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The Mechanisms of Institutional Reforms: Understanding Why Some Reforms Succeed and Others Fail

Abstract

The economic turmoil that struck Western Europe in the last five years makes it inescapable to reflect about the link between economic and political crisis, and institutional reform. It is important to understand in what context reforms are being put on the agenda, but also to understand what determines their *final outcome*. This paper focuses on what happens *after* bundles of reform (i.e. several reforms affecting multiple dimensions of the institutional architecture linked together by the reformers) are being put on the agenda, focusing on three sequences of reform: one in France (reduction of the presidential term and reversal of the electoral calendar, 2000-2001), one in Italy (constitutional and electoral reform of 2005) and one in Ireland (the sequence of political reforms starting in 2011).

I identify two types of reform according to the level of support at the beginning of the process: consensual, and divisive. Secondly, I distinguish between majoritarian, supermajoritarian, and externalized processes of reform according to their level of inclusion. I argue that the final outcome depends on the interaction between the nature of reform, and the process chosen to conduct it. I show empirically that the paths leading to successful reforms are different for consensual and divisive reforms. Divisive reforms appear to be driven primarily by self-interest and their outcome to depend on the veto player dynamics and on the ability to build a large coalition of reformers. Consensual reforms lead to credit-claiming strategies. Their outcomes depend on the capacity of the majority of actors to feel able to claim benefits for a popular reform.

Introduction

The economic turmoil that struck Western Europe in the last five years makes it inescapable to reflect about the link between economic and political crisis, and institutional reform. Indeed, in the midst of the economic crisis, a number of countries have decided to engage in the path of institutional reform, by developing what has sometimes been a vast agenda of proposals touching upon multiple dimensions of the institutional architecture. Academic debates are attempting to characterize the reforms caused by the crisis, and to understand the underlying dynamics of emergence and adoption behind them. Jacobs shows for instance that the processes of reform starting after the crisis have mainly consisted in what he labels as “crowd-pleasing” and “key-jangling” reforms, i.e. reforms led by act-contingent motivations (Jacobs 2013). The renewed interest of both academics and politicians for democratic reform had, however, started before the crisis. As noted by Mair,

“Rarely has there been such widespread discussion of institutional reform, be it of the electoral system, parliamentary procedures, local or regional government, plebiscitary mechanisms, or whatever. Almost none of the European democracies have been untouched by these discussions and almost all have devoted considerable research effort to discussing the limitations of their present institutional arrangements and the ways in which they might be changed – sometimes quite drastically. Moreover, the single thread that runs through almost all of these discussions in almost all of the countries concerned is that reform is needed in order to bring government closer to the citizen” (Mair 2013, 75–76)

In his opus on *The Politics of Electoral Reform*, Renwick makes the following remark: “understanding the *politics* of electoral reform is crucial to full understanding of reform outcomes: we cannot just identify antecedent conditions and predict the end result” (2010, 83–84). Rahat defines the politics of reform as a concept that pertains to the struggles between the forces trying to preserve the existing system and those trying to change it (2011, 523). Indeed, when examining bundles of reform in which several reforms have been put at the agenda at once, one can only notice that some reforms are adopted whereas others are abandoned along the way. Why do some of the reforms succeed while others fail? This paper focuses on this general question in order to address what it still a gap in the literature on democratic reforms: how can we predict the final outcome of reforms based on a limited number of variables? It focuses on what happens *after* bundles of reform (i.e. several reforms affecting multiple dimensions of the institutional architecture linked together by the reformers) are being put on the agenda. I focus here on three sequences of reform: one in France (reduction of the presidential term and reversal of the

electoral calendar, 2000-2001), one in Italy (constitutional and electoral reform of 2005) and one in Ireland (the sequence of political reforms starting in 2011). It is based on process-tracing and on case studies, triangulating diverse secondary sources (press articles, reports, parliamentary debates) with 53 elite interviews.

The first section presents briefly the three bundles of reform selected for the analysis. The following section argues that reforms can essentially be divided in two types, divisive and consensual, according to the level of support they benefit from when they are being put on the agenda, and into three types of processes according to their level of inclusion (majoritarian, supermajoritarian and externalised). The main hypotheses presented in the third section posit that the final outcome of a given reform depends on the interaction between the nature of reform and the process chosen to conduct it. This is assumed to lead to different roads to reform, in which the same variables (veto players, multidimensionality of reform, interaction between nature and process of reform) play out differently. The fourth and final section presents a six-category typology of reform outcomes, based on the combination between the nature and the processes of reform, and shows briefly how the three cases illustrate these different paths of reform and non-reform.

1. Three bundles of reform in Ireland, France and Italy

1.1. Case selection

These three cases have been selected on the basis of the dependent variable, i.e. bundles of reform presenting successful and unsuccessful reforms of the core democratic rules in France, Ireland and Italy. These three bundles of reform have been selected because of their diverse characteristics: the level of support enjoyed by the reforms before the process took place, the ways in which the reforms were put on the agenda, the leading actors that elaborated the projects, the multifaceted or unidimensional character of the reforms discussed, and finally, the existence of both successful and failed reforms across bundles, and sometimes within each bundle. Bundles of reform are here defined as *reforms that have been linked together as part as a broader sequence, beginning or ending beyond the moment of adoption and discussion of a given reform*. Moreover, in all three cases, referendums have been organised to validate some, or part of the reforms debated, influencing the course of the processes of reform (Table 1).

In Ireland, the sequence of reforms examined is still ongoing and started in 2011, taking the form of multiple successful and unsuccessful reforms launched after the arrival in power of a

new Fine-Gael Labour coalition that had promised far-ranging political reform in their election manifestos. These range from the attempt to abolish the second chamber, to the modification of the manner in which everyday business in the Dáil was conducted, to the institution of a constitutional convention to examine various aspects of the Irish constitution. The reforms examined in France took place between 2000 and 2001, dealing respectively with the reduction of the length of the presidential term from 7 to 5 years, and with the reordering of the electoral calendar to place the presidential elections before the legislative elections. The Italian reforms include a major constitutional reform attempting to modify multiple aspects of the balance of power, both between the executive and the legislative power, and between the central and local powers, and a major electoral reform replacing the Italian mixed-member electoral system with another mixed-system: PR with bonus.

Table 1. *Comparison of the three bundles of reform investigated*

	Reform	Emergence	Nature of reform	Process of reform	Outcome	Multifaceted reform?	Referendum
Ireland 2011-16	Discussion of an agenda of reforms by the constitutional convention	Exogenous	Both consensual and divisive	Externalised	Negative (so far)	No	No (so far)
	Abolition of the Seanad	Endogenous/exogenous	Consensual	Majoritarian	Negative	No	Yes
	Reform of the organisation of elections, of the Dáil and of the local government, transparency	Exogenous	Both consensual and divisive	Majoritarian	Positive	Yes	No
France 1997-2002	Reduction of the presidential term from 7 to 5 years	Endogenous	Consensual	Supermajoritarian	Positive	No	Yes
	Reordering of the electoral calendar	Endogenous	Divisive	Majoritarian	Positive	No	No
Italy 2001-06	Constitutional reform of the second part of the constitution	Endogenous	Divisive	Majoritarian	Negative	Yes	Yes
	Electoral reform replacing MMM with PR with bonus	Endogenous	Divisive	Majoritarian	Positive	Yes	No

In the Irish case, the large sequence of reforms initiated in 2011 was largely the consequence of public pressure that was exogenous to the political system itself, through the mobilisation of a multiplicity of actors from civil society and academia, and pushing forward an ambitious, but ill-defined agenda of reforms, ranging from making the Irish democracy more transparent, to

involving citizens directly in the process of reform. As the table shows, part of what was discussed since 2011 was also put on the agenda as a result of endogenous mobilisation within the political system: I refer here to the proposal to abolish the Seanad, which enjoyed a high level of political support. Secondly, the Irish case is the only one in which some of the reforms discussed have been externalised to actors outside of the political system, in this case, ordinary citizens within the realm of the Irish constitutional convention, containing both divisive and consensual reform proposals, such as the right to vote at presidential elections for Irish emigrants (consensual), the reform of the electoral system of the Dáil and the reduction of the voting age to 16 (divisive). Finally, a large number of other reforms have been conducted through a majoritarian process including for instance, an ongoing local government reform, the reform of provisions concerning the organization of elections (the introduction of gender quotas, the regulation of party and candidate donations, ...) and transparency (register of lobbyists, reform of Freedom of Information). In this paper, I will mainly focus on the two first series of reform (Senate, and reforms assigned to the constitutional convention)

The French bundle of reforms examined comprises two reforms that were adopted between 2000 and early 2001. The reduction of the presidential term from seven to five years was the result of a mobilisation endogenous to the political system, and was conducted through a supermajoritarian process, meaning that both the parliamentary majority and the opposition were actively involved in the definition of the final proposal. This reform was adopted through a referendum, and can easily be classified as a consensual reform proposal. The reordering of the electoral calendar to place the presidential elections before the legislative elections was, on the other hand, conducted exclusively by the parliamentary majority, without the opposition, but again with a positive outcome. This was a highly divisive reform. Both reforms dealt with single issues, and not with multifaceted proposals.

Finally, the Italian case presents two major institutional reforms, one successful (the electoral reform), and one which failed to overcome the final obstacle, the referendum (the constitutional reform). In both cases, the reforms did not result from external public pressure, but rather from the efforts of actors within the political system. Secondly, in both cases, the processes of reform were conducted by the parliamentary majority and without the opposition or external actors. Neither the constitutional nor the electoral reforms enjoyed widespread support, as they were divisive proposals. Both can be qualified as multifaceted proposals, as each of these reforms focused on multiple institutional aspects, rather than just one: the constitutional reform sought to

modify around 50 articles of the Italian constitution, whereas the electoral reform sought to replace the existing system with an entirely different one.

1.2. Methodology of the case studies

George and Bennett define process-tracing as a “method [that] attempts to identify the intervening causal process - the causal chain and causal mechanism - between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable” (George and Bennett 2005, 206). The same authors argue that this method consists of examining “histories, archival documents, interview transcripts, and other sources to see whether the causal process a theory hypothesizes (...) is in fact evident in the sequence and values of the intervening variables in that case” (George and Bennett 2005, 6). Here, the method of process-tracing has been used in order to adopt what Scharpf labels a “backward” strategy (1997): starting from the final outcome to reconstruct actors’ changing strategies and motivations.

