

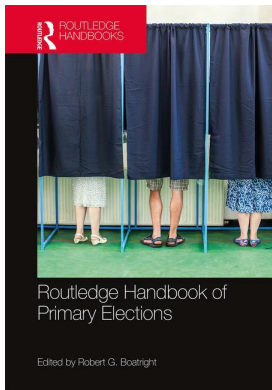
This article was downloaded by: 10.3.97.143

On: 23 Sep 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



## Routledge Handbook of Primary Elections

Robert G. Boatright

### The Italian Style of Intra-Party Democracy

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315544182-30>

Marino De Luca

**Published online on: 26 Feb 2018**

**How to cite :-** Marino De Luca. 26 Feb 2018, *The Italian Style of Intra-Party Democracy from:* Routledge Handbook of Primary Elections Routledge

Accessed on: 23 Sep 2023

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315544182-30>

**PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT**

Full terms and conditions of use: <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms>

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

# THE ITALIAN STYLE OF INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY

## A Twenty-Year-Long Journey

*Marino De Luca*

Primary elections are a relatively recent innovation in Europe. Their application is associated with specific circumstances (timing, type of organizing party, democratic regime, etc.), and therefore their adoption is associated with some circumstances that causes a certain level of heterogeneity at the European level. In this perspective, Italy is an important example, since the temporal continuity of its experience with primaries has made it a reference point in the framework of the studies on this topic. The aim of this chapter is to analyze how this instrument became rooted in Italian politics and how it developed. In order to be able to do so, we should focus on the political context before primary elections and understand what the political, social and cultural milieu was that led to the development primary elections.

In the early 1990s, Italian democracy underwent a series of important changes in terms of political system and party system. A number of scandals caused by corruption, as well as judicial investigations, contributed to the demise of the major political parties and to the delegitimization of party leaders (Morlino 1996). Moreover, the new 1993 reform led to a profound reorganization of the party system that altered parties' structure, the relationships among the parties, and voter participation (Katz 1996). Within this context, center-right forces originated from the fusion among post-fascist parties, Christian Democrats, and the ethno-regionalists of the North League (LN), which succeeded in solving the problem of the party leadership that was immediately taken over by Silvio Berlusconi (thanks to his political and economic influence). On the other hand, center-left forces were at the same time facing a decrease in the number of their members and an inability to provide a strong and long-lasting leadership that could counteract Berlusconi (Campus and Pasquino 2006).

In this framework, Italian primary elections took place thanks to three features that were typical of the Italian political system and to two processes that occurred on a larger scale. At a domestic level, institutional, strategic and historical reasons played a key role. Institutional reasons included the above mentioned transformations of the electoral system that – at a municipal level – fostered verticalization and a direct relationship between the representative and the represented party, while – at a national level – led to the bipolarisation of the system through the development of two large and heterogeneous coalitions, with the center-left facing great difficulties in finding a single and commonly accepted representative (Pasquino 2007; D'Alimonte 2008). Moreover, other institutional reasons fostered greater legitimization of such an instrument and its diffusion in that period; in particular, there was greater interest shown in the issue

by MPs and there were several attempts at institutional regulation. As for strategic reasons, primary elections in Italy took place, as in other democracies, as a response to the crisis of legitimacy of party leadership experienced by the center-left coalition, which was not able to reach common agreement on a single candidate and to reconcile citizens with politics after the scandals of the early 1990s. Finally, historically contingent reasons indissolubly linked primary elections to a specific political sphere that employed this institutional instrument as a sort of “brand” that had to be defended and further expanded at any electoral level (municipal, political and regional elections for instance), thus affecting the direct selection of party leaders. Furthermore, other political parties also had recourse to such an institutional instrument, even parties far from the center-left coalition; the original structure of this approach was also profoundly changed by the expansion of citizens’ participation through online platforms.

As for the two aforementioned processes on a larger scale that allowed the development of primary elections, one was the personalization of politics and the increase in the decision-making process within political parties. As regards personalization, we should consider that people had not only become more visible than political parties (Karvonen 2010), but they had also become more efficient in promoting electoral support (Blondel and Thiébault 2009; Calise 2015; Garzia 2011; Poguntke and Webb 2005; Venturino 2010). As Manin (1997) observed, this dimension of personalization did not correspond to a truly degenerative transformation of the political system, insofar as the nature of representative democracy considers the “personal” element as a basic form of its institutionalization.

The second process affected the decision-making process, leading to an increasingly greater involvement of members and supporters (Cross and Blais 2012; Kenig 2009; Pilet and Cross 2014; Sandri, Seddone and Venturino 2015) with a view to limiting membership decline and providing new opportunities for participation (Cross and Katz 2013; Hazan and Rahat 2010). From this perspective, there were two main goals: improving the public image of parties by promoting new inclusive methods to involve citizens, and re-defining the relationship of the party with members/supporters who had a new incentive for their involvement (Sarrow 1999; 2000).

This chapter will focus on the historical and political evolution of intra-party democracy processes. Specifically, the second section will give space to the causes of the transition to a more inclusive party system; the third will discuss the rules and arrangements of these processes in the various parties; the fourth will look at the primaries for the prime minister’s choice; the fifth will cover the primaries for the selection of parliamentary candidates; in the sixth, local primaries (regional, provincial and municipal) will be described and in the seventh section, finally, the processes for the party leader’s selection will be analyzed.

### **It’s a Long Italian Story**

In Italy, before the collapse of the party system, but also subsequently in the transition period, the selection of candidates was organized based on an apparent intra-party agreement at a central and local level. Such a negotiation was *de facto* more oriented toward a national level – suffice it to say, the shares of central national bodies (Wertman 1988; Bille 2001). In practice, before the changes of the 1990s, four large national parties existed: the Communist Party (PCI), the Socialist Party (PSI), the Christian Democrats (DC) and the Italian Social Movement (MSI). Other smaller parties, such as the Liberal Party (PLI) and the Republican Party (PRI) were organized in a few areas and strongly anchored to groups and associations such as the association of entrepreneurs (Bardi and Morlino 1992, 1994). In all those parties the role and importance of members was very limited.

The 1993 reform and the reorganization of the party system did not allow any amendment in the selection of candidates and party leaders, at least immediately. In fact, a more inclusive candidate

selection and open methods leadership selection increased the level of intra-party democracy in Italy only towards the mid-2000s.<sup>1</sup> Primary elections became central in the public debate in 2005, thanks to two events that magnified their success and increased people's enthusiasm and participation. The first event was the regional primary elections of the center-left coalition in the Puglia region, won by Nichi Vendola, the most extremist candidate, who unexpectedly defeated a more moderate candidate of his own coalition and was able to succeed over the center-right coalition candidate at the general elections. The second event, in contrast, marked the debut of national primary elections promoted once again by the center-left coalition to select the candidate for the Presidency of the Council to the general elections in 2006. That was a less competitive example of primary elections organized to strengthen the leadership of Romano Prodi, who was facing criticism and objections raised by other representatives of the center-left coalition. The participation of four million voters was a unique event and it represented an innovation in the system of candidate selection. In fact, the primary elections, won by Romano Prodi, who then became prime minister of the Italian government, had a positive impact on the parties' image and organization and started a long period of prosperity that subsequently had an influence on the selection of candidates at any level (municipal, provincial and regional levels).

At the national level, after the early elections in 2008, primaries were held in 2012 and they introduced a new aspect. Pier Luigi Bersani was selected as the candidate for the Presidency of the Council by means of two-round primary elections characterized by a high level of competition between Bersani and the other candidate Matteo Renzi. However, the 2013 general elections marked an element of novelty also in terms of MPs' selection. The two parties that had promoted the primary elections won by Bersani, namely the Democratic Party (PD) and Left Ecology Freedom (SEL), decided to select candidates to the Parliament and their political lists based on primary elections. Moreover, another party, the Five Star Movement (M5S) simultaneously decided to choose its candidates for Parliament by means of online closed primary elections (Lanzone and Rombi 2014). Such an important aspect of the Italian system of selection of candidates for the government could be attributed to the 2013 general elections, the so-called *Porcellum* method, according to which national political parties organized their lists by means of a pre-stated list of candidates, without the possibility of expressing any preference.

However, the greater inclusiveness of the system of candidate selection also had a positive impact on the selection of party leaders, thus revolutionizing the method for the selection of party leaders. Indeed, since 2007, on the occasion of its establishment and as subsequently stated in its charter, the Democratic Party started a multi-level approach of greater inclusiveness in the selection of its leaders; the most important step was the employment of a system similar to that of the 2005 primary elections for the selection of the leader of the center-left coalition. The model promoted by the Democratic Party for the selection of its leader that was subsequently employed in 2009, 2013 and 2017, was also employed by other parties. In 2013, two completely different political parties – Italy of Values (IdV) and North League (LN) – which had been long led by their founders, started a process of leadership selection through this new approach. After the exit of Antonio di Pietro, the main judicial figure of the investigation team of *Mani Pulite* in the early 1990s, Italy of Values opted for an (online and offline) direct election of the member of the party, while in the North League its founder, Umberto Bossi, was defeated by the new party leader, Matteo Salvini, in primary elections open not only to party members. In 2014, Brothers of Italy – National Alliance (FdI-AN), a center-right coalition – also chose its leader based on uncompetitive and open primary elections where Giorgia Meloni, the only candidate, was elected as the president of the party.

This brief overview highlights the most important steps of the Italian parties towards an intra-party democracy. The national media's emphasis on this phenomenon served to increase its

popularity. However, the majority of such elections were held at a local level, and very often far from the spotlight. In any case, in Italy they represented a fundamental step in the development of new forms of participation and greater inclusiveness in the choices made by political parties.

