

**Data on Diagnosis of the Digitalization of Intraparty Democracy in  
Southern European Political Parties  
(DIDIP-SEP)**

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## 1°. INTRODUCTION

The use of digital tools is transforming the internal organizational structures and strategies of political parties (Margetts, 2001, 2006; Hartleb, 2013; Klimowicz, 2018; Gerbaudo, 2019; Biancalana & Vittori, 2021, 2023), the forms of communication between party members and citizens (Faucher, 2015; Gibson, Nixon, & Ward, 2003; Jackson & Lilleker, 2009; Margetts, 2006; García Lupato & Meloni, 2023), and even the ability of parties (and particularly of traditional party structures) to establish closer and more direct contact with citizens, thereby expanding and renewing democratic engagement (Scarrow, 2005; Cross & Katz, 2013; Loxbo, 2013; Rahat & Shapira, 2017; Scarrow, et. al., 2022; Sandri, et.al, 2024; Tronconi y Bailo, 2025). In recent years, this has led to the proliferation of studies on the digitalization of political parties. However, most studies focus on the transformation of party management, political communication, and electoral campaigns (Gibson & Ward, 2009; Ward & Gibson, 2009), so consequently there remains a lack of comparative analyses regarding the extent to which parties are implementing digital mechanisms to reconfigure intraparty democracy.

Hence this study, therefore, poses two questions: What are the most digitalized dimensions of intraparty digital democracy, why, and which parties are more inclined towards intraparty digital democracy. The article first presents the analytical framework and hypotheses, followed by the methodology that leads to initial descriptive findings. Finally, the theoretical implications of our findings will be discussed, along with our contribution to the existing literature.

## 2°. STRUCTURE

The diagnosis of intraparty digital democracy includes:

**2.1. Structural Factors:** This section includes the party data, such as the name, acronym, founding year and party type.

**2.2. Coder Information:** This section includes the coder's information, and the dates of coding.

**2.3. Dimensions of Intraparty Digital Democracy:** This section presents the indicators of the four dimensions under study (electoral, liberal, deliberative, and participatory) and the coding values.

**2.4. Data Analysis:** This section explains how the analysis of the obtained data was carried out.

## 3°. CODING CODES

### 3.1. Structural Factors

Country	Political party	Acronym	Founding Year	Party Type
España	Partido Popular	PP	1989	Traditional (until 2009)
	VOX	VOX	2013	New (from 2010)

	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	PSOE	1878	Traditional (until 2009)
	Unidas Podemos	UP	2016	New (from 2010)
Grecia	Elliniki Lisi	EL	2016	New (from 2010)
	Néa Dimokratía	ND	1974	Traditional (until 2009)
	PASOK	KIN	1974	Traditional (until 2009)
	SYRIZA	AFI	2012	New (from 2010)
	Kommunistikó Kómma Elládas	KKE	1918	Traditional (until 2009)
Italia	Lega por Salvini Premier	LSP	2017	New (from 2010)
	Fratelli d'Italia	FdL	2012	New (from 2010)
	Forza Italia	Fi	2013	New (from 2010)
	Partito democratico	PD	2007	Traditional (until 2009)
	Movimento 5 Stelle	M5S	2009	Traditional (until 2009)
Portugal	Chega	CH	2019	New (from 2010)
	Partido Social Demócrata	PSD	1974	Traditional (until 2009)
	Iniciativa Liberal	IL	2017	New (from 2010)
	Partido Socialista	PS	1973	Traditional (until 2009)
	Partido Comunista	PC	1921	Traditional (until 2009))
	Bloco de Esquerda	BE	1999	Traditional (until 2009)
	Pessoas-Animais-Natureza	PAN	2009	Traditional (until 2009)
	Livre	L	2014	New (from 2010)

Source: Own elaboration.

### 3.2. Coder Information

#### 3.2.1. Coder's Name

The name of the person responsible for filling out the data Excel sheet.

