

ACADEMY

Anti-Party Parties in Germany and Italy

Protest Movements
and Parliamentary Democracy

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and Thomas Poguntke

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Foreword

In the last few years the political landscape in Germany and Italy, as well as in other European countries, has witnessed many radical changes. New political actors and movements have challenged the traditional political parties at the local, national and European level, gaining a strong and at first unexpected consensus from different groups of society.

The rise of radical, anti-establishment and populist protest movements reached its peak in the years 2012-2014.

The new “anti-party parties” managed to make use of the social protests and changed the political landscape in Germany and Italy. In Italy, the national elections in February 2013 marked a turningpoint in Italian politics: the Five-Star Movement entered the Parliament for the first time and emerged as one of the most prominent political forces in Italy. With more than 25% of the votes it is the largest opposition party. It also gained good electoral results in the elections of the European Parliament in May 2014.

In Germany the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), established in 2012 in Berlin, scored in the election for the German Bundestag in 2013, 4.7 % of the votes, remaining below the 5%-barrier. But just one year later, in the elections of the European Parliament, the AfD reached 7.1% of the votes and is represented with seven deputies in the European Parliament. From 2014 on, the populist AfD polled strongly in three Eastern German state parliamentary elections, winning around 10% of the votes in Brandenburg, Saxony and Thuringia. In February 2015, it obtained representation in the Western German state of Hamburg and in May the party gained 5.5% of the votes casted in the state parliamentary elections in Bremen.

Due to the strength of these new political forces and their importance - not only for the national but also for the European level - the Konrad-

Adenauer-Stiftung in Italy supports this publication, which aims at offering both a clear and extensive analysis of the rise of the “anti-party parties” in Italy and Germany. The volume features the contributions of Italian and German scholars and political analysts focusing on the respective national experiences with these phenomena.

I would like to thank Prof. Andrea De Petris and Prof. Thomas Poguntke for taking the lead in putting this publication together. Furthermore my thanks go out to the authors for their insightful contributions. I also thank the former Director of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Italy, Katja Plate, who initiated this project.

I hope you enjoy reading this publication and are looking forward to further exchanges on these subjects.

Caroline Kanter
Director of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Italy

Preface and acknowledgments

At different times in their political history, Western democracies have experienced different categories of political parties. Scholars of political science, Klaus von Beyme, Maurice Duverger, Otto Kirchheimer, Angelo Panebianco, Richard Katz and Peter Mair and Giovanni Sartori - to name only the best known - have tried over the years to provide a framework able to distinguish between the different categories of parties present in western political systems. They have described different kinds of political parties, on the one hand able to take inspiration from the existing social, economic, cultural and political issues of the moment for their electoral strategies; on the other hand, parties which were willing to steer the political debate and to influence the political language - which is conditioned also by the way political parties bring their own political and electoral message to public opinion.

The rise of radical and populist parties from the second half of the 1990s onwards has been carefully analyzed by many eminent experts of the field, including Stefano Bartolini, Piero Ignazi, Cas Mudde, Pippa Norris, Paul Taggart and Nadia Urbinati: scholars who started a line of study which is now followed by lawyers and political scientists all around the world, demonstrating that the spread of radicalized populist parties has become a global phenomenon.

Although various categories of parties have been identified over the years, their strategic approach to political competition remained largely the same: to present a proposal as a possible alternative to that of all other competitors, aiming at attracting support from the highest number of citizens possible, at winning the electoral competitions, at gaining majorities in the different representative institutions concerned and, ultimately, at assuming government responsibilities. This is a strategy that remained largely unchanged over time: to promote its own political pro-

posals as well as possible, through a proper use of the media made available by current technology, but always being aware of operating as “political parties”.

Recently, however, new political organizations have been on the increase, and they have gained the label of "anti-party parties". They are a new phenomenon, in fact, consisting in the creation of organizations aiming to compete in the electoral and political contest, which refuse from the start to be considered as equivalent to traditional political parties. The anti-party parties do everything to emphasize their (alleged?) substantial difference with the traditional parties, adopting a different internal organizational structure, issuing various statutory documents, using different communication strategies, enacting different internal decision-making procedures, and so on. Anti-party parties - not to be confused with the larger group of "anti-system parties" - do not necessarily aim at subverting the political and institutional order, but rather at presenting themselves as political organizations different from all other political competitors. In this sense, their rejection of the "party" label is the prerequisite to justify their own existence. All policy strategies pursued by anti-party parties find their justification in their imperative need to systematically affirm and confirm their inherent diversity.

This book provides a legal and political analysis of the anti-party parties that recently arose in Italy and Germany, and verifies the results of their communication strategies especially with regard to the national parliamentary elections, held in February and in September 2013 respectively. The various authors involved in the project gave their contribution to realize a description of all elements that characterize these political formations: internal organization, candidates' selection, decision-making procedures, policy and electoral strategies, electoral cleavages of reference, results in previous elections. There is also a section of the work analyzing the impact of these formations on the general political context of the two countries taken in to consideration.

The different analytical perspectives provided by the authors of the book show that it is not rare to find some characteristics of the anti-party party model in various degrees also in the traditional political parties. It is undeniable, for example, that mainstream political parties are gradually adopting some operational methods originally developed as communication strategies by anti-party parties. The analysis of this phenomenon, therefore, inevitably raises a crucial question: are we actually dealing with a new type of political party, or are we rather in presence

of an innovative new way of doing politics? The difference is anything but irrelevant: if we assume that the anti-party party is a model on its own, it is evident that such a model will be considered as one of many available organizational categories within which you can catalogue the political parties present in a given national context; instead, if we conclude that being “anti-party” instead represents a “state-of-mind”, we should then ask ourselves whether such a strategy cannot be adopted also by traditional political formations in the future. If this second hypothesis is true, an “anti-party operative strategy” could be enacted also by other kinds of political parties, and therefore interact and influence the very essence of already-registered political organizations.

This work represents a first attempt at providing elements of analysis of the anti-party parties, in the belief that - beyond the results that these formations will get at the electoral polls - their presence on the political scene represents a phenomenon deserving careful attention by the experts of the sector.

The project that allowed the realization of this book began as an international conference: it was held on November 15th and 16th, 2013 at the LUISS - G. Carli University in Rome, organized jointly by the Department of Law of LUISS and by the *Institut für Deutsches und Internationales Parteienrecht und Parteienforschung* (Düsseldorf Party Research Institute - PRuF) of the Heinrich-Heine University in Düsseldorf: an internationally renowned research centre on German and comparative party regulation and party research, founded in 1991.

The decision to undertake a collaboration with PRuF was due to two specific reasons. On the one hand, to analyze two national experiences based on different party systems, party regulations and electoral laws, in order to see what results the respective anti-party parties have attained so far in the two cases. On the other hand, to facilitate the participation of political scientists and legal scholars, in the belief that the phenomenon in question can be properly estimable only by adopting a systematic analytical interdisciplinary perspective. In fact, a study under an exclusively political science orientation could not properly take into account the normative framework within which the political parties have to operate, while a purely legal analysis would be likely to miss the properly political science characteristics of the phenomenon.

In any case, the entire project would not have been possible without the fundamental financial and strategic support provided by the Rome office of the *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung* (Konrad Adenauer Foundation -

KAS), which decided to accept our research proposal and support it generously in all phases of its realization. It is therefore essential to us to mention personally the people of the Adenauer Foundation, who offered their precious contribution in order to ensure that the entire project could be successfully concluded and this volume be published: Dr. Katja Plate, Director of the KAS Rome office until autumn 2014, who materially accepted our collaboration request and supported its implementation until the end of her stay in Rome; Dr. Silke Schmitt, collaborator of the KAS Rome office, who followed every step of the research, ensuring constant personal dedication at every stage of the project; Dr. Caroline Kanter, current director of the KAS Rome office, who granted full continuity in the commitment of the foundation also in the final stages of the project. A special mention is also deserved by Laura Reichert, former intern of the Adenauer Foundation, who provided unique assistance in the revision of the single contributions.

Sincere and heartfelt thanks go, of course, also to all the authors who accepted our invitation to collaborate on this project: with their articles, they have made it possible to realize this research, providing the scientific community and anyone interested in the emerging anti-party parties phenomenon with an extremely important contribution to better define its features and ease its understanding. It has been a great pleasure and honour to work with all of them. Considering the quality of the outcome, it is our sincere hope that further opportunities for collaboration will ensue in the near future.

Andrea De Petris, Rome
Thomas Poguntke, Düsseldorf

May 2015

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN ITALY AND GERMANY:
RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Five-Star Movement: A catch-all anti-party party

Fabio Bordignon and Luigi Ceccarini

The experience of the Italian 5-Star Movement offers a particularly interesting case of an anti-party party, also at an international level. The Movement's success at the General Election of February 2013 projected Beppe Grillo's "creature" well beyond the status of a niche phenomenon, turning it into a protagonist of the Italian political system. At its first participation in a general election, the M5S became the first party in the country¹.

Interest in the M5S, however, goes well beyond its electoral weight and the centrality this subject has achieved in national political dynamics. It concerns the peculiar characteristics of the movement from an ideological, programmatic and organisational point of view.

In this work, the establishment of the Movement and its effect on Italian politics will be analysed from a specific angle: the qualitative and quantitative evolution of its electoral base. An attempt is made here to determine, by using the official election data and the results of a *Demos* survey, the extent to which the profile of the 5-Stars electorate, and its evolution over time, calls into question the features of the Italian so-called "Second Republic"², from the perspective of its territorial structure, socio-demographic characteristics and political culture.

This text is divided into nine sections. The first section frames the case of the M5S within the evolution of the Italian political system. The second and third analyse two aspects of the geopolitical characteristics of the vote for the Movement at local and national levels. The fourth section traces the socio-demographic distribution, and the fifth looks at the peculiarities of 5-Star voters from the point of view of political origin. The sixth section examines the 5-Star vote, discussing the timing and meaning of the choice. The seventh considers the social image of the Movement, comparing its voters' representations with those of the electorate

as a whole. The eighth seeks to combine, within a single statistical regression model, the main elements of the 5-Star voter, in order to trace his/her “identikit”. Finally, the concluding section relates the results to the theoretical assumptions on which this work was based.

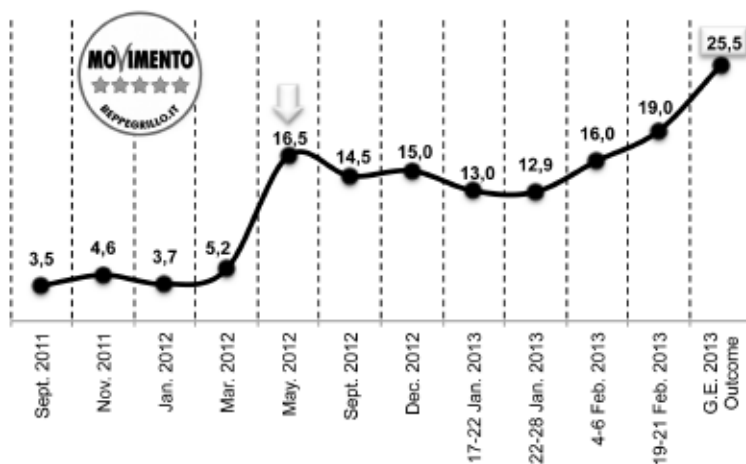
I. THE 5-STAR RISE

The history of the party is rather brief. The M5S began to take form between 2007 and 2008, from the network of relationships developed around the blog *beppegrillo.it*, established by the former comedian in 2005 (Biorcio & Natale 2013; Bordignon & Ceccarini 2013a; Corbetta & Gualmini 2013). However, Grillo’s people (who came to be called “grillini”) organised themselves (even offline) through the Meetup platform³, materialising the idea of hybridisation between old and new media, and between old and new models of participation (Chadwick 2006, 2013; Bimber 2003). It was the period of the mass demonstrations – the so-called V-Days (Vaffanculo Days: *Fuck Off Days*) – against the dual elites of politics and journalism. It was also the period of the first electoral experiments, thanks to the *Friends of Beppe Grillo* lists, “certified” by the blogger himself.

The 5-Star Movement was formally established at the end of 2009 and, in the two years that followed, it participated with modest success at the local administrative elections. The year of consecration, however, was 2012, when the spring municipal elections and the autumn Sicilian regional elections certified the Movement’s continuing rise in attractiveness. Within a few months, the estimates emerging from the electoral polls saw the M5S increase from 4% to 20% (Figure 1). The February 2013 General Election, however, caught political observers – and, perhaps, the leaders and activists of the Movement itself – by surprise. The Movement’s electoral support had exceeded 25%. The bipolar structure that had characterised the Italian political scene for almost twenty years was sent into crisis, giving rise to a parliamentary stalemate that was to last for several weeks⁴.

The M5S was able to exploit the window of opportunity opened up by a deep crisis in the Italian political and economic system. The Movement’s action tapped into (and, at the same time, amplified) the resentment towards the corridors of power, serving as the main interpreter of widespread demand for renovation of the political sphere and its main actors.

Figure 1. M5S voting intention trend. September 2011-February 2013, and 2013 General Election outcome. (% values)



Source: Demos&Pi surveys 2010-2013 and official Ministry of Interior data.

In fact, when subjected to the analytical lens of political science, the M5S shows strong elements of rupture, but also of continuity, with respect to the long period of the Second Republic, inaugurated at the beginning of the nineties with Silvio Berlusconi's entry into the political field.

From the point of view of the party form, the Second Republic was characterised by the transition from *mass party* (absolute protagonist of the so-called "First Republic") to *personal party*: Berlusconi's Forza Italia, later to become Popolo della Libertà (Calise 2000; 2013; McDonnell 2013). This party – which has always preferred to define itself as a "movement" – was, and still is, strongly subordinated to the charismatic and media-savvy qualities of its leader, a well-known media tycoon around whose companies the party is structured. The M5S is a political entity that is very different from Forza Italia. It describes itself as a "non-party": a purely horizontal, loosely structured, "leaderless" organisation (while Beppe Grillo is its figurehead and principal voice, he is not its formal leader in the traditional sense). In other respects, however, the M5S is very similar to Forza Italia: with a strong, charismatic, media-attractive front man – actually a legitimate owner, given that he owns the copyright of the party

symbol – and with a web-based media company embedded within its ‘central committee’⁵.

The Internet is at the centre of this experience (and experiment) in Italian politics. It underlies the communications strategy, the organisational base and the ideological foundation of the 5-Star programme. The “Non-Statute”⁶ establishes the blog *beppegrillo.it* as the headquarters of the movement. In fact, the strategies of the party (and of its leader) reveal, even in this case, a unique mix – or hybridisation – of old and new elements. The Movement’s communication takes place first via the Internet, but then on the ground, in the streets and squares. And from the network and squares it bounces onto television, where Grillo’s pronouncements are reflected in the mainstream media circuit (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2014a; Nizzoli 2013, 164–165). The result is that the Movement’s leader, while refusing (initially) to appear on television, is always present on the small screen, because so many anchor-men, politicians and analysts are talking about him and showing his blog-posts, tweets and videos.

From a programmatic and ideological perspective, the M5S offers a clean break from the schemes of the Second Republic, long based on the bipolar contrast between centre-left and centre-right (Ceccarini, Diamanti & Lazar 2012; Bordignon 2014).

The first objectives of Grillo and his Movement regarded issues that can be traced to the area of *new politics* (Poguntke 1987; 1989) and the (new) *libertarian left* (Kitschelt 1988). Grillo’s campaigns related mostly to environmentalism, civil rights, legality, transparency, the rule of law, and the problems of poverty and precarious employment. He also embraced the battles against the power of big business and the effects of globalisation. From an Italian perspective, the Movement seemed to fit into the flow of anti-Berlusconian mobilisation, including the more radical and “movimentist” groups. Gradually, however, Grillo, through his blog, adopted and reformulated some of the typical political issues of the Italian centre-right (Pedrazzani & Pinto 2013): in particular with regard to the high level of taxation, the loss of national sovereignty (assuming anti-European and anti-Euro positions), and the danger represented by out-of-control immigration – issues that had long been the workhorse of the Northern League. In parallel, Grillo’s iconoclastic rhetoric rails against the entire political system and its leaders, which he describes as a caste, a self-referential establishment made up of old parties, indistinguishable from one another, closed with respect to society, and corrupt in the man-

agement of public affairs. The old guard are linked to zombies: the living dead overtaken by history. In addition to the political class, other great enemy of the Movement is the information system, the old media, and the caste of journalists deemed subservient to political power and to the large, influential economic and financial groups – hence the idea of new media platforms: in particular, Web 2.0 as a tool for freedom and (direct) democracy in the hands of “the people”, the ordinary citizens, building a kind of (web-based) populist political rhetoric (Corbetta & Gualmini 2013; Diamanti & Natale 2014).

The M5S declares itself “beyond” right and left: a post-ideological party that rejects the traditional political categories. It goes so far as to imagine a new form of democracy (Diamanti 2014a ; 2014b), based not only on the active participation of citizens, but also on the Internet, through which it embodies a “post-representative” model that recalls some of the traits of the “monitory democracy” (Keane 2009) and of “monitorial citizen” (Schudson 2008), or those of the “counter-democracy”, with its practices of ‘surveillance’ on the holders of power (Rosanvallon 2006).

All this takes shape by mixing together elements of different types that are in some ways contradictory. For example, the *horizontal* dimension – as regards the relationship between the base and the leadership, and summed up by the slogan “everyone is worth one” – runs parallel with the *vertical* logic practised, instead, in the management of the Movement, and in particular of internal dissent (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013a).

Within a short time, the M5S carried out a process of rapid “conquest of political space” on several fronts. It went in multiple directions, invading, and in some ways renewing, different “territories”, including party organisation, leadership model, communication strategies, occupying the space of the traditional parties of the Second Republic. This conquest took place, in a specific and highly visible way, on the geographical – or, rather, geopolitical – front, which will be discussed below.

2. THE CONQUEST OF THE LOCAL DIMENSION

Before 24–25 February 2013, the 5-Star electoral map of Italy was necessarily partial and fragmentary. Indeed, up until that time, Grillo’s Movement had taken part only in local competitions, participating in administrative and regional elections. Moreover, the Movement had not put forward candidates for all of the local and regional elections throughout the

country. From the point of view of the territory, the initial experience of the Movement in the electoral field, with its *Friends of Beppe Grillo* lists, focused primarily on areas of the Centre and North of the country. In 2009, it participated, under the current 5-Star banner, in several administrative elections in Northern regions, and, in the following few years, it managed to expand into some Southern areas. In practice, this political player was able, within a short time, to translate into electoral support the discomfort associated with various “issues” that cut through Italy from North to South:

- a) the “Northern issue”, which emerged some twenty years ago in the heart of the productive North, particularly in the areas of small business, and is still largely represented by the Northern League (Diamanti 1996);
- b) the classic “Southern issue”, which has historically marked the South of the country, affected by major economic and social problems;
- c) then a new issue – that of “Middle Italy” – the “red heart” of the country (Ramella 2005), so called because it is politically orientated towards the left. Central regions have always been considered areas with widespread social well-being, thanks to the combination of economic development, good governance and high quality of life. However, a deterioration in the general conditions in Italy, stimulated in part by the global economic crisis, has appeared more rapidly (and more painfully) in the central regions than elsewhere, giving rise to unprecedented levels of public concern, in turn leading to intolerance towards the political class.

The success of the M5S in all these areas underlines how it has been able to effectively intercept the different types of “malaise” of these various territories. The turning point in the political path of the M5S was undoubtedly represented by the elections of 2012. Already in the first months of the year, the party’s relevance in the opinion polls started to grow (Figure 1), as it took advantage of the *window of opportunity* opened up by the economic crisis and by the growing social discontent regarding the austerity policies of Mario Monti’s technocratic government – as well as by the various scandals emerging in various parties in that period.

Grillo’s Movement both exploited and fuelled a widespread anti-political climate among citizens. At the same time, its ability to put forward candidates throughout the territory began to increase: the 5-Star symbol presented itself in 101 municipalities, three quarters of which were located in the Centre and in the North. In these contexts it acquired a lit-

tle less than 9% of the vote. Its electoral weight had more than doubled since the regional elections of two years earlier, exceeding 10% in 31 out of 74 major municipalities. In some important municipalities in regions of the Centre-North, such as Veneto and Emilia Romagna, it approached or exceeded 20%, but it obtained important results also in other urban contexts. For example in the city of Genoa it received 14% of the votes, almost sufficient to take part in the second-ballot, although it must be said that this is Beppe Grillo's home town. It also had mayors elected in four cities, some of which have a high symbolic value, such as Sarego (in the North-East), the city where the Northern League's "Padanian Parliament"⁷ is located, and especially in Parma, important capital city of the "red" Emilia Romagna region. This performance, accompanied by high-profile media exposure, consecrated the M5S no longer as a bizarre and peripheral phenomenon, but as a political actor at the centre of the scene and of public debate.

The success thus achieved resulted in a further increase in the polls, which corresponded to a "normalisation" of the electoral base (see §4). The "grillino" electorate began to show a social and political profile ever more similar to that of the social average. The "normalisation" process is traceable to an ever-increasing influx of voters who, in the past, had voted for parties of the centre-right (see §5). From the point of view of its geographical distribution, there was a progressive weakening of the territorial divide that had characterised it earlier. Support in the South began to equal that in the North. The enlargement of the electoral base to the South was confirmed by the Sicilian regional elections held in the following October. The M5S became, unexpectedly, the first party (albeit with only 15% of the vote), thereby foreshadowing what was to occur in the General Election of February 2013.

3. THE INVASION OF THE NATIONAL TERRITORY

The outcome of this process was then certified by the first national test. The elections of 2013 allowed, for the first time, a projection of the Movement's results on a map covering the entire national territory, thereby allowing us to verify the consistency and the degree of innovation with respect to the political geography of the Second Republic. For the Chamber of Deputies, the M5S obtained 8,689,458 votes, representing 25.6% of the total, corresponding to 108 seats. For the Senate, it received

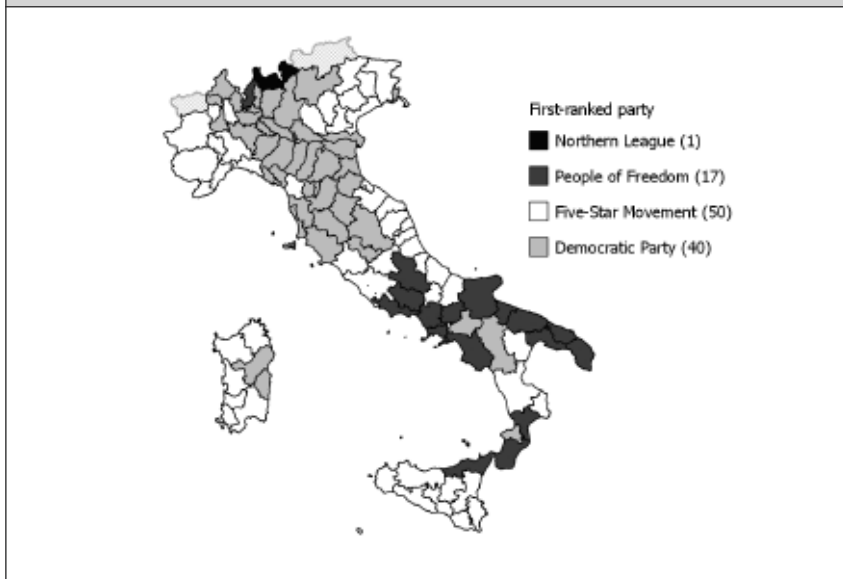
7,285,850 votes, equal to 23.8% and 54 seats. The vote had therefore consecrated the M5S as a respectable national actor: one of the “big three minorities” that had emerged from the vote (Diamanti 2013). In fact, in the Chamber of Deputies, the Democratic Party, led by Pier Luigi Bersani, received 25.4% of the vote, while Silvio Berlusconi’s People of Freedom obtained 21.6%, while their coresponding each obtained about 29% of the vote.

The support for Grillo’s party has become widespread, without particular concentrations in specific areas of the country. The M5S is everywhere. Indeed, its political weight has increased slightly, gradually passing from North to South: originally, the area more difficult to penetrate.

Analysing the votes distribution according to the classical geopolitical zones, the North-West – once called the “Industrial Zone”, owing to the presence of large industrial manufacturing facilities such as Fiat – emerged as an area of relative weakness, with 24.5% of the overall vote to M5S (compared to 27.1% of the electors in those regions). From the North-East area – once the “White Zone”, owing to a long-standing Christian Democrat tradition, later becoming the “Green Zone”, owing the presence of the Northern League (Diamanti, 2009) – the M5S received 12.2% of its vote (a figure quite close to 12.6% which represents the amount of the electors in that area). In the so-called “Red Belt” of central Italy, where a left-wing political orientation prevails, the percentage was actually at the same level of the electors living in that specific zone (18,8% vs. 18,7%). The area in which the vote for the Movement was slightly higher, however, was the Centre-South, formerly one of the “Light Blue Zones” where Berlusconi’s party has had particular support. However, these areas have long been characterised by a lower level of electoral stability compared to others. 44.5% of the votes for the Movement in 2013 came from the regions belonging to the Southern areas and the Islands, almost three point higher compared to the distribution of all voters (46.1%; see Table 1).

Ultimately, following the election, what mostly characterised the support for the M5S was the homogeneity of its distribution (Maggini & De Lucia 2014). This party, within a few years, had “spread itself” across the territory, eating into the traditional Italian geopolitical areas, thus profoundly renewing the electoral geography of the country. In Figure 2a we can see how, for example, Grillo’s Movement has spread into the provinces of the “foothills” of both North-East and North-West, which had been strongholds of the Christian Democrats during the First Republic, then of the Northern League during the Second. But it is possible to see

Figure 2a. The first-ranked party in the Italian Provinces
(2013 General Election, Chamber of Deputies)



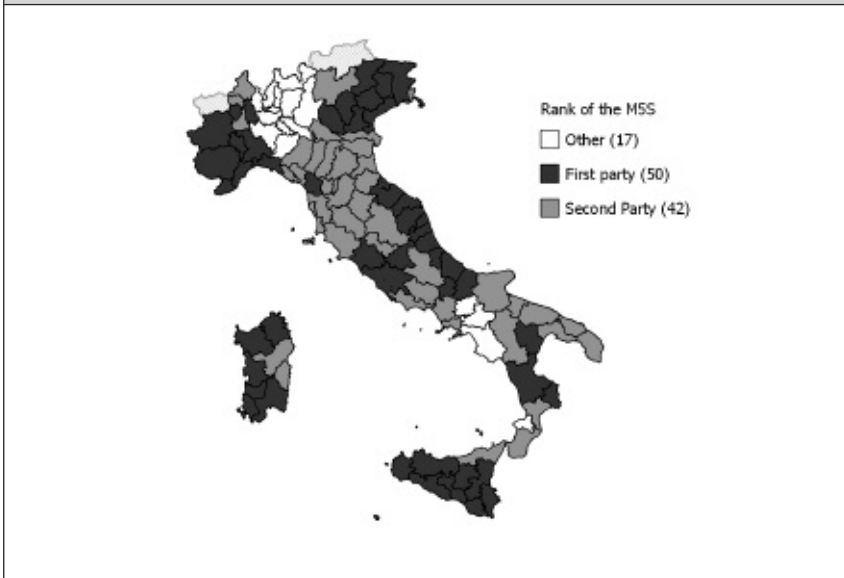
Source: LaPolis – University of Urbino, Electoral Observatory analysis based on official Ministry of Interior data, Bordignon & Ceccarini, p.17 and p.64

the success of Grillo's party also along the Adriatic coast, where, for example, the Marche region has always been considered, in the geopolitical divisions, a "red" region, for its bias in favour of left-wing parties.

The M5S emerged from the polls as the first party also in various provinces of Sardinia. It had strong support in Lazio and Puglia, winning in areas traditionally orientated towards the right. But the Movement's success arose especially in Sicily, which, during the Second Republic, had been an important reservoir of votes for the party led by Silvio Berlusconi. Among the 10 Italian provinces in which the M5S achieved the highest results, 6 were Sicilian provinces.

If we consider the distribution of the votes for the main parties throughout the 110 Italian provinces, the 5-Star Movement has the lowest coefficient of variation⁸. Significantly, it gets slightly higher figures in the South and on the Islands. The territorial diffusion of the Movement is even more evident in the map showing its distribution, at the level of Provinces, as either the first or second party (Fig. 2b). The distribution confirms what

Figure 2b. Rank of the M5S in the Italian Provinces
(2013 General Election, Chamber of Deputies)



Source: LaPolis – University of Urbino, Electoral Observatory analysis based on official Ministry of Interior data, Bordignon & Ceccarini, p. 17 and p. 64

was considered at the beginning: the 5-Star vote appears as a wave, a *tsunami*⁹ that has hit the entire national territory, covering and transforming it. Of the total of the 108 provinces considered, the Movement emerges as the first party in 50. In 21 of these, moreover, it assumes ‘majority’ proportions, prevailing even over the coalitions¹⁰. Where the M5S was not the first party, it was the second in no fewer than 42 provinces. In the 16 remaining provinces it was nor first neither second ranked party.

The Movement’s territorial map presents only a few “holes”. The electoral geography of Italy has changed dramatically with respect not only to 2008, but also to the traditional political colours of the territory. The map of the vote gives us the image of a deconstruction of the Italian geopolitical structure. Compared with the General Election of 2008, the three major parties (PdL, the Democratic Party and the Northern League) lost a total of more than 11 million votes. The index of bipolarity fell to below 60, having fluctuated, during the Second Republic, between 84 and 99 (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013b, 14). With the success of the M5S, the Ital-

ian political system has lost the bipolar configuration that had arisen in the General Election of 1996, and has assumed a tri-polar format (Pasquino & Valbruzzi, forthcoming).

Grillo's party knew how to fill the void left by the retreat of the traditional political forces – not only by inserting itself into the gaps between different political cultures, but also by undermining the major parties in their own territorial strongholds.

Within a short time, the M5S has gone “beyond” its origins in the provinces of central and northern Italy, and, from the point of view of territorial gain, has taken on the traits of a “national” party.

4. THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

So, who are the 5-Star voters? Where do they come from? Why did they choose Grillo's party at the 2013 General Elections?

The main effect of the Movement's electoral growth seems to have been a process of *normalisation* of its electoral base and social representation (as we shall see in §7). As regards both the socio-demographic and the political profile, the 5-Star voter appears, after the 2013 General Election, much closer to the average Italian than he or she was just two years before.

Until 2010–2011, the 5-Star electorate – estimated by polls to be around 4% (Figure 1) – had clear-cut characteristics. The analysis of its profile displayed: a notable preponderance of men over women; people with middle or high education levels; a marked concentration of people under 45 years of age; mostly employed people, especially white-collar workers. From a geopolitical viewpoint, it was strongly concentrated in the regions of the North and in the so-called Red Belt in the Centre of Italy. Grillo's followers were mainly former centre-left voters, seeking alternative channels via which to express their will to participate. One of their distinctive features was their high degree of political awareness and propensity to participate, especially through the unconventional channels offered by the new media.

Today, some of these traits appear greatly weakened, and others are totally absent. As we have seen in the previous section, the 5-Star vote now extends to the entire national map, changing its traditional patterns. Grillo's party has challenged the major political forces in their traditional strongholds.

A similar dynamic can be identified if we consider the social and political traits of the Movement's electorate. The 5-Star voter's "identikit" confirms some of its original traits, which, however, appear to be much less pronounced than they were before 2011. Moreover, the party made a breakthrough in social groups in which it had not been rooted at all. Table 1 shows the composition of the 5-Star electorate in 2010–2011 and at the 2013 General Election, as regards the main socio-demographic attributes.

- The male component is significantly larger than the female one. In February 2013, 59% of the 5-Star electorate is composed of men: three percentage points less than in 2010–2011, but still ten points higher than the average of the electorate as a whole (49%).
- There is a distinct bias towards youth classes, although this appears to have been partly reduced over time. The component of young people aged 15–29 declined from 27.5% to 20%. About 62% of the voters of the M5S are under 45, with a strong and stable concentration especially in the range 30–44 (42%, as opposed to 28% of all those who voted in 2013). The fraction of those over 44 rose from 30% to 38%, while that of those over 54 tripled from 7% to 22%. The weight of the component 45–64 is thus not far from the overall average. What makes the difference is the category comprising the oldest voters: those over 64. Here the deviation from the average voter is nearly 17 percentage points (7% v. 24%).
- The bias towards educated segments of the population also changed over time. The component with the title of secondary school or university dropped from 51% to 46%, only five points above the overall average of the voters (41%). The share of less-educated voters doubled from 6% to 12%.
- Consistent with the distribution by age, the category of pensioners is under-represented in this part of the electorate: 10% against 27% of all those who voted in 2013. The socio-professional category with the largest proportion remains that of dependent employees, although this, too, dropped from 54% to 42%, nearing the average of all those who voted (33%). The over-representation of clerical workers, teachers, technicians and officers disappears almost entirely by the time of the 2013 General Election: in 2010–2011, 29% of the electorate 5-Star were white-collar workers, whereas by 2013 this had dropped to 20% (compared with 18% of all voters). There remains a strong presence of blue-collar workers, passing from 25% to 22%,

Table 1. M5S voters' socio-economic and territorial profile and its evolution 2010/2011 – 2013 (%)

	M5S VOTERS		ALL VOTERS
	2010-2011	2013	2013
GENDER			
Male	62.2	58.9	48.9
Female	37.8	41.1	51.1
AGE			
18-29	27.5	20.0	15.5
30-44	42.6	42.3	28.2
45-54	22.7	15.7	17.1
55-64	4.9	14.6	15.1
65 and over	2.3	7.4	24.1
Over 45	29.9	37.7	56.3
Over 55	7.2	22.0	39.2
LEVEL OF EDUCATION			
Primary school or lower	6.1	12.0	23.5
Secondary school	42.6	42.1	35.7
High school/University degree	51.3	45.8	40.8
SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION			
Blue-collar	25.4	21.9	15.0
White-collar	29.0	20.1	18.1
Craftsman, tradesmen, entrepreneur	6.0	10.5	4.8
Professional	3.4	3.3	3.8
Student	12.3	10.0	8.3
Housewife	9.1	12.1	14.6
Unemployed	10.0	12.1	8.1
Pensioner	4.9	9.5	26.8
Other	0	0.5	0.6
Dependent workers	54.3	42.0	33.2
Independent workers	9.4	13.8	8.5
GEO-POLITICAL AREA			
North-West	31.6	24.5*	27.1*
North-East	14.6	12.2*	12.6*
Centre	19.3	18.8*	18.7*
South and Islands	34.5	44.5*	41.6*
(N)	273	261	1406

Source: Pooled Demos&Pi surveys 2010-2011; LaPolis – University of Urbino, Post-electoral survey 2013; (*) Official Ministry of Interior data.

while the incidence has grown especially of the self-employed and entrepreneurs: 11%, or more than twice the 5% that is observed among the voters as a whole. Finally, also the categories of students (10%) and the unemployed (12%) are, albeit slightly, above the average (about 8% in each category).

5. THE POLITICAL PROFILE

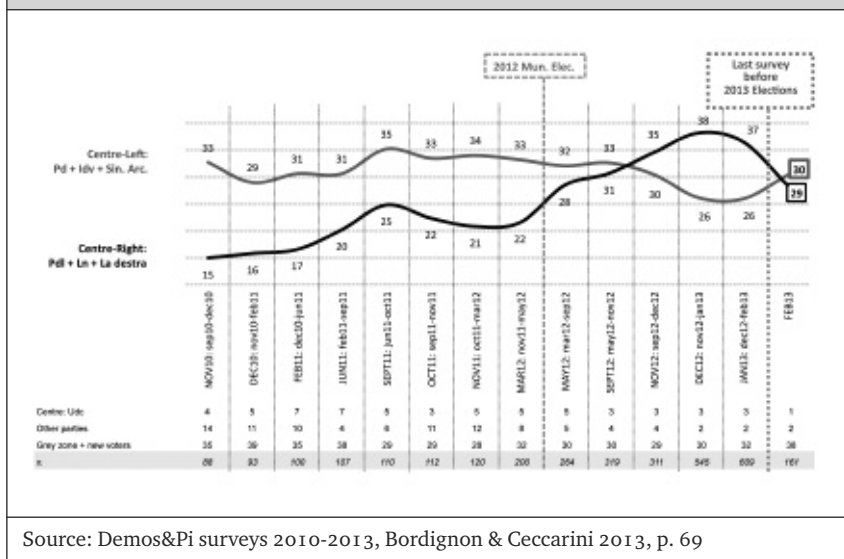
The general picture is increasingly one of a “catch-all party”. This metamorphosis seems consistent with the changes in the 5-Star voters’ political profile. We should remember that the Movement, according to its founder and leader, has “not ideologies, but ideas”: it is neither left-wing nor right-wing, but rather “beyond” or “above” the more traditional political axes. Consequently the 5-Star voters have an indefinite position on the left–right spectrum. More precisely, they have a balanced position arising from three contrasting forces. A significant portion of the Movement’s voters explicitly rejects the categories of left, right and even centre: they are simply outside, distant from this axis. The remaining part of the 5-Star electorate splits into opposite orientations: equally divided between left and right.

These three groups are clearly confirmed by the respondents’ past voting choices. If we consider their behaviour at the General Elections of 2008, we can trace the evolution of the 5-Star electorate’s political profile, which suggests a sequence of three distinct phases (Figure 3).

- 1) Until the end of 2010, potential 5-Star voters had a clear left-wing inclination. They were largely disillusioned Democratic Party voters, but some also came from radical left parties, or from antagonistic movements of the anti-Berlusconian left. The electoral flows from centre-right were limited: about 15% of the total amount of votes.
- 2) From the second half of 2011, this structure changed significantly, and the right-wing component rose to over 20%. The true turning point can be identified as the 2012 local elections: the municipal elections held in May, and the Sicilian regional elections held in October. The important success and the ensuing surge in electoral support coincided with a substantial enlargement of the fraction of 5-Star voters coming from centre-right parties – namely, Berlusconi’s People of Freedom and the Northern League.

Thanks to the strength of its message and the effectiveness of Grillo’s communication, the Movement intercepted the anti-political mood

Figure 3. The three waves of the vote for M5S. M5S voters based on their 2008 General Election voting choice: trend 2010-2013 (Moving average of three surveys for the period 2010-2013; survey distribution for February 2013, % values)



Source: Demos&Pi surveys 2010-2013, Bordignon & Ceccarini 2013, p. 69

- that permeated public opinion, and capitalised on the crisis of the traditional political actors that had characterised the previous 20 years of Italian political history. This trend continued till the end of 2012, when the surveys registered an overtaking: the centre-right group rose to over 30%, prevailing over the centre-left component.
- 3) In the run-up to the 2013 Elections – in particular over the last few weeks before the vote – a new break in this trend was observed. A third wave of 5-Star voters appeared. The final rush was made up of late deciders, mainly from the centre-left, and produced a new balance in the internal components. The data gathered in the immediate aftermath of the elections showed that the 5-Star electorate had two wings: a left wing and a right wing, each amounting to about one-third of this electoral segment. This proved the existence of a composite base, which would make it more complicated for the leader to keep all the internal groups together, as regards both the voters and the newly elected representatives.

6. A LATE DECISION AND A CHOICE AGAINST

In order to know more about the M5S and its voters, it is quite important to take into consideration the timing of their voting decision, and also the meaning of the voting choice itself. To this end, a post-electoral survey carried out by the LaPolis at the University of Urbino Carlo Bo provides some interesting clues. Dividing the Movement's supporters according to when they made their decisions, it is apparent that, in 39% of the cases, as against 26% on average, the decision to vote for this party was made, above all, during the election campaign itself, and especially during the week prior to the vote. This means that a significant amount of support for Grillo is, in practice, the result of a late decision arrived at principally during the campaign's final stages.

It is interesting to examine the growth in support for the M5S. In order to do so, and to make the trend clearer, we let 100 represent the total number of votes for Grillo, tracing the growth in support for his party in terms of when voting decisions were made (Ceccarini & Diamanti 2013).

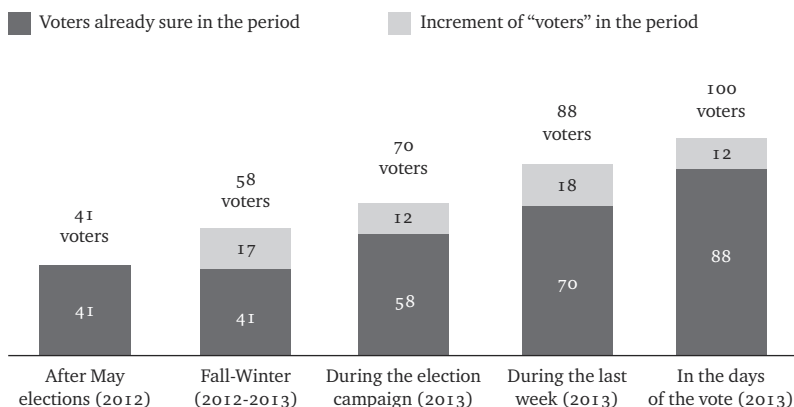
In the first place, following the elections of May 2012, the decided voters among the M5S supporters – those who say they had never had any doubts about whom to vote for – amount to 41 out of 100 (Figure 4). From this moment on, polls revealed that support for the party was growing (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013a, 2014b). Those 41 voters who had long made up their minds were joined by a further 17 more than a month before the 2013 General Election, thus bringing the share of voters to 58 out of 100 before the campaign began.

At the height of the election campaign, in the last two or three weeks before polling day, Grillo picked up further 12. The cumulative total at this point brought the support for Grillo to 70 out of 100. The remaining 30 were acquired in two subsequent moments closer to election day: 18 came on board during the final week, and are those we can call *late deciders*. Then the last 12 were added either the day before voting or on the day itself, when these voters went to the polls: they were, in other words, the M5S' *last-minute* voters.

In practice, the last 42 voters were added during the month of the election campaign, of which 30 (more than 2.5 million out of a total of almost 8.7 million) made up their minds during the final stage, either during the week before the vote, or during the two days the polls were open.

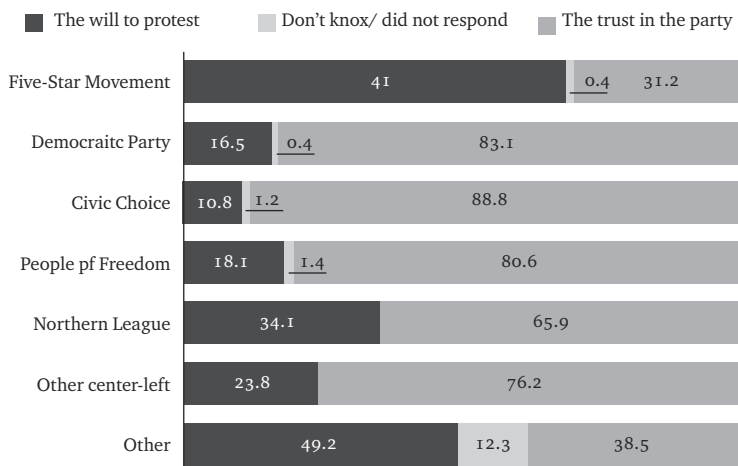
Considering the Movement's voters as a whole, for almost seven out of ten of them, the meaning of their voting choice was the desire

Figure 4. Cumulative distribution of M5S voters according to when they made their decision (Total M5S voters = 100)



Source: LaPolis – University of Urbino, Post-electoral survey, March 2013 (N = 1528), Ceccarini & Diamanti 2013, p. 144

Figure 5. Type of voting choice expressed by the voters of each party. (% values)



Source: LaPolis – University of Urbino, Post-electoral survey, March 2013 (N = 1528)

to express a sentiment of protest towards the party system and politicians (68%, as against 28% on average: 33% of the Northern League's voters, and around 17–18% of both Democratic Party and People of Freedom supporters). The remaining part, up to 100, represents the proportion of those who had chosen on the basis of trust in the party voted for (Figure 5). Those findings made quite clear what was the idea that lay behind the vote for the M5S.

7. LESS AND LESS DIFFERENT

The image that the voters of the M5S – but also the voters in general – have of this political actor can be considered a significant perspective in order to deepen our understanding of this “extra-ordinary” party. To this end, we asked what reasons most favoured the electoral success of Grillo's party. This question was asked in two surveys conducted at key moments, respectively in May 2012 – following the crucial municipal elections – and September 2013 – that is, at the end of a period in which the M5S had been in public office for some months.

The data suggest that, for two out of three citizens (65%), support for the M5S is associated with attitudes of protest (Table 2). The element of protest remains a strong one in public perceptions of the Movement. In particular, the proportion attributing the Movement's success to its expression of ‘protest against the Government’ reached 23% (an increase of 5 percentage points with respect to the previous survey), although a larger proportion continued to emphasise its expression of ‘protest against the parties generally’ (42%). The same trend, but with greater intensity, could be seen among those actually voting for the M5S (where the relevant proportion rose from 41% to 59%). The data show that the anti-political drive of Grillo and his Movement has assumed, in the perception of citizens, a mainly anti-party connotation.

At the same time, it is interesting to note that Grillo's candidates and elected representatives are less likely than in the past to be seen as “extraneous to the parties and closer to citizens' needs” (the percentages dropping from 16 to 11). A decline of even larger proportions is also to be found among the Movement's voters, where the relevant percentage halved between the two surveys considered, going from 33% to 16% (Table 2). The ‘concrete proposals’ advanced by the Movement (Verzichelli 2014; Bordignon & Ceccarini, forthcoming) continue to be infrequently recog-

Table 2. The reasons for the M5S' success. At the last elections, the M5S received many votes. In your opinion, this happened mainly... (% values)

	AMONG M5S VOTERS		AMONG ALL VOTERS	
	MAY 2012	SEPT 2013	MAY 2012	SEPT 2013
...because it expresses the protest against all the parties	27.0	41.5	43.3	42.3
...because it expresses the protest against the Government	13.8	17.6	17.5	22.5
	40.8	59.1	60.8	64.8
...for the faith in Beppe Grillo	2.6	6.7	6.3	7.3
...for the concrete proposals put forward by the Movement	23.3	17.5	6.6	6.9
...because the candidates were extraneous to the parties and closer the citizens' needs	32.8	15.9	16.3	10.6
Other	0.4	0.8	4.4	4.6
Don't know / did not respond	0.0	0.0	5.5	5.8
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Source: Demos&Pi surveys May 2012 (N = 1020) and September 2013 (N = 1245), Bordignon & Ceccarini 2014, p. 6

nised, by citizens generally, as a factor of success, remaining constant at about 7% in the two surveys. They also seem to have lost some relevance in the perception of M5S voters themselves, falling from 23% to 17%.

The initial months of the party in *public office* appear, therefore, to have somewhat undermined the image of ‘purity’ of Grillo’s team and the Movement as a whole. This has happened not only among citizens in general, but also, and more noticeably, among M5S voters themselves. It is evident that the *normalisation* of the electoral base has led to a *normalisation* of the image of the Movement itself.

8. THE 5-STAR VOTE: IN SEARCH OF A MODEL

Is it possible to select a set of traits which, when combined together, would provide a sufficiently accurate yet succinct “identikit” of a typical 5-Star voter? As a final step in the analytical journey undertaken, an attempt was made to condense the salient attributes of the “grillino” electorate into a single model. To do this, use was made of a logistic regression model, with the vote for the M5S as a dependent variable. More precisely, a dichotomous variable was constructed in this way as follows: 1 = a vote for the M5S in the Chamber of Deputies¹¹; 0 = a vote for other parties. In this way¹² it will be possible to identify the variables that best explain the 5 Star vote in relation to the support for the other parties.

The possible predictors have been divided into two separate blocks. a) The first block covers the basic socio-demographic variables: geopolitical zone; gender; age-group; level of education; socio-professional category and religious practice¹³. b) The second block covers, instead, the political orientations, opinions and behaviours deemed most relevant on the basis of theoretical considerations and the analysis of bivariate relationships: self-placement on left–right scale; the degree of interest in politics; attitude on the relations between parties and democracy; the definition of the respondent’s vote as a protest vote “against” the other parties rather than as a vote “for” a specific party (based on a bond of trust); the degree of satisfaction with the way democracy works; the sources of information used most often to inquire during the 2013 election campaign; two indicators of economic satisfaction, referring respectively to national and household economies¹⁴.

Table 3 shows four different models, reporting the values of the parameter Exp (B) and its relative significance:

Model 1 considers the entire block of socio-demographic variables, which together account for about 17% of the total variability of the 5-Star vote (based on Nagelkerke's pseudo-R²). All the variables considered, except for qualifications and religious practice, prove significant. Among these, we note, especially, the age-group, where, having assumed the oldest group as a reference category, all the values of Exp (B) are greater than 1, with a peak of 4.2 in the range 30–44 years. A slightly lower value (4.1) relates, among the socio-professional categories, to entrepreneurs and self-employed (compared to the reference category of pensioners). But also the value of the blue-collar workers is significant (2.3). Other things being equal, belonging to the female gender reduced by about 30% the probability of voting for the M5S. With regard to the geographical distribution, the parameter regarding the South and the Islands emerges as the most significant.

Model 2, which explains a total of 45% of the variability, considers instead only the second block of variables¹⁵. Among these, two clearly dominate all others: political self-placement and the protest vote. None of the dichotomous variables related to traditional ideological references of the left-right continuum emerge as significant. Indeed, it is precisely the refusal to take a position on this axis that quintuples (4.6) the probability of voting for Grillo's party. But the figure rises even higher if we consider the indicator for the protest vote: voters who declare to have chosen on the basis of the "desire to protest" have a probability of voting for the M5S that is nine times higher than those who, instead, claim to have voted on the basis of "trust" in a specific political force (9.4). Completing the framework for indicators of culture and political orientation, the probability of voting M5S increases on the basis of dissatisfaction in the functioning of Italian democracy, as well as on the belief that democracy could function without political parties. The regression parameters highlight the *critical* profile of these citizens (Norris 1999; 2011), but above all their opposing, and in some ways demanding, attitude towards politics, and in particular towards political parties and political leaders.

