Innovative Politics: Does The Five Star Movement Deviate from its 'Democratic Formula'?

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1. Introduction

Nowadays advanced democracies are characterized by a high degree of citizens' dissatisfaction towards politics and politicians (Dalton, Scarrow & Cain, 2004)**.** In particular, this dissatisfaction stems from citizens' disappointment with representative democracy. Indeed, citizens are shown to be increasingly "sceptical" towards political representation and indicators such as low turnout and growing detachment in party membership confirmed this trend in the last decades (Dalton et al., 2004).

 As a further consequence, this political disenchantment has led people to be more attracted by forms of innovative and "unconventional politics" (Dalton et al., 2004) that claim to take popular sovereignty more seriously within the political decision-making process (Altman, 2011). Often, this request is also characterized by the idea that citizens should shape their democracies directly without any mediated form of political representation (Dalton et al. 2004; Altman, 2011). According to this new and unconventional type of politics this chance might be offered by new technologies and the Internet which allows people to be constantly connected.

 Today, examples of this unconventional politics are citizens' associations and social movements, such as "GeenPeil" or "Pirate Party", that "reject political parties" (Poguntke & Scarrow, 1996, p. 257.) and promote direct democracy through the use of the Internet. Generally speaking, these "anti-political political" actors (Loveday, 1969) frame political parties as being self-interested and distant from the authentic citizens' interest. In this vein, it is interesting to note that this framing is very close to the essential definition of "populism" theorized by Cas Mudde (2004) which split society as divided in two opposite groups: the "pure people" and the "corrupt elite" (Mudde, 2004, p.543).

 One of those anti-system actors, firmly convinced that citizens should be protected from the corrupted elite of politicians, is the Italian Five Star Movement (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2015). This

movement can be considered as one of the most interesting examples of innovative and "anti-party parties" within the current Western democratic scenario. The Five Star Movement is trying to overcome representative democracy and it is promoting citizens' direct involvement also through technology. More specifically, this involvement has been boosted through the use of specific online platforms, such as *Rousseau*, where people can propose, discuss and vote on initiatives that, afterwards, the Five Star Movement representatives will bring into the political institutions.

Moreover, the Five Star Movement is also a case in point of successful anti-party movement considering that, according the exit polls in March 2017, it was supported by the 32% of the Italian electorate (Albertazzi, 2017, para.1). Starting from 2012 up to now the Five Star Movement has been able to achieve important goals at both local and national level (Romei, 2017) and nowadays it is possible to claim that this "anti-party entity" has become one of the most influential political players in Italy. Beyond the national borders this movement has also drawn academic and international attention for its strong Euroscepticism and controversial relationship with the European Union (Albertazzi, 2017).

However, despite its electoral success, over time this Movement has also faced internal contrasts and the Five Star Movement voters have complained about the performance of their representatives (Sappino, 2016). In this research we theorise that these complains have been caused mostly by the fact that these representatives seemed to "deviate" from the original Five Star Movement project aimed at applying a direct and transparent democracy.

More specifically, with the term "deviation" we indicate those cases in which the Five Star representatives' behaviour did not follow the authentic democratic project of this movement. We would like to draw the attention to the reasons behind these deviations and answer the following question:

Why do the Five Star Movement representatives deviate from the initial mission of this movement aimed at applying direct democracy elements to their party organization?

In order to answer to this question, firstly we will analyse specific cases that have presented internal contrasts and that, for this reason, might be framed as examples of possible Five Star Movement representative deviations. Moreover, it will be necessary to find out how these deviations have taken place. As consequence an ancillary research question is:

How do the Five Star Movement representatives deviate from the initial mission of this movement aimed at applying direct democracy elements to their party organization?

It is important to answer this question before the first. We need to define a deviation before we can know if it has taken place at all or figure out how. Indeed, only proper knowledge of the actual conditions of these deviations might give us the answer on why the Five Star Movement representatives deviate from the initial mission of this movement.

In the first part we will focus on how democracy has changed over time leading to an unconventional and innovative form of politics that wants to overcome representation. We will refer to some of the most representative examples of this new anti-politics that call for direct democracy. In particular, besides the Five Star Movement, we will focus on the Dutch "GeenPeil" and the "Pirate party" movement within Europe.

Then, in the second part we will present the general Italian political scenario, the Five Star Movement's history and a general description of its structure from a theoretical and practical point of view. We will start from the inception of the Five Star Movement, when it was only a virtual community of followers of the Beppe Grillo's blog (it will be defined as the "Five Star Movement embryo stage"). In this vein we will discuss how the Internet has always played an important role within the story and the logics of this movement (Tronconi, 2015). Secondly, we will describe how Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto Casaleggio (the two Five Star Movement founders) made clever use of the application "Meetup" to create a real network of followers at both the local and national level (Tronconi, 2015). Thirdly, we will depict, starting from the Meetup experience, how Grillo and his co-workers have been able to mobilize people in paramount events called V-days and how this further

experience has led to the idea of civic lists and the Five Star Movement's first participation in the Italian local elections in 2012. In addition to this, we will analyse from a theoretical point of view, what this movement is trying to do. We will see to what extent the idea that every citizen should influence the political life of the country directly is the backbone of the Five Star Movement democratic project. More specifically, we will describe what this project entails in terms of direct, transparent, participatory and deliberative democracy. In this vein, we refer to this project with our own definition of the "Five Star Movement democratic formula". Then, we will define specific forms of possible representative deviations related to the main points touched upon by this formula.

As a further step of analysis, we will make use of some of the most influential theories such as the "Iron Law of Oligarchy" (Michels, 1962 in Katz, 2006, p.41) and Schattschneider (Schattschneider, 1942 in Katz, 2006, p.38) to substantiate our expectations about the possible causal mechanisms behind the Five Star Movement deviations. In this vein we will also consider how the lack of a defined ideology, typical of the Five Star Movement structure, might considerably affect the Five Star Movement representation. To substantiate this point, we will also make use of Nadia Urbinati's idea of "ideological sympathy" (Urbinati, 2011, p.44) and Paul Taggart theories about populism (Taggart, 2004, 2007).

Our main expectation is that this deviation occurs because this movement is on the one hand characterized by an undefined ideology and on the other hand because it is more similar to a political party (with leadership which is too influential) than a democratic movement at this moment. A political party needs a defined structure and a certain degree of internal hierarchy that is incompatible with the idea of a citizens' direct democracy (Schattschneider, 1942; Michels 1962 in Katz 2006).

We will conduct a qualitative case study based on the Five Star Movement representatives with semi-structured interviews. Our research approach has to be considered as an exploratory case study in which we suppose that these deviations have taken place but we do not know the causal mechanisms that have caused this outcome.

We chose cases of deviation that might help us to confirm the existence of these deviations, to explore the reasons behind these deviations and to reach a conclusion on why these supposed deviations have taken place. In particular, we decided to interview the Five Star Movement representatives of Genova, Ravenna, Rimini, Parma and Milano. It is important to note that these cases, have presented internal conflicts (Sappino, 2016) and, according to us, they all present different examples of Five Star movement representative deviations. In order to study these different examples of deviations we will use a diverse case study approach (Gerring, 2008, p.9).

As conclusive remark we want to clarify why the present research project might be interesting from a scientific point of view and the reason is twofold. On the one hand this investigation concerns one of the most successful current anti-party movements within the European field. What is more important, the Five Star Movement is an example of new politics that finds its roots in civil society and that is aimed at applying direct democracy (Kirchgaessner, 2016). Finding out the reasons behind the Five Star Movement deviation might allow us to make a prediction about the future of these new influential social movements and anti-party party actors which want to overcome representative democracy and apply direct democracy though the use of the Internet. Thus, the present contribution might create the basis for a further study of this innovative and unconventional form of politics within the Western democratic system.

On the other hand, this study might be framed also as a fruitful contribution to the specific social movements field study. More specifically to that branch of study that is focused on clarifying what happens to social movements when they become politically powerful and they have to compete with political parties within an established political party system. The answer to this question would allow us to understand to what extent the political system affect its actors even when their aim is to challenge the system.

This introduction continues to discuss how the concept of democracy has evolved over time leading to new forms of unconventional politics such as the Five Star Movement. The second chapter depicts the history and structure of this Movement distinguishing between the very first period of this

Movement (embryo stage) and the current period characterized by a more defined structure. The third chapter reflects on what the Five Star Movement democratic formula entails and how it might be possible to deviate from this formula. In the same vein, this chapter mentions some theories that might help to understand why these deviations take place. The fourth chapter presents our methodology and case selection. The fifth chapter delves into the empirical analysis of the data collected whereas the sixth chapter into the findings and theoretical implications based on this evidence. Finally, in the conclusion we recap the aim of the present research, findings and final remarks on this investigation and Five Star Movement's world.

1.1 *Innovative politics: from a minimalist concept of democracy to a more complex one.*

Nowadays Western society is experiencing new forms of unconventional politics that combine elements of civil society with aspects of direct democracy (Dalton et al., 2004, p.125). Generally speaking, this kind of politics flourishes where citizens experience a high degree of dissatisfaction towards representative democracy (Kirchgaessner, 2016). This political mistrust of the people fosters those social movements and anti-party parties that present themselves as different from the established old-fashioned politics and call for authentic direct democracy. In the following section we will see how the democratic system, as the Western society used to know it, has changed over time leading to a new kind of politics beyond representation.

Nowadays democracies are considerably beyond the "minimalist concept of democracy" based on "free and fair elections" (Diamond, 2003, p. 32). Schumpeter claimed that elections, framed as a "competitive struggle", are necessary in order to elect a selected group of people that will be legitimated to take "political decisions" (Diamond, 2003, p.31). This minimalist concept of democracy should be considered as a crucial starting point to understand what democracy entails and to what extent it has changed over time.

Generally speaking, a society in which the political organization is democratic is where decisions are taken collectively. This means that everyone should be able to participate in this government and express their personal point of view. However, taking in consideration the considerable amount of people that might make up a community, to provide everyone the chance to take part in this collective government is quite challenging. "Free and fair elections" should be considered the first step to guarantee this collective government. Indeed, elections at local, national or supranational level would allow people to elect a limited number of representatives that would represent citizens' opinions. However, how can we ensure the fairness of these elections? In order to answer this question, it might be useful to use the three principles-standard theorized by Birch (2011): "inclusiveness", "policy-directed-voting" and "effective aggregation" (Birch, 2011, p. 17-19). These concepts will also lead us to a further analysis of those elements that make up democracy nowadays.

The first principle ("inclusiveness", Birch, 2011, p. 17) includes the right to vote and be voted into parliament and it refers to another important aspect of democracy: the participatory dimension. Indeed, as we said, democracy should be based on the basic assumption that everyone (or better: every citizen) should be allowed to take part in the collective sovereignty of a country (Urbinati, 2011). For that reason, the assumption of inclusiveness should be considered the first standard to guarantee fair elections. As a caveat, it is important to note that really inclusive participation might change according to national standards. For example, in Italy article 48 of the Constitution clearly states that those who commit crimes lose or might lose their right to elect or be elected and as consequence they could lose their right to be a political member of the community (Costituzione Italiana – Articolo 48, 2017, para.3).

The second principle, the "policy-directed-voting" (Birch, 2011, p.17) refers to the presence of equal information and to the chance to express individual preferences in a free and unbiased way during the pre-electoral and electoral periods. The equal information variable is crucial for achieving a fair election because only in this way can citizens be informed about the agenda of their aspiring representatives. Afterwards, according to their personal preferences on these political agendas, people

might decide to vote for a certain political party rather than another one and thus identify with a political flag rather another one. It is important to guarantee that this individual identification occurs without any external pressure and that the "citizen's freedom to choose" is ensured.

Moreover, "policy-directed-voting" (Birch, 2011, p.19) leads us to introduce the second key aspect related to democracy: the deliberative dimension. This dimension is strictly related to the citizens' communication sphere and to that process that should lead to reaching a common final decision to face specific issues (Sanders, 1997). In democracy people should have representatives that will represent their interests but, combined with this, they should also communicate and debate, exchanging personal standpoints (Arendt, 1993). For example, citizens could debate about why one policy might be better than another in order to govern the country (Reybrouck, 2016). This debating and exchanging of different points of view and information before the election might change people's opinions radically and it might lead to an increase of the degree of citizens' political involvement (Knobloch, & Gastil, 2014). Generally speaking, the elections "per se" might be also framed as a kind of collective deliberation, because elections lead to a collective decision that elect a selected group of representatives of citizens' interests.

The last principle-standard to assess the fairness of elections, "effective aggregation" (Birch, 2011, p.24) is interwoven with the concept of transparency. The latter concept is one of those which is most emphasized by citizens nowadays. Indeed, political representatives and political parties have often been accused of not representing citizens' interests and of being corrupt and not transparent (Dalton & Weldon, 2005). In this vein, Dalton and many other academics have noticed that in the political realm there has appeared an increasing mistrust towards representative democracy worldwide.

Generally speaking, indicators of this trend have been low turnout and a low degree of party membership (Dalton et al., 2004, para.1). David Van Reybrouck has defined this phenomenon and its "symptoms" (Taleb, 2012) as "democratic fatigue syndrome" (Van Reybrouck, 2016, para.10). The low degree of party membership should especially be considered a clear signal of the political status

of our time and of democratic fatigue. In a study from 2012 Ingrid Van Biezen, Peter Mair and Thomas Poguntke (2012) conducted an investigation into European party membership and compared party membership data from both 1980 and the late 1990s with that of 2007-2008 (Van Biezen et al., 2012, p.27). The results showed a decrease in party membership from a mean of 5.0 scored in the first period to a mean of 4.65 in the second (Van Biezen et al., 2012, p.27). This study also showed that there are examples of political parties able to maintain their voters' membership (e.g. the Italian Lega Nord), however the general trend confirmed that political parties are not perceived by citizens as those "mass organisations" entities that they used to be in the past (Van Biezen et al., 2012, p.42)

As a consequence, the citizens' disappointment with established politics has opened the door to new forms of democracy. In particular, it has led citizens to create associations to "monitor" their representatives' political performance (Keane, 2011, p.212). Nowadays, this "citizens' surveillance" is a widespread phenomenon that has led to the birth of different social movements and expert associations aimed to ensure that, institutional political and economic actors, will follow the "rules of the game" (Keane, 2011). This monitoring can also be labelled (with a certain degree of caution) as "advocacy democracy" (Dalton et al, 2004, p. 126). According to Dalton, Scarrow and Cain, advocacy democracy entails the participation of "citizens and public interest groups" in the political and administrative decision-making of the country but, eventually, the higher political institutions are the actors that will take the final decisions for everyone (Dalton et al, 2004). Monitoring and advocacy democracy should be understood as the direct consequences of the citizens' need to look after their interests and political sovereignty (Urbinati, 2011).

It is interesting to note that advocacy democracy has been characterized by a considerable growth in citizens' engagement in "unconventional forms of politics" (Dalton et al., 2004, p.129). More specifically, citizens seem to be increasingly interested in those movements or anti-party parties that call for a major degree of citizen participation and a major degree of direct democracy.

The concept of direct democracy finds its roots in ancient Greece when citizens (not including women and slaves) could express their own opinions and debate a public issue in the public arena or

Agorà. Nowadays, the most common and institutionalized tool of direct democracy used by advanced democracies is the referendum. According to Dalton, Scarrow and Cain (Dalton et al., 2004), democracies might make a greater or lesser use of this tool of unmediated public expression but generally speaking the more referenda are used the less important the change they might bring into effect (Altman, 2011). However, the present research is not interested in discussing the use of these institutionalized "mechanisms of direct democracy" (Altman, 2011, p.6) but rather in civil society's request for a more effective direct democracy that "bypasses" representative democracy (Dalton et al., 2004, p.126) or in any case the democratic model and its representative institutions as we used to know them.

In this vein it might be useful to refer to Robert Dahl and his definition of polyarchy (Krouse, 1982, p.445). According to this concept, when representative democracy comes about it should be necessary to take in consideration also those forms of contestation and association that might challenge representative democracy as we used to know it (Krouse, 1982, p.445). For the present research, polyarchy seems to be the necessary definition in order to understand how politics is changing, giving way to new and unusual ways of framing politics and democracy. Indeed, this definition is a lot closer to the current citizens call for democracy than the minimalist concept of democracy based on free and fair elections and representative democracy.

In the next section we will analyse specific examples of unconventional politics (Pirate Party and Geenpeil) and we will introduce the Five Star Movement.

1.2 *Innovative politics: Pirate party, GeenPeil and the Five Star Movement.*

Nowadays there are different examples of organizations which arose from civil society that call for the citizens' direct involvement in politics. Often these organizations want more transparency and, in this sense, they promote the use of Internet as a necessary tool to make information public and connect people with politics.

A case in point is the Pirate Party which is mainly known for its battle for freedom of information and abolition of copyright (Revell, 2016, para.1). Today this party, that is inspired by a "Swedish Pirate Bay hacker movement" (Pidd, 2011), is present in more than one European country. The aim of the Pirate party is to give citizens the chance to influence government decisions directly through a "free access to technology" (Schultz, 2011, para.3). More specifically, as Ben den Biel the spokesman for the German Pirate party claimed in 2011: "Our political goals are greater public participation and transparency… (we) want politics to change – to Politics 3.0 if you like" (Schultz, 2011, para.2). In Germany, this unconventional party obtained 15 seats in the Berlin's state parliament and it gave to its voters the chance to express initiatives on an online platform called "LiquidFeedback" (Pidd, 2011). Today, the Pirate party has no seats at all in this parliament but one of its members, Julia Reda, is a member of the European Parliament with the Greens/EFa Group (Davies, 2015).

In Iceland, the Pirate Party came in as second main party in 2016 and its leader, Birgitta Jónsdóttir, clearly stated that the goal of this party is to "apply direct democracy" through the use of technology (Revell, 2016, para. 6). More specifically she stated that the Pirate Party should be seen as a "Robin Hood" organization that gives a place to those citizens who "do not feel like they have a place in politics" and that want to "take power away from powerful actors to give it back to people" (Revell, 2016, para. 4).

Another example of innovative politics that combine elements of civil society and direct democracy can be found in the Netherlands with the "GeenPeil" party which inspired by the Dutch blog "Geenstijl" (Hakhverdian, 2014, para.3). In 2014, this blog promoted a controversial initiative directed at the European Parliament elections. Thanks to the Geenstijl' it was possible to collect results "from more than 1,200 voting stations" (Hakhverdian, 2014, para.4) and make a prediction on the result of the polls before the official date established by the European Union. This initiative was based on a twofold incitement: on the one hand to get direct access to reserved information and, on the other hand, it wanted to challenge political institutions.

In 2015, Geenstijl and the related Geen Peil party, supported a referendum against the European economic and political treaty with Ukraine (Luyendijk, 2016, para.4). According to GeenPeil, Ukraine is a corrupt nation with a civil war going on, as a consequence, citizens should participate in this important decision (De Jong, 2016, para.3). Eventually, this referendum took place and the results supported the rejection of this treaty. Even if GeenPeil does not have a clear manifesto or a defined ideology, it promotes the idea that citizens should express their opinions directly through online "microreferenda" in order to "reconquer democracy" (Teffer, 2016, para. 3 & 5). Currently, despite this attractive and unusual offer, GeenPeil has not obtained any seats in the Dutch parliament (Mudde, 2017).

If we compare the Pirate Party with GeenPeil party, we might find many similarities. Indeed, both are examples of an innovative and unconventional way of making politics that arose in civil society and makes a considerable use of the Internet as a tool for direct democracy. Moreover, both these parties seem not to have a defined ideology beyond their scepticism towards representative democracy.

