

PRIMARIES AND POLITICAL PARTIES IN EUROPE
A PROPOSAL FOR A TAILORED ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

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Work in progress (there is no point in quoting this version)

1. Parties' rationales for externalizing candidate and leader selection procedures

Most recent literature that analyzes parties from an organizational perspective focuses often on the concepts of intra-party democracy and party organizational democratization (Scarrow, 1999; Scarrow and Kittilson, 2003; LeDuc, Niemi and Norris, 2002; Bosco and Morlino, 2007). Le Duc (2001) and Rahat and Hazan (2007) underline that the most used instrument for implementing this 'democratization' process is the enhancement of the inclusiveness of the methods for candidate and party leadership selection. The actors endowed with candidate and leader selection powers are the central actors in the functioning of the party according to many authors (Gallagher and Marsh 1988, Marsh 1993; Massari, 2004; Hazan and Rahat, 2010). At the moment, the most inclusive method identified by the literature for selecting candidates for elections or the party leader is represented by party primaries, i.e. internal direct elections by party members and (sometimes) supporters and voters (Cross and Blais, 2008 and 2009; Kenig, 2009). Although the literature on primaries is quite extensive, especially concerning the development of this instrument within the US political system (see, for example, Ranney, 1972; Norrander, 1989; Palmer, 1997; Morton and Gerber, 1998; Hopkin, 2001; Ware, 2002; Cohen et al., 2008) the analysis of the implementation of primary elections outside the US and in particular within the European context is not equally developed (Heidar and Saglie, 2003; Valbruzzi, 2005; Lisi, 2009; Wauters, 2009; Pasquino and Venturino, 2009 and 2010; De Luca and Venturino, 2010, Seddone and Venturino, 2011). Nevertheless, this instrument has been adopted by parties active in several European countries such as, for example, Finland, Denmark, France, Spain, Greece and Italy (Laurent and Dolez, 2007; Lisi, 2009; Kenig, 2009; Mavrogordatos, 2005).

In particular, with regard to the European (or non-US) political context, the main dimension of primary politics to be taken into account according to tailored analytical frameworks is the one dealing with party organizational structures and particularly party membership role. Literature on party politics generally argues that primaries represent a further step in the organizational evolution of political parties. Following the analysis proposed by Katz and Mair (1993, 1994; 1995; 2002; 2009) we can easily see how parties have progressively and strategically reduced the size of the "party on the ground". The party in public office has taken over the organizational role of mass membership. Political parties seem to find new legitimacy in the participation in government rather than in social integration and encapsulation of voters and activists: the result is a shift in the mobilizing dynamic of intra-party politics. In this perspective, party organizational changes such as internal democratization processes and the adoption of primary elections are often analyzed in relation to the evolution of party model and in particular of the model of mass party theorized by Neumann (1956) and Duverger (1961). Trying to attract the median voter (Downs, 1956), political parties are argued now to target their political message for all the electorate, adopting thus a catch-all approach (Kirchheimer, 1966). The old organizational structures, rooted in the grass-roots membership and ideologically distinctive, have been replaced by this new logic in the mobilization of party supporters. These evolutions are often though to interact with (and in some cases explain) parties' organizational shifts towards (at least apparent) greater internal democracy. At any rate, when studying the explanatory factors and the potential consequences of the adoption of primary elections by European parties, it appears rather relevant to take into account previous literature on party models and party organizational transformations.

Moreover, other political dynamics, which to some extent are also specific to the European context, might play a role in the analysis of the main dimensions primary politics. The processes of party personalization and professionalization in communication strategies have been long described by party politics literature and are argued to have replaced party ideological strength in its role of main instrument of interparty

competition (Panebianco, 1982; Poguntke and Webb, 2005). These new tools for mobilizing voters may allow to attract new quotas of the electoral market, but do not guarantee a loyal and stable electoral support (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000), thus affecting negatively the transformation of voters into activists (Raniolo, 2004; 2006). If we take into account the growing evidence on the generalized decline of party membership and of election turnout in Western Europe (Scarrow, 2000; Scarrow, 1996), it seems that this new approach to electoral and party mobilization might not be as effective as it was intended to be in terms of outcomes of the new mobilizing strategies it entails (Mair and van Biezen, 2001; Mair, van Biezen and Poguntke, 2011). Furthermore, the increasing spread of anti-party and anti-politics feelings among citizens and voters, as well as the decline in the levels of political trust witnessed recently in many advanced democracies, seem to strengthen the idea of the emergence and gradual deepening of the gap between parties and their supporters (Bardi, 1996; Poguntke, 1996; Poguntke and Scarrow, 1996; Scarrow, 1996; Dalton, 2008).

Furthermore, primary elections are a recurrent theme in the debate about internal democracy, parties and their organizational changes (Mair, 1994; Katz and Mair, 1995; Scarrow, 1999; Seyd, 1999; Katz, 2001; Ware, 2002; Bolleyer, 2011). Especially within North American literature, there seem to be on this issue a deeply rooted prejudice (Ranney, 1972; May, 1973). The idea is that primaries could lead parties to an organizational and possibly electoral decline because they are thought to entail a gradual weakening of the control exerted by the party leadership on the recruitment procedures and on the organizational boundaries of parties, as well as to strengthen internal divisions and the autonomy of candidates from party central bodies (Hopkin, 2001). Indeed, if candidates are selected by a wider electorate, they will be responsive to this larger selectorate and not to the party (Ware, 2002). But then, in the European (or rather, non-US) context, the literature recently noticed an increasingly extensive and strategic use of this instrument for selecting candidates or party leaders. On the basis of this empirical fact, increasing scholarly attention has been paid to the phenomenon and several explorative analyses of the political economy of candidate and leadership selection rules have been recently developed (Hazan, 1997; Le Duc, 2001; Hopkin, 2001; Pennings and Hazan, 2001; Rahat and Hazan, 2006; Kenig, 2009). In the last decades European parties have adopted a wide range of different types of internal elections and party politics scholars are currently attempting to understand and conceptualize both the causes and the consequences of such organizational changes.

In fact, primary elections for choosing party leaders and candidates are becoming usual events for European parties. Although apparently foreign to European political culture and party systems, open (to all voters) primaries for selecting party leaders and candidates to elected offices have been increasingly used by European parties in the last decade (Kenig, 2009; Cross and Blais, 2012a). Moreover, closed primaries (also called the "One Member One Vote" system) have been adopted by parties in many Western and Eastern European countries since the 1970s. Straying from the original model of US primaries, where the direct primaries have been used for more than two centuries (Ranney, 1972; Palmer, 1997; Cohen et al., 2008), European parties have re-adapted primaries to their needs. This adaptation process is mainly due to the different role played by parties in the national party systems within the European context and it is also related to the different challenges that parties have to face in the contemporary European societies. The organizational nature of parties in Europe is very far from the one existing in the US. The very concept of party membership, so crucial in the study of primary elections, has a completely different meaning in the US and the European political context (Stone, Rapoport and Schneider, 2004; Heidar, 2006). The linkage between voters, parties and representatives is developed on the basis of significantly different dynamics in the two contexts.