Although, as mentioned in the first section, the global economic crisis has been a key ingredient in the growth of the M5S, economic dissatisfaction – all other variables included in the model remaining constant – has not emerged as a significant predictor, while some effect seems to have been exerted by privileged means of acquiring political and electoral information. The values of the parameter Exp(B) rise significant-

Table 3. Multivariate Model for M5S voting choice (Binary Logistic Regression: Dependent variable: 1 = vote for the M5S in the Chamber of Deputies; 0 = vote for other parties)			
	MODEL I		
	Sig.	Exp(B)	
BLOCK1: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC			
Gender: female (male = ref.)	0.043	0.711	
Age (Older than 65 = ref.)	0.002		
18-29	0.005	3.671	
30-44	0.000	4.178	
45-54	0.029	2.407	
55-64	0.007	2.528	
Level of education (Primary school or lower = ref.)	0.047		
Secondary school	0.597	0.796	
High school	0.541	0.771	
University degree	0.073	0.441	
Frequency of going to church (Never = ref.)	0.102		
Occasionally (1/3 times a month)	0.549	1.112	
Churchgoer (every week)	0.082	0.699	
Geopolitical area (North-West = ref.)	0.009		
North-East	0.667	1.124	
Centre	0.149	1.416	
South and Islands	0.002	1.876	
Socio-Economic condition (Pensioners/Other = ref.)	0.036	2.328	
Blue-collar	0.027		
White-collar	0.132	1.688	
Professional	0.577	1.286	
Craftsman, tradesmen, entrepreneur	0.001	4.133	
Student	0.372	1.533	
Housewives	0.247	1.539	
Unemployed	0.103	1.953	

	MODEL 2		MODEL 3		MODEL 4	
	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)
			0.038	0.643	0.026	0.635
			0.224		0.117	
			0.262	1.881	0.167	2.144
			0.041	2.638	0.021	2.946
			0.228	1.787	0.195	1.855
			0.090	2.010	0.057	2.183
			0.393		0.441	
			0.569	0.734	0.470	0.679
			0.897	1.072	0.932	0.956
			0.690	0.792	0.567	0.725
			0.304		0.353	
			0.317	1.251	0.446	1.182
			0.456	0.828	0.373	0.802
			0.273		0.162	
			0.953	0.981	0.829	0.932
			0.241	1.415	0.269	1.381
				1.504	0.064	1.571
			0.101			
			0.101		0.088	
			0.007	3.483	0.007	3.403
			0.370	1.454	0.294	1.539
			0.778	1.170	0.966	1.023
			0.028	3.165	0.026	3.106
			0.174	2.200	0.139	2.329
			0.350	1.511	0.411	1.436
			0.183	1.930	0.186	1.900

Continued on next page

Table 3. Multivariate Model for M5S voting choice (Binary Logistic Regression: Dependent variable: 1 = vote for the M5S in the Chamber of Deputies; 0 = vote for other parties)

	MODEL I	
	Sig.	Exp(B)
BLOCK 2: POLITICAL ATTITUDES, OPINIONS AND BEHAVIOURS		
Self-placement in left–right continuum Left (Other = ref.) Centre-left (Other = ref.) Centre-right (Other = ref..) Right (Other = ref.) Non-placed/no answer (Other = ref.)		
Level of political interest: A lot, somewhat (Not much, not at all = ref.) Democracy can work without political parties (There’s no democracy without parties = ref.) Protest voting: their vote was influenced by the “will to protest” (their vote was influenced by the “trust towards the party” = ref.) Satisfied about how democracy works in Italy (scale 1–10)		
Information source during electoral campaign: Daily newspaper: often (Never, sometimes = ref.) Television: often (Never, sometimes = ref.) Internet: often (Never, sometimes = ref.) Participation in political rallies: often (Never, so- metimes = ref.) Friends, family, colleagues: often (Never, someti- mes = ref.)		
Satisfaction about the economy: National economy (scale 1–10) Household economy (scale 1–10)		
<i>Constant</i>	0.000	0.093
<i>Nagelkerke’s R²</i>	0.170	
Source: LaPolis – University of Urbino, Post-electoral survey, March 2013 (N = 1528)		

	MODEL 2		MODEL 3		MODEL 4	
	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)
	0.663	0.858	0.918	1.039		
	0.938	0.974	0.733	1.130		
	0.314	0.686	0.318	0.677		
	0.828	0.915	0.918	0.956		
	0.000	4.647	0.000	4.944	0.000	5.172
	0.631	1.098	0.805	1.054		
	0.000	2.512	0.000	2.219	0.000	2.240
	0.000	9.395	0.000	10.167	0.000	9.881
	0.000	0.767	0.000	0.782	0.000	0.802
	0.005	0.563	0.048	0.654		
	0.556	0.892	0.808	0.951		
	0.003	1.816	0.088	1.449		
	0.361	0.666	0.142	0.511		
	0.041	1.617	0.073	1.574		
	0.385	1.051	0.472	1.045		
	0.418	1.044	0.763	1.018		
	0.000	0.152	0.000	0.050	0.000	0.058
	0.446		0.501		0.487	

ly above 1 among those who have collected the necessary information to vote via the Internet (1.8) or via the social networks of family or friendship (1.6).

Model 3 combines the independent variables considered in both models above discussed. The insertion of the socio-demographic variables leads, however, to a modest increase in the variability explained – rising from 45% to 50%, as compared to Model 2. The variables relating to information sources lose some of their significance. The choice in favour of more traditional media, such as newspapers, is confirmed as particularly influential, while the loss of significance of the indicator relating to the Internet is probably an effect of the presence in the model of the variable *age* – the elderly tend to use *new media* less than younger citizens. At the same time, although the Web is an important mean of political information, it is not decisive, as information passes via multiple channels. The hybridization of the communication strategy, as above-mentioned, is one of the Movement's strong points. Among the different age-ranges, only that relating to the range 30–44 retains a significant parameter. On the basis of these results, it was thought that this model could be significantly “streamlined”, resulting in a more parsimonious configuration with only a limited loss of explanatory power.

Model 4 is an attempt to simplify Model 3¹⁶. It is much parsimonious, with only four variables in addition to the socio-demographic ones. There is a small loss of explanatory power with respect to the full model (Model 3): Nagelkerke's R^2 coefficient shrinks from 0.50 to 0.49. On the basis of the route taken, it is therefore possible to summarise the determinants of the 5-Star vote.

The probability of being a voter of this party increases for males, for those in the age-range between 30 and 44 years, and for those who are self-employed or blue-collar workers. The 5-Star voter is characterised, above all, by a political orientation marked by a refusal to recognise the traditional left–right axis, by a desire to protest against the mainstream parties, and, more generally, by a deep dissatisfaction with representative democracy based on the role of the parties currently present on the Italian political scene.

9. CONCLUSION

The electoral base of the Movement, after the 2013 General Election, was an entity “in movement”, in the sense that in the course of its short history its profile has rapidly changed, at least in part. The 5-Star voter has become *normalised* in various respects. That is to say, s/he has progressively taken on traits that are similar to those of the social average. The particular socio-demographic characteristics that distinguished the 5-Star voter before the explosion of support that occurred between the administrative elections of 2012 and the General Election of 2013, after this crucial passage appear less evident. It is, in some ways, a predictable and even physiological phenomenon within such a strong process of growth. A new party that gathers the support of one voter in every four inevitably intercepts voters from different backgrounds, eventually reflecting characteristic traits of the electorate as a whole. However, the 5-Star Movement’s ability to gather cross-party support, breaking the cultural, political, territorial and class-based *cleavages* of the First and the Second Republic, is an aspect not to be taken for granted, and is of considerable interest. For these reasons, it could be defined an example of a sort of post-modern and post-ideological (non)party.

This process regards, indeed, not only the socio-demographic characteristics of the electoral base, but also its geographical location. Roots in the south of the country were strengthened after the 2013 General Election, having been weak in the first phase. The dynamism of this political actor had managed to cross traditional geopolitical boundaries – a sign of the ability to interpret a twofold issue: on the one hand, the strengthening criticism of the party system, and, on the other, instances of revitalisation of the political class.

This enabled the M5S to drain votes from the main blocks of the Second Republic, putting into question the “principle of non-communicating vessels” or, rather, the unwillingness of Italian voters to cross the border between left and right. Over time, the component of former centre-right voters has grown, re-balancing the original bias in favour of the centre-left. The component of ex-abstainers, who had formerly distanced themselves from politics, has remained large and constant over time. Such dynamics have led to the formation of a highly fragmented electoral base: about a third from the right, a third from the left, and a third that does not identify with this traditional scheme of politics.

Such heterogeneity is also reflected in the parliamentary work of the newly elected “grillini”, in the strategic choices and formulation of policy proposals. It is difficult to define “catch-all” policies that appeal to such a politically heterogeneous electorate. As a result, the need to continue the protest also in the heart of the representative institutions, bringing into Parliament a repertoire of un-conventional political action, seems an almost obvious choice, which serves to keep alive the antagonistic identity of the Movement – the anti-party party (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2013c; forthcoming).

The function of the protest, as the glue that binds a wide and heterogeneous electoral base, is visible also in the motivations for voting for the M5S: first, dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy, and hostility towards its main protagonists (above all, the parties); then the “disintegration” with respect to traditional references of ideological identification and meaning – hence the intention to protest and to express a lack of confidence.

A niche movement, very characteristic from the point of view of issues and origins, has transformed itself, therefore, into a catch-all (anti-)party, attracting voters of different political identity. It has challenged the bipolar structure of the Italian political system that characterised the last twenty years, breaking the electoral precincts of the Second Republic, thereby coming to prefigure a possible paradigm shift, moving beyond the idea of right and left. It is a path, however, the final destination of which is hard to glimpse as yet.

It is an emerging scheme that, through different experiences and electoral weight, can be observed also in other European countries, where anti-establishment, populist, anti-party parties are growing and questioning consolidated patterns: between liberals and conservatives, between left and right. Where the anti-political dimension is the foundation of this experience. Italy has once again become a laboratory in which transformation of politics is experienced with high intensity. But Italy is also a mirror reflecting the crisis that is hitting representative democracy.

NOTES

1. The M5S was the first-ranked party in terms of votes cast in Italy, since it received about 45.000 votes more than PD; the PD would be first-ranked party if the votes expressed by Italians living abroad were considered. In this case PD would have got about 135.000 votes more than M5S.
2. The expression “Second Republic” (1992-present) is commonly referred to the transition which affected the Italian political system after the heavy cases of parties’ corruption faced by the country in 1991-92, whose consequences are still influencing the Italian political system.
3. For a complete reconstruction of the history and political content of the early battles of Grillo and the M5S, refer to Bordignon & Ceccarini (2013a), Lanfrey 2011.
4. For an analysis of the 2013 Italian General Election, see Diamanti, Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013.
5. Gianroberto Casaleggio – the owner of Casaleggio Associati – is the co-founder, spin doctor, ideologist, and, in some people’s view, man at the helm of the M5S.
6. The M5S has called its statute a “non-statute”, in which the party is defined as a “non-party”: http://www.mee-tup.com/beppegrillo-97/pages/Non_Statuto_del_MoVimento_5_Stelle/
7. The Padanian Parliament is a representative body created by the Northern League. It has no administrative powers, but has political and symbolic functions linked to the idea of independence of the Northern regions. Its members are elected politicians in local administrations and in the national Parliament.
8. The coefficient of variation (CV) is given by the ratio of the standard deviation to the mean. The M5S had a CV of 0.19, while the highest figure was that of the Northern League (1.33). The scores of the two other main parties were 0.23 (Berlusconi’s People of Freedom) and 0.25 (Bersani’s Democratic Party).
9. The term “Tsunami Tour” was the name used by Grillo for the Movement’s campaign for the 2013 General Election.
10. Three coalitions presented themselves for the elections – from centre-left, centre and centre-right parties. Some individual parties also ran, including the 5-Star Movement.
11. The vote in the Chamber of Deputies was chosen because it includes all voters of 18 years and over, whereas in

the Senate only those over 25 years old can vote.

12. It should be noted that the analysis was limited to those who expressed a valid vote, and that the area of non-voting was excluded.
13. This variable is included in this group because it is considered a sort of structural trait, given the traditional and historical nexus between politics and the Catholic religion in the Italian case (see Diamanti & Ceccarini 2007).
14. Only the three variables referring to the respondent's satisfaction regarding (1) how democracy works, (2)

national economy and (3) household economy are used as scale variables. All others are used as categorical. The reference categories (ref.) are reported in Table 3.

15. For reasons of succinctness, the parameters of other models, made up of sub-groups of these variables, have been omitted.
16. The model adopts a stepwise procedure, with a forward method applied to the second block of variables, holding the socio-demographic variables fixed, as they are considered as "antecedent" variables.

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Anti-Party Voting in Germany: the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and the Pirate Party

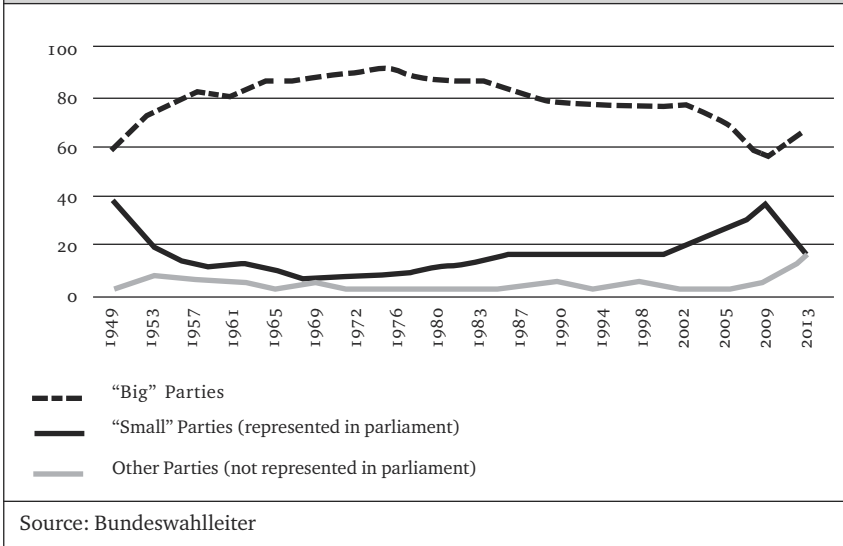
Ina Bieber, Sigrid Roßteutscher, Philipp Scherer

I. INTRODUCTION

The results of the 2013 Federal Election were a real surprise unpredicted by scholars and pollsters alike. For the first time since 1976, the total share of votes of the two major parties has risen again, while the share of the small parties represented in parliament has dropped significantly. The two “big” parties, CDU and SPD, obtained 67.2 percent of the votes, which is a gain of 10.4 percent compared to the previous election in 2009. The small parties have won only 17.0 percent of the vote and, therefore, more than 20 percent less than in 2009. Furthermore, more than 15 percent of the votes were wasted due to the 5% threshold – more than ever in Germany’s post-war history (see Figure 1).

Generally, the 2013 election led to the strengthening of the two big parties. However, considering that one out of seven votes was for a party that could not gain any seats in the Bundestag, the result points both to a fragmentation and a concentration of the party system (see also Schmitt-Beck et al., 2014). The Liberals (FDP) failed for the first time in the history of Federal parliamentary elections to overcome the five percent hurdle, and two so-called anti-party parties played a prominent role during the election campaign: the “Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)” and the Pirates. The AfD was founded only six months before the Federal Election and reached an unexpected result, as 4.7 percent of the voters cast their vote for them; a very close result to the 4.8 percent result of the traditional FDP. In addition, at the state election in Hesse, which took place on the same day as the Federal Election, the AfD obtained a vote share of 4.1 percent. The AfD opposes the current European policy and is highly skeptical about the Euro-zone and the handling of the current fiscal crisis (see also Bieber et al., 2014; Schmitt-Beck, 2014).

Figure 1. Trends in “big”, “small” and other parties in federal elections: 1949 - 2013



Furthermore, the Pirates won 2.2 percent of the votes in the 2013 Federal Election, and 1.9 percent and 2.0 percent in the state elections in Hesse and Bavaria. During the 17th legislative period, the Pirates experienced unexpected electoral success when they won mandates in four state parliaments (Berlin, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saarland, and Schleswig-Holstein) in 2011 and 2012. The Pirates fight for freedom of the internet and push for new ways of doing politics in the context of direct democracy mediated by the internet (Scherer and Bieber, 2013). Due to infighting within the party, the pirates faded from the spotlight following 2012. However, they were still able to mobilize about two percent of the voters at the 2013 state and federal elections. Although anti-party parties are no novel phenomenon, the most recent federal and state elections in Germany must be considered as outstanding in terms of anti-party voting.

These two parties, the AfD and the Pirate party, can be characterized as anti-party parties due to their programmatic focus and their tendency to criticize the established parties. We will argue further that ALL new parties are anti-party parties as they need to communicate that none of the existing parties cater to the new parties' issues or constituencies. Looking at the current trend, several questions arise: How can the voters of

anti-party parties be described? Are the voters of anti-party parties significantly different from the voters of traditional parties? Are they more dissatisfied with established parties and the functioning of democracy? Are they previous non-voters or voters with strong party ties? Subsequently, we will, first define the conceptual background of anti-party sentiments, anti-party parties and anti-party voting. Second, we will describe our data and methods and, finally, present the results based on the 2013 Federal Election and the two state elections of 2013 in Hesse and Bavaria which took place a week before (Hesse) or at the same time (Bavaria) as the federal election.

2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

In the debate about anti-party parties, three concepts, each building upon one another, are particularly important: anti-party sentiments, anti-party parties and anti-party voting.

2.1 *Anti party sentiments*

Anti-party sentiments can be defined as the “*disaffection with, or even rejection of political parties*” by the citizens (Poguntke and Scarrow, 1996, p. 257). In this context, Deschouwer (1996, p. 263) assumes that “*a political system faces stress when it is not able to respond to an acceptable number of demands*”. With regard to representative party democracy, this is normally unproblematic because the political parties mediate between citizens and the state. Once this mediation fails, however, representative democracy is endangered. If the parties themselves become the center of protest and if anti-party sentiments occur increasingly, the core actors of representative democracy are discredited.

Generally, the spread of anti-party sentiments in a country at a given point in time is always a combination of a general trend which can be observed in all western society *and* country-specific factors (Poguntke and Scarrow, 1996). Germany has a long history of anti-party sentiments. In fact, anti-party sentiments are as old as the party system itself (see e.g. Pappi forthcoming). In particular, the trajectory of the Weimar Republic shows how important it is to carefully observe anti-party sentiments (Scarrow, 1996) because then an extremist anti-party party, the Nazi party, was highly successful in mobilizing wide-spread anti-party sentiments

and, in the end, overthrew the democratic system. After Germany's defeat in the Second World War, the general public was apathetic and politically disinterested. However, after years of unprecedented economic wealth and the successful establishment of the second representative democracy, anti-party sentiments were rare, turnout was almost perfect and the two grand parties, the so-called "*Volksparteien*", the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats, won 80 to 90 percent of the votes (see Figure 1). From the late 1960s onwards, anti-party sentiments were again rising. In the beginning, the student movement challenged the status quo. Later, the new social movements attacked the established political systems, challenging that they ignored essential issues and themes. At the beginning of the 1980s, the discontent with the existing parties grew rapidly. The discussion about "*Parteienverdrossenheit*" (party disaffection) began (Rattinger, 1993). The growing disaffection with the traditional party system eventually led to the foundation and establishment of the Green party; at inspection, an anti-party party par excellence.

Since then, the debate about party disaffection has continued. Hence, scholars have studied the phenomenon and have tried to respond to various questions, such as the meaning of party disaffection, its identification and the consequences it implies for the political system (see e.g. Arzheimer, 2002 for a critical summary of this debate). One consequence of anti-party sentiments and party disaffection can be the formation of anti-party parties. In short, anti-party sentiments constitute the demand-side for anti-party-parties, a potential recruitment pool for anti-party voting.

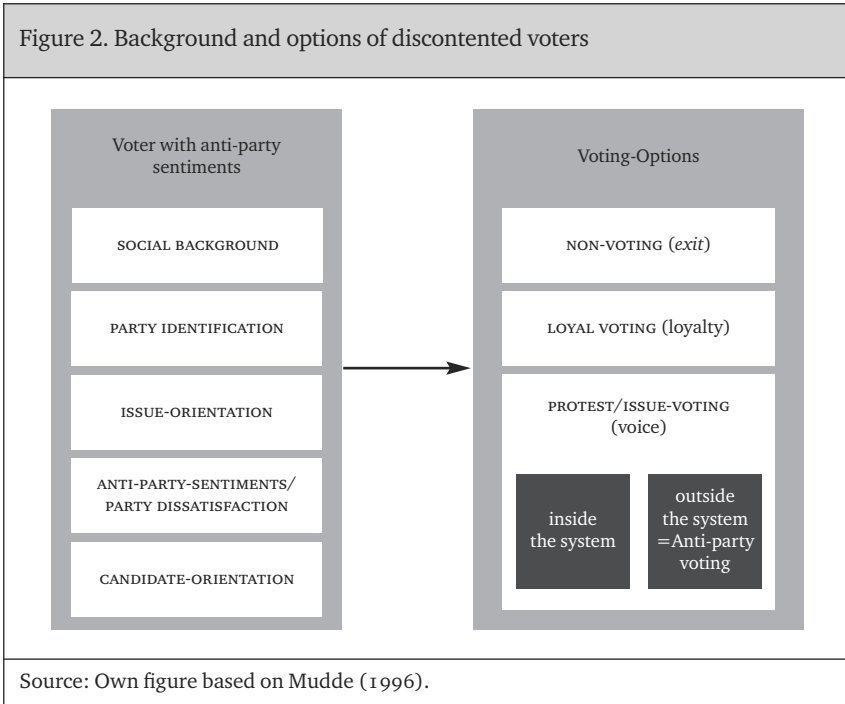
2.2 *Anti-party parties*

Anti-party-sentiments can only turn into anti-party-voting if there is supply; an anti-party-party that mobilizes anti-party sentiments. An anti-party party can literally be defined as a party which campaigns against established parties. As explained by Poguntke and Scarrow (1996), anti-party sentiments are a "*powerful tool for populist politicians who proclaim that they are outside of, and therefore untainted by, the existing parties*" (p. 257). Thus, the question is why anti-party parties oppose all other established parties? The answer is straightforward; because of the parties' novelty. According to Bourdieu (1987), it is a big challenge to enter a close field or market. The electoral market is such a closed field because gains of one party are the losses of another party. Alternatively, new parties can focus on mobilizing the non-voter segment. In both instances, however, the claim

to be different from all other existing parties is essential. If new parties would present themselves as moderate variants of existing options, their voter appeal would be marginal. Hence, it is a promising strategy for new parties to establish themselves as an anti-party party – a party that is radically different from the established supply. The anti-party appeal can come in two guises: First, the party claims to object to the system as a whole and argues that everything in the national political hemisphere is false and insufficient. In its extremist anti-system variant, such claims are rare at present. More often, the appeal has a populist connotation by criticizing other parties on the basis of their behavior or policies (Mudde, 1996). Such parties are usually called ‘Protest Parties’. Alternatively, the anti-party party focuses its protest on specific issues or voter segments. This position typically applies to ‘One-Issue Parties’. Hence, protest parties and one-issue parties are sub-variants of anti-party parties. In reality, anti-party parties often combine both claims as was typical for the early Green parties in Western Europe which challenged the traditional, elite-focused style of party politics in general, as well as the neglect of environmental concerns by all other parties (see e.g. Poguntke, 1989).

2.3 *Anti-party voting*

Anti-party parties face the challenge of turning more or less diffuse anti-party sentiments into countable votes. Yet, why should a disaffected voter cast a ballot in favour of an anti-party party? Put simply, voters can choose an anti-party party if they hold strong anti-party sentiments and/or if they feel that a certain issue they care about is only represented by the new party. However, disaffected voters can also abstain from electoral participation or simply vote for an established party. From an analytical point of view, the core question is thus, how to distinguish anti-party voting from traditional party voting. According to Mudde (1996), a discontented citizen has three options: “*exit, voice, and loyalty*”. “Exit” means that the voter does not participate in the next election and therefore will become a non-voter. The term “loyalty” implies that one sticks to voting for the traditional party while hoping that this party will change its behavior in the future. Finally, “voice” relates to a vote decision against the voter’s party identification. To vote for another established party can be understood as voting inside the established system, while voting for an anti-party party is identified as voting outside the system (see Figure 2).



Many election studies are based on the so-called Michigan model, which explains voting decisions on the basis of party identification, issue orientation, and candidate evaluation (Campbell et al., 1960; Schoen and Weins, 2005). Party identification is a long-term stable affective attachment to a political party that is acquired at an early stage of political socialization and intensified in the course of life. The social structure and social background of the voters are influential factors behind party identification and loyal party vote (Elff and Roßteutscher, 2011). In addition, party identification itself is a very important predictor. As Gidengil et al. (2001) argue, a strong partisan should be more likely to stay loyal to the established parties than a voter who has no party identification. However, as party identification is in decline, its role as a stabilizing element decreases (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Weßels et al., 2014) and a growing fraction of the electorate is potentially available for anti-party voting (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Webb, 1996). However, matters become even more complicated. A loyal partisan might de-

cide in favor of an anti-party party if she feels that only such a vote choice might push the “own” party in the preferred direction (Mudde, 1996). In such a case, anti-party voting is a transitional phenomenon aiming at a policy change of an established party. Figure 2 displays the principal choices of discontented voters.

To summarize, there are two general motivations for anti-party voting:

- (1) First, the voter is discontent with democracy and/or the political process in general and he/she holds strong anti-party sentiments (Gidengil et al., 2001; Webb, 1996). Thus, a voter demonstrates “protest” through the vote choice. The protest is expressed by voting for an anti-party party.
- (2) Second, a voter’s decision focuses on one particular (neglected) theme. Thus, the voting decision is driven by this “issue” (Bardi, 1996; Gidengil et al. 2001; Ignazi, 1992). This type of issue voting can be motivated internally and externally:
 - a. A voter is “internally” motivated if he/she normally chooses an established party but votes for an anti-party party in order to push the preferred party in a certain direction. Issue alienation or ignorance of the established parties is the reason for anti-party voting (Gidengil et al. 2001). Hence, anti-party voting is a tool for producing changes inside the established party system.
 - b. A voter is “externally” motivated if the vote choice is not a signal for an established party but is meant as genuine support for the anti-party party and the “new” issues and constituency represented by this new party (typically the case for Green party voters in the 1980s). The aim is to find representation and to enter or change the political system. According to Gidengil et al. (2001) the politicizing of a “hidden issue” is the key to success.

3. DATA AND METHODS

In order to examine the nature of anti-party voting in present-day Germany, we need data that includes information on standard voter characteristics such as social structure and/or party identification. As anti-party sentiments and issue orientations are core ingredients of anti-party voting, there should also be information on voters’ issue positions and general orientations towards parties and the political system. We employ an online survey conducted directly ahead of the 2013 federal election

Table 1. Data: Online-Tracking and State-Boosts of the German-Longitudinal Election Study (GLES)			
	FEDERAL ELECTION 2013	STATE ELECTIONS BAVARIA 2013	STATE ELECTIONS HESSE 2013
Data Collection	09/06-09/21/2013	08/30-09/14/2013	09/06-09/21/2013
Sample	Quota Sample of age 18 plus, German residents with voting rights		
Method	Offline recruited Online Panels		
N	1.000	500	500

and two additional online surveys conducted in the context of the state elections in Hesse and Bavaria. All three surveys were administered as a part of the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES)¹. All surveys are pre-election studies (see Table 1). The field period of the National Election and the State Election in Hesse were both from the 6th to 21st of September, 2013. Due to the early election day, the field period in Bavaria was from the 30th of August to the 14th of September, 2013. All surveys were conducted using a quota sample of German residents with voting rights².

In the subsequent analyses we will focus on voters of the Pirate party and the AfD (“Alternative for Germany”) as the two present-day representatives of anti-party parties. However, in order to grasp the nature and particularities of anti-party voting, we will systematically compare vote rationales of anti-party voters with those of the established parties, i.e. the two grand “*Volksparteien*”; the Christian Democratic Party (CDU/CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD). In order to increase case numbers, we merge the three data-sets. Note, however, that also in the case of the regional surveys we only analyze vote intentions concerning the federal election.

As online surveys are not ideal in terms of general representation, Table 2 documents a comparison of survey responses (vote intentions) with the official election result. One can see that voters of the Christian Democrats are underrepresented in the online surveys while the Pirates, in particular, are overrepresented. However, this can be attributed to the gen-

Table 2. Comparing Election Results with Online Survey Data

	OFFICIAL ELECTION RESULT	GLES: ONLINE SURVEYS MERGED
CDU/ CSU	41,5	33,6
SPD	25,7	26,6
Left Party	8,6	7,2
Greens	8,4	13,5
FDP	4,8	5,0
AfD	4,7	5,4
Pirates	2,2	6,2
Other	3,0	2,4
N.		1732

eral property of online panels which are somewhat younger than the population and which have a higher affinity of online panelists for online issues, i.e. the substantial core of the Pirate party's agenda. These differences must be kept in mind, in particular concerning descriptive analyses. In multivariate analyses, however, these differences are less significant because the focus there lies in analyzing the relationship between different variables (cf. Bieber and Bytzek, 2012).

4. RESULTS

The subsequent analyses proceed as follows: In a first step, we present basic descriptives concerning the four core elements of anti-party voting; social structure, party identification, issue orientation and anti-party sentiments. In all instances, we compare profiles of Pirate and AfD voters with profiles of CDU/CSU and SPD voters on the one hand, and all voters on the other. In a second step, we turn to multivariate analyses in order to examine which of the particularities respective voters hold when testing for potential effects of other factors.

Table 3. Social Structure			
		AFD	PIRATES
Sex			
	Male	58,1	63,9
	Female	41,9	36,1
Age	Ø	42,2	34,2
Education			
	Low	24,7	29,6
	Middle	48,4	42,6
	High	26,9	27,8
Employment			
	Full time	47,3	57,0
	Part time	19,4	11,2
	In education	10,8	14,0
	unemployed	10,7	15,9
	In retirement	11,8	1,9
Social stratum (self-rating)			
	Lower	16,1	23,6
	Middle	63,5	66,0
	Higher	20,4	10,4
Class			
	Manual Worker	13,6	29,7
	Routine non-manual	50,6	43,9
	Lower service-class	21,0	20,9
	Upper service-class	6,2	1,1
	Self-employed	8,6	4,4
	Farmer	0,0	0,0
Church attendance			
	Seldom, never	73,9	83,2
	Occasionally	19,6	16,8
	Weekly or more often	6,5	0,0
Denomination			
	Protestant	35,9	28,0
	Catholic	23,9	26,2
	Other	1,1	2,8
	None	39,1	43,0

	CDU/CSU	SPD	ALL VOTERS
	52,5 47,5	53,5 46,5	53,1 46,9
	45,2	45,5	43,4
	27,9 43,0 29,1	29,1 40,4 30,5	26,2 41,3 32,5
	51,0 17,2 6,2 7,1 18,5	47,0 16,0 9,2 10,2 17,6	49,3 17,2 9,0 9,2 15,3
	11,6 73,2 15,2	16,4 72,8 10,8	15,2 71,1 13,7
	12,3 46,7 29,5 3,0 7,9 0,6	14,2 47,8 30,7 3,7 3,7 0,0	14,2 46,7 28,7 2,8 7,3 0,3
	50,5 41,0 8,5	65,2 30,0 4,8	62,8 31,7 5,5
	33,0 38,6 1,7 26,7	39,4 26,4 1,8 32,4	33,7 29,8 2,1 34,4

4.1 Social structure

In the case of the Green party in the 1980s, voters had a clear generational profile and the party could convincingly claim to represent a neglected voter segment; the highly educated post-war generation. Is there something similar with regard to present-day anti-party parties? The voters of the Pirates and the AfD are more often male than on average and compared to the voters of the two *Volksparteien* (see Table 3). However, this maleness is a well-known phenomenon for new parties and was already observed in the 1980s for the Green Party and is also typical for radical or populist right-wing parties. Further, in comparison with the other parties, the voters of the Pirates are very young. The relatively young age of the Pirates' voters is also reflected in the employment status of the voters; many people are still studying or are non-employees. The proportion of people in retirement is correspondingly low. Whilst observing class-belonging, one can see that many Pirate voters come from the working class. AfD voters disproportionately identify themselves as part of the upper stratum of society and are also over-represented in the upper service-class and among the self-employed. Moreover, both anti-party parties, and in particular the Pirates, mobilize the secular voter segment, i.e. those without denominational belonging and who do not attend church.

4.2 Party identification

As to Gidengil et al. (2001), people with strong party affiliation are relatively immune to anti-party parties and, if they are disappointed with their own party, they look for alternatives within the established party spectrum. However, we argued that voting for an anti-party party might be a viable option for partisans if they wish to push their party in a certain direction. Moreover, voters who choose an anti-party party because they want to change the party system might quickly develop some form of identification with this new party. Hence, a glance at the patterns of partisanship is telling as it might indicate whether anti-party parties are about to develop own strongholds or whether it is more likely that protesting voters will return to their party of origin. Table 4 presents a preliminary overview concerning the distribution of party identification³.

The proportion of voters who have no party identification is particularly high concerning the two anti-party parties. Moreover, compared to the *Volksparteien* where about 80 percent of the voters claim to also

Table 4. Party Identification and Voting Decision 2013

	CDU/CSU	SPD	AFD	PIRATE PARTY	ALL VOTERS
No Identification	10,6	10,7	24,7	27,6	14,0
Voting Decision = Party Identification	82,0	76,8	33,7	35,7	65,6
Voting Decision ≠ Party Identification	7,4	12,5	41,6	36,7	20,4
N	554	440	89	98	1625

possess identification with the party, this percentage is much lower with regard to both AfD and the Pirates. Accordingly, about 40 percent of the votes come from individuals who say they identify with another party, a pattern that is hardly visible with regard to CDU/CSU or SPD voters. Where are these voters coming from? Table 5 shows the party identification of those anti-party party voters who claimed to be partisans of another party.

60 percent of the AfD voters, who voted against their party identification, have a Christian Democratic identification. Hence, the AfD clearly attracts voters who, for whatever reason, are not satisfied with the performance of the CDU/CSU. The Pirates, by contrast, profit from left-wing partisans, particularly from the SPD (almost 40 percent) and the Left and Green party. However, anti-partisan voting is clearly more diffused between different parties in the case of the Pirates compared to the AfD, which profits greatly from CDU/CSU adherents. Issue positions might be a reason for Christian Democrat partisans to vote for the AfD. We now turn to this question.

4.3 Voters' opinions on different issues

Voters, also loyal partisans, might turn to an anti-party party if they feel that an important issue is ignored or mishandled by their own party. Figure 3 shows the orientations of the voters regarding five core political issues. As issue positions only become clear when we consider the entire

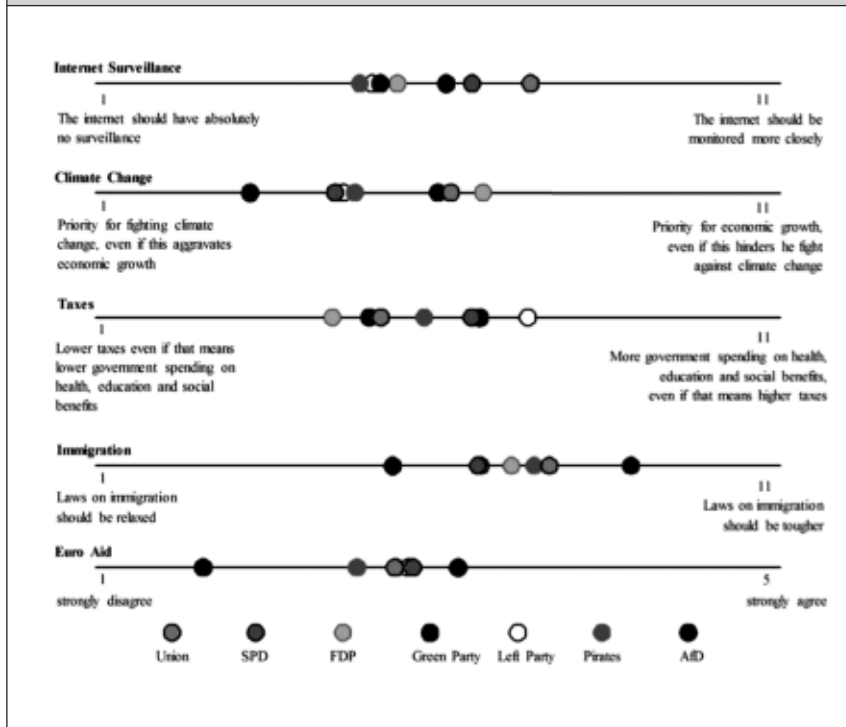
Table 5. Voting Decision \neq Party Identification: A Closer Look

		VOTED FOR ...				
PARTY IDENTIFICATION FOR ...		CDU/CSU	SPD	AfD	PIRATE PARTY	ALL VOTERS
	CDU/CSU	----	16,4	59,5	19,4	31,6
	SPD	48,8	----	18,9	38,9	34,4
	THE LEFT	2,4	14,5	5,4	13,9	5,8
	GREEN PARTY	12,2	60,0	5,4	19,4	18,3
	FDP	34,2	5,5	2,7	2,8	6,8
	AfD	2,4	3,6	----	5,6	1,6
	PIRATE PARTY	0	0	8,1	----	1,6
	N	41	55	36	37	323

ideological spectrum, we will now also look at the issue positions of voters from other smaller parties, i.e. the Left Party, the Greens and the Liberals (FDP). Concerning the traditional economic issue (taxes versus social benefits), none of the two anti-party parties takes an extreme stance. The same is true for the ecological issue where Greens (pro-ecology) and Liberals (pro-economic growth) have the most radical views. With regard to the question of internet surveillance – a key issue of the Pirates – the Pirate voters are most outspoken in favour of net liberty, however, differences to voters from other parties are rather slim. Thus, the Pirates' voters hold no unique position regarding this central topic of the Pirate Party. By contrast, AfD voters take extreme positions concerning two issues; immigration and Euro aid.

With regard to immigration skeptical views, AfD-voters constitute the counter-part of the voters of the Green party, but are also far more skeptical than voters of the CDU/CSU from which many AfD voters have their origins. Unsurprisingly, AfD voters also take the strongest position against aid to EU countries in economic trouble⁴. Again, differences between voters of the CDU/CSU and those of the AfD are relatively large.

Figure 3. Voters' position on core political issues



Hence, these results give clear hints that anti-party voting is (also) due to discontented partisans who are unhappy with the issue position of their party and try to push the own party through anti-party voting. In short, looking at issue positions, the Pirates seem to be a slightly more radical variant of other, more established parties (concerning one single issue – the internet), while AfD voters are clearly unique with regard to their stance on immigration and the EU, but also undoubtedly joined at the hips with CDU/CSU voters in terms of economic and ecological issues.

4.4 Anti-party sentiments

Anti-party sentiments are the emotional pool from which anti-party parties recruit their voters. Anti-party sentiments cover the discontent of citizens with political parties, the political process, the government or the politi-

cians, in general. Thus, these are more diffuse sentiments that go beyond the dissatisfaction with a single party or government because of perceived issue ignorance or wrong policy measures. In standard electoral surveys, good measures of anti-party sentiments are rare. Unfortunately, this is also the case with the GLES surveys. Thus we turn to more general measures of affection and dissatisfaction, i.e. with democracy in general, with political parties and politicians in general. Non-voting at the previous election will be considered as a fourth measurement for anti-party sentiments.

Satisfaction with democracy expresses citizens' general content with the political process in their country. It is measured on a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Looking at Table 6, there is a clear difference in the degree of satisfaction between voters of the established parties and voters of the anti-party parties: voters of the AfD and the Pirates are more often dissatisfied with the democracy in Germany than the voters of the *Volksparteien* and the electorate in general. In order to grasp the general discontent with parties and politicians, we created two indices that added all judgments across the party system (party index) and the leading politicians of the parties (politician index). The single scale runs from -5 (very unsympathetic) to +5 (very sympathetic). In order to re-scale the added values to the original scale we divided the sum by the number of single items (i.e. number of parties/politicians). Accordingly, negative values signal generalized disregard or dissatisfaction, while positive values signal support and satisfaction.

In general, politicians are viewed rather skeptically. This is true for all parties and the electorate as a whole. However, this skepticism is particularly pronounced in the case of AfD voters and much less so in the case of voters of the Pirate party. The same is the case with regard to anti-party feelings in which both anti-party parties' voters are more skeptical than voters of the *Volksparteien* and the general electorate. But once more, anti-party sentiments are much stronger among AfD-voters than among voters of the Pirate party.

Non-voting is a very clear indication of political disaffection. Hence, we will finally examine whether anti-party parties were successful in turning former non-voters into voters. Clearly, this is not the case. The percentage of former non-voters among Pirate voters is only very modestly above the percentage of non-voters that the *Volksparteien* managed to regain. These are, moreover, relative figures (% of total vote share), translated in absolute figures, i.e. number of non-voters; both *Volksparteien* were greatly more successful in turning non-voters into voters than was

Table 6. Anti-party sentiments

	CDU/CSU	SPD	AfD	PIRATE PARTY	ALL VOTERS
Satisfaction with democracy	3.7	3.3	2.6	3.2	3.3
Politician-Index	-0.4	-0.2	-1.5	-0.7	-0.3
Party-Index	0.0	-0.6	-2.0	-1.2	-0.6
Non-voter 2009 (in % of party-vote)	5.7	5.2	3.2	8.3	5.3

the Pirate party. Not even in relative terms, the AfD could attract former non-voters. Indeed, the AfD has a very low proportion of former non-voters. Thus, the AfD mainly mobilized dissatisfied voters of other parties, in particular from the CDU/CSU.

4.5 Multivariate analyses

Let us finally examine whether the findings are robust, i.e. whether they hold when other variables are simultaneously entered into the model. Unfortunately, one of our core political issues, the internet issue, was not included in the surveys concerning the two state elections in Bavaria and Hesse. Therefore, we present two separate analyses. One that employs the merged data file with larger case numbers but without issue positions, and a second analysis that presents all issue positions but is based on the smaller data-set, i.e. the survey on the federal election. Due to the binary nature of the dependent variable (party vote versus vote for another party), we perform logistic regressions, again comparing anti-party party vote rationales with the vote rationales of Christian and Social Democratic voters. The coefficients (odds ratios) of logistic regressions are not easy to interpret. Basically, a coefficient of around 1.00 signals that there is no difference in the likelihood that a voter will opt for one party or another, i.e. there is no effect. Values above 1.00 mean that the likelihood of voting for one party is higher, whereas values below 1.00 signal that the likelihood to vote for the party decreases – always compared to the contrast category, i.e. voters of all other parties.

Table 7 displays the results concerning the complete model but excludes issue positions. Looking at the AfD, there is still a substantial effect of upper class self-positioning. On the other hand, highly educated voters (compared to voters with a medium level of education) tend not to opt for the AfD. Very clear is the anti-party sentiment reservoir of this party. The likelihood of voting for AfD is largely decreased if voters are satisfied with democracy and hold positive opinions about political parties.⁵ Moreover, the effect of non-voting at the 2009 federal election is clearly negative. By contrast, the AfD profits greatly from voters without party identification and, in particular, from disaffected partisans, i.e. voters with a party identification of another party who decided to cast a ballot in favour of this anti-party party during the 2013 Federal election. Pirate voters are younger than the average voter but the profile of the Pirate voters is nevertheless very similar to that of AfD voters. The vote is driven by anti-party sentiments, disaffection with democracy and voters who are recruited mainly from the pool of non-partisans and discontented partisan of other parties. However, there is no effect of non-voting. Hence, the Pirate party is as successful – or unsuccessful – in mobilizing former non-voters than parties on average. In terms of party sentiments and satisfaction with democracy, voters of the Christian Democrats constitute the counterpart to anti-party party voters; satisfied with democracy and a high regard for political parties. Moreover, their main recruitment pool consists of own partisans. For individuals with no party identification or partisans of other parties, the likelihood of voting CDU/CSU is clearly depressed. The latter is also the case for a vote decision in favour of the SPD which also profits largely from own partisans. However, looking at the Social Democrats, there are no effects concerning anti-party sentiments or satisfaction with democracy. In short, discontented voters turn to anti-party parties. Both internal and external motifs are in operation; general and more diffuse discontent with the political process and dissatisfaction with the (established) favorite party.

Finally, we turn to the effect of issue positions on vote choices. Table 8 displays the results. The EU issue, not surprisingly, is highly relevant for AfD voting. If a voter supports financial aid for other EU countries, the likelihood of voting AfD is strongly depressed. Interestingly, there is also a modest effect on the position on internet liberty in the sense that AfD voters are rather against a closer monitoring of the net. Even more interestingly, there is no effect of the immigration issue. Although we could show that AfD voters have a rather radical position on this issue (see Figure 3 above) by con-

Table 7. Explaining anti-party voting: social structure, anti-party sentiments and party identification

	ADF	PIRATE PARTY	CDU/CSU	SPD
Sex female	0.77	0.69	0.94	1.02
Age in years	0.99	0.94***	1.00	1.01**
Education (ref: middle)				
Low	0.71	1.53	1.09	1.02
High	0.47	0.77	0.75+	1.04
Social stratum (ref: middle)				
Lower class	0.79	0.98	0.71+	1.18
Upper class	5.28***	1.44	0.8	0.82
Class (ref: manual worker)				
Self-employed & farmer	2.16	0.32	1.25	0.35**
Routine non-manual	1.92	0.63	0.93	1.11
upper & lower service class	1.37	0.51+	1.12	1.27
Denomination (ref: none/other)				
Protestant	1.24	0.89	1.08	1.64**
Catholic	0.88	0.96	1.50+	1.11
Church Attendance				
Seldom, never	1.14	1.60	0.69*	1.58**
Satisfaction with democracy	0.54***	0.68+	1.72***	0.96
Party-Index	0.57***	0.83+	1.45***	0.99
Participation 2009 Non-Voter	0.14+	0.53	1.24	0.93
Party Identification (ref: voting decision = PI)				
No PI	2.36+	2.05+	0.37***	0.33***
Voting Decision \neq PI	6.57***	4.86***	0.17***	0.40***
Constant	0.14+	1.59	0.18***	0.15***
N	1456	1456	1456	1456
Pseudo R ²	.26	.18	.18	.06

+ = $p < 0.10$, * = $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.005$, *** $p < 0.001$

trolling for other ideological positions, the immigration issue is not relevant for AfD voting. Turning to the Pirate party voters, preferences for more internet control clearly suppress the likelihood of voting for the Pirates. However, there are two further, albeit modest, issue effects: Pirate voters prefer climate protection over economic growth and are in favour of more liberal immigration policies. Effects are not large (only in the case of the internet issue); however, they support the impression that the Pirate party is a variant of other left-liberal parties and resembles in particular the issue profile of Green party voters (data not shown). Looking at the established parties, the voters of the CDU/CSU hold significant issue positions across the board. In all instances they lean towards center-conservative positions and in all instances issue positions are not radical, i.e. effects are statistically significant but not large. Almost the opposite is true with regard to the Social Democrats; there is a significant but rather weak effect concerning the socio-economic issue. Voters who tend to favour social spending over lower taxes tend to cast a ballot for the SPD. Regarding all other issues, there is no significant effect. Evidently, this should not mean that SPD voters have no opinions on core political issues; however, it signals that issue positions are hardly relevant for explaining a SPD vote decision.

5. CONCLUSION

The life-span of anti-party parties in Germany can be very short. A year and a half after the Federal election in September of 2013, the Pirates have almost disappeared from the scene. The AfD, in contrast, experienced a rather successful year in 2014. Since election day, most pollsters see them continuously above the five percent threshold. However, they were also successful in real life, as they won 7.1 percent of the votes in the election for the European parliament and gained parliamentary representation in the states of Saxony, Thuringia and Brandenburg. In Thuringia and Brandenburg they even exceeded the 10 percent mark. However, and despite these evident successes, the party's press coverage is rather negative at present. Two reasons are responsible for this development. First, as our data clearly shows, at the time of the Federal election, the party's profile was still dominated by the EU issue and had a rather "bourgeois" impetus, visible in the support by the voters who believed that they belong to the upper stratum of society. Some observers even called the party a "professors' party" because of its origins among economists, most clear-

Table 8. Explaining anti-party voting: Political Issues

	AFD	PIRATE PARTY	CDU/CSU	SPD
Internet	0.87+	0.77***	1.19***	1.01
Taxes	0.98	0.98	0.87***	1.13***
Climate Change	1.00	0.87+	1.23***	0.99
Euro Aid	0.40***	1.14*	1.38***	1.06
Immigration	1.08	1.14*	1.10*	0.99
Constant	0.55	0.09+	0.02***	0.13***
N	855	855	855	855
Pseudo R ²	.14	.09	.12	.02
+ = $p < 0.10$, * = $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.005$, *** $p < 0.001$				

ly represented by one of the founding leaders, Bernd Lucke, who holds a chair as a professor of economics at a German university. However, the enormous successes in the German states, so far all of them on the territory of the former GDR, were also due to voters who expressed anti-immigrant and nationalist sentiments with their vote decision in favour of the AfD. Since then, the party is in heavy internal dispute about whether it should remain an anti-EU, but basically bourgeois conservative party or, rather, increase its electoral appeal by opening up towards anti-immigration sentiments and change towards a more populist right-wing outlook. Closely related to these substantial and strategic choices are quarrels about leadership. Parts of the founding leaders and early supporters seem not to be willing to follow the populist path and are thus heavily criticized by second-ranked party elites. At the time of writing, it is unclear how the party will respond to these two challenges concerning substantial strategy and leadership. Note that the Pirate party was also highly successful in the years between the two federal elections of 2009 and 2013 (Scherer/Bieber 2013; Bieber et al. 2014), however, leadership quarrels contributed greatly to their continuous decline.

During the chancellorship of Angela Merkel, the CDU/CSU clearly moved towards the center of the political spectrum (see Scherer, 2011, p. 33). The self-positioning on the political right was a decisive motif for both AfD and CDU/CSU voters during the 2013 federal election (Roßteutscher and Scherer, 2014, p. 219). Hence, potentially, there is ideological space on the right of the Christian Democrats which could be filled by a more outspoken conservative/right-wing party such as the AfD. By contrast, the ideological spectrum on the left is already crowded and populated by three parties; the SPD, the Left party and the Greens. Hence, and notwithstanding leadership quarrels, the chances for a fourth left party in the German party system were generally not very promising. This is clearly different in the case of the AfD, next to which there is no single competitor on the right of the Christian Democrats. At present, the AfD is successful mainly because of CDU/CSU voters who are dissatisfied with the political course of their own party, in particular concerning EU and Euro policies. It will be crucial for the further success of the AfD whether it can retain these voters or whether it will lose them again to the established parties. However, in German post-war history there are many examples of right-wing alternatives to Christian Democracy. Some of them, such as the Republican Party, were highly successful at state elections but, after a short time, disappeared from the scene and never became a significant actor at the national level.

What is also clear is that issue positions and issue deviation from the preferred party only explains a part of the story. Both the Pirates and the AfD were particularly successful among voters who are dissatisfied with democracy in general and prone to anti-party sentiments. In Germany, and in most Western established democracies, there is a certain voter segment which is susceptible to anti-party sentiments. This is the natural recruitment pool for anti-party parties. Those generally discontented voters choose their party independent of more concrete issues and party personnel. They swim with the tides and opt for the most attractive and successful anti-party party. Hence, the success of the AfD is also, at least partially, explained by the decline of the Pirates.

What is, finally, also clear is that new parties – and all new parties are naturally anti-party parties – do not increase voter turnout automatically. They live mainly from anti-party sentiments and disaffected voters of established parties but are unable to mobilize those who abstain from voting. This is the very bad news for representative democracy.

