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# Doparies: A Novel Party Deliberative and Aggregative Decision-Making Mechanism to Improve the Quality of Representative Democracy

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## Abstract

The failings of parties are one of the central problems of contemporary democracies. What can be done to revive citizen participation? In this article, we present a novel party participatory decision-making mechanism named “doparies”. They are procedures that are nationally or locally implemented within and by parties, and permit any voter who declares to be an elector of that party (open doparies) or party members (internal doparies) to vote regarding crucial and controversial decisions during the period between one election and another. Whereas primaries are done before elections for choosing party candidates, doparies are done after elections for making party choices on issues. Doparies represent a bidirectional communication system between voters and representatives, and would retain the advantages of primaries (party–voters relationship) and referenda (debate before the vote), but would limit the excessive personalization of politics focusing on issues and not on people. There are both propositional doparies, allowing citizens to raise problems that are absent from their party political agenda, and consultative ones, allowing parties to hear the true voice of their voters, who, differently from what happens in polls, are informed by debates in party circles. We suggest that doparies are a new combination of deliberative and aggregative processes, and hypothesize that they can counteract parties’ crisis and abstention. Procedures similar to doparies are now part of the Italian Democratic Party statute and prominent national leaders have gathered signatures to organize local consultations. The use of primaries by Italian left-wing parties has had a contagious effect on right-wing ones as well as European ones. The same could happen with doparies.

## Keywords

doparies, primaries, political parties, democracy, antipolitics, abstention, turnout, decision making, representation, participation, aggregation, deliberation

## Introduction

Electoral turnout is declining across Western Europe, pointing to a strong disenchantment with elected officials and their ability to represent citizen’s needs and demands. In France, abstention has reached 53.6% in the regional election of 2010, and almost 60% in the European election of 2009. In Germany, participation in the political election of 2010 has seen a decrease of 7%, when compared with the previous political election. In Italy, the increase in abstention in the political election of 2008 has been the largest in the Republic’s history. These figures become more relevant if we consider that these three major liberal democracies have a tradition of very high electoral turnout. The scholarly literature on democracy takes this trend of decreasing electoral participation very seriously, as a symptom of a deeper democratic crisis.

Is in-depth crisis of many representative democracies irreversible? For representative democracies to work well, there has to be a continuous interaction among the represented and the representatives. Before elections, in some countries (e.g., United States, Italy, France, Israel, Japan, Argentina), there are party primaries, in which party members and electors choose candidates and electoral platforms. However, the main problem arises after elections, when it is very difficult for the electors to influence their representatives. In the United States, President Barack Obama won the primaries and the 2008 presidential election, thanks to the

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direct engagement of thousands of volunteers, but failed to maintain the same level of consensus and mobilization after the election.

One of the challenges that we've got to think about [he said, mulling on this issue] is how do I meet my responsibilities here in the White House, which require a lot of hours and a lot of work, but still have that opportunity to engage with the American people on a day-to-day basis, and know—give them confidence—that I'm listening to them. (Obama, 2010)

The Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi faced similar problems after winning a very popular center-left primary election in October 2005. He won the general election of 2006, but could not keep even the consensus of his base and was forced to resign in February 2008.

Several proposals have been formulated to address increasing citizens' passivity, by introducing forms of participatory democracy: strongly emphasized procedures of direct democracy; a mixture of direct and indirect democracy with electronic consultations, the "liquid democracy" of the German Pirate Party (Maguire, 2010); platforms for interaction between the elected representatives (see *Abgeordnetenwatch.de*, 2011); the British proposal that "any officially sanctioned petition with a vast number of signatories [to] be considered for a House of Commons debate and even, in the case of very popular demands, for a bill that might end in a crowd-sourced law" (Bennett, 2011, p. 29); the adoption from the United States of the so-called "informed opinion polls", also known as "deliberative polls" (Fishkin, 1995); etc. Noninstitutionalized forms of political participations (such as demonstration and petitions) reverse gender and age inequalities and have the potential to mobilize women and young people, but "do not provide an effective mechanism to get the lowly-educated groups within the population involved in politics" (Mariën, Hooghe, & Quintelier, 2010, p. 11).