Semi-directed interviews were conducted with academics, experts, journalists, civil society activists, policy advisors and politicians involved in the three processes of reform, during short and intensive stays: one month for the 23 interviews conducted in Ireland in May 2012 (principally in Dublin); around two months for the 16 interviews conducted in France between January and March 2013 in Paris; and a bit more than one month for the 14 interviews conducted between June and July 2013, mostly in Florence and Rome.¹ The interviews lasted, on average, around 50 minutes (from 30 minutes to an hour and a half). A different questionnaire comprising about twenty questions was used consistently for each country, and the use of interviews was facilitated by the fact they were always conducted in the native language of the interviewees. For each of the three interview guides, I adopted a sequential approach for the analysis of the reforms, dividing the processes into different phases (emergence of the issue of reform, construction of the agenda of reforms, negotiation, and adoption) in order to facilitate comparisons between the different reforms. This also means that before going out into the field, a fair amount of time was spent studying the relevant secondary sources (reports and press articles), in order to get a fair idea of the sequencing of the reforms, and, of course, to identify the key people who should be interviewed.

In addition to these 53 interviews which have constituted the most important research material for the three case studies, the empirical corpuses have been complemented with a

¹ See Appendix

significant number of reports led by experts or by politicians in and outside of parliament, analysis of the press coverage of the reforms over a long period of time, occasionally archives, and consultation of the most relevant parliamentary debates, which are systematically available online for the period covered in all three countries. I therefore applied the triangulation strategy advocated by Davies, advocated in particular when elite interviewing constitutes the major material (Davies 2001). The analysis of the press was systematised in order to lead to some additional quantitative analyses in the French case, while I re-used the study of the integrality of the debates on the electoral reform (both in committees and in plenary sessions) that I conducted in Italy for my Master's dissertation (Bedock 2009). In each case, I focused on several daily newspapers, trying as much as possible to use sources with different political sensibilities – ideally, one left-wing, one centrist, and one-right wing newspaper – and, when relevant (in Italy) published in different regions of the country. In Ireland, I consulted articles from the *Irish Times* (Dublin, centre-left), the *Irish Independent* (Dublin, centre-right) between 2009 and 2013. In France, the three main newspapers (*Libération*, left, *Le Monde*, centre, and *Le Figaro*, right) were systematically reviewed on the reduction of the presidential term and the reordering of the electoral calendar for a period covering July 1999 to June 2001. In Italy, the press archives cover a period ranging from January 2003 to July 2007, including in particular articles from *La Repubblica* (Rome, centre-left), *Il Corriere della Sera* (Milano, centre), *la Stampa* (Torino, centre-right) and *Il Giornale* (Milan, right).

2. Two types of reform, three types of processes

I claim here that the reforms of the core democratic rules can essentially be divided into two categories, divisive and consensual reforms, according to the initial level of popular support they enjoy. Secondly, the processes of reform can be divided into three categories: majoritarian processes, in which the government takes the lead, supermajoritarian processes, where the opposition and majority collaborate, and finally, externalised processes whereby the elaboration of the reform is left to actors outside of the political system.

2.1. Divisive vs. consensual reforms

I have chosen to discriminate between the types of reform according to the level of public support they enjoy (or that actors perceive them to enjoy). I could have chosen different criteria, using, for example, Tsebelis's distinction between redistributive and efficient institutional

reforms, according to whether a reform benefits all individuals or improves conditions for some at the expense of others (1990, 104). The distinction drawn by Tsebelis is extremely interesting and unproblematic on an abstract level. Indeed, it is easy to grasp that certain “institutions” or policies benefit everyone (for instance, the existence of roads and public lightning), whereas others redistribute resources or power (for instance, a tax that only affects rich households). However, when it comes to institutions that are complex, and intrinsically part of a greater system, it is much harder to discriminate between efficient and redistributive institutions. Some aspects of the same proposal may benefit “everyone”, whereas others might only benefit some of the actors involved. This distinction is therefore difficult to apply here: how does one discriminate between the two types of reform? What happens when a single proposal contains both redistributive and efficient aspects? Who is “everyone” – the actors within the political systems, or the citizenry? Do actors even have a clear sense of the distinction between redistributive and efficient aspects when they elaborate a reform?

In the absence of satisfactory answers to these questions, I have chosen a different criterion to enable me to distinguish between reforms according to the level of popular support they enjoy before the actual proposal is elaborated. Several assumptions are made here: (1) that actors, before they choose to make a proposal, attempt to evaluate the level of support such a proposal might garner among voters; and (2) that this evaluation may affect their subsequent behaviour. Of course, this does not imply that actors are necessarily right in their perceptions: they may over-evaluate the level of popular support enjoyed by a proposal or misperceive the effects that their actions may have on this level of support, as the process of reform may alter it substantially. Yet, through case studies, I believe it is possible to get a decent idea of the actors’ perceptions, of the level of support enjoyed by a project of institutional reform, and to trace the information that was at their disposal to back up their suppositions (in particular through press analysis, and access to reports). The fact that I am talking about the level of support *prior* to the process of reform taking place is also crucial here. Indeed, political actors may sometimes actively reframe reforms in order to turn them into divisive issues, if they believe this to be in their interest. Using our chosen perspective, the reforms fall in two categories: divisive reforms and consensual reforms.

I define divisive reforms as *reforms for which there is no perception of a broad agreement within the society or the political system on the part of the actors as to the desirability of the reform or the alternative envisaged*. In other words, these are reforms where a substantial part of the citizenry or of the political actors support the status quo rather than the proposed alternative. Consensual reforms, on the other hand, are *reforms for which there is a general perception of a broad agreement in the society and in the political system on the part of the political actors on the desirability of the alternative envisaged by the reform*. This

means that maintaining the status quo is much less of an option for reformers, insofar as the majority within the society and within the political system believe that the institution should be changed in a definite direction. The key postulate is that each type of reform leads to different ways of formulating the actors' preferences:

H1. During reform processes involving divisive reforms, the behaviour of the political actors and their positions on alternatives to reform derive primarily from outcome contingent attitudes, i.e. from the expected outcomes of the reform (self-interested strategy).

During processes of reform where there is no broad agreement in the society on the proposed alternative, politicians primarily base their support (or lack of support) for a proposal on whether they believe the reform to be in their own interests in terms of votes, policy, offices, or power in general; or else on values. In other words, in such processes, if a party or an individual decides to support a proposal despite a lack of popular support, it is because he believes there is something in it for himself, not necessarily just in terms of power, but also in terms of promoting his ideas on desirable institutions. Like Renwick (2010), I adopt a very broad definition of "power" here: not only projections in terms of seats or offices, but also matters relating to coalitions or influence on policy. Values are also expected to have an influence, most notably on the definition and selection of the alternatives considered by the political actors.

H2. During processes of reform involving consensual reforms, the behaviour of the political actors and their positions on an alternative of reform derive primarily from act-contingent attitudes, i.e. from the expected benefits or costs of supporting the act of reform (credit-claiming strategy).

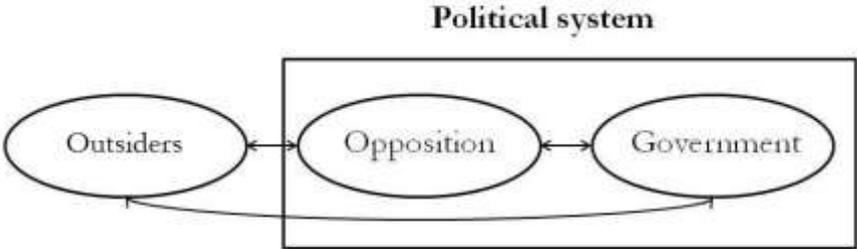
When a reform is broadly popular, the status quo is much less of a viable option than would be the case for divisive reforms. Consequently, the positions on the reform in the case of consensual reforms are, first and foremost, defined after examining the consequences of being seen to instigate the reform, as there are strong reasons to support it. This depends on the position of each actor in the process, and on its capacity to claim credit for a reform that is seen as desirable. In a seminal book, David Mayhew theorises on the three main activities of the members of Congress: advertising, position-taking, and credit-claiming (1974). Mayhew defines credit-claiming as "acting so as to generate a belief in a relevant political actor (or actors) that one is personally responsible for causing the government (...) to do something that the actor (or actors) considers desirable" (1974, 52–53). If this definition of credit-claiming is applied not to individuals in congress, but to the collective political actors themselves (and particularly to parties), this means that these actors seek to make citizens believe that they are personally responsible for government's decision to enact a reform that is considered to be desirable by a

majority of voters. Consensual reforms are characterised by a form of competition focused on invoking the paternity of the reform. I also argue that in cases where actors recognise their inability to claim credit for a reform, they have more of an incentive to change the framing of the reform, in order to weaken the actual initiator of the process.² This strategy can also be understood as the “contrary” of blame avoidance as defined by Weaver (1986; 1988), who argues that politicians are usually primarily motivated by the desire to avoid blame for unpopular actions. On the other hand, when a policy or an action is popular, credit-claiming becomes a rewarding strategy. A concrete example is given by Pierson, who shows that the periods of expansion of the benefits are leading to a process of “political credit-claiming” (1996, 143).

2.2. Majoritarian, supermajoritarian and externalised processes of reform

In established democracies, the decisions concerning the core democratic rules are usually elaborated and made in the parliament, and therefore by the actors who make up the political system of a given polity. However, there have been certain concrete cases in which the processes of reforms have been outsourced in order to involve actors outside of the political system, giving them power to define the alternatives that will later be discussed by the political actors. Therefore, three sets of actors can lead the processes of reform of core democratic rules: the government (and its parliamentary majority), the opposition, and actors outside the political system, which may include actors ranging from political experts to ordinary citizens (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *The three actors of institutional reforms*



Following this logic, when the decision to reform a given topic has been made, there are essentially three roads to reform: *majoritarian*, *supermajoritarian*, and *externalised processes*, depending on their degree of inclusion. I argue that for each reform route chosen there are different incentives for actors, as a given actor will be included in some cases, and excluded in others.

² Cf. *infra*.

In *majoritarian processes* of institutional reforms, the actors that are involved in the definition of the alternatives and their concrete elaboration come only from parties that support the existing government. Therefore, the opposition is excluded from the processes of definition and elaboration, and intervenes only at a later stage, i.e., during the parliamentary discussion. In more abstract terms, such processes follow a logic that resembles the ideal-type of what Lijphart defines as the adversarial (1968), or majoritarian model of democracy (1984; 1999): the majority concentrates power in its own hands, the executive has a lead role on the process, the dominant logic opposes two blocks (the majority, and the opposition). Like Lijphart, one can associate such processes with a logic based primarily on competition, rather than cooperation.