NOTES

1. The ZA-numbers of the surveys are: ZA5721 (Long-term Online Tracking 21), ZA5736 (State Election Bavaria 2013), ZA5737 (State Election Hesse 2013). See Rattinger (2014a, 2014b, 2014c).
2. They are based on quota samples using the criteria age (18-29 years: 25%, 30-39 years: 20%, 40-49 years: 25%, 50-59 years: 15%, 60 years and older: 15%), gender (female: 50%, male: 50%) and level of education (low: 35%, medium: 40%, high: 25%). The Online Panel was recruited offline by LINK. For references and study description see: <http://www.gesis.org/wahlen/gles/daten-und-dokumente/daten/>
3. PI includes weak and strong party identifier.
4. The exact wording is: In times of the fiscal crisis, Germany should financially support EU member states which experience strong economic and financial problems.
5. Due to multicollinearity (the party and politician indices correlate above .60) we had to exclude the politician index from the multivariate analyses.

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THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF PARTY SYSTEMS COMPARED

Is it all about money? The Legal Framework of Party Competition in Italy

Andrea De Petris

INTRODUCTION

In Italy the regulation of political parties began to receive attention in the early XX Century, when they were no longer considered simple election committees with the only function of organizing elections campaigns. However, the gradual extension of voting rights made it necessary to reconsider the nature of political parties, whose internal structure became more and more complex due to the rise and the development of the so called “mass-based parties” (Duverger 1954). Despite Italian liberal constitutional theorists tended to ignore them in the first decades of the previous century (Gregorio 2012, 43), political parties transformed themselves into permanent structures (Ridolfi 2008, 125), aiming to maintain a stable relationship with their voters and supporters, especially after the end of the Fascist dictatorship and the enactment of the Republican Constitution on January 1st, 1948 (Nicolosi 2006). Their role consisted not only in expressing the popular will in Parliament, but also in creating a permanent organization for social groups intending to participate in political life.

Nevertheless, the Italian regulation of political parties gained a very low profile, varying between different forms of public funding over the years but mainly avoiding references to their internal democracy. Therefore, a presentation of the legal framework of party competition in Italy must necessarily concentrate on how political parties finance their costs and activities, since these have been the only provisions able to influence the race among political movements in the Italian context so far. Indeed, the access to financial support is a crucial element for political competition (Öhman/Zainulbhai 2009), since there is an evident relationship between the amount of financial resources available to political movements and their chances of electoral success (Ridola 2000): as some-

one correctly noted, with money “shortages of manpower may be mastered and virtually all other deficiencies overcome” (Patel 1981, 138). Nevertheless, other constitutional orders decided to develop a much wider regulation of political parties, including sectors ignored by Italian legislation (Nassmacher 2003).

Thus, in the next pages this contribution will first review the main characters of the Italian constitutional debate on political parties, which also explains why the Italian legislator avoided to regulate their internal structure; secondly, it will recall the different disciplines of party funding adopted in Italy over the years; finally, it will summarize the new regulation of party financing recently adopted by the Italian Parliament. This last provision shows a completely different approach: for the first time in the Italian legislation, the right for political parties to access a brand new funding system, based on private fund-raising, is linked to some strict basic elements of internal democracy which the parties must now unavoidably assure. This contribution concludes with a brief speculation about the way Italian parties will organize their political competition, and how their new regulation could affect their chances of success in the future.

I. POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE ITALIAN CONSTITUTION

After the end of the Fascist dictatorship and the conclusion of World War II, Italy re-discovered the regulation of political parties. In 1947-48 the Constituent Assembly focused especially on the matter of political parties' internal democracy (Ridola 2008). Fearing that a lack of discipline could transform political parties into authoritarian subjects, free from legal constraints, the Christian-democrat Constitutional Law scholar Costantino Mortati - as well as François Goguel in France (Goguel 1958) - suggested the adoption of a special law on political parties. Mortati's proposal was based on two simple positions: on the one hand, the State had to acknowledge the crucial role played by political parties in connecting citizens and institutions, and therefore recognize their effective public nature; on the other hand, because of their actual public role, political parties should have to be regulated by law in order to ensure their democratic character in all their activities: not only for their arrangement of electoral campaigns, but also in their internal organization, in the selection of candidates to be included in their electoral lists, etc. (Predieri 1950).

Mortati's proposal finally did not succeed. Even the constitutional regulation of political parties resulted very modest. Actually, art. 49 contains only a basic reference to parties (“*All citizens have the right to freely associate in parties, in order to contribute through democratic processes to determine national policy*”), resulting in the defeat of those who would have wanted a clearer and stricter discipline. The 1947 Italian Constitution, in fact, applies the “democratic method” only to parties’ external behavior, instead of considering it as a general principle concerning all their activities, as it usually happens i.e. in most of the European countries so far (Van Biezen 2011). The attempts of some members of the Italian Constituent Assembly to expand the scope of constitutional provisions, extending the obligation for political parties to respect the democratic principle also with regard to their internal organization, were not successful. The fear that such a discipline would too strictly limit political parties’ autonomy resulted finally stronger than the intention to impose them a precise form of operating method (Merlini). Thus, the Italian “*Parteienartikel*” ended to merely regulate the “external” activities carried out by parties.

This choice inevitably affected also subsequent legal provisions concerning political parties. Their legal personality, their constitutional status, as well as the opportunity to oblige the national Parliament to issue a specific legal provision aimed to regulating political parties in details, could neither be afforded during the constituent debate, nor be mentioned in the text of the Italian Republican Constitution¹ (Salari 2008).

Nevertheless, scholars agree today that the choice made by the Italian Constitution describes a “Legalisation” process of political parties, which recognizes them as crucial subjects in connecting civil society and public institutions (Ridola 1982). On the other hand, the constitutional prescriptions concerning political parties clearly avoided to impose them strict rules on internal organization matters: differing from German Basic Law, the only democratic principle valid for Italian political parties affects their external activities, with no further limitations concerning their internal structures, electoral strategies or organization models (Borioni 2005, 13). A recent comparison between the Italian and the German regulation of political parties confirms these basic differences (Pacini/Piccio 2012). Also the fact that the Constitution renounced to refer to further secondary legislation on political parties can be considered a clear signal of the self-restraining strategy adopted by the Constitutional Assembly on this topic. Despite of a strong support to a wider interpretation of the constitutional prescription of “democratic method” contained

in art. 49, a strict literal interpretation of this norm eventually prevailed. Recurrent appeals by Italian scholars for the adoption of a strong regulation of political parties remained mainly ignored by the institutions (Chelli 1985; Zolo 1986; Teodori 1999; Pinelli 2000; Frosini 2003; Ruggeri 2010). Therefore, nowadays it neither exists an official obligation for the Italian political parties to respect democratic principles in their internal organization, nor the Constitution prescribes further secondary legislation aiming at regulating political parties.

Since no official acknowledgement of their legal personality occurred, political parties are considered private associations and therefore disciplined in the articles of Italian Civil Code referring to “Associations without legal personality” (art. 36-38). According to art. 36, these are associations whose internal organization and administration are ruled by internal agreements among their members. Thus, also under a civil law perspective Italian political parties remain free from effective regulation, confined in a sort of “juridical limbo” without clear prescriptions on their legal status (Grasso 2010, 655). This choice obviously affected the following approach to the regulation of political parties in Italy, and left open the problem regarding their lack of internal democracy (Bonfiglio 2013).

2. POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE ITALIAN SECONDARY LEGISLATION

Despite the reductive attention paid by Italian Constitution, the issue of parties’ internal democracy - also connected to the “cost of politics” - triggered the debate among scholars and institutions for over fifty years. Already in the early 1960s, an authoritative scholar like Leopoldo Elia tried to stress the crucial role of the mutual relationship between political parties and their internal organization for the quality of the democratic system (Elia 1963). Nevertheless, Elia supported self-regulating parties much more than a legal discipline aiming to impose them a form of internal democratic organization (Elia 1965). In 1985 the first Parliamentary Commission for Institutional Reforms actually did not bring any concrete solution to the problem (Lanchester 1988). A period of critical political corruption scandals, commonly called “*Tangentopoli*”, caused drastic changes in the political class and in the Italian party system. However, even the subsequent referendums willing to reform the electoral system (1991-1993) or to abolish public financing of political parties (1993) were not able to introduce new rules (Bianco 2001).

With the rise of the so-called “Second Republic” after 1994 (Grilli di Cortona 2007), the debate on the regulation of political parties and internal democracy abruptly stopped, rather than achieving a solution, despite it seems clear that one of the most probable causes of the widespread political corruption was the choice to grant political parties public funding without facing the hard matter of their internal democracy (Rhodes 1997). The problem however remained, because if it is true that the parties’ internal organization charts appear to be - and sometimes still are - “lighter” than in the past, the tendency to centralize powers in the parties’ leading organs increased, precisely because of the “personalization” of the political competition due to the adoption of electoral majority systems (Di Virgilio 2006). In a world where voters end up to indirectly choose even the Prime Minister (as leader of the Parliament’s majority), parties witness a sometimes strong identification between the charismatic leader and the political party he is leading (Prospero 2012). In these cases scholars speak of “personal” political parties which identify with their leader and/or founder (Calise 2010; about the peculiar case of Silvio Berlusconi’s personal party s. also McDonnell 2013). Even in parties with a more traditional organization, directive organs seem to maintain a decisive weight, while parliamentary groups, MPs, party minorities (if they are represented in their internal bodies) often seem to have a limited decision-making power, compared to the party’s and coalition’s leaders (Morlino 2006). These are the reasons why, despite the critical conditions of Italian politics which let many experts call for a more effective regulation (Rossi 2011), Italy refused to adopt an appropriate political party law.

After the heavy finance and political corruption cases of the last decades in Italy, Italian institutions started to pay a higher attention to this matter, also because of hard pressure coming from public opinion and media during the years (Raniolo 2013, 83). Therefore Italy started following a different approach, trying to gain inspiration by the regulation of political parties finance adopted in foreign countries (Pinelli 1984).

In 1974 the Italian Parliament passed the first law on party finance (L. 195/1974), which was repeatedly amended in the following years - even by a popular referendum in 1993 which aimed at completely abolishing their public funding. The 1974 statute introduced two forms of political financing: funding of national election campaigns and direct financial support to normal activities conducted by political forces represented in Parliament. After the mentioned abolishment of the direct parties funding by referendum in 1993, the only source of public financial support

left to Italian political parties was the reimbursement of electoral campaigns. Therefore, in order to compensate the lack of money caused by the abolishment, the electoral reimbursement, originally available only for national competitions, was extended to electoral campaigns held for local and European elections (L. 422/1980). Nevertheless, the amount of the money reimbursed to the parties repeatedly increased from the 1990s, leading to a *de facto* restoration of party financing figures existing until 1993. As a further evidence that campaign reimbursement in fact substituted direct parties funding, since 1999 an annual contribution has been conferred to political parties for every relevant election, independently from the expenses they actually held (L. 157/1999) (Biondi 2012, 143). A fact that supported the quite spread suspect that behind the reimbursement there were actually hidden “undercover” funds to political parties (Tarli Barbieri 2009).

3. REGULATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES’ PUBLIC FUNDING IN ITALY UNTIL 2013

The current regulation of parties’ public funding is resumed in L. nr. 96 of July 6th, 2012. The amount of contributions were reduced and the public funding system was reformed: according to the law, 70 % of the money is now given to political parties, not only as a reimbursement for campaign costs, but also as a contribution for financing their institutional activities. The remaining 30% is connected to the parties’ abilities to establish self-financing practices, and shall be paid proportionally to the dues and to private funding collected by the parties. Public contribution for 2012 and 2013 was reduced as a consequence of the need to reallocate public funding in local areas affected by natural disasters occurring in Italy since 2009.

The details of the current public and private financing system of political parties are ruled as follows:

a) Public funding

The current discipline of public funding for political parties was established by L. 157/1999 and subsequently amended several times, most recently by the aforementioned L. 96/2012. The criteria for the allocation of funds are contained in L. 515/1993 and L. 43/1995. The actual discipline foresees the reimbursement of the campaign ex-

penses held by political parties and movements for the election of the following representative bodies:

- Chamber of Deputies;
- Senate;
- European Parliament;
- Regional Councils.

Reimbursements are paid sharing among the entitled political parties four distinct funds, corresponding to four elective bodies: Chamber of Deputies, Senate, European Parliament and Regional Councils². Each fund currently amounts to € 15.925 million for each year of legislature, for each of the four mentioned organs³. The amount of each fund was originally determined for each year multiplying € 1 for the number of registered electors for the election of the Chamber of Deputies, which caused a significant increase of the funds. In order to contain the costs, a fixed maximum amount level for all four funds was introduced by L. 96/2012. Campaigning costs for elections of local bodies (municipal and provincial councils) are generally excluded from public reimbursements, with the only exception of the elections for the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano, the two elective bodies which compose the Regional Council of Trentino-South Tyrol⁴.

The current regulation also provides a form of reimbursement of electoral campaign costs related to legislative and constitutional referendums, ruled in art. 75 and 138 of the Constitution⁵. In this case, the promoting committee of the referendum obtains a refunding equal to the amount resulting from the multiplication of € 1 for the number of valid signatures collected in support of the referendum proposal, within a maximum refunding of €2.582.285 per year for all direct democracy consultations, providing that the referendum has reached the necessary 50% quorum of voter participation and is therefore valid. Therefore, referendum initiatives which do not manage to bring to the polls more than the half of the voters do not receive any reimbursement.

The present discipline produced a significant reduction of available public funds. In fact, L. 96/2012 not only redefined the reimbursement procedure, but also cut the total amount of contributions of about 50%, fixing it at € 91 million per year⁶. This reduction had immediate application also on contributions attributed in 2012.

b) Funds allocation

Art. 2 of L. 157/1999 recalls several previous legal provisions for the determination of subjects entitled to receive public funds and the procedure for the calculation of their distribution⁷.

Art. 6 of L. 96/2012 set a common basic criterion for all kinds of elections in order to determine the subjects eligible to be reimbursed: they must have at least one candidate elected in the electoral competition whose expenses should be refunded. Besides, parties are required to adopt an official funding act and a statute. If they do not comply with this prescription, they risk to be deprived of their public contribution⁸. Funds for the Chamber of Deputies' campaign are now distributed proportionally to the votes gained by the competing party lists, among all movements that obtained at least one candidate elected. The previous discipline required instead only to exceed the threshold of 1 per cent of the valid votes in order to be eligible for reimbursements, with no regard to the number of candidates actually elected.

The reimbursement of election expenses for the renewal of the Senate is allocated on a regional basis. Therefore, the fund is primarily divided among the Italian regions proportionally to their population. The share of each region is divided among the lists' candidates in the region, in proportion to the votes received by every list. In order to participate in the distribution of the fund, lists have to obtain at least one candidate elected per region.

The reimbursement fund for the European Parliament elections is divided among all political parties and movements that had at least one candidate elected, in proportion to the votes obtained by each party at national level⁹.

Finally, for regional elections the current regulation states the distribution of the fund among the regions in proportion to their population. Since the total amount of funds for each election is determined by the number of citizens entitled to vote, the Italian Parliament decided to extend the same criterion also to the distribution of the reimbursements at the regional level. In each region the funds are therefore allocated proportionally to the valid votes, among the lists that had at least one candidate elected in the Regional Council¹⁰.

As already mentioned, reimbursements for the expenses of referendum campaigns are paid only if the popular participation to the referendum achieves the validity turnout quorum (absolute majority, 50 percent plus one of the voters)¹¹.

c) Reimbursements procedure

The reimbursement payment occurs by decree of the President of the Chamber of Deputies or the President of the Senate, according to their respective competences. The President of the Chamber also regulates the reimbursement of the campaign costs for European and regional elections, as well as for referendum campaigns.

Political parties or movements aiming at receiving the reimbursements are required to apply for them at the President of the competent Parliament's Chamber within 30 days from the date of the elections¹². The contributions are paid on annual basis each year by July 31st. Should an early dissolution of the national Parliament occur, the annual payments of reimbursements will therefore be ceased¹³. Refunds of referendum campaigns are to be paid in a single sum, by July 31st of the year in which the referendum was held¹⁴.

The supply of electoral reimbursements requires that political parties and movements accurately fulfill their legal obligations.

d) Co-financing system

As already mentioned, besides the reimbursements for election expenses, L. 96/2012 has introduced a new form of contribution for the activities of political parties and movements¹⁶, apparently inspired by the political parties' financing model existing in Germany (*Parteiengesetz*). This is not an additional resource, but concurs to determine the whole amount of public funds assigned to political organizations. This system foresees two different procedures for the payments, whose total amount since 2012 is € 91 million: 70% continues to be paid as a contribution to election expenses as well as for regular activities performed by political parties; the remaining 30% is allocated in proportion to the self-financing capacity of the single political movements. In practice, for every Euro received from private donors, including membership fees, political parties receive 50 cents of public contribution, up to a maximum of € 10.000 per year for each single donor.

Parties entitled to participate in the co-financing system must either have at least one candidate elected in the relative electoral competition, or must have obtained at least 2% of valid votes in the last Chamber of Deputies' election. Therefore, the number of parties entitled to access the co-financing system is higher than the number of those entitled to receive campaign contributions, since also political movements with no candidates elected but able to achieve a minimum

amount of votes at the national level are included in the latter. The fixed amount quantified by law (30% of 91 million) represents the maximum payable amount: entitled parties obtain a public contribution in proportion to the number of valid votes received in the last election. Not allocated contributions shall be included into the national budget. The procedures for allocation of co-financing public funds are the same valid for campaign reimbursements.

e) Private funding to political parties

The law allows two different forms of private funding for political activities: general financial donations and specific donations to individual candidates in election campaigns. L. 195/1974 introduced a limit to the contributions of single individuals in favor of political organizations, and issued special provisions aimed to ensure transparency about the provenience of the contributions.

Not all private subjects are allowed to offer contributions to political parties. According to the law, only private individuals (natural persons) and legal persons (corporations, associations, companies, etc.) can donate money to political movements, their organizational structures or their parliamentary groups. Legal persons are allowed to offer contributions only if:

- the company does not exceed 20% of public shareholding;
- the company is not controlled by a company with public participation;
- funding is approved by the competent internal body;
- loans are regularly declared in the company's budget¹⁷.

Contributions to political parties (or to their joint organization and parliamentary groups) by public bodies, companies with over 20% of public shareholding, or companies under public control are strictly forbidden¹⁸. Violations against these provisions are punished with imprisonment from 6 months to 4 years, and a fine of up to three times the amount of the paid or received money¹⁹.

Art. 4, par. 1 of L. 659/1981 extended these prohibitions and sanctions to any form of loans and grants paid, directly or indirectly, to:

- Members of National Parliament;
- Italian members of European Parliament;
- Regional, provincial and municipal authorities;
- Candidates to these offices;
- Internal structures of political parties;
- Individuals holding positions of president, secretary, political and

administrative leadership of political parties at national, regional, provincial or municipal level.

Notwithstanding the general prohibition of party funding provided by art. 7 of L. 195/1974 and described above, natural and legal persons may contribute to activities of political parties and movements by cash donations, or offering goods and services, regardless of their amount. However, the law requires certain compliances to ensure adequate transparency.

For example, when private contribution exceeds € 5,000 a year, the donor and the recipient are required to sign a joint statement declaring the donation, addressed to the President of the Chamber of Deputies²⁰. Besides, parties are obliged to report all contributions received for their electoral campaigns to the President of the Chamber of Deputies.

Violations of these provisions are punished with a sanction of two to six times of the amount of the hidden contribution, and a temporary interdiction from public offices²¹. Contributions by natural persons are subject to a favorable tax regime, and can be deducted from own personal income taxes²².

Besides, the law introduces spending limits for election campaigns. Election expenses of political parties participating in national parliamentary elections may not exceed the sum obtained by multiplying the amount of € 1 for the total number of citizens enrolled in the electoral constituencies in which the party presents candidates²³.

The costs for each regional campaign cannot exceed the sum resulting from the amount of € 1 multiplied by the number of electors for the Chamber of Deputies enrolled in the provincial districts of the considered region²⁴. Spending limits for election campaigns, previously absent, were introduced in 2012, including provincial, municipal and European elections²⁵.

f) Private funding to candidates

Contributions for election campaigns collected by individual candidates are submitted to a special regulation. The general provisions described above, applying to political parties finances (transparency, prohibition to receive contributions from public companies, mandatory declaration of contributions exceeding € 5,000 a year), are extended also to single candidates.

Candidates can raise private funds to finance their campaign, but these contributions can be collected only by a specific representative sub-

ject²⁶, whose name must be reported to the competent Regional Warranty College (a special body established in each regional Court of Appeal).

The actual discipline for national elections sets also a limit to the expenses for the campaign of each candidate, which may not exceed the maximum amount of € 52,000 for each constituency, plus an additional sum given by € 0.01 multiplied for every citizen resident in the constituency where the candidate runs for the election²⁷.

As for political parties, there are spending limits for election campaigns of candidates running in regional elections, but not for those who candidate for European, provincial and municipal elections. The costs for the campaign of each candidate in regional elections cannot exceed the maximum sum given by the fixed amount of € 38,802.85, plus an additional amount given by € 0.0061 multiplied for every citizen resident in the constituency.

g) Reporting obligations for political parties

Contributions to political parties exceeding € 5,000 a year must be declared by both the donor and the beneficiary within three months (or by March of the year after the contribution has been collected) in a joint statement to be presented to the President of the Chamber of Deputies²⁸. Foreign contributions must only be notified by the beneficiary.

Candidates of political parties, movements, electoral groups and lists running for parliamentary elections must also report all contributions they received in a statement, resuming all expenditures occurring for their campaign and their financial sources. The statement must be presented to the Presidents of the Chamber they candidate for, within 45 days after the first session of the new Chambers. A special Office of the Italian Court of Auditors (*Corte dei Conti*), provided with all necessary information by the Presidents of both Chambers, verifies the correspondence between the statements and the electoral expenses actually held²⁹.

Besides, legal representatives of political parties or movements which gained at least 2% of the valid votes in one Chamber, or had at least one candidate elected in one of the representative bodies whose campaign was financed by private contributions (Chamber of Deputies, Senate, European Parliament or regional councils), must transmit by 15 June of each year a cash flow statement to the Presi-

dent of the concerned Chamber. The statement must include the amounts of contributions and electoral reimbursements obtained by the concerned party in the previous year, information on the expenditures which occurred for the election campaigns, as well as indication on the share of financial contributions among the different organizational levels of the party. Before it receives the official approval by the party, the cash flow statement must be controlled and approved by an external auditor.

A further control of the statements is taken by the Commission for Transparency and Control of Political Parties and Movements Accounts (*Commissione per la trasparenza e il controllo dei rendiconti dei partiti e dei movimenti politici*), established in 2012. The Commission is composed by 5 members appointed by the leaders of the three highest Italian courts, in the following proportion:

- 1 member from the First President of the Court of Cassation;
- 1 member from the President of the Council of State;
- 3 members by the President of the Court of Auditors.

The nominees are ratified by a joint act issued by the Presidents of both Chambers³¹.

The members of the Commission do not receive any payment for their services. During their term as members of the Commission they cannot assume or undertake other duties or functions. The term of office of the members of the Commission is four years, and is renewable only once. The Commission has its headquarter at the Chamber of Deputies; its financial resources and its secretarial staff are jointly and equally provided by both Chambers of the Italian Parliament.

The Commission controls parties' budgets, and verifies the correspondence between actual incurred costs and declared revenue on the one hand, and the statements provided by political parties on the other hand. In case of non-compliance or irregularities of the statements, the Commission can levy sanctions according to a strict and articulated fines system, and can even impose the concerned party to return the whole amount of public contributions previously received. The 2012 Act also introduces a transparency obligation: parties must publish their budgets in open data format both on their websites and in the Internet page of the Chamber of Deputies. Besides, the law states that contributions must be allocated exclusively for financing political activities, and foresees some constraints to their use, such as the prohibition to invest its cash resources in private financial instruments.

h) Reporting obligation for single candidates

Within three months after their election, MPs must submit to the Presidency Office of their Chamber and to the Electoral Warranty Board (*Collegio di Garanzia Elettorale*)³² a statement reporting costs and debts held for their electoral campaign, or a declaration affirming that they have been using exclusively means provided by their internal party organization³³. Non-elected candidates are also required to provide the same statement to the Electoral Warranty Board³⁴.

The statement must also include a copy of the documents sent to the Speaker of the competent Chamber, reporting all contributions - even if unrelated to the electoral campaign – exceeding € 5,000 a year by a single donor³⁵. This statement obligation applies to both donors and recipients of the contributions. It can be accomplished by candidates also by self-issued statements, but only for contributions expressly aimed for electoral campaigns³⁶.

Controls on compliance between the statements and the supporting documents are conducted by the regional Electoral Warranty Board³⁷. In the worst cases, an elected candidate who contravenes these provisions can even lose his/her seat in Parliament³⁸.

i) Fiscal treatment of private contributions

L. 2/1997 disciplines the fiscal treatment of donations to political parties made by natural and legal persons. The Act allows the tax deduction for contributions in favor of parties which run for national or European elections, or have at least one elected candidate in a Regional Council. Further provisions on this matter were introduced by L. 96/2012.

With regard to deductions of contributions to political parties from income tax, the current discipline provides following dispositions:

- cash donations of individuals between € 50 and 10,000 allow a deduction of 24% in 2013 and 26% in 2014 of the contribution from personal income taxes (the previous regulation allowed a 19% deduction, while the previous maximum limit for single contributions, set at € 103,291.38, has been reduced by L. 96/2012);
- cash donations of corporations and legal persons between € 51,64 and 103,291,38 allow a deduction of 19% of the contribution from corporate income taxes. Companies with public capital participation are not eligible for tax reductions.

Besides, the current regulation provides a further facilitation, establishing that transfers in favor of political parties are not subject to inheritance and gift taxes³⁹.

Despite of several attempts, the frequent reforms did not manage to reduce the public contributions. Table 1 summarizes the amount of electoral reimbursements assigned to political movements for costs held between 1994 and 2008. The increasing trend of expenses – and the consequent growth of public contributions - is evident. On the one hand, not only the costs for electoral campaigns due to the renewal of the national Parliament, but also public contributions connected to such costs appear to be especially expensive: the data of the national elections in 2001 represent a plain evidence of this. On the other hand, the table also shows how elections which were supposed to be less expensive, like the ones for the renewal of regional assemblies, regularly requested a very high level of public contributions. Thus, between 1994 and 2008, Italian political parties obtained over € 2.2 billion as public financial aid, which is 389,22% more than the costs they actually bore in the same period for electoral campaigns. A further negative consequence of this system was its incentive to a proliferation of parties entitled to receive electoral reimbursements, since the fragmented distribution of public money in several electoral competitions encouraged political movements to participate in European, state, regional or local elections (Pacini 2009).

Facing such data, the Italian Parliament reacted introducing a severe cut of public contributions to political parties in the recent past. Law n. 244/2007 (Finance Act 2008) cut € 20 million - from 2008 onwards – from the reimbursements due to election expenses and referendum⁴⁰. Afterwards, Decree-Law n. 78/2010⁴¹ (enacted from the legislature started in 2013) the amount that should be multiplied by the number of registered reduced electors of the Chamber of Deputies from € 1 to 0.9, in order to determine the amount of reimbursements fund to be assigned during the legislature⁴². The same Decree also repealed the act introduced in 2006, amending Law n. 157/1999, which allowed the payment of all annual fees in case of early dissolution of the Parliament. Decree-law n. 98/2011⁴³ reduced that amount by another 10 per cent, starting with the parliamentary elections held in 2013. It also ordered the immediate repeal of payments in case of early termination of legislature. Therefore, reimbursements returned to be paid for a number of years equal to the term of the legislature, as

Table 1. Electoral expenses and public contributions 1994 – 2008 (€)	
€	A
Elections	Total contributions
Italian Parliament 27-28/3/1994	36,264,124.32
European Parliament 12/6/1994	15,595,788.66
Regional Assemblies 23/4/1995	7,073,555.52
Italian Parliament 21/4/1996	19,812,285.84
European Parliament 13/6/1999	39,745,844.39
Regional Assemblies 16/4/2000	28,673,945.87
Italian Parliament 13/5/2001	49,659,354.92
European Parliament 12-13/6/2004	87,243,219.52
Regional Assemblies 3-4 and 17-18/4/2006	61,933,854.85
Italian Parliament 9-10/4/2006	122,874,652.73
Italian Parliament 13-14/4/2008	110,127,757.19
Total contributions	579,004,383.83

Source: Senato della Repubblica, Servizio studi, Dossier nr. 83/2013

primarily decreed by L. n. 157/1999. The final effect of all these reductions was an overall cut of 30 percent of the reimbursements previously assigned to political parties.

j) Forms of indirect contributions

Besides these forms of public and private funding, Italian political parties also receive indirect public contributions of financial relevance, like cost-reduced postal delivery, free use of public halls and spaces

	B	C	D
	Public contributions	Difference B-A	% B/A
	46,917,449.32	10,653,324.98	129,38
	23,458,724.66	7,862,936.00	150,42
	29,722,776.08	22,649,220.56	420,20
	46,917,449.32	27,105,163.48	236,81
	86,520,102.57	46,774,258.18	217,68
	85,884,344.63	57,210,398.76	299,52
	476,445,235.88	426,785,880.96	959,43
	246,625,344.75	159,382,125.23	282,69
	208,380,680.00	146,446,825.15	336,46
	499,645,745.68	376,771,092.95	406,63
	503,094,380.09	392,966,623.71	456,83
	2,253,612,233.79	1,674,607,849.96	389,22

during electoral campaigns, as well as public housing rental subsidies.

Another very relevant form of indirect public funding to political parties comes from the contribution to newspapers linked to political movements. In order to be eligible for public refund of publications costs, these newspapers must a) either be expression of political movements with MPs elected in one of the two Chambers or in the European Parliament, b) or belong to one of the acknowledged linguistic minorities,

Table 2. Public contribution to Parties' Newspapers 2008 (Ref. to 2007)		
NEWSPAPER	POLITICAL PARTY	PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION (€)
Il Campanile Nuovo	UDEUR	1,150,919.75
Democrazia Cristiana	Democrazia Cristiana (DC)	298,136.46
Italia Democratica	Editrice Mediterranea	298,136.46
Cronache di Liberal	UDC	1,200,342.31
Liberazione	PRC	3,947,796.54
Notizie Verdi	I Verdi	2,510,957.71
La Padania	Lega Nord	4,028,363.82
Le Peuple Valdôtaine	Union Valdôtaine	301,325.06
La Rinascita della Sinistra	PdCI	934,621.50
Il Secolo d'Italia	PDL	2,959,948.01
Il Socialista Lab	Nuovo PSI	472,036.97
L'Unità	Nuovo PSI	6,377,209.80
Zukunft in Südtirol	SVP	650,081.04

Source: Italian Government
http://www.governo.it/DIE/dossier/contributi_editoria_2007/stampa.html

with at least one MP elected in one of the two Chambers of the Italian Parliament⁴⁴. In the last decade the name and number of newspapers able to collect public contributions often changed; therefore, it is hard to identify which newspapers express which political movement, as well as to quantify the exact amount of money provided by the Italian State to these publications over the years. Table 2 shows the amount of the public contributions received by Parties' Newspapers in 2008.

It is very difficult to trace the amount of public funding obtained by these newspapers over the years, since often political parties have often been dissolved and re-founded under new names, or substituted their own journals with new titles. Table 3 summarizes the refunds paid to the identifiable Parties' Newspapers from 2009 until 2013.

4. THE NEW REGULATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES' FUNDING

The new government, nominated February 22nd, 2014, recently approved a reform which cuts the current structure of public reimbursements to political parties and substitutes it with a new system based on private donations and assignment of a quote of the income tax. The new provision entered into force on February 27th, 2014.

According to the new regulation, from 2017 onwards political parties will count only on assignment of a part of the income taxes and on private donations. Therefore, private citizens can either decide to donate them 0.2 per cent of their income tax, to provide them with liberal donations, or to support political parties on both ways. The new law introduces fiscal deduction of 26% for private donations by both single individuals and legal persons from € 30 to 30,000. In any case, in order to avoid excessive inequalities, single donations by private citizens cannot exceed the maximum limit of € 300,000 a year. The same limit reduces to € 200,000 a year for legal persons. In order to let political parties free in choosing their financial sources without any constraints, the new law consents them to opt among income tax assignment, private donations or both of them. Nevertheless, it is a matter of fact that with the new system it will be mainly up to private citizens and companies to decide if and how much they want to donate to political movements in order to support their activities.

Therefore, the new discipline aims to put an end to Italian political parties' historical dependence on public financial support in the near future, introducing a new system based on flexibility for both citizens (now free to decide if they want to financially support them, and which form of aid they want to offer) and parties (free to choose the form of financial support they prefer to receive). The 0.2 per cent of income taxes not assigned to political parties will be not redistributed among all political movements according to their results at the polls or to other criteria, but will be held by the State and used for other scopes. The new regulation introduces a

Table 3. Public contribution to Parties' Newspapers 2009 – 2012 (€)			
NEWSPAPER	POLITICAL PARTY	2009	
Cronache di Liberal	UDC	2,798,767.84	
Democrazia Cristiana	DC	303,204.78	
Europa	PD	3,527,208.08	
Liberazione	PRC	3,340,443.23	
Terra	I Verdi	2,484,656.16	
La Padania	Lega Nord	3,896,339.15	
Le Peuple Valdôtaine	Union Valdôtaine	306,447.59	
La Rinascita della Sinistra	PdCI	886,615.25 (-807,046.43) *	
Il Secolo d'Italia	PDL	2,952,474.59	
Il Socialista Lab	Nuovo PSI	480,061.60	
L'Unità	PD	6,377,209.80	
Zukunft in Südtirol	SVP	603,675.88	
		27,150,057.52	
Source: Italian Government (http://www.governo.it/DIE/dossier/contributi_editoria_2007/stampa.html)			
* Waived due to untruthful report			

	2010	2011	2012
	2,427,502.73	1,650,094.84	409,452.41
	262,983.74 + 19,398.92	199,864.98	
	2,872,914.08	2,343,678.28	1,183,113.76
	2,897,323.21 + 213,720.19	2,065,775.04	
	416,379.96 + 153,716.20	1,581,514.51	
	3,406,422.86 + 251,273.78	2,682,304.80	2,001,468.43
	265,796.38 + 19,606.39		
	2,433,356.34 + 179,495.82	1,795,148.57	992,804.04
	30,714.15	261,845.56	
	5,267,860.38 + 388,582.17	3,709,854.40	3,615,894.65
	467,617.05 + 34,493.63	335,254.22	183,006.16
	22,009,177.98	16,625,335.20	8,385,739.45

Table 4. Transition from public contribution to private donations (€)	
	2014
Public contribution (L. 96/2012)	91 million
Cuts compensated by private donations	-22.75 million (-25%)
Difference	68.25 million
Source: Italian Parliament	

maximum level for the assignment of 0.002 per cent of the income tax by private citizens: it will rise to € 7.75 million in 2014, 9.6 million in 2015, 27.7 million in 2016 and 45.1 million from 2017 on.

The costs for the public budget due to the fiscal reduction aimed to price private donations, which are estimated to be € 27.4 million in 2015 and € 15.65 million from 2016 on (Grignetti 2013), should be compensated by the gradual abolition of public contributions for electoral campaigns.

The new law introduces severe sanctions for those political parties which present false or incomplete statements on their legal or financial status. The already mentioned Commission for Transparency and Control of Political Parties and Movements Accounts is entitled to verify all statements and documents presented by political parties in order to get access to the new funding system, and can punish both political parties and private donors with monetary sanctions twice the sum of the irregular donations revealed through its controls. Should a political party refuse to pay the due sanction, it will lose its right to obtain tax income assignments for the following three years. Thus, political parties are bound to keep their financial status “clean”, if they want to regularly receive private economic support.

The abolishment of public funding to political parties will not cause an abrupt stop to their public financial support. A three years transition period provides a gradual reduction of 75%, 50% and 25% of the funds allocated for 2013. As showed in table 4, public reimbursements will therefore decrease from € 91 million in 2013 to about 68 in 2014, to 45.5 in 2015 and to 22.75 in 2016. From 2017 on, election campaigns of candidates and lists should be exclusively financed by individuals, encour-

	2015	2016	FROM 2017 ON
	91 million	91 million	91 million
	-45.5 million (-50%)	-68.25 million (-75%)	-91 million (-100%)
	45.5 million	22.75 million	0.00

aged by very relevant fiscal deductions, with no more expenses for the State.

Thus, critical voices recently raised concerns against the new funding system. According to a recent article by Guido Romeo, founding financial support of political parties on liberal donations will cost Italy € 270 million in four years – in terms of both foregone tax revenues which Italian citizens could assign to political parties instead of paying them to the State, and direct contributions priced by fiscal reduction, which would cause a further decrease of tax revenues. To these figures must be added other € 34 million until 2016 for the wage and the activation of solidarity contracts for parties' employees, which risk to lose their job due to the financial instability of political movements resulting from the abolition of direct public reimbursements.

According to the above mentioned inquiry conducted by Guido Romeo for the Italian magazine "Wired" (Romeo 2013), the new parties' funding system will show a deep change within the next three years. As resumed in table 5, direct public contribution should gradually be substituted by the allocation of 0.002 per cent of Income Tax, while tax deductions granted to private donations should proportionally reduce and finally disappear by 2017, since financial aid for political parties should base only on the free allocation of Income Tax in the future. Besides, free private donations – without tax reductions - should integrate the amount of financial resources that political parties will have at their disposal. However, this table simply summarizes how Italian institutions expect the system to evolve over the next years: of course, by now it is a mere hypothesis – and maybe a naïve hope - that Italian taxpayers will devolve such an amount of their

Table 5. Supposed Parties' Funding evolution 2014-2017 (€)

FUNDING SOURCE	2014
Direct public contribution	54,600,000
0.002 per cent of Income Tax	21,400,000
Tax deductions	0

Source: Wired.it

Income Tax to political parties in the next years, not to say of the money they should freely donate to them. Therefore, it is all but guaranteed that the future politics financing system will change as expected.

5. PARTIES FUNDING AND INTERNAL DEMOCRACY

However, the most important novelty of the new law is that in order to take advantage of this new form of financial support, as well as of a more favorable tax regime, political parties from now on must peremptorily satisfy a few very strict requirements, to be able to prove that they will ensure some minimum standards of internal democracy for the future. Firstly, political parties must approve a statute, adopted in the form of public act. The statute must specify the symbol chosen by the party, the address of the party's national office, the number and composition of the party's internal bodies, and explain the procedures of their election. The statute will also report the timing of congressional meetings, as well as the approval procedures of binding acts for the party. In the statute there must also be mentioned the necessary practices to select candidates and the criteria to grant the presence of minorities in the party's bodies with non-executive competences. Once they have approved their statute, parties must also transmit them to the already mentioned Commission for Transparency and Control of Political Parties and Movements Accounts: this is entitled to monitor the compliance of the statutes with the new regulation, assuring the necessary standards of internal democracy, and may request adjustments of the party's founding charta if such elements are

	2015	2016	2017
	45,500,000	36,400,000	0
	9,600,000	27,700,000	45,100,000
	20,900,000	11,900,000	0

not sufficiently provided. Changes must occur not before 30 and no longer than 60 days after they have been requested.

Secondly, if their statute passes the mentioned controls, political parties must be inscribed in an *ad hoc* “national register of political parties”, open only to those political movements observing the organization rules foreseen in the new law. If the party refuses to change its statute according to the requests pointed out by the Commission, this denies the party the allowance to be enrolled in the national register. In case of denial, parties can present appeal to the administrative court. The national register is divided into two parts: the first one includes parties allowed to receive private donations priced by special fiscal reductions, the second one contains political movements entitled to collect 0.002 per cent of the income tax of single individuals.

In order to provide full transparency to the new procedure, the law ensures open access to the whole data contained in the register, which shall be published on a special section of the Italian Parliament Web Page. Parties must also guarantee transparency about their economic conditions, since they are now bound to adopt an Internet page whose contents must result complete, affordable, simple to use and easy to understand for its users. Parties must provide clear information about amount and origin of the private contributions they received. All donors who gave over € 5.000 a year must be recorded in a special register, which must be transmitted every three months to the Chamber of Deputies with the necessary accounting documents. Wrong or incomplete statements can be sanctioned with a fee of twice up to six times of the amount of the irregular contribution, and a temporary disqualification from public offices for the

person in charge for holding the accounting statements of the concerned party. The complete list of contributors of every party must also be published on both the party's and the Parliament's Internet pages.

Thirdly, in order to receive liberal donations or 0.2 per cent of income tax from private citizens, they must have a) at least one candidate elected under its own symbol in the last elections for the national Parliament, the European Parliament or a regional council, or b) have submitted in the same election candidates in at least three constituencies for the renewal of the Chamber of Deputies or in at least three regions for the renewal of the Senate, or in a regional council or autonomous province, or in at least one constituency for the election of Members of the European Parliament.

On the one hand, the system appears to be open to new parties, as long as a parliamentary group, or one part of the so-called "Mixed Group"⁴⁶ in at least one of the two Chambers declares its link to a new political movement. On the other hand, it tends to put at disadvantage already existing political parties which lost the elections and therefore have no representatives in Parliament anymore, since they are not allowed to receive private donations as long as they have no MPs in at least one of the two Chambers. This could lead to the creation of new parliamentary groups, aiming at provide political movements without parliamentary representation with the necessary institutional links for joining the new contributions system.

CONCLUSIONS: DID THE REFORM MISS THE TARGET?

Italian political parties were not provided with a stable legal framework for a very long time. The strictly formal interpretation of art. 49 of the Italian Constitution, as well as the peculiar characters of Italian political structure, lead the Italian Parliament to avoid any discipline of the parties' internal democracy for decades, despite dramatic political crises had suggested to adopt a rigorous regulation of the matter (Biondi 2012, 160).

This normative deficiency made political movements raise and compete for electoral consent without very meaningful boundaries, allowing also so-called anti-party parties to run for elections without significant restrictions. The new regulation of the parties' financing system adopted in 2014 seems to represent a significant change of trend: for the first time in the Italian history, in order to be eligible for financial support, po-

litical parties must assure some basic elements of internal democracy of their organization; besides, they must grant that their budget, contributions and donors are correct and transparent, risking heavy monetary sanctions if they don't respect these severe rules.

The new discipline is still on paper, and its practical effects can be properly evaluated only after a suitable implementation. It is necessary to verify how seriously and effectively the new rules will apply, in cases when political parties should be sanctioned for irregular conduct of their finances. Most of all, it must be proved if and how these sanctions apply in case political parties should violate the above mentioned prescriptions with regard to their internal democracy and their organization structures. However, it is evident that the new law bases its strength on the fact that, in order to obtain financial support from tax payers, political parties will have to respect the above mentioned rules. Unfortunately, the Italian legislator did not seem to consider a nevertheless conceivable option: that a political movement could intentionally refuse to be included in the new funding system, which makes it free from the obligation to respect the strict rules about internal democracy and nevertheless take part into the electoral competition.

This is an at least latent weak point of the new law, since the new combination of private funding and public controls could not produce the expected effects in this case. If a political movement should decide to opt for different forms of financial aid, independent from both assignment of tax income percentages or private donations, it would set itself free from the above mentioned financial sanctions. Since anti-party or simple populist parties are often more likely to look for alternative forms of funding and organization, it would not be surprising to find out that they would not be concerned by the new discipline. To be plain and clear: if the new law aims to impose a strict regulation to all political parties, newcomers like the Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement, which made a point of its electoral strategy in refusing any form of public contribution and in abolishing any form of public financial aid to political parties (Biorcio/Natale, 49), could easily escape the new boundaries and nevertheless still run for elections. The same could happen to populist parties which decide to count only on private donations – what should not be too difficult for movements with a strict link to relevant private capitals - and renounce to the quote of Tax Income granted by the new regulation.

It seems correct to conclude that also in this case the Italian legislator probably missed a very important occasion: the one to link the financial

support to political parties to their mandatory commitment to grant effective democratic conditions also in their internal organization, as i.e. the German Bundestag did in 1967 (Morlok 2009). Yet, until internal democracy will not be considered an imperative requirement for the achievement of the status of political party, regardless of the form of economic support adopted by political movements, the pressure exercised by the new regulation through the new system of financial support risks to be inadequate to the pursued goal. Therefore, If it is the final scope of the new legislation to grant a general fair and correct competition between political parties, this is an aspect which deserves to be adequately considered by the Italian institutions in the future.

NOTES

1. The Italian Constitution mentions political parties in two other occasions: in art. 98, as it declares that “The law may set limitations on the right to become members of political parties in the case of magistrates, career military staff in active service, law enforcement officers, and overseas diplomatic and consular representatives”, and in XII Transitory and final Provision, which affirms the absolute prohibition of reorganizing “under any form” the Fascist Party. It is quite evident that these two articles were very easily accepted by a big majority in the Constitutional Assembly, art. 49 caused a harsh and controversial debate.
2. Art. 1, par. 1 and 3 L. 157/1999.
3. Art. 1, par. 1, 3 and 5 L. 157/1999.
4. In this regard, s. L. 298/2004 (Authentic Interpretation of Art. 1, par. 1, of L. 157/1999) and L. 43/1995, Art. 6, par. 2, regarding reimbursement for election expenses held by political parties or movements for the renewal of the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano.
5. Art. 1, par. 4, L. 157/1999.
6. Art. 1, L. 96/2012.
7. For electoral reimbursements of national elections: Art. 9, L. 515/1993; for regional elections: L. Art. 6, 43/1995; for European elections Art. 16, L. 515/1993.
8. Art. 5, L. 96/2012.
9. Art. 16, L. 515/1993.
10. Art. 6, par. 2, L. 43/1995.
11. Art. 1, par. 4, L. 157/1999.
12. Art. 3, L. 96/2012.
13. Art. 1, par. 6, L. 157/1999.
14. Art. 1, par. 6, L. 157/1999.
15. Art. 6 *bis*, L. 157/1999.
16. Art. 2, L. 96/2012.
17. Art. 7, par. 2, L. 195/1974.
18. Art. 7, par. 2, L. 195/1974.
19. Art. 7, par. 3, L. 195/1974.
20. Art. 4, par. 3 L. 659/1981. The original limit - € 50,000 a year - was reduced by L. 96/2012.
21. Art. 4, par. 6, L. 659/1981.
22. Art. 15, par. 1-bis and Art. 78, L. 917/1986.
23. Art. 10 L. 515/1993.
24. Art. 5, par. 3, L. 43/1995. Some regions issued own provisions on the topic, arising the limit of the sustainable electoral costs for political parties in their territory. This was so far the case in Lazio (L.R. 2/2005, art. 9) and Toscana (L.R. 74/2004, art. 14).
25. Art. 13, 14, L. 96/2012.
26. Art. 7, par. 3, L. 515/1993.
27. Art. 7, par. 1, L. 515/1993.
28. Art. 4, par. 3, L. 659/1981.

29. Art. 12, L. 515/1993.
30. Art. 9, L. 96/2012.
31. On Dec. 3, 2012, the Presidents of the two Chambers ratified the appointments of the Commission set by the three supreme Italian courts (Dec. published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* on Dec. 4, 2012, n. 283). With this act was also identified the President-Coordinator of the Commission.
32. Art. 13, L. 515/1993 imposed the creation of an Electoral Warranty Board, seated by the Court of Appeal of every Italian Region.
33. Art. 2, par. 1, L. 441/1982; Art. 7, par. 6, L. 515/1993.
34. Art. 7, par. 7, L. 515/1993.
35. Art. 4, par. 3, L. 659/1981; Art. 2, par. 2, L. 441/1982.
36. Art. 4, par. 4, L. 659/1981.
37. Art. 14, L. 515/1993.
38. Art. 15, par. 7, L. 515/1993.
39. Art. 5, L. 157/1999.
40. Art. 2, par. 275 L. 244/2007.
41. Art. 5, par. 4, converted into law by L. n. 122/2010.
42. As decreed by L. n. 157/1999, later amended.
43. Art. 6, converted into law by L. 111/2011.
44. Art. 3 par. 10 Law n. 250/1990 and Art. 20, par. 3 ter D.L. n. 223/2006, converted in Law n. 248/2006.
45. L. 21 February 2014, nr. 13, which converted the Decree issued by the Government in December 2014, available at: <http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2014;13> [accessed 1/9/2014].
46. The mixed group hosts the MPs who refuse to join one of the political groups present in the two Chambers of the Italian Parliament.

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The Legal Framework of Party Competition in Germany

Martin Morlok

I. INTRODUCTION

The success of political parties depends to a considerable extent on the legal framework in which they operate. A party democracy might with Schumpeter be conceived as an institutional arrangement in which political parties struggle in a competition for the peoples' vote¹. The law sets the conditions for this competition – and therefore the relative chances of political parties.

Of course, legal regulations are not the only relevant elements which are responsible for the success of a party. The social background of political parties, the societal context in which they operate, the organizational structure of the party and the kind of policies a party stands for and, not to forget, the leading persons are also important for the success of a party.

The main elements of the legal framework are the election law, the law regulating the financing of the parties and the party law in a narrower meaning. All these legal fields function as competition law: making up the terms of party competition. According to this I will show you some basic features of the German election law (2.), the law of political financing (3.) and the party law which regulates the parties' internal organization (4.). I will finish with a short resume.

2. ELECTION LAW

The election law as a whole consists of different parts which mold the chances of the different political parties. Especially important is whether a majority or a proportional voting system is implemented (2.1). The pre-conditions for being admitted to public election do also matter (2.2). In

the case of majority vote gerrymandering is a problem and the threshold is another in a proportional voting system.

2.1 *The German voting system*

At first glance the German voting system is a mixed one, it looks like a combination of majority vote² and proportional vote. Appearances are deceiving. In its political content the German voting system is a proportional system, in which the parties acquire exactly the number of seats in parliament which corresponds to their proportion of votes. Of course, a German citizen has two votes, but only the second vote is decisive for the composition of parliament, while the first vote is only important for the person of the candidates in the constituency and does not (anymore) influence the composition of the *Bundestag*. Therefore the design of the electoral district is of no importance.

In a proportional voting system a fast success is possible for a new party. It shows that public attention at a certain time may promote a new party. This expectation of electoral success can motivate the members and supporters of a new political movement and can enforce its organizational development. In this respect the legal situation in Germany is favorable for new parties.

2.2 *Admission to public elections*

A party can only take part with its own candidates at public elections if it has got a permission to do so. The preconditions for being admitted are firstly to be a party; this is not very pretentious, it only means to have a fairly established organization and a political program. Secondly, parties which are not yet represented in the *Bundestag* or in the parliament of a Land have to collect the signatures of at least 200 supporters in a voting district or for taking part with a party list 1 in a thousand of the number of citizens entitled to vote; the maximum required number is 2.000 signatures. This is to make sure that only serious proposals are presented to the voters. It is not quite easy to collect these signatures, but it can be achieved by a party which has chances of some kind of voting success. At the last federal elections 30 parties took part with own lists of candidates.

Perhaps another precondition for being admitted to the general elections is more interesting: All candidates a party presents must be dem-

ocratically elected in a local or regional party convention. Therefore the leader or the board of the party have no power of candidate selection. This is the most efficient means of guaranteeing internal democracy.

Parties which are denied access to public elections can go to court, remarkably directly to the Bundesverfassungsgericht. This was made possible by an amendment of the *Grundgesetz* in 2012 (Art. 93 I Nr. 4c GG).

