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### *Il partito democratico secondo Matteo*

Gianfranco Pasquino and Fulvio Venturino (eds.). Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2014, 242 pp.

Since 2013 parliamentary elections (ITANES, 2013; Chiaramonte and De Sio, 2014; Di Virgilio and Segatti, 2016) the Italian political system is facing several new aspects starting from the affirmation of the Five Star Movement, to the re-election of Giorgio Napolitano at the head of the State, and to the replacement of the government led by Enrico Letta with that led by Matteo Renzi, just a few months after the latter's election as national Secretary of Democratic Party (Fusaro and Kreppel, 2014; Hanretty and Profeti, 2015). In the attempt to solve the political deadlock after the 2013 political elections, the fundamental objective of the Government led by Matteo Renzi was to reform the 1948 Constitution to change the current symmetrical bicameralism and the reallocation of competences between the central State and the regional governments. At the origin of Renzi's strength, many scholars focused their attention on the last election for the new secretary of the Italian Democratic Party, held in December 2013.

Continuing the unique series of works dedicated to the evolution of the Italian Democratic Party (Pasquino, 2009; Pasquino and Venturino, 2010), this book gives an electoral framework of the election of Matteo Renzi at the Secretary of Democratic Party. Edited by Gianfranco Pasquino and Fulvio Venturino, the work deals both with the procedures and institutions established in the internal Statute of the Party and followed by the candidates in the elections for the secretary in 2013, and the analysis of the party's "selectorate" before and after the election, in the attempt to know what were the origins and the consequences of the wide success of the new secretary. The result is a brilliant work upon the procedures, the candidates and the electorate of the Italian Democratic Party, useful for that scholars interested in Italian Politics and in the evolution of the Italian Political System.

The authors involved in this work used different analytical sources: analysis of the internal sources of the Democratic Party are integrated by the data of the voters' political preferences and by the data elaborated by the "C&LS (Candidate and Leader Selection)" on the votes of the territorial sections and other voters at the 8 December 2013 voting.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part conveniently covers the Rules and the procedures that define the election process for the election of the secretary of the Democratic Party (chapters 1 to 4). The second part tries to identify and understand the

factors that supported Renzi's victory (chapters 5 to 8), while the third part addresses the effects of the December 2013 elections on the Democratic Party members and supporters (chapters 9 to 11).

Chapter one, written by Fulvio Venturino describes the set of procedures defined by the internal sources of the Democratic Party for the election of its secretary. What is emphasized in this chapter is that the election procedure does require the involvement of party members, but also that of sympathizers and delegates at the National Assembly. The objective of the first phase of the electoral procedure is to decrease the number of candidates for the National secretary and, at this stage, only the party members are involved. The second phase is dedicated to the national delegates' election to the National Assembly (1000 members); since any list of national delegates has to be connected to a candidate for the post of secretary of the party, the elections for the National Assembly are a part of the leader's selection process. This phase is of particular interest because the internal rules attribute the right to vote the secretary to all Italian citizens, to the European citizens resident in Italy and to all non-EU citizens with residence permits over 16 years old. Finally, the third phase of the selection process involves the National Assembly as it is composed at the end of the second phase. If one of the candidates obtains an absolute majority of the delegates, the assembly task is basically to elect its president who proceeds to ratify the outcome of the elections and this was the result of the 2013 election.

Chapter two focuses on the vote by the territorial circles. The analysis takes into account both the historical evolution of the party membership from 2007 to 2013 and the results of the election in terms of participation. Regarding the membership, the data do not show a unique trend: in 2007 there were 800 000 party members, while this number was reduced by 40 % in 2012, to go up again, about 13 % in 2013; the latter increase was probably the result of the vote for the selection of the Secretary. However, the analysis carried out in this chapter shows that the voting participation in territorial circles is geographically differentiated and probably related to different notions of participation between the north and the south of the Country. The overall participation at state-wide level reached 57 % of party members; yet this percentage was lower in the North (48 %) and in the Centre (37 %), whereas it reached almost 79 % in the South. Besides, another interesting element was the different territorial basis of support of the four candidates for the Secretary. The two candidates with most of consensus –Renzi and Cuperlo– respectively gained 45.3 % and 39.7 % of votes at state-wide level and they showed basically a homogeneous support at a national level. On the other hand, Giuseppe Civati –the third candidate with 11 % of votes– received individual high yield in the north and in the centre; and Pittella –the fourth candidate with 4 % of votes at national level– got an impressive 39.6 % of votes in Basilicata.

