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Electoral Studies in Italy and Abroad. A tribute to Aldo Di Virgilio

Stefania Panebianco and Francesco Zucchini
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FOCUS ON:
Electoral Studies in Italy and Abroad. A tribute to Aldo Di Virgilio

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Francesco Zucchini
ITALIAN POLITICAL SCIENCE CO-EDITORS

In the book edited by the past-President of the *Società Italiana di Scienza Politica*, Gianfranco Pasquino, with Marta Regalia and Marco Valbruzzi, *Quarant'anni di scienza politica in Italia* [Il Mulino, Bologna: 2013], Political Science in Italy has been compared to «a lady in her forties, rather immature, similar to a 40-year old child».

However, some subfields are more active than others in establishing research institutes, belonging to international research networks, and being well embedded in society. Studies on party politics, elections, electoral systems, electoral behaviour, represent a few of these subfields.

The n. 1/2015 issue is dedicated to these research subfields and intends to **pay a tribute to Aldo Di Virgilio, a beloved colleague who devoted his research activities mainly to electoral competition, electoral systems, political parties, electoral participation, pre-electoral coalitions, and candidates' selection**. His premature passing away induced us to depict the state of the art of these fields of studies with some of the friends and colleagues who had the chance to work alongside Aldo. Namely, the contributors to this special issue are: Roberto Cartocci, Alessandro Chiaramonte and Roberto D'Alimonte, Mario Caciagli, Paola Bordandini, Andrea Pedrazzani and Luca Pinto, Bernard Dolez and Annie Laurent, Daniela Giannetti, Steven R. Reed, Rossana Sampugnaro, and Luciano Bardi.f

The list of contributors is obviously not exhaustive, nor does this special issue intend to cover all the research topics addressed by Aldo Di Virgilio. We aim to attract the IPS readership's attention to a branch of Political Science that is directly related to our everyday life as electors and citizens – more or less informed and/or politically committed.

Following the path of Aldo's research agenda, these are the questions addressed by this IPS issue: **Where do we stand? What have we achieved? And what's next?** On the one hand, electoral studies and party politics are consolidated research areas of Italian Political Science, but on the other the evolving political panorama, the blurred boundaries between political movements and political parties, the changing meaning of the left-right axis, the electoral reforms, rising protests and polarizing political campaigns suggest further investigation and exchange of views with international research groups.

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In memoriam of Aldo Di Virgilio

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Aldo Di Virgilio has left us almost on tiptoe. It is not far-fetched to consider that it all occurred precisely in the style he had made his own: with discretion and a sense of measure. Hence, the surprise and dismay that struck his many friends and colleagues who had not yet learned the news of his illness. But even those who were closest to him, as I was, and knew of the uphill battle he was fighting could not imagine such a swift epilog. With these pages, his friends and colleagues, not only Italian, wish to recall his contribution to political science research and honor his memory as a scholar with a work that has the merit of looking beyond the sad occasion that inspired it. In fact, this issue of IPS, journal of the "Società Italiana di Scienza Politica," is meant to be a useful reference tool for scholars and their students.

In the following pages, Italian political science takes stock of the current state of its many thematic branches, several of which have been enriched by Aldo Di Virgilio's contributions, ranging from electoral studies and considerations on the transformations of political parties, to comparative politics. As for me, my colleagues have allowed me the honor of briefly introducing this collective undertaking. I believe that the most appropriate manner to do so is to offer a few thoughts on how Aldo considered his work; these are filtered, of course, by the long friendship that had bound us since the early 1990s, when we were both board members of the "Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica," a friendship which became even closer in 1999, when Aldo came to the Political Science Department of Bologna from the University of Calabria.

He was a rigorous scholar and an effective teacher, loved by the students of his courses and the many undergraduates whom he guided through their first research attempts, offering a degree of enthusiasm, energy, and time not usually found in academia.

He was a dedicated and skilled craftsman, with a keen eye for detail and for the links that bind the formal rules to the choices of political actors; he was a sensitive interpreter of those institutional and cultural inertiae that inevitably cause political decisions to remain conditioned, at least in part, by the previous power structures. So, frequently, in fact, are outcomes as predictable for analysts as they are underestimated by decision-makers. Here in passing, I would like to recall his incredulity—he was exasperated far beyond his customary reserve—when we learned that the Calderoli Law, hastily introduced in December 2005, had established a majority premium in the Senate for each of the 17 regions. In a country characterized by a particularly irregular electoral geography and by regions of very different sizes, this detail was a sure guarantee for ungovernability. In fact, in the following years, political events provided me with numerous opportunities to again discuss this issue with Aldo during our daily commute between Florence and Bologna.

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However, there is no need to indulge in personal memories. There is ample evidence of how Aldo's work left no room for interpretation shortcuts, for preconceived schematizations, or for easy simplifications. We find the first examples of this in his essays on the 1994 and 1996 elections, in which he analyzed the transformations of the electoral supply in the transition between the "First" and "Second" Republic. In the 55 pages of his dense essay in *Maggioritario ma non troppo* (Di Virgilio 1995), Aldo reconstructed the genealogical ties linking the old and the new actors, building a transition matrix between the 12 parties existing in the late 1980s and the 25 parties or movements founded between 1991 and 1994, in addition to the absolute novelty of Forza Italia (p. 187). He then paid the same rigorous attention to the composition of the coalitions in competition for the single-member constituencies, in particular, by setting up a table made up of as many as 26 lines (the constituencies of the Chamber) by 10 columns (the number of political forces that made up the coalition of the Progressisti!), purely to reconstruct the party affiliation of the candidates for the Chamber of Deputies in the various areas of the country (pp. 199–200).

We find even greater breadth in the essay included in *Maggioritario per caso*, which focused on the composition of the supply in the 1996 elections (Di Virgilio 1997). The alliance that Prodi led to victory over a divided center-right was even more diversified than two years before. Aldo reconstructed the 19 components to which the 471 Ulivo candidates in the 26 constituencies belonged—a footnote signals no Olive-tree candidate in the constituency of Nusco-Mirabello Eclano, where the former secretary of the Christian Democrats, Ciriaco De Mita, was the candidate. He was not part of Prodi's coalition; nevertheless, the Ulivo did not intend to oppose him in "his" constituency (pp. 100–101).

As can be seen from these examples, the complexity of the supply in the first two elections with the majoritarian system was incomparably greater than the reader—even the most informed—could have inferred from the media or which ultimately reached the Ministry of the Interior's Election Office as the list of candidates of each party in each constituency. Aldo's is a kind of ethnography of the backstage political decisions, conducted by interviewing individuals with privileged information—and in fact, in his works, Aldo systematically thanked the election managers of the various political parties and movements, the only persons who had the kind of information he needed to reconstruct the details of the bargaining between allied parties and movements.

In this sense, Aldo also worked for tomorrow's historians. In fact, the definition of the electoral supply generally loses its relevance for politics and media rather quickly. The day after the election—indeed, sometimes, just minutes after the polls close—the focus is only on the results of the vote to see who won and who lost, who would enter parliament, and who had been excluded.

Aldo's contribution was systematic in the context of the analysis of election results, as evidenced by the column he wrote for decades in the "Quaderni dell'Osservatorio Elettorale": a well-known reference point for specialists, who are sure of finding reliable data, in-depth analyses, and thoughtful comments.

Returning to the analysis of the moves of parties and leaders before elections, one must emphasize Aldo's acumen in pointing out that an election victory is almost always the offspring of a better supply; in other words, one that is more in line with the constraints and opportunities of a specific electoral system, and, of course, with the expectations of voters.

With the mainly majoritarian 1993 electoral system, the Mattarella Law, the center-right coalitions suffered systematic competition at the constituency level, where left-wing candidates were usually more experienced and better-known politicians in their constituencies. In view of the elections of 2006 and to reduce the risk of a probable defeat, Berlusconi managed to rush through approval of the new proportional electoral system with a majority premium—the Calderoli Law mentioned earlier—which abolished competition in the constituencies and provided for blocked lists, with the ultimate premium going to the coalition that received the most votes. Thus, the Left ended up losing its competitive edge in the constituencies and the Right was able to take full advantage of its main resource: the ability to broadcast Berlusconi's rhetorical skills over the TV channels, completely obscuring the candidates on the ground. Aldo followed systematically the effects of the new electoral system in 2006, 2008, and 2013, observing the different geometries that were created in the three elections in relation to the strategic decisions of the actors.

In short: in 2006, the right and left both focused on broad and inclusive coalitions, with the result that they allowed Berlusconi to recover much of the lost ground forecast right before the vote and to even the score in the Senate, leaving the Left with just a one-seat majority, thanks to the senators elected abroad. In 2008, the two new parties, PD and PDL, followed an exclusionary rationale, with smaller and politically more uniform coalitions, which led part of the electorate to cast a "useful vote" and not to disperse it among the minor lists, except for the UDC, a centrist party that obtained some success as a "third" actor, thanks to the proportional system of the law, net of the majority premium.

In 2013, the composition of the supply was different yet again: the two poles of the left and right were joined by a pole of the center (Monti and allies), a list of the extreme left (Rivoluzione civile), and the Movimento 5 stelle, extraneous to the left–right dichotomy. The result, as is known, rewarded the left in the Chamber but, unfailingly, left it weaker in the Senate, where the majoritarian game was neutralized by the distribution of the 17 regional majority premiums to the respective winners.

It would abuse the reader's patience to recall the other acute and elegant considerations that Aldo formulated, after three so utterly different outcomes stemming from the same electoral rules, in outlining a theory of the electoral supply. In concluding, I will simply recall his detailed analysis of the systemic outcomes of multiple candidacies, i.e., the possibility of nominating, without any limits, the same persons in multiple constituencies. In 2006, this opportunity was exploited to the maximum by the Right: Berlusconi and Fini were list headers in all constituencies of the Chamber of Deputies, and, in fact, they were elected 26 times each! Since there was only one seat to be filled, the candidate elected multiple times had to opt for one of the seats won, which started a waltz of candidates who moved up in the list, based on the decisions of those above them in the blocked list. Given this picture, which Aldo reconstructed with sophisticated statistical tools, it is no wonder that a wave of indignation arose in just a few months against the "caste" of "appointed"—and not elected—politicians. The outcry against appointed candidates was mostly groundless, since parties have always decided their candidacies based on the likelihood of a candidate winning in a specific constituency. But there is no doubt that the game of the options of multiple candidates has eliminated the representation bond of the elected with a specific territory!

A serious wound to democracy that Aldo was the first to analyze, indicating its relevance long before the populist wave raised its indignant crest.

At this point, we are left with the regret of not being able to follow Aldo in the analysis of the new electoral law, now under discussion in Parliament, to see whether and how it can (might) ameliorate the limits of the previous laws. But we have grasped his teaching: we are, in any case, warned that, whatever rules the legislature may establish, party leaders will, nevertheless, still have ample margins in choosing their political strategies. They will always have to take into account the size of their stock of loyal voters and the chances that it might have increased after the ballots are counted: "Ultimately, the point is that the supply, i.e., the coordination of parties and candidates, comes before the response of the voters, who, rather than coordinating themselves, are coordinated by the choices of parties" (2010, p. 71).

Farewell, Aldo, *and thank you*.

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The Field of Electoral Systems Research in International and Italian Political Science

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The study of electoral systems and their consequences has a long history. It goes back as far as to Plinius the elder, and less far away to the Marquis de Condorcet, or to mathematicians like Borda, d'Hondt, and St. Laguë, or to politicians like Hamilton, Jefferson, and Hare. However, according to Riker (1982), only in the 1950s this field of research gained a scientific status thanks to the work of Duverger (1951). It is Duverger, in fact, the first scholar who conducted an extensive and rigorous empirical analysis on the effects of electoral systems on parties and party systems, leading to two (originally three) general propositions, which would later become known as his "law" and his "hypothesis".

Such propositions have been the subject of academic debates that have continued for years and have regarded both their exact scientific status (Duverger, 1986; Riker, 1982; Sartori, 1968; 1986) and the direction of causality of the hypothesized relationships (Grumm, 1958; Nohlen, 1984; Rokkan, 1970). At any rate, they stimulated a flourishing of works about the variety of electoral systems applied in democracies (Bogdanor and Butler, 1983; Katz 1980; Lakeman, 1974; Nohlen, 1978), and about their consequences on the party systems in terms of what Duverger regarded as "mechanical effects" (mainly disproportionality and party fragmentation) (Rae, 1967; Taagepera and Shugart, 1989; Gallagher, 1992; Lijphart, 1994).

In the mid-eighties, however, Lijphart (1985) still complained about the backwardness of the discipline, especially with regard to the research on the effects of electoral systems on voters' behavior (strategic voting) and on parties' strategies (coalition building), i.e. the "psychological" effects highlighted by Duverger. It is exactly along this line of research that significant theoretical and empirical advances have been made in the following years, due also to a fruitful contamination of different approaches from the European and American traditions.