#### 3.2.2. Data Collection Completion Data

The date on which the data was collected, using the following format: day/month/year.

### 3.3. Objective and case selection

The objective of this study is to provide a diagnosis of intraparty digital democracy on the digital platforms and official websites of parties in Southern Europe with their own parliamentary group.

To achieve this objective, we have analyzed the websites and digital platforms of 22 national parties with representation in the national parliaments of Southern European countries. Specifically, there are 4 parties in Spain, 8 in Portugal, 5 in Italy, and 5 in Greece. It is worth noting that Sumar in Spain has been excluded from this analysis, due to it being a recently formed coalition, which prevents an assessment of its digital activity. The selection of parties with national parliamentary representation is considered relevant in Sartori's terms. Moreover, by making this selection, we can compare political parties of different types, thus moving away from more restricted case studies, small-scale comparisons, or an exclusive focus on a single party family.

The selection of these four countries is based on the fact that, to date, a significant portion of the existing literature indicates that the most innovative and extensive use of digital participation by political parties has developed in Southern Europe, examples being Podemos and the Five Star Movement (Gerbaudo, 2019). Peña and Gold (2023) suggest that they created the networked party, a new mode of party organisation. Furthermore, most studies on ICTs in Southern European parties, focus on analyzing specific aspects of internal democracy (Astudillo and Detterbeck, 2018; Gastil, 2021; etc.) or on case studies, primarily of Podemos and the Five Star Movement (Mikola, 2017; Deseriis and Vittori, 2019; Gerbaudo, 2021; Raniolo and Tarditi, 2020; García Lupato and Meloni, 2021; etc.).

In addition, Eurobarometer data shows a very low level of trust in political parties in these four countries. They also have similar scores in the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), developed by the European Commission in 2014. Thus, the selection of these countries ensures a comparable context in terms of progress in digital competitiveness, covering areas such as human capital, broadband connectivity, business integration of digital technologies, and digital public services. In 2022, Portugal scored 50.8 (15/27 in the ranking), Italy 49.3 (18/27 in the ranking), Greece 37.3 (21/27 in the ranking), and Spain 60.8 (7/27 in the ranking).

### **3.4. Data Collection**

To carry out a diagnosis of intraparty digital democracy in political parties from Southern Europe, we designed a measurement index that incorporates the dimensions from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) index and the work of Fitzpatrick (2021). Unlike other indices, our approach does not assign greater weight to any specific dimension or indicator, allowing for a balanced assessment of all aspects analyzed. Each indicator is evaluated using a three-point scale: not present (0), partially present (0.5), and present (1). This approach serves two primary goals: first, to identify which indicators are employed by each party; and second, to assess the degree of implementation of intraparty digital democracy, with the aim of determining which dimensions are most widely adopted.

The dataset collected focuses exclusively on the processes and digital tools that existed and were used during the period of analysis (2022–2023), evaluating only the presence of digital practices at that specific point in time. The main data sources for this analysis were the official websites and digital platforms of the political parties under study. It is important to note that, due to the dynamic nature of digital platforms, we adopted an approach that considers potential discrepancies resulting from frequent updates and temporary digital initiatives. We recognize that party platforms are in constant flux, with frequent changes in the tools used, which may cause variations in the evaluated indicators.

To address this challenge, the analysis was structured into three data collection phases distributed across the 2022–2023 period. This strategy enabled us to capture updates and changes to the parties' official websites and digital platforms at different moments, increasing the reliability of the results obtained. Additionally, to ensure broader and more in-depth coverage, we employed a dual strategy: on the one hand, we temporarily joined the parties whenever possible; and on the other hand, in cases where direct access was not feasible, we requested information from party members. Furthermore, we complemented the data by consulting journalistic sources, which provided a more

complete and accurate view of the state of intraparty digital democracy in the parties analyzed.

