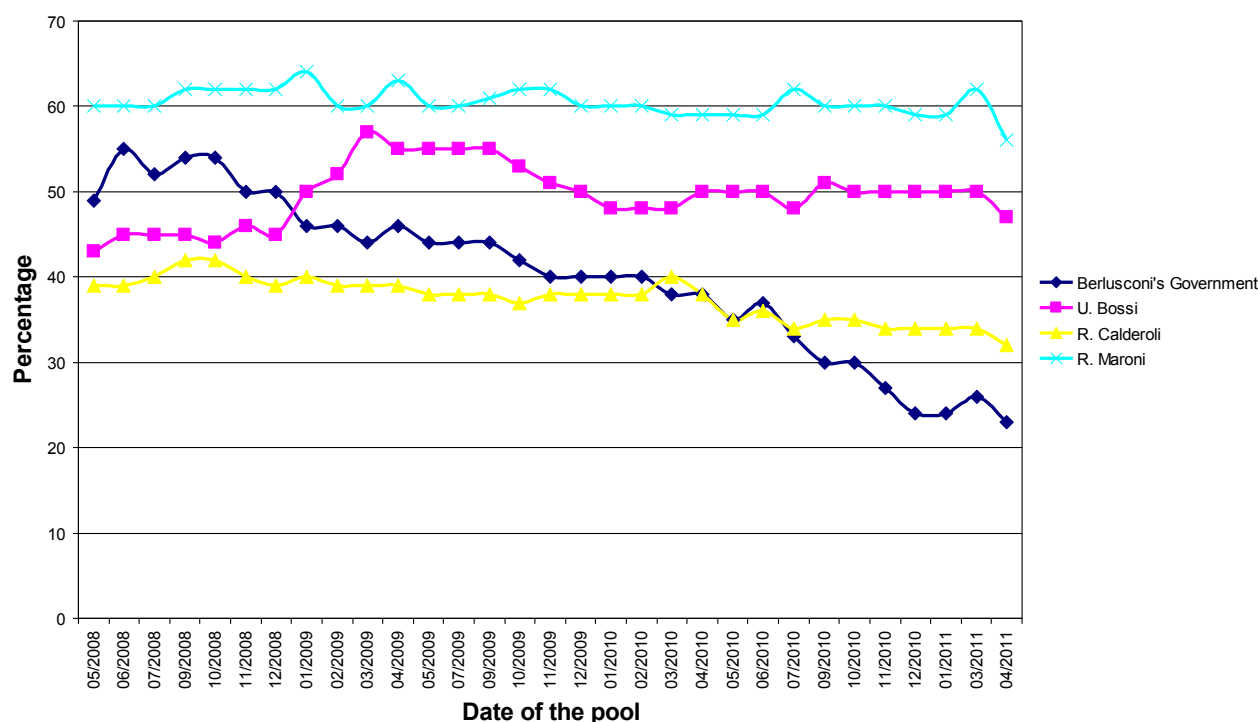
Table 8. The LN presence in Italian central governments from 1994.

Years	Electoral results (%)	Ministers	Vice-ministers	Junior ministers
1994-1995	8,4	R. Maroni (vice-president of the Council and Minister of Interior) F. Speroni (Institutional Reforms) D. Comino (UE Affairs) G. Pagliarini (Budget) V. Gnutti (Industry)		F. Rocchetta (Foreign Affairs) M. Borghesio (Justice) R. Asquini (Finance) M. Bedoni (Economy) M. Polli (Defence) M. Mazzetto (Education) S. Aimone Prina (Public Works) S. Cappelli (Transports and Navigation) A. Marano (Mails and Telecommunications) G. Meo Zilio (University, Research and Technology)
2001-2006	3,9	U. Bossi (Institutional Reforms and Devolution, until 2004) R. Calderoli (Institutional Reforms and Devolution, from 2004) R. Castelli (Justice) R. Maroni (Work and Social Policies)		G.P. Gobbo (Institutional Reforms and Devolution) M. Balocchi (Interior) D. Molgora (Economy and Finance) R. Cota (Productive Activities) A. Brambilla (Work and Social Policies) G. Dozzo (Agriculture) S. Stefani (Environment, since 2004) G. Giorgetti (Infrastructures and Trasports, 2001) Gasperini (Regional Affairs, since 2005) Bricolo (Infrastructures and Trasports, since 2005)
2008-13	8,3	U. Bossi (Federal Reforms) R. Calderoli (Normative Simplification) R. Maroni (Interior)	R. Castelli (Infrastructures and Trasports)	S. Viale (Interior) M. Davico (Interior) F. Martini (Health) F. Belsito (Normative Simplification)

Note: table updated on June 2013.

