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*The “Parlamentarie” of 5 Stars Movement:
a new instrument of (online) participation?*

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Causes and Consequences of Primaries as Instruments for Candidate Selection

The candidate selection process: an introduction

This paper aims at considering the Five Stars Movement’s Primary Election (called “Parlamentarie”) as an example of selective process for the representative office. Of this particular case we would like to study causes, specifications and the impact on the internal functioning of this “non-party” founded by Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto Casaleggio¹, and the consequences on the new Parliament framework, where the 163 Five Stars Movement’s (M5s) candidates have entered.

The selection method with which political parties – also those with new aspects – choose their candidates, not to mention their rules, outcomes and consequences of this process, defines a crucial aspect to study. Indeed, the outcome of candidates selection process will be able to act on the party structure and on the future Parliament (Hazan 2006). The belief is that the candidates selection is a primary function of a party and political organization in general, with a lot of consequences on the category of the selected candidates, on the political representation, on the internal unity level, on the MPs’ attitude and on the continuity of the same parliamentary group. The matter is that different selective methods also produce different consequences, not only intra-party, but also in relationship with the changes of the party system in a specific Country.

This specific case study – that of “Parlamentarie” – will allow to underline some important aspects to confirm this thesis: the process of the candidates selection is one of the most crucial functions of a political party in a democratic system (Sartori 1976). In addition, the characteristics of this process have a big impact on the personal and political attributes of the elected people and on their work. At the end, the analysis of this process gives a lot of information about the internal

¹It was the M5s’ founders themselves - Grillo and Casaleggio – to define the new political organization as a “non-party” with a “non-statute” published by the Web 2.0. This is the link <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/materiali-bg/Regolamento-Movimento-5-Stelle.pdf> .

functioning of a party and the political power in a specific country or in a specific political system (Katz, Mair 1993; Schattschneider 1942).

In particular, the “Parlamentarie” could be considered an example of primary elections to choose the Italian MPs’ candidates. But what characteristics do Parlamentarie have? How did it take place and what kind of rules regulate it? Who had the possibility to vote and above all who were the candidates? And who were the people elected? Finally, what kind of consequences derived the characteristics of this first Italian experiment of primary election for the choice of the MPs’ candidates² (also in relation to the following options made by the other “traditional parties”)?

This analysis considers the scheme used by Reuvez Y. Hazan³, that identifies four levels in order to classify the methods for a proper candidates selection: the candidacy; the “selectorate”; the decentralization and the method to choose candidates (vote or nomination). This four dimensions are investigated in relation to a *continuum* about the inclusion/exclusion level, as a crucial aspect to underline relevant aspects and consequences of general process. At first, this is a specific case of the voting mechanism and not an example of party nomination (another method to choose the political candidates); moreover the “Parlamentarie” are an experiment of “party’s primary election”. Now, it’s important to investigate the rules decided by the M5s’ central organization (what kind of primaries?). The present study analyzes in particular the candidacy rules: who can participate the process of the candidates selection? Then we analyze the selectorate: those who had a right to vote during this particular primary election (level of inclusion, selectorate’s characteristics) and what are the consequences of the selectorate’s typology. However, the main part of this study will analyze the outline of the main candidates (not only the selection rules): how many were they? Who are they (age, sex, working position, education level, incumbency, voting preferences, level of activism).

The analysis about the candidates can be divided into three parts: all the candidates during the “Parlamentarie”; the winners and the aspirant MPs’; finally the study focuses on the new members of Parliament Offices in comparison with other MPs’, who have come from another party and another lists (average age, turnover level, etc).

²Other examples of primaries elections for the selection of national MPs candidates are also the cases of Honduras’s National Party (PN) in 1996; those of Independent Committee of Political Electoral Organization (COPEI) in Venezuela in 1999 and of Island Independent Party (SFF) in 1995, and also these of Likud in Israel in 1999 and in Taiwan in 1995, when the primaries elections took place for the DDP (Democratic Progressive Party).

³Hazan, R.Y. and Pennings, P. (2001) *Democratizing Candidate Selection: Causes and Consequences*, in “Party Politics”, vol. 7, n. 3; Hazan, R.Y. and Rahat, G. (2000) *Representation, Electoral Reform and Democracy* in “Comparative Political Studies”, vol. 33, pp. 1310-1336; Bardi, L. (2006) *Partiti e Sistemi di Partito* (a cura di), Bologna, Il Mulino, pp. 171-196.

Parties and Primaries: the “non party” and the “Parlamentarie”

This study analyzes a specific case of instrument for the candidate selection process. Specifically, the research focused on the aspects and characteristics of a particular experiment of primary elections for the choice of the MPs' candidates. But primary elections only represent one of the possible instruments for the candidate selection. So, it's important to analyze the framework of what primary elections are: this general introduction it important to delineate the aspects of the particular case of the “Parlamentarie”.

First of all, primary elections are an intra-party democracy instrument that can be able to influence the following process of decision making. So, why choose primary elections as a method for candidate selection? During the last decades, primary elections have represented a crucial aspect for some political organizations, used in some countries – not only in the United States, where the primary elections are a very peculiar case, which is impossible to analyze now in this paper – to select candidates for the public office' roles: party leaders and the candidates for the public office in general. In Italy, primary elections were used for the first time - before a general election – in October 2005 by the centre-left coalition called “L'Unione”, to select their candidate to the role of Prime Minister, Romano Prodi. In the same year, in spring, “L'Unione” used (again) primary elections for the choice of the candidate for the Regional Government in Puglia and Tuscany. But, the very first example of primary elections is in 2004, in Calabria, for the choice of the candidate for the Regional Government. In the same period primary elections were used to choose some Italian mayors aspirants and in December 2012 the Democratic Party and “Left, Ecology and Freedom”⁴ used primary elections to select the MPs' candidates.

