PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS IN ITALY: ATTEMPTING MODERNISATION THROUGH DIGITAL ERA GOVERNANCE



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT
I. INTRODUCTION

II. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 The Law 124/2015
2.2 Digital Era Governance
2.2.1 The centrality of IT Changes in Contemporary Public Management Change
2.3 Politico-administrative context of Italy
2.3.1 Political system, the electoral dimension and its behaviour
2.3.2 Devolution
2.3.3 Civil Service
2.3.4. Legalism
2.3.5 Explaining the implementation gap in Italy
2.3.6 The Trajectory of Reforms in the Italian political context

III. RESEARCH QUESTION, METHODOLOGY AND METHODS
3.1.2 Research Approach
3.2 Research Methods
3.2.1 Document analysis
3.2.2 Interview methodology
3.2.3 Processing data
3.2.4 Interpreting data
3.3. Methodological limitations

IV. DATA ANALYSIS
4.1 Underlying principles and ideas of the reform package
4.2 Content of the package
4.2.1 Elements of digitisation
4.2.2 Elements of reintegration
4.2.3. Elements of need-based holism
4.3 Implications for implementation

V. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION
5.1. Discussion
5.2 Conclusion
5.2.1 Research Question 1: Core Ideas and principles of the Madia Reform Package: is it a case of policy transfer from the U.K.?
5.2.2 Research Question 2: Prospects for the Implementation of the Reform Package; An Early Assessment
5.3 Limitations and agenda for future research
5.4. Theoretical implications: Do DEG Reforms Fit Better With the Italian Context Than Earlier NPM Reforms?
5.5 Policy recommendations

REFERENCES
APPENDICES

ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyses the underpinning principles and ideas behind the design of the Law 124, better known as Madia Reform, enacted in Italy by the Renzi government in 2015. Drawing on the theory of Digital Era Governance, the thesis addresses the question of whether the English model inspired the Italian key policymakers, and therefore whether the reforms package is a case of policy transfer. It also explores the entailments of the implementation stage, by complementing the study with literature on the politico-administrative context of Italy. The dissertation takes a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews and document analysis, particularly focusing on the political discourse emerging from the data collected. In doing so, the dissertation argues that the motivating factors behind a reform design are often deeply rooted in the politico-administrative tradition of a country and cannot be just attributable to a theoretical model. Furthermore, it casts light on the rhetoric-realty dichotomy, and on the gap that often arises between political discourse and government action.

I. INTRODUCTION

When a country with an endemic and important public management problem, namely a recurrent implementation gap, tries to modernise its public administration through reforms, looking at internationally successful modes may be a suitable stratagem. However, we know that different politico–administrative contexts influence the outcome and the trajectories of public management reforms in different countries. We may be able to learn from countries with historically flawed trajectories, as well as, in the concrete case of Italy examined here. This study is an interesting opportunity to see whether such a problematic underlying history may now have been disturbed by a new ''modernising'' government.

This dissertation examines the latest package of public management reform, the so-called Madia Reform, announced in 2015 by the Renzi government in Italy. Policymakers and politicians present this package as the utmost modernising Reforms package in the history of Italian public management. The Law 124/2015 appears to make a shift to the so-called Digital Era Governance thinking. However, earlier waves of reform seem to have been very imperfectly implemented in Italy, which can be seen as moving only incrementally, without a radical transformation.

A case study approach is adopted in order to provide an in-depth analysis of the reforms package, studied from a holistic perspective. Two central research questions guide us through the discussion of the Law 124/2015. They refer to (i) Research Question 1: understanding the underlying principles and ideas or, perhaps the models from which the reform design draws inspiration. (ii) Research Question 2: it will investigate what the views and the expectations of the principal policymakers are with regard to the future reform's implementation stage, albeit at what is still a very early stage. Informed by these two questions, this dissertation tries to provide some explanations for the reasons and motivations behind the current reform design. Further, it ambitiously suggests new actions to be undertaken in order to ease the later process of implementation. The research will concentrate on only one particular reform project based in Italy; therefore the generalisation of the findings beyond this single case study is limited.