In this sense, a very special case of unconventional and innovative politics can be found in Italy with the Five Star Movement. This movement, run by an Italian comedian, Beppe Grillo, finds its grassroots in civil society and it promotes the idea that citizens should directly run their own democracy because, generally speaking, politicians are self-interested and corrupt (Amenduni, 2014). Often, the Five Star Movement's approach has been labelled as "populist" within the European political scenario (Lanzone &Woods, 2015, p.1). Later on, we will have the chance to delve into this topic.

In the same way as the Pirate Party or GeenPeil the Five Star Movement makes considerable use of the Internet to offer citizens the opportunity to express their preferences directly. Moreover, this movement refuses any kind of defined ideology or trade off with other Italian political parties. Citizens, tired of the old scheme of Italian politics, seem to appreciate the Five Star Movement's new and unconventional formula (Kirchgaessner, 2016). Indeed, up to now this Movement has collected

an impressive electoral consensus that makes of it one of the largest political actors within the Italian scenario (Romei, 2017).

However, even if the Five Star Movement has gained a consistent political weight within the Italian scenario, it has also experienced cases of internal conflicts and complaints about the Five Star Movement representatives' performances. In the next chapter we will delve into the history, structure and theoretical manifesto of this movement in order to understand why these complaints have taken place and ask if the Five Star Movement representatives are remaining loyal to the Five Star Movement's original democratic formula.

2.The Five Star Movement: History and organization.

In the following chapter we describe the history and organizational evolution of the Five Star Movement in Italy. More specifically, we address two different moments: The Five Star Movement embryo stage (Lanzone &Tronconi, 2015, p.58) and the current period.

2.1 Italian political Context.

Italian political history might be divided in two main periods. The first includes those years between 1948 and 1993 whereas the second period includes those years from 1993 up to the present (Fabbrini, 2009, p.30). The former period might be labelled as the First Republic and the latter as the Second Republic. In this vein, Fabbrini has pointed out that the First Republic was characterized by a "consensual democracy" whereas the second republic has been characterized by "competitive democracy" (Fabbrini, 2009, p.30).

More specifically the first period was characterized by a polarized pluralism whereas the second by a bipolar system (Sartori in Hopkin, 2015, p.326). What do these two concepts of consensual and competitive democracy mean and more specifically what have they meant within the Italian scenario? First of all, it is important to say that during the First Republic the Italian political scenario was characterized by two main political actors: The Democrazia Cristiana party (DC) and

the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI). The former was a Christian democratic party whereas the latter was communist and they were respectively related to the anti-communist (DC) and "communist blocs" (PCI) that characterized the cold war period (Fabbrini, 2009, p.31). In this sense Satori has pointed out that the Italian political scenario was characterized by a high "polarization" between these two main actors both characterized by strong ideologies. According to Fabbrini, the "polarization between these two main political players" and the fact that the Italian governments were dominated mainly by the DC and its allies (especially the Socialist group since 1963, Favretto, 2015) are the reasons why Italy was a consensual democracy during the First Republic (Fabbrini, 2009, p.31).

Things started to change during the 1990s when the Italian scenario experienced important economic and political scandals that led to the end of the DC-Socialist dominance. In particular, this set of scandals called "Tangentopoli" concerned the socialist Bettino Craxi and his group (Rhodes, 2015). These scandals were the results of an important investigation investigation ("Clean Hands") that led to the discovery that considerable amount of influential politicians were involved in a complex system of bribes and were accused of corruption (Rhodes, 2015, p.309-310). As consequence, the political Italian scenario experienced an important political change and "witch hunt" ("*caccia alle streghe*", Rhodes, 2015, p.310) which ended with the end of the DC- Socialist dominance. In addition to this the Italian communist party also collapsed due to the end of the cold war and the fall of the Berlin Wall (Hopkin, 2015, p.328). As a consequence of this breakdown the forces of the Italian left split into different political parties or formed a major coalition as the Democratic Party of the Left (Hopkin, 2015, p.328).

In this vein, it is also important to note that 1993 was also the year of a popular referendum that caused the electoral system to change in Italy from the proportional one (First Repubblic) to the "quasi majoritarian one" that starting from that year led to an alternation of governments of centre left or centre-right formed by coalitions of political parties (Fabbrini, 2009, p.31). This electoral system breakthrough was changed in 2005 when it returned to the proportional system with the addition of a prize for the majority (In which the winning party or coalition was given extra seats to

have a functional majority in parliament). Nowadays Italy is characterized by the "Italicum" a majoritarian system with two rounds of voting, and a prize for the majority (55% of the seats) and a minimum threshold of inclusion 3% (D'Alimonte, 2015, p.286). It is clear that the electoral system has always been characterized by "intense and acrimonious debate" (Regalia, 2015, para.13).

Besides these important electoral changes and the considerable decrease in party membership compared to the First republic period (Biezen et al., 2012), it is important to note that the Tangentopoli scandal benefited also the growth of unconventional and non-political parties such as Forza Italia and Lega Nord and figures such as Silvio Berlusconi (Forza Italia's leader) and Umberto Bossi (Lega Nord's leader) (Rhodes, 2015). Both Berlusconi and Bossi used non-conventional ways of doing politics, underlined how their agenda were trustworthy compared to the corrupt politicians of the past and, even more interesting, both tried to create a direct connection with citizens. Silvio Berlusconi, leader of Forza Italia, as a powerful and rich businessman used to promote himself and his right-wing liberal ideas through the use of his TV stations (Borcio &Natale, 2013). Umberto Bossi, past leader of the regionalist Lega Nord, used to call for the autonomy of "Padania" (an area located in the North of Italy) because of the economic gap between the North and the South and the corrupt habits of "Roma Ladrona" (Rome the thief, the Italian political main institutions are indeed in the capital Rome) (Rhodes, 2015, p.310). Both Bossi and Berlusconi were labelled as charismatic, populist and able to mobilize people (Biorcio & Natale, 2013; Tronconi, 2015). In this vein, Paul Taggart (2004) underlined how the "new populism" has often found a fertile ground generating forces such as Lega Nord and Forza Italia (Taggart, 2004, p.269). It is not the intention of the present research to investigate if Italy should be considered as a cradle of populism. However, it is interesting to note that both Berlusconi and Bossi have been labelled as such and have obtained considerable political success. Silvio Berlusconi especially has been prime minister four times: in 1994, between the years 2001-2005 and 2005-2006, and in the period 2008-2011.

At the moment Italy is governed by the left-wing party Partito Democratico in coalition with the right-wing forces of Angelino Alfano (Verderami, 2015). It is interesting to note that the last Italian parliamentary election was in 2013 and that the last four prime ministers (Mario Monti, Enrico Letta, Matteo Renzi and Paolo Gentiloni) were not elected by citizens (Liberati, 2016). In addition to this, what is more interesting to note is the presence of a new and competitive anti-political actor the Five Star Movement and its leader Beppe Grillo (Tronconi, 2015). Nowadays, the Five Star Movement can be considered as one of the more influential political actors within the Italian scenario (Tronconi, 2015) which is one the one hand trying to change the old way of thinking about politics and on the other hand trying to apply true direct citizens' democracy (Biorcio & Natale, 2013).

2.2 From a website to a Movement: The Five Star Movement's embryo stage.

The Five Star Movement was created on the 4th October 2009 by Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto Casaleggio in Milan. Nowadays the Five Star Movement can be considered one of the main political parties in Italy but it started as a movement. Actually, this movement usually defines itself as a movement however often the Italian media have defined it as party since it started to run for parliamentary elections in 2013. Later on we will also discuss this point in greater depth. At the moment we will limit ourselves to calling it a movement.

The current main Five Star Movement leader is Beppe Grillo. However, the adventure of this movement was started by the partnership between Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto Casaleggio. Beppe Grillo is an Italian comedian whereas Casaleggio was an IT expert (he died in 2016) (Tronconi, 2015). Generally speaking, the Five Star Movement is mainly associated with the figure of Grillo. However, it is important to underline the role that Casaleggio leader played since his ideas together with those from Grillo were known through Beppe Grillo's blog in 2005. At that time the movement did not exist but the partnership between Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto Casaleggio was already strong. Especially Grillo, as a popular comedian and influential public figure, was known for his satire against the Italian political scenario and the economic scandals related to it. During his shows he often

denounced the corrupted customs of the Italian politicians and how these were often linked to big and powerful multinational corporations. For example, Grillo was one of the first public celebrities that spoke about the "Parmalat crac" (Tronconi, 2015, p.17). This was a huge scandal related to the Italian food industry *Parmalat*, its patron Callist Tanzi and the insider trading and "fraudulent bankruptcy" perpetrated by him and his staff (Vignati, 2015, p.17). Another topic often promoted by Grillo was that of nuclear energy. Indeed, even before the creation of the Five Star Movement, Grillo used to promote initiatives to discourage the use of nuclear energy in Italy. In other words, Grillo was a kind of anti-elite and anti-establishment influential comedian who through his shows used to inspire people to think about themes such as political transparency and the environment.

Casaleggio was, on the other hand, at the head of a company of web marketing and strategies. This company, Casaleggio & Associati, has always played an important role in the organizational support for the Five Star Movement blog and in general for its movement of followers. Casaleggio was known for being strongly convinced in the power of digital communication and for being a fan of the "Gaia project" (Tronconi, 2015, p.19). This school of thought relies on the basic idea that collective knowledge is the new politics (Magazzinho, 2010). Through the use of the internet, people will be able to act directly on political decision-making and later on every citizen will be able to decide about his or her destiny and well-being without the need for any representatives or politicians (Tronconi, 2015)

As Tronconi and others researchers have underlined, historically the role of Casaleggio was controversial within the Five Star Movement (Tronconi, 2015) because he rarely appeared in public. Beppe Grillo has always been the frontman "megaphone" leader (Tronconi, 2015, p.23) of this movement whereas Casaleggio remained in the shadows. However, Casaleggio's influence on the Five Star Movement is unquestionable.

2.2.1Anti-media.

On 26 January 2006 Beppe Grillo and Casaleggio founded Beppe Grillo's blog (http://www.beppegrillo.it/, Accessed 15 November 2017) in order to create a platform of discussion

for citizens where they could express their opinion on topics such as healthcare, the environment, employment and capitalism. The foundation of this blog corresponded to the beginning of Grillo's comedy and show "Beppegrillo.it" (Vignati, 2015, p.16). On that occasion he claimed: "For Ian Clarke, the founder of the Freenet, the only method to ensure the survival of democracy is being sure that the government will not dominate if citizens communicate each other and if they share information" (Il nuovo spettacolo di Beppe Grillo, n.d.).

Over time Beppe Grillo's Blog has become one of the most popular in Italy. In 2006 Grillo claimed that the blog was "the tool we have for creating true democracy – a new form of democracy that has been called 'direct democracy'. People can now keep themselves informed, at all times and from different sources, about the issues that concern them: energy, water, health care and the government; and they can express their opinions without going through the filters of the party mandarins and newspaper editors. We are moving away from giving the politician *carte blanche* and towards the participation of the citizen" (Grillo in Vignati, 2015, p.18). This claim deserves a further explanation about what Grillo first and later the whole Five Star Movement think about information and media. Generally speaking, since Grillo started his career as an anti-politics comedian first and movement guru/leader second he has always framed the Italian media as highly politicized and thus biased (Tronconi, 2015). For that reason, Grillo has always supported the idea of alternative sources of information that should be shared online by citizens. This information should be provided thanks to those people who share the continuous exchange of citizens' knowledge and expert contributions. However, we will explain later how the Five Star Movement has access to such kind of information. What is important to underline now is that one of the main points made by Grillo, Casaleggio and in general the Five Star Movement has been that the media are not trustworthy. In this sense Grillo and Casaleggio have always proposed their blog also as a source of alternative unbiased information for Italian citizens. In 2006 the Blog started to be used as an effective tool of direct democracy and an interactive platform where it was possible to put together citizens' opinions. Moreover, through an initiative called the "Citizens' primaries" (*Le primarie dei cittadini*) Grillo's followers had the chance

to express their ideas on topics such as energy and the economy (Tronconi, 2015, p.20). On that occasion Grillo said: "Up to now primaries have been done by our employees (politicians). Now it is the moment for primaries be done by the employer (citizens). From today onwards, I will post proposals on important issues such as energy, transportation and electoral rules. In doing so I will be helped by influential experts and I will wait for your comments on our proposals (…) I invite the political parties' representatives to send their points of view on these issues to this blog (Primarie dei cittadini: energia, 2006, para. 1-2).

The results of these debates were delivered to the prime minister Prodi of that time and three law drafts were presented in the Italian senate. This kind of popular initiative was quite uncommon within the Italian political realm. Often the political parties try to convince citizens to sign a referendum petition. In this sense Grillo's proposal was quite unconventional at that time. However, these proposals met a cold reaction in both institutional and political realms. Indeed, these proposals were not really promoted within the political realm by members of parliament and neither became laws. As Tronconi underlined, this step should be considered as an initial substantial break between (on the one hand) Grillo and Casaleggio and (on the other) Italian representative democracy (Tronconi, 2015, p.20).

2.2.2 Meetup.

As the second important step in this research we have to consider the use of the online platform "meetup.com" introduced on the blog as a tool to create networks at both local and national level (Vignati, 2015, p.21). Meetup.com is a U.S. digital application that can be used worldwide by those people who share common interests and who would like to meet and discuss these interests in personal (Grillo in Tronconi, 2015, p.55). For example, we could try to search for a particular city in Italy and find out if a Five Star Movement group is present there and then it would be possible to subscribe to this group in order to participate physically in its debates. Nowadays, in Italy meetup.com is synonymous with the Five Star Movement. It is important to note that up to this moment in time

(2005) there was not really a Five Star Movement yet but a community of Beppe Grillo's blog followers that shared the same principles and ideas pushed forward by Grillo and Casaleggio. More specifically, at this moment in the movement's history a defined political movement had not yet formed but there was only an "embryo" of the current Five Star Movement (Lanzone &Tronconi, 2015, p.58). However, the use of the meetup platform can be considered as a crucial step for its growth. Indeed, using meetup tool has created the basis for real deliberation among Beppe Grillo's blog followers. The fact that people were invited to meet at local level in order to discuss and exchange information has strengthened the community of Beppe Grillo's blog and has formed the basis of the future network and organization of the Five Star Movement (Tronconi, 2015). It is crucial to note that especially the use of meetup has to be considered as an outcome of the willingness to apply deliberative and participatory democracy to the way in which the movement functioned. Indeed, everyone was invited to participate to exchange his/her ideas and experience with Beppe Grillo's community through the use of the blog or meetup (naturally, everyone that had the same kind of opinions). In this vein, it is fair to assume that especially meetup played a crucial role in order to apply deliberative democracy because, again, people were invited to meet in person and discuss issues which concerned them.

Beppe Grillo has clearly promoted the use of Meetup to encourage followers to discuss face to face at a local level in every part of Italy. More specifically, it a page called Beppe Grillo's friends (Gli amici di Beppe Grillo, http://www.beppegrillo.it/meetup/ that was the initial name, Tronconi, 2015, p.55. Accessed 15 November 2017.) has been created where it is still possible to create or to find a Five Star Movement discussion group. The rules for the use of this online platform are explained in Beppe Grillo's blog where the comedian also claimed that, depending on the dates of his tour he would try to be present at some of these meetings (Grillo in Lanzone & Tronconi, 2015, p.55). However, the outcome of the meetup initiative was that groups had the right to have their own rules as long as they were compatible with Beppe Grillo's blog principles. It is interesting to note that

Meetup is not free, but it is necessary to pay 19 dollars per month to use it. Beppe Grillo has often specified that he did not and he does not benefit from this initiative.

Simultaneously with the use of meetup it is important to mention the effects of two important events in evolution of the Five Star Movement: the VDay of 2007 and VDay of 2008 (V-day stands for the Italian curse" *vaffanculo*", "fuck off", but it also refers to the movie "V for Vendetta" which deals with a totalitarian regime and the revolution against it, Tronconi, 2015, p.21). It is important to underline these two events because they represent one of the main strengths of this movement: the capacity to mobilize people. At that time the media paid great attention to these two V-days which were able to bring together a considerable amount of citizens and followers of Beppe Grillo's blog. The first Vday was aimed at collecting a sufficient number of signatures necessary to promote a law for the introduction of preferences in the Italian electoral system. Moreover, during this event, Grillo and his followers called for a law that would introduce a ban for those political representatives who had a criminal record or who had already completed two mandates (Vignati, 2015, p.22). The first V-day took place in different Italian cities and on that occasion "336,144 signatures were collected (for the Italian law 50 000 are enough to promote a citizens' initiative law)" (Vignati, 2015, p.21).

The second V-Day followed the same path and it collected signatures to call for a referendum about the publishing industry. The first proposal to abolish the professional register of journalists, the second to abolish the public financing of newspapers and the third to abolish the "Gasparri law" for radio and television (Tronconi, 2015, p.22). Basically this law benefited the Mediaset company, a private company of telecommunications. This company is owned by Silvio Berlusconi and indeed this law was approved during his government in 2004. It is important to note that the V-days, beyond being an important outcome of civil society mobilization, have also been important in terms of the beginning of the Five Star Movement's attempt to establish direct democracy (Tronconi, 2015). This is because the aim of these two events was indeed to collect signatures for a referendum. Generally speaking, referenda are tools of direct democracy because they allow citizens to express their own opinion and interact with high political institutions in an unmediated way without having to go

through a representative (Altamn, 2011). What is important to note is that the considerable media attention given to these two V-days facilitated the further proposal promoted by Beppe Grillo and Casaleggio: The Five Star civic lists proposal (Tronconi, 2015, p.23).

2.3 From a Movement to a party.

The promotion of this civic list can be understood as a further crucial step in the history of the Five Star Movement. In a post of 10 October 2007 Beppe Grillo claimed: "the civic lists, the virus of participatory democracy, are a great opportunity to reform or maybe to found again our country. I have already said that I do not want to found a political party. My mission in the next months will be to promote through the use of our own symbol and in the blog those civic lists that will be characterized by certain requirements that I am going to indicate together with the responsibilities that these civic lists have to take in account" (Liste/civiche1, 2007, para.1). The importance of this claim is twofold. First of all, Grillo clearly stated his intention to apply participatory democracy through the initiative of civic lists promoted by himself, Casaleggio and the whole of Beppe Grillo's community at that time. Secondly, Grillo clearly underlined the fact that he did not want to establish a political party. As we previously said it is not really clear if or when the Five Star Movement has become a political party. Often the media have framed the movement as a party, however we should be careful about this distinction (Tronconi, 2015). At this point in the history of the Five Star Movement it is quite clear that this was not their intention.

Coming back to the importance of the civic lists and the requirements requested to form them, it is important to note how these lists have contributed to strengthening the experiences matured through the meetup debates and that deliberative experience. Indeed, often these civic lists have been the direct outcome of the meetup experience at the local level (Vignati, 2015). In particular, these requirements entailed few main points: "the candidates should not be a member of any other political party, they should not have a criminal record or be the subject of a criminal investigation, nor should they have been previously elected more than once at either the local or national level and they should

live in the area (municipal or regional) where they intend to present their candidacy" (Vignati, 2015, p. 23). In addition to these requirements, the candidates (and their civic lists) are also obliged to resign if they show to not possess these requirements anymore and to publish online the personal details of the civic list members (Vignati, 2015, p. 23). These lists should not be related to any other political party or civic list (with the exemption of those granted by the Five Star Movement certification) (Vignati, 2015, p. 23).

As we have already said it is important to underline the role played by these civic lists. This initiative together with the Meetup experience, created the basis of the Five Star Movement organization. In this vein it might be useful to mention a post from the Beppe Grillo's blog of 25 January 2007:

"I see only one chance possible. In order to take back our natural rights (concerning territory, water, air, light, health, transportation and environment) …We have to start at the municipal level. The political parties are anachronistic, done with and self-referential. (…) The blog introduces the initiative "5 star municipalities" (Comuni a 5 stelle). One star for energy, one for connectivity, one for water, one for the garbage collection and one for social services" (Comuni a 5 stelle, 2007, para.1-2).