These ministries are all very meaningful for the LN's programmatic issues: the Ministry of the Interior (covering issues like criminality, law and order, immigration etc.), Normative Simplification (one of the main refrains of the LN is that Italy has an overwhelming amount of norms and laws that impede the development of the enterprises), and Institutional Reform (that is to say, first of all, federalism). As fig. 1 shows, these ministers have a very good reputation, especially Roberto Maroni, in comparison with their colleagues.

Figure 1. Confidence in the LN's ministers in 2010 compared to the average of the entire Berlusconi government.



Note: data report only those expressing a lot or some confidence in the minister/government.

Source: Iprmarketing, FidMonitor, April 2011, available at http://www.iprmarketing.it/file/file/FidMonitor/FidMonitor_aprile_2011.pdf (accessed on 22/6/2011).

At the same time, by negotiating very favourable agreements in the pre-election period, the LN obtained 19% of the parliamentary seats against 8.4% of votes, and it is the “*ago della bilancia*” for the creation of each government during the 2008-2013 legislation⁵.

The presence in the national government is just one aspect of the broader representation that the LN has at different institutional levels. It goes without saying that after more or less 20 years of life span, the LN has now a political class occupying all levels of government, even if geographically concentrated in the Northern part of the Country. In January 2011, 3,603 municipal councillors, 1,460 municipal *assessori* and 374 mayors are members of the LN or of civic lists that can be related to this party (tab. 9). Mayors of the LN are now in power in important cities, such as Verona and Varese. Moreover LN representatives lead important regions, like Piemonte (Roberto Cota) and Veneto (Luca Zaia). According to the Governance poll 2010, consensus of the LN's mayors and governors is very high (IPR Marketing 2010). This result may be linked to the effectiveness of the LN's action

⁵ In November 2011, the fall of the Berlusconi government due to its incapacity to face the consequences of the economic crisis brought about the election by the Parliament of a new ‘technical’ government led by the ex-EU Commissionaire Mario Monti. The LN was the only party opposed to this change, protesting against the new set of policies adopted for the sake of public finance and the reducing of public debts. In this new phase of Italian politics, the LN is trying to get back to its old separatist and anti-systemic program.

in government, as well as to the “party’s ability to put forward a coherent and convincing narrative to party members and sympathisers about its experiences and achievements in government” (Albertazzi & McDonnell 2010, 1321).

Table 9. From cities to Europe: the LN political elected representatives.

Region	Municipal councillors	Municipal Assessors	Mayors	Provincial councillors	Provincial Assessors	Provincial presidents	Regional councillors	Regional Assessors	Regional President	M Ps	ME Ps
Piemonte	156 (194)	24 (105)	5 (39)	37	9	2	12	4	1	10	2
Liguria	19 (43)	6 (8)	1 (4)	7	3	-	3	-	-	2	-
Toscana	7 (22)	1	-	8	-	-	4	-	-	1	1
Lombardia	1200 (499)	261 (549)	86 (102)	94	43	6	20	5	-	37	3
Veneto	929	246 (177)	73 (48)	64	29	4	20	6	1	23	3
Friuli V.G.	169	23 (25)	6 (2)	11	2	1	7	2	-	3	-
Trentino- A.A.	13 (37)	-	-	7	-	-	8	-	-	2	-
Emilia- Romagna	85 (138)	7 (23)	1 (5)	29	3	-	4	-	-	6	-
Marche	5	-	1	2	-	-	2	-	-	1	-
Umbria	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Totale	2583 (1020)	568 (892)	172 (202)	259	89	13	81	17	2	85	9

Source: adapted from Tommaso Cerno, “Com’è verde la mia poltrona”, *L’Espresso*, 20 gennaio 2011, pp. 38-41.

Note: data in parenthesis indicate representatives elected in electoral lists connected to the LN.

