

# Discussion: Political Economy Implications of the Italian Reform

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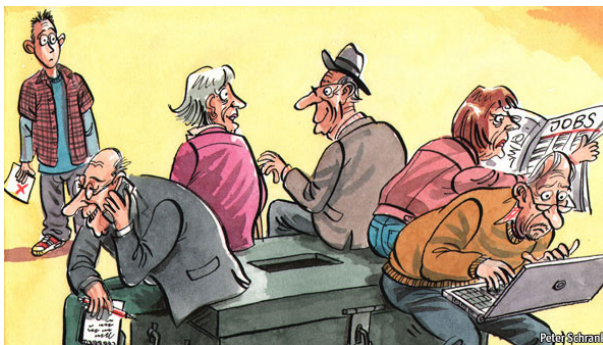
Sala Capitolare, Senato della Repubblica

## Four Political Economy Implications of the Italian Institutional Reform (beyond the ones analyzed by Prof. Tsebelis and among many others.)

- 1 Political representation of younger voters
- 2 Winners and losers from the change in the composition of voters
- 3 Political representation of women
- 4 Accountability of MPs

# Italy: No Country for Young Men (and Women)?

“Italy is a **gerontocracy** where the young feel politically stymied”  
(*The Economist*, 2011, United in Apathy)



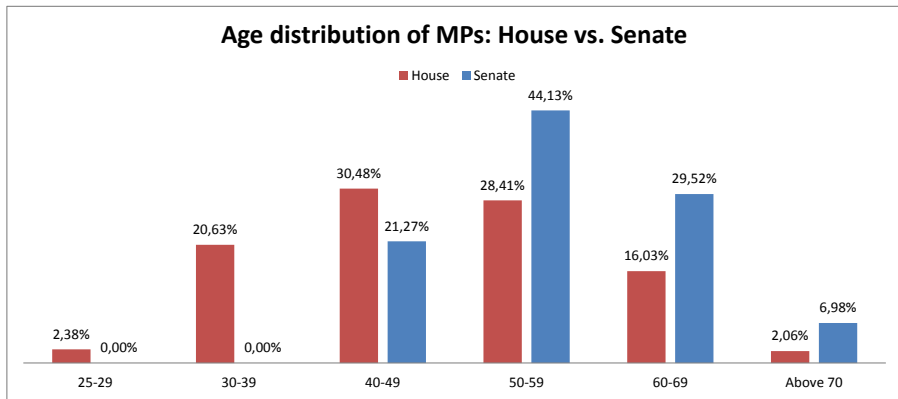
# #hanginthere (1)

Effects of the institutional reform in terms of **MPs' demographics**:

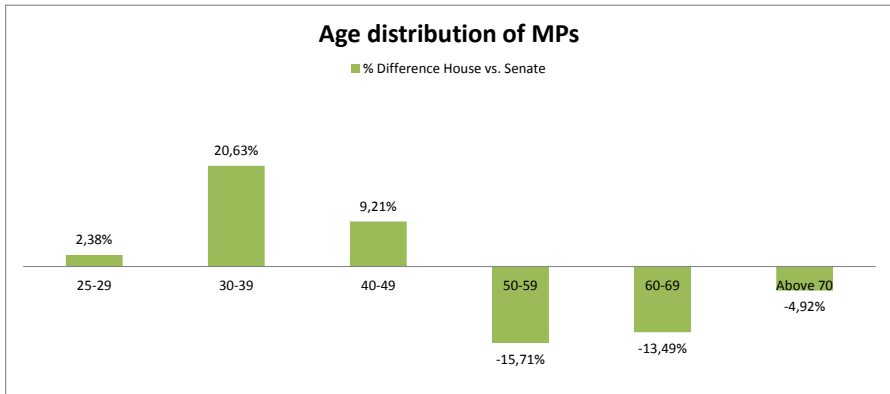
- “Passive electorate”. Min age thresholds: Senate: 40, House: 25
- Mean age MPs (XVII Legislature):
  - ▶ Senate: 57,19
  - ▶ House: 45,8

⇒ **Decrease in the age of MPs.**

# Passive Electorate: Age of MPs



# Passive Electorate: Age of MPs



► Age MPs: Women vs. Men

## #hanginthere (2)

Effects of the institutional reform in terms of **voters' demographics**:

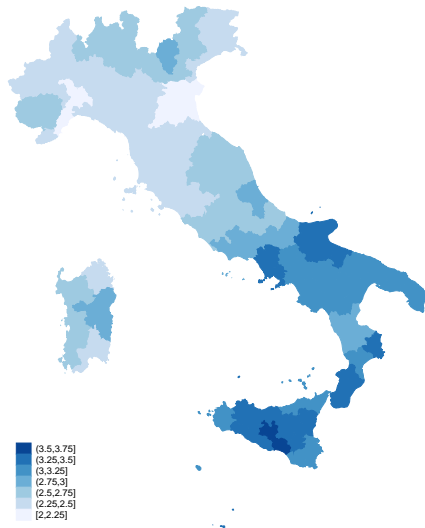
- “Active electorate”. Min thresholds: Senate: 25, House: 18
- Age voters (2015):
  - ▶ Senate: Mean 54,97 (Median: 53,66)
  - ▶ House: Mean 52,30 (Median: 51,44)

⇒ Decrease in the (mean and median) age of voters.