In order to grasp the complexities encountered by the majority of public management reforms in the country, the dissertation applies a previous and robust study conducted by Ongaro (2015) on the politico-administrative context of Italy. This scientific contribution is essential to guide the reader through the structure, the dynamics and the cultural norms of a state system that may, otherwise, seem unfamiliar and irksome. It is noteworthy to mention that Ongaro expresses the necessity of a study on the influence of the Napoleonic tradition in Southern European countries that is to some extent carried out. The dissertation complements this rather peculiar and territorial approach with an English framework, firstly developed by Dunleavy & Margetts (2006) i.e. Digital Era Governance. This conceptual framework will continuously appear throughout the paper, since the first research question aims to discover whether the Madia is a case of policy transfer from the UK. Therefore, the main themes of DEG will be explained according to its original conceptualisation and subsequently the original framework will be compared and contrasted with its Italian 'version' within the Law 124/2015.

The empirical data is qualitative and is drawn from ten semi-structured interviews with figures such as eminent academics, local authorities, politicians and the Minister of Public Administration and Simplification. So far, however, there has been little discussion about the gap between rhetoric of political discourses and reality. By analysing the data through discourse analysis, following guidelines of Potter (1997), Potter and Wetherell (1987, 1994) and Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), this study has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of how specific vocabularies are used to create political discourses. Document analysis is also part of the study, once again with a critical reading of formal texts such as the Law 124/2015 itself and of scientific papers and commentaries.

This dissertation is organised as follows: this chapter represents the introduction of the study. Chapter Two starts by introducing briefly but completely the Law 124/2015, then it presents the DEG framework and discuss the main characteristics of the Italian politico-administrative background. Chapter Three then presents the research questions and the approach, followed by the research methodology and its limitations. Based on the interview and document, Chapter Four presents the data collected, selected with a propensity to the utterances containing the terms and the linguistic style that characterises the political discourse of the reforms package, and more generally, of the Renzi government. The concluding chapter discusses the data, returns to the research questions, presents some limitations and provides some policy recommendation.

4.3 Implications for implementation

‘’*The obstacles that I presented in my paper of 2008 ’Public management reform in Italy: Explaining the implementation gap’ are unaltered. The worst element with the major ability of hollowing out the reform content is undoubtedly the administrative-law paradigm. Indeed, this paradigm has the power to hollow out contents that are managerial; it drags them in a sphere that is totally different, the legal discipline. Besides, there is a new obstacle, i.e. learning. Learning intensified the pessimism on implementation of both citizens and policy-makers. A positive point, however, is that the reforms object of my paper on 2008 do not intervene on the same fields of the Madia reform. It is possible that this trend of e-government and reintegration will have more simple dynamics and the weakest obstacles. Apparently, the main barriers of the Italian politico-administrative tradition may reveal easy to overcome this time.*’’ ‘’ (E. Ongaro).

‘’The main problem is the slowness to accept and absorb even the smallest change. Because in Italy, any administrator or bureaucrats says ‘We never did it this way…. Therefore, we will not do like this now’, this sentence is the maximum indicator of the endemic Italian resistance to changes. However, this does not mean than the change is impossible, rather than it is very hard and slow. In particular, if the strong autonomy of the regions remains as it is, the effects of the reform will be difficult to forecast. The various levels of overlapping jurisdiction and legislative are tremendous. This absolutely prevents a fluid and fast implementation. The public administration machinery is a monster, a massive boulder. It is not a problem of administrative leadership, is the politico-administrative systems, the laws, the overlaying’’ (S. Bolgherini).

By analysing the implementation stage from an academic point of view, what emerge from the preceding utterances is that rather than the reform, the real problem is Italy itself. In fact, the two academics seem to agree on the fact that the politico-administrative system of the country is recidivistic and leads to resistance to any kind of public management change. According to Ongaro, the obstacles are unchanged from 2008, with the administrative law paradigm always standing out

and a newborn impediment represented by a sort of pessimistic learning. Moreover, Bolgherini ascribes to the legal power devolution to the regions the role of slowing the implementation of reforms and of, fundamentally, compromising their effective realization.

Nevertheless, local authorities have an extremely trustful attitude towards the Madia reform:

''The Madia reform and the legislation passed from the Campania region so far are in perfect harmony. In October 2015 we approved a regional law on simplification. This represents a clear and net shift toward de-bureaucratisation of the region. I am confident that there is enough coordination and different laws will be serenely integrated. The Minister Madia shows strong interests on the local intervention, especially because is at local level that new path of simplification may be born.
The President of Campania Region specifies that de-bureaucratisation is one of its main goals. He is committed to the idea that the relationship between citizens and bureaucracy has to be driven by transparency and has to get rid of any kind of intermediation.'' (A. Lepore).

