

THE SIGNS OF PRESIDENTIALIZATION
OF THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

– *Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies from the 1980s* –

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According to the significant tendency of the last two decades cabinets and prime ministers are attaining predominance in an increasing number of fields, putting the parliament and the opposition at a disadvantage. This process has created a hybrid form which is neither a pure parliamentarianism any more nor a presidential system yet.

This tendency appears significantly in the reforms of the *Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies* which have accelerated the decision-making processes and strengthened the governmental activities.

Demonstrating the various stepping-stones of moving toward a presidential model, the paper focuses on how this tendency has been represented in the Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies and in the intentions of their modification, especially in the proposals of Legislation XVI. On the other hand it analyses how the dynamics of presidentialization have inspired the reinforcement of the resources at the disposal of the parliamentary opposition and its leader's institutionalization.

Comparing the presidentialization tendency and the developments of the parliamentary opposition the paper analyses the balance of power in the Italian parliament.

Keywords: parliament, opposition, balance of power, government, Rules of Procedure, presidentialization.

1. Reforms of the Rules of Procedure: the reinforcement of the Government versus the Parliament

After the decades-long feebleness of the Italian Governments, a revolution of the executive began with the reversal of the balance of power between the Government and Parliament in the 1980s, in which the previous has attained predominance in an increasing number of fields putting the parliament, and especially the opposition, at a disadvantage. This tendency was brought about by the extraordinary increase of the Government's normative activities, the reorganization of the PM's Office,¹ the strengthening of the PM's monocratic powers,² which occurred with a more general widening and consolidation of the role of the Government, attributing it various competencies and directional capacities to it, and by the relations with the EU-institutions.

1.1 The Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies in the 1980s

In the first three decades of the Italian Republic the executive was a hostage to the procedures, and decisions determined by the conflicts and/or agreements between the parties of the majority and the opposition. The Governments lacked a determinant centre of coordination, were fragmented by their dissociated ministers and unable to realise a proper and coherent programme.

The turning point arrived at the beginning of the 1980s, when the Governments started to conquer the leadership in the legislative processes. During this period the modifications of the Rules of Procedure have proposed to make the decision-making processes more efficient, to enable the Governments to realise their programmes in the Parliament and to exceed the principle of *consociativismo* (the practice of associating the opposition in governmental decisions) and unanimity.

These reforms were inspired by the willingness to make legislative procedures and parliamentary work more rational and efficient on the one hand, and by the demand for introducing a principle of majority and

¹ The creation of a strong apparatus of administrative support for the PM's Office, the development of the PM's staff, and the organization of the departments at the PM's Office on the basis of the principal functions of policy-making.

² Calise (2005).

strengthening the governmental powers on the other. As a part of this tendency the PM's figure was reinforced in the Government and the concept of 'governability' was introduced³.

The Government has obtained a major capacity to control the parliamentary works with the reforms and developed the concept of 'Government in Parliament', by a significant growth of its proper normative acts.⁴

1.2. *Changes of the 1990s.*

From the 1990s on the basis of the modifications of the Rules of Procedure of the previous decade the Governments have had an autonomous normative production, a proper and real power, which generated its preponderance on the general parliamentary legislative processes. The Government has become the major 'producer of normative acts'.⁵

As a consequence of the governmental normative power's development, the role of the Parliament has changed. The tendency has emphasized the control and inspective nature of the Parliament on the one hand, and it has reduced the number of legislative interventions on the other, thus decreasing the possibility of dedicating major attention to the quality of law-making.

The electoral reform of 1993, the new, mainly majoritarian system and its effects have contributed the above mentioned tendency in which the Parliament has de facto lost its so called elective function of the Government, since the electoral result expresses the governmental coalition and the PM, directly and definitely.⁶

Furthermore, the internal relations of the executive have also changed by rendering the Government more cohesive and conducted. Both, the collective character of the governmental activities and the PM's leadership capacity were strengthened. The ministers were bound to the PM's coordinated and disciplined actions⁷.