Moreover, the effects of the adoption of primary elections on parties' electoral dynamics are also highly contested within the US literature on the subject. In fact, the question that arises here concerns the electoral gain in promoting primaries. Literature on primaries is controversial on the issue of the electoral appeal of candidates selected through primary elections. If the literature is quite varied on the trade-off between the openness and inclusiveness of the candidate selection process and the electability of these candidates, the question of the negative impact in electoral terms of these inclusive internal elections is still under discussion. The differences in the ideological positions of the general electorate and the electorate mobilized by primaries (Kaufmann et al., 2005; Norrander, 1989) are generally thought to explain the argued negative effects in electoral terms. In this perspective, the results of primaries in terms of participation could be difficult to be valued by the general electorate (Adams and Merrill, 2008). Other studies focus the attention on the negative stance and the aggressive discourse of primary campaigns. The mutual de-legitimization between primary candidates could disclose and emphasize internal conflicts and unsolved rivalries (Djupe and Peterson, 2002; Haines and Rhine, 1998; Peterson and Djupe 2005). Finally, other stances on this issue refer to the concept of divisiveness (Atkeson, 1998; Bernstein, 1977; Born, 1981; Hacker, 1965; Hogan, 2003; Johnson et al., 2010; Kenney, 1988; Kenney and Rice, 1984; Makse and Sokhey, 2010; Piereson and Smith, 1975; Ware, 1979; Wichowsky and Niebler, 2010). The idea is that divisiveness in primary elections could demotivate party members and supporters. In fact the high level of competitiveness could affect the electoral choices of loser candidate's supporters leading to their electoral defection.

In terms of party image, primary elections can be considered as a tool used by parties in order to compensate the loss of legitimacy towards the electorate, to regain political credibility and to attract new supporters. Thus, parties are thought to provide more internal decision-making power to their grass-roots members and supporters as an incentive to their own membership to mobilize internally and to present a public image of being open and 'democratic' (Mair, 1994, Seyd, 1999; Scarrow, 1999; Scarrow, Webb and Farrell, 2000). Primaries represent a new pattern in the relationship between parties and their supporters. On the one hand, the adoption of internal direct elections contributes to incentive the internal mobilization of members already enrolled in the party, proposing new activist proceedings that in some way could represent a re-edition of the traditional mobilizing strategies of mass-based parties. On the other hand, primaries provide new opportunities for participation to those citizens less inclined to intra-party, traditional activism. In fact, the open and inclusive character of this instrument incentive new typologies of political participation, which do not require any formal affiliation to the party, but instead develop an intermittent participatory behaviour that concerning in particular voters interested by cognitive mobilization (Dalton 2008). In this perspective of political economy of leadership and candidate selection methods, primaries are considered mainly as a tool used and promoted by parties with the specific goal of building a new relationship with supporters that is subsequent to their own catch-all electoral strategies.

These two main dimensions of primary politics outlined here and concerning the internal and external consequences of such instruments, still need to be systematically and theoretically addressed within the European contexts. Hazan and Rahat (2007 and 2010) describe four dimensions for evaluating the functioning of leader and candidate selection methods: participation, representation, competition and responsiveness. Even though the literature on the political consequence of leadership and candidate selection processes outside the US is quite varied (Obler, 1974; Rapoport, Abramowitz and McGlennon, 1986; Hazan, 1996; Rahat and Sher-Hadar, 1999; Meirowitz, 2005; Cermel, 2007; Maravall, 2008; Hazan, 2002; Barnea and Rahat, 2007; Rahat et al., 2008, Rahat, 2009; Kenig, 2009), it is also highly fragmented, while cross-national and comparative studies have been developed only very recently. Moreover, the

analyses of candidate and leader selection methods and other intra-party elections have been generally limited to a description of the current and previous situations (Faucher-King and Treille, 2003; Heidar and Saglie, 2003; Seyd and Whiteley, 2004) or to an evaluation of the influence that the party on the grounds can exert through these processes (Scarrow, 1999; Wauters, 2003).

The aim of this paper is thus to launch a scholarly debate on the most pertinent way for approaching the analysis of primary elections within the European political context. We attempt at providing an exploratory analytical framework for documenting and evaluating the impact of primary elections on political parties. Given the new relevance of this organizational and political instrument within European party politics, it appears rather crucial to find appropriate analytical tools for understanding its functioning and its consequences. The classic literature and theoretical approaches to the study of primaries has been elaborated on the basis of the American experience. Given the significance of the difference between the structures of European countries' political systems and those present in the US, we need to elaborate new analytical schemes that stemming from the classical US theoretical and empirical models could be adapted to the European electoral, party and political context in the most effective way. In this paper, we will thus try to propose a few operationalization reflections, hoping to stimulate a scholarly debate on the subject. Our aim is to understand which are the main changes triggered by the adoption of these inclusive procedures for selecting leaders and candidates, both in terms of external (electoral) and internal (organizational) dynamics.

In fact, the literature is often conflicting with regard to the organizational and electoral changes entailed by the adoption of primary elections, especially open ones. For instance, on the one hand some scholars have underlined the political shortcomings with regards to internal cohesion that may be associated to the introduction of this instrument for selecting leaders and candidates: primary voters are usually considered to be more ideologically extreme than the general electorate and this might entail significant consequences in terms of candidates electability in general elections (Key 1956; Lengle 1981; Polsby 1983; Colomer 2002). On the other hand, other studies pointed out the fact that (open) primaries could negatively affect the candidate loyalty to the party, because his/her nomination is legitimated outside the party, directly by primary voters (Hopkins 2001). Then again, other scholars argue that primaries allow party central leadership bypassing the control of middle-level elites and local organizers and thus tend to increase their autonomy and their power (Katz and Mair, 1993 and 1995). Conversely, some studies argue that the differences between the selectorate and the electorate in terms of ideological positions are not that relevant (Geer 1988; Kaufmann et al. 2003) and that candidates selected through primary elections actually do not tend adopt extremist platforms, because they aim at preserving their ideological loyalty to the party (King 1999; Hansolabehere et al. 2001).

