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THE EXECUTIVE UNDER PRESSURE: evaluating the policy style (response) of Italian Prime Ministers from Renzi to Draghi

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Anno Accademico
2020/2021

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INTRODUCTION

The executive power is undoubtedly an institution subject to continuous evolution, promoted first of all by the configuration of the political system and the interactions between parties, but also by the figure of the Prime Minister himself, whose leadership and political capacity, modify the exercise of the power of direction and control over the Government.

In the Italian context, since the end of the Second World War, the governments that have succeeded each other, have shown a continuous evolution in relation to their constitutional prerogatives, practices, and role reserved above all for the Prime Minister, a figure who determines the political and legislative approach of each cabinet. This evolution has been mainly dictated, on the one hand, by the continuous search, on the part of Governments, to play an increasingly prominent role within the constitutional architecture in the relationship *vis a vis* with the Parliament, and, on the other hand, by the external pressures exerted by a multiplicity of new actors who have appeared over the last decades within the political systems.

The goal of this work is to analyze this process of change in executive power, specifically examining the legislative and leadership approach of four cabinets, nonetheless their reaction to the internal and external pressures by the new and growing veto players (Tsebelis 1995).

For the purposes of this analysis, after a brief introduction concerning the evolution of the executive power from the First to the Second Republic, in the second chapter the Government led by Matteo Renzi from 2016 to 2018. This executive, as it will be seen in the second chapter, fits well within the trend of personalization of politics (McAllister 2007; Garzia 2011; Musella 2012) that has marked our system since the 1990s. Moreover, the choice fell on the above-mentioned executive because of the role that former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi was able to carve out for himself during his years in power, through a strategy based on disintermediation (Lizzi and Pritoni 2019) and on the supremacy of Palazzo Chigi.

Secondly, we will proceed to analyze the two governments led by Giuseppe Conte, as they represented an important turning point in Italian political history. The Conte I executive, born following the 2018 elections and lasted until the Government crisis materialized in the summer of 2020, was the first Italian cabinet to be constituted entirely by political forces of a populist nature (and partially anti-establishment) and born as a result of a programmatic agreement based on the drafting of a true private contract.

In this context, the role taken on by Giuseppe Conte, as will be seen in the course of the third chapter, represented a point of rupture with the previous executives during which there had been a growth in the centrality of the role of the Premier. This trend was again reinvested in the Conte II government,

an executive that found itself having to manage the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences. Since the explosion of the health crisis, Giuseppe Conte has been able to carve out an increasingly central role for himself over the months, bringing back into vogue the topic of the personalization and verticalization of executive power.

Lastly, the current Italian government, the Draghi executive, born last February following the crisis of the Conte II cabinet, will be analyzed. Specifically, the rise of Mario Draghi to Palazzo Chigi will be understood in the light of the current debate on the role of technocracy in modern Western democracies, a context in which the Italian Government will be called upon in the coming months and years to face increasingly complex challenges such as the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) and the structural reforms related to it.

In order to provide for an exhaustive and systematic analysis of the different governmental and prime ministerial policy styles (responses), among the various models realized in political science, the choice has fallen on the Policy Style Model elaborated by Richardson and colleagues in 1982.

This model, based on an analysis of the macro-institutional context, enables the individual governments to be placed within a specific matrix, constructed around the analysis of two central dimensions: on the one hand, the governmental approach, understood as the way in which executives take their decisions (whether rationally or incrementally) and the nature of the same (whether they are reactive or proactive output) and, on the other, the relationship between the cabinet and external society, understood as the degree of permeability of individual Governments to the instances and pressures exerted by civil society. The combination of these evaluations will make it possible to understand the style of policy (reaction) of the Governments that will be analyzed in this paper.

As we will observe, despite the fact that the executives chosen as the reference point for our analysis date from a period of time close to one another, the result will be the formulation of four opposing policy styles. Such finding demonstrates the rapidity of the evolution of executive power in the Italian context.

CHAPTER 1 – MANAGING THE EXECUTIVE: BETWEEN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PRESSURES

1 Governing with or without the Parliament: the transformation of Italian Executive Power

In the years which followed the end of the Second World War, the reborn Italian Republic underwent a deep process of institutional reconstruction which involved all the basic components of a western liberal democracy.

The legacy of the fascist regime needed to be delated from the institutional architecture of the Italian State in order to renew those roles and attributions which have historically characterized the political system and order of the Nation. The Parliament, which suffered from the 1920s to the half of the 1940s a tremendous de-pauperization of its attributions, was restored as the true heart of the legislative and representation process of a State that needed to regain its democratic heritage. Contextually, the judiciary was declared an autonomous and *super partes* power, and not anymore, a mere executor of the will of the country leader.

Among the three traditional power that in each democracy have to be autonomous and separate, the role of the executive power has been - since the restoration of the democracy - one of the main institutional weaknesses of the Italian political system. Diffused and eventually endemic have been the core criticalities of the Italian executive, that could be summarized by the recurrent instability of the cabinets, the difficulties associated with the struggle for internal coordination between the representatives of the executive *i.e* Ministers and Ministries, and the relative weakness of the *ruler* of the executive, the Prime Minister.

These practical issues have always attracted the attentions of different scholars (Cotta and Verzichelli 2007, Cotta and Marangoni 2015) which have continuously tried to identify the inner causes which may have led to these features. The main attention with this respect has been directed towards the characteristics of the party system and towards the features of the Italian institutional framework.

1.1 The Executive within the Constitutional order: the codification of Government's role and prerogatives

In order to comprehend the origins of the institutional weaknesses of the Italian executive power, an analysis of the very first Italian constitutional chart – the 1848 *Statuto Albertino* – is needed.

Surprisingly, within the provisions of *Statuto Albertino*, the Government - as a Constitutional body - did not receive any particular attention. None article was directly referred to the cabinet nor to its duties and prerogatives, as the text was shaped by the institutional design which characterized the State at the time: the Constitutional Monarchy.

The architecture and the primordial configuration of the cabinet as an institutional body – as a typical constitutive element of the parliamentary form of government – gained subsistence within the Italian environment, not as a direct effect of the granted constitution, but as a *de facto* result of the new configuration of the political constellation derived by the direct application of the *Statuto* (Merlini 1995).

In particular, it is not surprising that the first codification of the legal organization of the cabinet occurred in 1888 by law n. 5195¹.

The evolution experienced by the Government since the *Statuto Albertino* were well known by the 1946 Constitutional Assembly, that - among other criticalities – had the precise duty to provide an articulated and stringent definition of the role of the Government, and its prerogatives *vis a vis* the other Constitutional actors.

It could be argued that this precise task has been positively concluded only in part. In particular, the Constituent Fathers have been partially able to forecast the relative Government's strengths and weaknesses which would have been derived by their provisions. Crucially, the country – for decades – as been ruled by a strong authoritarian government, which permeated every single corner of the institutional sphere. With this in mind, the Constituent Assembly attempted to construct an architecture capable of preventing any further authoritarian realm by assembling a system of *checks and balance* in which the executive needed to be oversighted and controlled, mainly by the Parliament. The Constitution, as the result of intense and deep compromise between all the political forces represented into the Constitutional Assembly, rather than solving the problem underlined by the implementation process of the *Statuto Albertino*, leaved open the room for future clash on the

¹ The Law n.5195 of the 1988 represented the central element of the Crispi's institutional reform. It is composed by two article: the first ruled the number and the attribution of the Ministries to be determined by royal decrees, the second prescribe the presence of an Undersecretary for each Ministry, who has the faculty of representing the its own Ministry in front of the Parliament during the formal discussion of a bill.

exact scope and perimeter of the Government action within the Italian institutional sphere (Cotta and Verzichelli 2007).

The Constituent Father, with their aim of preventing any future authoritarian drift, ruled that the Government must enjoy the explicit support of the Parliament. The cabinet – once nominated and sworn in by the President of the Republic - in order to be legally in charge, has the precise obligation to obtain a positive response from the vote of confidence of each of the two Chambers of the Italian Parliament (*art. 94 Cost.*). At the same time, the cabinet will have the precise obligation to resign in the case of a vote of no-confidence by both the Houses.

The provisions prescribed by art. 94 Cost. underlines the will of the Constituent Assembly to introduce a deep a true dependence of the Government on the Parliament within which, the cabinet in order to pursue its political goals has the practical need to enjoy a structured parliamentary majority. Art. 94 of the Constitution, however, imposes a wide operative “chain” on political and institutional will of the executive power, which with the aim not to promote any political instability and uncertainty in the Country needed to be counterbalanced.

In order to partially restore the independence of the Government from the Houses, the Constitutional Chart provides specific limitations on the exercise of the vote of confidence: in particular the latter needs – in order to be binding – to be signed by one tenth of the MPs of the Chamber in which this constitutional motion is presented.

This specific limitation, however, did not proved itself as true a instrument capable of preventing the rise of forms of cabinet instability. Interestingly, the Constituent Fathers had the strong conviction that Governmental instability would mainly arise as result of the unpredictable political action of individual Members of the Parliament. This belief could be argued to be the ideological base of the overall architecture of the vote of confidence, which is unable to deal with the core and practical reasons of the instability of the Italian executive power since the 1940s (Cotta and Verzichelli 2007). Immediately after the restoration of the democratic political system, the institutional instability - which could be considered as a recurrent element of the Italian history – has been mainly ascribable to the actions and behaviors of the political parties, which the Constitution could not deal with.

In general, the basic existence of the Italian government has always been highly dependent on the survival of the coalition agreement between the parties constituting the majority. Once collapsed the institutional agreement between them, the government has always proceeded to resign, without waiting for a vote of no confidence.

Another element in which the Constitution does not provide a valid operative baseline is the precise definition of the internal structure of the Government. The Constituent Fathers, instead of opting for a strong and clear choice between a model of ministerial autonomy, a collegial model or a

prime ministerial model, created an architecture in which each single scheme is coexisting with each other.

As a result, the Constitution assigns to the Prime Minister a delicate role and a preferential institutional *status* which differentiates it from the other role within the executive, both in terms of the day-to-day activities of the cabinet and in terms of the executive's formation. With respect to the latter, art. 92 of the Constitution, precisely confers to the Prime Minister the faculty to propose to the President of the Republic the names of its Ministers. Furthermore, art. 95 prescribes that is precise duty of the Prime Minister that of leading the political initiative of the cabinet, and that of coordinating the action of the Ministers.

The result of this constitutional choice makes the position of the Prime Minister that of a mere *primus inter pares* (Cassese 2000) and seems to move into the direction of an architecture based on the collegial character of the cabinet. This institutional interpretation provides the reasons why - within the Italian constitutional system – it is not the Prime Minister who receives the vote of confidence, but the cabinet as a collegial entity (Huber 1996).

However, even if the Constitution prescribes the collegial character of the Government with the coordination of the Prime Minister, it is possible to identify an element of individual responsibility of Ministers, who are politically accountable and criminally liable for those matters that belong and concern the interest of their own Department. Interestingly, the Prime Minister does not enjoy any constitutional power to dismiss the Ministers, duty that belongs to the President of the Republic.

On the light of the collegial character of the executive that inspired the overall architecture of the cabinet, the Constitution then did not provide the possibility to opt for a vote of no confidence against a single Minister. Only in 1995, for the first time in the history of the Italian Republic, the parliamentary majority which at the time supported Dini's Government, voted a motion of no-confidence against the Minister of Justice. Crucially, this represented a controversial turning point for the balance within the executive, and the Constitutional Court – called to decide upon this peculiar situation – expressed itself in favor of the individual vote of no-confidence against a single member of the cabinet².

Another aspect that need to be analyzed in order to comprehend the constraints and the privilege that the Constitution placed on the executive power is the law-making process. On one hand, the Government enjoys the prerogatives to enact specific law-decrees that has the same *status* and validity as a parliamentary initiated law. On the other hand, with respect to the general bills which follows the traditional legislative path inside the Chambers, the Government does not enjoy anything else than the same power of the Parliament. Apart from this constitutional arrangement, however, the

2 Judgement 6 December 1995 – 18 January 1996 N.7

bills initiated by the Government enjoys a *de facto* superordinate position with respect to the normal MP's proposals. The reason of this features needs to be found within the Constitutional provisions about the majority that the Executive must to enjoy in the Parliament, which explains the traditional greater success of cabinet bills (Di Palma 1977).

The preliminary analysis concerning the Constitutional rules regulating the existence of the Executive power provides the baseline for understanding the peculiarities of the Italian political system.

However, the main element that shaped the direction of the role of the cabinet within the system is an element that goes beyond the Constitution: the role of the party system in the formation and existence of the cabinets.

1.2 The development and transformation of the Italian Executive power during the First Republic: formation, political power, and internal management of the cabinets

Since the re-establishment of the democratic political participation in the Country, the history of the Italian governments during the decades of the First Republic (1946-1992) developed itself around four specific characterizing features.

Firstly, most of the governments that alternated themselves during this period could all be defined as coalition governments (Pritoni 2012), all of them including the leading party at the time, the DC (Verzichelli and Cotta 2000).

Secondly, the country experienced a poor alternation within the governments of those parties that at the time had the ultimate control of the political competition (Verzichelli and Cotta 2000).

Thirdly, due to the coalition agreement between the ruling parties for the formation of the cabinets, the duration of the executives was ultimately short, with an average duration of 373 days.

Lastly, the Prime Minister enjoyed only limited prerogatives of political initiative; it was mainly a weak figure, whose role was constrained by the will and the interaction among the parties composing the coalition (Maranini 1995).

With this respect, it is important to underline that some minimal changes have been present during this period, but they represented only a peripheral dynamic that did not altered at all the above-mentioned recurrent scheme.

According to Sartori (1976), the political environment of the First Republic had to be defined as extreme and polarized pluralism. In particular, the system was characterized by the presence and anti-system parties (namely the PCI – the Communist Party – and the MSI, born on the ashes of the fascist party), which if could, would have changed not simply the Government architecture, but the very system of government. The author directed then his attention to the competition among political

parties in order to give shape to his definition. Sartori identified that the center of the political (and ideological) competition – on which the entire system was based – was dramatically occupied by the simultaneous presence of the Christian Democrats and the other secular minor parties, like the Republican Party and the Liberal Party. This secularized center tended to receive continuous pressure from the parties belonging to the extreme side of the spectrum, which in turn constructed a system based on a bilateral opposition.

Given the occupation of the center, the entire political competition was characterized by centrifugal tendencies, with many voters located on the extreme wings, and the with the left and right side parties not moving towards the center (both in terms of policies and ideology) because they would have lost their vote on the extremes without gaining new ones.

One of the main determinants of the First Republic political system identified by Sartori was the strong ideological polarization, which marked the very existence of a dogmatic politics, in which the ideology determined citizens' mentality and voting behavior.

The relevance of parties' interaction into the process of government formation during the First Republic needs specific attention in this analysis. In particular, due to the configuration of the Italian party system, no party has been able to singularly hold a stable parliamentary majority³. This delicate situation required, for the cabinet to be formed, an explicit agreement among those parties which used to take part into the electoral rally, that typically took place after the elections. The coalitions which were at the base of the very existence of the executives were constructed around the DC, namely the only party able to enjoy the so-called relative majority (Leonardi and Wertman 1989). Crucially, it was impossible at the time to imagine or to build a suitable governmental coalition without the Christian Democrats in it.

Giovanni Sartori (1976) defined this peculiar determinant of the Italian executives with the concept of "peripheral turnover", in which only those relatively small parties belonging to the center-right or to the center-left alternated themselves inside and outside the cabinet coalition. The existence of this form of "peripheral turnover" finds its justification into the condition of the political parties at the time. In particular - due to the fear of communism that was wide spreading in Europe – the Communist Party, that during the First Republic represented the biggest challenger in terms of votes and consensus for the DC, has never been considered as a suitable government party. The Communist party however, since the 1976 election, would have represented the ideal parliamentary partner for a coalition government capable of eliding the Christian Democrats from it, but this never took place. The tendency at the time was then that of deliberately excluding from the representation into the

³ The only exception to this dynamic is the composition of the Chamber of Deputies between 1948 and 1953, when the DC held 305 parliamentary seats out the 572, detaining the absolute majority.

Executive those parties that belonged to the extreme of the political spectrum both on the left (communist, PCI) and on the right (Italian Social Movement, MSI), a condition that has been defined as the *conventio ad excludendum*, a term firstly theorized by Leopoldo Elia (Ridola 2009).

Within this perspective, the importance of the general elections for the creation of the cabinets was only marginal: it mainly provided the benchmark for evaluating the relative strengths during the negotiation phase for the formation of the governments among those parties that were already sure to be included into it. For this reason, the majority within the Parliament was critically large, but at the same time difficult to manage.

This configuration explains the relative short length and the instability of the executive of the First Republic. Moreover, the existence of such strong parliamentary majority imposed tremendous implications on the capability and even possibility for the political minority to negotiate and be taken into consideration during the daily parliamentary activities.

Within the Italian Republic, the President of the Republic has the precise role and duty to indicate the individual in charge to form (or at least trying) the Government (art. 92 of the Constitution). The Head of State, by the means of the consultations carried out with all the leaders of the Italian parties, once obtained an exhaustive picture on the possibility to arrive to a stable parliamentary majority capable of sustaining the activities of a Government, generally appoints as Prime Ministers the individual which represent such majority.

During the period of the First Republic, as previously mentioned, the only party capable of giving subsistence to a parliamentary majority has always been the DC. For this reason, the tendency for the Head of State was that of appointing as Prime Minister (or better as the Government *formateur*) a politician belonging to the Christian Democrats party. However, the DC was internally divided into different and competing factions that tended to challenge the other for the party leadership (Galli 1978). For this reason, within the party different were the leaders that in theory could exercise such influence and power to gain the appointment from the President of the Republic. Thus, the individual who ultimately become the *formateur* was basically the winner of the internal competition among the candidates of the Christian Democrats, but such choice could also be heavily influenced by the predilection of other parties that could be part of the cabinet coalition (Cotta and Verzichelli 2007). Since the DC was internally animated by specific sympathies for left or right-side position, the personal interconnection with the leaders of the other parties always played a critical role for the definition of the designed *formateur*.

The tendency to have only Christian Democrats appointed as Prime Minister come to an end during the 1980s. From this decade until the very end of the First Republic in 1992, thanks to the introduction - not without tensions and difficulties - of the “rule of alternation” (Curini and Zucchini 2012), the leaders of the other Italian parties gained the direct access to *Palazzo Chigi*, the “house” of the Italian

Executive power. In particular, Andreotti, De Mita, Gioia, Forlani and Fanfani (DC) alternated themselves with Spadolini (Republican Party - PRI), Craxi and Amato (Socialist Party – PSI) (Curini and Martinelli 2009).

During the years of the First Republic, however, apart from the delicate task of assembling a stable parliamentary majority capable of sustaining the work of the executive, the prerogatives enjoyed by the appointed Prime Minister, in the practical formation and composition of the Government, have always been reduced by the necessity to include within the process of political bargaining also the leaders of the other parties participating into the coalition (Cotta and Marangoni 2015). In particular, it was mainly their prerogative that of indicating the names of those politicians to be appointed both as Ministers and as Undersecretaries.

Within this operative scheme, the role of the Prime Minister was suddenly relegated to that of a mere mediator among all the competing interest at the decision table (Curini and Martinelli 2009). Furthermore, even when the Ministers belonged to its party, the possibility for the President of the Council to play an active role in the appointing was critically low. It was the result of the internal competition within the party between all the competing factions that practically designated the holders of the various Government Departments (Cotta and Verzichelli 2007).

The dynamics concerning the formation of the Government during the years of the First Republic, allow to better comprehend why the temporal duration of the executives was relatively short: this constitutive and recurrent features of the Executives at the time, has always been ascribable to the difficulties for the Prime Ministers and for the party leaders to maintain those political equilibria internal to the coalition which have been giving birth to the cabinets.

After this preliminary analysis it is clear that the political party - as an autonomous institution - with its internal and external dynamics was at the very heart of the political and institutional life of the country. Every single aspect of the daily activities of the Executive and of the Parliament was the result of the debate within the headquarters of the coalition parties, that played the role of *deus ex machina* of all the institutional architecture of the State.

The dynamics of the First Republic then, have erected the political parties as a *semi*-constitutional body, that acted as the real Government of the Country. They were the years of the “*Partitocrazia*” (Quagliariello 2011), and for the Executive power as an institution, the real pressure was within the system.

That the parties and their logics permeated every single aspect of the life and existence of the Governments - along with all the other component of the institutional architecture of the State - is immediately evident through the analysis of the main alternatives available for the formation and composition of the executives (on the light of the proportional-based electoral system). All of them were routed around the behavior assumed by the parties in the formation and support *iter*. Firstly, the

most diffused typology of cabinet composition was the full coalition Government, in which each party of the parliamentary majority was represented within the cabinet; these enlarged executives could only rise in a situation of stable alliances between all the parties belonging to the Government (Curini and Martinelli 2009).

Secondly, the First Republic also experienced single party or coalition government - mainly adopted as a transitional instrument - in which the leading party within the executive received the external support of other parties in order to gain a quasi-stable operative majority. An example of this typology is the Pella I Government (August 1953 – January 1954) in which the DC received the external support from the Liberal Party and the National Monarchist Party.

Thirdly, minority governments – a transitional measure as well as the latter - were the result of a delicate situation in which the executive party/coalition did not enjoy a stable parliamentary majority, but ruled thanks to the abstention of all the other parties in the Houses (Cotta and Marangoni 2015). An example of this typology is the Leone I Government (June 1963 – November 1963) which was a single-party government directed by the DC - which held the parliamentary relative majority) and based on the abstention of the Italian Social Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the Italian Socialist Party.

Lastly, the parties of the First Republic tended to give rise to caretaker governments or before general elections, or to force the Head of State to call for an anticipated electoral rally. This type of executives were characterized by the subsistence of Governments which were no longer enjoying the confidence of the Houses but lasted to carry out the daily activities of the cabinet without assuming any relevant legislative or political measure. Crucially, the exercise of this last kind of executive gave rise to different constitutional legitimacy issue: firstly as an explicit breach to the provision of art. 94 of the Constitution, and secondly in terms of Constitutional roles and attribution, since the call for new elections is a choice firmly in the hands of the President of the Republic (Verzichelli and Cotta 2000). An example of this typology is the Andreotti V Government which only lasted for less than six months between March 1979 and August 1979.

All of the four above mentioned possibilities for the creation of a government during the First Republic were cyclically adopted, and their relative frequency depended upon the relationship between the governmental parties, *i.e* between every entity within the electoral rally with the exception of the Communist Party and the Italian Social Movement (Pasquino 1987).

Among all the available examples of coalition governments during the First Republic, certainly the situation materialized between 1976 and 1979 deserves a special mention. The general elections of the 1976 produced an unexpected result, that modified the traditional configuration of parliamentary power in the Chambers. On the one hand, the DC maintained its traditional shares of popular support (even if it lost 4 seats in the Chamber of Deputies), and on the other hand, the Italian Communist

party experienced a 7-point increase in its vote that was translated into 74 more parliamentary seats in the Chambers, having respect to the previous election.

The electoral weight enjoyed by the Communists could no longer be neglected, but a precise event modified the traditional parliamentary dynamics: in 1978 the President of the Council Aldo Moro, one of the most prominent spokespersons of the DC and the promoter of the “*Compromesso Storico*” between the DC and the PCI was kidnapped by the Red Brigades (“*Brigate Rosse*”), the largest left-side Italian terrorist group. This unexpected event forced Giulio Andreotti, the undisputed leader of the DC, to reach an agreement with Enrico Berlinguer, Secretary of the PCI, in order to give birth to the first “National solidarity Government”, ruled by the Christian Democrats and the Communists (Lepre 2006). This event deserves special attention since, for the very first time in 30 years, the existence of Executive Power was not challenged by internal forces, but its direction was shaped by external factors that ultimately altered the normal party-centered scheme of the First Republic’s cabinet formation.

The executive power within the institutional architecture of the First Republic (and even during the Second Republic, 1992 ongoing) was then at the mercy of the will of the political parties, with mainly the DC in charge of allowing a Government to be born or to collapse.

During the years from 1946 to 1992, no cabinets have ever been able to last for the entire 5-year legislative term⁴. However, the end of the cabinets’ experience was never initiated by a parliamentary vote of no-confidence, but instead by the explosion of internal issues within the government coalition. Once again, the “*Partitocrazia*” was the real determinant of the institutional life of the First Republic. Crucially, the very rise of Governmental crisis was one of the main instruments in the hand of parties’ leaders to solve the internal disputes among all their factions. In addition, such crisis served as an institutional weapon, in order to redesign the internal equilibrium of the cabinets, that even if composed by the same coalition parties, were characterized by a different allocation among them of the most prominent role Ministers and public appointments (Vassallo 1994).

Moreover, the inner instability of the executives during the First Republic, was also ascribable to the fact that until 1992, the leaders of those parties belonging to the government coalition, rarely occupied a direct role within the cabinet. Party leaders, by remaining untied to institutional roles, had the particularly valuable possibility to directly influence the duration of the executive without encountering institutional criticalities (Lupo 2006). More than that, by remaining outside the cabinets, the leaders were able to maintain those freedom of action that any political entity needs to enjoy in order to be particularly “dangerous” and relevant within the scene (Cotta and Verzichelli 2007).

⁴ In the entire Italian political history, only two Governments have been able to last for the entire legislative term: Alcide de Gasperi during the first legislature, and Silvio Berlusconi during the fourteenth.

This tendency was challenged only in rare situations and by very few individuals. Without considering Alcide De Gasperi, the first Italian Prime Minister after the restoration of democracy (and leader of the DC), only five Presidents of the Council were at the same time leader of their respective party. It could be argued that for the leader of small- or medium-size parties as the case of Craxi (PSI) and Spadolini (PRI), it was easier to be successful in both roles, since the management of their respective parties (with only limited and not very powerful internal factions) was not a time-consuming activity. The same success rate was not experienced by the leader of bigger political entities like the DC leaders Andreotti, Fanfani and De Mita; the management of a mutant and internally turbulent “creature” as the Christian Democratic party, while holding the reins of the executive, was irreconcilable. Such visibility and the coexistence of institutional and political power gave rise to widespread negative reaction within their party, in which the opposing factions tended to ally within each other in order to interrupt this unlimited hegemony (Galli 1978).

As previously underlined, during the first decades of the First Republic, the management of the cabinet has always been heavily influenced by internal factors - namely the configuration of the party system and its pressures. With the exception of De Gasperi, the Prime Minister - due to constitutional and political constraints - has always been quite a weak institution. Firstly, because the Constitution did not provide any legal basis for a strong mandate, since it prescribes its indirect election. Secondly, due to the strong role played by the parties in every single decision of the executive, the President of the Council enjoy only residual power both on the appointment of the Ministers, both on policy promotion process. It was up to the government parties to determine the political and policy outlook of the executive, almost relegating the President of the Council to a symbolic figure (Cotta and Marangoni 2015).

A system based on similar features could only last until the rise of a charismatic leader, with a different idea of which should be the role of the President of the Council. The first Craxi Government of 1983 represented the first element of discontinuity with the past, as far as the role of the Prime Minister is concerned. The 1980s underlined the need for the Italian Republic to modify the conception associated with the Executive Power: the other European States and the US were ruled by particularly strong leaders, among them the most prominent examples were Margaret Thatcher at Downing Street and Ronald Reagan at the White House. It should be underlined that the first effort to enlarge the scope of the executive power within the Italian environment was not particularly easy to implement: any reforms in this sense needed to win the resistances from the political parties.

The first practical attempt to solve the lack of internal political coordination within the cabinet was adopted by the Prime Minister Bettino Craxi (Caviglia 2014). He opted for the creation of an inner

cabinets (Hine 1986)⁵ within the Government, in which party leaders, if members of the government (or as an alternative the most prominent ministers of each party represented in the Government) together with the most important ministers held the prerogatives to take each core decision. This solution was effective only in theory because, as previously underlined, party leaders tended to remain outside the cabinet, delegitimizing the decisions adopted by this inner cabinet.

Craxi's attempt has never been fully institutionalized by his successors but marked the beginning of a new era for the Executive Power, that needed to strengthen the President of the Council's office and its bureaucratic apparatus (Cotta and Verzichelli 2007).

Before the new wave born in the 1980s, *Palazzo Chigi* has never owned a true civil servant's apparatus, capable of supporting prime ministerial actions and decision making: the time for a deep reform was finally arrived.

When Ciriaco de Mita became President of the Council in 1988, one of the first measures adopted his government was the introduction of new specific provision aimed at determining the activity, order and regulatory power of the Government of the Italian Republic (law n. 400/1988) (Guiglia 2019)⁶. After this reform, the single Ministers did not longer enjoy the prerogative to adopt decision and act on their own, expanding the perimeter of those matters upon which it was compulsory a collegial deliberation of the Council of Minister. Furthermore, the law regulated and ruled the creation of an *ad hoc* apparatus with task of assisting the daily activity of the cabinet, and, more importantly, supporting the decision-making process of the Prime Minister. In particular, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers - as a bureaucratic department - became the epicenter of the new enlarged role of the Prime Minister, that could finally count on trained civil servants capable of supporting its Office.

The last element that need to be analyzed in the evolution of the Executive power during the First Republic is the relationship between the Government and the Parliament.

The overall weakness of the Italian executive power and the Prime Minister - apart from the above-mentioned exceptions - are even more evident if the parliamentary actions of the cabinet are taken into consideration. First of all, the Government has only rarely had the direct control of the parliamentary agenda (Di Palma 1977), with the consequence of encountering critical difficulties in shaping the direction of the legislative activity. As a result, the Executive faced tremendous issues in

5 The Autor underlines that his idea on the role of the PM that belonged to Craxi went beyond what displayed by his predecessor. In particular, his strong public image put him in the position to enlarge the scope of the executive, that under him founded himself in conflict with the Parliament, the Judiciary and even the Constitutional Court.

6 According the author, the law 400/1988 seeks to bring together three systemic principles found in Article 95 of the Constitution (for long time without implementation within the practice of the cabinets), which have had strong repercussions on the organizational and functional practice of governments. Specifically, the law relates the collegial principle, the monocratic principle and the principle of ministerial autonomy, providing new consistency for an expanded role of the Executive power.

promoting its own legislative proposals within the Houses, and also had to accept many different amendments on them (De Micheli and Verzichelli 2004). An interesting indicator of this dynamic was the extremely low approval rate of Government initiated bills and the rate of amendments on Executive legislative proposal. For this reason, the Governments during the First Republic needed to govern with the Parliament, and not without it. In this sense, Cotta and Verzichelli (2007) underline that during that the average success of governmental bills was directly associated with the power of the Chambers: wheatear in the Houses there was convergence between the MPs and the Government (*i.e.* party leaders) higher was the governmental legislative success.

However, from the 1980s, the executives have tried to limit the enormous power in the hand of the Parliament, with the aim of shifting the legislative balance more in favor of the Government. One of the first attempts is the 1988 abolition of the secret vote during the ordinary legislative process, that limited the possibility for the MPs to regulate internal clashes within the parties by using the legislative activity and eliminate the issue of the parliamentary snipers.

It is crucial, within this argumentation, to underline one of the main legislative instruments in the hand of the Executive power, recourse to whom has heavily increased since Craxi's Government. The law decree ("*Decreto Legge*" regulated by Art. 76 of the Constitution) allows the Government to temporally bypass the Parliament in the Legislative process, demonstrating the political authority of the Executive.

The overall experience of the Executive power during the First Republic, in which the cabinets and the Prime Minister were at the complete mercy of the parties (and then of the Parliament), could no longer continue in the same direction. The wave of institutional and political reforms raised in the 1980s did not even stop itself at the turning point of the existence of the Italian Republic: "*Tangentopoli*".

The "Clean Hands" judicial process ("Mani Pulite"), which involved all those political entities which ruled the Italian politics for decades, modified and altered the power's architecture of the State. The traditional political parties (and in particular the Italian Socialist Party, PSI) which shaped the First Republic with their logics and dynamics, have been so strongly annihilated that they could never regain their previous institutional space. The "*Partitocrazia*" was completely delated. For the Executive Power the season of the Second Republic represented an unprecedentedly change, gaining that institutional and political prominence impossible until that moment.

The era of the "Core Executives" was beginning.

1.3 The development and transformation of the Italian Executive power during the Second Republic: formation, political power, and internal management of the cabinets.

The entrance into the *epoque* of the Second Republic represented a turning point for the overall Italian political system. All those logics and distinguishing features of the previous decades were no longer feasible for an architecture not anymore exclusively based on the institutional will of the parties; new dynamics were immediately experienced. What should be noted is that the term Second Republic should be mainly conceived as a pure operative label aimed at distinguishing two different political *epoque*. In particular, in Italy the passage from the first and the second republic did not take place through a constitutional reform so structured capable of justifying the change of “Republic” as in France.

Since 1994, due to the presence of different electorally powerful coalitions within the system, Italy experienced a deep alternation in government, with an increase in their overall duration, which was a deep operative limit during the First Republic. Even the role of the Prime Minister within the cabinets was ultimately expanded: the Italian Republic was moving towards a deep personalization and “leaderism”, which would have driven all the daily activities and political direction of the Governments.

During the first period after the collapse of those political parties, which ruled over each institutional and bureaucratic character of the Italian Republic, the role of the President of the Republic in the formation of the Government rapidly increased. In 1992, the impossibility for those political parties, that traditionally played a marginal or opposition role within the Parliament, to create a stable majority, pushed Scalfaro, the President of the Republic, to adopt a solution never considered during the First Republic.

In order to assure a Government capable to lead the country during this delicate phase, the Head of State appointed as Prime Minister Carlo Azelio Ciampi, the former Governor of the Bank of Italy (Castrovilli 2021). For the very first time, the entire executive was constructed around the figures of prominent technocrats, whose political program has been previously agreed with the President of the Republic.

The experience of the so-called “*Governi Tecnici*” could be conceived as one of the main distinguishing features of the new direction assumed by the Executive power after 1992.

However, Ciampi’s Government played mainly a transitory role, which allowed the political party to renovate themselves without directly being involved into the management of the State. The

new majoritarian-based electoral law, introduced in 1993⁷, deeply modified the pattern of interaction among the political parties, giving consistency to a new mechanism for government formation (D'Alimonte and Bartolini 1997). Precise aim of the “*Mattarellum*” was that of allowing the elections to produce a clear and undoubtable outcome in terms of parliamentary majority, in order to discourage the recourse to post electoral agreements.

The majoritarian component of the new electoral law forced the political parties to create pre-electoral coalitions, based on a shared program and driven by a recognized leader.

Given the insurgence of this institutional dynamics, the outcome of the general elections tended to be much more relevant by playing a direct role (than that of the First Republic in which elections only served as a basis for the relative strength of a party within the cabinet) in the actual formation and composition process of new governments. For this reason, even the consultation carried out by the President of the Republic to form a new executive modified its prominence within the Italian Political scene. In particular, during the overall experience of the Second Republic until now, the role played by the President of the Republic has been defined as an accordion (As firstly theorized by G. Amato, Pasquino 2013). In particular, in the evidence of a clear and stable parliamentary majority, the President of the Republic limits himself in appointing as Prime Minister the leader of the winning coalition. However, in a situation of political crisis in which the majority is at stake, the role played by the Head of State gain prominence in the appointment of the President of the Council of Ministers. Examples of this last expansionary role of the President of the Republic are the birth of the Monti and Draghi Governments, in which respectively Napolitano and Mattarella should be conceived as real initiators these political experiences.

The coalition nature of the governments of the Second Republic did not alter the challenging negotiation process among parties - that was a distinctive feature of the First Republic - to designate Ministers, Undersecretaries and all the other roles within the executive (Bartolini, Chiaramonte and D'Alimonte 2004).

What could be underlined as the main core difference during the process, is the role of the Prime Minister. If on the one hand during the First Republic he was only a mediator among competing interests, on the other hand, during the Second Republic, the Prime Minister was regarded as the main and leading actor of this process, given his role as unilaterally recognized leader of the coalition.

⁷ Laws n. 276-277 of the 1993 (commonly known as “*Legge Mattarella*” or “*Mattarellum*” by the name of the his proposer Sergio Mattarella) drawn a mixed electoral system, according to which: 75% of the parliamentary seats were assigned through a *first-past-the post system*, and the remaining 25% (155 seats in the Chambers of Deputies) were assigned by a proportional mechanism by the means of short and blocked lists with a 4% threshold the parties needed to meet in order to be allowed to gain seats (basically a majority assuring mechanism).

However, even if this dynamic tended to be a recurrent scheme, some deviations and differences could be easily detected from 1994 up to today.

In particular, by looking to the last governments of the 1990s it is possible to detect at least two operative differences in the role exercised by the President of the Council. If Berlusconi, as the strong leader of a coalition together with his party, has always exercised and undoubtedly influential pressure in the clash for the appointments, on the other hand Prodi, a coalition leader without a party, could only enjoy a lower decree of discretionary power during this process (Cotta and Verzichelli 2007).

A more recent example is the one deriving from the unstable outcomes of the 2018 elections⁸, in which a post electoral coalition took the control of the Government. Within this peculiar situation, Lega and the Five Stars Movement (two competing parties during the elections but allied after them) designed an independent Prime Minister (Giuseppe Conte) who did not enjoy any prerogative in the designation of his cabinet.

Re-directing our attention to the features of the Executive power during the Second Republic, another element of discontinuity with the past is represented by the presence of the leaders of the coalition parties within the executive. In contrast with the First Republic, during which the most prominent politicians tended to be untied to the cabinets in order to be more influential for its existence, in the Second Republic parties' leaders tended to assume the lead of Ministries, increasing in this way the importance of the role and the overall durability of the cabinets (Bartolini, Chiaramonte and D'Alimonte 2004).

The average duration and the theoretical stability of cabinets it is a central element for the Italian governments after 1992. Even if the Second Republic executives faced difficulties in lasting for the entire legislative terms, the average cabinets' length was remarkable with respect of the First Republic. In particular, in the eleven legislative terms between 1946 to 1993, 44 governments alternated themselves in charge (4,4 cabinets for each legislature), with an average duration of 373 days. Since 1993, during the 7 legislative terms of the Second Republic, 17 has been the executives in charge up to today (2,4 for each legislature), which lasted on average 580 days⁹.

This higher duration of cabinets during the Second Republic reflects the increased role of elections into the government formation and lasting process. Specifically, the leader of the winning coalition, by the means of the elections, received a *de facto* popular investiture, which could not be neglected

⁸ The Five Stars Movement was the most voted party during the elections, but due to the mixed nature of the electoral law (the "*Rosatellum*"), did not gain enough parliamentary seats to govern on its own. The only feasible instrument for Government formation during the XVIII legislative term is the recourse to post electoral coalition.

⁹ The V and VIII legislative terms were the two periods with the highest number of cabinets in charge (6 executives), while 1 cabinet ruled during the XV legislature, which lasted only for 722 days.

neither by the opposition parties, neither by the President of the Republic. For this reason, each parliamentary situation which tends to alter the existence of a Government, representing the majority of the voters, becomes a heavily debated theme: the will of the parties need to face peoples' mandate. For example, the very first government of the Second Republic, the Berlusconi I, only lasted for six months because one of the cabinet's coalition party, the *Lega Nord* (nowadays know as Lega) withheld its support from the executive, allowing a new technocratic executive to born, sustained by a different parliamentary majority then the electoral winning one.

Since this episode, public debate has always divided itself around the possibility to have a different parliamentary majority from the one which received the popular investiture. This theoretical, and even practical, issue could not be solved by any institutional instrument, since neither the Constitution, neither the law are helpful with this respect. The constitutional chart only requires the executive to hold the majority in both Houses, but nothing prescribes about which majority should be the operational base of the Government.

This issue could have been solved by the Constitutional Reform promoted by Governments Berlusconi I and II and voted by the Parliament in 2005. According to the proposals of the reform, in case of collapse of the executive, if the government majority would have not been able to form a subsequent cabinet with its own MPs, new elections should immediately have been called. Together with this proposal, the reform aimed at extending the scope and the prerogatives of the Prime Minister, transforming its office into a pure "*Premiership*" (De Gregorio 2009).

According to this view, the Prime Minister would have been able to appoint and revoke the ministers and determining latter's activities. Furthermore, he would also have been able to directly dissolve the Chambers¹⁰. This reform would have constitutionally ended the political debate arose in the 1980s concerning the role of the Prime Minister and its enlargement, but it has never seen the light.

The constitutional referendum called in 2006 to ratify or not the content of the above-mentioned reform, moved into a conservative direction: the 61% of the voters expressed their contrariety to Berlusconi's proposal, imposing tremendous consequences for the center-right government in terms of political legitimacy.

What heavily distinguishes the executives of the Second Republic from the First Republic is also the alternation of coalitions and parties within the executives. As already underlined, during the decades from 1946 to 1992, all the parliamentary majorities were centered around the DC, which took part in each of the 44 cabinets which have followed one another. Through the entire First Republic, with the only exception of the "*National Solidarity Government*", all the parliamentary

¹⁰ The power to dissolve the Chambers is usually entrusted to the President of the Republic, but its exercise is not unconditional, since he can call early elections - according to the best practice - only when he encounters the impossibility to reach a new majority.

majorities were constructed by the same political parties; the only available alternance was in terms of their relative strength within the cabinets. This dynamic was completely outplaced since the first elections of the Second Republic in 1994. Since the Berlusconi I government, the center-right and center-left coalitions tended to alternate themselves in charge. Even those extremist parties, which would have been excluded from participating into the executives during the First Republic due to the presence of the “*Conventio ad excludendum*”, ended up in playing a much more central role within the cabinets. On the one hand, *Alleanza Nazionale*, the nationalist right party born from the ashes of the Italian Social Movement (MSI), moderated the ideological positions of its predecessor, and showed itself as a valuable government party during Berlusconi’s governments. Its leader, *Gianfranco Fini*, was the very first extreme right politician to hold a Ministry, since the collapse of the fascism¹¹, and to occupy one of the highest institutional roles in Italy: The Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies. On the contrary, the successors of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), and in particular the *Partito della Rifondazione Comunista* (Communist Refoundation) showed itself as particularly difficult to incorporate within a governmental majority. In general, even those left-side parties which defines themselves as the true carrier of the socialist ideology, ended up in moderating their stances, in order to be eligible for a role within the executives¹².

The cabinets of the Second Republic leaded by parties’ and coalition’s leader, tended to be much more powerful and stable then their First Republic’s predecessors.

However, the presence of authoritarian individuals with a recognized public image within the cabinets, make the management of the executive quite easier than in the past.

The possibility for the Prime Minister to appeals himself to the strong electoral mandate he received from the citizens, increased his prominence in the daily activity of the cabinets.