These lists ran for the first time during the elections of April 2008. At that time, they were present in 17 municipalities and in the Sicilian Regional Council. The percentages (of votes gained) were low but encouraging (Vignati, 2015). Later the number of civic lists related to Grillo's blog increased and obtained positive results especially in Emilia-Romagna ("6% for the list, 7% for the presidential candidate", Vignati, 2015, p.24). These results have to be considered as a first encouraging reaction expressed by Italian citizens towards what Grillo & Casaleggio were trying to do. What is more important is that these first positive results encouraged the two leaders to decide to give a more defined shape to the community of followers of their blog. As a consequence, Grillo and Casaleggio decided to clearly establish a movement: The Five Star Movement. The Five Star Movement embryo stage finished at that moment (2008).

In addition to this decision it is interesting to note that a few weeks before the foundation of the Five Star Movement, Grillo tried to run for the "role of secretary of the left wing party Partito Democratico but his candidacy was refused by the other members of the PD" (Vignati, 2015, p.24). This aspect should be also taken in consideration in order to understand why Grillo and Casaleggio decided to establish their own movement.

On the 4th October 2009 the Five Star Movement was officially created and on that occasion it announced it was ready to run for the regional elections of 2010 (Vignati, 2015). From that moment, the Five Star Movement started its political rise. From the election of two regional councillors in Emilia Romagna in 2010, to the administrative elections of 2012 when four Five Star Movement mayors were elected (one of them was in Parma) the political growth of this movement has steadily continued. In 2013 the Five Star Movement also ran in the national election for parliament ("*camera dei deputati*" and "*camera dei senatori*") and the results confirmed the rise of Beppe Grillo's movement as the third main political party in Italy (Tronconi, 2015). The Five Stars finally entered into the higher Italian political institutions. In particular, for this last election, the movement's candidates were elected online through Five Star Movement primaries. The candidates could be those that had already represented the Five Star Movement (certified by the Five Star Movement symbol) in the previous municipal or regional elections but had had no success on that occasion. Also voters needed to meet some requirements, the most important one: minimum age 18 and being enrolled in the Five Star Movement before the vote (Regolamento, n.d. para.1).

Since the political beginning of the movement which, as we have said, more or less coincides with the promotion of the local civic lists and the official foundation of the movement, the organizational structure has remained more or less similar to the embryo stage period. However, it is important to take into consideration a few other major events that have happened between 2013 and the present. Indeed, together with the growth of this movement also the responsibilities of those that have chosen to be part of this movement have grown. In the following section we will analyse the current Five Star Movement's structure.

2.3.1 Current structure.

Before going ahead to analyse in depth how the Five Star Movement has evolved from an organizational point of view, (and also how this evolution has led to representatives' deviations) it is important to mention some other important events in the history of this movement.

Firstly, in 2016 Gianroberto Casaleggio died and since that moment his son Davide has replaced him. Secondly, as an outcome of the administrative elections of 2016 now there are 37 cities which have Five Stars mayors or councillors (including Rome and Turin). Thirdly, now together with Beppe Grillo's blog and the meet up platform, followers can also use a new platform called "Rousseau". This platform should facilitate the participatory role of voters. In a post of the 17th July 2015 it was announced that the aim of this platform is to enhance the active participation of the followers in the Five Star movement's political activity (Rousseau, 2015). As also Davide Casaleggio has claimed about this platform: "Do not delegate, participate! With Rousseau and the Five Star Movement now you can. Through this model of participatory democracy, this movement has reached 30% in the national polls. Through the use of internet, we have changed the political parties and traditional mass media rules. (Casaleggio, 2017, para.3)

More specifically, for those that are enrolled in the movement it is possible to take part in the following options: "National lex" (*lex nazionale*), "Regional lex", "Europa lex", (you) Vote ("Vota"), "Fund raising", "Web shield" ("*scudo della rete*"), "Lex subscribed" ("lex iscritti"), "E-learning" and "Sharing" (Rousseau, 2015, para.4). The first option gives us the chance to participate in the writing of national law proposed by Five Stars parliamentary members (Rousseau, 2015, para.4). The second offers the same but at the regional level (Rousseau, 2015, para.4). The third the same as the previous two but at the European level (Rousseau, 2015, para.4). The "Vota" option concerns voting for the Five Star Movement list or voting about specific issues (Rousseau, 2015, para.4). The fund raising option refers to those donations that the voters might make to help the movement from a financial point of view. The Web Shield is about fundraising to defend the movement and its followers from a legal point of view (Rousseau, 2015). 'Lex iscritti' is an option that allows citizens to present law

proposals that the representatives should then present in parliament (Rousseau, 2015, para.5). The "E-learning" part is a page that contains lectures about the institutional and political structure where the representatives work (Rousseau, 2015, para.5). The last one, "Sharing", can be considered as a sort of archive section about the different proposals presented both at municipal but also at regional level (Rousseau, 2015, para.5). In addition to these functions there are another two: "Activism" and "Meet up" which will be activated in the near future. The latter will bring back the function performed by meet up during the first stage of Five Star Movement's rise, whereas the "activism" option will provide digital and non-digital information resources for the followers (Rousseau, 2015).

It is important to note the importance of the Rousseau platform for two main reasons. The first is because it should guarantee a certain degree of direct democracy and for that reason it should be considered as the main tool of direct democracy promoted by the Five Star Movement (together with the online direct election of representatives). The second reason is related to the degree of deliberative democracy that Rousseau should guarantee within the movement. Indeed, voters can give feedbacks and vote directly laws on the Rousseau platform.

2.3.2 The Five Star Movement manifesto and its system of checks and balances.

The *Non-Statuto* (the first guideline, "Il M5S vota un nuovo regolamento", n.d., para.6) together with the *Regolamento* (second and updated guideline, "Il M5S vota un nuovo regolamento e un nuovo non statuto", 2016) and the "Codice di comportamento in caso di coinvolgimento in vicende giudiziarie" (The behavioral code of the Five Star Movement in case of judiciary involvement) can be considered the backbone rules of this movement. It important to say that some important points have been integrated in the original *Non Statuto* over time. Two of these are related to the presence of a political leader ("capo politico") that was not mentioned at all in the original guideline and to how the expulsions and disciplinary measures are regulated (*Il Regolamento*, n.d.). It might be useful to keep in mind some of the main points of these rules: The Five Star Movement is not an association ("*Non Associazione*"); the aim is not to form a political party; this movement promotes a democratic

exchange of opinions without representative mediation and it recognizes the role of government to the network users (first version) and other administrative organs (addition of the second guideline) (Il Regolamento, n.d., para.1); it has a registered logo that can be used only by this movement and the members cannot use this logo to promote events or their candidacy without the permission of the political leader (second version); the members can participate in the collective real and online debates, vote online on the initiatives promoted by the movement and to propose their candidacy for the local, national and European elections ("Il M5S vota un nuovo regolamento", n.d., para.). It is interesting to note that only the political leader can decide to initiate online voting though, and this can happen to choose the Five Star candidates or when he thinks that it is necessary or when 20% of the members require it (Regolamento, n.d., para. 2).

Finally, the updated Regolamento introduced totally new administrative organs within the movement. First of all, there are two new established groups elected to the role of Five Star Movement supervisors: the "*Collegio dei probiviri*" (the Probiviri collegium) and the "*Comitato di appello*" (appeals committee) (Il Regolamento, n.d. para.1bis). The former is a group of three people elected online by voters from a group of names (among the parliamentary members) proposed by the directive council (Il Regolamento, n.d. para.5). The main task of this group is to decide about the members' behaviour. Indeed, this group can indicate when it is necessary to apply a disciplinary sanction or to proceed with the expulsion of a member (Regolamento, n.d, para.4). In this vein it is also important to mention the existence of a short specified document about those cases in which a member might be accused of different kinds of crimes (*Codice di comportamento del movimento 5 stelle in caso di coinvolgimento in vicende giudiziare*). Generally speaking, expulsion might occur when the member or representatives seem not to meet anymore the requirements indicated in the *Non-statuto* or when this person is not acting in a transparent manner and seems not to respect the movement ethics and principles anymore. By contrast, the Comitato *di appello* (appeals committee) is a group of three people whose job is to re-examine expulsion cases (Il Regolamento, n.d. para.6). More specifically, those people who were members or representatives and have been expelled can have recourse to this

committee of appeal. The members of this group are selected in the following way: one is chosen by the directive council of the movement and the other two are elected by the web from a group of names proposed by the directive council (Il Regolamento, n.d. para.6).

2.3.3 Staff.

Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto Casaleggio were supported and surrounded by a selected number of workers (besides the "Casaleggio & Associati" group) necessary to organize the movement and the Blog. Trying to define the role and the identities of this group is difficult. Mainly they identify themselves as "Beppe Grillo's staff". Generally speaking, they are a kind of medium between people and Beppe Grillo and they should facilitate the use of the blog or any other platform related to movement. They can also question representatives and ask for clarification about their performance. For example, that was the case with Federico Pizzarotti, mayor of Parma. Pizzarotti who was expelled in 2016 because apparently he did not inform in time the Five Star Movement staff of an accusation he received (about some offices for the theatre of Parma) (Bia, 2016a). Pizzarotti on his own has always denounced this decision as authoritarian and not transparent.

2.3.4 Financing.

During its electoral campaigns the movement has not received any public funding. In the Five Star Movement blog it is explicitly stated that the financial resources for the movement are based on the individual donations made online by activists. However, activists and followers are not forced to donate if they do not want to.

So far, we have delved into the Five Star Movement from a historical and organizational point of view. In the next chapter we will analyse what the Five Star Movement's democratic formula entails, how it might be possible to deviate from it and why.

3. Divergence from the Five Star Movement's Democratic Formula.

The following chapter explains the democratic formula of the Five Star Movement. Then, it turns to explain how it might be possible to deviate from this formula. Finally, it will discuss specific theories that might help one to find out why these deviations take place.

3.1 The Five Star Movement democratic formula: direct-participatory, transparent, and deliberative.

The efforts of Five Star Movement are aimed at overcoming representative democracy and to create an authentic citizens' democracy (Lanzone & Woods, 2015). More specifically, this Movement wants to fight the caste of "corrupt politicians" giving people the chance to exert directly their political sovereignty. For this reason, the Five Star Movement has often been labelled as part of that populist wave that represent society as divided in two opposing groups: "people" Vs "elite" (Mudde, 2014, p.543) and which is able to mobilize the "resentment" of dissatisfied citizens (Lanzone & Woods, 2015, p.55). It is not a mere coincidence that this Movement has obtained considerable support among those voters "alienated from the mainstream parties" (Lanzone & Woods, 2015, p. 58) and that its formula has been able to obtain such important political success within the Italian scenario presenting itself as a reliable democratic alternative to the to corrupt mainstream politics (Floridia & Vignati, 2014).

More specifically, in our intention the label "Five Star Movement democratic formula" addresses the four main dimensions that seem to substantiate the Five Star Movement manifesto: the direct, participatory, transparent, and deliberative dimensions. Floridia & Vignati (2014) have already used these concepts (especially "direct", "deliberative" and "participatory democracy)" analysing what they entail and to what extent they are connected to the Five Star Movement manifesto and structure (Floridia & Vignati, 2014).

3.2 Direct and Participatory Democracy.

The first aspect of this dimension, direct democracy, refers to the Five Star Movement intention to give the chance to be directly involved in politics, overcoming the other forms of representative democracy.

As Beppe Grillo, the Five Star movement leader and polestar, has frequently claimed, the Five Star Movement is not "left-wing" or "right-wing" and it wants to apply direct democracy through the elimination of political parties (Il M5S non è di sinistra (e neppure di destra), 2013, para.1). As also Gianroberto Casaleggio put it: "Direct democracy is possible through the Internet… The Web makes possible both the participatory democracy and unbiased information" (Danna, n.d. para.1 &11). This last sentence should be considered as particularly significant because it explains in a nutshell how the Five Star Movement intends to present itself as an alternative anti-political democratic project aimed to apply citizens' direct democracy. People might finally play a prominent role if they kept themselves informed and if the chance were given to them to directly express their opinions.

From the Five Star Movement point of view the Internet is the necessary tool to create the basis for direct democracy, to fight the elite of politicians (Lanzone & Tronconi, 2015) and to keep citizens informed. Indeed, on the one hand the Internet makes it possible to share information and data that might be difficult to find in other official media and, on the other hand, through specific digital platforms, it enables citizens to discuss and express directly their individual preferences. In this vein, the *Rousseau* platform should be considered as the symbolic expression of the Five Star Movement's direct "web-democracy" (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2016).

Previously we have described how the Five Star Movement makes use of these kind of digital platforms but what is important to note is that, especially at local level, these platforms have been used as an initial step to lay the basis for a real network in the territory (Lanzone & Tronconi, 2015). To sum up, the Internet should be considered as a kind of virtual "agora" (Floridia & Vignati 2014) for the Five Star Movement and thus a place where it is possible to share information, mobilize people, discuss and eventually vote on political issues.

What is interesting to note is that the Five Star Movement is actually trying to apply direct democracy at both the macro and micro level in Italy at the macro level the Five Star Movement's democratic formula arrived in the Italian Parliament in 2013 (with more than 25% of votes, Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2016, p.132) and to the European Parliament in 2014 (with the 19% of votes, Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2016, p.139). One post from the Beppe Grillo's blog claimed that "Finally the European Union was experiencing an historical victory. Direct democracy is now in the European Parliament. For the first time citizens have been legislators thanks to the laws that they had proposed on the Five Star Movement portal" (Il M5S applica la democrazia diretta in UE, 2015, para. 1). It is interesting to note that the Five Star Movement has assumed a controversial approach towards the European Union over time. Overall, the Movement has always criticized the European Union accusing it of supporting some countries more than others (especially Germany) and to be only interested in financial issues. However, the choices made by the Five Star Movement within the European Parliament have not always been coherent with this tendency of disapproval. Indeed, since 2014 the Five Star Movement has been allied with the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD), the same group as the English and pro-Brexit UKIP, but in January 2017 Grillo proposed to become a member of the more pro-EU ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) (The Five Star Mistery, 2017). The ALDE group did not react positively, so eventually the Five Star Movement remained in the EFDD. This set of events makes clear to what extent the Five Star Movement is not strictly attached to left-wing or right-wing ideologies (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2016).

At the micro level, the Five Star Movement's efforts to bring direct democracy started from the municipality. This aim was explicitly stated in an anonymous declaration posted in the Five Star Movement website on the importance of municipality: "Direct Democracy-Transparency and connection. The municipality is everyone's home and it should become a glass-building where everyone can witness what happens, everyone can participate, contest, propose in order to build an effective democracy" (Democrazia Diretta, n.d., para.1). In other words, the municipal dimension should be considered as the first step of the Five Star Movement's project of direct democracy.

Indeed, the local level offers the most favourable conditions to be involved in management of the common good and to monitor what representatives actually do.

The second aspect of this dimension, participatory democracy, is strictly related to the idea that an unmediated democracy should also give the opportunity to the greatest number of people possible to be involved in the government of the country. Indeed, one of the main mottos of the Five Star Movement is "one counts one" (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2016) and it should express that the main intention of the Five Star project is to not leave anyone behind but rather give the chance to everyone to be part of this "revolution of direct democracy". More specifically, the "one counts one" slogan should indicate that every citizen's voice, every vote is important and it points out that the Five Star Movement's democratic project calls for an actual participatory democracy. For these reasons the Five Star movement members are allowed to and called upon to express their opinions on *Rousseau* or on the blog of Beppe Grillo. In this way, the Five Star Movement enables citizens to participate and theoretically, this participation, does not know obstacles because it only requires to subscribe to the movement and then interact through online platforms.

What is also interesting is that the Five Star Movement's request to participate also intends to avoid any form of hierarchy within the Movement. Indeed, the Five Star Movement has always refused the idea of being considered an old-fashioned political party characterized by a hierarchical structure with by leaders. As a matter of fact, Beppe Grillo has always refused to be defined as the leader of the Five Star Movement group. Rather he chooses to define himself as "the megaphone" or "guarantor" of the Five Star Movement (Bordignon & Ceccarini 2016, p.134). In particular, the label "guarantor" is interesting because it confers to Beppe Grillo a kind of special monitoring power over the other members, activists and representatives of the Five Star Movement) even if there is no clear definition of this "guarantor role" in the Five Star Movement rules (Manaro, 2017).

The participatory dimension also leads us to consider, once again, the ideology variable the question of ideology within the Five Star Movement structure. Indeed, more than once both Five Star Movement members and Beppe Grillo have claimed to be interested in good ideas rather than

ideologies. For that reason, it is quite hard to place the Five Star Movement electorate within a defined political ideology (Colloca & Corbetta, 2015, p.196). Often this lack of defined ideology in the Five Star Movement has been labelled a clear sign of its populist character (Colloca & Corbetta, 2015, p.195). However, what is interesting to note is that, currently, the Five Star Movement is prone to allow everyone who so desires to support its democratic formula and its rules to join.

3.3 Transparent Democracy

Since the beginning of its political adventure, the Five Star Movement has always underlined how its aim is not to benefit from what politics could offer in terms of money and success but rather its aim is to bring transparency into politics. In order to prove this, every month the whole group of Five Star Movement representatives gives a considerable amount of its salary back and, in addition to this, every representative has to publish a complete list of his or her expenses.

Generally speaking, this movement calls for a major degree of transparency and control at every level of economic and political life. In this vein, the Five Star Movement supports the idea that citizens should be able to directly control the behaviour of their representatives and only through transparency might citizens actually promote effective control. "People deserve to know" should be considered the main motto of this dimension of transparency that per se should also lead citizens not to need any kind of representatives after a certain time. Indeed, an informed citizen would not need any sort of intermediation from politicians and thus any sort of political ideology.

3.4 Deliberative democracy

According to Floridia and Vignati (2014) the deliberative dimension seems to be the vaguest within the Five Star Movement structure. Indeed, compared to the other forms of democracy supported by this Movement the deliberative dimension has been the least supported (Floridia & Vignati, 2014, para.4). However, according the present research, this dimension is quite evident in the Five Star

Movement democratic formula. Indeed, the Five Star electorate can discuss, debate and vote online the Five Star Movements initiatives or at least those initiatives that the Five Star Movement decide to put to the vote. Ideally, every Five Star Movement initiative should be put to the vote, allowing the Five Star Movement to decide and reach a final deliberation. In this vein, the Rousseau Platform should be also considered a tool of deliberative democracy.

Citizens' participatory deliberation seems to be the real aim of the whole Five Star Movement democratic project because, as this movement has claimed more than once, an authentic democracy should be run directly by the citizens (5 Giorni a 5 Stelle, 2016) and thus they should be part of collective deliberation on common issues. In this vein, the Five Star Movement representatives should be only "spokespersons" (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2016) that bring into the institutions the citizens' final deliberation.

3.5 Deviations from the Five Star Movement's democratic formula.

Since the Five Star Movement has obtained powerful positions within the Italian political scenario it has also experienced a certain degree of challenges against the Movement and its representatives'. Often these contestations were motivated by a lack of transparency in the formulation of important decisions such as the expulsion of Five Star Movement members or representatives.

The first who was expulsed was Valentino Tavolazzi in 2012 (Zaccariello, 2012). Tavolazzi was a municipal councillor in Ferrara and apparently he was expulsed because he participated in an internal convention aimed at debating the Five Star Movement organizational issues and difficulties (Zaccariello, 2012, para.1). The problem was that this convention was not approved by Grillo and he did not appreciate this initiative (Zaccariello, 2012). Since 2012 more than 60 representatives and members have been expulsed. Most of the time directly by Grillo. Moreover, over time, besides these contestations also other Five Star Movement representatives seem to have deviated from the original aim of the initial Five Star Movement democratic project, violating its basis and principles (Sappino, 2016).