2. Primary elections in the European context

Before presenting an overview of the potential consequences of primary elections on European parties, it might be useful to briefly provide a general definition of the concept. Party leader and candidate selection through direct election is often labeled as open or closed primary election, although the adoption of the terms of “primaries” or “primary elections” for designing those specific internal elections, either open to all members or the wider electorate, is somewhat controversial in the European literature (Fabbrini, 2002; Valbruzzi, 2005 and 2008; Lisi, 2009; Castaldo, 2009; Gangemi, 2009; Pasquino and Venturino, 2010; Lefebvre, 2011). In fact, Hazan and Rahat (2006) define as non-party or open primaries all the methods for leader and candidate selection that are open to all voters. They define, on the other hand, as party or closed primaries (or also OMOV systems, ‘one member one vote’) all the methods for leader and candidate selection that are open only to party members (Valbruzzi, 2005; Rahat and Hazan, 2007). In the American literature, on the contrary, primary elections are defined as those elections in which party members or voters select candidates for a subsequent election (Ware, 2002). As Ware pointed out in his work on the American direct primary, nowadays in the US in almost every state the *“selection of candidates for public office takes the form of an election that is organized by a state agency, rather than parties themselves, and is subject to state law”* (2002:2). From this basic definition of primary elections within American political settings, we can easily see the three main points of variation between the American direct primaries and the direct election of party president within European parties:

1. The instrument has been elaborated mainly in the framework of the nominating procedures for electoral mandates rather than for party internal mandates;
2. The primary election is thought to be regulated by (state) law and organized by external bodies and not directly by the party;
3. There is a direct and essential link between the nominating procedure and the subsequent (general) election. This representation link is reflected in the requirement of an overall correspondence between the primary electorate and the general electorate. According to some authors, then, we can define as primary elections those electoral competitions open not only to party members but also to registered voters and sympathizers (Fusaro, 2006: 44).

We are aware that using the same concept for identifying two objectively different phenomena such as primary election in the US and internal elections for selecting the party leader within Western European parties might represent a clear case of “concept misformation” (Sartori, 1970: 1038). Nevertheless, we underline here the absence of specific research tools for studying such new organizational features of European parties and also the undeniable similarity of several organizational dimensions and of various symbolic aspects between the internal direct elections for selecting the leader and candidates in Europe (both OMOV systems and those open to the electorate at large) and the primary elections for selecting presidential and gubernatorial candidates in the US (Rahat and Kenig, 2011). Although European primaries for selecting the leader and/or the candidates for office are mainly organized and financed by parties themselves, in many cases the regulation of such instruments is provided by state law, as for instance is the case in Germany or Finland (Ranney, 1981: 81). In many other cases, also, the selection body is open to the entire general electorate and not only to party members. Moreover, beside such practical and organizational similarities as those outlined above, the main argument in favor of using the concept of

primaries within the European context, in particular for studying the elections for selecting party leaders, is that the linkage with subsequent elections might be latent but is generally present. Although the party leader is not technically and automatically a candidate for general or presidential elections at the moment of the selection procedure, in most parties the leader is automatically designed as candidate for Prime Minister (or President) in subsequent elections (Valbruzzi, 2005; Kenig, 2009b and 2010). In conclusion, in this paper we propose few suggestions on the potential development of an analytical framework for studying in a comprehensive way the various dimensions of primary politics, taking into account at the same time all those party internal ballots used either for choosing the leader or the party candidates for office and open either to registered members or to party voters.

3. Exploratory suggestions for evaluating primaries' impact on political parties

In this section, we elaborate a preliminary, exploratory proposal of an analytical framework for explaining in a comparative perspective the impact of primaries on political parties both internally (on other organizational features and settings) and externally (on their electoral performance). Tables 1 and 2 summarize our suggestions for identifying the most pertinent indicators for assessing the impact of primaries on political parties. In fact, within North American literature, there seems to be a lack of consensus on the actual consequences of primary elections on other party organizational dimensions (Ranney, 1972). According to some authors, primaries inevitably lead parties to organizational decline, because they entail the explosion of party organizational boundaries, while exacerbating as well internal divisions and increasing the degree of candidates' autonomy from party central bodies (Pomper, 1977; Born, 1981; Wattenberg, 1998). Moreover, the effects of the adoption of primary elections on party electoral dynamics are also highly contested within the studies on the American experience. In fact, the question that arises here concerns the electoral gain in promoting primaries. We have seen in the first section that the theoretical models are quite varied on the trade-off between the inclusiveness of the candidate selection process and the electability of these candidates. These two main dimensions of primary politics, concerning the internal and external consequences of such instruments, still need to be systematically and theoretically addressed within the European contexts.

Given these gaps in the existing literature on the European cases and the contradicting evaluations of the US literature, the fact that the increasing use of primary elections in Europe has triggered relevant organizational and strategic changes within parties (Hopkin, 2001) and the lively political and scholarly debate that ensues, we develop a proposal of analytical framework. The framework looks at two distinct aspects of the consequences of primaries: organizational aspects and electoral ones. Thus, five different dimensions will be analysed: membership role and internal factionalism, leadership type and autonomy (internal aspects), electoral performance of the party, candidate responsiveness and party image (external aspects). For each dimension of analysis we suggest a set of empirical indicators. The measurement of the variables proposed here might be implemented on the basis of original data on party organizational structures, on electoral data (votes and turnout at subsequent general elections, votes, competitiveness and turnout of the primary elections) and on secondary data for measuring internal factionalism, leadership style and autonomy.

Table 1. Operationalization of the main consequences of the adoption of primaries: internal aspects.

Impact of primaries on political parties				
	Dimensions of primary politics	Research questions	Indicators	Empirical methodology
INTERNAL LEVEL	MEMBERSHIP	<i>RQ. To what extent primaries enhance participation by attracting new members?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evolution of membership figures 2. Degree of membership mobilization (members/primary voters) 	Aggregate data and meso (party) level data: membership figures; primary turnout figures, aggregate electoral data
		<i>RQ. To what extent primaries enhance ordinary members' mobilization within the party?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Absolute membership turnout in primary elections 2. Degree of involvement in primary campaigns 3. Evolution of the degree of participation in intra-party activities before and after primaries 	
		<i>RQ. To what extent primaries affect members' attitudes towards the party?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evolution of the degree of party identification 2. Sense of political (external) efficacy 3. Members' attitudes towards primary elections' rules and functioning (degree of satisfaction with regard to the nature of the selectorate, the nomination rules and primary campaign) 	
		<i>RQ. To what extent primaries affect internal party loyalty?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attitudes towards the selected nominee of losing candidates' supporters 2. Perspective candidates' voting intentions in general elections 3. Perspective candidates' attitudes towards party reaction to primary results 4. Perspective candidates' attitudes towards the degree of competitiveness of primary elections 	
	LEADERSHIP	<i>RQ. To what extent primaries strengthen the party leadership?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leaders' longevity in office 2. Share of preference votes obtained in general elections by the leader/candidate selected through primaries 3. Degree of cohesion of the dominant coalition (measured by endorsements) 	Party statutes and constitutions, official communication and statements, media briefs, documents regarding party conventions
		<i>RQ. To what extent primaries weaken party cohesion and stimulate internal conflict?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evolution of the number of party congressional proposals and motions 2. Evolution of the degree of divisiveness in party communication 	

Table 2. Operationalization of the main consequences of the adoption of primaries: external aspects.