In *supermajoritarian processes* of institutional reforms, the parties of both the parliamentary majority (and therefore the government) and the opposition are involved in the definition and the elaboration of the alternatives to reform. I refer here not to processes where only a tiny proportion of the opposition collaborates with the government, but to processes where, at the very least, the main party of the opposition takes a crucial part in the procedure. Bartolini considers that “the opposite of competition – that is of parallel and independent effort to achieve the same prize – is negotiation or cooperation – that is concomitant and coordinated effort to obtain or to share the prize” (1999, 436). Supermajoritarian processes are defined by a greater degree of cooperation and negotiation than majoritarian processes of reform. To use Lijphart’s analogy again, such a process would resemble the ideal-type of a consociational, or consensus democracy, as it involves cooperation, bargaining, compromise and negotiation between the most relevant political forces within a given polity.

More attention should be devoted to understanding what I mean by *externalised processes* of institutional reforms. To be very clear, it is absolutely obvious that in most, if not all, of the reported cases of institutional reforms, the actors in the political system did not elaborate the proposals in a closed bubble which outsiders were excluded from. The establishment of *ad hoc* expert committees to produce reports on potential reforms, or consultation with independent experts or exponents of civil society during the elaboration phase of the institutional reforms are common practices. These, to my mind, do not qualify as falling within the category of externalised processes of reform, as the politicians maintain a firm grip on the definition of the alternatives, and are in no way compelled to listen to the advice of the experts or civil society advocates they have consulted. Externalised processes of reform are processes during which the political actors *officially* delegate certain phases of the definition and elaboration of the reforms to actors outside of the political system: experts, or ordinary citizens. The second criterion is the

requirement to provide answers to the proposals made by the body in charge of the definition, which can take several forms: the government obligation to officially reply to the proposals or the obligation to proceed via a parliamentary vote or through a referendum on the alternatives elaborated. The rationale, particularly in cases where ordinary citizens are entitled to define the alternatives to reform, is that of maximum inclusion: indeed, such processes may often only result from a deliberate choice on the part of key actors within the political system to give up their prerogatives to define institutional reforms.

To take concrete examples, and despite its significance in promoting the adoption of a mixed-member proportional system in New-Zealand, the institution of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System cannot be considered as an externalised process of reform: despite the Commission's broad terms of reference, the government made no formal commitment to answer the its requirements prior to its institution (Vowles 1995). Dissimilarly, the citizens' assemblies on electoral reform created in British Columbia in 2004 and in Ontario in 2006 are good examples of externalised processes of reform.³ These bodies, comprised of ordinary citizens, were charged with defining whether or not the FPTP system should be retained, and elaborating a concrete alternative system, if deemed necessary. The politicians in power made the formal commitment to put the proposals of the citizens' assemblies to a referendum, a promise that has been kept despite the fact that the two referendums in British Columbia and one in Ontario were unsuccessful.

It is important to bear in mind that externalised processes of institutional reforms - although there are empirical recent examples, particularly taking the form of citizens' assemblies, to reform the electoral system - are clearly the exception, as opposed to the rule. In relation to the choice to create citizens' assemblies to review electoral systems, Fournier et al. argue: "it is clear that the initiating party in each instance hoped to garner the benefits of 'act contingencies' by portraying itself as a party of progressive change" (2011, 27).

³ The case of the *Burgerforum* (Civic Forum) in the Netherlands, where ordinary citizens reviewed the existing electoral system in 2006, would not meet the criteria I have set: indeed, before the citizens' assembly was set up, the government made no commitment to implement or discuss its recommendations (Fournier et al. 2011).

3. Why do some reforms succeed and others fail? Some hypotheses

There are basically four possible outcomes for any given reform during the phase of the final vote. These outcomes are, in this instance, the “dependent variable” that I try to predict. First possible case: the reform is adopted thanks to actors outside of the parliamentary majority, and therefore by a large majority. Second case: the reform is only supported during its time of adoption by the parliamentary majority, or in the case of referendums, passes by a small margin. Third option: the opposition manages to make the reform’s adoption fail, or the reform is abandoned before being put to a vote. Finally, the worst case scenario for a reformer: the reform fails to be adopted not only because of successful activism on the part of the opposition, but also because of defections within the parliamentary majority. The veto players, the existence of multifaceted or “unidimensional” reforms, and the type of reform processes are the three main factors that I examine in order to understand the different outcomes of the reforms studied. These three dimensions have a distinctive impact on the final outcome of consensual and divisive reforms.

3.1. Veto players

A veto player is an agent which is able to block reform, whether a party or an institution. Tsebelis argues that: “the veto players theory expects policy stability (impossibility of significant change in the status quo) to be caused by *many veto players*, by *big ideological distances* among them, or by *high qualified majority thresholds* (or equivalents) in any collective veto player” (Tsebelis 2000, 464, emphasis added). Regarding the specific issue of referendums, he considers that the possibility of a referendum is equivalent to the introduction of a new veto player, who is the median voter of the population (Tsebelis 2002; Hug and Tsebelis 2002). Hug and Tsebelis argue about the possibility of the elimination of veto players through referendums: “if the same actor (whether it is an actual veto player or not) controls both the formulation of the question and the triggering of the referendum, other veto players lose their ability to veto outcomes and hence the number of veto players actually decreases” (2002, 467). Tsebelis also underlines the power of the agenda-setter, who can “consider the winset of others as his constraint, and select from it the outcome he prefers” (2002, 34). Tsebelis believes that the agenda-setting power usually belongs to the government as a whole, for two reasons: a positional one (as governments in multiparty systems are supported by a majority or are centrally located in the policy space), and an institutional one (the government has institutional instruments to actually control the agenda) (2002, 109).

But what happens when there is broad agreement on a given reform, “cancelling” the ideological polarisation aspect? In theory, if all veto players agree on a given reform, the amount of them no longer matters. This has particular relevance regarding consensual and divisive reforms. By definition, consensual reforms are characterised by broad agreement among both citizens and relevant political actors. I have also argued that the government and the opposition cooperate on the conception of reforms in supermajoritarian processes of reform, and seek the inclusion of outsiders during externalised processes of reform. As a consequence:

H3. For divisive reforms, the usual expectations about veto players and referendums apply: reform becomes more difficult as the number of veto player rises as their preferences differ more widely.

H4. For consensual reforms elaborated through a supermajoritarian or an externalised process of reform, the number of veto players and the requirement to hold a referendum have no impact on a reform’s likelihood of adoption.

H5. For consensual reforms elaborated through a majoritarian process of reform, the positions of the actors throughout the process are likely to shift. The reforms can only be adopted when the parliamentary majority is cohesive and large enough to prevent the opposition from blocking the reform.

There is no need to elaborate on the first argument. The second one is also relatively straightforward: if both the government and the opposition collaborate in bringing forward a concrete reform on a topic that is consensual, the number of veto players or the requirement to hold a referendum becomes irrelevant, as all of the relevant actors agree on a given reform, and consequently, all of them can claim credit for the adoption of a popular reform. The same goes for the case where political actors choose to go through an externalised process of reform for a consensual proposal: they have no incentive to block a proposal that enjoys widespread agreement, and as the process has been externalised, no political actor can claim for itself a decisive role in the reform. The last argument deserves additional explanation. I have argued that actors are, first and foremost, expected to seek to claim credit for reform when consensual institutional reforms are at stake. When a consensual reform is elaborated solely by the parliamentary majority, it means that the government and its supporters seek to exclude the opposition from the conception of a reform that enjoys popular support. Therefore, even if there is widespread agreement among the actors within the political system on a given reform at the beginning of the process, the opposition is faced with two difficult choices: supporting a reform without being able to claim a decisive role in its elaboration, or shifting position in order to reframe the issue, oppose the government, and possibly lead the reform to fail. Empirical evidence suggests that this temptation is particularly strong for opposition parties in cases where

the government must go through a referendum before a reform can be adopted. The hegemonic and plebiscitary aspects inherent to any referendum have long been evidenced and discussed in the literature on the topic (Qvortrup 2000; Qvortrup 2001; Suksi 1993). In any referendum, there is an implicit question of support for the government. Consequently, there are numerous examples of referendums results which have been heavily skewed by the fact that (some) voters wished to punish their government. For example, the French President's support for the 2005 referendum on the European Treaty was one of the best predictors of a "no" vote (Sauger, Brouard, and Grossman 2007), and this proved decisive for the final outcome. As a consequence, in cases of majoritarian processes of reform involving consensual reforms, the final word depends on the attitude of the opposition, as they may choose to adopt strategies in order to make the reform fail. In such cases, the usual veto players' logic applies in defining the final outcome: the outcome depends on the number of veto players, their ideological distance, and on the position of the status quo.

3.2. Multifaceted reforms

Multifaceted reforms can be defined as *reforms in which the issue at stake is framed as multidimensional, as opposed to one-dimensional reforms that are centred on a single issue*. For instance, the constitutional reform in Italy was multifaceted because it affected multiple aspects and was framed as a multidimensional reform: issues included devolution, the role of the second chamber, reform of the executive, and so on. Conversely, the issue of Seanad abolition in Ireland was framed as a one-dimensional issue: the options were abolition, or non-abolition. I insist on the aspect of framing, since no issue is *a priori* one-dimensional, particularly issues related to the core democratic rules that always affect multiple dimensions, since institutions form a *system*. Yet, reformers may choose either to "simplify" a given institutional reform by presenting it as a one-dimensional issue, or to "complicate" it by framing it as a multifaceted reform. I argue that the effect of the multifaceted character of a reform is exactly the opposite in relation to the likelihood of adoption of a consensual reform to its effect on the likelihood of adoption of a divisive reform.

H6. Consensual reforms are more likely to be adopted if they are framed as one-dimensional issues.

H7. Divisive reforms are more likely to be adopted when the majority is divided, if they are framed as multifaceted reforms.

The matter at stake here is the effect of complexity, ambiguity, but also of coalition-building dynamics on the outcome of institutional reforms. Consensual reforms are adopted more easily when they are presented as one-dimensional. It should now be clear that the main reason facilitating the adoption of consensual reforms is the fact that they enjoy a high level of public support. In such a configuration, adding multiple dimensions of reform would only “blur” the message, and would risk adding a divisive dimension to an otherwise consensual matter. As a consequence, the reformer who aims to implement consensual reforms would be better off “slicing them” into single, popular, easily readable issues, limiting their level of complexity and ambiguity as much as possible, in order to get everyone on board on precise reforms.