2.3 Threshold of 5 %

An important obstacle for a new party is the threshold of 5 %: A party which has not collected at least 5 % of the votes does not get any seat in parliament. This holds true for the *Bundestag* and the parliament of the *Länder*, but not for the community councils. After the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* had banned the 5%-threshold for the elections to the European Parliament³, the *Bundestag* has reintroduced a threshold, now of 3 %. This threshold again was declared unconstitutional by the *Bundesverfassungsgericht*⁴.

The hurdle of 5 % severely restricts the chances of small and new parties, because the possible failure of a party might be anticipated by voters and therefore a party which is in danger of not overcoming the threshold might lose potential voters.

There are different aspects of this problem of a threshold, just to name one: In the last election to the *Bundestag* more than 15 % of the votes had no effect on the composition of the *Bundestag*. So we could call it a representation deficit – which is the price for political stability. Related to this problem is another unfair effect: The votes for these parties enlarge the number of mandates for the parties which succeed to enter the parliament. Thus the threshold destroys the representative composition of the parliament.

But you also have to take into consideration that Germany is federally organized. Therefore a new party may have success in one of the *Länder*, which is much easier than to overcome the 5 %-threshold in the whole republic. Especially in the big cities of Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen, which are States (*Länder*) on their own, new parties, also anti-party parties had fast successes; there you don't need an organization which is expanded around the country.

3. POLITICAL FINANCING

Party activities need a financial basis. The German Party Law distinguishes between two components of resources of political parties: their own means and state subsidies.

3.1 *The parties' own money*

Not only state subsidies but also the parties' own money is regulated by the Party Law. Donations larger than 10.000 EURO a year have to be disclosed and the parties have to render account of their takings, of their expenses and their assets, Art. 21 I 4 GG⁵. Contrary to other countries there are no spending limits for election campaigns.

Regarding their own money all parties are treated equally and I can't see any difference which results from these regulations for bigger or smaller, for old or new parties.

3.2 *Public party financing*

- a. German parties receive money from the State⁶. There are two forms of direct state financing: They get money for votes and also for the money they collect on their own, this means membership fees and donations, therefore for their allowances.

For every vote a party receives 0,70 EURO. This holds true for the elections to the *Bundestag*, to the parliament of a *Land* and to the European Parliament.

The law appreciates the allowances of a party by giving 0,38 EURO for each EURO a party receives from members or donators, up to a limit of 3.300 EURO per person. Donations from organizations are not augmented in this way.

- b. The German public law for political parties makes sure that political parties depend on own means. Therefore state funding for both the voting compensation and the compensation for allowances are kept in unless the party has not the same amount of own money. That means that 50 % of the money of a party must come from fees or donations. The ratio behind this is that parties feel a stimulus to care for their own money and not to rely only on state subsidies. Thus parties are kept dependent on civil society. This corresponds with their legal status as private associations.

To qualify for these state subsidies, a party must receive at least 0.5 % in a federal election or a European election or 1 % in the election to a state parliament.

These prerequisites again shall make sure that only serious political organizations receive money and not such that are only founded to receive state money. These regulations guarantee equal opportunities for small and new parties as long as they have a minimum success at the polls. However, some new parties do have problems with the 50 %-limit.

A (new) party may have electoral success and therefore be entitled for the votes-subsidies, but may have no comparable success in raising own money. In this case the state subsidies are reduced to a 50 %-limit.

- c. Regarding the new party “*Alternative für Deutschland*” (AfD) I have to report a technical detail. German parties do only receive state money if they have given a statement of accounts to the President of the Bundestag. This is the basis for the contribution of state money in the following year. The newly founded AfD could not render a statement of account for the year 2013, because it has been founded only in that year. Therefore, according to the rules of the law this party could not receive any public funds for the year 2013 despite its quite substantial voting success.

Apparently this is not in accordance with the idea behind the legal norm. *Materialiter* a party deserves money for votes, *formaliter* there is a need for the statement of accounts of the year before. But this requirement is not an end in itself. This precondition is only to secure a reliable fundament for the calculation of the state subsidies. The lawyers and the administration of the *Bundestag* shared this view and therefore the new party AfD seems to be entitled to get state subsidies for the year 2013.

Looking at the system of public subsidies, small and new parties indeed enjoy equal opportunities. Even more, the money for votes helps newly founded parties with a minimum of success at the polls to develop their organization. This can be considered as being helpful in taking off. A critical eye of a needle is the criteria of 50 % of own money.

3.3 *Public financing of representatives and parties in parliament*

The State subsidies for political parties are not the only way of financing the political process. There is a comparatively comfortable public financing of the members of parliament and of their associations as the parties in parliament. Members of the *Bundestag* get money for assistance both in Parliament and in their constituency, and the organization of the party in parliament also receives money for the organization and also for staff. In fact, more people work for the parties in parliament than for the party organization itself.

Of course, there are good reasons to take care that Parliament and the representatives can function effectively. But on the other hand these financial means are concentrated in the hand of the parties which overcame the 5 %-threshold. Smaller parties and necessarily new parties cannot enjoy these resources. So this is a substantial disadvantage for small and for new parties. The only remedy against this bias in equal opportunities is a strict control of the purposes these means are spent for. They must not be used for party activities, especially not for campaigning.

3.4 *Party foundations and youth organizations of the parties*

The whole field of political financing comprises also two other practices of giving money to party-affiliated organizations. I speak of the foundations the bigger parties in Germany have and of the youth organizations. Both types of satellite organizations receive state money. As for the foundations a party must have achieved twice the voting results at the *Bundestag* elections beyond 5 %. These foundations have different tasks: among others they serve as think-tanks for the party and one and the other job might be financed by the foundation and not by the party – thus saving the party's resources.

The role of the youth organizations is evident, they recruit and train young members for a party.

In both respects new parties do not participate in these public funding. Probably it is inevitable that new parties are handicapped compared with the old and well-established parties. All beginnings are difficult; however, the degree of these disadvantages is disputable.

4. PARTY ORGANIZATION LAW

Aside from rules for the public funding of political parties the German Party Law includes norms for the regulation of the organization and the decision-making of the parties. The aim of these regulations is to preserve internal democracy. At this point I have to make clear: It is very easy to found a party, there are no significant legal difficulties to do so – but a party must have a democratic structure and democratic processing rules. There are several provisions to guarantee the democratic character of the internal party life:

- A party must have a written statute⁷ and a written program. This enables the members to insist on the rules and procedures laid down in advance. It is a device against arbitrariness by the powerful.
- The organization must be sufficiently differentiated⁸ in order to give members a real chance of influencing the decision-making process. Party units should not be too big.
- The head of the party must consist at least of three persons. This shall prevent a monocratic type of party. The board of a party has to be re-elected at least every two years⁹.
- The law demands a secrecy of the elections for important positions in the party¹⁰.
- Equal rights for all members are guaranteed¹¹.
- Nobody can be excluded from a party without a proper procedure and this decision is reserved for an interior party court¹². Moreover, the reasons for excluding a member are restricted by the law¹³.

These norms prevent the type of a personalized party, which sometimes and somewhere is the form in which new parties come around. These provisions also have the effect that the structures of German parties resemble each other. As the party law was formulated in 1967 there are only weak elements of direct democracy in the legal regulations of the parties.

Taking it all together the norms for the interior life of a party do not really constitute a bias against small or new parties with the one qualification that party life in Germany demands organizational expenditure. Therefore it is not favorable for movements with a charismatic leader.

5. SUMMARY

Inevitably established parties have advantages. Legal preconditions for public subsidies and rules for the organizational decision-making of the parties must be mastered. Experience and routine are helpful in these respects. They are accumulated with the ageing of a party. But in my eyes there are no unfair legal handicaps for smaller and new parties. On the contrary, the state funding even for parties with a relatively small success in elections brings about substantial financial means and thus helps to develop the organization and motivates the supporters. Thus, my result for Germany is: The success of a new party does not really depend on the legal framework – and that's the way it should be: The voters' decision should make a difference.

NOTES

1. J. A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, Chapter 13, 1., firstly published 1942.
2. §§ 1 II, 4 Bundeswahlgesetz (Federal Election Law).
3. BVerfGE 129, 300 ff.
4. Bundesverfassungsgericht, decision 26.02.2014.
5. For details see §§ 23 ff. German Party Law.
6. For details see §§ 18 ff. German Party Law.
7. § 6 German Party Law.
8. § 7 German Party Law.
9. § 11 I German Party Law.
10. § 15 II German Party Law.
11. § 10 II 1 German Party Law.
12. § 10 V German Party Law.
13. § 10 IV German Party Law.

PROGRAMS, STRATEGIES AND GOALS OF ANTI-PARTY PARTIES

Programs, Strategies and Electoral Campaigns of the Five Stars Movement in Italy. A brand new Party Model or an “Anti-Party” State of Mind?

Andrea De Petris

INTRODUCTION

The absolutely unexpected performance of the Five Stars Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle - M5S) was by far the most remarkable event of the 2013 Italian national elections¹. Surprised by this astonishing result, media, politicians, political and legal scholars suddenly concentrated their attention on the newcomer within the Italian party system, debating on the reasons for this electoral triumph. Many analyses concentrated on the peculiar character of the party, which systematically attempts to emphasize its alleged differences from all other political movements². The intention of the M5S, founded by the extremely popular ex-comedian Beppe Grillo in 2009, seems to question the historical structure of the Italian party system under all perspectives: founding documents, programs, communications strategies, political goals. The crisis of the conventional political representation convinced many Italians to consider Grillo's theoretic approach as the only way to enact valid political purposes, pursuing a radical alternative to traditional parties. Therefore, the M5S seems to have established a brand new “Party form” in the Italian political landscape, made of different communication strategies, innovative statutory documents, original selection procedures of party's candidates, alternative ideas to be achieved by the party's representatives in local, regional and national assemblies.

In its first five parts, this contribute intends to summarize a description of all these atypical tactics and plans adopted by Grillo's movement, with the aim to underscore its eventual effective differences from the “usual” strategies adopted by most of the other Italian parties. Even if, on the one hand, the time seems still too short to evaluate if these strategies will bring any effective results in the next future and the Five

Stars Movement will gain a stable position in the Italian party system for the years to come, on the other hand, the growth of the M5S with its pioneering methods rises the question if we are facing a brand new form of political movement, which does not fit in the traditional party classifications, or if we are dealing with a different sort of political phenomenon. Therefore, in its final part this article tries to verify if the M5S can be considered a prototype of a brand new kind of political party, that we could call “Anti-Party Party”, or if its innovative nature is rather made of novel attitudes and strategies, implanted in an already existing type of political movement.

1. A PERSONIFIED (AND MAYBE BLOGIFIED) PARTY

If there is an element that can be assumed as the main character of the M5S, from its origins on, it is that it has been built, developed and directed by Beppe Grillo as a “personal movement”, with a very deep relationship between the Italian (former) comedian and its political creation. Nevertheless, this relationship evolved in a very different way from the usual “personal parties”, whose leaders mostly build a movement modeled after their own image and ideals, and whose members tend to act as simple acritical followers.

On the one hand, in fact, Grillo and his supporters developed a link of mutual interdependence, since his choices have been often influenced by the positions and requests of the M5S’ members, or by the expectations of the participants to the party’s initiatives. On the other hand, the communication forms adopted by the M5S, mainly based on the messages posted on the Grillo’s extremely popular Blog³, often conditions the agenda of the movement and shapes specific goals and initiatives pursued by the supporters at both local and national level. The mutual influence between the Internet page and the party is so strong that the party statute mentions the Blog (a virtual space) as the official “headquarter” of the movement (a physical, material association)⁴.

As unique owner of the Blog, Grillo maintains a firm control on the activities of party members and supporters; this allows him to keep a position of undisputed primacy, if compared with the roles held by the rest of the movement⁵. Nevertheless, two analysts of the M5S observed that this kind of relationship leaves many problems of the so-called “institutionalization of charisma” phenomenon unresolved, meaning a party’s

organization where links among leaders, management and supporters tend to be more functional, avoiding risks of anarchy and authoritarianism⁶. Besides, a recent study denounced omissions, irregularities and abuses allegedly made on the Blog by Grillo and the other co-founder of the M5S, Gianroberto Casaleggio, in order to keep the movement under their firm and absolute control, and to establish a sort of “digital dictatorship” within the party⁷. Matter of fact is that, so far, no official information has been provided by the M5S leadership about the existence of external third subjects entitled to verify the regular operating of the Blog.

2. A “NON-ASSOCIATION” WITH A “NON-STATUTE”

One of the peculiar characters of the M5S is its systematic refuse to adopt definitions and lexicon in use by traditional parties. Therefore, the movement presents itself in front of the public opinion as a “Non-Association” based on a “Non-Statute” (Constitution Charter), claims not to be a political party and refuses to adopt “normal” founding documents. Besides – as already mentioned - the movement does not have a system of local venues, nor a material organization structure on the national level. However, the decision of Grillo and the other co-founders of the movement to call its basic charter “Non-Statute” is already a clear sign of their wish to underline a radical diversity between the M5S and the rest of the Italian political parties.

The differences between the “Non-Statute” and correspondent documents of other parties do not concern only its name, but also its structure. Just to give a few examples, the Silvio Berlusconi’s *Popolo della Libertà* (PdL), which on November 16th, 2013 readopted its original name *Forza Italia* (FI), has a statute⁹ made of 52 articles divided in 7 sections plus final provisions, and amounts to 8,064 words; the *Partito Democratico* (PD) statute¹⁰ counts 47 articles distributed in 9 sections, for a total of 11,944 words; the *Nuovo Centro Destra* (NCD), which split from the PdL in 2013, approved its statute¹¹ on April 13th, 2014: the document counts 31 articles and 6,921 words. The M5S “Non-Statute”, instead, counts only 7 articles and 597 words, what makes it by far the shortest political party Charter in Italian history.

In its first article, the “Non-Statute” declares the special nature of the movement, which is officially defined as a “Non-Association”. In order to clarify what this should mean, the article explains that the M5S should

be considered as a “vehicle of discussion and consultation” originated on the already mentioned Grillo’s Blog www.beppegrillo.it. Therefore, according to this definition, the Five Stars Movement sees itself as an instrument for the diffusion of topics and matters contained in Grillo’s Blog among the public opinion, rather than as a typical political movement, whose goals and strategies usually consist in gaining people’s support and political representation in the public institutions. Art. 1 of the “Non-Statute” shows a further relevant difference with other political parties, when it states that the location of the M5S corresponds to the web address www.beppegrillo.it: this transforms what used to be a physical place for traditional movements to a virtual site available only on the World Wide Web. In order to further clarify the exclusively virtual dimension of the movement, Art. 1 ends with the indication of a specific E-mail (movimento5stelle@beppegrillo.it) as the only officially recognized instrument for communications with the party: no telephone numbers or postal addresses are provided. It is quite evident that such an approach aims to confer the M5S a completely different status from all other political movements in Italy, as well as to categorically refuse all those typical tools and operating modes usually adopted by its competitors. At the same time, Art. 1 makes clear that it is not possible to find the M5S anywhere in real space: local, regional or national venues do not exist, “material” traditional meetings or interviews with party’s staff, directive boards, presidents or similar cannot take place. According to Art. 1, the only place where the communication with the party is possible is the Internet – a fact that deeply changes the perception of the movement by citizens and media.

Art. 2, which deals with party’s temporal expectations, specifies that, being “a non-association”, the movement does not have a predetermined duration.

Art. 3 continues to emphasize the uniqueness of the movement as it affirms that the name of the “5 Stars Movement” results to be connected to a trademark registered on behalf of Beppe Grillo, who is therefore “the sole owner of the right to use” it. In other words, the only person legally entitled to use the name of the party, formally handled as a commercial brand, is Beppe Grillo: without his consent, nobody else – not even party’s members, staff or representatives in public institutions – is allowed to make any use of it. The party’s name ends therefore to be regarded as a commercial brand, and is officially assimilated to a private company, whose only owner is a single physical person. It seems easy to predict that such a concept for a party’s name risks to arise heavy conflicts with the public func-

tion that a political movement is expected to perform when it is created.

Art. 4 declares the M5S's "scope and goal". In its first part, the article recalls the already mentioned Blog www.beppegrillo.it as the privileged platform whose services will serve as basis for the party's activities. Besides, the experiences gathered by so-called "Meetup" groups¹², public actions and demonstrations promoted by the Blog, as well as by the so-called "Certified Civic Lists"¹³, should also inspire the Five Stars Movement in its future political efforts. All these knowledge, practices, involvements and skills represent the starting point for the selection of individuals aiming not only at running as party's candidates for local, regional, national and European elections, but also at supporting and promoting party's campaigns. Therefore, there is a clear intention to establish a tight connection between "virtual" goals and initiatives endorsed in Grillo's Blog on the one hand, and "real" actions and programs implemented by the M5S on the other hand. The key tool for this effort, as declared in Art. 4, is the Internet, which is recognized as the central instrument "in the process of consultation, deliberation, decision and choice for the movement itself". According to the "Non-Statute", the Web is therefore the special background where the virtual connects with the material dimension of the movement, featuring it as a unique pattern in the Italian political landscape.

Should this not be a sufficient attempt to make of the M5S an extraordinary example of political movement, Art. 4 goes on affirming that it "is not a political party nor does it have the goal of becoming one in the future": a nearly dogmatic declaration, which surely risks to result puzzling to the most. Indeed, it is not very understandable how an organization evidently created in order to gain political consent, to select candidates and to run for elections should refuse to exist as a political party. The explanation is given in the remaining part of Art. 4, where it is clarified that the effective goal pursued by the M5S is to create suitable conditions for an effective exchange of ideas and for a valuable democratic debate, beyond the traditional political parties' boundaries and without the usual intervention of representative organs. Once again, it is declared that the Internet should serve as the necessary tool for allowing not only people to achieve new forms of direct communication, but also to grant "the total amount of Internet surfers" opportunities usually available only to minorities.

Here there is a change of dimension for the sort of public the movement is appealing to: instead of referring to citizens, voters or people, as

the traditional parties use to do in their official documents as well as in their political discourse, the M5S aims in the first instance to attract “the Internet surfers”. The reason for this change of dimension is clear: if the M5S is not a party, but a sort of implementation instrument for ideas firstly promoted on the Internet, it does not make sense to refer to categories of subjects which are not immediately involved in the virtual space, where the M5S communication and operative strategies are supposed to operate at their best. However, the final goal of this apparently revolutionary approach is, again, to stress the inherent difference which should distinguish the M5S from all its political competitors: a leitmotif which systematically recurs in all official documents, as well as in the communication strategies pursued by the movement.

Art. 5 explains how to become a member of the Five Stars Movement. The article asserts that, in order to join it, the only step to take is the simple registration on Grillo’s Website: no purchase of membership cards, enrollment in party lists or similar practices are requested. To inscribe in the M5S you simply need to be an adult Italian citizen who, at the time of his/her application for the membership, is not already member of political parties or associations whose goals conflict with the purposes pursued by the M5S. Since the movement does not dispose a set of offices on the territory, the requesting member must forward the application through the Internet and certify in it that he/she meets the requirements requested in Art. 5.1. Should an admitted member no longer meet the requested requirements, the organization of the movement, or the member itself, can cancel his/her membership.

It is evident the intention of the movement to present itself as a “light-structured” and transparent organization: no papers, no material registration, no membership fees to pay. You only need to fill in and send an on-line form, where every aspiring member must assure to respect the necessary conditions for the application. However, the transparency emphasized in the application procedure suddenly shrinks, when it comes to the verification of the declarations given by the potential party members: a certain “organization” - not better identified by the “Non-Statute” - is entitled to control that the associates actually hold the necessary characteristics and, if they don’t, the rather mysterious organ can decide to expel them from the party. The M5S founding Charter does not contain any further indication about possible remedies against eventual controversial expulsions from the movement, neither provides expelled members with any form of appeal aimed to verify the correctness of their

exclusion: a lack of internal democracy which undeniably harms the “fair house of glass” image that the movement wants to transmit to the public opinion.

Art. 6 declares that the membership in the movement is completely free of charge, and that no payments or fees are due to enter the party - a further element that aims to distinguish the M5S from all other Italian political parties. The same article continues explaining that individual initiatives, projects or events related to the M5S can be promoted through the Grillo’s Blog, and that the financial resources necessary to support them can be collected through fund raising campaigns conducted on voluntary basis. This plain refusal of compulsory fees and contributions from its members can result especially appealing to the Italian public opinion, giving them the impression of a movement not interested in money: a particularly delicate matter in Italy, where money scandals involving politicians have been everyday affairs for decades¹⁴.

The “Non-Statute” concludes with the procedures for appointing candidates at local, regional, and national elections. Art. 7 represents an at least partial change in the self-description adopted by the M5S in the rest of its basic charter: while the other six articles refer to a movement existing and operating exclusively in virtual space, the methods chosen to select electoral candidates of the Five Stars must necessarily refer - at least in part - also to a “material” dimension. The movement presents itself as “repository of prospective candidate applications”, meaning that it aims to operate as the central “collection place” where the candidatures can be submitted and evaluated; accepted candidates will be afterwards trained to run for elections under the name of the M5S.

This is the reason why every single candidate must firstly be registered as private person on Grillo’s Blog; then, he/she has to obtain an *ad hoc* permission from the movement, which entitles him/her to run in the corresponding election using name and trademark of the Five Stars Movement. Art. 7 clarifies which special requirements a willing candidate must have: holding the Italian citizenship, respecting the age requirements requested by law for the specific election he/she wants to run for¹⁵, having no criminal records as well as no ongoing personal lawsuits “no matter the nature of the offense alleged to them”. This provision represents another clear intent to stress the alleged difference between the M5S candidates and their competitors: while the first must demonstrate to be free from any previous conviction in order to run for a seat in an elective public assembly, other political movements often tend to distinguish among

different sort of offences, in order to justify the presence of already convicted candidates in their lists. The evident goal of this choice is to demonstrate that the M5S is extremely careful in the selection of possible candidates, and that it radically rejects any potential representative with criminal records, no matter how serious the committed crime is.

Art. 7 continues explaining that, for every single election, the candidates' CV will be made public through a special Internet site created within Grillo's Blog, which will serve also as virtual platform for the publication of all applications: these should therefore result "open, transparent, and unmediated" for the public. Another indication that the M5S intends to be a sort of work-in-progress, rather than a normal political organization, evolves from the final sentence of Art. 7: it clarifies that the selection procedures for candidates are likely to change over time, if the gathered experiences in the first elections should suggest to do so. In other words, the movement admits that the procedures chosen for the candidates' selection could result inappropriate to the scope in the future, and leaves the door open to possible forthcoming adjustments.

3. THE "CERTIFIED LISTS"

The M5S tries to consolidate its image of a "self-made" and transparent political movement spreading an official invitation to its supporters to create a "certified list". As previously mentioned, these are candidates lists that private Italian citizens are expressly encouraged to establish, in order to run for local elections under name and symbol of the Five Stars Movement. The procedure for the creation of such a list is explained in details in a special page of Grillo's Blog entitled "create your own list"¹⁶: this page summarizes all official documents to be presented to the competent local public authorities, and recalls every single step (collection of citizens' signatures in support of the list, time schedule for the presentation of the documents, further obligations to be respected by lists' promoters, etc.) to be followed for the creation of the list. Besides these formal legal requirements, it is however mandatory for the list to gain the official "certification" by the M5S. In order to receive this permission, the potential candidates must comply with a strict series of prerequisites, listed in another specific page of the Blog¹⁷:

- a) At the moment of the candidature, every candidate must not be member of other parties or political movements;

- b) Every candidate must not have been convicted for criminal offenses, not even by a Court of First Instance;
- c) At the moment of the presentation of the list, every candidate must not have already been member of a local, regional or national Parliament more than once;
- d) Every candidate must be a permanent resident in the territory of the town where the list shall be presented.

In large part, the requirements for the candidates of the “certified lists” match the obligations requested in Art. 7 of the “Non-Statute”. Some of them, like the permanent residence of the candidate in the town where the election is held, are due prerequisites that every candidate must necessarily fulfil according to the current legislation, while other requirements are expressly demanded by the M5S. It is however interesting to note that the lack of any possible criminal records, originally required in Art. 7 of the “Non-Statute” as absolutely mandatory for willing candidates, has later been partially mitigated in the instructions for the certified lists. The general absence of convictions has been substituted with a lack of convictions for criminal offences, implicitly admitting candidates previously condemned for civil offences. This partial mitigation of a matter like the criminal records of M5S candidates, which has been a sort of trade mark of the movement since its creation in 2009, can be explained with the fact that in Italy local representatives are likely to risk civil convictions for political measures they passed in their mandates, due to the complex regulation of public administration. Keeping the original harsher conditions in force could have meant for the M5S elected candidates to risk the resignation for controversial political measures they approved during their office.

The requirement of having served as member of an elective public assembly for no more than one mandate in the past seems consistent with the M5S’s “mission”: to candidate honest and disinterested representatives, not fascinated by gaining and keeping power indefinitely. This approach is confirmed by further rules, which prohibits M5S’s candidates to hold more than two mandates in their political career, no matter if at local or national level: this should grant a systematic change among the representatives in the public institutions. Besides, every elected candidate commits to leave his/her seat, if it is later demonstrated that he/she does not meet the mentioned requirements for reasons already existing before the elections, or that occurred during the legislature. Should the elected candidate refuse to resign, his/her list would immediately loose

its right to be qualified as a “certified list”, and to use Grillo’s Blog for advertising its political initiatives and activities¹⁸.

As long as all requirements are met, the Five Stars Movement will publish on a specific space of the Blog all references of the certified list, including the names of all candidates, their CVs and political program, and will create a dedicated page for public discussions. All original documents must be sent exclusively per post to an indicated P.O. Box, while an excel file with the references of all candidates of the list must be sent per e-mail to the electronic mailbox *listeciviche@beppegrillo.it*. Once again, on the one hand the M5S tries to prove itself extremely flexible and informal in selecting its own candidates; on the other hand, it provides no indication on how to deal with possible disputes on denied certification of aspiring M5S’s lists, or with refusal of potential candidates. In these cases, Grillo’s movement ends up to be “judge in its own cause”, refusing to let prove the correctness of its own decisions by external bodies: this is a quite typical method in all Italian political parties, but it ends up reducing the alleged differences between them and the M5S in terms of lack of internal democracy and transparency.

Grillo’s movement tried to distinguish from other political parties also with regard to the selection procedures of candidates for national elections. Instead of letting the national leadership have the absolute power to decide who should be inserted in the candidate lists, like nearly all other Italian parties use to do, the Five-Stars Movement opted for a combination of direct democracy and new technologies. Between December 3. and 6., 2012, all already registered members of the movement had the opportunity to participate in the so-called “on-line primary elections” for the Italian parliament (*Parlamentarie*), in order to select the M5S candidates entitled to run for the national elections of following February 2013¹⁹.

Once again, the clear intent of the initiative was to demonstrate the openness of the movement to an effective democratic attitude, rather than to keep the traditional hierarchical approach of other political forces. Nevertheless, the on-line consultation, open only to members registered by September 30., 2012, saw a quite low level of participation: according to the media, only 31,667 registered members used their right to express up to three preferences for the running candidates, causing strong criticisms and accuses of a clear failure of the initiative even among supporters of the movement, due to alleged lack of transparency and doubts on the effectiveness of the procedure²⁰. As some scholars correctly pointed out, it seemed ex-

tremely contradictory for a movement which aims to present itself as transparent and grassroots democratic, to end up basing the candidates' selection exclusively on the Internet, in a country where the digital divide is still a very relevant phenomenon²¹. Besides, no official evidence on the results of the on-line consultation have been provided by the party leadership afterwards, forcing the candidates to merely accept the available data as correct *per se*, even if they would question their exactness²².

4. PARTY PROGRAM

One of the main characters of the M5S political program is its attitude to be a document “under permanent construction”. Rather than to exist as a stable ideological manifesto, established by the party's leaders and approved by the party's national assembly, the program aims to represent an “open platform” able to welcome all proposals and suggestions submitted by members and citizens by the time. Such a “fluid” approach has been clearly favored by the informal and local-oriented structure adopted by the Five-Stars-Movement as its political trademark²³, but will be probably hard to be maintained after its already mentioned extraordinary performance in the national elections of February 2013.

Despite of its potentially shifting nature, the M5S program shows at least five fixed points, based on the already mentioned “Florence Charter” (*Carta di Firenze*), which its supporters adopted in 2009 in order to provide basic guidelines for their local lists, symbolically represented in the five stars of the party name: Water, Environment, Transports, Development and Energy. Therefore, rather than a formal program, these topics represent a general framework for the future program of the movement, to be filled with specific and punctual proposals that members, supporters and citizens are invited to submit through a sort of “open process”. This results in a document which can be therefore quickly adjusted for forthcoming political challenges.

In other words, the program represents an operating method, rather than a formal document, aimed to provide local supporters with the chance for a constant adjustment, amendment or expansion of the M5S basic charter. If this risks to make the program too eclectic and heterogeneous, the systematic use of the Internet communication tools – mainly based on Grillo's Blog – try to assure a generally homogeneous and consistent outcome.

The current version of the program²⁴ is divided in seven chapters (State and Citizens, Energy, Information, Economy, Transports, Health Care, Education) of different length. The first chapter (State and Citizens) complains about the inefficiency and high costs of the public administration and the alleged loss of accountability of a Parliament that “does not represent the citizens any more”. The suggested remedies go from a strict abolition of public funds and electoral reimbursements for political parties, to a maximal limit of two legislatures for every MP, to a systematic use of direct democracy, abolishing the currently mandatory request of a participation quorum for the legitimacy of nationwide referendums. Since political corruption was one of the historical topics that lead to the foundation of the party, it is not surprising that many provisions of the program deal with proposals aimed at increasing the ethics of political life, wishing an automatic exclusion of already convicted citizens from public representative institutions. Besides, the party’s pledge for absolute transparency of public institutions appears consistent not only with its claim for the broadcasting in live streaming of national Parliament meetings, regional and local public assemblies, but also with its allegation that an appropriate use of the web would improve the chances for private citizens to virtually participate.

The second chapter deals with energy matters, mainly concentrating on a deep review of energy politics. The program demands i.e. a firm respect of the European provisions on energy savings buildings, with the intent to increase the energy efficiency of future private and public constructions. Moreover, the party claims for a structural change from fossil to renewable energy sources, in order to warrant a stable availability of energy also for the next generations, as well as to reduce the environmental and climate impact that an excessive use of fossil energy sources would cause. Grillo’s movement suggests also a radical change in waste politics, since Italy has been repeatedly condemned by European institutions for violations of EU provisions. The program suggests the adoption of the “Zero Waste” approach, which should substitute the usual remedy adopted by Italian institutions (dropping garbage in landfills) with innovative and more efficient measures based on recycling, reuse and reduction of waste.

Another important matter regards the realization of big public works, like the construction of the *Treno ad Alta Velocità* (TAV), a new high-speed railway between Turin and Lyon: the opposition of the concerned areas in north-western Italy has been strongly supported by M5S, which

alleged that the impact of the railway on the environment and the extremely expensive investments would not be worth the effort²⁵. A similar context regards the regulation of public water, which has recently become a very controversial matter in Italy. Although two referendums took place in Italy on June 12th and 13th, 2011, with over 25 million votes in favor of keeping water a public good, there have been several attempts to allow private companies to take control of water resources in recent years²⁶. This explains why the question is still extremely delicate, and why Grillo's movement is very committed in the fight for maintaining Italian water resources under public control - as its program fiercely declares.

The third chapter deals with information, described as "one of the foundations of democracy", whose transparency and efficiency must be defended at all costs since "the unaware or wrongly informed citizen is not able to decide, is not able to choose". Therefore, M5S claims for a radical openness of the media to an effective pluralism, for a strong fight against public and private information monopolies and oligopolies, for the abolition of public funds for daily newspapers, as well as for pluralistic shareholders of information corporations. Besides, Grillo's movement demands a complete coverage of the whole Italian territory with Internet broadband – what is very consistent with its interactive communication method with members and supporters, relied much more on the Web than on traditional media²⁷. The section is completed by proposals aiming at bringing back the Italian telecommunication network under complete public control, at matching the tariffs for private customers with the cheaper European standards, and at abolishing fixed costs for connection to the telecommunication network.

The fourth chapter regards economic matters, and is an extremely varied part. It requests a stronger regulation of the stock exchange market, the enforcement of the banks' accountability for financial products they sell to private investors, and the cut of public debt through the introduction of (not better explained) new technologies, which should allow "direct access of the citizens to information and services without brokers or advisors". The party also intends to abolish stock options and alleged *de-facto* corporate monopolies (like Telecom Italia, Highways Network, Railways, Italian Hydrocarbons Company – ENI), by supporting local productions and non-profit companies, as well as to introduce a general minimum unemployment wage.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to transports – a topic which understandably represents a very relevant matter for a party which has been

defined a “new environmentalist” movement²⁸. Indeed, the M5S’s proposals aim at introducing a sort of revolution for Italian standards, reducing the use of private automobiles, enforcing public transportations, supporting bicycles and sustainable mobility in urban areas. The State should make systematic investments in the railway network and in public transportation, in order to provide an adequate service to Italian commuters.

The program contains also proposals for a “green urban movement”, like the introduction of a car sharing system of electric automobiles, in order to reduce CO₂ emissions in cities. Besides, as already indicated, Grillo’s movement aims at improving the quality of Internet connections through public investments in the broadband – which still lacks in several parts of the Italian territory. This should allow introducing also in Italy forms of “teleworking”, meaning the opportunity to operate from home for many employees, who would have no more need to physically show up on their work place every day. In the intentions of the Five-Stars Movement, this should reduce the amount of everyday commuters, and therefore avoid the terrific scenes which the Italian car drivers and users of public transports are used to during rush hour. Besides, as already mentioned, the party is deeply committed in the opposition against extremely expensive gigantic public construction projects with a high impact on territory and environment, like the High Speed Railway between Turin and Lyon, and the very controversial project regarding the bridge over the Straits of Messina, between Calabria and Sicily.

The sixth chapter deals with health care measures. After the devolution of health care competences from central State to the Italian regions in 2001, this has become a very delicate topic in Italy. In fact, this change had a very heavy impact on public finances, since some regions resulted completely inefficient in providing health care services in their territories, with enormous waste of public and private money, and an extreme loss of quality for the assistance provided to citizens²⁹. Some Italian regions went nearly bankrupt. M5S addressed this problem stressing the need to restore a central control on the topic, and to reduce the influence of private competitors (which tend to consider health care a financial business rather than a service to the population). According to the program, basic health care services should be free of charge for all Italian citizens, who should pay affordable prizes, proportioned to their income, for further medical care. Besides, health care public spending should be radically reduced, i.e. promoting the prescription of generic medical prod-

ucts, cheaper than other medicines, usually more expensive but equal in terms of effects on illness. Italy should also invest financial and human resources in promoting a different lifestyle, based on healthy nutrition, regular physical activity, stop smoking, moderate assumption of alcohol, rather than in supporting systematic medical checks.

The access to medical treatments should become easier and more transparent: waiting lists should be public and reliable, while waiting times for analysis, diagnosis and cures should be strongly minimized. Pain therapies should be offered in a more systematic and efficient way, while public investments in medical research should increase and private donations to medical structures for scientific purposes should be promoted.

The last chapter of the program, quite short if compared to the others, is dedicated to instruction. The main proposals deal with a systematic use of new technologies also in teaching activities. According to Grillo's party, a reliable Internet connection should be available in every school, free of charge for all pupils; this should lead to a progressive abolition of printed books, substituted by laptops and tablets, what would request a deep change also in the didactic organization of schools and universities.

Public funds should go only to public schools, excluding financial aids for private institutes. This is a long time debated subject in Italy: despite of a constitutional provision which clearly excludes public funding for private schools³⁹, in recent years several Italian governments provided forms of financial aid also to private education institutions - which in significant part result to be catholic³¹. Therefore, to take such a resolute position against financing private schools could alienate part of the conservative electorate to the M5S in the future.

Italian universities should offer to students an efficient system for a proper evaluation of the teaching performance assured by professors. Besides, high school lessons should be available also on-line, allowing students to attend them also at home, avoiding too crowded classrooms. The State should also offer free classes of Italian language to foreigners, whose attendance should be compulsory for those of them who intend to apply for Italian citizenship. Finally, the State should also invest public funds in high school research, and support joint ventures between universities and private business companies.

5. FURTHER POLITICAL MATTERS

As seen, the political strategy of the M5S is founded on few clear basic points: sustainable development, systematic use of new technologies, fight against corruption, increase of moral standards in Italian politics, endorsement of direct democracy.

Although other topics receive very high attention by media and public opinion, they find instead few space in the party's program. This is i.e. the case of civil rights matters, like how to deal with illegal immigrants, which kind of legal treatment deserve civil rights for homosexuals, or how to regulate common-law marriages. All these topics have been basically ignored by the public manifesto of the Five-Stars Movement. This does not mean that they don't appear in the daily debate among leadership and party's members, although in most of the cases Grillo seems to prefer unrestricted, usually quite provocative public statements to a well-organized and challenging internal discussion with the party's supporters. This happened i.e. in 2012, when Grillo posted on his blog a message against the concession of the Italian citizenship to children of legal immigrants born on Italian soil, what started a large protest by party supporters and caused him an accusation of adopting radical right and even racist positions³². A similar situation occurred again in 2013, when Grillo made a clear endorsement for gay marriage and specific provisions in favor of an effective equality for homosexuals, criticizing gay discrimination in Italian legislation³³. Grillo's statements started a ruthless debate on his blog among supportive and critical party members.

Comparable internal struggles have been observed after Grillo's declarations in favor of a more liberal legislation on abortion, which is legal in Italy, but can meet substantial limitations if medical staff refuses to practice it for moral or religious reasons - what could end up in an effective restriction of access to abortion.

In more recent times, there have been very frequent cases of internal dissent in the party - not only between the leadership and single private members, but also between Grillo, his closest partners and M5S politicians. If the struggles with "ordinary" party supporters tend to be resolved by Grillo with a (usually extremely condemning) message on his blog, critical challenges between him and his representatives in the Italian Parliament use to lead to an expulsion of the dissenting MPs from the M5S parliamentary group. This does not necessarily lead to an end

of the political career of the expelled MPs, since the Italian legislation allows them to keep their mandate as long as they do not renounce to their seat.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the most distinguishing features of Grillo's movement gives the impression that, rather than to adopt a clear political position on the right-left parties landscape, the M5S tries to appear as a fluid, post-ideological political movement. Its tendency to pursue programmatic goals which belong sometimes to typical right, sometimes to typical left positions, seems to confirm the attempt of Grillo's movement to present itself as a force beyond the usual classifications adopted to describe the political landscape.

The same can be said for the allegedly different way to communicate with its own members, supporters and voters, to organize the internal party structure, to promote party's positions and tactics, and to conduct electoral campaigns.

Such a strategy is not only trying to provide to the movement a new "political image": it is also useful for the M5S's efforts to prove that in its inherent nature it is radically different from all other parties. Its attempt to distinguish itself from all already existing political movements serves also to the M5S to demonstrate its being an alternative to the traditional party form. The refusal of the usual classification based on the left-right scale is the first step for Grillo's movement to prove that it wants not only to *be* different, but also to *act* differently, which means: it can provide different solutions to political problems that traditional parties have not been able to solve so far.

Such a radical post-ideological approach can hardly offer reliable benchmarks for conceptual references, and therefore clearly hinders any possibility to categorize the M5S according to the most popular political classifications³⁵. Scholars recently suggested that Grillo's party could represent an "Avant-gard" of a new (post)ideological political category, which is gaining consent especially in western democracies: the "new populist" party³⁶. Tough, if we examine the inherent programmatic characteristics of the "traditional" populist parties, especially in the Italian contest (trivial reference to people in the political discourse, uncritical faith in the party leadership, oversimplification of political questions)³⁷, we should con-

clude that the M5S does not perfectly fit this image. However, in order to consider Grillo's movement as a prototype of the "new populist" party, we should include a merely programmatic into a wider operative analytical perspective, where working strategies count at least as much as – if not more than – political programs and goals. We would then probably conclude that what makes a party "new populist" is based much more on the way it operates, rather than *only* on what it stands for in the political debate. In other words, it seems possible to affirm that "new populism" is a dynamic attitude, rather than a static ideological position: though, if this is true, it means that also other kinds of political movements (liberal, conservative, socialist, regional, extremist, etc.) could adopt "new populist" methods in their operative and communicative strategies in the future³⁸. Finally, we could ask ourselves if this "new populist" character would be inherent with the essence of a possible new category of political movements: the "anti-party" parties, whose main feature would consist in a systematic rejection of what a traditional party is supposed to be and do.

It is definitely too soon to say if such a category in fact does exist, or if a "new populist" attitude could influence the primary nature of already existing political movements and therefore inherently change the traditional categories of political parties we use to know. Nevertheless, the M5S could represent a useful prototype for a careful analysis of this phenomenon, which would probably be worth a precise attention and specific studies in the time to come, not only in Italy.

NOTES

1. In its first attempt in a national election, the M5S obtained 8.689.168 votes (25,5%) in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, and 7.285.548 votes (23,79%) in the Senate – scoring by far the highest success for a political newcomer in the Italian political history.
2. S. i.e. Piergiorgio Corbetta/Elisabetta Gualmini (ed.), *Il Partito di Grillo*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2013; Giuliano Santoro, *Un Grillo qualunque. Il Movimento 5 Stelle e il populismo digitale nella crisi dei partiti italiani*, Lit edizioni, Roma 2. Ed. 2013; Paolo Marcolisi, *Storia e programma politico del Movimento 5 Stelle*, Barbera Editore, Firenze 2013; Roberto Biorcio/Paolo Natale, *Politica a 5 Stelle*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2013.
3. www.beppegrillo.it.
4. S. infra, par. 2.
5. For a very recent study of the impact of Grillo's Blog on the M5S s. Federico Mello, *Un altro blog è possibile. Democrazia e Internet ai tempi di Beppe Grillo*, Imprimatur, Reggio Emilia 2014.
6. Roberto Biorcio/Paolo Natale, *Politica a 5 Stelle*, cit., 32.
7. Federico Mello, *Il lato oscuro delle stelle. La dittatura digitale di Grillo e Casaleggio. Testimonianze, documenti e retroscena inediti*, Imprimatur, Reggio Emilia 2013.
8. The whole document is available in English at: www.movimentocinquestelle.eu/documenti/non-statuto-en.pdf (18.12.2014).
9. Available at: www.pdl.it/notizie/15377/statuto-del-popolo-della-liberta (18.12.2014)
10. Available at: s3.amazonaws.com/PDS3/allegati/statuto_1.pdf (18.12.2014)
11. Available at: www.nuovocentrodestra.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/STATUTO_pubblicato-sul-sito_Agosto-2014.pdf (18.12.2014)
12. Meet Ups are local groups of M5S supporters, aiming to realize goals in accordance with the party's strategies and manifesto. In order to create a Meet Up, a group of private citizens must satisfy a number of conditions, gain the approval of the M5S leadership (mainly Beppe Grillo) and register as a official "M5S Meet Up".
13. Civic Lists have been the first form of political organization connected with Beppe Grillo and the topics of his Blog, before he had the idea to implement this experience creating the M5S.

14. Donatella Della Porta/Alberto Vanucci, *Corrupt Exchanges and the Implosion of the Italian Party System*, in: Arnold J. Heidenheimer/Michael Johnston (ed.), *Political Corruption. Concepts and Contexts*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, 3rd ed. 2002, 717-738.
15. The minimum age requested for candidate to public offices varies for the different elective bodies. The Italian Parliament distinguishes between the Chamber of Deputies (lower Chamber) and the Senate (higher Chamber): in the first chamber, you need to be at least 25 years old at the day of the elections in order to candidate, while the second chamber's candidates must be at least 40. In order to candidate for local, provincial and regional elections, the requested minimum age is 18, while Italian candidates to European Elections must be at least 25.
16. www.beppegrillo.it/movimento/crea-la-tua-lista.html (18.12.2014)
17. www.beppegrillo.it/movimento/certifica-la-tua-lista.html (18.12.2014)
18. According to Grillo's Blog, 587 M5S "certified lists" ran for local elections in 2014, s. www.beppegrillo.it/movimento/elenco_liste.php (18.12.2014)
19. Giuliano Santoro, *Un Grillo qualunque*, cit., 170-172.
20. *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, "5 Stelle, critiche sulle 'Parlamentarie': 95mila voti e 32mila votanti? Un flop", 7.12.2012, avail. at: www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2012/12/07/5-stelle-utenti-criticano-parlamentarie-95mila-votano-flop/439458/ (18.12.2014)
21. According to a recent survey, in 2013 only 63,5% of the Italian citizens went on-line at least once a week, which means that nearly four Italians out of ten made no use of the Internet in that year, s. "Gli under 30 protagonisti dell'evoluzione digitale della specie" (*Censis press release on the 11.th Rapporto Censis/Ucsi sulla comunicazione*), 11.10.2013, avail. at: www.censis.it/?shadow_comunicato_stampa=120930 (18.12.2014)
22. Nicola Genga/Francesco Marchiano, Cinque Stelle e non solo. La società civile entra in politica, in: Mario Morcellini/Marzia Antenore/Christian Ruggero (ed.), *Talk & Tweet. La campagna elettorale 2013 tra TV e Twitter*, Maggioli, Santarcangelo di Romagna 2013, 265-288 (277-278).
23. Gianluca Passarelli/Filippo Tronconi/Dario Tuorto, *Dentro il Movimento: organizzazione, attivisti e programmi*, in: Piergiorgio Corbetta/Elisabetta Gualmini (ed.), *Il Partito di Grillo*, cit., 123-167 (146).
24. Document available here: www.beppegrillo.it/iniziative/movimento-cinquestelle/Programma-Movimento-5-Stelle.pdf (18.12.2014)
25. Donatella Della Porta/Gianni Piazza, *Voices of the Valley, Voices of the Straits. How Protest creates Community*, Berghahn Books, Oxford 2008.
26. Chiara Carrozza, *Si scrive acqua... Attori, pratiche e discorsi nel movimento italiano per l'acqua bene comune*, aAcademia University Press, Torino 2013; s. also Filippo Giordano/Riccardo Mussari/Flippo Caputo, *Managing services and voicing public values: the water sector in Italy*, in: Charles Conteh/Thomas J. Greitens/David K. Jesuit (ed.), *Governance and Public Management. Strategic foundations for volatile times*, Routledge, New York 2014, 76-93.
27. Lorenzo Mosca/Cristian Vaccari, *Il Movimento e la Rete*, in: Piergiorgio Corbetta/Elisabetta Gualmini, *Il Partito di Grillo*, cit., 169-196.

28. Gianluca Passarelli/Filippo Tronconi/Dario Tuorto, *Dentro il Movimento: organizzazione, attivisti e programmi*, cit., 148-150.
29. Margherita Giannoni/Theodore Hittiris, *The regional impact of health care expenditure: the case of Italy*, in: *Applied Economics*, 14/2002, 1829-1836.
30. S. Art. 33.3 Ital. Const.: "Entities and private persons have the right to establish schools and institutions of education, at no cost to the State".
31. According to the available surveys, in 2005/2006 about 21% of the Italian schools were private. 7.116 of them (about 57%) were catholic. Pupils attending private schools were almost equally divided between catholic and nonreligious institutes.
32. Eleonora Bianchini, *Grillo contro cittadinanza ai figli di immigrati. Bufera in Rete: "Cambia in Lega a 5 stelle"*, in: *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 25.1.2012, avail. at: www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2012/01/25/grillo-contro-cittadinanza-figli-dimmigrati-bufera-rete-cambiano-m-e-lega-5stelle/186370/ (18.12.2014)
33. Gianluca De Martino, *M5S: matrimoni gay, legge anti-omofobia e cambio di genere, i primi ddl dei grillini in Parlamento*, in: *L'Huffington Post*, 8.4.2013, avail. at: www.huffingtonpost.it/2013/04/08/m5s-matrimoni-gay-ddl_n_3035176.html (18.12.2014)
34. Luciana Matarese, *Aborto, il M5S per la modifica della 194. "Il 70% del personale sanitario deve essere di non obiettori"*, in: *L'Huffington Post*, 19.7.2013, avail. at: www.huffingtonpost.it/2013/07/19/aborto-m5s-modifica-194_n_3623780.html (18.12.2014)
35. S. above all the classification made of nine different party models suggested by Klaus von Beyme, which was based mainly on their ideological orientations, s. Klaus von Beyme, *Parteien in westlichen Demokratien*, Piper, München 1982.
36. Piergiorgio Corbetta, *Conclusioni. Un web-populismo dal destino incerto*, in: Piergiorgio Corbetta/Elisabetta Gualmini, *Il Partito di Grillo*, cit., 197-214.
37. Marco Tarchi, *Italy: A Country of many populisms*, in: Daniele Albertazzi/Donald McDonnell (ed.), *Twenty First Century Populism. The Spectre of Western European Democracy*, Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke 2008, 84-99.
38. This seems to be at least partially the case, i.e., of the Pirate Party and the Alternative für Deutschland in Germany.

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The Election Campaigns of German Anti-Party Parties – Pirates, Free Voters and the Alternative for Germany

Carsten Koschmieder and Oskar Niedermayer

I. INTRODUCTION

In the federal elections in Germany in 2013, three anti-party parties were participating: The Pirate Party of Germany, the Federal Association of FREE VOTERS, and the Alternative for Germany. These parties had been viewed as promising, and commentators, at one time in the years and months prior to the elections, had been speculating about each of them entering the parliament. Yet, although not all of these parties failed in the elections, none of them managed to pass the five-per cent threshold. This article deals with the election campaigns of those three parties. However, it will not give a descriptive or chronological analysis of the course of the campaigns, but it will point out systematically the factors that the authors consider to be responsible for the success – or the failure – of the parties.

There are several reasons for the success or the failure of newly established parties belonging either to the supply and demand side of political competition or to the external conditions, which influence the orientations and activities of the actors. On the supply side, there are: Firstly, the resources of the party and of its competitors, i.e. the organisational structure, the members, the party leaders, the financial resources, the motivation of the protagonists to strengthen the party's influence, the internal decision-making process, and the ability to pursue a strategy. Secondly, the organisational strategies the new party pursues to mobilise voters, and the strategies of its competitors regarding the new party. And finally, the policies promised by the new party and by its competitors, especially their position concerning the main cleavages that shape party competition. In Germany, there are two main party-political cleavages: the socio-economic welfare-state cleavage and the socio-cultural cleavage con-

cerning progressive-libertarian vs. conservative-authoritarian values (cf. Niedermayer 2014: 77).

The factors on the demand side originate from the political orientations and the behaviour of the electorate: The most important factors of this group are the main societal cleavages. Other factors are the degree of party identification, the interests of social groups and the ability to organise them, and the political orientation of the electorate towards the leaders of the different parties and towards particular policies (ibid.).

There are also external conditions of political competition which may influence the success or the failure of a new party: the legal framework, that is the electoral system and the law on parties, the organisation of the state as federal or unitary, the degree of support by the media, associations and social movements, as well as economic, social, demographic, domestic and foreign political, ecological and technological developments or events (ibid.).