Nadia Urbinati (2006) challenges the idea that representative democracy is the second best choice when compared with direct democracy, in which citizens take political decisions. The fact is that no democracy in the world takes into consideration the culture of everyday politics and successfully combines participatory and representative systems, if not in a superficial way (Ginsborg, 2005). Most importantly, representative democracy is a perfectly legitimate form of democracy to shape the process of decision making. If it is in crisis, we must not think of its replacement, but of how to address the crisis of political parties, because their failings are one of the central problems of contemporary democracies (Mair, 2005; for a different view, see Webb, 2009). Political parties "constitute the representative process" (Urbinati, 2006, p. 134). Participation has indeed fallen, with partisan loyalty and party membership strongly decreasing over time (Dalton, 2006; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Mair & van Biezen, 2001).

In this article, we will present a novel participatory democratic decision-making mechanism developed in Italy, named "doparies" (Calabretta, 2005, 2007, 2010a), which functions within the context of political parties. Doparies are consultations conducted after the elections among party electors, not just members, to choose among contested party decisions. In this sense, they represent a tool of political influence available to the civil society—movements, associations, and individuals—without replacing political parties, as civil society can only respond partially and inconsistently to citizens' needs. With doparies, civil society movements and parties become complementary and strengthen each other. Doparies represent a bidirectional communication system between citizens and their representatives, which can be an easy and fast way to improve the quality of representative democracy. We hypothesize that doparies can counteract parties' crisis, abstention, and antipolitics.

Words are important in democracy. Then, what about the word *doparies*? Recent studies on human memory indicate that its function is also to flexibly prepare to possible future situations that are simulated by putting together pieces of past experiences (Schacter & Addis, 2007). Analogously, *dopary* is a neologism that brings together different important words that are important for democracy in the description of a useful tool for the future. The initial letter "D" is for democracy, decision, deliberation. The crisis of the Italian words *dopo* ("after"), *doping* ("addiction"), *dopamina* ("dopamine"), and *primarie* ("primaries") indicates the need for democracy in the popular wisdom that crippled the names and adapted them to everyday life. Whereas primaries are done before elections for choosing party candidates, doparies are done after elections for making choices on issues. The term relates to "doping": in this case, it is a beneficial addiction, like the one being experienced when exercising, where body movements are beneficial for the brain; similarly, the social movements and social capital are beneficial for parties and democracy. Instead, dopamine is the neurotransmitter involved in the process of decision making (e.g., Schultz, 2007).

In the following, we will explain what doparies are and how they work, present the rationale of the scientific project, and list possible advantages, risks, and critiques. In the appendix we will briefly describe the steps of the proposal's promotion.

## Doparies: What They Are and How They Work

The idea of doparies stems from the awareness that the voters cannot do anything after election to influence the decisions of their representatives. We are experimenting with doparies in the Italian context. Italian politics might be an interesting case study because it exhibits several problematic features and evolving trends.

Italian people are interested in democracy and in expressing their own narrative of the world, as shown by the success

of blogs and social networks (De Biase, 2007; Petrella, 2007), but they have a declining confidence in the institutions (Eurispes, 2011). The Italian constitutionalist Andrea Manzella admits the substantial disappearance of parties as centers of aggregation and planning of the common good (Manzella, 2010). Italian political parties are seen as oligarchies that are far from common people's everyday life and auto-referential lobbies led by charismatic leaders. There is an excessive and pathological political personalization (Galli Della Loggia, 2009): Most parties add the name of the respective leaders on the party symbols, and unlike 10 years ago, television now gives more coverage to party leaders than institutions (D'Argenio, 2011). The popularity of leaders as celebrities does not translate into trust, and disenchantment with them and the political system they represent has begun to spread among young people, intellectuals, and a significant proportion of the Italian population (Amato, 2010; Diamanti, 2011a). Only 5% of Italians trust the political parties (Diamanti, 2011b). The fall of Silvio Berlusconi's government in November 2011 leads to Mario Monti's emergency technical government that "does not include a single elected politician" (Squires, 2011). To complicate this scenario, it is improbable for the electorate to move from one political side to the other. If the electors believe that their needs are poorly represented by the political leaders of their own political party, they either continue to vote for them or find a convenient refuge in the practice of abstention. As already mentioned, the Italian political election of 2008 registered the fastest-growing electoral abstention of the postwar period (Istituto Cattaneo, 2008). Yet, abstention is not antipolitics, but one of the available political options, according to the 2010 report of Audipolitica. The level of participation in the referenda of June 12 to 13, 2011, which were not tied to political parties, was high (Gramellini, 2011).