Impact of primaries on political parties				
	Dimensions of primary politics	Research questions	Indicators	Empirical methodology
EXTERNAL LEVEL	CANDIDATE RESPONSIVENESS	<i>RQ. To what extent primaries shift the focus of candidate/leaders responsiveness and accountability towards the external political arena?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evolution of the parliamentary behaviour of candidates: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Degree of consistency of candidates' legislative initiatives with party manifestos and policy agenda 1.2. Candidate voting behaviour in parliament (degree of deviation from party indications) 	<p>Legislative proposals, roll call voting data</p> <p>Individual level data on candidate behaviours (quantitative surveys)</p>
	ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE	<i>RQ. To what extent primaries foster party electoral performance?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Index of participation (primary elections turnout/share of party votes at previous general elections) 2. Index of mobilization (primary elections turnout/ share of party votes at following general elections) 3. Share of preference votes obtained in general elections by the leader or candidates selected through primaries 	<p>Electoral results (primary and general elections)</p>
	PARTY IMAGE AND PUBLIC OPINION	<i>RQ. To what extent primaries convey a more democratic image of political parties?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evolution of the degree of political trust and of trust in parties 2. Voters' attitudes towards the degree of competitiveness of primary elections 3. Evolution of the degree of competitiveness of primary elections 4. Degree of "negativity" in campaign communication 5. Party central elites' renewal rate 	<p>Qualitative interviews and secondary data</p> <p>Data on party organization (offices in central bodies)</p> <p>Data on candidate profiles</p> <p>Individual level data: quantitative surveys (public opinion, voters, candidates and party members)</p>

4. Internal level

Primary elections could affect parties at organizational level even more strongly than general elections. The potential consequences of primary politics on party internal structure are due to the nature of the instrument itself. The selection of leaders and candidates through an inclusive selectorate constitutes a new competitive arena for party internal factions. Especially in the case of open primaries, the exogenous legitimation of the selected candidates or leader and the participation of voters and supporters could supply an opportunity for minority factions and for individual ambitions to defy the party leadership and its dominant coalition. This means that within primary competition there is more than the mere question of nominations. Thus, in order to understand the functioning of main dimensions of primary politics, we need to focus on party organization and particularly on the evolution of the internal relationship between members and the party, both at organizational level (by looking at the changes in party rules, boundaries and membership size) and at individual level (by looking at members' attitude towards their role within the party and towards this participatory procedure). Also, a relevant dimension to be taken into account is represented by the leadership's ability to deal with the political issues raised by primary elections and to face the risk of a potential shift in the internal distribution of decision-making power.

A. Primary elections' potential impact on membership

Primary elections, both open and closed ones, might represent a modern transposition of (or a viable alternative to) the old participatory procedures of mass parties, where members and activists played a crucial role within party organization. The (at least apparent) devolution of decision-making powers to the wider membership and party supporters (in the case of open primaries) entailed by this kind of internal elections could strengthen activists and ordinary members' propensity to get involved in intra-party activities. Instruments of intra-party democracy such as primaries could also affect party membership structures by attracting new members. With regard to these two points, nevertheless, it is important to distinguish between the potential effects of open and closed primaries. If the impact on internal participation of the devolution of decision-making power to ordinary members through the adoption of OMOV systems for selecting candidates and leaders might be considered to be more direct (more instruments for participation stimulate higher involvement) and easily measurable, the impact of open primaries to the attitudes and behaviours of ordinary members can be considered more controversial. Members might negatively evaluate the inclusion of party voters and simple supporters within internal decision-making, especially with regard to such crucial and symbolic decisions as the selection of candidates for office and leaders. These negative attitudes could then discourage members' involvement in intra-party activities.

Furthermore, in the case of both open and closed primaries, the high degree of inclusiveness of the selection procedure might be considered as a threat to the traditional internal functioning of the party. This could entail a differentiation in the attitudes towards the party according to membership duration, and thus between old and recently affiliated members, and also according to the degree of previous involvement in party activities, and thus between active and passive member (Abramowitz, McGlennon and Rapaport, 1986; Russell, 2005; Van Holsteyn and Koole, 2009). Particularly in the case of closed primaries, one of the most relevant political opportunities triggered by the adoption of primaries is the development

of a new kind of relationship between party and its members. Primaries, by evocating a more direct, participatory mode of political participation, could indeed incentive intra-party mobilization of affiliated members and stimulate new forms of involvement of supporters and voters (in the case of open primaries). However, if the evolution of overall turnout in open primaries over time might represent a pertinent and straightforward indicator of the impact of this instrument on party's mobilizing appeal, in the long term the consequences on membership internal mobilization and role within party structures appear to be more complex to assess.

a) *To what extent primaries enhance participation by attracting new members?*

Given that one of the main reasons for parties to adopt intra-party democracy instruments such as primary elections is to open their organizational boundaries and to stimulate enrolment, the first indicator we suggest to explore is obviously the *evolution of overall membership figures* in order to assess to what extent the adoption of primaries attract new members and whether these new cohorts of affiliates remain active within the party or end up being “instant members” (Rahat and Hazan, 2007). The second indicator is the *index of membership mobilization*, which is calculated, for the case of open primaries, by dividing the number of affiliated members by the overall figures of primary voters and which grasps the participatory reaction to primaries through the incidence of activists on the overall primary turnout. In the case of closed primaries, conversely, the index is measured by the share of members that participated to the internal election over the total membership figures.

Beside the quantitative evaluation of the participatory dimension of primary politics, it might be useful also to address the evolutions in the quality of intra-party involvement that are argued to be linked to the use of primary elections. The adoption of primaries for selecting leaders and candidates could trigger significant evolutions not only in the quantitative aspects of intra-party mobilization but also in the kind of activities carried out by activists and ordinary members. If we argue that primaries could represent a way to provide an effective replacement to the traditional channels of intra-party participation no longer available (or viable) within contemporary parties, we can consequently assume that the recent evolutions in the nature and type of membership involvement within parties that use primaries can be explained mainly by the adoption of these inclusive procedures of decision-making.