After the changes in the beginning of the 1990s there was a demand for harmonizing the institutions with the new political order by the reform of the Rules of Procedure and of the Constitution.

1.2.1. *Reforms of the Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies between 1996 and 1999.*

The last reforms of the Rules of Procedure were inspired by the demand to create a majoritarian democracy, giving the Government-majority the possibility to develop and realise its policies through the Parliament, without by-passing it (as it has happened in the past by abnormal use of urgent decree-making) and attributing guarantees to the opposition for its institutional role.

The main lines of the purposes were to create institutional solutions for the improvement of the collaboration between the Government and its parliamentary majority and the realization of a constructive dialogue with the opposition. The reforms of the Rules of Procedure have realised four fundamental innovations in these aspects: have given major efficiency for the decision-making processes through the discovery of the importance of the 'time factor', as an essential resource for regulating and governing; have attributed adequate instruments to the Government for being able to realise its policies in the Parliament; have increased the quality of the legislative 'production', pursuing the aim of clarity and simplification; have adjusted the political debates in the legislative assembly to the disciplines of the majoritarian decision-making system, which allows a wide possibility for confrontations between the programme of the Government and the programme of the opposition and makes the political control of the Government's decisions more efficient.⁸

1.2.1.1. *Reforms for developing the efficiency of decision-making processes.* The reforms have eliminated the principle of *consociativismo* disciplined by the Rules of Procedure of 1971.⁹ They have emphasized the

³ The idea of attributing adequate procedural instruments for enabling the government to realise its policies. A detailed exposition of the reforms in the 1980s is given in De Cesare (1999), Fusaro (1999), Lippolis (2001, 2008), Mazzoni Honorati (1999)

⁴ In 1981 the discipline of the times (Article 39) and the regulation of the presentation of amendments (Article 85) was modified. In 1983 the session of the budget was introduced (Articles 119,120,121,123) and the parliamentary group leaders' powers were reduced by the introduction of various quorums (Article 46), in 1986 the discussion-times were reduced (Article 39), in 1988 the criteria of the secret ballot was exceeded for limiting the activity of the so-called "*franchi tiratori*", the deputies of the majority who have voted against the government in secret (Article 49) and in 1990 the Conference of Group Chairpersons has received the right for deciding on the agenda of the House with the obligation of considering the priorities of the government (Article 23).

⁵ The normative activity of the government expanded from the 1990s in three main fields: in the urgent decree-making, in delegated decrees and in "*regolamenti di delegificazione*" (it is adopted after the parliament has allowed the government to regulate a matter which previously was regulated by law).

⁶ This effect is also reinforced by the electoral law reform of 2005.

⁷ With the internal rules of the government in 1993 and the reorganization of the secretary general in 1994.

⁸ Lippolis (2008) pp. 5-26.

⁹ Morrone (1998) pp. 449-494.

figure of the president of the Chamber¹⁰ by determining that if the newly introduced quorum¹¹ in the Conference of Group Chairpersons is not obtained,¹² which happens nearly always,¹³ he is the person who decides on the programme of business and on the order of business with some limits.¹⁴

For the programming the new Rules of Procedure have introduced the immediate application of the so-called '*contingentamento dei tempi*' (the division of time among parliamentary groups) for the arguments registered in the order of business for every phase.¹⁵ This general and immediate application with the elimination of the previous regulations has improved the efficiency of the organization of business significantly.

Furthermore, the reforms have reduced the possibilities of the obstructive activities in the programming and have narrowed the possibilities for presenting amendments for obstructive purposes on a large scale.¹⁶ Besides, they have restricted the other popular 'weapon' of the parliamentary opposition, the so-called '*numero legale*' (the presence of a quorum).¹⁷

To assure the real debates of the bills and the possibility to amend them, the reforms have provided the requirement according to which the consideration of bills in Committees acting in a drafting capacity cannot last less than two months.