In October 2005, the Italian center-left coalition organized an open primary for choosing its leader in the successive political election. It was a very successful primary with more than 4.5 million voters (Pasquino, 2005, 2007). Eight components, one for each of the center-left coalition parties, were part of the primary organizing committee. This committee has fulfilled the tasks normally carried out in the elections by the Minister of Interior Affairs, namely, the control of the legality of the vote. It prepared the document "Project for Italy", which the coalition acknowledged and proposed to the Italians for the rebirth of the country and which was accepted and signed by all the candidates and the voters in the primary (Oliverio, 2005). Doparies can be organized in similar ways.

The procedures of doparies are nationally or locally implemented within and by parties, and permit party members or any voter who declares to be an elector of that party to vote regarding crucial and controversial decisions after the elections. Doparies should not be confused with polls. Usually, parties conduct polls to find out what their electors think about the key issues that arise after elections or that were in the party's electoral platforms, but divided the party after the

election. The main problem with polls is that people are asked to express their opinions regarding very complex issues (e.g., green vs. nuclear energy), but have no opportunity to think about them and debate them. This situation opens the door to emotive politics in which leaders do not lead and people are manipulated, misinformed, and confused (see also below).

Examples of doparies include assisted reproduction, nuclear energy, living will, political alliances, quick citizenship for immigrants, and 20% taxation of financial income. In particular, the latter was a proposal in the government program of the center-left, but then, it split the majority in the years 2006 to 2008.

Doparies are consultations organized by parties or coalitions and are not open to all citizens but only to party members and supporters:

1. Doparies take place in organizations, such as parties, in which persons share some ideologies or visions.
2. Doparies require discussion among members—pondering on issues, exchange of opinions, and diversity of points of view.
3. After the discussion, doparies have a central requirement: vote, as in primaries.

Doparies can be called both from the top—leaders or party committees decide to consult electors about decisions—and from the bottom—electors collect party members' signatures to ask their party to organize doparies. This process allows the "final control of the agenda by the demos", one of Robert Dahl's five criteria to meet the ideal of democracy: "The demos must have the exclusive opportunity to decide how matters are to be placed on the agenda of matters that are to be decided by means of the democratic process" (Dahl, 1989, p. 113).

Doparies may be used, for example, no more than once a year—to consult the voters after the election on key issues. Doparies do not force one to be always present and involved. Each citizen can use the instrument only when he or she believes that democracy does not work well or that an important point is missing in the political agenda. Of fundamental importance is that the tool exists and is accepted by parties to allow citizens, associations, movements, and civil society to achieve a minimum political efficacy through their actions, without much effort.

It is possible to hypothesize two types of doparies to address the issues raised by the debate on "liquid versus solid party", or American-style "light" open party versus valorization of party members:

*Open doparies*, open to all party electors and potential new voters. They take place, for example, once a year, to debate crucial issues that split the party. They refer to the procedures tested in national primaries and constitute a real and beneficial physical movement of millions of citizens.

*Internal doparies*, open to party members who are used to meet and discuss political issues. They would be electronic, more “detailed” and frequent, and serve the purpose of building party’s policies.

This architecture of doparies avoids the danger “to disarm activist’s desire to participate”, which, according to some experts, is a result of primaries being open to all voters (Seddone & Venturino, 2010). In the case of doparies, activists have more privileges than the electors who are not active in the party.

Could the results of doparies have a binding force? Many citizens and politicians argue that results should be binding. This is a sensitive and important issue that needs to be discussed. Referring to participatory democracy, Luigi Bobbio (2006), a scholar who has made numerous studies on deliberative democracy, argues that the lack of binding power is one of his strong points because it allows interactions that are not harnessed and promotes the informality of the relationship between the participants, allowing them to compete openly without preestablished positions and invent new solutions. If they deem it necessary for the good of the community and respect of minorities, political leaders would still have the possibility to disregard the result of the dopary and, therefore, the prevailing opinion of their electors that the dopary would finally manifest. They would assume the responsibility, as political leaders, to lead and not be led (Parisi, 2007). In this case, it is essential that they recognize a minimum of effective action to voters who organized the dopary and voted in it. For example, they could explain, with maximum media exposure, the reasons for their decision not to respect the outcome of the dopary.

