

# Vote shifts between the Chamber and the Senate: The rise of the M5S and fall of the PD among young people

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We have already seen how the electoral results between the Chamber of Deputies (the House) and the Senate differentiate from each other.<sup>1</sup> In particular, we note how the coalitions led by Berlusconi and Bersani fared better in upper house elections: approximately 1.5% better for Berlusconi and over 2% for Bersani. Consequently, the M5S won 25.6% of the seats in the Chamber and 23.8% in the Senate, whereas Monti and his coalition fell from 10.6% to 9.2%.

We must keep in mind the differences in the electoral system of the two assemblies and the effect those differences have on the outcome. In the Senate, specifically in the important swing regions that are crucial for the victory of competing political coalitions, the need for strategic votes was much greater than in the Chamber. In fact, the center-left victory in the lower house could have been taken for granted, leaving more space for both genuine and protest voting. Another source of variation in the results from the two legislative branches lies in the different electorates. Over 4.5 million adults, age 18–24 who can only vote in Chamber elections, represent about 10% of the total number of voters for the lower house. Knowing the election results at a district level means it is possible to single out the electoral behavior of the 18- to 24-year-old demographic with statistical analysis. The fundamental element is that this group represents the exact difference between the electorates of the Senate and the Chamber. For this analysis, we have selected five regional capitals from various geographical areas: Turin, Milan, Florence, Rome, and Palermo. Table 1 shows the distribution of votes from the aforementioned demographic with respect to the distribution of municipal electorates as a whole.

The most evident characteristic is the overrepresentation of the M5S among young voters, which counters the underrepresentation of the PD. This appears in all five cases with varying, but never marginal, magnitudes. The number of younger citizens voting for the Democratic Party is barely greater than a third of the whole electorate in Palermo and Turin: therefore, the registered decline was greater than 60%; in the other three cases, the decline varied between 30% and 40%. The M5S saw increased support among young people in Florence and Milan by about 25% in each region, followed by an increase of approximately 40% in the southern capitals and even by 70% in Turin. Since the movement led by Beppe Grillo is ranked as the second most popular party in the overall electoral result of all five cities and with the Democratic Party being first among this young demographic, we note that the PD was only able to retain a majority in Florence. In the other cases, the M5S stands as the most popular party among voters aged between 18 and 24 years old. In Palermo, the M5S was able to reach the absolute majority of valid votes in this age-group, while in Rome and Turin, two out of every five people in the age-group voted M5S.

It is interesting to observe the results of SEL. The party led by Vendola also saw good results among young voters. In Florence, within the younger age-group, the SEL stands as the third most popular party with a vote share equaling a number about double that of the entire electorate. Also, in Turin, the SEL was significantly overrepresented; in Rome and in Milan, the overrepresentation is still evident but is somewhat diminished. It is well known that younger people tend to vote for more radical parties than the median-aged voter. This being true, the PD must have surely lost some younger votes by entering a coalition with a left-leaning party. In any case, it seems that the alliance with the SEL has allowed the party, led by Bersani, not to suffer

<sup>1</sup> . See. Maggini in this volume.

Table 1. Vote preferences (%) of young voters (aged 18–24) in five major cities, compared with whole electorates (source: Goodman model on polling station-level data)

		SEL	PD	Monti Coalition	PdL	LN	Others center-right	M5S	Others	No vote	Total
Turin	18–24	6.1	8.7	9.3	12.9	4.4		32.5	3.2	22.9	100
	Total	3.5	22.1	9.5	12.9	4.3		19.2	3.6	24.9	100
Milan	18–24	4.2	13.5	13.7	11.6	2.4	3.5	16.0	6.9	28.2	100
	Total	3.2	22.2	11.2	15.4	4.8	1.7	12.8	4.2	24.5	100
Florence	18–24	11.8	20.8	10.6	11.2	3.7		16.9	0.5	24.4	100
	Total	4.7	32.9	8.0	11.2	2.9		14.1	4.3	22.0	100
Rome	18–24	3.7	15.3	6.4	10.8	3.1		28.5	7.1	25.1	100
	Total	3.6	21.9	7.4	14.2	3.6		20.6	4.4	24.3	100
Palermo	18–24	0.9	4.5	4.9	12.0	1.2		27.5	1.8	47.2	100
	Total	1.5	12.0	4.9	15.0	2.3		19.5	4.2	40.6	100

heavy losses among young voters. The only exception is Palermo, where the slightly center-left coalition barely exceeds 10% of all valid votes.

Like the PD, the other formerly dominant party, the PdL, does not perform well with younger voters. Not only did the PdL fail overall to be represented well, but in Palermo, Rome, and Milan, the party, along with its coalition partners, had very little success among the 18- to 24-year-old demographic.

In the case of the Monti coalition, the results are more ambiguous. In Palermo, it gathered less than 5% among the whole electorate and younger voters; in Milan and Florence, the coalition is better represented by young people; however, in Turin and Rome, it suffered, although in a marginal way, to gather those votes.

Finally, the decision to abstain from voting is the last possible choice to compare younger voters with the whole electorate. Excluding Turin, the data shows that younger citizens have been more prone to abstain from voting. This was true to a lesser extent in the capital, with more significant differences in Milan and Florence and even more so in Palermo. In the Sicilian capital, almost half of the voters between the ages of 18 and 24 decided not to cast their ballot.

Methodological notes: All the analyses have been conducted through the Goodman model, corrected by the Ras algorithm. In Rome, Milan, Turin, and Palermo, they were collected separately in every uninominal district of the Mattarella elec-

toral law for the Chamber and then aggregated city matrices. In Florence, however, the municipal level coefficients have been directly computed.

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