This growing dimension of the LN political class requires coordination and a clear chain of command, supported by a clear hierarchical organization. Its all-pervading structure, its widespread territorial ramification, and the relevance attributed to its militants make the LN more similar to one of the traditional parties of the Italian First Republic, exactly the same parties the LN has significantly contributed to overcome. According to Biorcio (2010), the main features of the territorial dimension of the Italian parties of the First Republic were three: a) a diffusion of a widespread network of *sezioni* (party branches) in charge of proselytism; b) the presence and activity of several associations linked to the party; c) a network of mayors and local administrators able to mediate between the multiple interests in the territory. The LN scores very well on all these three indicators.

As far as the first aspect is concerned, the LN had never launched a wide membership campaign, but has emphasized the role of its supporters: being a member of the party means

first of all being an activist participating in the party life and electoral and mobilization campaigns. Only those supporters who have demonstrated an ability to play an active role inside the party have a chance of being selected for an electoral seat.

The LN members can spend their energy and time in one of the several associations promoted by the party. The aim of these associations is the socialization of Padania inhabitants to the LN program and action. There are associations for women (i.e. *Donne padane*, Padanian Women, for the “defense of moral and economic interests of the Padanian women and the protection of the family, instrument for the diffusion of fundamental roles and values”⁶), for the cooperation with underdeveloped countries (i.e. *Cooperazione Padania nel Mondo*, Padanian Cooperation in the World), for the promotion of the medical sector (i.e. *Medica Padana*, Padanian Medicine) and for the defense of abandoned animals (*Il collare verde*, The green collar).

The LN is organized in a very different way from the other right wing Italian party, the PDL (*Popolo della libertà*, Freedom People), which is much more “light” and volatile. In as far as we look at its organizational characteristics, the LN can be considered the last party of the First Italian republic; however, for its political role and its innovative political language and message, it can also be defined as the first party of the Second Italian Republic (Biorcio 2010).

At the local level, the political action of the LN mayors and local administrators focuses mainly on issues with a clear impact on public opinion sentiments, like, for example, immigration, security and defense of values. Even if municipal decrees are not always effective, they are well covered by local media and offer huge visibility (at national level too) to the LN (Biorcio 2010).

5. The policy impact of the LN

Scholars have demonstrated that the LN’s capacity to influence policy-making during its years in the national government has been extremely limited. On the contrary, its impact on the Italian political culture has been much stronger: the need to transform Italy into a federal country, a traditional LN issue, is now accepted by all the main political parties, and the issue of security is now relevant in the political program of all the political forces (even if interpreted in different ways) (Albertazzi, McDonnel & Newell, mimeo). If, on the one hand, it is certainly true that “a comparison between the Lega’s stated objectives on federalism and

⁶ See http://associazionipadane.leganord.org/associazioni/donne/donne_padane.html (accessed on 22/06/2011).

what it has achieved so far shows that the glass remains very much half empty” (Albertazzi & McDonnell 2010, 1325), on the other hand, it is important not to underestimate the importance of the LN. It is not by chance that two of the main achievements of the second Berlusconi government are the federal reform approved in 2002 called “Legge Bossi-Fini” and the security package prepared by the LN’s minister of Interior, Roberto Maroni, approved by the Law n. 94 of August 2009⁷.

5.1. Federalism

If federalism is nowadays a common issue (even if differently interpreted) in the manifestos of all the main Italian political parties, this is mainly due to the relevance acquired in the Italian political life by the LN. Thanks to the general agreement on this issue, the first (and, until today, the only) federal reform of the Italian state was approved by a centre-left majority in 2001 (Fabbrini & Brunazzo 2003), even with the opposition of the LN, which criticised this reform for not being ambitious enough.

The following centre-right government that came into power in 2001 proposed a new federal reform. By the end of 2001, a few months after the electoral victory of the Casa delle Libertà (*House of Freedoms*), Umberto Bossi, the then Minister of ‘Institutional Reform and Devolution’, issued an initial proposal which was intended to complete article 117 of the Constitution by providing regions with ‘exclusive legislative competence for the following matters: (a) health; (b) education, except the autonomy of schools; (c) definition of the elements of education programs referring to the areas of interest to the regions; and (d) local police’. The aim of this project was that of ‘making Lega Nord happy and letting it perceive it had achieved a target it had tried to achieve for a long time, especially before administrative elections due later that year’ (Vassallo 2005, 142-143).