Cox (1997) is the first scholar that had the merit to integrate the game theoretical modelling of the American tradition and the empirical and comparative perspective of the European tradition into an original and unified framework for the analysis of electoral systems and their consequences. Based on the concept of strategic coordination, Cox's work generalizes Duverger's Law to multi-member elections, by positing that the number of viable candidates/lists in any individual district – under certain conditions that are explicitly pointed out — is limited by an upper bound of M+1 (M being the district magnitude). Moreover, and again under certain conditions (mainly related to the control of the

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executive), coordination – and therefore the M+1 rule — may take place at the system level, by projecting the local party systems into a national party system.

Meanwhile, the process of democratization under way in various countries, from Eastern Europe to Latin America, from Asia to Africa, has provided scholars of electoral systems the opportunity to broaden the scope of their analyses and to check whether theories developed mainly with reference to Western consolidated democracies would still be valid when applied to a larger and more diversified number of cases. Thus, comprehensive comparative analyses on the types and the effects of electoral systems have been conducted on new and old democratic countries (Colomer. 2004; Farrell, 2001; Gallagher and Mitchell, 2005; Golder, 2005; Norris, 2004) and even on all countries in the world (Reynolds, Reilly and Ellis 2005), while other works have focused either on certain geo-political areas such as post-communist Eastern Europe (Birch 2002; 2003), or on specific aspects of non-standard electoral systems such as, for example, the single transferable vote and the alternative vote (Bowler and Grofman, 2000), the single non-transferable vote (Grofman, Lee and Winckler Woodall, 1999), and especially the mixed electoral systems, which have had a widespread application in the last twenty-five years (Ferrara, Herron and Nishikawa, 2005; Moser and Scheiner, 2004; Shugart and Wattenberg, 2003).

Furthermore, in recent years some new themes have seen the light in the field of electoral system research. One is the process of electoral reforms (Ahmed, 2013; Boix, 1999; Colomer, 2005; Hazan and Leyenaar, 2012; Renwick, 2010), that have occurred in many countries after a long period of stability in the electoral rules. Another is the way electoral systems influence the selection of candidates and link together voters and representatives (Colomer, 2011; Ezrow, 2010). A third theme is related to how electoral systems contribute to shape the functioning of democracies (Lijphart, 1999; Powell, 2000), the quality of democracies (Diamond and Plattner, 2006) and, under particular circumstances, even the survival of democracies (Reilly, 2001).

The contribution of Italian political science to the comparative research on electoral systems has been quite relevant, starting with the seminal works of Sartori (1968; 1984; 1986; 1994) about the Duverger's propositions and the refinement of the conditions of their validity. Other works are those of Fisichella (1984; 2008), Massari and Pasquino (1994), Pasquino (2006), Baldini and Pappalardo (2009), Chiaramonte (2005), and Chiaramonte and Tarli Barbieri (2011).

Since the 1990s Italy itself has become an interesting laboratory of new electoral systems, introduced in every tier of government, often by means of referendum, and later changed more than once (Giannetti and Grofman, 2011; Renwick, 2010). The first reform took place in 1991 and regarded the old proportional system, specifically the preference votes, that were diminished from up to four down to one (Pasquino, 1993). The second and the third reforms were far more radical: both of them took place in 1993 and called for the cancellation of proportional representation in electing, respectively, municipal and provincial councils, and the national parliament.

At the local level, the electoral reform of 1993 contained all the ingredients that would characterize the debate on future reforms: the direct election of the chief executive, two-rounds voting, the majority bonus (Agosta, 1999; Baldini and Legnante, 2000; Caciagli and Di Virgilio, 2005). At the national level, the mixed system introduced in 1993, instigated by the outcome of a referendum held in the same year, provided for 75% of the total

seats being assigned in single-member districts by plurality and the remaining 25% allocated proportionally in multi-member districts (D'Alimonte and Chiaramonte, 1995). The main effects of the new electoral rules have been the establishment of a bipolar party system, characterized by high degree of fragmentation (Chiaramonte and D'Alimonte, 2004; D'Alimonte, 2003; 2004).

The fourth electoral reform of the 1990s occurred in 1995 and involved the regions. Together with the subsequent constitutional law no. 1/1999, it provided for the direct election of the president of the regional government by plurality and of the regional assembly through a mix system consisting of a majority bonus plus proportional representation. The new electoral system was meant to be majority-assuring, i.e. to guarantee the coalition of parties supporting the directly elected president the majority of the seats in the regional assembly (D'Alimonte 2000). The same 1999 constitutional reform, however, gave regions a large autonomy in choosing their own electoral systems. In the following years many regions took advantage of it and changed their electoral rules, but they did not reject the general model of a mix of proportional representation and majority bonus (Chiaramonte, 2007).

By 1999 all voting systems in the subnational tiers of government were based on proportional representation with a majority bonus. Only at the national level there was a different kind of mixed electoral system based on single-member districts and plurality rule with a PR quota. In 2005, however, a new (the fifth) electoral reform took place for the election of the national parliament. The majority bonus was introduced at this level too, though with significant differences in its functioning between the Chamber of deputies and the Senate (Chiaramonte and D'Alimonte, 2006; Chiaramonte and Di Virgilio, 2006). The merits and shortcomings of the new electoral system have been highly debated (Di Virgilio, 2007a; 2007b; D'Alimonte, 2007; Feltrin and Fabrizio, 2007; 2008; Pasquino, 2007). The system however did not survive the scrutiny of the Constitutional Court. At the end of 2014 the Court declared unconstitutional certain features of the system, namely the long closed lists and the mechanism for assigning the majority bonus. By cancelling the bonus and leaving intact the other rules for the distribution of seats, the Constitutional Court introduced *de facto* a proportional electoral system. However, in 2015 the Italian parliament passed once again a new electoral reform and reinstalled a mixed electoral system similar to that used until 2013. The major difference is that the majority bonus will be assigned to the list with most votes provided that its percentage is at least 40%. If no list will reach this threshold the top two lists will go to a second ballott. The winner of the runoff will get 54 % of the seats and the losers will be split the rest based on the votes they got on the first round. More than 20 years after its beginning, the process of electoral system change continues. Italy is still one of the most important laboratories of electoral engineering in the world.

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The Local Elections

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In spite of 40 years of intensive development of electoral studies in Italy, the local elections have remained, for a long time, almost neglected. The first work on the Italian local elections was from a Briton, Roy Price (1957). Only in the 1990s, as a consequence of the electoral system reform of 1993 for both municipalities and provinces, did scholars take a keen interest in this field of research.

Before 1993, articles or chapters in books about the "administrative elections," as municipal and provincial elections are called in Italy, were very few. In a work dedicated to the electoral "earthquake" of 1975—with the crisis of the DC, the growth of the PCI, and the weight of the younger vote—the local elections had, however, occupied a large space, illustrated with general tables of the results in 4,800 municipalities out of over 8,000 (Ghini 1976). After this work, we can recall a book from 1981 on the administrative elections in Bologna and its suburbs or a reader on the municipal elections in 1985 in Perugia. In 1985, we had another reader on Milan and provincial elections, or once again, in 1990 on the provincial elections in Milan. Guido D'Agostino edited three readers on the elections in Naples and in the Campania Region (1980, 1990, and 1992), which examined municipal elections too. In the 1980s, the most interesting contribution was perhaps the theoretical work of Piergiorgio Corbetta and Arturo Parisi (1984) about the specificity of this kind of vote, with sharp observations on the quantification, the structure of the competition, and the relationship between parties and the electors.

At the end of that decade, in the first overview of Italian studies and research on electoral behavior, there was nothing about the local elections because of the scarcity of contributions (Mannheimer 1989). Nevertheless, in the same overview, it was indicated that there was a newfound interest in elections during the same decade: the birth of a specialized six-monthly review, the *Quaderni dell'Osservatorio Elettorale*, edited by the Regione Toscana, and the foundation of the Società Italiana di Studi Elettorali (SISE) attest to this fact. At that time, the Istituto Cattaneo of Bologna initiated two publications, the quarterly *Polis* on Italian politics and society and the yearbook *Politica in Italia*, regularly translated in an English edition. The basis for the future development of research was founded. In all these periodicals, there have been a good number of studies on local elections, making this sort of consultation more important and interesting.

While the contributions on the local elections before the fascist period remain very few, the first free administrative elections, which took place during the spring and autumn of 1946, have found many students, either historians or social scientists. Among the historians, we have to mention the article on the electoral ley (Ballini 2010) and the remarkable work on the municipal elections of 1946, 1951, and 1956 (Forlenza 2008). Historians and

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political scientists worked together in essays on the 1946 elections, edited by Guido d'Agostino (1989) or by Patrizia Dogliani and Maurizio Ridolfi (2007).

The reform of 1993 (introduced with legislation 81/1993), produced the most conspicuous change in the Italian local elections: the direct election of the mayor and of the president of the provincial government. After the application of the new systems—in some cases in 1993, and others in 1994—the large application happened in 1995. The reform, along with other reforms in the local system, sought to increase the efficiency of local governments through concentrating power in the hands of their chief executive, who would be able to appoint or dismiss the other members of the executive. The new logic of alliance building with the aim of "voting to elect a government" was a challenge for the political players and a satisfactory solution for the electorate. Local governments have changed, pitting the personalized leadership of these "new mayors," elected by the people—"demo-elected," as they are called—against the residual (or resurgent) veto power of the parties. The local elections represented a deep change in both the big turnover of the political class and the behavior of the citizens. Moreover, with the crisis of Tangentopoli, the traditional governing parties disappeared, the lists were differently named, and the class of municipal politicians was completely renewed.

When the local elections had always been considered in Italy as "political" because of the polarized struggle between the national parties and the subsequent influence of the national climate, being really "second-order elections," after the 1993 reform, the elections in the municipalities have become more autonomous and the results are even able to change national political situations. All that can explain the growth of research and reflection, with a quantity of publications to match the interest.

The first monograph completely dedicated to the local elections came out in 2000, written by Gianfranco Baldini and Guido Legnante with a geography of the coalitions and in-depth analysis of the results. A year earlier, the reader edited by Stefania Operto (1999) had been published and included contributions by Aldo Di Virgilio (187 municipalities in the 1993 and 1997 elections), Andrea Mignone (129 municipalities in Piedmont), Daniele Comero (Province of Milan), Antonio Floridia (Province of Lucca), Flavio Spalla (provincial elections of Pavia), Baldini e Legnante (the influence of the incumbents), and Luca Formigli e Fulvio Venturino (the number of candidates and lists in nine great municipalities), with Stefania Operto (Genoa) as editor. Being the central question of the reader, the electoral systems were elaborated upon by the introductory contribution of Antonio Agosta, an expert on electoral systems, who explained the reasons for the reforms, the effects, and the mechanisms of transformation of the votes into seats. Surprising was the 1999 case of Bologna, where the Left was defeated after more than 40 years (Baldini, Corbetta, Vassallo 2000).

Some contributions on the electoral campaigns have been published, but the most important is a reader edited by Carlo Marletti (2007). The authors who analyzed the campaign in the municipal elections were Marco Mazzoni and Stefania Ester (Foligno), Rossana Sampugnaro and Vittoria Cuturi (Catania), Giorgio Grossi (comparing the mayor of Milan and the president of the Lombardia Region), Cristian Vaccari (Bologna), Marco Cilento (Naples), and Federica Boni (Milan). In the introduction, the editor interpreted the candidature of the leadership as consequence of the crisis of the party organizations,

the changing relationship between electors and politics, and the growing importance of the territory.

Among the many authors who have worked extensively on local elections, I have to mention Fulvio Venturino for his works on candidates and primaries and Antonio Floridia for the research on local elections in Tuscany.

Having as editor a regional government, the *Quaderni dell'Osservatorio elettorale* is engaged to promote regional and local research. I enumerate 27 articles on local elections with attention to electoral systems, participation, campaigns, female vote, preference vote, and primaries. The *Quaderni* has promoted research on electoral history too, and therefore, on local election history. In the series of *Politica in Italia*, I enumerate nine articles by different scholars, the most by Guido Legnante. *Polis* has published articles on Italian elections, but very few on the local elections: I can recollect articles on administrative elections in Veneto's municipalities (1992), in Milan and Bologna (1994), and on the primaries in Bologna and Florence (2010).

The main focus of almost all these works was inevitably on the direct election of the mayor with all the consequences, formal and informal.

Another innovation in the Italian elections are the primaries. They are not previewed or regulated by law: only the parties of the center-left have introduced this rule in all types of elections, including in the local too. The choice of candidates for mayor's post through the primaries has become common practice in the center-left coalitions. Many contributions to research on the different municipalities took place frequently. To mention a noteworthy contribution, there is the reader edited by Gianfranco Pasquino and Fulvio Venturino (2009), concerning nine municipalities, analyzed by as many authors.

The only article, which the *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, during the decades of its existence, has dedicated to the local elections was by Aldo Di Virgilio (1994). It concerned the Italian local elections in the autumn of 1993, the first after the introduction of the reform. The 57 pages of this article were seminal for both the future works of Di Virgilio and the entire research on the local elections in Italy. Nobody except Di Virgilio has studied so continually and exhaustively the Italian local elections in the 20 years since then. I can recollect the essay about the 1995 elections in *Politica in Italia* 1996 too.