In terms of empirical methodology, this can be measured only at individual level, by collecting data on the intensity, quality and type of intra-party mobilization through tailored quantitative surveys of party members, and possibly panel surveys repeated over time. Such data would contribute in evaluating whether primaries and the wave of political mobilization they usually entail could have consequences on the long term, especially open ones and in terms both of campaign activities and turnout. These data could also contribute in assessing whether, conversely, primary elections represent a tailored participatory event exclusively related to the issue of candidate or leader selection, without any impact on members' propensity to mobilize within the party beyond participating in internal elections. Thus, we need to collect data on the relationship between members and the party, focusing particularly on the evolution of membership internal mobilization. This will lead us to the next research question.

b) *To what extent primaries enhance ordinary members' mobilization within the party?*

Besides the assessment of the evolutions in the overall degree of membership mobilization, also the evaluation of the qualitative dimension of membership involvement appears to be relevant here. This means trying to understand to what extent primary elections could contribute in reshaping the nature and

type of intra-party participation. Besides the rather straightforward evaluation of the *absolute membership turnout in primary elections*, which focuses on the the mobilization appeal of primaries (both open and closed) on the members, one can look also at other aspects of their behavior within the party. For instance, we propose to look at the *degree of involvement in primary campaigns* (particularly in the case of open primaries). Tailored quantitative surveys of party grass-roots members could shed a light on the intensity of involvement and on the participatory reaction to this intra-party democracy instrument of ordinary affiliates. A third possible indicator is represented by the *evolution of the degree of participation in intra-party activities before and after primaries*, which could contribute in assessing whether participating in primary elections represents for ordinary members just a one-time political activity within a pattern of intermittent mobilization, or this could trigger a pattern of more stable and intense participation, enhancing thus intra-party activism in the long run.

A further step in the analysis of the consequences of the use of primaries on party membership is to assess not only the evolutions in membership behaviors, but also in their attitudes towards the instrument itself and other attitudes towards the party. It would be pertinent to investigate members' perception of different dimensions of primary politics and their level of satisfaction with these particular internal elections. We know from literature that primaries represent a new way for parties to distribute collective and selective incentives to members in order to foster their participation, so it might be useful to empirically assess to what extent this new balance of incentives could change (or even damage) the relationship between grass-roots members and party leadership. In this case too, quantitative surveys could represent the most effective empirical tool, because they allow analyzing in detail members' attitudes and perceptions on a wide range of aspects of intra-party organization, such as for instance the role played by party elites within the so called "invisible primaries", namely the process of definition of rules on passive and active selectorates, or the type of primary campaign conducted by perspective candidates or leaders. We are thus interested in the point of view of members on the consequences of internal democratization. Very few studies have explored intra-party democracy, and particularly primaries, and their consequences from the point of view of the actors mainly concerned by these reforms, namely rank-and-file ordinary members (Scarrow, 2005; Lyons, 2009; van Holsteyn and Koole, 2009).

c) *To what extent primaries affect members' attitudes towards the party?*

The third dimension that we have identified as relevant for understanding the impact of primaries on the relationship between parties and their members is the one related to membership perception of intra-party democracy. The set of indicators we suggest here are thus aimed at investigating not only members' degree of satisfaction with the instrument of primaries *per se*, but also other attitudes towards the party such as the degree of ideological identification and the sense of belonging to the organization. Quantitative surveys of grass-roots members remain the most useful empirical tool for collecting this kind of data. We suggest to develop three indicators with regard to this dimension: the first is represented by the *level of party identification*, which evaluates the degree of ideological proximity between members and their party on the classical left-right axis or concerning its policy agenda and thus with regard to the degree of party ideological representativeness and responsiveness to membership demands.

The second indicator deals with members' *sense of (external) political efficacy and specific support (trust) for the party*, both in general terms (with regard to members' role within the party) and, more specifically, concerning party rules on nominations, candidacy and voting systems. The sense of external political efficacy concerns the evaluation of the responsiveness of party organizational structures to members' demands and to the individual's reported belief that their participation matters. In particular, it deals with

members' perception of the relevance of their vote in primary elections. The latter variable, more specifically, links the way the individual perceive his/her role within the organization he/her belongs to and the way he/her exploits the opportunities for mobilization provided by the organization's structural features. The sense of (incumbent-based) political trust and of specific support for the party deals with members' satisfaction with party performance, in terms of representation and internal democracy (Gamson, 1968; Craig et al., 1990; Niemi et al., 1991).

A third indicator contributes in analysing members' evaluation of the structural aspects of primaries. This indicator, namely *members' attitudes towards primary elections' rules and functioning*, deals with the degree of satisfaction of grass-roots members with regard to the nature of the selectorate, the nomination rules and the type of primary campaign. These organizational changes are giving members more say over outcomes: but are members satisfied with primaries? The analysis of the process of rules definition and adaptation to the reactions of the party base might allow grasping the ability of party elites to address primary results.

d) *To what extent primaries affect internal party loyalty?*

The fourth research question that we suggest to address, with regard to primaries' impact on membership-party relations, concerns the electoral strategies implemented by members in reaction to primaries. Also this research question is developed at individual level. If we consider, as explained above, that the dynamics of primary competition tend to spur factions and party internal conflict, we can also suppose that this enhanced internal conflict could affect members' electoral choices in general elections. Thus, it appears rather relevant to identify which are the main voting intentions of primary voters (either members, in the case of OMOV systems, or primary voters, in the case of open primaries) in case of defeat of their chosen candidate (either for party leadership or perspective candidate for general elections). In fact, in the case of primary elections for selecting the party leader, the latter is often automatically designated as the party candidate for prime ministerial office at subsequent general elections. Thus, members' voting intentions in general elections could also be affected by the outcome of primary elections for selecting the party leader.

This is a field of analysis highly debated within the literature on primary elections politics. Some scholarly analyses blame the divisiveness in primary competition for the potential negative performance of the party at subsequent general elections, underlining the possible risk of defection (either abstention or dissenting vote) in general elections of those primary voters that supported the losing primary elections candidates (Piereson and Smith, 1975; Kenney, 1987; Johnson et al., 2010). Other interpretations focus rather on the degree of "negativity" (i.e. the strategy of trying to gain electoral advantages by referring to negative aspects of other perspective candidates) of primary campaigns for explaining the potential increased gap between the party and its members (and primary voters) with the result of potential defection in general elections (Ansolabhere, 1997; Djupe, 2002; Peterson and Djupe, 2005). With regards to this point, it might be helpful to look at the *voting intentions of losing candidates' supporters towards the winner*, both in the case of primaries for selecting the leader and for selecting candidates for general elections. A quantitative survey of the voting intentions at general elections of primary voters (open primaries) or party members (closed primaries) remains the most appropriate empirical strategy concerning this indicator.

Nevertheless, given that the research question dealing with the electoral strategies of party members in reaction to primaries involves also the party and its internal organization, we suggest taking into account also the reaction of party elites to primary elections' results. In particular, it would be useful to analyse the communication strategies and reactions of party leadership and central bodies concerning primary results,

assessing whether the selected candidate or leader obtains the official support of the whole party or, especially in the case of highly divisive primaries, the nomination process triggers a crisis in the internal balance of power. We suggest looking at three different indicators, measurable mainly through qualitative semi-structured interviews: the (losing) *candidates' voting intentions in general elections*; the *candidates' attitudes towards party reactions to primary results*; the *candidates' attitudes towards the degree of competitiveness in primary elections*.