To rationalize the legislative activity the new Rules of Procedure have distinguished the type of the bills' consideration and the approval processes on the basis of their subjects.¹⁸

Regarding the legislative procedures of bills declared urgent, the reforms have made the declaration process of urgency faster and assured to them derogative times and conditions.¹⁹ Nevertheless the modifications in favour of the bills declared urgent, some limits have been introduced, such as the maximization of their number (no more than five bills, in the case of quarterly programmes, or three, in the case of bimonthly programmes, may be declared urgent for each programme of business), restrictions for the types of bills which may be declared urgent (urgency may not be declared for constitutional bills or for the bills regarding issues of exception al political, social or economic significance and relating to rights enshrined in the Part I of the Constitution)²⁰ and the requirement of an explanatory memorandum of the Government for the declaration.²¹

The new Rules have introduced unlinear reforms also for the other type of the Government's normative action for the confirmation of decree-laws. They determine that the confirming bill shall be entered as the

¹⁰ Also for this motive the change of the election of the presidents of the House from 1994 is significant. The majority from the Legislation XII till now has elected the own representatives for the President of the House, abandoning the consociative model. It is important for the relation between the majority and the opposition because the president has incisive power in the organization of business. Lippolis (2000)

¹¹ The new requirement is equal to at least 75 per cent of the deputies.

¹² This quorum is accessible only in particular political conditions and so has very similar effects to the discipline of unanimity.

¹³ Gianniti e Lupo (2004) p. 230.

¹⁴ He always has to take into consideration the government's priorities and the proposals of the groups. He cannot attribute the government more than the half of the available time for the consideration of bills; for the governmental bills he has to guarantee for the groups of the opposition more time in the debate than the group of the majority and for the proposals of the opposition he has to reserve the 20 per cent of the of the arguments. Lippolis (2001) pp. 613-658.

¹⁵ r. C. Article 24, paragraph 5.

¹⁶ The new Rules of Procedure determines that "additional sections and amendments shall, as a rule, be tabled and discussed in Committees. New additional sections and amendments, and those rejected at the Committee stage, may however be tabled in the House, up to the day preceding the sitting in which the debate on the sections is to begin, as long as they fall within the context of the subjects already considered in the text or in any amendments tabled and declared admissible at the Committee stage." r. C. Article 86, paragraph 1.

The next step of this tendency was the reform according to which "the President of the Chamber may also put any amendments, additional sections and sub-amendments tabled by deputies declaring their dissent from their respective Groups, to the vote, that he or she recognizes as relevant.

¹⁷ The new Rules of Procedure declare the principle according to which the participation at the parliamentary works is the deputies' duty. r. C. Article 48-*bis*.

¹⁸ r.C. Articles 23,24, 27 e 49.

¹⁹ A. Morrone (1998) pp. 475-476.

²⁰ r.C. Article 69.

²¹ The government has to attach an explanatory memorandum to the bill which describes the necessity and urgency with which the decree needs to be adopted, shall be accounted for and the expected effects of its implementation, as well as the impact of its provisions on existing legislation shall be described. The Committee to which the confirming bill is referred may ask the Government to update the information provided in the explanatory memorandum, with reference also to individual provisions in the decree-law. r. C. Article 96-*bis*.

A further, new limit is that a Group Chairperson, or twenty deputies, may table a preliminary question referring to the content of the bill or of the decree-law related to. (Article 96-*bis*, paragraph 2-3)

first item on the agenda of the sittings of the Committee to which it has been referred²² on the one hand but they set that not more than half of the overall time available shall be devoted to this subject,²³ on the other.

1.2.1.2. *The quality of legislative acts.* To develop the quality of legislative acts, the new Rules have established the institution of the Committee on Legislation with equal representation for the majority and the opposition. The Committee shall express its opinion to the other Committees on the bills that the latter are considering. It may express an opinion on the quality of the texts, with regard to their homogeneity, simplicity, clarity and correctness of wording, and to their effectiveness in simplifying and reorganising the legislation currently in force.²⁴

1.2.1.3. *Confrontations and control mechanisms.* To assure a wider space for confrontations and control mechanisms the reforms have determined that both the activity of the Committee on Legislation and the preliminary inquiries can be requested by a minority of a Commission, assuring the opposition the possibility to be subjected to a comparison with the governmental policy.