The period of analysis spanned 2022–2023 and was conducted through three rounds at different points in time. In the first phase, we reviewed prior academic studies and relevant press articles, and we analyzed party statutes and specific documents related to internal processes (e.g., primary elections) within the parties under study. Party statutes, as noted by Kittilson and Scarrow (2003: 65), serve as “a useful indicator of changing attitudes in the relationship between the party leader, party members, and the party itself.” It is also worth noting that the use of party and journalistic sources helped determine whether a specific procedure had been digitalized.

Subsequently, the official websites and digital platforms of the parties were analyzed to score each of the selected indicators based on the value scale, as will be explained in the next section. This process was repeated twice to verify the accuracy of the data analysis and coding. In addition, the results were shared with country-specific experts to confirm whether any coding errors had occurred. This involved review by individuals with expertise in digital democracy, political parties, or comparative politics, who assessed the data for quality and validity.

### 3.5. The dependent and independent variables

Building on Fitzpatrick's (2021) work, and based on the database we created, we proceeded to construct the four dimensions allowing us to assess the level of development of intra-party digital democracy: the Electoral dimension, the Liberal dimension, the Deliberative dimension, and the Participatory dimension. Each of these dimensions is further composed of a set of items or indicators, which enables a more precise evaluation of the elements that constitute digitalization within the parties (see Tables 1-4).

#### 3.5.1. Electoral Dimension

Variables	Items	References
Digital voting	Online elections to select electoral candidates	Hazan y Rahat (2010); Pilet y Cross (2014); von dem Berge & Poguntke (2017); Biancalana y Vittori (2021)
	Online elections to select candidates for the party's governing bodies	
	Consultations	
Beyond digital voting in decision-making procedures	Any online mechanisms for recruiting candidates or internal party bodies	Berge, Poguntke, Obert y Tipei (2013), Coller, Cordero y Castilla (2018)
	Capacity for online initiatives or proposals	Mikola (2018)
	Online consultations or referendums on general issues	
	Any online mechanisms for recruiting candidates or internal party bodies	
	Online consultations or referendums on political strategies and/or government decisions	
	The results of the consultations or referendums are binding	

Source: own elaboration

### 3.5.2. Liberal Dimension

Variable	Items	References
Online Transparency	Statutes, regulations, and organizational chart	Berge, Poguntke, Obert and Tipei (2013), Rahat y Shapira (2017)
	Resolutions adopted by party bodies	
	Biographical information about party officials	
	Information on asset or financial declarations of party officials	
	Management reports	
	Ethical Code	
	Budgets	
Accountability	Internal audit reports	Margetts (2006), Gibson, Nixon, & Ward (2003)
	Internal communication tools and email list of party officials	
	Mechanisms or spaces where members can demand accountability from party leaders and bodies online	

Source: own elaboration

### 3.5.3. Deliberative Dimension

Variables	Items	References
Digital Platform	Existence of an online deliberative platform	Scarrow (2005), Margetts (2006), Cross y Katz (2013), Rahat y Shapira (2017)
Platform regulations	The operating or participation rules are established by the party's regulations	Poguntke, Scarrow, Webb y et. (2016)
	The principles and procedures are transparent in online consultations	Gerbaudo (2021)
Participation on deliberative processes	Platforms are open to all members	Kies (2010)
	No coordinator and/or moderator of the forums	Gerbaudo (2021)
	All comments are published without restriction	

Source: own elaboration

### 3.5.4. Participatory Dimension

Variables	Items	References
Digital Platform	Existence of an online deliberative platform	Scarrow (2005), Margetts (2006), Cross y Katz (2013), Rahat y Shapira (2017)
Platform regulations	The operating or participation rules are established by the party's regulations	Poguntke, Scarrow, Webb y et. (2016)
	The principles and procedures are transparent in online consultations	Gerbaudo (2021)
Participation on deliberative processes	Platforms are open to all members	Kies (2010)
	No coordinator and/or moderator of the forums	Gerbaudo (2021)
	All comments are published without restriction	

Source: own elaboration

### 3.6. Results

Please refer to the attached Excel file for the results.

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