B. Primary elections' potential impact on leadership and internal power distribution

Also concerning the internal dimension of primary politics, it appears relevant to take into account the potential consequences of primary elections on the other side of the membership-party relation, namely the one of leadership. Especially in the case of parties using open primaries for selecting the party leader, the role of the latter is nowadays legitimized through a procedure which is highly inclusive yet external to the party organizational boundaries. This fact might affect the dynamics of leadership's loyalty towards the party. Thus, it might be useful to explore more in depth the extent of the evolutions in the leadership-party relations, in order to assess the scope of change in the role played by leaders and in the features of their legitimacy towards party members, voters and supporters. With respect to this point, it is obviously necessary to distinguish between the effects on leadership's role of primaries used as candidate selection procedures and of primaries used as leadership selection procedure. It is necessary also to distinguish the effects of open and closed primaries. For the moment and for simplicity reasons, we will focus on the effects of open primaries on leadership-party relations.

We consider that the dynamics and consequences on party leadership's accountability and responsiveness of closed primaries might be more complex to apprehend. This is because the leadership accountability dimension of primary politics could be affected more strongly, within this type of primaries, by the organizational specificities of the selected case. We will develop further the reflection on the identification of possible indicators for analyzing the consequences of closed primaries on leadership accountability in the next version of this paper. As an example, we can look at the case of the UK Labour and at the various studies that tested consequences of the adoption of the Electoral College method for selecting the party leader: several authors underlined that these organizational reforms resulted in a decreased accountability of the party elites towards members and activists and in an increased centralization of decision-making powers in the leadership's hands (Shaw, 1996; Quinn, 2005; Russell, 2005; Faucher-King, 2008).

Several scholars underlined the potential (negative) effects on the accountability and responsiveness dimension of this inclusive method for selecting candidates and leaders (Lisi, 2009). Indeed, if candidates or leaders are selected by a wider electorate as it happens in open primaries, there are high chances that they will become more responsive to the ideological positions and demands of this larger group of selectors rather than their party. They might also end up feeling more accountable to the primary voters that elected them than to the party central bodies and middle-level elites. Thus, this process can ultimately affect party internal cohesion, leadership loyalties and the capacity of the leader to exert its control over the organization. A potential outcome of such dynamics might be that the leadership would be legitimized by political actors external to party structures, namely primary voters that may or may not be party members, but less so internally, with consequences on its support by members and middle-level elites. This could affect the profile, quality and duration in office of the leadership. Hence, it might be useful to clarify these potential implications on the basis of both quantitative (surveys, electoral data at aggregate level) and

qualitative research tools (semi-structured interviews and endorsement data). These techniques could help in investigating the evolution of the degree of approval and support for the leadership over time and across different groups. We identified two main macro-dimensions of analysis on the issue of party leadership, the first one is related to the leadership's effectiveness in managing exogenous participatory dynamics that could generate shifts in the internal balance of power, the second one concerns its ability to manage potential internal conflicts triggered by the results of primary elections.

a) To what extent primaries strengthen the party leadership?

One of the most debated hypotheses about primary elections concerns the idea that the inclusiveness of this selection procedure could entail a consolidation of leadership control over internal decision making processes. The inclusiveness assured by primaries could generate a direct link between the leadership and either voters (in the case of open primaries) or members (in the case of closed primaries), hence bypassing the role of party intermediate level elites and activists in controlling elites' decisions. In other words, primaries allow elites to rearticulate their power within the party, by diminishing the role of traditional party organizational structures and by providing an external legitimation (in the case of open primaries). Internal democratization reforms that broaden the party organizational boundaries to include, in such a crucial decision such as the selection of the leader or the candidates, all individual party members, also those that are less socialized within the party or are less active, or in some cases even party voters and supporters, could correspond to a strategy for "emasculating" activists and increasing in the end the elites' control over party decision-making. Several authors, from Mair (1994) to Katz (2001) to Webb (1994) argued that the adoption of primary elections for selecting the leader or the candidates for office would increase the leadership autonomy and boost the concentration of decision-making powers in its hands.

In order to understand the impact of primaries on leadership autonomy and power, we suggest focusing on few indicators. The first one concerns the *leader's longevity in office* and is obviously related only to the case of primary elections for selecting the leader. This indicator might be useful particularly for analysing highly divisive primaries, because in this context the internal cohesion could be jeopardized by primary dynamics and outcomes and consequently the leadership, and particularly its capacity to run internal decision-making processes, could be weakened. The second indicator regards the *electoral results* gained by the nominees, either the selected leader or candidates for elections (namely the *share of preference votes obtained in general elections by the leader/candidate selected through primaries*). This indicator is aimed at measuring the electoral appeal of the leader or candidates, comparing his/her electoral performance considering his/her modality of selection. This indicator might contribute in understanding the consequences of the outcomes of a given primary election because it grasps the degree of "personalization" of party politics triggered by the use of primaries. Personalization of politics is one of the most useful concepts in understanding current political processes, and primaries - even more than general elections - bring out the relevance of the role of personal charisma, individual profile and personality of perspective candidates and leaders. Hence, it might be useful to analyse the personal contribution of the leader or candidate selected through primaries to the party electoral results.

The third indicator deals with the extent to which party elites can steer primary voters' preferences and is measured by analysing elites' endorsement towards the primary candidates (Cohen et al. 2008; Mayer and Bernstein, 2011). This indicator could help in measuring the *degree of cohesion of the dominant coalition* within the party because, as previously suggested by several studies applied to the American case (Cohen, Karol, Noel and Zaller, 2002 and 2003), endorsements to primary candidates seems to represent a useful strategy for mapping party internal factions. Collecting data about *elite endorsements* allows to identify

internal networks and patterns of power distribution and thus to analyse the role of party organization and its dominant coalition within the primary election process. The map of party internal factions that could be elaborated on the basis of such empirical explorations contributes in measuring the overall level of elite cohesion.

b) *To what extent primaries weaken party cohesion and stimulate internal conflict?*

Building on the components highlighted in the previous sub-section, this dimension looks at the long term impacts of primaries and takes into account not only the power and functioning of the dominant coalition within the party but more generally it looks at the overall degree of intra-party cohesion. The aim is to investigate the internal consequences of primaries in terms of the relationship between the leadership and its opposite factions. Taking into account the potential divisiveness triggered by primary competition and its effects on party organization, we identified three pertinent indicators aimed at measuring the level of internal cohesion. We suggest adapting and exploring some 'traditional' indicators, such as for instance the *evolution of the number of party congressional proposals and motions*, which could contribute in clarifying the internal level of party cohesion in ideological and policy position terms. Also the analysis of party political communication could be helpful with regard to this point. The qualitative and quantitative content analysis of party elites' political speeches during and after primary campaigns could provide useful information on the level of negativity of the latter. The study of the *evolution of the degree of divisiveness in party communication* could thus contribute in explaining the impact of primaries on the leadership-party relations, helping in interpreting the dynamics of primary competition.