Furthermore, the wave of reforms initiated in the 1980s, aimed at strengthening the role and the power of the President of the Council, contributed in shaping the degree of influence and autonomy of the Prime Minister during the Second Republic. In particular, the modification occurred into the political conditions of the country, allowed for a more organic reform of the office of the Presidency of the Council of Minister.

Nowadays, the head of the executive can count on specific civil servants at his dependencies, capable of assisting him in its decisions and autonomy. This transformation, on the one hand reduced the

11 Gianfranco Fini was appointed as Minister of Foreign affairs in 2004 and held this role during Berlusconi-II and Berlusconi-III governments until 2006.

12 A valuable example of this argumentation is the evolution of the micro-electoral lists belonging to the leftist side of the political spectrum. *Liberi e Uguali* parliamentary group, which belongs to the majority which supported Conte-II Government and Draghi-I government, even if composed by three left-side parties (*Articolo 1*, *Sinistra Italiana* and *Possibile*) which defines themselves as a separate entity form the center-left area, could not be considered as part of the classical Italian ideological communist left.

direct responsibilities in the hand of the Prime Minister because of the presence of a bureaucratic apparatus behind him, and on the other hand, tied the office of the Italian President of the Council closer to the other European examples of core executives (Calise 2006). In addition, as previously mentioned, Italian Prime Minister, since the outbreak of the Second Republic, has acquired a much more consistent role in the decision and allocation of Ministerial seats, even if those parties of the coalition could still exercise a prominent veto power on its decision.

If during the First Republic the political parties could easily rule over the entire institutional system, nowadays the party is a structure at the service and mercy of its leader.

This leaderistic tendency could, on the one hand allow the Prime Minister to enjoy greater degree of personal power within the cabinet, but on the other hand this centralization of political prerogatives could easily mine the stability of the executive (Pombeni 2009). The electoral mandate received by the leader of the executive, that today is commonly used as a political weapon within the cabinet, cannot be conceived as a clear dominance tool over the executive (Cotta and Verzichelli 2007). Mediation and bargaining are still key determinants of the survival of the Italian cabinets, which nowadays are continuously challenged by internal and external pressures.

With the expansion of the prerogatives and the role of the Prime Minister - as portrayed by the experience of Craxi Governments - the executive power is nowadays more prone to clash with the representatives of the legislative power: the Parliament. If the cabinets of the First Republic could be argued to have been governing with the Parliament, the same cannot be experienced after 1992.

During the last 25 years, the executives have increased their power *vis a vis* with the Houses. If the success rate of Government bills was lower than the MPs bills during the First Republic, nowadays the situation is exactly the opposite.

The governments, in order to pursue their legislative objectives are commonly prone to recourse to the provision of the *Decreto Legge* (Law decree), admitted as an exception to the normal legislative process, in case of extreme necessity and urgency. Law decrees have the same effect as ordinary law, as soon as they are issued from the executive during the Council of Ministers, but they require the ratification by the Parliament within 60 days from their introduction. Even if this legislative instrument is residual, its use has been massive during last decades. In particular, due to the strict time for its conversion into law, there are limited possibility for the Parliament to amend the draft, leaving the Government with a remarkable power over the legislative process.

In addition, the executives have a variety of instrument at their disposal to secure their legislative will: the Constitution provides defensive tools that the Government can use in order to assure the concretization of its legislative will, whom end up in depauperating the role of the Parliament during the legislative procedure. First of all, executives could secure the approval of a bill mainly through the "*Questione di fiducia*", a vote of confidence placed on the final vote of a bill which stops all the

amendments to a legislative item and stabilize the behavior of the parliamentary majority. During the Second Republic, and in particular since the XVI legislative terms (2008-2013), the adoption of the vote of confidence over legislative proposal has drastically increased, underlying the willingness of the Government to secure its programs and the fear over an ordinary parliamentary procedure, to much prone to unexpected results (Lupo 2007).

In order to provide an exhaustive picture of the defensive tools accorded to the executive, deserves to be mentioned the *maxi emendamento*, an instrument that tend to resort in order to block the parliamentary discussion on the bill (Lupo 2009).

As underlined, the thick line separating the executive from the legislative power in Italy has tended to be weakened by the cabinets in order to gain the leading role also within the Chambers.

Such tendency is far from being unproblematic, since by the means of the defensive tools, the parliamentary oppositions experience a deep weakening on their ability and possibility to get involved within the legislative activity.

Since the first legislative term after the restoration of democracy in Italy, the entire political system has been characterized by specific features and dynamics which have shaped the direction of the Executive power. The First Republic “*partitocrazia*” has applied tremendous internal pressure on the autonomy of the cabinets, which during those decades have struggled in order to find a place and a role *per se*.

After 1992, even if internal pressures - mainly dictated by coalitions and party leaders - continue to play a central role in the existence of cabinets, the main challenges an executive need to face are mainly external. Outside the Chambers, Palazzo Chigi, and Quirinale there is an independent world made by companies, enterprises, associations and special interests which constantly exercise pressure on the Executive, aimed at influencing and shaping the political decisions of the Government. These pressures are nowadays relevant for the daily activity of the executive, and their power is constantly evolving.

If these pressures are capable of exercising any veto over the executive, it will be examined in the next section.

2. The Executive and the “veto players”: are we living into a “vetocracy”?

Governments has the ultimate goal of shaping the legislative direction of their country.

In Italy this aim has given birth to a variety of institutional conflicts, between the government and the Parliament, between the Government and the Regions, between the Government and the political parties sustaining it, and ultimately between the Government and the civil society.

It is clear that, in order for the country to be governable, different instances need to be directed to the executive and the ruler of a country needs to find the perfect balance among all the competing interests. They could be originated within the system (by political parties and the MPs) or outside the system (such as companies, association and the citizenry in general).

Policymaking is the central element of this argumentation, since it is during this process that policies, as the outcome of the political system are proposed, discussed and then adopted. Policymaking attracts the attention of all the actors involved in the legislative and governmental affairs, either they have specific preferences over selected policies (De Swaan 1973), or whether they are motivated by an ideological background which shapes the direction of their preferences (Bawn 1999).

The analysis of the policymaking process, and the pressures exercised towards it, is essential for a complete understanding of how and why the legislative path produced specific results instead of others.

Policy outcome is the result of two determinants: the prevailing institution (*i.e.* the Government, political parties or even representative of the civil society) and the preferences of all the entities involved. This outcome heavily varies depending on which actor has the predominance over the political system, given the fact that both the configuration of the actors involved, and their preferences is a changeable determinant.

Each institutional architecture has a different configuration of actors which attempt to influence the final outcome of the policy process, their interaction and dynamics vary from one to another.

To which extent those actors are capable of taking the control of the legislative process within a country and ultimately influencing its final outcome?

2.1 George Tsebelis and the “Veto Player” analysis: evidence from the Italian case.

According to George Tsebelis, in order for a policy proposal to be effective in modifying the legislative *status quo*, a specific set of individual or collective actors have to agree to the proposed change (Tsebelis 1995). These entities have been defined as “*veto players*”. They can be *institutional* if derived by the constitution of a country (The Houses, the President, the Prime Minister) or *partisan* if derived by the features of the political system of the reference nation.

Following Tsebelis’ theory, each political system is characterized by a different configuration of veto players, which can differentiate themselves in terms of overall number, cohesion and, ultimately, the ideological differences among them. These features and their interaction could predict the direction of the veto activity.

If the overall number of the veto player is high, and they are characterized by significant ideological distance among them, the possibility for the status quo to be modified is relatively low: where a significant modification of the original policy set is unforecastable, the overall system is characterized by *policy stability*.

In contrary, when veto players are competing entities with an institutionally aggressive tendency, they propose to other actors “take it or leave it” offers that could exercise a significant control over the legislative activity, required to modify the status quo.

These entities defined by Tsebelis as *agenda setters*, need to make specific proposals that could easily be accepted by the others veto players, otherwise the *status quo* will prevail.

Above all, what should be hedged is what Milton Friedman defined as the tyranny of the *status quo*, namely the core reason for the impossibility to introduce articulated institutional and constitutional reforms within the States. According to the American Nobel Prize winner, the *status quo* is remarkably difficult to brake, because it is protected by what has been called “the iron triangle”. At one vertex there are the direct beneficiaries of a law, at a second vertex, legislative committees and their members, at the third, the bureaucracy that administers a law (Friedman 1984). In order for the *status quo* to be braked, a country need to experience the convergence of at least two vertexes.

According to Friedman only the President of a Country is capable of exercising enough pressure to break the iron triangle, but only during the first 100 days of its Presidency, otherwise the tyranny of the status quo will prevail.

The situation of policy stability (Friedman’s tyranny) is not only enemy of the veto players, but also of the governments. Each executive, in order to win the electoral competition, presents to the electorate well defined political proposals, which the citizenry expects to be implemented once in office. Any electoral and political proposals are focused on the necessity to modify the actual *status quo*, and any difficulties, in the governments’ attempt to change it, could have unwanted results. In particular, the criticalities a government encounters in its attempt to change the status quo, may lead to its resignation and replacement in a parliamentary system.

In this sense, the greater the policy stability *i.e.* the impossibility to overcome the *status quo*, the greater the governmental instability. For this reason, the role of agenda setter veto player could be enormous, since the executives, in order to maintain their institutional role, could end in sacrificing their legislative autonomy and political independence.

Furthermore, within the institutional pendulum which characterizes the condition of policy stability, if the Government’s effectiveness is ultimately mined, the role of the judiciary and of the bureaucrats gains prominence, making their existence more active and autonomous from the political system.

As underlined, one of the main determinants which affect the policy stability is then the overall number of the veto players and their distance. However, what really matters in this context is the

influence that these veto players have during all the steps of the policymaking process, which in turn derives, as in a game theory scheme, from the sequence of their political actions, *i.e.* who makes proposals to whom (Tsebelis 2002). Moreover, the nature of the veto players can be useful to forecast the final result of their pressure: if these actors have an individual character (as for the case of the institutional veto player) they can make an easier correspondence between their desired outcome and the final one.

Conversely, if the veto players are collective (like the political parties in a multiparty system, and even the representative of the civil society) the final policy outcome is related to the *locus* of the decision making (parliamentary commissions, Council of Ministers, Parliament etc.), and on who actually is entitled to exercise the control of the agenda.

The type of the reference political institution - *i.e.* the powers the Houses and their configuration, the ideological stances of the parties, and the degree of integration within the political system of private actors - will determine the so-called “constellation of veto players”, which in turn will frame the possibility to modify the *status quo*.

According to Tsebelis, given the parliamentary nature of the Italian institutional architecture and given the presence of a heterogenous variety of veto players, Italy should be defined as having a high degree of policy stability, to which it is associated a high governmental instability (Tsebelis 2002).

Moreover, the fragmented multiparty system (Sartori 1976), which distinguishes the Italian political architecture, needs to be considered as one of the main determinants of the impossibility for an executive in charge to systematically modifying the legislative apparatus of the State. Along with this aspect, the rigidity of the Italian bureaucracy (Vittoria and Alfano 2019), together with the highly independent and autonomous role of the judiciary (Cassese 1969)¹³, complete a framework which witnesses the problematic environment where the cabinets are called to operate.

A key determinant of the Italian context (*supra ch. 1, par. 1.2*), is that, given the necessity for a bill to pass the approval of both House, the government’s legislative proposals (which has passed the scrutiny of the government parties) tend to have greater chances of being approved by both the components of the Parliament.

Tsebelis came to the conclusion that, within the Italian context, the *partisan veto players* are the parties composing the Government majorities (Tsebelis 1999).

13 The author underlines - forecasting the future relationships between political parties, judges and members of the executive - that one of the biggest issues for the actual independency of the judiciary is represented by the political ideology which belongs to each judge. In particular, given the high degree of autonomy, and considered the weak supervisory power of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary, the administrator of the law could operate by biasing the political architecture of the state. In particular, by the means of *ad hoc* proceedings, the judiciary could end in favoring the existence and exercise of concentrated interests.

However, the increasing fragmentation of parties within the Parliament, and the process of depolarization seem to have been more relevant than the size of the government coalition. Both phenomena act through the particular decision rules that have so far governed the formation of laws, regardless of the number of actors in government¹⁴.

According to a first argument, valid only for majority governments, every cabinet's proposal would automatically find approval in Parliament because all the parties in government would have signed a pact, at the time of the constitution of the government, that would oblige them, on pain of the collapse of the government, not to promote any policy that was not desired by each of them. In such a case, since the governing parties have the majority in Parliament, many amendments to the Government proposal would be rejected because they would harm the interests of at least one of the party members of the Government. The final decision would therefore be in an area close to that of the government proposal.

The theme of the majority governments and their operative logics refers to the distinction made by Lijphart (1999) in *Patterns of democracy* between majoritarian and consensual democracies. In this sense, Lijphart takes up the opposition between two polar types - a majoritarian model and a consensual model of democracy - which he had already proposed at the beginning of the 1980s (Lijphart 1984). The antinomy is introduced through the well-known Lincolnian definition of democracy as "*government of the people, by the people, for the people*", where the people in whose name and for whom one governs, can be the simple majority of the citizens (majority model) or the largest possible majority of the same, ideally unanimity (consensual model). Aside from the effective introductory image, the contrast is justified theoretically by recognizing how the analytical dimension underlying the two models is nothing more than the different degree of inclusiveness of the institutions in the two models of democracy.

Recalling the distinction between internal decision-making costs and external risks presented by Buchanan and Tullock (1962), whom theory was then later recalled by Sartori (1987), majoritarian democracies are characterized by institutional arrangements that reduce inclusiveness to what is strictly necessary (the majority, in fact), based on a minimization of decision-making costs and the acceptance of the relative external risks¹⁵.

14 Polarization and fragmentation are generally thought as explanatory variables for the stability of democratic regimes, not for the stability of "policies." Moreover, polarization and fragmentation have an opposite relationship with the stability of democratic regimes to the one imagined by Tsebelis for the stability of "policies": high levels of polarization and fragmentation increase the instability of democratic regimes.

15 By virtue of strongly disproportional electoral systems, it is not uncommon for majoritarian systems to govern in the name and on behalf of a simply relative majority, thus also earning the appellation of pluralistic democracies, from "plurality".

Consensual democracies, on the other hand, are more inclusive, accepting the increase in transaction costs to reach a collective decision in order to reduce the subsequent external risks, for example in the implementation of the same. It is in this sense that the adjective consensual is justified, because these are institutional configurations that favor - or even force - the construction of an extended consensus and broad and inclusive political agreements.

Turning our attention to the practical application of Tsebelis' argumentation on the Italian case, another remarkable feature is the existence of strict party discipline, which would allow the commitments made by party leaders to the government, to be taken as binding upon the MPs. The party leaders should be influential members of the Government and have the possibility and convenience of imposing sanctions on rebellious parliamentarians, up to and including not standing for re-election.

In Italy, the secretary of the party enjoying the relative majority has rarely been also President of the Council (Cotta 1996), and there is no evidence of sanctions being imposed for voting behavior that differs from the indications coming from the Executive. A recent exception to these argumentations was the recent expulsion by the 5 Star Movement of several dissident parliamentarians, who decided, in opposition to the party, not to vote for the confidence in the newly formed Draghi government supported among others by the same Five Stars Movement.

One way of asserting the agenda power of the government, is through the advantages offered to the cabinets by the legislative procedural rules. In this case, this power would derive either from an *ex post* veto power (the possibility of proposing the last amendment in the legislative process), or from an *ex ante* veto power (the possibility of submitting to parliament a proposal made *de facto*, in whole or in part, not amendable). In the latter case, Parliament would be forced to choose between the Government proposal and maintaining the status quo.

As before, the imagined requirements are ill-suited to the Italian case. In Italy, according to the two houses' procedures, the Government does not have the exclusive prerogative of tabling the last amendment before discussion of the articles but shares this prerogative with the Parliamentary commissions (Biondi and Leone 2012)¹⁶.

Moreover, it has no power to "armor" its own proposal, unless someone mistakenly interprets the vote of confidence or emergency decrees as substitutes for this power. The vote of confidence does not actually force a choice between the government proposal and the status quo, but between the government proposal and a new government (Huber 1996), even if in Italy, the absence of constructive vote of confidence as in Germany and Spain, makes the result of the consultation more

¹⁶ This remains true even in the new regulation in force in the Chamber of Deputies, which many insiders consider to be a regulation that enhances the role of the executive in the legislative process.

insecure. In particular, during the First Republic, the parliamentarians, or the party that had decided to open a Government crisis, would not even necessarily have jeopardized the existence of the parliamentary majority that had until then supported that government.

As an effect of the importance attributed to the government, Tsebelis considers the individual parties forming the government to be the veto players of legislative activity under a parliamentary system. The reasons for the increasing difficulties of the Italian executive to experience a deep approval of its initiatives, would therefore derive from the progressive enlargement of the governmental structure (Kreppel 1997).

Furthermore, by considering the relationship between the House and Senate in a strong bicameral asset (symmetrical and uneven bicameralism), it is possible to recognize that each branch of Parliament is potentially a veto player since no bill can be passed without the consent of both branches.

In other words, it is impossible to legislate without the consent of both Chambers.

On the other hand, every single "governmental" party actor is a veto player, not because its failure to assent to a bill prevents it *de jure* from being enacted, but it is a veto player in relation to the gravity and credibility of the threat it is able to enact: the threat of provoking a government crisis (Zucchini 2001).

Ultimately, Tsebelis' analysis of the Italian configuration of Veto Players seems to be well suited only for the dynamics of the First Republic; in order to deal with the decades after 1992, new logics and interactions needs to be considered.

2.2 Pressure groups as "Veto Players": the transformation of Italian organized vested interest representation.

Since 1992, the constellation of the Italian veto players has enlarged itself: interest groups, which were present within the Italian environment since the 1950s, have gained such prominence that allowed themselves to be included in the above-mentioned sphere.

It is actually this aspect that seems to complete the Tsebelis argumentation about the Italian veto players environment. Even if these actors have always been conceived as essential and powerful entities within each political process, the Italian literature dealing with this sensitive theme is relatively young.

Half a century of *partitocrazia* has almost forced Italian and foreigners political scientists to take an interest, before any other decision-making actor, in political parties, partially neglecting the role played by pressure groups.

In other words, the theoretical and analytical approach that has become established in the study of Italian politics has been able to privilege those dimensions and places in which political power has been consolidated, inside and outside public institutions, mainly through political parties (Pritoni 2016).

A critical dimension that cannot be neglected is the socio-cultural dimension of the Italian political environment, which could have shaped the direction of half century of investigations.

In Italy, interest groups are connoted by a negative aura and often likened to corrupted practices (Panebianco 1989)¹⁷. Moreover, the difficulties for the citizenry and the voters to detect the existence of the major interest groups, to measure their ability to influence the political process and to investigate the type of relationships and resources used to exert pressure (Leech 2010), contribute in stimulating the existence of too simplistic beliefs about interest group. In addition, the political dialectic recently brought into parliament by the Five Stars Movement regarding lobbying and the effects on democracy of interest representation, makes the clearance of this practice particularly complex.

The characteristics and the role of interest groups in Italy - activation, instances, organization, strategies - are also linked to major social and economic transformations, to the evolutionary dynamics of public policies, to the type of regulation and style of policy making. In the course of time, large interest organizations have found themselves sharing their role with environmental movements, associations, large companies, local authorities.

First of all, the role of the interest groups in Italy was evident even during the decades of the First Republic. The typology of these relationships for the decades from the 1950s to the 1970s was described by resorting to the categories of kinship, clientele, "collateralism" and union, and the resources exchanged were identified predominantly in votes and consent versus legitimacy, recognition, and favorable measures. The literature devoted particular attention to this sensitive theme. In particular, La Palombara (1967) scrutinized the relationship between Confindustria, the political parties and the governmental apparatus at the time; Martinelli (1994) investigated the deep relationship between the legislative effort of the DC and mainly the interests of the industrial environment; Morlino (1991) by observing the relations between the DC and the large trade confederations, has identified control, collateralism and symbiosis as the prevailing type of relationship between the governing party and interest groups, so that the instances and claims of the latter have often become the views of the party and the government.

¹⁷ The author underlined that unlike other political cultures, which are more inclined to accept the action of interest groups as legitimate, in Italy the low legitimacy of the political role of 'fractional' interests has contributed to making the relations between interests and the political class less visible.

In particular, social categories represented by large interest groups tended to be heavily included into the policymaking process, while landowners, large companies, professional orders, banks obtained attention and protection on the basis of personal relationships and other strategic resources brought into play.

In the phase of consolidation of democracy and of the republican state, political parties have therefore played a fundamental role, and large interest organizations have accepted a subordinate position by gaining access to the political arena. These were the years of a semi neo-corporatist approach, in which organizations representing individual interests, made decisions on economic and social policies in concert with public authorities. The entrepreneurial side embraced this strategy in order to avoid delegitimization and to obtain a sort of green light in the choices of the sector. In this historical period, political parties became effective gatekeepers of democratic consolidation because they were able to encapsulate conflict, recompose divisions, and include special interests in decision-making processes (Morlino 1991).

This interpretation, however, should be historically placed in the first phase of the First Republic, when the Christian Democrats, acted as a bridge between the institutions, the administrative apparatuses and the large organizations of interest. It played the role of articulating and aggregating social instances and partisan pressures, then translating them into large and small policies (Lizzi 2011).

The picture just provided, slightly changed since the 1980s. A consolidated democracy and the affirmation also in Italy of social and economic policy regimes in the areas of pensions, health, labor, education, industry, the Mezzogiorno, agriculture, etc., have made the interest groups, involved in these policies, more important. Thanks to these policies, they became more autonomous with respect to political parties, over and above the social regulation methods that have been experimented and implemented in the various spheres (Lange and Regini 1987); this was possible because the policies themselves became institutions and resources for the groups

Their involvement, in fact, did not only take the forms of simple inclusion within the political arena typical of the past, but it was rapidly extended to the various phases of the policy process.

Interest groups - and, in particular, the large trade organizations – played a broader role, also aimed at information, definition of technical issues, availability of specific knowledges (of the production sector, technological innovations, territory, etc.), and the availability of information.

In the last years of the First Republic, the policy style, that imposed itself as predominant into the scene, was the so called “oligopolistic bargaining” (Lange and Regini 1987), in which, at least within the strategic policy sectors as industrial and labor fields, large organizations, capable of pre-mediating between interests and transmitting them in an aggregate fashion, negotiated on an equal footing with

their counterparts *i.e.* the public authorities and political parties. It was basically a neocorporative model (Schmitter 1974).

The logic that prevailed, however, was not that of the institutional objective, but rather of the promotion/defense of the various interests, and the relations between groups, parties and institutions were sometimes marked by competition/conflict and sometimes by cooperation.

In the years of the rapid growth of the Italian public debt, and of the deterioration of the economic conditions at the turn of the late eighties and early nineties, it was the governments of the day that searched consensus, legitimacy and collaboration to cope with new and more difficult financial instabilities, just as it is the social partners which accepted negotiation in exchange for stable access to policy-making.

Thus, after the period of subordination to the parties, unions and other interest groups began a progressive process of autonomy, political and organizational reinforcement that institutionalizes - albeit informally - the access to public decision-making processes.

This was evident not only in bargaining with the government and the industrial counterpart, but also in the formulation of policies for housing, taxation and pensions (Gualmini 1997). The consolidated structures of power, between organs of the state, between government and parliament, between public authorities and private actors (including interest groups), between parties, began to creak.

Between 1992 and 1993, the situation deteriorated, and the political and party crisis exploded as a result of judicial investigations, with more or less serious effects on many policy sectors. This political crisis struck with dramatic consequences on parties and institutions, but with much less significant negative effects on organizations and interest groups that were linked to those parties and apparatuses and with which they had woven close relationships.

Since the early nineties, Italy has gone through a political instability and social transformation, together with an extensive reform of many public policies. During this period, there has also been a high rate of turnover in the parliamentary and political class of government (much less in the case of state's executives, public and private managers, senior bureaucrats and ministerial executives), which have altered the dynamics of the relationships between interest groups and politics.

These critical events in Italian politics were then combined with a process of Europeanization which represented a very strong external constraint for the players (be they public decision-makers, groups, experts, local authorities, etc.) in terms of macroeconomic policies, the drastic measures to reduce public spending as a function of convergence and Italy's entry into the euro area.

However, Europeanization has also been a pressure in the direction of necessary change, and for some policy areas an opportunity, particularly in the direction of reform, in offering visibility and access to new players, in affirming new forms of partnership between public institutions and interest

representation in the formulation, decision-making and implementation of policy choices (Fabbrini 2000).

As the context changed, within a new system of electoral and institutional rules and limited/conditional sovereignty vis-à-vis the EU, the groups also adapted and adjusted their organizational characteristics and strategies for their effective presence in policymaking. Economic groups, trade unions and other forms of spontaneous aggregation of interests (which in the Second Republic assume the role of agenda setters veto players) have become indispensable in the decision-making process aimed at policies of recovery and austerity.

Differently from the past, during the Second Republic it is possible to detect different strategies adopted by the interest groups to deal with the policy field which they were willing to influence. For example, in the area of pensions, there was an immediate emergence of a stricter trade unions' game plan on the light of the imposition of the government reform project (Amato and Dini technical governments), which was radical in its adjustment mechanisms, even if not in its implementation times.

These are policy reforms imposed by external constraints, by the unsustainability of public accounts (where the pensions were the largest factor). The hardening became so strong with the first political government of the transition (Berlusconi I, 1994) as to create a social and political clash which led to its resignation (Regonini 1996).

However, the deconstruction of the political system and the long transition, with the changes in the relationship between government and parliament and between the different levels of government, pushed interest groups to privilege relations with the government and bureaucracies, on the one hand, and to rely less on relations with parliamentarians and political parties, on the other hand.

This tendency was then progressively favored by the emergency-type financial logic within which, at various times over the last twenty years, the government was forced to set its policies.

During the Second Republic, the features of the legislative process incentives allow the interest groups to exercise their strategies of influence both upstream and downstream of the legislative process. This indicates a consistent tendency to act directly on governmental actors (politicians and bureaucracies) both in the formulation phase and in the implementation phase (when those regulatory acts must be produced without which, in the Italian system, the actual implementation of decisions is not possible) (Capano, Lizzi and Pritoni 2014).

This is a bi-directional dynamic, in which on the one hand the majority of the interest groups tend to concentrate their action in the places where decision-making relevance appears to be the greatest, while on the other hand, governments and bureaucracies have every interest in having a stable relationship with interest groups without party mediation (Pritoni 2017).

This dynamic is particularly evident in the case of the bureaucratic sphere. In many different policy sectors, in fact, the disappearance of party intermediation has favored the dynamics of structured relations between groups and bureaucratic apparatuses. This has occurred in the areas of credit and insurance policies, health policies, educational policies, agricultural policies and transport policies. Within these specific policy sectors, the technocratic nature of the issues at stake represents an excellent justification for a dynamic of *insider politics* (Pritoni 2017), but at the same time it is also an excellent opportunity for bureaucracies to control the sector of reference, reducing information uncertainty and the rate of conflict.

The role played by the MEF (Ministry of the Economy and Finance) as a catalyst and, in some cases, a veritable dominus of decision-making processes and, therefore, a privileged bureaucratic partner of the main interest groups, is significant. This position, favored by the policies of financial restriction brought about by both the economic policies of the EU and the effects of the financial crisis that erupted in 2008, has made the already historically strategic role of the MEF even more pivotal in public decision-making processes, especially in the policy formulation phase. This centrality is, and has been, favored by the fact that executives have often delegated to this apparatus (as the seat of consolidated technical expertise and keeper of the state accounts) the semi-exclusive management of the nation's economic and financial policies. This delegation has taken on the connotations of a real cession of sovereignty in cases in which (for example, with the Berlusconi IV, Monti and Letta governments) the economic policy of the government has been shaped as a mere implementation of directives and guidelines coming from Brussels.

We must, however, place this "new" role of the bureaucracies in an ever-changing context: while it is true that the weakening of party gate-keeping favors bureaucratic supremacy, this does not imply the rebirth of a new administrative state, in which weak politics leaves power in decision-making processes to the bureaucracies.

In fact, to counterbalance the previously exercised party control, it has emerged a more autonomous and more effective role as policy making role of the executive (Lizzi and Pritoni 2014), in particular since Renzi's Government.

This is evident, for example, in the context of education, credit and insurance, pensions, and health care, where the Government tends to be impermeable to pressures and interests (quoting states of financial necessity or certain systemic visions of a policy area) and to act as a decision-maker for the collective wealth. Within this condition, the new relationships between bureaucracy and interest

groups are quietly cast aside, as are the historical private relationships between politics and certain groups¹⁸.

The new direct relation between bureaucratic apparatuses and interest groups, and the pro-active role of the Government, can sediment effects such that - even if the ongoing restructuring of the party system reaches a point of equilibrium that is stable over time – the party gate-keeping is unlikely to return to the forms and modes of the past.

What should be evident up to this point is the central role that interest groups plays within the Italian legislative and regulatory environment as agenda setter and relevant veto players.

The presence of such powerful veto players within every institutional system is however far from being unproblematic.

Following Tsebelis definition, if any Government, in order to pursue its own legislative program, need to conduct intensive negotiation with actors that can preclude the approval of such bill, a State is characterized by the persistence of veto players.

The presence of strong forces capable of shaping the direction of Government' activities, preventing specific circumstances from happening and delaying the overall legislative production, is a topic that need specific attention.

What happens when a weak bureaucratic apparatus and an unstable government deal with unregulated interest groups?

2.3 The Executive and the “political decadence”: are Italian Governments constrained by a “Vetocracy”?

Francis Fukuyama in his latest book on Democracy in the Time of Globalization has summarized one of the main problems of contemporary democratic regimes: the structural inability to make decisions or to do so in a time frame that is sustainable for the needs of the voters (Fukuyama 2014).

The American political scientist has named this condition "*Vetocracy*", to summarize the role that crossed vetoes have in blocking the decision-making mechanism of democracies.

The pressure that interest groups has been able to exercise, has influenced legislation or blocked government reforms; voters are more prone to have perceptions of the ineffectiveness of politics in which the rituals of power seem to give rise to endless bargaining which produces stalemates,

¹⁸ This will be much more evident in the analysis of the legislative iter of the Jobs Act, Renzi's labor market reforms. This theme will be analyzed in the second chapter.

postponements and partial decisions. These dynamics take different directions with respect of the form of Government of the reference State.

In parliamentary democracies such as the Italian one, the greatest difficulties are mainly linked to the weakness of the executive: broad agreements, shifting majorities and short-term governments have greatly weakened the decision-making capacities of these democracies (Castellani 2016).

A government of short duration is weak in its political action because it tends to fail to carry out a program of reforms that require a process of implementation of at least a few years. Large coalitions and majorities that change during the course of the same legislature weigh down the decision-making process.

The government then, is forced into continuous and exhausting negotiations with its own majority and the various parties that compose it, with stalemates, parliamentary difficulties and crossed vetoes. In this way, political institutions lose the trust of citizens and can move towards dangerous crises, within which the establishment loses its authority and decision-making capacity: that is the condition that Huntington defines through the concept of "political decadence" (Huntingdon 1962).

The author's argument is that any major socio-economic transformation causes problems for the traditional political order, and consequently new social groups and new forms of participation tend to put pressure on existing institutions.

Decadence occurs when the latter fail to initiate a transition that better enables them to adapt to the new forms of reality. Institution can fail to adapt to external changes, or because of excessive rigidity in its mechanisms, or when the power of the ruling class blocks changes to protect its interests and positions.

Political decadence, while manifesting in any regime, is difficult to manage especially in liberal democracies. The latter tend to have greater difficulties in framing and implementing reforms, because being an open political regime, they suffer more from the actions of interest groups. This triggers a vicious circle in which reduced government duration, short-term policies, partisanship, and political instability favor pressure groups to block or amend certain decisions proposed by the government. In particular, it will be enough to act on one of the various components of the parliamentary majority in order to enter into internal negotiations and block or amend a measure.

It is clear that the representation of interests is inherent in any liberal democracy, indeed it is a fundamental component of it: without lobbying there is no democracy (Dahl 1998).

The multiplicity of interests and the possibility for interest representation's organizations to relate to the legislative and executive powers are themselves a constituent element of the plurality enjoyed by liberal democracies.

However, an unregulated lobbying can be one of the factors of political decadence and weakening of institutions, even if partly caused by their inability and instability.

In a variety of circumstances, lobbyists prove themselves to be a valuable technical aid in drafting laws and measures (given the weakness and the lack of policy expertise of the political class), but if not adequately counterbalanced by a strong executive, they can ultimately distort governmental policies by bending them towards a subjective interest.

Moreover, the democratic issues that this argumentation is highlighting are getting worse with the multiplicity of legislative levels. This tends to manifest itself because interest groups can thus put pressure on various institutions by strengthening themselves, multiplying their effect and, if necessary, exercising greater veto power. The only remedy that looks feasible to solve the above-mentioned criticalities relies on the institutional organization that the politics is capable of giving to itself.

Transparency, simplification of legislation on government's level, and majority and executive stability, seem to be the only remedies to stop the power of vested interests. Indeed, a government under parliamentary siege, by the hand of interest groups, is doomed to the ineffectiveness of its policies and is therefore a weak executive.

Is Italy constrained by a "vetocracy" then? Despite the fact that in any case, the executive power in Italy has too often proved itself to be weak and incapable of managing organic transitions, an overall answer does not seem to be valuable.

A statement capable of referring itself to the Executive power *per se* would end in neglecting specific peculiarities of each cabinet that could be useful in providing a more prominent answer case by case. Even if the trend of the Italian Republic, since the restoration of democracy, could be interpreted as a pendulum between weak executives and the cabinets' will to restore their supremacy, reaction to veto players tends to be different among governments.

If on the one hand, during the First Republic, the *partitocrazia* kept the executive in check, and played a median role between the State and the interest groups, on the other hand it is not possible to detect a recurrent trend to be applied to each executive of the Second Republic.

The political and institutional context of these last thirty years has proved itself to be increasingly variable, influenced by exogenous and endogenous factors, which drastically modified the policy style response from one executive to another. The leadership exercised by the Prime Minister, the relative electoral weight of his party, the policy convergence and the cohesion of the cabinet's majority are all element that need to be taken in consideration for an effective evaluation.

For this reason, a model capable of identifying the policy style (response) of each executive need to be adopted in order to evaluate how Governments deal with internal and external pressure.

3 Richardson *et al.* (1982) and the Policy Style Model

In order to evaluate the policy style of any executive and detect its policy response, it will be used the systematization adopted by Richardson *et al.* in 1982, which reviewed some of the theorizations offered in the public policy analysis literature and finally condensed their thoughts into a deliberately very simple two-dimensional space. They argue that policy styles can be theorized using different units of analysis, each of which gives rise to a different assessment. Therefore, taking their theorization as a starting point, but going further and integrating it with contributions from other literatures, it is possible to identify at least four levels of analysis.

First of all, the single policy decision can be taken as the unit of analysis (*micro-institutionalism*): the style will then be determined by the substance of the decision and the constellation of actors that is created around it. Linked to this strand of investigation are some studies, for example on advocacy coalitions (Sabatini and Jankins-Smith 1999) and those on policy communities (Greer 2015), which are useful to explain where policy ideas come from, under what conditions they manage to find practical application and whether and how they are implemented.

Secondly, the entire policy area can be chosen as the unit of analysis (*meso-institutionalism*): in this case, it would be the type of policy that determines the corresponding style, according to the famous dictum "policy makes politics" (Lowi 1964). Within this tradition we find the analysis of administrative subcultures that characterize certain issue networks (Heclo 1978), and in particular the investigations on the concentration or dispersion of costs and benefits of the policy, understood as determinants of the type of mobilization that the government will face and then the corresponding style of policy (Wilson 1973).

The third option makes policy style dependent on the *macro-institutional context* and assumes that the menu of policies available to each government and their style are determined by the "strength" or "weakness" of the state (Nettl 1968) or by the "variety of capitalism" in which each government operates (Hall and Soskice 2001) or by particular traditions of government established over time (Richardson, Gustaffson and Jordan 1982). In these cases, the unit of analysis is the political-administrative system as a whole, and the expectation is that all policies in the same system will be characterized by a similar style.

Finally, a fourth unit of analysis is the *macro-regional area* which, by hypothesis, would be able to condition the policies of the governments of the states that belong to it. The states belonging to these macro-areas will tend to adopt similar policy styles by osmosis or because they have found it convenient to agree on specific mechanisms of convergence.

The many contributions on European policy making, for example the five policy modes (Wallace, Pollack and Young 2010), belong to this strand.

As is evident, this literature is potentially very large. As we move from one unit of analysis to another, even the concept of policy style ends up in changing. It is therefore necessary to make a choice which has fallen on the analysis of the macro-institutional level, which has been the preferred field of analysis of the *comparative political economy* after the Second World War.

To this end, we will use the scheme elaborated by Richardson et al. (1982), who, after a long discussion, arrived at proposing a truly simplified analytical space (figure 11 p.13):

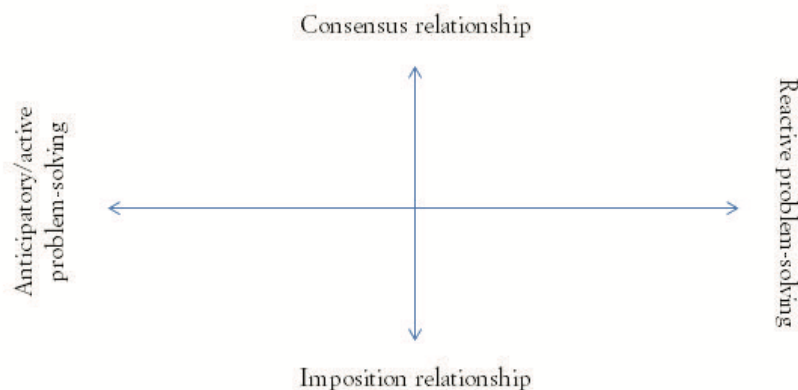


Figure 1.1 – Policy style model, matrix – Richardson et al. (1982) p.13

The horizontal axis of the *governmental approach* indicates the way in which the government of a country normally tackles policy problems: whether *rationally*, *i.e.* after an exhaustive analysis of the various alternatives and with a decision-making attitude oriented towards radical change, or *incrementally*, through successive approximations in which ends and means are simultaneously considered, given the great disparity of positions present in the country and in Parliament. These two categories clearly capture the government's ability to either address problems early and with its own design capacity or simply respond to problems once they emerge and can no longer be ignored and refer to them as the "*anticipatory approach*" or "*reactive approach*."

The vertical axis, on the other hand, describes the *government's relationship with society*, *i.e.* whether it seeks consensus or is able to impose its vision and will, and would therefore be the axis of the "*weak state*" or "*strong state*," in the sense of being easily captured by various interests or being able to impose its will on those interests. There are obviously parallels also with the (neo)corporative or consociational traditions, on the one hand, and statist and dirigiste traditions, on the other, typical of the comparative political economy of the 1980s.

These dimensions jointly capture the ability of the political-administrative leadership to resist the pressures of society and its autonomous ability to develop responses to current problems, which can

be implemented after building a broad consensus or can be imposed from above, aspects indicated by the "*consensus relationship*" as opposed to the "*imposition relationship*".

Finally, depending on the unit of analysis chosen, it will be possible to place individual decisions, entire areas of policy, and even national and supranational traditions in this space. If one adopts the macro-institutional unit of analysis (the "*country system*"), one comes closer to the reasoning that has long characterized the debate of *comparative political economy* and one can study, for example, whether there is a gradual convergence of national policy styles due to the growing complexity of policy making (*overcrowding theory*) or the growing demand by social groups to be involved (*overload theories*) (Richardson *et al.* 1982).

CHAPTER 2 – MATTEO RENZI AND THE “VERTICALIZED DISINTERMEDIATION”

1. The Personalization and “Presidentialization” of the Italian Executive power: evidence from the Renzi Government

After the collapse of the old party system and the end of the First Republic, new opportunities appeared for Italian Prime Ministers. In particular, some of the characteristic traits of government coalitions and party organizations, which until then had determined the structural weakness of the prime ministerial figure in Italy, disappeared (Hine and Gherzi R. 1991). At the same time, there was the concrete development of those tendencies towards political personalization, whose effects had already been evident during the 1980s and the 1990s.

The idea of personalization of politics (McAllister 2007; Garzia 2011), a distinctive feature of recent decades, has been interpreted as a direct consequence of the process of transformation that has marked the existence and experience of mass parties in recent decades (Garzia and Viotti 2012). The aforementioned transformation has substantially modified the structure of political alignments in modern democracies. Specifically, this phenomenon has made political affiliation and the outcome of electoral contests more dependent on the citizenry's perception of the figure of the party or coalition leader (Dalton 1996).

Beyond the evolution of mass parties, a crucial element in the debate on political personalization is the advent of political communication centered on the massive use of messages transmitted through television and social networks. The advent of audience democracy (Manin 1997) has led the leader to occupy a superordinate position to that of his own party, a context within which the latter has become more dependent on the communication with the electorate, a prerogative reserved almost exclusively to its leader (Mughan 2000). The personalization of politics, understood as a complex phenomenon characterized by multiple aspects (Karvonen 2010) has undoubtedly modified and transformed the paradigms of Italian politics in recent decades, perhaps irreversibly.

The most radical transformations, however, took place in the context of the political parties, with the emergence on the Italian political scene, after the wave of “*Tangentopoli*”, of the so-called “personal parties” (Calise 2000).

For the first time in the history of the Republic, the Prime Minister found himself as the head of a party, a collateral role which could have heavily shaped the direction of the Executive power. However, this enhancement of the Prime Ministerial role, although based on effective machines of political intermediation, is not the result of explicit constitutional changes. Italy was rapidly moving

towards a deep personalization of the political environment, with important implication on the overall exercise of the executive power.

The next section investigates the origins and the evolution of the politics' personalization and the debate rose around this debated theme. The following one will analyze the Renzi Government's experience on the light of the personalization debate. Emphasis will be devoted also to the evolution of his leadership within the Democratic Party. The last section will evaluate the policy style (response) of Renzi executive, taking into consideration its legislative activity and strategy on the light of the reforms introduced, and taking also into consideration the relationship between the Renzi executive and the external veto players during the Jobs Act legislative iter.

1.1 Origins and evolutions of the personalization of power's debate

The concept of "personalization of power", is nowadays widespread and then difficult to frame in its descriptive content.

The first attempt to distinguish between "*pouvoir personnalisé*" and "*pouvoir personnel*" was made by Maurice Duverger (1954). Specifically, the former refers to the situation in which the authority of the leader does not derive solely from the role he or she holds, but also from his or her individual popularity gained through electoral competition, whereas the latter implies a condition in which it is exclusively the personality of the leader that confers legitimacy and foundation

Both definitions counterpose the form of the legal institutions and procedures to the informality of the feature (psychological, character, etc....) of the individual who uses those forms.

