

II International Conference on Public Policy

**Panel 11. Discourse and critical policy research**

**T11P05. Media and Policy**

Milan, July 1th – 4th 2015

## **Mediated deliberation and public policy: the Italian case.**

Stefania Ravazzi, Gianfranco Pomatto, Micol Maggiolini

Department of Culture, Politics and Society, University of Torino

The paper presents the findings of an exploratory analysis of the so-called “mediated deliberation”, a relatively new field of analysis that aims at measuring and explaining the capacity of mass-media to provide a wide and heterogeneous range of information, arguments and viewpoints. Two main hypotheses have driven the empirical research: 1) the mediated deliberation is variable; 2) the variance depends on the type of conflict that has developed within the policy subsystem.

The analysis has been conducted through a comparison of the three major Italian newspapers (“Corriere della Sera”, “Repubblica” and “Il Sole 24 Ore”) and three different policies (labour policy, citizenship policy and energy policy). From their on-line archives, 457 articles were retrieved concerning the main laws or draft laws on the three policies in the last twenty years. The corpus of articles has been analysed by a pool of researchers with the support of policy experts, distinguishing the two main deliberation components: informing and arguing. The arguments in particular were analysed looking at their contents, sources/senders (politicians, interest groups, bureaucrats, experts, journalists, citizens), the orientation toward the policy measures (pro or con), the level of inference complexity (complete inference or incomplete inference) and the type of logic (logic of consequentiality or logic of appropriateness).

The findings on the Italian case have confirmed the research hypotheses: the mediated deliberation, although quite low, vary among policies and this variance stems from the type of conflict that characterizes the policy subsystem.

## Introduction

The topic of this paper<sup>1</sup> is the so-called “mediated deliberation” (Simon and Xenos 2000, 363; Wessler 2008, 1; Maia 2012, 99), a relatively new field of analysis that combines political communication research and public deliberation research. The aim of this research field is to measure and explain the “deliberativeness” (Wessler 2008) of the mass media, that is, their capacity to provide a wide and heterogeneous range of information, arguments and viewpoints on public issues (Maia 2012; Steiner 2012).

The literature on political communication includes three different perspectives of analysis: the first focuses on the news’ contents, news making and framing processes; the second is focused on public opinion and in particular on how mass media affect consumers’ opinions; the third focuses on the media system and its patterns of relation with the social and political environments. Deliberative democracy literature counts three main fields of inquiry: the theoretical works; the empirical studies on deliberative mini-publics<sup>2</sup>; the empirical analyses of different modes of communication, in order to evaluate whether and why they approach (or do not) the deliberative ideal. The analysis of the mediated deliberation applies this latter analytical perspective to the news contents.

This paper focuses in particular on the mediated deliberation that concerns public policies. This field is relevant for two main reasons: firstly, mass media are the main source of opinion formation about public policies, which are often complex and controversial (Berkowitz and Pritchard 1989 Chaffee and Frank in 1996, Kim et al. 2011); secondly, mass media may affect the perceived legitimacy of public policies and, consequently, also the level of consensus toward governments (Kim et al. 2002; 2011; Scheufele et al. 2002; Quiring and Weber 2012).

Two main hypotheses have driven the empirical research: 1) the mediated deliberation on public policies is variable; 2) the variance depends on the type of conflict that develops around a policy. In particular, the mediated deliberation on a policy is expected to be better when the policy conflict is not focused on deep values or fundamental normative precepts. In order to address these research questions, an exploratory analysis of the mediated deliberation in the three major Italian newspapers in relation to three different public policies has been carried out between 2013 and 2014.

---

<sup>1</sup> An earlier and partial version of this article was first published in Italian as a chapter in the book edited by Bobbio and Roncarolo (2015), which brings together the results of a wider research entitled "Communicating Public Policies", co-financed by the S.Paolo Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> The so called “mini-public” is an *ad hoc* decisional process, which is organized to involve ordinary citizens in an informed and dialogic arena to take a public decision (Fung 2003; Dryzek 2010).

The paper is organized as follows: the next section summarizes the theoretical framework from which the present research has developed; Section 2 briefly describes the methodology, the units of analysis and the measured variables (explained more in detail in the Codebook Appendix); the third section reconstructs the three policies and describes the types of conflict that has characterized the different policy subsystems; Sections 4 and 5 show the findings in support of hypothesis n.1, while Section 6 tests the validity of hypothesis n. 2. A summary of the arguments is finally offered in the conclusion.