# Active Electorate

Difference in Age of Voters House vs. Senate (absolute values)

Mean



Median





# Political Economy Implications (1)

- Younger generations are likely to gain from the reform due to:

- 1 Decrease in the age of MPs: **Younger median MP**
- 2 Decrease in the age of voters: **Younger median voter**

⇒ This may facilitate policies aimed at redistributing resources from the old to the young generation.

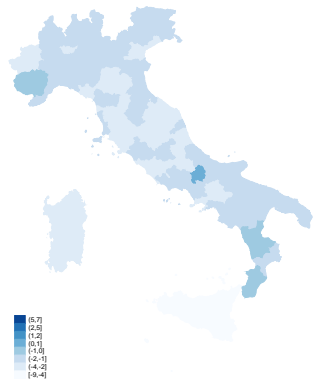
E.g., re-balance welfare state policies targeted to different age groups such as social security, child-care, etc.?

- Geographical shift in the median voter (may favor regions with younger voters, i.e., South)

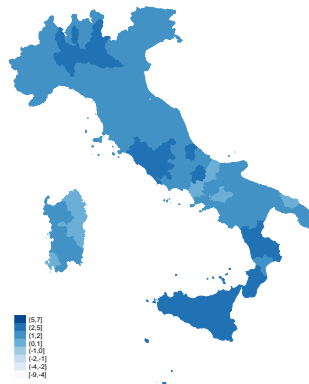
# Active Electorate: (Political) Winners and Losers

Difference in Vote Shares House vs. Senate (2013)

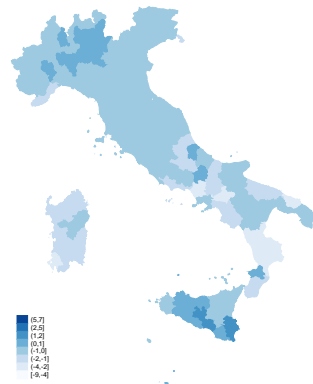
PD



M5S



PDL



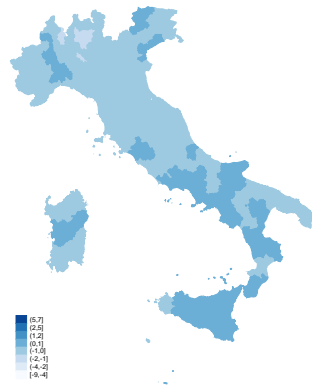
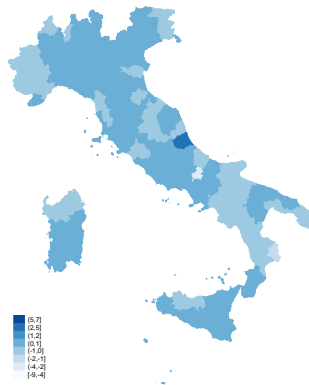
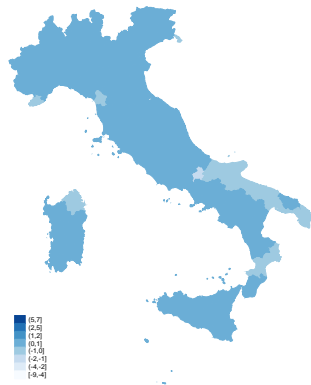
# Active Electorate: (Political) Winners and Losers

Difference in Vote Shares House vs. Senate (2013)

SEL

FdI

LN



## Political Economy Implications (2): Winners and Losers

<b>Party</b>	<b>Average difference vote share House vs. Senate (2013)</b>
M5S	1,82%
SEL	0,16%
Fratelli d'Italia	0,04%
Lega Nord	-0,15%
PDL	-0,67%
PD	-2,11%

## Political Economy Implications (3): Gender Representation

New constitutional provisions promoting gender equality:

**Art. 1:** “[...] *Electoral laws concerning the House of Representatives should **promote equal gender representation** between men and women*”

**Art. 35:** “[...] *The law of the Republic establishes the **fundamental principles to promote equal political representation** of women and men [at the regional level]*”