## Doparies Research Project Rationale

In the essay “Global Divergence of Democracies”, Diamond and Plattner (2001) review the distinction between electoral democracy—defined by a single criterion: to ensure the holding of regular, free, and fair elections among competing parties—and liberal democracy—characterized by the additional requirements in which the central role of the civil society and citizen associations stands out as a check on policy choices and as a deep soul of democracy.

Some critics of political parties believe that civil society can be self-sufficient, but, according to Ronsvall (Gambaro, 2008), it is an illusion to think that democracy can only be reduced to the civil society. Democracy is always a face-off between the government and society and between decisions and consensus. It must be continually subjected to a process of appropriation, owing to activities of the civil society, institutions, and permanent interaction between power and society.

Hay and Stoker stressed that “if we are to reanimate and revitalize our politics, then we need to recreate the space for public and visible deliberative decision-making” (Hay & Stoker, 2009, p. 235). However, there is no decision-making system par

excellence. The overall solution should be looked for a rational use of different systems and decision-making bodies, such that each of these finds its corresponding corrective and complement to the other (Sartori, 1995).

Webb (2009) asks what evidence is there to show that people “yearn for deeper and more extensive political engagement.” In Italy, this request has been very clear on several occasions, mostly regarding primaries. In particular, it happened in December 2010, after a newspaper interview of the secretary of the Democratic Party Pierluigi Bersani, who argued the need to sacrifice the primary to choose the center-left candidate for prime minister to broaden the political coalition in possible election against center-right (Bartocci, 2010; De Marchis, 2010). The revolt of the base of the party on social networks and a number of important leaders has been very clear, and thus, on January 13, 2011, at the party’s national leadership committee, Bersani announced a national conference to discuss the issue of primaries and internal democracy (De Marchis, 2011). After the local elections in May 2011, many political analysts and politicians agreed that primaries were one of the main reasons for the success of the center-left coalition. As a result, for the first time, the issue of primaries has become resoundingly central in the center-right political field to the point of filling the pages of newspapers and television and stimulating the elaboration of a specific law (Amabile, 2011; “Dopo i ballottaggi”, 2011).

Dopary is a new simple mechanism that does not need new laws and, therefore, agreement among parties to be implemented and that gives an answer to the citizens’ right and need for influencing political decisions. Today’s complex societies cannot be guided solely by politicians, who often become oligarchic; by experts, who sometimes make big mistakes (Tetlock, 2005); or by citizens, who frequently lack the skills and information necessary to decide. The mechanism of doparies involves various democracy actors: experts, politicians, journalists, and citizens. Citizenship and political parties are key players in the vote, whereas journalists and experts are actors in the debate preceding the vote. Experts and stakeholders are actively involved in the deliberative polls (Fishkin, 1995) that could enrich the predopary discussion.

Zurich Professor Bruno Frey’s research (2002) shows that giving Swiss citizens the possibility to have a role on political decisions increases their satisfaction with life and that the positive effect of direct democracy on happiness is stronger in cantons with medium or high direct democracy rights, over and above economic conditions. Emotions are influenced by interpersonal and social relationships, and depend very much on the ability of influencing others, changing society, and affecting politics. In the introduction to the collection of essays “*Felicità e libertà*,” Bruni and Porta (2006) argue that the interpersonal dimension can be the bridge between Daniel Kahneman’s utilitarian tradition and Amartya Sen’s Aristotelian tradition about happiness. All the other authors in this volume, including Kahneman and Sen, share the idea



that life does not flourish, in Sen's words, and that existence is not pleasant, as Kahneman puts it, without friends and without genuine relationships, especially disinterested relationships with others. The relational dimension, then, is important not only as a source of happiness but also because it is the place where one exercises (or not exercises) the rights, human development, freedom, and civil life. All these authors highlight the importance of considering happiness not only as the satisfaction of desires but also of linking happiness with relatedness (the quality of human relationships) and with the possibility for citizens to live their virtues (not in a moralistic sense but in the sense of action) and develop activities (happiness as "human flourishing" or "fulfillment" according to Sen, which is much like the Greek *eudaimonia*).

One can naturally ask—What are the tools with which citizens today can say what is wrong in their relationship with politics? The main function of doparies is to open a channel of communication between those involved in democracy. Public happiness comes from an intense democratic relatedness among citizens, political parties, experts, information, and institutions.