More specifically, it might be fair to assume that this Movement has experienced cases of "direct democracy and participatory democracy deviation", "transparent democracy deviation", and "deliberative democracy deviation". Each of these should be considered as a particular form of deviation related to the four different dimensions of the Five Star Movement's democratic formula.

The direct democracy deviation includes all those actions that not comply with the aim of creating a direct democracy. For example, the Five Star Movement voters can elect directly their representatives through online elections. However, ignoring the result of this online elections should be considered as clear violation of the Five Star Movement attempt to apply direct democracy. Additionally, besides being a potential case of direct democracy violation it seems to also be a case of participatory democracy deviation. Indeed, ignoring an online voting outcome rejecting the elected candidate should also be considered a clear attempt to exclude and marginalize that person. The participatory democracy deviation collects all those cases that do not respect the principle that "one counts one" or in other words that every vote is important. More specifically, the Five Star Movement promotes the idea that its agenda is decided by its electorate thus a restriction in the participation of this electorate should be considered as a violation of the participatory democracy dimension. Direct democracy and participatory deviations should be considered as strictly related.

Transparent democracy deviation indicates on the one hand all those cases that demonstrate a lack of transparency in the activity of the Five Star Movement's representative and, on the other hand, those cases where there is a request for clarification from both citizens and representatives that has not been satisfied. For example, if the Five Star Movement refuses to publicize the expenses and the benefits received because of their role (Baggi & Di Pietro, 2017), then it might be fair assuming that they are deviating because of a lack of transparency.

Deliberative democracy deviation considers those cases that present a violation of the idea that the Five Star Movement's final decisions should be the result of collective and participated citizens' debates. It is clear that this form of deviation has many similarities with that of participatory democracy, however, in this case what makes the difference is that participation is not enough.

Citizens should be able to effectively discuss and reach a final decision that the Five Star Movement representatives will then bring to the institutions.

3.6 Expectations regarding the Five Star Movement's divergence from its "democratic formula".

In the following section we will address to some theories that might help the present research to formulate expectations about deviations of the Five Star Movement's representatives from the original Movement democratic formula.

3.6.1. The massive organization of internal democracy and the "Iron law of oligarchy".

Why would the Five Star Movement representatives' deviate from their initial intentions? There are different theories that might help us to understand this phenomenon.

According to Schattschneider the democratic system is unthinkable save in terms of parties' (Schattschneider in Katz, 2006, p.34). Political parties make democracy possible and political parties are the active players within the political field. However political parties′members should not be considered to be Rousseauean delegates but as "alliances of leaders between which voters choose" (Katz, 2006, p.36). This means that political parties should be framed as representational mirrors for citizens not as an "association of citizens" (Katz, 2006, 42) Moreover, the party cannot be managed by its voters but it does need a selected group of people that manage it (Katz, 2006, p.36). This selected group of people should fulfil more responsibilities but also assume more powers within the party management and it indicates that a hierarchy is necessary within the party. Indeed, this hierarchical structure seems to be necessary in order to guarantee a fair administration of the party but it is clearly incompatible with the idea of a direct democracy run by citizens. In short, Schattschneider has underlined how direct democracy is not possible within a party, because "internal democracy is incompatible with external cohesion" (Katz, 2006, p.36).

More specifically, direct democracy is that dimension in which, to guarantee the maximum of "fairness" and "equality" (Cohen, 1997), everyone should participate in the decision making of the group. However, this kind of effort might work only in small associations whereas in a massive group or political party it is unfeasible and it has been also underlined how beyond being structurally impossible, direct democracy is not the best solution in order to govern. Indeed, taking into account everyone's opinion might negatively affect the fairness of the final conclusion, because not everyone has the same level of knowledge. Schattschneider emphasized the impossibility of guaranteeing true direct democracy within a political party, basically because a structural and cultural hierarchy is necessary in order to work and compete with the other parties.

This concept of hierarchy is strictly related to another approach that we should take in consideration in this section: the "iron law of oligarchy" theorized by Robert Michels. As Michels put it in relation to democratic organization: "It is organization which gives birth to the dominion of the elected" (Katz, 2006). According to Michels democratic organizations are destined to be steered by an "oligarchy" or in any case a central power, especially when they are run by an influential leader (Michels, 1968). This change happens as a direct consequence of the growth of the democratic organization. This growth leads the association to expand its structure and administrative section. For example, a massive organization would struggle to find the conditions to guarantee direct deliberation (Cohen,1997, p.75). The more the democratic organization develops the more its administrative structure will grow (Michels, 1968, p. 72). More specifically some duties and main responsibilities would be assigned to a smaller group of people that inevitably would then also become more powerful within the organization and interested in maintaining this personal power (Michels,1968). As Michels put it: "one who has for a certain time held the office of delegate ends by regarding that office has its own property" (Michels, 1968, p.81). Michels also underlined how this iron law of oligarchy mechanism is typical in those organizations characterized by a strong leadership in which the role of the leader is perceived as indispensable (Michels, 1968, p.364). A strong leadership will grow in influence and this influence is likely to lead to a full centralization of power and to a voluntary

renunciation of the members' sovereignty over time. It is important to mention the iron law of oligarchy especially in relation to Schattschneider's theory because they both offer an explanation of why a massive organization conflicts with the idea of an effective direct and participatory democracy (Katz, 2006). In this vein it seems fair to assume that Michels' model enriches and completes the Schattschneider theories.

Taking into consideration Schattschneider and Michel's theories we could formulate precise expectations about the reasons behind the Five Star Movement deviation. Schattschneider claimed that democracy is "only possible between parties and not within the party" (Schattschneider in Katz, 2006, p.36) because true direct democracy is incompatible with the needs of a massive party or organization. This theory clearly refers to the relation between political parties and the political party system in which they are embedded. The Five Star Movement began as a Movement but it has assumed the features of a political party over time, especially since it has been admitted to the higher institutions of Italian politics. Often Beppe Grillo and the other Five Star Movement representatives claim that they do not want change their status from movement to political party basically because they do not want to be part of that corrupt elite (Tronconi, 2015). However, the Five Star Movement has to compete with the other political parties and over time has assumed a more defined structure necessary for its internal administration. For example, the more recent "*Probiviris' College"* and "*Appeals Committee"* (previously mentioned) fulfils monitoring tasks that were not present in the beginning of this movement. The creation of these roles has created an unbalanced situation within the movement between those who have a certain degree of monitoring power and those that do not.

Moreover, even if the Five Star Movement motto is "one counts for one" and they promote democracy from below (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014), it seems to be difficult to stick to this promise. Indeed, more often in the last years this movement has been accused of being authoritative towards its members (Tronconi, 2015). As Bordignon and Ceccarini have underlined, the Five Star Movement has often promoted an alternative way of thinking about democracy, moving from a "vertical dimension" typical of the Second Republic and the related personalisation of political leadership to a

"horizontal democratic dimension" in which the role of leadership disappears (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2014, p.21). However, the strong leadership of Beppe Grillo is undeniable for three main reasons. Since the beginning of the Five Star Movement's adventure Grillo has been the "megaphone" of the ideas and opinions of the movement's members (Tronconi, 2015, p.12). Secondly he is the owner of the Five Star Movement symbol and that means that he can decide if to grant its use or not for local or national elections. Thirdly, nowadays Beppe Grillo is also the "guarantor" of the movement (Tronconi, 2015, p.12). This means that Grillo is the most powerful person with monitoring powers within the Five Star Movement (Griseri, 2017).

Taking in consideration the idea of Schattschneider and Michels (in Katz, 2006) we might expect the Five Star Movement representatives to deviate because a true internal direct democracy is not possible in a massive party and organization (Schattschneider) and this happens also because the Five Star Movement has always been characterized by the strong leadership of Beppe Grillo (Michels, 1968).

3.6.2 The lack of ideology: Delegation Vs Representation and Taggart's protest politics.

In the following section we will mainly address two theories. The first refers to the contraposition between the Rousseauean idea of delegation and Nadia Urbinati's idea of representation (Urbinati, 2011, p.30) whereas the second theory is related to Paul Taggart's analysis of populism and anti-politics (Taggart, 2004, 2007). Both these theories are strictly related to a third element: the lack of ideology. Firstly, we will analyse the contraposition between the concept of delegation vs. representation and then we will delve into Taggart's theories. All these elements are strictly related to the Five Star Movement case, especially if we take into consideration that this movement has often claimed not to be attached to any particular ideology (Colloca & Corbetta, 2015, p.196). The analysis of these theories might help us to formulate a new expectation related to this particularity.

According to French philosopher Rousseau a true democracy conflicts with the concept of representation and representative democracy (Urbinati, 2011). This theory is related to the idea that

political representation per se seems to entail a contradiction between "being present and yet not be present" (Pitkin, 2004, p.335). Indeed, political representation indicates that citizens' interests are represented by a selected group of people that will act in the interests of citizens. However, these citizens cannot be present during the representatives' performances within the higher political institutions. So how it is possible to assess if they are actually representing the citizens' interests honestly? Besides that, this paradox related to being politically represented also requires that citizens give up part of their individual sovereignty (Urbinati, 2011, p. 33) as members and administrators of their democracy and owners of the "general will" (Rousseau 1987 in Urbinati 2011, p.34). The idea of representation necessarily indicates an "interdependence" between representatives and citizens (Urbinati, 2011, p.27) and in this interdependence the individual sovereignty loses its effective power. For these reasons, Rousseau refused the idea of representation because it entails a form of "alienation" of the individual sovereignty and rather he promoted the idea of "delegation" (Urbinati, 2011, p.33). Delegates are those citizens that speak as "ambassadors" of citizens interests but that have no power in terms of decision in the "sovereign's place" (Urbinati, 2011, p.35). It is interesting to note that the ideas of Rousseau have often been used by those movements that promote the idea that society is composed in two opposing parts "pure people" versus "corrupted elite" (the general will versus the will of all, Urbinati, 2011).

By contrast, Nadia Urbinati underlined how important representation is in terms of "articulation of pluralism" within society (Urbinati, 2011, p.45). More specifically, she claimed that representation is based on an "ideological sympathy and communication" between the representatives and their voters that make it possible "to seek unity [and] not an act of unification" (Urbinati, 2011, p. 45) within society. In other words, it is important that citizens sympathize with those people that will bring their interest within the institutions and that this sympathy would be based on a specific set of ideas and beliefs, in one word, in a specific ideology. The representation of defined different beliefs will guarantee the society pluralism but it will also express a defined political guideline for the well-being of the whole community. As a consequence, according to Urbinati, the relationship between

representatives and its voters should be ideological and not merely based on a "contract" (Urbinati, 2011, p.45).

As a second main theory we will address Paul Taggart analyses of populism and anti-politics parties and movements (Taggart, 2004). Nowadays populist parties are the main supporters of direct democracy (Mudde, 2004). The populist pure form frames society as split in two groups, the "pure people" and the "corrupted elites", and it strongly defends the idea that politics should be based solely on the general will of the former group (Mudde, 2004, p.543). In order to make this vision possible people should be able to exert their political voice and sovereignty directly (Urbinati, 2011). As stated above, the idea of "unmediated citizens' representation" finds its roots in the Rousseauean concept of individual sovereignty that, according to the French philosopher, should not be alienated through political representation (Urbinati, 2011, p.33; Altman 2011). According to Rousseau only "delegation" is acceptable in a democratic state not representation (Urbinati, 2011), because representation always entails a form of reworked version of those citizens' interests whereas delegates are simple ambassadors of people's opinions. This "revolutionary idea" (Grillo, Fo & Casaleggio, 2013) that contests the legitimation of representative democracy is crucial in order to understand populism as a phenomenon of "protest" (Mair, 2007) close to current citizens' call for direct democracy.

Mudde underlined how the term populism has often been used to indicate an" emotional" or opportunistic phenomenon to attract votes (Mudde, 2004, p.542). In this vein, populism has often been used to indicate a negative and harmful phenomenon in contraposition to democracy (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012). However, framing populism only in this negative perspective would be highly reductive (Mudde, 2004). For example, it would not take into account the differences between, the Spanish *Podemos* and the French *Front National* (Mudde, 2004). These two European cases have been both labelled as populism (Mudde, 2004) but it is not possible to claim that these two political entities want the same thing or that they refer to the same needs of people. Generally speaking, populism is characterized by a "thin ideology" that means that it can be attached to other stronger

left-wing or right-wing ideology (Mudde, 2004, p. 544). *Podemos* is attached to a left-wing ideology that wants to fight the elite of politicians especially from an economic point of view, whereas *Front National* is a right-wing populist party that is characterized by nationalism and xenophobia. What is interesting is that both are strongly strictly exclusionary towards something or someone. Mudde has perfectly depicted this trend claiming that "populism is always an illiberal democratic response to undemocratic liberalism" (Mudde, 2015, para 8).

Paul Taggart claimed that populism or those actors that present "strong features of populism" are a "feature of representative politics" and more specifically a reaction to it (Taggart, 2004, p. 270). This reaction entails a "war" towards the established political system and its members. Moreover, in the same line of Mudde (2004) Taggart pointed out that these populist and anti-party parties can be characterized by a "lack of core values" and thus "they tend to be highly chameleonic" (Taggart, 2004, p. 275). However, Taggart underlined also how, on one hand these entities have to maintain their reputation of an authentic alternative to politics and its deficiencies but on the other hand they have to become, after all, parties of government" (Taggart, 2004, p.284). More specifically this paradox seems to be more evident when these populist parties are members of the national parliament (Taggart, 2007).

It is important to note here that this research is not interested in assessing to what extent the Five Star Movement is a populist actor itself. However, undoubtedly Taggart's reflection on populism and anti-system parties or movements - characterized by chameleonic behaviour (Taggart, 2004, p.275)- which have to compete in the system that they want to challenge might be useful for this research (Taggart, 2004).

According Taggart, eventually these anti-establishment parties are destined to push forward the same logics of those political parties they wanted to fight in the beginning. For example, one of the main points of these kinds of unconventional parties is the fight against the personalization of politics (as Tronconi pointed out (Tronconi, 2015) but eventually anti-politics actors (as the Five Star Movement) are characterized by a very strong charismatic leadership such as Silvio Berlusconi,

Umberto Bossi, Marine Le Pen. (Taggart, 2004; Tronconi, 2015). In this sense, Taggart's theory could be connected to the "iron of law oligarchy" that we have previously depicted and also to the principal-agent model (Michels and successively Panebianco, Tronconi, 2015, p.12) might be useful in our case.

According to this model the electoral competition leads the movement to pay more attention to the vote-seeking rather than the voters' needs (Tronconi, 2009, p.13). In his explanation of this model Katz refers to "movement entrepreneurs" (Katz, 2006, p. 282) and not to "movement representatives" but we will refer to this theory taking in consideration both the movement leader/entrepreneurs (Beppe Grillo) and the Five Star Movement representatives. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the principal-agent model is focused on the transition that occurs between the movement framed only as "movement" and the movement framed as political party (Katz, 2006, p. 282).

In conclusion, we might formulate another expectation entirely based on the lack of ideology element that might help us to understand why the Five Star Movement representatives deviate from their original democratic project. More specifically, this expectation is based on two main theories: the contraposition of the concept of delegation vs. representation and on the fact that the Five Star Movement is one of those anti-system parties characterized by a thin ideology (which is not attached to any other defined ideology) that is behaving more and more like other political parties and is also looking for electoral consensus.

First of all, it is important to take into consideration both the Rousseau theory on delegation and the critics moved against it because they are strictly related to the Five Star Movement and its way of applying a delegation model beyond any kind of ideology. Is the Five Star Movement succeeding in its aim of being simple delegates beyond every kind of ideology or can their deviation possibly be explained by the fact that it is not possible to put ideologies away when it comes to representation?

Second of all, Taggart's theories on anti-system actors lead us to the conclusion that the Five Star Movement representatives deviate for two main reasons. Firstly, because, even if the Five Star Movement's aim is to challenge the established political system, they have to compete in that political system that they want to overcome. This competition leads the Five Star Movement representative to adapt to that system and use the same logics as the other representative in order to survive and, as such, deviate from their initial democratic project. So, eventually it is possible to claim that these representatives deviate because they are affected by the system in which they have to compete. Moreover, the lack of a defined ideology enables the Five Star Movement to often change its own position, to be a "chameleon" (Taggart, 2004) and to prioritize vote-seeking in order to maintain its powerful position.

Now, that the Five Star Movement's democratic formula has been analysed and possible deviations from it and theoretical expectations have been described, it is time to present our methodology and case selection.

4. Methodology.

In the following chapter we will present our case selection and methodology. More specifically, we will explain why this research chose a diverse-case selection and semi-structured interview method and its operationalization.

4.1 Exploring the world of the Five Star Movement.

We have already clarified what we mean by the label "Five Star Movement representative deviations". In addition to this we have specified that "deviation" is a term that we use to define those cases that present a gap between the Five Star representatives and the democratic project pushed forward by this movement. As a further caveat it is important to underline that before our investigation we could only assume that these gaps took place. Indeed, part of our research is aimed to find out if

these deviations actually happened. For this reason, we selected a limited number of cities that experienced internal conflicts within the Five Star Movement (Sappino, 2017).

We assume that these cases experienced Five Star representatives' deviations because they were characterized by a considerable amount of citizens' complaints against the Movement and its representatives (Sappino, 2017). The main goal of our research is aimed at understanding why these deviations took place, but before this step we have to find out if these deviations actually happened and how the Five Star Movement deviated from the movement's original democratic project. As a consequence, we will try to answer the following questions:

Why do the Five Star Movement representatives deviate from the initial mission of the Five Star

Movement aimed at applying direct democracy elements to their party organization?

This should be considered our main research question, however, in order to answer this, we have firstly answer the following sub-question:

How do the Five Star Movement representatives deviate from the initial mission of the Five Star

Movement aimed at applying direct democracy elements to their party organization?

These questions suggest to us two main points. Firstly, that we are interested in the causal mechanisms behind the Five Star Movement representatives' deviation. With the term "causal mechanisms" we refer to that "pathway" that leads from the independent variable X to the dependent variable Y, thus that relationship that goes from the causal variable to the outcome variable (Gerring, 2006, p.43). Secondly, these research questions suggest that we know or we can suppose the outcome or Y variable (the Five Star Movement representatives' deviations) but we do not know precisely the independent X variables that have caused these "puzzling outcomes" (Gerring, 2008, p.647). This means that starting from our Y variable we have to find out the explanatory or dependent X variable. As a main consequence, the present research has to be labelled as an X-centred one (Gerring, 2008, p.648). Indeed, we can only formulate "expectations" on the possible causal mechanisms or X variable/s behind these deviations.

However, it is important to note that even if we have expectations about possible X variable/s they should not be considered as hypotheses that we are going to test but, rather, as theoretical guidelines that might help our research exploration.

Following these assumptions, a qualitative case-study approach seems to be the most suitable in order to conduct a profound and fruitful study on the Five Star Movement representatives' deviations. Indeed, only a qualitative approach based on a single case or small number of cases would lead to the variety of details and elements (Gerring, 2006) necessary to discover the hidden causal mechanisms behind the Five Star Movement representatives' deviation.

In particular, the present research will focus on a selected number of cases directly connected with the Five Star Movement representatives' internal conflicts and possible deviations (Sappino, 2017). A Large-N cross case study would be too broad for the purpose of our research because it would lead to a superficial understanding of those causal mechanisms we are interested in. Moreover, in terms of internal validity it is less difficult to reach the real causal mechanisms of a limited, rather than a large, number of cases (Gerring, 2007, p.646).

