



University
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

EUGENIO PAZZINI

BA (University of Portsmouth, 2014)

**“Populism and the changing media landscape:
Understanding the rise of the Five Star Movement in Italy”**

Department of Political Science

Wednesday, December 20, 2017

1:00 P.M.

David Turpin Building

Room A318

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Oliver Schmidtke, Department of Political Science, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Valerie D’Erman, Department of Political Science, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Thomas Saunders, Department of History, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Lisa Rosenberg, Department of Chemistry, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

The thesis develops an understanding of the relationship between populism and the changes in the media landscape brought about by the advent of web 2.0. Its aim is to explain the rapid emergence of the Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement in Italy. A contextual analysis of the structures of opportunities reveals that the key to understand the 'success' of 5SM lays in the fact that the political actor fully exploited the affordances of the Web 2.0, making them resonate with the 'thin' ideology of populism. The advent of web 2.0 can then benefit political actors employing a populist ideology in three ways; enhancing the declining trust and separation between people and the political establishment, providing a seemingly more direct form of communication with the electorate and providing a new way of constructing the 'people' of populism through the networks.