For divisive issues, the reformer who seeks to implement a reform does not enjoy a great deal of support, and faces exactly contrary incentives. Analysts coming from the field of public policy have reflected extensively on ambiguity’s capacity to bring forward reform. Palier coined the term “ambiguous agreement” to describe how certain welfare reforms have succeeded against the odds (2002; 2005). Others show that ambiguity is inherent to any policy process, and can be used as a resource by reformers (Zahariadis 2003). My argument here is similar to Rahat’s: complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty can in some cases serve reform (2008). In order to overcome the reservations of the other actors (in particular in cases where the parliamentary majority is highly divided) the most viable option consists of linking together multiple aspects of reforms into a package deal. Doing this carefully enables the reformer to accommodate the preferences of all of the actors in order to pass the reform, to facilitate tradeoffs, to blur the actors’ perceptions of the likely effects of the reform, or even to shift their preferences in a context where information and the cognitive ability to understand a reform is necessarily limited. Of course, there is no guaranteeing the success of such a strategy, particularly when the actors all prioritise their objectives in much the same way. Still, as in most cases there will be certain aspects of a package deal which are more relevant to one actor than to another, multifaceted reforms tend to make the adoption of reforms easier in a context where the actors are numerous and divided.

3.3. Processes of reform and nature of reforms

The basic idea here is that some processes of reform are better suited to particular types of reforms than others. This is because the reformers do not have the same objectives when they choose a majoritarian process as they would were they seeking an externalised, or a supermajoritarian one. Moreover, on some occasions, choosing one type of process over another may actually represent the desire to see the reform fail, or be delayed.

H8. *When reformers choose a supermajoritarian or an externalised process of reform for a consensual reform, the reform is adopted by a comfortable margin.*

H9. *When reformers choose a supermajoritarian or an externalised process of reform for a divisive reform, the reform is very likely to fail before it is put to a vote.*

H10. *When reformers choose a majoritarian process of reform for a consensual or for a divisive reform, the final outcome is dependent upon the other dimensions discussed before (veto players, one-dimensional vs. multifaceted, etc.). Ultimately, these reforms pass if the parliamentary majority is cohesive and large enough.*

When the issue at stake is consensual, and the political actors collaborate together or with actors outside of the political system, there is no obstacle to the adoption of the reform. When it comes to supermajoritarian and externalised processes relating to divisive reforms, on the other hand, the rationale is that reformers choose these paths (generally at least) because they do not actually want the reform to be adopted. The justification here is very simple: if the government and the majority were truly committed to reforming a divisive dimension of the institutional system, they would seek to retain as much control over the process as possible. There has been a tendency to overlook the fact that many attempted institutional reforms actually fail, as authors first and foremost tend to study successful reforms. And yet, in so many cases, dealing with institutional reforms seems to consist mainly of burying them with sufficient craftiness to preserve illusions. In other cases, it also consists of trying, in desperation, to bring together a group of political actors that is far too diverse to give any reasonable expectation of agreement.

The fate of citizens' assemblies offers a cruel illustration of this dynamic. In British Columbia and Ontario, the governments had their hands tied, as they had made promises to hold referendums. They have since put very little energy into defending the electoral system crafted by the citizen assemblies. In the Netherlands, the *Burgerforum* was created in order to get the D66 party into the coalition in 2003, with the mission to review the electoral system and to propose alternatives or corrections. Long before the coalition failed in 2006, it was clear that the government had no intention of fighting for electoral reform and that the D66 had become isolated. Fournier et al. give the following conclusion: “[the politicians] will not hand over such power unless they expect delegation to fail or are convinced the outcome will correspond to their preferences” (2011, 146). Hence the paradox: although, in theory, very inclusive processes of reform may seem desirable in order to build agreement on divisive issues, such processes actually have very slim chances of leading to a vote, let alone to the adoption of a reform.

As for the last argument, I will simply state here that the fate of consensual and divisive reforms in majoritarian processes depends on other factors, discussed in the previous hypotheses:

the attitude of the opposition – particularly in referendum contexts when a consensual reform is at stake, the cohesion of the parliamentary majority and the capacity of reformers to bring about acceptable trade-offs for divisive reforms, etc.

4. A typology of reform outcomes

The empirical evidence points towards the variance of the causal pathways at work according to the combination of the type of process and the nature of the reform. It is possible to summarize the findings by presenting the six combinations of types of reforms and types of processes, with empirical illustrations in the form of the successful and unsuccessful reforms that have occurred in Ireland, France and Italy. Most crucially, I will discuss the mechanisms behind these reforms.

Table 2. *Expected outcomes for different combinations of types of reform and types of process*

	Consensual reform	Divisive reform
Externalised process	++ Ex: none in the case studies	- Ex: most of the reforms discussed in constitutional convention in Ireland since 2013
Supermajoritarian process	++ Ex: <i>Quinquennat</i> in France in 2000	- Ex of attempt: Third <i>Bicamerale</i> in Italy, 1997-98
Majoritarian process	+/- Ex: Seanad reform in Ireland of 2013 “small” Irish reforms 2011-13 Federalism reform of 2001 in Italy	+/- Ex: constitutional reform of 2005 in Italy Electoral reform of 2005 in Italy Reordering of the electoral calendar in France

Note: ++ means that the reform is adopted by a majority going beyond the parties supporting the government, + that the reform is adopted by the majority/by a small margin, - that it is rejected or abandoned, -- that it is rejected and that there are defections inside the majority.

4.1. Consensual reform, externalised process

For this type of reform, the general logic is to involve all actors in the process of reform as much as possible, including those outside of the political system. As it concerns consensual reforms enjoying a great deal of popular support, and therefore bringing about positive outcomes

for all of the actors within the political system, the dominant strategy consists of making sure that credit can be claimed for the reform, and therefore of ensuring involvement in the process. I have also argued that in such configurations, adoption should be relatively easy. These reforms are not actually expected to be very frequent: there would be many reasons to expect that, whenever possible, the government will try to claim credit for a popular reform idea by controlling its elaboration (see 4.3-). To date, at least, no instances of such reforms can be found in the three case studies. This might be the case at some point if topics such as voting rights for Irish emigrants are effectively implemented in the near future, based on the work of the constitutional convention; such measures appear to have the support of many Irish citizens and political parties. However, most of the reforms that are currently on the agenda of the constitutional convention are actually divisive (see 4.4-). This seems to confirm and expand the impasse already apparent to those who have studied citizens' assemblies: these devices are primarily created in order to deal with contentious issues such as electoral systems, or in the case of Ireland, the length of the presidential term, voting age, etc. They don't tend to deal with consensual issues. Yet, at this point, the Irish case doesn't seem to provide decisive proof that externalised processes of reform make the adoption of consensual reforms easier either, insofar as the reformers appear to have little motivation to delegate the elaboration of consensual reforms. Indeed, given the fact that consensual reforms are dominated by outcome-contingent logics and credit-claiming strategies, the externalisation of consensual reforms would amount to deliberately sharing credit with external actors for the initiation of a popular institutional reform.

4.2. Consensual reform, supermajoritarian process

This second configuration of reform was encountered in the French case study, in relation to the shortening of the presidential term. This was the result of the country's particular institutional situation after the 1997 election, with the cohabitation of a Socialist PM and a Gaullist president. This situation of "divided majority" compelled the French political elites to collaborate, as both the president *and* the prime minister have some prerogatives regarding institutional reforms when they require constitutional change, as it was the case in this instance. Empirical evidence points towards a mix of collaboration between the majority and the opposition during the phase of elaboration of the content of the reform, and of the competition to be seen as the actor "responsible" for the reform during the adoption phase. The hypotheses that the dominant logic is one of credit-claiming (H2), and that the final outcome is the adoption

of the reform by a large majority (H8), regardless of the number of veto players or the referendum requirement (H4) are confirmed by the empirical evidence.

The reform to introduce the *quinquennat* illustrated the double logic of competition and collaboration. The president of the Republic and his camp (the opposition) did indeed cooperate with the PM and his allies (the majority) in order to pass a popular reform in the parliament, but this was followed by a phase of competition to claim credit for a reform which had been supported by the vast majority of French people for decades. The credit-claiming logic was abundantly clear, and actors were quite self-aware of this imperative. This was well evidenced by the fact that Chirac chose to support the reform after all, despite being against it personally, as it was popular both among the public and within the Parliament. Secondly, this is evidence by the lack of involvement of the left-wing parliamentary majority in the constitutional referendum called by the president, and therefore by the opposition. It shows clearly how the main political actors tried both to claim credit for the reform and to minimise (in the eyes of the public) their opponents' degree of involvement in the final, positive outcome. Conversely, Chirac's decision to hold a referendum that was not constitutionally required for the adoption of that particular constitutional reform was a consequence of his fear of being excluded from the benefits of a popular reform. The reform was passed by a very comfortable margin, both in the parliament and during the referendum held a couple of months later (73% of voters in favour, despite a low turnout of 30%), as a result of the agreement between the majority and the opposition on its merits.

In this second configuration of reform, the cooperation between the majority and the opposition in France was forced upon them by the constitutional character of the modification, and the situation of a divided majority. In all likelihood, as illustrated by the reordering of the electoral calendar (4.6), such cooperation would not have taken place if no institutional constraints had compelled the actors to act together. Going beyond the French case, it is arguable that situations in which the government and the opposition collaborate to pass a consensual institutional reform may actually be, if not exactly frequent, then at least relatively common. Indeed, in many countries, reforms of the core democratic rules, and constitutional reforms in particular, require a special procedure more stringent than that for the passing of ordinary legislation in the parliament. France, Ireland and Italy illustrate the consequences of the referendum requirement. However, supermajorities are also often necessary to pass a constitutional reform in parliament: in the US, for example, any constitutional amendment requires a supermajority of two-thirds of both houses of the Congress, *and* ratification by three-

quarters of the states! In such cases, reformers who fight for the adoption of a given modification have greater incentives to work closely with the opposition, in order to have its support, notwithstanding the credit-sharing implicit in this set-up.

4.3. Consensual reform, majoritarian process

This case of reform is particularly interesting, and I believe it to be much more common than the two configurations mentioned above. This would suggest that the topics at stake are perceived as being popular with the public, and that the government decides to retain the upper hand on the elaboration of the reforms.

Thus, contrary to the previous configurations, the government here chooses not to collaborate with the opposition during the phase of elaboration of the reform, and therefore to claim credit for the reform without sharing the spoils with its main contenders. I argued that there is a particularly big chance in this situation that the opposition will switch positions before the process is over, being in favour at the beginning, and opposed at the end, particularly when a referendum is to be held during the final adoption phase, again as a result of outcome-contingent motivations. The rationale behind this assertion was that this would be a consequence of the exclusion of the opposition from the elaboration of the reform, and of the difficulty they would then have in claiming credit for the reform. Several examples of such reforms have been outlined in the case studies: the abolition of the Seanad in Ireland, and the vast majority of the reforms that have been debated in Ireland since 2011.

