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Nota di contenuto	; Part I. How the direct primary arose: -- Catalytic effect of ballot reform -- Legal control of party activity -- Spread of direct nominations -- ; Part II. Why the direct primary was introduced: -- Reformers versus urban machines -- Impact of party competition -- Explaining an 'irrational' reform -- Reaction and aftermath.
Sommario/riassunto	This book rejects conventional accounts of how American political parties differ from those in other democracies. It focuses on the introduction of the direct primary and argues that primaries resulted from a process of party institutionalization initiated by party elites. It overturns the widely accepted view that, between 1902 and 1915, direct primaries were imposed on the parties by anti-party reformers intent on weakening them. An examination of particular northern states shows that often the direct primary was not controversial, and only

occasionally did it involve confrontation between party 'regulars' and their opponents. Rather, the impetus for direct nominations came from attempts within the parties to subject informal procedures to formal rules. However, it proved impossible to reform the older caucus-convention system effectively, and party elites then turned to the direct primary - a device that already had become more common in rural counties in the late nineteenth century.