But what are the most important causes of the Italian primary elections and what were the consequences produced by this new process on the political system? What role do the candidates play and in what kind of environment were they born? Finally, what can the consequences be of these primary elections in relationship with the rules imposed by the party organization?

The most common thesis about the causes of primary elections derives from the already famous scheme about the three faces of Party Organization and its evolution, launched by Richard Katz and Peter Mair⁵ in 1993. Political parties are more and more organized around the *central office* – the Staff around the leadership - and devoted to the *public office* activities; less and less concentrated on the *party on the ground* (the party which lives at the local dimension and gives a lot

⁴“Sinistra, Ecologia e Libertà” (Sel).

⁵See Katz, R.S. and Mair, P. (1993) *The Evolution of Party Organizations in Europe: The Three faces of Party Organization* in “American Review of Politics”, vol. 14 (Winter), pp. 593-618. Trad. in Bardi, L. (2006) *Partiti e sistemi di partito*, Il Mulino, Bologna, pp. 33-58.

of decision making power to its activists and militants). So, during the last twenty years, almost every European party have suffered the consequences of the card-carrying members' lowering⁶. Thus, in the effort to contain this reduction, political parties chose primary elections to improve the power of the party on the ground, especially in a crucial situation as during the candidate and leader selection. In particular, there is one element to analyze the causes of this choice: in the first place, the option of the purposeful method to select the candidates, resulted from the organizational structure about a specific political party and, at the same time, this choice can decide the same party's order. A research about the primary elections can may become an important point of view to investigate the in-house spreading power. So, choosing the primary elections means deciding to delegate a portion of power to the card-carrying members – or to the simple supporters or “support circles” (it depends on the primary rules and on the level of inclusion/exclusion) – but at the same time keeping another sector of power under the central office control (the candidacy and selectorate rules). In any way, the primary elections activate a lot of consequences, in particular, on the Party organization and on the political system, in general.

Therefore, primaries have been chosen by the Italian centre-left parties as a new instrument for grassroots participation, but with what kind of consequences? About this aspect there are two theories: on one hand, primary elections are considered to be an instrument for real participation for the party on the ground: maybe, the only and the true party transformation element during the last decade. On the other side, primaries appear as a confusing method to delegate power to the party on the ground: in reality, this power remains in the central office to supervise the decisions into the public office and the rules for the candidacies. Left out, in the present analysis, the particular debates about the rules of primary elections for the choice of the Italian Prime Minister aspirant (Renzi vs. Bersani intra-democratic party debate), we have to keep in mind these two theses about the consequences of Italian primaries. Now, we must consider the specific case of primaries for the choice of MPs candidates. This new instrument has some different characteristics in relation to another case of primary elections used to choose intra-party leaders, mayor candidates and prime minister candidates for a general election.

Considering the Italian primaries for the choice of the MPs candidates, it's possible to underline two aspects about the causes of this new method. One is the aspect about the consequences. As far as the causes are concerned: - besides the general “crisis” of parties and the lowering of card-carrying members, we examine the present context and in particular the current electoral law that prevents the citizens (electorate) to express a preference among candidates

⁶About card-carrying members' lowering we can see Pasquino G. (2009), *Nuovo corso di Scienza Politica*, il Mulino, Bologna, pp. 168-170.

(preferential voting), but only a voting list⁷; - the second cause involves the general crisis of the Italian political system and the lack of confidence in parties and in Public Offices in general. In particular, after the regional election in Sicily, M5s underlined its electoral success and remarked the crucial role of the citizens (the people by the people) and a surge of populism arrived in Italy⁸. The choice of the MPs primary elections represented a change for the traditional parties to improve the possibility of the citizens participation.

The consequences we need to underline are that the MPs' primary elections represent a wider empowerment of the citizens towards the primaries to choose a party leader or a Prime Minister. The selectorate (the party on the ground) – even if supervised by the party in the central office – has the power to choose the people for the party in the public office (or only a part of this). In this case, the hazard is a loss of control on the behalf of the central office in relation to the other two faces of the organizational party. After an election, in fact, the operating core of almost all parties becomes the corpus of the elected: the winning candidates (Hazan 2006). For this reason, it becomes basic to analyze the rules used for the process of the candidate selection. It's also fundamental that we focus on the typology of the candidates (from their decisions will also result the following intra-party decisions). However, if a party decides to choose MPs primary elections as an instrument for the candidate selection, it's probable that it will preserve the control of the rules concerning the candidacy and the selectorate. But what kind of rules? Different rules also produce different party structures and different relationship in-between the three faces (party in the central office/in the public office/on the ground). And this is the core of the present research: what kind of answer will derive from the M5s' primary elections? How do they differ? Who will really make the decisions? Finally, what kind of consequences will the *Parlamentarie* originate and what are the future development possibilities of the M5s?

So far, we have illustrated the general characteristics of primary elections in relationship with "traditional parties". Now, instead, the present analysis focuses on the particular case of M5s and its *Parlamentarie*. They were presented as a real novelty for Italian political system, before the general elections in February 2013. But how did they develop? Before analyzing the characteristics of *Parlamentarie* (rules, candidates, selectorate, results) we need to briefly illustrate the context of M5s' development and the previous phases of the communication of *Parlamentarie* by the Beppe

⁷The current Italian electoral law is n. 270 (21th December 2005). This law changed the Italian electoral system and it was created by Minister Roberto Calderoli. The new law was defined "Porcellum" by the political scientist Giovanni Sartori.