### The Italian Rules of Intra-Party Democracy

The first element to be analyzed in the context of new intra-party democracy processes is related to rules. The “private” nature of Italian primaries allows parties to self-regulate the process of selection of candidates or leaders. This implies that intra-party democracy processes are often tailored on specific organizational needs (or events) promoted by the parties themselves. This approach, which was subsequently affected by a series of attempts to advertise the system,<sup>2</sup> has determined small regulation differences, above all at a local level. However, the procedure of national primary elections is premised on some well-defined and common features among all types of selection, apart from some exceptions that will be subsequently reviewed.

The primary elections won by Romano Prodi in 2005 set some general rules that were formalized only in 2008, after the drawing up of the statute of the Democratic Party. Such an initial regulation was directly and indirectly transposed into the primary elections promoted both by the center-left parties and others. In the initial 2005 rules, two main regulations governed the sphere of selection and candidacy. As for the selection of candidates, citizens entitled to vote for the Chamber of Deputies were permitted to vote, upon the signing of the “Progetto” and payment of a voluntary donation of minimum 1 Euro coverage for expenses. The electorate was highly inclusive, since immigrants legally residing in Italy for at least three years and the so-called *potential* voters, i.e. young people who were to be 18 by the end of the legislation, were also permitted to vote. The regulations also held that voters had to give their consent to enter their names in a list of participants to the election which the public could consult.<sup>3</sup> As for the selection of candidates to the party leadership, candidacy was admitted provided that at least 10,000 (up to a maximum of 20,000) voters’ signatures were submitted. Finally, in order to be entitled to participate in the system, candidates could not have been involved in any political activity in support of the center-right coalition in the previous legislation.

The PD statute, as previously stated, was the main regulatory element in terms of participation in primaries, thus better outlining rules and introducing some important novelties (Venturino 2015). The statute set forth that electors, and not only party members, could decide on the selection of candidates for public posts of party leaders. The two categories are listed in a register of members and in a register of voters based on some requirements. In both cases, the Democratic Party admitted the participation of all Italian citizens and citizens of EU Member States, as well as non-EU citizens residing in Italy. Among other things, the statute ruled that to be entitled to be a member of the party or acquire the status of voter in primary elections promoted by the party itself, citizens must be 16 years old. Moreover, participation in primary elections required the payment of a donation, which in a certain number of cases was not requested of party members. As for candidacy, the statute establishes two different criteria, one employed for the selection of party leaders, and the other for the selection of candidates for other posts. In the first case, leaders’ selection criteria depend upon requirements such as being a party member and candidacy being supported by at least ten percent of the members of the outgoing National Assembly, or by party members numbering between 1,500 and 2,000 people. In contrast, candidates for monocratic roles (e.g. Mayor, President of the Provincial Government, or President of the Regional Government) are selected by means of primaries promoted by the party or the coalition. In the first instance, candidacy can be promoted with the support of ten percent of the members of the Assembly of the referring territorial district concerned, i.e. with a number of

signatures equal to at least three percent of party members in a territorial district. In the second case a shared regulation among the coalition forces is established and PD party members can submit their candidacy provided that it has been supported by at least 35 percent of the members of the Assembly of the territorial district concerned, in other words, that it corresponds to at least 20 percent of the party members in the territorial district concerned.

In contrast, center-right parties and coalitions rarely employed such processes for the selection of candidates and leaders and, instead, they avoided them in many cases. In the House of Freedoms (CDL), the adoption of primary elections was promoted by the leader of the Union of the Center (UDC), Marco Follini, at the time of the 2005 primaries of the center-left coalition, however, the proposal was abandoned when Berlusconi was suggested as a candidate. Similarly, another attempt promoted by the Secretary of the People of Freedom (PDL), Angelino Alfano, in respect of the 2013 general elections failed. In this case, rules based on the primaries promoted by the center-left coalition were proposed and, upon payment of a donation of two Euros and signing of the Charter of Values, citizens registered on electoral rolls could take part in the selection of the candidate proposed for the leadership of the center-right coalition. Such entitlement was extended to citizens aged 16, but denied to foreign citizens. As for candidacy, at least 10,000 signatures were necessary, with a limit of 2,000 signatures in each Region.

Another party of the center-right coalition, the North League, organized an inclusive selection both in 2013 and in 2017 to elect the federal secretary of the party (in both cases Matteo Salvini was appointed). Participation was limited to party members with at least one year's membership,<sup>4</sup> while candidacy was limited to people who had been LN party members for at least 10 years, upon the support of at least 1000 signatures collected among party activists.

Finally, even in 2014 another party of the center-right coalition – Brothers of Italy – National Alliance – experimented with primary elections at a national level to appoint its president, Giorgia Meloni, and this experience was extended to all EU citizens from the age of 16.

Primaries were also adopted by another important Italian political party, the Five Star Movement, on several other occasions: to select parliamentary candidates in the 2013 general elections; candidates for the European Parliament in 2014; candidates for regional ministers and regional president; and candidates for municipal elections, both for the office of mayor or municipal commissioners in many cases. The initial attempt, in the general elections of February 2013, was an opportunity to test the use of an online platform, that has since then become the distinctive feature of intra-party democracy processes of the party. The M5S experience was a clear example of closed primaries, accessed only by a section of party members.<sup>5</sup> Candidacy criteria were also very stringent, since only non-elected party members of previous elections were entitled to participate. Generally speaking, the online platform is still the “environment” par excellence where primary elections of the party take place, apart from some exceptions when the M5S organized traditional primaries ahead of municipal elections, between 2013 and 2015. Such a peculiar selection mode implies several consequences in terms of participation, results, list formation and more broadly on the party organizational structure.

### **The Selection of the Prime Minister**

This section, along with the subsequent ones, will take into account intra-party democracy processes, analyzing them based on party typology and territorial level of reference. More specifically, this section will focus on the primaries held by the center-left coalition in 2005 and 2012 to select a candidate for the party leadership.

The peculiarity of 2005 primary elections, which were held one year before the general elections upon initiative of the center-left coalition called then “The Union,” lay in the fact that



Romano Prodi's victory was taken for granted and that the elections only aimed at strengthening his leadership (Hopkin 2006). In fact, the center-left coalition was trying to avoid the mistake that had been made by Prodi himself in 1996 when, not having been directly supported by the parties, he had faced many difficulties in holding the parliamentary majority intact (Corbetta and Vignati 2013). Internal divisions in the center-left coalition lasted a long time, and almost ten years later, the former Italian prime minister, despite his non-adherence to any political party, but enjoying an enhanced reputation thanks to his experience as the President of the European Commission, seemed again to be the only political figure that could have united the multi-faceted center-left coalition. In 2005 other candidates were competing for the leadership along with Prodi: Fausto Bertinotti (Communist Refoundation Party), Clemente Mastella (Union of Democrats for Europe), Antonio Di Pietro (Italy of Values), Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio (Federation of the Greens), Ivan Scalfarotto and Simona Panzino (independent). There was an extraordinary participation that peaked to over 4 million<sup>6</sup> voters. The results showed that Prodi had reached over 74 percent of votes, while the first of his competitors reached only 15 percent (see Table 24.1).

Therefore, rather than complying with an increasing need for intra-party democracy, the first attempt of primary elections in Italy was introduced to settle a dispute among the parties of the center-left coalition and to legitimize its leadership. However, the success of this experience led to several consequences. The first result, since the origins of the Democratic Party in 2007, was the choice to include both party members and voters in the procedure of the party leader selection. In the same year, the direct election of the democratic Walter Veltroni made him the natural candidate for the post of prime minister in the 2008 general elections, thus avoiding the need for further primaries (Bordandini et al. 2009; Lazar 2008; Hanretty and Wilson 2010). Despite the good results for the PD in 2008, the center-right coalition, led by Silvio Berlusconi won the election. Simultaneously, the PD adopted a statute with open primaries as a tool to select candidates at any level; the statute also established that the selection of the leader was to be based on a multi-phase process similar to the 2005 open primaries that had played a key role in the process.

After the 2008 elections, the center-left coalition had recourse to open primaries also in 2012 to select the candidate for the coalition "Italy. Common Good" (Vassallo and Passarelli 2016). However, based on the statute of the PD, only the then-leader Pier Luigi Bersani – selected in 2009 by means of open selection – was entitled to participate in the primaries as a representative of the PD. Objection to this rule and its postponement allowed two other PD candidates to take part in the primaries of the coalition. One was Matteo Renzi, who had been asking for a party leadership replacement for a long time, and the other was Laura Puppato, a regional minister of the PD and the only woman candidate. Besides the three PD candidates, other competitors participated in the primaries, such as Nichi Vendola of the post-communist Left Ecology Freedom left wing, who became the Governor of the Puglia Region by means of the regional primary elections

Table 24.1 The 2005 Center-Left Coalition Primary

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>%</i>
Romano Prodi	The Olive Tree	3,182,686	74.2
Fausto Bertinotti	Communist Refoundation Party	631,592	14.7
Clemente Mastella	Union of Democrats for Europe	196,014	4.5
Antonio Di Pietro	Italy of Values	142,143	3.3
Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio	Federation of the Greens	95,388	2.2
Ivan Scalfarotto	Independent	26,912	0.6
Simona Panzino	Independent	19,752	0.5
<i>Total</i>		<i>4,294,487</i>	<i>100</i>

system, and Bruno Tabacci, the leader of the Democratic Center (CD). So, while in 2005 the other parties of the coalition were more numerous and influential, in 2012 the central role played by the PD, as compared to the two smaller parties, was evident. The 2012 primaries, in fact, were initially perceived as a competition to decide on the leader of the PD: the main aim was to solve a problem within the party itself, which was divided between a wing led by Matteo Renzi – who was then the mayor of Florence – and a wing led by the leader of the party Pier Luigi Bersani.