5. External level

As widely assessed in empirical terms by the literature on the American experience, the effects of the use of primary elections for selecting leaders or candidates go well beyond the organizational dimension and concern primarily the external side of party politics. Leaders and candidate selection procedures entailing a highly inclusive, participatory electoral contest often characterized by high political personalization might affect in a crucial way the overall political representation process and this from several points of view. The first component is the one related to responsiveness and concerns the changes in the focus of leaders and candidate accountability. Especially in the case of open primaries, the legitimacy of the nominee comes from an external body and this could generate a shift in the dynamics of internal accountability by marginalizing the role of control played by party central bodies. Accountability concerns the obligation of leaders and candidates selected through primaries to answer for their political decisions and the control that their principals can exert upon their actions. The adoption of open primaries can transform the features of their principals, which change from party middle-level elites, central bodies or members (according to the previous procedure of selection) to primary voters. A direct link with the selectorate is created and this is also true in the case of closed primary elections, which shift the focus of accountability from party elites (usually the parliamentary party group) or central bodies to the wider membership, either active or not. The second component of this dimension is represented by the impact of the use of primaries on the electoral performance of the party. The third and last component is represented by the reaction of public opinion to the adoption of primaries and concerns the need of political parties to address such issues as the spread of anti-party and anti-political feelings, which could undermine their legitimacy as instruments of political representation, by redefining their public image.

A. Potential impact of primary elections on candidates' responsiveness and accountability

With regard to this first component of the external dimension of primary politics, we suggest that unlike nominations by party elites, which incentive candidates and leaders to take into account elites' indications, policy positions and claims in their legislative behaviour, primary elections due to their highly inclusive nature tend to transform the dynamics of both responsiveness and internal accountability. Hence, we try to suggest here a few exploratory indicators that can contribute in understanding to what extent the behaviour of nominees (candidates for elections and/or leaders) selected by primaries remains loyal to party elites' indications and, conversely, to what extent the emergence of external legitimation processes generate nominees' political attitudes distant from party ideological positions and policy agenda. With regard to this component of the external dimension of primary politics, thus, we have identified one main research question:

a) To what extent primaries shift the focus of candidate/leaders responsiveness and accountability towards the external political arena?

Concerning the potential changes in the party base of leaders and candidates' legitimacy, we identified found two main indicators that could contribute in understanding the implications of the adoption of primaries on this variable, namely the *parliamentary behaviour* of the nominees selected through primary elections. Thus, it is worth noting that this first research question is more pertinent in the case of primary elections for selecting candidates for office rather than party leaders, given that it makes little sense to explore the degree of loyalty of leaders towards their own party in terms of parliamentary behaviour. The first indicator deals with the *degree of consistency of candidates' legislative initiatives with party manifestos and policy agenda* and measures their propensity to follow the party line as opposed to their tendency to promote other policy priorities. In empirical terms, this indicator can be measured by the exploration of the type and number of individual legislative proposals and initiatives and also by collecting individual level data on self-reported behaviour in parliament through quantitative surveys. These data would be aimed at assessing the degree of individual behaviours consistence with *party manifestos and ideological positions*, on the one hand, and with *party policy agenda* on the other hand. The second indicator deals with the *candidate voting behaviour in parliament* and thus grasps the degree of deviation from party indications within the legislative process. In empirical terms, this indicator can be measured by the analysis of patterns of roll call voting.

B. Potential electoral impact of primaries

The main aim of primary elections is to mobilize party members, in the case of closed primaries, or sympathizers and voters, in the case of open primaries. In the first case, the inclusion of the whole membership within such a crucial decision-making process such as the selection of candidates or the leader could trigger an increase in the degree of electoral mobilization of party activists and ordinary members, particularly with regard to the campaign. This could consequently affect the electoral competition both at primary and general elections level. In the case of open primaries, the inclusion of sympathizers not formally affiliated to the party within the internal decision-making processes (and in particular in the leadership and candidate recruitment processes) could expand the support for the party both at electoral

and organizational level. Therefore, the question that arises here concerns the electoral gain in promoting primaries. It is thus relevant to investigate the electoral appeal of candidates and leaders selected through primary elections. This is the dimension of primary politics that has been most widely explored within the literature on the American experience and thus we dispose of a large array of potential relevant indicators and variables identified by previous studies which can be easily adapted to the European context. We will thus just provide here a brief overview of the most pertinent ones.

Nevertheless, the literature on US primaries is controversial on this issue, especially with regard to the consequences of primary elections aimed at selecting candidates for office. If there are several studies that theoretically and empirically explored the trade-off between inclusiveness of candidate selection procedures and the electability of these candidates, the issue of the negative impact in electoral terms of the most inclusive internal elections is still strongly debated. The differences in the ideological positions of the general electorate and the selectorate mobilized by primaries are generally thought to explain the negative effects in electoral terms of the adoption of primary elections (Kaufmann et al., 2005; Norrander, 1989). In this perspective, the fact that the usually high turnout in primary elections could trigger an increase in the electoral consensus for the party in general elections could be difficult to grasp by the general electorate (Adams and Merrill, 2008). Other studies focus on the contrary on the negative stance and the aggressive discourse of primary campaigns. The mutual de-legitimization between primary candidates could disclose and emphasize internal conflicts and unsolved rivalries (Djupe and Peterson, 2002; Haines and Rhine, 1998; Peterson and Djupe 2005). Finally, other scholarly opinions on this issue generally refer to the concept of internal divisiveness (Atkeson, 1998; Bernstein, 1977; Born, 1981; Hacker, 1965; Hogan, 2003; Johnson et al., 2010; Kenney, 1988; Kenney and Rice, 1984; Makse and Sokhey, 2010; Piereson and Smith, 1975; Ware, 1979; Wichowsky and Niebler, 2010). The idea is that the high level of divisiveness which often characterizes primary elections could demotivate party members and supporters in the following general elections. The collection and analysis of electoral data concerning both primary and general elections could contribute in clarifying these issues. With regard to this component of the external dimension of primary politics, thus, we have identified one main research question:

a) *To what extent primaries foster party electoral performance?*

Investigating primaries' impact on electoral performance requires to develop the analysis on two different levels: the party level and the individual candidate level. In fact, we need to understand whether it is the party or the individual candidates that gain the greater electoral advantage from the use of primaries. Thus, the first indicator we suggest here concerns the potential impact of the degree of participation in primary elections on party results in general elections. Although primary elections turnout could be equally relevant for explaining the party performance in general elections both in the case of closed and open primaries, it appears rather clear that this indicator is more pertinent in the case of primary elections open to the whole party electorate. We suggest thus to focus here on the case of open primaries and to develop an index that could take into account party electoral results and primary elections participation, namely an "*index of participation*", which is calculated by dividing the turnout in primary elections by the share of party votes at previous general elections. The index measures thus the proportion of party voters that bothered to show up and vote in primary elections, giving information about the primaries' ability to mobilize party voters. Another way to look at this issue is to measure, on the contrary, the proportion of primary voters that decided to support the party also in the following in general elections. In this case, we suggest the use of an "*index of mobilization*", which is calculated by dividing the primary elections turnout by the share of party votes at the following general elections, giving information on primaries ability to attract new voters.