4.2 Data and method.

Following the choice of a qualitative approach the present research intends to collect data through the interviewing method. More specifically, through semi-directed interviews (Bray, 2008, p.298) with Five Star Movement representatives (mayors, regional council or municipal council members). This type of interviews facilitates the in-depth exploration of causal mechanisms and allows us to take into consideration new pathways of research. In other words, on the one hand the semi-structured interviews allow us to collect opinions on specific topics and, on the other hand, they help the researcher to explore new factors directly suggested by the interviewees.

 It is important to note here that these kind of interviews should not be confused with the ethnographic method. Indeed, this method starts from a "tabula rasa" stage (Della Porta & Keating, 2008, p.303) in which the researcher is not really knowledgeable about the object of his or her

investigation. This lack of knowledge leads the researcher to be totally open minded towards every kind of interviewees' inputs that might help to build up our knowledge.

With the ethnographic approach, the semi-structured interviews share the wish to take in consideration new inputs directly from the interviewees' answers. However, these two approaches differ because for the semi-structured interview approach it is important that, before starting the interviews, the researcher has an initial defined topic in mind and some related previous knowledge. Then, through different interviews, this topic will be enriched with details, nuances and different interviewees' points of view (Leech, 2002). So basically the main difference between the ethnographic and the semi-structured interviewing method is that the former mainly revolves around observation of every kind of aspect of a topic, whereas the latter deals with direct questioning and digging on specific aspects of a topic of interest. Thus, the semi-structured interview method makes use of open-ended questions, that, on the one hand allow the researchers to focus on their target and, on the other hand, give to the respondents the chance to express their opinion in the clearest way possible.

Having said that, there are also downsides of risk that should be taken into account when speaking of semi-structured interviews. First of all, it is important to consider that the interviewee's answer might be biased. Indeed, it might happen that the interviewee does not answer according to his or her personal point of view but according to an ideological or external influence. This kind of issue is particularly important for the present research especially if we take in consideration that the Five Star Movement is characterized by strong internal discipline among its members and that internal criticisms towards the Movement have always been the cause of expulsions (Tronconi, 2015). Moreover, it is important to remember that this movement shows a strong scepticism towards the media and journalists (Tronconi, 2015) which might also affect the whole interviewing process.

Secondly, it is important to guarantee the reliability and replicability of these semi-structured interviews to make a final comparison of the data collected possible. In order to ensure these two conditions, the researcher should prepare a structure of open-ended questions for the interview. It is

important that these questions are not too complex or too direct but rather enhance the interviewee's wish to answer in the richest way possible (Leech, 2002).

4.3 Case selection.

The present research focuses on a selected number of cases that have experienced internal conflicts and related complaints about the Five Star Movement representatives' performance (Sappino, 2017). Moreover, these cases have been chosen according to the diverse-case selection method (Gerring, 2008). Why?

The cases that we have taken into consideration were not chosen randomly but according to a precise method. Indeed, they all present different ways of deviating from the original Five Star Movement's democratic formula. More precisely, these cases offer deviations related the main standpoints of the Five Star Movement democratic formula (direct, transparent and participatory democracy). The diverse-case method seems to be ideal in order to provide a "representative full range of values characterizing X or Y or some particular X /Y relationship" (Gerring, 2008, p. 9). In this case the representative deviations are our Y so we are interested in different values that characterize Y.

It might also happen that some variations combine with each other (Gerring, 2008). In that case we will deal with cases of combined deviations. The most important aspect of the diverse case selection method is that it gives the chance to study a specific phenomenon through the analysis of different expressions (cases) of that phenomenon. This last element is fundamental for the present research, especially if we take into consideration that our approach is exploratory rather than hypothesis testing and thus diversity might help us to find the real causes behind the Five Star Movement's representative deviations.

Having said that, the present research will focus on four main cases. The first case entails the combination of two Italian cities Rimini and Ravenna that have experienced a similar example of transparent democracy deviation in 2016 (Sappino, 2016). The second one refers to the Italian city of

Genova and a case of direct and transparent deviation which happened in March 2017 (Pucciarelli, 2017). The third case involves Parma as an example of transparent democracy. Parma was the first important electoral achievement of the Five Star Movement in 2011. This case is particularly well known within the Italian scenario because in 2016 the mayor Federico Pizzarotti was expelled by the Movement (Bia, 2016b). The last case, Milan, will be used as an example of deviation from participatory democracy.

It is clear that all these cases pertain to the local level and thus the present research will focus mainly on the Five Star Movement local representatives: mayors, municipal council members and regional council members. Moreover, the present research is not only interested in those Five Star Movement representatives that are currently in office but also in those that were previously in office or that have been expelled from the Movement. For the aim of the present research, we thought that interviewing ex- representatives might be particularly helpful to find out the causal mechanisms behind the Five Star Movement representatives' deviations. Additionally, it is important to underline that the whole selection of our interviewees responds to precise needs related to the story of our cases. We focused on representatives that might have experienced those internal conflicts or that might have witnessed those events. We also gave the opportunity to the interviewees to choose between anonymity and being publicly known. In the following sections we will present our cases.

4.3.1 Rimini and Ravenna: transparent democracy deviation and participatory deviation.

This first case involves two cities: Rimini and Ravenna. It might be possible to aggregate them because they present the same kind of issue. Indeed, in both Rimini and Ravenna, Five Star Movement civic lists for the municipal election of 2016 were not presented (Bignami, 2016). More specifically, on that occasion Beppe Grillo and his associates did not grant the certification necessary to run and be elected as representatives of the Five Star Movement (Sappino, 2016). Why? Apparently because

of internal conflicts in the Five Star Movement present in both cities. As a consequence, the 'headmaster' of the movement decided not to release the qualification and posted a very short communication on the blog to express this decision (Sappino, 2016).

It is important to note that in both these cities the Five Star Movement was quite strong and for that reason the top down decision took by Beppe Grillo and his stuff caused a certain degree of disagreement among the Five Star Movement activists in 2016 (Sappino, 2016). It is true that both these cities had problems in the formulation of the Five Star Movements civic lists but, at least the Rimini Five Star Movement assembly elected a lawyer called Davide Grassi as aspiring mayor (Zaccariello, 2016, para.1). Grassi was also presented to the press as the Five Star Movement candidate supported by the regional and national representatives Marco Affronte e Giulia Sarti (Zaccariello, 2016, para.2). However, his candidacy was contested by the ex-wife of Beppe Grillo Sonia Toni who also wanted to run as the Five Star Movement's candidate (Zaccariello, 2016, para.1). Eventually, Davide Grassi and his civil list did not obtain agreement from Grillo and his associates.

As a consequence, in a long post Marco Affronte (Five Star Movement regional representative) described this decision as depressing because the Five Star Movement had good chance of winning in Rimini (Sappino, 2016). Also the way this decision was communicated was seen to be unfair and it did not take into consideration the considerable amount of people that supported the Five Star Movement in Rimini.

In Ravenna something similar happened and in that case Five Star Movement followers also promoted an online petition to convince the Movement's headmaster to give to Ravenna the chance to run for election. This petition had 1000 supporters (Sappino, 2016, para.5).

Both these cases presented a representative deviation because even though there was democratic deliberation that led to the election of a Five Star Movement list, Beppe Grillo and his associates eventually decided to not grant the certification to run for the Five Star Movement (Sappino, 2016). What is also interesting to note is the total lack of transparency in providing the

reasons related to this decision. The Five Star Movement grassroots members asked for a clear explanation but they did not obtain any useful reaction.

4.3.2 Genova: direct, participatory and transparent democracy deviation.

In March 2017 there was a scandal related to the Five Star Movement primaries in Genova (Pucciarelli, 2017). Shortly afterwards there was to be the mayoral election in this city and because of that the Five Star Movement had to elect its candidate. As a consequence of an online collective election, Marika Cassimatis won as the Five Star Movement's candidate. However, Beppe Grillo decided to ignore this election and to announce a new online election (Pucciarelli, 2017). Why? He did not really give a fair explanation and he literally asked his followers "to trust him" (Pucciarelli, 2017, para.2).

This case can be framed mainly as a clear example of a twofold deviation, namely a direct and a transparent democracy deviation. The former refers to the decision of the leader of the Movement, Beppe Grillo, to ignore the direct and legitimate online election of Marika Cassimatis, the latter pertains to Grillo's decision to explain why Marika Cassimatis had to be discharged. Indeed, Grillo has never clearly explained why he took this decision (Pucciarelli, 2017) and in this way he lacked of transparency.

In addition to these, it might be argued that also a participatory democracy deviation has taken place. As we have previously explained this kind of deviation is strictly related to the direct democracy deviation and it occurs when effective citizens' participation to the Five Star Movement project is obstructed and the motto "one counts one" is violated. In this case, the deviation did not take place to prevent the citizens' direct involvement in the Movement decision-making process, as a matter of fact the official online citizens direct vote took place regularly. Nevertheless, Grillo refused the outcome of this election (direct democracy deviation) because he decided to exclude Marika Cassimatis. So, eventually the Genova direct democracy deviation is a consequence of the participatory democracy deviation pushed forward by Grillo to damage Cassimatis' candidacy.

The present research is aware that the difference between direct democracy deviation and participatory democracy deviation is blurred and not always clear. However, in Genova, Grillo's intent was not to undermine direct involvement of citizens in the political process, but to prevent Cassimatis' candidacy.

4.3.3 Parma: transparent democracy deviation.

Five Star Movement's Federico Pizzarotti, mayor of Parma since 2009, was expelled from the Movement in 2016 (Bia, 2016b). Apparently this happened because he did not notify in time that there was an ongoing investigation into the Parma theatre and thus he contravened one of the main Five Star Movement statutes (Bia, 2016a). The subject of this inquiry concerned the nominations of the Parma theatre head office. Apparently, even though an official and open competitive selection process to find suitable candidates had been established, the municipality chose candidates that did not participate in the official competition. For these reasons Pizzarotti and his stuff have been accused of a lack of transparency and, following the protests, an investigation started. Pizzarotti tried to defend himself explaining that in the description of the open competition it was clearly stated "explorative character" and thus it was not strictly necessary to choose someone from that competition (Bia, 2016b). Moreover, he added that when he was looking for aid to solve important municipal issues he was left alone by those representatives that should take care of the Five Star Movement's municipal affairs (Luigi di Maio and Roberto Fico) (Bia, 2016b). He also publicly provided the exchange of emails that could prove this (Bia, 2016b). The lack of communication between the central head of this movement and its branches could be also framed as deviation because Pizzarotti's request for aid was ignored for weeks by the headmaster's organization.

Another interesting aspect concerns the example per se of Pizzarotti as Five Star Movement representative. Indeed, one of the main promises of his electoral campaign was to close an incinerator located in nearby Parma (Trentadue, 2016). Nowadays, this incinerator is still active and it has become one of the main cause of dissatisfaction with Pizzarotti (Trentadue, 2016). This means that

Five Star Movement mayor of Parma has not accomplished his mission as Five Star representative and thus he has deviated from the Five Star Movements democratic project.

4.3.4 Milano: deviation from participatory democracy.

In 2016 Patrizia Bedori was elected by the Five Star Movement local community as aspiring mayoral candidate for Milan (Castigliani, 2016). However, a few months before the final elections she decided to leave the electoral campaign because, according to her, she was becoming the victim of continuous criticism both from inside and outside the Movement. More specifically, concerning the internal criticisms, Bedori referred to other Five Star Movement representatives, such as Serenella Fucksia, who publicly denigrated her candidacy (Castigliani, 2016). Apparently these criticisms concerned Bedori's physical appearance ("ugly, fat and unemployed", Castigliani, 2016, para.1) and her behaviour was not considered to be communicative enough (Castigliani, 2016).

For these reasons, Bedori gave up on her candidacy and the local Five Star Movement (behind closed doors) decided to candidate the third elected person (the second one had also given up) during the previous Five Star Movement election (Castigliani, 2016).

If Patrizia Bedori is right and she was actually forced to leave the electoral campaign because of external but also internal pressure (from other Five Star Movement representatives) this case might be framed as an example of deviation from participatory democracy. This deviation occurred because some representatives did not apply the Five Star Movement's motto "one counts as one" and wanted to prevent Bedori's candidacy specifically.

Now that our cases have been presented, we can focus on our operationalization and application of the method.

4.4 Operationalization.

The semi-structured interviews are based on some important concepts that we have previously depicted and discussed in our theoretical framework. More specifically they will refer to the meaning

of three main dimensions: "Democracy", "Five Star Movement democratic project" and "Five Star Movement representation".

The "Democracy dimension" entails two main questions:

1)   What is your opinion about the degree of democracy in our country?

2)   What is the role of citizens within a democracy?

The "Five Star Movement democratic project dimension" entails five main questions:

3)   What is the difference between the Five Star Movement and any other Italian political party?

4)   I will show you some cards with a few words. Could you please rank them in an order that make sense for you in terms of importance? Words: deliberation, transparency, participation? (sub question: What comes into your mind when you see these words?)

5)   What does "one counts as one "mean in your opinion?

6)   What do you think of Internet as a tool to improve democracy?

7)   What do you think of the Five Star Movement platform "Rousseau"?

The "Five Star Movement's representation" entails five main questions.

8)   What does it mean to represent people? What should the role of a Five Star Movement representative entail then? What kind of tasks should he or she accomplish in connection to the spirit of the movement?

9)   In your opinion, to what extent have the M5S representatives from (the top to the bottom) fulfilled this role?

10)   Tell me, what would betraying as a Five Star Movement representative mean? What would be the worst form of betrayal?

11)   What would you say is the main challenge of your mission as M5S

representative?

12)   Tell me, do you always follow what people propose to you and then follow these proposals?

13)   Could you please indicate a common element that characterize the Five Star Movement's members?

14)   What do you think about the European Institutions? What do you think when, in the European field, the Five Star Movement is labelled as populist?

4.5 Application of the method.

The researcher sent official invitations sponsored by Radboud University to the whole group of Five Star Movement representatives present in our case selection. In this invitation the Five Star Movement representatives were politely invited to take part in the present research on the Five Star Movement and its representatives. Moreover, the invitation explicitly ensured the anonymity for the participants to this project.

The purpose of the present research is to collect between three to five interviews per city with a total of 18 interviewees at least. Moreover, every interview should be conducted face-to-face in order to establish a direct dialogue with the participants. However, some of them were done on skype through video-calls because of geographical reasons. It is important to make interviewees feel comfortable and that they feel free to answer whatever they want to without any external pressure (Leech, 2002). At the beginning of every interview the Five Star Movement representatives will be thanked and the purpose of this research will be explained again, or at least part of it. At the end of every session the participants will be also asked if they want to add something.

Moreover, every interview will be recorded (adding personal notes) with the permission of the interviewees. The interviews will be conducted in Italian and later translated into English. As a final step it will be necessary to compare the interview data looking for patterns and relationships of

related causal mechanisms that might explain the Five Star Movement deviations. These interviews took place between June and July 2017. In the following chapter we will present the data that we collected during our interviews.

5. Empirical Analysis: Interview- Based Evidence.

In the present chapter we present the empirical results of our interviews. More specifically, for each case we list the similarities, differences and most interesting points claimed by our interviewees.

The present research collected 20 interviews in total among local and regional Five Star Movement representatives across the cities of Milan, Genova, Rimini, Ravenna and Parma. In addition to these we also interviewed a member of the European Parliament, Marco Affronte, who, in 2014, was elected with the Five Star Movement and who comes from Rimini. Nowadays, Affronte is a member of the Greens/EFA group within the European Parliament (Baggi and Di Pietro, 2017)

In order to offer clear analysis, we will provide the individual results for each case. These results will be organized according to structure of the questionnaire that we have previously depicted: "Democracy dimension", "Five Star Movement democratic project dimension" and "Five Star Movement representation". In this way it should be possible to understand if the Five Star Movement representatives' deviations took place and how they happened.

5.1 Milan

In Milano we collected 5 interviews.

5.1.1 Milan: The democracy dimension

For the "Democracy dimension" it is possible to assume that none of these representatives has a positive view of Italian democracy. At the top of the main reasons there are "impossibility of expressing political preferences during the national elections", "lack of transparent and independent information and media", "citizens' disappointment towards politics" and related "low turnout". In addition to these, two interviewees clearly stated that the main problem of the Italian democracy is

that it is a "top down democracy" still attached to the "representative model" without "forms of direct democracy such as public debates and frequent referenda".

Concerning the role of citizens within democracy, all the interviewees agreed with the idea that people should play an "active role "in Italian political life: they should participate and vote more, be curious and "informed" about what happens in their country". In this vein, Stefano Buffagni, (regional council member) stated: "active citizens should care about their community…today this sense of community is getting lost. We want to use the Internet to allow citizens to express their preferences but we also care about the importance of an authentic community made of human relationships" (Stefano Buffagni).

5.1.2 Milan: The Five Star Movement democratic project dimension.

The main differences between the Five Star movement and the other political parties can be summed up in two main points. First of all, the Five Star Movement representatives are "simple citizens lent to politics" and they are not interested in the political career as such and it is also important to avoid the temptation to behave as a "politician". For this reason, the Five Star Movement representatives can be elected only twice, have to give back a considerable part of their salary and make their expenses public.

Secondly, the Five Star Movement is not interested in ideologies but frames itself as a "post-ideological movement" (Stefano Buffagni). More specifically, these representatives are more interested in "good ideas" feasible for the community, it is not important where they come from. Thirdly, the Five Star Movement is not characterized by a hierarchical structure but it should be considered only as an "association where citizens, activists and representatives are at the same level". This equality is based on a "continuous exchange of ideas on the Internet or through public debates".

Concerning the concepts of transparent, deliberative and participatory democracy three representatives ranked them in this order: transparency, participation and deliberation. They explained that transparency is necessary in order to have access to trustable sources of information:

"unbiased information is necessary in order to keep citizens aware and informed". Then, knowledgeable citizens can participate deliberate in political life. Buffagni is one of those that supported this formula, but he was also sceptical about the idea that an ideal deliberation is possible: "the most important one for me is transparency whereas the third one is a utopia... (during the deliberative process) it is necessary to have someone with a good idea and a certain degree of charisma" (Stefano Buffagni).

The remaining two representatives chose participation before transparency and deliberation. According to this perspective it is firstly necessary to invite people to participate and exchange ideas. Then, this exchange has to be as transparent as possible in order to reach a fair deliberation.

The "one counts one" slogan was commonly defined by all the interviewees as "every vote counts as one". This means that within the decision-making process and related voting everyone has the same right to participate and vote, and every vote has the same political weight within the deliberative process. However, this slogan should not be confused with the idea that every opinion counts the same within different decision-making processes. Some people might be experts on a specific topic so, in that case, their opinion should count more in terms of the fairest contribution possible. It is important to note that all these representatives underlined how the "one counts as one" slogan has led to many difficulties within the party. This is because, sometimes, people misunderstood the real meaning of this sentence assuming that every opinion should be given the same weight (in terms of expertise and knowledge) all the time.

It might be interesting to note that at this point of our questionnaire during one interview the Genova case was touched upon. The interviewee claimed that the "citizens voting results are important and irreversible within the Five Star Movement, so it does not matter what Grillo or Casaleggio say, the voting results cannot be changed. The Five Star Movement policy is made by its voters". Then, we asked how it was possible to explain what happened in Genova, when Grillo rejected Marika Cassimatis, duly elected through an online election by the Five Star voters, as a candidate for the municipal election. The interviewee answered that "Beppe Grillo is the guarantor

of the Five Star Movement so he can decide to permit the use of the Five Star symbol…they thought that she did not reflect certain values of our movement. However, I have been in this movement since 2012 and Genova represented a first and isolated case. Nothing is perfect, we are pioneers in these things, it might happen we have problems sometimes".