⁸About the populist aspect of M5s we can see Corbetta, P. and Gualmini, E. (2013), *Il partito di Grillo*, Bologna, Il Mulino. About populism in general we can see Meny, Y. and Surel, Y. (2001), *Populismo e Democrazia*, Bologna, Il Mulino. In particular about web populism and new populism there are two papers by the author of the present research, one was presented last September in Rome, during the Annual Sisp Conference; another paper was illustrated in Birmingham during the one-day conference "Berlusconi and post modern politics", last December.

Grillo's personal blog. What was the real innovation of these instruments for candidates selection and what were the elements that bring back to "traditional parties"? So, were the *Parlamentarie* a true challenge to the "old parties" and did they improve grassroots participation? Now we will consider three aspects: - the innovation of the primary elections for the choice of MPs candidates and not for the selection of a party leader or a Prime Minister candidate; - the Web 2.0 as a polling station; - the relationship between the party on the ground and the staff around the leadership to decide the primary rules. From the analysis of these three aspects we will reach the description of the candidates' profile and the role of the new MPs. Finally, we will consider the M5s, in relationship with the party in public office and other faces of the political organization: in particular, what will the future challenges of the "non-party" founded by the Italian comedian Beppe Grillo be?

Web, participation and 'ground': the rise of 5 Stars Movement

M5s has been the best Italian novelty during the last decade: in February, it became the first Italian party with a national media of 25.5% of voters support⁹. A surprising result that attracted the attention of the media and also of some political scientists. An unusual outcome that led within only three months to another historic consequence (May 27th 2013) during the Italian local elections and in particular the mayor election in Rome. This paper isn't meant to analyze the general result of M5s, but it's important to remark the decrease of electoral approval¹⁰. In order to understand the future of M5s, the analysis of the process of candidates selection (public office) is important: chosen by who? What are their relations with the central office and with the party on the ground? And all this in the firm belief that from the selection process of the candidates depends the whole nature of a party, the distribution of inner power and, above all, that, following an election, the elected are those who will become the operating and working unit of a party. From the winning candidates, from their choices and from their relationship with the other organizing components will also depend the future of the party (Hazan 2006), its evolution and its own survival.

Considering M5s development, it is important, at first, to underline this "non-party" structure: "5 Stars Movement is a free association of citizens. It is not a political party and it does not mean to become so in the future. It has no left or right ideologies, but ideas. It wants to fulfill an efficient and effective exchange of opinions and a democratic comparison excluding associative and

⁹For the General Election analysis we can see Filippo Tronconi, *Da dove arrivano i voti del Movimento 5 Stelle?* in "Rivista Il Mulino", vol. 2/2013, pp.356-363.

¹⁰For the result of local elections we can see the analysis made by Istituto Cattaneo and in particular the study about the "voting transitions": how do voters' preferences change from a general election to a local election? See this link for the results of this research: <http://www.cattaneo.org/it/>.

party ties and without the mediation of leaderships and representations, recognizing to all citizens the governing and directing role normally ascribed to a few”¹¹. Then, a first aspect that emerges is that of a presumed novelty: a new political movement that was born in 2009 and became famous thanks to the popularity of the Italian comedian Beppe Grillo and his internet blog. But also a movement that gradually developed on the ground within local group and Meetup¹². So, the new political organization was born in a period of lack of confidence in political parties and also in a period of economic crisis¹³. But when were the *Parlamentarie* announced? On 29th October 2012, the M5s’ spokesperson Beppe Grillo announced the guidelines to follow as party candidates in the 2013 general election. For the first time in Italy, the candidates were chosen by party members through an online primary election between 3rd and 6th December¹⁴. By his blog, Beppe Grillo also defined “*le primarie del nulla*” the primary elections organized by the centre-left coalition “*Italia Bene Comune*”: according to Grillo’s post the real primary elections are these of MPs’ selections and not the primaries to select the Premier candidate¹⁵. So, were the *Parlamentarie* a challenge to “traditional parties”? The same parties that decided – a few weeks later - to use MPs primaries elections for the choice of their list candidates¹⁶.

The “selectorate” of the *Parlamentarie*

The “selectorate” is the body that selects the candidates for public office. We classify the selectorate using levels of inclusiveness versus exclusiveness, according to Hazan and Rahat. The most inclusive selectorates are all the voters, while a highly inclusive selectorates are all the party members – both of whom can partake in primaries, depending on the conditions set for participation. An in-between selectorate is made up of selected party agencies or party delegates. The highly exclusive selectorates are either the party elite or the most exclusive nominating entity of a single leader. We consider three complexities concerning the selectorate: the assorted, the multi-staged, and the weighted candidate selection methods. The selectorate imposes the most significant consequences on politicians, parties, and parliaments, more than any other dimension of candidate selection.

¹¹<http://www.beppegrillo.it/movimento/iscriviti.php>

¹²In August 2013 the Meetup Groups were about 1.230: www.meetup.com .

¹³To compare M5s with “populism protest” and other “anti-system” party we can see Tarchi, M. (2001), *L’Italia Populista*, Bologna, Il Mulino. For the M5s’ development phases we can also see Biorcio, R. (2013), *Politica a 5 Stelle*, Milano, Feltrinelli.

¹⁴<http://www.beppegrillo.it/parlamentarie.html>;
http://www.beppegrillo.it/2012/12/parlamentarie_istruzioni_per_luso.html;
http://www.beppegrillo.it/2012/12/le_parlamentarie.html .

¹⁵http://www.beppegrillo.it/2012/11/le_primarie_del.html .