### **Doparies: Advantages, Risks, and Critiques**

What can be the advantages of using doparies in modern representative democracies? And what about the risks and critiques? Unlike the primaries, doparies put the emphasis not on individuals but on ideas. However, they are not opinion polls and even referenda. What is the difference between polls and doparies? The abused utilization of the methodology of polls to understand and influence the orientations of citizens toward political and electoral issues has several drawbacks (e.g., Callegaro & Gasperoni, 2008; Durand, 2008). Whereas polls are conducted on a significant sample of the population, in doparies a very high number of voters express themselves. Differently from polls, doparies can be activated by citizens. However, the essential difference is that respondents in an opinion poll are completely unaware of the implications of the subject matter they are asked to evaluate, and they respond according to the superficial impression of the moment. In contrast, in doparies, as in referenda, citizens know that they must express an opinion that may affect important political decisions, and they have the time and motivation to inform and deepen their knowledge, creating a view that is certainly more responsive than the one given in a poll. As shown by Frey (2002), "the main function of the prereferendum process is certainly to raise the level of information of the participants" (p. 138). The exchange of opinions also favors the formation of preferences of participants.

There are important differences also between referenda and doparies. First, as already mentioned, doparies call to vote supporters and members of the majority or opposition parties that have launched them, whereas referenda call to vote the entire electorate of the country. Parties care about

the organization of doparies and should encourage a kind of discussion (members/experts) different from what happens in referenda (voter/media) and similar to a kind of spontaneous deliberation (see also below). Let us consider the case of referenda in Italy. They can only be abrogatory and not propositional, whereas doparies can be both consultative and propositional. They have a quorum, and those who are against have become aware that the most effective strategy to defeat a referendum is to focus on abstention. As 25% of the population never goes to vote, it is enough to just add a 25% motivated abstention to defeat a specific referendum. As referenda normally generate low levels of participation, the 57% turnout in the referenda of June 2011 in Italy was unexpected. Doparies do not have quorum and therefore cannot be invalidated. The most important difference between referenda and doparies is that the latter have the main function to recreate, although in new forms, the growing intellectual exchange among sympathizers/members/activists and political leaders, which partly characterized the life of the Italian parties until the nineties of the last century.

According to Domenico Parisi (2006), today the society becomes more complicated to understand, and people have very few tools to comprehend it: We should invest in the problem of how to use new technologies (computers, Internet, video games, and simulations) to increase the level of the society's social and economic literacy. Expression of an opinion through doparies on difficult issues, such as living will or the use of nuclear energy, may provide unequal access to this instrument of participatory democracy due to "education, class, gender, and age" (Mariën et al., 2010), as had already occurred for institutionalized and noninstitutionalized participation instruments. In contrast, the prediction here, based on the "impressive turnout" at the so-called Italian national primaries of 2005, 2007, and 2009 (Seddone & Venturino, 2010; Valbruzzi & Passarelli, 2008), is that people, motivated by the fact of expressing an important opinion, feel the need to exploit new learning opportunities as those offered by the Internet (e.g., Wikipedia and free online university courses offered by some of the leading universities worldwide).

In some of the criticisms on doparies, the argument of the "madness of crowds" is cited to refer to the risk of making political decisions collectively (Pace, 2009). The literature shows the critical importance of optimizing animal collective behavior of a dynamic environment where there is a constant flow of information to allow an individual to change behavior at all times (Amé, Halloy, Rivault, Detrain, & Deneubourg, 2006). The dopary process represents a direct channel for a continuous flow of information and a mechanism for turning private judgments into collective decision (Surowiecki, 2004). A very large number of citizens can express themselves, thereby promoting the diversity of opinion, which is very important to ensure that the aggregate opinion of a group of people of media competence can be better than that of a smaller group of experts (Page, 2007).

One critique of doparies argues that even if people are informed and documented, and even if it is not just a choice between two leaders (such as in primaries), there is always the danger—in the society of entertainment—that emotion prevails over the critical sense and few demagogic slogan over informed choices (La Porta, 2010). In reality, this danger has been present for some time in Italy, with politics led by an exasperated poll addiction. The exchange of opinions (especially those of minorities) and the constant flow of information in doparies are essential to move from the “madness” toward the “wisdom” of the crowd.