An articulated picture of the political support for the candidates is provided by A. Anastasi and R. De Luca in chapter three. Their essay focuses on the votes of the members and sympathizers for the National Assembly and the National Secretary. Facing a participation of nearly 2.8 million people, the authors indicate that the traditional areas in support of the Democratic Party (Toscana, Marche, Umbria, Emilia Romagna) showed off a large participation (nearly the 43 % of voters of the

Democratic Party in the political elections held in May 2013), while the participation in the North and in the South of the Country was much lower. This part of the text ends with the reconstruction of the composition of the National Assembly of the Democratic Party, written by M. Fasano and N. Martocchia Diodati in chapter four. In particular, the essay stresses how the majority of those elected is made up of people with no prior political affiliation before the Democratic Party (so called “the natives”).

The second part of the book contains several contributions that aim at explaining the results of the election of the National Assembly and the National Secretary. This objective is reached by reasoning on types and uses of the available information among the “selectorate” and trying to connect the sociological analysis of voters and their self-placement along the left-right political continuum with the choice of the preferred candidate, a choice based on his quality, viability and electability. Among the most interesting findings, the chapter shows the prevalence of television as a source of inside information by contrasting selectors with diversification of communication channels exploited by the three major candidates, especially considering the availability of new communication platforms. The conclusions on the sociological profile of the type selector are more in line with previous studies on PD, even if, for the first time, they register a gap between the sociological composition of the electorate and the candidates, much younger. In their works, the authors successfully underline one of the aspects that characterized the political campaign carried out by Matteo Renzi: the desire to deeply renovate the traditional establishment both in terms of political doctrines and sociological representation.

As for the own-collocation, the chapter edited by V. Emanuele and F. Serricchio shows that the “selectorate” and the electorate of the party have become political overlapping in 2013, while in the past they formed two groups with different political views. This observation is then integrated by the finding that the basis of the Democratic Party during the election process in the Democratic Party was expanded both leftwards thanks to Civati and towards more moderate positions due to Renzi. Indeed, S. Soare and F. Sozzi underline that the choice of the voters was influenced more by the electability of Matteo Renzi and his personal attitudes than by the viability or the attitudes of the others pretenders.

The last part of the book is composed by some analyses, which concern some aspects of the selectors, after the election results. First, the authors analyze the tendency of the categories of Democratic party’s members, sympathizers and external voters. The authors of this work, D. Fruncillo e F. Marchianò, have discovered that a consistent part of the external voters (18 %) had used the election of the Secretary to establish a relationship with the party. In other words, the selection process seems to have had a positive effect of increasing loyalty among new potential members and voters of the party. In particular, these results confirmed the goodness of a selection process in which were involved not only the members of the party but also –in general– the sympathizers, especially for a political party that assumed the “majoritarian principle” as a strategy of political competition since its foundation.

Indeed, the chapter written by F. Chiapponi and S. Rombi highlighted the different sections of the Democratic Party’s “voters” with their different identity and their

relationship with other components. The scholars underline that the old establishment, i.e. the component linked to Cuperlo seems to be characterized by increased feelings of loyalty towards the party, while the components related to Renzi and to Civiati tend to be more prone to defect. These results are very important: because suggest that even if the candidate of the establishment would lost, his voters weren't, in principle, oriented to follow the candidate outside the Party (in case of secession).

At this last thought then it binds the brilliant chapter written by S. Mengucci and A. Scotto. It focuses on the general opinions of the selectors after the results and on their electoral leaning. Despite the uncertain political context and the doubtfulness of the biennium 2012-2013, it results from the analysis that the Secretary elections of 2013 did not have a divisive effect within the party, a considerable risk to the situation of the Democratic Party.

Of course, one of the limits of these analysis is the impossibility of taking into account the relationship between the several factions within the Democratic Party. In this sense, it will be interesting to consider the data from 2014 to 2017, three years characterized by several conflicts inside the PD which led to the appearance of several others political parties (*Possibile Futuro a Sinistra Italiana, Articolo 1*).

As a final consideration, the book represents an excellent and helpful tool for the scholars interested in the evolution of the Italian Democratic Party especially because it takes into account both the peculiarities of the various candidates at the Secretary of Democratic Party and the limits, opportunities and procedures provided by the statute as well as the reactions and the behavior of the different "selectorate".

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