The plurality system, adopted in 2005, was abandoned in favor of a second ballot system aiming at 50 percent plus one of the votes. This system and some of its rules, had an impact on participation. In the first ballot, in fact, the turnout was three million voters with a ten percentage-point deviation between the two candidates. The second ballot saw a decreased number of voters, since only participants voting in the first ballot had been admitted, thus excluding potential new voters. This choice practically prevented Renzi from achieving a comeback. The attitudes of the defeated candidates also had an impact on the final result: the majority of Nichi Vendola’s voters in the first ballot, in fact, voted for Bersani in the second ballot, thus allowing the latter to reach over 60 percent of the consensus (See Table 24.2).

Once these data have been analyzed in descriptive terms, it is worth focusing on one of the most debated topics in the European literature, the impact of primaries on electoral performance and on party membership (De Luca and Venturino 2015, 2017). Starting from electoral results, the general elections held one year after the primaries of 2005 and 2012 were characterized by a series of extraordinary events that affected their results. In the general elections of 2006 the change in the electoral system by means of a controversial law, the so-called *Porcellum*, which was subsequently considered unconstitutional, had a substantial effect on election results in terms of parliamentary representation. In 2013, however, the highest volatility ever was registered. The most important political parties collapsed and the M5S reached 25 percent of the consensus in its first electoral campaign, thus becoming the first political party in Italy. By taking into account such external conditions, it could be observed that between the parliamentary elections of 2001 and those of 2006 (close to the primaries in 2005), the center-left coalition led by Romano Prodi obtained about three million votes more (Table 24.3), thereby winning the elections by a large margin against the center-right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi. However, the Prodi government lasted only two years, and in the subsequent elections in 2008, as already pointed out, the center-left coalition led by the PD representative Walter Veltroni was defeated by Berlusconi’s center-right coalition. As for the general elections in 2013, primaries played a key role in the public image of the political party. In fact, soon after the 2012 primaries, the candidate Bersani registered a peak in the consensus and was on top of all the polls. However, the advantage gained by the center-left representative decreased just before the elections. This event implied a considerable loss of consensus (about 3.5 million votes) and the creation of a three-pole parliamentary

Table 24.2 The 2012 Center-Left Coalition Primary

Candidate	First Round			Second Round		
	Party	Votes	%	Candidate	Votes	%
Pier Luigi Bersani	Democratic Party	1,395,096	44.9	Pier Luigi Bersani	1,706,457	60.9
Matteo Renzi	Democratic Party	1,104,958	35.5	Matteo Renzi	1,095,925	39.1
Nichi Vendola	Left Ecology Freedom	485,689	15.6			
Laura Puppato	Democratic Party	80,628	2.6			
Bruno Tabacci	Democratic Centre	43,840	1.4			
<i>Total</i>		<i>3,110,211</i>	<i>100</i>		<i>2,802,382</i>	<i>100</i>



Table 24.3 Votes in the General Elections of the Party Promoters of the 2005 and 2012 Primary Elections

<i>Primaries</i>	<i>Before primary</i>	<i>After primary</i>	<i>Difference</i>
2005	16,019,388 <sup>a</sup>	19,002,598 <sup>b</sup>	+2,983,210
2012	13,689,330 <sup>c</sup>	10,047,808 <sup>d</sup>	-3,641,522

*Source:* Ministry of Interior.

*Note:* a The Olive Tree, 2001 parliamentary election; b The Union, 2006 parliamentary election; c Democratic Party and Italy of Values, 2008 parliamentary election; d Democratic Party, Left Ecology Freedom, Democratic Center and South Tyrolean People's Party, 2013 parliamentary election.

representation (center-left, center-right and M5S) that made a parliamentary majority more difficult. After long negotiations, a government led by the PD vice-secretary Enrico Letta was formed and supported also by the center-right coalition. Such a choice caused a fracture in the center-left coalition, since Left Ecology Freedom decided not to support the new government. Therefore, after an initial success of the primaries, a disastrous situation affected the left-wing parties and, more in general, Italian political life.

To sum up, in terms of electoral performance, both primary elections were a partial success for the center-left coalition. In 2005 they provided an increase in votes and allowed the creation of a center-left government that, however, did not last long. Despite the collapse in terms of votes, in 2012 they allowed the center-left coalition to create a government supported by political forces other than those of the center-left coalition.

As for membership, there were two different effects on the numbers of party members. When parties employ closed primaries, generally adhesion increases immediately before primaries and new party members either quit after them or they remain within the party as relatively inactive members (Cross and Rahat 2012). The situation is different when open primaries, where citizens can vote for their candidate without becoming party members, are adopted. Therefore, in regard to open primary elections, no considerable increase in members should be registered. In contrast, the number of members could increase after open primaries as a consequence of a better image of the political party. In Italy, data on membership was influenced by the transformations undergone by political parties over the last two decades. That having been said, while in the 2005 primaries data on membership of the two main parties, that created the PD, registered an increase of about 56 thousand members, in the 2012 primaries the parties that promoted primary elections after a general collapse registered a slight diminution of about one thousand members (Table 24.4). Thus, while in the first case the increase seems to be connected to the primary, in the second no effect seems to be connected to the primary; instead, a general collapse of membership occurred. This aspect will be better addressed in the section on intra-party democracy processes in the choice of leader.

Table 24.4 Membership of the Party Promoters of the 2005 and 2012 Primary Elections

<i>Primaries</i>	<i>Before primary</i>	<i>After primary</i>	<i>Difference</i>
2005	815,481 <sup>a</sup>	872,414 <sup>a</sup>	+56,933
2012	578,191 <sup>b</sup>	577,169 <sup>b</sup>	-1,022

*Source:* Democrats of the Left, Daisy, Democratic Party and Left Ecology Freedom.

*Note:* a Democrats of the Left and the Daisy; b Democratic Party and Left Ecology Freedom.

## Parliamentary Primaries

Until 2013, primaries were almost exclusively employed to select people for prime minister and other leadership roles. However, as already pointed out, the adoption of the so-called *Porcellum* system with pre-selected lists of candidates appointed by the party, encouraged some political parties to have recourse to primary elections to select their candidates for parliamentary elections (Pasquino and Valbruzzi 2013; Regalia and Valbruzzi 2016). In the 2013 general elections, two parties, PD and SEL, after selecting Pier Luigi Bersani as a leader candidate in national primary elections, decided to organize elections all over Italy to appoint candidates for the Parliament. These were “semi-open” primaries; only party members or supporters who had already voted in the primary elections of the coalition for the appointment of Bersani were entitled to participate. More than three million voters took part in the selection of the premier candidate, while subsequently about two million voters participated in the primaries to appoint candidates to the Parliament (Musella 2014).

However, PD and SEL were not the only parties which adopted this type of selection and – before them – the M5S had organized online “closed” primaries to select their candidates to the Parliament (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013; Lanzone and Rombi 2014; Tronconi 2015). As compared to what happened in the PD and SEL, parliamentary primary elections, called “*parlamentarie*” by Beppe Grillo to distinguish his own party from the others that were adopting the same procedure, were different for a number of reasons. First, votes were expressed online only by means of a pluralistic system and each participant could express up to a maximum of three votes. Second, these primaries took place over four days and third, only “certified” voters as at 30 September 2012 were entitled to participate, i.e., 31,612 voters, of which only 64.1 percent participated. Finally, unlike the PD and SEL, the M5S was the only party that had selected the whole set of candidates to the Parliament.

Table 24.5 shows selection based on some socio-graphic and political features of primary candidates. Starting from the example of the PD and SEL primaries, overall, no specific differences emerge among candidates and winners. Generally speaking, gender balance was maintained among those who were candidates and the winners. This element is not surprising: the electoral system devised by the two parties imposed the double gender preference. Also, in regard to age a certain coherence could be observed between the two groups: 46 percent of candidates and elected members of the PD and about 50 percent of the SEL belonged to an over-50 age group. In terms of education, candidates of both parties displayed higher education levels with over 70 percent in the PD. As for the incumbency factor, in the PD the share of candidates without any administrative role passed from 41.9 to 37.9 percent, while in SEL it was 77–78 percent, with no parliamentary representation, since the party had not reached the quorum required to have access to the distribution of the constituencies in the previous legislation.

In the case of the M5S, Table 24.5 shows that the most important feature was candidates’ gender. In the primaries of M5S, no shares for women had been envisaged, nor had electoral systems imposing a gender balance been devised. Results indicate a percentage of men above 80 percent among both candidates and winners. In terms of age, under-50 candidates are the largest number among both primaries candidates and winners. Also, educational levels are interesting: among the candidates who won the primaries there is a certain balance between those who have a final diploma and graduates. In terms of incumbency, no previous administrative posts were registered at either a local or a national level. This confirms the novelty of the leadership proposed by the M5S.