## **1. Mass media and deliberation**

The literature on deliberative democracy - which was inspired by the thought of Habermas and Rawls and has been developed thanks to the pioneering contributions of Jane Mansbridge (1980), John Elster (1985; Elster and Hylland 1986), Bernard Manin (1987) and Joshua Cohen (1989) - is now populated of theoretical and empirical studies from various disciplinary perspectives, which have greatly enriched and sophisticated the scientific debate. After more than three decades of literature, the adoption of a new systemic approach has been proposed by some scholars, by extending the analysis of deliberation on a variety of discourse venues, in order to better understand the linkages and mutual influences of opinions, interests, values, visions and arguments within the public sphere (Parkinson and Mansbridge 2012). From this viewpoint, mass media play a key role for the functioning of a hypothetical deliberative system (Maia 2012), expecting that they stimulate the formation of reasoned opinions through an adequate supply of information and arguments on public interest issues (Habermas 2006; Ettema 2007; Kim et al. 2011). The studies on mediated deliberation lie within this theoretical framework, by assessing the contribution that mass media offer to the deliberative system in terms of quality of information, space for divergent voices and exchange of arguments.

Deliberation scholars obviously recognize that reality can only be, at least for now, very far from the ideal deliberative system. Especially with regard to public policies, ‘ideally the media should offer a platform for a respectful and sophisticated dialogue with all policy positions being included on an equal level. Yet, the real media world tends to be so far removed from this ideal that it looks frustrating from a deliberative perspective’ (Steiner 2012, 179). Some characteristics of media systems hamper the functioning of a properly deliberative system: the conflict of interests that characterizes media owners, who should be impartial but actually can have strong interests in promoting specific paradigms or viewpoints on public policies (McChesney 1997; Hallin and Mancini 2004); the for profit nature of the media companies, which leads to frame news in order to enhance their appeal and reach a greater audience (Staab 1990; Entman 1993; Voltmer and Koch-

Baumgarten 2010; Maia 2012), for example by over-simplifying and decontextualizing news (Franklin 1997; Delli Carpini and Williams 2001), by accentuating the most sensational and conflicting ones (Esser 1999; Wessler 2008) and by over-emphasizing voices and viewpoints of actors with authority and political power, like members of Governments and Parliaments and prominent members of organized interest groups (Schoenbach 2001; Schudson 2003; van Aelst *et al.* 2010; van Dalen 2012). In the Italian, Spanish and Greek case (and, to a lesser extent, also in the French case), the polarized pluralist media system further aggravates the situation: mass media are partisan and largely subordinate to politics or business actors (Blumler and Gurevitch 1995; Hallin and Mancini 2004), and consumers search in the news mainly messages consistent with their own value systems and their political orientations (Shen and Edward in 2005; Borah 2011; Stroud 2011).

However, Wessler (2008, 8) has argued that mediated deliberation 'is probably a matter of degree and [...] the level of deliberativeness remains to be ascertained empirically'. In this regard, for example, the exploratory study of Ferec *et al.* (2002) has shown the presence of different models of mediated deliberation on the controversial issue of abortion. Although far from the ideal model of deliberation, German newspapers gave space almost only to voices of the traditional organized actors (political parties, churches and public and private big organizations). On the contrary, in the US, newspapers also reported arguments and opinions of groups and grassroots associations. Starting from these findings, Bennett *et al.* (2004) wondered more generally whether specific variables could explain the presence of different models of mediated deliberation. The intent of this article is to address this question by comparing how communication on public policies may vary in relation to the type of conflict that characterizes the policies.

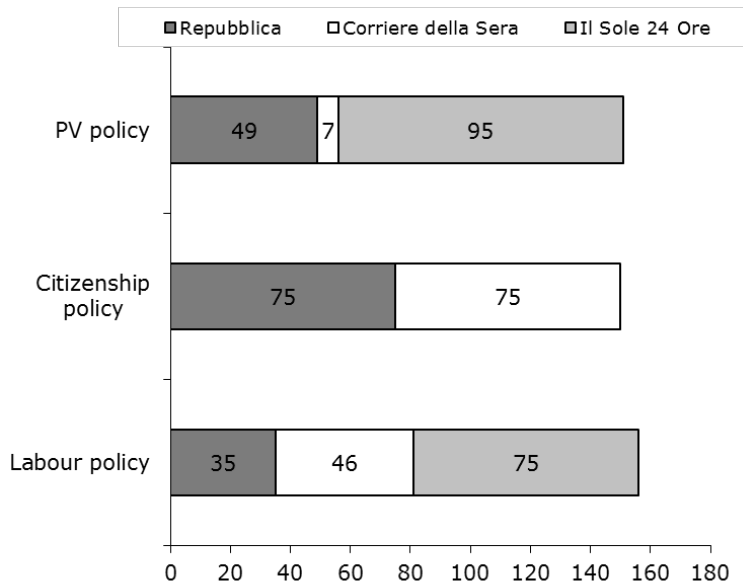
## **2. Methodology**

Three policies were chosen because of the high level of conflict that the main reforms raised in Italy over a period of twenty years, between 1993 and 2013: the labour policy, the citizenship policy and the photovoltaic energy (PV) policy.