Based on these theoretical considerations, this article now analyses the reasons for success or failure of the three given parties. It starts with the Pirate Party, followed by the Free Voters. The last party to be analysed is the Alternative for Germany.

2. THE PIRATE PARTY

The Pirate Party of Germany, or short the Pirates, was established in 2006 (cf. Bartels 2013). Until 2009, it has been an insignificant party that was not even able to participate in every State election. Due to the success of the Swedish Pirate Party in the European Elections in 2009 and public debates on internet censorship in Germany in the same year, the party became more widely known and gained around two per cent of voters during the next two years in several elections. For many different reasons that cannot be elaborated in this article, the Pirate Party then surprisingly won fifteen seats in the Berlin State election (cf. Niedermayer 2013a: 44-48). In the wake of the media hype that followed, the party also won seats in the State parliaments of the Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein, and North Rhine-Westphalia. Furthermore, the Pirates reached double-digit percentages in some of the nation-wide opinion polls in spring 2012 (cf. Koschmieder/Niedermayer 2015: 211). Many political observers took their entry into the Bundestag for granted. However, the figures in the opinion polls dropped rapidly, and in the three State elections prior to the fed-

eral elections in 2013, they only gained around two per cent. And the 2.2 per cent in the federal election were also devastating. Not even in Berlin, their stronghold, did they manage to get more than 3.6 per cent.

This rapid decline will be explained in the following.

2.1 The supply side of political competition

As mentioned above, the first factors that will be looked at regards the supply side of political competition. The most important problem within the party was and still is a fundamental dispute on policies and the organisational structure, on what the party is supposed to be. When it was founded, it was fighting for civil rights on the internet and for free music downloads. It did not position itself in the welfare-state conflict (cf. Haas/Hilmer 2013: 75-76). Some want the party to remain that way, some want it to become a liberal-conservative party, but the largest group wants it to be on the left or even the far left side in the welfare-state conflict (cf. Koschmieder/Niedermayer 2015: 215). Likewise, the party used to be organised bottom-up, grassroots democracy was stressed, and the so-called party leaders hardly had any power (cf. Koschmieder 2012: 6-8). Now, while some try to stick to this anarchic grassroots democracy and further evolve it, others strive for a more “normal” party structure, a structure like the one that other German parties have. They mainly argue that the party needs to be more organized to be successful. These fundamental disputes led to tremendous and ongoing internal conflicts. Members of the executive committee were publicly insulting each other. On party conferences, hours of heated arguments hardly turned out into any result, and a consensus was rarely found. The party platform and the party leaders were constantly attacked by officials and by rank and file Pirates. Consequently, the party was unable to devote all its (limited) resources to the election campaign (cf. Koschmieder/Niedermayer 2015: 217). In fact, some members did not even want the party to pass the five-per cent threshold. Anyway, the internal conflicts were severely hindering the success of the Pirate Party.

For an election campaign it is important to have well-known, telegenic and undisputed leaders or candidates who can represent a party and its demands in the media. Because of the principles of anarchic grassroots democracy, the Pirate Party did not have such persons. Contrarily, the party had six members of the executive committee, sixteen front

runners and more than ten representatives for different policy areas. While this may be a good strategy to avoid the accumulation of power by a single person, they are simply far too many for a successful election campaign (cf. Koschmieder/Niedermayer 2015: 218-19).

Party conferences are general meetings within the Pirate Party. There are no delegates, so every member can participate, contribute and vote if he or she shows up at the conference¹. Thus, more than 2000 people come together, everyone wants to have a say, and there are no party leaders to channel the discussion. The party platform is amended only once a year at such a meeting. These amendments can be suggested and written by anyone. Consequently, after a complex, long-lasting decision-making process, the party platform is fragmented, very inconsistent, and it lacks a clear message.

The fact that the party is organised bottom-up also impeded a centrally managed election campaign. The party members collaboratively decided on the motives on the election posters, the slogan of the campaign and so on and so forth. It made the Pirates, as some argued, more flexible, but crucial manpower was lost because the campaign was not coordinated, and again no clear message was conveyed. Some of the party members, especially the leaders, tried to centrally orchestrate the campaign, but these attempts were not followed by the party².

Another reason for the decline of the Pirate Party was that it has lost its uniqueness: With the NSA scandal, all opposition parties were talking about data protection, internet security and civil rights. And the Pirates' demand for more transparency, which had been one of the keys to their success in the Berlin State election, was by then copied by all other parties. And although their competitors talked about "their" topics, they never talked about the Pirate Party. It was seen as insignificant during the whole campaign and, consequently, ignored by all other parties. And one other party – the Alternative for Germany – made life especially difficult for the Pirates. The Alternative for Germany managed to be seen as the protest party that is different, that speaks out against the mainstream parties. A year before, the Pirates were representing that very same image. Now, they lost all these dissatisfied protest voters who initially allowed the party to be so successful.

The last reason for the Pirates' decline is that they had very little financial resources, compared to other parties. Mainly because they are newly established, but also because they lack funds: they do not receive donations from companies, they do not get much state money because

they are still small, and their members are often not even paying their membership fees (cf. Niedermayer 2013b: 85-89).

These are the factors on the supply side of political competition. The next chapter will deal with the demand side.

2.2 The demand side of the political competition

Most important, all the topics that are relevant for the Pirate Party concerning the in-ternet – freedom of the internet, internet security, internet governance, illegal music down-loads – all these topics do not mark an important cleavage (Niedermayer 2014: 84). Even people who are interested in these topics are far more interested in issues concerning the welfare-state conflict or the social-cultural cleavage. And voters could not tell where the Pirate Party stands in those conflicts. As mentioned above, there were severe conflicts within the party on these issues. And if the party itself can neither decide nor communicate where it stands, how are the voters supposed to know?

So, most voters did not know about the party's position, and its issues were not seen as important. But even those voters who voted for the party in the past and were interested in their policies, were disappointed about the Pirates because they did not fulfil the expectations, neither those of the voters nor their own. They had promised "politics 2.0", a new way of making politics. They promised to be more transparent, more open for participation, not in for power politics. But their parliamentary groups turned out to be just the same as the mainstream parties: they argued about positions, they fought each other, they met behind closed doors. And the above-mentioned internal quarrels did not help to give the impression that the Pirate Party abstains from political intrigues.

For all of these reasons: long debates on party conventions, quarrels among the party leaders and rank and file members, arguments about most basic policies – the Pirates were perceived by the voters as an unreliable, very chaotic group of people who are not able to pursue reasonable policy. What was considered to be refreshing in the beginning when the Pirate Party was widely unknown seemed inappropriate for a party that entered four State parliaments and that has had a lot of time to overcome their beginner's mistakes. Moreover, as opinion polls showed that the party had little chance to pass the five-per cent threshold anyway, voters did not want to "lose" their vote. Thus, they preferred to opt for a party that was more likely to enter parliament.

2.3 *The conditions of political competition*

After talking about the supply and the demand side, the conditions of political competition will be considered in the following pages. The most important factor here, and in fact one of the most important factors to explain the decline of the Pirate Party, is decreasing media support (Koschmieder/Niedermayer 2015: 226-27). Ever since the Berlin State election, the media had contributed to the rise of the party. They had covered the topic extensively, and they liked the party because it was different, it was new, and it was entertaining. But after several months, that changed. From summer 2012 onwards, the reports became more negative. This is not, as many Pirates assume, due to a great conspiracy. It is simply the way that media functions. The party was not “new” any longer, the journalists began to understand the problems below the calm surface, and people were not amused any longer by reports about the Pirate’s teething troubles. After months of negative reports about the party, the media began to ignore it, mainly because the party had dropped severely in the poles as mentioned above. During the election campaign, the Pirate Party was barely mentioned. Even the party’s activities around the NSA scandal seldomly claimed attention.

The final reason for the decline of the Pirate Party is the lack of support from other associations or social groups. Apart from some NGOs concerned with the internet, the party has not been able to link up with any relevant group. Thus, it had little support for its campaign.

3. THE FREE VOTERS

Along with the Pirate Party, two other anti-party parties took part in the federal elections: the Alternative for Germany and the Federal Association of FREE VOTERS – in German: Bundesvereinigung FREIE WÄHLER. Free Voters have been existing on the local level since the foundation of the German Federal Republic (cf. Holtmann 2012). They claim to orient themselves not towards ideological party politics, but towards rational solutions of problems above party lines, using “common sense”. Thus, they do not see themselves as a party (cf. Niedermayer 2013c: 650). The local Free Voters began to found regional associations very early, and in 1965, they established the Federal Confederation named “Free Voters Germany”. Some regional associations participated in State elections, but they nev-

er had any success. Furthermore, the participation was controversial among members because many wanted to concentrate on local politics alone. In 2008, however, the party managed to pass the five-per cent threshold in the Bavarian State election. Hence, the Federal Confederation decided – after a controversial debate – to participate in the European Election in 2009 as “FREE VOTERS” in all of the German States. Although they did not live up to their expectations and only gained 1.7 per cent of the votes, in February 2010 the Confederation was reorganised as the “Federal Association of FREE VOTERS”. Since July 2013, it has regional organisations in all of the sixteen German States. These regional organisations are, however, not always closely linked with the local FREE VOTERS or with their regional associations. For example, the very successful FREE VOTERS in Baden-Württemberg reject participating in State elections or federal elections. Nevertheless, the Federal Association of FREE VOTERS decided to participate in the German federal elections in 2013, mainly because the Bavarian FREE VOTERS insisted to do so.

The party managed to nominate lists of candidates in all of the sixteen German States. To have a prospect of success, the party needed, on the one hand, a front runner who could guarantee media attention beyond Bavaria. On the other hand, it had to find an issue that would be a unique feature in the party system. Stephan Wehrhahn, the grandson of the first German chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, was the party’s designated front runner. However, he resigned in March 2013 even before he was officially nominated (cf. Niedermayer 2014: 86-87). Thus, the party lost its supposed driving horse, its most prominent candidate, before the election campaign really began. Furthermore, it also lost its unique feature. Concerning their policies, the FREE VOTERS claim to be centrist and above the party lines, focussing on average citizens and using their common sense. This, they argue, makes them both conservative and liberal. Their domestic policy proposals could not form a unique feature. Thus, the party tried to establish itself as a protest party against the European crisis policy of the other German parties. This strategy failed when the newly-founded Euro-sceptic “Alternative for Germany” drew the attention away from the Free Voters (ibid.). Consequently, the Free Voters remained invisible during the election campaign – with the exception of Bavaria where the State parliament was elected one week prior to the Bundestag. Outside Bavaria, the Federal Association was insufficiently organised, hardly got any support by the media and was completely ignored by its competitors. Hence, they only gained 1.0 per cent of the votes – a rather poor result.

4. THE ALTERNATIVE FOR GERMANY

The last chapter³ will look at the “Alternative for Germany”, in German “Alternative für Deutschland” or in short the AfD, by far the most successful of the three parties. Its history⁴ began on March 25, 2010: In the morning of that day, Chancellor Angela Merkel emphasized in the German Parliament that there would be no direct financial support for Greece. In the evening, she agreed to the first bailout package for the country at the EU summit. This commitment to the attempt to stabilise the Euro – regardless of the financial risks involved – made several Euro-sceptic people and groups think about how to intervene and how to organise themselves politically. Alongside with representatives of small and medium-sized businesses in associations and political parties, there was a group of neoliberal economists led by Professor Bernd Lucke from Hamburg. He had already founded a “plenum of economists” to concentrate expert knowledge against policies aimed at saving the European currency. Prior to the enactment of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) by the German Bundestag, the opponents of that policy intensified their activities. Lucke, who had been a member of the Christian Democrats until the end of 2011, along with fellow campaigners founded the “Alternative for the Election 2013” in September 2012. This organisation allied with the FREE VOTERS and participated together in the Lower Saxony State election in January 2013.

After receiving only one point one per cent of the votes, this alliance was terminated again and the “Alternative for Germany” was founded as a party on February 6, 2013 (cf. Häusler 2013: 26-39). The party was covered in the media for the first time on March 11, when it presented itself to the public. April 14 saw the AfD holding its first party congress, electing the executive committee and passing the charter and the party platform. First opinion polls of the widely defined electoral potential showed that one in four Germans could possibly consider voting for a party like the AfD. However, when asked what party people would actually vote for, it was only after the intensive media coverage of the first party convention that the AfD was named at all, but only by two to three per cent of the electorate. One single polling institute listed the party at four to five per cent for a short time. For the next four months, the AfD remained at two or three per cent in the polls. At the high time of the election campaign, however, the party rose to four per cent, and one institute even monitored it at five per cent just prior to election day. In the actual elec-

tion, the party achieved 4.7 per cent and closely failed to pass the five-per cent threshold, thus not entering parliament. Nevertheless, this result is a smashing success, as no newly-established party had been able to achieve such a good result in Germany since the 1950s (cf. Niedermayer 2014: 89, Niedermayer 2015).

This chapter will analyse how this success can be explained.

4.1 The supply side of the political competition

On the supply side of political competition, one has to mention at first that for a newly-founded party, the AfD had a lot of resources. The party was able to form a nationwide and working organisational structure and an adequate membership base in extremely short time. Even before the first party convention, regional associations had been established in five of the German States. In May, the party was established in all sixteen States. Furthermore, the AfD gained many new members. By the party's own count, the numbers rose from 5000 at the end of March to 10000 at the end of April. This rapid consolidation of its organisation provided very good conditions to overcome the legal obstacles that German political associations are facing when they want to participate in elections: every political association that has not at least five representatives in any federal or State parliament without any intermission since the last election has to tell in writing to the Federal Returning Officer that it wants to participate in the upcoming election. The party has to provide several documents, including the charter and the party platform. The AfD was able to provide these documents in time. The Federal Returning Officer then decides whether the association in question counts as a party for this election. But even if it does, this does not yet mean that the party is allowed to participate in the election. Every party has to assemble a list of candidates in a secret ballot either in a general meeting or in a meeting of delegates in every German State where they want to run. Additionally, new parties have to collect signatures from up to 2000 supporters in every State. The AfD managed to fulfil all these requirements everywhere and, thus, could run in all States.

In addition, party leader Bernd Lucke turned out to be a front runner prominently covered by the media, especially in the beginning. He was able to eloquently point out the positions of the AfD. Furthermore, due to him being a professor, he managed to be seen as an expert on financial issues.

Information about the financial resources of the party is scarce. However, the professional and nationwide advertising campaign leads to the conclusion that the party had a very solid financial basis, especially because of the donations it received. Another advantage was that, despite internal quarrels during the establishing of some regional party organisations, the AfD managed to portray the picture of a unified party to the voter. Furthermore, the whole election campaign was planned and carried out thoroughly by the strategically acting party leadership.

Because the new party urgently needed a manifesto for the upcoming election, the leadership installed a top-down decision-making process: the manifesto – which contained less than four pages – was written by the executive committee and passed on the very first party conference without any discussion⁵. Programmatically, the AfD had a unique feature with its position against the Euro rescue package. Although the Left Party also opposed those decisions in the Bundestag, they could not offer any alternative solutions to their voters. The AfD, on the other hand, demanded a controlled dissolution of the Euro zone by reinstalling national currencies or by creating smaller, more stable common currencies. Furthermore, the AfD demanded that the costs of the rescue packages were not to be paid by the taxpayer. Instead, the banks should bear their losses themselves.

The first response of the other parties to the AfD was to ignore it, although some recommended dealing with their suggestions. This, however, did not happen as for different reasons the other parties did not want to deal with the issue of the Euro crisis. Instead, they tried to marginalise the AfD and stigmatise it as a right-wing populist party – and there were indeed some causes for that characterisation (cf. Häusler 2013: 60–91). But there is reason to believe that violent protests of left-wing groups against the party's election campaign led to increasing solidarity with the AfD.

4.2 The demand side of political competition

If one looks at the demand side of political competition, that is the political orientations of the electorate, it becomes obvious that there were indeed potential voters for a Euro-sceptic party: The Euro crisis and the Euro rescue package were the third most important topics for German voters shortly before the election. More than forty per cent expressed the

opinion that the Euro is rather a disadvantage for Germany. And more than one third stated that the Euro crisis was very important for their decision in the election (cf. Infratest dimap 2013: 3).

Apart from policies concerning the Euro, the party manifesto and other statements clarified the party's neo-liberal position within the welfare-state conflict and its national-conservative position in the socio-cultural cleavage. With the exception of the party's position on immigration policy, however, these positions could not be clearly identified by voters in the course of the election campaign. Thus, as a populist protest party, the AfD was seen as an eligible alternative for different social groups with different political orientations, even for former voters of the Left Party.

4.3 The external conditions of political competition

The external conditions of political competition favoured the AfD as well. Although part of the media covered the party's openness towards the far right, the AfD benefited from an upward spiral, mutually supported by better poll numbers and more media coverage. Once the polls showed that the party could pass the five-per cent threshold, it attracted voters from other, smaller protest parties that were not expected to enter parliament anyway (cf. Infratest dimap 2013: 19).

Furthermore, the discussion on possible future bailout packages for Greece once again directed the electorate's attention to the Euro crisis in late August, only a short while before election day.

At present, one cannot definitely tell whether the AfD will be able to establish itself in the German party system or not. One of the most important preconditions for further success is that the national-conservative and market-liberal wing of the party succeeds in the ongoing internal conflict with its right-wing populist wing. A clear right-wing populist party is probably not successful in Germany in the long run due to the political culture in the country (cf. Koschmieder 2013). Since the Christian Democrats have turned more towards the political centre in recent years, however, a new conservative party might find its place in the German party system.

NOTES

1. See the chapter by Carsten Koschmieder about internal democracy for further details.
2. The coordinator for the election campaign, Matthias Schrade, threatened to resign as early as March 2013 because his advice was constantly ignored.
3. This chapter is mainly based on Niedermayer 2014: 88-92.
4. See Niedermayer 2015 for a more detailed account of that history.
5. See the chapter by Carsten Koschmieder on internal democracy for further details.

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ORGANIZATION, CANDIDATE SELECTION
AND INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY OF ANTI-PARTY PARTIES

How to Select Citizen Candidates: The Movimento 5 Stelle Online Primaries and their Implications

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INTRODUCTION

Amid the lingering crisis of confidence that Italian political parties have faced for at least a decade (Ignazi 2012), leader and candidate selection methods have become an increasingly contested terrain and a strategy by which various parties have attempted to regain some legitimacy among their supporters and voters in general. When, on November 30th, 2012, Beppe Grillo's blog announced that the *Movimento Cinque Stelle* (hereafter, M5S)[†] was going to select its candidates through online primaries to be held between 3 and 6 December, a new chapter was written in the already rather long and tortuous story of Italian parties' grappling with candidate selection rules in the face of an increasingly sceptical public.

The Italian case is by no means exceptional among European democracies. Faced with steeply declining membership (Van Biezen, Mair, and Poguntke 2012) and the weakening of the "party on the ground" face in favour of the "party in central office" and "party in public office" ones (Mair 1994), over the last two decades many parties have tried to offer new process incentives to their members and supporters by allowing them to vote on the selection of their leaders, key officials, and candidates, and sometimes even on public policies and crucial political decisions such as coalition agreements (Norris 2006; for a discussion of the implications of these changes see Rahat and Hazan 2010).

The Italian case is particular, however, because the rhetoric employed by politicians and media commentators about the "opening up" of candidate selection processes by parties has been particularly heated and has framed the issue less as a purely organizational one than as a matter of parties' identity and electoral positioning. This has been caused, in turn, by two factors. The first refers to the particularly negative attitudes to-

wards politicians and parties among public opinion, with surveys such as Eurobarometer² consistently showing Italy ranking at the bottom among European countries in terms of political trust (Mosca 2014a). The second factor is the electoral system that is used in parliamentary elections, introduced in 2005 by the centre-right majority, by which candidates are elected in very large constituencies in block party lists with no preference voting, thus making it impossible for citizens to have any influence on which candidates should be elected Members of the Parliament, among those in the party lists they choose (Pasquino 2007). Since the previous system allowed voters to choose individual candidates through a combination of first-past-the-post and proportional systems with preference voting, the new system caused a substantial reduction of voter influence on the selection of individual MPs. As a result, parties have been put under pressure to compensate for this reduction of voter influence by opening up their candidate selection processes.

The first and most eager to respond was the *Partito Democratico* (Democratic Party), which in its 2007 statute made primaries mandatory for the selection of heads of government at both national and local levels as well as introducing the direct election of its leader by popular ballot. The party allows sympathizing non-members to vote in these elections, thus adopting a very inclusive definition of the electorate (i.e., those allowed to select candidates for the party: see Rahat and Hazan 2010). During the first turbulent years of its existence, when the Democratic Party struggled to find a stable and recognizable identity, it seemed as if the party was defined by its reliance on these inclusive candidate selection methods as much as by its policies and ideology. However, until the 2013 parliamentary election, the party had not allowed its members and supporters to choose candidates for elective assemblies at any level of government.³

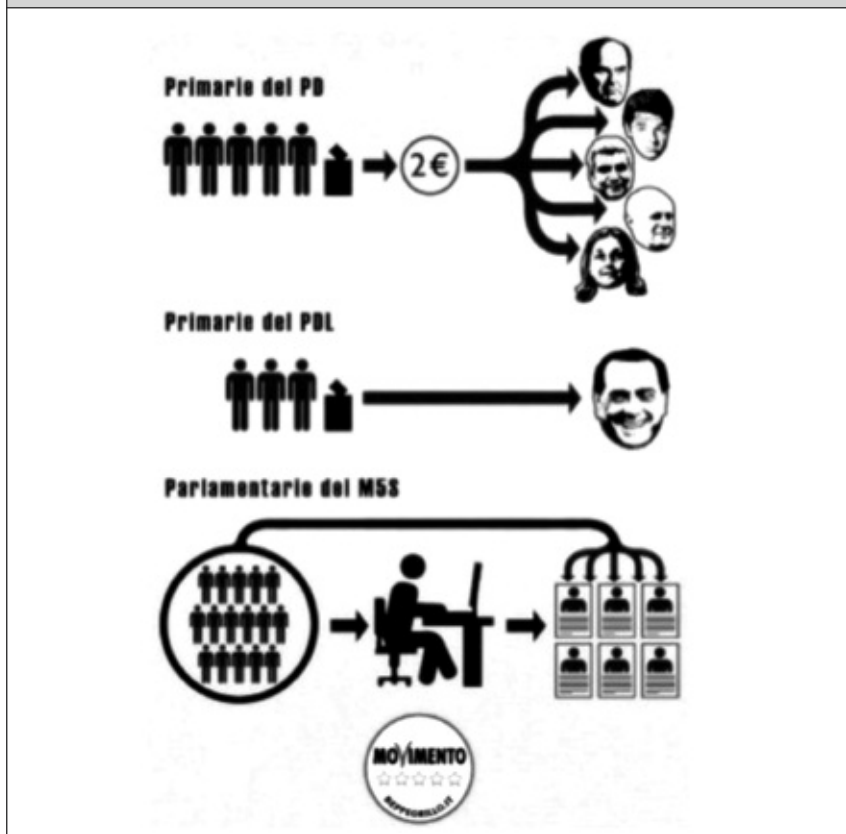
On the other side of the spectrum, Silvio Berlusconi-led parties *Forza Italia* and *Popolo della Libertà* always refrained from adopting inclusive candidate selection methods, mostly due to the charismatic nature of their leadership and the fragmented structure of their organization, but at times their officials joined the bandwagon and announced that primaries would, or should, be held in those parties, too. An internal referendum among party members or sympathizers was often floated as a possible way to identify a successor to Berlusconi, although the founder himself never allowed any succession mechanism to be put into place.

Against this background, the choice made by M5S to select its candidates through primaries represented a relevant innovation in the Ital-

ian political system. Primaries had never been organized by any major party to select candidates for legislative assemblies, although the Democratic Party would end up doing that in the very end of December 2012, shortly after the M5S's primaries (and, most likely, as a response to the innovation represented by M5S's primaries themselves). The biggest novelty in M5S's primaries (dubbed *Parlamentarie* by Grillo) was, instead, that they were organized and campaigned entirely on the internet. This was an innovative choice not only by Italian, but also international standards, and resulted consistent with the party's ideology and organization. Since its founding, the M5S has been characterized by its reliance on the web as a tool for organisation, decision-making, communication, and identity-building. The party's founders, Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto Casaleggio, developed a hyperbolic narrative of the web as an inherently transparent, democratic, and accountability-enhancing technology, which has become a crucial component of the collective identity of M5S members and an important rhetorical device with which the party pursues legitimacy when addressing outsiders (Mosca, Vaccari and Valeriani 2015; Natale and Ballatore 2013).

For an anti-party party that relied heavily on digital media for its legitimization as well as for reducing the costs of coordination and collective action, the marriage of democratized candidate selection methods and internet technologies was an effective tactic for positioning itself in the political marketplace. On the one hand, it allowed the party to present itself as going one step forward in decentralizing candidate selection than even the most inclusive party in the whole Italian political system. Consistently, this online election was the first of a series of similar efforts (i.e. aiming to select the movement's candidates for the Presidency of the Republic or candidates for municipal and regional elections) to engage members in its decision-making. On the other hand, the choice of the internet as the only medium for both communication and decision-making preserved the carefully crafted image of the party as avoiding the conventional, and generally distrusted, spectacle of televised politics to communicate directly to citizens and supporters without any intermediation by the political-media establishment. An example of the rhetoric surrounding these online primaries is the poster reproduced in Figure 1, where M5S's primaries are compared with the procedures for the selection of the leaders of the two main coalitions: the centre-left, which asked supporters to pay a minimum of 2 euros to choose their leader in October 2012 through paper ballots, and the centre-right, where no candidate ex-

Figure 1. A poster calling for M5S primaries



isted to challenge Berlusconi. By contrast, the M5S did not ask its supporters to pay any money to vote, and allowed them to do so with their computers.

The online primaries were also a response to a substantial organizational challenge in the life-cycle of this emerging party: the M5S had seen impressive growth in popularity during 2012 and was expected to be in a position to elect many representatives in the 2013 general election. However, it had fielded candidates in its first local election only four years earlier and, since it was initially founded on the idea that only local government could change the everyday lives of citizens and the functioning of the political system it had never competed in a national election. Moreover M5S membership, organization on the ground, and de-

cision-making procedures varied substantially across the country making it difficult to achieve consistent outcomes and performances in a national campaign. From this perspective, the primaries could also serve to provide popular legitimacy to unknown candidates who would represent the movement in the campaign and later in Parliament.

Official declarations aside, the reasons for organising primary elections can vary from expressive to instrumental, although one often finds a mix of these two possible motivations. Primaries can mobilise and galvanise supporters, because they involve active members and sympathisers in the internal life of a party or a coalition. An important aspect of primary elections (as for all kinds of elections – see Pizzorno, 1987) concerns their ritual dimension: that is, calling upon people to confirm their support for a party. In those cases, the final outcome of primary elections can be taken for granted. This has been the case of many primary elections held by the *Partito Democratico* in Italy, which have simply ratified choices already made clear in advance (Valbruzzi, 2005; Bolgherini and Gelli, 2011; Pasquino and Valbruzzi, 2013).

Another important aspect of organising primaries concerns media coverage, resonance and visibility in public discourse. Primaries can become media events because they contradict the widely-held assumption that citizens are detached from political parties and politics. Primary elections suit the media logic particularly well because they can be easily covered through journalistic frames evoking the horse-race metaphor. Primaries are more attractive to the mass media than traditional party congresses because they allow the development of a narrative anticipating the official electoral campaign and its crucial events (i.e. live debates among candidates on television).

In this chapter we will evaluate the online primaries of the M5S with respect to all these dimensions. We will analyse the rules for passive and active electorate that were put in place by the party leadership and evaluate their impact on the inclusiveness of the competition and their contribution as a form of democratic innovation in the Italian political system. Since these primaries were conducted entirely online, we address the role of the internet in candidates' repertoire of communication, particularly as regards their presence and popularity in the main social media platforms. We will evaluate the outcomes of the primaries in terms of the characteristics of the candidates placed in higher positions in the party lists as a result of the online primaries. This is a very relevant factor for the internal party's competition, since due to the aforementioned characteris-

tics of the electoral law for the Italian Parliament, the placement of the single candidates in the parties' lists will mostly determine whether they were elected. Finally, we will offer some reflections on the process employed by the M5S to select its candidates for the following national elections – those for the European Parliament that were held in 2014 – and some reflections on the prospects and implications of this innovative candidate selection method for the party and the Italian political system.

THE RULES OF THE GAME

In order to explain the M5S's primaries, the rules and inclusiveness of the electoral process will now be briefly discussed. First to be noted is that, although the movement's members, sympathisers and voters tend to use the Internet more than the average population does (Mosca, Vaccari and Valeriani 2015), an election held only online cannot be really considered inclusive in a country such as Italy where in 2012 only six in ten voters had internet access.

Moreover, wide participation in the *Parlamentarie* was prevented by a series of barriers erected by Grillo and his staff in their definition of the active and passive electorates.⁴ The selectorate was defined as Italians aged over 18 who had joined the movement and sent a digital copy of their ID to the staff managing the blog before 30 September 2012. Voters could express up to three preferences for candidates in their electoral district. The passive electorate was defined as former candidates of the movement aged over 25 who had already participated in local elections without being elected. According to the electoral system, the 1,486 candidates were allocated to 31 electoral districts (27 in Italy and 4 abroad). Candidates presented themselves to voters by publishing a *curriculum vitae* on the movement's website, where they could also post links to their profiles on social networks and a short video presentation on YouTube. In order to run for the primary elections, they had to subscribe to a code of conduct drawn up by Grillo and Casaleggio, Grillo's communication consultant and a key figure in the party. This is an important issue because various M5S's MPs were subsequently expelled from the party on the grounds that they had violated some provisions in the code. The code of conduct defines an MP's monthly gross salary (5,000 Euros, which is substantially less than the allowance that Italian MPs receive from the state), and it obliges MPs to repay the difference to the state, to report monthly expenses

connected to parliamentary activities, and to resign if convicted of any crime. Moreover, it sets rules on how registered members can introduce parliamentary bills and on the expulsion of those violating the code itself (see Movimento Cinque Stelle, 2013b).

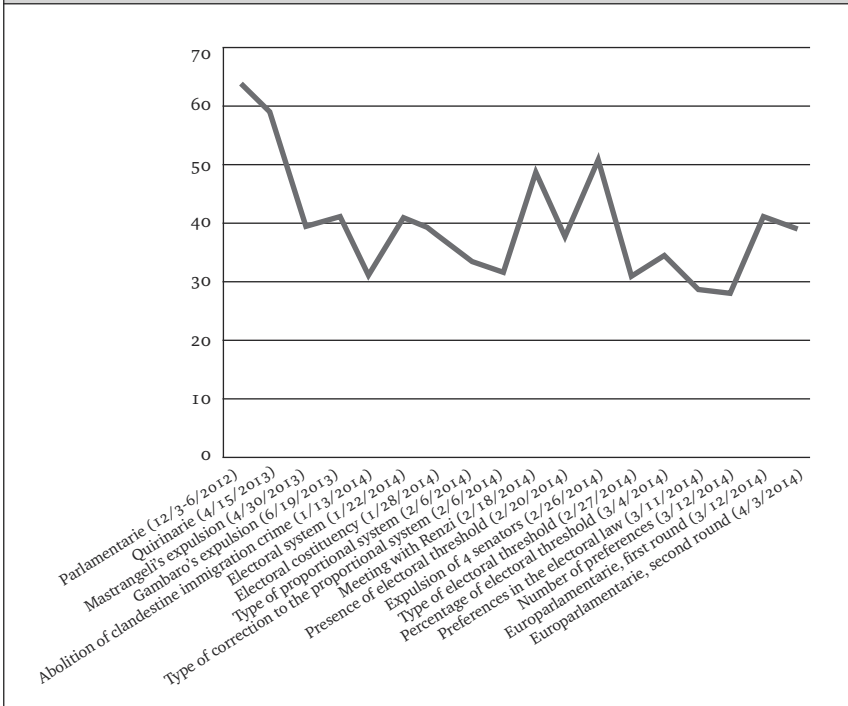
Procedural aspects of the online primaries also shaped the electoral process. First, the vote began only three days after it was announced on Grillo's blog, leaving both candidates and members very little time to prepare for the election. Secondly, online voting was only possible for registered users during working days, and mainly during working hours (Monday 10am-5pm; Tuesday 10am-9pm; Wednesday *Parlamentarie* 10am-5pm; Thursday 10am-8pm).⁵ According to the staff of Grillo's blog, this limitation was necessary so that they could check the correctness of voting procedures in real time and avoid hacker attacks.

As regards transparency, the entire electoral process was administered by the staff managing Grillo's blog. No forms of external control were possible, which means that the data could easily have been manipulated. Only after reiterated pressure from M5S's members and journalists did Grillo disclose the overall number of participants in the *Parlamentarie*.⁶ However, data on votes received by individual candidates have never been made public, and they could only be retrieved for the purposes of our research because they had been leaked by voters and candidates able to access the results of their electoral district.

These rules and limitations had clear implications on who participated and who was elected. According to official data published by the organisers, just under two-thirds of those entitled to vote took part in the election: 20,252 out of 31,612. Overall, preferences given by voters amounted to 57,272 (as opposed to a potential number of up to 60,756).⁷ Turnout figures were similar – although generally decreasing – in other online consultations organised by Grillo and his staff in the following months (see Figure 2). While *Parlamentarie* and '*Quirinarie*' (online elections to select the party's candidates for the Presidency of the Republic) involved around 60% of potential voters, turnout in subsequent votes concerning expulsions and specific policies (immigration and electoral reform) decreased to 30-40 percent with only a few exceptions.⁸

Interestingly, the final outcome of *Parlamentarie* – that is, candidates' selection and placement on the closed lists of the party – is only partially related to the number of votes gained by individual candidates. According to the rules established in advance on the composition of the lists in each electoral district, candidates for the lower chamber should have been se-

Figure 2. Voter turnout in the M5S's online consultations (percentages)



Source: Grillo's blog.

lected, firstly by giving priority to those aged between 25 to 39, and secondly according to the votes they obtained in the primaries. Hence the age factor was considered more important than the number of preferences obtained by each candidate. In some districts, this meant excluding candidates who gained more votes but were aged over 40. Whereas this distortion did not affect those running for Senate because the Constitution states that candidates to this chamber must be at least 40 years of age, candidates elected to the House of Deputies must be at least 25, but the Constitution does not set a maximum age limit. The M5S's rules thus resulted in a clear penalisation of candidates aged over 40 because the number of seats available in the Senate (315 overall) is half of that in the House of Deputies (630 overall). Accordingly, the M5S elected 54 senators and 109 deputies.

Table 1. Average number of votes per candidate in the *Parlamentarie*

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES	AVERAGE VOTES	MIN - MAX	N	S.D.
Deputies	132.7	22-602	109	84.7
Senators	131.3	28-381	54	71.4
TOTAL	132.2	22-602	163	80.3

The effect of these rules are well exemplified by the case of the district of Liguria where, instead of selecting the second, third, and fourth most voted candidates (all aged over 40) to run for the lower chamber, the fifth, ninth, and tenth most voted candidates were put on the list because they were under 40. Selecting candidates for the lower chamber regardless of age and considering only their ranking based on votes would have translated into a different composition of the parliamentary group. According to our records, almost one-sixth of the most voted candidates ($N=25$) do not overlap with those currently sitting in the lower chamber. If we consider the socio-demographic characteristics of those gaining more votes and compare them with M5S's elected deputies, we notice that average age increases from 32.6 to 35.7 years, while, if we look at gender, the percentage of females increases from 33.9 percent to 40.4 percent. Education does not change significantly.

The preferences gained in primary elections by each current MP belonging to the M5S averaged around 130 (Table 1), with minimal differences between senators and deputies. The figures range from a minimum of 28 votes for senators (Basilicata district) and 22 for deputies (Europe district) to a maximum of 381 votes for senators (Lombardy 2 district) and 602 for deputies (Lombardy 1 district). The low number of votes gained by elected candidates is clearly related to the strict rules set for definition of the selectorate. Grillo's decision not to communicate the votes gained by each candidate in all districts was probably due to a desire to hide the low participation in the primary election and, consequently, the limited popular legitimation of the winners. From this point of view, we can conclude that, as a result of the rules established by the party leadership, the *Parlamentarie* were characterised by parochialism, since they involved only restricted circles of activists.

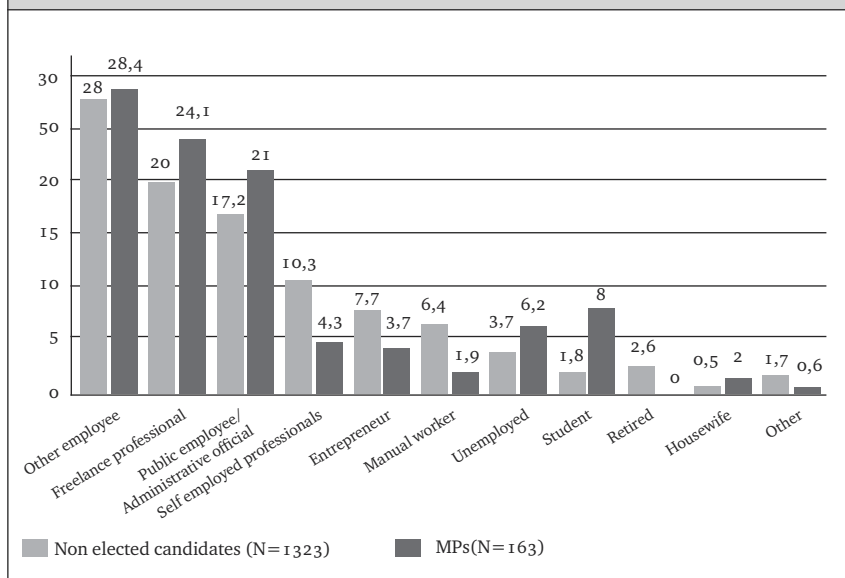
Table 2. Age cohorts of candidates (percentages)			
AGE	NON-ELECTED CANDIDATES	MPS	TOTAL
Under 29	7.2	19.6	8.5
30-39	29.8	47.2	31.7
40-49	39.9	25.2	38.3
50-59	18.4	7.4	17.2
Over 60	4.7	0.6	4.3
TOTAL	100	100	100
(<i>N</i>)	(1323)	(163)	(1486)

THE OUTCOMES OF THE ONLINE PRIMARIES

The function of primaries is to select candidates, and an evaluation of this process must therefore involve an assessment of the selected candidates. As data on the votes gained by each candidate in online primaries are not available due to the transparency issues highlighted above, the only way to evaluate the outcome of the selection process is to consider candidates' position in the electoral lists, which depended – at least partially (since, as we have illustrated, this requisite was biased by giving priority to the young age of deputies) – on the votes obtained by each candidate. Therefore, we evaluate the outcomes of the primaries in terms of candidate selection by comparing the characteristics of the M5S's elected representatives ($N=163$) with those of all candidates for the online primaries who were not elected ($N=1,323$). Because the votes gained by the M5S in the 2013 general elections were quite homogeneously distributed among the various areas of the country (Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2013a), and because candidates were elected in each constituency according to their position in the party lists, we consider the election of candidates to parliament as a proxy that allows us to distinguish the winners and losers of the online primaries.

Comparison between elected and non-elected candidates shows differences concerning gender, age and education: women and young peo-

Figure 3. Occupation of candidates in the M5S's primary elections (percentages)



ple were over-represented among elected MPs compared to unelected primary candidates. In fact, only 9.7 percent of non-elected candidates were female, while this percentage increased to 38 percent among MPs. The comparison of the age cohorts of MPs and non-elected candidates also shows relevant differences, with elected MPs much more likely to be between 18 and 39 years of age and unelected candidates substantially more likely to be aged between 40 and 60 years (Table 2). Considering average values, while the average age of unelected candidates was 43 years, the average age of MPs was 37 (33 for deputies and 46 for senators). With respect to education, we found that around two-thirds of MPs had a university degree as opposed to 44 percent among unelected candidates.

In terms of occupation, 30.1 percent of all candidates were either self-employed professionals or freelancers, 28.1 percent were office employees, 17.7 percent were public employees or administrative officials, 7.4 percent entrepreneurs and 5.9 manual workers, while 9.3 percent did not work (being retired, housewives, unemployed, and students). MPs were more likely than candidates to be unemployed and students (this was probably related to their younger age), and less likely to be manual workers, entrepreneurs, and self-employed (see Figure 3).

CANDIDATES' PRESENCE AND POPULARITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

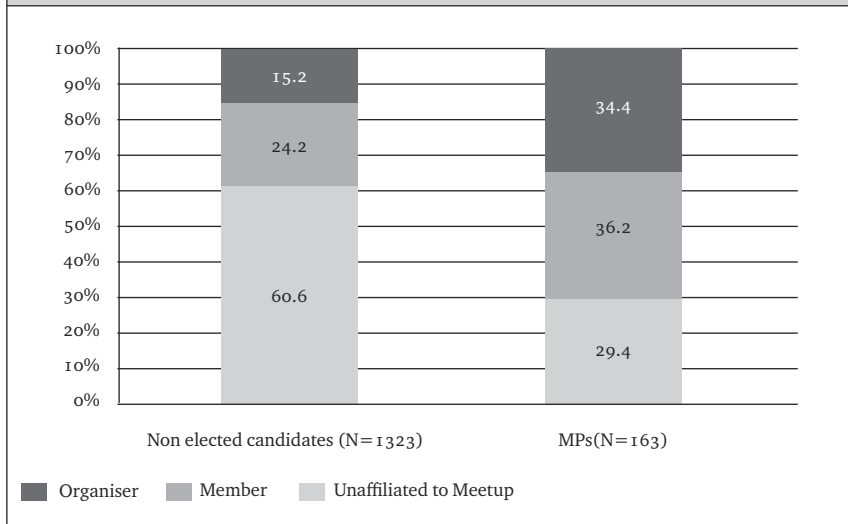
With more than 1.5 million “likes” on his Facebook page and more than 1.4 million followers on Twitter, Beppe Grillo is the most popular Italian politician on social media platforms, at least in terms of potential audiences he can directly reach (see Vaccari and Valeriani 2013). Grillo – and the staff taking care of his social media presence – has always been extremely active on these sites that, together with M5S leader’s blog, represent a pivotal component in the party’s political communication toolkit (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013b).

In this section we consider whether social media presence, popularity rates and activity of M5S’s candidates running for *Parlamentarie* – and of those subsequently elected as MPs – reproduced, in a smaller scale, Grillo’s investment and performance on these platforms. We thus investigate if M5S’s candidates can be considered as “digital influencers” or whether they were just common citizens, without any substantial popularity online. Moreover, since the primaries were entirely managed online, candidates were explicitly invited to indicate links to their social media pages in presenting their candidacy, and this information was accessible to voters. Therefore, the internet and especially social media could be expected to be a key arena for candidates’ campaigns.

We focus both on candidates’ presence on the most commonly used online social networking platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube, as well as their involvement in M5S local Meetup groups, which constituted a very important component of the party’s organization in its early stages (Mosca and Vaccari 2011; Mosca 2014b). Based on the distinction between “bonding” and “bridging” social capital introduced by Putnam (2000) and subsequently discussed by Norris (2002) in relation to digital environments, Meetup constitutes a channel for “bonding digital influence”, allowing communication and organization within closed communities of activists identified by their common interest in the party’s activities and goals. On the contrary, other online platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Youtube can be considered as proxies of “bridging digital influence” encompassing wider online communities, including also less engaged activists, sympathizers or just potential voters (the latter becoming relevant especially during the subsequent national election campaign for candidates having succeeded in the *Parlamentarie*).

We begin our analysis from candidates’ presence, activity, and leadership roles in Meetup groups. As shown in Figure 4, the most success-

Figure 4. Candidates' involvement in Meetup groups (percentages)



ful candidates in the primaries were those who had played a leading role within these communities. Compared to M5S's unelected candidates, MPs were more likely to be involved in Meetups (69.8 percent versus 39.5 percent), with half of them (34.4 percent) holding positions of responsibility in such groups (founder, organiser, co-organiser, assistant organiser). These findings show that the M5S's primaries allowed candidates to capitalize the reputation and influence developed within the inner circle of activists by taking responsibility for organizational activities both online and offline. Since the *Parlamentarie* were characterized by a series of barriers that excluded (even as active electorate) non-activists, this "internal reputation" – and thus bonding digital influence – was the kind of popularity that mattered the most in such a selection process.

Moving to more generic platforms that allow communication and interaction with broader audiences, we found that Facebook was the most popular platform, being used by almost 75 percent of the candidates, followed by YouTube, to which about 40 percent uploaded a video presenting their candidacy (as explicitly suggested by the party leadership), Twitter (used by 39 percent), and the professional social network LinkedIn (28 percent). On the contrary, 17.6 percent of those running for the *Parlamentarie* were not registered to any of the platforms considered.

Our analysis of candidates' popularity on these platforms shows that, at the time of their participation in the *Parlamentarie*, they had quite a limited reach: the average candidate had 600 friends or fans on Facebook, 95 contacts on LinkedIn and 50 followers on Twitter, whereas the number of views of their YouTube videos was 800. One of the most popular candidates on social media, Roberto Fico – the “founder” of the Naples Meetup, subsequently elected as MP and nominated President of the parliamentary committee overseeing National Public Television – had 5,195 Friends on Facebook and 1,646 followers on Twitter. Except for some special cases thus, it is hard to describe these subjects as “digital opinion leaders”. Far from being a legion of “little Beppe Grillos” – in terms of the attention they gained through their online presence – they really seem to be common citizens unlikely to exercise any particular influence on digital media platforms.

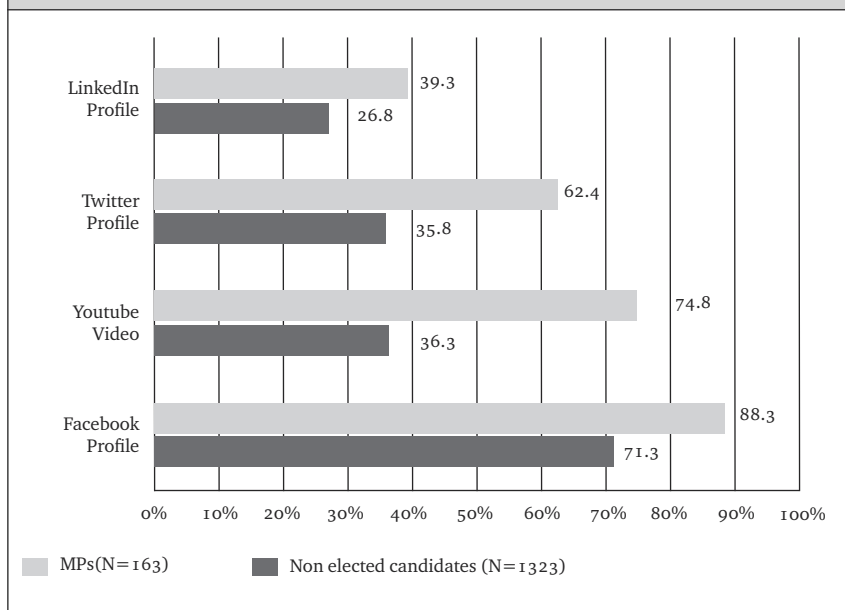
However, it should be noted (see Figure 5) that the winners of the *Parlamentarie*, as the case of Roberto Fico already showed, tended to be more present and popular on social networking platforms compared to unelected candidates: 88.3 percent of elected MPs was present on Facebook, almost 75 percent on YouTube, more than 62 percent on Twitter, and 39.3 percent on LinkedIn.

Moreover, as Table 3 shows, substantial differences emerge when comparing the popularity of elected and unelected candidates on the same platforms, too. On Facebook for example the average number of friends or fans of candidates subsequently elected as M5S's MPs was, at the time of the *Parlamentarie*, 955 (vs. 545 among unelected candidates) while their average number of followers on Twitter was 100 (vs. 39). Moreover, the following/followers ratio of M5S's MPs was 0.9, whereas that of unelected candidates was 2.

A following/followers ratio barely below 1 confirms that, although they could not be considered “broadcasters” (i.e. Twitter users having exponentially many more listeners than sources of information, see Krishnamurthy, Gill and Arlitt 2008), candidates having succeeded in M5S primaries were those who had been able to attract at least a limited attention from others on social media platforms, whereas unelected candidates were even less likely than elected ones to play important role in the flow of information on Twitter.

These findings, combined with those regarding candidates' presence and leadership roles in Meetup groups, suggest that engagement and popularity on social networking platforms online could have played a role

Figure 5. Candidates' presence on social networking platforms (percentages)

Table 3. Social media reach of candidates (averages)⁹

PLATFORM	NON- ELECTED CANDIDATES	(N)	MPS	(N)
Facebook (friends/fans)	545	(648)	955	(98)
YouTube video (views)	660	(447)	1,345	(115)
Twitter (followers)	39	(474)	100	(101)
Twitter (Ratio following/followers)	2		0.9	
LinkedIn (contacts)	99	(347)	72	(61)

in the outcome of the *Parlamentarie*. However, such effect should not be overestimated for at least two reasons: first of all, both elected and non-elected candidates were not at all great digital influencers; secondly, the fact that a large majority of elected MPs were active users or even organizers in local M5S's Meetup groups might also mean that their long-time "frontline" involvement in the initiatives of the party had given them visibility, thus also boosting their popularity on social media.

In order to assess the importance of digital media in the selection process of M5S's representatives, we also investigated the use candidates made of social networking platforms during their campaign for the general election. In this regard it should be noted that the current electoral law – based on blocked lists, as discussed above – does not provide any incentive for individual candidates to campaign on their own, as their probability of being elected only depends on their party's votes in the constituency where they run and in their position on the party list, which is determined before the campaign. However, since both M5S's leaders and activists frequently emphasize the alleged power of the web in disrupting established top-down patterns of political information and organization (see Mosca, Vaccari and Valeriani 2015), we expected that online social media should have been exploited at all levels of the campaign as a tool for gaining attention and consensus.

The analysis of candidates' activity disconfirmed such expectation: the winners of the *Parlamentarie* did not make significant use of social media for campaigning in the general election. First, in the three months until Election Day only a few new profiles were opened after the primaries by M5S's candidates: 4.3 percent opened a new Facebook page during the campaign and 3.1 percent of them joined Twitter during the same span of time. Secondly, candidates' popularity on social media did not increase in any substantial way, with the average candidate acquiring 136 new friends (or fans) on Facebook and 57 new followers on Twitter. We found also a limited communication activity on Twitter, with 101 messages sent on average during the three months between the *Parlamentarie* and the conclusion of the election campaign. The average number of visualizations of candidates' YouTube video presentations was more substantial (1,068); however, since these videos were recorded to present their candidacy for the primaries, they could only partially be considered as central to their general election campaigns.