1.2.1.4. *Adequate instruments for the Government.* By the innovations of various fields the reforms have made the Government more visible both at the strategic level of the organization of business and at the operative level of legislative activity taking a step towards a stronger integration and real coordination between the executive and legislative power.

By rationalizing, simplifying and accelerating the procedures the Government has got the necessary instruments to be able to put into normative measures in the Parliament on the one hand and by discouraging the Government's recourse for decree-laws, the Parliament has received a chance to be the creative laboratory in which the Government's political decisions can be converted into legislative acts, on the other²⁵

However, the realization of the reforms shows that the innovations do not have had the adequate effects to protect the Parliament from the negative effects of the bipolar majoritarian system.

1.3. *Proposals for modifying the Rules of Procedure after 1999*

1.3.1. *Proposals for modifying the Rules of Procedure in the Legislation XIV.* In the Legislation XIV 12 proposals were presented for the Presidency, six by the Government-majority and six by the parties of the opposition. Among these proposals there were only four extensive. The main fields of the proposed modifications were the consideration by Committees acting in a drafting capacity, the consideration in the House, the organization of business and the rationalization of the legislative procedures.

1.3.2. *Proposals for modifying the Rules of Procedure in the Legislation XV.* In the Legislation XV 10 proposals were presented for the Presidency, eight by the Government-majority and two by the parties of the opposition. Among these proposals there were three extensive, they concerned the declaration of urgency, the discipline of state budget and accounts, the consideration in the House and the discipline of voting.

1.3.3. *Proposals for modifying the Rules of Procedure in the Legislation XVI.* The Legislation XVI is characterized by the general interest and activism at proposing modifications for the Rules of Procedure. After the initial proposal of the Government-party, the *Popolo della Libertà* (Pdl) in 2008, almost every political forces have presented one or more documents.

However the participation in the debate is wide, the process is very problematic because of the indented ideas, not only among the parties, but also between the groups of the same parties in the two houses.²⁶

Moreover, numerous presented proposals seem to respond more to the specific needs of the single political forces at the moment than to systematic questions in the long run.

This chapter analyses the three most important proposals, the two presented by the Government-party, the Pdl (A. C., XVI leg., Doc. II. n. 3 and Doc. II. n. 14.) and the one presented by the biggest party of the opposition, by the Partito democratico (Pd) (A. C., XVI leg., Doc. II. n. 9.).

1.3.3.1. *Strengthening governmental activities in the proposals.* However in the three examined proposals there are common aims, but there are significantly different concepts for their realization. The initiatives intervene essentially in fields already defeated and they do not give adequate answers to the demands of the sectors that requires substantial overhaul.

Furthermore, the proposals do not take an advantage of the possibility of the various control mechanisms and the opportunities offered by the different parliamentary procedures.²⁷

²² r.C. Article 96-*bis* paragraph 3

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ r.C. Article 16-*bis*.

²⁵ Morrone (1998)

²⁶ For example among the proposals of the Pd, presented in the various houses, there are significant differences regarding to the institutionalization of the opposition which would create an asymmetry between the House and the Senate.

²⁷ Only the proposal of the Pd contains modifications at the other sectors of the governmental actions such as at the field of foreign policy.

1.3.3.1.1. *Strengthening of the position of the Government in Parliament in the proposals of the Pdl.* The main concept of the proposal is that there is a significant governmental weakness in the parliamentary dynamics and particularly in the legislative procedures. So the main purpose is to enable the Government to formally assume a guiding role in these fields for practicing the function of the managing committee of the majority. At accomplishing the goal the Rules of Procedure have an important role as according to the Constitution they determine the legislative process with reference on the procedures and conditions of the parliamentary activities.