In 2005, Di Virgilio drew a balance-sheet of more than 10 years of the tenure of the demo-elected mayors in a reader edited by himself (Di Virgilio 2005). The valuation was positive: the conquered specificity of the administrative vote, the influence of some results on national politics, the reinforcement of the mayor's power, the achieved stability of the executives, and the possibility for the citizens to individualize the responsibilities were some of the topics covered. In the reader were also contributions by a congress of the SISE about local elections in Europe, held in Naples 2000. The SISE would have dedicated at the local elections many workshops and two of its three-year-congresses.

In the later SISE congress on local and regional governments, held in Turin in 2009, there were many contributions on different cities with local election history or comparisons between municipal, regional, and national elections. One of the introductory comparisons — a large, comparative analysis of the electoral systems and results in 27 European countries — was made by Di Virgilio (2010). The focus was on the dynamics of change in the last decades in Italy and Europe, the electoral systems, the electoral arenas, the relations between assemblies and mayors, and the importance of the local elections.

The impressive work was the high point of years of the author's empirical research and theoretical reflection, now in a comparative perspective.

The intensive reflection about the local elections in Italy was stimulated in Di Virgilio by the regular reports, "Elezioni in Italia," published in the *Quaderni dell'Osservatorio Elettorale*. The author followed the long evolution of the Italian local elections over the years: the crisis of the national politics, the upheaval of the party system, the new bipolar structure of the competition, and the emergence of local personalities. The entire series of these articles is perhaps both the complete explanation of the local elections in Italy in the last quarter century and the masterpiece of Di Virgilio.

If, in the new century, the Italian electorate landscape is completely transformed compared to the years of the First Republic, it is at the local level much more than at any other. In place of the old system of municipal governments, based on unstable coalitions formed with complicated negotiations after the vote, sometimes against the voting choices of citizens, the changed electoral law might bring with it new local political systems providing stability, responsiveness, and popular accountability. In the past, the local elections have always had a "political" connotation: the issues of the campaign were the national and the international political problems imposed by the central parties. After the reform and general changes in the Italian political system, issues in the local elections are now related to traffic, schools and hospitals, and, indeed, the personalities of the candidates.

In the past, local elections in Italy have never been easy to understand. The reform has perhaps facilitated analysis and interpretation. The local elections have become autonomous and their own political relevance is indubitably augmented. All that has encouraged a number of studies, much more in comparison with the past, as we have seen.

We now have a good foundation. The quantity of elaborated data is significant. But many of these studies remain descriptive. The research is lacking in a theoretical approach, which is surely very difficult to formulate: the local elections are not simultaneous, the contests are different, and different are the arenas. The large majority of the municipal elections are, nevertheless, held in a single round: a general framework would be possible, and so, also, an overall work. What was possible for Ghini in 1975 could be made possible in 2014 or 2019.

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National Party Delegates

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1. Who are the national party delegates?

National party delegates are not just simply party members, but activists with a long political militancy. In many cases, these are people with a certain social visibility, thanks to organizational or elective positions in politics and local-level associations, and therefore, frequently, pivotal members of the civic and party communities. They are figures who can shed light on the relationship between not only parties and society, but also local party units and the central organization. In fact, party delegates can be considered privileged witnesses who experience from within the parties' transformations induced from without. Hence, their values and attitudes are more stable compared to those of simple members — another reason why they represent a bridge between the old and the new parties in Italy (Bordandini, Di Virgilio and Mulè, 2011a).

National party delegates, in fact, lie somewhere between a party's local leadership and its national leadership, and thus can be defined as middle-level party elites. According to Niedermayer, "European political parties are internally differentiated organizations. To study their functioning, five types of relevant actors can be distinguished: ordinary party members, local party activists, local party elites, middle-level party elites, and party leadership." (Niedermayer, 1986: 253)

From a formal viewpoint, national delegates participate in national party conferences and can be considered the party's indirect representatives on the ground to some extent. In most cases, members vote for their representatives at the municipal level; these then elect the provincial delegates, who in turn, elect the national delegates. Delegates are a crucial link in a party's organizational chain; they constitute a bridge between the party membership and its leadership (Rohrscheneier, 1994). In fact, it is they, who must communicate the opinions and moods of members and supporters to the governing bodies, and simultaneously make the party's political line known at the local level (Ignazi, 1989: 331).

Today, middle-level elites are a "strategic group" of political actors not only because they are the driving force of party organization, but also because they are "people who are intensively involved politically, but who do not live off politics" (Bellucci, Maraffi and Segatti, 2000: 16–17). However, they are actors who "expect to become at least semi-professional politicians... [for this reason] they perform roles of linkage-coordination between distinct organizational areas from which they derive the main resources to capitalize in the struggle for organizational power and, in general, in the quest for political influence" (Raniolo, 2011: 236). In fact, delegates were traditionally perceived as the privileged pool from which to select a party's leadership and candidates, not only at the local

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level. They have been referred to as "Leaders in the Years to Come" (Bordandini, Di Virgilio and Mulè, 2011b).

Therefore, an analysis of parties from the viewpoint of their national delegates allows researchers to acquire a crucial observation perspective, especially during a historical phase, such as the last 20 years, during which parties have undergone profound transformations, with split-offs, mergers, and elimination from the political scene being the rule.

Another aspect to consider is the quality of the data that this analysis unit allows one to obtain. Researching parties and their organizations today is quite different from the past. The gradual shift of political parties from civil society to the state and the loss of importance of the party on the ground with respect to the party in central office (and especially, to the party in public office) has rendered analyses of party membership more complex and less salient, whereas surveys on national delegates have taken on a much more significant role. There are two reasons for this increasing significance: first, this is the group from which future leaders will emerge (Mulè 2011); second, that surveys on national delegates can be organized much more easily than those on party members and party local organizations. Organizational streamlining, in fact, has prompted parties to focus less and less on collecting and managing data on membership, local party headquarters, official documents, and their structure in general.

Consequently, researchers who are interested in these types of analyses are forced—at least in Italy—to deal with outdated and unreliable data (Ignazi, 2013). The only time parties try to sort out the information on their organizations is on the occasion of their national conferences, which require the activation of all the necessary logistical and organizational procedures to elect and appoint the national delegates.

2. The tradition of research on national delegates

Although not on an on-going basis, party delegates have constituted a tested research field in the literature on political parties. The first comparative research based on this analysis unit dates back to the 1970s, namely, the EPPMLE (European Political Parties Middle Level Elites) Project of the European Election Study, financed by the Volkswagen Foundation, the European Committee, and the European Parliament. The project was directed by Karlheinz Reif (University of Mannheim) and Roland Cayrol (National Foundation of Political Science, Paris), and involved 12 European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and the UK) and 68 parties; the surveys of party delegates were conducted mainly between 1978 and 1981. The questionnaire used had a common section for the political parties of all countries and a specific section adapted to each party, and it focused on identifying the respondents' political profiles and on the national delegates' perception of their party's organization and political culture (see Reif, Cayrol, and Niedermayer, 1980; Niedermayer, 1986; Reif, Niedermayer and Schmitt, 1986; Pierre, 1986).

The data collected by the EPPMLE Project served as the basis not only for conference papers and research reports, but also for articles, books, and individual chapters, many of them based on intra-country comparison (or on the analysis of a single party). Among the cross-national publications based on the original data set, we recall Van Schuur's book (1984) on the political beliefs of delegates from nine European countries; the article by Reif, Cayrol and Niedermayer (1980) on the attitudes of middle-level party elites regard-

ing transnational policy-making; the paper by Cayrol and Reif (1983) on the different attitudes of delegates of 40 European parties regarding internal party conflict; Rohrschneider's work (1994) on intra-party dynamics in 11 West European democracies; Iversen's article (1994) on the policy positions of middle-level party elites in seven European countries; and the article by Ignazi and Cayrol (1983), based on a comparison of the French Socialist Party (PS) and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI).

Gianfranco Pasquino and Piero Ignazi of the University of Bologna supervised the Italian section of the EPPMLE Project. The surveys focused on six parties: PDUP, PSI, PSDI, DC, PLI, and MSI. The PCI was excluded. However, in 1990, Ignazi used the EPPMLE Project questionnaire to conduct a survey on the delegates at the XIX PCI Conference (Ignazi 1991 and 1992). Among the publications based on the delegates of the Italian parties, we recall Ignazi and Panebianco (1979), Ignazi, Mancini and Pasquino (1980), Pasquino and Rossi (1980), Ignazi and Pasquino (1982 and 1986), and Mancini and Pasquino (1984).

After the EPPMLE Project, between the mid-1980s and the early years of the new millennium, no other systematic research on national party delegates was carried out in Italy, except for sporadic surveys on the middle-level elites of the PCI (Accornero, Mannheimer and Saraceno, 1983; Accornero, Casciani and Magna, 1987; Accornero Magna and Mannheimer, 1989), the PRI (Ignazi, 1986 and 1988; Ignazi and Ysmail, 1992), the MSI (Ignazi, 1989), the AN (Ignazi, 1994; Baldini and Vignati, 1996), the PDS (Ignazi, 1992), and the DS (Bellucci, Maraffi and Segatti, 2000).

A new and broader comparative survey of the opinions, values, and attitudes of Italian middle-level party elites, namely, the research project on party delegates conducted by the "Italian Observatory on the Transformations of Political Parties" was launched only in the early years of the new millennium. This research, coordinated in methodological terms by Aldo Di Virgilio and Paola Bordandini, collected over 6,000 questionnaires between 2004 and 2013 from national delegates during 21 national surveys conducted at the conferences of 18 different Italian parties.

Finally, with reference to the last few years, one should recall the surveys on the delegates who participated in the last National DS Conference and in the National PD Assemblies; these surveys were conducted (in conjunction with those of the Observatory) by the research group of the University of Milan's Department of Social and Political Sciences (see Fasano and Martocchi Diodati, 2014).

3. The research on national delegates of the "Italian Observatory on the Transformations of Political Parties"

The Italian Observatory on the Transformations of Political Parties originated from an inter-university research program ("PRIN"), co-funded by the Ministry of Education, University, and Research and the four universities involved: Florence (unit coordinated by Marco Tarchi, who was also the PRIN's national coordinator), Bologna (unit coordinated by Aldo Di Virgilio), Cosenza (unit coordinated by Francesco Raniolo), and Trieste (unit coordinated by Anna Bosco). The Observatory's goals were to reconstruct the structural features of the new Italian parties and to examine the evolution of their interactions with the external (social and institutional) environment. Several research tools were contemplated for this purpose: an analysis of political communication and the websites of the

political parties; a study of their statutes and electoral programs; the preparation of in-depth interviews with their organizational and communication managers; the reconstruction of their electoral competition strategies; and the surveys on the conference delegates. The Observatory's Bologna unit (soon to be dedicated to Aldo Di Virgilio) has focused its research on party delegates since 2004. The Bologna research group[1] – led by Aldo Di Virgilio – organized (until 2010 in collaboration with the other PRIN research units, and in particular, with the Florentine unit) the data collection during the national conferences, but it was involved primarily in the search for information on the participants in the various conferences, in coding the questionnaire's open questions, and in building the 21 research data sets.

The data collection was based on a self-completion questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of a common general section for all parties and of a specific section adapted to each party's characteristics and to the context in which the conference took place. No sampling plan was included because a survey on the entire population was attempted, by distributing questionnaires to all conference participants. As seen in Table 1, the Observatory group was hosted at the following 21 national conferences: Third PDCI National Conference (Rimini, February 20–22, 2004); Second DL National Conference (Rimini, March 12–14, 2004); Third SDI National Conference (Fiuggi, April 2–4, 2004); Second FI National Conference (Milan, May 27–29, 2004); Fourth MSFT National Conference (Fiuggi, December 11–12, 2004); Fourth NPSI National Conference (Rome, January 21–23, 2005); Third DS National Conference (Rome, February 3–5, 2005); Second UDEUR National Conference (Naples, February 18–20, 2005); Fourth PRC National Conference (Venice, March 3–6, 2005); First UDC National Conference (Rome, July 1–3, 2005); National Assembly of the Greens (Fiuggi, November 10–12, 2006); Fourth DS National Conference (Florence, April 19–21, 2007); Third DL National Conference (Rome, April 20–22, 2007); Seventh National Conference of the Italian Radicals (Chianciano Terme, October 30–November 2, 2008); First National Conference of The Right (Rome, November 7–9, 2008); Third AN National Conference (Rome, March 21–22, 2009); PD National Assembly (Rome, November 7, 2009); First IDV National Conference (Rome, February 5–7, 2010); First SEL National Conference (Florence, October 22–24, 2010); First FDS National Conference (Rome, November 20–21, 2010); and Third PD National Assembly (Milan, December 15, 2013).

Table 1. National Conferences that hosted the "Italian Observatory on the Transformations of Political Parties", respondents and sample coverage (% respondents on the population of delegates attending the conferences).