Luigi Bobbio (2006) is perplexed by the proposal of doparies because he thinks that the choice of alternative projects or policies cannot be called to vote (even of activists) but should first be subject to discussion. In other words, according to Bobbio, what is needed is a deliberative process, rather than an aggregative one. However, a deliberative process may be conducted only among a limited number of participants on well-defined issues (personal communication, September 2008). When he talked about the process of aggregation, Bobbio refers to counting of votes among pre-established positions according to the principle of majority; according to the deliberativists, the essence of democracy is based on arguments in the “discussion” (“deliberation”, in English) between all actors involved in the issue at hand.

To answer this objection, it is necessary to try to explain in more detail what is meant by “deliberative process”. Deliberation is a method of decision making (e.g., Cohen, 1989; Elster, 1998; Habermas, 1997; see also Fung, 2003), which is differently defined. According to Mercier and Landmore (in press), public deliberation is an exchange of arguments for and against a given proposition, where “exchange” means that “there must be a feedback loop between reasoning from at least two opinions” and “a disagreement between at least two individuals in the course of a conversation.” Doparies are consultations about specific controversial political decisions, and therefore, the debate is, by definition, related to diverging opinions about the same issue. As a consequence, in these situations, the feedback loop can take place. Moreover, the hypothesis is that, different from the general referenda—which are open to all the citizens and mainly covered by television and other political debate media and in which citizens often reason alone or with their family and friends—debates of doparies occur in party circles, clubs, and places where there is a limited number of participants who exchange reasoned arguments. In short, it can be said that doparies are a new combination of a deliberative process, in which the debate takes place in parties circles, among a limited number of participants who hold different opinions and exchange reasoned arguments about a specific issue, and an aggregative processes, because in the end there is the vote. Future research should verify whether this particular kind of process avoids, as it usually happens with genuine deliberation, the problems of polarization and overconfidence—the characteristics of reasoning

alone or reasoning with like-minded people (Koriat, Lichtenstein, & Fischhoff, 1980; Landmore & Page, 2011; Sunstein, 2002; Tesser, 1978).

Political analyst Massimo Teodori is skeptical about the actual chance of convincing/forcing political parties to greater participatory democracy (through doparies or other similar instruments), unless the character of private law is changed (personal communication, July 2008). According to Teodori, a necessary step to enhance participatory democracy is the acquisition of legal personality by the parties (Frosini, 2003). In this regard, several draft laws have been pending in the Italian Parliament for years. Should we wait until those become law to seek the implementation of democratic instruments such as doparies?

Other arguments against doparies may be quickly addressed. Direct democracy only works well in small systems such as Switzerland, they say. But the great success of the primaries shows that it is possible even in large countries such as Italy; moreover, the political leaders of various countries, including France, have studied the Italian primaries to replicate them. Others say that the high costs of doparies could be an obstacle, but Italians have shown willingness to support the organization of primaries through generous voluntary contributions. The apathy of voters would be also an issue, though the large turnout in 2011 Italian primaries and referenda suggests the contrary; in Switzerland, 40% of the population usually votes, but they vote even 4 times a year, whereas in doparies one would vote no more than once a year. Finally, there would be the risk of oversimplifying complex problems—however, with doparies, it is possible not only to vote “yes” or “no” but also to choose between different documents that address the same problem (e.g., the type of employment contract that facilitates the entry into the labor market of unemployed youth).

## Conclusions

Even critics of participatory and deliberative democracy admit that there are situations in which people want to contribute to political decisions and in which participation benefits both the person and the political system. We presume that the current serious crisis of many democracies is one of those situations and propose doparies as a new bidirectional communication mechanism between parties and their electors. Doparies are consultations among party members or electors that are done after elections for taking crucial and controversial decisions.

Representative democracy needs to regenerate itself with the latest scientific knowledge and innovative energies of citizens. Today, everything is changing so fast that no party can predict at the time of preparation of the electoral program what will be the challenges that it will face once in government. Could doparies be the basic tool through which ordinary citizens avoid the disastrous experience of democratic disenchantment of abstention, build a proper relationship of

political representation, and enjoy the pleasure of the happy exercise of public reason? Doparies serve to create communication and trust between voters and their representatives, improving the quality of representative democracy, which, thus, becomes participatory.