‘*'Sometimes we see a short circuit in the administration system. The main problem at the local level it is that is not clear who does what. This is my vision as mayor. The vision of a citizen is even worse. The Madia reform come in the right moment with the right strength, because citizens have to change the opinion that they have of the P.A. The de-bureaucratisation is important but has to be combined with a reinforcement of he role and the function of the offices. If there are not enough human resources, then the only solution is the unification of different offices. Otherwise, it is impossible to expect acceleration. This is the right way to reform, to do something from the A to Z*''(C. Bonajuto).

The political discourses enunciated by the two officials deliver a clear message: the Law 124/2015 is necessary and has the proper vigour; it moves in parallel with the local authorities and it is able to solve the traditional deficiencies of the P.A. Despite the air of positivity that flutters around the package, it is important to point out that

both the politicians belong to the same political party of the Minister Madia, the Democratic Party. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that although the interviewees lavish praises to the reform, little is said about the strategy to overcome the barriers.

''The legislative phase of the framework Law 124 was not easy. However, at the end of that the real challenge will start. Will we manage to implement it on the territory? Will we raise a collective commitment from the country? The collective dedication is fundamental; I am referring to street-level bureaucrats, professionals and citizens. It is fundamental that they take on a small piece of responsibility to contribute to the radical change we aim to. Do we believe in it? Would we put an effort, as a country to make things change?'' (M. Madia).

Apparently, the implementation stage is mysterious for the Minister as well. The sequences of questions may mean two things: on one hand it may indicate a real uncertainty. On the other hand this seems a declaration that the success of the reform is not solely her responsibility, but it largely depends on a wide and a communal effort. Therefore, there are many questions and a strong call for cooperation to the widest civil society.

''This reform is an occasion, an occasion Italy cannot lose. It is a frontier of huge modernisation. Usually the citizen is sceptic with regard to the P.A. because he sees it as a labyrinth from which is very hard to get out. But we are now in a phase where we can give solutions and answers to citizens. Because the reform is law, but it is also strategy'' (Silvia Morera, Pwc consultant Area Government).

Indeed, it is on this point, on the strategy of implementation, that the Law 124/2015 leaves many unanswered questions.

V. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

5.1. Discussion

Through the data collected (both document and interviews), the word ''simplification'' or ''simplify'' have appeared 43 times. Nearby, the expression ''to modernise'' or ''modernisation'' emerged 35 times. Although with a small variance, simplification seems to be the key words and is, perhaps, in the perception of the policymakers, the indispensable route in order to achieve modernisation. The final aim of political language is to work different terms together into new articulations, and therefore producing new articulations of political themes, i.e. political discourses (Fairclough, 2000). Hence, the political discourse of the current Minister of Public Administration and Simplification is all concentrated around the theme of simplification, with the final ambitious aim to defeat the complexities of the Italian system.

What emerges in unison from all the written and oral data collected is the perception that in Italy the administrative system is a brake rather than a factor of development. Besides, one of the main slow-motion factors is the juxtaposition of various legislative powers. Thus, it is legitimate to question if another law would solve the endemic problems. Nevertheless, a law it is not sufficient in order to trigger an efficient reform process, but is necessary to put in order the previous chaos. According to the participants, this is the main objective of the Madia reform that introduces new norms on the mode of operation of the P.A. but, mainly, intervenes on already existing disciplines with the scope to simplify them. The fields on which the reforms intervene to lighten the bureaucratic machine are numerous: the digital administration, transparency, the local authorities, and port authorities.
According to Mattarella (2015), one of the main responsible of the Law 124 editing is that this reform is a comprehensive reforming process rather than a sum of isolated interventions that were recurring in the last decades.

The digitisation and the transparency shift mark a break point with the past and sign a new era of public service delivery. They represent a bridge because they

connect the tools of the regulatory framework on the administrative sphere became real and concrete. This is particularly noticeable in the ports authorities context, where the reintegration of different agencies is driven by the digitisation innovations. In fact, with the creation of an integrated and interoperable software system among agencies, it is possible to practically realise what has just been conceptualised in the legal texts.