Unfortunately, the need to preserve the government coalition induced the adoption of a package deal, where each author (the LN, but also Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale) could achieve one of its aims. Giovanni Sartori defined this reform as a cattle market, where every party secured at least one ‘cow’ (Sartori 2006, 54-55 and 60): ‘devolution for the LN; the premiership and safeguards against governments being toppled before the end of the legislature for Forza Italia; the reintroduction of the principle of the national interest, an aspect of ‘presidentialism’ to the executive, and the possibility of Fini becoming either Prime

⁷ At the same time, we cannot forget the fact that the electoral law used in the 2008 and 2010 general elections is named after Roberto Calderoli, the then minister of Reforms. Since this law is not relevant in the LN party manifestos, we will not consider it expressly in this chapter.

Minister or President for his loyalty for Alleanza Nazionale; and the possibility of going back to proportionality in the reformed electoral system for *Unione Di Centro*' (Bull 2006, 10). The small consensus the center-right coalition had built in Parliament lacked popular support: the 2005 federal reform was rejected in 2006 in the confirmative referendum foreseen by the Italian Constitution for constitutional reforms without a large parliamentary basis.

In the 2008 government led by Silvio Berlusconi and supported again by the LN, federalism is still a relevant issue. In May 2009, the Parliament approved a *legge delega*, giving the power of approving 8 implementing decrees to the government. Some of them have already been enforced, such as the state-owned properties federalism (legislative decree n.85 approved on 28/5/2010)⁸, Capital Rome (legislative decree n.156 approved on 17/9/2010)⁹, standard requirements (legislative decree n.216 approved on 26/11/2010)¹⁰, municipal federalism (legislative decree n.23 approved on 14/3/2011)¹¹, fiscal autonomy of regions and provinces (legislative decree n.68 approved on 6/5/2011)¹², infrastructures equalization and territorial cohesion (legislative decree n.88 approved on 30/5/2011)¹³.

Even if evaluating the fiscal federalism reform approved by the Berlusconi Government is out of the scope of this chapter, it may be useful to say a few words on the debate following the approval of the legislative decrees. The process of federalization has been one of the issues to which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) paid attention after a mission in Italy on May 2011. In its long concluding statement of the Mission, the IMF points out that "Further decentralization should not undermine fiscal discipline. Reducing transfer dependency at the sub-national level should improve public expenditure efficiency, fiscal performance, and accountability. To this end, local authorities should be allowed to tax all real estate properties. Clear safeguards need to be established to guarantee deficit neutrality and avoid an increase in the tax burden. The ongoing fiscal federalism reform should be

⁸ Transferring to subnational institutions (regions, provinces, metropolitan cities, municipalities) of public goods like those belonging to maritime and water state properties, regional and local interest airports, mines and quarries, as well as the buildings of the Defence Ministry that are not used for defence and national security purposes.

⁹ Conferring a special statute to the territory of the Italian capital.

¹⁰ Establishing the financial needs of subnational institutions necessary to provide comparable services.

¹¹ Substituting fiscal transfers from the national government with taxes autonomously decided by the municipalities.

¹² Substituting fiscal transfers from the national government with taxes autonomously decided by the regions and provinces.

¹³ Fostering a new approach to the issue of local development based on thematic concentration of resources, individuation of a limited number of interventions with a strategic goal, clear definition of involved actors responsibilities, strengthening of monitoring powers.

integrated with the envisaged fiscal consolidation. Federalism at variable speeds should be considered, reflecting the regional differences in administrative capacity”¹⁴.

Interestingly enough, the type of fiscal federalism that has been approved is far from the objectives expressed by the LN in some of its political documents, such as its manifestos and the resolutions of its “Parliament of the North”, even if it can be presented only “as a first significant step toward some sort of more ‘complete’ federalism” (Albertazzi & McDonnell 2010, 1325).

5.2. Immigration and security

Immigration and security are two of the main issues in the LN’s rhetoric and are very often seen as interlinked. According to the LN’s political discourse, (illegal) immigrants produce insecurity and the stopping of all incoming immigrants is a priority of this party. This is the reason why the 2008 campaign was even harder than those in the past, and it was driven by the slogan “Let’s close our borders”. It is not surprising that one of the first acts of the minister of the Interior and one of the main LN leaders was the “first security package”, presented to the Council of Ministers in May 2008 and approved one year later, followed by a decree law called “second security package” (which was approved by the Council of Ministers on November 2010 and became law one month later). These new legal instruments introduce the crime of “clandestine immigration”, raise barriers to entry of the immigrants facilitating, at the same time, their expulsion.