National Conference	Respondents	Sample %
Third PDCI National Conference (Rimini, February 20–22, 2004)	290	40.6
Second DL National Conference (Rimini, March 12–14, 2004)	310	22.1
Third SDI National Conference (Fiuggi, April 2–4, 2004)	352	44.5
Second FI National Conference (Milan, May 27–29, 2004)	382	17
Fourth MSFT National Conference (Fiuggi, December 11–12, 2004)	104	20.8

[1] Comprising since 2008, besides Aldo Di Virgilio and Paola Bordandini, Roberto Cartocci and Daniela Giannetti too.

Fourth NPSI National Conference (Rome, January 21–23, 2005)	206	13.7
Third DS National Conference (Rome, February 3–5, 2005)	434	27.5
Second UDEUR National Conference (Naples, February 18–20, 2005)	96	8
Fourth PRC National Conference (Venice, March 3–6, 2005)	208	30.1
First UDC National Conference (Rome, July 1–3, 2005)	179	9.4
National Assembly of the Greens (Fiuggi, November 10–12, 2006)	131	23.1
Fourth DS National Conference (Florence, April 19–21, 2007)	324	23.8
Third DL National Conference (Rome, April 20–22, 2007)	305	16.5
Seventh National Conference of the Italian Radicals (Chianciano Terme, October 30–November 2, 2008)	173	48.5
First National Conference of The Right (Rome, November 7–9, 2008)	284	9.5
Third AN National Conference (Rome, March 21–22, 2009)	143	9.5
PD National Assembly (Rome, November 7, 2009)	205	20.6
First IDV National Conference (Rome, February 5–7, 2010)	944	33
First SEL National Conference (Florence, October 22–24, 2010)	385	44
First FDS National Conference (Rome, November 20–21, 2010)	259	43
Third PD National Assembly (Milan, December 15, 2013)	352	32
Total	**6,066**	—

All information relating to the surveys on the party delegates carried out by the Italian Observatory on the Transformations of Political Parties are gathered in the book series (currently composed of nine volumes) "*Delegati di partito*", published by Clueb (Bordandini and Di Virgilio, 2009–2013). This is a documentation work designed to present the research, data collected, and methodological choices made. Other publications based on these data include Chiaramonte and Di Virgilio (2007), Bordandini and Di Virgilio (2007), Bordandini, Di Virgilio and Raniolo (2008), Di Virgilio (2008), Raniolo (2008 and 2011), Bordandini and Cartocci (2011), Bordandini, Di Virgilio and Mulè, (2011), Di Virgilio and Giannetti (2011), Mulè (2011), and Bordandini (2013a and 2013b).

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The study of political candidates

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Introduction

Although there exists a wide range of views about what democracy means, there is a general consensus in defining democratic regimes in terms of regular, free and fair elections. In many countries, parties are the primary actors in organizing elections, so that a widely accepted statement in political science affirms that they "created democracy and that modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties" (Schattschneider, 1942: 1). Parties define the rules governing the electoral competition and control the recruitment of candidates for elective offices, hence determining the distribution of power and the identity of political elites, and finally shaping the chain of democratic accountability that links citizens and elected representatives. The study of political candidates – who eventually form the teams that compete for popular support, defining the composition of parliaments and governments – is therefore related to the very nature of representation, and allows to cast light on important issues such as party competition, intra-party politics and the functioning of legislative assemblies.

The focus on individual candidates is also driven by a methodological interest in going beyond the empirically disputable "parties-as-unitary-actors" assumption, as well as by a substantial desire to understand the trend towards the personalization of politics (Karvonen, 2010; McAllister, 2007; Rahat and Sheafer, 2007) and the recent changes in the workings of parties as intermediaries between citizens and the state (Katz and Mair, 1995; Thomassen, 2014). The goal of this contribution is to provide a thorough review of the research that has been conducted on candidates. We discuss the theoretical approaches developed by scholars on the subject in the first section, the main conclusions of the empirical research in the second section, the methods and data employed in candidate research in the third section, and finally some possible trajectories for future research.

Theoretical approaches

Theoretical works on political candidates have most of the time focused on the relationships between political institutions and candidates' characteristics and behaviour. In rational choice accounts, individual politicians are typically assumed to seek election – or re-election in case they already hold a legislative seat – as this enhances their ability to pursue offices or policies (Mayhew, 1974; Fenno, 1978; Strom, 1997). Politicians will thus spend time and effort doing what they believe voters will reward in the next election. Vote-seeking strategies are sought after within a set of political institutions, which create opportunities and constraints on individual behaviour and shape the incentives faced by would-

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be legislators. Regime type, electoral rules, methods for selecting candidates and the hierarchies of elective offices can be treated as independent variables, as they are expected to have an impact on the traits of candidates and the choice of their behavioural repertoire. In what follows we concentrate on three major topics in theoretical research on candidates for political office: the effects of electoral systems, candidate selection, and career patterns. Each of these is related to prominent political institutions influencing not only who enters the legislative elites, but also how candidates behave during the electoral campaign and in the legislature if elected.

The most well-developed theoretical framework for the study of candidates and individual politicians focuses on electoral institutions (André et al., 2014). Electoral rules differ in terms of whether they strengthen or weaken politicians' incentives to cultivate personal reputation rather than the party reputation (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Shugart et al., 2005). Specifically, in electoral systems in which intra-party competition is present – such as open-list PR systems – politicians are rewarded by voters for their personal reputation. Candidates are hence expected to cultivate a personal vote by maintaining a close connection with their constituency. On the contrary, under electoral rules that discourage intra-party competition – like closed-list PR or STV – the (re)election prospects of political aspirants are inextricably tied to their party's electoral performance. This weakens candidates' incentives to nurture a personal reputation among voters.

In order to become members of the legislature, prospective politicians must pass two barriers, not just the electoral one. Before being elected by the general public, would-be representatives must be chosen by a party selectorate – that is, the body that chooses the party candidates. The same happens for incumbents, who have to be re-selected by their own party. Candidate selection – labelled by Gallagher and Marsh (1988) as the "secret garden" of politics due to the difficulties encountered in collecting empirical data on parties' internal nomination processes – is the object of a second major theoretical approach to the study of candidates which has developed more recently (Ramney, 1981; Norris, 1997). Just like electoral rules, also the mechanisms governing candidate selection can be either more personal or more subject to the control of the party leadership (see Hazan and Voerman [2006] on the connection between the two types of rules) and can then have important consequences for the behaviour of individual candidates (Hazan and Rahat, 2005).

Two crucial aspects of candidate selection rules emphasized in this literature are the decentralization of the recruitment process and the inclusiveness of the party selectorate. Concerning the former, territorial or functional decentralization of candidate selection is expected to increase nominees' responsiveness to the demands of their constituency (Hazan, 1999). As for the latter, which has been highlighted as more fundamental, a negative relationship has been theorized between inclusiveness and party cohesion. Since in order to be (re-)selected politicians need to satisfy and respond to the selectorate, more exclusive selectorates are expected to push candidates to engage in party-centred activities. In this case, to raise their chance of being recruited, politicians need to be responsive to a small partisan "oligarchy" formed by the party leadership or a restricted group of party delegates. In contrast, a more inclusive selectorate – composed by all party members or the entire electorate – implies the involvement of non-party actors in candidate selection, which can lead individuals to

promote interests that are at odds with those of the party. This results in more candidate-centred behaviour (Rahat and Hazan, 2001; Hazan, 2014). While in the above mentioned studies candidate selection has been treated as an explanatory factor, a number of works have analyzed it as an outcome to be explained. This strand of the literature has mainly sought to explain the degree of democratization and decentralization in the selection procedures adopted by parties (Scarrow et al., 2000; Lundell, 2004).

A third relevant perspective in theoretical research on candidates deals with career patterns. Early studies hypothesized a relationship between political institutions and political careers (Schlesinger, 1966) and analyzed the aggregate-level consequences of institutions on career patterns (Polsby, 1968). Starting from Jacobson and Kernell's (1981) study of congressional candidates, more recent works have analyzed individual career choices in a micro-level perspective (e.g. Kiewiet and Zeng, 1993). In this view, politically ambitious candidates make their career choices in a given structure of political opportunities defined by a hierarchy of elective offices. Politicians attempt to move upward from less desirable offices to the smaller set of highly sought-after positions, while the availability, accessibility and attractiveness of offices condition individual ambition (Borchert, 2011). Career patterns have also been considered as an independent variable affecting intra-party politics, legislative behaviour and legislature's policymaking capacity (Kousser and MacKenzie, 2014). At the same time, the sociological study of political elites has paid considerable attention to analyzing the composition of legislative assemblies, the gradual transformation of legislative elites in terms of their socio-demographic and political background, as well as the consequences of these changes for representative democracy (Best and Cotta, 2000).

The empirical study of candidates

The main hypothesis emerging from the personal vote literature described above is that incentives translate into different forms of behaviour that are commonly considered to be personal vote-seeking. In particular, general indicators of a conduct aimed at cultivating personal reputation are whether candidates carry out individualized electoral campaigns (Zittel and Gschwend, 2008), and – once elected – whether they engage in constituency service (Martin and Rozenberg, 2012; Searing, 1994), promote particularized legislation that primarily benefit their local community (Crisp, 2007), or break with party discipline in legislative voting in order to advocate on behalf of constituents (Carey, 2007, 2009; Cain et al., 1987).

Comparative research has focused mainly on the link between electoral rules and legislative voting behaviour, using aggregated data of elected candidates' roll-call votes. Contrary to expectations, Sieberer (2006) found that party unity is marginally stronger in candidate-centred than party-centred environments, while Depauw and Martin (2009) did not find a consistent effect of electoral rules on cohesion. Analyses comparing the voting behaviour of candidates elected with a mix of ballot structures have allowed further country-specific investigation, moving from party- to individual-level data. However, even in these cases the results are inconclusive (Martin, 2014). Following the format of single-country studies, scholars have shifted their attention to individualized campaigns. Contrary to legislative behaviour, campaign activities are more directly linked to electoral incentives and are not simultaneously affected by other factors such as legislative organi-

zation and regime characteristics. Furthermore, the study of personalized campaigns casts light on the role of candidates at the electoral level, openly addressing the concept of the personalization of politics. A review of case studies focusing on candidates' campaign activities shows that, in general, electoral incentives fail in explaining cross-country differences, highlighting the relevance of additional factors affecting the behaviour of candidates (Zittel, 2014).

The inconclusiveness of empirical results have pushed scholars to explore complementary explanations of candidates' behaviour. Tavits (2009), examining comparative data on voting behaviour, found that candidates with local-level political experience tend to be electorally more successful, and, once in parliament, to behave more independently. Shomer (2009), studying bill initiation, found no support for the connection between candidate selection procedures and vote-seeking behaviour, discovering instead that career patterns better account for individual-level variations. Similarly, Russo (2012), attempting to explain the cause of variation in parliamentary questioning – a proxy of constituency service engagement – found that, despite the closed-list electoral system, Italian elected candidates with a genuine local profile are those most likely to focus on constituency-oriented questions.

Research methods in candidate studies

Building on the exploratory studies on parliamentary roles and norms conducted in the 1950s and 1960s, research on candidates and elected representatives has usually been carried out using interviews and surveys (Bailer 2014). Elite surveys – whether personally administered as in interviews or self-administered as in structured questionnaires – are considered one of the most valuable sources of data for studying the attitudes and behaviour of candidates and representatives as they provide direct measures of the orientations and intentions of individual politicians.

Recent prominent examples of surveys on political elites include: the European Parliament Research Group (EPRG), PartiRep, the European Election Candidate Survey (EECS), and the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS). The first two projects focus on elected candidates: the EPRG (Scully et al., 2012) provide data on individual members of the European Parliament, while PartiRep surveyed national and regional legislators in 15 advanced democracies (Deschouwer and Depauw, 2014). Rather than concentrating on elected representatives only, the EECS – which is included in the PIREDEU project (Giebler and Wüst, 2011) – and the CCS have collected data about candidates running for European and national parliamentary elections, respectively.

In particular, the CCS has collected data in 20 countries and 25 elections, using a common core questionnaire to allow for cross-country comparability. The topics covered in the survey include candidates' socio-demographic profile and political background, previous political career, elite recruitment and candidate selection, engagement and mobilization, usage of campaign instruments, intra-party democracy, value orientations and attitudes towards political issues and representation. The Italian module of the CCS constitutes the Italian Candidate Survey, which was carried out during the months immediately after the 2013 elections in Italy (Di Virgilio et al., 2014).

Future Research

The impressive amount of information available on legislators has biased empirical research towards legislature-specific in-depth studies of the behaviour of elected representatives. However, the recent efforts in collecting cross-country survey data on many aspects of politicians' activities and attitudes may open a new era of research in a wide range of areas. In particular, CCS data, which contain material on both candidates and elected representatives, are mostly yet to be explored. Specifically, the possibility to match self-reported information with other sources of data, such as the content of electoral campaigns and parliamentary questioning, or the patterns of bill initiation and roll-call votes in a comparative framework, gives the opportunity to generalise results beyond specific examples and better evaluate the effect of institutional variations. These developments could prove useful for scholars working in many sub-fields of political science, such as legislative studies, electoral studies, political behaviour and party politics.