The failure to abolish the Seanad in Ireland resulted, to a large degree, from the successful re-framing of the reform debate, which turned a consensual issue into a divisive one through criticism of the motives behind the referendum, and linked the issue with other contentious issues within the Irish institutional system, such as the matter of executive accountability. In the context of economic and political turmoil, the Irish upper house served as a cheap expiatory victim. The Seanad, its functioning, and the lack of added value of an upper house in its existing form had been criticised for decades, but most of the conclusions of the debates called for a profound reform of the Seanad. The decision to abolish the Seanad if Fine Gael went back to power was taken unilaterally by Enda Kenny and his advisors in October 2009. It was soon

directly or indirectly endorsed by all of the major political parties, as the idea was shared by a wide majority of the political and of the people at that time.⁴

During the official campaign before the referendum took place on the 4th of October 2013, the reform has been antagonised by the main opposition party, Fianna Fáil, by some ex-Fine Gael and Labour politicians, by the Greens, as well as by influent civil society advocates. The “yes” side, on the other hand, was supported by the government coalition (Fine Gael-Labour), but also by Sinn Féin. The coalition against the reform has attempted and succeeded in de-legitimising the reform, denouncing the cynical motives of Enda Kenny who had campaigned on the idea that the voters should get rid of senators costing €20 million a year. The opponents have all argued that the Seanad should be reformed rather than abolished. They have also replaced the question of the Seanad in a wider frame, insisting on democratic accountability and linking the issue with Dáil reform, showing that the abolition of the Seanad was meaningless without the reinforcement of the lower Chamber. Eventually, the negative campaigning over the Seanad issues had led many of the undecided voters and experts to choose the “no” side on the referendum. In the end, against all odds, and despite the polls which consistently predicted the abolition of the Seanad by a comfortable margin,⁵ Kenny lost the referendum with 51.7% of the voters who casted a ballot against abolition. The turnout has been among the lowest ever registered for a referendum in Ireland, with only 39.2% of voters who went at the polls. The result of the vote can be thought to be a mix of sanction against the government and Kenny’s cynical motives behind Seanad abolition, of the lack of mobilisation, but also of the successful referendum campaign.

This example illustrates how the opposition, which had been excluded from the elaboration of the reform, felt the urge to hold a distinctly separate position from that of the majority, and partly or totally re-framed the issue at stake in order to weaken the position of the government. However, in the case of the Seanad referendum, the reformers actively re-framed the debate in order to turn a single issue into a more complex one, embedded into multiple other dimensions of reform. Thus referendum failure is in line with the hypotheses presented above. In particular, this shows that it is harder to adopt a consensual reform when it is framed as a

⁴ In 2011, 58% of the people surveyed agreed with the proposition “the Seanad should be abolished”. The survey has been conducted by the Irish National Election Study of 2011.

⁵ On the last major poll of Ipsos MRBI published, when undecided voters were excluded, the proposal was backed by 62% and rejected by 38% of the individuals surveyed. When including the undecided, 44% backed the proposal, 27% said they would vote to retain the Seanad, 21% did not know what they would vote, and 8% said they would not vote.

Beesley Arthur. “Seanad referendum set to pass as voters back argument for cost savings”. *Irish Times*, 30 September 2013.

multidimensional issue, as it is highly likely that the existing consensus on a specific point will disappear when this issue is embedded into a wider frame. Moreover, the consequences of the exclusion of the opposition seem to be far less important for the outcome of consensual reforms when the final adoption takes place in the parliament, rather than in a referendum. Indeed, in such cases, the final outcome ultimately depends on the parliamentary majority: if this majority has enough seats in the parliament to pass the reform on its own, there is only so much that the opposition can or would want to do in order to reverse the final outcome on an issue that enjoys broad agreement. This was illustrated in Ireland by the easy adoption, thanks to the compact and strong parliamentary majority of several reforms, the most emblematic being the adoption of gender quotas of 30% (40% in the future) of women candidates in the party lists (Buckley 2013). Indeed, insofar as the reforms of the core democratic rules tend not to be very popular with the general public, the credit-claiming logics are much less strong for issues that remain purely in the parliament. The conclusions may be different, however, in countries where reforms require supermajorities to pass: in such instances, it is probably a risky strategy for a government to attempt to claim credit for a consensual reform on its own by bypassing the opposition.

4.4. Divisive reform, externalised process

I have argued that such a configuration is particularly likely when the government is trying to shelve a topic that it considers too important not to deal with, but where the government actually prefers the status quo. This may be the case, in particular, when a given agenda of institutional reforms is imposed upon the political elites by external pressures, as was the case in Ireland in 2011. It is quite striking to see, for example, how all of the experiences of citizens' assemblies on electoral reform eventually failed to lead to positive outcomes. The constitutional convention launched in Ireland on the 1 December 2012 is a telling example to disentangle the dynamics behind this apparent paradox. At the time of writing (April 2014), the convention has made 24 recommendations, going much further than the initial narrow agenda it was handed over. However, none of these recommendations have led to concrete action so far.

Even though the existing Irish legislature is far from being over, there is evidence that the setting-up of the constitutional convention was a way of getting rid of certain important and divisive topics regarding institutional reform, such as electoral system reform in particular, but also other aspects, such as voting age and the length of the presidential term, or gay marriage. On all of these issues, no agreement could be found between the two coalition partners when the Programme for Government was elaborated in 2011. As a consequence, most of the issues that

have been assigned to the constitutional convention are divisive, as evidenced by several polls. In 2011, for example, only 27% of the people surveyed agreed with the idea that “the electoral system should be replaced” (Coakley 2013, 15).⁶ In 2012, when asked how they would vote on a referendum on the topic, 46% of the people surveyed only said they would vote yes “to reduce the term of the president from seven to five years”, and 56% said they would vote no “to reduce the voting age to 17”.⁷ In June 2013, 49% were in favour of the removal from the constitution of the references to the woman’s life as being in the home, and 62% were opposed to the reduction of the voting age (Coakley 2013, 16).⁸ Only issues concerning the right to vote for Irish emigrants in the presidential election appear to benefit from a wide support (Coakley 2013, 16).

The heterogeneous agenda of the convention can be explained by a series of disagreements between Labour and Fine Gael, making it easier to “kick it to touch” to the convention. The government has allowed a certain number of issues to be on the agenda of the constitutional convention, either because they were divisive for the coalition (gay marriage) or because they did not really care about implementing them in the first place. The choice of calling for a referendum certain issues such as voting age is strange given the strong opposition of the public opinion. Yet, one must not forget that the general election is planned in 2016, and that there is no way to know whether the government will still be in place by then. The most likely outcome is that there will be a lack of time, political resources, and momentum to implement most of the suggestions of the convention. The current strategy therefore largely consists in moving the issues forward in time, later in the legislature. Therefore, the empirical evidence largely confirms that the most likely outcome of divisive reforms, when an externalised process of reform is put in place, is either the non-adoption of a reform proposed by the body to which the government has delegated the elaboration, or the non-discussion of the reform in the parliament, which is even more likely. This empirical evidence is completely in line with the findings on citizens assemblies conducted in Ontario, British Columbia, and the Netherlands, where divisive electoral reforms have failed to be adopted or even put to a vote (Fournier et al. 2011).

⁶ Source: Irish National Election Study of 2011.

⁷ Source: Survey of 2012 Ipsos –MRBI poll, “Ireland 2012: out changing attitudes and values”.

⁸ Source: Ipsos-MRBI poll published in the Irish Times on the 15 June 2013.

4.5. Divisive reform, supermajoritarian process

Of all of the six configurations of reform, I believe this one to be the least likely to lead to a positive outcome “in the real world”. What is more likely, however, is that the process will begin with collaboration between the opposition and the majority on a divisive issue, that this collaboration will end in the middle of the process, and that this will lead either to the abandonment of the reforms at stake, or to a switch to a majoritarian process of reform.

The example of the third *Bicamerale* in Italy presided over by D’Alema between 1999 and 2001 offers a good illustration of how the opposition and the majority failed to collaborate until the end of a project of constitutional reform that would have necessitated many substantial changes of the core democratic rules. Many of the provisions discussed over the course of the Bicameral Commission were abandoned altogether, whereas others led to a majoritarian process of adoption on the topic of federalism. The reason why these reforms are particularly unlikely to succeed is straightforward: it is just very difficult to bring together the interests of the majority and of the opposition on divisive issues. The interests of these actors are likely to be totally distinct, and if such a reform is not particularly popular with public opinion, self-interested logics tend to prevail. This to some extent explains why, despite numerous attempts to reach a shared solution (shared by the majority and the opposition) on constitutional reforms in Italy, the antagonistic interests represented in the Italian Parliament were always a stumbling block. Overcoming the barriers to reform represented by such a configuration would imply both the opposition and the majority sharing of a set of “selfish” interests, a situation that could arise if “within-block” divisions inside the majority and the opposition prevail over “between-block” divisions. Some examples exist, such as the 4% threshold for European elections adopted by the big parties (PD, PDL) in 2009 in Italy in order to weaken their numerous, small coalition partners. However, this situation is still quite exceptional, particularly in democracies based on a strong bipolar and alternating logic.