In the opinion of the party the so-called perfect bicameralism was one of the main obstacles of the governmental actions' efficiency and the degenerative phenomena of the last years (the abuse of the urgent decree-making and the frequent recourse of the motions of confidence) were only the consequences of the unresolved problems.

The principle philosophy of the proposal regarding the position of the Government in Parliament is that the separation of powers of Locke and Montesquieu is not realised for any more through the separation of the legislative power from the executive one, but through debates between Government-majority and opposition. This concept frankly represents the new majoritarian idea regarding the balance of power between the two institutions.

1.3.3.1.2. *Rationalization of governmental activities in the proposal of the Pd.* The innovations introduced at the normative field in the last decade have theoretically strengthened the Government and have given stability to the majority (especially by the electoral reforms), but have not yet introduced the necessary counterweights, the so-called checks and balances which are presented in other democracies.

This shortage has caused a progressive depletion of the Parliament's privileges, on the one hand, by the cutback of the directive and the controlling roles of the Houses, and, on the other hand, by the excessive interference of the executive in the normative activities which has run down the legislative function of the Parliament.

In the proposal of the Pdl (A. C., XVI leg., Doc. II, n. 3,) it is declared that "the Rules of Procedure determine the concrete configuration of the Government form in an underground manner, but more penetratingly than the constitutional expectations". In other words, according to the Pd, the explicit intention of the Pdl is to modify the Government form by the use of the Rules of Procedure, without the expense of a constitutional revision, which is inappropriate and unacceptable according to the Pd.

As a response to the above mentioned plan of the major governmental party, the Pd proposes to attribute the Parliament new and adequate forms of times, and a central role in the processes of governance beside an unchanged Constitution. According to the party the preferable solution is to reopen the debates of the constitutional reform, especially regarding the second part, concerning the government form and the composition and the functions of the Parliament.

2. *Parliamentary opposition and its leader's institutionalization*

In order to have a full picture of the balance of power in the Italian Parliament, it is necessary to analyze the powers, competencies and spaces of the other main actor, the opposition.²⁸

This paragraph examines how the developments of the Rules of Procedure of the House reinforced and amplified the instruments and competencies of the opposition enabling it to counterweight the preponderance of the Government over the Parliament.

2.1. *The opposition in the Rules of Procedure in the 1980s.* The reforms of the 1980s indicate an attempt to search for a major governability and a modification of the relation among Government-majority-opposition, incited by the situation caused by the reforms of 1971, the fact that a small part of the House was able to block the procedures. It was more than necessary to reduce the obstructive instruments and areas, to limit the powers of the minor groups, and to reorganize the principle of unanimity. These demands were also reinforced by the exhaustion of the "solidarietà nazionale".

There were high attempts to establish a functional majoritarian system through the norms of the Rules of Procedure and to strengthen the position of the Government in the Parliament. As a first step, the latter was realised in the decision-making processes of the state budget and accounts by introducing exact procedural bonds.

To delimit the paralyzing obstructive interventions the reforms have modified the organization of business and the order of business, the deliberative processes and the procedural powers of the group

²⁸ As professor Salvatore Valitutti said "a democracy breathes with two lungs, the one of the majority and the one of the opposition".

chairpersons, approved several restrictions regarding the time limits of the debates and interventions and introduced a *quorum* in the voting system by modifying the principle of equality among groups at the procedural powers.²⁹

In parallel with strengthening of the Government-majority position the reforms tended to pay attention to creating a statute of the opposition. However, since at the time there were some modifications in favour of the opposition, the statute was not approved.

As a guarantee for the opposition the new Rules have disciplined the proportional division of times on the base of the numerical consistency of groups. In the field of scrutiny they have introduced the institution of *question time* in 1983.

Besides the modifications of the Rules of Procedure regarding the instruments and spheres of the opposition, at the end of the 1980s there was another significant event in favour of its institutionalization. In 1989 the biggest party of the opposition, the *Partito Comunista Italiano* (Pci) tried to establish an English-type shadow cabinet, but without any long-lived and significant results.³⁰

In conclusion the reforms of the 1980s have abandoned the model of *consociativismo* and made a step forward to the principle of alternate Government.