The general path of political institutions' personalization has facilitated the tendency to make the power coinciding with the individuals who exercise it: autonomy, in fact, become in this way not a synonymous of the discreteness of the organ or the office, but of the freedom - as spirit and intellect - of its holder (Esposito 1932).

Michel Foucault, following Schmitt's indications against the notion of sovereignty, offers its most effective epistemological synthesis. "*What we need is a political philosophy that is not built around the problem of sovereignty, therefore of law... We need to cut off the king's head (and here the king is the sovereign people)*". This is why the notion of State must be abandoned, "*in search of a meta-power*". But the same fate is also reserved to science, because "*knowledge is not made to understand, it is made to take a position*". In the end, it is the same form-subject to become superfluous: "*we must get rid of the constituent subject, get rid of the subject itself*", against any formal institution, so that we can "*study power outside the model of Leviathan, outside the field delimited by legal sovereignty*

and the state institution. It is a question of studying it from the techniques and tactics of domination" (Foucault 1977).

"*Pouvoir personnel*" need to be conceived as nothing more than "technique" and "tactics" of domination.

Indeed, this idea is not a novelty within the European and Italian political culture. We should not only think about the Weberian "charismatic legitimation" (Matheson 1987), but also about the Italian liberal revisionism of Benedetto Croce, and Giovanni Gentile, for whom the State is not so "authoritative" for its norms, but "strong" for its protagonists.

The concept of *pouvoir personnel* is therefore combined with the rejection of the rationalization of political relations, left to their subjective contingency, in the domain of individuals on individuals.

Today, in Europe and in Italy, the political debate around the "presidentialisation and personalization of the executive" is consistent. However, the frame of reference does not change, as it keeps describing the circumstance that in parliamentary regimes, historically evolved in the government's collegiality, a progressive shift in favour of the leader of the electorally dominant party is taking place. As a consequence, the Prime Minister's monocratic role is growing in influence at the expenses of government collegiality.

The personalization/presidentialization phenomenon poses a delicate paradox over the role of the leader of the Executive: on the one hand, his personal strength is enhanced by the weakness of parties and of the formal institutional rules; on the other hand, it is precisely this weakness that forces the leader's personality into isolation, assuming it to be a "non-institutionalizable" peculiarity (Elia 2006).

One of the first European studies on the "personalization of power" is represented by Boris Mirkin-Guetzévitch's book "*Le nouvelles tendances du Droit constitutionnel*", in which the Russian-French constitutionalist describes "personalization" as a "*transfiguration of the parliamentary regime*" (Mirkin-Guetzévitch 1954).

The parliamentary regime was founded on the historical conquest of the legal-constitutional primacy of Parliament. This primacy, in turn, has been transformed, due to the ideological prevalence of mass parties, into an unprecedented network of consensus organization, which has made the art of governing a "technique of legislative proposal", with the consequent "protagonism" of the Government as a subject of parliamentary initiative.

However, this tendency of an executive power that is superordinate with respect to the legislative power, in all European countries, has clashed with a formal "constitutionalization" that, instead, was affirming the legal primacy of Parliament.

The reaction to this contradiction between the "*necessary political primacy*" of the Government and the "*legal-constitutional*" primacy of Parliament, which emerged at the end of the 1920s, has been

translated into the need for a deep constitutional revision aimed at transforming the "political" primacy of the Government into a "constitutional" principle¹⁹. According to Mirkine-Guetzévitch (2009), this inversion represents a "*rupture*", as the "*invention and expansion*" of a new power assumed as a specific attribute of an already fixed competence has been made juridical. This codification has thus given rise to an inevitable precarious antagonism between constitutional bodies, in an extent which entails a consequential "extension of political discretion in the management of inter-organic procedures" (Mirkine-Guetzévitch 2009). In particular, this discretion is defined by the author as "*Pilsudskism*"²⁰, as it coincides with a project of legal reinforcement of the Government with respect to Parliament, functional to the "*pouvoir personnel du président*".

Interestingly, Mirkine-Guetzévitch distinguishes between "*Pilsudskism*" and Fascism, just as he distinguishes between "Personal Government" and "Fascist Government." Such a differentiation presents interesting insights into the issue of the "personalization" of power. The Polish project (inspired by the "*Pilsudskism*") established a personal power, within which the universal suffrage ended up by assuming a completely passive role, unable to judge ex post the choices of the President or to invest the Parliament, and its majority, with autonomous duties with respect to the Government. Fascism, on the contrary, was distinguished as an authoritarian dictatorial regime of explicit denial of any elective principle (Bonfiglio 1993).

Here is the topical point: the "personalization" of power depauperates the Parliament but does not deny the procedural principle of parliamentary elections and the political right to vote, relegating it, however, to a simple "instrumental character", as a doubly legitimate means: "voted" by the people and "provided" by the Constitution.

Mirkine-Guetzévitch considered inevitable and physiological the need for a "political" supremacy of the government, as a product of the development of legislative technique and social complexity. Contrary to today's theories, this supremacy, should have never become "juridical". In other words, social complexity should never have simplified or, worse, annihilated the institutional dialectics of the relationship of trust typical of parliamentary regimes. The "political" supremacy of the Government meant "functionalization" of the relationship between Parliament and Government with respect to the realization of the electoral program, but certainly not impoverishment of functions.

¹⁹ One of the very first examples portrayed by the author is offered by the 1929 constitutional revision of the Polish "*bloc gouvernemental*". The Polish Constitution of 1921 had established, like other European Constitutions of the period, the primacy of Parliament. However, the law of August 2, 1926, had already strengthened the powers of the President of the Republic - and conditioned the parliamentary duties - with the attribution of the right to dissolve the Parliament, thus inverting the means-end relationship between parliamentary "juridical" primacy (the means) and governmental "political" primacy (the end).

²⁰ This term derives from the Jozef Pilsudski, the Polish General considered as the father of the 1918 Polish independence.

On the contrary, the idea of the "juridical" supremacy of the Government, claiming to transform the proactive pre-eminence gained in society through electoral consensus into a definitive and irreversible constitutional "protagonism", would have ended up freezing the electoral victory and handing it over to the personal strength of its leader.

As previously emphasized, one of the main causes of personalization and presidentialisation (as it will be analysed) can be attributed to the transformation of mass parties (Garzia and Viotto 2012) and the erosion of the traditional political affiliation that had characterized political competition until the advent of communications- and image-based politics. The debate on this subject has always attracted the attention of numerous scholars, who have dealt with the issue of politics' personalization and the presidentialization of executives in countries with a prime-ministerial tradition under different lights: from the transformation of the parties, to the new frontiers of political competition, from the expanded role of the prime minister to the relationship between government and parliament.

First, it seems relevant to emphasize the three hypotheses suggested by MacAllister (2007) regarding the idea of personalization, as they bring together elements addressed by different strands of research. Specifically, the author identifies three main dimensions to which the causes of this phenomenon are ascribable. The first dimension concerns the evolution of the role of the Prime Minister, whose power and role have been expanded by numerous reforms within individual countries. A second dimension is connected to the advent of audience democracy (Mair 1997), insofar as MacAllister associates as a central factor in the presidentialization of politics the growth of the so-called *mediatisation* of politics, a central element in modern electoral contests. Finally, presidentialization is strongly associated with the profound transformation of the parties and the growing disalignment.

Turning our attention to the governmental dimension of the matter, in recent years contemporary democracies have shown a common evolution, even without organic reforms of the Constitutional Charter. They have seemed, in fact, to "presidentialize" themselves, dictating the centrality of the heads of government (Musella 2012a). Already several decades ago, some authors were beginning to recognize the personalization of power as "*one of the modeling tendencies inherent in contemporary constitutional life*" (Elia 1970, p. 672), linked to the development of investiture democracies that value popular choice over the holders of political direction.

This transformation, seems to be moving toward the establishment of what are called monocratic governments (Elgie 1997). Specifically, they are defined as the exercise by the holder of executive power of strong personal leadership capable of permeating the entire governmental activity, in which the president (or Prime Minister) assumes a direct leadership (and even superordinate) position with respect to the cabinet (Lijphart 1994). As Dunleavy and Rhodes (1990, pp. 5-8) emphasize, this type of executive is distinguished by "*a generalized ability [by the president or prime minister] to decide policy across all issue areas in which she or he takes an interest; by deciding key issues which*

subsequently determine most remaining areas of government policy; or by defining a governing 'ethos', 'atmosphere' or operating ideology [...]".

Within monocratic governments, therefore, the cabinet assumes an almost residual position within the executive, as the ministers become essentially executors of the will of their leader, and the bureaucrats at the service of the executive power assume the role of mere implementers, as they are deprived of the power to actively produce policies (Elgie 1997).

In this respect, Poguntke and Webb (2005), suggest that the presidentialisation of politics occurs across three fundamental arenas of democratic life.

Firstly, the government's management is assigned to a monocratic leadership. This follows from the fact that the head of government is no longer legitimized by parliament and can form his cabinet without interference from other institutions. Second, the leader achieves a position of greater autonomy from the party to which he belongs, which in many cases he is also able to control in turn (Elia 2006, pp. 5-11). Finally, every aspect of the electoral process is increasingly centered on the leadership (Wattenberg 1991), whose appeal to the citizenry becomes a useful - and a necessary - resource for victory.

Returning to the categorization proposed by MacAllister (2007), fundamental aspects of the personalization and presidentialization of politics are the party and electoral dimensions. These, given their interconnectivity, cannot be analysed separately.

In recent decades, political leaders, on the light of the intercurrent social and media transformation, have assumed an increasing role both in electoral competitions and in political communication (Garzia 2011). The effects of leadership within political systems are different. Here we will focus on the parliamentary system to which Italy belongs.

According to Garzia (2011), parliamentary systems are based on the responsible party government model. Within such a context, the main role is occupied by the parties which seem to convey votes more than their leader (MacAllister 1996). Within the model proposed by Garzia (2011) - which actually seems to represent the system of the First Italian Republic - the entirety of the political phenomena can be related to a partisan framework (Miller 1976). Specifically, this dimension can be ascribed to the concept of party identification (Bartle and Bellucci 2009) and affiliation with party apparatuses that have developed since the 1950s. In particular, in the context of the Italy of the first republic, this element strongly influenced the electoral choices of the voters: ideology represented the real determinant of the vote (Sartori 1976).

Such an interpretation of electoral behavior seems to relegate party leaders to a marginal role. Nonetheless, recent studies of voter behavior have shown that the impact of leaders on their party's electoral outcomes are most relevant in elections governed by a majoritarian system (Curtice and Blais 2001). Moreover, leaders in the modern context tend to be more electorally determinant when

voters are required to choose exclusively between major parties (Curtice 2003) or, as partially in the Italian context of the Second Republic, when the electorate has to select between two parties which alternate in the governing majority (Barisione 2009).

The debate on the personalization and expansion of the role of the Executive and that of the Prime Minister/President has also characterized the political environment of the United State of America. Even if the US are characterized by a completely different constitutional and institutional architecture compared to the European State, their interpretation of this delicate political issue is remarkable and topical.

The main controversial theorization concerning the role of the President as the constitutional representative of the executive power, finds its concretization in the political thoughts of the former USA President Alexander Hamilton, remembered as an important defender of an energetic executive (Bailey 2008). Such a belief, known as the “*Unitary Executive Theory*”, has ultimately gained prominence at the beginning of the 2000s, shaping the perception on the exact scope of the American executive power.

The supporters of this theory claim that the President is the only figure entitled to exercise and maintain the political and administrative control of the executive branch. Following this interpretation on the scope of the Presidency, the ruler of the Executive has the unilateral power to dismiss undesired officials (Waterman 2009). This theory finds itself as opposing to the Supreme Court’s Decision in *Humphrey’s Executor v. United States* (1935), in which the Supreme Judges ruled the impossibility for the President to remove any governmental executives (for example administrators of the independent regulatory agencies) for political reasons²¹. According to the *Unitary Executive Theory*, rewards the President with the unilateral responsibility to manage and take decisions concerning each single aspect within the executive branch. As a direct consequence, all of the executive branch must be accountable to its Chief Executive.

This theory, which directly touches every single aspect of the Presidential leadership framework, has been used to justify an expansionary role of the American Presidency. In particular, it has helped in increasing the traditional authority which has been constitutionally exercised with regard to administrative strategy of the Presidency since Nixon’s mandate.

Even if the *Unitary Executive Theory* has never founded direct supporters and applications in Europe, different attempts to reform the executive power seem to move into a direction that could be easily supported by the original proponents of this set of beliefs. Unsurprisingly, some of them have

²¹ U.S. Reports: *Humphrey’s Executor v. U.S.*, 295 U.S. 602 (1935) – George Sutherland (Judge): <https://bit.ly/2NN05Kk>

been taking place in Italy, a nation longly animated by the debate around the presidentialization and the personalization of politics.

According to Rahat and Sheaffer (2007) the process of personalization of the political sphere must be understood as a condition within which the political weight of a single actor increases over time to the detriment of the traditional centrality of political parties. The Italian case is therefore well placed within this trend: although the first signs of this process of personalization were already evident from the 80s (especially with the figure of Bettino Craxi) (Pasquino 1990), the transition to the Second Republic has undoubtedly accelerated this path until it reached, from several points of view, the ideal-typical “personalized polity” (Calise 2004).

With the collapse of the partyocracy and the modification of the traditional Italian electoral system in 1993 with a majoritarian revolution, the conditions for a real rise of a personalistic leader were more than prosperous (Garzia and Viotti 2012). Undoubtedly, Silvio Berlusconi's entry into politics had real and evident effects in the process of personalization of Italian politics (Campus and Pasquino 2006). With the constitution of "Forza Italia" in 1994 it was immediately evident that the Second Italian Republic, also thanks to the figure of Berlusconi himself, was moving towards different tracks from the past. A party verticalized on its leader (Poli 2001) and a massive media communication had opened the door to a change in the Italian context that would undoubtedly have an echo in the decades to come.

The main example regarding the Italian attempt to personalize and “presidentialize” the Executive power is represented by the 2005 Italian Constitutional Reform proposal, voted by the Parliament, but rejected by the 2006 referendum. This project was characterized by the attempt to constitutionalize the “political” supremacy of the Government and of his leader.

In fact, one of the most severe criticisms directed at this draft was that of the excessive strengthening of executive power and its monocratic transformation in the figure of the Premier.

However, the controversy was not so much about the question of the monocratic role itself, as it was about the circumstance that the enhancement was achieved not through the institutionalization of monocratic power, but through its true “legalized personalization”. Furthermore, this strengthening of the “political” of the Government was achieved through the attribution to the individual himself, rather than to the monocratic function held by his Prime Ministerial role, of all the mechanisms of the form of government.

The discontinuity of this constitutional project compared to the past lied in the following profiles: election of the Prime Minister by linking him or her to individual candidates or to one or more electoral lists (new art. 92 *Cost.*)²²; abolition of the initial vote of confidence, and qualification

²² Art. 30 of the Constitutional Law – Official Gazette n.269, 18/11/2005 - <https://bit.ly/3rcsKGo>

of the Chamber of Deputies alone - thus excluding the Senate - to vote on the program, but not on the Government (new art. 94.1 *Cost.*)²³; recognition of the Prime Minister's right to put the question of confidence alone, with the sole exclusion of constitutional and constitutional revision laws (new art. 94.2 *Cost.*)²⁴ and simultaneous abolition of the provision according to which a vote against one or both Houses of Parliament on a Government proposal does not entail the obligation to resign.

These elements had to be combined with the new structure of the no-confidence motion system. Specifically, the Prime Minister could resign only and exclusively when the no-confidence motion has been approved by an absolute majority of the members of the Chamber of Deputies (not the Senate) or rejected with the casting vote of the deputies "not belonging to the majority expressed by the elections".

In this way, the parliamentary situation of trust was placed on unprecedented tracks, within which two personal powers of the Prime Minister acted: the power to appoint and revoke ministers directly, without the obligation of a parliamentary passage (new art. 95.1 *Cost.*)²⁵; determine the general policy of the Government without initial parliamentary confidence (new art. 95.2 *Cost.*)²⁶.

In this configuration, the Italian constitutional reform opposed an absolute monocratic independence of the Prime Minister to an equally absolute parliamentary absence of the confidence and no-confidence majorities, breaking definitively with the continuity of those practice typical of the Italian parliamentarianism.

Moreover, the motion of no-confidence, in the new paragraphs of Article 94 of the draft, assumed a triple identity: as a *sanctioning no-confidence* (producing the dissolution of the Chamber); as a no-confidence "*reconstructive*" of the coalition, voted in the elections, around a new Premier; and as a motion without "*presumption of confidence*", if "*rejected with the decisive vote of deputies not belonging to the majority expressed by the elections*" (Pace 2006).

The very first attempt to constitutionalize the "confidence relationship" – with no more exceptions to parliamentary regulations (as had always been the case historically since 1887) – instead of translating itself into strengthened the legitimacy of Parliament, moved into the configuration of a Premier alone against everyone, strong in his "confidence contract" with the electorate.

The final outcome would have been remarkably different from the British "*Elective Dictatorship*" (Lord Hailsam 1978) or Duverger's "*Elective Monarch*" (1962), as draft conferred to the Prime Minister the ultimate constitutional tools to direct the overall Executive Power without any constraint.

²³ Art. 32 of the Constitutional Law – Official Gazette n.269, 18/11/2005 - <https://bit.ly/3d7m7Al>

²⁴ *Ibidem* art. 32

²⁵ Art. 33 of the Constitutional Law – Official Gazette n.269, 18/11/2005 - <https://bit.ly/3cg7MCc>

²⁶ *Ibidem* art. 33

Moreover, such a constitutional mechanism would then have had heavy consequences on the political communication: on the one hand, the "will" of the Prime Minister would have overlapped with that of the coalition and all the voters, on the other, the Parliament would have been transformed into a sort of executive-interpretative body of the Prime Minister (new art. 70 *Cost.*)²⁷. The effects would have been twofold. On the theoretical level there would have been an erosion of the constitutional communicative action, in favor of the "direct constitutionalized channel" between voters and the personal figure of the President of the Council. On a procedural level, the *principium cooperationis* of loyal "trust" between Parliament and Government would have dissolved, with a paradoxical "return" to the predominance of strong personal power, at the expenses of the complexity of institutional relations (Pasquino 2015).

It is fundamental to note that Berlusconi, the man who has symbolized the personalization of the executive branch since the 1990s, apart from the failed attempt at the referendum, will not devote any particular energy and effort to the process of institution building for the presidency. Besides periodic stances on the matter, Silvio Berlusconi will not give his support to the constitutional reform project of the D'Alema bicameral commission²⁸, and this can be explained by the uncontested dominance exercised by Berlusconi over his own party and, consequently, over the media scene (Calise 2016). The attempts to strengthen the government through "institutional" procedures, in the course of that particular governmental experience, have produced soft changes, aimed in particular at consolidating the organizational structures and coordinating functions of the Presidency of the Council²⁹, rather than real structural reforms (Fabbrini 2013).

The debate concerning the expansion of the role and prerogatives of the Prime Minister has animated the political environment since the 1980s, within a continuous pendulum between the presidentialization of the executive and the willingness of the Parliament to gain always more prominence. Berlusconi's attempts did not represent the end of the Prime Ministerial effort to enlarge the executive office.

However, the analysis concerning the presidentialisation in Italy is, above all, anchored in the theme of strengthening the role of the Prime Minister.

Many analyses focused on the preeminence of candidates in electoral campaigns, the leadership effect on the outcome of the vote, the processes of verticalization of political parties and the progressive

²⁷ Art. 14 of the Constitutional Law – Official Gazette n.269, 18/11/2005 - <https://bit.ly/31fvjNq>

²⁸ D'Alema in 1999, by the mean of the Bicameral Commission for the Constitutional Reforms, attempted to reform the Office of the Prime Minister in order to enlarge its attribution within a "Semi-presidential" framework.

²⁹ Legislative Decree 303 30/07/1999 moved in this direction. Among other aspects, the decree indicated the functions of the Presidency of the Council; it explicitly stated (art. 3) the responsibility of the President of the Council of Ministers in guiding and coordinating policy towards Europe, as well as in implementing the commitments deriving from it. In addition, it included the regulation of accounting autonomy and various questions concerning the status of the personnel of the Presidency

strengthening of the president within the ministerial structure. On the other hand, the impossibility of realizing the majority political program through parliamentary acts, it is often resolved by the expansion of the role of the executive in the area of autonomous regulation (Clementi 2015).

The scarce autonomy in the agenda setting process institutionalization of the Italian executive, which is a characteristic feature of the entire republican history, can be seen in the dependence of the political this actor on party changes over time. In this sense, as highlighted in the first chapter, the government's recourse to urgency decrees is one of the main attempts to resolve this problem.

Musella (2012b), in his comparative analysis between the First and Second Republics regarding the nature of legislative production, showed a growing trend between 1996 and 2012 in the use of decree-laws and legislative decrees. Specifically, within that specific time frame, decree-laws have represented about 16% of the total legislative production. This is a percentage that is even more interesting due to the increase in the same period of another type of governmental decrees, those that start from a parliamentary delegation. Legislative decrees in the years under consideration reach 27.5% of legislation.

The two processes of expansion of decree-laws and legislative decrees thus lead ordinary legislation to decrease to an average of 56.4% of total legislative production, and for some years to reach 40%, as, for example, in the two-year period of the 4th Berlusconi government (2008-2011). In order to make a comparison, it is sufficient to consider that during the X legislative term, corresponding to the period 1987-1992, laws "weighed" 75% of the production of legislation (De Micheli 2006).

From the 1990s, in the phase in which the personal party is liberalized, the president of the Council acquired a new centrality and channels of accomplishment of the political program of the majority coalition. The lack of cohesion and discipline of the parties in Parliament, however, makes the relationship between the new leader-directed governments and the parliamentary assembly merely interlocutory, leading to a very frequent use of instruments aimed at stiffening the parliamentary decision-making process, as in the case of the use of the confidence motion.

Even if the Italian President of the Council appears to be a figure suspended between political drives and lack of institutional consolidation, recently, there have been several attempts to invert this trend.

Undoubtedly the experience of the Renzi Government, given its unique features, represents one of the most prominent examples of a leader-directed executive, in which the personal characters of the Prime Minister produced undeniable effect on the overall functioning and on the conception of the role of the Presidency of the Council. In this sense, of particular relevance is the analysis of Capano and Pritoni (2016) who has examined the legislative production of the Renzi Government, starting from the assumption of the centralization of the decision-making process of the Renzi executive (Marangoni 2016). In their analysis, the authors investigated the rate of innovation of the reforms

adopted by the executive in question and compared them with those adopted by the Prodi I and Berlusconi II governments. The authors, following an empirical analysis showed that the reforms in the field of public administration, in the field of labor and education scored the highest rate of innovation comparatively to the proposed executives, an element that testifies to the precise will of Matteo Renzi to leave an indelible mark in Italian political history.

Specific attention needs to be directed to Renzi's governmental experience, on the light of the presidentialization and personification debate.

1.2 From the parliamentary crisis to Palazzo Chigi: the experience of Renzi Government

Matteo Renzi's government – the sixty-third of the Republican era and the sixtieth since the entry into force of the 1948 Constitution – was born on March 2014, exactly one year after the 2013 elections and the beginning of the XVII legislature.

As it is known, those elections had delivered to the country a situation of political stalemate to which the "grand coalition" at the base of the Letta Government had tried to remedy. However, such a coalition had already been reduced during the life of that executive to a minimal coalition, between the party of relative majority and various minority actors from other electoral coalitions: the New Center Right (NCD), Civic Choice and the Union of the Center³⁰.

The experience of the Letta's Government however – originally born as a "grand coalition government" – rapidly came to end.

Following the Extra-Parliamentary³¹ Governmental Crisis that occurred in the XVII Legislative term in February 2014, the Government led by Prime Minister Enrico Letta was forced to resign in order to allow the formation of a new executive led by Democratic Party Secretary Matteo Renzi. Such crisis primarily moved on two specific routes: firstly, the resignation of various Ministers from the Executive³², and secondly, the victory of Matteo Renzi in the primaries election of the Democratic Party (PD) to which Letta belonged.

³⁰ Scelta Civica and Union of the Center (UDC) during the 2013 elections were part of the "With Monti for Italy" coalition, which supported Mario Monti the former Italian Prime Minister from 2011 to 2013. The New Center Right (NCD) however, at the time a relatively new political entity. It was born on November 15, 2013 by exponents of the People of Freedom opposed to its dissolution and the re-foundation of Forza Italia, as well as in favor of continuing to support the Letta government.

³¹ Commentators tend to refer to extra-parliamentary crisis when the resignations are not induced by a specific parliamentary act but are the result of disagreements between parties of the coalition, with the consequent impossibility for the Government itself to operate.

³² Silvio Berlusconi, at the time leader of the People of Freedom (PDL) withheld its support to the executive, with the consequent resignation of its Ministers and Undersecretaries.

In particular, one of the first decision adopted by Renzi as the new leader of the PD, which could be defined as dictated by *Realpolitik*³³ inspirations, completely turned the tables. On February 13, 2014 the National Direction of the Democratic Party approved with 136 votes in favor, a motion proposed by the secretary Matteo Renzi aimed at requesting the resignation of Prime Minister Enrico Letta and the formation of a new government. The decision adopted by its own party leaved Letta with no other choices than to communicate to the President of the Republic its resignation.

The effects of the Renzi's strategy have immediately concretized themselves in the formation phase of the new executive. After a crisis, which only lasted for 8 days, Matteo Renzi sworn in by the Head of State as the new Italian Prime Minister. The duration of the parliamentary crisis which led to the formation of this new Executive appears to be remarkable if compared with the previous experiences since 1983. The data provided by the CIRCaP report on Renzi's Government³⁴ underlined that since 1983 among the twenty-two executive which succeeded each other until 2014, only 5 cabinets³⁵ has been formed at the end of lower lasting parliamentary crisis, with an average of 22.2 days. In particular, its predecessor, Letta, became Prime Minister after 44 days of parliamentary crisis, far above the average.

What should not regarded as an absolute novelty is the fact that either the new Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi, and at the same time the leader of the relative majority party, either the fall of the government headed by Enrico Letta was determined by the will expressed by a political party that was part of the relative majority coalition, and indeed by the relative majority party of which Letta himself was an authoritative exponent. These logics and dynamics are completely adhering to those practices which prevailed during the First Republic.

The transition between the Letta Government and the Renzi Government, both of which are post-electoral executives, has revived the debate about the role and relationship between elections and cabinet formation in the Italian system.

Within the Italian legal system, the modalities of appointment of the Prime Minister and of the formation of the Government are regulated by article 92 of the Constitution, even if, however, this provision does not establish precise limits to the power of the President of the Republic in this delicate

³³ The term *Realpolitik* refers to a political practice based on an objective assessment of the concrete interests and existing power relationships, without any reference to ideological requirements or even sentimental grounds. The term goes back to G. Diezel's paper "Principles of Realpolitik Applied to the State Conditions of Germany" (1853) and is used primarily with respect to the politics of O. von Bismarck.

³⁴ Rapporto CIRCaP sul Governo italiano 20 febbraio 2015 – Buon compleanno Renzi, il primo anno di Governo. Available at: <https://bit.ly/31IVpyn>

³⁵ BERLUSCONI III (PM after 3 days of parliamentary crisis, XIV Legislative term), D'ALEMA I (PM after 4 days of parliamentary crisis, XIII Legislative term), MONTI I (PM after 4 days of parliamentary crisis, XVI Legislative term) CRAXI II (PM after 5 days of parliamentary crisis, XIV Legislative term), CIAMPI (PM after 7 days of parliamentary crisis, XI Legislative term)

process. On the other hand, they seem to assign to political dynamics and constitutional conventions the configuration of the executive's formation (Ainis 2007). In any case, it should be underlined that the fragmented and conflicting structure of the political system of the parties (Cotta 1997), first in the proportional period and then in the majority phase, has favored the establishment of practices that are not always univocal (Rescigno 2010), and the increasing extension of the power of appointment of the President of the Council and of the ministers that the Constitution assigns to the President of the Republic (Cheli 1983).

As is well known, the constitutional system subordinates the exercise of the power of appointment of the Prime Minister to a precise result, *i.e.* the necessity that it can reasonably achieve the prerequisites for the establishment of the fiduciary relationship between Parliament and Government (Pitruzzella 1994). In this sense, this structure implies that the process of government formation does not depend exclusively on the electoral result, but also on the outcome of the negotiation process between the parties within Parliament (Diermeier and Merlo 1999). As pointed out by Merlo (1997), especially in the Italian context, this process influences the birth and structure of the executive more than the result of the elections themselves, since following this process it is common to witness the birth of executives that differ from the indications of the popular vote.

In the Italian context, in this sense the Role of the President of the Republic in the process of formation of the Government, which among other things also depends on the personal characteristics and on the charisma of the Head of State himself (Weber 1922), seems to occupy a superordinate role compared to the elections themselves (Fusaro 2013) since, within parliamentary democracies the popular vote does not directly elect the executive (Bulmer 2017).

Between 1948 and 1992 this influence appeared limited (Grimaldi 2011) since the existence of a multiparty system with a strong tradition based on the idea of party government (Vassallo 1994) determined the fact that the President of the Republic played exclusively the role of ratifier of the parties' choices (Pasquino 1987), a role which was limitedly based on the electoral result. With the unraveling of the party system following the *Tangentopoli* affair, with the weakening of the parties themselves, there has been an increase in the role of the President of the Republic in the formation of the executive (Marrone 2018) as the recent elections have shown.

Especially after the introduction of the majority electoral system in 1993, not a few commentators (e.g. Ruggeri 2010) have argued that the indication of the Prime Minister of the winning coalition would bind the Head of State to the electoral result, preventing him from differentiated solutions (De Martino 2018). The question, therefore, is to establish whether by means of the majoritarian regime a rule has been introduced that imposes on the Head of State a precise behavior: namely, whether the President of the Republic is obliged to appoint as Prime Minister the leader of the coalition of parties that won the elections (Crisafulli 1954); and likewise, if there is a government crisis, he must dissolve

the Chambers. The problem, posed in these terms, has led to a clear response from commentators. In fact, the constitutional provisions prevail over the electoral rules, which do not provide for a real duty towards the President of the Republic. Therefore, at least on the legal constitutional level, this hypothesis is unfeasible. Specifically, Esposito (1954) pointed out that the role of elections is fundamental for the exercise of the sovereignty of the people, but "the sovereignty of the people exists only within the limits and in the forms in which the Constitution organizes it, recognizes it and makes it possible, and as long as it is exercised within the forms and limits of law". Specifically, the electoral law and the elections, while representing a constituent element of the form of government (Esposito 1954), does not seem to be able to conform to such an extent the relations between the Bodies of political direction of the State as to restrict so significantly the scope of articles 92 and 88 of the Constitution which, in the logic of the parliamentary form of government, recognize the Head of State rather wide margins of appreciation (De Martino 2018).

Returning our attention to the 2013 context, however, the element of discontinuity with the past it is not represented by the *locus* of the decision *i.e.* inside the party, but rather than by the *modus*. In fact, the entire course of the 13th February PD's National Direction, which determined the decisive turning point for the institutional affair in question, was broadcast live via online media.

Perhaps this may suggest that in this case the use of such a communicative instrument was consciously desired in order to accentuate the incisiveness of the deliberation assumed by the party's direction with respect to the adoption of the consequent decisions by the President of the Council then in office (Salerno 2014).

Moreover, the fact that the clash between the two political lines within the same party was particularly acute was made clearly visible by the overlapping of two opposing strategies of action and communication. On the one hand, President Letta the previous day had called a special press conference to present his "*Impegno Italia*" at Palazzo Chigi, a proposal for a renewed coalition pact that could give new impetus to the executive. On the other hand, Matteo Renzi in live streaming had the almost unanimous approval from the PD leadership of a statement in which it affirmed the end of support for the Letta government and the willingness to take responsibility for forming a new executive within the confines of the same coalition majority.

The different political force of the two acts that took place a few hours apart was clearly evident when it was possible to verify that, while the proposals and perspective indications of President Letta were not followed by any positive response from the political forces of the majority, the radically censorious deliberation of the PD executives wanted by Secretary Renzi was followed by a sudden acceleration of events that led to the resignation of Enrico Letta.

The disruptive deliberation of the PD leadership and, on the other hand, the intrinsic institutional weaknesses of the actions adopted *in extremis* by President Letta found their respective origins from

the very nature of the Italian parliamentary system, and above all from the fragility embedded in it since the birth of the Republic as express will of the constituents. In addition, Enrico Letta, was perhaps already aware of his own destiny, also due to the meeting that had already taken place with the President of the Republic (and who, in turn, had already met Matteo Renzi). Indeed, during the press conference for the presentation of *"Impegno Italia"*, he also expressly affirmed that *"resignations are not given because of rumors or palace maneuvers"*, but only after it had been expressly said, especially by those who intended to replace him, what he intended to do³⁶. In other words, he left to his competitor, now *in pectore*, the responsibility for the *de facto* opening of the government crisis.

Therefore, the "private nature" of the *locus* in which the decisive political word on the fate of the Letta government was pronounced should not come as much of a surprise. The parties, until the current regulations are modified, are simple unrecognized associations to which the constitutional order assigns essential functions in determining the form of government³⁷.

It is true that, as confirmed by the Constitutional Court, the parties are not holders of "*constitutional attributions*" in the *strictu sensu*, but at the same time they exercise "*functions (which) must, therefore, be preordained to facilitate the participation of citizens in political life and the implementation of programmatic lines*"³⁸ defined by the parties themselves. And it is clear that among these functions there is also that of defining whether or not a given executive is still consistent with the programmatic lines of the party itself.

Similarly, it is not surprising that the so-called "parliamentarisation" of the government crisis was not implemented. The Constitution says nothing about the resignation of the Government, nor about the phase preceding the appointment of the Prime Minister and Ministers. It is, however, rather recent practice for the Head of State to invite the resigning Prime Minister to present himself to the Houses of Parliament, but not in order to make him explaining the reasons for his resignation, nor to necessarily vote on the preservation of the relationship of trust, but to initiate a debate in the Parliamentary Assemblies so that the Government can take, after having listened to the positions of the political forces, a definitive decision on the matter (Lipollis 1981). Therefore, there is no constitutional norm, not even of a customary nature, that requires parliamentarization of the crisis of government.

³⁶ Press conference held by Prime Minister Letta, in the Sala dei Galeoni of Palazzo Chigi, on February 12, 2014: <https://bit.ly/3rmCf60>

³⁷ As underlined by the parliamentary dossier of AC.2839 "Disciplina dei partiti politici. Norme per favorire la trasparenza e la partecipazione democratica". In particular, such dossier underlines that ordinary jurisprudence is prone to equate political parties to not recognized associations: <https://bit.ly/39iiExq>

³⁸ Judgement 1/2014 of the Italian Constitutional Court

In this case, then, the reasons for the crisis had been made completely public and transparent with the declaration of the governing body of the PD, as was officially reported by Prime Minister Letta to the President of the Republic at the time he resigned: *"They necessarily follow the resolution taken yesterday - in public and with the express consent of the Presidents of the respective parliamentary groups - by the Directorate of the Democratic Party in favor of a change in the governmental structure. Having lost the decisive support of the main component of the government majority, the Prime Minister believes that at this point a formal parliamentary passage could not offer elements such as to induce him to resign, because he would not be available to preside over governments supported by hypothetical different majorities"*³⁹.

Among other things, it is worth to note the interesting reference to the *"consent of the Presidents of the parliamentary groups"*, a reference that has allowed the resigning President, and through him the Head of State, to acquire the consistent will of the parliamentary groups to proceed with the formation of a new executive. In this way, implicit reference was made to those cases - not easy for the President of the Republic to settle - in which, precisely with regard to these institutional passages, the position of the party with the relative majority seemed to stand out from that of the parliamentary groups (Fabbrini 2013)⁴⁰.

Another element that needs specific attention in the analysis of this parliamentary crisis is the role played by the at-the-time President of the Republic. Giorgio Napolitano, during a press release in which he was asked to comment the developing events stated *"It seems to me that the floor is now in the hands of the PD"*⁴¹. This statement was the object of criticism, as interpreted as a sort of disrespect towards the other constitutional bodies and their respective constitutionally relevant competences even before the crisis officially opened⁴².

In truth, the answer of the President of the Republic gave a concise picture of the actual functioning of the Italian form of parliamentary government, in which it is evident that the loss of support from a political force belonging to the majority coalition, even more so if it is the largest party, inevitably determines institutional consequences of great impact on the life of the executive.

Furthermore, it is relevant to mention some non-institutional passages that may have had some weight in the development of the affair under examination and on which, at least at first sight, the Head of State seems to have played a role of "registration" of the events, rather than of impulse or reaction.

³⁹ Press release of the Presidency of the Republic on 14th February 2014: <https://bit.ly/31ooVn1>

⁴⁰ One of the most prominent examples in this sense is represented by the controversial case of Pella's resignation, the possible reappointment of the former and the subsequent birth of the first Fanfani Government in January 1953

⁴¹ As underlined by <https://bit.ly/2NWkw7E>

⁴² Ferocious have been the criticism from the Five Stars Movement: <https://bit.ly/3m0fJPo>

It is relevant that on the evening of 10th February 2014, and therefore the day before the meeting with Letta mentioned above, the President of the Republic invited Matteo Renzi as the Secretary of the PD to dinner, as stated in the official communiqués of the Presidency⁴³. It is presumable that the President was already correctly informed of the future steps that Secretary Renzi intended to take, just as nothing excludes that the Head of State provided advice and warnings; just as nothing excludes that the next day, when Napolitano met Letta, the framework of feasible options had already been jointly outlined.

Having discussed the development of the parliamentary crisis which led to the rise of Renzi's Executive, it is now possible to direct the attention to the first steps of the formation process of his cabinet and to subsequent moves.

In February 2014, with Matteo Renzi, an executive was formed (for the first time since 1946) by a "political" (*i.e.*, non-technical in nature) Prime Minister who was not a member of parliament, and who hasn't any electoral derivation (other than winning the "primaries" for election as secretary of the Democratic Party).

The paradox, if it is possible to talk about paradox, is that an executive that for this reason was apparently structurally weak (also in consideration of the composite nature of its majority), has instead proved to be strong or, certainly, no weaker than the "majority" governments of the second republic⁴⁴. This statement is confirmed by the simple fact of the government's ability to last. With 1024 days of mandate Renzi's becomes the fourth longest executive of the entire republic⁴⁵, preceded only by "organic" party governments (Vassallo 1994).

The duration of a government is not necessarily a measure of the strength and effectiveness of the executive. The CIRCaP data (Verzichelli 2014), make it possible investigate phase from an equally fundamental (and, in a certain sense, preparatory) perspective, that of the "institutional capacity" of the government (both with reference to internal balances and to the relationship with the legislature and the party system), also in relation to longer-term evolutionary dynamics.

From this point of view, for example, the Renzi government has seemed, in a certain sense, to institutionalize that greater capacity for "penetration" into the structure of the executive by the Prime Minister that had gradually emerged in the course of the second republic (Cotta and Marangoni 2015). The CIRCaP data have underlined a specific dynamic which emerged with the governments of "electoral derivation". In particular, a certain number of undersecretary positions with a technical

⁴³ The press release under examination is available at: <https://bit.ly/3fkamM>

⁴⁴ However, it must be considered that majority governments are not always synonymous with stability. If the majority is "oversized" (thus containing more parties than the minimum winning condition) governance of the coalition becomes complex and possible conflicts may trigger crises leading to the fall of the executive

⁴⁵ After the Government Berlusconi II (1409 days), the Government Berlusconi IV (1283), and the Government Craxi I (1088 days).

profile, have been entrusted to personnel not immediately partisan in origin (and, if anything, belonging to a restricted circle of collaborators of the Prime Minister) and assigned to key ministries, starting with the Presidency of the Council and the Ministry of the Economy⁴⁶.

The Renzi Government has certainly marked a decisive "return of politics" also in the distribution of ministerial and under-secretary positions compared to the season of technicians that had led XVI Legislative term (CIRCaP report 2014). However, the same cabinet saw from the outset at least five deputy ministers and technical undersecretaries, in addition to the Minister of the Economy Pier Carlo Padoan, and a good number of ministerial and undersecretary portfolios assigned to individuals from a wider (and increasingly formalized) network of experts and trusted advisors of the prime minister himself. This is the case (after what has gone down in the news as the mini government reshuffle of early 2016) of the appointment of economist Tommaso Nannicini, formerly Renzi's advisor, as new undersecretary to the Presidency of the Council.

Furthermore, the CIRCaP report (Verzichelli 2014) provides interesting insights on the political experience of the individuals chose by Renzi to serve within his cabinet. With a rate of parliamentary experience of 65%, Renzi offered an executive in line with the model consolidated in the so-called Second Republic (very different from the rates close to 90% that connoted the previous historical phase).

Things change in a rather evident way if the extent of the parliamentary experience of its cabinet is taken into consideration. In fact his Ministers were at the time largely elected during the two previous legislative terms, the XV and the XVI. The average parliamentary experience of the 12 ministers of the new cabinet who have parliamentary experience is just above 6 years.

In order to experience a similar rate, there is the need to take into consideration the Berlusconi I Government of 1994, with 5 and a half years of parliamentary experience for 22 of his 26 ministers. At that time, Berlusconi chose some "survivors" from two parties of the first republic, the DC and MSI, but the bulk of his team was made up of politicians from the Northern League, present on the institutional scene for only two years, and a good number of " newcomers" from Forza Italia.

Another element that the CIRCaP report underlines, in comparison with the other "political" governments that followed the crisis of the 1992-1994 period, is the fact that the Renzi government was composed by the greater share of prominent representatives of the relative party establishments with a specific role within their political entities (Verzichelli 2014).

⁴⁶ Thus, for example, Berlusconi in 2001 and 2008 (especially with the appointment of a close collaborator of the Prime Minister, Gianni Letta, as undersecretary to the Presidency of the Council), but also a "weaker" head of government, such as Prodi in 1996 and 2006 (for example, with the appointment of Enrico Micheli and Riccardo Levi as undersecretaries to the Presidency of the Council), succeeded in imposing "their own" figures, not immediately ascribable to a system of allocation of offices according to a logic of inter-party control.

The national party experience has been considered as equivalent to an office at the level of national secretary obtained before the first entry into government. In this respect, Renzi government differs from many other executives of the long Italian transition, by placing in the cabinet individuals who at the time were directing their own formations: next to the three party leaders involved (Renzi, Alfano and Giannini) almost all those called to the government showed a responsibility within national party's leadership. Renzi moved into the direction of strong politicization of his executive.

Alongside the cabinet composition, there are other element which witnesses the penetration tendency within the structure of the Executive that need specific attention in order to comprehend the "personalization" process of the overall executive branch.

Matteo Renzi was certainly not the first Prime minister to assume the Presidency when the legislative term has already begun⁴⁷.