4.6. Divisive reform, majoritarian process

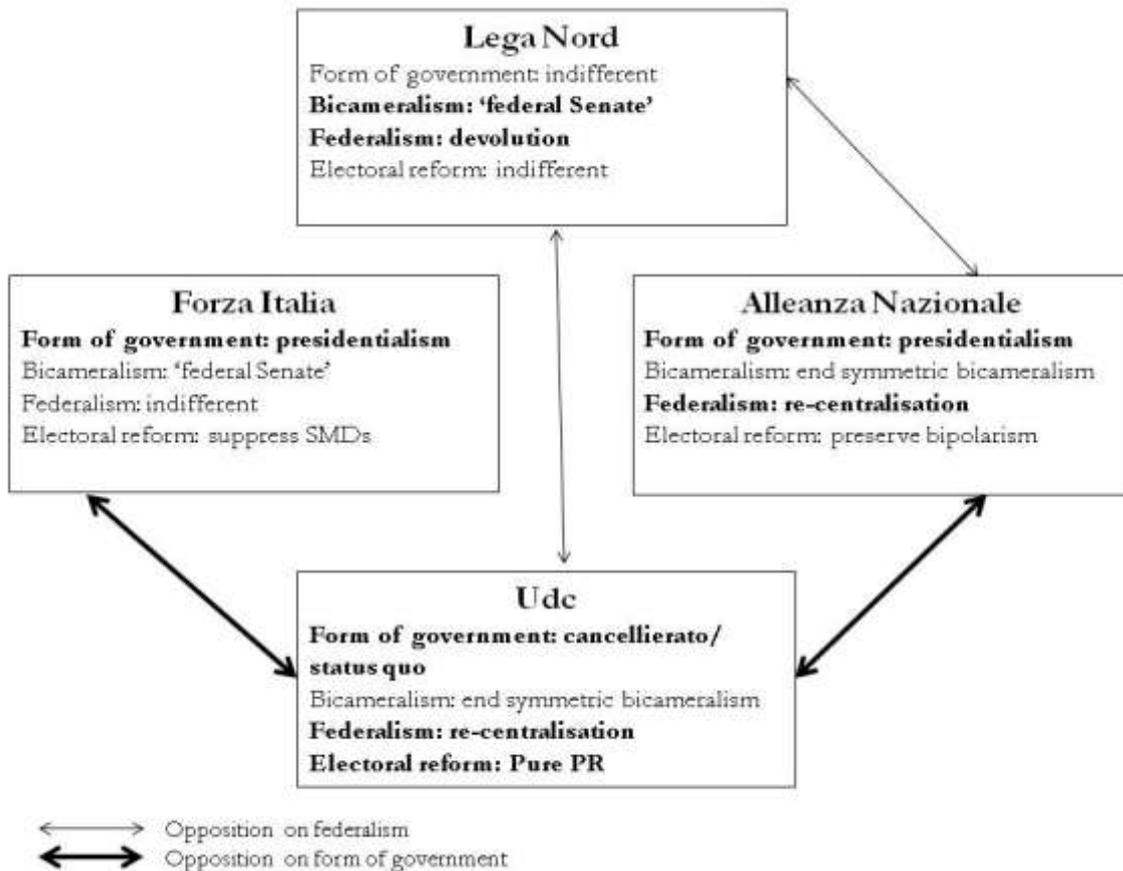
The last configuration is also probably the most frequent when it comes to the discussion of institutional reforms. It concerns divisive reforms, and processes during which the majority chooses to lead the process. When the majoritarian process is chosen to deal with such reforms, there are a number of possible final outcomes, which ultimately depend on the unity of the parliamentary majority.

The easiest situation is when the government can pass the reform on its own with the support of the parliamentary majority, because the majority is in agreement on the content of the reform. This implies, again, that no supermajority is required to pass the reform. In this case, the outcome is relatively straightforward: the opposition opposes, while the majority adopts the reform. The reordering of the electoral calendar in 2000 in France is a typical example. In 2002, for the first time and because of fortuitous circumstances, the legislative elections were to take place for the first time in the history of the Fifth Republic right before the presidential elections. All of the parties tailored their positions on this topic according to the belief that they had better chances to win the presidential (PS, half of the UDF), or the legislative elections (RPR, half of the UDF, small parties), confirming that self-interested strategies are paramount when it comes to divisive reforms (H1.) Despite the fact that the RPR, particularly in the Senate, tried to slow down the reform in every way possible, as long as the Socialist Party, with the help of the centrists, had enough votes to pass the law in the parliament, the outcome was certain.

A second possible situation concerns moments when the majority supporting the government is divided on the reforms at stake, with opposite positions. In such cases, as the Italian case shows, both for the constitutional reform (at the parliamentary stage) and for the electoral reform, the crucial factor that enabled the reform to pass was the ability of the majority to construct a bundle of reforms offering mutual concessions and “spoils” to each member of the coalition. Figure 2 shows that the positions of the four centre-right coalition partners (FI, AN, UDC, and LN) on the three main themes that structured the constitutional reform (form of government, bicameralism, federalism) and on the electoral reform were widely divergent.

Therefore, the negotiation in the parliament has mainly consisted in offering to each of the four coalition partners some concessions, expanding considerably the scope of the reform. For instance, whereas the project of constitutional reform presented by the government in first reading comprised the modification of 29 constitutional articles (an already considerable number resulting from difficult negotiations in summer 2003!) the final project comprised the modification of no less than 43 articles of the constitution! The multifaceted character of the reforms, together with the uncertainty about their actual effects, and the actors’ misperceptions – each of whom believed that they had been the canniest of all, successfully led to the adoption of complex and substantial reforms, at least in the parliament. It is also important to note that in such cases, a positive outcome may occur at the expense of the general readability and efficiency of the reform, and that reform can only occur when the different actors have different priorities. Otherwise, it is not possible to distribute the “spoils” in such a way as to satisfy everyone.

Figure2. *Initial positions in summer 2003 of the four parties of the majority on the four main institutional themes*



Note: the text in bold indicates the leading priorities of each party. For example, the priorities of the Lega Nord related to bicameralism and federalism

The third possible outcome is that the government has no majority with which to pass the reform, or that this majority changes during the final stages of the adoption. The 2006 referendum on the constitutional reform in Italy provides a good illustration. The reform was successfully adopted in the parliament thanks to the construction of a bundle of reforms during the parliamentary phase. Yet, the reform failed to pass the final hurdle, the referendum, as the 2006 election led to a switch of government majority (with the return of the centre-left), and to the defection of many centre-right voters. This also evidences the importance of timing for the final outcome of reforms. Rahat and Hazan suggest that, in the case of electoral reforms, delaying tactics serve as barriers to reform (2011, 487–488): procedural barriers, and the disagreement over content. Although the authors argue that these tactics cannot completely block a reform, the case studies suggest that they may be able to delay them for so long that the conditions favourable to a positive outcome may change.

Conclusion

To conclude, this analysis shows that the mechanisms leading to reform and non-reform are not the same according to the type of reform at stake and the process of reform used to conduct it, leading to the elaboration of a six-category typology to predict the outcome of reform. One can wonder how these empirical and theoretical findings could be expanded to other cases of reform. The empirical results on divisive reforms could certainly also be applied to major electoral reforms. For instance, the bundling logic found in the Italian case both for the electoral and the constitutional reform can be applied to other Italian reforms, including for instance the 1993 electoral reform where an agreement was also reached by accommodating in the text multiple incentives and priorities (Bedock 2011). I have also mentioned that the findings on externalised processes for divisive reform clearly echo the findings of authors who have worked on citizens' assemblies. We could multiply the examples, although a more promising research track could be to use a different method in order to investigate the applicability of these findings. In particular, the use of configurational methods and qualitative comparative analysis (QCA, Rihoux and Ragin 2009) seem particularly appropriate: the dependent variable is dichotomous (adoption/non-adoption), and a limited list of independent variables has been identified (the type of process, veto players, the type of reform, and its multifaceted character). It may therefore be possible to list a combination of variables observed in a larger dataset than the case studies presented here, in order to identify more systematically the conditions leading to reform and non-reform. More generally, these conclusions also lead to pay more attention to the *processes* of reform, and not only to the context of emergence in which they are put on the agenda.

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Appendix: list of the interviews conducted and interview guides

This presentation is ordered in the following way: name, function held during the sequence of reforms considered (for politicians and councillors), current function (for experts), other relevant functions (when applicable), party (when applicable), date of the interview, location of the interview, city in which the interview was held.

List of the interviews conducted in May 2012 on the agenda of political reforms in Ireland

- 1- Anon. political adviser in the department of the Taoiseach, FG, 30 May 2012, at his office in Dublin.
- 2- Byrne, Elaine, journalist and research fellow at University of New South Wales Sydney, co-author of politicalreform.ie, on the academic team of *We the Citizens*, 10 May 2012, at a café in Dublin.
- 3- Coakley, John, Professor of political science in the University College Dublin, 1 June 2012, at his office in Dublin.
- 4- Daly, Eoin, lecturer in the School of Law at University College Dublin, 9 May 2012, at a café in Dublin.
- 5- Dempsey, Noel, ex-Teachta Dála (TD) for Meath and Meath West between 1987 to 2011, ex-minister (1997-2011), FF, 30 May 2012, at a café in Dublin
- 6- Devins, Jimmy, ex Teachta Dála (TD) for Sligo-Leitrim between 2002 and 2011, ex local councillor in Sligo County Council between 1991 and 2002, ex-minister, FF, 18 May 2012, at his office in Sligo.
- 7- Farrell David, Professor of political science at University College Dublin, co-author of politicalreform.ie, on the academic team of *We the Citizens*, the constitutional convention and reformcard.com, 8 May 2012, at his office in Dublin.
- 8- Hardiman, Niamh, Professor of political science at University College Dublin, 22 May 2012, at a restaurant in Dublin.
- 9- Harris, Clodagh, Professor of political science at University College Cork, on the academic team of *We the Citizens* and reformcard.com, 21 May 2012, by Skype.
- 10- Hogan, Gerard, High Court Judge, ex-lawyer and professor of constitutional law at Trinity College Dublin, 29 May 2012 and 31 May 2012, at his office in Dublin.
- 11- Leahy, Pat, journalist for the Sunday Independent, 15 May 2012, at a café in Dublin.
- 12- Marsch, Michael, professor of political science at Trinity College Dublin, 15 May 2012, at his office in Dublin.
- 13- Mac Conghail Fiach, senator since 2011, director of the Abbey Theatre and Chairman of “*We the Citizens*”, Independent, 29 May 2012, at his office in Dublin.
- 14- Murphy, Eoghan, Teachta Dála (TD) for Dublin South-East since 2011, ex-Dublin city councillor from 2009 to 2011, FG, 24 May 2012, Leinster House, Dublin.
- 15- Murphy, Mary P., professor of sociology at NUI (National University of Ireland) Maynooth, member of TASC and *Claiming our Future*, 16 May 2012, at a café in Dublin
- 16- O’Connor Nat, director of the think tank TASC, 4 May 2012, at his office in Dublin.
- 17- O’Keeffe, Susan, senator since 2011, ex-journalist, Labour, 24 May 2012, Leinster House, Dublin.
- 18- O’Rourke, Mary, ex-Teachta Dála (TD) for Longford Westmeath and Westmeath (1981-1997, 2007-2011), ex-senator (1997-2007), ex-president of the Seanad (2002-2007), ex-minister (1989-1994, 1997-2002), FF, 23 May 2012, at her home in Athlone.
- 19- Power, Averil, senator since 2011, ex-political advisor of Mary Hanafin in the Department of Tourism, Family affairs and education, ex-spokesperson on political reform in the 2011 election, FF, 29 May 2012, Leinster House, Dublin.