2.2. *The reforms of Rules of Procedure between 1996-1999*

The most determining innovation of the reforms in favour of the opposition is that the new Rules of Procedure contain the expression, groups of the majority and groups of the opposition for the first time, so the phrase of opposition, distinguished from the simple minority, emerges at the normative level.

The main purpose of the reforms is to assure the function of the institution and to attribute responsibility to the political decisions. For this major aim they have had two conceptual pillars: enabling the majority to set and realise its policies efficiently on the one hand, and giving the opposition the right to explain its dissents and disagreement with governmental decisions and lines, and to present its alternative proposals, on the other.

The new Rules of Procedure have granted the opposition some procedural powers formally identifying its alternate role to the majority. In this concept the reforms have determined that 20 per cent of the participants of a parliamentary committee have the right to request an opinion from the Committee on Legislation on considering bills.

Furthermore, the reforms have given every group chairperson the opportunity to present requests for information, clarifications and documents from the competent ministers.

At the procedural level the reforms have abandoned the principle of unanimity at the approval of the organization of business and the order of business at the Conference of group Chairpersons, introducing a lower quorum.³¹ However this innovation has reduced the power of the opposition at the field, but the reforms have determined that the opposition is guaranteed a fifth of the subjects to be covered, or of the overall time available for the business of the House in the period under consideration and that the subjects other than bills, proposed by the opposition for insertion in the order of business, shall be entered as a rule as the first item on the agenda of the sittings devoted to them. Moreover they determined that not more than half the overall time available shall be devoted to the consideration of bills confirming decree-laws.³² These innovations attribute the opposition a more wide visibility in the work of the Parliament.

The reforms have achieved results (more radically in the House and more slightly in the Senate³³) also at the field of the popular obstructive instruments, the presentation of amendments by introducing standards for their admissibility and the presence of a *quorum*³⁴. But at the field of amendments, the reforms have attributed a counterbalance in favour to the opposition as they have prevented that an extreme use of presidential powers eliminates all of their amendments and have guaranteed to have voted their most significant amendments.

Regarding the presence of a *quorum* the reforms have declared that the participation at the parliamentary work is the duty of every deputy and the Bureau shall set the deductions of the daily attendance allowance for absences from sittings of the House and Committees³⁵. Moreover the reforms have determined that the deputies who are present and prior to the start of the vote had declared their intention to abstain, shall be

²⁹ Mandàk (2011)

³⁰ Pasquino (1995) p. 64.

³¹ "The programme of business shall be adopted if approved by the Chairpersons of the Groups representing an overall membership which is equal to at least three-quarters of the members of the Chamber." r. C. Article 23. paragraph 6.

³² r. C. Article 24 paragraph 3

³³ The Rules of Procedure of the Senate does not contain any restrictive standards for the amendments on the contrary; it gives the possibility to present those amendments which were declared inadmissible in the House.

³⁴ The presence of a quorum is a requirement declared by the Article 64, paragraph 3 of the Constitution.

³⁵ r. C. Article 48-bis

counted for the purpose of establishing the presence of a quorum and the signatories to a request for a qualified vote, and deputies requesting a quorum call, as well.³⁶

Last, but not least the reforms have introduced the institution of minority rapporteurs in the legislative procedures and have assured them a quantity of time in the debates on the basis of the numerical consistency of its nominating groups. This innovation attributes the opposition an important role in the phase of formulating alternative proposals and amendments since the rapporteurs shall express their opinion on the amendments before they are put to the vote. In so doing, the rapporteurs may ask the Government to reply to specific questions regarding the consequences of the measures it has proposed.³⁷

All of these innovations in favour of the opposition grant its capacity and visibility to criticize and amend the policies of the Government.

Regarding the scrutiny power the reforms have developed and updated this kind of instruments significantly. They have revitalized the question time, foreseeing a more continuous course, the PM's more frequent participation and a regular broadcasting.³⁸ Moreover they have introduced the ministers' question time³⁹.