In such circumstances, and especially if the Head of the Government is in his or her first appointment at national level, the solidity of the administrative machinery of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (PdCM) becomes necessary to ensure, on the one hand, a handover that is as smooth as possible and, on the other, a rapid and effective entry into office of the new president and his team. It is, however, the prerogative of the President of the Council of Ministers, formalized in by the Law 400/1988 governing the organization of the PdCM, to appoint the administrative heads of the Presidency. The choice between ensuring continuity of roles and functions or giving an innovative push to the bureaucratic apparatus is widely discretionary.

The appointment of Mauro Bonaretti as Secretary General of the PdCM represents, in a sense, a change from the profile who have held this role in the past. His long-lasting cooperation with the Undersecretary Delrio, first at the Municipality of Reggio Emilia and then at the Ministry for Regional Affairs, confirmed the willingness of the new leadership to firmly control through these two key figures in the PdCM the delicate mechanism of transformation of acts of political direction into administrative acts.

Of equal interest is the use that has been made of the spoil system mechanism. Out of a total of twenty-four departments within the PdCM whose President relies on for the exercise of general policy functions or for the coordination of specific policy areas, the higher rank executives turnover rate has been around 75%, with just five department heads confirmed in their positions (less than half of those confirmed by Letta at the beginning of the legislature)⁴⁸.

The overall change in the governmental approach, apart from the ritual recourse to the mechanism of the spoil system, has been evident since the first speeches Matteo Renzi made in the Parliament.

⁴⁷ Since 1953, there have been 26 new government's appointments at Palazzo Chigi, without including the number of those governments formed consecutively under the same presidency.

⁴⁸ Rapporto CIRCup sul Governo italiano 20 febbraio 2015 – Buon compleanno Renzi, il primo anno di Governo.

Referring to the programmatic declarations made by President Renzi to the Chambers, for the first time it was not a matter of a speech prepared in advance and therefore mostly read on the basis of a written text.

On the contrary, Prime Minister Renzi presented himself to the Senate - the Assembly that at the time had the task of proceeding to the first discussion and vote of confidence - with a speech largely made, "off the cuff". And this meant that for the subsequent transmission of the speech to the other Assembly it was necessary to proceed to the stenographic transcription of the words pronounced by the Prime Minister (Salerno 2014).

Among all the statements made in that context, it is important to underline the passage in which the Prime Minister, recalling his intention to modify the bicameral structure of the present institutional architecture, expressed his hope that this would be the last time that the Senate would vote on the confidence of a government: *"Today, asking for a vote of confidence means proposing a bold, unified and in some respects - I hope - innovative vision, which starts from the language of frankness with which I communicate from the beginning that I would like to be the last Prime Minister to ask for the confidence of this House"*⁴⁹.

The magnitude of such statement was perfectly reflecting the intentions of Matteo Renzi, and undoubtedly demonstrate his personal approach to the Prime Ministerial Office mainly characterized by visible *Realpolitik* components and a strong personalization of the political debate.

In particular, in a context of an increasingly evident crisis and transformation of parties, Renzi has been able to exploit the possibilities to enlarge the scope and the perimeters of the Government's leader, which within this circumstance enjoys greater spaces of autonomy with respect to his own party ("conquered" by the means of the primaries, that are poorly controlled by the traditional party machine) and, on the other hand, through government action, must strengthen his own personal authority.

Matteo Renzi's own communicative style, after all, reflected (or, perhaps, fed) the tendency to personalize the dynamics of government, starting with the formation of the executive's agenda, entrusted more to the direct communication of measures and objectives by the prime minister rather than to more "formal" instruments such as coalition agreements or programmatic statements by the President of the Council within the Parliament during his inaugural vote of confidence (Marangoni 2016).

In order to provide further evidences concerning the above-mentioned Renzi's tendency, Cotta and Marangoni proponed a simple but significant indicator, namely, the "*Programmatic*

⁴⁹ As in the text of the programmatic statements made in the Senate on the 24th February and transmitted to the Chamber of Deputies, available at: <https://bit.ly/3fn9Ni6>

Density” of the confidence speeches made in parliament by Council presidents before obtaining the inaugural vote of confidence (Cotta and Marangoni 2015).

As noted in an initial brief note by CIRCaP on the birth of the Renzi government (Marangoni 2014), the programmatic density of the statements made in parliament by Renzi (measured as the number of detectable policy commitments for every 500 words), is just over 1.1, thus significantly lower than that measured for the governments of the last two decades.

It is relevantly lower than the density recorded with the Monti government (almost 3.5), but also behind than that of the governments led by D'Alema and Amato in the XIII Legislative term (around 1.4), as well as the "majority" governments led by Prodi (in both cases above 1.5) and Berlusconi (above 2 both in 2001 and 2008).

On the same relatively low levels (1.12), by the way, is also the density measured by the other organic program speech held by Renzi in parliament (in September 2014) on the occasion of the presentation of the so-called "agenda of a thousand days". What should be noted is that Renzi's programmatic density is even lower compared to Enrico Letta's (1.8). Concerning this interesting comparison, Cotta and Marangoni underlined that *“Letta [...] still seems more oriented to the horizon and the logic of the "emergency government" [...], while Renzi] seems more oriented to draw broad scenarios of change [...] than to identify specific measures on which to direct government action”* (Cotta and Marangoni 2015). Apart from this quantitative overview, the various policy "packages" to which the Prime Minister has committed himself (from labor, to public administration, to schooling) have rather been the object of less mediated "information" from Renzi at special press conferences, or through even more direct channels such as the monthly eNews, used by the Prime Minister himself since his days as mayor of Florence.

This sort of "leaderization" of the Executive had ultimate impacts on the intra-coalition dynamics. If during the First Republic, and even during the majority of the Second Republic executives, the dimension of the governmental conflict rested at the inter-coalition level, during Renzi Executive commentators underlined a substantial cancellation of this typical dynamic, in favor of a growing conflict within the majority party led by Renzi himself (Marangoni and Vercesi 2014).

The "style" of Renzi's leadership has also had strong impacts on the government's legislative activity.

During the period under review, approximately 70% of the legislative proposals sent by the Government to Parliament have 'passed through' Palazzo Chigi, *i.e.*, they bared the signature of the Prime Minister among the sponsoring ministers⁵⁰. As much as this is inherent to the nature of

⁵⁰ Without taking into consideration those bills for the ratification of international agreements and treaties, that are important acts in themselves, but of little impact in terms of policy.

governmental initiative, it is inextricably linked, perhaps even before the will, to the coordinating capacity of the Council Presidency.

The Renzi Government has moreover consolidated those practices of "forcing" the ordinary legislative process that had already emerged with the executives of the alternation, beginning with the systematic use of law-decrees. With respect to the latter, Renzi government, in line with the executives of the Second Republic, has resorted to them up to a limited extent, at least in absolute terms, compared to the dimensions that emergency decrees had assumed during the First Republic. The law decrees, however, in a context of progressive contraction of the number of Government legislative initiatives, assumed a very significant relative weight on the action of the Executive (in the case of the Renzi government, equal to approximately 55% of the law initiatives presented in Parliament), as well as a clear strategic function, if it is true that many (approximately 45%) of the measures that has been defined as "programmatic", because linked to the objectives defined (in a more or less precise manner) in the government's programmatic documents, have been delegated by the Government to the conversion of the law decrees⁵¹.

On the other hand, the scope of the legislative decrees concerned matters central to the government's program, from labor reform (Jobs Act) to fiscal simplification, up to the determination of electoral constituencies for the new "*Italicum*" electoral system. At the same time, from a technical point of view, a process of progressive centralization at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the structures for the preparation of regulatory acts can be highlighted with respect to the legislative apparatus of the individual ministries, which confirms the importance of legislative decrees for the action of the government and, within the ministerial committee, of the President of the Council of Ministers (Musella and Vercesi 2019).

A final interesting element that need to be analyzed in order to provide an exhaustive picture on Renzi's governmental tendencies is the recourse to the instrument of the confidence motion. During the securitized executive, the Government's strategic choice to "secure" the parliamentary path of the most important legislative initiatives by recurring to the question of confidence is evident. The Renzi government has put a total of 66 questions of confidence on its own legislative initiatives. This meant that this Government recurred to such a measure for approximately the 27 percent of its legislative operations⁵². Even if this share could appear relevant, it is lower than other governmental experience. In particular, the 45 percent of Monti Government's proposal were adopted by the means

⁵¹ In the absence of a true coalition agreement (or electoral manifesto of the governing coalition), the documents analysed are the statements made by Renzi in Parliament on the occasion of the inaugural vote of confidence, and the so-called "program of a thousand days", presented to the House and Senate by the Prime Minister on September 16, 2014. Among the overall governmental objectives identified between those two speeches, 25, about 33% of the total number of bills passed by the Government in the first two years of office (excluding ratifications), can be classified as programmatic.

⁵² Data available at: <https://bit.ly/3tXXnBh>

of the vote of confidence, and 33 percent of Gentiloni Government's initiative received the motion of confidence⁵³.

The Renzi Government, in any case, seems to have further consolidated a practice that emerged in an increasingly evident manner with the "majority" governments first, and then during the "technical phase". The ratio of confidence motions to bills presented by the government went from just 0.06 during the Prodi I Government (one confidence motion for every 16 legislative initiatives, excluding in this case also reiterated legislative decrees), to approximately 0.22 (1 to 4.5) under the Berlusconi IV government.

Therefore, the question of confidence now seems to be a systematic practice in the Italian legislative process (Marangoni and Verzichelli 2014). It is also remarkably strategic, since, as mentioned before, if it is considered that the executive's propensity to make use of them has often proved to be a function of the "relevance" of specific government interventions and has particularly accompanied measures linked to the implementation of the government program. This has also been the case for the years of the Renzi government, which have seen the executive put at least one confidence question on about 35% of the programmatic bills, compared with "only" 27% of all measures when considered in aggregate terms.

At the end of this analysis of the parliamentary and executive experience of the Renzi Government, it seems necessary to make some considerations in relation to the debate on the personalization and pre-individualization of the executive.

Specifically, Matteo Renzi seems to have fueled the discussion on the expansion of the role and prerogatives of the President of the Council of Ministers not through specific legislative proposals, but through a precise political project within the existing regulatory provisions. His continuous attempt to personify the entire political debate, to focus all the governmental pressures on himself and to fuel a dialectic based on "the need for organic reforms for the good of the country," very well fits into the historical need for the Prime Minister to reassert his absolute control over both the executive and parliamentary branches. It is possible to affirm that Matteo Renzi has demonstrated that there is indeed the possibility, albeit with obvious operational limits linked to the metamorphosis and attitude of the majority parties, for a government leader to presidentialise the Italian executive power while remaining within the constitutional perimeter.

However, despite what has been highlighted above, the experience of this government has not eliminated the need, in order to effectively complete the process of an institutionalized strengthening of the Prime Minister, to move towards organic reforms regarding the scope and the prerogatives of

⁵³ Data available at: <https://bit.ly/3d8Al3O>

the executive. If this is not accomplished, everything will be left to the personal attitude of the Prime Minister of the moment.

However, in order to reach an effective evaluation of the policy style (response) of the Government under scrutiny, further elements linked to the personal leadership style adopted by Matteo Renzi require specific attention.

2. Matteo Renzi, one man in charge: the centralization of the party apparatus as the rationale for the personalization of Executive Power

In a context of continuous transformation of both the Executive Power and political parties, Matteo Renzi has certainly played a central role.

His strong personality, comparable only, within the center-left spectrum, to that of Bettino Craxi, has completely redefined a pattern of political alignment historically led by leaders with a marked socialist background.

What has been repeatedly defined as "contamination from the right" has, both in terms on content and modalities, found a new and concrete expression in Renzi, who has completely departed from the traditional style of the Italian left. Since the 2012 Democratic Party's primaries, Renzi has distinguished himself for representing a leadership of rupture and renewal with respect to the ruling class that until then had led the party. When he subsequently assumed the leadership of the PD in 2013, the party's traditional center of power was heavily influenced by his personal conception of the role entrusted to the Secretary. The party, by the direct will of its leader, began to be flanked by collateral structures (such as the "*Leopolda*" and the "*FutureDem*"), which were given a central role in the life of the party. The leader was beginning to emerge, even in the center-left, as the true arbiter of the entire party's political and managerial activity.

Such a vision based on the centralization of the overall political visibility and party decisions (partially derived by his party management approach), undoubtedly had strong repercussions on his Government experience, as underlined by the precedent section.

Investigating up to which extent Renzi's rise as leader of the Democratic Party, and PD's administration path have influenced his simultaneous Prime Ministerial experience - in terms of policy style and managerial approach - is the aim of this paragraph.

2.1 Party leadership: Renzi's experience from 2012 PD's primary elections towards a personalized "network party"

In the last decades of the twentieth century, political parties appear as "organizations under stress" (Wolinetz 2002), called to measure themselves with three important political-institutional challenges (Bernardi and Valbruzzi 2011).

The first issue concerns their legitimacy crisis, due to the progressive erosion of those tasks of recruitment and selection of the ruling class and the weakening of the function linked to the aggregation of interests (Ignazi 2004). It is in this sense that the serious crisis of the parties, conceived as intermediary actors and gatekeepers between citizens-voters and the institutions responsible for governing the territory, unfolds.

A second crisis affects traditional political organizations on the side of their political vulnerability, brought about by an increasingly unstructured electoral market that cannot be traced back to the loyalty expressed in the "membership vote" (Parisi and Pasquino 1977).

Finally, the last challenge to which the parties are subjected within the contemporary era concerns their own reduction in attractiveness, with particular reference to the strong decrease in the number of members.

In an attempt to cope with this latter difficulty, the theorized forms of "*electoral party*", "*party network*", "*cartel party*", "*business party*", "*personal party*" or "*franchise party*" tend to present a very light internal structure, relying on a smaller number of affiliates and a weaker organization than traditional mass parties (Segatori 2012).

Beyond the ongoing transformations, however, parties are and remain true "*adaptive creatures [capable of] changing, renewing and, at times, reinventing themselves in light of ever-changing political, social and electoral realities*" (Barnea and Rahat 2011). In this regard, in an attempt to respond to the challenges to which the sphere of politics is subjected in Europe in the years at the turn of the century, one of the tools adopted to recover competitiveness in the field of delegitimization, vulnerability and less electoral attractiveness is expressed in the mode of selection of leaders through the method of primary elections. These in turn tend to be conceived as an appeal to the ballot box to the members (or voters) of a political party, to which it is attributed - on the North American model - the ability to choose the actors candidates for elected public office.

In Italy, the use of primary elections as an attempt to revitalize party institutions at various institutional levels and as a more inclusive way of political selection of the ruling class, both local and supra-local, is a rather recent practice (De Luca and Venturino 2010). The first experimentation

on a national basis dates back to October 16, 2005, on the occasion of the choice of the prime ministerial candidate of the center-left party⁵⁴.

Two years later, on October 14, 2007, after two years of government and the implosion of the “Center-Left Union”⁵⁵, the rhetoric of primary elections contributed to building one of the founding myths of the newly formed Democratic Party.

Provided for by the Statute, the internal primaries within the PD are conceived to complete the congressional function and carried out in order to build a broad political recognition of the chosen leader. However, the primaries perform, at least in their national declination, another fundamental task, relating to the reunification of the political alignment given the numerous and profound differences and heterogeneities that, if neglected, could risk undermining the unity of the coalition. Through recourse to the consultation of their electoral base, in fact, at the beginning of the 2000s, the leaders of the center-left attempted to recompose the internal fractures of the various power groups by means of the indication of a collective leader who, on the strength of broad popular legitimacy, tried to interpret a program and a unified and shared political project.

More precisely, the primaries end up being *"an instrument capable of recompacting (at least at the beginning) the party (or the line-up) [...] around the chosen candidate, who from the primaries will obtain that visibility capable of placing him at the center of the electoral campaign"* (Ciaglia and Mazzoni 2011).

Among the institutional repercussions of the primary elections, however, is the progressive acceleration provided to the processes of personalization and presidentialisation of the institutional roles, which characterized the Italian political system in the years at the turn of the century. The direct appointment of the leader by the electoral body (or part of it) determines a legitimization of the person which is certainly stronger than that obtained through party delegation. Furthermore, the leadership's style that are contrasted during the primary competitions and the race for the national premiership tend to be profoundly different both in terms of formation and in the interpretation of the role assigned.

⁵⁴ They take concrete form in the phase of Italian political history that precedes the birth of the Democratic Party, when the United in the Olive Tree alliance between the DS and La Margherita uses, for the first time, the mechanism of the primaries, in order to give the future leader of the coalition a broader political legitimacy than that produced by individual competing parties.

⁵⁵ “The Union” is the name of the coalition, led by Romano Prodi, which between 2006 and 2007 brought together the parties of the reformist left with those of the radical left and some subjects of the Catholic and moderate center. The main glue of this coalition was the political adversity towards the center-right led by Silvio Berlusconi. The Union won the 2006 political elections supporting the second Prodi government and remained in office until May 2008, when - following early elections - the fourth Berlusconi government took office, decreeing the end of the Union's political experience.

This is exactly what happened in the primary elections of the fall of 2012. By recurring to them, the “progressist alignment” – afflicted by a variety of internal competing factions lead by prominent individuals - unilaterally identified the leadership to oppose the rival coalition and, with it, the political project that (at least in the election campaign) appeared able to unite all the souls of the coalition. As in this case, keeping dissent and unity together is a very difficult task, but one that is essential for achieving final victory.

In the context of the 2012 primary election, eventually won by Pierluigi Bersani, secretary (at the time) of the Democratic Party, former President of the Emilia Romagna Region and Minister with economic proxies in the center-left governments of the "Second Republic", Matteo Renzi presented himself as carrier of a new political wind which could hardly have been stopped for much longer.

During that political competition Renzi was defined as the bearer of “*situational leadership*” (Damiani 2013) which “*should not be understood as a quality that an individual has or does not have. It is always defined by a specific situation and is recognized in the response of supporters to the words and acts of an individual. If the answer is positive and a follow-up is formed there is leadership, otherwise there is no*” (Edelman 1985).

Situational leadership, therefore, far from the weberian identification of a leader with “extraordinary” qualities and powers, is such to the extent that it is capable to successfully managing random and contingent situations.

According to Segatori, a situational political leadership is the result of four fundamental assumptions: firstly, the existence of a precise situation; secondly, the pre-mobilization of a mass (which can become participation); thirdly a political culture in transition and unable to fully interpret the meaning of the situation, nor to adequately target the pre-mobilization; and lastly, an individual of “*words and deeds*” (Segatori R. 2010).

This, exactly, is the role that Renzi tries to play in Italy between the first and second decade of the 2000s.

Relevant for this analysis is to decline the characteristics identified by Segatori for the situational leadership in the model embodied by Renzi.

The first assumption: presence of a specific situation. This aspect is made explicit, in the case under examination, in a double meaning, by virtue of the international financial crisis which put economic development in difficulty at the beginning of the 21st century and by the internal difficulty of the Italian progressive spectrum in independently undertaking a process of inner renewal.

The second assumption concerns the pre-mobilization of civil society: in this regard, in the months preceding the electoral campaign of the 2012 primary, a climate of strong criticism of a political

"caste" was identifiable (Rizzo and Stella 2007), oriented to protect and maintain the power privileges acquired over time⁵⁶.

The third assumption refers to the changing political culture, unable to interpret the requests for renewal coming from below. These considerations seem perfectly adequate to the Italian situation at the turn of the first and second decades of the 21st century, when the Democratic Party found itself involved in a difficult and complex process of transformation, in search of an autonomous identity with respect to the former communist and former Christian Democrat political legacy.

Finally, the figure of Renzi corresponded exactly to the model of the man of words and deeds to which Segatori refers. A man of words because his political leadership sank into the construction of a new language, of which the term "scrapping" (hoped for in relation to the old party nomenclature) takes on a symbolic meaning capable of interpreting the renewing spirit and capable of building a political grammar functional to the widespread needs in civil society. Renzi, however, did not limit himself to just being a man of words, but played a role characterized above all by the quality of his administrative functions. In this sense, his being at the same time a candidate for the position of leader of the center-left and mayor of the city of Florence projected him exactly into this scenario: a politician of words and deeds.

The risk of the situational leadership model, however, lies in the possible mismatch between the expectations raised and the results actually achieved. If *"in the initial phase the defined emotional approach prevails over the one considered rational, in the medium to long term the relative weight of the two approaches [could] be reversed"* (Segatori 2010).

However, in the case of Renzi, this risk materialized itself only temporarily (and eventually at the end of his experience as PD's leader), pending his final ascent which took place only a year later, in 2013.

Given the sudden ineligibility of Silvio Berlusconi following a final sentence in August 2013 for crimes related to tax fraud⁵⁷ and after the resignation of Pier Luigi Bersani as secretary of the Democratic Party⁵⁸, the traditional equilibria which has been characterizing the party system at the time rapidly collapsed.

⁵⁶ The period between the first and second decade of the 2000s coincided, in Italy, with a climate of general distrust expressed by citizens towards the advanced ethical and political degradation of the party apparatuses (involved, after the early nineties of the twentieth century, in a new season of corruption and patronage) and with the feelings of heightened anti-politics that penalize most of the national political parties. In strong dissent with the party regime of the time, in this period a "populist" movement was born (the 5-Star Movement) led by Beppe Grillo who, in strong controversy with the ruling class of the time, proposed a profound institutional renewal starting from society civil and non-professional politicians.

⁵⁷ Berlusconi's ineligibility was the result of the application of the *Severino Law*, which renders (also retroactively) those who have been sentenced to more than two years' imprisonment for crimes punishable by at least four years ineligible to stand for election.

⁵⁸ Bersani's resignation occurred because of the failure to elect Romano Prodi as President of the Republic in 2013. Specifically, Bersani commented harshly on this event, asserting that *"We have produced an event of absolute*

The Democratic Party, left without a guide was needing a new leader, capable of re-unite the party whose equilibria appeared extremely fragile. The 2013 primary election for the selection of the PD's Secretary represented in this sense a critical turning point for the future of the party, and marked the beginning of a new leadership style era.

The first two secretaries of the Democratic Party, Walter Veltroni and Pierluigi Bersani (elected respectively in 2007 and 2009), stand out for their strong militancy and for their belonging and loyalty, above all, to the party. Although chosen through the procedure of *inclusive leader selection* (Rahat and Hazan 2011)⁵⁹, they come to the helm of the PD thanks to the legitimacy and consensus they managed to establish within their own political party. Those organized for the selection of the first two national secretaries of the Democratic Party were, in fact, elections with an almost foregone conclusion, which, served two fundamental functions: on the one hand, to present the new leader (in reality, selected in advance by the establishment) and his political proposal to the outside world; on the other, to recompose the party (at least in appearance) around the chosen secretary, after the divisions that had arisen at the very moment of his selection

During the 2013 PD's leader election – whose saw the presence of candidates who were ideologically similar and interested in keeping the level of internal conflict low (Civati, Cuperlo and Pittella, all belonging to the traditional Italian traditional socialist-based Italian left) – Matteo Renzi tried in every conceivable fashion to place himself at the center of the electoral clash, to the point of transforming that competition into a veritable horse race that could trigger a process of spectacularization. His intent has always been clear: to produce a rupture in the traditional political culture of the Italian left, challenging his own party from within (Ventura 2015).

Renzi qualified himself to be, first and foremost, a leader with a prevalent "*external derivation*" (Duverger 1954), intended to build consensus even outside of his own party. From this point of view, he showed himself to be immediately aware of the fact that, not being able to count on the support of a large part of the establishment of his party, in order to win the internal battle within the PD he had to resort to a broader legitimation, outside the party itself, addressing not only the traditional left-wing target nor only the center-left. For this reason, in 2013, Renzi decided to address the entire electoral body through the idea of "scrapping" ("*rottamazione*").

In this way, in the role of outsider of the Italian political system, Renzi challenged the old bureaucratic apparatus of the PD by proposing a new model of leadership, centered on his visibility, on precise communication strategies and above all on the construction of a broad empathy with the public-voter.

gravity, the mechanisms of responsibility and solidarity have broken down, a day dramatically worse than yesterday. Among us, one out of four has betrayed. There are drives to destroy the PD" (<https://bit.ly/31FbzmC>).

⁵⁹ The authors distinguished between *inclusive candidate selection* (the process of the premier candidate) and *inclusive leader selection* (namely the competition to select the party leader).

What Renzi was trying to build in that political transition was, to all intents and purposes, a postmodern leadership, focused on the personal qualities of the leader. The process of leaderization initiated by the former Tuscan mayor within the center-left was so fast that he has been defined as the "*Leftist Berlusconi*" of the Italian PD (Bordignon 2014).

Paraphrasing the political literature on political parties with reference to the model of the *catch all party* (Kirchheimer 1966), Renzi appeared as a catch all leader, meaning by this expression his ability - for the first time expressed in the history of the Italian center-left - to address a generalist audience of people (of the left, but not necessarily only of the left), which allows him to overcome the limits defined by the boundaries of the traditional party membership. On the other hand, this is an objective that Renzi repeated publicly several times during the electoral campaign of the 2013 inclusive leader selection: "*we have to go and get the vote of those on the right one by one. It is not a dirty word [...]. Let's go and get those who voted there last time*"⁶⁰. And again: "*we want to go and get the votes of the center-right without stink under our noses*"⁶¹.

This strategy led Renzi to the victory of the 2013 inclusive leader selection process and marked a new page in the post-ideological evolution of the Democratic Party. Under the management of Matteo Renzi, the PD radically changed its political and organizational strategy compared to the past, moved by the strong influence of a personalizing and centralizing leader.

With the appointment of Matteo Renzi as secretary of the Democratic Party, the party's traditional focus of activities and decision-making centers has been greatly altered during the leadership of the former mayor of Florence.

The PD went from being a closed container reserved only for those who historically came from the Italian left (both in electoral terms and in terms of membership) to a political machine aimed at widening the circle of those who supported the party. This new inclusive process was transforming the democratic party into a true *network party* (Heidar and Saglie 2003), which combined together some characteristics of the *mass party*.

With the rise of Renzi, the number of left-wing political formations closely linked to the name of their leader increased, and the party experienced a phase of profound transformation of its electoral base, managing to intercept voters from political formations of the center and center-right. In this sense, appeared fully accomplished the so-called "*contamination from the right*" (Bordignon 2014) that led even formations, which can be considered offspring of mass parties, to focus on a reorganization of the party in a personalized key.

⁶⁰ Repubblica, 23th May 2014, available at: <https://bit.ly/2Px4Fgz>

⁶¹ Repubblica, 22th October 2013, available at: <https://bit.ly/3ujGrFv>

Since 2013, it was possible to observe a strong personalization of PD politics and power with the birth and rise of new "personal" organizations. "*Leopolda*" and "*FutureDem*", two fundamental pieces of the Renzi rationale, gathered supporters of the leader who only partially coincided with the members and the tradition of the PD.

Leopolda is the name given to the political convention conceived and launched by Matteo Renzi that, since 2010, has been held annually in the fall in Florence at the former Leopolda station and gathers the leader's supporters. It is also the stage from which Renzi forcefully launched the idea of "*rottamazione*", obtained the popular investiture for the primaries of 2012 against Bersani for those for the Secretariat in 2013, and become the central event of the campaign for the YES to constitutional reform in 2016. Every aspect of communication was carefully designed as expression of a pop culture: more of an American convention than an election committee of a party representing the history of the Italian left. It was clearly not just a scenic innovation but an attempt to change the old symbology and the very identity of the party organization (Sampugnaro 2017).

Therefore, during the rise of Matteo Renzi, at the Leopolda there were no limits to external contributions - even those not in line with the traditional identity of the PD - but it was characterized by an intensive openness to social segments from all political alignments which agreed on the need to introduce a political discontinuity and in a short time.

The interesting aspect was that the new ruling class that showed up at the Leopolda became the managing apparatus of the country, taking on relevant government and sub-government roles at the expense of those political personnel linked to the history of the PD⁶².

Among the organizations that established a direct relationship with Renzi, it is possible to remember FutureDem. The association was born from the experience of the committees in favor of Matteo Renzi during the electoral campaign for the 2012 Primaries, mainly as a support organization for the mobilization. Subsequently, the young adherents proposed themselves as a think tank of policies oriented to encourage free enterprise and meritocracy and, later, as a political-cultural association.

Through the "Leopolda system" and FutureDem it was possible to raise funds, mobilize new supporters outside the party, elaborate policies, but above all include heterogeneous groups and individual personalities, not always compatible with the traditional PD background. Both expressed a form of new collateralism in which Renzi placed enormous political relevance, and towards whom he externalized – to organization directly associated with his leadership - typical party's functions that until that moment remained mainly internal.

⁶² Just think of Maria Elena Boschi, who became Minister for Constitutional Reforms, and Marianna Madia, who became Minister of Public Administration.

As Diamanti underlined, *"two identities coexisted in the PD. The "historical" one and the "personalized" one.* The PD and the PdR (Party of Renzi). They brought together those who vote PD despite Renzi. And those who vote for Renzi despite the PD (Diamanti 2016).

However, despite the so-called "contamination from the right" and the rise of Renzi as the "Leftist Berlusconi", unlike Forza Italia the Democratic Party has not become – under his leadership - a personal party (Calise 2010). It is not a *"business party"*, of a "proprietary" nature: a party that begins and ends with its leader, insofar as it is inseparably linked to the founder's (private) financial and organizational resources. It is, on the contrary, a party that "pre-exists" the leader, and (probably) will survive the leader. A party endowed with a solid organization, with an articulated territorial structure, with "rules" that regulate the internal life, and delimit the margins of maneuver of the Secretary, in terms of prerogatives and duration of the mandate.

It was a highly personalized party, or at least in the process of rapid personalization, as a result of the turnaround brought about by Matteo Renzi. This was a path already attempted by Walter Veltroni at the time of the foundation: inscribed, therefore, in the genetic makeup of the PD. But not in that of the founding members, heirs of the great mass parties of the First Republic. It is not a coincidence that the advent of Pier Luigi Bersani as secretary in 2009 coincided with a reversal of direction, balancing the liquid party, the American party imagined by the first secretary, with the party of the members, the party of the apparatus (Bordignon 2014).

Renzi's was a leadership that, through the strength of the leader-people bond, attempted to constrain internal debate (and the expression of dissent). Emblematic in this sense is what he accomplished during the first National Assembly of the PD after the success of the 2014 European elections. On the strength of the 40.8% exhibited by a large panel mounted behind him, he silenced the internal opposition by stating that *"the time for mediations is over"* (Renzi 2014).

Renzi's party leadership and management – far from being unproblematic - undoubtedly represented a pivotal turning point for the existence of the Democratic Party, and even if it gave rise to tremendous internal clashes, it has served as benchmark to direct the overall Government leadership, management and policy style experience. As well as a party leader he was centralizing on himself every programmatic aspect, so as Prime Minister he tried to strengthen the role of the prime minister in practice. He was one man in charge.

3. The Policy style (response) of Renzi Government

Renzi obtained the leadership of the government under the impetus, if not of emergency, at least of an acceleration perceived as necessary. The feeling (not only Renzi's) was that the Letta government was continuing in the wake of incremental, negotiated and potentially endless reforms. Renzi, as a true "political animal", aware of the danger of slowing down, won the premiership and sought to strengthen the government with constitutional reforms (electoral law and reform of the Senate) conceived, in perspective, as ancillary to the other structural reforms that he has begun to put in the pipeline (work, public administration, school, justice) and through the marginalization of the rituals of consultation. Opinions on this style of decision-making are the most varied, ranging from appreciation for having been able to introduce innovations (organizational-media and political-strategic) that have created a space for maneuver where none seemed to exist, to the concern of those who deplore the disintermediation and fear that it is a prelude to a "mild authoritarianism" (Pasquino 2015).

Two are the main determinants of this evaluation, the verticalization of the governmental policy proposals, and its authoritarian relationship with external/forces.

3.1 The Verticalization of the governmental policies: the “Renzinomics” and the centralized storytelling

As underlined in the first chapter, Italy should be conceived as a “*complex political system*” with the deep presence of simultaneous veto players (both internal and external) that need to be incorporated within the legislative process in order to give completion to the Government agenda. However, such a system tends to collide with a charismatic and centralizing Prime Minister as Renzi was: one man in charge.

Presidents of the Council, in order to bypass the need to undergo continuous negotiation with the country's veto player need to find their governmental legitimization into an element that even the veto player cannot control: the electorate.

Renzi's attempt, analyzed from the point of view of the Government's storytelling and policies management, was precisely that of directly engaging the electorate through a communicative discourse that drawn new scenarios and, on the basis of them, requesting the consensus necessary to transform the institutional context in which these scenarios had then to be realized. This approach, can be interpreted as a profound attempt to transition the Italian political system from a complex to a more straightforward format, with the aim to perform in Italy what is traditionally done in France,

where all interests are heard, but then the Government - the sole depositary and interpreter of the national interest and the general will - decides.

Renzi attempted to perform this strategy by the means of the economic policy proposals of his Government, commonly defined as "*Renzinomics*" (Macroeconomicus 2015), and though the intense verticalized storytelling constructed around such legislative initiatives.

"*Renzinomics*" is the name given by some observers to the mix of demand-support policies - consumption (bonus of 80 euros to workers with an income of less than 26. 000 euros gross per year; 500 euros bonus to young people; cancellation of the tax on the first home) and investments (cut in IRAP, refinancing of the now historic Sabbatini law⁶³, decreasing incentives for those who stabilize the workforce) - and the stimulus of supply - above all the measures of flexibilization of the labor market and active policies to favor employment contained in the Jobs Act - that characterizes the macroeconomic action of the Renzi government.

The tax cut through bonuses - the "putting some money back into the pockets of the Italians"⁶⁴ - was certainly conceived as an electoral maneuver (Palmerini 2014), and probably was, even though it was presented as a policy to support domestic demand. In the government's communication, it was also supposed to represent an anticipation of a much more ambitious policy of progressive reduction of taxes which was to be launched as soon as the proportion of public debt had fallen.

That of reducing taxes, it was in some sense neo-liberal policy (and therefore not akin to the traditional ideological lines of the Italian center-left), but that, electorally speaking, had become necessary in the rather extreme circumstances of an Italy whose fiscal pressure had (and still has) reached extreme levels. The eighty euro bonus therefore became a central element of the Premier's communicative discourse aimed at maintaining consensus in view of the implementation of much more demanding reforms.

Equally important in the strategy of limiting vetoes were the measures to support the other component of domestic demand, *i.e.*, investment, which were implemented with a refinement of the Sabbatini Law, with the authorization of accelerated depreciation and with the cut in IRAP (regional tax on productive activities). Part of the strategy aimed at limiting vetoes were the measures to support the other component of domestic demand, *i.e.*, investment, which were implemented with a refinement of the Sabbatini Law, with the authorization of accelerated depreciation and with the cut

⁶³ Facilitating access to credit for small and medium-sized enterprises was one of the first priorities of the Renzi government. After strengthening the Guarantee Fund for SMEs, which allows to activate financing with a public guarantee, the government, in 2017, expanded the audience of companies that can make use of the Fund and refinanced it with 500 million euros for 2017/18. With the New Sabbatini, the government opened the financing to all productive sectors, including agriculture and fishing, for those companies investing in machinery, plant, business assets and equipment, as well as hardware, software and digital technologies.

⁶⁴ These were the words used by Matteo Renzi to describe and present the economic measures introduced by his Government in 2014. News available at: <https://bit.ly/3dHfEfz>

in IRAP (regional tax on productive activities). These measures simultaneously attempted to revive internal demand and provide the productive capacity necessary to meet it, although they only partially succeeded. This is because after a period of prolonged recession, any increase in demand is met through the reduction of stocks, with the risk that investment will lag behind the recovery in business. As Macroeconomicus (2015) underlines, both the attempt to revive domestic demand and the attempt to legitimize itself a posteriori through indirect electoral verification (that of the elections to the European Parliament in May 2014, where the PD reported the largest percentage of votes ever and was the largest party in Europe) were objectives aimed at loosening the *internal constraint and vetoes*, represented both by the internal currents within the Democratic Party and by the parties of a majority that Renzi had rebuilt around himself. Matteo Renzi, by the means of his Governmental activity was then attempting to verticalize the policy storytelling, by presenting himself as the true savior of the Country, as a leader capable of anticipating the future needs of its electors.

The relaunch of the economy and the growth of the gross domestic product also served to reduce the *external constraint and vetoes* (represented then by corporate and aggregate interests), which has already been partially loosened thanks to the structural reforms that influenced the calculations of the stability parameters, and to regain credibility "in Europe" and on the markets. Apart from the political legitimation that Renzi was attempting to gain from the external actors and veto player, delicate has been the relationship with them, as it will be analyzed in the next sub-paragraph.

Certainly, more structural, were the interventions on the supply side, aimed at flexibilising the labor market, making the public administration more efficient, speeding up the course of justice and modernizing the world of education. In a context such as Italy's, which has long been stuck in a rut, Renzi's reforms certainly appeared revolutionary. These were widely supported reforms that have had a twofold order of consequences: those relative to intervention in the specific policy sector will have their effects over time (but some results of the Jobs Act are already being seen), while those relative to the way in which they have been carried out, *i.e.*, avoiding the rituals of consultation and ignoring the vetoes, will have effects in the long term.

While this package of reforms had a dual nature, on the one hand to suppress internal vetoes and to alleviate external ones, they showed - especially in their parliamentary approval process - Renzi's strategy of assuming a policy of anticipation rather than reaction. This is a style of policy characterized by continuous adherence to the political will of the leader, who verticalizes to himself the choices of legislative initiative, which are then presented to the audience as far-reaching measures.

3.2 The disintermediation and the external veto players: evidence from the Jobs Act's legislative "negotiation"

As is now well known, the executive led by the former secretary of the Democratic Party (PD) developed an intense reform activity during the almost three years it was in office.

Among the measures that are most remembered there are undoubtedly, the reform of the labor market, the "Jobs Act" (law 183/2014), the so-called "Good School" (law 107/2015), the amendment of the electoral law (the so-called "Italicum": Law 52/2015), the "Madia Reform" of public administration (Law 124/2015), the law on civil unions (Law 76/2016) and, of course, the constitutional reform (later rejected by the Referendum of December 4, 2016). These are all policy processes of particular relevance and that have aroused great political controversy, both among decision-makers and in public opinion.

However, if it is true that the constitutional reform has ended Renzi's career at Palazzo Chigi, it is equally true that the Jobs Act has represented perhaps the clearest manifestation of his policy style. It can be argued, that the Renzi government died on the constitutional reform, but was born with the labor market reform (Pritoni and Sacchi 2019).

The "Jobs Act" reform of the Renzi executive represents *in toto* the concretization of that style of governmental policy which has been widely discussed, based on verticalization and personalization. In the collective imagination, it, represents a typical case of what the literature calls "*governmental unilateralism*" (Culpepper 2014), a situation characterized by a substantial irrelevance on the part of the major national socio-economic actors (first and foremost, the large confederal unions - Cgil, Cisl, Uil - but also the main business associations). This situation is immediately apparent if it is considered the speed of the entire Jobs Act legislative process. In the space of 18 months, the Renzi Government has had both the delegated law and all eight legislative decrees linked to the reform approved by Parliament, thus highlighting the executive's desire to adopt only and exclusively the reform design conceived within the government, thus eliminating any room of action for external veto players i.e. stakeholders. That approach, decreed what Culpepper and Regan (2014) defined as "*the death of the social pacts*" (Culpepper and Regan 2014), that is, the end of that policymaking experience, born after the sovereign debt crisis of 2008, based on the creation of special pacts for economic growth between the government and the social partners necessary for economic recovery, especially in countries like Italy, that are, without a real neo-corporatist connotation (Regini and Regalia 1997).

In Renzi's narrative, the underlying logic of the entire re-shaping project was to overcome labor market dualism between those who were protected and those who were not.

The elements of innovativeness of the Jobs Act has therefore been many, and as always happens with proposals aimed at modifying the policy status quo which imply a clear break with the past, the distinction between potential winners and potential losers of the decision-making process - in the field of organized interests - becomes quite clear.

If at first, the attitude of the main stakeholders remained fairly cautious, this situation quickly changed following the procedural decisions taken by the Government⁶⁵.

In recent years, the idea that Italian governments are increasingly able to proceed unilaterally with the approval of their own labor market reform plans, without involving the main interest groups in any fashion, has become more widespread (Culpepper 2014).

The approach that the Renzi government wanted to give to the decision-making process regarding the Jobs Act follows exactly this slope. Disintermediation and unilateralism, in the first months of the decision-making process, were claimed by Renzi and his Executive as real values. On the other hand, it is Renzi himself who is the spokesman of this changed attitude, with a series of interviews in which he clarified in particular that he "*wanted to take power away from the unions*"⁶⁶, for whom "*the music has changed*", and that the Government was perfectly ready to "*move forward without the unions*"⁶⁷.

On the other hand, Renzi has been capable to pursue his disintermediation strategy also by the means of the very broad mandate conferred to his Government by the delegated law voted by the Parliament.

In the course of the few occasions - absolutely informal, so as not to affect the narrative carried forward by the Prime Minister in relation to public opinion - in which technicians of the various stakeholders and government consultants (where the ministerial bureaucracies were almost completely cut off from the design of the policies) met, as highlighted by the interviews conducted by Pritoni and Sacchi (2019), the possibility of the former to influence the content of the regulations being approved was almost void.

Obviously, the large trade union confederations strongly criticized this approach, claiming their social role and seeing in the government's decision-making an attack on the prerogatives of traditional socio-economic actors. On the other hand, the business community - less traditionally (and ideally) tied to concerted practices - did not seem to suffer particularly from this *modus operandi*, and indeed appreciated it explicitly. A statement by Confindustria President Squinzi is emblematic in this regard:

⁶⁵ Confindustria (the leading Italian entrepreneurial union) manifested its support to Renzi's proposal, as well as CISL ("*Italian Confederation of Trade Unions*"), partially moved by the personal relationship with Renzi, and on the light of the general popular consensus towards the reform. The main critics arrived from the leftist trade union, with CGIL ("*Italian General Confederation of Labour*") and UIL ("*Italian union of labor*") leading the race of those firmly opposed to the Jobs Act.

⁶⁶ Il Fatto Quotidiano, 4th May 2014, available at: <https://bit.ly/324qRkQ>

⁶⁷ Il Sole 24 Ore, 6th May 2014, available at: <https://bit.ly/3t6uWRB>

*"I have never been fond of consultation, also because I think it's good to listen to everyone, but in the end, only one person decides. I also do this in my company"*⁶⁸.

The government's approach partially changed in the process of approving the legislative decrees implementing the reform. With the draft decrees in hand, the government's consultants sought the expertise of the main interest groups - Confindustria and trade unions *in primis* - to do fine-tuning, without prejudice to the political choices already made. The objective was, first and foremost, to avoid regulations that were materially flawed or difficult to implement⁶⁹.