After a decade from the adoption of the CAD introduced by the Legislative Decree n.82 in 2005, the Law 124 proposes again an intervention on the digitalisation of the administration, in order to provide faster services to citizens through ICT. The reform does not change the previous decree, just tries to improve it with a regulatory rationalisation and the redefinition of the functions. Many participants of the qualitative research suggested that the core of the digital revolution in Italy is its infrastructure, the SPID. Although this system is immensely attractive, it already presented some weak points; its realisation would require a big effort of practical coordination. Similarly, the Legislative Decree on transparency is now a law; still, much remain to do in order to guarantee the intelligibility of all the information and to expand the awareness of their availability. Furthermore, Galletta (2014, p. 235), states, ''there is still the problem of transparency as detached from accountability. The transparency that is supposed to strengthen the democratic character of institutions, is basically replaced by the idea of spreading information''.

As for reintegration, many direct interventions aim to rationalise the coordination and collaboration tools. Moreover, the participations to the decision-making and policy process of the public institutions through the telematics mode have to deal with the problem of the digital gap. So before guaranteeing a radical wave of transformation, policymakers should consider the degree of ''digital alphabetisation'' of the country (Fiorentino, 2015). Similarly, the innovative one-stop window named SCIA is still waiting to be officially approved by the Parliament because of the discrepancies among state, regional and provincial laws and procedures.

Although the Minister Madia strongly argues that is her prerogative to intervene on the rigidity of the country, on the imbalance between core and non-core areas, on

the controversial relation between politics and administration, there are no answers as to how to eliminate the relations.

In addition to simplification and modification, two recurring words and principles are those of unity and flexibility of the administrative system. Apparently, the law does not deny the autonomy or the roles of the various departments, but introduces important changes that tend to reinforce the unity principle. This principle is strengthened with innovations that facilitate the osmosis between the state administration and the territorial offices. Moreover, the necessity of flexibility emerges from the words with which many interviewees describe the radicalism of some digital norms that need to be supplemented with a less rigid system. The implementation of the digital news is threatened by the obsolescence of a lot of traditional reasoning. For this reason, the Madia reform is presented as a comprehensive attempt at modernisation through digitisation.

5.2 Conclusion

This dissertation draws on a qualitative case study of the Madia reform package to examine the underpinning principles behind its design and the entailments of its future implementation. Based on the analysis of the collected data, this conclusion will present some answers to the research questions. The next sections will present the limitations of the dissertation, suggest some inputs for further research and cautiously propose some policy recommendations.

A peculiar contribution of this paper is the marriage of two separate literatures: one on an English model of public management and the other about the politico-administrative system of Italy. Yet, it is noteworthy that the first idea of a digital administrative law was born in Italy in 1978, developed by Giovanni Duni (1978), with the name tele-administration. Nonetheless, this primordial literature is essentially focused on the legal value of digital documents and is miles away from the detailed model developed by Dunleav and Margetts. The combination of the two theoretical frameworks with the empirical findings saw emerge from the case study, new answers to a yet unexplored issue. Indeed, this dissertation ambitiously undertakes an analysis of the consequences of attempting the implementation of

radical reforms in a country traditionally change-resistant. Therefore, this work may have relevant theoretical implications that will be illustrated in section 5.4. Furthermore, the methodological application of discourse analysis often unveils the gap between rhetoric and reality, in this case the gap between the effective strategy of the Madia reform and the language of the political discourse about the package.

5.2.1 Research Question 1: Core Ideas and *principles of the Madia Reform Package: is it a case of policy transfer from the U.K.?*

This study has raised important reflections about the power and the influence of the individual in charge of the design of the reform, who takes the decision, who follows the legislation throughout its evolution. Furthermore, their background is fundamental and it is what really shapes the laws in each aspect, and to some extent its implementation. The first research question of this dissertation challenges if there is a case of policy transfer from UK to Italy, and in particular, if the Madia reform bases its development on DEG model, and particularly on the policymakers' ideas and on the models they drawn inspiration from. The interviews specifically deal with this aspect, consulting all the interviewees on theirs references model and their underlying ideas. Many interviewees, including the Minister refer to the UK, especially in areas such as transparency and digitisation. Yet, a case of policy transfer has been explicitly denied. Elements such as reintegration, digitisation and needs-based holism appear to be forced by various phenomena, for instance austerity, ICT advancements, and last not least by the assertiveness of Matteo Renzi. In fact, his leadership style, typically unwilling to delegate would explain to some extent its centralising government. Another hypothesis is that some elements of the DEG framework were studied and maybe imported but this was not an intended choice, but rather driven by the knowledge of the English language.