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Party Coordination in Legislative Elections: Comparing France and Italy

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In Memoriam of Aldo Di Virgilio

* * *

There are people, such as Aldo Di Virgilio, who are able to combine human and scientific qualities. We witnessed this uniqueness during our scientific collaboration with him which started some years ago, and continued until his untimely death. We had the opportunity to experience Aldo's noble qualities during informal discussions held at various conferences. Regular cooperation with him, which took place over recent years, allowed us to see how much Aldo truly was a "gentleman researcher". We are now left with our treasured memories of Aldo and the fruitful scientific exchanges we had with him. We remember especially our exchanges on issues relating to some of Aldo's main scientific interests, in other words, the study of electoral systems, and the use of the institutional and comparative approaches in political science (Di Virgilio and Kato, 2001).

This short contribution summarizes a recent contribution, written by Aldo Di Virgilio, Annie Laurent and Bernard Dolez (forthcoming). It is based on the confluence of three scientific fields: the study of electoral systems combined with the institutional approach and comparative perspective. The goal of this recent contribution was to investigate party coordination in "complex" electoral systems, to quote Rein Taagepera (2010), such as France during the Fifth Republic and Italy since the mid-1990s. Our hypothesis was that political parties have more incentives to play with the rules in "complex" rather than "simple" electoral systems such as FPTP or PR.[1] In countries using complex electoral systems, political actors may arrange the rules in different ways and modify institutional arrangements while learning the effects of the new rules. We also considered the historical context of electoral rules because institutional and political contexts matter. In fact, different types of elections and electoral rules may affect parties' strategies for legislatives elections where other electoral races are important. This is the case in France and Italy

[1] In a broader sense, electoral rules can be considered as the tools thanks to which political forces will go to use the legislative and executive processes, manage their resources (the voters) and more generally their respective interests (Laurent A., Delfosse P. and Frognier A.-P, 2004).

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where presidential and Senate elections respectively have important consequences. The aim of collaborative research with Aldo was to show how the use of some embedded electoral rules in France and Italy have influenced party strategies in legislative elections.

This research is part of a collaboration with a research group that was started some years ago. Within this group, Aldo played a central role. First, he was the initiator with Bernard Grofman (University of California, Irvine) of an early research seminar exploring "Two-bloc-politics in France and Italy.[2] Second, he led the Italian part of a comparative scientific research programme dedicated to studying the coordination of parties in France and Italy. Third, he was co-editor with Annie Laurent (CNRS-CERAPS-Lille2) of a forthcoming special issue of 'Revue internationale de politique comparée' that will present the results of some of this work.

France and Italy have similar political characteristics. In particular, there is a tradition in both countries of having a polarized multiparty system. Or to quote Sartori, Italy and France have fragmented partisan systems with strong ideological polarization and centrifugal competition with some extreme parties (Sartori 1976). However, France and Italy's political regimes and electoral systems are fundamentally different in other respects. The contrasts that may be drawn between France and Italy range from having, respectively, semi presidential versus parliamentary regimes to an unequal bicameral versus egalitarian bicameral systems. Another key dissimilarity between France and Italy has to do with their different electoral systems. France adopted a two round electoral system under the Fifth Republic leading to a long-standing system of party coordination during legislative elections resulting from stable arrangements that have favored the establishment and persistence of political "blocs".[3] In Italy, a series of electoral systems ranging from a pure proportional system of representation between 1946 and 1992, a mixed majoritarian system employed between 1994 and 2001 and more recently a proportional system with seat bonus since 2006 has led in recent times to a more fluid system of party coordination.[4]

Despites these differences, some institutional features allow us to understand why party coordination has become the rule in these two countries. One is the disproportionality of France's and Italy's electoral systems which clearly encourages political parties to cooperate and to establish electoral alliances in two particular situations, i.e. respectively when the legal threshold for advancing to the second round or the threshold for participation in allocation of seats is high. In the French case, the two-round system encourages political parties to coordinate on two fronts. First, in order to progress to the second round parties are motivated to form coalitions for the first round where the electoral coalition partners agree to endorse one candidate per constituency.[5] Second, in order to win a max-

[2] September 16-17, 2011, Bologna, Italy.

[3] It is important to note that the legislative elections of 1986 were held using PR at the level of the department.

[4] Except in the elections of 1953.

[5] In France, this threshold has been progressively increased. It was 5% of the valid votes at the beginning of the Fifth Republic, and 10% of the registrants in 1967. It has been 12.5% of the registered voters since 1978. Today, due to the low level of turnout, a party has growing difficulties in crossing this threshold. For example, in the legislative elections of 2012 a candidate had to get more than 20% of the valid votes to progress to the second round (except if the candidate was ranked second in the first round, in which case they qualified for the second round automatically).

imum number of seats in the second round members of the electoral coalition implement a "discipline républicaine" where partner parties agree to withdraw their candidate in favour of the best ranked candidate in the "bloc". In Italy, the series of electoral systems adopted since the 1990s have also encouraged political parties to form pre-electoral alliances to avoid the risk of being seriously penalized by the electoral rules. The Italian mixed majoritarian electoral system adopted in 1993 favoured electoral alliances at the constituency level in order to win the maximum of the seats in the plurality tier. The proportional electoral system with bonus in operation since 2005 also provides incentives for pre-electoral coordination because these electoral rules define the threshold for allocation of seats according to the type of pre-electoral alliance. Here it is easier to win seats within a coalition by obtaining 2 per cent of the valid votes rather than standing as an independent party where 4 per cent of the valid votes are required to win a seat. Incentives to form pre-electoral alliances are stronger when there is a high bonus, which has been the case since 2005. Under the current system, 55 per cent of seats are given to the most popular list, or pre-electoral alliance, at the national level regardless of the number of valid votes. In short, Italy's most recent electoral systems have encouraged political actors to form broad pre-electoral alliances that include parties which were left out on the sidelines when pure PR rules were in place between 1958 and 1992.

Beyond electoral rules, other institutional factors can encourage political parties to form pre-electoral legislative alliances through a "contamination" effect, when there are two major elections. Here both France and Italy are similar because both legislative and presidential elections are important in France, and Chamber and Senate elections in Italy are also major elections. Their electoral rules influence partisan legislatives strategies. From the outset French presidential elections had strong effects on both party coordination in legislative elections and on pre-electoral alliance stability. The Fifth Republic swept away "local customs and fragmentary considerations"[6] that had characterized the two-round electoral system during the Third Republic. The introduction of presidential elections in France created and then strengthened the nationalization of candidate nominations and electoral behavior (Dolez and Laurent, 2001). It has contributed to "de-territorialized" legislative elections. This "contamination" effect is currently even more influential than in the past because legislative elections have been held just after presidential elections since 2002 (Parodi, 2007; Dolez and Laurent, 2010; Dupoirier and Sauger, 2010; Laurent, 2014). This presidential contamination of legislative elections has been reinforced by the addition of a "coattail effect" (Golder, 2006; Hicken and Stoll, 2011; Shugart and Carey, 1992).

In Italy, the egalitarian bicameralism system also affects partisan strategies, as a party or a coalition must obtain a majority in both legislative chambers. In this kind of situation, pre-electoral coordination can create a dilemma for parties as different electoral rules for lower and upper chambers are in place. For example, under electoral system adopted in 2005 the geographical level for allocating the seat bonus is at the national level for electing the Chamber, and at the regional level for Senate elections. Moreover, electoral thresholds for electing the Senate are higher than those for electing the Chamber of deputies. These differences can have important consequences.

[6] Charles de Gaulle, speech on November 7, 1962 (translated by the authors).

For example, securing a majority in the Italian Senate was difficult in 2006, and proved impossible in 2013. Such results show that Italy's egalitarian bicameralism can complicate partisan strategies because it tends both to undermine party coordination and favor "out of bloc" candidacies. In 2013 Mario Monti, as leader of a new centrist coalition, gambled that he could play the role of "pivot" in absence of any majority in the senate where he could support a center-left majority in the upper chamber or alternatively be guarantor of a grand 'left-right' coalition. Thus, Italy's electoral rules encouraged Mario Monti to create his own electoral list.

In general, all rules (including electoral ones) act as both a constraint and a resource for actors. A "complex" electoral rule creates "complex" pressures for political actors that motivate them to change the rules. The comparison between the French and the Italian cases highlights both the constraints of complex rules on actors and the way in which they adapt their behavior through party coordination.

However, party coordination is not the product of an invisible hand that drives parties who were once competitors to become partners because of their shared electoral interests. Coalitions are also formed through a leader or party who takes the initiative to open up the electoral game. Political parties can then either accept or reject invitations to participate in a "new" game. In Italy, Silvio Berlusconi "invented", albeit in an imperfect way, party coordination at the district level when the mixed electoral system was adopted in 1994. In France, François Mitterrand played a decisive role in bringing together first the "non-communist parties", then all the left-wing parties with the signature of the joint program in 1972. For his part, Valéry Giscard D'Estaing played an equally important role for the non-Gaullist parties, as well as Jacques Chirac, when he created the UMP in 2002. Having a common enemy is sometimes the main factor, which can explain the creation of pre-electoral alliances. For example, Charles De Gaulle played a federal role in 1962 with the creation of the "Cartel des Non" against him. Silvio Berlusconi played a similar role pushing the creation of centre-left coalitions in 1996 and 2006. On each these occasions, these "Cartel des Non" coalitions were cemented by opposition to two powerful leaders.

Today, the electoral game is therefore more open than in the past because the electoral rules are still in a process of change. Planned constitutional and electoral reforms in Italy, and the introduction of more proportional rules for the French legislative elections of 2017 would undoubtedly change the political systems on both sides of the Alps. If these reforms will be implemented, French and Italian politicians will be compelled to change their electoral strategies once again.

There is no doubt that Aldo would have engaged in a serious way with these important issues, and especially with those relating to reform of the Italian Senate and the Italian electoral system. His passing is a both a great loss for European political science and for his many friends both within and outside academia.

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Political Parties in the Legislative Arena: Party Switching and Beyond

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Aldo Di Virgilio's main research interests revolved around the study of political parties as crucial actors in democratic politics. Several of his publications dealt with party organization, party competition, and more recently with party behaviour in the legislative arena, using Italy as a case study. This brief note, which will focus on the party switching literature, will highlight Aldo's contributions to the study of legislative parties in parliamentary systems.

Research on party switching, that is changes in party affiliation among legislators, has largely to do with the issue of intra-party politics. Indeed, parties are better conceived as "endogenous coalitions" (rather than unitary actors) created by ambitious politicians who aim not to create parties *per se*, but to be re-elected to control legislative and executive decisions (Aldrich, 1995). The conceptual challenges posed by the study of intra-party politics are summarized in a volume edited by Daniela Giannetti and Kenneth Benoit (2009) which offers an overview of key themes within this area of research, including the nature of party unity and cohesion, as well as of explanations for why parties differ, both within and between national contexts. The contributions in this volume moved the discussion of intra-party politics, which had to a very large degree been focused on the US context, to multiparty parliamentary systems that predominate in Europe. In these systems, party unity is particularly important, as cohesive parties are a necessary condition for the working of electoral democracy. The Giannetti and Benoit (2009) book also set out the theoretical framework associated with the study of party switching.

Party switching has important implications for how well electoral democracy works because changing party affiliation in the inter-electoral period has an impact on democratic accountability, responsibility and representation. The party-switching phenomenon began to attract scholarly attention around 2000 when several articles examining the frequency and rate of party switching in an array of political institutions across countries were published. Case studies ranged from new democracies or weakly institutionalized party systems such as Brazil, Poland, and Russia, to established democracies facing institutional changes and electoral realignment such as Japan and Italy (Benoit and Hayden, 2004; Desposato, 2006; Heller and Mershon 2005; Kato and Kannon, 2008; McMenamin and Gwiazda, 2011; Mershon and Shvetsova, 2008; Reed and Scheiner, 2003; see also Verzichelli, 1996).

A volume edited by William Heller and Carol Mershon (2009) summarized much of the scholarly discussion about both determinants and consequences of party switching. When dealing with determinants of party switching most research focuses on the incen-

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tives faced by individual legislators. This work builds on Muller and Strom's (1999) influential policy-office-votes model of party behavior, as many scholars have adapted it for individual level analyses of legislators' switching choice. Legislators are assumed to switch parties for three main reasons: (1) policy or ideological motivation where individual legislator's policy positions are closer to another party rather than their own party; (2) office seeking motivations where legislators evaluate that the prospects of obtaining rewards of office are better in another party; or (3) vote seeking goals so as to ensure their continued electoral survival.

In addition to these motivational hypotheses, the literature highlights the role of institutional arrangements such as regime type, electoral systems and candidate selection procedures in shaping parliamentarians' incentives to switch their party affiliation. A recent article by O' Brien and Shomer (2013) provides a comprehensive testing of hypotheses concerning motivational and institutional determinants of party switching in a comparative perspective.

Another focus of analysis has been the timing of switching during the parliamentary cycle. This idea was originally developed by Michael Laver and Kenneth Benoit (2003), who modelled the evolutionary dynamics of legislative party switching between elections. A number of studies has examined how patterns of party switching vary across specific time periods during the legislative term, depending on which payoffs (i.e. electoral, office and policy) are most salient (Mershon and Shvetsova, 2008; Mershon and Shvetsova, 2011).