The analysis was conducted on the newspaper articles that contained information on the three policies. The articles were selected choosing the days around the main focusing events of each (effective or expected) policy change, in order to collect about 150 articles for each policy from the major Italian newspapers: 457 articles were finally retrieved from the on-line archives of the three major Italian newspapers: 'Corriere della Sera', 'Repubblica' and 'Il Sole 24 Ore' (fig. 1). These

newspapers are owned by large holdings with different political orientation: left-wing (Repubblica), moderate (Corriere), and right-wing (Il Sole 24 Ore)<sup>3</sup>.

Figure 1. The corpus of newspaper articles



The corpus of articles was analysed distinguishing the two main deliberation components: facts and arguments.

As far as the factual dimension was concerned, the articles were analysed in order to verify the presence of sufficiently detailed descriptions on the main policy measures included in the reforms. Furthermore, the top 20 articles were submitted to a group of 13 experts (respectively five for the labour policy, three for the citizenship policy and five for the PV policy) with different profiles and skills (economists, jurists, policy analysts). For each article, the experts were asked to assess two dimensions: 1) the correctness of information and 2) the level of comprehensibility of the technical terms and expressions (the Codebook Appendix contains a detailed description of the items).

The argumentative dimension was analysed deeply by extrapolating the arguments<sup>4</sup> from the articles and by applying some of the main variables on which the literature on public deliberation has been focused in the last decade (Steiner *et al.* 2003; 2004; Stromer-Galley 2007; Maia 2012):

<sup>3</sup> Since Il Sole 24 Ore has a particularly specialized profile, the citizenship policy was not covered. For this reason, articles on the citizenship policy were retrieved only from the other two newspapers.

<sup>4</sup> An argument is here defined as a message that contains problematic expressions, for which validity claims are raised, and the reasons (which are based on evidence of different types: theoretical, empirical etc.) with which such claims are justified (Habermas 1981).

contents of the arguments, message sources/senders, orientation towards the policy measures, level of inference complexity and logic of the argument (see the Codebook Appendix for a detailed description of the coding scheme)<sup>5</sup>.

### 3. Policies, conflicts and values

Public policies have been classified in several ways. The most known and still used typology is the one of Lowi (1970; 1972), who classified policies on the basis of public coercion modes and distinguished among regulatory, distributive, redistributive and constitutive policies.

The three policies that were selected for the analysis were characterized by some important reforms or attempts of reform in the last twenty years, each of them containing both regulatory and distributive measures. The labour policy underwent three main reforms of the labour market, in 1997, 2002 and 2012. The citizenship rules have not yet been reformed, but three key draft laws were discussed in Parliament and raised a hot debate, in 2006, 2011 and 2013. The PV policy was officially initiated in 2003 through a national law, to which followed some debated decrees in 2005-2006 and a controversial reform in 2011.

The three main reforms of the labour market introduced various elements of flexibility to several job contracts. The 1997 ‘Treu’ reform abolished the monopoly of public intermediation between labour supply and demand, introduced the ‘temporary job’<sup>6</sup> and extended the range of flexible contracts (apprenticeship contracts; training contracts, fixed-term contracts; internships). The 2002 ‘Maroni’ reform extended the use of temporary jobs, introduced the staff leasing<sup>7</sup>, facilitated the use of part-time contracts and introduced the ‘project contract’. The then government also proposed the abolition of the Article 18 of the Workers’ Statute, but the proposal was voted down<sup>8</sup>. The 2012 ‘Fornero’ reform weakened the Art. 18, by establishing the possibility of reinstatement only in case

---

<sup>5</sup> The encoding of the arguments, following a specific training coordinated by Gianfranco Pomatto and Stefania Ravazzi, was carried out by three different researchers. Gianfranco Pomatto then recoded autonomously 150 items (50 items randomly chosen for each policy). The correspondence of the results was equal to or greater than 95%.

<sup>6</sup> The ‘temporary work’ is a temporary employment relationship that involves three subjects: the worker, the intermediation agency and the company. The intermediation agency enters into an employment contract with the employee and a supply contract with the user company.

<sup>7</sup> Staff leasing allows the intermediation agency to manage also permanent contracts.

<sup>8</sup> The Art. 18 established the right to reinstatement in the workplace for workers that were fired ‘without a just cause or a justified reason’.

of discriminatory reasons, and introduced new rules for the use of the ‘project contracts’ and fixed-term employment contracts<sup>9</sup>.