Nevertheless, interesting insights about the factors that determine the motion towards DEG model arose from the interviews with the scholars. Firstly, the conceptual framework of DEG seems to better chime with the Italian cultural tradition. In fact, the vision of the citizens as *"first and foremost subject of rights and duties"* is enormously and deeply rooted in the Italian state culture (Ongaro, 2015). This may explain the renowned rejection of NPM-inspired reforms, while providing

a partial explanation to the shift toward a DEG model. Anther possible reason behind the convergence toward DEG is the typical Napoleonic state conception of the state as organic. Once again, this tradition does not match with the NPM fragmentation trend. On the contrary, reintegration and a massive reinforcements of the central bodies of the state, for example the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, would better correspond to the conventional Napoleonic notion of state.

5.2.2 Research Question 2: Prospects for the Implementation of the Reform Package; An Early Assessment

As clearly signalled in the introduction, a second purpose of this study was to explore the possible likelihood of the reform package being implemented according to the principal decision makers. The Madia reform is an ambitious project that draws the central idea for a set of chirurgical interventions on the principle unresolved obstacles that have impeded the success of many policies in Italy since years. Nowadays the reform is still in an early and delicate phase, so it is difficult to make a final assessment. In fact, less than a half of the Legislative decrees have been approved and the remaining are passing through the early stage of implementation. Nevertheless, the main topic of the interviews and the focus on the document analysis was the research of an implementation program, schedule or strategy. The implementation future is seen and described as positive by a wide range of interviewees. Even the critical opinions of the academics are optimistic about the reform, while remaining negative on the current state of the politico-administrative regime. An explanation for this climate of optimism and trust is certainly derived from the fact that many interviewees are political exponent of the Democratic Party. Yet, their optimistic political discourses often create a friction with the obstacles already emerging and reported by scientific journal and more neutral commentaries. The Pwc consultant Morera made a significant contribution to a more impartial discussion on this theme, when she states that reform is not simply legislation, but it is also strategy. Such a perspective is in line with the assumption that the politico-administrative context of the country is still excessively tied to the administrative law paradigm, which remains throughout the years the execration of any implementation phase of any reform in Italy.

Digital changes may have a non-transformational impact in practice if not combined with organisational and cultural transformation. A political behaviour tied with an administrative law cultural paradigm will unlikely accomplish a radical shift to modernisation. Indeed, the first modernisation shift should happen in the civil society's behaviour, by moving from a legalism culture to a digital and modern culture. In conclusion, the preliminary and early findings of this study suggest that the implementation stage of the Law 124/2015 will encounter not a few impediments. As a matter of fact, this was already inferable from the slowness with the approval of many decrees proceeded and the complexities claimed by local authorities with the SCIA. Yet, it is appropriate to admit that the digitisation processes are usually more practicable, although their initial costs are high. Further, the political cohesion around the government direction and the enthusiasm gravitating around the innovations are the reforms package, which is a promising scenario. Political support is fundamental in the design of a reform, and becomes vital during its implementation.

However, the prospects for the implementation are uncertain at this stage. This does not depend on the design of the reforms package; rather it is a consequence of the politico-administrative system. From the analysis of the interviews combined with the scientific analysis of Ongaro, it is possible to conclude that the major policy makers are aware of these obstacles but are just partially ready to tackle them. This is the risk that incurs when a rule is written without firmly assessing the practical aspects. Yet an important attempt, so as to overcome the menace of the implementation gap, is the creation of a National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (NATC, 2016). Particularly relevant for the Madia reform has been the adoption of the National Operative Plan for Governance 2014-2020 that uses European Structural & Investment Funds for a total of € 827 million aims to improve the P.A. (NATC, 2016). In particular, its strategy focuses precisely on building a proper ICT infrastructure along with the various local authorities and therefore on enhancing the transparency and the policies of e-government and digitisation, considering them as fundamental elements in order to modernise the country. This is a clear demonstration that the national government and the local bodies are cooperating in order to implement the reform.