Due to the effects on people's lives of "the biggest financial crisis the world has ever faced" (Kirkup, 2011), 2011 has seen the wave of popular protests worldwide demanding more participatory democracy (e.g., Indignants and Occupy movements; Rogers, 2011). I mean that the introduction of doparies would be important not only for the Italian political system but also for that of other countries. Doparies are different from referenda: Participation is not open to all voters but is limited to party members or electors. Moreover, no quorum is required for the validity of the vote. Finally, there are both propositional doparies (i.e., party members collect signatures to ask their party to be consulted on a particular topic), allowing citizens to raise problems that are absent from their party political agenda, and, in the other direction, consultative ones, allowing parties to hear the true voice of its voters, who, differently from what happens in the polls, were informed by the debates in party circles. Doparies would retain the advantages of primaries (party-voters relationship) and referenda (debate before the vote), but would limit the excessive personalization of politics, focusing on issues and not on people.

Doparies would:

- Allow common people to realize the aspiration to a more constant participatory democracy
- Not force people to align themselves with the thought of political parties
- Convince undecided and disappointed persons to become interested in public issues and to vote
- Give movements a tool for controlling politicians
- Bring politics near the people's everyday problems
- Help elected politicians feel useful and avoid being under the thumb of power
- Decrease expectations about politics held by electors and reduce anger from them toward their party leaders because they would understand how difficult it is to take decisions
- Create stronger social cohesion between politicians and electorate and within the electorate

The scientific project of doparies, which will be carried out in collaboration with Yale University, is expected to achieve a series of scientific studies seeking to demonstrate that this tool influences the well-being, cognitive style, and social behavior of the participants (Calabretta, 2010b, 2010c; Clark & Mills, in press; Keil, 2010; Spada & Vreeland, 2010). The joint 2011-2012 CNR (National Research Council of Italy)/NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities) Fellowship will fund a 6-month period of research on doparies in the American Universities of Yale, Stanford, MIT, and

Harvard. As a research agenda, we plan to use computer simulations and to conduct laboratory and field experiments.

The use of primaries by the Italian Democratic Party has had a contagious effect on Italian right-wing parties (e.g., Carioti, 2011) as well as on other European parties (French socialist party; Gozi, 2011). It has already happened with primaries and it could happen with doparies.

## Appendix

### *Promotion of Doparies*

In December 2005, the proposal of doparies was first officially presented in the weekly magazine *Avvenimenti* (Calabretta, 2005). In December 2007, the spokesman for the Secretary of the Democratic Party (PD) Roberto Rosciani commented as follows: "The proposal of doparies was read with attention and will be considered in the committee that has the task of preparing proposals for the Statute of the PD." Article 27 of the Statute of the PD—approved on February 16, 2008, and amended by the National Assembly on May 21-22, 2010—provides for procedures similar to doparies (called "internal referenda").

In early March 2009, two articles on doparies written by Mario Pirani (2009a, 2009b), one of the most prominent Italian journalists (Pirani, 2010), were published in the most important Italian newspaper, *la Repubblica*, followed by several other commentary articles in main national newspapers and by national public television interviews (e.g., Calabretta, 2009a, 2009b).

At the end of March 2009, the first congress of the right-wing party *Il Popolo della Libertà* (PDL) approved the statute of the party. Article 10 provides for electronic consultations on important decisions. (As already pointed out, doparies have to be preceded by a critical phase of study and debate, in which there is a reasoned exchange of different positions with regard to the subject of the dopary among a limited number of participants.)

The proposal of doparies entered into all three motions of primaries' congress of the PD in October 2009 (in the congress motion Marino, it is written as "primary and dopary party"; Civati, 2009). Close to the primaries of the PD, the media coverage of doparies had an international visibility through Miguel Mora in the Spanish newspaper *El País* (Mora, 2009).

In January 2010, the essay titled "Doparie dopo le primarie" (Calabretta, 2010a) was published, and then promoted all over the country. On December 20, 2010, doparies were described in the newspaper *la Repubblica* as "a system of democratic common sense wisdom" (Ceccarelli, 2010). In February 2011, the new center-right party *Futuro e Libertà*, born from the splitting of PDL held its constituent assembly and approved the first articles of the Statute, which speak of "peripheral participation in decision-making." The party

*(continued)*



## Appendix (continued)

leaders have spoken from the stage of a technology platform, connected to the Internet, for members to vote on all decisions of the party (Maurelli, 2011).