M5S'S ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES COMPARED TO OTHER PARTIES'

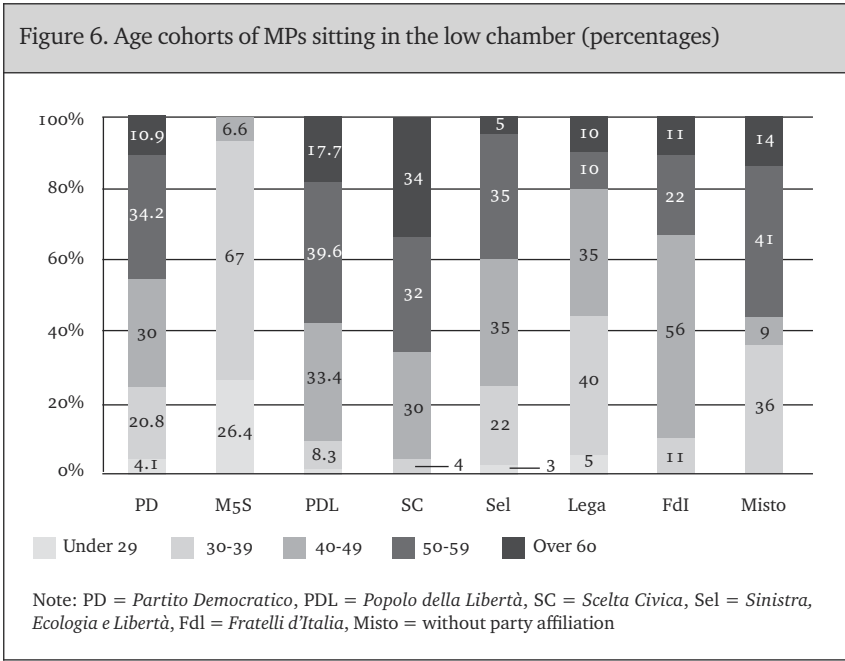
The need for a profound change not only in the policies, but also in the types of people representing Italians in parliament, were one of the main aspects of the M5S's election campaign. In order to assess whether the outcome of the primaries enabled the party to achieve this goal, we will now compare M5S's MPs with those belonging to other parliamentary groups in order to assess if the candidate selection process adopted by the movement was effective in renovating elected representatives at least from the point of view of socio-demographic characteristics and education.

As Figure 6 clearly shows, M5S's MPs are younger than all other groups sitting in the low chamber: two thirds are between 30 and 39 years of age and only 6% over 40. As we already discussed, however, this is only partially the result of voters' choices in primary elections as their will was somewhat biased by the penalization of candidates over 40 in the composition of candidate lists for the low chamber.

With respect to gender balance, one can notice that one third of M5S's MPs in the low chamber are female. Compared to the other groups, only the *Partito Democratico* (PD) presents a greater presence of women. This was the consequence of the rules of PD primary elections that imposed participants to split their two preferences in gender terms ("*doppia preferenza di genere*"). Compared with other parties not employing primary elections, the selection process of M5S's MPs translated into a higher presence of females.

In terms of education, on average M5S's MPs are a bit less educated than MPs belonging to other groups sitting in the low chamber (with the exception of *Sinistra, Ecologia e Libertà, Lega Nord, and Fratelli d'Italia*). From this point of view the result could be partially explained by the significant presence of M5S's young representatives still in education that have been all elected in the low chamber (representing the 12% of those belonging to the parliamentary group).

In sum, compared with the other parties, the selection process lead to a higher presence of females and young people, which is also quite representative of the movement's constituency.



AN ASSESSMENT OF ONLINE PRIMARIES
FOR THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS OF MAY 2014

Just as it did en route to the 2013 general elections, the M5S selected its candidates for the European elections of May 2014 via online voting. Most limits already highlighted for the 2012 primaries can also be noticed in this occasion. The election took place as a double-ballot on March 31 and April 3, 2014. The first round was aimed at selecting one candidate from each region (up to three preferences could be expressed). As the electoral system divides Italy in only five districts (North-East, North-West, centre, South, and the islands), the first round served to grant the inclusion of at least one candidate from each of Italy's regions (also including the tiny ones) in the electoral lists. In addition to the 20 candidates selected in the first round, the 53 other candidates needed to complete the electoral lists were selected in a second round organized in the five electoral districts established by the electoral system. As in the 2012 ballot, various critical issues emerged regarding this consultation, such as transparency, timing, candidate numbers, rules, and participation.

In terms of transparency, candidates' profiles were only accessible to supporters who had sent a valid document to the staff and asked to become certified users of Grillo's blog. This arrangement is certainly worse than the *Parlamentarie* of 2012, when anyone – including us as researchers – could freely access information on all candidates. The information on votes gained by candidates improved only slightly: differently from 2012, the votes obtained by those who were selected as MEP candidates were made available, but no information was provided on the exact amount of votes gained by not selected candidates.

Concerning rules on passive electorate, candidates had to be over 25 and had to have subscribed to the blog before the end of 2012. Furthermore, those running in 2014 regional or municipal elections as well as those already elected and still in office and those denied using the name and the symbol of the movement by the staff could not take part in the competition. As for selectorate, voters had to have subscribed on the blog before June 30, 2013 and not being prohibited using the name and the symbol of the movement by the staff. Concerning the code of conduct adopted for the elections, some rules seem to limit the activity of representatives in the European parliament. First, MEPs cannot join other political groups unless Grillo decides so. Second, the staff supporting elected representatives in their daily activity has to be selected within a group whose members have been designated directly by Grillo and Casaleggio and financed by each deputy with 1,000 euros per month. Third, MEPs must resign if found guilty of any crime and, according to the recall principle, could also be forced to step down if requested and motivated for serious reasons by at least 500 certified members residing in their electoral district or if such proposal is approved by the majority of certified members residing in their electoral district in an online consultation. Any MEP who violates the code of conduct must pay a fine of 250,000 euros to the M5S that will devolve it to a charity.

As for the electoral consultation, similarly to 2012 it was advertised via a last-minute call – some activists even claimed having received the staff's invitation to vote on the blog a few minutes after the official opening of the electoral procedure that lasted from 10am to 9pm (*La Repubblica*, March 31 2014¹⁰). Overall, candidates running in primary elections were 5,091 (substantially more than the 1,486 who had run for a much larger number of seats in the *parlamentarie* of 2012). Just to provide some figures at the regional level, there were 750 in Latium, 674 in Lombardy, 491 in Sicily, 332 in Emilia-Romagna, and 262 in Piedmont (*L'Huffing-*

ton Post, March 31 2014¹¹). Especially in those regions displaying a high number of candidates, the last-minute call made time to access and to compare the profiles of all competitors running in the election very limited.

Criticisms to the electoral procedure came not only from independent journalists but also from long-time activists and the party's elected representatives for different reasons. Some noticed that candidates' CVs and other relevant information were not always made available online by the party (*La Repubblica*, March 31 2014¹²); others reported that some popular representatives belonging to the movement openly endorsed candidates on social networks, possibly influencing voting decisions. Several MPs lamented the high number of candidates running in the primaries observing that most of them were unknown people and did not dirty their hands in local groups. On the same wavelength, the M5S mayor of Parma contended against "candidates that never committed locally" and noticed that voters "cannot know what kind of competences they bring" (*La Stampa*, April 1 2014¹³).

Regarding participation, the consultation mobilized only a minority of "certified activists": voters in the first round were 35,188 (41.2% of those entitled to vote) and preferences expressed were 92,877. In spite of the larger number of candidates, thus, the primaries for MEP candidates achieved substantially lower participation rates compared to those for selecting candidates for the general election. Votes gained by candidates selected in the first round ranged from a maximum of 556 in Lombardy and 503 in Piedmont to a minimum of 58 in Molise and 33 in Valle D'Aosta.¹⁴ Turnout slightly decreased in the second round (33,300 votes and 91,245 preferences) while votes won by candidates ranged from 643 in the north-west electoral district to 1,880 in the district of central Italy.¹⁵

To conclude, we will briefly discuss the outcome of these online primaries. With limited differences, sociodemographic characteristics of winners look close to those of candidates selected in 2012: they are young, educated and balanced in terms of gender. The average age of the 73 candidates running for European elections is around 37 years, 47% are women, and 81% are graduates or have a higher education degree. Most of them are office employees (24%), freelance professionals (23%) or teachers and researchers (15%). Their presence on social media is higher than in previous primaries, ranging from 91% on Facebook to 60% on Twitter, and 47% on LinkedIn. Almost two-thirds recorded a presentation video on Youtube (average visualizations 1,706). Although most of the candidates running in primary elections were unknown and not ac-

tive in local groups, among those selected as candidates only 13% are not members of any Meetup groups while over one-third played a coordinating role within such groups. Out of 10 MEP candidates not belonging to any Meetup group, two had been hired as parliamentary collaborators for the party's MPs elected in 2013. This means that only one-tenth (8 out of 73) of those selected for running in European elections are not actively involved in the movement. Considered the possibility given to any (unknown) person subscribed to the blog to run in primary elections it seems that – as already noticed for 2012 primaries – activism in local groups increases candidates' chances to prevail in processes of internal selection.

CONCLUSIONS

The unprecedented – by both Italian and European standards – use of online primaries to select parliamentary candidates seems to have become one of the most recognizable features of the internal life of the M5S. As an anti-party party, the M5S used this particular method of selecting parliamentary candidates in order to differentiate itself from most other parties, especially in the context of Italian politics where candidate selection methods became an increasingly contested component of parties' identity and self-presentation to voters. Our analysis of the party's use of online primaries is only based on two cases, only one of which could be studied extensively due to the timing of this publication, but our findings illuminate some important aspects of the functioning and implications of this process.

In evaluating the M5S's online primaries, we differentiate between their internal and external goals. Internally, primaries, as any other candidate selection method, serve the purpose of solving a set of organizational problems, such as who to reward with candidacies, how to maintain internal cohesion in making that decision, and how to ensure that a sufficient number of candidates is fielded in every constituency. Externally, primaries contribute to defining the party's image in three ways: through media coverage of the process and its characteristics, to the extent that it is achieved, through the involvement of new supporters and sympathizers, if they are attracted by the idea of being able to contribute to a party's decision-making, and through the identity and characteristics of the candidates and representatives who are selected as a result.

With respect to internal goals, our findings suggest that the online primaries were less an attempt to include broad sectors of the electorate in the party's internal decision-making than an organizational solution to a series of challenges faced by the M5S at a crucial point in its upward electoral trajectory. The limitations imposed to passive electorate ensured internal cohesion by preventing "infiltration" by other parties or people external to the core of the most active members of the party, as shown by the high levels of involvement of successful candidates with M5S's Meet-up groups. Although these limitations did not ensure that the whole contingent of M5S's parliamentarians was entirely and unquestionably loyal to the party leadership – as of this writing, six representatives have been expelled and five have left voluntarily (*La Repubblica*, March 10 2014)¹⁶ – they arguably limited the proportions of the problem. These choices involved clear trade-offs between inward consolidation and outward mobilization, as the barriers to participation probably discouraged the involvement and mobilisation of supporters and sympathetic citizens beyond long-time activists. In this respect, the *Parlamentarie* enabled "recognition among the similar" rather than activating potential voters and mobilising supporters. The online voting procedures of the online primary was a somewhat exclusionary and opaque process, favouring those with more experience and a leading role in the Meetup groups, and, to some extent, those most present and popular on social networking sites, while at the same time making it very difficult for bottom-up leaderships to emerge that could have challenged the existing hierarchies, including the very top of the party. However, the process was not immune to internal criticism too, which in the long term might undermine the same internal cohesion that the closing of ranks inherent in the rules of the process was meant to achieve. Furthermore, the fact that the rules on composing the lists took only partial account of the (low) number of votes gained by candidates, as well as the fact that candidates who had already been elected to other offices were not allowed to run, may have created some discontent among the party's mid-level elites who saw their career prospects damaged by the process. That being said, such discontent is unlikely to be disruptive for the party as long as its electoral success guarantees a steady stream of career opportunities and most M5S candidates and representatives realize that in the medium term they have more to lose than to gain by criticizing the leadership – not least due to the Draconian codes of conducts that they had to subscribe to as primary candidates – and deserting the party.

With respect to external goals, the characteristics of the process made it impossible by definition to attract new supporters and sympathizers, and as a result, participation to both the – exceedingly short – primary campaigns and votes was very limited. This was in all likelihood a conscious choice by the M5S leadership and depended on the particular regulatory arrangements that regulated the primaries, as we have shown in this chapter, rather than inherent characteristics of any online primaries. A primary process that allowed a reasonable time for candidates to campaign, that enabled supporters and sympathizers to enrol to vote right until ballots were cast and possibly to also support new candidacies, could have certainly attracted wide audiences and lively citizen engagement, especially if it had been adequately propagated through the movement and its leader’s widely popular web presence. However, these goals took a back seat in favour of guaranteeing party unity and ensuring that the process was expedite and, overall, devoid of drama and conflict—aspects that would have certainly attracted media coverage, but most likely in ways that did not suit the party’s goals and interests. Moreover, our findings about the primary candidates’ online presence suggest that there were very few “digital influencers” among them and that, far from being able to replicate in any way Grillo’s online hyper-activity and widespread success, M5S’s candidates regarded their leader as a megaphone to be listened, leaving him the whole responsibility of the party’s digital outreach. Far from being a burden, this quasi-monopoly consolidated the centrality of the party leadership even as it formally decentralized decision-making power in the selection of parliamentary candidates. However, one of the external goals of the primaries was fully achieved to the extent that its outcomes ensured that the M5S’s parliamentary delegation was starkly different from that of all the other parties in ways that were consistent with its campaign message and political positioning, particularly with respect to gender and age.

The prioritization of internal over external goals – and the lack of transparency and, one would argue, democratic legitimacy of the outcomes of the process that result from these choices – suggest that the strategy and functioning of the M5S have more in common with those of most political parties than its “anti-party” rhetoric would suggest. As all parties must confront conflicts and trade-offs between their different “faces” and organizational goals, it is not surprising that the M5S had to develop its own strategies in order to achieve a balance in its internal organization. As Schattschneider emphasized more than half a century ago, “The na-

ture of the nominating process determines the nature of the party; he who can make the nominations is the owner of the party.” (Schattschneider 1942, 64, quoted in Rahat and Hazan 2010, 8). Just as the importance of candidate selection methods for the identity and functioning of the M5S was confirmed by our analysis, the ways these processes will evolve in the future, as well as those conflicts and power struggles that such processes both determine and result from, will be crucial to understand the development of this party.

NOTES

1. In accordance with Italian academic conventions, we specify that Cristian Vaccari wrote the sections titled “Introduction” and “Conclusions”, Lorenzo Mosca wrote the sections titled “The rules of the game”, “The outcomes of the online primaries”, “M5S’s elected representatives compared to other parties” and “An assessment of online primaries for the European elections of May 2014”, and Augusto Valeriani wrote the section titled “Candidates’ presence and popularity on social media”.
2. For instance, in May 2013 Eurobarometer data showed that only 7% of Italians claimed to trust political parties: only in austerity-prostrated Greece, Slovenia, and Spain was the percentage lower. Across the whole European Union the percentage was a rather somber 16%. See http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/index_en.cfm (accessed 14 April 2014).
3. In the 2008 elections its statute was already in place, but an exception was made because these were snap elections called three years ahead of schedule and only two months before the vote, so that there was not enough time to organize primaries in advance of polling day.
4. See Movimento Cinque Stelle (2013a).
5. The voting procedure was subject to a series of technical problems: no user with an email account on gmail.com received the message from the staff inviting them to vote, while some users who had regularly registered on the blog complained that they had not been recognised by the online system, which meant that they could not log in and vote. Others stated they could even vote twice or more.
6. On 6 December, after the primaries had been concluded, Grillo simply stated on his blog (Grillo, 2012a) that ‘votes were around 95,000’. The lack of information on the exact number of participants induced groups of activists to count votes at the district level and make them available through a Facebook group. On 18 December, Grillo provided aggregate data on the overall number of participants in the election.
7. See Grillo, 2012b.
8. However, the number of those entitled to vote on the blog has increased over time to reach 85,408 users.
9. In some cases collection of data regarding candidates’ activity and connections on social media was not pos-

sible, mainly due to privacy settings of their accounts. Numbers and averages values presented in the chapter and reported in Table 3 refer to the cases we have been able to analyse.

10. http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2014/03/31/news/europee_primo_voto_in_rete_per_candidati_m5s-82426633
11. www.huffingtonpost.it/2014/03/31/europee-m5s-vip-portaborse-parenti_n_5063470.html
12. See footnote n. 10.
13. www.lastampa.it/2014/04/01/italia/politica/ecco-i-primi-candidati-mscelti-dalla-rete-per-le-europee-aucTUWvpXIXmNkPB8Yx3eN/pagina.html
14. See Grillo 2014a.
15. See Grillo 2014b.
16. www.repubblica.it/politica/2013/06/20/news/la_diaspora_dei_deputati_grillini-61519844

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Internal Democracy and Candidate Selection The Free Voters, the Alternative for Germany and the Pirate Party

Carsten Koschmieder

I. INTRODUCTION

Newly formed anti-party parties are often caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, they are built around one prominent or charismatic leading figure who is pulling all the strings. On the other hand, they criticise existing parties for their lack of internal democracy, the party whip and obedient Members of Parliament. Although all three German parties in question – the Free Voters, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and the Pirate Party – are clearly anti-party parties, they are very diverse when it comes to the level of internal democracy within them. This article analyses that level of internal democracy in each of the parties. The focus lies on the way in which the candidates for the parliamentary election in 2013 and for the European elections in 2014 have been selected. Therefore, the next chapter outlines the legal framework which all German parties have to abide by. Then, all three parties are analysed in distinct chapters. In the end, a conclusion is drawn.

2. THE FRAMEWORK

The most important legal framework for parties in Germany is the very strict German Law on Parties.¹ It outlines clear rules both for internal democracy and for the way candidates have to be selected (cf. e.g. Morlok 2013, Merten 2007). Like many regulations in the Federal Republic, one of its purposes is to prevent Germany from ever becoming a dictatorship again. Thus, it sets very strict rules for internal democracy to prevent one person or a small group of persons from taking over and dictating the party. These rules can even be enforced by regular German

courts. They can, for example, make the party repeat an internal election if they rule that it was manipulated. Furthermore, parties are not allowed to expulse members arbitrarily, thus hindering party leaders from getting rid of internal opposition easily. It is a difficult process to even expel one single member, and German parties are obliged to have their own judicative (cf. Morlok 2013: 254). Furthermore, in the end, that process can, again, be contested in regular courts. Moreover, the German Law on Parties defines that the party convention has to be the highest body of the party. It also lays down clear rules on such a convention. For instance, a party convention has to meet at least every other year. It can be held as a general meeting of all party members, but in most parties, it is an assembly of delegates. These delegates also have to be elected at least every other year. Although members of the executive committee can be “ex officio” delegates – which means that they are delegates without being elected, but just because they are members of the executive committee –, these “ex officio” delegates may never have more than one fifth of the vote. This is, again, to prevent the party leaders from accumulating too much influence (cf. Zeuner 1969: 57-59). Basically, all important decisions concerning the party have to be made at the party convention. It is the only body able to amend or to alter the party platform and the charter; it decides on the membership fees, and it is the only one to determine the dissolution of the party. Party leaders and all members of the executive committee have to be elected by the party convention at least every other year. And these elections have to be held according to democratic standards: for example, every candidate, even a renegade, has to get enough time to present himself to the convention (cf. Morlok 2013: 254), and the elections themselves have to be held secretly to prevent party leaders from exerting pressure on the delegates. Furthermore, all lists of candidates for the federal elections for every German State are elected at the respective regional party convention.² For the European elections, the list of candidates also has to be elected at the party convention on the federal level.

These are the rules which all German parties have to abide by. In reality, of course, they do have some elbow room within the given limits. The next chapters aim at exposing how the different anti-party parties make use of this autonomy.

3. THE FREE VOTERS

The chapter on internal democracy and candidate selection within the “Free Voters” is a brief one for two reasons. Firstly, the party did not play any important role in the recent election, was barely visible during the election campaign, and only received one per cent of the votes (cf. Niedermayer 2014b: 86-88).³ Recent opinion polls and the current political situation in Germany give no impression that they will fare any better in the European elections. Secondly, the Free Voters are the least interesting of the three parties in question when it comes to internal democracy because they do not differ much from other parties.

The most important difference derives from the fact that the “Free Voters” originated from many diverse local and regional groups (cf. Holtmann 2012). Thus, the organisation is rather weak at the national level, and the party leaders do not have much influence on regional associations. They see themselves as more or less independent and consider politics at the local level as most important, and some groups are not at all interested in federal elections and did not want to participate in the first place (cf. Niedermayer 2013a: 650). Among those diverse groups, the Bavarian Free Voters are more successful. In 2008, they entered the Bavarian State Parliament. Thus, they became not only more widely known and attracted more members, but they also increased their financial resources. Furthermore, they are better organised than other state associations of the Free Voters. Consequently, the Bavarian Free Voters have disproportionate influence on the federal level. Moreover, the Bavarian party leader, Hubert Aiwanger, is also the leader of the national party organisation. As one of the few publicly known figures and supported by the most resourceful regional branch, he has some influence within the party. Nevertheless, in sum this means that the party has very weak leadership on the national level, and the regional associations are more or less independent.

4. THE ALTERNATIVE FOR GERMANY

When it comes to internal democracy, the newly established party “Alternative for Germany” is far more interesting. Since the AfD has been founded only shortly before the federal elections, it had to deal with a special situation, a special framework that heavily influenced the way in-

ternal democracy had been practiced. This situation will be analysed at first in this chapter.

The Alternative for Germany was founded in February 2013, only a good six months before the elections for the Bundestag took place. It was founded to participate in these elections. All resources and all the steps the party took were focussed on these federal elections – for which they had little time to prepare. The organisational structure had to be established, the regional branches had to be founded, a party platform and an election manifesto had to be written and to be approved, the candidates for the election had to be elected, and as a new party, the AfD needed to collect thousands of signatures to be allowed to participate in the elections (cf. Niedermayer 2014a). These were huge tasks in little time for the party. The leaders had a clear strategy on how to manage all the preparations and on how to succeed in the elections. And they planned to go through with it as they saw fit – too much internal democracy was seen as obstructive to the greater good. Furthermore, the prominent telegenic leader Bernd Lucke is often seen on television and widely associated with the party's main issue in public – that makes him very powerful within the party. To sum up, these are not the best conditions for internal democracy. These are, in fact, very bad conditions.

But is the reality within the party really that bad? On the federal level, the party had held only one party conference prior to the elections, the conference in which it was founded. This conference was orchestrated perfectly by the party leaders to prevent anything unexpected and unwanted from happening. While the party elite was able to establish and coordinate, the rank and file party members did not even know each other and, thus, had no chance to organise or articulate in any way before the conference. Thus, they were, for example, not able to make any proposals or rally support for any changes of the party platform. This platform was consequently written exclusively by the party leaders and passed at the conference en bloc without any discussion and without any alternative suggestions. The programme as a whole might have found a consensus among the delegates, but of course, individual points might have been contested. This was hindered by the careful planning of the party leaders. Furthermore, they ensured that the platform remained the way they wanted it to be by introducing the rule that a majority of seventy-five per cent is needed to change anything. Lastly, by not holding another party conference in 2013, the party leaders hindered any possible changes. In sum, although they followed the German Law on Parties to

the letter, the party elite did everything possible to prevent any real internal democracy or any changes to its plan.

Between the first party conference and the federal elections, all important strategic decisions have been made by the executive committee. Although in most parties the executive committee does make more or less important decisions between the party conventions, this is by far more substantial for a newly founded party such as the AfD: There simply have been a lot more important long-term decisions than it is usually the case. For example, it was uncertain from the beginning whether the AfD would – alongside its economic liberalism – establish itself as a conservative, nationalist or even right-wing populist party. All these opinions could be found within the party, struggling to influence the party in the respective direction (cf. Häusler 2013, Koschmieder 2013). Those trying to prevent the AfD from becoming a right-wing populist party wanted to hinder members of other German right-wing populist and right-wing extremist parties to join the AfD. In this conflict, it was the party's executive committee that decided who was allowed to enter and who was not, heavily influencing the mixture of the rank and file party members and, thus, the development of the party in that essential matter. Another, however related, example is that because the party platform is very vague and very short, there are many areas in which the party did not have anything decided yet. Instead of waiting until a consensus was reached among the members, the party leaders simply decided where the AfD should position itself in these fields. Strategically, this is doubtlessly useful, but when one looks at internal democracy, this is a questionable decision. Altogether, the executive committee had a severe influence not only on short-term or strategic decisions, but on the long-term development of the party's very essence. Thus, to sum up, prior to the federal elections, it seemed as if the party leaders founded the party, and now it was theirs. You were welcome to join up, but you were not expected to change anything.

In the forefront of the European elections, however, the party elite tried to include the growing party base in the development of the manifesto. In the end of a process including many regional conferences, all party members were asked to vote on the final version of the program. The text was divided into small sections. For most sections, the members could only decide whether they approved the paragraph or not, but for some sections, there were actually two or sometimes even three, contradicting, statements to choose from. Thousands of party members participated (cf. Litschko 2014). Although this was a top-down process and

hardly any controversial topic has been touched, it is nevertheless a huge improvement with regard to internal democracy.

Another important issue for internal democracy is the way the parties elect their candidates for public offices, not least because after entering parliament, these candidates are part of the party elite themselves. It is, again, important to keep in mind that the lists of candidates for the federal elections had to be in order shortly after the AfD was founded to meet the official deadline. Thus, there was a great pressure of time. On the other hand, there was pressure to proceed accurately and without making any formal mistake because that could have forced the party to repeat the whole process. And lacking the time, this could have hindered the party's participation in the elections.

Being new to a new party, most rank and file members only knew the party leaders and other prominent figures. They could not know the nameless challengers who stood against leading party members. This is of course the case in every party (cf. Zeuner 1969), but usually, those challengers could build up a network of supporters or campaign within the party to convince people of them. In the short time given in this case, this was impossible. Consequently, it was no surprise that in all States, prominent party leaders have been elected for the top positions on the lists. Unknown candidates without any support by the party elite did not make it anywhere. Furthermore, the federal party leaders wielded strong influence on the elections in the different States. Their favoured candidates had a clear advantage, and sometimes, they virtually decided who had to be the front runner. For example, the leaders of the regional association in Berlin were fighting each other, trying to drive their adversaries out of the party (Leber 2013a). Of course, they could not agree on a list of candidates. Hence, the executive committee of the federal party organisation decided to send in Joachim Starbatty, a retired Professor and one of the most prominent figures in the party. He was elected as front runner for Berlin despite the fact that he came from southern Germany and had nothing to do with the Berlin regional association and absolutely no power base there (Leber 2013b).

Not unusual for a new, promising party, the positions on the party lists were vigorously contested. Apart from the party elite, there were no favourites. In established parties, there are "natural candidates", usually composing of the incumbents, some local leaders, a prominent member of the State parliament and the favourite of the party's youth organisation. The AfD, however, lacked most of these "natural candidates",

and often local leaders did not have enough time to consolidate their position. Thus, whereas in established parties, mostly only two or three people run for one position, there were often dozens running in the AfD – to become a member of parliament seemed very attractive to many. Of course, the regional party leaders often tried to secure promising positions for themselves. Sometimes, they regarded every method as acceptable. For example, in Bavaria, the responsible State authorities ruled that the process of candidate selection in the AfD had been manipulated by the regional leaders. Consequently, they had to repeat the whole election (cf. Glas 2013). As another example, in Brandenburg, a lot of new members had not been invited to the party conference, and some who came were not allowed to vote. Many accused the regional leaders of deliberately manipulating the party convention in order to get elected (cf. Wittig 2013).

In sum, although the process of electing the lists of candidates was formally democratic, the actual realisation lacked many basal requirements of real democracy. This is, on the one hand, partly explainable – and excusable – by the circumstances: a new party needed to elect these lists very quickly. But on the other hand, this is another hint for the overall deduction that the AfD is the project of an elite with a defined strategy – too much interference of participating party members is not welcome. Thus, one has to draw the conclusion that the AfD is having problems with internal democracy so far, although there are, as mentioned, signs of improvement.

5. THE PIRATE PARTY

The last party dealt with in this article is the most interesting one when it comes to internal democracy: the German Pirate Party. As part of their culture, the Pirates have a very flat hierarchy, and many think that this is one of the reasons for the recent success of the party (Baringhorst/Yang 2012). Thus, they value it greatly. In the following chapters several implications for internal democracy resulting from this general attitude will be discussed: at first the powerless position of the party leaders and the influence of ordinary party members, secondly the interesting way party conferences are organised, and thirdly the way in which lists of candidates are elected. Then, the article will analyse the organization's problems and will discuss one interesting proposal to deal with them.

5.1 Party leaders and ordinary members

In the Pirate Party, party leaders are rather powerless. There is a general mistrust within the party towards professional politicians. Thus, the party leaders are expected to work voluntarily, without being paid or compensated, and preferably as a side job. Of course, the time these leaders can spend working for the party in this way is limited, weakening their position. Often, they do not stand for re-election because they are exhausted by the hard work or because they can no longer afford not to earn money from a paid job. This fluctuation also hinders one party leader from gaining too much influence. But not only the leaders' resources are limited: there is also almost no staff working for the party, consequently there is no bureaucracy for the leaders to control. So, structurally, the leaders' position is weak (cf. Niedermayer 2013b).

There is not only mistrust towards professional politicians, but also towards party leaders in general within the Pirate Party. This political culture leads to many pirates expecting the party leaders only to administer the paperwork, but not to make any decisions. Although some party members consider this as a problem, there are enough rank and file members who will criticise every political decision the leaders make. They will usually do it openly, and they will use very harsh and impolite, often abusive language. Especially social media are used to "shitstorm" a party leader if one disagrees with what he says or does. Of course, a party leader who is permanently insulted by his own party members is automatically seen as weak. Furthermore, the leaders of the Pirate Party often hesitate about making proposals because they fear the reaction – and are not expecting too much approval anyway.

Moreover, leaders in the Pirate Party are never consensus candidates. In other parties, the different groups will come together and more or less agree on a set of candidates who then have a high level of acceptance. In the Pirate Party, however, this is seen as intransparent horse-trading, and, officially, such different groups or wings of the party do not even exist at all. Thus, many candidates stand for one office, and while one wins in the end, many others lose, and their supporters are unlikely to unconditionally support the winner.

Another fact obstructing powerful party leaders is that the party is far from being unified. Many different groups disagree on fundamental questions concerning the future of the party. Furthermore, the regional associations are important, very diverse – and quite independent. Lead-

ers of the federal party association are often attacked and criticised by members of the executive committees from local branches, and their word carries little weight on the State level or on the local level.

If the party leaders have much less power than in other parties, then it must be the rank and file members who are more influential than usual. At first glance, this is undoubtedly true. Meetings of all executive committees are open to the public and the minutes of the meetings are published online, giving members the opportunity to control the leaders. Election campaigns, the design of posters, the organisation of events or the formation of a working group for a specific topic – all these things can not only be heavily influenced by party members, often the very initiative comes from the party base, and the party elite has nothing to do with it at all. Most important when analysing the influence of ordinary party members, however, is to take a look at how the party conferences are organised.

5.2 Party conferences

As mentioned above, the party conference is the most important institution in a German party. The Pirate Party has an interesting feature: party conferences are always general meetings. That means that every member that shows up can participate as if he were a delegate. Everyone can contribute to the debates, call for a change of the rules of procedure, and vote. This is done twice a year for two days. The whole conference is hardly structured by the party leaders or anyone else, and even the little structure it has is often overthrown suddenly. The leaders often do not speak at all, or just welcome the members, whereas in other parties, the speech of the leader is seen as the highlight of the whole event. Even more, the party leaders rarely file motions. Rank and file party members are working, sometimes alone, often together in groups or online, on proposals for the conference. Consequently, the party manifesto approved on such a conference is often a patchwork, lacking a leitmotif. Sometimes, some of the points in the manifesto contradict one another, or less important subjects are largely oversized. Voters are, thus, unable to see the message the party wants to distribute, reducing its chances in the election (cf. Koschmieder/Niedermayer 2015). Moreover, there are usually more motions than there can be discussed at one party conference. This is due to the unorganised, unstructured, very chaotic and time-consuming way in which these conferences function. But this article does not look at ef-

fectiveness, but at internal democracy – and the way these conferences are organised does look very democratic. But if one takes a closer look, several flaws of that concept become clear – that make it in fact less democratic.

Firstly, the attendance depends on the location. If the party conference is held in the south of Germany, many more members of the southern States will participate. Because the party is so diverse, this will make a difference, especially if, for example, the party leader is to be elected. The local candidate obviously has a clear advantage because his supporters can easily participate. The second problem is that many groups are not able to participate. Those with small children, for example, those with relatives in need, those with not enough money, those working on weekends – all these groups are consequently underrepresented. Assuming that different social groups have different interests and desires, this can be seen as a problem regarding internal democracy. One might argue that those with small children cannot participate in other parties either, but at least there they could appoint one representative to stand up for them. A third, more practical problem is that because everyone can file a motion and no one knows which motions will be discussed and decided about, no participant is able to carefully read these hundreds of pages. While representatives could prepare, most of the rank and file members are simply left alone with their lack of knowledge. Thus, sometimes ridiculous things happen at these conferences: after accepting a motion with a great majority, someone discovers a word or a phrase in it that many Pirates dislike, but that no one noticed before. Then, the vote is repeated and the motion rejected after all. The last problem for internal democracy mentioned here is the complex voting system the Pirates use. Still many rank and file members have difficulties to understand it. This leads to unintended results, because not everybody knows how to support their candidate best. Sometimes the Pirates use the standard approval voting, which is not overly complicated, but sometimes they use the Schulze-Method in which every voter can give between -10 and +10 points to every single candidate. These points are then not simply added, but it is checked which candidate wins against which competitor. Without vast knowledge in IT and mathematics, the outcome cannot be reconstructed. Voting strategically and supporting one specific candidate is very complicated and requires respective knowledge, limiting this possibility to a small group.

To sum up, there lie many problems for the realisation of internal democracy in this interesting approach. Before talking about the prom-

ising solutions the Pirates offer, the next chapter will deal with how the lists of candidates are elected at these conferences.

5.3 *Election of candidates*

The described problems at the party conference are of course particularly severe when it comes to the election of candidates. The lists for State or federal elections are, as mentioned, always determined at such party conferences. As mentioned above, there are always many candidates, often dozens, for the different party lists. In North-Rhine-Westphalia, the party had to arrange a completely new party conference because there was not enough time for all the candidates even to only present themselves on one weekend. One reason is that, as in the AfD, there are no (or only a few) “natural” candidates in such a young party, for example no incumbents who could claim places on such a list. Furthermore, as mentioned, the party leaders are not very powerful. Thus, they often do not even try to secure places on the lists – probably, most of the time they would not succeed anyway. Party leaders or other prominent figures are often defeated by members who claim to be simple Pirates from the party base. For example, the well-known Anke Domscheit-Berg, leader of the Brandenburg regional association, often seen on television, and wife of the famous WikiLeaks activist Daniel Domscheit-Berg, lost against an unknown local Pirate and did not get a promising place on the list for the federal elections (Berliner Morgenpost 2012). As mentioned, again, there is a huge regional bias within the greater German States, depending on where in the specific State the conference is being held. The last mentionable point concerning the selection of candidates is the extensive question-and-answer time that party tradition holds. Prior to an election, all candidates – if able – meet with rank and file members, answering questions. These questions are often rude and aggressive – it is called “barbecuing the candidates”. On these occasions, especially the party elite is asked harsh questions. Again, the Pirates do not see this as impolite, but as an expression of their grassroots democracy.

For the actual election process, all potential candidates are given at least a few minutes to present themselves. After each presentation, the audience votes whether or not the candidate should be asked some questions. This often saves a lot of time: When electing the list of candidates for the European elections at the party conference in Bochum in January 2014, less than half the candidates that presented themselves were approved and

asked questions later. The questions are either drawn, or those asking the questions are allotted. Often, also at the party conference itself, the questions are rude and aggressive – or mocking the candidate or the whole process. Subsequently, all members vote for their preferred candidates. The different voting systems to determine the order of the candidates have already been explained above. It is important to mention, however, that regardless of the voting system, each candidate has to get the approval of more than fifty per cent of the attending members in order to enter the list at all. For the European elections, sixty-two candidates presented themselves. Only twelve finally made it on the list. But because all of the sixty-two candidates had ten minutes for their initial speech, the whole process took many hours, leaving no time to discuss the manifesto for that election (cf. Koschmieder/Niedermayer 2015).

So far, it should be clear that the Pirate Party is very much interested in internal democracy, but that several problems derive from the unconventional methods they have developed. The final chapter will outline an interesting way of dealing with these problems.

5.4 *The Standing General Meeting*

Three ways of dealing with these problems are discussed within the party. The first idea is to keep everything as it is now, accepting the flaws for the greater good. For example, the regional bias is seen as a necessary evil if one wants to allow everyone to participate. Or, another example, many argue that a self-contradicting patchwork platform gradually improved by rank and file members is by far better than a monolithic platform dictated by the party elite. While some say the Pirate Party should stick to its ideals out of principle, others even argue that the strength of the party derives from this chaotic structure, and that voters find this approach appealing (e.g. Unterburger 2014). However, with the continuing lack of success of the party and the ongoing quarrels, those supporting this first idea are diminishing.

The second idea is to become a “normal” party – with delegates on party conferences, with party leaders acting as political leaders instead of an administration, with a well-written, coherent manifesto prepared by the party elite, and with different organised wings within the party (e.g. Götze 2014). While most Pirates support this development to some extent, only few want to lose the party’s uniqueness completely by turning into a “normal” party.

The third (and the most interesting) idea, however, is to try something completely new: a virtual party conference, the so-called “standing general meeting”. “Standing general meeting” means that every member can participate in the party conference as before. But this time, it is a virtual party conference, and people participate via the internet. Theoretically, no delegates are needed because there are no obstacles for people to participate themselves. In some models, however, delegation is possible: if one does not wish to participate this week, one can delegate one’s right to vote to someone else. The advantage of the “standing general meeting” is that everybody is able to participate, regardless of place or time at hand. Therefore, this institution solves the above mentioned problem that a party conference without delegates sounds more democratic, but in fact is not because many people are not able to participate. Moreover, it solves another severe problem the Pirate party has: because this meeting never has to end, all actual problems the party has can be solved, all pressing decisions can be made, and all the motions which are currently not discussed due to time limitations at the party conference could be discussed. In theory, the party members who participate in the “standing general meeting” using respective software can decide about the party manifesto, can elect new party leaders, decide whether the party should form a coalition government, and can even demand that the party’s members of parliament vote Yes for a certain bill, for example. Again, every member is allowed to file a motion for this party conference. If a certain number of other Pirates approve this motion, it enters the next stage. There, it is discussed, and suggestions for amendments can be made. Finally, a vote takes place in which every party member has one vote. It is, however, possible to give one’s suffrage to another party member, who then votes on one’s behalf – or gives the two suffrages to another member (cf. Buck 2012).

This interesting idea and possible solution to many of the Pirate Party’s problems concerning internal democracy cannot be found in the party’s reality yet. In some German States, a very weak version has been established in which all party members can decide on policy papers and statements. On important issues, they can only make suggestions, for example about what the party should write in its manifesto. New leaders or other office-holders cannot be voted for online.⁴ Lately, other local branches of the Pirate Party experimented with more extensive versions of an online party conference. In Berlin, for example, the newly established “standing general meeting” allows for binding decisions about the par-

ty platform and the manifesto.⁵ But although the decision to introduce this institution has been made, it has yet to be implemented (cf. Heiser 2014). On the federal level, not even a pared-down version has been implemented or decided at all.⁶

There are several reasons why this appealing solution has not been tested yet. On the one hand, it is not at all certain that the very strict German Law on Parties allows such an innovation. Legal experts have published diverging statements on that subject, but as long as it is not introduced and taken to court afterwards, one cannot be sure (cf. Morlok/Bäcker 2013: 19-21, Robbe/Tsesis 2011). But on the other hand, the “standing general meeting” has some flaws in itself – that may be the reason why it has not really been introduced yet. Firstly, the software used for the conference can easily be hacked and manipulated. If the vote is secret, it is impossible to check whether the results are accurate. The only solution to that problem is that every voter can be identified by his real name and his voting behaviour is visible to everyone. But then, secondly, many are opposed to open voting as they fear social pressure or consequences resulting from “wrong” voting behaviour. Additionally, some votes have to be secret due to the German law on parties. The third problem is that candidates need to present themselves in person. If a party chairman is to be elected, the members want to meet him personally and listen to his speech. And in general, the real-life contact of party members from different areas on party conferences is important for any party. They are, after all, not only groups which aim at the same political goals, but also social entities. At party conventions, many important things happen outside of the assembly hall, in the evening, during breaks. Politics consists of people meeting and talking to each other (cf. Hensel/Klecha 2013: 65-67).

For all these reasons, the opposition against such a “standing general meeting” is still strong. But it is undoubtedly a very interesting and promising proposal, and it is important to monitor how it will work in the Pirate Party’s branches in different German States in the future. Apart from that, the Pirate Party has made some remarkable attempts to ensure and to increase internal democracy. However, they have not yet found a solution to the problems that come with extensive participation.

NOTES

1. The German Law on Parties can be accessed online at http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/aufgaben/rechtsgrundlagen/pg_pdf.pdf (13.03.2014).
2. For the German federal elections, there have to be separate lists of candidates for every German State.
3. See the chapter by Niedermayer and Koschmieder about the elections for further details.
4. The web page of the branch in the German State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, for example, documents the “standing general meeting” there. It was established in 2012. In 2013, a motion to allow the “standing general meeting” binding decisions about the party platform failed. See http://wiki.piratenpartei.de/MV:St%C3%A4ndige_Mitgliederversammlung (13.03.2014).
5. The motion approved at the party conference in Berlin on the 1st March 2014 can be accessed online at http://wiki.piratenpartei.de/BE:Parteitag/2014.1/Antragskommission/Antragsportal/Satzungs%C3%A4nderungsantrag_-_004 (14.03.2014).
6. At the party conference in Neumarkt in spring 2013, all motions for a standing general meeting have been rejected after a long and heated debate. A proposal for a revised version has not even been discussed neither in Bremen in December 2013 nor in Bochum in January 2014 (cf. Koschmieder/Niedermayer 2015).

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ANTI-PARTY SENTIMENT
AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE PARTY SYSTEM

The Italian Party System and the Anti-Party Challenge

Filippo Tronconi

The sudden and unexpected rise of the Movimento 5 Stelle (Five Star Movement) in the 2013 general elections has deeply impressed the Italian and international public opinion. A populist anti-party movement at its first participation in a national electoral competition has obtained some nine million votes. Against all reasonable expectations, its leader, the comedian Beppe Grillo, and its elected representatives (109 Deputies and 54 Senators without any previous political experience) have become protagonist of the Italian political scenario. Although certainly surprising in its extent, the success of the M5S is not unprecedented. Indeed, the Italian political system has already demonstrated to be definitely permeable to populist allurements. Throughout the republican period, more or less durable anti-party calls have bewitched large shares of the Italian society.

In the following pages we will review the most relevant of such populist anti-party challenges, placing them in the context of an evolving party system. From Guglielmo Giannini's Uomo Qualunque to the M5S, passing through the Partito Radicale, the Lega Nord and Forza Italia. Each of these subjects expresses a widespread distrust and malaise among the Italian people, that more and more frequently has exploded into a generalised protest against the whole political establishment.

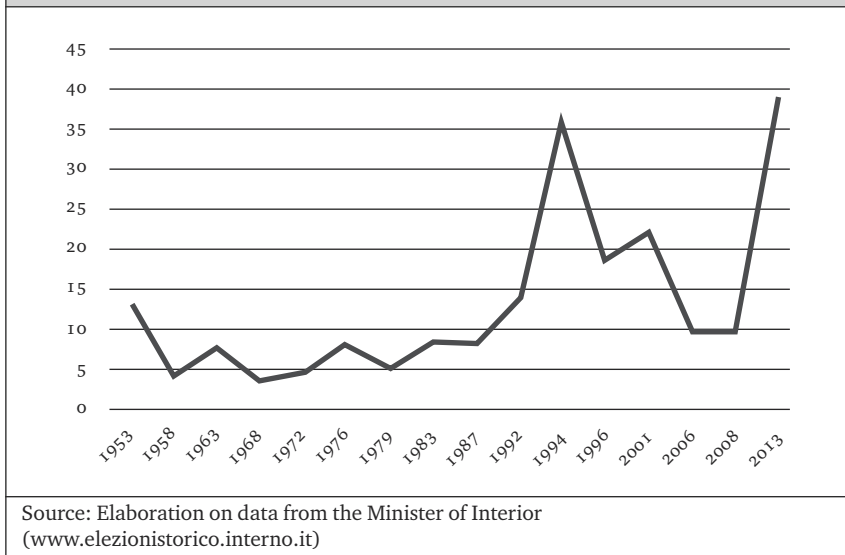
I. THE 1948 PARTY SYSTEM: CLEAVAGES, SUBCULTURAL IDENTITIES AND STABILITY

In 1948 the first parliamentary elections after the fall of the fascist dictatorship were held. The party system that emerged in that occasion had several elements of continuity with the pre-fascist party system as well as relevant elements of rupture. The main parties emerging in the 1948

elections were already active in 1921 (the Communist and the Socialist Party) or represented an ideal legacy of pre-existing parties (the Liberal Party and most notably the Christian Democrats, heirs of the Popular Party), but their relative electoral weight had profoundly changed. While the Liberals had become a marginal political force, the Christian Democrats obtained a plurality of votes and a majority of seats in the first legislative term, posing the foundations for a durable dominant position that would last until the beginning of the 1990s. On the left side, the Communist and Socialist Party jointly contested the founding elections under the label of the Popular Front, hoping to become the most voted list. While the Front faced a clear defeat, the Communist Party was successful in its challenge to assume the hegemony of the leftist camp: in the first legislature of the republican Chamber of Deputies the Communist Party had 126 representatives whereas the Socialists elected only 53 deputies.

The shape of the 1948 party system, which was bound to remain fundamentally unchanged until the eighties, was determined by the politicisation of two social cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). The religious cleavage was a particularly deep one, given the conflicts between the Italian State and the Papal States during and after the process of political unification of Italy. The Christian Democracy was the most obvious advocate of the influence of the Catholic Church – and Catholic values in general – in the political arena, while all the other parties, with many nuances, positioned themselves on the secular side. The class cleavage was also relevant, and only partially overlapped with the religious one (Corbetta 2006; Maraffi et al. 2010). The Catholic Church succeeded in fact in keeping an influence on the working class, at least in some areas of the country. The Christian Democrats, as a consequence, were able to attract support from all social classes. The Socialist and Communist parties, on the other hand, were the main champions of the working class. A third cleavage, the territorial one¹, has demonstrated a surprising persistence: it dates back to the pre-fascist period and will even survive the breakdown of the party system in the nineties (Diamanti 2003). It is sufficient to compare the map of relative strengths of the Christian Democrats and the Popular Front in 1948 with the map of vote percentages of the Socialists and the Popular Party in 1919 to find an astonishing similarity (Corbetta e Piretti 2009). The “red belt”, including the regions of Emilia-Romagna, Toscana and Umbria, and part of Liguria and Marche, displaying a strong and consistent support for the Front in 1948 had already been the place of the original development and spread of the socialist movement (be-

Figure 1. Index of volatility (Chamber of Deputies, 1953-2013)



yond the big industrial cities of Milan and Turin). Analogously, the North-east (the “white zone”: Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Trentino, the eastern areas of Lombardy) and some areas of Piedmont, the Christian Democrats’ strongholds in 1948 and afterwards, had already been the areas where the Popular Party obtained its best performances between 1919 and 1924.

Broadly speaking, four electoral areas could be identified, reflecting four different political cultures: 1) *the industrial Northwest*, including the cities of Milan and Turin, where the act of voting is mainly based on individual (and volatile) judgements on government performances; 2) the *Red belt* of central regions and 3) the White area of the north-east, where electoral loyalties are mainly driven by identifications with the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats (and the Catholic Church) respectively; and finally 4) the *Mezzogiorno*, where clientelistic relations are widespread and individual bonds between voters and local political leaders have a strong influence on voting behaviours (Parisi and Pasquino 1977). This determines the existence of two unstable and electorally competitive areas (the Northwest and the Mezzogiorno), and two non-competitive areas characterised by predominant parties (the Christian Democrats in the White area, the Communist Party in the Red belt).

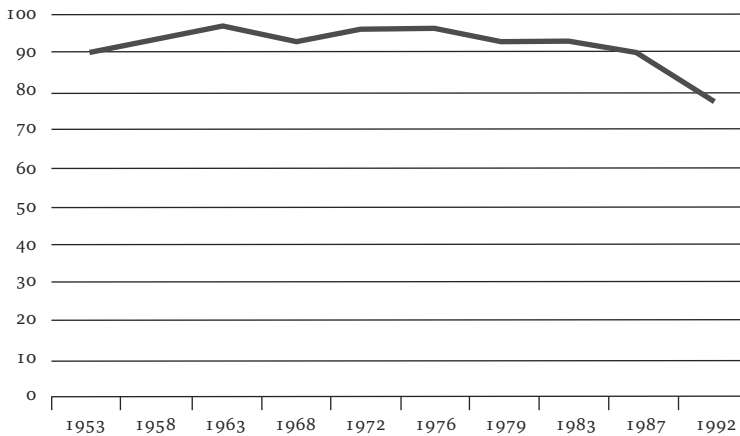
As a result of these underlying cleavages, the Italian party system was characterized by an unusual stability in electoral alignments and in the relative strength of the main parties. Figure 1 describes the trend of electoral volatility. Values remain well below 10 in all elections from 1953 to 1987 and peak in 1994 and 2013, as we will discuss below.

Although the scenario was dominated by the competition between the two main actors (the DC and the PCI), also small parties have been able to survive. This is due in the first place to the electoral rules. Between 1948 and 1992 the Chamber of deputies was elected through an open-list proportional representation system without any legal threshold. Seats were initially allocated in 32 large constituencies (19.7 deputies on average) with the method of the so-called Imperiali quota. As not all seats were allocated in this first distribution, rests were subsequently reallocated within a virtual national district among lists reaching at least a full quota within a local district. This electoral system guaranteed an almost perfect proportionality in the allocation of seats, and an implicit threshold normally below 1% of the votes. The Senate was elected through a peculiar plurality system, where the threshold required for being elected was as high as 65% of the votes. Since almost no one reached that threshold, votes were subsequently reallocated on a proportional basis (with D'Hondt method) within 20 regional constituencies. This made the electoral system of the Senate *de facto* similar to the one adopted for the Lower Chamber, and led to a distribution of seats that was normally similar in the two branches of the Parliament.

Beyond the Communist and Socialist parties and the Christian democrats, three small centrist parties took advantage of these very low electoral thresholds. The Social Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the Liberal Party were always able to cultivate their share of consensus and to gain representation. On the right end of the political space, also a neo-fascist party, the Social Movement, constantly gained representation since the founding elections.