More specifically, an illegal immigrant can be fined from 5,000 to 10,000 euros. Foreign nationals can be kept in a “centre of identification and expulsion” for 180 days (instead of the previous 60 days). They must pay a tax in order to ask for a visa to apply for Italian citizenship. The visa is needed in order to have access to licences, authorization and other kinds of administrative acts. Public officials finding a foreign national without visa are requested to communicate it to the public authority. The first security package promotes stricter controls on money transfer operations and makes the marriage between an Italian and a foreign citizen much more difficult in order to avoid “marriage of convenience”. Finally, it makes it possible for a group of citizens, in agreement with the prefect, to patrol the streets in order to help combat crime (the so-called *ronde*).

It is always difficult to measure the impact of a party on the political agenda of a government. It is even more difficult to measure the contribution of a party to the law-making

¹⁴ See <http://www.imf.org/external/np/ms/2011/051111.htm> (accessed on 24 June 2011).

process. In any case, it is widely recognised that the LN played an active role in shaping the government's position on the immigration and security issue (Zaslove 2004; Ruzza/Fella 2009; Geddes 2008; Cento Bull 2010). At the same time there is an emerging consensus that even in these fields, that are so central in the LN's rhetoric, the way the government's decisions have been implemented is largely far from the results envisaged by the LN itself. To this respect, Anna Cento Bull writes that in the fields of security and immigration, one can consider the action of the LN as a case of simulative politics, which can be defined (borrowing the words by Blühdorn 2007, 267-8, cit. in Cento Bull 2010, 431) "a form of political communication that... articulates demands which are not supposed to be taken seriously and implemented, but which are nevertheless constantly rearticulated with politicians being criticised – as part of the performance – for not implementing them".

6. Conclusion

In 2012 a political scandal concerning the mismanagement of public funds by LN politicians and by members of Bossi's family jeopardised the future of the party. More specifically, judicial investigations conducted by two different Public Prosecutor's offices (in Naples and in Milan) found out that the son of the LN's charismatic leader and member of the Lombardy Regional Council, Renzo Bossi, utilized the funds aimed at covering the party's electoral expenditures for personal reasons. Moreover, these investigations demonstrated that such behaviour was widespread among the closest collaborators of Umberto Bossi, the so-called *cerchio magico* ("magic circle"), that have gained much power after the illness of the leader.

As a consequence, the shocked LN electorate started to demonstrate its profound dissatisfaction towards a party supposed to be "different" from the others. In the May 2012 administrative election, the LN lost more than 50% of its consensus in comparison to the 2010 regional election (Istituto Cattaneo 2012). Only in the smallest municipalities did the LN confirm its performance of previous elections. Moreover, the LN won only in those big municipalities (like Verona) where the candidates had shown a certain degree of autonomy from the party. Umberto Bossi resigned as secretary to become the president of the party, a position that moves him away from the strategic decisions. Many of the leading party members, like Rosi Mauro, vice-president of the Senate, were expelled from the party. The traditional annual meeting in Pontida was temporarily cancelled. Roberto Maroni became the LN's new public "face" and, probably, the next secretary.

Many commentators (like Ilvo Diamanti in the pages of the newspaper *La Repubblica*) defined these events an “earthquake” and started to prophesise the end of the LN. Its electoral performance in the 2013 general election seems to offer a provisional approval to such a view. Over the last 20 years, the role gained by the LN in the national and subnational representative institutions has grown, making the LN a party essential to the more general equilibrium of the entire national political system. Its crisis will certainly have an effect even beyond the Northern area.