In conclusion, it is complicated to understand the repercussion of the Law 124/2015 if this is not contextualised in the national frame, encompassing the general process of reform going through in Italy. The Madia reform seems indissolubly tied to the constitutional reform and it is, indeed. In fact, on the constitutional reform depends essentially a drastic reduction of legislative timing. The long and slow parliamentary processes, that the constitutional reform aims to cut, explains to some extent the absence and, probably, the impossibility for the policymakers to compile a written strategy and establish deadlines. The reforms package has the potential to determine a shift toward the simplification and the modernisation of the country, although it is likely that the implementation process will still be tortuous and patchy. Italian policymakers still need expedients so as to guarantee an effective implementation and respect of precise deadlines, which should be respected independently of political and territorial interferences.
A stronger and more credible implementation strategy is still indispensable in order to give to the country the tools and the power to reform itself.

5.3 Limitations and agenda for future research

Although the research has broadly reached its initial aims, there were some unavoidable limitations. First, because of the time and words constraints the study involved only a small sized sample. The study should ideally have involved more participants at different state level, and from different political parties.

Secondly, in order to generate findings that are able to be generalised, more historical and comparative research on public management reform would be required. Although the case study approach allowed an in-depth understanding of the reform process, it restricts the generalisation of its findings. It clearly only covered an initial period of the reform process so that it was not possible to take a firm view of the extent to implementation as yet. Follow up work is therefore needed, tracking progress against milestones set by the Ministry.

Future research works might focus on the role of the regional parties and authorities, in particular by conducting a comparative analysis with countries such

as Spain, where they do not have foundations in a separate cultural identity, but principally focus on protecting economic interest. Furthermore, research investigating in-depth the influence of the Napoleonic tradition and its legacy on the Italian politico-administrative context would add a great explanatory power and enhance the understating of the trajectory of public management reforms. The issues that influence public management reforms are infinite and highly complex, but this highlights the need for a comparative analysis of public management reform trajectories across different jurisdictions.

Finally, further work needs to be completed to establish whether Italy is moving toward a more conventional majoritarian system and the possible implication that this shift may have in facilitating the carrying-through of more radical reforms.

5.4. Theoretical implications: Do DEG Reforms Fit Better With the Italian Context Than Earlier NPM Reforms?

The accomplishment of this study has been provoked by Ongaro (2015), who recommended an investigation on the influence of the Napoleonic tradition in public administration in Southern European countries. The picture that the author Ongaro draws of these countries is rather cynical including Italy. In fact, in conducting his investigation on the main causes of the implementation failure regarding the norms and attempting to introduce a means of performance measurement (a NPM style reform), he concludes that some features of the Napoleonic-administrative tradition are detrimental for these reforms (Ongaro, 2009). The main obstacles have been broadly described in section 2.3.5. Nevertheless, it is suggested here that the Madia reform, with its main trends and technological innovations may surpass the status quo of the Italian public management.

Ongaro (2009) argues that the conception of the citizens as ''first and foremost subject of rights and duties'' typically in the Napoleonic states, perchance combined with the concerns about uniformity in the administrative action, especially uniformity in the treatment of cities, may have eroded the adoption of performance measurements. Therefore, this may provide an explanation of the rejection of NPM-

style reforms while at the same time opening a reflection on the compatibility between the DEG framework and the Italian politico-administrative system. The main features of the DEG model are, indeed, the disintermediation of the public administration, self-government and isocracy. Apparently, these phenomena better chime with the Italian conception of the citizen perceived as central and predominant figures in this administrative culture than in earlier NPM orientated reforms. The digitisation processes may have a chance of being positively accepted and adopted by the citizenry, because they latch on the Italian civil society's ideology and behaviour.

Besides this, another important theme of DEG is reintegration. This trend aims to rebuild and strengthen the central capacity of the government with a re-assimilation of vertical hierarchies, visible in the Madia project especially in the reform of the port authorities. Reintegration is undoubtedly closer to the Napoleonic state's conception of a centralised and unitary state. Conversely, the NPM-style reforms focused on disaggregation and agentification drastically crashes with this tradition. The direction of Law 124/2015 and, more generally, of the Renzi government, is well defined; the principle of united government is widely affirmed and shared, both as a technical choice and as a political principle.

One possible implications of this analysis is that the DEG model is culturally and politically compatible with the Italian tradition. Nevertheless, these considerations need to be interpreted with caution. In fact, the two themes of reintegration and digitisation may change and improve the implicit conception of the relationship between citizen and State, rather than the explicit one. For example, the digitisation trend, by abolishing all the steps of disintermediation in the P.A. and by allowing bureaucratic procedures to be accomplished rapidly, allows the simple use of a smart-phone from the entirety of the citizenry, thus may change the citizen-State relationship. Nevertheless, these changes may be interpreted as a starting point for future radical shifts, but do not represent, yet, a political paradigm of transformations. The Law 124/2015 is at an early stage of its development, and is still argued that it has a strong potential to overcome the traditional weaknesses of

the Italian public management, because of its basic fit with the underlying culture of public administration there.