¹⁶http://www.beppegrillo.it/2012/12/le_buffonarie.html

According to this scheme, the *Parlamentarie* were an example of primary elections to select the political candidates for public office and in particular for Parliament. Besides, the *Parlamentarie* were intra-party primaries that involved a highly exclusive electorate. This election took place totally thanks to the Web 2.0 and it was managed by the M5s' national Staff through the link www.beppegrillo.it. The *Parlamentarie* took place from 3rd to 6th December 2012. The rules were highly limited, both for the candidacies and for the body that had to select the candidates, that is to say the people who were members of national movement "MoVimento 5 Stelle-Beppe Grillo"¹⁷ before 30 September 2012 and sent a copy of their ID. The voters could express up to three preferences for the candidates of their Electoral District (the same District as in the "Calderoli Law"). Thus, the electorate of *Parlamentarie* was quite limited: according to the results diffused by the national Staff (Beppe Grillo's Blog) this primary elections had concerned 20.252 voting members (out of 31.612 members who could vote). The potential votes were 60.756; 57.272 the votes cast. The preferential voting included in this research were 53.655 (93,68 % of total votes)¹⁸. The M5s' primary elections can be taken as an example of closed European primaries, that, generally, were limited to the party card-carrying members: the electorates included in the "members arena" are different according to the adopted restrictions concerning the membership; specifically the additional conditions requested to the party members (Hazan 2006: 176). For example, the members' participation can be reduced by the request of a minimum period of membership, prior the date of the candidates selection.

The levels of accessibility, instead, concern how and where it's possible to vote: polling station, postal vote or party's convention. In this specific case, the vote could only be expressed online: so, the Web 2.0 operated as a polling station. Indeed, only the national members could vote and in particular only those who needed to register and also sent a copy of their ID, before on 30th September 2012 and, in other words, more than two months before the announcement of the *Parlamentarie*. The electorate has been evidently restrictive, so it affected the legitimacies of the candidates. A primary election that has been, immediately, a big impact to mass media, as a proclamation of newness and as a possibility of grassroots democracy. Instead, it has been limited to about 30.000 entitled to vote. During the entire electoral campaign, a limited participation and unknown candidates helped on focusing the attention on their leader and his tour and, at the same time, gave the citizens the possibility to choose the candidates in a direct way, despite the electoral

¹⁷<http://www.beppegrillo.it/movimento/iscriviti.php>

¹⁸The outcome was not diffused by the National Staff.

law. So, this new instrument has been used also by Democratic Parties and Left, Ecology and Freedom¹⁹.

The candidates: 1.486 potential MPs

Totally, candidates of *Parlamentarie* have been 1.486: but who could present their candidacy? Were allowed to present their candidacy only the M5s' activists that had already been proposed as candidates – but not elected – in M5s' lists certified by Beppe Grillo, during earlier local elections (both regional and administrative between 2008 and 2012)²⁰. A choice, that of candidacies, as limited as that of selectorate. Considering again the *continuum* inclusivity/exclusivity, on the one hand there are the rules according to which each party elector can also be a candidate; on the other side - that of exclusivity – there are some restrictions as in this case, where the conditions concern the essential issue (precondition) of prior candidacy under the M5s lists and also the “non-election” at a local level.

The 1.486 candidates have been classified in a dataset composed by ten variables: age, gender, education, job, geographical area of origin, candidacy Electoral District, incumbency, past political experiences, Meetup membership, Meetup role. For each candidate the dataset also included the preferential voting number and another three variables that have permitted to classify the candidates divided into three groups: all primaries' candidates (1.486); winner candidates (822: 556 the candidates for the list of Chamber of Deputies and 266 the candidates for the list of Senate of the Republic) and the elected – the new MPs' (163: 109 Deputies; 54 Senators).

In this paragraph we shall analyze the characteristics of all primaries' candidates. Considering now details of the candidates' profile it is possible to underline that 1.293 out of 1.486 were men (87%) and only 193 were women (12,98%). The average age was of 42,33²¹. Analyzing the candidates' qualification, it emerged that 46,9% of the full MPs' candidates were graduated (697 of 1.486) and one-third also had a postgraduate degree (PhD, master and specialization); 45,76% had high school diploma (680 of 1.486); 6,32 % of the candidates had a middle school diploma; about 1% didn't declare their education level.

Then, we focused the attention on the candidates' job: a majority of the candidates were office workers (about 35%); 20,4% were freelance professionals; about 10% are self-employed;

¹⁹In December 2012, with a “traditional” primaries election.

²⁰<http://www.beppegrillo.it/parlamentarie.html>

²¹The candidates biography and their *curriculum vitae* have been presented at this link http://www.beppegrillo.it/2012/12/i_risultati_delle_parlamentarie.html – not any longer available – and have been also possible to watch a You Tube video as a candidates presentation. At this link there's an example of a video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2E_88Fi4RRc .

7,4% of candidates were entrepreneurs and 5,8% were teachers. So, among the candidates there was also a 6,3% of factory workers; a 3,6% of managers; 3,8% of unemployed; about 2,5% of students and 2,3% of retired. There are only a few housewives (about 9,5%) and a few candidates that have a different job.

Focusing the attention on the candidates' origin, we can observe that all candidates have been presented in their Region of origin and in their Electoral District. Furthermore, the high number of candidacies gave the possibility of M5s to propose candidates for all the Electoral District and for all the electoral lists. None of the candidates had previous incumbency within another party or political organization and nobody had local incumbency, not even with the M5s. There's only 8 candidates out of 1.486 (0,53%) that declared they had, in the past, a party membership card, for example with the Northern League, Italy of Values (Idv), the Green Party (the Greens), the Democratic Party of the Left, the Socialist Party and the Radical Party.