In particular, it is with respect of the disapplication of article 18 of the Workers' Statute to the indefinite-term contract with increasing protections - one of the main aspects of the entire measure, certainly the one on which the fiercest political battle was fought - the confederal unions manage to wrest some limited concessions. This took materialization in the field of employee's dismissal for just cause, and in the matters regarding the exclusion of the measures introduced for the minimum wage.

Nevertheless, the small modifications made to the text did not change the nature of the reform, which was born, conducted and implemented following the unilateral design of the government.

The trade unions were the real losers in this legislative dispute, as they were sucked into the vortex of abhorrence of consultation, which up to that moment had allowed them to obtain privileged relations with the previous executives. The incidental winners turned out to be Confindustria (Confederation of Italian Industry) and the entrepreneurs, but not so much for their effective lobbying activity, but rather as bearers of preferences similar to those of Matteo Renzi.

In the few months that passed between the presentation of the first draft of the delegated law in parliament and the approval of Law 183/2014, the Jobs Act, the Renzi government could afford to marginalize the role of interest groups and proceed in isolation for one fundamental reason: the consensus enjoyed by the Prime Minister, in the country, was at the highest level⁷⁰, and therefore it was very difficult, if not impossible, to oppose him.

This attitude changed in the spring of 2016, with what Sacchi (2018) defined as a "*concertative turn*", when it became necessary to involve stakeholders in the review, at the negotiating table, of

⁶⁸ Squinzi during the 44th Meeting of Confindustria young entrepreneurs, 7th June 2014, video available at: <https://bit.ly/3s6PvvY>

⁶⁹ A constant element in the formulation of the Jobs Act, in fact, was the need to avoid material errors such as those made by the Monti government with the issue of the "esodati", as underlined by SACCHI S. (2013) "Le riforme del welfare nella crisi del debito italiano: pensioni, lavoro, ammortizzatori sociali", in DI VIRGILIO A. AND RADAELLI C.M. "Politica in Italia. I fatti dell'anno e le interpretazioni. Edizione 2012", Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 217-236.

⁷⁰ At the time of the inauguration speech, in fact, 57% of Italians had confidence in the executive and its leader; this percentage reached 66% immediately after the European elections at the end of May 2014 and still remained above 50% at the end of the year (survey carried out on December 17, 2014 by Lorien Consulting on 1,000 respondents over the age of 18, available at: <https://bit.ly/3s7AHNq>), supposedly in conjunction with the approval of the enabling act.

corrective measures to the 2011 “Fornero pension reform”. Nevertheless, this involvement followed what had already been done previously in the implementation of the Jobs act, *i.e.*, making use of external expertise in order to avoid structural problems in the policy to be implemented.

Although the Jobs act represents only one of the main legislative acts of the Renzi government, the tools of unilateralism and disintermediation, as emphasized by Lizzi and Pritoni (2019), must be considered as one of the main distinctive features of the entire policy style of the Renzi government (Lizzi and Pritoni 2019).

3.3 Renzi Government within Richardson et al. (1982) policy style model

Having now exhaustively analyzed Matteo Renzi's governmental style as prime minister, having discussed the main policies of his government, and the kind of relationship it had with the external veto players, it is now possible to recall the policy model of Richardson *et al.* (1982) in order to begin the positioning process of the government in question within the aforementioned framework.

As previously underlined, the matrix constructed by the American scholars aimed at evaluating the Governments' policy style (response) has on its horizontal axis what has been defined as the *governmental approach*. Such a dimension, indicates the way in which the Government of a Country tackles policy problems: whether *rationally*, *i.e.* after an exhaustive analysis of the various alternatives and with a decision-making attitude oriented towards radical change, or *incrementally*, through successive approximations in which ends and means are simultaneously considered, given the great disparity of positions present in the country and in Parliament. These two categories clearly capture the government's ability to either address problems early and with its own design capacity or simply respond to problems once they emerge and can no longer be ignored and refer to them as the "*anticipatory approach*" or "*reactive approach*."

Following the analysis of the Renzi executive conducted so far, it is possible to affirm that the entire legislative activity of the same has been conducted *rationally*, following different analysis of the various available alternatives and with the intention of concretely and profoundly modifying the status quo.

This dimension, the clearly capture the Renzi government's ability to address problems early and with its own design capacity, that for this reason has to be conceived as representative of the *anticipatory approach*.

This approach is undoubtedly the result of Renzi's continuous attempt to change the status quo and not let the veto players internal to the Italian political system (his own party and the majority coalition) to outline the political direction of its executive. The reforms of the labor market, the “Buona Scuola”,

the “Italicum” and the “Renzinomics” must therefore be interpreted as anticipatory policies, aimed at modernizing the bureaucratic sector of the country, which until then had struggled to keep up with its European competitors.

Matteo Renzi’s executive has been now placed on the left side of Richardson et al (1985) matrix. In order to finally place it, it is necessary to investigate one final dimension (the vertical axes).

The *vertical axis*, as underlined in the first chapter, describes the government's relationship with society, *i.e.* whether it seeks consensus or is able to impose its vision and will, and would therefore be the axis of the “*weak state*” or “*strong state*,” in the sense of being easily captured by various interests or being able to impose its will on those interests. There are obviously parallels also with the (neo)corporative or consociative traditions, on the one hand, and statist and dirigiste traditions, on the other, typical of the comparative political economy of the 1980s.

These dimensions jointly capture the ability of the political-administrative leadership to resist the pressures of society and its autonomous ability to develop responses to current problems, which can be implemented after building a broad consensus or can be imposed from above, aspects indicated by the “*consensus relationship*” as opposed to the “*imposition relationship*”.

Following the discussion about the evidences that the Jobs act legislative *iter* has been presented, the unilateralism and the disintermediation strategies performed by Renzi Executive, tightens his Government to the definition of an “*imposition leadership*”, whom political action is exclusively based on the will of its leader, which in turn tend to impose its policies to the audience, supported by the broad consensus he had by the electors.

This imprinting, therefore, allows the Renzi executive to be defined as a “*strong state*” characterized by strong *dirigiste traits*. In conclusion, Renzi Government finds its place within Richardson et al. (1985) policy style model, in the lower left quadrant, to witness its undeniable political strength (*verticalization*), and its programmatic unilateralism (*disintermediation*).

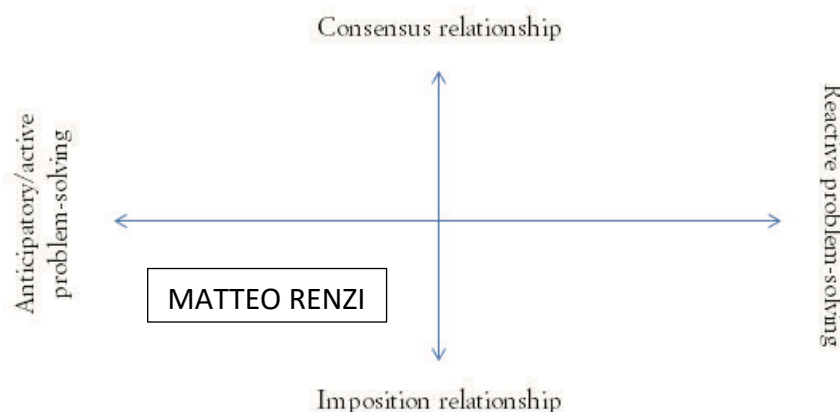


Figure 2.1 – Policy style model, matrix – Richardson et al. (1982) p.13

CHAPTER 3 – GIUSEPPE CONTE: FROM THE “HIDDEN” PREMIERSHIP TO THE PRIME MINISTERIAL CENTRALIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE POWER

Giuseppe Conte's prime ministerial experience, which began following the 2018 general elections and ended in February 2021, was undoubtedly characterized by a strong evolution in the role the Prime Minister played within the cabinet.

During his 988 days in office (albeit divided between the 461 days of the Conte I Government, and the 527 days of the Conte II Government), former Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte was able to carve out an ever-increasing role for himself within the Governmental dynamics, going from being a mere moderator between the vagueness of the Lega and the 5 Stars Movement (the parties of the Conte I Government coalition) to almost holding semi-exclusive control of the executive's decisions in the context of the pandemic emergency during the Conte II cabinet. Empirically, this difference can also be inferred from the composition of the two executives. While in the Conte I Government, Di Maio and Salvini (leaders of the League and the 5 Star Movement, respectively) occupied the role of "Deputy Prime Ministers" and Giuseppe Conte, as Prime Minister, mainly fulfilled the role of "watchdog", in the Conte II Government such figure can not be found.

Given the substantial differences in policy and leadership between the Conte I and Conte II Governments, these executives will be analyzed separately, in order to highlight the particular dynamics that have characterized them, and to arrive at a comprehensive assessment of their respective policy style (responses).

The next section will investigate the 2018 elections and their effect on the Government formation. The second section will deal with the Conte I Government, a cabinet characterized by the difficult coexistence of the League and the 5 Star Movement. The last section will analyze the Conte II cabinet and the role played by the Prime Minister in the Covid-19 crisis' management.

1. The subordinate role of the Prime Minister during the Conte I Government: parties and internal veto player as limit to the premiership's autonomy

The 2018 elections, whose results were affected by the electoral law that determined the composition of the Parliament, produced a political context similar to that characterizing the First Republic. The impossibility for the coalitions that stood for the elections to produce a solid majority, led the parties to have to resort to ex post alliances in order to give life to an executive supported by a solid Parliamentary majority.

The League and the Five Stars Movement, which during the elections where one opposed to the other, through the so-called “*Government contract*” gave birth to an executive characterized by a strong populist imprint (Kriesi 2018). The choice of Prime Minister fell on an individual from outside the Parliament and who, like Renzi, had no Parliamentary background, and above all had never had any experience of political representation. Giuseppe Conte, at the time of the events in question, a lawyer and university professor, was chosen as head of the executive, and was given a role mainly of moderator between the political forces of the majority, and guardian of the Government contract.

After the experience of the Renzi executive who had, in his own way, reinforced the political role of the Prime Minister, once again the head of the executive found himself in a role subordinate to that of the party leaders who are members of the Government, as in the case of the Letta Government.

1.1 The 2018 general elections: between “*tripolarism*”, disproportionality and ex-post Governmental agreements

At the gates of the general elections that were called for March 4, 2018, the Gentiloni Government, the last of the XVII legislative term (which began in 2013 and ended in 2018), had a precise role: to move forcefully towards the determination of an electoral law capable of leading the country to the vote.

Without further legislative intervention, the country would have gone to the polls with a hybrid electoral law and only partially the result of the Parliamentary initiative, with two diametrically opposed systems: one to elect the Chamber of Deputies, and one to elect the Senate. This peculiar situation can be attributed on the one hand to the intervention of the Constitutional Court on the Calderoli Law, the so-called “*Porcellum*” (the electoral law with which the vote was taken in 2013) which would have been applied for the elections of the Senate, and on the other hand on the particular nature of the “*Italicum*”, the electoral law launched by the Renzi Government, which however would only have been applied to the Chamber of Deputies, since, according to Renzi's political design, the traditional elective senate would have been abolished (Chiaramonte and D’Alimonte 2018).

With the Judgment 1/2014, the Constitutional Court declared the “*Porcellum*” partially illegitimate, as it provided for blocked lists of candidates to vote on the one hand, and because it contained a majority prize that allowed the coalition which obtained the majority the valid votes cast to be able to count on 54% of the Parliamentary seats, on the other hand. Thus, considering that the subsequent electoral law, *Italicum*, was applicable only to the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate would

therefore been elected by a pure proportional system, without a majority premium and with a threshold of 8%, as revised by the Constitutional Court.

With the Judgment 37/2017, as previously materialized, the Constitutional Court partially declared unconstitutional the provisions of Renzi's electoral Law, the *Italicum*, and abolished the run-off provision, leaving then unaltered the majority price included in the challenged electoral role. Thus, after the intervention of the Constitutional Court, the Chamber of Deputies would have been elected with a proportional system with a 54% majority prices to be assigned to those party capable or gaining the 40% of valid vote and completed by a 3% threshold for winning seats. If none of the party would have been able to reach the 40%, all the seats would have been assigned proportionally.

In order to solve this electoral and political criticality, which would have made practically impossible to reach a Governmental majority after the elections, the Parliament approved on 26 October 2017 a new electoral law commonly known as "*Rosatellum*". Such a name is derived from Ettore Rosato, head of the Democratic Party Parliamentary group in the Chamber, who was the first proponent of the Law (Chiaramonte and D'Alimonte 2018).

The *Rosatellum*, as well as the *Mattarellum* of 1993, was a mixed electoral law, which allocated about 61% of the seats with a proportional formula (Multi-Member Districts), 37% through the Single Member Districts, with plurality rule and first-past-the-post mechanism and the remaining 2% reserved to the Italian foreign citizens.

Specifically, the *Rosatellum* provided for the allocation of seats according to a three-tier system.

The first tier was represented by the 232 single member districts for the House and the 116 single member districts for the Senate.

The second tier was represented by the 63 multi-member districts for the House in order to elect 386 Deputies, and 33 multimember districts for the Senate in order to elect 199 senators.

The last tier was represented by the 28 constituencies for the House, and the 20 constituencies (one for each region) for the Senate.

It was foreseen both in the Chamber and in the Senate a national threshold of 3% for single lists and 10% for coalitions. It was not allowed to vote separately, *i.e.* the possibility of voting for a candidate in the single-member constituency and for a list other than one of those supporting him/her.

The voter therefore found himself before a ballot paper with the name of the candidate in the single-member constituency and the symbol of the party supporting him, or of the parties in the coalition, each accompanied by the names of the proportional list of the single party.

By choosing a candidate in the single member constituency, he or she would also automatically vote for the list that supported him or her.

In the case of a coalition of more than one list, the elector had to cross the symbol of the party of the coalition supporting the candidate to which he wanted to assign his proportional vote. If he/she

decided to cross out only the name of the candidate for the single-member constituency, without choosing any of the lists that support him, his vote would have been distributed proportionally according to how many votes the various lists of the coalition have received (it is therefore preferable to cross out one's own favorite list, otherwise the vote will be assigned automatically).

It was possible to run for up to 5 proportional plurinomial constituencies as well as in a uninominal constituency.

The lists were short: they had a maximum of 2 to 4 candidates, but for the seats attributed with the proportional system the voter was not be able to make preferences, as the candidates of these short lists were indicated by the parties.

Both in the House and in the Senate no one of the two genders could exceed 60% in the uninominal constituencies, while the alternation in the proportional lists was mandatory.

The introduction of this electoral law produced several substantial effects: firstly, on the competition and organization of party coalitions. Secondly, on the exercise of strategic voting by the electorate. Lastly, on the possibility or not of achieving a stable Parliamentary majority.

On the party side, the architecture of single member districts whose candidates had to be supported by short and blocked coalition or party lists, pushed parties to create broad pre-electoral coalitions based on a program and potentially on a shared leader. This pre-electoral configuration gave birth to a tripolar electoral competition, where the center-right coalition (composed of "*Forza Italia*", "*Lega*", "*Fratelli Italia*" and "*Noi con Italia*") contended for victory with the center-left coalition (composed by the Democratic Party, “+*Europa*”, “*Civica Popolare*” and “*Italia Europa Insieme*”) and the 5 Stars Movement. This configuration was closely associated with the idea of strategic coordination (Cox 1997). The constitution of pre-electoral coalitions had already been present within the Italian political and electoral scene between 1994 and 2001, the years in which the electoral law that dominated the Italian political system was the *Mattarellum*. In spite of the reduced share of seats to be assigned with the majority mechanism compared to the *Mattarellum*, the *Rosatellum* incentivized parties to strategically coordinate in order to obtain greater chances of victory (Chiaramonte and D’Alimonte 2018).

On the voters' side instead, the architecture of the *Rosatellum* has made it more complex for voters to vote strategically. Generally, within an electoral competition with a strong majority push, voters tend not to vote for their ideal candidate if the latter has little chance of final victory, and to direct their voting preference towards the most liked candidate among those perceived as having a chance of victory. In the context of the 2018 elections, the size of the single-member constituencies has made it more complex for voters to find information on the chances of victory of individual candidates. In addition, the total adherence of the proportional list to the candidate of the single-

member constituency has made the logic found up to now in elections governed by mixed electoral systems less feasible (Chiaramonte 2005).

Finally, it was believed that the electoral law in question could limit the feasibility of post-electoral coalitions between party groupings which, in the electoral contest, had presented themselves as valid alternatives for Government. Specifically, it was believed that, in an electoral context driven by a strong majority component, the ex-post effectiveness of parties in forming alternative Governments to those presented during the electoral campaign was limited. This prediction, however, turned out to be fallacious because, as we will analyze, a post-electoral Government was formed following the elections.

At the end of the 2018 elections, despite the presence of the majoritarian component which was expected to play an active role in ensuring a Parliamentary majority – even if the latter was not conceived as easy to achieve due to the architecture of the *Rosatellum* (Chiaramonte and D’Alimonte 2018), - the result has been, once again in the history of the Italian Republic, that of a hung Parliament (Chiaramonte *et all.* 2018)

When it comes to results, the winning coalition was that of the center-right, with 37% of the votes in the Chamber and 37.5% in the Senate, without managing, however, to obtain an absolute majority of seats. The center-left coalition led by the PD came in only third place, with about 23% of the votes in both chambers. The real novelty, in fact, was the success of the 5 Star Movement that without making alliances came in second place with almost 11 million votes in the House (32.7%) and almost 10 million votes in the Senate (32.2%), resulting the most voted individual party.

The presence of the majority share guaranteed by the single member constituencies produced undeniable disproportional effects on the Parliamentary representation (Chiaramonte and D’Alimonte 2018). The center-right coalition and the M5S were over-represented in terms of seats: the center-right was assigned 265 seats (42.1%) in the House and 137 (43.5%) in the Senate, while the M5S was assigned 227 seats (36%) in the House and 112 (35.6%) in the Senate. Conversely, the center-left is under-represented, obtaining 122 seats in the House (19.4%) and 60 (19.0%) in the Senate.

Regarding the performance of individual lists, M5S, as just mentioned, was by far the most voted party, surpassing by more than 13 percentage points the PD, which came second. The latter achieved the worst result in its history, obtaining about 19% of the total votes (18.7% in the House and 19.1% in the Senate) and 112 seats (17.8%) in the House (and a similar share in the Senate, obtaining 53 seats). The party's performance was particularly disappointing in the majoritarian arena (Chiaramonte *et all.* 2018), where it won only 21 seats (9.1%) in the Chamber’s single member constituencies and an even lower share, 6.9%, in the Senate. In contrast, M5S won in about 40% of single member constituencies (93 seats) in the House and a similar share in the Senate (37.9%). This performance in the majoritarian arena was similar to that of the center-right coalition, which was composed of several

lists, however - which gives an idea of the extent of the M5S's success. The only arena in which the M5S did not obtain a satisfactory result was the "foreign" constituency, where it obtained only one seat in the Chamber. On the contrary, in this arena the PD was the most voted party, obtaining five seats in the House and two seats in the Senate.

The results of the 2018 elections drastically changed the configuration of the Italian political and party system compared to previous electoral contexts, while maintaining elements of continuity with the 2013 elections, to be found mainly in the presence of an electoral tripolar competition (D'Alimonte, Di Virgilio and Maggini 2013).

A crucial element of this electoral contention, which allowed the two anti-establishment parties (Lega and Five Stars Movement) to gain wide support (Paparo 2018), was electoral volatility (Emanuele 2015). In fact, when analyzed comparatively, the electoral volatility of the 2018 elections was the twelfth highest since 1945.

A final distinctive element of this electoral round, was the absolute decrease in the nationalization of the vote, conceived as the level of territorial homogeneity of the electoral support for political parties in a given party system (Emanuele 2018).

Therefore, such an electoral result eliminated any possibility of reaching a Government of pre-electoral derivation, constituted exclusively by the coalitions that run for the elections.

At the gates of the 2018 elections, widespread belief was that at the end of the vote a Government of moderate and semi-centrist inspiration could be reached, led by the Democratic Party and Forza Italia (Chiaramonte and D'Alimonte 2018). However, the electoral results of the two political parties in question did not allow the formation of such a Governmental plan.

As in the first republic, there was a need to resort to post-electoral agreements to create a new executive.

There were two alternatives to reach a stable executive, both built around the 5 Stars Movement, the party with the highest number of seats following the elections. The first scenario saw the materialization of a yellow-red Government with the 5 Stars Movement and the Democratic Party, while the second scenario saw the formation of a yellow-green Government led by the 5 Stars Movement and the League.

Both scenarios found fruition in the months and years that followed the 2018 elections.

1.2 The “Contract for the Government of change”: the formation of Conte I executive, and the role of the Prime Minister

In order to investigate the dynamics that led to the birth of the Conte I executive following the 2018 elections, it is necessary to consider some key elements that characterized such electoral contest and influenced the later interaction between those parties that took part in it.

From the point of view of the scholars who analyzed the situation in 2018, what most changed the pattern of interaction between coalitions and parties was policy polarization. Specifically, it should not be conceived as a factor able to exclusively alter and modify the single aspects of party competition during electoral campaigns (Downs 1957), but rather as a crucial factor capable of imparting different directions to the birth, functioning and end of a Government (Conti, Pedrazzani and Russo 2020). Policy polarization is therefore a key factor in understanding the interaction between individual party machines, as convergences and divergences in this area can lead to the birth of a Government experience (Strøm, Müller and Bergman 2008), and by influencing the policymaking and management of the same, can also decree its end (Martin and Vanberg 2011).

In other terms, the 2018 electoral competition can also be understood in light of the study of electoral parties' behavior developed by Strøm (1990). Specifically, according to this conceptualization, the author identified three specific patterns of party behavior in the electoral context: vote seeking-party, office-seeking party, and policy-seeking party.

The first model (*Vote Seeking-Party*) owes its paternity to Downs' (1957) theorization, according to which political parties should be considered as "teams of men" whose aim is to maximize their electoral support in order to gain greater control of the government.

Contextually, according to Strøm (1990) office-seeking parties, unlike vote-seeking parties do not have the ambition to maximize their electoral outcome, but rather their own control over the roles and offices of government. It should be noted, however, as pointed out by Riker (1962) that this configuration of parties is more likely to be found after the electoral contest, therefore within the coalitions of government. This element can be deduced from the fact that it is only in the post-electoral phases and in the formation of the executive that the parties can effectively aim for specific roles within the executive.

Finally, the model also includes so-called policy-seeking parties, in order to identify the nature of intra-party agreements in electoral contests. Specifically, such coalitions based on shared programs and ideas, according to Axelrod (1970) are constituted by parties which, within the political space, are interconnected. However, it should be emphasized that the constitution of these coalitions thus constituted by policy-seeking parties is aimed at achieving control of the executive (De Swaan 1973), and therefore such a coalition is an instrument for the pursuit of that goal.

Specifically, in the context of the 2018 elections, both center-right and center-left coalitions fall under the definition of Policy-Seeking Parties insofar as they are based on a shared program but put in place in order to increase their respective chances of final victory. As far as the 5 Star Movement is concerned, it presents traits proper to both of the first two models, insofar as oriented to the maximization of electoral votes, but aimed at achieving exclusive control of the executive.

Turning our attention now to the circumstances of the 2018 election campaign, it has been pointed out that this electoral competition was animated by the centrality of non-economic issues (Giannetti, Pedrazzani and Pinto 2018). Specifically, immigration and the role of European institutions proved to be the two issues of greatest salience and relevance within the electoral campaign, followed by economic and fiscal policies. The emergence of issues related to the perceived interference by the European Union within Italian politics has represented, especially in recent years, the emergence of a new cultural issue and cleavages (Kriesi et al. 2012) that has catalyzed the attentions of parties especially in 2018.

Starting from the identification of the most relevant issues for the parties (and for the voters), it is possible to identify two clusters of parties/coalitions in the context of the 2018 elections. The first cluster groups the center-left area headed by the Democratic Party. It was characterized by the will to expand the provisions of the Italian welfare state even at the cost of having to increase tax pressure, and by Europhile and pro-migration positions. A second cluster instead is composed by the center-right coalition (League, FI, FdI and NcI), characterized by positions more oriented towards Euroscepticism (in particular League and FdI) and towards the promotion of pro-free market policies and the cutting of public spending (in particular FI and NcI).

The 5 Stars Movement, on the other hand, was found to have a more fluid position, being close to the center-left in terms of economic, social and environmental positions, but adhering to the center-right cluster in terms of the European Union and immigration.

The identification of the aforementioned positions with respect to the pivotal themes of the 2018 electoral campaign are fundamental for understanding the degree of policy polarization in this context, since a high rate of polarization highlights the presence of strong thematic divergences and political priorities, an element that could undermine the possibility of programmatic interactions between the parties.

In this sense, it appears noteworthy the analysis conducted by Conti, Pedrazzani and Russo (2020), who using the index produced by Dalton (2008) measured the polarization of parties with respect to the thematic areas of greatest salience identified by Giannetti, Pedrazzani and Pinto (2018). Specifically, the results of the analysis conducted emphasized that in the context of the 2018 elections, the party system was most polarized around non-economic issues, such as immigration and the

European Union. This element turned out to be fundamental in the parties' choices in the context of the negotiations aimed at giving birth to the new executive.

The negotiations between the League and the five-Stars movement for the formation of the so-called "yellow-green" executive developed within these dynamics.

Specifically, although it was foreseeable the birth of a Government formed by the Democratic Party and the 5 Stars Movement, the latter was more closely aligned with the League in those issues of greatest importance.

It was precisely the convergence and divergence in matters of the European Union and immigration that decreed the birth of the experience of the Conte I Government. In this sense, Gianfreda and Carlotti (2018) identified a relevant ideological convergence between Lega and Movimento 5 Stelle on issues related to the European Union and the European integration process, with the aversion to the euro as the main point of contact between the two parties. At the same time, however, immigration represented an issue that divided, albeit with some points of convergence, the two political entities, with the 5 Star Movement characterized by a more moderate position than that of the League.

The formation of the executive led by the League and the 5 Stars Movement was not, however, a straightforward. During the intense phase of negotiations that lasted for more than two months, the President of the Republic played a key and central role in influencing the negotiations between the parties involved (Valbruzzi 2018). In the accord that materialized during the negotiations between the League and the 5 Stars Movement, these two parties reached an agreement known as the "Contract for the Government of Change", coming to identify in Giuseppe Conte, a lawyer and until then outside the political arena, the Prime Minister of the new executive. The negotiations, despite the agreement reached between the parties, were not easy, as the President of the Republic refused to approve the appointment as Minister of Economy of Paolo Savona, an economist known for his Eurosceptic and anti-Euro positions (Fabbrini and Zgaga 2019). In order to give new impetus to the negotiations, almost as in a game of chess, Mattarella broke the deadlock by appointing the economist Carlo Cottarelli, former president of the International Monetary Fund, to form a technocratic Government. This executive, however, never saw the light as the League and the 5 Stars Movement decided to propose to the President of the Republic a new list of Ministers, excluding Paolo Savona from the new proposal. This choice, orchestrated by the Quirinale, turned out to be decisive, and led to the birth of the first Conte Government, which formally took office on June 1, 2018.

The birth of the Conte Government thus stems from the agreement of a contractual nature signed by the League and the 5 Stars Movement, an agreement that nevertheless represents an absolute novelty in the Italian and European political landscape (Conti, Pedrazzani and Russo 2020). However, the main element of discontinuity with the past is not so much represented by the emergence of a post-electoral agreement, but rather by its contractual nature.

It should be emphasized that the fact that coalition Governments arise as a result of post-electoral agreements does not in itself represent a political novelty (Pereira and Moury 2018). Indeed, out of a sample of 223 Governments that came into existence in Europe between 1945 and 1996, roughly 61 percent of them have a negotiated derivation (Müller and Strøm 1999), both pre- and post-election. Specifically, as pointed out in the first chapter, Italy has a long tradition of Governments born from post-electoral agreements, especially in the First Republic (Di Palma 1977), but also in the Second. Above all, following the electoral reform of 1993 (characterized by a strong majority component) the parties had to review their electoral strategies and promote pre-electoral agreements in order to create coalitions. There have been several examples of this during the various elections that have followed one another. The first in this sense turned out to be the agreement which gave life to the first Prodi Government in 1996 (Di Virgilio 1996), followed by the programmatic agreement at the basis of the creation of the Berlusconi II Government in 2001 (Diamanti 2007).

The process of agreement between the 5 Stars Movement and the League is relatively different from the context of 1996 and 2001 due to its post-electoral nature, but above all due to the contractual nature that distinguished it. In particular, the recourse to a contract was not a simple communicative strategy (Scaglioni and Sfardini 2019) like the one at the base of the "contract with the Italians" signed in 2001 by Silvio Berlusconi⁷¹.

The "privatistic" form of the contract as an instrument to regulate political relations was not new to the 5 Stars Movement, the real actor in the negotiation⁷². By resorting such an instrument, the political leaders wanted to mark the ideal distances separating their respective parties, emphasizing that a Government action would have been possible only in relation to some specific and predetermined matters.

The choice of the form of the contract as a manifestation of the will not to give life to a political alliance, but more simply to a cooperation aimed at the precise achievement of predetermined objectives. The "Government contract" was not the expression of a political address binding the

⁷¹ On May 8, 2001, in the studios of the television program "Porta a Porta", Silvio Berlusconi closed his electoral campaign by presenting and signing the "Contract with the Italians" with which, in his capacity as leader of the political coalition "*La Casa delle Libertà*", he undertook, in the event of an electoral victory, to carry out five programmatic points (reduction of fiscal pressure, implementation of the "Plan for the defense of citizens and the prevention of crimes", raising of minimum pensions to at least one million lire per month, halving of the current unemployment rate with the creation of one and a half million new jobs, opening of construction sites for at least 40% of the investments provided by the "Ten-year Plan for Major Works"); and pledged not to stand as a candidate in the next political elections if, at the end of his Government experience, he did not achieve at least four of them.

⁷² A prime example was the adherence by the Mayor of Rome, Virginia Raggi, to the "Code of Conduct for candidates and elected members of the 5 Stars Movement in the 2016 Rome administrative elections on the lists of the 5 Stars Movement". The signing of this code required the Mayor, among other things, to consult "the guarantors" of the Movement before taking decisions of "high administration" and obliged her to compensate the same Movement with the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand euros in the event that failure to comply with the directives of "the guarantors" determines a damage to the party public image.

parties in view of a general assumption of responsibility. Rather, it constituted a sort of specification of works contracted out by the majority parties to the Government and Parliament (Carducci 2018). However, the Contract for Change Government, according to Santana Pereira and Moury (2018) should not be considered a novelty as a post-election agreement, but rather because it was signed by two parties, which, being particularly distant from an ideological point of view, attempted to find points of commonality in order to create an executive.

It now seems relevant to analyze the Government contract in the light of the polarization that characterized the 2018 electoral campaign, and that allowed the League and the 5 Stars Movement to create the yellow-green Government. Specifically, it is worth examining how this polarization has been translated into political priorities, understood as those policies that have received the most attention from the two parties (Jones and Baumgartner 2005).

The analysis conducted by Conti, Pedrazzani, and Russo (2020) revealed that about 26 percent of the contract sentences were related to two specific policy dimensions: Law and Order and Welfare. These themes appear to be in line with the priorities expressed by the two parties in the electoral context. Specifically, the League had always shown itself to be particularly sensitive to issues related to security, immigration and public order, while the 5 Stars Movement had built its electoral narrative on citizenship income and the expansion of the welfare state. For this reason, Valbruzzi (2018) suggested that the Government contract should be understood as a juxtaposition of the measures of greatest relevance to the individual parties, rather than a real attempt to arrive at an accomplished synthesis of their respective electoral programs and priorities.

Instead, what represents a point of discontinuity with the polarization previously discussed is the low relevance that the themes associated with the European Union have found within the contract (only around 3% of the agreement). Moreover, the few lines dedicated to this theme had little relevance to the Eurosceptic positions taken by the two parties in the electoral context. This dimension, as highlighted by Valbruzzi (2018) and Pereira and Moury (2018) appears to be ascribable to the role played by the President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella (known for his Europhile positions) in the negotiation process for the birth of the new executive, in light of the affair involving the appointment of the Eurosceptic Paolo Savona to the MEF.

Having analyzed the contract which allowed for the birth of the Conte I Government, it now seems relevant to proceed to an analysis of the composition of the executive in order to understand the role of the Prime Minister within it.

Firstly, the nature of this agreement, in order to have a chance of lasting over time, required as Prime Minister an individual outside the parties who would serve as guardian of the provisions of the Government contract. This individual, therefore, despite occupying the “appearance” of President of the Council of Ministers, should have recognized the subordinate position of his role, in favor of the

total domination that the parties would have on the activity of the executive and legislative power. The already difficult coexistence between two party leaders such as Matteo Salvini and Luigi Di Maio, who never hid their respective ambitions to take over Palazzo Chigi, determined the emptying of the political and executive prerogatives of the Prime Minister, prerogatives that previous Governments had attempted to expand both in legislative terms and through the management methods of management of executive power.

The choice of who would fulfill the office of Prime Minister fell on Giuseppe Conte, a lawyer and an academic, until then little known on the Italian scene.

It appears relevant to underline that this choice is entirely ascribable to the 5 Stars Movement, which already had previously intertwined relations, even if not political, with Giuseppe Conte.

In 2013, the Five Stars Movement appointed him as a member of the self-regulatory body of administrative justice, the Presidential Council of Administrative Justice (an appointment later ratified by the Chamber of Deputies). According to the chronicles, on that occasion Giuseppe Conte stressed to Luigi Di Maio his extraneousness to the 5 Stelle Movement, both in programmatic and electoral terms⁷³. In fact, until 2018, Giuseppe Conte was considered to be, as he confirmed, close to the center-left spheres, and in particular linked to Maria Elena Boschi and the area of the Democratic Party led by former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi⁷⁴.

The appointment of a non-political Prime Minister to head an executive that is political in nature represents the first major innovation of the yellow-green Government (Marangoni and Verzichelli 2019).

The second major novelty was the role played within the Cabinet by the two real architects of the Government under scrutiny. Matteo Salvini and Luigi di Maio both assumed the position of Vice-President of the Council, at the same time holding their own Ministries. Specifically, in line with the importance assigned by the parties to law and order and welfare, Matteo Salvini was designated as Minister of the Interior, while Luigi di Maio took the lead of the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Labour (for the first time, a single politician held two particularly sensible Ministers simultaneously). It should be noted that the choice of assigning to the two party leaders the position of Vice-President of the Council (a position not constitutionalized in the Italian legal system) must be understood as a precise political will to emphasize the real ownership of the Government, an element that has severely limited the possibility for Giuseppe Conte to influence in first person the appointments in the executive and the programmatic choices of the latter. It was therefore opted for a very strong centralization of Government power in the two creators of the Government to

⁷³ <https://bit.ly/3aAFIhk>

⁷⁴ <https://bit.ly/3dNFEXX>

counterbalance the non-political nature of the Prime Minister. This choice, however, proved to be the bearer of many problems in the survival of the executive.

The last great symbol of discontinuity with the past is represented by the appointments at two strategic Ministries: that of economy and that of foreign affairs.

For both roles, the choice, not without surprises, fell on two technocrats such as Giovanni Tria, holder of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and Enzo Moavero Milanesi, chosen as Minister of Foreign Affairs. The choice of entrusting these Ministries to two non-Eurosceptic technicians must be understood in light of the Paolo Savona affair. Specifically, Tria and Moavero Milanesi, responsible for relations between Italy and the European Union, represented that guarantee (requested not even too veiled by the President of the Republic, Mattarella) that the country would not have engaged in a head-on collision with the European institutions (Marangoni and Verzichelli 2019).

Nevertheless, the growing tendency among politicians not to accept specific responsibilities in extremely technical matters such as those of the Ministry of the Economy has been repeatedly underlined (Hallerberg and Wehner 2012), but the strategy adopted by the League and the 5 Stars Movement to delegate to external parties both the ownership of Palazzo Chigi, the MEF and foreign affairs is not shared by any other European Government (Marangoni and Verzichelli 2019).

With reference to the other ministries and apical Government positions, not considering those assigned to technicians, it must be stressed that the distribution made by the 5 Stars Movement does not bring any further novelty (apart from the high rate of discontinuity in term of Governmental appointment), with Luigi Di Maio's party ending up holding 34 of the 65 Government offices, and the League 26 places.

With regard to the composition of the Government, a last mention is deserved by the choice of the Undersecretary to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, a role which, by agreement, fell to the League. The choice was made on Giancarlo Giorgetti, considered by many as one of the main architects of the electoral success of Matteo Salvini's party. Giorgetti, former Undersecretary at the Ministry of Transport, leader of the group of the League at the Chamber of Deputies and former President of the Finance Commission of Montecitorio, should have supported Salvini in his Government action, and ensure an effective implementation of the agenda of the executive in the light of his moderating skills.

To conclude the analysis of the birth and structure of the first Conte Government, it should be noted that the choices regarding the ministries and undersecretaries were made with a clear purpose, that of ensuring Matteo Salvini and Luigi Di Maio the highest possible visibility (Marangoni and Verzichelli 2019), emphasizing in this way who was actually in charge of the executive power, certainly not the Prime Minister.

1.3 The political and Parliamentary activity of the yellow-green Government

Because of the singular composition of the Conte I Government, there was the expectation that such an executive would have been able to engage in the renewal of the political class and Parliamentary dynamics that has been characterizing European democracies over the last decade through the actions of those parties defined as populist (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015). The coexistence between the 5 Stars Movement, which had made the divide between the traditional political elite and the citizenry a central element in its idea of direct democracy (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013), and the League, the oldest party on the Italian scene, which had always been marked by nativist and anti-immigration attitudes (Passarelli and Tuorto 2018), was seen as a potential element of rupture with the past.

Nevertheless, from the earliest stages of negotiating the Government contract to the choice of Ministers, it was immediately evident that the 5 Stars Movement, while maintaining some of its radical aspirations of opposition to the political caste (Tronconi 2018), had embarked on a path of renewal in order to become a Government party. On the other hand, even the League, which until that moment had chosen to remain detached from the previous experiences of Government (both to that of Monti in 2011 and that of Letta in 2013), had already begun a process of profound transformation, going from being a federalist party to a national party under the leadership of Matteo Salvini (Giannetti and Pedrazzani 2018).

The yellow-green coalition Government promised, during the contract drafting process, to undertake a path of clear revolution of the Italian legislative apparatus, and to introduce substantial reforms in the tax, welfare, immigration, security, and legal systems. Nonetheless, both Di Maio and Salvini had not reckoned with the difficulties of managing possible criticalities within the coalition and the difficulties of translating into legislative action the ideas present in the Government contract. These latter difficulties were immediately evident during the programmatic speech made by Premier Conte to the Houses to obtain the vote of confidence.

The analysis of the Government's proactivity conducted by Marangoni and Verzichelli (2019) calculated through the programmatic density of the inaugural speech made to the Houses of Parliament by Giuseppe Conte, confirmed the difficulties that commentators expected about the legislative capacity of the said Government (Conti, Pedrazzani and Russo 2020). Specifically, the programmatic density, calculated considering the number of programmatic commitments pronounced for every five hundred words, stood at 1.5, below the average of previous executives since 1996. It is worth noting that Letta had obtained a score of 1.9, Gentiloni 2.9 and Monti 3.5. Conte's inaugural speech made continuous references to the objectives included by the two parties within the

Government contract, thus highlighting the difficulties his executive would have encountered in translating the ideas contained in the agreement into real legislative proposals.

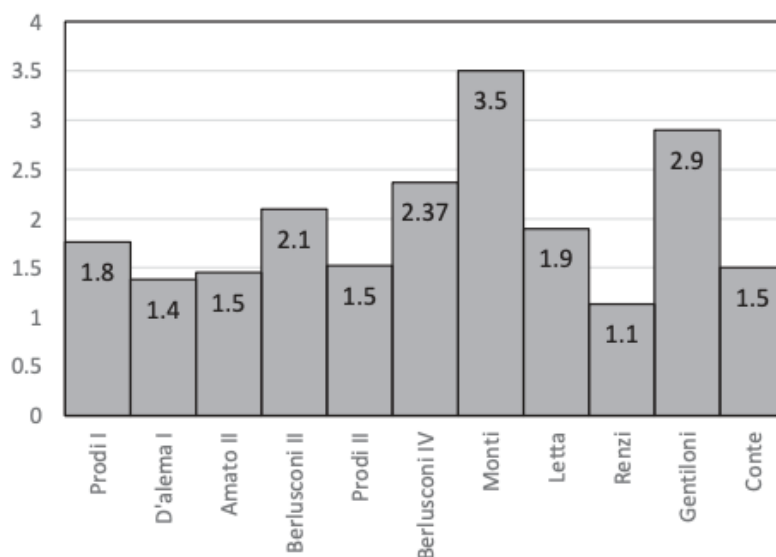


Figure 3.1 – Programmatic density of prime ministers' inaugural statements, 1996–2018. – Marangoni and Verzichelli. (2019) p.273

Before quantitatively analyzing the legislative initiative of the 461 days of the Conte I Government, it seems appropriate to focus on a rather interesting feature in this regard: the rate of conflict between the 5 Stars Movement and the League during the first six months of Government. Following the methodology and model indicated by Marangoni (2016), Marangoni and Verzichelli (2019) identified that in the first six months of the yellow-green executive, 47 internal conflicts within the Government coalition materialized, about 8 per month. It should be noted that about half of these clashes involved at least two or more members of the Government. Specifically, the majority of disagreements personally involved the two leaders of the cabinet, Matteo Salvini and Luigi Di Maio, who did not clash so much on the merits of the contents of legislative action as on their adherence to the Government contract.

If, on the one hand, the inter-institutional conflicts involving the 5 Stars Movement were the result of continuous disagreements between the various factions that comprised the party itself, on the other hand it was the League itself that sought a direct clash with its Government partners. In particular, Matteo Salvini often took particularly rigid positions in order to defend the programmatic priorities of the League (as in the case of the high-speed rail link between Turin and Lyon), and did not fail to impose vetoes on the legislative activity of the Government on specific issues that had always characterized the narrative of the party, namely legalization of soft drugs and expansion of civil rights to same-sex couples.

The data on the legislative activity of the Conte I Government must be understood both in light of the programmatic density, which has underlined the possible difficulty in translating the contents of the Government contract into action, and also in light of the high level of internal conflict within the executive, an element that has certainly not facilitated a linear Parliamentary activity.

During the 15 months of the yellow-green Government, 68 laws were approved by Parliament. Among them, 21 found their origin in Parliamentary action, while the remaining 46 were sponsored by the Government. In relation to the latter, 5 were ordinary laws, 16 laws ratifying international agreements, 3 laws regarding the state budget (including the budget law, the economic and financial document and the update note to the economic and financial document), and 22 bills converting law decrees into laws.