However, with regard to the impact on the general elections, among the three cases the most important difference is the choice of M5S not to include candidates who had not been elected

Table 24.5 Candidates and Winners in the Parliamentary Primary for the 2013 General Elections

	<i>Democratic Party</i>		<i>Left Ecology Freedom</i>		<i>5 Star Movement</i>	
	<i>candidates</i>	<i>winners</i>	<i>candidates</i>	<i>winners</i>	<i>candidates</i>	<i>winners</i>
Woman	49.5	49.6	47	48.1	14.9	18.8
Man	50.5	50.4	53	51.9	85.1	81.2
20–29 years	4.6	3.8	5.1	4.8	9	10.2
30–39 years	20.6	20.4	18.9	19.1	30.4	30.7
40–49 years	29.3	30.2	27.8	28.8	39	37.9
50–59 years	34.0	35.3	33.3	32.5	17.3	17.1
60–74 years	11.5	10.3	14.9	14.8	4.3	4.1
Primary/middle school diploma	0.8	0.9	1.5	1.4	6.4	5.7
Secondary school diploma	23.9	25.5	28	29.4	49.6	46.8
Degree	74.1	72.5	63.2	63.2	43.4	47.4
N.a.	1.2	1.1	7.3	6	0.6	0.1
None	41.8	37.8	78.1	77	100	100
Municipal level	26.9	26.7	16.6	17.5	0	0
Provincial level	9.3	9.7	3.3	3.6	0	0
Regional level	4.9	5.7	2	1.9	0	0
National level	17.1	20.1	0	0	0	0
	885	663	457	418	1242	775

Source: C&LS–Candidate and Leader Selection.

by online primaries. As Table 24.6 shows, the leaders of the two center-left parties reserved some shares of nominees so as to be able to put their own trusted candidates in the lists. This led the PD to elect 27.9 percent of its candidates to Parliament directly co-opted by the Party Secretariat, while the share was 29.5 percent for the SEL.

More generally, data on the 2013 general elections indicate a renewal of the political class with a decrease in the percentage of outgoing MPs among newly elected members (De Lucia 2013). New parties, such as M5S and SEL, were most responsible for this change; however, the PD also contributed: 262 MPs were elected for the first time, in comparison to more than 400 who already sat in Parliament. Another very important aspect, beside the aforementioned changes, is the increase in the percentage of women elected (10 percent more), which brings the share of women in the Parliament to 30.8 percent. Among the parties with the highest percentage of women were the parties that promoted primaries: PD and M5S (38 percent), and SEL (27 percent).

Table 24.6 Candidate Selection Procedures of Elected MPs in the 2013 General Elections

	<i>Democratic Party</i>		<i>Left Ecology Freedom</i>		<i>5 Star Movement</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Primary election	287	72.1	31	70.5	163	100.0
Party appointment	111	27.9	13	29.5	0	–
<i>Total</i>	<i>398<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>100</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>162<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>100</i>

Note: a Nine people elected in the foreign district should be added; b One person elected in the foreign district should be added.

To sum up, the experience in primary elections for Italian MPs shows some clear elements. The gender composition of Parliament was more balanced when it was imposed by the parties themselves (as in the PD and SEL primaries) through the “double preference” approach. When this factor is not taken into account (e.g. the M5S primaries) or no leading criterion is adopted (due to the choice of both parties to select a share of candidates directly appointed by the party) men are numerically superior. However, an important consequence of MPs’ election was the increase of women among the elected. Finally, another element in common is the larger presence of younger candidates, which contributed to a transformation of the political class.

### **Regional, Provincial, and Municipal Selection**

Over the last decade Italian primaries have become a distinctive feature of center-left parties, and a consolidated practice in the Italian political system. Despite much media attention at a national level, intra-party democracy in Italy has developed and stabilized above all at a sub-national level. As a whole, in Italy over 1,000 primary elections took place and, among these, over 90 percent were held at a municipal level.

In this regard, this section analyzes open primaries held between 2004 and 2005 at the regional, provincial and municipal level to select candidates for executive positions such as the president of the Regional Government, of the Provincial Government, or the Mayor. A common element in these cases was voters’ participation, which constantly made primary elections an innovative tool for the selection of candidates. While previous studies have extensively investigated this aspect, this section of the chapter will focus on local primaries in terms of distribution, number of candidates and impact on general elections.

#### ***Regional Primaries***

Primary elections to select candidates for the post of President of Regional Governments have increasingly played a key role in Italian politics (Massetti and Sandri 2013; De Luca and Rombi 2016). As already stated, the first relevant primaries were held in the Puglia Region with Vendola as a candidate in 2005, and they had a great impact both on the party system and on the media. As shown in Table 24.7, while in the 2003–2006 elections only two primaries were held, and four in the 2008–2011 period, in the 2012–2015 period 11 primaries were held, comprising over 50 percent of all Italian regions. Most such competitions took place in southern Italy and the Italian islands (11 primaries) as compared to northern and central regions, which were characterized by three primary elections each. Moreover, if we look at the promoting parties, 14 primary elections out of 17 cases were promoted by the center-left parties to select a leader for the coalition, while they were held to settle intra-party issues in the PD in only three instances. However, in the coalition primaries, the PD candidate won in 10 cases out of 14. In two cases, formally independent candidates won, but they were supported by the main parties of the coalition: Rita Borsellino in the 2005 primaries in Sicily and Umberto Ambrosoli in 2012 in Lombardy. In conclusion, the only candidate who defeated moderate candidates was Nichi Vendola, who was appointed for the first time in 2005 as a representative of RC, and was then re-confirmed after five years, supported by the SEL.

Initially, regional primaries featured competition between two candidates and this was confirmed in the five primaries held between 2005 and 2010; an exception to this was Calabria. Subsequently, the competition took place with the participation of three candidates. Only in Basilicata were there four candidates competing for the post of President of the Region, while five candidates were competing in Molise and Sardinia.

Table 24.7 The Italian Regional Primaries, 2005–2015

<i>Region</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Promoter</i>	<i>Number of candidates</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Winner's party</i>	<i>Regional election victory?</i>
Apulia	2005	center-left	2	Nichi Vendola	RC	Yes
Sicily	2006	center-left	2	Rita Borsellino	Independent	No
Apulia	2010	center-left	2	Nichi Vendola	SEL	Yes
Umbria	2010	PD	2	Catuscia Marini	PD	Yes
Calabria	2010	PD	3	Agazio Loiero	PD	No
Molise	2011	center-left	5	Paolo Frattura	PD	No
Lombardy	2013	center-left	3	Umberto Ambrosoli	Independent	No
Basilicata	2013	center-left	4	Marcello Pittella	PD	Yes
Sardinia	2014	center-left	5	Francesca Barracciu	PD	Withdrawn
Abruzzo	2014	center-left	3	Luciano D'Alfonso	PD	Yes
Emilia Romagna	2014	PD	2	Stefano Bonaccini	PD	Yes
Calabria	2014	center-left	3	Mario Oliverio	PD	Yes
Apulia	2015	center-left	3	Michele Emiliano	PD	Yes
Veneto	2015	center-left	3	Alessandra Moretti	PD	No
Liguria	2015	center-left	3	Raffaella Paita	PD	No
Campania	2015	center-left	3	Vincenzo De Luca	PD	Yes
Marche	2015	center-left	3	Luca Ceriscioli	PD	Yes

*Source:* C&LS–Candidate and Leader Selection.

As for gender differences and their impact on the general elections, women prevailed in only five cases, and among these only one (Catuscia Marini in Umbria) became the President of the Region. In the remaining 12 cases the male nominees were able to win the following regional elections, in nine cases with a higher percentage in terms of success in comparison to the last electoral cycle.

### ***Provincial Primaries***

Table 24.8 shows the primary elections held in Italy between 2006 and 2013 to select candidates for the post of President of the Provincial Government. The time-span under consideration is smaller as compared to other primaries at the local level, since Provincial Governments in Italy have been profoundly reformed by the Decreto Salva-Italia (Save-Italy decree) approved by Monti's government in December 2011. Subsequently, Law No. 56 of 2014 transformed the provincial government of ordinary regions into second-level administrative entities with a restricted suffrage election of their bodies. Such a change altered the institutional layout and downsized their electoral and political importance.

If we look at the data in Table 24.8, it is evident that provincial primaries, like regional ones, organized only by center-left parties, were mainly coalition primaries, except for those promoted in the early years of the PD, which – under the leadership of Walter Veltroni – opted for a strategy of non-alliance with other parties.

These primaries were held in southern provinces only in five cases, mainly concentrating in central and northern Italy. As for the number of candidates, the data in the table indicates an average range between two and four; a few cases with five candidates and just one case with six candidates are reported. The winners of the primaries, all men, except for three women, were representatives of moderate parties: Democrats of the Left (DS), Democracy is Freedom – The Daisy

Table 24.8 The Italian Provincial Primaries, 2006–2013

<i>Province</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Promoter</i>	<i>Number of candidates</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Winner's party</i>	<i>Provincial election victory?</i>
Gorizia	2006	center-left	4	Enrico Gherghetta	DS	Yes
Lucca	2006	center-left	4	Stefano Baccelli	DL	Yes
Imperia	2006	center-left	2	Fulvio Vassallo	DS	No
Ancona	2007	DS	2	Patrizia Casagrande	DS	Yes
La Spezia	2007	center-left	5	Marino Fiasella	DL	Yes
Vercelli	2007	center-left	3	Francesco Carcò	SDI	No
Vicenza	2007	center-left	3	Pietro Collareda	DL	No
Asti	2008	PD	2	Roberto Peretti	PD	No
Caltanissetta	2008	PD	4	Salvatore Messina	PD	No
Fermo 1	2009	PD	2	Renzo Offidani	PD	Not candidate
Ascoli	2009	PD	3	Emidio Mandozzi	PD	No
Cuneo	2009	PD	3	Mino Taricco	PD	No
Savona	2009	PD	6	Michele Boffa	PD	No
Taranto	2009	center-left	2	Gianni Florido	PD	Yes
Arezzo	2009	center-left	2	Roberto Vasai	PD	Yes
Pistoia	2009	center-left	3	Federica Fratoli	PD	Yes
Siena	2009	PD	3	Simone Bezzini	PD	Yes
Firenze	2009	center-left	3	Andrea Barducci	PD	Yes
Grosseto	2009	center-left	3	Leonardo Marras	PD	Yes
Prato	2009	center-left	2	Lamberto Gestri	PD	Yes
Fermo 2	2009	center-left	2	Fabrizio Cesetti	Left	Yes
Pordenone	2009	PD	2	Giorgio Zanin	PD	No
Napoli	2009	center-left	3	Luigi Nicolais	PD	No
Isernia	2009	center-left	5	Antonio Sorbo	Left	No
Avellino	2009	center-left	3	Alberta De Simone	PD	No
Brescia	2009	PD	5	Diego Peli	PD	No
Verona	2009	PD	3	Diego Zardini	PD	No
Ravenna	2011	center-left	4	Claudio Casadio	PD	Yes
Trento	2013	center-left	5	Ugo Rossi	PATT	Yes

Source: C&LS–Candidate and Leader Selection.