Party switching has significant consequences for democratic politics. As Laver and Benoit (2003: 215) point out, "there is a great deal of politics between elections. In particular, legislators may defect from one party and join another, parties may split and fuse, and the party system may thereby evolve into one quite different from that produced by election results". Single episodes may radically change the legislative arithmetic to save the government from collapse or to change political winners into losers, as happened in Italy during the 1996-1998 period (Giannetti and Laver 2001). Moreover, elected politicians' choices may affect the reshaping of party system during a parliamentary term without the direct involvement of voters in elections (Mershon and Shvetsova, 2013).

Italy has been a laboratory for the study of party switching as this phenomenon became especially important in Legislature XIII (1996-2001) when almost one-in-four Italian legislators changed their parliamentary party affiliation (Heller and Mershon, 2005; 2008). After 2001 legislative party switching declined substantially, supporting the idea that its incidence in the previous legislature could be simply considered as the product of a transition of the Italian party system, triggered by political scandals. However, in subsequent legislatures the number of defections from parties increased once again. Such upsurge in legislative party switching motivated further research. This is where Aldo's contribution to legislative studies comes into play. Aldo played a leading role in a research team – based at the Department of Political and Social Sciences in the University of Bologna – including myself, Andrea Pedrazzani and Luca Pinto. He was the principal investigator for a project about fluidity in the Italian Parliament. His main collaborator in this research was Luca Pinto. During this work it was quite natural that Aldo became very interested in party switching, as this phenomenon occurred at the intersection of those

institutional and political changes affecting the Italian party system in the last decades. These were themes that formed the bulk of Aldo's research agenda.

The goal of an article co-authored by Di Virgilio, Giannetti and Pinto (2012) was to identify the determinants of party switching in Legislature XVI (2008-2011). This case study was motivated by a puzzle: why a parliament that promised to be marked by stability ended up being characterised by high levels of fluidity? In examining this question, this study adopted the motivational framework described above and added several contextual variables such as timing, party type and party structure.

This article's two key results are (1) policy tensions constitute one of the main motivations for party switching, and (2) time matters in the study of party switching. The modelling results show that policy motivations are both prominent and constant over time. Moreover, the role of policy motivations of individual legislators in party switching interacts with the degree of ideological heterogeneity within their parties. Within ideologically homogeneous parties, legislators who are relatively distant from their parties' positions have a greater incentive to switch party. In contrast, within ideologically heterogeneous parties, legislators who are closer to their party's policy position are the most likely to switch due to the party's limited capacity to effectively pursue policy goals. Coming to the issue of time, this analysis confirms that electoral and office related determinants of party switching have a different impact during the life of a legislature. However, the results about timing were not always consistent with previous research, suggesting that further work was required.

This research has been subsequently extended by Luca Pinto. An article published in 2015 uses a new data set tracking the timing of MPs' changes in party affiliations between 1996 and 2011 in Italy. Pinto finds that switching is mainly motivated by policy reasons, and that it is more likely during government formation periods and budget negotiations. These results are a consequence of the interplay between legislator's ambitions and the alternation of key phases in the legislative cycle. This research highlights the fact that party unity is best understood as the output of a complex dynamic process.

An under-developed feature of this work is the importance of factions on party switching by blocks of legislators. Aldo was planning to deal more thoroughly with the distinction between individual switching and coordinated moves leading to party mergers and break-ups that have been a distinctive feature of Italian politics in recent years. The issue of factions was only marginally touched on in another article devoted to examining candidate selection procedures within Italian Parties (Di Virgilio and Giannetti, 2011). Factional politics is the subject of an extensive literature, which cannot be summarized in this short space (however see Boucek, 2012). With regard to the Italian case, this research question has been recently pursued by scholars such as Andrea Ceron (2015) who examined the determinants of factions' breakaways from 1946 to 2011.

I have no doubt that Aldo would have continued to push forward the intra-party politics research agenda, if his untimely death had not so abruptly interrupted his work. The Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS) project, where both Aldo and Paolo Segatti (University of Milan) were responsible for research in Italy, involved collecting data about individual candidates (and elected representatives) running for national parliamentary elections in many countries. This international research project offers a promising ground to enrich our knowledge of the "internal life" of political parties. Although his collabora-

tors are committed to completing this late research work, it is impossible to replace Aldo. His passing deprives both the Italian and international political science communities of an immensely valued scholar and friend.

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Comparing Japanese and Italian Politics: A Personal Quest

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Like many others in the field, my goal in studying political science is to make political science more scientific. Yet my idea of how to become "more scientific" seems to differ from the norm. The problem arose in high school when my plane geometry class failed to impress. Making deductions from ad hoc assumptions about imaginary concepts still does not seem like science to me. I also find the search for the structure of DNA and Darwin's epiphanies in the Galapagos Islands as exciting as Galileo peering through a telescope.

My chosen strategy for studying comparative politics is to try every methodology I can think of to understand the politics of a single country as thoroughly as I can, analogous to the way biologists study single species in order to understand the principles of genetics and evolution (Weber, 2007; Ankeny, 2007). I chose Japan as my case because it seemed to represent the single "most different case" among industrial democracies. As the only "non-Western" case, the obvious question is, "How much difference does culture make?" and the obvious approach is to compare. Along with many others who study Japan, my conclusion was not much (Reed, 1993).

I taught a seminar on Japanese politics at both the University of Alabama and at Harvard University. For a variety of topics from parties and party systems to economic policy, I assigned three or four articles on Japan and one each on as many other industrial democracies for which I could find good articles on each topic. Every student was required to read all of the Japanese articles and to choose one other country and read only the articles on that country. Discussion soon eliminated any thought of Japanese uniqueness. One student would say, "Japan is completely different from Country A" only to be answered by another student who would respond, "Maybe so, but it just like Country B". It was amazing how many different countries filled the "Country B" slot but it soon became clear that the theories that explain the politics of West European parliamentary democracies explain Japanese politics just as well. The best way to understand Japanese politics is to read research on the politics of Britain, Germany and Italy, and among the three the most helpful is clearly Italy. I told my students that, if one ignored geography and focused exclusively on politics, Japan was on the continent of Europe east of Britain, south of Germany and north of Italy.

First and foremost, I find simply reading about Italian politics surprisingly useful. For example, when I read, "On economic matters, the DC started out as a defender of the interests of industry and of independent farmers. But very quickly, as the links with civil society expanded and its electoral target groups multiplied, the party became an avenue

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for the advancement of the economic interests of every relevant societal and economic group." (Bardi, 2004:128) I think, "That's the LDP in a nutshell." The comparison between the DC and the LDP is the most obvious, but I also found reading about the relationship between the DC and Vatican useful in understanding the relationship between the Komeito and the Souka Gakkai (Ehrhardt, Klein, McLaughlin and Reed, 2014).

Sometimes reading about Italian politics stimulates my research on Japanese politics. The idea of a "mass clientelism party" presented by Frank Belloni, Frank, Mario Caciagli and Liborio Mattina (1979) clearly applies to the LDP but I am not yet sure precisely how? I am now working on the idea of an "organizational vote". The LDP uses quasi-governmental institutions and private corporations as campaign organizations in a clientelistic exchange which looks like a Japanese version of "mass clientelism". However, I am still having trouble moving beyond journalistic accounts.

Other times reading about Italian politics confirms (at least to my mind) my interpretation of Japanese politics. When I described LDP nomination policy as "if you win, you are LDP" (Reed, 2009), a way of avoiding factional conflict and leaving the decision to voters, I was delighted to read, "For many years the DC was reluctant to force candidate turnover because of preferential voting. … Given that at the time Italian electoral slates allowed for the nomination of many more candidates than any party could hope to have elected, it was possible for the DC to confirm all incumbents and also include a number of potential challengers leaving the final outcome to the individual's ability to attract preference votes." (Bardi, 2004: 132).

Of course, nothing works every time. I am now working with Matthew Carlson on topic of political corruption in Japan. Though Japan and Italy share a history of serious corruption, the content and style of corruption varies much more than we had anticipated. Japanese corruption turns out to be less a matter of "corrupt exchanges" (Della Porta and Vannucci, 1999) than Italian corruption, but more a matter of economic and bureaucratic institutions spreading money around lavishly in an attempt to buy generalized access to the government and widespread embezzlement of public funds.

When Italy and Japan adopted comparable electoral systems in comparable circumstances, it represented a "natural experiment" and presented the opportunity to do more systematic comparisons. Many scholars analyzed this natural experiment as if it were similar to a chemistry experiment: "if single-member districts, then two-party system". They found that Italy and Japan had electoral systems featuring single-member districts but did not have two-party systems. Chemistry experiments, however, only work properly when you use distilled water and purified ingredients. Natural social experiments are more like doing a chemistry experiment using seawater and dirt from the back yard. A better analogy would be field experiments in evolutionary biology (Thompson, 2013): change one aspect of the ecological environment and look for changing directions and dynamics. The question thus becomes, "Did Italian and Japanese politics move in the expected direction?" and the answer is a resounding "yes" (Reed, 2001 and 2007).

It was quite satisfying to find consistent movement in the predicted direction but many differences between Italy and Japan remained to be explained. Abstract thinking was not proving helpful and reading about Italian politics proved frustratingly insufficient. Much more detail was required. I needed to ask Japanese questions about Italian

politics and answer Italian questions about Japanese politics. A project organized by Daniela Giannetti and Bernard Grofman provided the opportunity to do so.

The project paired a student of Italian politics with a student of Japanese politics. I was paired with the perfect partner, Aldo Di Virgilio. He could answer many of my Japanese questions off the top of his head and, if not, would come up with answers to other in a day or two. It often took time to communicate the Japanese questions and understand the Italian answers. I assume the converse was also true. Questions answered often generated further questions. It was a thoroughly delightful and stimulating discussion, one of the best experiences of my academic career. We were approaching a "thick comparison" between the Italian and Japanese politics.

I am quite satisfied with the result (Di Virgilio and Reed, 2011). Again analogous to an experiment in evolutionary biology, we found that similar subspecies of the genus "predominant political party" evolved in different ways in response to similar stimuli, not only because the stimuli were slightly different, but also because the parties had evolved in different environments. We made some progress, but much remains to be done. We continued to communicate by email and I would have loved to have another chance to work with Aldo but his untimely death has made that impossible. I am deeply saddened by this turn of events.

Comparative political scientists based in Europe are lucky. They can meet regularly and ask questions of colleagues who focus on other countries. Such discussions produce a shared vocabulary and research agenda. It is much harder for a comparative political scientist based in Japan.

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MPs elected abroad: selection, strategies and programs

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Since the adoption of the "Tremaglia" law to the last general election, enough time has passed to enable an initial assessment of the "foreign" constituency phenomenon. The regulatory framework has changed radically in the last 20 years: from the "Moschini-Armella" law to the present day, procedures have enforced the opportunities of political participation within representative institutions for Italian citizens abroad (Balsamo, 2012). In this context, a first decisive step was the setting up of representative bodies for Italian Communities (Comites in 1985; Cgie in 1989). Later, in 2001, the "Tremaglia" law[1] further expanded the space for participation: it instituted a new constituency (Circoscrizione Estero) for Italian emigrants and introduced postal voting in general elections and referendums. Italians living abroad have been able to elect 12 deputies and 6 senators, while only those who can reside permanently in a foreign state are eligible for election (passive electorate).[2] Therefore, there are many critical points of laws: the drawing up of the electoral district (Sartori, 1999; Sica, 2008), the possibility of fraud, the delimitation of electorate (Zincone, 2006b): and the quality of political representation (Tarli Barbieri, 2007; Gratteri, 2008).

After the law's adoption, the first referenda (2003, 2005), the confirmative referendum on constitutional reform (2006) and the general election (2006) have had positive outcomes in terms of voter turnout: Italians, listed in AIRE (Anagrafe Italiani Residenti all'Estero), increased from 4.5% of electoral certificates delivered[3] (in the 2001 general election) to 42.54% of ballot envelopes sent back in 2006 (Feltrin, Coassin, 2007; Rubechi, 2008). Data also show that the Italian electorate abroad may produce unexpected results: for example, in contrast to the rest of the Italian electorate, the "Estero" constituency approved constitutional reform in the referendum of June 2006; it also rewarded centre-left parties. Also the 2013 elections gave, at least symbolically, a strategic value to results of the

[1] Legge 27 dicembre 2001, n. 459 "Norme per l'esercizio del diritto di voto dei cittadini italiani residenti all'estero".

[2] The "foreign constituency" has four sub areas: "Europe" (including the Russian Federation and Turkey), "South America", "Central America and North America" and "Africa-Asia-Oceania-Antarctica".

[3] The data refers to the electoral certificates that were withdrawn from registered voters (AIRE – Anagrafe Italiani Residenti all'Estero). Registration was required to vote in polling stations located in the Italy "native" or "origin" towns.

* This text describes briefly the main points of my on-going research on Italian MPs elected abroad: reconstruction of Italian deputation profile and the kind of representation enjoyed by Italian migrants.