In conclusion the reforms have moved the focus to the development of the union of Government-majority and of the realization of its policies and moved forward to the model of alternate Government. They have given more visibility and a major awareness of its role to the opposition, but for the completion of this trend there is a need not only for a constitutional reform, but also for a political will.

2.3. The opposition in the Rules of Procedure between 1999-2008

In the Legislation XIV and XV the presented proposals have not contained specific regulations regarding the institutionalization of the opposition.

2.4. Proposals for modifying the Rules of Procedure in the Legislation XVI

This paragraph analyses the proposals of the two major parties, the A.C., XVI leg., Doc. II. n. 3, presented by the deputy of the Pdl (the other Pdl-proposals, which was examined at the paragraph below does not contain any relevant part regarding for the opposition) and the A.C., XVI leg., Doc. II. n. 9, presented by the deputy of the Pd.

These two proposals are based on different concepts of necessity and forms of the opposition's institutionalization and follow a different logic.

2.4.1. The proposal of the Pdl. The main idea of the proposal is that the strengthening of the Government in the Parliament has to be accompanied by the introduction of a real and elaborated statute of the opposition, which should enable the opposition to practice an indispensable role of incentive and control.

The formal recognition of the minority mostly represented as the opposition in the Parliament would contain its organizational and functional opposite character to the Government, its distinction from the other minorities and the attribution of privileges and instruments to the shadow cabinet and to its leader.

2.4.2. The proposal of the Pd

No matter how the proposal of the Pd gives numerous guarantees and powers to the opposition, it does not contain any concrete form of its institutionalization, because the party thinks that this process is possible only after the modification of the Constitution. Furthermore, according to the proposal the party is convinced that the institution of shadow cabinet, proposed by the Pdl and realised by Walter Veltroni, ex-leader of the Pd in 2008, is incorrect and also dangerous in such a presidential or pseudo-presidential constitutional order as the Italian one.

Conclusion

The paper has shown the modifications, the developments of the Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies regarding the acceleration of the decision-making processes, the strengthening of governmental activities and the powers of the opposition and its institutionalization. These steps have been motivated by the necessity of timeliness, operative efficiency and by the "concreteness of the cases" instead of "abstract talks".

³⁶ r. C. Article 46

³⁷ r. C. Article 86

³⁸ r. C. Article 63 paragraph 1.

³⁹ The urgent interpellations can be presented by a group chairperson or by not less than thirty deputies. Each Group Chairperson may sign not more than two urgent interpellations for each month of parliamentary business and each deputy may sign not more than one for the same period. r. C. Article 138-bis.

Significant changes have taken place in the strengthening of the opposition for enabling it to express its disagreement with the governmental proposals and to vote against them, but these steps do not seem to be sufficient enough to realise an efficient control on the executive, to represent an alternative and to counterweight the preponderance of the Government over the Parliament.

I assume that the so-called presidential tendency is unlinear and ambiguous both in general and in the developments of the Rules of Procedure.

My starting point is that until the Constitution change the parliamentary form of the Italian political system, its evolution toward the presidential model is impossible. The main character of the Italian system is the political responsibility of the executive to the Parliament and there are not any signs of this relation of confidence in the presidential systems.

As a consequence of the necessities of the last decades there has been an intention to transform the Parliament to a purely ratifying institution. But this kind of reduction is also unknown in the presidential systems.

However it may seem that there is a movement toward the presidential model in the Italian politics because of the PM's personal and institutional reinforcement in the Government and indirectly because of the strengthening of the Government's activities.

In conclusion, in the last twenty years the direct and indirect effects on the balance of power in the Italian Parliament have led to an atypical system, to a mixture of both parliamentarism and presidentialism and the two models of parliamentarism. Although it may happen that neither the presidential, nor the parliamentary model is adequate for the Italian system and it has to experiment its atypical model which is appropriate for the traditions, anomalies and political culture of the post-war period.

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