A further interesting element of this research concerns the Meetup membership²². About 43% of the candidates also line a Meetup role: organizer, co-organizer, assistant organizer or simple member. The functions have been codified according to two kinds of methods: the role and the grounding level (local/regional/provincial). Within a Meetup there are four tasks: "organizer"; "co-organizer"; "assistant organizer"; "member". In the case of double assignments, we have considered the highest and that performed for the longest time and at the upper level. The situation described is that of the Parlamentarie's period (December 2012). So, on the total of candidates it results that only the 43% also had a Meetup assignments. During the analysis of Parlamentarie's phases it will be possible to underline that the elected candidates were also part of a Meetup group.

Focusing the attention on the 631 Meetup members, it is important to consider the assignments distribution among all candidates: the 59% were the member; the 19% the assistant organizer; the 12% the co-organizer and the 10% the organizer.

A final aspect of the candidates' profile concerns the preferential voting. In total this research collected 53.655 voting: each elector could express a maximum of 3 preferences, but it was impossible to find all preferential voting²³. Anyway this study underlines that the most voted candidate was one from Lombardy (602 preferential voting and 13,6% of the votes in his Electoral District); the second was a candidate from "Campania 2" who obtained 200 preferential voting

²²About Meetup we can see this link <http://www.meetup.com/find/>.

²³The end result of the Parlamentarie wasn't diffused by the M5s' National Staff. Only the registered selectorate had the possibility to know the order of candidates election and the preferential voting for each candidate, but only in a specific Electoral District, the same of own voting authorization: http://www.beppegrillo.it/2012/12/i_risultati_delle_parlamentarie.html. Present study were conducted by an intensive internet research, by the analysis of local press cuttings and by email/social network contact with Meetup groups and individual candidates.

(about 12,8% of the Electoral District preferences); in Basilicata the best candidates obtained 12,3% of the district votes; similar percentage in “Lazio 1” where the most voted candidate obtained 11,8% of votes. Most voting candidates were Meetup member, in particular assistant organizer and organizer in Milan, Brescia and Rome. The most voted candidates in each Electoral District obtained between 6% and 13% of the local preferential voting. In particular, in “Lombardy 1” the best candidate obtained 13,6% of the preferences and the second most voted candidate obtained 5,2% of preferential voting. So, this is the case with the most concentration of votes in favor of a candidate that caught 612 preferences out of 4.419; at the contrary, in Calabria the best candidate obtained 6,6% of the preferences and the second candidate 6,2% votes. So, in the most cases the best candidates obtained a medium value of 9,6% of the Electoral District preferential voting, with about 3 percentage points difference compared to the second candidate. This aspect underlines a trend to an homogeneous votes distribution, with no specific area of voting concentration (the official results didn’t permit to analyze the exactly number of voters in each Electoral District. The Central Staff diffused only the results about the national voters – and the national preferential voting - and not their about the Electoral District. With this research it’s now only possible to analyze the total of preferential voting in each Electoral District, but not the number of voters in the same District).

The results of the Parlamentarie: Meetup membership and electoral lists

Now we analyze the winners’ profiles: of 1.486 candidates, the winners of Parlamentarie have been 822 (55,3 % of total candidates): 556 have been placed inside the lists of the Chambers of Deputies (also according to their age) and 266 inside the Senate of the Republic. Among them, the most voted candidate was one of the candidates at the head of the list in the Electoral Districts of Lombardy with “602” preferential voting; the least voted (absolute values), on the contrary, was another candidate from Lombardy and he occupied the 28th position of the list for Senate: he obtained “2” preferential voting. He is followed by a candidate from Campania (running for the Chambers) who obtained “3” votes. In the composition of the lists for the two Houses of Parliament, M5s occupied all the disposable places and presented its own candidates in all the Electoral Districts, even in the foreign district.

Among these people there were 151 women out of 822 lists candidates: about 18,3% in relation to 10% of all primaries candidates. Focusing on the education level and the job position, it’s possible to underline that there haven’t been significant mutations of the candidates framework: the selectorate has chosen about 35% of employees and 20% of freelance professionals. Also, there is a predominance of graduated candidates. This situation highlights that the selectorate wanted to

especially choose the general renewal and not to award specific categories of candidates; this is a first possible aspect to underline the transversal characteristics of 5 Stars Movement.

It's also important to remark another interesting datum: among the winners of the Parlamentarie the distance between the total members of the lists and the Meetup membership: 630 of 1.486 among the total candidates; 452 of 822 (among the lists candidates): 54,9%.

Reducing the analysis those who obtained the highest number of votes in every Electoral District, we will demand if these people's characteristics are different from the specimen (the total number of candidates). First of all we can see that the selectorate of Parlamentarie rewarded women: among the "best candidates" they are over 66%, a little more than 10% among all candidates. The winners of Parlamentarie are younger than the total specimen: 42% is 35 years old or younger; the average age is 38 vs. 42 of the whole assembly of primaries candidates. We must underline that the best candidates are more active and present inside Meetup than the specimen average (71% of them are members vs. 42% of total specimen) and half of them also have a responsibility task within a local group (organizer, co-organizer, assistant organizer, event organizer).

In particular, it is possible to illustrate the lists formation: the age and gender distribution among the candidates, in relation with the "best candidates". 42,3% is the average age of primaries candidates; 41,9% the average age of lists candidates (Chamber and Senate); 38,5% the average age of the only best candidates (Chamber and Senate); and 66% of best candidates were women.