(DL), Italian Democratic Socialists (SDI), Democratic Party (PD), and the Trentino Tyrolean Autonomist Party (PATT); only in two cases did candidates belong to the so-called extreme left-wing, while the PD has always played a key role since its creation. The nominees were elected president in 14 provincial elections, i.e. half of the cases. This figure, however, does not completely portray the fact that primaries promoted the electoral success of the candidates.

### *Municipal Primaries*

Between 2004 and 2015, 952 open primaries were organized to select candidates for the post of mayor. Table 24.9 shows the distribution of primaries over the period analyzed. More specifically, in 2004 and 2005, before the so-called “Prodi’s primaries,” the lowest number of primaries was held; by contrast, almost half of the municipal primaries were concentrated in 2009 and 2014. The table shows the number of municipalities that employed primaries for the selection of the mayor every year. Generally speaking, primaries were more frequent in the years showing a



Table 24.9 The Italian Mayoral Primaries, 2004–2015

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of municipalities with mayoral elections</i>	<i>Number of mayoral Primary elections</i>
2004	4,518	4
2005	1,097	2
2006	1,328	29
2007	1,020	48
2008	616	37
2009	4,292	177
2010	1,071	36
2011	1,343	58
2012	1,009	117
2013	719	88
2014	4,105	297
2015	1,108	59
<i>Total</i>	<i>22,226</i>	<i>952<sup>a</sup></i>

Source: C&LS–Candidate and Leader Selection

Note: a The number of municipalities with mayoral primary elections is 920.

higher number of municipal elections. In this respect, we should also take into account that citizens of over 8,000 municipalities normally vote at the end of the five-year legislation period, or in case of crisis of the town council; such events, starting from the direct election of the mayor introduced in 1993, automatically imply anticipated elections.

Another interesting element, underlined by several scholars (e.g., Sandri and Venturino 2016), is that the larger the municipality, the higher the probability for primary elections. This is fairly evident in provincial capitals where both traditional and new parties deploy more developed organizations, made up of party leaders, members and activists working in territorial establishments or organized in basic units such as the meet-up groups adopted by the M5S. Both territorial establishments and organizational power make it easier to promote primaries in larger municipalities as compared to smaller ones. Moreover, another hypothesis, which can account for the diffusion of primaries in provincial capitals, is the final reward: being the mayor of a large municipality is not only more profitable for candidates, but it can also be an important step forward for a higher level political career. Large municipalities are often a springboard and a higher number of candidates for the post of mayor ultimately leads to primary elections.

Another important aspect of municipal primaries is that, starting from 2012, several political forces promoted more primary elections. In fact, while almost all primaries at the national, regional, and provincial level were organized by left-wing parties or coalitions, primary elections for the selection of mayors were characterized by the presence of other political groups. As Table 24.10 shows, this approach was sporadically used by some center-right parties and coalitions, civic parties, regional/autonomous parties and by the M5S. However, as shown in the table, the vast majority of these primary elections – 866, accounting for 91 percent of the total – were organized by center-left parties or coalitions.

As far as competitiveness is concerned, however, Table 24.11 shows a distribution of primaries based on the number of candidates.<sup>7</sup> The first datum focuses on the limited number of primaries with one candidate only, organized in two cases by the center-left coalition and in other two cases by the PD, while in the remaining three cases they were organized by two minor

Table 24.10 The Italian Mayoral Primary Elections by Promoting Party/Coalition, 2004–2015

<i>Promoter</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Center-left coalition	542	56.9
Democratic Party	305	32.1
Civic list	32	3.4
Center-right coalition	22	2.3
Center-left civic list	18	1.9
5 Star Movement	14	1.5
The People of Freedom	7	0.7
Center-right civic list	3	0.3
Center coalition	2	0.2
Future and Freedom for Italy	2	0.2
South Tyrolean People's Party	2	0.2
Brothers of Italy – National Alliance	2	0.2
Democrats of the Left	1	0.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>952</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: C&LS–Candidate and Leader Selection.

parties of the center-right coalition: Future and Freedom for Italy (FLI) and Brothers of Italy – National Alliance (FDI). The events that led to this choice are different. In the center-left coalition the presence of a single candidate was due to the retirement of the candidates because of personal reasons or as a result of intra-party/coalition conflicts, while in the second case, the presence of a single candidate for the center-right coalition was the outcome of a decision made by organizers.

The multi-candidate model in Table 24.11 shows that over 90 percent of municipal primaries was held with between 2 and 4 candidates. In contrast, primaries with five or more candidates accounted for only seven percent of the total. It is not easy to affirm that an excessive number of candidates could be a “pathology” of the system; however, primaries for the selection of the mayor ensure fair competition: citizens are aware of the candidates’ programs and can choose based on their own information collection.

Table 24.11 Number of Candidates Running in the Italian Mayoral Primaries, 2004–2015

<i>Number of candidates</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
1	7	0.7
2	437	46.0
3	304	32.0
4	126	13.3
5	51	5.4
6	15	1.6
7	8	0.8
8	1	0.1
9	1	0.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>950</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: C&LS–Candidate and Leader Selection.

Table 24.12 Number of Candidates Running in the Italian Mayoral Primaries by Promoting Party/  
Coalition, 2004–2015

<i>Promoter</i>	<i>Percent of candidates</i>	<i>N</i>
Civic list	3.3	30
The People of Freedom	3.3	7
Center-left coalition	3.1	542
Center-right coalition	2.8	22
Center-left civic list	2.7	18
Center-right civic list	2.7	3
South Tyrolean People's Party	2.5	2
Democratic Party	2.4	305
Democrats of the Left	2.0	1
Center coalition	2.0	2
Brothers of Italy - National Alliance	1.5	2
Future and Freedom for Italy	1.0	2
<i>Average</i>	2.5	936 <sup>a</sup>

Source: C&LS-Candidate and Leader.

Note: a Only primaries where it was possible to find the total number of candidates.

Table 24.12 shows competition in primaries for the selection of mayors based on the promoting party. The average number of candidates in these elections is 2.5; higher numbers of candidates are found in competitions organized by civic parties (3.3). The most interesting example is, again, the experience of center-left parties. When center-left parties are organized in coalition the average is 3.1 candidates, while in the main party of the coalition, (namely the PD) the average is 2.4. This suggests that in coalition competitions, internal pluralism leads to representation candidacies, while in the case of the PD the lower average reflects the different nuances of the party and intra-party competitiveness.

As for the format of the competition, further analysis should focus on the presence of female candidates. Of the 928 primaries for the selection of mayors where data is available,<sup>8</sup> 519 cases featured only male candidates (55.9 percent). In the remaining 409 primaries, between one and three candidates were women.<sup>9</sup> There were only 127 cases in which a female candidate won in the subsequent municipal elections (13.3 percent).

In regard to the consequences of primaries, one of the most explored aspects is the performance of candidates in the subsequent elections. In particular, the main element of observation is the “primary penalty,” the potential for high level of division caused by the primaries that negatively affects the result of general elections; this mainly occurs at a local level (Ichino and Nathan 2013). However, if we look at the whole *corpus* of local Italian primaries, candidates selected by means of open primaries were defeated in 393 local elections (41.3 percent), but they succeeded in 533 municipal competitions (56 percent).<sup>10</sup> In order to be able to provide final results, a comparison between the results of the elections for the candidates chosen for the first time and the results of the candidates chosen through other methods is necessary; however, it appears that no marked “primary penalty” exists for local elections.

To conclude, as compared to other kinds of primaries, local primaries organized for the selection of mayoral candidates are characterized by two peculiarities: they were held regularly over a period of time and displayed a high number of cases; and the diffusion of inclusive methods at a territorial and party level seems to suggest a “contagion effect.” To be sure, open

primaries are a peculiarity of center-left parties; however, their use was increasingly extended to center-right, regional and M5S parties.