A particularly interesting aspect concerns Parliamentary bills. Of the 21 mentioned above, 15 were sponsored by the 5 Stars Movement, while only 4 were promoted by the League. This data highlights peculiar differences in the legislative strategy of the two parties. Specifically, the League, as a highly verticalized structure, gave predominance to the action of the party within the executive itself and not in the Parliamentary seats, while the members of the Government in the 5 Stars Movement were probably not in full control of the legislative agenda of their Parliamentary groups (Conti, Pedrazzani and Russo 2020).

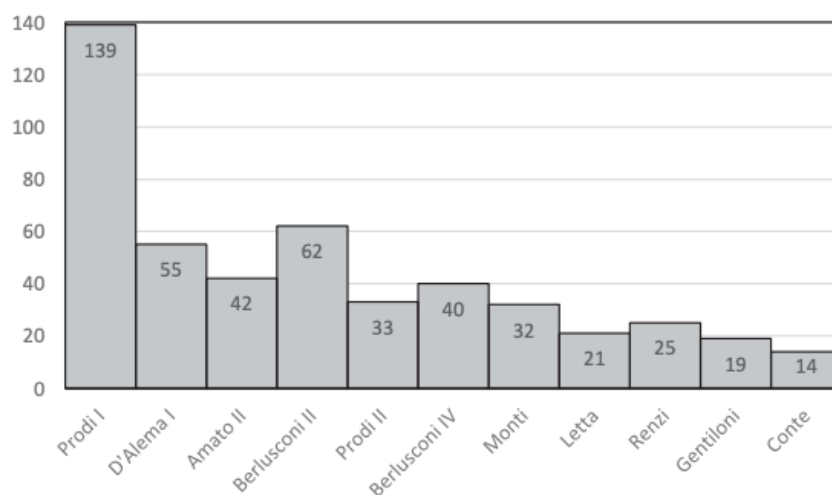


Figure 4.1 – Government's legislative activity during the first six months of its terms – Marangoni and Verzichelli. (2019) p.274

It should be emphasized that, despite the peculiar features of the executive, its legislative action, albeit with some characteristic elements, turned to be in line with the tradition of previous executives (Giannetti, Pinto and Plescia 2020).

In the first place, the Conte I Government, due to the massive recourse to decree-laws (one every three weeks) must be considered adherent to the tradition of the Second Republic. Specifically, the continuous recourse to urgent decrees has been, since the 1980s, a distinctive characteristic of Italian executives (Cotta and Verzichelli 2007), whom in this way were able to avoid the possible insurgence of legislative problems caused by the internal fragmentation of the governing parties.

Secondly, the data on law decrees allows us to understand the legislative strategy of the yellow-green executive. Specifically, the Conte Government, by entrusting its programmatic action only to a limited extent to the ordinary legislative process, has revealed a real verticalization of legislative activity. The divisions on the priorities of the executive meant that only a few selected proposals could be sent for Parliamentary discussion. What represents a novelty in this sense is the locus where the real decisions on the legislative activity of the executive were made. Over the months under examination, there were several private meetings between Luigi Di Maio and Matteo Salvini (Zucchini and Pedrazzani 2021), whom, bypassing the traditional debate within the Council of Ministers and Palazzo Chigi, used to determine the real fate of the Government's proposals (Marangoni and Verzichelli 2019).

A third distinguishing feature is the role played by the Prime Minister. During the first Conte Government, the Prime Minister had a marginal autonomy in imposing his agenda *vis-à-vis* the ruling parties, *i.e.* M5S and League. However, he played a role in mitigating inter-coalitional conflicts and conducted an intense bargaining process with European and international institutions. This dynamic represented an important difference compared to what was accomplished by Matteo Renzi during his Government, as many of the legislative initiatives of the cabinet led by the former mayor of Florence clearly derive from Renzi's policy agenda. In this sense, it is worth noting that in only two of the eleven decrees approved by the yellow-green Government during the first six months of the legislature, Giuseppe Conte played the role of principal communication sponsor.

Turning our attention now to the main legislative productions of the Conte I Government, the most prominent measures introduced are undoubtedly the citizenship income (*Reddito di Cittadinanza*) and the pensions' reform system (*Quota 100*).

Both provisions, included in the Government contract, were understood by the two majority parties as their own flagship initiatives. The reform promoted by the League went to modify the norms of the Fornero Law on the matters concerning retirement age (introduced by the Monti Government in 2011) and represented the crowning achievement of an electoral proposal that had distinguished Salvini's party over the last few years (Cavalieri, Russo and Verzichelli 2018). Citizenship income, on the other hand, had been the "warhorse" of the 5 Stars Movement since its founding, a measure which, however, was never particularly appreciated by the League.

However, these prescriptions, in order to be effectively implemented, required a substantial increase in public spending, an element that led the Italian Government to have a very hard time with the European Union (Codogno and Merler 2019), continuously charged of interfering with the Italian legislative activity.

Beyond the aforementioned flagship measures of the yellow-green executive, the Conte Government, again by the hand of its real leaders Salvini and Di Maio, introduced further provisions with programmatic relevance for the two governing parties. Specifically, the League successfully passed the so-called security decrees that tightened the regulations on immigration, while the 5 Stars Movement promoted the so-called sweeping law sponsored by the Minister of Justice Bonafede.

It should be noted that immigration issues represented both a central theme in the 2018 election campaign but were the promoters of a major social cleavage that divided citizens between those who were in favor of integration, and those who instead demanded that the Government would adopt appropriate measures to safeguard the nation's cultural identity (Quaranta and Martini 2019). Within this division, not only did the voters and the population find their place, but also the two forces of Government. Specifically, the 5 Stars Movement had never taken positions of strong opposition to the migratory phenomenon, and this had strong repercussions in the Parliamentary process to adopt the security decrees promoted by Salvini. The strategy of the latter led many Parliamentarians of the 5 Stars Movement to vote against the adoption of these decrees as, according to them, they were in opposition to the provisions contained in the Government contract (Tronino 2018). This affair allowed Salvini to gain additional support during the experience of the Conte I Government (Giannetti, Pinto and Plescia 2020) and further eroded the support of an increasing number of Italian voters towards the European Union (Quaranta and Martini 2019).

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the legislative experience of the yellow-green Government should be understood as a mere juxtaposition of individual party priorities rather than as the implementer of an organic programmatic project (Valbruzzi 2018). For these reasons, the experience of this executive has always been characterized by a very high level of internal conflict between the two real leaders of the executive, a situation that has certainly slowed down the legislative production. It is exactly here that Giuseppe Conte came into play, as a moderator between the party disputes, rather than as the real director of the political activity of the executive.

1.4 The party-centric executive: the Conte I Government within Richardson *et al.* (1982)

Policy style model

As highlighted in the first chapter, the policy style model conceived by Richardson *et al.* enables the evaluation and positioning regarding the policy style (response) of specific executives, while at the same time assessing the Government's legislative productivity and its interaction with stakeholders and civil society. In order to proceed with the positioning of the Conte I executive, it is necessary to understand the relationships that said Government has established with interest groups and representatives of organized corporate interests.

Among the two souls that have formed the yellow-green Government, the 5 Stars Movement has always been distinguished by its dialectic and ideological positions in relation to interest groups, and more generally, with respect to lobbying. Specifically, it is sufficient to refer to the speeches delivered by Alessandro di Battista, who has made the battle against lobbies one of his core political communication strategies.

Already in 2013, the year he became a Member of Parliament, Di Battista had frontally attacked the phenomenon, mainly during the electoral competitions, stressing that the interference of interest representation inside the Houses had little to do with democracy.

However, in order to highlight the practical approach of the M5S towards the phenomenon of interest, it is necessary to divide the issue on two different levels: the Parliamentary activity of the 5 Stars movement and the actual relations between the latter and the interest groups.

From a legislative perspective, the 5 Stars Movement during the Conte I Government has always been particularly active in attempting to regulate the activity of interest representation.

One of the main supporters of this political priority has always been the President of the Chamber Roberto Fico, who in June 2019 implemented for the first time the discipline concerning the Register of Representatives of Interests, issuing sanctions to registered lobbyists who had not complied with the guidelines on how to exercise the activity of interest representation in the premises of the Chamber. Fico's initiative has been qualified as one of the first attempts to make effective a regulation that has been drafted during the previous legislative term (2013-2018), mainly through the efforts of former President of the Chamber Laura Boldrini and former Vice President Marina Sereni. The regulation concerning the activity of interest representation in the lower House of the Parliament, which was adopted through an amendment to the Chamber of Deputies Regulations on April 26, 2016 (and provided with an implementing discipline ratified in February 2017), had a timid start at the end of the XVII Legislative Term.

In the current Parliamentary term, on February 7, 2019, following the impulse of the Chamber's Presidency Office, the discipline of the lower chamber of the Parliament has seen the strengthening

of one of its cornerstones, namely, the timely indication of the names of the deputies met by the stakeholders. However, the innovation in the approach of the President of the Chamber, stands as an intermediate strategy on the matter on behalf of the Five Stars Movement, which in May 2019 presented, in both branches of Parliament, two separate bills to regulate lobbying. The proposals, signed by Francesco Silvestri in the House and by a former party bigwig like Nicola Morra in the Senate, have a substantially homogeneous regulatory framework.

The above-mentioned bills have the aim of establishing a model with a unified register of business representatives, which repeals all the other existing systems at the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Labor. In addition, a system of compulsory registration of lobbyists is established, as well as a structure for the monitoring and verification of the financial reporting of interest groups, called upon to respect the adoption of a code of conduct and to ensure the transparency of their meetings with public decision-makers.

On the one hand, from the point of view of Parliamentary activity, the 5 Stars Movement has been particularly prone to limiting the operations of interest groups. On the other hand, data show that the latter have played an extremely central role in the legislative activity of the Conte I Government.

Specifically, an article published by MilanoFinanza in January 2020⁷⁵, underlined how public affairs and lobbying consulting firms have benefited from the presence of the 5 Stars Movement in government. According to the 2018 balance sheet data of the top ten operators in the sector, the turnover of lobbying activity in Italy increased by 15.5 percent compared to the previous year, testifying a shift away from the disintermediation strategy initiated by the Renzi executive.

As pointed out by Marangoni and Verzichelli (2019) both the Parliamentarians and the ministers of the 5 Stars Movement were characterized by a substantial political inexperience, since many were at their first experience within the Parliament. This aspect intensified the relationships between the *Grillini* and interest representatives, who played a key role in influencing, albeit partially, the direction of the Conte I Government's legislative output.

Another aspect to consider when evaluating the relationship between the yellow-green executive and civil society are the effects of the communicative choices made by both Salvini and Di Maio. The latter, by continuously promoting their Parliamentary initiatives, were employed in a permanent electoral campaign, aimed at seeking the continuous consent of the electorate.

Having now discussed the type of relationships that occurred between the Conte I Government and civil society, it is possible to place this executive within the vertical axis of Richardson et al.'s (1982) policy model.

⁷⁵ Il Business del lobbying ringrazia il governo gialloverde, Milano Finanza 11 January 2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/3fUC5Pt>

As previously pointed out, this dimension describes the Government's relationship with society, *i.e.*, whether it seeks consensus or is able to impose its vision and will and would therefore be the axis of the "*weak state*" or "*strong state*," in the sense of being easily captured by various interests or being able to impose its will on those interests.

These axes jointly capture the ability of the political-administrative leadership to resist the pressures of society and its autonomous ability to develop responses to current problems, which can be implemented after building a broad consensus or can be imposed from above, aspects indicated by the "*consensus relationship*" as opposed to the "*imposition relationship*".

In light of the above, given the willingness of the leaders of the executive to undertake a continuous electoral campaign aimed at seeking the favor of the electorate, and in light of the permeability of the executive and Parliament to the demands of the representatives of interest, the Conte I must be defined as an executive characterized by a "*consensus relationship*" with the external society.

What was analyzed in the previous section regarding the productivity and nature of the legislative production of the yellow-green Government allows us to place the Conte I executive within the horizontal dimension of the policy style model of Richardson et al. (1982). Such a dimension indicates the way in which the Government of a Country tackles policy problems: whether rationally, *i.e.* after an exhaustive analysis of the various alternatives and with a decision-making attitude oriented to a radical change, or incrementally, through successive approximations in which ends and means are simultaneously considered, given the great disparity of positions present in the country and in Parliament. These two categories clearly capture the Government's ability to either address problems early and with its own design capacity or simply respond to problems once they emerge and can no longer be ignored and refer to them as the "*anticipatory approach*" or "*reactive approach*." Although with appropriate differences with respect to the Renzi Government analyzed in the previous chapter, it is possible to assert that the legislative activity of the Conte I Government was also conducted rationally (despite the high rate of internal conflict) and aimed at introducing a substantial modification of the country's legislative status quo. Both the League and the 5 Stars Movement have made articulated changes to various legislative sectors, such as welfare, security, immigration and the tax system. For this reason, the Conte I Government must be conceived as representing an *anticipatory approach*.

In conclusion, the Yellow-Green Government finds its place within the Richardson et al. (1982) policy style model in the upper left quadrant, reflecting the effective desire to make changes to the Italian legislative apparatus, and due to the willingness of Salvini and Di Maio to continuously seek a consensual relationship with civil society.

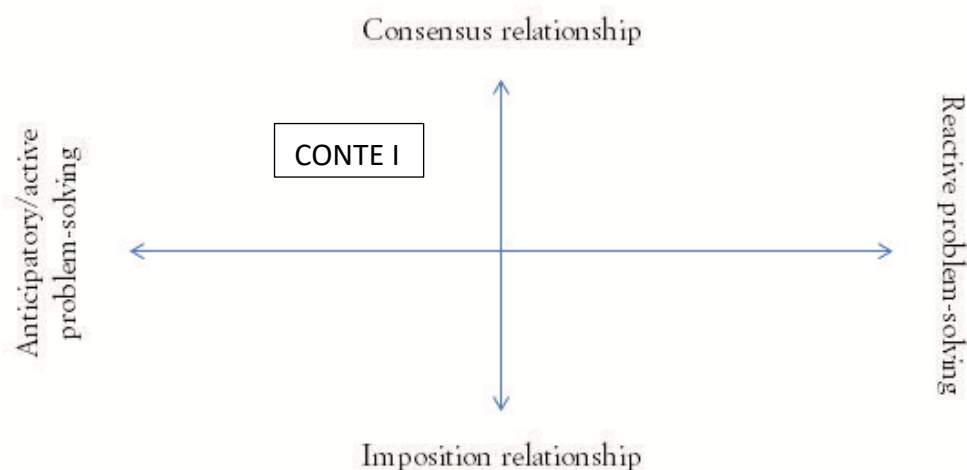


Figure 5.1 – Policy style model, matrix – Richardson et al. (1982) p.13

2. The Conte II Government at the pandemic crisis test: centralization and quest for external legitimacy

As predicted, the experience of the yellow-green Government came to an end after just over a year from its appointment (Coduti 2020).

During the first months of the executive's life, the continuous disagreements between the two majority parties were already tangible, problems which severely limited the effectiveness of the Conte I Government and eventually led to its dissolution.

In addition to what was highlighted in the previous section, four main factors led to the collapse of the Government contract resulting in the demise of the yellow-green executive.

Firstly, the economic and fiscal policies proved to be those most difficult to implement. The League, which since the electoral campaign has been promoting an organic tax reform, has witnessed the limitation of its programmatic priorities due to the 5 Stars Movement, which, as previously pointed out, shared an entirely different economic agenda. To be specific, the Flat Tax proposed by the League (Gattesci 2018), which represented one of the main League's electoral proposal, has only seen the light in a strongly limited and amended extent.

Secondly, the positions of the two parties towards the European Union have too often proved to be at odds and difficult to reconcile (Valbruzzi 2019; Salvati 2019). Emblematic in this sense was the support that the 5 Stars Movement gave to the birth of the European Commission chaired by Ursula Von Der Leyen in the European Parliament. The League ill-digested the decision taken by its

Government partners, who were accused of having betrayed the Italians by voting for the candidate proposed by Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel (Conti, Pedrazzani and Russo 2020).

Thirdly, the League and the 5 Stars Movement clashed sharply over the issue of large infrastructure projects, another programmatic priority of the party led by Matteo Salvini. Specifically, the yellow-green Government was strongly divided by the affair of the Turin-Lyon high-speed railway link, a situation that more than once threatened to represent the end of the Conte I executive (Mandate and Stegher 2019).

Finally, what really broke the already difficult balances within the majority was the result of the 2019 European elections, following which, Matteo Salvini demanded a more prominent role for his party within the executive (Colloca and Valbruzzi 2019). The leader of the League having failed in his intent, with the aim of forcing the President of the Republic to call for new elections, withdrew his support to the yellow-green executive, putting a definitive end to such Governmental experience.

The Government crisis promoted by Matteo Salvini, however, actually had implications that the leader of the league himself had not foreseen. In August 2019, the Democratic Party and the 5 Stars Movement reached an agreement to give birth to a new Government led by Giuseppe Conte, the Conte II executive.

It should be noted that Luigi Di Maio was not immediately in favor of this Government agreement, which, however, was sponsored by the founder of the 5 Stars Movement Beppe Grillo and Davide Casaleggio, president of the Rousseau Association, which managed the platform through which the party made its decisions by consulting its electorate.

Also in this scenario, the President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, played a fundamental role in the formation of the executive. Threatening to call for new elections, in which both the PD and M5S would have possibly underperformed with respect to 2018, he drove the two parties to reach an agreement based on a shared political program.

The so-called yellow-red executive that remained in office from September 2019 to February 2021, was based on a Parliamentary majority which was again conflictual (albeit in a much smaller fashion compared to that of the yellow-green executive) and which had to resort to continuous political compromises in order not to run into legislative impasses.

As a starting point from what was presented in the previous section, here only one episode in the life of this executive will be analyzed due to its relevancy: the choices made by the Conte II Government and the Prime Minister's role during the Covid-19 emergency which, from February 2020, has profoundly shaken the stability of the Italian political system.

2.1 Managing the pandemic: between power verticalization and Parliamentary depauperization

In the previous section, emphasis has been placed on the extent to which Giuseppe Conte, in the course of the experience of the yellow-green Government, has assumed a marginal role in the choices of the executive which he led.

The presence of two influential leaders such as Salvini and Di Maio has certainly undermined the possibility for the Prime Minister to have a greater impact on the political and legislative choices of Palazzo Chigi. It should be noted that, if on the one hand the role of the Prime Minister during the first Government of the XVIII legislative term was mainly that of arbiter and moderator between the Government parties, on the other hand, in the Conte II executive the Premier has assumed a central role in Italian politics, to the extent of verticalizing to himself all the choices made by the cabinet and assuming the role of *de facto* holder of executive power.

Indeed, what represented one of the main the turning point of Giuseppe Conte's prime ministerial experience has been the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, a situation that has forced the executive to assume a greater and more permeating role in the life of the nation.

Thus, Giuseppe Conte stepped from being the shadow of his two Vice-Premiers to embodying a verticalized and highly personalized executive power.

The expansion of the role and prerogatives experienced by the Italian Prime Minister is clearly embedded in the personalization of politics, which, even before the outbreak of the pandemic, had been characterizing the European and, above all, the Italian politics. As highlighted in the course of the second chapter, since the 1990s Italy has witnessed a continuous transition of powers and prerogatives away from Parliament and towards Palazzo Chigi (Calise 2016), an element that has led the Prime Minister to not simply be a *primus inter pares* within the cabinet (Calise 2006) but to become the most prominent figure within the executive (Musella 2018) and the catalyst for mass media attentions (Calise and Musella 2019).

These dynamics were so accentuated by the outbreak of the pandemic that the Italian Parliamentary system ended up operating according to logics that are typical of a presidential regime (Rullo 2020). Specifically, Giuseppe Conte, in the months in which his executive had to deal with the consequences of this health emergency, managed to attract to himself both the entirety of the executive and, above all, legislative power.

The absence in our Constitution of norms which specifically and explicitly regulate situations of emergency, or "alarm" (as in art. 116 of the Spanish Constitution, art. 48 of the Hungarian Constitution, art. 19 of the Portuguese Constitution, art. 16 of the French Constitution) has made it necessary to adapt the existing discipline to these new unforeseen events.

As has already happened in pre-existing situations, the emergency in itself has legitimized extra ordinem regulatory interventions, which have strongly limited personal and economic freedoms to protect the supreme good of health and the very life of people (Catellani 2020).

As regards the legislative activity, the emergency has been managed exclusively by the Government, through the issuing of decree-laws which constitute, as highlighted in the first chapter, the main instrument that our Constitution has provided for the regulation of extraordinary situations of necessity and urgency.

However, even though the Italian Constitution confers to the aforementioned legislative measures the title to intervene and face situations of difficult management, the recourse to urgent decrees has represented a further step towards a total control of political production by the Prime Minister (Criscitiello 2019).

Specifically, there are various anomalies in the use of decree-laws that have occurred over the past year, and which have highlighted the transformation already underway for some time in the relationship between Parliament and the Government, which the emergency phase has further accentuated. Highly debatable was the issuing of decree-laws that postponed to subsequent Decrees of the President of the Council of Ministers the task of regulating in detail the limitations to fundamental freedoms, listed with the decree only in an approximate way (the most evident example is represented by the d.l. n. 6/2020, partly modified by the same Government during the Parliamentary discussion of the conversion into law n. 13/2020).

The agitated phase of the beginning of March, with a Parliament "partially" operational due to the mobility limitations of the Parliamentarians (Curreri 2020a), certainly did not allow a comparison between the two bodies as should normally occur. The many criticisms made of the anomalous use of decree-laws (Azzariti 2020; criticism extended to "the entire legislative chain" D'Aloia 2020) were, however, heard, so that subsequent decrees were formulated in more detail with regard to the limitations of liberties (legislative decree no. 19/2020 which repealed the previous one), and then moved on to increasingly articulated and often heterogeneous formulations. Parliament's contribution was, however, marginal, as during the conversion phase the question of confidence was always asked and the plurality of interests and subjects involved induced also those Parliamentarians who were reluctant to accept the content they did not agree with, in order to achieve their regulatory objectives in any case.

Law-decrees have found their implementation, integration and execution in a large number of decrees of the President of the Council of Ministers (d.P.C.M.), the use of which has certainly not been a novelty in Government practice. In recent years it has been particularly widespread, leading to various criticisms and remarks, including the Committee for Legislation of the Chamber, regarding the abuse of atypical sources to implement legislative acts or otherwise attributing to these acts also regulatory

compliance responsibilities (Di Porto 2016). This practice of substituting d.P.C.M. for regulatory acts certainly reduces the time required to approve an act, but it also removes its content from any type of control: that of the President of the Republic and of the Government as a whole and of the Council of State (the control of the Court of Auditors is limited to d.P.C.M. that have accounting issues but are in any case provisionally effective).

In the emergency phase, the anomalous use of the d.P.C.M. became the norm, since these acts were entrusted with a preeminent role in defining the limitations of freedom, generically provided for by the law-decrees that required acts of execution, integration, implementation. Specifically, through these normative instruments, Giuseppe Conte, as Prime Minister, has undoubtedly assumed a superordinate role with respect to other sources of law, forcing in a certain sense the adoption of specific measures at the expense of other constitutional actors (Musella 2020a). It is enough to consider that from the declaration of the state of emergency on January 31 to May 18, the Premier signed 16 d.P.C.M. completely bypassing the legislative role of the Parliament. This situation attracted not a few criticisms also from the various local autonomies that complained of having been completely deprived of all their constitutional attributions (Musella 2020b).

No less important was the change in the way the information on Covid-19 events was communicated to the citizens by the members of the Government and by the President of the Council, who plays an institutional role also in the moments in which he exercises the power of externalization, in part regulated by law, but also based on a series of constitutional practices and customs.

During the emergency, press conferences have been a recurring instrument of direct dialogue between the President of the Council and the electorate, in addition to the daily press conferences of the Head of Civil Protection and the Special Commissioner for the emergency. And precisely the press conferences of President Conte have presented anomalous aspects. We can think about the use of the Facebook live broadcast or the holding of press conferences without the possibility for journalists to ask questions to the President (thus losing the possibility of interaction and therefore the very nature of communication) (Barile and Vagni 2019), or, again, the announcements on the time of a press conference of the Prime Minister that was then postponed with subsequent delays, not always appropriate, during an health emergency in which institutional communications had acquired a central role in the lives of citizens (Ceccobelli and Vaccari 2021).

Within such an emergency situation, the Italian political system has been able to witness the rise of a verticalized executive and extremely limited in the actions and choices of the Prime Minister. In this context we find what was pointed out only a few years earlier by Calise and Musella (2019) namely *"bypassing protocols and official procedures, the decisional act is carried out through its instant communication via social media. While emergency bills had marked the rise of the prime ministerial*

executive, the immediate decree through tweet or Facebook represents the supreme stage of presidential Government".

A final peculiar aspect of Giuseppe Conte in the pandemic context's management is certainly represented by the continuous search, by the Premier, of a technical legitimacy to his actions, and of a centralized externalization of some programmatic aspects of the executive.

Specifically, during the health crisis, Prime Minister Conte has continuously availed himself of an almost technocratic support given the technicality of the issues at stake. Specifically, the Prime Minister, through specific appointments such as that of Domenico Arcuri as Extraordinary Commissioner for the Covid 19 Emergency, has inserted himself within the consolidated trend that sees the holders of executive power further centralize their power through Government appointments. This approach, as pointed out by Verzichelli and Cotta (2018) has become particularly relevant also in the Italian context and has meant for the Premier the possibility to increase and centralize his power through the faculty to appoint to strategic roles individuals connected to him.

Equally emblematic of this trend was the establishment of the so-called Colao task force charged with developing a detailed plan for the economic and productive revival of the country.

First of all, the choice of entrusting the identification of specific resilience policies to a technician such as Colao (former CEO of Vodafone, with a long experience in prestigious investment banks such as Morgan Stanley and McKinsey) has further undermined the already delicate relationship between the executive and legislative powers in such a turbulent historical phase (Rullo 2020).

Finally, the constitution of the Colao Task Force has represented a further impoverishment of Parliament, in favor of a consistent expansion of technocratic power, an element that has further undermined the concepts of legitimacy and democratic transparency.

In conclusion, the emergency has certainly determined a phase so anomalous as to impose on the Government a transformation of its way of operating and, certainly, it is not easy to predict whether this transformation is the adaptation to an unpredictable and exceptional situation or the consolidation of practices that had been evident for some time. In fact, it must be stressed that what has not been possible to achieve in the role of the Government and the Prime Minister in seventy years of republican history, despite the many attempts made over time, has partly materialized as a result of the health emergency and the interpretation given to it by the Government.

Suddenly, after the declaration of the state of emergency deliberated on January 31, 2020 and after the issuance of the first decree-law n. 6/2020, the President and his Government began to assume a primary position in every type of decision and activity, flanked by a very reduced activity of direction and control of all other constitutional bodies and subjects. All legislative activity has been carried out by means of decree-laws and in the conversion phase the question of confidence has always been posed, deadening at the highest level the possibilities of modification, direction and choice of the Parliament.

It seems that all this can lead to a mild and reasonable evolution of the form of Government of our very special Republic (Democracy Italian Style, according to the definition of LaPalombara 1987), which tends by its nature to be in continuous and slow movement.

2.2 Conte II Government within Richardson *et al.* (1982) Policy Style Model: towards a new verticalized disintermediation?

In the previous section it was underlined that while on the one hand the Governmental and legislative activity of the Conte II executive has relegated Parliament to a secondary role, on the other hand the Premier himself has been employed in a rapid and decisive process of centralization of the decision-making center of the State. Similarly, the management of the pandemic emergency has brought back into vogue the idea that in order to administer the state, the Prime Minister must assume a role that transcends the classic definition of *primus inter pares* within the executive itself. Undoubtedly, through strategic appointments in sensitive roles, Giuseppe Conte has been able to attract to himself the entirety of the decision-making process, supported by a large group of technicians capable of giving further legitimacy to his choices.

In order to place the Conte II executive within the Policy Style Model devised by Richardson *et al.* (1982), as done in previous sections, it is necessary to analyze the relationship between the forementioned cabinet and external veto players and the citizenry at large.

The analysis conducted on the Renzi executive has highlighted that, in a situation in which the Prime Minister tends to verticalize decision-making, it is conceivable to expect a relationship between the executive and external stakeholders based on the idea of disintermediation. It is now necessary to understand whether this trend can also be observed in relation to the Conte II Government.

A useful reading key in this sense, in order to understand the level of incisiveness of interest groups' instances within the choices operated by Conte, are the General States of the Economy convened by Palazzo Chigi in June 2020.

The States General, launched last June 13, has been a ten-day event convened by Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte at Villa Doria Pamphili in Rome with the intent to involve the social and economic partners in the planning of specific economic measures aimed at revitalizing the Italian productive and economic system.

Even before that event was officially started, with not a little criticism from the Democratic Party and Italia Viva⁷⁶ (a party formed by Renzi in September 2019), the allusion to the term General States attracted widespread criticism from commentators. Specifically, Economist Alessandro Penati commented on the convening of such an event through an article published in La Repubblica in which he wrote *"I learned with some apprehension the news of the solemn convocation of the General States by Prime Minister Conte. My high school memories have brought back to my mind the States General convened by Louis XVI in May 1789 to bring together all those that today we would call "social partners" and get from them indications on how to put an end to the serious economic and social crisis of France and avoid the collapse of public finances"*

Beyond the historical allusions, even the same social partners convened at the meeting did not spare harsh criticism to the choice of the then Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. Specifically, the President of Confindustria, Carlo Bonomi, underlined that he would have expected that in the meetings at Villa Pamphili the Government would have presented a detailed plan, a chrono-program with the expected effects, a timeline, the effects on GDP, but that all this did not materialize⁷⁷. It seems relevant to underline how the same Trade Association of Italian entrepreneurs expressed satisfaction with the interactions it had obtained with previous Governments, as well as with those with Matteo Renzi during the formulation of the Jobs Act, in which, as we pointed out in chapter two, disintermediation had been particularly evident.

Fundamental to understand the climate that was established around the *kermesse* organized by Giuseppe Conte, it is necessary to underline how the center-right opposition led by Giorgia Meloni (FdI), Matteo Salvini and Antonio Tajani (FI) decided not to participate in the States General, as they reiterated that they would be ready to confront the Government at any time, but only in institutional venues. Specifically, Matteo Salvini, to remark the secondary role played by the Parliament in that delicate historical phase, affirmed that *"Italians don't need other shows and parades, there is the need immediately of the redundancy fund for millions of workers, real money for entrepreneurs and families, open and safe schools. The place of debate and discussion is the Parliament, not mansions or parades. 60 million people cannot depend on the mood of Rocco Casalino (the spokesman of the Prime Minister)"*⁷⁸.

⁷⁶ On June 5, 2020, during the majority summit held at Palazzo Chigi, the head of the Dem delegation Franceschini would have asked for explanations to the Prime Minister on an initiative that "had not been shared" and that "surprised everyone". Even the then Minister of Agriculture Teresa Bellanova would have turned to Prime Minister Conte asking for greater pragmatism and fewer choices dictated by the search for continuous media visibility. (<https://bit.ly/3ewgddX>)

⁷⁷ Agi, 15 June 2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/3uuEfeU>

⁷⁸ Il Sole 24 Ore, 10 June 2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/3tpEZk9>

In the context of Villa Doria Pamphili, the Conte II Government involved numerous political interlocutors such as the President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen and presented to the social partners who attended the meetings the numerous projects that the executive had studied in order to boost the economic recovery of the country. However, it must be stressed that, although the representatives of interests presented their programmatic proposals, they remained partially unheeded. The States General did not allow the social partners to continuously influence the choices of the Government, which listened to the requests of the external veto players only in an interlocutory way, with the intention of presenting them with a recovery plan, rather than modifying it on the basis of the requests received.

It should also be pointed out that even the proposals presented by the Task Force led by Colao remained partially unexpected, testifying to the unilateral nature of the programmatic will of Giuseppe Conte, who, embodying the robes of Louis XVI, presented his executive as the true bearer of measures for the relaunch of the country.

There are many similarities between the Jobs Act devised by Matteo Renzi and the economic recovery plan presented by Giuseppe Conte in the context of the General States. In both cases, the two Presidents of the Council involved interlocutors outside the Government such as companies, trade associations and interest groups. Nonetheless, this involvement had a merely interlocutory value, as both Governments continued unilaterally in their political design, making disintermediation a fundamental key to their programmatic work.

The analysis of the context of the General States, taken as the key to interpreting the relationships between the Conte II Government and external society allows us to place ourselves within the vertical axis of the Policy Style Model of Richardson *et al.* (1982).

Unlike the first Conte Government, the Conte II executive strongly reversed its tendency in its relations with external veto players and with the citizenry, testifying to the fact that this executive was to be regarded as a *strong state*, prone to imposing its political will rather than allowing it to be influenced by external players. Moreover, the ways in which Premier Giuseppe Conte conducted, in the name of the Government centralized on him, relations with various interest groups and companies, turned out to be contracted by what within our model is defined as *imposition leadership*.

Giuseppe Conte, in the course of his second executive, has proceeded on a strategy aimed at imposing the choices of his cabinet on external parties even at the cost of being unpopular.

Recalling now our analysis about the policy production and on legislative style of the Conte II Government, it should be noted that legislative formulation since the outbreak of the pandemic in January 2020 has been particularly dense. Numerous have been the d.P.C.M.'s as well as the law decrees sent to the Chambers for the process of conversion. However, it must be highlighted that, unlike the Renzi executive, whose legislative production was focused on the implementation of

reforms aimed at modifying the *status quo*, that of the Conte II executive was born with quite different aims. Specifically, the legislative activity from January 2020 until the end of the experience of this executive must be conceived, within the Policy Style Model adopted here, as contracted by a *reactive* rather than *proactive approach*. Specifically, the decrees promoted by the Conte II executive such as the Cure Italy Decree and the Relaunch Decree had the objective of putting a brake on the effects of the pandemic (understood as the problem to be solved) and bring back the *status quo* which was present before January 2020.

In conclusion, the Conte II executive, strongly personalized by its leader Giuseppe Conte, finds its place within the Policy Style Model of Richardson et al. (1982) in the lower right quadrant of the matrix, testifying the strong unilateralism of its legislative production (*imposition leadership*) and the intention of the Government to react to external contingencies (*reactive approach*).

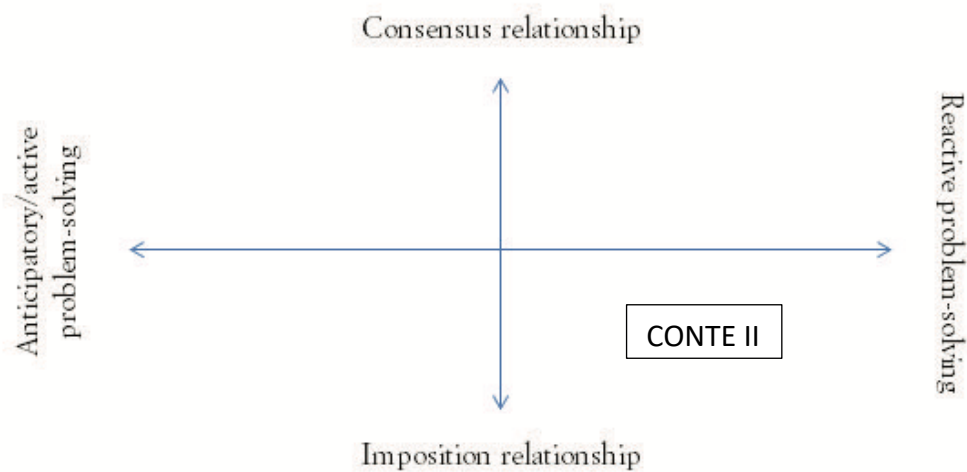


Figure 6.1 – Policy style model, matrix – Richardson et al. (1982) p.13

CHAPTER 4 – MARIO DRAGHI AND THE ULTIMATE RISE OF THE TECHNOCRATIC PREMIERSHIP

1. The Draghi I Government: technocracy as an alternative to the Governmental failure of political parties

At the turn of 2020 and 2021, the Conte II executive, in the wake of many previous cabinets (as we have had ample opportunity to note in the previous chapters), entered into a Government crisis that led to its fall. It was determined by the failure of the political stability of the coalition constituted by the M5S, the Democratic Party (PD), Italy Alive (IV) and Free and Equal (LEU). Specifically, the third party of the majority (IV), led by former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, weak in the polls but relatively strong in Parliament, with its 28 deputies and especially its 18 senators, withdrew, after much controversy, its support to Conte.

In a first phase Conte tried the path of a renewed confidence in Parliament and obtained it, but only with limited numbers (especially in the Senate) and only through the abstention of IV. Then, on the eve of a debate on justice, a subject that divided the majority, fearing a vote that would see him in the minority, on January 26 he resigned.

After quick consultations, President Mattarella did not accept either the request for the Government's referral to the Chambers or to entrust Conte with a third mandate: the Prime Minister, strong in the continuing confidence of the bulk of his majority (all except IV), hoped to collect sufficient votes, turning to all parliamentarians willing to vote for him, the so-called "responsible" or "builders", some of whom had formed an *ad hoc* group. It would have been, however, an assignment in the dark, likely to give rise to unsustainable situations such as the formation of a Government destined to present itself to the Chambers without certainties but in the hope of gathering sufficient votes: mainly thanks to the fear of early elections.

The President of the Republic, on the other hand, entrusted a so-called exploratory mandate to the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Roberto Fico, so that he could verify the existence of a majority in favor of another Conte Government, according to a modality that he had already experimented in the crisis of 2018.

The attempt by the President of the Chamber, however, did not yield the results that the parties supporting the Conte II Government hoped for, essentially putting the choice back in the hands of the President of the Republic who, as we underlined in the first chapter, tends to assume a primary role in moments of weakness of the parties (Pasquino 2013).

Mattarella, following an hypothesis that had been circulating for months, entrusted on February 3, 2021, the task of forming a new executive to Mario Draghi, who can be considered today the Italian personality with the greatest prestige in the world.

The new Government stems from President Mattarella's invitation to form a "*Government that does not identify itself with any political formula*"⁷⁹: it is a Government of presidential inspiration, a consequence of the parliamentary groups' impossibility to solve the crisis otherwise, and the result of the Head of State's evaluation considering the turbulent context. While confirming that the dissolution of the Chambers and elections is the natural route to revert situations of absolute political deadlock, the pandemic and the unavoidable deadlines of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) justify the request to all political forces, without exception, to contribute to the formation of a "high profile" Government.

On February 13, 2021, ten days after the appointment and eighteen days after the resignation of the second Conte Government (a rapid timeline), the Government headed by Professor Mario Draghi has sworn in the hands of the President of the Republic. It has obtained the confidence of the two Chambers, by a large majority: 262 yes in the Senate (82% of the plenum), 545 in the House (87%), with the approval of all groups except Brothers of Italy and some members of the 5 Stars Movement (immediately expelled and went to thicken the mixed groups, 76 components in the House, 39 in the Senate). The Draghi Government is the third of the legislature, the sixty-third since the Constitution came into force, the seventeenth in the last seven legislatures. It is the seventh Government headed by a non-parliamentary since 1993 (Ciampi, Dini, Monti, Renzi, Conte I and Conte II), the fifth in ten years. Its composition, 23 ministers including 8 independents and 15 from the parties that voted for confidence, resembles that of the Ciampi Government (the Dini and Monti Governments were composed only of non-parliamentarians; the Renzi Government and the two Conte Governments were ordinary coalition Governments, Prime Minister aside).

The Draghi Government must be understood in the light of the crisis of the party Government (Mair 2009), an element which has led the traditional party apparatus to give ground to subjects external to politics in the formation of Government.

In the first section we will analyze the newborn Draghi executive in the light of the debate on the crisis of the parties (and party Government) as well as the depoliticization of the political space, an element which, due to a widespread lack of legitimacy, opens the floor to Governments derived from outside the traditional logic of party Government.

⁷⁹ Open, 2 February 2021, available at: <https://bit.ly/33s6S0b>

In the next section, instead, the Draghi Government will be analyzed in the light of the debate on the rise of technocratic executives, with the aim of placing this cabinet within the experience of technical Governments of the Italian Republic.

1.1 The crisis and the challenges to party Government: between legitimacy and responsiveness and the advent of technocracy

As highlighted in the first chapter, especially in the Italian context, the traditional system of parties and their ability to govern effectively has been put into crisis by the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty and by the outbreak of *Tangentopoli*, a situation that has exposed the weaknesses of a system that cyclically faces internal and external pressures. From the partitocracy that characterized the entire First Republic, we have moved rapidly to the rise of forms of representation and Government that have posed as alternatives to the traditional dominance of the parties. Populism, but above all technocracy, the real focus of this section, are phenomena that are strongly contesting the very existence of traditional parties, as well as the necessity that a Government, in order to function effectively, must be based on parties.

Can a democracy and above all a Government function without parties?

According to Giovanni Sartori's (1976) definition, *"a political party is any political group identified by an official label that stands for election and is capable of placing through elections (free or otherwise) candidates for public office."* Sartori chose to adopt a descriptive perspective on political phenomena (Piccio 2015), thus offering a definition of a political party that could be applied uniformly across space and time. Specifically, what Sartori produced ran in opposition to the approach that dominated political science in the 1960s within which we in fact find a specific enumeration of the functions of political parties, such as socialization and political education, aggregation, and articulation of the interests of the citizenry, public policy formation, campaign organization, recruitment of the ruling class, and participation in the activities of parliaments and Governments (King 1969). Sartori's analysis has proven to be the basis for numerous subsequent studies on party apparatuses and their roles within the democratic system. Specifically, Katz and Mair (1994) produced an analytical categorization capable of distinguishing the three specific faces within which the activities and the role of the parties are articulated: the party on the territory (composed of militants and members), the party as a central organization and the party in the institutions.

For the purposes of our analysis, only the last categorization will be analyzed, since it is precisely the crisis of this last dimension that has allowed the rise of alternative forms of Government dominated by political parties.

Over the last few decades, political parties have undergone a process of rapid transformation that has changed their strategies and, above all, their tasks.

Specifically, the changed relations between society and institutions since the seventies inextricably linked the parties to the idea of State, with the latter quickly becoming the *conditio sine qua non* for the survival of party structures.

It was the advent of the cartel parties (Katz and Mair 1995) that changed the traditional perception of the role of political organizations. This type of party is characterized by "*the interpenetration of party and State and also by the development of a collusive web among the parties themselves*" (Katz and Mair 1995, 17).