The widespread implementation of doparies could start from the bottom. On March 5, 2008, a civil list near the center-right at Bitonto, a large town near Bari, in southern Italy, brought the political agenda for administrative doparies ([bitonto.myblog.it](http://bitonto.myblog.it)). On October 25, 2009, the same day when the national primary of the PD was conducted, the party leaders of Luino (Varese) decided to organize a sort of referendum on the decision of the municipal administration to build a wall along the lake. The consultation was open to all citizens and had a great turnout: About 15% more than the people who have voted in the primaries decided to express their opinion in the consultation, despite the requirement to make a double line (Varese news, 2009).

In the uncertain situation of Italian politics at the end of 2010 and early 2011, characterized by mistrust from the side of electors to the major Italian parties, the secretaries of the PD of some towns in Sicily (Enna, Caltagirone, and Gela) organized a referendum open to members and electors on the decision of whether the party should continue to support the regional government. The initiative infected the other parties of the center-left wing, which called for a coalition regional consultation on the issue. Subsequently, Senator Enzo Bianco, a former Minister of Interior Affairs, through YouTube, gathered signatures of party members for a deliberative referendum based on Article 36 of the Statute of the Regional PD, which refers to Article 27 of the national statute. Some newspapers and blogs explicitly spoke of “doparies” (Catania Politica, 2011; Condorelli, 2011; *Giornale di Sicilia*, 2011; *L’Opinione*, 2011; Pipitone, 2011). A total of 5,000 signatures were then delivered by May 2, 2011: The regional leaders of the party indicated that referendum regulation would be approved in June 2011 and that what should be the first regional dopary would take place after the summer. In a press conference at the Chamber of Deputies, convened on April 14, 2011, to present to the press a new draft law on internal party democracy and discipline of primaries, the former secretary of the PD Walter Veltroni spoke in favor of the internal party referenda and specified that they could be subject to further regulation in political parties (Fraschilla, 2011).

During the same period, young national political party leaders such as Giuseppe Civati and Sandro Gozi have publicly expressed on their Facebook profiles that they will organize the first national dopary on the theme of the political alliances of the PD, a topic that lacerates the party for years. In his book “*Oltre i partiti*” (“Beyond the parties”, 2011) the former coordinator of PD Goffredo Bettini has proposed to the center-left to open up to new forms of representation, in which the role of primaries and doparies would be crucial.

It has to be verified whether the ordinary accomplishment of doparies in one of the two major Italian parties could have a contagious effect on the other political parties, as seems to be already happening: In March 2011, a consultation on nuclear energy was launched among the party members on the site of right-wing party *Futuro e Libertà*. In May 2011, Antonio Barile, a former mayor of San Giovanni in Fiore (Calabria, South Italy), committed himself to delivering doparies if reelected as mayor (PDL more civic lists). In Emilia Romagna, two regional leaders of Beppe Grillo’s Five Star Movement have brought their resignation in the face of public confronting a sort of referendum on the work that they carry out the election in the region (Ponzano, 2011). The decision on what should be their salary was also subjected to consultation. Did this participatory policy influence the movement’s local elections in Bologna on May 15, 2011, where the Five Star Movement scored a very good result (nearly 10% of the vote)? On June 24, 2011, Pierluigi Bersani, general secretary of PD, called and chaired the party’s national board focused on internal democracy; during the press conference, he announced that his party would soon organize the first party internal referendum (Collini, 2011).

After 2 years since the appearance on Facebook, dopary pages have thousands of friends (of different political affiliations, right and left), in addition to the thousands who have signed the petition online ([www.petitiononline.com/doparie](http://www.petitiononline.com/doparie)). On March 24, 2011, the proposal of doparies was presented at the library of the Italian Chamber of Deputies by invitation of the PD parliamentary group. It is gaining increased interest in Italy (see [doparies.it](http://doparies.it) and [facebook.com/doparie](http://facebook.com/doparie)) and beginning to be known in other countries: On May 27, 2011, the most widespread nonsports newspaper in Spain *El País* has published a long article about primaries in Europe (Gomez & Prades, 2011), and doparies are the only new method mentioned. The first vice-president of the European Parliament Gianni Pittella wrote that politics needs to encourage direct participation in public life with doparies (Pittella, 2011).

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