### Leadership Selection

Within the Italian political system, the PD is the only political organization that has strengthened intra-party democracy both through primaries for the selection of candidates and through the direct election of its leaders (Sandri, Seddone and Venturino 2013; Sandri and Seddone 2015a). Despite the statute of the PD that entitles only its members to choose its leaders at a provincial and municipal level (art. 15.4), the selection of regional secretaries is organized based on a complex process, very similar to the selection of its national secretary, allowing all citizens to participate, based on the model of open primaries (art. 15.8). Between 2007 and 2017, the PD party organized 69 selections of regional secretaries. In 60 cases, the selections took place by means of open primaries, while in the remaining nine cases, the Regional Assembly selected them (Venturino 2015). In the same period the PD had five national secretaries, three of whom were selected through the participation of party members and voters, while two secretaries were appointed by the National Assembly to replace resigning, outgoing secretaries.<sup>11</sup> The party statute establishes different roles for members and voters. Indeed, the selection of leaders is pivoted on two stages. The first stage is similar to the OMOV system, or “one-member-one-vote,” and involves enrolled members. The second stage is similar to the OPOV system, or “one-person-one-vot,” involving also supporters.<sup>12</sup>

By considering more inclusive selections of party leaders, the three PD secretaries were elected by party members and voters in four elections: in 2007 when the party was founded and over 3.5 million voters elected the first secretary Walter Veltroni; in 2009, when over three million people took part in the selection of Pier Luigi Bersani; in 2013 when about 2.8 million voters participated in the election of Matteo Renzi as the party secretary; and then in 2017 when Renzi was re-elected by about 1.8 million voters (Table 24.13). Therefore, in just ten years, the PD changed leaders five times and, so far, Renzi’s tenure is the longest-running. Moreover, the inclusion of supporters and general voters in the selection blurred the intra-party boundaries

Table 24.13 Leadership Selection of the Democratic Party, 2007–2017

<i>Party leader</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Selection system</i>	<i>Selectors</i>	<i>Number of candidates</i>	<i>Winner (%)</i>	<i>Runner-up (%)</i>
Walter Veltroni	October 2007–February 2009	OPOV	3,541,917	5	74.8	13.2
Dario Franceschini	February 2009–November 2009	National Assembly	1,258	2	91.9	8.1
Pier Luigi Bersani	November 2009–April 2013	OMOV + OPOV	3,102,709 <sup>a</sup>	3	53.8	34.3
Guglielmo Epifani	May 2013–December 2013	National Assembly	593	1	85.8	–
Matteo Renzi	December 2013–February 2017	OMOV + OPOV	2,805,775 <sup>a</sup>	3	65.8	20.5
Matteo Renzi	May 2017–present	OMOV + OPOV	1,838,938 <sup>a</sup>	3	69.2	19.9

Note: The participation data refers to the OPOV system.

further, thus placing the party in a less institutionalized sphere (Fasano and Seddone 2016). However, this high level of inclusion was never perceived by party members as an attempt to downsize their intra-party role (Sandri and Seddone 2015b). It rather served to reinforce participation over time, rendering this an intrinsic characteristic of the PD.

Table 24.14 shows participation levels in the four selections at the regional level. When one considers aggregate national data, a remarkable element is the decrease in participation in elections. Over the last ten years the initial spur seems to have been exhausted and the number of voters has shrunk considerably. In 2007, for instance, when the party was founded and Veltroni elected, a turnout of 74.8 percent was reached, while the direct competitors, i.e., Rosi Bindi and Enrico Letta, reached only 13.2 percent and 11.9 percent respectively. Two extra candidates took part in that election, Pietro Giorgio Gawronski and Mario Adinolfi, who both collected a few thousand votes (0.3 percent). In that selection, the low level of competitiveness was counteracted by the large participation in celebration of the party foundation.

Table 24.14 Participation in the OPOV System Selection of the Democratic Party, 2007–2017

<i>Regions</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2017</i>
Valle d'Aosta	3,345	2,345	3,569	1,889
Piemonte	162,949	158,208	164,578	89,379
Liguria	79,895	88,234	81,870	47,972
Lombardy	351,144	357,970	377,806	226,359
<i>Northwest</i>	<i>597,333</i>	<i>606,757</i>	<i>627,823</i>	<i>365,599</i>
Trentino Alto Adige	29,849	26,477	27,955	14,023
Veneto	176,917	176,476	177,621	86,756
Friuli–Venezia Giulia	53,363	52,276	46,928	25,536
<i>North East</i>	<i>260,129</i>	<i>255,229</i>	<i>252,504</i>	<i>126,315</i>
Emilia–Romagna	421,325	391,087	405,505	215,958
Tuscany	311,869	285,221	393,513	210,753
Umbria	77,329	75,074	71,176	40,339
Marche	101,217	85,918	93,486	47,106
<i>Center (Red Zone)</i>	<i>911,740</i>	<i>837,300</i>	<i>963,680</i>	<i>514,156</i>
Lazio	348,865	316,745	252,523	173,195
Abruzzo	111,452	60,563	54,144	40,052
Molise	17,191	18,697	12,385	11,936
Campania	456,081	300,949	192,463	156,808
Apulia	247,866	174,220	123,178	156,197
Basilicata	68,457	66,647	32,541	41,568
Calabria	208,968	144,671	89,580	81,926
Sicily	183,854	201,577	128,992	112,445
Sardinia	111,301	106,755	59,098	47,203
<i>South and Islands</i>	<i>1,754,035</i>	<i>1,390,824</i>	<i>944,904</i>	<i>821,330</i>
Abroad	18,680	12,599	16,864	11,538
<i>Italy</i>	<i>3,541,917</i>	<i>3,102,709</i>	<i>2,805,775</i>	<i>1,838,938</i>

Source: Democratic Party.

With the election of Pier Luigi Bersani, in 2009, the PD introduced the “multi-stage” selection procedure described above, involving party members and voters in different steps. This approach allowed access also to non-members and the selection through the so-called primary election system played a key role. On that occasion the most competitive selection in the history of the PD took place and Bersani won with 53.2 percent of the votes, followed by Dario Franceschini (34.3 percent) and Ignazio Marino (12.5 percent). However, in 2009 participation plunged; in fact, in all areas of the country, except for the northern and western regions (led by Liguria and Lombardy) participation decreased.

The decrease continued in the subsequent primary elections of 2013, despite some interesting aspects: notwithstanding the decrease of about 300,000 electors, some differences emerged. The decrease was more marked in the central and southern regions, as well as in the Islands, while in northern and western regions, along with central regions, participation increased considerably. This occurrence is mostly a consequence of the transformation in the PD and the participation of Renzi in the competition. The latter, in fact, after having been defeated by Bersani in the coalition primary elections of 2012, had always been presented as the leader candidate aiming at a makeover of the party. In the 2013 competition, three candidates were running for the post: the frontrunner Renzi; Gianni Cuperlo, representing the post-communist party tradition; and Giuseppe Civati, a young MP who had already served as regional minister. Actually, in the OMOV competition another candidate was present: the European MP Gianni Pittella, who had been put aside after the OMOV voting. The final result saw Renzi heading the competition with 67.5 percent of the vote, followed by Cuperlo (18.2 percent) and Civati (14.2 percent).

Slightly more than two months after his election and the collapse of Letta, Renzi became prime minister. For the first time, the overlap between party leadership and premiership (mentioned in the PD statute) occurred, thus moving the PD towards a “presidential” party structure (Musella and Webb 2015).

When he became prime minister, Renzi initiated a series of reforms, among which was a reform of the constitution of the Italian Republic. The prime minister anchored his premiership to this event; in fact, after the defeat of its political wing in the constitutional referendum of 4th December 2016, Renzi resigned. Paolo Gentiloni was then appointed as prime minister and he did not alter the government structure much, leading the country in line with the approach of Renzi’s government. After this, his leadership was also questioned and this led to a new electoral campaign for the national secretariat. After less than five months, then, and in defiance of all forecasts, the former prime minister regained the party leadership with 69.2 percent of the votes, almost a total consensus, far ahead of his opponents Andrea Orlando (19.9 percent) and Michele Emiliano (10.9 percent). However, as shown in Table 24.15, participation dropped substantially, by more than one million votes, from the previous primary elections. Thus, less enthusiasm was shown for the latest primaries, also because the favorite candidate was competing in a more institutionalized role characterized, for better or worse, by his double incumbency (leader of the party and of the government). Renzi, thus, appeared less as the young politician who had promised to “scrap” the old political system and more as someone attempting to reconfirm the good things made by his government.

If there was a collapse in the number of participants voting for the leadership, it is important to understand what happened to the PD membership. Like many other parties of western Europe, the two founding parties of the PD (the DS and DL) had already experienced a significant decrease in their membership. However, despite the decade-long decrease in membership, the creation of the new party led to an increase in members (about one million) of the founding parties. To understand the size of the new party it is necessary to examine the number of new members in the 2008/2009 period, when the party had 820,000 members. Since then, there



Table 24.15 Party Membership of Democratic Party (before and after its Foundation), 2005–2017

Year	Political party significant events	Members	Difference	Var (%)
2005	Center–left primary for Prime Minister candidate	800,907 <sup>a</sup>	–14,574	–1.8
2006	General Elections	872,414 <sup>a</sup>	+71,507	+8.9
2007	PD foundation and party leader selection	1,000,229 <sup>a</sup>	+127,815	+14.7
2008/2009 <sup>b</sup>	General Elections/ European elections and Party leader selection	820,607	–179,622	–18.0
2010	–	618,768	–201,839	–24.6
2011	Monti premiership	537,757	–81,011	–13.1
2012	Center–left primary for Prime Minister candidate	500,163	–37,594	–7.0
2013	General Elections/Party leader selection	542,890	+42,727	+8.5
2014	Renzi premiership and European elections	378,669	–164,221	–30.2
2015	–	395,574	+16,905	+4.5
2016	Renzi resignation and Gentiloni premiership	405,041	+9,467	+2.4
2017	Party leader selection	449,852	+44,811	+11.1

Source: Democratic of the Left and DL (2005–2007); Democratic Party (2008–2017).

Note: a Data derived from the sum between DS and DL members; b Biennial Membership provided by the party.

has been a substantial decrease in participation, resulting in a membership of about 500,000 in 2012. In 2013, when Renzi was selected, the party registered a slight trend reversal which led to 42,727 more members as compared to the previous year. However, in the following year a further decrease (over 30 percent) left the PD at a historical low. Since 2015, there has been a slow growth, and membership peaked again (over 11.1 percent) in the last selection of the party leader.

In general, considering the membership, the party accounts for about six percent of its electors, in line with other European parties (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010; Van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke 2012). However, the increase in members and the swift decrease after its foundation and the primaries for the party leader confirm the hypothesis of the “instant members,” members of the party who were initially attracted by this event and abandoned the party immediately afterwards (Hazan and Rahat 2010).

