

## *Abstracts*

### **Primaries and Parties: what kind of primaries and for which party model?**

*by Antonio Floridia*

This contribution focuses on the relationship between different party models and the use of primaries as a tool for candidate selection. This topic is linked to the future of parties in contemporary democracies, as well as to their (according to the chosen interpretative approach) crisis, evolution, or degeneration. In the first part, some features of the theoretical analysis about party changes and their internal democratization are considered. Then, the various possible primary models are outlined and the relationship between them and party organization models are analyzed, with particular reference to the Italian experience. The conclusion is that these various relationships are founded on a different conception of democracy, and on a different view of parties' role and functions in it. On the one hand, there is a view of democracy where parties are elitist organizations and mere electoral machines. On the other hand, there is a renewed view of representative democracy, founded on a virtuous circularity between representation and participation, where parties are free and associative organized structures.

*Keywords:* Primary elections; Party model; Political Participation; Party organization

### **The role of direct primaries in reforming the State in the USA (1865-1915)**

*by Giuseppe Gangemi*

The movement for direct primaries in the USA has been unable to produce significant effects until it succeeded in constructing an alliance with two others movements: the Civil Service Reform Movement and the Short Ballot Movement. Until then, the direct primaries movement had been unable to obtain stable majorities in the States, while later it became a major tool to contrast corruption inside the parties and in the civil service system. This essay describes the contribution the direct primaries gave, in the USA, to the reform of the State. As far as the empirical research argumentation is concerned, this contribution introduces only a part (the one concerning the USA between 1865 and 1915) of a more complex comparative design, which is structured on two approaches: a synchronic one (the state

of the political system in Italy from 1871 to 1901 compared to the US system from 1865 to 1915) and a diachronic one (the state of the political system in Italy from 1892 to 1922 compared to the political system in Italy from 1992 to 2010). The main conclusions of the research, as well as of the pages presented here, are: a) many differences occur between the changes introduced at the end of the XIX century in the US system (which enforced the quality of democracy) and the changes introduced in the Italian system (which instead weakened the quality of democracy and contributed to the crisis of the Italian liberal State and to the advent of fascism); b) the primaries experienced in Italy in the last years, are quite different from the direct primaries realised in the USA, being instead more similar to the kind of primaries contrasted by the direct primaries movement at the end of the XIX century.

*Keywords:* Primary elections; Participation; Spoils system

### **Primaries: parties' democratization efforts, citizen participation and plebiscitary issues**

*by Antonino Anastasi*

The article aims at showing the difficulties faced in introducing primary elections in the Italian representative democracy. The theoretical content of this contribution is twofold. First some questions concerning primary elections as a device for the selection of parties' candidates will be discussed; then the impact of the primary vote on citizens' participation resources to party-politics arena will be analyzed. These topics are dealt by following two paths. The first is devoted to briefly reconstruct the political consequences of different types of primary elections in the USA. The second path focuses on the development of the theoretical and political debate on primary elections in Italy, in a context characterized by crisis and transformation of political parties. According to the literature, when primary elections are pursued by party coalitions, then it is highly probable that they may lead to harsh conflicts among, and inside, the involved parties. The last part of this essay reports in fact two striking examples: the primary elections to select the centre-left coalition's mayoral candidate in Palermo and Aversa in 2006. The outcomes of this analysis show that political parties do not become open and transparent organizations as an immediate result of the introduction of primary elections. As well, they prove that it is not possible to consider primary elections as the only way to improve openness, transparency, responsiveness and accountability of organizations, such as political parties and institutions in liberal-representative democracies.

*Keywords:* Party system; Party organization; Primary elections; Political participation; Plebiscitarianism

## **Women and primary elections: political participation and activation networks**

*by Simona Gozzo and Venera Tomaselli*

This contribution aims at analyzing voters' characteristics and their preference motivations at the first Italian national primary elections in 2005 and the Sicilian regional primary elections in 2006. This analysis mainly focuses on gender differences and is based on a sample of face-to-face interviews. In 2005 the primary elections were called in order to select the centre-left coalition candidate for the following parliamentary elections, while the 2006 ones in order to choose the president of the Sicily region. Several differences between these two primary votes are to be detected, first of all the fact that the regional primaries were much more competitive. Both elections are analyzed by focusing on the voters' propensity for political and civic involvement with a specific gender-oriented perspective. Political engagement's mechanisms are reconstructed, allowing to single out different participatory profiles. Furthermore, voting motivation and priorities, cognitive dimensions as well as political communication tools employed by the candidates are considered in order to provide a more accurate explanation of voters' behavior and attitudes.

*Keywords:* Primary elections; Gender-oriented studies; Political participation; Civic involvement; Analysis of latent dimensions.