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"Estero" district: the weight of "Italians abroad" is a determining factor in the election results.[4]

The central problem was representation and its construction in the presence of such a large "orbiting" electoral college (Sartori, 1999). In this context, the selection of elected representatives in the new college and the quality of representation become key issues.

The profile of Italian MPs elected abroad is linked to general transformation of Italian deputation profile and to electoral mechanisms. The last general elections (De Lucia, 2013; Tronconi, Verzichelli, 2014) show profound transformations of parliamentary representation that partially match the new profile of the "Estero" delegation in XVII Legislature.

The "Estero" electoral system and, in particular, the preference system limits turnover, favouring candidates with greater visibility and recognition. New elected,[5] in fact, are only half in the foreign constituency, compared with 64.2% of all elected. Levels of instruction are very similar while, in contrast, generational change is less marked. The proportion of women is also divergent from the general trend: the number of women is only 22.2%. The analysis of political participation (in the year preceding the 2013 elections) reveals the prevalence of traditional participatory activities (party activities, meetings and debates, mobilization) and, secondly, significant activism online. Unconventional forms (fair trade consumption) or territorial forms of mobilization (parades, demonstrations, leafleting) are less important.

The General Election re-elected a large part of the parliamentary constituency abroad, returning even someone who had not been confirmed in 2008. For four of the elected, this was their third election: they have represented a permanent presence since 2006, the year of the first application of the "Tremaglia" Law.

There were no lateral entrances, nor outsiders: MPs elected were all previous members of political parties and trade unions or in one of the hundreds of emigrants' associations (Colucci, 2001). The latter are very important because his mobilization role: "mediation ... between the territories of origin, arrival and return" (Colucci, 2001: 429; cfr. Consonni, 2012). For "foreign" elected, trade unions and employers' organizations are crucial in order to win the elections, even more than the parties.

The logic of selection of political personnel is slightly different from what is found in a national context. The role played by the party organizations is central and the role of "incumbent" MPs is enhanced. From interviews, the selection process seems largely attributable to party logic. A partial exception is the case of the "Parlamentarie" that select candidates of the M5S and, in a few cases, the "Primarie" for the PD. Talking about candi-

[4] PD obtained first position only if we sum "Italia" and "Estero" votes (8.646.034 + 287.975). Only in "Italia", the first party is Movimento 5 Stelle [M5S] (8.691.406 votes without "Valle D'Aosta" constituency).

[5] The research is mainly based on semi-structured and self-administered questionnaires through the platform "Google-drive" and on some in-depth interviews. We interviewed 18 MPs (12 deputies and 6 senators) and 34 non-elected candidates of 227 candidates, selected from electoral lists of the "Estero" constituency. Just for the latter (the data will be used only in limited form for this paper), the electronic method, has overcome the problem of geographical distance. The questionnaire assessed the sociodemographic profile, the methods of political recruitment, political participation propensity, and communication to electorate. In consideration of the universe considered, we considered only the absolute values and it is excluded the use of multivariate techniques for profiling. *The research includes analysis of draft bills.*

dates' selection for the constituency, Democratic Party and Forza Italia representatives indicated national committees before local ones. To win elections, the associative profile appears more important than party membership. Associations have a territorial and thematic aspect that is complex and growing, especially in these areas. This explains the parties' competition to secure the "services" of central figures – to serve as relational hubs – in a network of relationships. Over time, however, prudence dictated the choice of candidates more clearly included in party networks: this was to limit electoral "migration".

As the deputies claimed, it is not easy to construct a communication electoral campaign for the communities of Italians living abroad. Therefore, the numerous associations become short cuts to mobilization. Using the associations as intermediaries reduces the costs of political mobilization for the candidate: in enormous territories, costs are unsustainable for a candidate without abundant economic resources. Given these premises, the campaign of candidates generally focused on restricted portions of territory, generally adjacent with his own place of study or work. Therefore, the distribution of individual preferences means that more than half the votes came from the state of residence of MPs where they, in all probability, focused their efforts. The candidates' approach was concrete: mobilization campaigns developed in relatively short periods and with little investment. From the interviews, it emerges that candidates habitually use traditional tools in their campaign: leafleting, meetings, rallies. Traditional media (radio, tv, etc.) and digital platform appear less central, but this does not mean that MPs are not present on social networks. Social networks become important to stay in touch with the voters in the constituency.

Data show that the chances of winning are greater in cases with a specific profile, namely candidates who come from states where there are large communities of Italians and also from those states where turnout propensity is more pronounced.

In studies on the elected, Parliamentarians' interpretation of political representation is a central issue. As well as data on productivity in parliament, it is useful to ask about the role played by the "foreign" delegation, in order to assess the form given to representation. The "Tremaglia Law" gives importance to a set of specific policies for Italian immigrants, giving them the opportunity to identify representatives of the territories and also some specific policies. Representation should simultaneously cover a territorial dimension (the electoral college) and a thematic dimension (the rights of migrants). As shown in other studies (Carey, Shugart, 1995), the proportional electoral law for the college encourages intra-party competition, which is not limited to the election period but also extends to parliamentary life. In this framework, draft bills and many individual activities ("ordini del giorno", interpellations, time questions, and amendments) are linked to the individual's need for external visibility, especially to the voters (Zucchini, 2001; Russo 2013): a long-term strategy to be re-elected.

The productivity index of parliamentarians reveals a composite situation in comparison with parliament as a whole. From the data of Openparlamento, senators and congressional representatives have very different productivity ratios.

Analysis of the intentions and activities of parliamentarians showed polarization on issues directly related to the theme of living abroad. Even when the subject seems distant or general (E.g. the defense of the welfare state), the protection of Italian emigrants and their rights are frequently encountered. Among the activities that can be monitored – leav-

ing in the background activities of informal pressure – I analyzed the production of draft bills. In sum, the number of approved draft bills is overall very low. For example, the elected are aware of some critical issues in electoral law, especially the mechanisms for defining voters and collecting expressed votes. These reflections express a wide consensus that could ensure a process of partial reform of the law. Despite sharing many reforms, the deputation is not able to build a shared agenda on the issues of migration within Parliament, but it can influence marginal aspects of legislative output.

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Parties and Elections in the European Union

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EUI-RSCAS OBSERVATORY ON POLITICAL PARTIES AND REPRESENTATION

Parties and elections at EU level: a troublesome relationship

The development of political parties at the European Union (EU) level is closely intertwined with the history of the European Parliament's (EP) elections. Academics and practitioners have discussed this relationship for more than three decades, i.e., at least since the first direct EP elections in 1979. Initially, the focus was not on parties, but essentially on elections. Since inception, these were deemed to be "different" from national-level parliamentary elections and significantly more problematic, mostly because of unsatisfactory electoral participation levels and of the "second order" (Reif and Schmitt, 1980) nature and relevance of EP elections and campaigns in the Member States (MS). However, it was assumed that elections could only be beneficial for the development of an EU-level party system, and, ultimately, for EU democracy.

Subsequently, the debate extended to the EP party groups, seen as crucial elements of the developing party system at the European level. While a high level of cohesiveness (see, among a host of others: Attinà, 1990; Kreppel, 2002) and other indicators of institutionalization were hailed as undeniable demonstrations of the positive effects of the institutional dynamics of an elected EP on the EU-level party system, the direct impact of EP elections *per se* appeared to be less clear and not necessarily positive (Bardi, 2002). The fragmentation of the electoral arena that permits the survival at the European level of practically every relevant, and sometimes, even not-so relevant, component of most national party systems and the continuing expansion of the EU could be seen as negatively affecting the reorganization of the existing EP party groups after each election. Moreover, differences in the electoral systems and in their effects on MS party systems at the two levels can cause additional distortions. These difficulties can be magnified by the already mentioned second-order nature of EP elections. Normally, electors use second-order elections to express political positions they hope will be responded to in the first-order arena; but it is also plausible that political parties consider them as ideal opportunities to test the electors' reactions to new electoral strategies. EP elections are often perceived as being even less important than most sub-national (the prototypical second-order) elections; unlike most second-order elections, they involve the whole national electorate and allow for the development of uniform nationwide electoral strategies. They thus provide ideal opportunities for nationally motivated electoral experiments, and sometimes reflect party and electorate behavior that is dysfunctional for the EU party system. The cumulative

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consequence of these factors is a slowing down of the consolidation of and internal integration of the Euro parties as such processes advance in the course of each EP term, but retreat somewhat with each election.

The positive and negative elements outlined above shaped the debate on parties and elections at the EU level for the first three decades of the directly elected EP. The emphasis shifted across time from the consolidation of parties and the development of a quasi-consociational arrangement among the major EP party groups to the feared dilution of the ideological character and identity of the party groups that could have resulted from the massive enlargement that expanded the EU by an unprecedented 12 new MS in the first decade of the new century, but no new relevant themes were introduced until the last two elections. In fact, although it was hoped that Regulation (EC) No 2004/2003 and its follow-ups that regulate the status and financing of political parties at the European level would help consolidate Euro parties and integrate their organizational components, a properly developed Euro-level party system is still lacking (Bardi et al. 2010). Besides the endemic lack of salience and powers suffered by the EU's supranational institutions, especially the EP, this is due to the lack of a genuine politicization of the EU level of government, as national dynamics still prevail in EU decision-making.

The 2014 EP elections: new challenges and new parties

In recent years, and in particular, in the period surrounding the last 2014 EP elections, the difficulties encountered by scholars and other observers in disentangling the complex relationship between elections and political parties at the EU level have acquired a more clearly political nature. What seems to be at stake is not so much the consolidation of the EU party system and the institutionalization of its party components, but rather, the very political, pro- or anti-European, nature of Euro parties. To be sure, we have witnessed a (re)-emergence of various strains of Eurosceptic parties in many MS, also as a result of the sustained economic and financial crisis that has been affecting Western democracies. Such tendencies take on very diverse connotations in different MS, but they certainly have the potential to affect the party system at the EU level as well. The sustained financial/economic crisis that has characterized with a global reach most of the last decade has profoundly changed perceptions of the EU. On one hand, it has stimulated demands for greater democratic control of EU institutions, and consequently, for more legitimacy of decisions made at the EU level. Conversely, the harshness experienced by some MS because of the effects of such decisions has contributed to the strengthening of traditional Euroscepticism and to the emergence of a new kind that has been termed *Horizontal Euroscepticism* (Bardi, 2014). Decisions made at the European level are increasingly being perceived as impositions from few, strong states on many weaker ones, even if made in full respect of the Treaties, and, procedurally, of MS sovereignties. Next to traditional Euroscepticism based on resentment aimed vertically at EU institutions and directives, we thus witness the emergence of sentiments that are aimed horizontally against individual, supposedly domineering, MS and not necessarily at European integration. Although the distinction between traditional and horizontal Euroscepticism may appear to be subtle, it does have some important implications. For example, traditional Eurosceptic parties such as UKIP or the Front National aim at undermining the very existence of the EU through attacks on EU principles and institutions, but the opposition of other parties such as Syriza

seems to be aimed more at the way other MS influence EU policies than at the EU *per se*. Also, the Five Star Movement's anti-Euro stance is more critical of what they see as the negative consequences of monetary integration with stronger economies such as Germany on Italy's ability to respond to the economic crisis than criticism of EU principles and institutions. Although, at present, the specific impact and significance of these two different types of Euroscepticism may be difficult to identify and assess, it seems plausible that in the long run, horizontal Euroscepticism may acquire a different ideological connotation on the left–right axis. This would be more likely if the issues that currently cause reciprocal anti-MS resentment should become more politicized at the EU level.

The 2014 EP elections: outcome and effect on the Euro parties and their system

Be it as it may, for the reasons that were outlined in the previous section, it was anticipated that the cumulative effect of the Eurosceptic vote in many MS would significantly affect the Euro parties and their system, even if it is recognized that it cannot be easily separated in the analysis from the protest or warning vote typically cast by electors in second-order elections against the parties that are in power at the national level. Moreover, another important development was expected as a result of the decision by the five major Euro parties to designate the EC Commission presidential candidates.[1] Although it is perhaps too soon to come to a conclusion on the basis of a single election's experience, this move was considered to be a first important step in the Euro-politicization of EP elections.[2] For all these reasons, the 2014 EP elections represent a good opportunity to take stock of the Euro parties and their system, in terms of the structure, ideological make-up, and politicization.

The overall outcome of the elections was very well summarized as one of "stability amid change" by one of the early commentators of the elections (Kroh 2014). From a merely structural viewpoint, the 2014 EP elections produced significant amounts of change. The main indicators of party system institutionalization, the number of effective parties (NEP) and the cumulative strength of the three core EP groups, retreated considerably. The 2014 NEP score, 5.4, was even worse than the one, 5.3, observed for the second-elected EP—the most fragmented ever up to this point. It should be noted that the NEP score was as low as 4.2 in 1999 and hovered around 4.5 for most of the EP's elected history. Similarly, the three core EP groups' cumulative seat share, 63.8% in 2014, fell below two-thirds of the total for the first time since 1984, when it was 62.4%. These undeniable and apparently negative structural changes need to be interpreted in terms of their political causes and consequences as well of the development of a viable party system at the EU level.