The generally positive assessment of intra-party democratic processes in public discourse has triggered a “contagion” effect in the other parties, as previously stated. Notable among these parties has been the North League, which – after the resignation of its founder Umberto Bossi after 20 years and a brief mandate of Roberto Maroni – selected Matteo Salvini as the party leader both in 2013 and 2017, by means of a sort of closed primary election where all party members were entitled to participate. As anticipated in the section on the regulations, participation in the primaries was even more exclusive, since only members with at least 12 months’ membership were entitled to vote. In both cases, as shown in Table 24.16, Salvini obtained a result of over 80 percent of the votes, thus transforming the party congress into an event legitimating his leadership.

Table 24.16 Leadership Selection of North League, 2013–2017

	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Number of Candidates</i>	<i>Winner (%)</i>	<i>Runner-Up (%)</i>
2013	10,221	2	81.7	18.3
2017	8,024	2	82.7	17.3

Source: North League.

More recently, the small right-wing party Brothers of Italy – National Alliance organized an uncontested primary election to select its new party leader (Giorgia Meloni), to choose the new party logo, and to measure the voters’ positions on some Italian political events. A total of 249,380 people participated in the election and 225,532 voters expressed their preference in the polling stations scattered all over Italy, while 23,848 people voted online through the system organized by the party.

Therefore, the “contagion” seems to be a feature of the current Italian political scene even if the organizational impact of the primaries has been controversial, in that their positive effects in terms of political communication, inclusion, transparency and democratization have made primaries an effective tool in reacting to the current situation of low faith in politics and a widespread anti-party attitude.

### Conclusion

The intra-party democratic processes developed in Italy have become a unique feature of the Italian model of politics. The reasons previously outlined – the change in the electoral system, which fostered a verticalization of the relationships between citizens and representatives; the crisis of leadership legitimacy in the center-left coalition; the “brand” of a model to select candidates and party leaders; and the contagion of non-center-left parties – illustrate this.

The private nature of such processes has allowed parties to self-regulate their introduction in relation to the special needs of the promoting party. In this perspective, we could consider the system employed by the PD as the main reference of the Italian model. However, in regard to inclusiveness, the process of selection in Italy can be differentiated based on the greater/lower criteria of inclusion. As shown in Table 24.17, this allows us to further differentiate between *closed models* (where only party members were entitled to vote) in the M5S for the selection of candidates and in the LN for the selection of the leaders, and *open models* typical of the center-left coalition and, in particular, of the PD.

More specifically, intra-party democracy models for the selection of candidates have affected different territorial levels. Prodi’s national primaries in 2005, which paved the way for other experiences, were originally created to reinforce Prodi’s leadership in a dispute among the promoting parties. The subsequent primaries for Bersani’s elections in 2012 were characterized

Table 24.17 Typology of the Italian Candidate and Leader Selections

	<i>Candidate selection</i>	<i>Leader selection</i>
Closed (party members)	5 Star Movement	North League
Open (voters and supporters)	Center-left coalition, Democratic Party	Brothers of Italy – National Alliance, Democratic Party

by greater competitiveness. In this manner, primaries have become a competition tool rather than a legitimization tool, and in both cases they have been characterized by a high level of participation. The 2005 primaries allowed organizers to build the government and to increase consensus in the general elections. In 2012, despite the collapse in terms of voters, primaries started a process to build the government, based on a “great coalition” system with the support of center-right forces.

As for other territorial levels (regional, provincial and municipal), primaries have been used frequently to select candidates. An initial difference of this type of primaries is that while all the primaries at a regional and provincial level were organized by center-left parties or coalitions, municipal primaries were rather characterized by the presence of other parties. Municipal primaries, even though not being under the spotlight, were (and still are) for figures and importance the core of the process of democratization of parties in Italy. They are the most regular and most competitive primary elections that bring candidates for the post of mayor close to citizens and have a positive impact on municipal elections, if we consider the “victory” factor.

However, Italian primaries in 2013 also had an impact on the choice of candidates for Parliament. In that case, thanks to a system that gave advantage to parties that used a centralized selection process, the most important parties of the center-left (PD and SEL) as well as the M5S had recourse to primaries to select MPs and senators. In the first case, they were semi-open primaries and in the second case they were online closed primaries. In both cases, however, primaries were able to renew the political class and to create a territorialization of the vote to the advantage of more “rooted” candidates.

Finally, intra-party democracy processes have also affected the selection of leaders. In this case, the PD reintroduced the open primaries model to select both national and regional leaders. The inclusion of both supporters and voters in the selection of the leaders on one side blurred the boundaries of parties and on the other allowed a contamination between members and electors, which – over time – reinforced participation as a typical feature of the PD.

Participation, despite the decrease in the number of participants (as compared to previous experiences) is still one of the most distinctive features of the Italian model. In fact, even if in some cases such democratic processes revealed weakness or contradiction, so far they have represented one of the few moments of true participation of citizens in the political life of the country, and they continue to do so.

## Notes

- 1 Actually, the first primary elections had already been held in the 1990s. In 1998, a center-right party, the National Alliance (AN), experimented with open primary elections to select candidates for the provincial council in Rome, while primary elections for the selection of the candidate to the City Council were held in 1999. In that case, these were (closed) primary elections held to select the candidate for the Municipal Elections in Bologna (a historical stronghold of the left-wing party); the candidate of the center-left coalition Silvia Bartolini was a representative of the Democrats of the Left (DS), and she obtained 79.9 percent out of 21,688 participants. Such an attempt, quickly organized and in the framework of a severe crisis of the center-left coalition in the city, remained famous for the unexpected defeat of the center-left coalition, which was unable to elect a left-wing mayor for the first time in the post-war period.
- 2 In 2004 the Regional Government of Tuscany passed a law (Law No. 70, repealed in 2014) allowing parties to hold official primaries to select their own candidates for the regional council. This law was employed in regional elections in 2005 by DS and TF parties and in 2010 by PD and SEL. In 2009 another region, Calabria, passed a law, although never used, which formally allowed parties to hold primary elections to select their candidates running for the presidency of the regional council.

- 3 The general system remained in the subsequent primaries of the coalition in 2012, held to select the candidate for the leadership of the party: participation was open to all adult citizens – even citizens of the European Union residing in Italy and to non-EU citizens having a resident permit – upon payment of a donation of two Euro, by signing the public appeal of support (*Appello di sostegno*), the charter of intents and their enrolment in a Voters List.
- 4 The LN party makes a distinction between “supporting members” and “activist ordinary members.” The former have specific duties, however they cannot vote in congresses, nor submit their candidacy. The latter are members with the right to vote and the right of representation in the party. Such qualification can be acquired only by adult individuals who have been supporting members for at least one year and have participated in political activity or propaganda, upon previous application by the interested party and upon approval.
- 5 Minors and non-EU citizens are not entitled to vote; they cannot access the online platform, because they are non-members of the M5S. Moreover, in order to be able to access the online voting platform, a minimum membership period is required. It may vary and it is officially indicated on the website every time there is a vote announcement.
- 6 An interesting aspect of this was the ability of the parties to mobilize voters during primaries. Based on the coalition parties’ membership figures some scholars assume that a plausible participation threshold was 1.3 million voters. This further explains why the participation of four million voters in the 2005 primaries was an extraordinary event.
- 7 Two cases are missing in the global calculation: those organized by Civic Parties in small municipalities where the final number of competing candidates could not be inferred.
- 8 In the remaining cases, most of which are primaries organized by Civic Parties in small municipalities, it was not possible to find data on the gender of all candidates.
- 9 In 354 primaries, there was one female candidate, in 50 primaries, two female candidates and in 5 primaries, three female candidates.
- 10 In 26 cases (2.7 percent) nominees withdrew their candidacy, thus not participating in the subsequent municipal elections.
- 11 Dario Franceschini replaced Walter Veltroni in 2008, and Guglielmo Epifani replaced Pier Luigi Bersani in 2013.
- 12 If the winner of the second stage does not obtain an absolute majority, the National Assembly selects the party candidate.