- 20- Wall, Matt, postdoctoral researcher in the department of political science of the Free University, Amsterdam, 2 May 2012, by Skype.
- 21- Whelan, Noel, lawyer, columnist with the Irish Times and other media, ex-political adviser and FF politician, 14 May 2012, at a café in Dublin.
- 22- White, Alex, Teachta Dála (TD) for Dublin South since 2011, senator from 2007 to 2011, Labour, 24 May 2012, Leinster House, Dublin.

List of the interviews conducted between February 2013 and April 2013 on the quinquennat and the reordering of the electoral calendar

- 1- Avril Pierre, constitutional lawyer, ex-Professor of public law at *Institut d'Etudes Politiques* of Paris, 6 February 2013, in his home in Paris.
- 2- Bas, Philippe, former deputy general secretary of the Presidency of the Republic between 2000 and 2002, 19 February 2013, at his office in Paris.
- 3- Bourdon, Pierre, constitutional and administrative lawyer, ATER at University Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne, 25 February 2013, at a café in Paris.
- 4- Carcassonne, Guy †, constitutional lawyer, professor at university Paris-X Nanterre, 4 February 2013, at his office in Paris.
- 5- Colmou, Yves, former director of cabinet of the minister in charge of the relations with the Parliament, and adviser of the minister of Home Affairs between 1997 and 2002, 11 March 2013, at his office in Paris.
- 6- Dutheillet de Lamothe, Olivier, former deputy general secretary of the Presidency of the Republic between 1997 and 2000, 20 March 2013, at his office in Paris.
- 7- Gicquel, Jean, constitutional lawyer, emeritus professor of public law at University of Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne, 15 February 2013, at his office in Paris.
- 8- Giscard d'Estaing, Valéry, MP of the Puy de Dôme (1956-73, 1984-2002), former President of the Republic between 1974 and 1981, 11 March 2013, at his home.
- 9- Guelman, Pierre, former advisor of the Prime Minister for the relations with the Parliament, 1997-2002, 5 March 2013, at his office in Paris.
- 10- Ludet, Daniel, former advisor for Justice in the cabinet of Lionel Jospin, 1 March 2013, at his office in Paris.
- 11- Mazeaud, Pierre, member of the constitutional council between 1998 and 2004, former secretary of state in governments of Debré, Pompidou and Messmer, ex-MP of Haute-Savoie between 1988 and 1998, former president of the constitutional council (2004-2007), RPR, 5 March 2013, at his home in Paris.
- 12- Maus, Didier, constitutional lawyer and high civil servant, 20 February 2013, at his home.
- 13- Roman, Bernard, MP of the Nord (1997-now) and former president of the *Commission des lois* in the national Assembly (2000-2002), PS, 13 March 2013, at his office in Paris.
- 14- Mény, Yves, political scientist and specialist of the institutions, ex-directo of the European University Institute, 31 January 2013, at a café in Paris.
- 15- Paillé, Dominique, former general delegate of the UDF, MP of the Deux-Sèvres between 1993 and 2007, 3 April 2013, at his office in Paris.

List of the interviews conducted between in June and July 2013 on the constitutional reform and on the electoral reform of 2005

- 1- Anon. Councillor of the Camera dei Deputati, 28 June 2013, at his office in Rome.
- 2- Calderisi, Giuseppe, Councillor for the president of the Senate between 2001 and 2006, 4 July 2013, at his office in Rome
- 3- Ceccanti, Stefano, Professor of Comparative Public Law at university La Sapienza of Rome, senator of Piemonte between 2008 and 2013, PD, 26 June 2013, at a café in Rome.
- 4- Chiti, Vannino, MP of Toscana between 2001 and 2008, minister of the relations with the Parliament between 2006 and 2008, senator of Toscana since 2008, DS, 3 July 2013, at his office in Rome.

- 5- D'Alimonte, Roberto. Professor of Italian political system at University LUISS Guido Carli of Rome, 13 June 2013, at his office in Florence.
- 6- D'Onofrio, Francesco, senator of Lazio (1983-1987, 1996-2008) and president of the parliamentary group from 2001 to 2006, ex-MP of Lazio between 1990 and 1996, UDC, 25 June 2013, at his home in Rome.
- 7- Fisichella, Domenico, senator of Lazio between 1994 and 2005, independent senator between 2005 and 2006, vice-president of the Senate from 2001 to 2006, AN, 3 July 2013, at his home in Rome.
- 8- Fusaro, Carlo, Professor in the department of legal sciences at Università degli Studi of Florence, 10 June 2013, at his office in Florence.
- 9- Maran, Alessandro, MP of Gorizia between 2001 and 2006 and member of the Commission Affari Costituzionali I between 2001 and 2006, MP of Friuli-Venezia Giulia between 2006 and 2013, senator of Friuli-Venezia Giulia since 2013, DS, 25 June 2013, in a restaurant, Rome.
- 10- Nania, Domenico, senator of Sicilia and president of the AN parliamentary group in the Senate from 2001 to 2006, MP of Sicilia between 1987 and 2001, AN, 26 June 2013, in the Senate, Rome.
- 11- Pastore, Andrea, senator of Abruzzo between 1996 and 2013 and president of the Commission Affari Costituzionali I between 2001 and 2006, FI, 19 June 2013, at his office in Pescara.
- 12- Tarli Barbieri, Giovanni, Professor of constitutional law at Università degli Studi of Florence, 17 June 2013, at his office in Florence.
- 13- Tonini, Giorgio, senator of Marche between 2001 and 2013, senator of Trento since 2013, DS, 4 July 2013, at his office in Rome.
- 14- Vassallo, Salvatore, Professor of Political Science and Comparative Politics at University of Bologna, former MP of Emilia-Romagna between 2008 and 2013, PD, 11 June 2013, at his office in Bologna.

Role of the interviewee in political reform

- 1- First of all, I would like you describe me a little bit what has been your specific role in the process of political reform that is (now) happening in Ireland. I know you were involved in..., but I would like to know more precisely was your “function”, and when and why you started to focus on political reform.
- 2- What, personally, do you think are the most urgent political reforms to conduct in Ireland?

Period going from the 1990s to the crisis in 2008

Before going to the most intense “moment of the debate”, I want to understand what was the importance given to the issue of political reform before the crisis, so roughly in the last two decades before 2008. So, quickly, can you tell me...

- 3- Who were the **actors / parties** interested in political reform back then? Who was pushing for it?
- 4- What were the **topics** that were debated? How did these topics emerge in the agenda in the first place? /Who pushed to discuss these topics in the Parliament in the first place?
- 5- **Where** did the discussions about political reforms take place? /For politicians: how was work organised in the committee? Was it only in the parliament, or between academics? Was there some interest among the general public?
- 6- What were the **preferences** of the actors promoting reforms? Were there really consensual, or on the contrary quite contentious, or were parties quite indifferent? For politicians: What was the preference of your own party on this matter? And the other parties in Parliament?
- 7- There were quite a number of early parliamentary reports that were released, by the All-party committee on the constitution, then by the Joint committee on the constitution between 1997 and 2002. What happened with the recommendations of these reports? Were they followed by any action?

Discussions on political reform in the legislature 2008-2011

Then I would like to focus on the period that preceded the election of 2011, so roughly 2008-2011.

- 8- Was there a “before” and “after” crisis in the debate on political reform? When did **non-political actors** start to get interested in the topic (like the civil society and academics)? And when did the citizens and the general public start to become interested in this?
- 9- *For politicians:* When the Joint committee on the constitution was set up, what was it you were asked to debate? For example, why did you review the electoral system? And what did you intend to achieve back then?
- 10- What were the positions of the main parties in the parliament about political reform at the beginning of the last legislature? And at the end? Do you think that this position changed? Why?
- 11- Did the agenda of the things discussed concerning political reform in the parliament change over the course of the legislature?/Do you think that the leader of your party, or of other parties became more interested in political reform before the election?
- 12- What happened with the recommendations released by the committee, such as the establishment of an electoral commission, or commitment for women participation and reinforcement of the Dail? Were they followed by action? Were they used to fashion the manifestos, or the programme

for government? /How and who fashioned the manifestos for the section on political reform in your party?

Political reform since the election of 2011

There are now clear commitments to political reform in the Programme for Government, and the government is preparing the launch of a constitutional convention right now.

- 13- Who are **the actors** involved in the debate on political reform since the election of 2011? Did new actors emerge?
- 14- What are **the preferences** of these actors? Do you believe for example that the governing coalition, the opposition parties, and the civil society are pushing for the same agenda for reform, or that there are differences? What are they hoping to achieve with it?
- 15- Would you say that there are now strong expectations of the citizens towards political reform, or is the crisis still mainly an economic crisis? *For politicians:* When you talk(ed) to your constituents, do you have the feeling that political reform is an important topic for them, compared to other issues? Is there a demand for it?
- 16- What are the different **arenas** in which political reform is debated today in Ireland?
- 17- Some of the most important measures announced by the PoG include the abolition of the Seanad, the reduction of the size of the Dáil, more powers to the Dáil. Who is responsible for the content of the Pfg, and where do the main ideas come from? For example, how did the idea to abolish the Seanad appear?
- 18- Why do you think that the government made the choice of delegating a part of the decision about reform to the constitutional convention? Why not staying within the parliament? Where does the idea of Citizens' assemblies come from?

Conclusion

Thank you, again, for these insights, and for giving me this interview. Before I leave,

- 19- Do you know other people, or do you have access to documents that might help me to better understand the process of political reform in Ireland? Who do you think I should talk to?

Interview guide used in France

Rôle de l'interviewé dans le processus quinquennat/calendrier, préférences, et prévisions

- a- Premièrement, j'aimerais que vous me décriviez quel a été votre rôle spécifique dans le processus qui s'est déroulé entre 2000 et 2001. Quelle a été votre « fonction », et à quel moment avez-vous commencé à vous impliquer dans ces deux questions institutionnelles ?
- b- D'un point de vue théorique, pourquoi pensiez-vous (ou non) que les réformes du quinquennat et du calendrier étaient importantes à mener ? Par quelles réformes auriez vous voulu les voir complétées ?
- c- Au moment de l'adoption du quinquennat et de l'inversion du calendrier, quels effets anticipiez vous ?