In general, Internet is considered a useful tool to connect people and exchange trustable information. For example, depending on the feedback that citizens express on Rousseau the representatives might understand how to deal on certain topics. "This is the reason why Beppe Grillo and Casaleggio run a blog and not a website, to give people the chance to interact" (Stefano Buffagni). However, all the representatives' agreed on the idea that Internet remains a tool that should be used properly and critically. Moreover, all the representatives underlined that Internet should be used in combination with face to face debates to keep the importance of human relationship and human community.

The tool Rousseau is appreciated by all the interviewees. "It is open-mindedness and a new tool that, over time, people will learn to use…no one is doing anything like that in the world" (Stefano Buffagni). Another representative admitted that, On Rousseau, sometimes the citizens' consultation is minimal because people have only to decide between initiative 1, 2 or 3 which option they prefer for new law proposals…but it is already something that other parties do not offer. Despite the utility of this platform, more than one representative underlined that Rousseau is still new and maybe people will need time to get used to it.

5.1.3 Milan: The Five Star Movement representation.

Regarding the dimension of Five Star Movement representation, these representatives stressed that they prefer to be labelled as "spokesperson" ("*portavoce*") or as those that "bring the citizens voices within the institutions". They all spoke about how being active at the local level, listening to people and working with citizens' associations play a crucial role in their "mission" as Five Star Movement representatives. An interesting point of view was given again by Stefano Buffagni who explained how the Five Star Movement representatives are spokespersons, but "working within political

institutions are also requested to make a summary of the different citizens' points of view" (Stefano Buffagni). The aim of the movement is to enable citizens to express opinions on everything but sometimes, this goal is not applicable for every minor decision. "We can ask citizens to express their opinion on law drafts and ask them to give feedbacks on Rousseau, then we collect these feedbacks to understand which way we should take but we correct the final version of this draft" (Stefano Buffagni). Another representative has underlined how sometimes it is not possible to consult the whole group of Five Star Movement local followers because of reasons of timing.

Concerning the performance of the other Five Star Movement representatives within the country these interviewees expressed a generally positive opinion. However, they also underlined how it was not possible to express a fully informed judgement on the whole group of representatives, because there is no direct contact all the time with other representatives beyond the local level. Stefano Buffagni and another representative said more on this point. They both claimed that, in certain cases, the movement could do better. In this vein, Buffagni also added that "the Five Star Movement is an experiment and it is also normal that its representatives have failed sometimes" (Stefano Buffagni). None of these representatives delved further in this claim giving clear examples of Five Star Movement representatives' failures.

The answers to the question "what would betraying mean as a Five Star representative?" show a clear pattern. As the main form of betrayal these interviewees indicated "self-interested behaviour" "not respecting the commitments' made with citizens", "betrayal of the citizens' trust". In three cases we also asked directly if those cases in which citizens ask for a clarification that, eventually, is not given by the Five Star representatives should be considered as betrayals. Stefano Buffagni answered that "if I act fairly and in a transparent way I can give an explanation to those people who argue with my decision. They could also disagree with this explanation. The true betrayal is when you quit the Five Star Movement. We could all do that and keep all the benefits of being representatives, but we did not do that and we always give a considerable part of our salary back" (Stefano Buffagni). Another representative clarified that it is necessary to distinguish between those that accidentally forget to

answer to a clarification request and those that do this on purpose. The second case should be considered a betrayal. In the third case, the interviewee confirmed that it can be labelled as betrayal, "we are all humans and it can happen that sometimes decisions have to be taken quickly behind closed doors, but if we realize that we have made a mistake we apologize and try to find a solution".

As a major challenge related to the role of representatives every interviewee has is personal opinion: "to govern this country" (Stefano Buffagni), "to remain a spokesperson that gives an example to the others", "to accomplish every single challenge for the citizens well-being ". One claim was particularly interesting especially in relation to the Milan case. This representative stated that there is a twofold challenge for a Five Star Movement representative. The first one is an internal personal challenge because this role transforms one's previous life completely. The second challenge is about maintaining "group unity". Indeed, sometimes there can be difficulties and complaints within the group and it is necessary to find a common solution to overcome these difficulties.

Apparently all these representatives follow the citizens 'proposals if they are in line with the Five Star movement manifesto. For example, they might push forward initiatives directly suggested by activists within the regional council (Stefano Buffagni). However, these ideas should be related to the Five Star Movement program and it is also necessary to be "critical" sometimes on the feasibility or otherwise of these ideas.

There is scepticism towards the current policy adopted by the European Union. These representatives are not against the European Union as such, but against the fact that this union seems to be based only on economic interests. In order to obtain a real European Union, it would be necessary to apply the same laws and standards in every European country.

When we asked what they think about the label "populist", a first representative stated that the concept populism should not be always framed as negative: "the Five Star Movement is the people". A second representative stated that within the Five Star Movement there is certainly a certain degree of populism but" the movement wants to overcome it giving birth to a new concept of Europe".

For this case we did not find clear evidence of a "participatory democracy deviation". However, we do think that a further investigation should be done concerning this dimension. Especially because of the claims made by some representatives about the difficulties faced in maintaining the unity of the group in Milan and the fact that sometimes it was necessary to take decisions without the citizens' involvement.

5.2 Genova

In Genova we collected 3 interviews. One of these representatives, Marika Cassimatis, had quit the movement.

5.2.1 Genova: The democracy dimension

Starting from the "Democracy dimension", all the interviewees gave negative feedback on Italian democracy. According to them Italy is characterized by biased and "manipulated" media that do not give to citizens the chance to be correctly informed. Apparently, the Italian media tend to censure the good things done by the Five Star Movement. By contrast, the same media considerably stress when the Five Star Movement or its representatives face some difficulties (e.g. the current mayor of Rome, Virginia Raggi, Kirchgaessner, 2016).

Another element often mentioned during the interviews, as a proof of the awful state of Italian democracy is the low turnout. In particular, one representative stated that this low turnout should be seen as the result of both the citizens' wish not to participate and the institutions' approach to elections. Indeed, according to this point of view, the current political institutions and main parties do not encourage citizens to participate in political life and elections: "when the system is scared that citizens might participate (in political life) it is a sign that there is something rotten in this system". In this vein, it was also pointed out that, since 2011, Italy has been governed by four non-elected governments.

All the interviewees agreed with the idea that citizens should play an active role within politics, participate as much as they can and try to get as much information as possible distinguishing between biased and unbiased sources: "nowadays we have that internet that still has a sufficient degree of freedom to get information autonomously". Moreover, it was stressed how, on average, Italian citizens, are too attached to the concept of "delegation". With this term they indicated the habit that leads citizens to authorize their representatives to decide everything on their behalf.

5.2.2 Genova: The Five Star Movement democratic project dimension.

As for the main differences between the Five Star Movement and the other parties two of these three interviewees claimed that there is more than one important difference. Firstly, the Five Star representatives strictly follow the rules of the movement which also include not continuing one's political career beyond two mandates. Secondly, the Five Star representatives cannot disregard the commitments taken with voters during the electoral campaign: "our electoral program is our leader". Thirdly, these representatives are not interested in ideologies but only on "good ideas" that might benefit the "common good". Additionally, it was underlined how the Five Star Movement is not characterized by a fixed and "hierarchical structure" but rather by a "horizontal and participatory structure" that is based on a "collective intelligence".

Marika Cassimatis stated something radically different on the current difference between the Five Star Movement and the other political parties. According to this interviewee, there was a first stage when the representatives were thought of as "real spokespersons who had to behave as a bridge between the active citizens and the political institutions". Nowadays, this is not the case anymore: "Officially since the end of 2015, the Five Star Movement has become a hierarchical political movement with a political leader ….in the beginning it was not like this, now this movement is organized as a structure" (Marika Cassimatis). During this interview we also asked what is the difference between the "role of guarantor" and "political leader": the guarantor should ensure that the

rules of the movement are applied whereas the political leader might also go against these rules" (Marika Cassimatis).

With respect to the concepts of transparency, participation and deliberation two representatives claimed that they should be ranked in the following way: participation, transparency and deliberation. Participation is the first step for every political action whereas transparency should be considered as a necessary standard for it. Following these first two steps a fair deliberation might be reached. Cassimatis ranked these concepts as follows: transparency, participation and deliberation: "without transparency it is not possible to have participation and, as a consequence, to reach democratic deliberations" (Marika Cassimatis).

Concerning the "one counts for one" motto it is possible to note that the answers gave in Genova are very similar to those collected in Milan. "One counts for one is the paraphrase of the Jacobin motto "one head one vote" claimed this representative, "however it has been often the reason for misunderstandings within the movement". One counts for one should mean that during the Five Star Movement debates and related voting moments every vote counts as only one, it does not matter who is the owner of that vote. However, this does not mean that everyone counts equally with the others in every situation: "We are for meritocracy, so in order to play a certain relevant role within the Movement it is important to take in consideration those people that are qualified for that role". In addition to this it was underlined that "everyone can propose his or her candidacy", but this does not mean that everyone has the capacities to accomplish specific tasks:" Sometimes there are people that are looking for a chance of redemption we consult citizens on political topics but we cannot always consult them on every little organizational issue".

Besides this clarification Marika Cassimatis clearly claimed that the "one counts for one" motto has no value anymore because now "the Five Star Movement is characterized by a political leader". Moreover, this interviewee added that there is a clear difference between the Five Star Movement of the origins and its current position and the breakpoint should be considered the approval of the new rules in 2016. According to this representative, what happened in Genova during the last

Five Star election for the role of mayor candidate should be considered as a clear signal of lack of transparency: "Transparency disappeared when the political leader (Beppe Grillo) said "trust me"" (Marika Cassimatis).

Generally speaking, the Internet is perceived as a useful "communicative tool" but not as the unique solution to improve democracy. "The web has to be used critically" because there are good sides ("the opportunity to reach many people") and bad sides ("e.g. fake news). Compared to other communicative tools such as television or radio, the Internet gives people the opportunity to reply to what they see and express their personal points of view: "before citizens were only passive entities now they can interact and contribute to the collective intelligence". This opportunity allows The Five Star Movement to survive and be visible despite the "distorted picture of this movement" depicted by the other media.

The tool Rousseau is described as a tool to guarantee "participation and transparency". On the one hand, on Rousseau the Five Star Movement representatives can upload their initiatives and documents, and as a consequence citizens can monitor their representatives 'work. On the other hand, citizens can vote and contribute with their feedbacks to these initiatives. In addition to this, the presence of a new section called "Call to action" was emphasised where everyone can propose events and meetings: "This section is similar to meetup but I hope that it will substitute it because people confuse meetups and the Five Star Movement…The Five Star Movement is the political entity whereas Meetup is only a tool to meet and schedule events. In Call Action it is specified that the initiatives proposed are not directly promoted by the Movement.

Marika Cassimatis had a completely different opinion about Rousseau. According to this representative, in the beginning Rousseau was supposed to be a tool to expand citizens' participation but it does not. In particular, "Call to Action" is described as a tool that should substitute Meetup but that actually is used to monitor the followers: "There was a Five Star Movement meetup in Naples (considered as dissident) that publicized a meeting on Rousseau… and this event was removed from Rousseau without any justification. The strategy of the movement is to overthrow the power in the

local Meetups and centralize it on this platform which is checkable" (Marika Cassimatis). During this interview we also asked if, within the movement, the identity of the staff members is known and the answer was negative. This means that the Five Star Movement voters and representatives do not know the identity of the Movement staff and, therefore, do not know exactly who to contact in case of internal issues.

5.2.3 Genova: The Five Star Movement representation.

As regards "Five Star Movement representation" it was claimed that the Five Star Movement would substitute "representative democracy" with "direct democracy and that the representatives as "spokespersons" should be considered a "channel" between citizens and institutions. Moreover, it was underlined that representation for the Five Star Movement means to focus on the citizens common good, to respect the electoral program and the Five Star rules for representatives (e.g. to give back part of the salary).

All the interviewees gave quite a positive feedback on the Five Star Movement representatives' performance so far. One representative stated that it is possible to understand if the Five Star Movement representatives have worked well so far looking at the degree of citizens' participation in the local Five Star Movement initiatives: the more the citizens' participation, the better the representatives' performance. Cassimatis recognized that "we did make some political mistakes, but we are humans it is normal to make a mistake sometimes" but this representative also claimed that "the problem is that now direct democracy is undermined within the movement" (Marika Cassimatis). More specifically, according to Cassimatis the Five Star Movement does not consult its voters on important political issues: "On the political line to adopt on the Ius Soli bill there was no consultation or voting on Rousseau".

Recently, there has been much discussion on the "ius soli" topic within the Italian political scenario. In short, the different political parties have been debating on the possibility of changing the current law that rules the citizenship of children of immigrants to introducing the "ius soli" principle,

wherein children that are born in Italy automatically receive Italian citizenship (Polchi, 2017, para.2). However, the Five Star Movement voters have not been consulted on this topic, nor have they been asked to vote on this initiative.

"Self-interested behaviour" was indicated as the main reason for "betrayal within the movement". In the same vein, not to respect the Five Star Movement rules, its program and "its principles of direct and participated democracy" were also indicated as example of betrayals. Moreover, it was underlined how important is to maintain a direct relationship with citizens listening to their feedback and opinions in order not to betray the role of Five Star Movement representative.

By contrast, all these representatives gave different points of view on what is the main challenge for a representative. These are the most important ones: "finding the way to combine your personal life and 24 hours daily work as representative continuously in contact with citizens", "accepting the responsibilities of being a representative and listening to people" (Marika Cassimatis) and "trying to overcome a system based on patronage and nepotism".

All these interviewees stressed how important it is to receive feedback from citizens and thus follow their initiatives: "Our electoral program should be considered as a synthesis of citizens' initiatives however I am constantly in contact with citizens through different online channels…they also propose ideas and if they are in line with our program we promote them within the political institutions". Cassimatis stated that even after the decision to quit the movement "we are trying to continue to promote citizens' initiatives within institutions" (Marika Cassimatis).

During these interviews we also asked to mention one or more elements that might characterize Five Star members. Two of these representatives indicated "the will to change this country and be an active part of this change" whereas Cassimatis made a distinction between the Five Star Movement in the beginning and the current Five Star Movement. Indeed, according to this representative today the members of this movement are characterized by a certain degree of "fanaticism" whereas in the beginning this movement was different from the other political parties because it was based on a "sense of community" that supported a certain idea of change: "Today the

Five Star Movement is a political party with a fixed and local structure, there is a political leader so it should be considered a political party" (Marika Cassimatis).

In the end we asked our interviewees to give us feedback on the European institutions and express their opinion on the term "populism". Generally speaking, there is criticism towards the current European Institutions. Indeed, according to these interviewees today the European Union is merely based on economic interests that are mainly managed by the richer countries. Moreover, they claimed that "there is not enough democracy in this Union… thank God nowadays we have representatives also in the European parliament and we can try to monitor what happens within it". Marika Cassimatis mentioned that in the beginning "the Five Star Movement supported the idea of a referendum on the euro but now it has changed its political line on this" (Marika Cassimatis).

On the term populism two interviewees agreed with the idea that too often this term is used "negatively": "we side with people and in this sense "populism" should be framed positively… we are not demagogues because we realize what we propose". By contrast, the third representative claimed that nowadays this movement is opportunist rather than populist: "Yesterday Di Maio claimed that the Five Star Movement welcomes everyone from the left-wing to the right-wing…this means that there is no ideology behind this movement and that the Five Star Movement is only looking for votes at the moment…this aspect is crucial in order to understand the Genova case".

In conclusion we think that it is possible to claim that in Genova a violation of the principle of transparent, direct and participatory democracy has taken place. More specifically in this case, Beppe Grillo (leader and guarantor of the Five Star Movement) should be considered the main executor of this deviation.

This deviation took place because Beppe Grillo nullified a legitimated and direct online vote that had elected Marika Cassimatis as Five Star Movement candidate for the municipal election in Genova. This act should be considered as a violation of direct democracy. Moreover, it is important to say that this violation took place as a consequence of Grillo's specific will to exclude Marika Cassimatis from the election. So, actually it is possible to speak of a participatory democracy

deviation that caused the direct democracy deviation. Finally, it is also possible to speak of a transparency democracy deviation because Grillo did not explain the real reasons of this decision to the movement.

We also know that out of three interviewees only Marika Cassimatis clearly expressed criticisms towards the Five Star Movement. For that reason, even if we do think that it is enough to prove a case of deviation in Genova we also suggested a further investigation on this case.

5.3 Ravenna and Rimini.

Ravenna and Rimini experienced similar difficulties with the Five Star Movement so they will be analysed together. In total we collected eight interviews for these two cases (four in Rimini and three in Ravenna). Among these interviewees there are two members of the regional council and since Ravenna, Rimini and Parma are located in the same region (Emilia Romagna), we will probably use the regional council interviews also for the Parma case. Moreover, it is important to say that two of these interviewees have left the movement. One of them is the Member of the European Parliament, Marco Affronte.

5.3.1 Ravenna and Rimini: The Democracy dimension.

Generally speaking, almost all these representatives are considerably dissatisfied with Italian democracy. The main reasons for this dissatisfaction are attributed to the presence in Italy of "politics which are too self-interested and not democratic enough", "a system of biased media manipulated by economic interests" and to an "increasing citizens' disinterest in politics". In particular, almost all these interviewees stressed the important role played by the media: "The media should monitor democracy because its politics is made by political parties which are not impartial…The Five Star Movement has gone beyond ideologies because we want to be impartial and we are interested only in citizens' needs". Marco Affronte is the only one that expressed a more positive opinion about Italian democracy: "At the moment democracy works well at the institutional level…a lot will also

depend on the new electoral law but right now, I do not think that there should be any serious concern for Italian democracy" (Marco Affronte).

On the role that citizens should play in democracy all the opinions converge: citizens should be "active", "informed" and they should monitor what their representatives do. "Unfortunately, it seems that today Italian citizens (accustomed to delegation) have become too lazy to participate" claimed one representative, whereas another said "the citizens' participation and opinion is not considered seriously by the Italian institutions (even the outcomes of referenda) …but people are begging to participate". In the same vein, it was stressed how, in the beginning "the Five Star Movement was created to give citizens the opportunity to participate actively in Italian politics" (Marco Affronte).

5.3.2 Ravenna and Rimini: The Five Star Movement democratic project.

The question about the main differences between the Five Star Movement and the other political parties raised interesting points of view. Indeed, besides the same differences mentioned by the representatives of Milan and Genova (e.g. "the Five Star Movement does not have a hierarchical structure, it does not benefit from public funds, it wants to implement direct and participated democracy through Rousseau") three interviewees expressed a critical opinion on this point. More specifically, these opinions came from Rimini: "The Five Star Movement has changed…in the beginning everyone counted and everyone could express their point of view, whereas today the movement looks like a corporation". One of the main consequences of this change is that "citizens' activism, which had made the Five Star Movement great in the beginning, is disappearing now".

Marco Affronte underlined how the role played by the meetups is radically changing over time: "The meetups were spontaneous groups of people which were not merely interested in the electoral consensus but in inciting citizens to become active and to participate whereas, nowadays, the Five Star Movement is looking for electoral consensus" (Marco Affronte). Affronte also pointed out how this "hunt for electoral consensus" should be considered as the main reason behind the Five

Star Movement's attempt to move from the EFDD (Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy) to the ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) in January 2017 (Rankin, 2017): "The ALDE group is not left-wing or right-wing so it does not scare anyone" (Marco Affronte).