This definition refers to two different aspects. While the one that underlines the inter-party collusive dynamic, and that gives the name to the type, has been the target of much criticism (Koole 1996), the other aspect - the interpenetration between party and State - has been recognized as adherent to the most recent developments of parties, so much so that according to Ignazi (2004) it would perhaps be more appropriate to adopt a different label, *i.e. State-centered party*, in order to highlight the crucial element of the symbiotic relationship with the State.

The parties thus ended up performing less those brokerage functions that consisted in linking citizens with the State [a typical dynamic of mass parties as highlighted by Duverger (1951)], as the parties moved towards the State, becoming part of it and exploiting its resources.

The cartel party is the result of the growth of party Government, the extension of the spheres of activity that the party can directly or indirectly control.

It is precisely this idea of party Government that appears to be the best possible key to interpret the crisis that has bound the parties and their ability to be effective holders of executive power since Tangentopoli.

In 1987 Katz defined party Government as that form of Government in which the following conditions are met: decisions are made by elected party officials (or staff subordinate to them); policies are decided in parties; which then act as cohesive entities to implement them; and rulers are recruited and are politically accountable through parties (Katz 1987, p. 7). In this reconstruction, the focus is on the process of policy decision-making, and party Government is essentially defined in terms of the ability of parties to control the decision-making process (Cotta 1995).

From this definition of party Government Katz then derived the variable of the "*partyness of Government*", defined as the degree of intensity of party control over political processes and on the basis of which he proposed to evaluate the empirical cases. At the same time, the author identified a second fundamental level for the evaluation of the strength or weakness of the party system, the "*party of Governmentness*", namely the extension of the scope of party control to other areas of

society. Specifically, it is from this last parameter that derives the Italian idea of *partitocracy*, that is the ability of parties to permeate any dimension of the institutional life of the Republic.

Cotta (1995) highlighted that this distinction made by Katz is particularly relevant to assess the Italian case, what he called the Italian party Government referring to the decades of the First Republic. According to the American political scientist, the two dimensions, the partyiness of Government and the *party Governmentness* could be inversely correlated (Katz 1986). Cotta (1995) suggested, therefore, that an expansion of *party Governmentness*, the area of intervention of parties, could result in serious limits for the partyiness of Government, the ability of the parties to direct the decision-making process. The extension of the role of the parties highlighted in the context of the First Republic (but also partially after 1992) has been interpreted precisely as a consequence of the difficulties encountered on the partyiness of Government side (Cotta and Isernia 1996). The party Government, struggling to manage the decision-making process as a consequence of the peculiar characteristics of the Italian political system, would have been pushed to compensate for its deficits, therefore, through an expansion of its intervention. As emphasized by Cardini (1985), the political parties of the First Republic found fertile ground in this direction for internal and external factors within the party system: from the lack of alternation in Government, to the weakness of the public administration, to the well-rooted protectionist and interventionist traditions of the Italian State.

Although over the decades political parties have dominated the entirety of the political and governmental life of countries, the mechanism of party Government appears to have entered a deep crisis, dictated by the pressure that, as we will discuss shortly, specific challenges are exerting.

Above all, it is the very idea of the cartel party, which have been dominating the political scene for decades, that entered into crisis. According to Mair (2013), European democracies are moving towards a process of estrangement between rulers and the governed resulting in the implosion of participatory forms of democratic representation that had characterized the golden age of mass parties (Ridolfi 1993). This dynamic has materialized to the point in which the representation of the people is increasingly left in the hands of non-party organizations, often of populist imprint, which may seem more responsive to the political demand coming from the citizens but are not required to be responsible to them and to the institutions (Van Biezen 2014). The cartel party, driven therefore by the exclusive need to live within the State and survive because of it, has on the one hand abandoned its task of representation, and has made the willingness control the State its primary ideology. On the side of professional politicians, stability in office becomes more important than electoral victory itself; on the side of citizens, this implies the reduced possibility of effective choice between alternative political options. Parties thus tend to resemble each other programmatically (Mair 2008), confirming a reduction of the ideological distance between them already observed by Kirchheimer (1966) with the idea of the Catch all Party. By suffocating the representative principle, however, in

the long run, the cartel party ends up generating and legitimizing its own opposition: populism, or rather the tendency, transversal to all political cultures (Serio 2015), to seek consensus for power outside the institutional circuit and to found a postmodern sovereignty that rests precisely on the void (Mair 2013), where the sovereignty typical of the second part of the twentieth century - the golden age of party-Government and the welfare State - rested on the centrality of citizenship rights that constituted the political space of mass democracy (Galli 2001).

It should be noted that due to the aforementioned reasons, the contemporary world appears to be a space in which *"the distances between parties and their voters have become wider, while the differences between parties have diminished, two processes that combined have contributed to reinforce an increasing popular indifference to parties and, potentially, to the world of politics in general"* (Mair 2013). The progressive withdrawal of representative functions (Dalton and Wattenberg 2001) to the advantage of political rents leads to a change in political polarization (Sartori 1976): this is demonstrated above all by the weakening of the conflict between left and right that had shaped the European political space in the last two centuries with the advent of the phenomenon of "depoliticization" (Burnham 2001).

In particular, the most consistent change has occurred in those parties that were located in the extreme part of the right/left political spectrum, characterized by strongly polarized ideological positions and which have been identified as anti-system parties (Sartori 1976). These parties have now given up proposing an alternative to the system, namely a radical change of the political regime in its form and in its dominant political values (Stoppino 2001). They have fully reverted back to the realm of inter-party competition within the political system itself, where parties tend to be more differentiated by their central or peripheral position with respect to the possibility of forming a Government, or by their genesis and organization, such as movement parties or personal parties (Katz and Crotty 2006).

Beyond the party dimension, it should be emphasized that Mair's (2013) great insight lies in having demonstrated how the development of a decision-making process at the European level (Europeanization) has clearly played a pivotal role in downsizing political competition among parties at the national level (Majone 2003). Specifically, in the delicate process of European integration, there has been a shift in the decision-making process from the national to the European level, towards those towards those non-majoritarian institutions - such as the European Central Bank - which, at every level, are deliberately isolated from politics, party action and the electoral process, *i.e.*, from the control of the electorate (Koop 2016). An important detonator of these dynamics was undoubtedly the condition of uncertainty arising from the great economic crisis of the beginning of the century, which effects on European party systems have been investigated by Leonardo Morlino (2017). The author had already defined in a political science perspective the concept of crisis as *"the process of decline in institutional efficacy as well as divorce and change in relations among civil society, parties*

and Government institution". In a comparative research Morlino concluded that, at least in the Mediterranean European countries analyzed (Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece), the economic crisis had a catalytic effect: it induced change where there were already all the preconditions for change towards the delegitimization of a party system and accelerated it. Contextually, Frorio and Little (2015) had noted that the crisis radicalizes these processes of change by bringing out the inability of governing parties to come to terms with different demands: those that come from supranational institutions and markets and those that are expressed by the will of the electorate.

In addition, a further aspect to consider, as highlighted by Morlino (2017), is the existence, alongside the party system, of other expressions of voice: social movements, interest associations, unions, etc., which in the past (for example, in Italy in the 1980s) had given rise to neo-corporative solutions (Wilson 1983) to reduce conflict and overcome the crisis. In the 2008 context, however, these structures disappeared in the countries of the Mediterranean area. The crisis also weakens these channels, in addition to those of the parties. The parties are no longer linked to collateral organizations or organized interest groups, which represented above all class divisions, but to lobbies, pressure groups and collective movements that introduce new issues on the public agenda that traditional parties are unable to represent (Keller 2015). Environmental issues, bioethics, human rights, and immigration are some of these new areas of conflict which are certainly political but increasingly extra-political. In this way, not only do these new movements form an opposition, albeit a heterogeneous one, to mainstream politics, but, above all, they can escape from the traditional dialectic between majority and opposition (Serio 2017), thus carving out for themselves a role of all-out opposition, while at the same time often perceiving themselves as anti-Government forces, relieved of the burden of being and showing to be "responsible" (Mair 2008)

The parties that govern our democracies increasingly seem to be parties without "people", organizations now incapable of fulfilling that function of linking institutional politics and popular participation/interest. This aspect is at the heart of Schattschneider's work "*The semi sovereign people*" (1960), which questions how much of the decision-making process in politics is actually under the control of the individual citizen, both because of the opacity of policy making processes and because of their complexity. In the moment in which the parties are no longer able to fulfill their role as intermediaries between citizens and institutions because they are not anymore rooted in society but only in institutions, the proper functioning of pivotal elements of democracies such as electoral involvement and accountability enter into crisis (Salvati 2018). The representation of diffuse interests gives way to that of particular and organized interests, and responsiveness finds itself increasingly in tension with responsibility (Bardi, Bartolini and Trechsel 2020) that is, with the need for politicians to not to simply answer the short-term demands of the electorate but to take into account medium to

long-term needs and external demands, namely the demands coming from the markets, from international actors and - in the case of many European countries - from the EU.

The weakening of parties therefore has an influence on the performance of democratic institutions, given that democracy is unthinkable without the structural contribution of parties, which ensure transparency, political competition (within a context of free elections), access to office, and representation (Katz and Crotty 2006). The permeability of the modern political system to new forms of representation derives precisely from this structural weakening, a phenomenon that is added to the transfer of sovereignty to the European Union, for example, and that feeds the idea of the regulatory State theorized by Majone (1994). Here the theme of the contrast between knowledge and politics and the confrontation between technicians and politicians emerges strongly; the confrontation between an idea of society that tends to guide itself and relies on those who have the technical knowledge to make complex choices (Caramani 2017), and instead an idea of society permeated by political organizations, with the latter being responsible for the management of the Government and the relevant political choices. The contrast, therefore, is between de-politicized democracy (and institutions) versus politicized democracy; or it is the contrast between governance and Government (Lence 2008). This is the context that stimulates the use of anti-political or anti-party forms of representation such as the populist one, which sees in the recourse to the virtues of the people the only possible alternative for democracies victimized by elites (Meyer and Wagner 2020) with populist movements that ethicize the distinction between masses and ruling groups, with the former considered as a *unicum* and body of the nation, and the latter considered as a foreign body with respect to the nation itself (Caramani 2017). Specular to this view, as Caramani wrote, is the technocratic approach to politics that sees the emptying out of aspects such as responsiveness and accountability, in virtue of an idea whereby it is the elites who know what is right and preferable for the interests of the nation.

As pointed out above, one of the main factors that must be understood as promoting the rise of alternative forms of Government to the party-centered model is undoubtedly the context of economic crises and poor economic performance of Governments, an element that has fueled the materialization of technocratic executives (Brunclik and Parizek 2019). This condition has undoubtedly increased the possibility for technicians to be more involved in the political life of the States in times of economic crisis (Semenova 2020) to the point of holding, within the individual national executives, top positions in financial matters (Alexiadou and Gunaydin 2019). Nonetheless, this characterization is not a constant in the European context, since despite the fact that the economic crisis of 2008 has had significant effects on individual States, the technicians in Government have not completely replaced the cabinets formed by the parties (Cotta 2018).

As pointed out by Emanuele *et al.* (2021) the use of technocratic forms of political representation and management could be understood as a strategy adopted by parties in order to solve the dilemma

between responsibility and responsiveness first highlighted by Mair (2009). Specifically, the term responsiveness was used to highlight the tendency of parties to be more focused on what has been defined as "input-oriented legitimacy", while responsibility was used to define the delicate circumstance in which Government parties are faced with specific limits to their operations due to external subjects and institutions. Moreover, it has been highlighted how the problem of the coexistence between responsibility and responsiveness has been historically accentuated when party leaders have been betrayed to confront the effects and practical implications of multilevel governance (Lefkofridi and Nezi 2020), an element that has been accentuated by the outbreak and management of the economic crisis of 2008 (Karremans and Lefkofridi 2020). It is precisely when the traditional form of political representation proves incapable of adapting to external *stimuli* and managing this growing form of inter-institutional political-State management that technicians find the most fertile ground. In addition, it should be noted that the emergence of this form of multi-level governance together with the greater permeability of European States to new forms of interest representation, have increased the number of veto and semi-veto players, a condition that is increasingly forcing Governments to follow specific operational forecasts (Emanuele et al. 2021). Within such a configuration, Governments are faced with a thinning of their traditional prerogatives to control the political and policy agenda to the point of adopting decisions that in the absence of such circumstances they would never have put in place (Strøm 2003; Mair 2009).

In spite of this new configuration of institutional balances, European Governments and the parties that comprise them appear less and less free to adopt an architecture of public policies unilaterally and to implement their own programmatic desires without restrictions. In this sense, there are two solutions that Cotta (2018) has envisaged within this dynamic: on the one hand, parties can choose to oppose this constriction of their prerogatives and continue to hold the entirety of Governmental positions with the risk of losing votes in the course of the elections, or, on the other hand, parties have the possibility to give up part of their prerogatives and cede some roles within the Government to technocratic figures.

In this sense, it seems relevant to highlight that the presence of technocratic figures within the executives, or even the fact that the Prime Minister, as in the current Italian Government, is a technocratic figure, also implies a greater concentration of power in the hands of the Prime Minister, while the political parties, who have been voted in, see their influence on the formation of the Government diminish (Tronconi and Verzichelli 2021). Furthermore, according to De Sio (2021) technocratic leadership de-responsibilizes both parties and voters. The parties abandon their role as actors of difficult choices in the allocation of resources. Thus, it appears that decisions are made outside of politics - even though, in reality, resource allocation always involves a political decision about who gets what - even when the decision is made by experts based on their supposed superior

knowledge. Voters, on the other hand, are led to believe that their voting decisions are without consequence. If they know that their vote does not influence the formation and policy direction of the following Government, they might end up voting for more extreme parties in protest, as happened with the 5 Star Movement (Tronconi and Valbruzzi 2020). Or they might decide that the same vote counts for almost nothing and abstain.

Voting in the electoral context has a decisive relevance, therefore, also in the context of the emergence of technocratic forms of political representation and in the presence or absence of technocrats within the executive, as it is in this case that the response of citizenship is manifested with respect to the perception of the clash between responsibility and responsiveness.

In this sense, Emanuele et al. (2021), in their quantitative empirical research on the involvement of technical personnel in the cabinets, started from the hypothesis that "*The higher the electoral change, the higher the share of technocrats in Governments*", proposing two corollaries to this hypothesis, namely that on the one hand "*The higher the electoral change among established parties, the higher the share of technocrats in Governments*" and on the other "*The higher the electoral change due to the entry of new parties and the exit of old parties, the higher the share of technocrats in Governments*".

The authors, through their analysis, have shown that, in Western democracies, the presence of technocratic figures within the ranks of Government is more frequent in cases of minority Governments and single-party majority Governments, while it is less frequent in particularly broad Government coalitions. Similarly, the presence of technocratic figures within the executive branch is positively associated with parliamentary support of the executive. However, it has been pointed out that, the presence of technicians is less widespread in post-election Governments as these cabinets tend to be more adherent to the political outcomes determined by the popular vote (Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2010; Wratil and Pastorella 2018).

Emanuele *et al.* (2021) have also shown that, considering parties' positioning on the left-right dimension, it is within Governments of centrist extraction that the highest rate of technical figures within the ranks of executive power is manifested.

An additional element identified by the authors, and useful for the purposes of this analysis, is the fact that the use of technocracy is largely growing within European democracies in recent decades. Specifically, it was pointed out that the appointment of technical figures to top positions within the executive (up to having a technocrat as Prime Minister) was found to be in line with the interpretation of the problem highlighted by Mair (2009) about the relationship between responsibility and responsiveness. According to Emanuele *et al.* (2021) the use of technocratic appointments can be understood as a way used within Western democracies to dilute responsibility in those periods

characterized by a sustained growth of constraints from outside, as in the case of multilevel governance, and in the presence of increasingly weak parties (Strøm 2003; Mair 2008).

Finally, the need for modern parties to be accountable to international commitments and the growing number of external veto players, and at the same time not to lose their ability to be accountable to the electorate, seems to have led Government parties to distance themselves more and more from the classic Government party model, devolving an increasing amount of responsibility to ministers or subjects characterized by non-political background.

2. The nature of the Italian technocratic Governments: evidence from the Second Republic

It is easily understood that technocratic Governments are centered on technocrats. As Fabbrini (2015) underlined, technicians are those who meet three basic characteristics. Firstly, at the time of Government appointment, they do not have a parliamentary seat, nor do they come from partisan positions. Secondly, at the time of Governmental appointment they do not have a political identity, neither do they come from roles or positions within a party. Lastly, the technicians called to Government are generally holders of specialized expertise in areas that have become crucial to the functioning of that Government and, generally, those areas relate to economic and financial policies, administrative and judicial policies, and foreign and defense policies (Wratil and Pastorella 2018).

For the purposes of this analysis, it should be noted that, as highlighted by Fabbrini (2015) the existence of technical Governments is more common within parliamentary democracies. This element turns out to be mainly dictated by the fact that in presidential democracies such as the United States there is the tendency to have technicians heading presidential departments as the direct election of the chief executive necessarily politicizes their role (Fabbrini 2009). It is in parliamentary democracies, on the other hand, that there have been cases of technical Governments, as well as Governments with varying combinations of technicians and politicians⁸⁰.

⁸⁰ It should be pointed out that recourse to technocratic governments has occurred in countries such as Bulgaria (Indzhova Government 1994-1995), the Czech Republic (Tošovský Government February-July 1998), Hungary (Bajnai Government 2009-2010) and Romania (the 3 Vacariou governments from 1992 to 2000) which had to follow a difficult and contrasting path from socialist to democratic regime. Other examples of technocratic governments, which do not follow the above transition in Europe are found in Portugal (Nobre de Costa Government in 1978), in Greece (as in the case of the two Zolotas executives from 1989 to 1990) and in Finland (as in the Liinamaa Government in 1975)

Beyond the locus in which Governments of a technical nature can find more fertile ground, it is necessary to consider those two factors, not strictly institutional, which have favored the formation of this type of executive.

The first factor is represented by the transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one (Morlino 2012a), an element that is clearly not the case in Italy.

Instead, the second transition concerns the transition from one political configuration to another within the same democratic regime. This was the case of Italy in the transition from the so-called First Republic to the so-called Second Republic (Fabbrini 2006). In this passage, the Government of the country was entrusted to technical Governments (such as those of Ciampi and Dini), pending the formation of a new party system. However, technical Governments also occurred in phases of paralysis of the existing party system, without presupposing the formation of a new party system (as was always the case in Italy with the Monti Government (Culpepper 2014) and recently with the Draghi Government.

In addition, as highlighted in previous sections, the advent and rapid rise of the European integration process has undoubtedly accentuated the emergence of technical Governments. Where there has been (especially in the Italian context) a clear difficulty on the part of the traditional political class in managing the process of integration of public policies at European level with those at domestic level, Governments led by technical figures have increasingly assumed a preponderant role, as in the case of the Monti executive.

2.1 Ciampi, Dini and Monti executives: the first Italian technocratic Governmental experience

The definition of what should be meant by "technical Government" is far from undisputed (Lupo 2015). With the concept of technocratic Government, it is customary to understand an executive of a non-political nature, an element which, however, betrays the idea that a Government, in order to be defined as such, must necessarily be political. In this sense, Morlino (2012b) pointed out that an executive must maintain this characteristic "because it has the confidence of parliament and because its decisions have consequences on citizens, benefiting some and disadvantaging others, as is proper to all political choices". In the context of these reflections, scholars have investigated elements capable of distinguishing, in certain Governments, a greater distance from politics, that is, from the parties and parliamentary groups (and therefore from the classic model of "party Government"). Among these elements, the characteristics of the President of the Council of Ministers, the composition of the Government (and therefore the link between ministers and political forces),

and finally the scope of the programmatic intervention and the degree of influence of the parties on Government decisions tend to come to the fore.

In particular, McDonnell and Valbruzzi (2014), in their attempt to define a "technocratic Government", firstly tried to reverse the typical conditions of the "party Government" model (Katz 1986), considering therefore that it requires the existence of three features: that all major Government decisions are not made by elected party members; that public policies are not made by elected party members; that public policies are not made by political forces; and that public policies are not made by political parties. In fact, within a technical Government, the main Governmental decisions are taken by non-elected personnel, they are the expression of policies that have not been established within the governing bodies of the party, they are promoted by individuals who have been trained outside the parties or in national and international technical bodies, in universities, in think tanks, in large banks or companies, in the circuit of consultancies and lobbyist representation of interests. The same authors then attempted to investigate the existence of what they called "*full technocratic Governments*", distinguishing them within the broader category of "*technocrat-led Governments*". These were identified on the basis of three criteria: the prime minister is a technician; the majority of ministers are technicians; they have a mandate to change the status quo (this distinguishes them from "caretaker Governments", which can be translated as "institutional Governments" or "bridge Governments" which have a more limited mandate).

Based on these criteria, in the Italian experience only the Dini (1995-1996) and Monti (2011-2013) Governments would fall into this category of "*full technocratic Governments*", as both were made up 100 percent of non-elective personnel, while the Ciampi Government should rather be qualified as a "*technocrat-led partisan Government*" (McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014). In the composition of the Ciampi Government (1993-1994), in fact, as will be discussed below, most of the Ministers (14 out of 25) cannot be qualified as independent technicians, but rather as partisan and with a fully political curriculum. It should also be pointed out that in the initial composition of the Ciampi Government, there were even more political ministers, before the Ministers from the Democratic Party of the Left and the former radical Rutelli resigned the day after their swearing in, following the denial of the authorization to proceed against Bettino Craxi (Gentiloni Silveri 2013). Considering this distinction, Draghi Government should be regarded as partially detached from the traditional Italian technocratic executives.

However, before turning our attention to the current executive of the Italian Republic and placing it within the tradition of our technical Governments, it seems appropriate to briefly analyze the main similarities and contrasting elements between the above-mentioned executives, in order to lay the foundations for an effective organic comparison.

A first common feature of the three "technical Governments" which preceded the Draghi Cabinet, concerns their length and their correlation with political elections. In this sense, all the three Governments considered here have lasted more than a year and less than a year and a half: to be precise (calculating these periods from the swearing in of the Government in question until the swearing in of the next Government), the Monti Government lasted 529 days, the Dini Government 486 days and the Ciampi Government 377 days. Moreover, all three of these Governments ended with an electoral appointment, which these Governments were called upon to manage: in fact, more than 100 days passed between their resignation and the establishment of the next Government (128 days for the Monti Government; 126 days for the Dini Government; 117 days for the Ciampi Government). In the case of the Ciampi and Dini Governments, the electoral appointment has been anticipated (by about 3 years) with respect to the natural expiry of the term, while with the Monti Government, the advance was only a few weeks (Albanesi 2014). In no case, however, were these Governments born immediately after the elections, but, exactly the opposite, they were always Governments established following the failure of a fully "political" Government, which had been formed in the aftermath of the electoral appointment (respectively, the Amato I, Berlusconi I and Berlusconi IV Governments).

A second common element relates to the origins of the Presidents of the Council. According to the definition proposed by McDonnell and Valbruzzi (2014) used here as the reading key, all three Prime Ministers could not be considered elected politicians at the time of their appointment. A different situation applies to Mario Monti, who was appointed Senator for Life a few weeks before becoming Prime Minister. Only Dini could boast ministerial experience (he had been Minister of the Treasury in the previous Berlusconi Government, for eight months) while Ciampi had never held Governmental or representative office. All of them, however, had matured a solid curriculum in technical institutions, such as the Bank of Italy (of which Ciampi had been governor for a long time and Dini general director) or the European Commission (of which Monti had been a member for two mandates, where he had dealt with very significant portfolios, such as the internal market and competition) (Gozi 2005), also in the light of a marked expertise in the economic field. All three, however, while not being "incoming" (elective) politicians, became "outgoing" politicians. (Lupo 2015). Ciampi, indeed, has never been a member of Parliament, but has been, in the following legislature, Minister of the Treasury, in the Prodi and D'Alema Governments, from 1996 to 1999 and was elected in 1999 President of the Republic (thus becoming, at the end of his mandate, Senator for life, by law). Dini and Monti, on the other hand, not only entered politics in the final phase of their Government experience, but also became promoters and leaders of new political formations, qualifiable as personal parties, which arose on the immediate eve of electoral appointments (Calise 2010).

A third element common to the experiences of the three "technical Governments" can be identified in the breadth of parliamentary consensus around them, at least at the time of the vote of confidence. Indeed, if we look at the initial vote of confidence in the Chamber of Deputies, this consensus is manifested, for the Ciampi and Dini Governments, above all through abstentions⁸¹: the Ciampi Government recorded 309 votes in favour, 60 against and 182 abstentions in the House (in the Senate, 162 votes in favour, 36 against and 50 abstentions); the numbers for the Dini Government are quite similar, with 302 votes in favour, 39 against and 270 abstentions for, 39 against and 270 abstentions in the Chamber (in the Senate, 191 votes for, 17 against and two abstentions). With the Monti Government, on the other hand, abstentions (literally) are reduced to zero, both in the House and in the Senate, and consensus is manifested directly through the highest number of favorable votes in the republican history: 556 votes in favor, 61 against and no abstention in the House; 281 votes in favor, 25 against and no abstentions in the Senate. Nevertheless, considering these three Governments as "Governments of broad agreement" or "grand coalition" may be, false: the majority that supported them was certainly very large, particularly in the case of the Monti Government; however, it cannot be said that the composition of the executive, starting with the Prime Minister, and its programmatic direction are the result of a real agreement between the political forces. However, the technical Government cannot be interpreted - at least not in its entirety - as the result of such an agreement, since it is endowed with a greater autonomy, due to the peculiar origin of the president of the Council of Ministers and - at least a portion - of his ministers.

A fourth and final element that characterizes all three experiences taken into consideration here is represented by the very significant role played by the Presidency of the Republic in identifying the name of the President of the Council of Ministers, of some ministers and also in the formation of the same majority coalition and in the definition of the relative mandate.

In addition to the elements common to the three "technical Governments" considered here, they can be differentiated from one another primarily by the presence or absence, in the Government composition, of current parliamentarians.

As mentioned earlier, this is an element that tends to be considered decisive for the purposes of attributing, or not, the qualification of technical to a given Government. It is, moreover, evident that ministers who are also parliamentarians, however characterized by a marked technical profile, end up being qualified as fully political components of the Government: inevitably, even if characterized by a high technical background and not members of a political party or movement, they have, however,

⁸¹ The Ciampi Government recorded 309 votes in favour, 60 against and 182 abstentions in the House (in the Senate, 162 votes in favour, 36 against and 50 abstentions); the numbers for the Dini Government are quite similar, with 302 votes in favour, 39 against and 270 abstentions for, 39 against and 270 abstentions in the Chamber (in the Senate, 191 votes for, 17 against and two abstentions).

been elected in a list linked to a specific party and adhere to a parliamentary group. At the same time, the parliamentary affiliation of the members of the Government is one of the most recurrent characteristics of parliamentary forms of Government (Elia 2006). Whereas in the Ciampi Government, the majority of Ministers, as mentioned above, as well as all of the undersecretaries were current parliamentarians, with the Dini and Monti Governments, there was a total absence of MPs in the ranks of ministers and undersecretaries (with the sole exception of Monti himself, who was a current parliamentarian as he had been a senator for a few days). This is an element of discontinuity that is not insignificant, so much so that in view of it the Ciampi Government should be denied the title of authentic "technical Government". In some ways, however, there seems to be an evolutionary line: in the sense that the Ciampi Government represented the first experience of "technical Government" and it was traumatic enough to have the first non-parliamentary Prime Minister in the history of the Republic (Ciampi 1996 p.7), as well as a large group of appointed ministers completely independent of any party logic.

The events of the "technical Governments", which have been briefly reviewed so far, must also be understood by considering a further factor, which helps to better understand the reasons for some of the choices - or some of the non-decisions, as in the case of missed or delayed dissolution of the Chambers - made by the institutional actors in the course of the last twenty years of the republican constitutional evolution. In fact, it is necessary to consider the weight, in the events examined here, of the European Union: both directly, through its institutions, and more indirectly, through the Governments of the other member States. If we look carefully at the actions of the Presidents of the Republic in the formation of the "technical Governments", we can see that they have tried to act not only by taking into account the need for the Government to have the confidence of the Chambers, but also this "European dimension" of the action of Italian Governments.

It should be stressed that, in this context, the personal and professional reputation and reliability of the members of the Government are considered elements of strength, essential if the intention is to take an active part in European forums, and necessary, in particular, to deal with the turbulence of the financial markets. In the light of this, it is also possible to explain the choice (in Italy, but not only there) of constantly entrusting, also within political Governments (and indeed in substantial continuity with what has happened in a large part of the republican experience, albeit with reference to economic portfolios less extensive than the current one), the position of Minister of the Economy to figures with a solid technical profile and an independent reputation with international economic institutions (Manfrelotti 2013).

2.2 The Draghi Government within the tradition of Italian technical executives: how to read it through Richardson et al. (1982) policy style model

The Government headed by Mario Draghi presents many elements of continuity with previous experiences of "technical" Governments. In this regard, the rhetoric used by the political forces following its formation should not be misleading. Many of them seemed understandably eager to distance this Government's history from that of the Monti Government, which was considered afterwards in many ways disappointing, when not bankrupt (De Sio 2021).

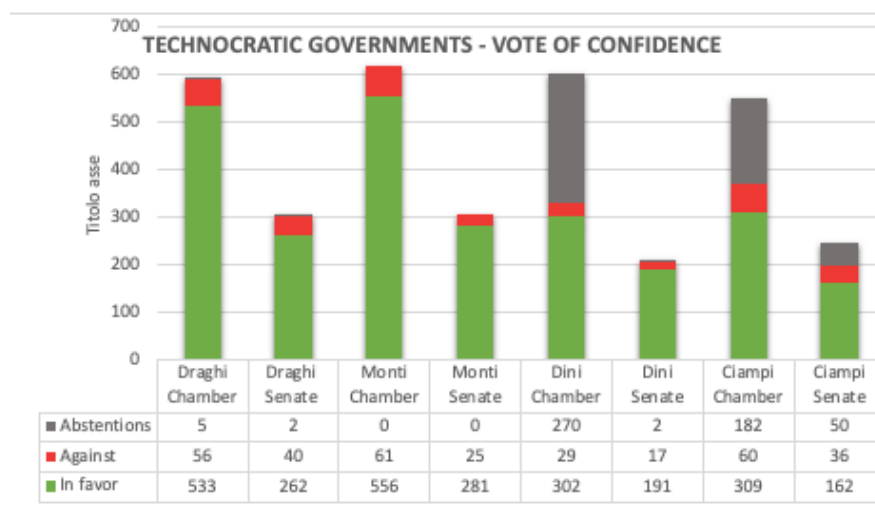
Also, for the case of Draghi's cabinet, we are in front of an executive presided over by a "non-political" subject, with a very prestigious curriculum in national, European and international economic institutions, among others as governor of the Bank of Italy and then as president of the European Central Bank. It should also be noted that since the termination of this last position (on October 31, 2019), more than a year has elapsed, *i.e.*, the period in which, pursuant to art. 6 of the code of conduct for members of the Governing Council of the European Central Bank, once they have ceased to hold office, they are required to "avoid any conflict of interest that may arise from any private or professional activity". Prior to such expiry, in fact, they must receive, in application of the aforementioned discipline, a prior opinion from the Governing Council in office at that time.

In addition, for the Government headed by Draghi, there are all the other three constants that were seen to characterize the previous executives led by Ciampi, Dini and Monti, namely: the limited duration; the impulse of the President of the Republic and the broad parliamentary consensus. Having been formed after the failure of two political Governments, both presided over by Conte and supported by different and in any case unusual majorities, in other words not at all coinciding with the coalitions presented to the electorate in 2018, the Draghi Government was born with a maximum time horizon of just over two years. An important "checkpoint" will certainly take place 12 months after its constitution, on the occasion of the election of the President of the Republic: that election - which, as noted by many, could bring Draghi himself to the Quirinale - will be the moment in which it will be assessed whether the XVIII legislature can reach its natural conclusion and, if so, with which Government. Therefore, as far as can be imagined at the moment, we are moving towards a minimum duration of one year and a maximum of just over two years, until the natural conclusion of the legislature: a little more than the record set by the Monti Government among "technical" Governments.

Even in the case of the Draghi Government, as in other "technical" Governments (Randazzo 2018), the impulse of the President of the Republic seemed particularly evident. A clear drive first of all, has been evident in the identification of the Prime Minister, given that the appointment was immediately formalized, once it became clear, following the failure of the exploratory mandate given

to the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Fico, that there was no margin to repeat, nor to enlarge the majority on which the Conte II Government was based. However, it cannot be ruled out that the President of the Republic had already raised such a possibility during the consultations that led to the exploratory mandate to the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Fico, in the event of failure of a re-election of a political Government headed by Conte. The impulse promoted by Mattarella, at least on the basis of what can be guessed, was also decisive in the determination of the ministerial structure (Armaroli 2021): not only in the search for a "high profile" in the identification of the holders of some crucial ministerial positions, but also in the creation of a new Government.

Finally, with regard to the broad parliamentary consensus, the record figures of the Monti Government were reached: the Draghi Government obtained 535 votes in favor in the Chamber (with 56 votes against and 5 abstentions) and 262 votes in favor in the Senate (with 40 votes against an abstentions).



Broad support, that of the Draghi Government, motivated, moreover, by a reason in some ways opposite to that at the basis of the vote in favor of the Monti Government: if in the latter the idea was "all in" in order to take all a share of responsibility for the austerity policies then necessarily pursued, and as underlined by Marangoni (2012) born as an "interim Government on which the parties were ready to allocate the burden of unpopular measures, in the case of the Draghi Government there is instead the desire to be all involved in the decision on the allocation of funds of the Next Generation EU (Garzia and Karremans 2021).

As far as composition is concerned, many observers have underlined the dominant presence, in the Draghi Government, of political ministers, highlighting in this a clear element of detachment with respect to the Monti Government (and, going backwards, also with respect to the Dini Government): among the 23 ministers that compose it, in fact, those generally qualified as "non-political" are 8. A not too dissimilar distribution also characterized the original composition of the Ciampi Government, with 10 "non-political" out of 27 ministers. It should be noted, however, that

the simple counting of Ministers is of little relevance, since the weight of each Minister must be taken into consideration. In this case, 7 of the 8 Ministers considered as technical are Ministers "with portfolio", while only one has no portfolio.

Considering the programmatic horizon of the Draghi Government in relation to those of the other "technical" Governments, there is no lack of consistency with the technical Governments previously analyzed, albeit with the necessary adaptations to very different political and economic-financial contexts (Garzia and Karremans 2021), which make the program of the Government in question more ample and certainly not characterized by the limited scope of the so-called "caretaker Governments", to which "technical" Governments are sometimes superimposed (Brans, Pattyn and Bouckaert 2016).

All three of the previous "technocratic" Governments were, in fact, the result of the failure of "political" Governments and the need to undertake reforms that those Governments were not, or did not seem to be, able to accomplish (Lupo 2021): electoral reform in a majoritarian fashion, consistent with the abrogative referendum on the law on the election of the Senate, which had just taken place, as a result of the crisis of the party system manifested with "Tangentopoli" and in an economic context that was anything but easy, in the imminence of the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, in the case of the Ciampi Government; huge operations to consolidate public finances, also through unpopular but necessary reforms of the pension system, in the case of the Dini and Monti Governments, both of which succeeded Governments led by Berlusconi, with reference to which, in various ways, a break-up of the relative parliamentary majority and a clear inability to proceed with reforms long called for were recorded (emblematic, in 2011, was the letter signed by Trichet and Draghi, with which precisely such reforming interventions were urged). It should be underlined, however, that nowadays the European Union is performing a different policy style, with the aim of assisting the European Nation States in the difficult path to recovery from the pandemic by the means of expansive monetary and fiscal policies.

In the case of the Draghi Government, too, it is now a question of putting in place important reforms, on which the previous majority, which failed due to the withdrawal of Italia Viva, had struggled to find satisfactory meeting points: those required to take advantage of the funds allocated by the European Union, with the Next Generation EU.

In fact, as is well known, in the last months of the Conte II Government there has been disagreement within the majority on how to put on the Italian side of a complex euro-national process, in other words, on how to best pursue the national interest, in this case coinciding with the European one. For the purposes of pursuing one or the other, in fact, it is necessary to outline a restart of the Italian economy, able to remedy ancient defects (in particular, with regard to female employment and the length of time taken by civil justice) and, at the same time, to respond to the challenges of today (the

green economy and digitalization, among others): therefore, in consideration of the entity of the resources employed and the time horizon outlined, it is hoped for a full and convinced involvement of the widest possible spectrum of political forces (Lupo 2020). A dissent, therefore, not insignificant, especially for a Government, such as Conte 2, formed precisely in order to realign Italian and European political direction, the day after the elections to the European Parliament in May 2019 and the formation of the von der Leyen Commission.

Moreover, it is probably no coincidence that the element of greatest difficulty of the party system, at the basis of the failure of many political Governments and, above all, at the root of the formation of "technical" Governments such as the Monti Government and the Draghi Government, was represented by the relationship with the European Union (Gotor 2021). It is, the inability of the Italian political system to take those "systemic" decisions autonomously that have been requested for some time at the European level and considered necessary, in their own interest, by the institutions of the Union and the other member States; and, ultimately, to move in full coherence with that European constraint that is anything but a marginal part of the constitutional framework in force.

In light of this last element, a specific reflection seems to be necessary, albeit briefly and always with primary attention to its repercussions on the form of Government, on the effects that the formation of the Draghi Government has determined and is still determining on the political framework (Caravita 2021), and in particular on the position expressed by the Italian political forces with regard to European integration and the Euro.

The dominant argument, motivating the evident change of position among the most Eurosceptic forces, is that the European Union would have changed and would therefore no longer be identifiable with austerity policies, as had happened in the recent past. While it is true that, following the pandemic, there has been a decisive change of pace in the European Union's fiscal policy guidelines, as is necessary when faced with an emergency such as the one currently underway, this does not alter the fact that the European regulatory framework has remained essentially the same, albeit with significant prospects for reform (Fasone and Lindseth 2020).

This is why it can be pointed out that, after the 5 Stars Movement, and even the League and a part of the political forces to the left of the PD have understood, by supporting the Draghi Government and its program, that belonging to the European Union is an indisputable part of the current Constitution and that contesting it - as well as questioning Italy's membership of the Eurozone - inevitably ends up qualifying as "anti-system" the political forces that adopt this position. The Italian Government today has, as Federica Mogherini effectively noted in 2014, "two capitals," Rome and Brussels, and disavowing the existence of this second capital and forming a Government that is not fit to operate there as well ends up making Italian interests weaker, when not indefensible.

If this is the case, if the change at the top of the PD with Enrico Letta as new Secretary will fully develop its European potential, and if the oppositions, starting with FdI and the exiles of the 5 Stars Movement, will beware of hypothesizing Eurosceptics options and will also place themselves on the level of options compatible with the "composite" Constitution in force today, the step forward made, also in terms of political culture, could be very significant.

In continuity with what was done in the previous chapters with respect to the Renzi, Conte I and Conte II executives, we will now proceed to place the Draghi Government within the Policy Style Model elaborated by Richardson et al. (1982), taking into consideration, however, that since this Government took office towards the end of February, quantitative and qualitative data on legislative action are not yet available. In this case, we will proceed with an evaluation of the regulatory and parliamentary attitudes which have become evident in the course of these months.

From a purely legislative point of view, the different approach with which the Draghi executive is handling the response to the pandemic should be emphasized. First of all, in discontinuity with the Conte II executive, all the measures put in place from March to today to deal with the health emergency have been managed through specific decree-laws and no longer through dPCMs. This element is particularly significant, as it testifies to the precise will to return Parliament to the center of political and institutional debate. From the point of view of policies linked to the health emergency, the legislative production is particularly dense. Since taking office, the Draghi Government has sent 4 decree-laws to Parliament for their conversion into laws: the Easter Covid Decree, the April Covid Decree, the Reopening Decree and the Reopening-*Bis* Decree. All these decrees have or are currently undergoing two readings in the Chambers of Parliament, and none of these have been put to the vote of confidence by the Government.

At the same time, as did Giuseppe Conte, the current Prime Minister Mario Draghi is also making extensive use of press conferences to announce the contents of the legislative measures adopted by the various Councils of Ministers. Also in this sense, the differences in approach between the style adopted by Draghi and his predecessor are evident. If, on the one hand, Giuseppe Conte has always conducted press conferences alone, only rarely allowing journalists the chance to intervene, the current Prime Minister has completely reversed this trend. Firstly, Draghi's press conferences see the participation of other members of the Government, such as the Minister of the Economy, the Minister of Labor or even the President of the "*Istituto Superiore di Sanità*". Secondly, the press conferences convened by the current executive have focused on the content of the measures rather than the image of the Prime Minister, as in the case of the Conte Premiership (Ceccobelli and Vaccari 2021). In addition, there is constant interaction between Government representatives and journalists, an element that testifies to Mario Draghi's intention to complete a process of rapprochement between

institutions and civil society, a relationship that, during the course of the previous Government, had been particularly strained.

Turning our attention now to further legislative provisions adopted by the current Government, it must first be pointed out that they are always initiated within the executive through the instrument of decree-laws, an element that puts the current cabinet in line with the trend of the Second Republic. As far as content is concerned, it must be stressed that, to date, the Government's attitude is still anchored in a style of reaction rather than protectiveness. This stylistic characteristic is, however, due to the need for the current Government to put in place measures to restore the status quo prior to the pandemic. Within this branch of measures, there is certainly the *Sostegni* Decree, which concluded its parliamentary process on Wednesday, May 19, and the more recent *Sostegni-Bis* Decree, passed in the Council of Ministers on Thursday, May 20, a measure that will fully commit the 40 billion euro foreseen by the budget variance voted by Parliament on April 15.

However, the current executive is also showing a proactive and anticipatory approach. This style can be seen first of all in the decision of the Draghi Government, as soon as it took office, to completely revise the draft of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan inherited from the Conte II Government. Such a political action cannot go unnoticed, as it turns out to be explicative of a peculiar attitude of the current executive. Moreover, many of the measures announced by the Government, and which will be adopted in the coming weeks and months, such as the Simplification Decree, the PNRR Governance Decree, the reform of civil and criminal justice testify to the Government's desire to move with conviction towards a radical change of the status quo, aimed at bringing the country into line with other European countries. However, it should be pointed out that the conditions set by the European Commission for access by Member States to Next Generation EU funds have imposed on Italy the need to reform numerous areas of the State, an element that has, in any case, found favor with the current executive.

In order to place the Draghi Government within the Policy Style Model of Richardson *et al.* (1982), it should first of all be emphasized that at the present time, although the current executive is taking every decision rationally, after careful evaluation of the proposals in the field, including through continuous involvement of social partners and stakeholders, his Governmental attitude must be defined as a reactive approach.