## References

- Bardi, Luciano, and Leonardo Morlino. 1992. “Italy.” In *Party Organizations: A Data Handbook on Party Organizations in Western Democracies, 1960–90*, eds. Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair. London: Sage, pp. 458–618.
- Bardi, Luciano, and Leonardo Morlino. 1994. “Italy: Tracing the Roots of the Great Transformation.” In *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, eds. Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair. London: Sage, pp. 242–77.
- Bille, Lars. 2001. “Democratizing a Democratic Procedure: Myth or Reality? Candidate Selection in Western European Parties, 1960–1990.” *Party Politics* 7(3): 363–380.
- Blondel, Jean, and Jean-Louis Thiébault. (eds.). 2009. *Political Leadership, Parties and Citizens: The Personalization of Leadership*. London: Routledge.
- Bordandini, Paola, Aldi De Virgilio, and Francesco Raniolo. 2009. “The Birth of a Party: The Case of the Italian Partito Democratico.” *South European Society & Politics* 13(3): 303–324.
- Bordignon, Fabio, and Luigi Ceccarini. 2013. “Five Stars and a Cricket. Beppe Grillo Shakes Italian Politics.” *South European Society and Politics* 18(4): 427–449.
- Calise, Mauro. 2015. “The Personal Party: An Analytical Framework.” *Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* 45(3): 301–315.
- Campus, Donatella, and Gianfranco Pasquino. 2006. “Leadership in Italy: The Changing Role of Leaders in Elections and in Government.” *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 14(1): 25–40.
- Corbetta, Piergiorgio, and Rinaldo Vignati. 2013. “The Primaries of the Centre Left: Only a Temporary Success?” *Contemporary Italian Politics* 5 (1): 82–96.
- Cross, William P., and Andre Blais. 2012. *Politics at the Centre: The Selection and Removal of Party Leaders in the Anglo Parliamentary Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Cross, William P., and Gideon Rahat. 2012. "The Pathologies of Party Primaries and their Possible Solution." Presented at the workshop on 'Party Primaries in Europe: Consequences and Challenges', European Consortium for Political Research's Joint Sessions of Workshops, University of Antwerp, Belgium, 11–15 April.
- Cross, William P., and Richard S. Katz. (eds.). 2013. *The Challenges of Intra-Party Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- D'Alimonte, Roberto. 2008. "Italy: A Case of Fragmented Bipolarism." In *The Politics of Electoral Systems*, eds. Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 253–275.
- De Luca, Marino, and Stefano Rombi. 2016. "The Regional Primary Elections in Italy: A General Overview." *Contemporary Italian Politics* 8(1): 24–41.
- De Luca, Marino, and Fulvio Venturino. 2015. "Democratising Candidate Selection in Italy and France." In *Party Primaries in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Giulia Sandri, Antonella Seddone, and Fulvio Venturino. London: Ashgate, pp. 129–144.
- De Luca, Marino, and Fulvio Venturino. 2017. "The Effects of Primaries on Electoral Performance: France and Italy in Comparative Perspective." *French Politics* 15(1): 43–56.
- De Lucia, Federico. 2013. "The 2013 Parliament: New and More Gender-balanced." In *The Italian General Election of 2013: A Dangerous Stalemate?*, eds. Lorenzo De Sio, Vincenzo Emanuele, Nicola Maggini and Aldo Paparo. Roma: CISE, pp. 93–96.
- Fasano, Luciano M., and Antonella Seddone. 2016. "Selecting the Leader, Italian Style." *Contemporary Italian Politics* 8(1): 83–102.
- Garzia, Diego. 2011. "The Personalization of Politics in Western Democracies: Causes and Consequences on Leader–Follower Relationships." *The Leadership Quarterly* 22(4): 697–709.
- Hanretty, Chris, and Alex Wilson. 2010. "The Partito Democratico: A Troubled Beginning." In *Italian Politics 2009: Managing Uncertainty*, eds. Marco Giuliani and Erik Jones. New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 76–92.
- Hazan, Reuven Y., and Gideon Rahat. 2010. *Democracy Within Parties: Candidate Selection Methods and their Political Consequences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hopkin, Jonathan. 2006. "From Federation to Union, from Parties to Primaries: The Search for Unity in the Center–Left." In *Italian Politics 2005: The End of the Berlusconi Era?*, eds. Grant Amyot and Luca Verzichelli. New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 67–84.
- Ichino, Nahomi, and Noah L. Nathan. 2013. "Do Primaries Improve Electoral Performance? Clientelism and Intra-Party Conflict in Ghana." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(2): 428–441.
- Karvonen, Lauri. 2010. *The Personalisation of Politics: A Study of Parliamentary Democracies*. London: Routledge ECPR Press.
- Katz, Richard S. 1996. "Electoral Reform and the Transformation of Party Politics in Italy." *Party Politics* 2(1): 31–53.
- Kenig, Ofer. 2009. "Classifying Party Leaders' Selection Methods in Parliamentary Democracies." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 19(4): 433–447.
- Lanzone, Maria Elisabetta, and Stefano Rombi. 2014. "Who Did Participate in the Online Primary Elections of the Five Star Movement (M5S) in Italy? Causes, Features and Effects of the Selection Process." *Partecipazione e conflitto* 7(1): 170–191.
- Lazar, Marc. 2008. "The Birth of the Democratic Party." In *Italian Politics, 2007: Frustrated Aspirations for Change*, eds. Mark Donovan and Paolo Onofri. New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 51–67.
- Manin, Bernard. 1997. *The Principles of Representative Government*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Massetti, Emanuele, and Giulia Sandri. 2013. "Italy: Between Growing Incongruence and Region-Specific Dynamics." In *Regional and National Elections in Western Europe. Territoriality of the Vote in Thirteen Countries*, eds. Regis Dandoy and Arjan Schakel. Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp. 142–162.
- Morlino, Leonardo. 1996. "Crisis of Parties and Change of Party System in Italy." *Party Politics* 2(1): 5–30.
- Musella, Fortunato. 2014. "Parlamentarie PD under the Microscope." *Representation* 50(2): 245–258.
- Musella, Fortunato, and Paul Webb. 2015. "The Revolution of Personal Leaders." *Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* 45(3): 223–226.
- Pasquino, Gianfranco. 2007. "Tricks and Treats: The 2005 Italian Electoral Law and Its Consequences." *South European Society & Politics* 12(1): 79–93.
- Pasquino, Gianfranco, and Marco Valbruzzi. 2013. "Prime Minister Primaries: Candidate Selection between Innovation and Manipulation." In *Italian Politics 2012: Technocrats in Office*, eds. Aldo DiVirgilio and Claudio M. Radaelli. New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 112–132.

- Pilet, Jean-Benoit, and William P. Cross. (eds.). 2014. *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies: A Comparative Study*. New York: Routledge.
- Poguntke, Thomas, and Paul Webb. (eds.). 2005. *The Presidentialization of Politics: A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Regalia, Marta, and Marco Valbruzzi. 2016. "With or Without Parliamentary Primaries? Some Evidence from the Italian Laboratory." *Contemporary Italian Politics* 8(1): 42–61.
- Sandri, Giulia, and Antonella Seddone. 2015a. *The Primary Game. Primary Elections and the Italian Democratic Party*. Novi Ligure: Epoké.
- Sandri, Giulia, and Antonella Seddone. 2015b. "Sense or Sensibility? Political Attitudes and Voting Behaviour of Party Members, Voters, and Supporters of the Italian Center-Left." *Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* 45(1): 25–51.
- Sandri, Giulia, Antonella Seddone, and Fulvio Venturino. 2013. "The Selection of Party Leaders in Italy, 1989–2012." In *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies. A Comparative Study*, eds. Jean-Benoit Pilet and William P. Cross. London: Routledge, pp. 93–107.
- Sandri, Giulia, Antonella Seddone, and Fulvio Venturino. (eds.). 2015. *Party Primaries in Comparative Perspective*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.
- Sandri, Giulia, and Fulvio Venturino. 2016. "Primaries at the Municipal Level: How, How Many and Why." *Contemporary Italian Politics* 8(1): 62–82.
- Scarow, Susan E. 1999. "Parties and the Expansion of Direct Democracy: Who Benefits?" *Party Politics* 5(3): 341–362.
- Scarow, Susan E. 2000. "Parties without Members? Party Organization in a Changing Electoral Environment." In *Parties Without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, eds. Russell J. Dalton and Martin P. Wattenberg. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 79–101.
- Scarow, Susan E., and Burcu Gezgor. 2010. "Declining Memberships, Changing Members? European Political Party Members in a New Era." *Party Politics* 16(6): 823–843.
- Tronconi, Filippo. (ed.). 2015. *Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement. Organization, Communication and Ideology*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Van Biezen, Ingrid, Peter Mair, and Thomas Poguntke. 2012. "Going, going, . . . gone? The Decline of Party Membership in Contemporary Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 51(1): 24–56.
- Vassallo, Salvatore, and Gianluca Passarelli. 2016. "Centre-Left Prime Ministerial Primaries in Italy: The Laboratory of the 'Open Party' Model." *Contemporary Italian Politics* 8(1): 12–23.
- Venturino, Fulvio. 2010. "Italy: From Partitocracy to Personal Parties." In *Political Leadership, Parties and Citizens. The Personalization of Leadership*, eds. Jean Blondel and Jean-Louis Thiébault. New York: Routledge, pp. 172–189.
- Venturino, Fulvio. 2015. "Promoting Internal Democracy. An Analysis of the Statute of the Partito Democratico." In *The Primaries Game. The Case of the Italian Democratic Party*, eds. Giulia Sandri and Antonella Seddone. Novi Ligure: Epoké, pp. 35–50.
- Wertman, Douglas A. 1988. "Italy: Local Involvement, Central Control." In *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics*, eds. Michael Gallagher and Michael Marsh. London: Sage, pp. 145–168.





**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

## PART VI

# Primary Election Reform

As previous chapters of this book have shown, there are many components to primary elections that can be changed. Although it is not always clear who will benefit – that is, which types of politicians, which parties, which types of voters, which sorts of political values – there is still much potential for reform. There have at times been organized efforts to change primaries or to establish them in places where they did not exist. Yet it is difficult to speak of a reform “agenda” or to link any such agenda to larger political ideologies or perspectives. This section explores two reform ideas – one which has been implemented and has received much attention, and another that has yet to be taken seriously by politicians but may ultimately prove to be of consequence.

In the United States, the closest thing there is to a reform agenda is the effort over the past two decades in some western states to establish a nonpartisan “top-two” primary. The idea has been proposed in several states, but it has only been implemented in three: California, Louisiana, and Washington. J. Andrew Sinclair and Ian O’Grady explore the consequences of California’s establishment of the top-two primary, and the bibliography to their chapter lists other studies of California’s experiment. It remains difficult to determine what consequences California’s new primary law will have, in part because the state has simultaneously pursued other electoral reforms, such as a new nonpartisan redistricting plan, and in part because the political culture of the state may be sufficiently different from that of other states, in that what “works” in California may not work elsewhere. Yet California’s new primary is likely to play a role in guiding primary reforms in years to come.

Also in this section, Michael Kang and Barry Burden explore the effect of “sore loser” laws in American elections. Most states prohibit primary losers from running in the general election as independents or as the nominee of a rival party. As Kang and Burden show, these laws may ultimately discourage competition and yield suboptimal results. In many instances, a primary loser may be the strongest general election opponent for the primary election winner, and the general electorate may be more hospitable to the primary loser than it is to the winner. Kang and Burden explore the history of these laws, and their chapter leaves us with the possibility that, despite the lack of attention it has received, the abolition of sore loser laws might be a reform worthy of consideration.



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>