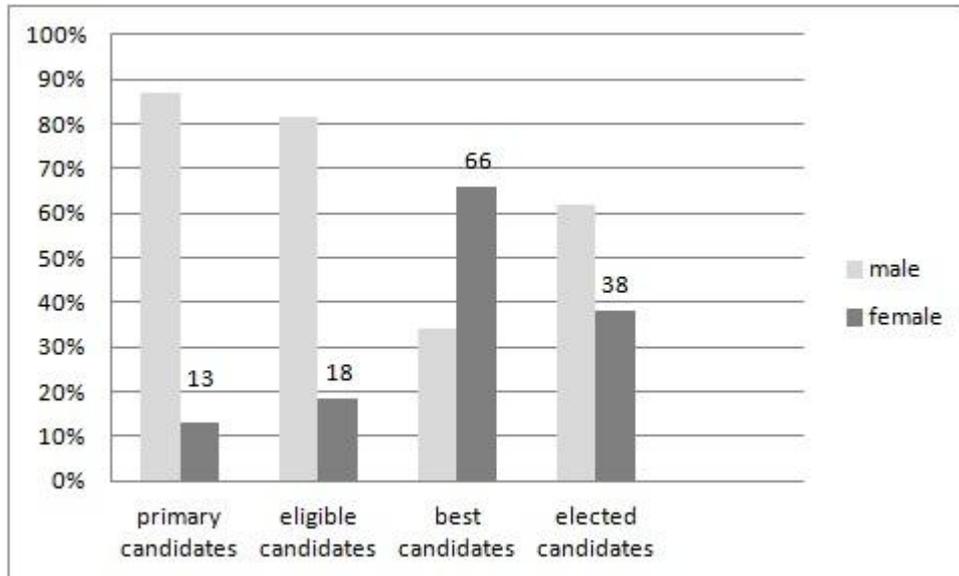
The new "5 Stars Parliament"

In this paragraph we compare, first of all, the three phases of candidates selection process (candidacy/primaries/election), so we'll describe the composition of new Parliament and the characteristics of the Parliamentary Groups²⁴.

The first aspect is about the female presence: among elected candidates the women are of 47% in the lists for Chamber and 34% in the lists for the Senate. In total, about 38% of the new MPs, elected in the M5s' lists are women.

²⁴ This study not consider yet the recent permutation from M5s Group to "Gruppo Misto" by two MPs.

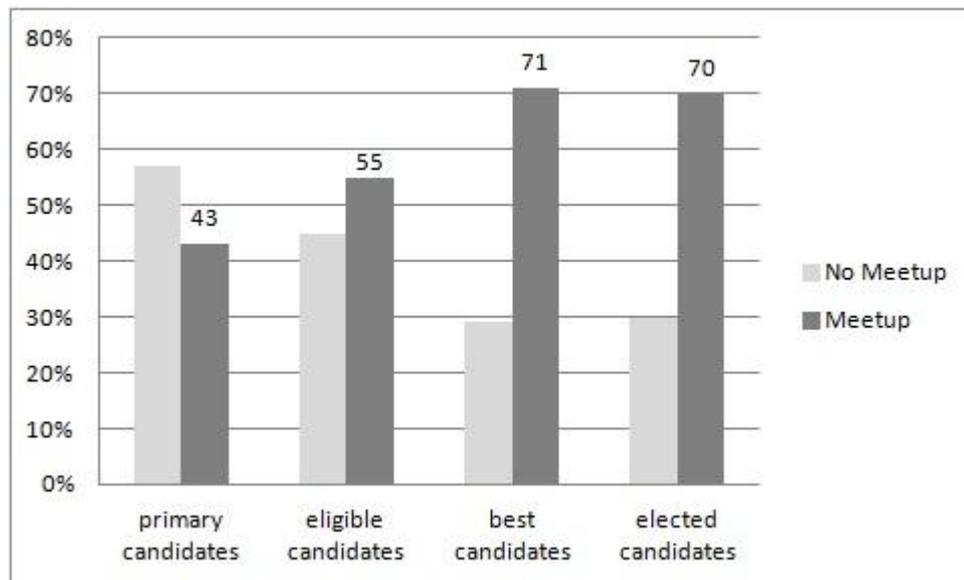
The bar chart (graph 1) remarks the female presence in the candidates selection process: women have been the most voted and became 66% in comparison to 13% among primaries candidates. Then, 38% of women entered the Parliament.



Graph 1. Female Presence in the candidates selection process

Another comparison is the average age of the candidates during the selection process: the average age was 42 years among all primaries candidates; 41 among lists candidates; 38 among “best candidates” and, finally, 36 is the average age of new MPs. In particular, 30,5% of the deputies are under 29.

A last aspect of this candidates selection process concerns the Meetup Membership: the bar chart (graph 2) remarks the relation with Meetup Membership and the specific phases of selection process:

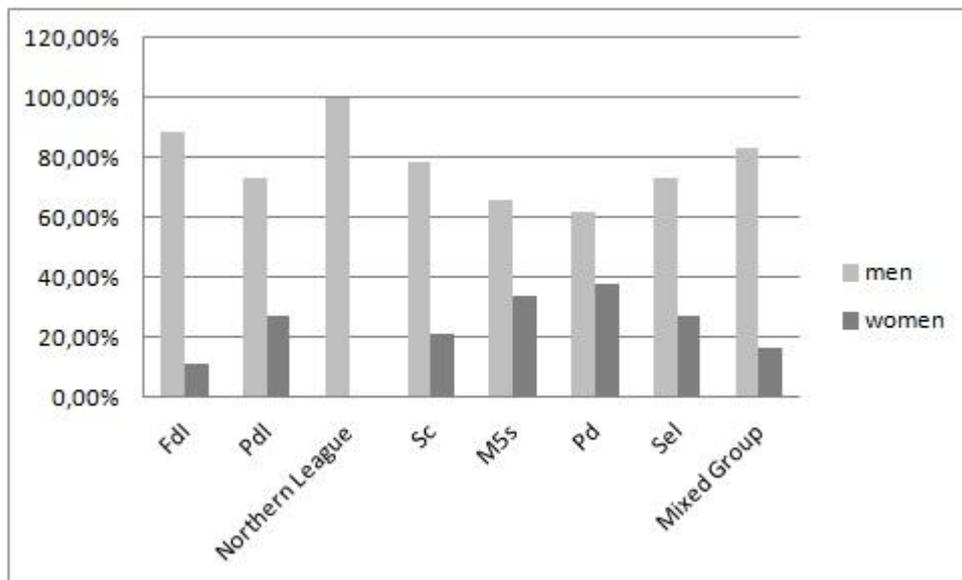


Graph 2. Connection between Meetup Membership/Candidates

Graph 2 underlines the difference between the total of the elected and the membership inside Meetup: among the 163 elected in Parliament – at the date of the M5s online primaries election – 112 were having an active part within their local groups, that is the electoral committees, during the Parlamentarie and during the electoral campaign, in the meetings with the citizens and during the official campaign of the Beppe Grillo’s Tsunami Tour. The underlying graphic shows the relationship between the candidates to the Parlamentarie and their membership in Meetup Groups. The light gray 1 series shows the total candidates throughout the four phases of consultation and the dark gray 2 series shows the membership in Meetup during the same four phases (primary candidates/eligible candidates/best candidates/elected candidates). As you can see, in the case showing the relationship between the Meetup membership and the elected candidates, the two towers of the bar chart are more of less coinciding at the value of about 70%.

Now, we analyze the new Parliament framework: the picture we have is that of a renewed parliament, above all about the age and the relationship with the average age of the other parliamentary groups. The M5s’ elected have been 163: 109 have their seat in the Chamber of Deputies (37 women and 72 men) and 54 in the Senate (25 women and 29 men). Another important comparison is the average age of the Deputies among Parliamentary Groups. The M5s group is the second for female presence (33,9% of women): the first is Democratic Party

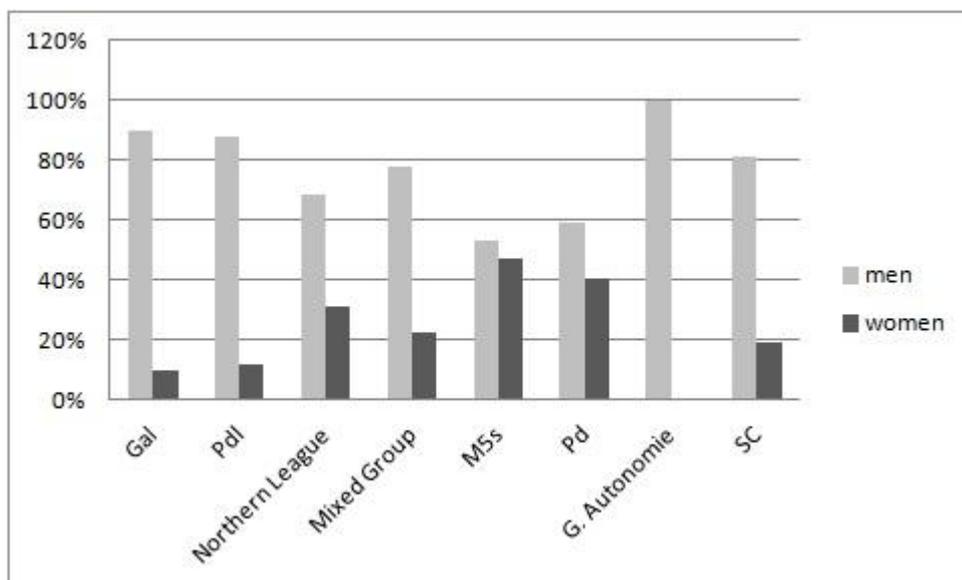
Group with 37,9%. The group with the least female deputies is the Northern League, with no women at all. The graph 3 outlines these aspects.



Source: Chambers of Deputies

Graph 3. Parliamentary Groups: gender distribution Chamber of Deputies

The bar chart (graph 4) outlines the same gender distribution, but among the groups of the Senate:



Source: Senate of the Republic

Graph 4. Parliamentary Groups: gender distribution Senate

Finally, we consider the average age among the Groups inside the two Houses of Parliament: table 1 outlines the Deputies distribution par gender and table 2 concerns the same distribution, but among Senators: the comparison is between M5s Groups, Deputies/Senators in the seventeenth Legislature and Deputies/Senator in the previous Legislature (the sixteenth).

Age Groups	M5s Deputies	XVII Leg. Deputies	XVI Leg. Deputies
under 29	30,1	7,6	0
30 <years< 39	68	28,9	5,6
40 <years< 49	1,9	24,4	24,1
50 <years< 59	0	27,8	40,5
over 60	0	11,3	29,8
Tot. (N)	100 (105)	100 (630)	100 (630)

Source: Chambers of Deputies

Table 1. Deputies/Age Groups: comparison M5s/Deputies XVII Legislature/XVI Legislature

It's important to underline that the new Parliament has been renewed, in comparison to the previous Legislature and M5s has contributed to this novelty. At the Chamber, the deputies under 29 are 7,6% relative to 0% in the previous Legislature and they were all chosen by the primary elections and they were from M5s or from the Democratic Party. The deputies between 30 and 39 in the present Legislature grew of about 40% in comparison to the previous Legislature and in the same age groups is also part the most M5s deputies (68%). To compare the M5s' deputies with the other members of the Chamber, it is possible to note that no M5s' deputies is over 49 than 27,8% of the total parliamentary groups and less than 2% is included in the age group "between 40 and 49 years".