Moreover, Affronte touched upon what happened in Rimini in 2016 when the Five Star Movement decided not to grant any electoral certification to the prospective candidates of this city. According to this MEP, more could be done to shed light on what was going on in Rimini, especially because the Five Star Movement had a great chance of winning the Rimini municipal election at that time: "there were two lists, one made by people that had been in the movement for 10 years and the other one that was created only one month earlier…Even if the staff was struggling to decide who deserved certification they could have asked for clarification from the Five Star representatives originating from Rimini (6 in total) , from us…but no one was consulted. Moreover, they told us that it was too late to open an online vote on this issue" (Marco Affronte). Affronte considered this decision as "disrespectful" for those activists in Rimini that had put so much effort over the years building up the movement

Concerning Ravenna, only one representative expressed doubts on how Beppe Grillo exerts his role of "guarantor": "Sometimes, in the capacity of guarantor, Grillo believes that he has enough knowledge to intervene and decide on the outcome of specific situations but his reasons are completely personal and thus arguable…The Genova case might be an example of this."

With regard to the concept of transparent, participatory and deliberative democracy the main trend corresponds to the following formula "participation, transparency and deliberation": "Participation is crucial and it should be encouraged more", "transparency is useless if there is no participation" and "deliberation can happen only in presence of participation and transparency". In particular, talking about transparency Affronte claimed that it should be framed in two ways: "Firstly, as representatives, we should share our work with citizens, secondly there is another kind of transparency that the Five Star Movement has promoted, the transparency of incomes and costs of politics" (Marco Affronte). He also added: "I do not see so much transparency around me in the

European Parliament…out of 73 Italian European Parliament members I am the only one who allowed the journalists of the *Il Fatto Quotidiano* (Baggi &Di Pietro, 2017) to have a look at the data and documents" (Marco Affronte).

On the "one counts for one" motto there is a clear pattern and all these representatives agree on the idea that it means that every person's vote should count as one, but not that every opinion counts the same in terms of capabilities in every context: "every opinion should be respected but also the fact that everyone has different competencies that are suitable for different situations" (Marco Affronte). More than once it was underlined how this slogan has been often the reason for misunderstandings within the movement: "Some people thought that because "one counts for one" then a member of the municipal council should not decide anything".

Overall, the Internet is perceived as a useful tool, especially to foster "global and rapid citizens' participation". However, the web should be used critically and in combination with face to face debates. Opinions diverge when it comes to the "Rousseau" platform. Three out of four representatives from Rimini expressed doubts on this platform: "Rousseau is a positive thing but it is not so innovative if we take into consideration what our engineers were able to do 7-8 years ago when they made more efficient programs than the liquid feedback used by the German pirates party in that period". Basically, here our interviewees underlined that before the introduction of Rousseau they had made available a program to support direct democracy within the Movement and that, at that time, it was quite innovative compared to the German case for example. Indeed, years ago the activists of Rimini supported an open-source platform called AIRESIS that could be used by the whole of the Five Star Movement: "But Grillo ostracized AIRESIS because he could not control it".

The main doubts on the current official Five Star Movement Platform concerns its contents and the voting standards. One representative from Rimini commented: "how could we be sure that the voting results were not manipulated? We often asked if it was possible to improve the transparency of online voting through third-party certification but they always refused". In the same vein this representative expressed criticism towards the unknown identity of the Five Star Movement

Administrative Staff: "As Five Star Movement representative I had to guarantee maximum transparency on my past and personal life but we did not know anything about this staff…even when we needed guidelines we did not know who to turn for advice". Marco Affronte claimed that "Rousseau is an interesting experiment but there is still work to be done… the whole Five Star Movement program is not on Rousseau. They ask citizens to vote with a "yes" or a "no" on specific little parts of this program but this is not collective work with voters… I do not think that it is because of technical difficulties but because they do not want citizens to discuss and vote on the whole program" (Marco Affronte).

In Ravenna the opinions on Rousseau were quite positive and less detailed. Only one representative expressed the idea that the Five Star Movement is trying to centralize the citizens' debating process on this platform: "I think that they want to move all the face to face debating to Rousseau and I am not convinced of this choice, it could lead to a depersonalization of the citizens' debate". Additionally, this interviewee touched upon what happened in Ravenna in 2016, when this city did not obtain the Five Star Movement's certification necessary to run for the municipal election: "In cooperation with the local meetup we proposed a mayoral candidate and a list of potential municipal council members…other movement members and a colleague of mine in the municipal council (together with others) refused our ideas and sent another list to the certification office... The Staff was not aware of what was actually happening in Rimini and so they decided not to grant certification to anyone." The other representatives from Ravenna contested this decision and asked the Five Star central office to overcome the internal difficulties through an online vote but the answer was no: "The Staff, Luigi Di Maio and Roberto Fico answered that when there are conflicts at the local level it is a signal that the territory is not ready and thus the best thing to do is to not grant any certification".

5.3.3 Ravenna and Rimini: The Five Star Movement representation dimension.

At the level of "representation of the Five Star Movement" there is no evident uniform trend concerning the question "What does it mean to represent people?". All these representatives were

convinced that a good representative should focus on the common good and interact with people (collecting their inputs and trying to involve them in politics as much as possible) but there are different opinions on what a Five Star Movement "spokesperson" should be.

Some representatives simply stated that representing people should mean "to bring their initiatives within the institutions overcoming any personal opinion", others, such as Marco Affronte, claimed that, representing people should be something different and that it is not always possible to represent the whole group of citizens. This difficulty is caused by the fact that it is not possible to bring every citizen's opinion into the political institution because, sometimes, it is necessary to work on technical topics which are unknown to the most part of citizens: "You can share ideals, goals and guidelines with people and the more you share the better it is, but then you have to represent these elements within an institution. I have always focused on environment and my move to the Green group is coherent to those political guidelines that I have promoted since the beginning… The idea of "spokespersons" was thought up in good faith but once you work within an institution you realize that it is not possible to be only a spokesperson". In the same vein, a representative from Ravenna, clearly said "A good representative should not always say yes to citizens' requests, it depends if these are feasible or not".

The opinions on "to what extent the Five Star movement representatives have fulfilled their role" raised criticisms in both Rimini and Ravenna. More than once it was underlined that it is difficult to give an exhaustive answer to this question because, there are not enough contacts with the whole national group of Five Star Movement representatives. Apparently, at the local level these representatives were able to keep their contacts with citizens: "I was an activist in Rimini and it was easier to bring citizens' voices into the municipality. For example, we used to meet up on Monday and debate with citizens about the initiatives that our representatives had to present during the municipal council meeting on Thursday…the higher the representative role, the less chance there is of bringing all the citizens' voices into the institution" (Marco Affronte). Another interviewee from Rimini expressed a strongly worded opinion on this point. "The Five Star Movement has grown

quickly and unexpectedly and this has brought into the parliament citizens without proper skills and knowledge, with the exception of some of them that have been good so far… but certainly not the "poster boy" such as Di Maio or Di Battista".

In the same vein two out of three representatives from Ravenna underlined how the Five Star movement seems to be considerably interested in electoral consensus at the moment: "Nowadays the Five Star movement is wavering on its political positions and as a consequence its communication often also changes and this trend is disorienting people". The most interesting point raised was about the specific case of Ravenna when one representative clearly stated that because "the Five Star Movement wants to govern the country and all the rest can be given up and Ravenna should be considered a case in point as a proof of this tendency". Moreover, according to this representative, the rule applied to Ravenna (no certification for those cities that present two lists and experience internal conflicts) was not uniformly applied in the country and nobody (staff or representatives) came and tried to shed light on this situation decision: "It's as if we were told "you are in silence and you will remain in silence… and the feeling is we have wasted the efforts of five years of work within the municipal council".

As far as "what would betrayal mean as a Five Star movement representative" it a common trend among those interviewees (both in Ravenna and Rimini) can be distinguished. The main forms of betrayal which were pointed out were: "not respecting the electoral program and/or disobeying the electoral program, "adopting self-interested behaviour" and "ignoring the citizens' opinions".

Additionally, other forms of betrayals were underlined which have a lot in common with the previous criticisms expressed. Marco Affronte underlined how the Five Star Movement has always called for transparency whereas now there are "decisions taken by a group of unknown people and nobody knows anything about these decisions but they do have a considerable influence on the movement… this is one of the main betrayals for me", moreover "out of 15 Five Star Movement members of the European Parliament only 2-3 publicized their expenses and I wonder why those

activists that committed themselves to monitoring their representatives behaviour do not rebel against this" (Marco Affronte).

Affronte also said that it might be fair to assume that his decision to leave the movement and go in the Greens/Efa group would be considered a betrayal: "I have betrayed those voters that elected me with the Five Star Movement and when someone told me "you should resign" I thought that it made sense…but I was also elected with preferences and this gave me some relief". Another representative from Rimini spoke *very* forcibly against the "guarantor" Beppe Grillo: "within the movement betrayal means doing something that Grillo (or the staff) dislikes, whereas it should mean violating the originating principles of the movement".

Turning to the subject of "challenges for a representative" all the interviewees had different points of view. The main positive one claimed that "pushing forward a cultural revolution", "bringing citizens' initiatives within the institutions" and "winning the daily challenges" should be considered as the main challenge for a Five Star Movement representative. By contrast, Affronte stated that, at the moment, the main challenge is to come back to the originating principles of the Five Star Movement because there is a gradual move away from them: "For example they said "direct democracy" but it is not functional, they said "no leaders" and there are leaders … Also the local level has changed, it used to represent a fruitful experience but today it represents only a resource for electoral committees" (Marco Affronte). In addition to this, Affronte claimed that the Five Star representatives are aware of what is happening within the movement but that they prefer to be silent either because this trend suits them or because they are focusing on a "superior goal that this movement is trying to achieve" (Marco Affronte).

Once more the subject of electoral consensus seems to be the focus of the criticisms expressed by these representatives. Another interviewee from Ravenna claimed that it is important that the Five Star Movement wins the elections, but this should not mean allowing everyone into the movement: "The Five Star Movement should also clarify what it wants to be and close the door to the extremists. In Ravenna we lost an opportunity to make it clear that there should be no space for extremism within

the movement". Apparently, in Ravenna there were good chances of winning the municipal election and the decision not to grant this city with the Five Star Movement certification raised a considerable dissatisfaction among citizens.

Speaking about forms of betrayal, another representative from Rimini touched upon what happened in this city before the municipal election of 2016: "it was explained to many as citizens as possible why the certification was not granted but not everyone agreed on this decision… I did not take it personally, it was thought that it was better not to give the certification to anyone, start over and learn from previous mistakes."

Overall, the whole group of interviewees was cautious on the question "do you always follow what people propose to you and then follow these proposals?". Basically, they all claim that it is very important to be aware of different citizens' opinions and initiatives but these should also be in line with the Five Star Movement program: "for example if citizens propose to open an incinerator, the answer is no because the movement has always been against it". However, only two interviewees underlined that the role of representative also required putting away any personal opinion and focussing only on what citizens want. This principle was not completely embraced by the whole group: "You should listen to all the different point of views but not everything is feasible and, sometimes, it is important to say no and explain the reasons for this decision".

With respect to the "common character" that the members of this movement share it is possible to point out "the will to put yourself out there", "doing something good for the collective" and "the need to be properly represented" as the main responses expressed by our interviewees. However, more than one representative distinguished between the beginning when these characteristics were the real ties between the Five Star Movement members, and the present time which seems to be something completely different. Generally speaking, the years between the 2010 and 2013 were indicated as the years that created a division between these two periods. The first period was characterized by "vigorous activism" whereas, nowadays, that kind of activism is disappearing and a

certain form of "careerism" and" fanaticism" is gaining ground within the movement. This opinion was supported by three interviewees from Rimini and one from Ravenna.

One of the representatives from Rimini also added something more on the Rimini case. Overall, this interviewee confirmed what Marco Affronte had already said on what happened in Rimini, about two different groups and lists for the municipal election in 2016: "The second list was pushed forward at the last minute by people that had never engaged in the movement…we tried to solve this controversy but the other list was not really open to cooperating with us". Apparently, the decision not to grant any certification in the presence of two lists and internal conflicts was meant to be a general rule, but it had important consequences: "I think that this decision caused the departure of a considerable amount of activists". The Five Star Movement had a good chance of winning the election but even the opportunity to vote online for one of the two lists was not granted.

With the exception of Marco Affronte, the current European institutions are perceived as not equal and far from citizens' needs. Most of these representatives clearly stated that they are not necessarily against the European Union but that this should be based on something more that economic interests: "There is too much discrepancy between the national rules and Italy is often victim of what other countries impose".

It is interesting to note that only one interviewee from Rimini referred to the ambiguous behaviour of the Five Star Movement within the European Union: "In the beginning they wanted to quit the Europe Union, now they want to stay in the European Union…Could you make up your mind?".

In conclusion we think that there is enough evidence to claim that in both Rimini and Ravenna a "deviation from transparent democracy" and a "deviation from participatory democracy" took place. Both these cities had good chance of obtaining satisfactory results in the municipal elections of 2016 but none of them was granted Five Star Movement certification. The reasons given by the Five Star Movement certification office, a few members of the Italian parliament (Di Maio and Roberto Fico) and Davide Casaleggio were that "when there are internal conflicts and two lists the best solution is

to not grant the certification", but nothing more was done to clarify what was happening in these cities even if their representatives asked for a further investigation. Moreover, it is not really clear who had the final say on the decision to grant Five Star certification or not. It was probably Beppe Grillo in cooperation with the Five Star Movement Staff, but it is not really clear who the members of this Staff are. All these elements should be considered as a sign of lack of transparency within the movement.

To sum up, it is important to stress that what happened in both Ravenna and Rimini should also be considered to be a signal of a "deviation from participatory democracy" because even if the representatives of these cities clearly asked to involve the citizens and let them decide which list was more representative, this request was rejected in both cases. It is not really clear if this rejection was caused by practical difficulties or by a clear will not to go further. Moreover, it is important to say that this deviation was mainly caused by the behaviour of the most influential actors of the movement who, apart from Beppe Grilllo and Davide Casaleggio, remain unknown.

5.4 Parma.

In Parma we collected three interviews and we will also refer to a fourth interview with a member of the regional council. It is important to note that all these interviewees (with the exception of the regional council member) have left the Five Star Movement and are now representatives of a civic list (*Effetto Parma*) that recently won the municipal election and confirmed Federico Pizzarotti as mayor of Parma (Bia, 2017).

5.4.1Parma: The Democracy dimension.

Overall these interviewees did not have such a severe opinion of Italian democracy. Marco Bosi (ex-Five Star representative and currently member of the municipal council with the *Effetto Parma* group) claimed that Italy has got the right tools for a democratic country: "maybe the quality

of these tools is debatable" (Marco Bosi). Marco Vagnozzi (ex-Five Star representative and currently member of the municipal council with the Effetto Parma group) pointed out that certainly there is a problem with democracy in Italy because it "systematically happens that the electoral outcomes, such as the referendum for the public financing of political parties, are ignored", moreover it is not possible to express preferences for the national parliament. Federico Pizzarotti (ex-Five Star Movement mayor and currently mayor with the Effetto Parma group) expressed concern mostly for the increasing "citizens' disaffection towards politics".

The role of citizens within democracy should be definitely active according to these representative and it should start from the elementary basis of democracy: "It would be already a considerable improvement if citizens were to do what a representative democracy requires, namely "monitoring of the representatives and of their work" (Marco Bosi). Vagnozzi also underlined how important it is that Italian citizens return to participating actively in politics, first of all starting again to use their right to vote: "My favourite democratic model is the Swiss one because there are continuous referenda whereas in Italy we are too used to the habit of delegation" (Marco Vagnozzi). It is interesting to note that on the principle of direct democracy Bosi expressed a specific opinion: "It is not possible to speak about direct democracy "*tout court*" without any mediation…however it is possible to involve citizens so many important decisions but to achieve this would require a gradual process (Marco Bosi).

5.4.2 Parma: The Five Star Movement democratic project.

Turning to the main differences between the Five Star Movement and the other political parties these three representatives expressed the common idea that "there are not so many at the moment". Pizzarotti claimed that even if many Five Star members continue to say the same things that the movement posited in the beginning, "it is clear that, nowadays, there is a hierarchical leadership and top-down guidelines and it is not really clear who decides what" (Federico Pizzarotti). Additionally,

Pizzarotti also pointed out that there are less online votes, more appeals for electoral reimbursements and that the representatives seem to be more and more interested in being re-elected.

According to Bosi, since the Five Star Movement won the municipal elections in Parma (2012) the movement has changed: "since then many people have started to be on the winning team" (Marco Bosi). Bosi explained how he used to appreciate the original Five Star Movement: "I felt I was listened to and it really gave the feeling that it gave to everyone a home". By contrast, this interviewee stressed how, nowadays, the Five Star Movement is becoming more and more similar to a conventional political party especially because it wants to achieve as much electoral consensus as possible: "It is acting as other political parties but it has not taken a clear position on a range of topics such as immigration and civil rights" (Marco Bosi).

Vagnozzi agreed with the idea that, at the moment, the Five Star Movement shares many similarities with the other political parties, nonetheless he pointed out two differences: The Five Star representatives' elections and the online "Rousseau" platform. However, speaking about Rousseau, Vagnozzi expressed doubts on the opportunities that it really offers to citizens, especially because "it is not possible to propose votes from the grassroots" (Marco Vagnozzi)

When it comes to the concepts of transparent, participatory and deliberative democracy all these representatives chose different ranking. Bosi claimed that these concepts should not be ranked because they are all connected, and that it would be fairest to speak about a correlation between them: "the more the transparency the more the fairness of the deliberation…on the other hand transparent politics can reach the fairest deliberation because it is monitored by people that participate" (Marco Bosi). Vagnozzi pointed out transparency, participation and deliberation as the fairest formula explaining that without timely and exhaustive information (transparency) it is not possible to participate in the decisions and finally to deliberate. The third interviewee, Pizzarotti, indicated deliberation as a second step between participation and transparency: people have to propose initiatives, then these have to be discussed and decisions have to be taken, and as a final step the outcomes have to be made clear to everyone (Federico Pizzarotti)

The "one counts for one" raised the same kind of criticism in all these interviews. Apparently, the meaning of this slogan has been distorted over time leading to a sort of standardisation of an individual's capabilities: "The idea that I had of the "one counts for one" motto was that everyone had the same chances but I was aiming for a meritocratic process…whereas it sometimes felt as this motto meant that we were interchangeable, as in a sort of post-communism where people are mechanisms that can be removed when they are not functional to the superior aim" (Marco Bosi).

Internet is perceived as a useful tool for democracy, especially because it connects people as it has never happened before" (Marco Bosi), but the Web remains a tool that should be used properly and that "cannot be considered a replacement of democracy…it is important that people meet up and debate face to face" (Federico Pizzarotti). Speaking about the use that the Five Star Movement is making of the Internet, the mayor of Parma expressed doubts: "For this movement the Web is becoming a way of splitting the group of people that actually decide what to do from those that should theoretically decide what to do (the citizens)" (Federico Pizzarotti). Moreover, he pointed out what has happened in Genova as a clear example of the fact that it is not true that citizens decide everything within the movement.

Turning to the *Rousseau* platform, Pizzarotti stated that he did not know this platform very well, but he was sceptical: "I agree on the use of online voting or the exchange of information but I think that to shift the whole decision making process onto Rousseau is an attempt not to have local groups anymore". Indeed, the movement is losing its connection with the local groups: "I always read the data and the number of cities that ask for Five Star Movement certification is decreasing" (Federico Pizzarotti).

Like Pizzarotti, Vagnozzi expressed doubts on what *Roussseau* offers in terms of transparency: "Internet is a useful tool for direct democracy if it is used in a bidirectional way but in *Rousseau* citizens cannot easily propose their initiatives and they do not know the identity of the other members". Vagnozzi explained to us that if citizens' want to propose their own initiative (and not simply give feedback on what is proposed in a top-down way) they have to collect 3000 signatures

on paper: "But how can you look for a member's signature if you do not know their identities?" (Marco Vagnozzi). Conversely, Bosi claimed not to know *Rousseau* very well but that it should not be labelled as direct democracy: "*Rousseau* is a political party platform aimed at making initiatives but direct democracy is when all the citizens from all the political parties take decisions" (Marco Bosi).