The Italian party system born in 1948 has been labelled as “imperfect bipartitism” (Galli 1966) stressing the fact that one of the two main competitors (the PCI) was permanently excluded from government, on the basis of its loyalty to the Soviet Union. Symmetrically, the Christian Democrats have uninterruptedly been the main (or sole) party in government from 1946 to 1993, and have always occupied the office of Prime Minister until 1981. Another influential definition has been proposed by Giovanni Sartori (1976), who described Italy as a case of “polarized pluralism”. This

Figure 2. Shares of votes to the founding parties
(Chamber of Deputies, 1953-1992)



Source: Elaboration on data from the Minister of Interior
(www.elezionistorico.interno.it)

type of party system is characterised by the presence of a party occupying the centre of the political space (The DC) and two anti-system parties at the two opposite poles (the MSI and the PCI in the Italian case). Given this structure, alternation in power is *de facto* impossible, and the two anti-system parties, permanently relegated to an opposition role, have strong incentives to radicalise their political manifestos in order to keep extreme voters loyal, determining a centrifugal dynamics of competition.

The convergence of the above mentioned factors (the ability of parties to encapsulate voters' loyalties, the stability of voters' preferences, lack of alternation in power) contributed to create a very stable system, where the entry of new parties was an exceptional event, in spite of the low electoral threshold. Until the 1980s no new successful challenger appeared on the Italian political scenario; the "historical" parties of 1948 were still able to obtain 90% of the votes in 1987 (figure 2).

The first cracks in this apparently unalterable stability of the party system appeared at the beginning of the 1980s. Before turning to them, a precedent is worth recalling, that of the Uomo Qualunque, as this experience, even though short-lived, is in a sense a forerunner of many populist anti-party challenges characterising contemporary democracies.

In the immediate aftermath of the liberation of Rome from the Nazi occupiers, the journalist and playwright Guglielmo Giannini founded a party, the *Fronte dell'Uomo Qualunque*, named after the magazine (*L'Uomo Qualunque*, the Common Man) that he had founded in 1944 and edited. At the Constituent Assembly elections of 1946 the Fronte obtained a remarkable 5.3% of the votes and 30 seats. However, it was not able to confirm similar scores two years later. In 1948 the Fronte contested the general elections within a right wing alliance (Blocco Nazionale, National Bloc) and elected seven representatives (four at the Camera and three at the Senate), that left the party soon afterwards.

In spite of its short life span, the Uomo Qualunque has been described as a prototype of a populist or anti-party movement, anticipating several experiences that would spread all over Europe some decades later (Tarchi 2003). The catchphrases employed by Giannini show all the repertoire of populist movements, springing from a vision of society where the inborn virtues of ordinary men are opposed to the selfishness and vices of the elites. Furthermore, both the people and the elites are considered as monolithic entities, and all the lines of divisions within the people, starting with the ideological ones, are interpreted as artificially induced by the elites, with the only goal of keeping and perpetrating their own power.

The main targets of Giannini's barbs are the newly re-born parties and, more generally, the emerging republican institutions. In his opinion, Italy does not need the complicated representative institutions and rules that are being designed by the Constituent Assembly. In this sense, the Uomo Qualunque claims to represent a radical alternative to *all* political parties, which are described as all equally corrupted and inept. Conflicts among parties, the argument goes, are only a façade behind which the fundamental unity of interests of the political elite is hidden. Ideologies themselves are nothing but a cover of the personal ambitions of professional politicians: as such, fascism, communism, liberalism, republicanism are to be put all on the same ground and equally opposed. The alternative to all political parties that the *qualunquismo* proposes is a government run by "neutral" technocrats able to adopt common-sense solutions that are easily at hand. Indeed, a "good bookkeeper", appointed by lot and whose term of office should last no more than one year, would be sufficient to run the state. The virtues of political amateurism are often recalled as opposed to the vices of a ruling class made of professional politicians. Eliminating the idea itself of "political career" would be sufficient to stop once and forever the "system of ministerial corruption and col-

lusion of political parties and organised interests, encouraged by the ambitions of professional politicians seeking re-election at all costs” (Giannini as quoted in Tarchi 2003: 84). This is an argument that Beppe Grillo will enthusiastically resume almost seventy years later.

As in any party claiming to represent the popular protest against parties, a striking contradiction is self-evident. The mobilisation must assume organisational forms and carry out the functions typical of those political parties against which it is aimed (Taggart 1995). As in many similar cases in the following decades, the contradiction is tackled by proposing solutions that in principle challenge the conventional ideas of parties as organisations; in practice, however, the claim of a non-bureaucratic, decentralised leadership is counterbalanced by the presence of an unchallenged leader that *de facto* controls all the crucial decisions. Once again, the Lega Nord and the M5S will face similar organisational challenges several decades later.

2. THE BREAKDOWN OF THE “FIRST REPUBLIC” AND THE PARTY SYSTEM OF THE “SECOND REPUBLIC”

Although the breakdown of the party system of the so-called “First Republic” and the birth of the “Second Republic” took place between 1992 and 1994, the first cracks were evident, at least with an *a posteriori* judgement, since the beginning of the eighties (Cotta and Isernia 1996; Morlino and Tarchi 1996). Among these at least three developments are worth recalling:

- 1) The slow but relentless decrease in the vote share of the two main parties. In 1983 the sum of votes (and parliamentary seats) of the PCI and DC was for the first time since 1953 below the threshold of two thirds, that is needed in order to pass Constitutional amendments without confirmation through a popular referendum.
- 2) The steady decrease of electoral turnout, for the first time below 90% in 1979 and further decreasing in the following elections. Although this might seem still a very high degree of participation when compared to other European countries, it signals for the first time a decreasing ability of parties to mobilise their respective supporters, and, symmetrically, the spread of mistrust among Italian citizens towards political parties, that a growing share of the people perceive as unable to channel their demands to institutions.

- 3) The rise of new political parties which succeeded, for the first time since 1948, to be continuously represented in parliament. In particular, the Partito Radicale, although officially born in the mid-fifties, obtained its first elected representatives in 1976, and was able to confirm its institutional presence in the following elections. The Verdi contested general elections for the first time in 1987 obtaining several parliamentary seats. Both parties, and the Radicals in particular, displayed several characters that can easily be referred to a populist message. The Verdi, borrowing from the German experience, not only aimed at introducing the issue of environmentalism and the opposition to nuclear power in the agenda of Italian politics², but also proposed a new model of party organisation, close to the fluid structure of extra-parliamentary movements. The Radicals on the other hand, display a clearly anti-party standing in their style of communication and in their manifestos. The use of popular referenda to bypass the inactivity of parties, especially in the field of civic rights, will soon become their most recognisable trademark. Overall, the Radicals introduced an original and progressive version of populism, insisting on the virtues of responsible and engaged citizens (instead of the generic and apathetic people referred to by the *Uomo Qualunque*), but still a clear message of distance and distrust in the institutional role of political parties³.

A less visible newcomer in the Italian party system will later have a prominent role. A small autonomist movement, the *Liga Veneta*, was born in Veneto – the traditional stronghold of the Christian Democrats – reaching parliamentary representation in 1983. Although the *Liga Veneta* would soon implode as a consequence of many internal disagreements, it was the first expression of the “northern disease” (Diamanti 1996), that soon spread in other regions. The most prominent of these movements, Umberto Bossi’s *Lega Autonomista Lombarda*, was born in 1984. A few years later these experiences will be the constituent parts of the *Lega Nord*, one of the main protagonists of the Italian political scenario in the Second Republic, as we will see.

The political class substantially ignored these signals of weakening of the linkage between the party system and civil society and was not able to promote a much needed self-reform⁴. The transformations of the nineties were in fact imposed to the political elites by a broad social pressure (as shown by the success of the referendum leading to the adoption of a plurality electoral system in 1993 and contrasted by most of the main

parties) and by the resolute action of the judiciary against widespread corruption that was crucial in the delegitimization of the party system emerged in 1948.

The electoral system passed in 1993 as a consequence of a successful referendum⁵ and was based on a mixed-member formula. 475 deputies (three quarters of the total) were elected in single-member districts with a plurality formula. The remaining 155 seats were allocated in 26 multi-member districts through proportional representation with a 4% threshold at national level. The same system applied to the Senate, with 232 seats allocated through plurality and the remaining 83 allocated through proportional representation in regional multi-member districts. The main differences between the two electoral systems were the formula (Hare for the Camera and D'Hondt for the Senate) and the fact that while for the Camera voters expressed their proportional and plurality votes on two separated ballots, for the Senate, proportional seats were allocated among the "best losers" of the plurality contest (see D'Alimonte and Chiaramonte 1993 for details).

It is disputable whether the new electoral rules determined the disappearance of the old political actors or, on the contrary, if it was the extreme weakness of the old parties to allow the transformation of the electoral system. Be it as it may, the 1994 elections led to a completely new political scenario. Not only had the most voted party (Berlusconi's Forza Italia) been established only a few months before, but the whole structure of competition was also profoundly changed. Two broad pre-electoral coalitions competed for government, one on the left, including the former Communists, Socialists, the progressive factions of the former Christian Democracy, and one on the right, including Forza Italia, the Lega Nord, Alleanza Nazionale (the heirs of the neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano)⁶. The third coalition (Patto per l'Italia) was mainly made of former Christian Democrats (including Mariotto Segni, the initial promoter of the referendum on the electoral system), and had to learn at their own expenses that third forces rarely survive as relevant actors in plurality competitions. Having obtained only a handful of seats, they soon split, with their members joining the left or the right wing coalitions.

After the traumatic elections of 1994, where unprecedented levels of vote volatility and parliamentary turnover were reached (Figure 1 above), the party system stabilized around two more or less stable coalitions competing for and alternating in government. The need to build broad and heterogeneous coalitions in order to be competitive in single

member districts led in fact to the birth of what has been labelled a “fragmented bipolarism” (D’Alimonte 2005; Di Virgilio 2006). As a matter of fact, and contrary to the expectations of many supporters of the “majoritarian” reforms, the traditional fragmentation of the Italian party system did increase during the nineties instead of decreasing. At the same time the electoral competition acquired a bipolar structure, where two main *coalitions* were crucial actors along with single party organisations. Third coalitions and parties contesting elections outside coalitions were normally underrepresented or simply excluded from parliament (Reed 2001; Bartolini, Chiaramonte and D’Alimonte 2002).

A rather striking characteristic of the Italian party system since the nineties is the presence of anti-party populist parties. Not only in the position of challengers of the *status quo*, as it happened with the Uomo Qualunque or, in different forms, with the Radicals. This time two parties, the Lega Nord and Forza Italia, displayed rather clear elements of populism while being major political forces and even governing the country. The success of the Lega in northern Italy, and particularly in areas characterised by the diffusion of a dense network of small and micro enterprises, has demonstrated how much disappointment and distance there was between these strata of Italian society and the political system. With its anticentralist rhetoric (“Roma ladrona”, literally “Rome the big thief” was one of its first slogans) and its manifest opposition to traditional rituals and the communication style of Italian politics, the Lega offered a protest tool to this area of the country (Diamanti 1993; Biorcio 2010; Passarelli and Tuorto 2012), with a political discourse that is in fact an inextricable fusion of regionalist and populist positions⁷. The opposition to the central state and its inefficient bureaucracy always went hand in hand with opposition to the party system. Moreover, the two were depicted as the two sides of the same coin, and the Lega an antidote to both. Its appeal to local identities has always been presented as a way to contrast the virtues and legitimate interest of “natural” local communities to the distant, complex and corrupted representative institutions. The use of dialects is another effective communication tool to signal the closeness to the “man of the street” as opposed to party politicians, who use instead an inaccessible and convolute *langue de bois* – the *politichese* – only addressed to the political class itself. The counterpart of the selfish and corrupted political class and bureaucracy is the northern honest and laborious people, imagined as a homogeneous community where social and ideological divisions are artificially imposed⁸.

After the first electoral breakthrough in 1992 (8.7% of the votes), in 1994 elections the Lega Nord had to face a formidable competitor on its own anti-political ground. Berlusconi's Forza Italia shares in fact several characteristics with the Lega Nord, though presenting also distinctive features, beyond, quite obviously, being active on the whole peninsular territory.

In the political scenario of the Second Republic, Forza Italia is probably the most innovative political actor both in terms of internal organisation and in terms of the effects it brought to the dynamics of party competition. Its founder and unchallenged leader, the tycoon and media entrepreneur Silvio Berlusconi, brought a true shock to the tradition of Italian politics. His entrance to the political arena probably represents the most immediate evidence of the deep crisis the Italian party system and political establishment has faced at the beginning of the nineties. Notwithstanding his long-standing relations with men and parties of the First Republic, particularly the Socialist Party and its leader Bettino Craxi, Berlusconi managed to present himself as a "new man", extraneous and opposed to the ruling political class. Indeed, since his first electoral campaign, Berlusconi has always underlined his role as a prominent member of civil society as opposing to the political class that was facing the corruption scandals of Tangentopoli. His success as a self-made businessman, although certainly favoured by his closeness to the governing parties – and supposedly also to criminal organisations – has often been underlined as a distinctive element in a scenario dominated by inept professional politicians.

Berlusconi's model of communication is radically different from Bossi's one, even though they share a common populist root. Berlusconi does not represent himself as a man of the people and his ideal stage is not a street rally. On the contrary, the character he wants to portray is the smart and competent entrepreneur who was able to build a fortune from scratch and to create thousands of jobs, and who ventures now into politics to transfer his knowledge and skills to the state, and eventually to rebuild a country in ruin. The organisational model of Forza Italia reflects this approach, and represents another break with the tradition of Italian (and European) political history. Forza Italia is in the first place a personal party (Calise 2000; McDonnell 2013), owned and led by Berlusconi and a limited circle of collaborators of him. Its structures are originally based on the organisation and staff of Berlusconi's companies, in particular Publitalia, the advertising company of Berlusconi's televisions (Poli 2001). The flex-

ible and light organisational articulations of this party, as well as its personnel, are very different from the hierarchies of the traditional professional parties, and this difference is explicitly pointed out. Moreover, Berlusconi often recalls how Forza Italia's representatives and himself are only temporarily committed to politics. They all come from the world of business, and will happily go back to it, as soon as they will have accomplished the mission of rescuing the country from the misery to which professional politicians have condemned it⁹.

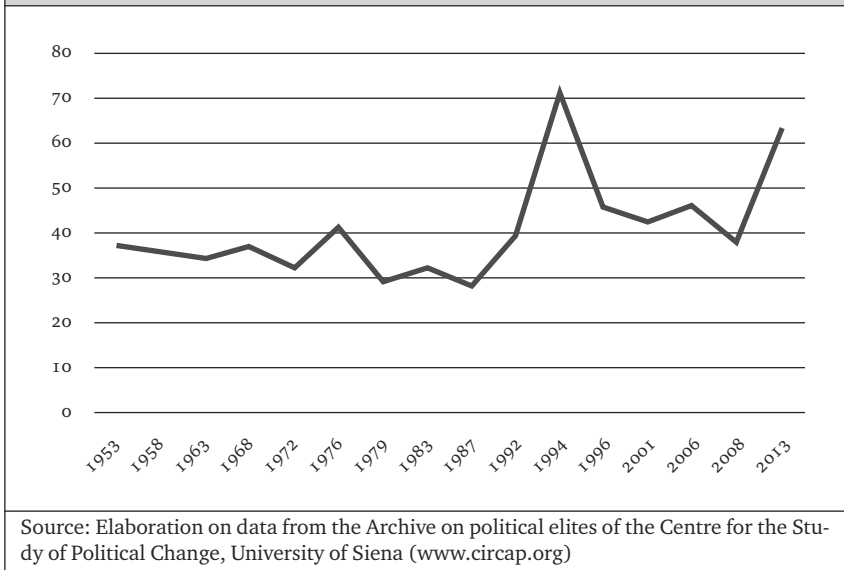
The striking success of Berlusconi's party has had long-lasting consequences on the Italian party system and its competitive dynamics. In the first place it has made it difficult, if not impossible, to rebuild a centrist political organisation similar to the old Christian Democracy, a project that has been attempted several times without success (Cotta and Verzichelli 2008, 85). In the second place it has forced pieces of the old Christian Democratic establishment to build a stable alliance with the parties of the left, posing the foundations of what would eventually lead to the birth of the Partito Democratico. Indeed, a new kind of polarisation has taken the place of the Sartorian polarised pluralism: from 1994 to 2013 the structure of competition has always revolved around the cleavage pro-anti Berlusconi. At the same time, the electoral success has changed Forza Italia (and the Lega Nord) as well. After twenty years of continuous presence in the representative institutions at national and local level, and three times in government (1994-95; 2001-2006; 2008-2011), the anti-establishment message could not remain intact and the "revolutionary" impetus of the first years lost appeal and left room to disappointment among voters. The general elections of 2013 were indisputably clear in showing the decline of the political equilibria of the previous two decades.

3. THE LAST ANTI-PARTY CHALLENGE – SO FAR.

THE PARTY SYSTEM OF 2013 AND THE MOVIMENTO 5 STELLE

A quick look back at figure 1 uncovers the exceptional nature of the 2013 general elections. With unchanged electoral rules, volatility has reached the unprecedented value of 39.1, a value that places those elections among the most volatile in the whole history of post-war Western Europe¹⁰, whereas 63.2 per cent of deputies were elected for the first time (Figure 3). These figures are close to or higher than those of 1994, when the new party sys-

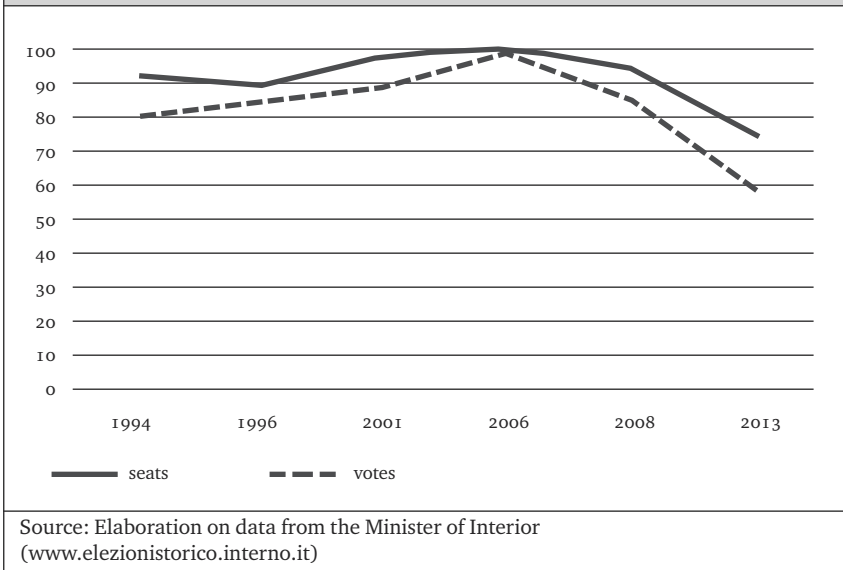
Figure 3. Parliamentary turnover (Chamber of Deputies, 1953-2013)



tem was born after the collapse of the First Republic. At individual level, estimates of vote flows indicate that at least 44 per cent of voters (equal to about 20 million people) have changed their mind between 2008 and 2013 (De Sio and Paparo 2014). This extraordinary level of change in voting behaviour was translated also into a new format of the party system. After twenty years of failed attempts of “third forces” to break the dominance of the two main coalitions, in 2013 four political actors (whether individual parties or coalitions of parties) obtained seats and, more interestingly, three of them have an almost equal electoral strength. Indeed, the sum of seats of the two main coalitions has dropped from 99.8 per cent of 2006 to 74.6 of 2013 per cent (Figure 4), notwithstanding the generous bonus awarded by the 2005 electoral system to the most voted coalition. In terms of votes this trend is even more evident (from 99.1 to 58.3).

The main driver of this exceptional change is once again a peculiar political subject, with a clear anti-party nature. The Movimento 5 Stelle, in its first participation in a general election, and four years only after its official birth, became the most voted party on national territory, with over 25 per cent of the votes. This was the most successful party entry in the post 1945 history of the whole Europe (Maggini and De Lucia 2014, 182).

Figure 4. Index of bipolarism (Chamber of Deputies, 1994-2013)



The Movimento 5 Stelle presents several features typical of anti-party populist movements in an almost paradigmatic way. Beginning with the name, it shares with the Lega Nord and Forza Italia the fact that it rejects the label of party, and all the organisational structures traditionally associated with it. It claims instead to be a non-association¹¹, with headquarters 'located' in the blog run by its founder and leader Beppe Grillo.

Officially born in 2009, the M5S came to the forefront of the Italian political scenario in May 2012, where it achieved a first, unexpected success in local and regional elections. The success was doubled a few months later, when Grillo's movement became the first party in the regional elections in Sicily, and even the most sceptical observers began to believe (or to fear) that the M5S would play a leading role in the upcoming general elections. Just one year before that breakthrough, this movement was known only among the most well-informed political observers as a bizarre but substantially irrelevant phenomenon. It was led by Beppe Grillo, a comedian with an anomalous professional path. A popular presence on public TV channels in the 1980s, he was banned from mainstream television after telling a joke on the ruling Socialist Party during a prime time show. After that, he continued his activity in theatres, cultivating a small-

er but loyal audience with shows that increasingly focused on current political events, and especially on environmental issues and a harsh criticism of the degeneration of the contemporary capitalist economy. Later on, the same topics will be extensively covered in the blog that Grillo started in 2005 (Vignati 2013).

Beppe Grillo's political discourse encompasses all the main features typical of any anti-party populist movement. In the first place the juxtaposition between the (vicious) establishment and the (virtuous) people. The establishment is above all identified with party politicians, but often includes those who control economic power (big business leaders, bankers, managers of multinational companies), those who control information, trade unionists, high-ranking bureaucrats. The second element frequently recalled as a defining feature of populism is the identification between the leader and his people. The typical leader of a populist movement is someone who personifies the common sense of 'the man in the street', as opposed to the unnecessary complications and artificial divisions that characterise political elites. The direct link between the leader and his people is also connected to the rejection of intermediate bodies of representation, and particularly political parties. In the experience of the M5S the role of Beppe Grillo is indisputable and few – even among its own militants – would argue that the M5S would ever have been born or exist today without its founding leader. Quite interestingly, Grillo has sometimes paid a symbolic tribute to another populist leader, Umberto Bossi, referring to the first years of the Lega Nord: "Bossi in his singlet was a hero, when he shouted at banks (...). Then he entered the system" (Quoted in Gualmini 2013, 13). The leader's style of communication is another frequent distinctive character of populist parties, as we have recalled above. Grillo's language meets the need to break conventions, to impress the audience with a disturbing and rude style, against the hypocrisy of the political jargon. The first massive public event he organised was the V-Day, where 'V' stands for 'vaffanculo' (bugger off), generally addressed towards the Italian political elite. Furthermore, as it was the case for Guglielmo Giannini almost seventy years before, he is known for constantly mangling the names of his opponents and inventing insulting nicknames (Berlusconi is the 'psycho-dwarf', Renzi is the 'little idiot from Florence', Monti is 'rigor montis').

While the characteristics mentioned above are common to most populist anti-party movements, other elements seem to differentiate it from its European counterparts. The first one of these is ideology. Con-

trary to most of the successful populist parties all over Europe, the M5S does not display a clear right-wing standing. Beyond the anti-establishment appeal, the foremost point of reference is to be found in post-materialist and environmentalist values: according to the 2009 ‘Carta di Firenze’ the five stars stand for ‘[public] water, environment, [public] transport, [sustainable] development and [renewable] energy’. One of the most significant battles fought by Beppe Grillo, in his shows and then on the blog, is against the projected high-speed train connecting Turin to Lyon and other big infrastructure projects that have met with hard opposition from local citizens’ associations. More generally, the manifesto of the M5S stresses environmental issues (e.g. waste management, energy, urban quality of life, ethical consumerism) and left libertarian stances related to citizens’ empowerment through practices of direct democracy (Passarelli, Tronconi and Tuorto 2013). This brings us to a second element of originality, that is, blind faith in the virtues of the Internet as a tool for breaking the chains of old representative politics, and opening the way to a horizontal exchange of ideas and democratic debate among citizens, and ultimately to the accomplishment of large-scale direct democracy. In this sense, Piergiorgio Corbetta (2013) has coined the apt definition of ‘web-populism’ for the M5S.

It is anything but certain that the Italian party system emerged from the 2013 elections is a stable one. On the contrary, Berlusconi’s leadership in the centre-right camp seems to be more questioned than ever before, and also Grillo’s leadership has attracted severe criticism within the M5S. This has in turn led Grillo to tighten his control over the party and to solve internal disputes by expelling numerous activists and elected representatives that, according to his more or less undisputable opinion, had violated the internal rules of the movement. More fundamentally, it is the nature itself of this “movement-party” (Kitschelt 2006) to make it unstable. Its ambition to keep an exclusively horizontal organisation and a participatory internal democracy has soon proven to be incompatible with the awkward presence of a charismatic leader. The presence of the M5S as a relevant actor of Italian politics in the next years will depend to a large extent on its ability to solve the problems related to the internal distribution of power and the relations between the “party on the ground” and the “party in central office”. The stability of the party system, on the other hand, depends on the ability of the Italian political elites to re-establish robust linkages with citizens. In a society where distrust towards political parties and the representative institutions is constantly and ab-

normally high (Morlino and Tarchi 1996), this task does not seem within reach in the short run. On the contrary, actors that exploit anti-party sentiments, once considered as a temporary and barely relevant anomaly of the political system, have become a prominent feature of the Italian political system. There are reasons to believe that they might become a permanent feature as well.

NOTES

1. It must be noted, however, that the meaning of 'territorial cleavage' in the Italian context does not imply a reference to linguistic or ethnic pluralism, as in the traditional rokkianian interpretation of the centre-periphery cleavage. It refers instead to the presence of distinct 'subcultures' within its territory, defined as areas characterized by a peculiar political and cultural identity, a specific socio-economic background, a dense network of associations with a clear political reference.
2. In the aftermath of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, the Verdi promoted a referendum to shutdown Italian nuclear plants. The referendum was held, with success, in 1987.
3. The derogative label "partitocrazia", referred to the party system as a whole, was introduced by the leader of the Radicals Marco Pannella
4. Although the need of reforms meant to make the insitutional system more efficient was well perceived by at least part of the elites. This is demonstrated by the establishment of a parliamentary commission for constitutional reforms in 1983, which did not lead to concrete results.
5. The referendum abolished the 65% threshold of the single member districts of the Senate, de facto introducing a "real" plurality system, with the expectation that the Parliament would have consequently adapted the electoral law for the Chamber too.
6. More precisely, there were two distinct coalitions on the right. One in the Southern regions, including Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale, and one in the North, including Forza Italia and the Lega Nord, and competing *against* Alleanza Nazionale. The two coalitions, however, jointly supported the first Berlusconi government that came into office in 1994.
7. A right-wing extremist stance became clear at least since the beginning of the new century, if not before (Ignazi 2005; Bulli and Tronconi 2012). This is especially evident in the party's positions on immigration, which often assume openly xenophobic tones.
8. On this regard, it is worth quoting the leading article of the first issue (1982) of "Lombardia Autonomista", the newspaper of the Lega Lombarda edited by Umberto Bossi: "It does not matter what is your age, your job, your political orientation. What matters is that you are all – we are *all* – Lombard citizens. This is the really important fact, and the time has come to

- give this fact a political substance. As Lombard citizens, in fact, we all have a fundamental common interest, to which all our partisan divisions must be subordinated. The Italian parties use us and distract our attention from pursuing our own interests and make us look after the interests of others (their own in first place!)”.
9. Numerous examples of such rethoric can be found in Tarchi (2003, 159-175).
 10. Only two elections show higher volatility: The Spanish elections of 1982, when the Socialist Party took power for the first time and the Greek elections of 2012, in the midst of the Euro-crisis (Chiaromonte and Emanuele 2014, 255).
 11. The ‘non-statute’ of the movement states that ‘the M5S is not a political party, nor is it foreseen to become a political party in the future’.

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The German Party System after the 2013 Elections: An Island of Stability in a European Sea of Change?

Thomas Poguntke

I. INTRODUCTION

Election night September 2013. The CDU headquarter in Berlin, the Konrad-Adenauer-Haus, is packed, the crowd cheers: The exit polls indicate that the Christian Democrats might win an overall majority of the seats in the Bundestag. In the end, the Christian parties and their future coalition partner SPD reach about two thirds of the votes cast, which translates into about 80 per cent of the seats because of the 5 per cent-hurdle. Political analysts argue that Chancellor Angela Merkel has reached the peak of her power. Also, many identify a renaissance of the German *Volksparteien*. Yet, it remains doubtful if the 2013 Bundestag election really indicates the continuing stability of the German party systems that has been characterized by the dualism of the two core parties.

Arguably, such a conclusion would be premature. First and foremost, we need to factor in the large number of votes that have been not counted for the allocation of parliamentary seats. Since the 1950s, the German electoral system has not deprived such a large share of the electorate of parliamentary representation: 15.8 per cent of the voters cast their ballot for parties which did not cross the 5 per cent threshold of the German electoral law and are therefore not represented in the Bundestag. As a result of the growing fragmentation of the German party system the disproportionality of the German electoral system has now approached levels otherwise known from the United Kingdom. The value of the Gallagher index of disproportionality reached 8.3 and was considerably higher than previously.

Also, turnout was only marginally above the all-time low mark of the previous 2009 Bundestag elections. This means that the aggregate hold of the two large German parties is much lower than the comfortable

majority in the Bundestag suggests. If we take the size of the electorate as point of reference (rather than the number of votes cast), the Christian parties could only mobilize 29.3 per cent of those eligible to vote while the Social Democrats reached a mere 18.2 per cent. Between them, the parties of the Grand coalition were only supported by less than half of the German electorate (47.5 per cent). Finally, volatility reached the second highest value of all Bundestag elections (18.35).¹

Yet, despite these clear signs of erosion, the Germany party system seems to be a model of stability if we compare it with many other European countries. Are we witness of yet another German *Sonderweg*? While most incumbent governments were heavily penalized in national elections since the beginning of the sovereign debt crisis, the German government did not really bear the brunt of the crisis. To be sure, the FDP lost all seats (for the first time ever), but this is hardly attributable to the debate about the Euro. Rather, the party had narrowed its political portfolio to almost a one-issue agenda emphasizing the need for tax cuts and suffered from severe leadership problems. The main result of the Bundestag election was, however, the re-election of Chancellor Merkel and the strong gains of her Christian Democratic party. Furthermore, and in marked contrast to most other European countries, Eurosceptic or (right-wing) populist parties did not gain parliamentary representation. On the surface, the German party system remained largely stable while party systems elsewhere experienced landslide elections.

2. LANDSLIDE ELECTIONS IN EUROPE

Even cautious analysts tend to agree that many European party systems have experienced dramatic electoral change since the onset of the sovereign debt and Euro crisis, which reached a first peak in the wake of the collapse of the Lehman Brothers in autumn 2008. Even a brief glance at the volatility figures from the most recent national elections shows that they tended to be considerably higher than the long-term average. In the 1990s, volatility was normally between 7 and 15; only the implosion of the Italian party system resulted in a record high of 40 (Bardi 1996; Dalton et al. 2000: 41). In recent years, much higher levels of volatility have become the norm rather than the exception across Europe. Hardly surprising, the highest value was recorded in a Greek national election at the height of the Greek crisis in May 2012 where volatility reached 45.50.²

However, many other European elections were also marked by significant electoral change. Volatility in the Irish election of 2011 soared to 29.95 which represents a 372 per cent increase; the French value doubled in 2012 and reached 23.50, Belgium registered a similar level in the same year. Also other countries with traditionally stable party systems registered markedly higher levels of electoral change than in the past.

Arguably, two separate causal effects coincide. On the one hand, and this is almost trivial, we are living in age of seminal electoral dealignment which has led to the erosion of the previously stable anchorage of West European party systems (Dalton et al. 2002). On the other hand, the Euro crisis has left deep marks on European elections results. If we compare the volatility value of the last election before the beginning of the Euro crisis with the mean volatility recorded since the beginning of 2009, we find an increase in 11 of the 17 members of the Eurozone (see table 1). To be sure, this is not the exclusive result of the economic crisis. Particularly the magnitude of change will be influenced also by the specific national conditions including long-term developments and the performance of the incumbent governments. Yet, if we also look at the immediate governmental effects of national elections, there can be little doubt that the crisis has had a profound effect on the party political landscape in the Eurozone.

Only 8 out of 26 elections within the Euro zone between autumn 2008 and January 2015 returned the incumbent Prime Minister to office. If we consider the period of time between autumn 2008 and January 2015, only Chancellor Angela Merkel governed without interruption. Again, not all changes in government are directly attributable to the crisis but the following discussion will show that many of them are.

Ireland was the first country that was hit by the crisis. The elections of 2011 were dominated by the discussion over the rescue package imposed by the so-called ‘troika’ of the European Central Bank (ECB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the EU Commission and the governing party Fianna Fail was ousted from government suffering a record loss of 24.2 percentage points (Niedermayer 2013: 420-22; O’Malley 2012). Unlike Ireland, *Finland* was not really hit by the crisis but the Euro rescue measures were highly controversial in the 2011 election campaign. This worked to the benefit of the ‘True Fins’ lead by Timo Soini, who won 19 per cent of the popular vote and became the third largest party in parliament. As a result of this landslide election, the incumbent Centre Party Prime Minister Mari Kiviniemi lost office (Sundberg 2012). *Spain*, on

Table 1. Volatility before and since the beginning of the Euro crisis (Eurozone)*

COUNTRY	LAST ELECTION BEFORE 2009	MEAN 2009 -1/2015	DIFFERENCE
Austria	15.20	13.60	-1.60
Belgium	12.70	16.53	+3.83
Cyprus	11.30	5.60	-5.70
Estonia	32.40	11.10	-21.30
Finland	6.80	14.90	+8.10
France	11.90	23.50	+11.60
Germany	8.45	15.18	+6.73
Greece	6.10	23.60	+17.50
Ireland	6.35	29.95	+23.60
Italy	9.70	39.10	+29.40
Luxembourg	9.60	6.73	-2.88
Malta	2.50	5.55	+3.05
Netherlands	19.80	18.85	-0.95
Portugal	8.50	13.10	+4.60
Slovakia	27.80	26.35	-1.45
Slovenia	33.35	45.18	+11.83
Spain	6.00	15.20	+9.20

Source: <http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/countries.html> (own calculations, parties below 3 per cent were aggregated); for Italy: D'Alimonte 2013.

*The two late Eurozone members Lithuania (1 January 2015) and Latvia (1 January 2014) are excluded from the analysis; the data covers all election until January 2015.

the other hand, was badly affected by the financial turmoil. Even though the country had already reached troubled waters during the regular parliamentary election of spring 2008, that is before the crisis really became apparent in the wake of the collapse of the Lehman Brothers, the Socialist government headed by Prime Minister Zapatero was returned to office. However, it clearly paid the price for the implementation of strict austerity measures in the following years and Zapatero's successor Rubalcaba was heavily beaten in the early elections of 2011 when the Spanish Socialists lost 15 percentage points (Delgado/Nieto 2012; Niedermayer 2013: 423-24). Likewise, the governing *Portuguese* Prime Minister Sócrates lost power at the 2011 elections which were held at the height of the financial crisis (Magone 2012; Fernandes 2011). In *Cyprus*, elections were also held during the peak of the crisis and the Conservative presidential candidate assumed power after a campaign dominated by economic issues in February 2013 after the country had been governed previously by Communist President Dimitris Christofias. Finally, there is any reason to suggest that the defeat of *French* president Sarkozy in the 2012 presidential elections can at least partially be explained by the controversial austerity policy that Sarkozy promoted in such close partnership with Chancellor Merkel that the label 'Merkozy' became an ironic synonym for the close German-French policy alliance.

To be sure, this brief overview may not be complete because the debate over the Euro crisis played also an important role in other European elections without dominating the agenda to the extent that was apparent in the cases discussed above. Yet, we need to add government changes without previous elections which were directly related to the crisis. Most conspicuously was the collapse of the Papandreu government in Greece in November 2011 which eventually led to two early elections in May and June 2012 that massively changed the Greek party system. The elections were marked by the landslide victory of the Left Socialist SYRIZA which mobilized against the harsh austerity measures that were requested by the Troika in exchange for the massive financial support necessary to prevent the Greek state from going bankrupt. The party had still been a minor party after the 2009 elections and suddenly became the second largest Greek party in the 2012 elections winning 26.9 per cent in the June elections. The Socialist PASOK of former Prime Minister Papandreu suffered a heavy defeat and reached a mere 12.3 per cent in the June 2012 elections, while the Conservative ND recovered in the second election and could form a coalition government under the leadership of Antonia Sama-

ras (Dinas/Rori 2013). The final blow for the old forces came in the January 2015 elections which brought SYRIZA leader Alexis Tsipras to power heading a coalition with the right-wing populist ANEL. The party of former Socialist Prime Minister Papandreou lost all seats in parliament.

Also Italy experienced a change of government without a previous election. In November 2011 Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi resigned amidst the deepening financial crisis upon massive pressure from other EU countries and cleared the way for an expert caretaker government led by Mario Monti (Garzia 2013: 1095-6). The true extent of the anti-European mood of the Italian public became only apparent in the wake of the early elections of February 2013. Both, Berlusconi's PdL and Beppe Grillo's Movimento Cinque Stelle played the anti-European card and mobilized against the austerity policies of the Monti government (D'Alimonte 2013; Niedermayer 2013: 429-31). To be sure, the staggering success of the 'Grillini' who went from nowhere to become the strongest party winning 25.6 per cent of the vote is not solely attributable to a Eurosceptic groundswell in the Italian public. In addition, Grillo managed to mobilize a deeply rooted anti-party sentiment (Poguntke 1996) of those who are simply disaffected with Italian politics and its rituals, even though he leads his supposedly grass roots democratic, internet-based movement hardly any less autocratic than Berlusconi does with his PdL (Bordignon/Ceccarini 2013). Consequently, Grillo rejected after the elections all invitations by the 'old' parties to enter into negotiations over a possible cooperation (Garzia 2013: 1101).

3. (RIGHT-WING) POPULISM AND EUROCEPTICISM

The previous discussion has shown that many substantial changes in national party systems and the resulting changes in government were at least partially the result of the disaffection of many voters with the policies to rescue the Euro. However, this does not necessarily mean a rise of explicit Euroscepticism. The French presidential election campaign and the subsequent change of power from Sarkozy to Hollande underline this point. The two leading protagonists and their parties campaigned for their preferred path towards securing the survival of the common European currency but this debate was largely free of Eurosceptic undertones.

Naturally, this does not apply to the Front National (FN) which capitalized on the considerable unease with the enormous financial risks and

potential budgetary burdens among large parts of the French population. Similarly, other right-wing populist parties tried to sharpen their anti-European profile. Yet, this was not always successful as is exemplified by the fate of the Dutch Freedom Party (PVV) of Geert Wilders that lost a third of its vote share after a pronouncedly anti-European campaign in the 2012 parliamentary elections (Otjes/Voerman 2013). However, this has not prevented the Italian Lega Nord to embark on a decidedly anti-European course in recent years. Eurosceptic and right-wing populist sentiments are, of course, not confined to the Eurozone. In the United Kingdom, arguably the 'motherland' of Euroscepticism, growing popular disaffection with the European integration project has boosted the electoral fortunes of UKIP to an extent that has made Prime Minister David Cameron feel compelled to announce a popular referendum about EU membership in order to prevent the defection of a considerable part of the Conservative electorate to UKIP (Lynch et al. 2012).

Certainly, not every surprising electoral success of new or hitherto unsuccessful parties is boosted by right-wing populism or, as is the case for the Greek SYRYZA, by protest against Euro rescue policies. The Polish Palikot movement, for example, is primarily an expression of 'generalized disaffection with, or even rejection of, political party' (Poguntke 1996: 340). Similarly, the Slovak anti-party party OĽaNO surprisingly reached the third place in the 2012 elections. While the debate over the Euro rescue policy significantly contributed to the collapse of the coalition government, the actual election campaign was dominated by a corruption scandal that clearly worked to the benefit of OĽaNO (Niedermayer 2013: 424-25; Malová/Učeň 2013).

On the other hand, there were some countries which were badly hit by the Euro crisis where the party systems were capable of absorbing popular discontent without a major upheaval of the party system format. Spain and Portugal experienced high volatility but this was the result of shifts between the established parties. What about Germany? How robust is the seeming stability of the German party system in the context of the European developments as they have been sketched out above?

4. THE GERMAN PARTY SYSTEM: STILL SOLID AS A ROCK?

Our necessarily brief overview of the most important party political developments in European party systems and related changes in government make Germany appear as a role model of stability. However, the introductory remarks on volatility, the effect of the five per cent hurdle and declining turnout have suggested a warning note against hasty conclusions. How solid are the structural foundations of the German party system really? We will argue on the following pages that the German party system is considerably less stable than it seems at first sight. Accordingly, Oskar Niedermayer has already pointed out after the 2009 Bundestag elections that the German party system was among those which were most affected by the erosion of core party dualism (Niedermayer 2010a: 7; Niedermayer 2010b). As shown above, we have witnessed many upheavals in European party systems that can at least partially be attributed to the Euro crisis. This might suggest that the outward stability of the German party system may be largely the result of the rather moderate repercussions of the Euro crisis on the German economy.

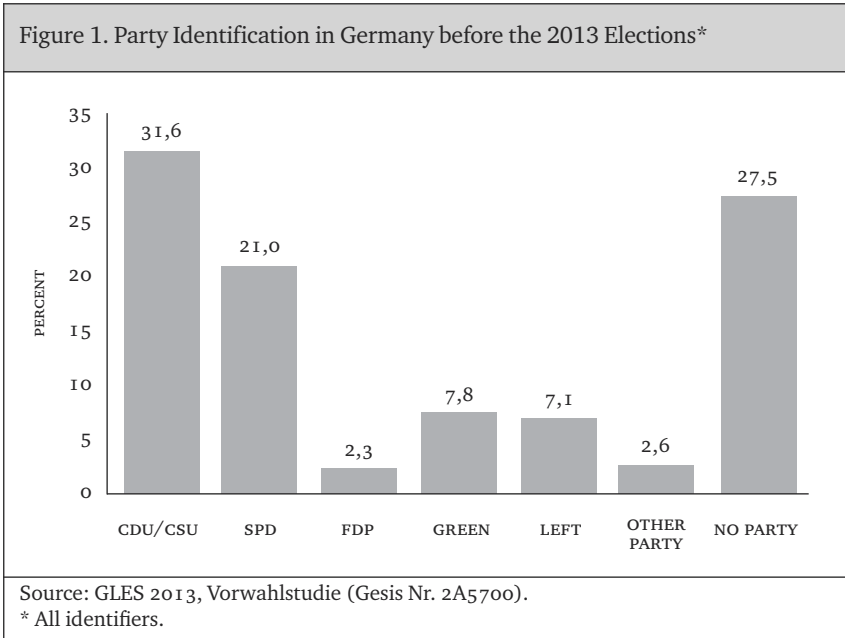
A closer look at the evolution of the federal election campaign and the considerable changes in the poll ratings of the main parties indicates that the frequently diagnosed renaissance of the “*Volksparteien*” is a somewhat heroic statement. After all, we should recall that the Greens were approaching the 30 per cent mark in opinion polls asking for voting intention in the next *Bundestag* election around mid-term. Furthermore, the first Green Prime Minister assumed office in the *Land* of Baden-Württemberg in 2011, heading a green-red coalition government. The CDU, which had governed there forever (more precisely: since 1953) was relegated to the proverbial hard opposition benches while its coalition partner FDP barely succeeded to cross the 5 per cent-hurdle. In other words: The large victory of the Christian parties in the 2013 Bundestag elections tends to deflect attention from the structural fluidity of the German party system (Niedermayer 2009; Poguntke 2014). The 2013 Bundestag election result owes much to the considerable popularity of incumbent Chancellor Angela Merkel and almost equally much to a series of campaign gaffes by SPD Chancellor-candidate Peer Steinbrück (Schmitt-Beck et al. 2014). In many respects, the election result reflects the increasing presidentialization of the electoral process (Poguntke/Webb 2005), which means that the electoral fortunes of German parties are increasingly dependent on the performance of the their top candidates.

It follows from this that the strength of the Christian parties may owe much to the weakness of the opposition leader. Hence, it does not indicate a particularly firm anchorage of CDU and CSU in certain social segments of society. Similarly, the relatively modest result of the Greens does not mean that they could not have reached a much better outcome with a more appropriate strategy and a fitting leadership team. This also applies to the Social Democrats where most of the top leadership positions are still occupied by the old guard.

Admittedly, these arguments are provocative. What about the evidence? Essentially, we will pursue three perspectives: First, we will look at the results from electoral research; second, we will analyse the organizational anchorage of the political parties in the German electorate as indicated by the size of their party membership; and, third, we will look at a central behavioural indicator, namely, volatility over time.

The degree to which voters identify with political parties is a well-established indicator of the structural stability of party systems. The decline of party identification (PI) is almost conventional wisdom of comparative election studies (Dalton et al. 2002: 26). So far, the decline has not been dramatic in Germany but there is a clear downward trend (Ohr/Quandt 2011: 185-88; Schmitt-Beck 2011: 9). Figure 1 shows the proportion of German voters with party identification shortly before the 2013 Bundestag elections. Unsurprisingly, CDU/CSU have the largest proportion of voters with party identification among their potential voters, which reflects the structural bias of the German party system in favour of the Christian parties. More remarkable, however, is the fact that those who say that they identify with no party are more numerous than those who identify with the second largest party SPD.

To be sure, party identification may not only be focused on a specific party but may to a degree contain an element of loyalty towards a specific political camp. CDU/CSU are better placed from this perspective because, until recently, the FDP was the only other party fishing in the same pond. Clearly, the emergence and initial electoral success of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) has changed this. Furthermore, the Free Voters (Freie Wähler) have established themselves as serious political force in the bourgeois camp in Bavaria. The left-wing camp, on the other hand, has been fragmented for many years with three significant parties competing also against each other, namely SPD, the Left and the Greens. To a certain degree, this explains the very high proportion of so-called late deciders, that is, voters who leave their voting decision until very late.

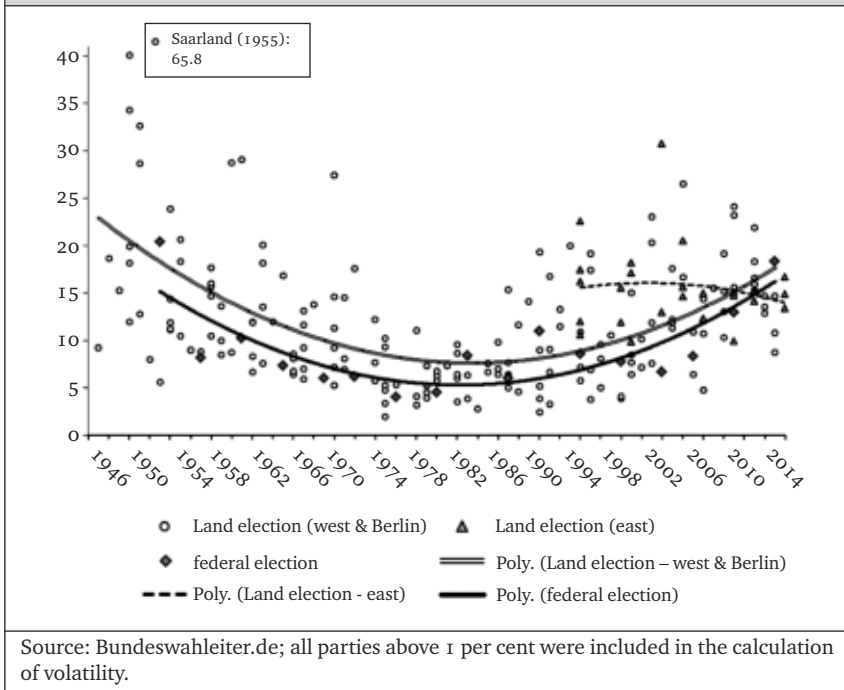


Overall, however, it is clear that the two large parties have substantially lost loyal voters.

Another clear indication of the declining anchorage of the German parties in their core electorates is the decreasing number of party members (Niedermayer 2012). Like other trends, this is not specific to Germany but a European-wide phenomenon (van Biezen et al. 2012; van Biezen/Poguntke 2014). Despite some variation between individual parties, there is a clear downward trend for the vast majority of European parties. The same applies to Germany, where party membership has roughly been halved since the mid-1970s. Even the newly founded Green party has never succeeded in creating a genuine mass membership organization. They are, however, the only party represented in the Bundestag which has registered some growth in membership figures in recent years. The overall decline of party membership has resulted in an erosion of the capability of German parties to stabilize their electoral support via their own membership organization (Poguntke 2000: 246-60; Poguntke 2005: 56-58).

This has contributed to rising volatility. Again, this is no German peculiarity but a European-wide phenomenon, as the figures discussed in

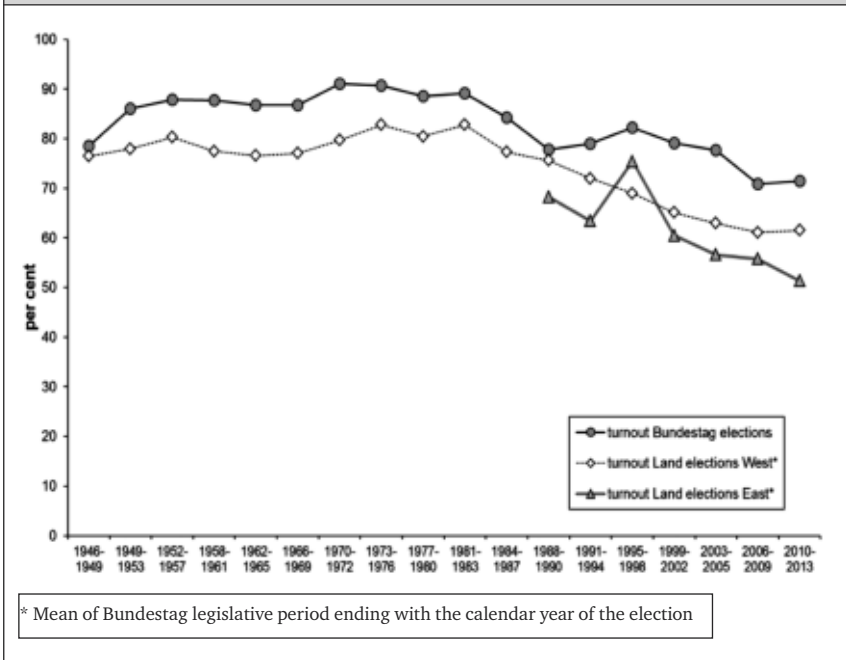
Figure 2. Volatility in Germany



section 2 clearly demonstrate. In Germany, we can see two parallel developments. Longitudinal figures covering the entire post-war era in West Germany clearly show a marked rise of volatility since the 1980s (see figure 2). German unification augmented this trend through the addition of a newly enfranchised East German electorate which lacked well-entrenched party loyalties and was hence prone to volatile electoral behaviour. Overall, as can be seen from the trend lines in figure 2, which show the development of volatility in federal and *Land* elections, the German party system has gone full circle as regards the stability of voting decisions: By 2013, voting behaviour is equally volatile as it was in the immediate post-war era. To be sure, this is primarily not the result of the inclusion of the East German electorate, as the separate line for the East German *Land* elections clearly shows.