References

- Aguilera de Prat, Cesáreo R. (1999), *El cambio político en Italia y la Liga Norte*, Madrid: CIS.
- Albertazzi, Daniele and Duncan McDonnell (2005), “The Lega Nord in the Second Berlusconi Government: in a League of its Own”, *West European Politics* 28 (4), 952-972.
- Albertazzi, Daniele and Duncan McDonnell (2010) “The Lega Nord Back in Government”, *West European Politics* 33 (6), 1318-1340.
- Albertazzi, Daniele, Duncan McDonnell and James Newell (2011), “Di lotta e di governo: The Lega Nord and Rifondazione Comunista in Coalition”, *Party Politics*, 17 (4), 471-487
- Biorcio, Roberto (1997), *La Padania promessa. La storia, le idee e la logica d'azione della Lega Nord*, Milan: Il Saggiatore.
- Biorcio, Roberto (2010), *La rivincita del Nord. La Lega dalla contestazione al governo*, Roma-Bari, Laterza.
- Biorcio, Roberto (2013), *Politica a 5 stelle. Idee, storia e strategie del movimento di Grillo*, Milan, Feltrinelli.
- Blühdorn, Ingolfur (2007), “Sustaining the Unsustainable: Symbolic Politics and the Politics of Simulation”, *Environmental Politics* 16 (2), 251-275.
- Bouillaud, Christophe (1998), «Les antécédents idéologiques de la Ligue du Nord», *Revue Française de Science Politique* 48 (3-4), 458-479.
- Brunazzo, Marco & Christophe Roux (2012), “The Lega Nord: From Alpine Peripheral Protest to Italian Central Government”, in Günther Pallaver and Claudius Wagemann (eds), *Challenges for Alpines Parties. Strategies of Political Parties for Identity and Territory in the Alpine Regions*, Innsbrück, Studienverlag, pp. 55-80.

- Bull, Martin (2006), "The Constitutional Referendum of June 2006: End of the 'Grande Riforma'...but not of the Quest for Constitutional Reform", Paper presented to the seminar "Politica in Italia", Bologna, October.
- Bulli, Giorgia and Filippo Tronconi (2012), "Regionalism, Right-wing Extremism, Populism: the Elusive Nature of the Lega Nord", in Andrea Mammone, Emmanuel Godin and Brian Jenkins (eds), *Mapping the Extreme Right in Contemporary Europe: From Local to Transnational*, London, Routledge, 78-92
- Cento Bull, Anna and Mark Gilbert (2001), *The Lega Nord and the Northern Question in Italian Politics*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Cento Bull, Anna (2010), "Addressing Contradictory Needs: the Lega Nord and Italian Immigration Policy", *Patterns of Prejudice* 44 (5), 411-431.
- Champeyrache, Clotilde (2002), *La Ligue du Nord, un séparatisme à l'italienne. Racines et discours d'un parti politique*, Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Corbetta, Piergiorgio (2010), "Le fluttuazioni elettorali della Lega Nord", in D'Alimonte, Roberto and Alessandro Chiaromonte (eds), *Proporzionale se vi pare. Le elezioni politiche del 2008*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 105-128.
- Corbetta, Piergiorgio and Elisabetta Gualmini (eds) (2013), *Il partito di Grillo*, Bologna, Il Mulino.
- De Luna, Giovanni (1994) (ed.), *Figli di un benessere minore: la Lega, 1979-1993*, Scandicci, La Nuova Italia.
- De Matteo, Lynda (2007), *L'idiotie en politique. Subversion et néo-populisme en Italie*, Paris, CNRS Editions/Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.
- Demos & Pi (2008), *Forzismo, leghismo e forzaleghismo*, Vicenza: Demos & Pi.
- Diamanti, Ilvo (1995), *La Lega. Storia, geografia e sociologia di un nuovo soggetto politico*, Roma, Donzelli.
- Diamanti, Ilvo (1998), *Il male del Nord. Lega, localismo, secessione*, Roma, Donzelli.
- Diamanti, Ilvo (2009), *Mappe dell'Italia politica. Bianco, rosso, verde, azzurro... e tricolore*, Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Diani, Mario (1996), *Linking Mobilization Frames and Political Opportunities: Insights from Regional Populism in Italy*, *American Sociological Review* 61 (6), 1053-1069.
- Fabbrini, Sergio and Marco Brunazzo (2003), "Federalizing Italy: The Convergent Effects of Europeanization and Domestic Mobilization on the Italian Territorial System", *Regional and Federal Studies* 13 (1), 100-120.