5.4.3 Parma: The Five Star Movement representation dimension.

Speaking about what it means to represent people, Pizzarotti and Bosi underlined how important it is to understand people's needs but also it is important to discern which choices would be better for them regardless of the decisions to satisfy their temporary emotional desires. Pizzarotti claimed: "The Five Star Movement was different from the other self-referential political parties at the beginning and we want to be the "bridges" for people's needs but, for a representative it is also important to have independent thoughts to judge what is the right thing to do from what is not" (Federico Pizzarotti). In the same vein, Bosi stated that the Five Star Movement misunderstood the role of representatives: "For example, here in Parma we have always called Pizzarotti mayor and not spokesperson because he has to take specific decisions and he has responsibilities to bear" (Marco Bosi). Conversely, Vagnozzi focused on how different it is to represent people when you are in the majority group compared to when you are in the opposition group: "when you have to represent everyone you realize so much more and it is interesting to compare so many different point of views" (Marco Vagnozzi).

Regarding how the other Five Star Movement representatives have fulfilled their role, none of these interviewees expressed a completely positive opinion. Pizzarotti pointed out that the movement "has not enhanced meritocracy but rather loyalty and the ability to communicate as main skills for a representative" whereas Bosi labelled the movement as the "selfies' party where its most influential representatives are treated as rock stars that nobody can criticize". Moreover, Bosi underlined that there is only a minor group of representatives at a high level that work hard but which also stay mainly in the shadows and that before 2012 the group was different in terms of ideological

roots: "Before 2012 everyone had a clear idea of the main project, then the movement opened its doors to the orphans of Berlusconi and Bossi…everything started to change and the activists had mainly right-wing roots" (Marco Bosi). As a final remark on this question, Vagnozzi and Bosi claimed that the representatives at local level (municipalities) remain the best part of the movement because they work hard without any considerable compensation in economic terms. By contrast, it seems that beyond the local level many representatives are looking to be re-elected for a higher role in the national parliament (Marco Bosi).

Turning to the topic of betrayal, according Pizzarotti to betray as a representative means to behave in a self-interested way and not to pay attention to the common good anymore (Federico Pizzarotti). Whereas, Vagnozzi claimed that not to reach a specific goal that was in the electoral program or change it totally, should be considered a betrayal. In this sense, Vagnozzi also referred directly to what happened in Parma: "The Movement accused us because we founded a new list called *Effetto Parma* but before this we often tried to clarify our situation with them, when there were difficulties, but they never agreed to clarify anything" (Marco Vagnozzi). In the same vein, Vagnozzi specified that he personally tried to contact Gianroberto Casaleggio, Beppe Grillo, Roberto Fico e Luigi Di Maio through e-mails but also with registered letters with proof of delivery, but no-one has never replied to them. Speaking about betrayal, Bosi also commented on what happened in Parma: "In the Five Star Movement they think that to betray means to take decisions against the movement consensus and when we took decisions going against with what they wanted at national level they told us that we were betraying the movement" (Marco Bosi). "However", added Bosi, "not all the decisions are black or white…if during the electoral campaign we promised A but then, we realized that for budgetary or legal reasons we could not promote A, the solution is not to resign but to find the most similar and feasible solution close to A" (Marco Bosi).

The subject of 'challenge' raised three different answers. According to Pizzarotti, the main challenge for a representative is to deal with people that are not really aware about specific topics but, because one counts for one, their opinion should be taken into consideration and applied (Federico

Pizzarotti). Bosi pointed out "not being afraid to lose electoral consensus" and choose to take even unpopular decision if they are the fairest solution possible over time (Marco Bosi). Conversely, Vagnozzi claimed that to "debate with the opposition, explain your reasons and try to convince it to follow these reasons" is main challenge for a representative.

Overall all these representatives think that it is important to listen to citizens' opinions and collect their inputs (also through different kinds of social networks) but it is also true that not every citizens' idea is feasible or can be promoted "citizens are not customers, they are not always right" (Marco Bosi). However, in Parma the administration also promoted an institutional channel where people can be informed and directly participate in the municipal activities (Marci Vagnozzi).

The question about what is a common element that characterizes the Five Star Movement's members show a clear trend. According to all these representatives, it is necessary to distinguish between the original Five Star Movement and the current version. The former was characterized by the will to positively change this country whereas the latter seems to be characterized by a sort of careerism: "Especially after 2013 many people understood that this movement could offer a good chance of becoming someone and of being famous and for these reasons they joined it" (Federico Pizzarotti). As consequence it seems that the people that who want to work hard and are not interested in offending the others are quitting the movement whereas there is another group of people who are always fine with what is written in the blog even if the movement often changes its own positions (Federico Pizzarotti). Moreover, Pizzarotti also pointed out the unexpected and considerable growth of the movement as one of the reasons for this change.

Finally, with regard to the European Institutions, overall all these interviewees are pro Europe. However, some criticisms were made especially by Pizzarotti and Vagnozzi. Vagnozzi claimed that the European Union should not be based on international treaties because they entail too many complications whereas the European Union should be organized as a federalist union (Marco Vagnozzi). Conversely Pizzarotti claimed that there is not enough cooperation among the members of the European Union (Federico Pizzarotti).

In conclusion we think that we can claim that Parma has experienced a deviation from transparent democracy because these representatives often tried to clarify what was happening within the city, and for this reason they were trying to contact the higher representatives within the movement but none ever replied to this request.

Turning to the subject of the incinerator and the fact that Pizzarotti could have betrayed the movement, we think that a further investigation might be required. However, the elements that we have collected during these interviews suggest to us that he did not betray the citizens on purpose on this point but that he merely failed in this task because of administrative reasons.

6. Findings and Theoretical Implications

In this chapter we compare the answers collected for each case. In this way we can assess if the Five Star Movement's representative deviations actually took place and, eventually, why they occurred.

The main question that the present research tried to answer is: *Why do the Five Star Movement representatives deviate from the initial mission of this movement aimed at applying direct democracy elements to their party organization?*

However, before answering this question was necessary to face an ancillary question to asses if and how those deviations actually took place: *How do the Five Star Movement representatives deviate from the initial mission of this movement aimed at applying direct democracy elements to their party organization?*

The results showed that in five out of four of these presented enough elements to confirm that a Five Star Movement deviation has taken place. More precisely, according to our analysis Ravenna and Rimini presented enough evidence to claim that these two cities experienced a Five Star Movement representatives' deviation in terms of participatory and transparent democracy. Genova also presented enough evidence to speak about a transparent, direct and participatory democracy

deviation, especially if we take into consideration also the general opinion that other representatives (beyond Genova) expressed about this case.

Turning to Parma, this city provided enough evidence to claim that a transparent democracy deviation took place and, in particular, according to the elements that were collected, it is not possible to claim that the mayor Federico Pizzarotti deviated. Due to a lack of data on this point, a further investigation is warranted. Finally, Milan is the only case with too little evidence to confirm a deviation.

In addition to these results, it is important to note a caveat about Ravenna and Rimini, Genova and Parma. Indeed, according to the collected interviews, in Genova it was the leader of the movement, Beppe Grillo, which caused the deviation of transparent and direct democracy, whereas in Ravenna and Rimini it is not really clear who took the decision to not grant the Five Star Movement certification and persisted in the solution to not allow these cities to participate to the municipal elections. However, in Ravenna-Rimini and Parma also higher Five Star Movement representatives as Luigi Di Maio (mentioned in both Ravenna and Parma case) and Roberto Fico (mentioned in the Parma case) played a decisive role in how these deviations occurred. Overall, the role played by the Casaleggio Associati and the Staff of the Five Star Movement is less clear. According to our results, both these actors - it is not really clear if they can be considered the same thing - play a fundamental role in the decision making of the Five Star Movement. However, especially considering the identity of the Staff is unknown, we cannot delve further in this aspect.

Having answered our sub-question, we can move to our main question: Why the Five Star Movement representatives deviate from the initial mission of the Five Star Movement aimed at applying a direct democracy? According to the interviews collected and the following comparison it is fair to assume the main reasons behind these deviations are considerably close to both our expectations, namely the impossibility to guarantee internal democracy in massive organizations (Schattschneider and Michels in Katz, 2006) and the lack of ideology (Urbinati, 2011; Taggart 2004).

First of all, it seems that the Five Star Movement has experienced two periods differentiated by the fact that in the beginning this movement was not looking for electoral consensus whereas nowadays it is strongly looking for it. As matter of fact, most of those that distinguished these periods pointed out the years close to 2013 (when the Five Star Movement entered the national parliament) as a defining moment. Moreover, these interviewees underlined the fact that this new trend is coming along with the notion that the movement is often changing its political positions, giving the impression of being incoherent on certain specific topics such as immigration and civil rights (Marco Affronte). In this sense it is important to keep in mind that the Five Star Movement often claims to be "not interested in ideologies but only in good ideas" (Stafano Buffagni) and that this "chameleon nature" (Taggart 2004) can be very useful if the aim is to maintain the political power and to eventually increase it. Apparently, nowadays the higher placed individuals (e.g. Grillo) are gradually paying more attention to the difficulties of the macro level rather than the issues of the micro level as one of our interviewees from Ravenna underlined: "it seems that because their goal is Rome (where the Government is located) everything else can be given away". Surprisingly this opinion was not only supported by those people that have quit the movement but also by some interviewees who used to be representatives for the movement and nowadays are only members.

Second of all, it was firmly stressed in more than one interview - especially by those that have quit the movement - that the Five Star Movement seems to be increasingly characterized by a hierarchical structure, with a system of top-down decisions and strong leadership, even if in the beginning one of the main slogans of the movement was "we do not have bosses or leaders" (Marco Affronte). Definitely this outcome recalls our first expectation related to the idea that, even if a movement declares that it wants to guarantee the internal democracy among its members, this aim is destined to fail because it is not possible to guarantee an effective direct democracy in a massive group. Moreover, in order to compete with other political parties, it is necessary that the movement would be defined by a structure and a hierarchy in order to steer the whole movement towards electoral victory. Inevitably, this hierarchy would be characterized by a head composed of a smaller

number of people that, in charge of specific duties would have also more power than lower tier members (e.g. the Fie Star Movement Staff). In other words, the model theorized by Michels, the iron law of oligarchy (Michels, 1968), might perfectly explain why the Five Star Movement representatives deviate according to the results collected in the present research. This theory is particularly interesting if we take in consideration that Michels underlined that those democratic movements that grow considerably and that are characterized by strong leadership are more likely to develop an iron law of oligarchy. Definitely the Five Star Movement is characterized by the strong leadership of Beppe Grillo and our sources confirm this aspect.

In conclusion, both our expectations seem to coincide with the main patterns that the present investigation has found out during its interviews. However, there is a last element that should be stressed: the role of representatives as "spokespersons". Some of these representatives (mainly those still in charge) underlined that they preferred to be labelled as spokespersons and not representatives because they intended to bring citizens' voices within the institutions. Besides those interviewees such as Affronte, who clearly stated that it is not possible to bring all the citizens opinions within an institution (Marco Affronte), also those representatives that promote the spokespersons admitted that they did not always bring all the citizens' voices within the institutions, and this "because not all the ideas are feasible". These claims bring new questions to the idea that it is possible to be only a "spokesperson" or a "delegate" as Rousseau would say (Urbinati, 2011). According to the results of the present research the idea of spokespersons as representatives is not feasible, because even those interviewees that claimed to support this idea confessed that it was not always applied.

What is even more interesting is that some interviewees claimed that as "spokespersons you have to put away your own ideas and focus only on people needs". Conversely, others (both ex representatives and current representatives) underlined how important it is to remain critical representatives: "because "one counts for one" does not mean that, as representative, I do not decide anything", "because the personal judgement adds value to the role of representative" (Federico Pizzarotti), "because people are not clients, they are not always right" (Marco Bosi). These claims

were particularly useful for the present research since they recall the importance of that ideological sympathy theorized by Nadia Urbinati (Urbinati, 2011) between representative and voters that seems to be an irreplaceable key element of representation at the end: The Five Star Movement and their voters believe in the same idea that uncorrupted politics is possible after all.

7. Conclusion.

In the present research we delved into the world of the Italian Five Star Movement. This movement can be considered one of the most successful examples of innovative politics within the European field. More specifically, with the label of innovative politics, we addressed to those new unconventional forms of politics that are a direct outcome of citizens' dissatisfaction towards politics and that combine civil society contestation with elements of direct democracy through the use of the Web and new technologies. In this vein we have depicted the main characters of some of the most popular European cases of innovative politics as the Pirate Party and the Dutch GeenPeil.

Yet the Italian Five Star Movement should be considered a case in point of this trend because of its electoral success which has led this movement to be one of the main actors within the current Italian political scenario. Indeed, with its aim of challenging representative democracy and applying an authentic direct democracy through the use of the Web this movement has obtained a considerable electoral consensus over time, leading it to enter into the Italian parliament and be at the head of some of the main Italian cities, such as Rome and Turin. However, besides this brilliant rise the Five Star Movement has also experienced some internal difficulties that have led its voters to complain about their representatives. More specifically, this was apparently caused by the fact that in these cities the authentic democratic project promoted by the movement was not respected by the Five Star representatives. These series of complaints drew our attention leading us to wonder if in these cities the Five Star representatives could have deviated from the original project of the movement aimed at applying a direct democracy. For this reason, we have decided to focus on the following research

question: Why do the Five Star Movement representatives deviate from the initial mission of this movement aimed at applying direct democracy elements to their party organizations?

Then, we realized that it was firstly necessary to prove that these deviations took place and in which way, so as a sub-question we decided to investigate: How do the Five Star Movement representatives deviate from the initial mission of this movement aimed at applying direct democracy elements to their party organization?

In order to answer to these two questions, we first analysed the history of the Five Star Movement and how it started with the idea of the Italian comedian Beppe Grillo and the IT expert Gianroberto Casaleggio to run a blog where people could discuss environment and common issues, and how, over time, this experience has led to the foundation of local groups of followers first (the meetups) and the creation of a real movement later (in 2009). Then we analysed how this movement has grown over time from a structural but also theoretical point of view. Indeed, we depicted how it has grown as a political actor at both national and European level and how its organization also has changed over time leading to the creation of specific roles (e.g. the Guarantor role played by Grillo), new administrative organs (e.g. the Staff) and specific rules (e.g. the Non-Statuto). More interestingly, we have underlined the role played by the online platform Rousseau where the Five Star voters can vote on their representatives and actively participate to the law drafts of the movement.

In the same vein, we analysed what the Five Star Movement is trying to do in terms of their democratic project aimed at challenging representative democracy and at applying a direct democracy. More specifically, we have distinguished four main sides/aims of this democratic project: the direct democracy, the transparent democracy, the participatory democracy and the deliberative democracy. According to our analysis the Five Star Movement manifesto entails all these sides that should be considered the main principles and guidelines of the Five Star mission to apply a "cultural revolution". Accordingly, we have also distinguished four possible ways to deviate from this democratic project: the direct democracy deviation, the transparent democracy deviation, the participatory democracy deviation and the deliberative democracy deviation.

Subsequently, we decided to focus on those Italian cases that have experienced Five Star Movement internal conflicts and related citizens' complaints. In particular, after a careful research, we chose Milano, Genova, Rimini - Ravenna and Parma as cases that might have experienced specific different deviations: Milano as case of participatory democracy deviation, Genova as case of direct, participatory and transparent democracy deviation, Rimini and Ravenna as case of transparent and participatory deviation and Parma as case of transparent democracy deviation. We based our case-selection on the "diverse-case" method (Gerring, 2008). Our investigation required a qualitative in-depth study based on semi-structured interviews with Five Star Movement representatives and ex-representatives originating from these cities. In particular, we interviewed regional council members, municipal council members, a mayor (Parma) and a member of the European Parliament. Twenty interviews were collected.

According to our findings four out of five cases provide enough evidence to assess that a Five Star Movement representative deviation occurred. Genova presented a direct, participatory and transparent democracy deviation and Beppe Grillo seems to be the main cause of all of them. Ravenna and Rimini experienced a participatory and transparent democracy deviations and it is not really clear who should be considered the first main executor of these deviations. Parma proved enough elements to substantiate the presence of a transparent democracy deviation but not enough to argue that, in particular, Federico Pizzarotti deviated. In Ravenna, Rimini and Parma also higher representatives (e.g. Di Maio and Fico) seem to have played a decisive role in the deviation that occurred. Finally, Milano seems to be the only case that has not actually experienced any kind of deviation.

Turning to our main research question on why the Five Star Movement representatives deviate from the initial mission of the Five Star Movement aimed at applying a direct democracy, the elements collected brought us to consider both our theoretical expectations valid. Indeed, both the impossibility to guarantee internal democracy in massive organizations steered by strong leadership (Schatteschneider and Michels) and the lack of a defined ideology (Urbinati and Taggart) should be considered as the main causes of the Five Star Movement representative deviations.

These conclusions have been fuelled by specific differences between the early Movement and the current one pointed out by many of our interviewees (especially those that are not in the movement anymore). These interviewees have clearly explained that in the beginning the Five Star Movement was not so interested in the electoral consensus as it seems to be now that it has reached a position of considerable political power in Italy. Moreover, they also underlined that, especially since entering the national parliament, the Movement has been characterized by such a hierarchical structure and strong leadership (Schatteschneider and Michels).

In addition to this, many representatives complained about the unclear behaviour and undefined political line that the Movement adopted on important topics. The Five Star Movement has often claimed to be a movement beyond any ideology, but according to our findings this chameleonic character (Taggart and Urbinati) is also used by the Movement as an attempt to stay in power and eventually grow politically. Apparently, this conduct has also led the Movement to pay more attention to the national level rather than the local level.

The lack of ideology proposed by the Five Star Movement also draws our attention to the label "spokespersons" used by the Movement for its representatives and to the difference between delegation (Rousseau) and representation. Apparently, even if the Five Star Movement idea of representation expects representatives that limit themselves to bringing the citizens' voices within the institutions without any personal input, ultimately both current representatives and ex representatives have expressed doubts of the possibility of this idea. Additionally, most of them claimed that it is important to use personal critical thinking especially when citizens seem to not be aware of the consequences of their requests. In this vein the ideological sympathy (Urbinati) between representative and voters seems to be necessary in order to find a correct balance for the representative process.

As a final remark it is important to say that it is hard to generalize across these cases but as a qualitative study based on semi structured interviews this research should be considered as potentially biased so a broader investigation and would be necessary to confirm and integrate our conclusions.

However, this study could be considered the beginning of a more in depth study on the Five Star Movement, but also on innovative politics aimed at applying direct democracy through the use of new technologies. In this sense it might be interesting to consider those criticisms made against the platform *Rousseau* as "system aimed to centralize the Five Star Movement power and monitor the voters". If this claim would be true it would mean that it could become more than a tool to guarantee direct democracy; *Rousseau* would be a system similar to the *Panopticon* theorized by Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1991).

However, besides all the criticism that might be given on how the Five Star Movement is changing and its representatives deviating, the present investigation is convinced that this movement remains one of the most interesting experiments of democracy within the European field and that it would be even more interesting to witness how it would behave (or maybe further change) if it would form its own government. For those that have labelled this movement as "populist" it would be a new interesting case to study, especially if we consider that the Five Star Movement seems to be not attached to any particular ideology. Possible critics of this outcome might be faced with the same answer that was given to us when asked about the movement as a populist entity: "well, populism is not necessarily an evil word".

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