[1] The five EP party groups in question were: the European People's Party (EPP), the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (PASD), the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats from Europe (ALDE), the Greens, and the United Left (GUE/NGL). The first three constitute the so-called Europarty system's core.

[2] The 2009, and even more so, the 2014 EP elections witnessed the launching of Voting Advice Applications. This other development, at least for the time being, has more of an academic than of a political/institutional relevance, and cannot be treated in detail here. It has, however, attracted considerable attention and shown a potential ability to impact on voters' choices. See also these links: http://www.eui.eu/Projects/EUDO/Research/EUProfiler.aspx; http://www.eui.eu/Projects/EUDO/euandi/Index.aspx; http://www.euvox2014.eu/.

Widespread protest and more specifically, Eurosceptic votes in many EU MS were undeniably at the root of the structural changes described above. On one hand, this could be interpreted as a negative development for the strengthening of EU parties and their system, as the consolidation of the core EP groups, considered as the pillars of the Euro party system, suffered a setback.[3] Conversely, the strengthening of divergent forces and the creation of a real opposition within the EP, might signal the beginning of a politicization of the EU political system, and therefore be seen as a positive occurrence. The real significance of this apparent dilemma can perhaps be understood through an analysis of the appointment of the Commission's president—the event that was considered to have the potential for favoring politicization. But in the end, the habitual convergence of the three core groups prevailed once again, for a time with the additional support of the Greens and of the United Left. Immediately after the elections results were known, it was clear that it was of paramount importance for all the five Euro parties to have the most voted of their candidates, Jean-Claude Juncker, elected President of the Commission and not to allow the MS to designate an alternative candidate. Paradoxically, the emergence of an openly anti-European party group (Farage's and Grillo's Europe of Freedom and Democracy) and the increasingly Eurosceptic connotation of the European Conservatives and Reformists group, rather than favoring the EP's adversarial politicization, stimulated the retrenchment of the EP party system's core. The conflict at the EU level is still between the MS' intergovernmental approach to EU decision-making and the Euro parties' attempt to build a supranational political space. The latter objective appears to be impossible to reach without major institutional reforms capable of giving the EP more powers over the EU executive and of redressing the balance between intergovernmental and supranational decision-making at the EU level. In fact, even the attempt to politicize the appointment of the Commission's President and the strengthening of opposition groups within the EP as a result of the 2014 vote have made a difference. Given the current political climate at the MS and EU level and the consequent unlikelihood of major institutional reforms being launched or even proposed, the full institutionalization of Euro parties and the creation of a truly competitive party system at the EU level are still a long way to come.

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[3] The three core EP groups cumulatively lost more than 70 seats between 2009 and 2014. Even if such loss was partially due to a reduction of the total EP size (reduced from 766 to 751), it still amounts to more than 10% of their total strength.

Kroh, Chris (2014), "Stability amid change: Impact of the 2014 European Parliament elections at the European level", Electoral Studies, 36, pp. 204-209.

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Book Reviews

Section edited by Stefania Panebianco

INGRID VAN BIEZEN (ED.), *On parties, party systems and democracy. Selected writings of Peter Mair* (Colchester, UK: ECPR Press, 2014). 666 pp., €62,30 (hardback), ISBN: 9781907301780

This book is a very important contribution to the key aspects of political science and is not only an ostensible tribute to Peter Mair, who was and through his legacy still is, one of the most influential political scientists of the last several decades. It constitutes a unique and extremely representative anthology of his most important writings, selected with painstaking care and attention by Ingrid van Biezen, one of Peter Mair's Ph. D. supervisees and an affirmed political scientist herself. Peter Mair's untimely death in August 2011 deprived the international political science community of one of its most accomplished and original thinkers and one of the most active promoters of research on political parties and democracy. The ECPR Press initiative to publish a book of his selected writings represents not only a necessary testimony of how central Peter Mair's figure was to the political science community, but also a fundamental resource for all political scientists worldwide, particularly those belonging to younger generations.

Through his direct involvement in major research projects, such as the ones on Party change, on the Future of party government, on Party organization, and, more recently, on Party patronage, to mention just a few, he was responsible with a few other colleagues for the rebirth of party politics studies from the 1990s. It is doubtful whether the journal "Party Politics" would exist if not for the favorable milieu for party studies Peter Mair's influential work with that of Stefano Bartolini, Hans Daalder, and Rudolf Wildenmann at the European University Institute in the 1980s.It is at this institute that two of the journal's original editors, David Farrell and Paul Webb, were Ph.D. candidates at the time Peter Mair was a young member of faculty. Peter Mair's work, not only as a scholar but also as a teacher and Ph. D. supervisor, contributed to creating the journal.

The book is very well organized into six parts, each dedicated to one of the six most important aspects of Peter Mair's vast academic production: Comparative politics, National politics, Party systems, Political parties, European Union, and (The future of) Party democracy. Ingrid van Biezen's unparalleled knowledge of Peter

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Mair's work is reflected in the appropriateness of the identification of the six thematic areas and of the choice of the essays and articles eventually included in each one of them. Moreover, the editor's narrative of how the book was assembled provides a very perceptive description of the evolution of Peter Mair's approach to the study of politics and of how it evolved and expanded from reflections on the politics of his native country, Ireland, and on parties of the Marxist left, through in-depth conceptualizations and empirical studies of party change and adaptation, party organization, systemic properties, and party system dynamics, to enlightening discussions of the very meaning of democracy in the increasingly complex multilevel structuring of contemporary political systems. Peter Mair's reflections on this last aspect and on the changing role and ability of political parties to perform linkage functions in post-industrial societal settings has induced some observers to describe him as someone who had made a full transition from being an enthusiastic supporter of the view that parties are essential pillars in the construction of properly functioning democratic systems to becoming an explicit critic of their continuing ability to perform their functions or even of the persisting usefulness of those functions. Ingrid van Biezen's introduction, coupled with the equally heart-felt and inspiring "Intellectual portrait" by Peter Mair's mentor Hans Daalder, and Stefano Bartolini – who was arguably with Richard Katz. Peter Mair's most important collaborator – reveals that his position on political parties even in his last, according to some commentators very pessimistic, works was much more nuanced than commonly believed.

The problem of party and party system change can be seen as the unifying concern of Peter's intellectual contribution and the two sections dedicated by the editor to these themes give the reader a persuasive account of this. Peter Mair was a protagonist of the trend that witnessed a resurgence of theoretical reflection on parties, the starting point of which was probably his 1983 contribution, included in the book as Chapter 6. Peter Mair's works on parties can cumulatively be described as the theory of party organizational change. Party adaptation to changing macroeconomic and societal conditions was the central problem for the theory, which unfolded through many other works based on, or inspired by, the *cartel party* model, developed by Peter Mair with Richard Katz (1995–Chapt. 16). Coupled with the other Katz and Mair endeavor on the three faces of party organization (1993–Chapt. 14), the model inspired later works, also by other authors, on the internal diversification of party organization, and favored the replacement of the original hierarchical/monolithic model with that of the *franchise party*[1] or with the hierarchy/stratarchy/federation organizational tripartition[2] (Bolleyer 2012).

The centrality of party to Peter Mair's work did not prevent him from making outstanding contributions to other theoretical and empirical aspects of political science, as demonstrated by his article on Concepts and Concept Formation (2008–

[1] Carty, R. Kenneth (2004), "Parties as Franchise Systems: The Stratarchical Organizational Imperative,"in Party Politics 10 (1), pp. 5-24.

[2] Bolleyer N. (2012), "New Party Organization in Western Europe: of Party Hierarchies, Stratarchies and Federations", in Party Politics18(3), pp. 315-336.

Chapt. 2), where he admirably built his reflection on Sartori's classic work, and by his studies on the Irish and Dutch political systems.

Finally, the last two sections of the book offer a number of fundamental examples of Peter Mair's ability to identify and interpret, with profound and original views, new developments and directions of politics and democracy. To mention one of his more recent important contributions, Peter Mair's discussion of Representative and Responsible Government (Chapt. 25) is one of the most perceptive and enlightening in the literature. As such, it initiated a new debate that is still ongoing and promises to leave an indelible mark in contemporary political science. This and all the other essays it includes make this book a necessary addition to any political science library.

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Nicola Genga, *Il Front National da Jean-Marie a Marine Le Pen. La Destra Nazional-populista in Francia* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2015). 205 pp., €18,00 (paperback), ISBN: 9788849843309

The volume of Nicola Genga makes a thoughtful reconstruction of the life of the French Front National party (FN) from its origins until recent times. This is done through coverage of different aspects of party emergence, party organisation and ideology. The volume consists of five substantive chapters and an Introduction.

In chapter one, the author analysed the process of party emergence and the main reasons for the sudden success of this party in the eighties after more than a decade of total irrelevance. The main argument raised by the author is that contrary to common wisdom and to what has often been argued in the literature, it was not the innate charisma of its leader Jean-Marie Le Pen – or his role of party founder – to determine the emergence of FN. In fact, Jean-Marie Le Pen was not the most prominent among the party founders and originally he did not exert a strong leadership on his party, but only gradually he managed to make the party central office more identified with him and his leadership. This process did not go unchallenged however, as the role of Len Pen as well as the whole party line have several times been challenged from inside the party. It is exactly in these moments that the leadership of Le Pen, as well as the popular support for the FN, suffered the most. Hence, to hold an uncontested leadership is not a fixed property of this party but rather an outcome of intra-party competition. Under this point of view, FN shows features of pluralism in its intra-party life that are interesting for a party whose democratic character has often been questioned. Hence, the reasons for the advent of Le Pen as national political figure and the electoral emergence of FN are phenomena that should be explained by factors other than intrinsic charismatic leadership. These factors include the materialisation of new divisive issues within society, the introduction in France of second order national elections and the unintentional sponsorship exerted by President Mitterrand. According to the author, it is thanks

to these drivers (that are then discussed in chapter two) that Le Pen started to acquire visibility in the media and with the public.

The first of these drivers was the emergence of the issue of immigration within French society. Before FN, other parties had already attempted to give representation to the mounting discontent of citizens for immigration, particularly it was the French communist party that had started to policitise this issue in terms of economic challenges to the French working class. The FN was able to up-take the issue and to politicise it through a more encompassing approach including both identity and economic motivations. With FN, opposition to immigration became principled and not contingent on single aspects, a linear message that resonated with the public giving at the same time representation to fears that had become widespread within society. A second driver of the emergence of FN was the move from a multi-party system based on four main parties of which two (the left) had been excluded from government to a system of bipolarity with four governing parties and two-party dominance. It is at this point that the FN could more successfully forward its image of third force and of a purifier not colluded with power. Then, the introduction of European elections is defined as another driver in the emergence of FN. These are second order elections characterised by a sanction vote for the incumbent, electoral reward for the opposition – particularly for fringe and protest-based parties – in a context of low turn-out. The author associates the electoral emergence of FN with the European elections of 1984 when the party gained an unprecedented 11% of votes. Local elections also gave opportunities to the FN to be successful and to appoint officials at least in some areas of the country. Indeed, it is in second order elections that FN was more successful, while first order elections in France apply majoritarian rules and restrictions to representation that would probably make the emergence of this party impossible. Finally, another driver considered by the author is the unintentional sponsorship given by President Mitterrand. In the name of democracy and of pluralism Mitterrand formally invited the national broadcast not to exclude FN, a call that was immediately executed. In reality, by doing so Mitterrand mainly attempted to divide the right-wing electorate by giving more options to conservative voters. Appearance of Le Pen in the national broadcast boosted his visibility among the general public, moreover his presence in popular TV shows benefited audience so his presence in the media became even more frequent. Finally, for the same strategic reasons Mitterrand introduced PR representation for parliamentary elections, an electoral system that permitted the appointment of a considerable group of FN deputies in 1986 (proportional representation was then abandoned in the following elections). At that point, the electoral emergence of FN was accomplished and the party had become a real challenger to all mainstream parties, a result that the same Mitterrand was probably not able to anticipate.

Chapters three and four of the volume analyse the ideology of FN. According to the author, this is the result of a complex mix of *dirigisme* (of fascist roots) and neoliberalism that build on the anger of the lower classes without really promoting egalitarianism within society. Moreover, it is an ideology with a populist appeal because it represents the French nation as virtuous and made of homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous foreigners who deprive the sovereign people of

their identity, rights, values and prosperity. The *demos* and the *ethnos*coincide strictly in this ideology that the author defines as national populist.

Finally, chapter five describes the rise of Marine Le Pen to party leadership, again not an uncontested process in the intra-party life. Although an assessment of her leadership is still premature, certainly some important changes are visible with respect to the party ideology. Her attempt to move from political extremism to a stance more acceptable by a wider electorate has produced alternate results, as the irregular electoral record of FN under her leadership shows. However, Marine Le Pen faces probably the most challenging contest in her attempt to create a party central office (and electorate) identified with her: her farther and historical leader Jean Marie Le Pen.

The book has a broad coverage and does not really test any particular set of theories in systematic way, but through narratives the story of FN is presented in a way that is at the same time engaging and easy to read.

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