On the other hand, from the point of view of relations between the Government and external society (both external veto players and the entire economic and social fabric of the nation), Draghi's approach aims to establish a relationship of solid and loyal collaboration between the institutions and the executive. To date, the leadership style adopted by the Premier appears to be akin to the consensual leadership designated by Richardson *et al.* (1982), which therefore indicates a consensus relationship between institutions and the outside world.

For the above reasons, albeit provisionally, it is possible to place the Draghi Government in the upper right quadrant of the Richardson *et al.* (1982) Policy Style Model, testifying the path of rapprochement between citizens and Government institutions, and the reactive style of the policies implemented to date. In any case, in the writer's opinion, in the coming months the Draghi Government will move to the upper left quadrant, insofar as it is clear that the current executive will leave a deep mark on the State system through a radical change in the *status quo*.

This outlook is based on an analysis of the current parliamentary activity of the Draghi executive. Specifically, as previously highlighted, if on the one hand the first legislative measures of the Draghi government were driven by the need to counter the socio-economic and financial effects produced by the pandemic crisis, on the other hand, the intention in the medium to long term seems to be to bring the country in line with the other European nations.

Specifically, the Sostegni-bis Decree, the more recent Decree on the Governance of the PNRR and simplifications, and the measures undertaken in order to implement the strategy on the digitalization of the country are apparently measures of such broad scope as to cross the pandemic management purposes. In the course of the coming months, the Draghi government, in order to correctly implement the projects contained in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan and comply with the parameters imposed by the European Commission to access the Next Generation EU funds, will be employed in a dense path of reform, which will involve the state fiscal, education and judicial system, as well as a more general simplification of the current Italian regulatory framework. These elements, if effectively implemented as announced by the Prime Minister, will allow this executive to leave an indelible furrow in the legislative history of this country.

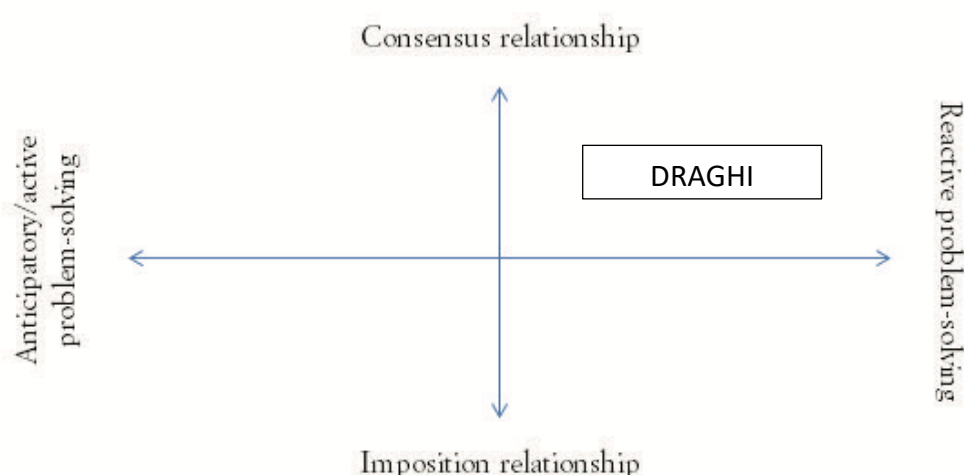


Figure 7.1 – Policy style model, matrix – Richardson et al. (1982) p.13

CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this thesis was to analyze the Renzi, Conte I, Conte II and Draghi Governments through the Policy Style Model theorized by Richardson *et al.* (1982). This analysis was aimed at identifying for each executive the respective policy style (response), in light of the legislative and programmatic style, and the relationship with civil society and external veto players (Tsebelis 1995). By placing the above-mentioned governments within a single cumulative matrix, it is possible to better appreciate their distinctive characteristics and the relative similarities and differences.

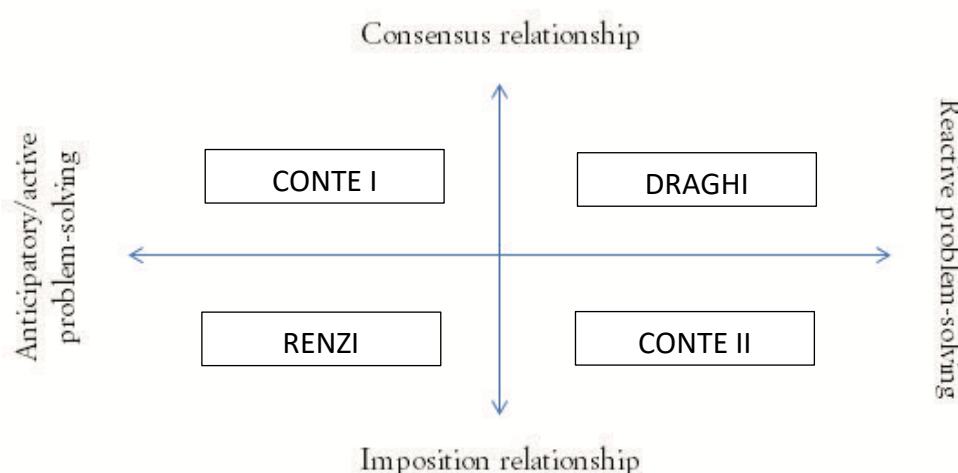


Figure 8.1 – Policy style model, matrix – Richardson et al. (1982) p.13

In order to make an effective comparison between the individual executives, it seems appropriate to recall the main characteristics of the individual dimensions that compose the matrix proposed by Richardson et al. (1982) which was used in the previous chapters as a reference key.

The matrix constructed by the American scholars aimed at evaluating the Governments' policy style (response) has on its horizontal axis what has been defined as the *governmental approach*. Such a dimension indicates the way in which the Government of a Country tackles policy problems: whether *rationally*, *i.e.* after an exhaustive analysis of the various alternatives and with a decision-making attitude oriented towards radical change, or *incrementally*, through successive approximations in which ends and means are simultaneously considered, given the great disparity of positions present in the country and in Parliament. These two categories clearly capture the Government's ability to either address problems early and with its own design capacity or simply respond to problems once they emerge and can no longer be ignored and refer to them as the "*anticipatory approach*" or "*reactive approach*."

The *vertical axis*, as underlined in the first chapter, describes the Government's relationship with society, *i.e.* whether it seeks consensus or is able to impose its vision and will, and would therefore be the axis of the "*weak state*" or "*strong state*," in the sense of being easily captured by various interests or being able to impose its will on those interests. There are obviously parallels also with the (neo)corporate or consociative traditions, on the one hand, and statist and dirigiste traditions, on the other, typical of the comparative political economy of the 1980s.

These dimensions jointly capture the ability of the political-administrative leadership to resist the pressures of society and its autonomous ability to develop responses to current problems, which can be implemented after building a broad consensus or can be imposed from above, aspects indicated by the "*consensus relationship*" as opposed to the "*imposition relationship*".

Having recalled the principal characteristics of this model, it is possible now to proceed to a comparative analysis of the four executives scrutinized in the course of this elaboration.

Firstly, the Draghi Government and the Conte II Government are both located to the right of the horizontal axis, insofar as both executives were defined in the fourth and third chapters, respectively, as cabinets characterized by a reactive approach. Both Governments, here under consideration, were (in the case of Conte II) and are (in the case of Draghi) strongly influenced by the difficult management of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, an element which undoubtedly represented and represents a strong catalyst for the programmatic and legislative attention.

Recalling now our analysis about the policy production and on legislative style of the Conte II Government, the legislative formulation since the outbreak of the pandemic in January 2020, has been particularly dense. Numerous have been the d.P.C.M.'s as well as the Law Decrees sent to the Chambers for the process of conversion. However, the legislative production of the Conte II executive was born with quite different aims with respect of those executives that have been defined as proactive. Specifically, the legislative activity from January 2020 until the end of the experience of this executive must be conceived, within the Policy Style Model adopted here, as contracted by a *reactive* rather than *proactive approach*. Specifically, the decrees promoted by the Conte II executive such as the Cure Italy Decree and the Relaunch Decree had the objective of putting a brake on the effects of the pandemic (understood as the problem to be solved) and bring back the *status quo* which was present before January 2020.

On the other hand, turning our attention now to legislative provisions adopted by the current Government, it must first be pointed out that they are always initiated within the executive through the instrument of Law Decrees, that puts the current cabinet in line with the trend of the Second Republic. As far as content is concerned, it must be stressed that, to date, the Government's attitude is still anchored in a style of reaction rather than protectiveness. This stylistic characteristic is, however, due to the need for the current Government to put in place measures to restore the *status*

quo prior to the pandemic. Within this branch of measures, there is certainly the *Sostegni* Decree, which concluded its parliamentary process on Wednesday, May 19, and the more recent *Sostegni-Bis* Decree, approved by the Council of Ministers on Thursday, May 20, a measure that will fully commit the 40 billion euro foreseen by the budget variance voted by Parliament on April 15.

Undoubtedly, the Draghi Government was set up to manage the social-economic consequences of the pandemic that began in the first months of the Conte II Government. As highlighted in the course of the thesis, it is the health crisis that represents the point of commonality between the Draghi executive and the Conte II, insofar as this difficult economic-health condition has forced the two executives who, to date, have found themselves having to manage the consequences, to adopt, even with a certain rapidity, policies and corrective measures aimed at safeguarding and preserving the status quo that was present in the country until January 2020 rather than to change it further. However, as far as the Draghi Government is concerned, it is possible to expect that the policies that this executive will find itself putting into place, in order to correctly implement the European Commission's precepts regarding the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, will allow it to produce significant changes in the current and past *status quo*. Despite the fact that the Draghi and Conte II Governments share a similar legislative imprint, the style of leadership and approach to external society has turned out to be at antipodes. If, Giuseppe Conte, since February 2020, has centralized the entire image of Italian executive power, going so far as to personalize its operations, on the other hand, the leadership and relational style of Mario Draghi appears to be more oriented towards the reconstitution of a consensus around the institutions, in order to overcome those divisions between the executive and civil society that had materialized during the previous cabinet.

Secondly, as can be seen from the cumulative matrix proposed earlier, the Conte I Government and the Renzi Government are both located to the left of the horizontal axis, insofar as both are characterized by what has been defined as a legislative approach of a proactive nature, and thus aimed at significantly modifying the status quo.

Following the analysis of the Renzi executive conducted in the second chapter, its entire legislative activity has been conducted *rationality*, following different analysis of the various available alternatives and with the intention of concretely and profoundly modifying the *status quo*. This dimension, clearly captured the Renzi Government's ability to address problems early and with its own design capacity, and for this reason it has to be conceived as representative of the *anticipatory approach*. This approach is undoubtedly the result of Renzi's continuous attempt to change the *status quo* and not let the veto players, internal to the Italian political system (his own party and the majority coalition), to outline the political direction of its executive. The reforms of the labor market, the "Buona Scuola", the "Italicum" and the "Renzinomics" must therefore be interpreted as anticipatory

policies, aimed at modernizing the bureaucratic sector of the country, which until then had struggled to keep up with its European competitors.

Although with appropriate differences with respect to the Renzi Government analyzed in the second chapter, it has been possible to assert that the legislative activity of the Conte I Government was also conducted rationally (despite the high rate of internal conflicts) and aimed at introducing a substantial modification of the country's legislative *status quo*. Both the League and the 5 Stars Movement have made articulated changes to various legislative sectors, such as welfare, security, immigration and the tax system. Specifically, the introduction of the citizenship income, the corrupt sweep law, the two security decrees and other measures analyzed in chapter three demonstrated the legislative proactivity of the executive mentioned here.

However, despite this point of commonality between Conte I and Renzi's cabinet, these two executives differ substantially in the role occupied by the Prime Minister within them, but also in the type of relationship established with external veto players and civil society.

If, as we have seen, Giuseppe Conte, in his first Government, has mainly played the role of mediator between his two deputies, Salvini and Di Maio, on the other hand Matteo Renzi has always shown himself to have a leading role in the executive between 2016 and 2018, to such an extent as to bring back into vogue the decade-long debate on the personalization of politics and Government. In addition, if the Conte I Government seemed embarked within a continuous electoral campaign perpetrated by the League and the 5 Stars Movement in search of an ever-growing electoral consensus, in the Renzi Government we saw the Prime Minister employed in a continuous path of imposition of his leadership, both within the Government and his party, but also towards external veto players, who fell within the trap of disintermediation built by the former mayor of Florence.

Thirdly, turning our attention now to the vertical axis of the matrix, the Conte I Government and the Draghi executive appear to be united by the so-called consensual leadership, although they differ in terms of proactivity/reactivity in the legislative production. Despite this commonality in terms of relations with external veto players and civil society, however, it is essential to underline the differences in the approach of the two executives, even though they are located in the same direction. The two Vice-Presidents of the Council in the Conte I Government, have lived their Government experience in a continuous electoral campaign, perpetrated not so much in order to bring institutions closer to civil society, but rather to fuel the consensus of their respective parties to the detriment of their Government partner. Although this attitude must be considered consensus leadership, it is diametrically opposed to what Draghi has done in the same sense. The current executive shares the same type of leadership but exercised it in a completely opposite way. Since February, Mario Draghi has been called to the difficult task of raising the Nation from the catastrophic consequences of the pandemic, an objective that, with all the difficulties of the case due to the management of a large and

heterogeneous Government majority, the current Prime Minister is fulfilling through a process of rapprochement between institutions and citizens. Therefore, this tendency of the Draghi Government should not be confused with a search for consensus in electoral terms, as it is quite evident that the current Prime Minister has not shown any ambitions of an electoral political nature. Draghi's objective, from February to today, has therefore seemed to be that of affirming the will of his Government to act in the exclusive interest of the citizens, to whom the proposed measures are presented at press conferences open to the participation of journalists and from which it does not appear that he wishes to unilaterally impose any decision.

Finally, the cumulative matrix shows that the Renzi Government and the Conte II Government are characterized by the same type of approach to external veto players and the citizenry in general: namely that of the imposition leadership.

In the course of the second chapter, through the example of the legislative process of the Jobs Act, it was highlighted how the former Prime Minister Renzi has put in place a strong and sustained disintermediation between his executive and all that resided outside Palazzo Chigi.

The approach that Renzi wanted to give to the decision-making process regarding the Jobs Act (taken here as one of the main examples in this sense) follows exactly this slope. Disintermediation and unilateralism have always been claimed by Renzi and his Executive as real values. On the other hand, Renzi has been capable to pursue his disintermediation strategy also by the means of the very broad mandate conferred to his Government by the delegated law voted by the Parliament.

The analysis conducted on the Renzi executive has highlighted that, in a situation in which the Prime Minister tends to verticalize decision-making, it is conceivable to expect a relationship between the executive and external stakeholders based on the idea of disintermediation.

A useful reading key for the Conte II Government, in order to understand the level of incisiveness of interest groups' instances within the choices operated by Conte, as underlined in the third chapter, are the General States of the Economy convened by Palazzo Chigi in June 2020. In the context of Villa Doria Pamphili, the Conte II Government involved numerous political interlocutors, such as the President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen, and presented to the social partners who attended the meetings the numerous projects that the executive had studied in order to boost the economic recovery of the country. However, although the representatives of interests presented their programmatic proposals, they remained partially unheeded. The General States did not allow the social partners to continuously influence the choices of the Government, which listened to the requests of the external veto players only in an interlocutory way, with the intention of presenting them with a recovery plan, rather than modifying it on the basis of the requests received.

There are many similarities between the Jobs Act devised by Matteo Renzi and the economic recovery plan presented by Giuseppe Conte in the context of the General States. In both cases, the

two Presidents of the Council involved interlocutors outside the Government such as companies, trade associations and interest groups. Nonetheless, this involvement had a merely interlocutory value, as both Governments continued unilaterally in their political design, making disintermediation a fundamental key to their programmatic work.

Despite the fact that the Renzi Government and the Conte II Government share the same style of leadership set-up, as has been extensively emphasized in the course of this analysis, they are at antipodes in terms of the nature of legislative production.

At the end of this analysis, it is important to highlight, among the four Governments analyzed in the course of this study, the executives who, within the cumulative matrix produced, were found to be the most distant both in terms of legislative production and in terms of relations with external subjects.

In this sense, it is emblematic to underline that the Conte I and Conte II Governments were not characterized by any element of commonality. Firstly, the role and attitude of Giuseppe Conte in the course of the two executives led by him changed drastically, going from shadow of Salvini and Di Maio to absolute leader and unilateral holder of executive power. Secondly, this change in the role of the Prime Minister, facilitated by the end of the coexistence between the League and the 5 Star Movement, has undoubtedly drastically altered the ways in which the Conte Government has positioned itself *vis-à-vis* external society, with an increasing rate of disintermediation and rigidity. Certainly, the pandemic has produced relevant effects in this sense, but further elements should be considered and analyzed especially regarding the communicative style of the Prime Minister in the Conte II executive.

Within our analysis, even the Draghi and Renzi Governments do not appear to be comparable in any of the macro aspects which constitute the Policy Style Model of Richardson et al. (1982). As we have seen, the socio-economic context of the two executives is not at all comparable.

However, despite the differences highlighted in this analysis, there is a single factor that can be found in common between the experiences of these four Governments. Both Renzi, Conte and Draghi, at the time they took on the role of Presidents of the Council of Ministers, were associated with an extra-parliamentary derivation, insofar as none of these held a parliamentary seat. Moreover, if both Conte and Draghi did not hold any political or party role in their previous political experience, Renzi at the time was the leader of his own party. Both had behind them a curriculum of technical rather than political experience.

This specific element would deserve further analysis in order to understand whether the Prime Minister's background, whether of a technical or political nature, could in any way influence the final direction of the executive. In this sense, a first response seems to come from the fact that, albeit with due differences, the first Conte Government (at a time when the former prime minister was far from

showing any political ambitions) is similar to the Draghi Government in terms of consensus leadership. In any case, this specific issue would require further investigation, given the topicality and centrality of the theme of the extra-political derivation of Italian prime ministers in recent years.

In conclusion, the objective of this thesis has been that of providing an empirical key to perform a comparative analysis between executives which, at first sight, might seem more similar or more distant than they actually were. In this regard, the Policy Style Model of Richardson et al. (1982) was undoubtedly an excellent tool to perform this ambitious task, due to its immediacy and ability to bring together elements that are not immediately related, such as legislative style and permeability to external demands.

At the end of this analysis, it is clear that the issue of executive power and the evolution of the role of the Prime Minister will always be highly topical until this office will be codified with greater clarity and certain perimeters within the Constitution. Until that time, Italy will continue to witness this continuous pendulum between the widening of the prerogatives of the executive power and the resistance of the legislative power to any further constraints to its representative role, with the Prime Minister emerging as the protagonist of this struggle.

ABSTRACT

Il presente elaborato si pone l'obiettivo di analizzare e valutare il “*policy stile (response)*” di quattro differenti Governi italiani, facenti parte della c.d. Seconda Repubblica.

Come noto, con il termine Seconda Repubblica si fa riferimento alla storia politica italiana dal 1992 ai giorni nostri. Proprio il 1992 rappresenta un punto di svolta nel panorama politico italiano, determinato dalla crisi del sistema dei partiti della c.d. Prima Repubblica, in seguito allo scandalo di c.d. Tangentopoli, e dalla entrata in vigore del Trattato di Maastricht.

Tali eventi hanno influenzato in modo determinante tutti i governi che si sono succeduti, in particolare, ai fini dell'analisi condotta nel presente elaborato, si è proceduto ad analizzare quattro diversi governi – Renzi, Conte I, Conte II, Draghi I - che, per le motivazioni che si avranno modo di esporre, rappresentano un campione significativo della recente storia politica italiana.

Al fine di condurre un'analisi in chiave comparatistica dei diversi approcci di governo, si è scelto di utilizzare il “*Policy style Model*”, elaborato nel 1982 da Richardson *et. al.*

Tale modello, basato su un'analisi del contesto macro-istituzionale, consente di collocare i singoli governi all'interno di una matrice strutturata su due dimensioni di ricerca: l'approccio governativo (inteso come il modo in cui gli esecutivi prendono le loro decisioni e la natura delle stesse) e la relazione intercorrente tra l'esecutivo e la società civile [intesa come il grado di permeabilità del governo alle istanze dei portatori di interesse, della società civile e degli c.d. *external veto players* (Tzebelis 1995)].

Dunque, nel corso del primo capitolo, si è inteso gettare le basi per la successiva analisi dei quattro governi sopra menzionati, analizzando la trasformazione del potere esecutivo italiano sin dallo Statuto Albertino del 1848.

Il potere esecutivo, in special modo in Italia, come si è avuto modo di constatare, è un'istituzione soggetta a continui mutamenti, determinati, in primo luogo, dalla configurazione del sistema politico nonché dalle interazioni tra i partiti e, in secondo luogo, dalla figura del Primo Ministro (*i.e.* il Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri). Tale figura riveste senza dubbio un ruolo cruciale nel panorama della produzione legislativa governativa, essendo la sua capacità politica e di *leadership* determinante nell'influenzare le modalità di attuazione delle politiche perseguite.

Nel condurre la suddetta analisi, è emerso incontrovertibilmente come l'esperienza fascista si ponga quale punto di rottura rispetto al passato. Proprio la deriva assolutista del potere esecutivo, sperimentata nel ventennio nero, ha spinto l'Assemblea Costituente, negli anni antecedenti all'adozione della Costituzione italiana del 1948 (tutt'oggi vigente), a prevedere in capo al Primo

Ministro e al Governo vincoli più stringenti nell'esercizio delle prerogative proprie del potere esecutivo.

Tali previsioni, che si concretizzavano in una mancanza di una puntuale disciplina di tali prerogative, se da un lato intendevano evitare ogni e qualsivoglia eventuale deriva assolutista, hanno tuttavia determinato non poche criticità in relazione alla stabilità nonché all'autonomia del Governo rispetto al Capo dello Stato (*i.e.* il Presidente della Repubblica) e al Parlamento.

Nello specifico, la formulazione normativa scelta dall'Assemblea Costituente non forniva una specifica disciplina delle prerogative del potere esecutivo, determinando quindi un accrescimento del potere attribuito al Parlamento nonché non indifferenti problemi di stabilità dei governi.

Tali questioni sono state oggetto di attenzione da parte di tutti i Governi a partire dagli anni '80, in particolare i Governi De Mita (DC) e Craxi (PSI) si sono prodigati al fine di ridurre i vincoli posti dalla Costituente e, conseguentemente, disciplinare e dunque ampliare le prerogative di titolarità del potere esecutivo.

Indubbiamente, la configurazione dei partiti nella Prima Repubblica, caratterizzati da un pluralismo estremo e polarizzato (Sartori 1976), limitava fortemente la stabilità e l'autonomia dei governi *vis a vis* con il Parlamento e con le strutture partitiche, determinando che leggi venissero ideate e varate nei quartieri generali dei partiti di maggioranza e non già in seno al Governo. Tale forza, in capo ai partiti, produceva l'ulteriore conseguenza di rimettere alla volontà dei *leader* degli stessi le sorti del Governo in carica.

Il quadro sin qui delineato ha subito un drastico mutamento nel 1992, in seguito alle vicende giudiziarie di Tangentopoli, che coinvolgendo l'intera classe dirigente dei principali partiti della Prima Repubblica (su tutti, il Partito Socialista Italiano), hanno accelerato il processo di deterioramento di realtà politiche che sino a quel momento avevano sperimentato una posizione di controllo sulle istituzioni repubblicane (PSI, PCI e DC).

Tale evento, ha dunque reso necessario per l'allora Presidente della Repubblica in carica, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, affidare la nazione in mano ad un Governo tecnico, individuando in Carlo Azeglio Ciampi la figura idonea a guidare il paese nella transizione tra la Prima Repubblica e quella che sarà poi nota come la Seconda Repubblica.

Tale transizione ha determinato notevoli mutamenti nell'assetto del Paese, incidendo anche su elementi chiave della democrazia, quale è il sistema elettorale. Lo storico sistema proporzionale ha dunque subito una momentanea battuta d'arresto ad opera del Governo Ciampi, il quale in un'ottica di radicale rottura rispetto al passato e allo scopo di agevolare la formazione e la stabilità dei futuri Governi, ha optato per l'adozione di un sistema elettorale maggioritario (c.d. *Mattarellum*, 1993).

In un contesto di trasformazione, quale quello in cui l'Italia si è trovata negli anni '90, si è assistito all'emergere di nuove personalità e nuovi partiti, su tutti, Silvio Berlusconi con il suo partito Forza

Italia e Romano Prodi, storico leader del centro sinistra negli anni a cavallo tra il vecchio e il nuovo millennio.

Proprio la personalità di Silvio Berlusconi, indiscusso protagonista della scena politica negli anni compresi tra il 1994 e il 2011, ha rappresentato il principale punto di svolta nella figura del Leader - Primo Ministro sino a quel momento sperimentate.

La forte capacità di *leadership* dimostrata, nonché la tendenza alla personalizzazione del partito da lui fondato (Forza Italia), hanno influenzato in maniera determinante la sua figura quale Primo Ministro.

Come si è avuto modo di osservare, la *leadership* e la personificazione dell'ufficio del Primo Ministro hanno portato i vari Governi Berlusconi, a tentare di accrescere ed ampliare il potere del Premier e del Governo rispetto agli altri attori costituzionali, rendendo la figura di Silvio Berlusconi assimilabile, per qualche verso, a quella di Craxi.

Proprio le suddette tendenze e volontà di accrescimento dei poteri in capo all'Esecutivo, hanno portato nel 2006 ad un tentativo di riforma costituzionale, poi bocciato dai cittadini italiani in sede di referendum, volto a stravolgere l'allora vigente assetto costituzionale.

Successivamente, sarà necessario attendere sino all'ascesa di Matteo Renzi nel 2014 per ritrovare le medesime peculiarità, caratterizzate da una forte personalizzazione, verticalizzazione e presidenzializzazione del potere esecutivo (così come teorizzate, tra gli altri, da Garzia, Musella e Calise), individuate per la prima volta in Bettino Craxi, e in seguito in Silvio Berlusconi.

Dunque, volgendo di nuovo lo sguardo al *focus* della nostra analisi, proprio il Governo Renzi è il primo dei quattro Governi analizzati e valutati attraverso il "*Policy style Model*" di Richardson *et. al.* Dall'analisi condotta, è emersa *in primis* la peculiarità della figura politica di Matteo Renzi, affermatosi nel panorama politico italiano quale *leader* del Partito Democratico e "rottamatore" della precedente classe dirigente del partito. Proprio tale caratteristica è senza dubbio il *fil rouge* di tutta la produzione normativa del suo Governo, fortemente riformista e con uno *storytelling* legato alla sua volontà di dimostrare un netto distacco rispetto ai predecessori.

Tuttavia, nonostante sotto tale aspetto Renzi rappresenti un punto di svolta rispetto al passato, egli presenta delle caratteristiche proprie del *leader* berlusconiano. In particolare, la forte verticalizzazione e personalizzazione dell'ufficio del Primo Ministro e lo scarso coinvolgimento degli attori esterni (*i.e.* dei portatori di interessi) nella produzione legislativa, hanno rappresentato gli elementi distintivi del Governo Renzi.

A tal fine, basti volgere lo sguardo al c.d. *Jobs Act*, riforma del lavoro e delle politiche attive, a cui Renzi ha affidato la propria gloria. In tale occasione è emerso incontrovertibilmente il suo spirito fortemente personalistico, attraverso l'adozione della politica della disintermediazione (Pritoni e Sacchi 2017) che rendeva impossibile per gli attori esterni al Governo influenzare sensibilmente le

decisioni dello stesso, essendo questi coinvolti solo in via consultiva. In tale occasione è emerso anche il suo *policy style*, atto al *problem solving*, ma in chiave anticipatoria e razionale.

Da tale analisi emerge incontrovertibilmente la forza della figura del Primo Ministro nel Governo Renzi, il quale, ha scelto di esercitare tale forza, non già mediante un programma di riforma, come Silvio Berlusconi prima di lui, bensì attraverso le modalità operative e l'atteggiamento politico.

Nella matrice di Richardson *et al.* si colloca nel quadrante in basso a sinistra, in quanto la *leadership* di Renzi è sicuramente di tipo impositivo (le idee politiche provenivano sempre dal Governo e venivano poi imposte agli attori esterni), vi è una forte tendenza al problem solving ma l'approccio è chiaramente anticipatorio.

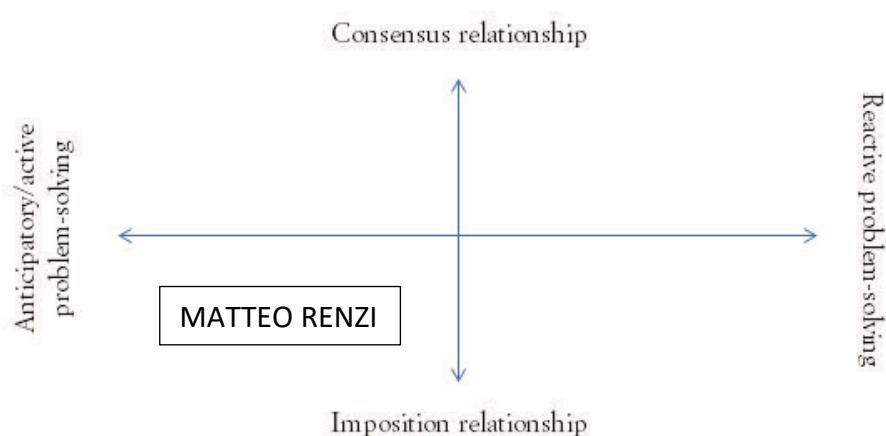


Figure 9.1 – Policy style model, matrix – Richardson et al. (1982) p.13

Proseguendo la nostra analisi, il secondo ed il terzo Governo analizzati sono quelli presieduti da Giuseppe Conte (Conte I e Conte II) che, stante le profonde differenze storiche di cui si dirà, sono stati oggetto di due analisi ben distinte.

Il primo Governo Conte, nato a seguito delle elezioni del 2018, si colloca in un contesto in cui, dato il sistema elettorale misto (c.d. *Rosatellum*), il risultato del voto aveva prodotto risultati poco chiari. I due partiti che in sede elettorale avevano raccolto la maggior parte del consenso popolare (Lega e Movimento 5 Stelle), in virtù delle caratteristiche della legge elettorale vigente, si trovavano nell'impossibilità di governare autonomamente, rendendo necessario, al fine di procedere alla formazione del Governo, un accordo post-elettorale, della stessa stregua di quelli stipulati dai vari partiti nel corso della Prima Repubblica.

Come si è avuto modo di notare, la scelta di Giuseppe Conte, soggetto del tutto esterno alla realtà politica italiana sino a quel momento, quale Primo Ministro, accompagnato dai due *leader* dei partiti

vincitori quali suoi vice [Salvini (Lega) e Di Maio (M5S)], rappresenta un *unicum* nella storia del nostro Paese.

In questa situazione, mai sperimentata prima nel panorama politico italiano, in cui le due forze di Governo erano rappresentate da due *leader* così ingombranti e diversi sul piano ideologico, Giuseppe Conte rivestiva il ruolo di arbitro, volto al mantenimento degli equilibri all'interno dell'esecutivo e senza particolare incidenza sulle scelte programmatiche.

Per ciò che ha riguardato le politiche perseguite dal Governo, è possibile ritenere che le stesse siano state di tipo anticipatorio, atte a modificare lo *status quo*, attraverso le numerose riforme varate (in questa sede si rinvia al c.d. reddito di cittadinanza, i decreti sicurezza, etc..).

Rispetto alla *leadership*, Giuseppe Conte è senza dubbio molto distante da Matteo Renzi, stante la sua costante ricerca di consenso tra gli elettori e tra i portatori di interesse.

Nella matrice di di Richardson *et al.*, il Governo Conte I si colloca nel quadrante in alto a sinistra, in quanto caratterizzato da politiche proattive e riformiste, ma da uno stile di *leadership* orientata al consenso, elemento desumibile dalla continua campagna elettorale di Salvini e Di Maio.

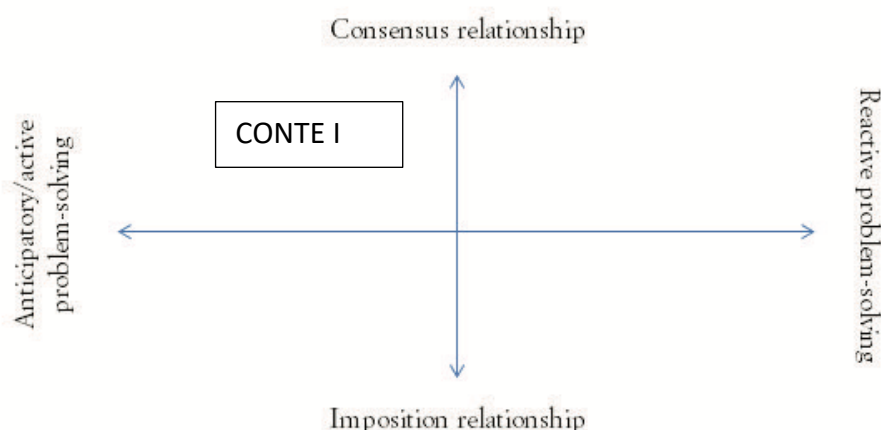


Figure 10.1 – Policy style model, matrix – Richardson et al. (1982) p.13

Tale unione, tra la Lega e il Movimento 5 Stelle, che fu tutto fuor che idilliaca, si ruppe definitivamente in seguito ai risultati delle elezioni europee del 2019. In tale occasione il partito di Matteo Salvini risultò essere il preferito dagli italiani e determinò la volontà dello stesso di esercitare maggior peso e controllo all'interno dell'esecutivo ma, a fronte del diniego da parte dei colleghi di Governo, Salvini decise di scrivere la parola fine, con la speranza in tal modo di anticipare la chiamata alle urne degli italiani.

Tuttavia, il Presidente della Repubblica Sergio Mattarella, non dando seguito alle richieste di Matteo Salvini, conferì a Giuseppe Conte il mandato al fine di formare un nuovo governo (Conte II), appoggiato dal Movimento Cinque Stelle e dal Partito Democratico.

Il Governo Conte II ha senza dubbio lasciato un segno indelebile nella storia repubblicana, guidando il paese nel corso della pandemia globale da Covid-19.

Proprio in tal senso, in riferimento alla figura di Giuseppe Conte come Primo Ministro, l'avvento della pandemia rappresenta un punto di rottura. Se dapprima lo stesso era stato ritenuto l'ombra dei suoi due vice nel corso del Conte I, successivamente si è trasformato in una figura fortemente ispirata alla verticalizzazione e alla centralizzazione dell'ufficio da lui ricoperto nel Conte II.

Nello specifico, la produzione legislativa del Governo Conte II è stata caratterizzata da impulso reattivo, e non già proattivo, determinato dalla necessità di ripristinare lo *status quo* pre-pandemico, attuato mediante l'utilizzo dei decreti-legge, dei decreti del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri nonché un assiduo ricorso al voto di fiducia, operando, di fatto, uno svuotamento dei poteri del Parlamento.

Dunque, il Governo Conte II, per molti versi assimilabile al Governo Renzi, ha agito attuando una politica di disintermediazione, volta ad accentrare tutte le prerogative in capo al Presidente del Consiglio e assumere ogni e qualsiasi decisione all'interno del Governo, non lasciando spazio alcuno agli attori esterni.

Nella matrice di Richardson *et al.*, il Governo Conte II si colloca nel quadrante in basso a destra, in quanto caratterizzato da politiche reattive e uno stile di *leadership* di natura impositiva.

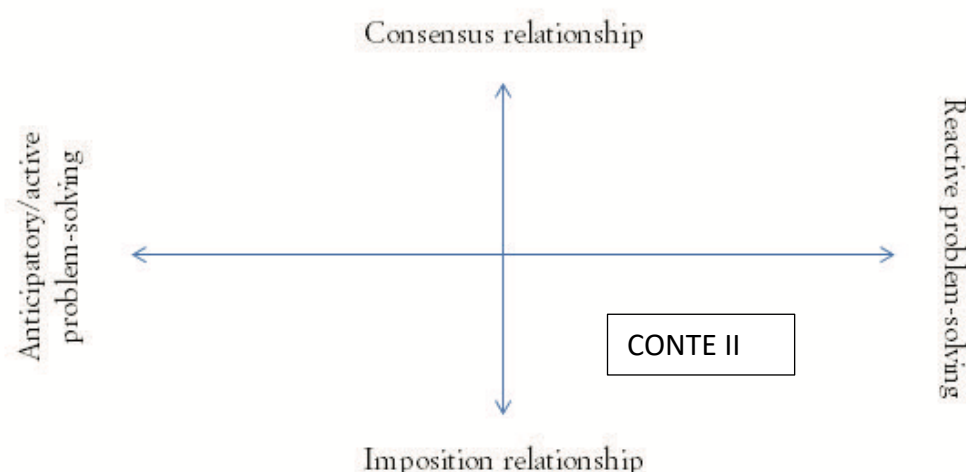


Figure 11.1 – Policy style model, matrix – Richardson et al. (1982) p.13

Da ultimo, si è analizzato il Governo Draghi, quarto Governo tecnico della storia repubblicana.

Tale Governo, è stato valutato sulla base delle differenze e delle analogie rispetto ai suoi predecessori (i Governi Ciampi, Dini e Monti), alla luce del dibattito sull'ascesa di forme di governo tecnocratiche in contesti di crisi dei sistemi politici (McDonnell e Valbruzzi 2014), e della crisi del sistema del governo dei partiti.

Come si è avuto modo di osservare, il Governo Draghi è caratterizzato, al pari dei suoi predecessori, da uno stile di *policy* di stampo reattivo, dovuto alla necessità di risolvere le problematiche (perlopiù economiche) derivate dall'avvento pandemia.

Tuttavia, lo stile di *leadership* è orientato al consenso, volto a rendere i cittadini partecipi e consapevoli delle scelte adottate dal Governo e dal Parlamento. Tale circostanza risulta confermata dalla scelta di ricorrere all'uso dei decreti-legge in luogo dei decreti del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, sancendo un netto distacco dallo stile adottato nel Governo Conte II.

Nella matrice di Richardson *et al.*, il Governo Draghi si colloca nel quadrante in alto a destra, in quanto caratterizzato da politiche reattive e uno stile di *leadership* orientato al consenso.

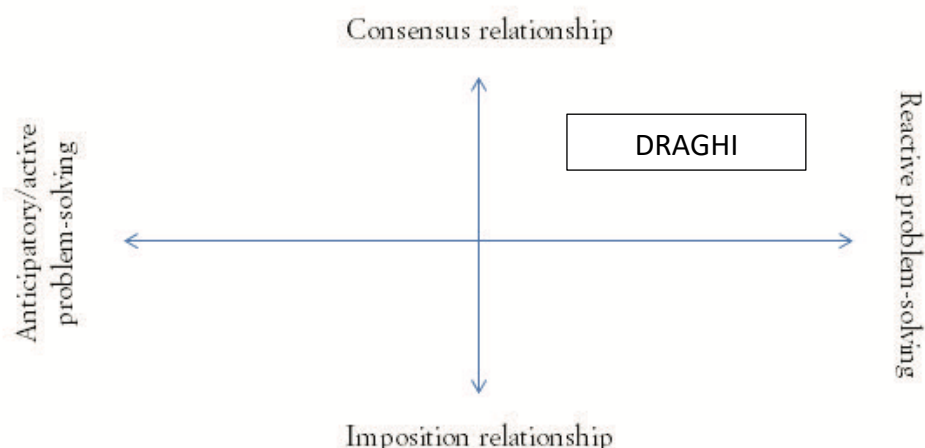


Figure 12.1 – Policy style model, matrix – Richardson et al. (1982) p.13

Ad ogni modo, dall'analisi svolta in relazione alle più recenti tendenze del Governo in carica, è possibile ritenere che la posizione di Mario Draghi nella matrice subirà una modifica. Stante le numerose riforme in cantiere, tra cui quelle afferenti la giustizia, la scuola, il sistema tributario, etc..., è evidente la volontà del Governo di lasciare un'impronta indelebile nella storia repubblicana italiana, determinando un drastico cambiamento nel sistema del Paese, anche rispetto allo *status quo* pre-pandemico, e un conseguente cambio di collocazione nella matrice, verso un approccio proattivo e non più reattivo.

In conclusione, posizionando sulla matrice di Richardson *et al.* tutti i Governi analizzati nel corso del presente elaborato, è possibile concludere che senza dubbio i Governi Conte I e Draghi condividono

lo stesso stile di *leadership*, ma presentano diversità in riferimento allo stile di produzione legislativa (uno proattivo e l'altro reattivo).

Del pari, i Governi Renzi e Conte II condividono lo stile di *leadership*, ma presentano una diversa natura in riferimento allo stile di *policy*.

I Governi Draghi e Conte II evidenziano forti similitudini quanto a *policy style*, marcatamente di stampo reattivo, ma differiscono in quanto a *leadership*. Allo stesso modo i Governi Renzi e Conte I non presentano comunanze in fatto di *leadership*, ma sono del tutto assimilabili avendo riguardo allo stile riformista di *policy*.

Infine, dunque, i più distanti all'interno della matrice sono i Governi Renzi e Draghi, e Conte I e Conte II, i quali non presentano alcun tratto comune.

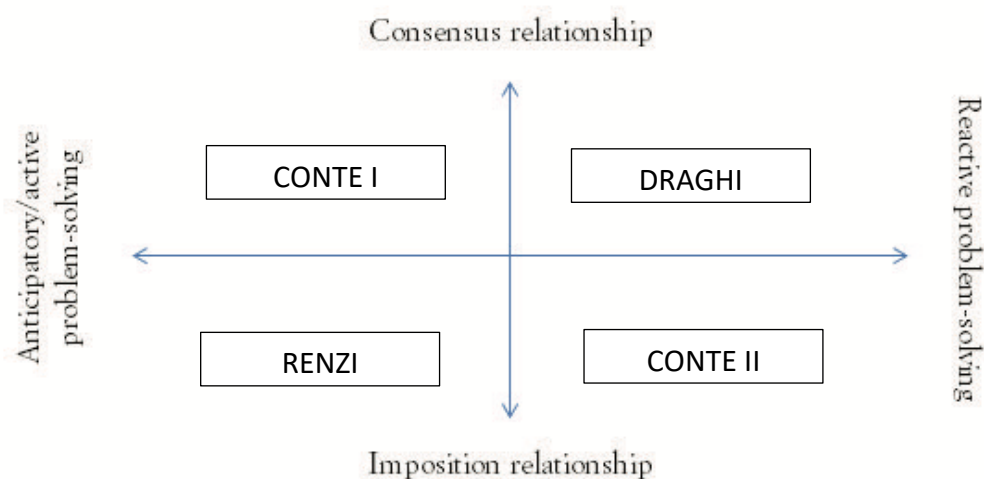


Figure 13.1 – Policy style model, matrix – Richardson et al. (1982) p.13

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