The second level of analysis concerns the electoral appeal of candidates or leaders nominated by primaries. The question that arises here deals with the extent to which primaries foster the individual electoral results. In order to explore empirically this issue, we suggest to develop a “*personalization index*” which measures the *share of preference votes obtained in general elections by the leader or candidates selected through primaries*. Although this indicator could be also used with regard to the internal dimension of primary politics, and in particular for assessing the degree of autonomy of leaders or candidates selected through primaries (see Table 1), it is at the same time a pertinent instrument for measuring the electoral impact of these intra-party democracy procedures.

C. Primary elections’ potential impact on party image

It is generally argued in the literature that anti-party and anti-political feelings are strongly rooted in post-modern society. Post-materialism, new forms of political participations, higher levels of education and greater availability of cognitive resources have led to a sort of self-sufficiency in the exercise of representation by citizens and voters. At the same time, the literature on party linkage argues that there is nowadays an increasing distance between parties and society which generates a relevant gap in the political representation process. The latter is also supposed to trigger the emergence of a generalized feeling of discontent, distrust and rejection towards parties (Gamson, 1968; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Dalton, 2002; Norris, 2002). The issue at stake here is whether the adoption of such intra-party democracy instruments as primaries, thanks to their transparent and inclusive procedures, could compensate this lack of legitimacy of parties towards the electorate. In this view, participatory instruments such as primaries are adopted in order to improve the public image of political parties (Dalton, 2004). The question that arises here is thus the following: to what extent primary elections, which are supposed to strengthen internal democracy, can compensate the growing lack of legitimacy of parties with regard to the electorate at large?

a) *To what extent primaries convey a more democratic image of political parties?*

The empirical assessment of the impact of primaries on the public image of political parties is rather complex and might require a multidimensional approach. We propose to develop the analysis concerning three very different aspects: the political attitudes of citizens towards political parties and primary elections; the features of primary processes that incentive the competitiveness of the internal electoral contest (divisiveness, negativity); the potential organizational changes at the level of party elites. These three components concern thus very different dimensions: individual attitudes, political communication, organizational features of the selection procedures and party organizational aspects. To start with the first component, we propose to focus on indicators measuring the individual attitudes towards the party and to test their correlation with indicators measuring voters’ opinions on the use of inclusive candidate and leadership selection methods. Thus, on the basis of quantitative instruments such as public opinion and voter surveys, it would be helpful to assess the *evolution of the degree of political trust and of trust in parties* and to assess the link of the latter with the citizens’ satisfaction with primaries and with individual perceptions of the democratic nature of primary elections.

Secondly, given that we aim at assessing the extent to which primaries could be used by parties in order to counter the pervasive antiparty rhetoric, it could be pertinent to collect individual level data on *primary voters’ attitudes towards the degree of competitiveness of primary elections*. These data could contribute in explaining whether primary voters, either party members or the electorate at large, perceive primary

elections as being real and transparent competitions, or as simple coronations of nominees already chosen by party elites. If the degree of competitiveness of primary elections is perceived as satisfactory by primary voters, this could lead members and voters in general to consider primaries as an effective instrument of intra-party democratization. Thirdly, it could be useful to take into account not only voters' attitudes towards the competitiveness of primary elections but also to look at the actual evolution of the *degree of competitiveness of primary elections*. A pertinent indicator is thus represented by the difference in the share of votes of candidates in (open or closed) primary elections. Moreover, with regard to this point, it could be useful also to consider the political communication adopted by candidates in primary elections as a pertinent indicator of the degree of competitiveness of the contest. On the basis of quantitative and qualitative analyses of the content of candidates' speeches and official statements during primary elections campaign and of their relative degree of negative rhetoric it is possible to assess the *degree of "negativity" in the political communication strategies of the primary campaign*.

Finally, one of the most important messages presented by parties in order to counter antiparty arguments concerns the renewal and turnout of political elites. The idea is that primary elections could incentive renewal processes within parties. These party organizational changes triggered by primaries concern thus their public image and not only the internal distribution of decision-making power as we have explored in the previous section of this paper. The main indicator for assessing the degree to which primaries trigger organizational renewal is represented by *party central elites' turnout rate*.

6. Conclusions.

Since the mid-nineties, a substantial body of scholarly literature on primary politics outside the US - especially within European and Israeli parties - has been developed. Some studies focused on the main rationales for adopting such intra-party democracy instrument, other explored its functioning in various national and cross-country contexts, and other investigated its consequences on parties themselves in terms of electoral performance both in primary and general elections and in terms of internal organization, cohesion, power distribution and unity. In this paper, we do not try to elaborate new or original approaches to the subject, either theoretical or methodological or empirical. Instead, we started from the existing literature on European primaries, we selected the more common and relevant analytical elements and then attempted at providing a synthesis of the main dimensions of primary politics analyzed in previous studies. In particular, we focused on the potential organizational changes and electoral consequences triggered by the adoption of such inclusive methods of leadership and candidate selection, rather than on main rationales for using this instrument. This is because, given the enduring relevance of party organization in the European (and non-US) political context, the question of potential decline of party structures entailed by primaries appears to be still at the centre of the political and scholarly debate.

Moreover, we consider that, unlike the century old, burgeoning and extremely well developed literature on the American experience of primary elections, the "younger" literature on primaries outside the US might not have yet reached a consensus on some fundamental definitions and methodological aspects – *what is a primary election? Which are the main dimensions to be explored when investigating the consequences of primaries on political parties?* – given the peculiarity of each case, both at party and country political system level. The aim of this paper is thus to attempt at formulating a (at least partial) systematization of the main elements analyzed by previous studies and to supply a (very) general overview of the subject. Hence, we have tried here to provide a preliminary, exploratory set of suggestions for elaborating a

comprehensive analytical framework for investigating the consequences of main dimensions of primary politics within the European context. We tried to identify a few key pertinent variables and indicators that could be developed for analysing at the same time, and using similar research design, both open and closed primaries and both procedures for selecting leaders and candidates. Some indicators remain relevant or useful only for some specific types of primaries (i.e. leadership duration in office could be conceptually linked only to the measure of the potential consequences of primaries for selecting the leader), but the great majority of analytical dimensions suggested in this paper refers to a general, comprehensive framework for studying this phenomenon as a whole. The idea was to launch the discussion, on the one hand, on the main elements to be taken into account when studying primaries and, on the other hand, to set the grounds for identifying some common definitions of the most relevant concepts and variables of this area of research.

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