Highly renewed was also the Senate, where about 76% of M5s' Senators are under 50, in comparison to the 32% of the rest of the Senators and only 1,8% are between 60 and 69 (19,8% among the total of the Senators). In the previous Legislature they were only 9%. Table 2 underlines the percentage values and the Senators distribution among age groups²⁵. In general, the table underlines that the Senators under 50 were 9,8% in the previous Legislature and now are 32%. So, have decreased the Senators percentage in the age groups between 60 and 69: 34,8% in the previous Legislature and about 20% during the present Legislature.

Age Groups	M5s Senators	XVII Leg. Senators	XVI Leg. Senators
40 < years < 49	75,9	32,1	9,8
50 < years < 59	22,3	43	40,7
60 < years < 69	1,8	19,8	34,8
over 70	0	5,1	14,7
Tot. (N)	100 (54)	100 (318)	100 (319)

Source: Senate of the Republic

Table 2. Senators/Age Groups: comparison M5s/Senators XVII Legislature/XVI Legislature

So the new MPs, despite being elected by a restricted number of voters only, have contributed to the renewal of the Parliament, where the average age is highly lower and where there are more women in comparison to the previous Legislature²⁶.

²⁵It is important to specify that in the age groups “over 70”, now, there are only the three Life Senators; at the contrary, during the previous Legislature, between 2008 and 2012, the Life Senators were up to seven; only one Senator, during the last year of the Legislature, was included among the age group “between 60 and 69 years”; all the others were included among the “over 70”.

²⁶To renewal Parliament also contributed Democratic Party and Sel, other party that used MPs primaries election for the choice of their lists candidates. This is the source for the numbers about others Mps (Deputies):

<http://www.camera.it/leg17/28>; for the Senate:

http://www.senato.it/leg/17/BGT/Schede_v3/Statistiche/Composizione/SenatoriPerEta.html

In conclusion

In particular, this study underlines some aspects about the characteristics of the M5s' MPs and also some rules of the internal organization of this party: first of all, the Parlamentarie have been an example of “closed primaries” with an exclusive selectorate and with candidates that were completely unknown to traditional politics, although active members of the M5s (these people had been on the local and regional lists but were not elected).

So, the exclusive rules concerning the selectorate originate “identification among similar people” and not a case of “large citizen participation”. However, this primary experiment has had a very strong impact both on the media and within political debate itself. Some of the other parties have considered the possibility of adopting this primary candidate selection process, as well (especially the centre-left parties). Also, the Parlamentarie were the first example of online voting, though it was limited to a restricted portion of electors, with rules imposed by the staff around the leadership.

In particular, in order to understand the selectorate's opinion on the Parlamentarie, a web survey was launched among the members, through the central staff, and uploaded on the online platform Survey Monkey²⁷. The survey involved 628 people and it occurred between 27th February and 19th March, with a 36-question survey divided into three groups. Analyzing the results, it is possible to notice that 55,9% of the members was not satisfied with the Parlamentarie and would like to apply some changes in the future. In particular, the members demands less restrictive rules: the 28,3% of the members did not vote because “They didn't manage to register on time” and the 5% “Because they didn't know about it”. The 24,4% of the interviewed wants to change the voting process, in order to make it wider, and 15,8% also want to widen the candidacies, in order to make them less restrictive. Moreover, more than 21% would like to be given the possibility to vote both on and off-line. Finally, the activists demand “More transparency in the voting procedures”; “More time to vote”; “Public meetings on the territory with the candidates”; “More transparency in the announcement of the results, as to have public announcements.” and finally “More communication with the local groups (Meetup) and the central staff”. So, it appear that the M5s members suffer for the restrictive rules and for the control of the National Staff, that imposed a restrictive rules for this “closed primaries”, controlled by the central office.

Focusing, whereas, on the analysis on the candidates characteristics, it is possible to underline, first of all, a massive presence of candidates under 40. Moreover, when considering the

²⁷The web survey used the CAWI methodology (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing). The complete results of this work will be presented during the 2013 Sisp Annual Conference, in Florence.

newly elected M5s' MPs, it is possible to spot a new parliamentary group which is younger than the national average age and which has more women. At the moment, the groups with the most women are M5s, Pd and Sel. In conclusion, it is clearly early to say what the consequences of this candidate selection process are: what can be observed here is that among the new M5s MPs, there is a higher presence of under 30s compared to the other Chamber of Deputies political groups, and this contributed to lowering the average age of the current Parliament. In the Senate, too, there is now a higher number of senators who are younger than 50. As far as the M5s candidates are concerned, it is possible to say that their work on a local level - both actively on the territory and within local groups (Meetup) - played a vital role.

Finally, we can say that the M5s candidates have been exclusively chosen by the selection method of primary elections, even though these can only be voted by a specific number of people. In the following months and through the whole legislature, it will be possible to assess their group cohesiveness and their relationship with the selectorate and the national staff²⁸.

A final evaluation of the Parlamentarie - seen as an example of grassroots democracy and as a direct involvement of the citizens through the web - leads to two precise aspects which have been analyzed in this paper and previously underlined: the first one is the rules which were imposed by the central staff, which only entitled a part of their members to vote; the second one is about the relationship between the elected candidates (and the current public office), the central office (which established rules by means of votes and candidacies) and the electors (party on the ground). The candidate selection process represents only an important phase to investigate the characteristics of the internal organization of a political body, although it will be possible to monitor the elected corpus by analyzing the relationship with the other faces of organization; the group cohesiveness and the electoral behavior of the individual candidates in relationship with specific policies and in relationship with the other parliamentary groups.

²⁸It is important to specify that these data do not consider the recent events, which led to the creation of a 'mixed parliamentary group' and desertion of some deputies and senators.

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