La genèse du quinquennat

Avant que nous commençons à parler du moment le plus intense du débat j'aimerais comprendre quelle était l'importance accordée à l'enjeu de la réduction du mandat présidentiel avant 2000, disons depuis 1973, moment où le sujet est débattu au parlement. Pouvez-vous me dire, en deux mots :

- 1- Que s'est-il passé en 1973, au moment de l'échec de la réforme? Le sujet a-t-il été remis sur l'agenda depuis ?
- 2- Quels étaient les acteurs qui soutenaient cette réforme avant 2000 ? S'agissait-il plutôt d'acteurs isolés, ou y-avait-il une réflexion systématique au sein des partis et du monde académique sur ce sujet ? Quels étaient les arguments avancés ?
- 3- Pourquoi ce long moment entre 1973 et 2000 sans rediscuter du quinquennat? L'intérêt pour la réforme était-il alors purement limité au monde académique ?
- 4- Alors que Jospin s'est prononcé assez rapidement en faveur du quinquennat, Chirac s'y est opposé à de nombreuses reprises. Etaient-ils représentatifs des positions de leurs partis respectifs ? Savez-vous s'il s'agissait d'un sujet plutôt consensuel au sein des différents partis ? suscitait-il le conflit, l'indifférence, une large adhésion ?
- 5- La troisième cohabitation a-t-elle relancé le débat ? A-t-elle fait changer d'avis certains acteurs ? Pourquoi ?
- 6- Des tribunes d'intellectuels ont été publiées régulièrement dans le monde pour défendre le quinquennat, notamment à partir de la troisième cohabitation. Ont-elles influencé les politiques ? Avez-vous pu, vous ou des collègues, être consulté à ce propos par les acteurs politiques ? Lesquels ? A quel moment ?

Premiers mois de l'année 2000

Je voudrai maintenant revenir sur les premiers mois de l'année 2000, avant que le quinquennat ne soit discuté au parlement.

- 7- Des acteurs politiques tels qu'Alain Juppé, Hervé de Charrette, ont commencé à annoncer publiquement leur soutien au quinquennat début 2000. De plus, le RPR a commencé à avoir un groupe de travail sur le sujet, assez actif. Pourquoi ce revirement ? Comment se positionne Chirac là dedans ?
- 8- Avant que le débat ne s'engage au parlement, avez-vous une idée de ce qu'étaient les positions des principaux partis sur le sujet ? Existait-il des divisions au sein de la droite et de la gauche, ou même au sein des partis ?
- 9- Lorsque l'on épluche la presse de 2000, on a l'impression que la réforme devient peu à peu inéluctable. Pourquoi le débat se cristallise-t-il à ce moment précis ? Pourquoi cette réforme gagne-t-elle autant d'adhésion aussi vite après avoir été oubliée si longtemps, et pourquoi cette accélération ?
- 10- VGE a pris la responsabilité de déposer une proposition de loi début mai. Pouvez-vous m'expliquer ce qui s'est passé entre ce moment, et le moment où la décision est prise de passer par un projet de loi sans amendement (« quinquennat sec »), puis par un référendum ? pourquoi cette voie et pas une autre ?
- 11- Comment expliquez-vous une adoption facile et rapide au parlement de la réforme ? Comment est-il possible qu'autant d'acteurs aux idéologies et préférences institutionnelles opposées aient- pu se retrouver sur cette réforme ?

Pour les parlementaires

- 12- Pouvez-vous me redonner les grandes lignes du débat qui ont eu lieu au parlement sur le quinquennat ? L'assentiment était-il fort? Sur quels arguments? Qui pour, qui contre? Comment les acteurs ont-ils réagi à l'interdiction d'amender le texte ?

Campagne référendaire de l'année 2000

Revenons maintenant brièvement sur la campagne référendaire qui a eu lieu à l'été 2000.

- 13- Il a été fait le choix d'une campagne brève. Pourquoi ce choix ? Pour les partis n'ont-ils pas mis plus de ressources et d'énergie dans la campagne ?
- 14- L'opinion publique apparaissait, dans les sondages, à la fois comme acquise, et indifférente. Mais comment expliquer un tel niveau d'abstention ? Les partis avaient-ils prévu cela ?

Pour les experts

- 15- Les académiques et les intellectuels ont-ils été appelé à jouer un rôle dans cette campagne ? Quelle était la position des experts face au « quinquennat sec » proposé ?

La genèse du calendrier

- 16- Juste après la réforme du quinquennat, un certain nombre de voix s'élèvent pour modifier le calendrier dans la foulée, avec au départ une grande réticence, et de Chirac, et de Jospin. Qui a promu l'idée de l'inversion, avec quels arguments ? Et pourquoi cette réticence ?
- 17- Comment expliquer que, quelques-mois après s'y être opposé, Jospin et le PS décident finalement de déposer une proposition de loi sur le sujet ?

Le débat sur le calendrier

- 18- Au contraire du débat sur le quinquennat, la question du calendrier a suscité une forte opposition au parlement du PCF, des Verts, et du RPR. Comment expliquer les positions des partis respectifs sur le sujet ? Pourquoi, notamment, le RPR a-t-il défendu une vision qui, somme toute, donnait plus de prééminence au parlement ? Et le PS une vision qui entérinait une vision plus présidentielle ?
- 19- De façon générale, pourquoi le quinquennat a-t-il fait peu débat, et le calendrier déclenché les passions politiques ?

Conclusion

- 20- Connaissez vous d'autres gens, ou avez-vous accès à des documents qui pourraient m'aider à mieux appréhender ce qui s'est passé pendant ces deux réformes ?

Interview guide used in Italy

Ruolo dell'intervistato nel processo di riforma, preferenze, e previsioni sulle conseguenze delle riforme

- 1- Innanzitutto, vorrei sapere qual è stato il Suo ruolo specifico nel processo di elaborazione delle riforme istituzionali che sono state definite tra il 2003 e il 2005. Quale è stata la sua funzione, e in che modo Lei è stato coinvolto nel processo ?
- 2- Dal punto di vista teorico, che cosa pensava rispettivamente della riforma costituzionale e della riforma elettorale del 2005 ? Il Suo giudizio era positivo o negativo ? Perché ?
- 3- Quali erano gli effetti di queste due riforme da Lei anticipati, sia sul piano politico che sul piano istituzionale ?

Genesi della riforma (2002-Agosto 2003)

Prima del 2003, ci sono stati vari tentativi di riforma delle istituzioni italiane. Quali sono state le iniziative del centrosinistra tra il 1996 e il 2001 ? In particolare, potrebbe parlarmi della riforma del Titolo V ?

- 4- Alla fine del 2002, c'erano già state varie discussioni in Parlamento sulla devoluzione. In seguito, all'inizio del 2003, si è cominciato a parlare di premierato, con un giudizio abbastanza positivo da parte dell'opposizione. In marzo, si parla della riforma del Titolo V. A che epoca queste questioni hanno cominciato a emergere nel dibattito pubblico? Sono emerse in modo concomitante oppure le differenti questioni sono apparse in momenti diversi? Chi ha preso l'iniziativa per i differenti aspetti della riforma?
- 5- Quali erano le posizioni iniziali dei principali partiti della maggioranza all'inizio delle discussioni su questi temi? E quelle dell'opposizione?
- 6- Perché il CDx ha scelto di discutere i vari aspetti della riforma costituzionale (devoluzione, federalismo, premierato, corte costituzionale, etc) in un singolo provvedimento piuttosto che in alcuni disegni di legge distinti?
- 7- L'idea di riformare la legge elettorale per tornare alla proporzionale è emersa nell'aprile 2003, insieme all'idea di adottare un sistema simile a quello delle elezioni provinciali. Chi ha avuto quest'idea? Perché fu deciso di non discuterla insieme alla riforma costituzionale? Quali erano le posizioni iniziali dei differenti partiti del CDx su questo punto?

Per i politici

- 8- Quali erano gli aspetti più importanti della riforma per il suo partito? Perché? E quelli più problematici?

L'elaborazione del progetto unico di riforma costituzionale

- 9- Qual è stato il ruolo dei costituzionalisti e degli esperti all'inizio del processo? Quali costituzionalisti, gruppi, ed esperti, sono stati consultati dal centrodestra? (dal centrosinistra)?
- 10- Nel luglio 2003, D'Onofrio, Nania, Pastore, e Calderoli hanno ricevuto il compito di scrivere una proposta di riforma costituzionale. Perché si è scelto di procedere così? Che cos'è successo a Lorenzago di Cadore, e quali sono stati i punti più problematici della discussione? Come sono state sormontate le divisioni della coalizione?
- 11- Quali sono state le principali misure su di cui ci fu un accordo fra i 4 saggi di Lorenzago?
- 12- Che cosa è successo nella maggioranza del CDx fra agosto 2003 (accordo di Lorenzago) e dicembre 2003 (inizio della discussione in parlamento)? Chi ha negoziato il progetto?

La discussione della riforma costituzionale in parlamento

- 13- Da dicembre 2003 a marzo 2004, durante la prima lettura al Senato, ci sono state ancora delle tensioni tra la Lega e gli altri alleati sul federalismo? Il CDx era unito, oppure restavano dei punti problematici? Erano isolati, o rappresentativi, gente come Pera o Fisichella?
- 14- Qual era l'attitudine dell'opposizione sul testo, e come spiegarla? C'erano sono tensioni interne al CSx sulla riforma costituzionale?
- 15- Durante la prima lettura alla Camera (aprile-ottobre 2004), torna la discussione sulla riforma elettorale, questa volta con l'idea di adottare il Tatarellum. Perché? Qual è stato il ruolo dell'UDC, e perché quest'idea non ha avuto impatti in quel momento?
- 16- Nel luglio 2004, l'UDC ha proposto vari emendamenti del testo, che hanno provocato nuove tensioni nel centrodestra. Perché? Come è stato sormontato questo nuovo ostacolo? Che cosa cambia nel testo e nell'accordo? A cosa serve il cosiddetto Lorenzago due?
- 17- Che cosa succede durante gli ulteriori passaggi della riforma costituzionale in Parlamento nel 2005?

Riforma elettorale

- 18- Alla fine del 2004, fu presa la decisione di adottare una “mini-riforma elettorale”, più precisamente con l’idea di adottare la scheda unica e il cosiddetto Nespolum, mentre l’UDC voleva una riforma molto più importante. Perché il processo è finito con l’adozione di una grande riforma elettorale abbastanza eteroclita? Quali erano le posizioni dei partiti di CDx sulla riforma elettorale? E quelle dei partiti di CSx? C’erano delle divisioni nelle due coalizioni, oppure erano compatte?
- 19- Come si è riusciti ad arrivare al compromesso finale e all’adozione delle due riforme alla fine 2005?

Referendum

- 20- Che cosa mi può dire della mobilitazione per il referendum del 2006? Delle posizioni dei differenti partiti? Perché il CDx ha perso questo referendum abbastanza nettamente? Quale sono stati i momenti decisivi della campagna sul referendum?

Conclusione

- 21- Lei conosce altre persone, o dei documenti che potrebbero aiutarmi a capire meglio che cos’è successo durante il processo di adozione di queste due riforme ?