In addition, the number of voters potentially open to change their vote choice has structurally grown due to the slow yet sustained decline of

Figure 3. Turnout in Germany 1946-2013



turnout. While more than 90 per cent of the electorate cast their vote in the federal elections of the 1970s, turnout is now some 20 percentage points lower (see figure 3). Furthermore, this trend structurally increases the mobilization opportunities of new parties, which can attempt to exploit the growing detachment of a portion of the electorate from the established party system as a whole. If we factor in that abstentionism is particularly high in the socially disadvantaged segments of society (Schäfer et al. 2013) we can clearly identify a sizeable potential for populist mobilization here.

Taken together, the developments discussed above indicate a weakening structural anchorage of parties which means that the importance of the supply side of politics has grown. Smart opposition politics (or simply a favourable party system configuration) sufficed to propel the FDP to unprecedented electoral pinnacles in 2009 while an equally inept governmental behaviour was enough to send them to the electoral wilderness barely four years later. Similarly, a vigorous election campaign of the

SPD and the outgoing Chancellor Gerhard Schröder made the party come neck to neck with the Christian parties in the 2005 federal elections while it finished with the worst ever result only four years later. Another example are the Greens, who entered the 2013 election campaign strengthened by some strong *Land* election results, the election of the first ever Green Prime Minister in the Christian Democratic heartland of Baden-Württemberg, and federal poll ratings approaching the 30 per cent mark. Yet, after a strategically ill-conceived campaign they reached only a mediocre result and ended behind the Left party which became the leading party of the opposition after the formation of the Grand Coalition. Also the poll ratings of the Christian parties were characterized by substantial fluctuation over recent years. Arguably the most conspicuous example is the 2005 election campaign where CDU/CSU entered with poll ratings close to the 50 per cent mark and finished with a mere 35.2 per cent. First and foremost, the strong gains of 2013 mean that the potential for heavy losses has also grown.

5. NO GERMAN *SONDERWEG*

The structural factors discussed so far in conjunction with the now considerable fluctuation in the poll ratings of the German parties and – above all – in their election results clearly indicate that the German party system has largely lost its exceptionality in the European party political landscape which had been a result of the ‘politics of centrality’ (Smith 1982). The centripetal mode of party competition diagnosed by Gordon Smith, which rested on a combination of the success of the catch-all parties and the strength of ideological taboo zones on the left and the right ends of the ideological spectrum, has largely lost its determining power. The establishment of the Greens and later of the Left has resulted in a considerable differentiation and radicalization of the ideological spectrum on the left. On the opposite end of the ideological continuum, the famous dictum of the former CSU leader Franz-Josef Strauß has until recently remained unchallenged who had maintained that there should be no democratically legitimate competitor to the right of the Christian parties. This had set the German party system apart from many other European party systems where parties with often highly questionable democratic credentials even made it into governmental coalitions (Carter 2005; Decker 2006; Grabow/Hartleb 2013).

As a result of the growing relevance of the supply side of party politics it remained a matter of time until the German party system would “normalize” also in this respect. The course of modernization enforced by Chancellor Merkel on the CDU has created somewhat more space to the right of Christian Democracy. Furthermore, the Euro crisis has politicized the project of European integration which had enjoyed the so-called “permissive consensus” of most European mass publics. While it had been a concern of pro-European elites without much mass attention for decades, the direction of European politics has now become a legitimate and controversial item of national political discourse also in Germany. The success of the newly founded AfD, which narrowly missed the 5 per cent hurdle in the 2013 Bundestag elections, indicates the potential for a Eurosceptic, decidedly conservative party which is no stranger to populist undertones.

German parties find it increasingly difficult, just like their counterparts in other EU member states, to pursue responsible policies and simultaneously fight off Eurosceptic and/or populist challenges. The considerable narrowing of the policy space through constraints emanating from European integration – in Merkel’s terminology the lack of credible alternatives – structurally limits the room for manoeuvre of pro-European parties. Meanwhile their challengers feel little need to consider whether or not their demands could be realized under the restrictions of the European policy process (Mair 2008: 222). This is the strategic advantage of such diverse parties as SYRIZA, the AfD, Beppe Grillo’s five star movement or UKIP.

Does this mean that the so-called cartel parties are in danger of becoming victims of their own success? After all, according to the original thesis by Katz and Mair, the partial absorption of political parties into the sphere of the state was accompanied by a weakening of party competition (Katz/Mair 1995). This makes them structurally more vulnerable by radical challengers. Under conditions of increasingly fluid electoral markets, this becomes particularly apparent in times of crisis. Whether this leads to the foundation of new, successful parties or to the sudden growth of previously insignificant ones depends on the specific combination of long-term structural changes (such as the erosion of party anchorage) and the specific political context. As long as established opposition parties are capable of absorbing popular discontent, party systems may remain reasonably stable. However, the example of the French Socialist government under President Hollande shows that this may not be sustain-

able for longer periods of time. After all, the French government did not take exceptionally long before it largely subscribed to the austerity policies. This is likely to increase the opportunities of radical challengers such as the Front National to capitalize on popular discontent. The victory of SYRIZA in Greece and the rise Podemos in Spain are clear writings on the wall.

Yet from the perspective of democratic theory, the success of Eurosceptic or even (right-wing) populist parties could have beneficial effects in the medium term. It could force the established parties, as long as they are still strong enough, to engage in a meaningful debate over national and European policy and to rediscover the simple fact that party competition should also be a competition between concepts and ideas for the future. Blaming Brussels for the alleged lack of alternatives will not suffice in the long run. However, as the Greek example indicates, time may be running out.

* The author would like to gratefully acknowledge the help by Michael Angenendt and Johannes Schmitt in data analysis and library research.

NOTES

1. Data from Bundeswahleiter.de; all parties above 1 per cent were included in the calculation of volatility.
2. To be precise, the value for the 2008

Italian elections is higher but the frequent rearrangement of parties and party alliances question the accuracy of these values.

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ROUND TABLE

Anti-Party Parties and their impact on Italian and German Politics: Transient or Permanent?

Rome, November 16th, 2013

UDO GÜMPEL: In Germany we had the experience of the Pirate Party, but there is a fundamental distinction to be made compared to the Italian situation. Maybe one of the reasons could be, a personal remark, that the German Party Law, the “*Parteiengesetz*”, forced the Pirate Party to take democratic decisions inside of the party. And the German Party Law forced the party to have these congresses and to have the public discussion. I think this is a very remarkable distinction with respect to the Italian *Movimento 5 Stelle* (M5S), because, as we know, this is not that what we could define a political party. It is some kind of a commercial brand. There is only one person who is the owner of this commercial brand and he is the one who decides who is to be called a “fan” of this, because you cannot even do something like a matriculation. There is no list, there is no committee of guarantees, there is nothing of what a political party has been defined in our past, there is only Beppe Grillo and it is not even Gianroberto Casaleggio the one who could decide because, as we know, the foundation has been done by three persons: Beppe Grillo, his nephew and his lawyer. These are the official owners and when they discussed with other people, and there are a lot of cases well-known now in Italy, they did not discuss in a politically elected committee about the expulsion of a member of this party. And there is no committee of guarantees, but they set the latter by the law and they said: “We, as the owner of the brand, we deny you the future use of our brand.” It is just like Coca-Cola. This is maybe the reason why Beppe Grillo can continue to have this strong hand on the party and the same forced need by the German law has destroyed the Pirate Party. So I think, I would like to stress this point, in Italy we don’t have any kind of Party Law similar to the ones existing in Germany or in other countries. When in this legislature some member of the Parliament from the Democratic Party proposed a similar law, it was obvi-

ously a proposal aimed to destroy the M5S, because we have the *Popolo della Libertà* (Pdl), now *Forza Italia* (FI), and other parties who do not respect even the laws and the regulations they gave. So I think here in Italy we have an extremely difficult situation, in which you hand over your political representation to movements, one-person-movements, that could be only compared to the *Caudillismo* of Latin American experiences and which have nothing to do with European democratic countries. So when we talk about the Anti-Party Parties here today, this is not a party itself, it's a personal movement with even less democratic structure than Silvio Berlusconi's Party. Who remembers, now six years from the last convention to call up for his "*Consiglio Nazionale*", he knew that inside of this "*Consiglio Nazionale*" he will have the majority. Today he called up the union but nobody has ever heard about considerate and friendly decisions inside the Pdl, so the only party which has some similarity and could be compared to it is the Partito Democratico (PD). But with many deficiencies in this, because they finally decided to hold a national convention and they do not reach the legal numbers to change, and the convention is on Friday, but nobody can come...so, I think they really disregard elementary democratic rules of political life.

I would like to hear from my colleagues here what they think about this very extreme critics on the Italian political system. But I know that yesterday evening you talked about this and so I am not very optimistic about the future. In order to the question we have to discuss, unfortunately this seems to be a permanent situation in Italy, because I cannot even see a very strong movement in the public opinion here in Italy that would like to change this. So, this was my question here and I think it's a very critical situation, even from the German point of view. How to deal with this kind of representation without representation? How to deal with a government, a maybe future government, that is built by people who have in reality, apart from the one election in Parliament, no democratic base and representation?

PROF. SERGIO FABBRINI: Let me try to answer to the question on two levels. One is certainly about the differences between Italy and Germany. The other level regards the possible similarities between Italy and Germany.

Regarding the first one, democracy within parties, in this question there is an underlying assumption, a kind of normative assessment, that democracy should have a certain form and structure, and sometimes it happens that this ideal structure is not always corresponding to the ef-

fective structure that those who raise the issue in certain countries have in mind. In the case of Italy, I would say, if we want to understand why there is no democracy within parties, we have to take a larger historical view. We have a constitution that implies, that requires, that imposes to the party to adopt a democratic procedure, and the Constitution back in 1949 asked the parliament to introduce the necessary legislation in order to implement this constitutional requirement. This legislation has never been approved. The reason for that is that, on the one side, Italy had for roughly half a century the largest communist party in the Western world, and on the other side that Italy came out from the Second World War as a crucial strategic country in the Cold War. This happened with the most important communist party, a party that had been essential in the fight against fascism, and at the same time a party that did not fully meet the democratic standards leading in the Western countries. So what do you do in such a context? If you approve the law required by the Constitution, you should question the so-called democratic centralism of the communist party. But the communist party represents one third of the electorate. In Germany, after putting the Nazi-party out of law, you decided to put also the communist party out of law, so in that case it was easier to introduce a classical Western legalization of party life, because Germany had basically two main parties: the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats, able to aggregate even the extreme positions on the left and on the right. This was not possible in Italy. If we adopt a legal view, we probably are good with legality but we are bad with democracy. Sometimes politics and legality do not overlap. And this was the necessity to keep the communist party on board, without letting the communist party playing a governmental role.

After all Italy, differently from Greece, was able to chain its ideological conflict, to civilize its political life, to come out of the fascist experience in a way that we of course are proud of. So, explaining why Italy has no legislation on parties and considering that this is a responsibility of the Italians is a very normative assessment that explains in my view, sorry if I say that, a kind of the classical bias that the Italians are backward. It is not like that.

What Italy has in common with Germany is that the anti-party movement in both countries expresses an anti-European view, an anti-European mood. The Pirates as well as the M5S are the vehicle for expressing this criticism of the European Union and in general of the way in which we, Europe, the European Union, the European institutions dealt with the

Eurocrisis. And the fact that the Eurocrisis is dramatically reducing the alternatives within the electoral system, the governmental system at the national level, as Thomas Poguntke said before, is a fact that in a way is going to suspend electoral competition and there is a tendency to centralize in order to create a grand coalition. These parties are the vehicle for expressing this critical mood in relation to the management of the Eurozone.

Let me add a further reason why Italy is unhappy, or better said, why public opinion in several member States is unhappy with the management of the Eurozone. In Germany it happens because Germans think that if the wealth of the Germans is transferred to the Southern member States in order to be helped, they have to be submitted to strong conditionality, that they could not find a way of accepting. Why there is this mood? I think the mood is coming from the view that Euro and more in general the Eurozone should be organized according to those ordoliberal principles of the proper, German public culture. A culture that substitutes rules and laws to politics. And it is exactly this view, to see politics always through laws and through rules, that you do not see politics as a choice between policy options. My point is that if we do not call into question this view of what we must call executive technocratic judicialized federalism, we are going to witness a deeper and deeper refusal of the way in which the Eurozone is functioning. So, between Italy and Germany exist important differences, but also important correspondences in the end.

UDO GÜMPEL: Thank you very much, this was a very interesting point of view. Of course we are not agreeing on the basics.

I would like to enlarge one question. You are completely right with the different point of views of the cultures, so I agree perfectly with you. But on the other hand, this was one point I would like to stress, if Italy would have had a law demanded by the Constitution on the political parties, imposing parties to adopt a real internal democratic structure, that would have been obviously a strong barrier against Beppe Grillo and his political movement. Because inside his movement, there are a lot of people not agreeing with him, but he has the strong hand, he decides everything. So if you think about the decisions on what the MPs of the M5S proposed, for some people they could even form a new majority in the Parliament, and so gain political stability in Italy. But Beppe Grillo's concept and ideas are completely different, he refuses any kind of coalition. So if the member of his party, the members of the Parliament, or the members of a future party would have democratically taken some part of the

decision, if there would have been a congress vote, I guess, he had to defend his political positions inside his party and things would have ran differently even inside the M5S. Because he knows that the majority of his MPs does not agree with him. But he always said: “I feel what the Italians want”. A democratic structure is some kind of a barrier against dictatorships inside political life. So it is not that I disagree with your idea that in Germany we maybe think too much about rules and laws, but on the other hand, a complete lack of these kinds of rules like in Italy is really an open door for every kind of dictatorship.

PROF. LEONARDO MORLINO: I think that if we are going around the issue, we have to take into account a sort of counter-intuitive puzzle. Up to now, no one has discussed the Italian party puzzle. Inter-party sentiments, dissatisfaction and particularly the growing dissatisfaction because of the economic crisis last year, lower and lower confidence towards the institutions, so a larger, a wider spread feeling of protest in different areas, in different social groups. At the same time, when a protest is expressed, it is channelled through parties. This is the puzzle, this is the problem. On the one hand, we do not even have the courage to call parties “parties”, except for the Partito Democratico. All of them, you can go through the different names, and you do not find the word “party”. So, the feeling of inter-party sentiment of the crisis for example, that is stressed by the press, is very widespread.

Then we do not have demonstrations, riots, problems of violence, which we had in Spain and in Greece. We had that kind of protest channelled by parties. This is the puzzle, this is a key point we should understand and we should discuss.

Now, why? I wrote a book about the 40's and 50's on the point of party legislation and so on that you are addressing. In those decades any kind of legislation of parties was impossible because of differences, because of radicalizations and so on. And now, because of a conflict, other differences make a parties regulation still impossible. So let's forget about the legislation, but the point of a lack of regulation means low barriers. Low barriers mean the possibility of channelling the protest, of institutionalizing the protest. In the regional way that you see with Grillo and the other ways. If you look at that from this point of view, they are very impressive. Because if we consider what we call political radicalization in Italy, that is the vote for the extremes, in 1992: 11%, in 1994: 14,4%, in 1996: 18,7%, and then lower, in 2001: 10%. But in 2006: 15%, in 2008:

12, almost 13%, in 2013: 33%. This is the situation of radicalization of today. But this radicalization is now channelled, you do not tell people in the streets, because it is institutionalized. So now of course we are in favour of changes to break the institutional stale mate that we have on different kinds of policies but we have to be aware that if we make a change of the electoral law and if that electoral law will lift the barrier, in the sense of putting a higher barrier, we can have a sort of trade-off for the people in the streets. Let's have a look again at other survey data, for example about what I call "non-conventional participation", you remember the idea of "non-conventional participation". Non-conventional participation in Italy is growing, in terms of attending demonstrations, in terms of attention to debate. There is an opening towards non-conventional participation. And what is topping the opening? The channelling made by Grillo. We don't like it, but this is the truth.

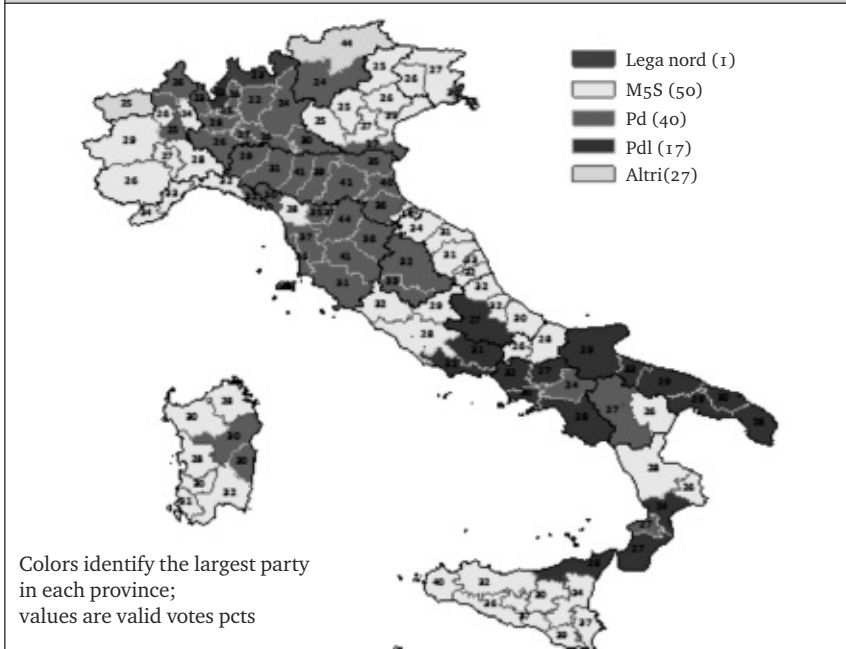
UDO GÜMPEL: This was a very deep analysis and I agree perfectly with you because you channelized it. On the other hand, you said you channelized it, but what will happen if with the actual law he could get 31% and then also the next 29% and so he will have the absolute majority in the first chamber, in the "Camera". That would mean an absolutely ungovernable situation. So it is not as easy as it could be if it was a protest movement with about 5,6 or 10%, because he would gain some representation but he would not determine the destiny of the country.

PROF. MORLINO: Anyway, we have the largest protest movement of all democracies in the world, a little bit larger than the Greek protest movement which is the second in a sort of list of protest movements that I checked.

UDO GÜMPEL: Let's go back to the title of our debate: Is this thought to be a stable factor in Italy?

PROF. ROBERTO D'ALIMONTE: I would like to contribute to this question with some data on the nature of this party. But first let me tell you an anecdote. I started to really understand the nature of the contradictions of the M5S on 22 February 2013, when I listened to the last major rally of the M5S here in Rome in Piazza San Giovanni. I must confess that I was very angry about it. To a crowd which was estimated at 800.000, I don't believe it was 800.000, but certainly it was several hundred thousands, were

Figure 1. Largest party by province



read out readings of Pier Paolo Pasolini. For those of you who don't know, Pier Paolo Pasolini is an Italian intellectual who criticized systematically modern society, the consumer society. So I discovered that the fundamental ideology of this political movement is "happy decline", in Italian you use "la decrescita felice". This is a party whose ideology is decline, that is "Let's set back". Not just "Let's not grow", as if we have already grown too much and now it is time to shrink. This is the meaning of "decrescita felice". And then I started to think of my data. They were telling me that on the day of the elections, Sunday 25th, we are now talking about Friday 22nd, the M5S would have collected votes from many small and medium size entrepreneurs in Northern Italy, particularly in the North-East, who have experienced economic difficulties for years, and they were certainly not happy about it. How could they vote for a party that stands for a 'happy decline'? And yet this is precisely what was about to happen on Sunday. And it did happen. But of course those entrepreneurs were not in Piazza San Giovanni on Friday and Grillo did not campaign in the North-East with Pasolini's books in his hands.

Table 1. Younger and more educated reward M5S		
		MOVIMENTO 5 STELLE
	whole sample	25,5%
BY AGE GROUP		
	18-24	35%
	24-34	29%
	35-44	34%
	45-54	32%
	55-64	20%
	65+	10%
BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION		
	University degree	29%
	High school diploma	31%
	Middle school	28%
	Elementary	14%
N= 11026 pooled pre-election polls on 18-22 feb 2013		
Source: Ipsos public affairs		

And now I want to show some data. As you can see in Figure 1, in the North-East, which is the area of the country with the highest density of small and medium size firms the largest party on February 25th was the M5s, the party of the “happy decline”. So how do you explain this? Any explanation has to take into account lack of information. Quite simply, voters in the North-east as well as in other areas, did not really know what Grillo’s party was standing for. This is the point, they did not know. And they did not know because of another interesting feature of this party: the party did not use TV. In a sense it hid itself from mainstream media. So, its basic contradictions could survive because people did not have enough information. It was segmented information that Grillo was providing to different sectors of the electorate. And he got away with that.

But now, after its great electoral success, the M5d cannot hide anymore and this is why my prognosis is less pessimistic than yours. Again,

	PD	PDL	SCelta CIVICA/MONTI	LEGA NORD
	25,4%	21,6%	8,3%	4,1%
	19%	19%	8%	4%
	20%	22%	7%	5%
	20%	19%	9%	4%
	21%	20%	9%	4%
	32%	22%	8%	3%
	37%	27%	9%	4%
	27%	15%	11%	2%
	25%	18%	8%	2%
	23%	23%	8%	4%
	29%	27%	8%	8%

let me show you some data. As you can see from Tables 1 and 2 the M5S is a catch-all-party. This is what makes it different from any other traditional populist party. It is overrepresented, as we would expect, among the youngsters: 35% of voters 18 to 40 years of age voted for it. And it is underrepresented among the oldest cohorts, whereas for the PD it is the opposite. But what it is even more interesting is education: 29% of voters with a university degree voted for the M5S vs. only 14% with an elementary education (Table 1). As to professional sectors (Table 2), one can see that entrepreneurs, professionals, managers, even the self-employed, one of the backbones of Berlusconi's support in the past, voted more for the M5S than for any of the larger parties.

So what does this data tell us about the profile of the M5S? This is not the profile of "Alba Dorata" (Golden Dawn) in Greece. This is a catch-all-

Table 2. Active professionals sectors reward M5S		
		MOVIMENTO 5 STELLE
	Whole sample	25,5%
BY PROFESSIONS		
	Entrepreneurs/professionals/managers	25%
	Self-employed	39%
	Clerks/teachers	31%
	Manual workers	29%
	Unemployed	33%
	Students	37%
	Housewives	21%
	Retired	11%
BY SECTOR		
	Public sector	31%
	Private sector	30%
N= 11026 pooled pre-election polls on 18-22 feb 2013		
Source: Ipsos public affairs		

party that draws its support from all sectors of Italian society. Of course this goes in the direction of what Prof. Morlino was saying, because the level of dissatisfaction, outrage, protest affects Italian society across the board. And Grillo has captured this. But this is not the profile of the kind of parties that we associate with radicalism, even though there is a radical component. The true radical component is the anti-establishment rhetoric. But you have to put this together with the data showing that educated people as well as the most active sectors of Italian society have voted for Grillo.

Will this trend continue? Can Grillo keep all together all the diversified components of its electoral bloc, once enough information is available about the real nature of his party? For sure in Italy today there is a potential for great instability which the M5s can continue to exploit, but of course politics is an interactive game. The future success of the M5s

	PD	PDL	SCELTA CIVICA /MONTI	LEGA NORD
	25,4%	21,6%	8,3%	4,1%
	23%	17%	13%	3%
	15%	20%	7%	3%
	25%	15%	9%	5%
	20%	24%	7%	5%
	18%	24%	4%	4%
	23%	11%	9%	1%
	22%	29%	9%	5%
	37%	25%	9%	5%
	29%	14%	9%	4%
	21%	20%	9%	5%

depends on what the other parties will do. In spite of its contradictions, in spite of its “happy decline” ideology and so on, it is possible that Grillo’s party will remain at this level of electoral support or close to it, if there is no change in the other major parties.

But this morning I have not heard yet the word “Renzi”, the “Renzi factor”. As I said, politics is an interactive game, so how can the “Renzi factor” change the interaction?

UDO GÜMPEL: Of course, what you stressed is the absolutism, M5S is a popular party. He is the one who represents absolutely perfectly the Italian electors. It is the perfect representation, sociologically seen, of what Italy is. And we see that Berlusconi lost his active electors in Veneto and in the so-called “active”, “productive” areas of Italy. Last time they voted for the M5S. But now in Parliament there is a lot more information of

what MPs do. And what they propose is usually no more a liberal “happy decrescita”, but what they are proposing, for example this morning, is a pension of max. 5000 Euros a month for everybody, subsalaries of at least 600 Euros for everybody. So the proposals they now actively support in Parliament are often done by activists of M5S who came from the left wing. And this is one of these contradictions.

And I would like to know what you think, if this could be the reason for other conflicts and for even less impact on the electoral success of this movement now represented in Parliament. A lot of extreme left-wing-members of these groups, who often try to bring proposals, were not very in harmony with the basic ideas of the electoral body.

PROF. MORLINO: I would like to develop a little bit what Roberto said. You understand better this slide, if you complement this with the abstention rates. Because you have to read this kind of slides keeping in mind the rates of abstention and its connections. In this way, Grillo’s performance comes out more clearly in those areas. The point is that there is a larger, wider spread protest, particularly in the middle class. A part of this protest is expressed by abstention, another part takes the form of a symbolic vote for Grillo. They do not know what Grillo says, they do not care what Grillo says, Grillo is a symbol of protest. Of course no one expected, maybe not even the people who voted for Grillo, that kind of success, but this is the reality. This is the point to better understand.

UDO GÜMPEL: When we saw this morning where they do come from, it was very interesting to see that from different regions and towns you showed us, there are completely different origins of the voters. We have regions where 30-40% is coming from the non-voters, other towns where 50% come from the PD, in the South they came mainly from the PdL so the sketch in all areas is absolutely differentiated. Of course he has got also the protest voters from the non-voters-area, but could this stand for a long time? Because you cannot promise to everybody everything what he did in his very partially, separated campaign. He has never been to any kind of talk show that several million people could follow, where they could recognize the contradictions because you cannot promise lower taxes in the one hand, and free money for everybody on the other hand, as somebody did in the last campaign.

What do you think how the Italian electors will react to this game? And then of course we have to introduce the “Renzi-factor”, which is some

kind of a different populism but it is even a new factor in this game.

PROF. D'ALIMONTE: I disagree with the association of Renzi's name to populism because this is another conference.

UDO GÜMPEL: Okay, but what do you think about the "Renzi-factor"? Would he change the main cards in the game?

PROF. D'ALIMONTE: Yes, because the data show that Renzi is capable of attracting votes both from Grillo and Berlusconi. He has great appeal which comes from the fact that many people trust that he will bring about change. Change is the magic word in Italian politics today. This is not true in Germany because Germany is after all a satisfied society. Reforms were done there. Germany has a rate of unemployment that we dream of. Everything in Germany is going well. So the word "change" has basically no political relevance there. No so in Italy.

Now who has embodied, who has personified change in Italy? Berlusconi in 1994 and he won, Grillo in 2013 and he 'won'.

UDO GÜMPEL: The Northern league as well?

PROF. D'ALIMONTE: The Northern league in 1992. Today Renzi is the change. And today, in order to capture this protest vote, which is very large, you have to be associated with change. People believe that Renzi will deliver it. I actually don't know if Renzi will be able to do it. I hope so, but I really don't know. But I do know that this is the reason why people will vote for him. And this is also the reason why Grillo and Berlusconi are going to lose votes. This is why Renzi is a factor.

PROF. FABBRINI: I would suggest to adopt a larger perspective on the question of Italy. When we talk about Italy, there is always the danger to become too much idiosyncratic, that you just see Italy from an Italian point of view. Today we have a larger phenomenon. We have an anti-establishment mood which is crossing many countries inside and outside of Europe. It is sufficient to look at the reaction of the Tea Party in the United States, a very significant reaction to the point that the party is responsible for the shut-down of the federal government of the most important Western country. So there is a significant anti-establishment mood growing up. And of course, this anti-establishment mood has different

reasons according to specific countries, but they have elements in common, at least in Europe.

And these elements in common have to do with the question of the form of integration we passed through. Certainly in Italy we have additional factors. We have an inefficient administrative apparatus in many parts of the country. Also there are regional governments that are quite efficient and competitive at European level. The picture in Italy is much more complex than in general, there are many other levels of the government that perform quite well. But generally speaking, the administration is not up to the role that we expect.

Then we have the permanent Southern question, which is not resolving, in many cases it is worsening. It is a matter of fact that 40% of the Italian population lives in a part of the country which is really far away from the process of economic modernization that we are witnessing in the rest of the continent.

So there are specific elements of the Italian situation, but there are also elements that have to do with the European integration. As Prof. Dr. Morlino said, democracies have one formidable instrument for channelling and bringing together these needs, and this instrument is the political party. For a very long time, Italy had powerful political parties able to channel one of the most crucial factors of dissatisfaction, which was the ideological conflict between two parts of the country, which represented also two countries.

The crisis of the Italian party system in 1992/1994 subtracted Italy from this crucial factor of regulating political conflict and of channelling political dissatisfaction. When a party system is collapsing, building a new party system within a democratic system is a long endeavour, and this is why personal leadership came into the floor.

It became important to have leaders, the Northern League was created by Bossi, Forza Italia was created by Berlusconi. You have this personalization of the process, but it is a personalization within an established political system. I would not compare Italy to the splittings of South American countries in the 90's for example, which is a completely different kind of experience.

So now the question for Italy is how to achieve an institutionalized and modern party system in the context of generally diffused dissatisfaction. In general, party systems tend to be institutionalized in condition of growth and well-being of consensus. We have to face a much more complicated operation, which is the formation of a party system in a mo-

ment in which it is not clear for example the distinction between left and right.

What is the distinction between left and right? Starting in your country, what is the distinction between Christian democrats and Social democrats? The main important legislative treaty based agreements, like the fiscal compact, were approved by the Bundestag through a majority of a large part of CDU and SPD. One part of the CDU was against the fiscal compact, a significant part of the liberal democrats was against the fiscal compact. De facto you already had a Grand Coalition in Germany even before the formation of a formal Grand Coalition, because the options available for dealing with the Eurocrisis are really very tight. Of course, this is not a good condition for creating the classical Western democratic system based on the competition between left and right. So you have the formation of a centrist coalition, which can have the form of one prominent single party with some satellite elements set out. Or you have the alternative extreme on one side or the other.

With regard to Italy, I would not say left and right because Grillo is neither left nor right, and I guess also the German Pirates are neither left nor right. But if that is true, then creating a new party system out of a cleavage between pro- and anti-establishment is an absolutely dangerous operation. Because the anti-establishment parties do not want to stabilize, they do not want to institutionalize, because if they are institutionalized, they feel like becoming part of the establishment. So if you say to Grillo: "But what would you do instead of approving the fiscal compact?", then he should have to answer that for the Eurozone it is better to have another kind of policy. But he does not want to make that, so he says "I am against". But when you are against something, you do not have the presupposition of forming a political party in some way.

So the instability in Italy is higher than in other countries because it took place in an historical period of weak political representation. But that instability is a more general phenomenon. In Germany you have a much more stable political order because of historical conditions. Nevertheless, if the distinction between the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats is smoothing, disappearing in some way, what do you do about electoral democracy? I mean, Merkel is taking many of the issues raised previously by the Social Democrats, even by the GRÜNEN, look at the nuclear options. And the Social Democrats are in a vacuum, they do not know exactly how to distinguish themselves from the CDU, because in the main important decisions they are with the CDU, and many

voters in Germany do not know exactly where the distinction between Gabriel and Merkel is.

And then look at the crisis of the Socialists in France. Francois Hollande has the lowest level of popularity of any president at 1-2 years after the election. What is the policy option in France, vis-à-vis Germany? They did a campaign saying “We will be against austerity, we want to renegotiate the fiscal compact” and then he was obliged to ask the Assemblée Nationale to a vote in favour of the fiscal compact and basically to follow what seems to be a tenor. There is no alternative. If you have a tenor context in France, Germany, Italy, setting up a political order within a classical electoral competition will be very, very difficult for everybody.

UDO GÜMPEL: I would like to hear something from the public, because we discussed so many questions that it would be nice to hear something from you.

QUESTION (PUBLIC): My question is related to the data that Prof. D’Alimonte showed on occupational composition of the electorate. You were wondering how Grillo could bring together the small entrepreneurs of the North-East and young educated people. My tentative answer is, and I would like to hear your opinion on this, that these people are the losers of the economic crisis. This could be a reason for keeping them together. And of course you see that the retired people are not voting for Beppe Grillo, probably also for age reasons, but maybe also because they are not losing much in the current crisis. While Grillo is appealing to people who are at risk. So both the entrepreneurs are shutting down shops and factories, and young educated people are fearing that they are not going to find jobs corresponding to their high level of education and that they might be forced to emigrate.

And this is the problem that probably is not felt in Germany. There is no crisis in Germany, so there are no losers of the crisis. That is probably a reason why we have such different levels of support for anti-party parties in the two countries.

I am wondering about Spain: How can we explain that nothing changed in Spain in the last elections?

PROF. D’ALIMONTE: In the Grillo electoral base there is everybody, as we have seen. The “losers of globalization” are an important component. But there are also some of the ‘winners of globalization’, such as medium and

small size firms which are export-driven. The Grillo movement is highly composite.

My explanation of it is quite simple. Look at the supply side in the 2013 elections. Voters were facing a choice which included a guy from the old left, Bersani and a discredited Berlusconi. This was the 'standard' choice: Berlusconi or Bersani. Why should we be so surprised to find out that, in a context of great dissatisfaction and anger, so many people decided to cast a vote for somebody that looked radically different and new? Somebody that was anti-establishment, without knowing that he was also anti-growth. This is what can happen in democracies. That is why I am more optimistic than Mr. Gumpel because I feel that Grillo's movement is to a large extent the response to the lack of change by the established parties. And then we go back to Renzi. Renzi is change. Maybe there will be somebody else running instead of Berlusconi. The next election will be different for many reasons. Today people know more about Grillo and his contradictions, and there will be new faces running. So voters will be looking at a different range of choices and that is what will drive the change in the outcome of the game.

PROF. MORLINO: I might add something that I think all of you know very well. Since the work of Otto Kirchheimer more than 50 years ago, we know that the conclusion about the electoral behaviour of citizens in contemporary democracies is that the social status is not the most important explanatory factor. Don't forget this. Otherwise we totally lose the meaning and the analysis. This is something that we have to remember and therefore develop the explanation in other directions, not in the direction of the social status of the voters.

QUESTION (PUBLIC): I have a question starting from one point of Prof. Morlino. If I understood your point correctly, you were stressing the important role of the M5S in channelling the protest movement into a sort of political, and in this case, pacific participation. This is probably true. One of the effects that Grillo had in many areas in the country was also to give protest a democratic form of expression. We have been talking about this yesterday.

You said if we are going to change the complete frame of a new electoral system, we could make it more difficult for parties to be voted, to be successful, and we could have part of this protest not to be represented anymore: we could therefore have riots in the streets or similar phenomena, as we are seeing happening in Greece for instance.

I would like to use perspective in order to analyse the German situation not only in the last months, but in different moments of crisis that concerned Germany in the last decades. For example the late 60's, the early 70's or the early 90's, when the socioeconomic situation in Germany was quite different from now, although I believe that even in recent times there are some quite deep crisis areas also in Germany, surely not so spread out as in Italy, but there are also German losers of the globalization.

Anyway, the question is: How comes that in this moment of crisis in Germany you did not have anti-party or protest parties being successful? In the late 60's we had of course extreme parties on the left and on the right side, but they did not manage to become a real political actor. Never. Maybe at the regional level sometimes, but no more than that.

My possible remark is: What about the legal framework? Not only the electoral system, but the fact that political parties in Germany must apply to specific legal conditions to be recognized as a party. In other words, what Grillo made in the last months, just going on the Internet and saying: "Now, this was my manifesto so far, now I am just changing it. I just change and introduce new topics", and nobody discussed or protested about it, this would not be possible in Germany. Or just kicking out MPs of his party out of the Parliament, just because he claimed they were wrong. This would not be allowed.

This splitting, this change, is effective not only in Grillo. We have seen similar behaviours in other parties in Italy in the last decades: I could recall a lot of similar examples. I therefore suggest that the lack of a legal framework enables a party to do something that in other countries parties cannot do, and this explain why protest parties in Germany cannot be so successful. You have to deal with your members, and you have to explain why you have changed your "manifesto". And at anytime you want to kick out some of your members, you have to go through a specific procedure which makes the thing democratic, but very strictly regulated. This probably can play a role in explaining why this kind of parties in Germany are not as much successful as they are in Italy. This is my hypothesis and I would like to hear your opinion.

PROF. MORLINO: Let me come back to what I considered the "Italian puzzle": anti-party protest, anti-party sentiments, anti-political sentiments channelled through parties. This is a puzzle. How do you explain this puzzle? I gave a first part of explanation, low barrier.

There is a second part of explanation: tradition. The party tradition that we had. When I did a large survey in Southern Europe in the mid-80's, Italy was distinctive because the majority of people at this time, 30 years ago, was replying: "We don't like parties but we need them". This is the background to give you the real reply to your question. The legal framework is always an important possible intervening variable, but never the key explaining factor. So when you think about the legal framework, you have to think comparatively about both Germany and Italy in the early 50's. This is the moment when there could have been the possibility of setting up that legal framework.

In Germany it was possible, it was obvious, there were a set of different reasons. In Italy, because of the radicalization, the distance and so on, it was not possible. Now it is no longer possible, in the new contemporary situation it would be wrong.

But let me make my last point to sum up what I said. Eventually I think that Italy's present of today is our future. That we are bound to be externally governed. And there is no way out and we will go on in this way with higher or lower protest party pessimism and so on, but this is our future. So our present is our future.

QUESTION (PUBLIC): A short question on politics as an interactive game, as Prof. D'Alimonte said. Which was in the European Union the role played by, what I would call, the "moderate evolution of the democratic party" regarding the success of Grillo? I mean, there was and is a large sensation in the left electorate that the democratic party is no longer a left party.

In this sense, do you think that Renzi can get votes from Grillo? That the "change factor" can substitute this loss of left identity in the democratic party?

PROF. D'ALIMONTE: Yes. I did mention that before and I repeat it. The data in our hands tell us that Renzi has a kind of appeal that will allow him to capture votes both from Grillo and Berlusconi.

REPLY (PUBLIC): So he is the symbol of this moderate evolution?

PROF. D'ALIMONTE: Yes, he is a symbol of a moderate evolution but he is also a symbol of change. I know that this word "change" is really a magic word. It is an explanatory factor. The intriguing question is why somebody, at some

given time, is able to be credibly associated with the promise of change and win the confidence of people who what change today.

REPLY (PUBLIC): The generational factor is important.

PROF. D'ALIMONTE: Yes, but it is not just the young people, also older people want change. They probably do not even know what it means to them. If you ask them "What is change for you?", maybe the only common factor is that they want to see new faces. They want to see the old guard gone. Renzi gained national prominence with one word: "rottamazione", which might be translated with the word "wrecking". The idea behind it is something like 'throwing the old elites onto the junkyard'. This is the word with which a 36-year old man, who was well known in Tuscany, but not really known in the rest of the country, achieved national prominence. All of a sudden millions of people discovered him. And since then his ascendancy has been constant. From then on he was the guy that people looked at for delivering change, as an alternative to Grillo. Often we look for a complicated explanation of social and political factors, while sometime things are relatively easy to explain.

UDO GÜMPEL: But Berlusconi recognized that when he said: "Oh my dear, maybe Renzi will win the PD primary elections. I will not stand even as a candidate against my nephew". So he understood it very well. Fortunately Bersani won. But this was an inside struggle of PD. And I think it is very interesting that when they ran the first primary elections Renzi against Bersani, the regions where Renzi won were the more productive, the good governed ones. It seems strange, but the regions where PD runs relatively well voted for Renzi. And it was not only Florence, it was the red areas of Italy (Tuscany, Emilia, Umbria) and even Bersani's homeland. Bersani never won at home, he lost against Renzi, and then he lost against PdL.

PROF. D'ALIMONTE: The other interesting thing is that, after Renzi began his political career as president of the province of Florence, the critical juncture occurred when he decided to run for mayor of Florence. Florence, of course, is part of Tuscany and Tuscany is part of the so called "red zone", the area of Italy with the largest support for the left since 100 years ago. The outgoing mayor was a member of Renzi's party. He had governed for 10 years and was very unpopular. Renzi was not the choice of his party

in the primaries. But he decided to run against the party establishment appealing directly to voters in the name of change and discontinuity. Although the PD-establishment used all possible tricks to prevent his success, he won. To explain his success it is not possible to take into account only the popularity of his message. His personality was a factor too. He is young, he has never been communist and he has a style of communication that is very different from the old guard. It is direct, like Berlusconi's'. And whether we intellectuals like it or not it works. For Bersani, communication was a dirty word and that is one of the reasons he lost. Instead, Renzi understands what it means to communicate effectively, and he is using all forms of communication including the new media, as Grillo does. And Renzi is as good as Grillo in using them.

UDO GÜMPEL: He is better.

PROF. D'ALIMONTE: We also must look at content. Renzi say things which are appealing to pool of voters who are traditionally anti-left. Take for example the taxi-drivers in Rome. Most of them are rightist. I take taxis very often, and I ask every taxi-driver whom they used to vote for. Most answer Berlusconi or Grillo, but when I tell them that I am from Florence and ask what they think of my mayor, 80% of them say "I will vote for him". Because he makes people believe that his policies are not too far from what they want. Because, as an example, now and then he talks against trade unions, and this goes down well with the Roman taxi-drivers as well as for a lot of other moderate people all over the country. He sounds different from the traditional politicians of the left, he sounds more like a centrist, like a moderate, but more than anything else he sounds like someone who can really deliver what people want. That is part of his success.

UDO GÜMPEL: And he is against Massimo D'Alema, and I think this means a lot of votes for him, no?

PROF. MORLINO: Right. In 1976 Samuel Huntington published an important piece, the title is "The change to change". In this piece, Huntington explains why change and reasoning about change itself is not enough, despite the ironic title. Change means dissatisfactions. As long as there is dissatisfaction, change can be a magic word. Until we come to a different situation, to some decision, to some expectation, to some enthusiasm

for something new, as for example the success of Berlusconi in the mid-90's. When we look at data about satisfaction in Italy in the mid-90's, there is a growing satisfaction because they had high expectations about Berlusconi. So even expectation is enough to change the meaning of the change. Dissatisfaction is a critical, a necessary condition. Why was Merkel re-elected in Germany? Because Germany is a satisfied society. Renzi needs this condition.

UDO GÜMPEL: I think we should come to an end. In Germany we call it "Wechselstimmung". That means a mood, a demand for change. Of course in Italy we have this mood, so let's see if Grillo or Renzi will be the next one. Thank you very much.

Abstracts

INA BIEBER/SIGRID ROSSTEUTSCHER/PHILIPP SCHERER

Anti-Party Voting in Germany: the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and the Pirate Party

The results of the 2013 Federal Election were a real surprise unpredicted by scholars and pollsters alike. For the first time since 1976, the total share of votes of the two major parties has risen again, while the share of the small parties represented in parliament has dropped significantly. Moreover, the liberals (FDP) failed for the first time in the history of Federal parliamentary elections to overcome the five percent hurdle, and two so-called anti-party parties played a prominent role during the election campaign: the “Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)” and the Pirates. The AfD was founded only six months before the Federal Election and reached an unexpected result, as 4.7 percent of the voters cast their vote for them; a very close result to the 4.8 percent result of the traditional FDP. Although anti-party parties are no novel phenomenon, the most recent federal and state elections in Germany must be considered as outstanding in terms of anti-party voting. These two parties, the AfD and the Pirate party, can be characterized as anti-party parties due to their programmatic focus and their tendency to criticize the established parties. Subsequently, we will argue further that ALL new parties are anti-party parties as they need to communicate that none of the existing parties cater to the new parties’ issues or constituencies. In the empirical part of this chapter we examine the social structure and issue position of anti-party voters, their relation to more established parties, their level of dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs and anti-party-sentiments and conclude with a discussion of the long-term prospects of these anti-party parties in the German electoral system.

FABIO BORDIGNON/ LUIGI CECCARINI

The Five-Star Movement: A Catch-All Anti-Party Party

At the Italian General Election held on February 2013, the 5-Star Movement (M5S), a web-based anti-establishment political subject, became the first party at its first national test. This chapter frames the experience of the Movement led by the comedian Beppe Grillo within the evolution of the Italian political system, in the broader picture of the crisis of Western representative democracies. Using both official election data and survey results, the analysis focuses on the quantitative and qualitative change in the electoral base of the Movement. The “identikit” of the 5-Star voter reveals a process of rapid normalization, but, at the same time, clearly confirms the populist and anti-political profile of this party. In a few years’ time, a small anti-party movement has become an outstanding catch-all anti-party party, upsetting the structure of party competition and rewriting the territorial and socio-political coordinates of the Italian electoral market.

ANDREA DE PETRIS

Programs, Strategies and Electoral Campaigns of the Five Stars Movement in Italy. A brand new Party Model or an “Anti-Party” State of Mind?

The article intends to summarize a description of all these atypical tactics and plans adopted by the Five Stars Movement, with the aim to underscore its eventual effective differences from the “usual” strategies adopted by most of the other Italian parties. Even if, on the one hand, the time seems still too short to evaluate if these strategies will bring any effective results in the next future and the Five Stars Movement will gain a stable position in the Italian party system for the years to come, on the other hand, the growth of the M5S with its pioneering methods rises the question if we are facing a brand new form of political movement, which does not fit in the traditional party classifications, or if we are dealing with a different sort of political phenomenon. Therefore, this article tries to verify if the M5S can be considered a prototype of a brand new kind of political party, that we could call “Anti-Party Party”, or if its innovative nature is rather made of novel attitudes and strategies, implanted in an already existing type of political movement.

ANDREA DE PETRIS

Is it all about money? The Legal Framework of Party Competition in Italy

Since the Italian Constitution chose not to rule their internal organization, for decades the only legal framework for Italian political parties was limited their access to public and private money. The Italian legislator adopted different forms of parties' funding, avoiding every interference in their internal organization: thus, parties maintained a strictly authoritarian structure. The new regulation of the parties' financing system approved in 2014 seems to represent a significant change of trend: for the first time in the Italian history, in order to be eligible for financial support, political parties must assure some basic elements of internal democracy of their organization; besides, they must grant that their budget, contributions and donors are correct and transparent, risking heavy monetary sanctions if they don't respect these severe rules. Unfortunately, the Italian legislator did not seem to consider a nevertheless conceivable option: that a political movement could intentionally refuse to be included in the new funding system, which makes it free from the obligation to respect the strict rules about internal democracy and nevertheless take part into the electoral competition. For this reason, one can argue that the 2014 reform probably missed its target.

CARSTEN KOSCHMIEDER

Internal Democracy and Candidate Selection – The Free Voters, the Alternative for Germany and the Pirate Party

The article analyses the way internal democracy is implemented and candidates are selected in three German political parties, namely the Federal Association of FREE VOTERS, the Alternative for Germany (AfD), and the Pirate Party of Germany. The FREE VOTERS are a party with strong local branches and, thus, with weak leadership. The AfD is led by influential and charismatic figures who are not welcoming too much participation from the rank and file members. The initial party platform, for example, has been drafted by the party elite and approved without any chance to previously amend it. The Pirate Party values its democratic structure and the many possibilities for its members to participate. The leaders have little influence, and all party conventions are held as general meetings. There are also multiple possibilities to participate online, although these opportunities are not yet matching the party's expectations.

CARSTEN KOSCHMIEDER/OSKAR NIEDERMAYER

The Election Campaigns of the German Anti-Party Parties – Pirates, Free Voters and the Alternative for Germany

The article analyses the election campaigns of the Pirate Party of Germany, the Federal Association of FREE VOTERS, and the Alternative for Germany (AfD). For each party, the factors explaining their success or failure are classified into the supply and demand side of political competition, or into external conditions. For the Pirates, the most important reasons for their failure were decreasing media support, their internal conflicts about basic issues, and the fact that voters did not care much for their core topics. For the FREE VOTERS, the most important reasons for their failure were the loss of their prominent front-runner and the fact that criticism of the European crisis policy was expressed more prominently by the AfD. For the AfD, the most important reasons for their good results were the importance of the Euro-crisis for the electorate, media support and the fact that, as a populist protest party, it received votes from various social groups with different political orientations.

MARTIN MORLOK

The Legal Framework of Party Competition in Germany

The German legal framework, in which parties operate, consists of three main elements: the election law, the regulation on the parties' money and rules for the internal structure of the parties. The threshold of 5 %, a party must overcome to get a seat in parliament, is the most important element influencing the chances of political parties at the elections. Parties receive state funding according to the number of votes they get and the money they collect on their own. But there is a limit: At least half of the money of a party must be self-generated as for example by membership fees or donations, if not, the state funding is kept. Parties with deputies in parliament enjoy the substantial means these members receive. The party law knows several provisions to guarantee the democratic character of the internal process. Most important is that candidates for a public office must be democratically elected in the lower strata of a party.

LORENZO MOSCA/CRISTIAN VACCARI/AUGUSTO VALERIANI

How to Select Citizen Candidates: The Five Star Movement's Online Primaries and their Implications

In late November 2012 Beppe Grillo's blog announced that the Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S) was going to select its candidates for the forthcoming gen-

eral election through online primaries. In this chapter we evaluate such process with respect to different dimensions. First of all, we analyze the rules for participation that were put in place by the party leadership and evaluate their impact on the inclusiveness of the competition. Secondly, since these primaries were conducted entirely online, we address the role of the internet and social media in candidates' electoral performance. We then discuss the socio-demographic characteristics of those candidates placed in higher positions in the party lists as a result of the online primaries. Finally, we offer some reflections on M5S's online selection of candidates for the 2014 European Parliament elections.

THOMAS POGUNTKE

The German Party System after the 2013 Elections: An Island of Stability in a European Sea of Change?

Unlike in most EU member states, the German party system has remained relatively stable since the beginning of the Euro-crisis. Building on a review of the most important developments in other European party systems and referring to longitudinal data, the article demonstrates that the party political mobilization of Eurosceptic or populist protest might also be possible in Germany. Everywhere in Europa are the so-called cartel parties structurally in danger of falling victim to their own success and their concomitant strategic inflexibility.

FILIPPO TRONCONI

The Italian Party System and the Anti-Party Challenge

In this chapter the anti-party challenge of the *Movimento 5 Stelle* is observed in historical perspective. We recall the main steps of the evolution of the Italian party system, from the post-war setting of 1948 to the present days. Within this context, we describe the most relevant populist anti-party movements, from Guglielmo Giannini's *Uomo Qualunque*, to the *Partito Radicale*, *Forza Italia*, the *Lega Nord*. Each one of these political subjects expresses a diffused distrust of segments of the Italian society towards the main actors of the democratic system and its ruling class. Furthermore, such expressions of democratic malaise have increased over time, from being a peripheral and barely relevant phenomenon, to occupying the center of the stage of Italian politics.

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