5.5 Policy recommendations

In this last part, some recommendations for the Italian Government are suggested, based on the theoretical and empirical findings.

A first recommendation is linked to the incessant difficulties encountered from the reforms package during the implementation stage. The creation of an implementation agency is strongly recommended. The task of this new agency would be to monitor and control the implementation of the Law 124, with a particular regard to the Legislative Decrees still waiting for the full approval. This could speed up the implementation procedures and facilitate it, by mediating with local authorities. The Agency should be under the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Its structure should ensure independence and represent citizens and businessmen. Furthermore, academics, named civil servants and junior ministers may compose it, acting as change leaders. The agency should provide the strategic and normative tools to the local authorities so as to implement the strategy; necessary measures would be the compilation of a written strategy with milestones, leading to the establishment of deadlines and the tight control of theirs respect.

Secondly, the Government should put a major effort into informing citizenry on the importance of the Constitutional reform referendum and intensify its propaganda. As Ongaro (2015) maintains, a majoritarian Parliamentary system may facilitate approval and the implementation of more radical and more modernizing reforms. The positive result of the referendum to the held in October 2016 could move Italy closer to the other Western democracies systems, creating a more stable parliamentary organism and ensuring continuity in the government action.

Finally, although is not the main core of this dissertation, it should not be neglected that the Renzi government is massively intervening in order to enhance the Italian conditions of the public employment and its human capital. In particular, the jobs act reform and the articles on the public employment in the Madia reform are

moving the public employment close to the private sphere. This step is necessary in a country like Italy and has to be further promoted with new laws and reforms on performance measurement and termination (partly already content of the Law 124/2015).

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interviewees profiles

Amedeo Lepore , Executive councillor of the Campania Regional Government and Professor of History of Economics at LUISS University.

Ciro Bonajuto, Major of the Municipality of Ercolano (located in the Province of Naples).

Daniele Pommier Vincelli, political advisor at the Department for Public Administration and teaching assistant in political sociology at Sapienza University.

Edoardo Ongaro, Full Professor of International Public Services Management at Northumbria University.

Francesco Nicodemo, responsible for communication at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Ivano Russo, Advisor at the Ministry of Infrastrucuture and Trasport.

Marianna Madia, Minister of Public Administration and Simplification.

Silvia Bolgherini, Full Professor of Analysis of Public Policy at Università Federico II di Napoli.

Silvia Morera, Price Waterhouse and Coopers's consultant Area government.

Vito Grassi, VP of the Business Association.

Appendix 2: Interviews protocol

The M.Sc. dissertation will explore two research questions:

1. With the Madia reform package, is Italy moving toward a wave of DEG, as an important aspect of organising its public services?
2. What are, according to key policy makers, the implications for implementations of the package?

Introduction:

At the beginning of the meeting a short introduction was provided. The information sheet was presented as well as the consent form. Thereafter, I explained why I am doing this research, what the interest is and what is the purpose of the interview.

Starting questions:

- As a start, I would be interested to know what is your background and whether you had a function in the reform design?
- If yes, can you describe it in details?

Political context

- Is the reform of public administration central to Renzi government? Does it have a high priority?
- Renzi is presented as a modernizer, on the same style of Blair and the Third Way. Do you think that his leadership style is simply promotional language or is political pragmatism?

Underlying principles and ideas of the reform package

- If you had to summarize in one or two sentences the main content of the reform, how would you describe it?
- Where do the central ideas of the reform originate from? They are inspired by the UK?

- Why do you think digitisation processes are so relevant in the reforms package?
- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the Law 124/2015?
- What will be the main result of the reform in the long run?

Implications for implementation

- The Madia reform is distinguished from previous administrative reforms, because it is a comprehensive approach. It is in fact a single act that establishes rules relating to central aspects of organization and functioning of the public sector and intervenes on existing disciplines. There are, however, critical points, which could prevent the success of the implementation stage.
- According to you, what are the main obstacles and how does the government plan to overcome them?
- What is the government's strategy for an effective implementation of the reform?
- And its timing?