# Political Economy Implications (3): Gender Representation

EU Rank	World Rank	Country	Lower or single House	Upper House or Senate
			% Women	% Women
1	5	Sweden	43.6%	---
2	10	Finland	41.5%	---
3	14	Spain	40.0%	39.2%
4	17	Belgium	39.3%	50.0%
5	21	Denmark	37.4%	---
6	22	Netherlands	37.3%	34.7%
7	24	Slovenia	36.7%	7.5%
8	26	Germany	36.5%	40.6%
9	30	Portugal	34.8%	---
<b>10</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>31.0%</b>	<b>28.3%</b>
11	44	Austria	30.6%	29.5%
12	48	United Kingdom	29.4%	24.6%
13	49	Luxembourg	28.3%	---
14	52	Poland	27.4%	13.0%
15	60	France	26.2%	25.0%
16	70	Estonia	23.8%	---
17	73	Lithuania	23.4%	---
18	76	Ireland	22.2%	30.0%
19	87	Bulgaria	20.4%	---
20	88	Czech Republic	20.0%	18.5%
21	95	Greece	19.7%	---
22	98	Slovakia	20.0%	---
23	101	Latvia	18.0%	---
24	120	Croatia	15.2%	---
25	129	Romania	13.7%	7.7%
26	137	Malta	12.9%	---
27	140	Cyprus	12.5%	---
28	153	Hungary	10.1%	---

XVI legislature (i.e., before 2013): share of women in the House was 21.4% (19% in the Senate) - World Rank 63

## Political Economy Implications (3)

- The reform may help enhance women representation (in politics and beyond)
- Implementation?

# Political Economy Implications (4): Media & Accountability

- Media crucial channel to keep politicians accountable: watchdogs (e.g., Snyder and Stromberg, 2010; Drago, Nannicini, Sobbrío, 2014)
- How to improve the accountability of MPs?
  - ▶ Increase the number of watchdogs (↑ # news media)
  - ▶ Decrease the number of people to be watched at (↓ # MPs)



# Political Economy Implications (4): Media & Accountability

Subtle effect:

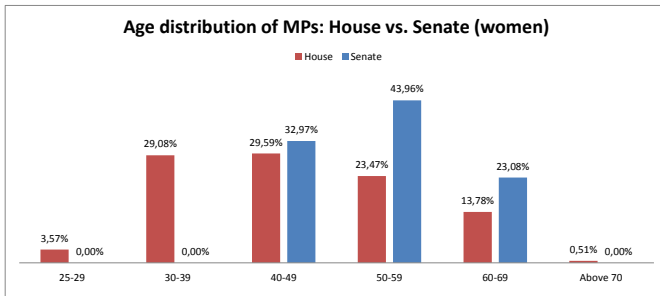
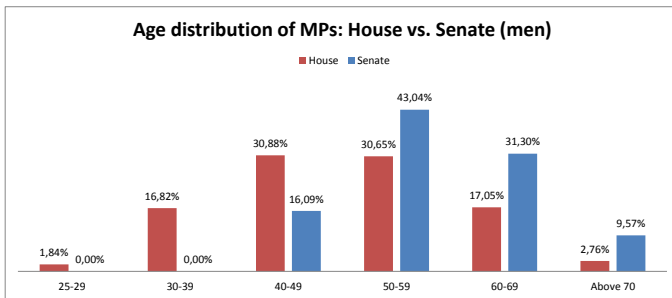
- Younger voters are less likely to follow traditional media.

⇒ Agenda-setting power of traditional media (i.e., newspapers, tv) may weaken.



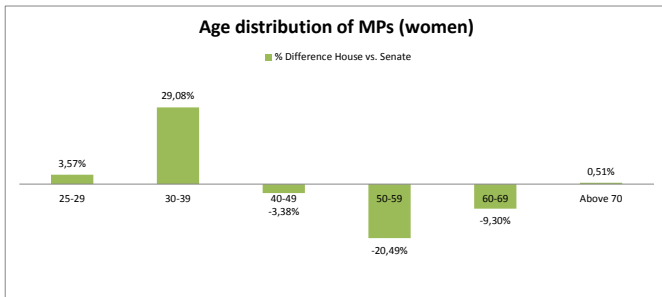
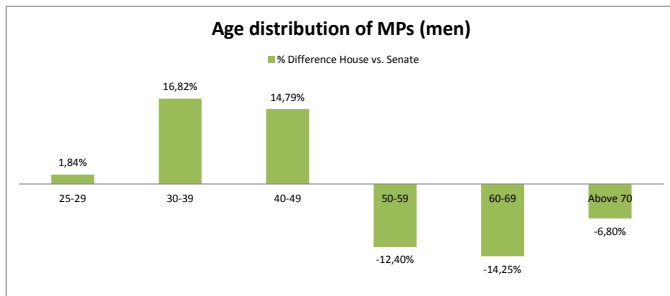
Thanks!

# Passive Electorate: Age of MPs



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