- Geddes, Andrew (2008), "Il rombo dei cannoni? Immigration and the Centre-right in Italy", *Journal of European Public Policy* 15 (3), 349-366.
- Gold, Thomas (2003), *The Lega Nord and Contemporary Politics in Italy*, Basingstoke, Palgrave.
- Gomez-Reino, Margarita (2002), *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Italian Politics. Inventing the Padania: Lega Nord and the Northern Question*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Huyseune, Michel (2006), *Modernity and Secession. The Social Sciences and the Political Discourse of the Lega Nord in Italy*, Oxford: Berghahn.
- Huyseune, Michel (2010), "A Eurosceptic Vision in a Europhile Country: The Case of the Lega Nord", *Modern Italy* 15 (1), 63-75.
- IPR Marketing (2010), Governance Poll 2010, available at http://www.iprmarketing.it/govpoll10_gov.asp (22.06.2011).
- Istituto Cattaneo (2012): 9 maggio 2012 - Elezioni Comunali 2012 - Lega Nord, available at http://www.cattaneo.org/index.asp?l1=pubblicazioni&l2=comunicati_stampa (22.06.2012).
- Mannheimer, Renato (1991) (ed.), *La Lega lombarda*, Milan Mondadori.
- Mannheimer Renato (1993), "L'elettorato della Lega Nord", *Polis*, 7 (2), pp. 253-274.
- Masseti, Emanuele. & Giulia Sandri (2012), *Dominant and Outsider Ethno-Regionalist Parties in Francophone Alps: The Case of the Union Valdôtaine and the Ligue Savoisiennne*, in Günther Pallaver and Claudius Wagemann (eds), *Challenges for Alpines Parties. Strategies of Political Parties for Identity and Territory in the Alpine Regions*, Innsbrück, Studienverlag, pp. 35-54.
- Pallaver, Günther (2006), *The Südtiroler Volkspartei: from Irrendentism to Autonomy*, in De Winter, Lieven/Gomez-Reino, Margarita/Lynch, Peter (eds), *Autonomist Parties in Europe. Identity Politics and the Revival of the Territorial Cleavage. Volume II*, Barcelona: Institut de Ciències Politiques i Socials, 161-188.
- Pallaver, Günther (2012), *South Tyrol: From an Ethnic to a New Territorial Cleavage*, in Günther Pallaver and Claudius Wagemann (eds), *Challenges for Alpines Parties. Strategies of Political Parties for Identity and Territory in the Alpine Regions*, Innsbrück, Studienverlag, pp. 101-126.
- Profeti, Stefania (2010), "Toscana. Un esito annunciato con qualche sorpresa", in Brunetta Baldi and Filippo Tronconi (eds), *Le elezioni regionali del 2010. Politica nazionale, territorio e specificità locale*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 139-152.

- Prontera, Andrea (2010), "Le Marche. Da terra di confine a laboratorio politico", in Brunetta Baldi and Filippo Tronconi (eds), *Le elezioni regionali del 2010. Politica nazionale, territorio e specificità locale*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 165-177.
- Ruzza, Carlo and Oliver Schmidtke (1993), "Roots of Success of the Lega Lombarda: Mobilization Dynamics and the Media", *West European Politics*, 16 (2), pp. 1-23.
- Ruzza, Carlo (2006), "The Lega Nord: Towards Electoral Stability and Modest Success", in Lieven De Winter, Margarita Gomez-Reino, and Peter Lynch (eds), *Autonomist Parties in Europe. Identity Politics and the Revival of the Territorial Cleavage. Volume II*, Barcelona, Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials, 219-246.
- Ruzza, Carlo and Stefano Fella (2009), *Re-inventing the Italian Right: Territorial Politics, Populism and 'Post-Fascism'*, London, Routledge.
- Sartori, Giovanni (2006), *Mala Costituzione e altri malanni*, Roma-Bari: Laterza.
- Tambini, Damian (2001), *Nationalism in Italian Politics. The Stories of the Northern League, 1980-2000*, London, Routledge.
- Tronconi, Filippo (2013), Da dove arrivano i voti del Movimento 5 Stelle?, "Il Mulino", 2, 356-363.
- Vassallo, Salvatore (2005), "Le riforma costituzionali del centro-destra", in Carlo Guarnieri, and James Newell (eds), *Politica in Italia. Edizione 2005*, Bologna: il Mulino, 141-161.
- Zaslove, Andrej (2004), "Closing the Door? The Ideology and Impact of Radical Right Populism on Immigration Policy in Austria and Italy", *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9 (1), 99-118.