Three main citizenship reforms were presented and discussed in the Parliament over the last twenty years, although none of them passed: the ‘Amato’ draft law in 2006, the ‘Sarubbi-Granata’ draft law in 2009 and the ‘Manconi-Tronti’ draft law in 2013. These attempts of reform intended to intervene on the rules for the acquisition of the citizenship by resident foreigners, rules that still provide: a preferential treatment for foreigners who are married to Italian citizens and EU citizens (4 years marriage) and a more severe and long procedure for other foreigners (10 years of legal residence) and for their children born on the Italian soil (continuous residence in Italy of the child and his/her parents until the age of 18). The Amato draft law proposed to reduce the minimum period of residence from ten to five years, but to subordinate the acquisition of the citizenship to the passing of a public examination (including language skills and questions about the Italian Constitution) and to a pledge allegiance to the Italian national values. The Sarubbi-Granata draft law restated substantially the precedent proposal, with the addition of the *ius soli* for children of foreigners (at least one of them resident in Italy for at least five years). The Manconi-Tronti draft law asked for the *ius soli* for all the new children born from resident foreigners and the citizenship for minors who had been in Italy for at least 10 years and had attended a primary or secondary school.

The Italian PV policy dates back to the Nineties, when the State introduced grants for the construction of PV plants. In 2003, with the law called ‘Conto Energia’, that transposed some EU directives, the State replaced the grant policy by establishing a new twenty years-long programme of special tariffs for PV energy producers. In a few years, the tariff plan was reshaped five times, to slightly and gradually reduce the incentivizing tariffs and leave space to the natural dynamics of the free market. However, in 2011, with the adoption of the so-called ‘Romani’ Decree, the new Conto Energia significantly reduced the incentives and imposed new limits on the location, size and type of plants.

All these mentioned reforms raised widespread conflicts between right-wing and left-wing parties, inside the parties, between parties and interest groups, and inside interest groups. However, the three policy conflicts were different in terms of relevance and weight that policy actors gave to values and normative principles within the disputes.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework helps better focus the matter of value conflicts. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993, 29-34, 220-223) distinguished between conflicts that focus on underlying

---

<sup>9</sup> The Art. 18 was then abolished in 2014 and the government substituted some fixed-term contracts with a new ‘indefinite duration’ contract (only for private organizations).

principles ('deep core') or 'fundamental normative precepts' and conflicts that focus on 'precepts with a substantial empirical component' or 'secondary aspects'.

The conflicts that have characterized the various reforms in the three policies developed around different value dimensions, as the Italian literature on these policies has reported. Since the early Nineties, the conflict on the labour reforms crystallized into a contrast between irreconcilable deep core values, framing all issues as a total opposition between the right to a decent and secure job and the need for a flexible market (Ferrera and Gualmini 1999; Pritoni 2010; Vesan 2012; Gualmini and Rizza 2013). The conflicts on citizenship reforms revolved around the fundamental precept the national identity, intended as a good to protect from different cultures or as an evolving and socially constructed mix of beliefs, behaviours and values (Zincone; 2011). In the conflict on the PV policy, although normative precepts like environmental sustainability and resource exploitation could be addressed, disputes focused more on precepts with substantial empirical components, in particular the effectiveness of the incentives on the development of the PV industry and public sustainability of their costs (Prontera 2008; 2009; Faiella 2013).

The hypothesis of this article is that policy conflicts and newspaper communication modes are linked. More precisely, when the conflict focuses on deep core values or fundamental normative precepts, newspaper communication is expected to be less deliberative. The explanations behind this hypothesis could be complementary, the former concerning the strategies of the policy actors, the latter concerning the media logic. On the one hand, in fact, policy actors modulate their actions in the political arena by choosing from a wide variety of strategies, that depend on the context in which they act and on calculations of the likely costs and benefits (Sabatier and Jenkins Smith, 1993; Binderkrantz, 2005; Victor, 2007; Beyers, 2009; Baumgartner *et al.*, 2009). When a political conflict does not crystallise as a dispute between values and principles, strategic policy actors could perceive the use of symbols and heuristics as less effective in terms of gaining alliances and supporters, thus leaving room for a communicative repertoire more focused on persuasion and the use of rational arguments. On the other hand, mass media could use different ways of communication in relation to the type of conflict that characterizes the issue at stake. When a value conflict is ongoing, mass media can easily draw on a repertoire of slogans, metaphors and heuristics that are directly linked with the values and that increase the appeal of the news, while in case of a more pragmatic conflict, the symbolic repertoire would be less rich and probably less effective, thus allowing more space for arguments and rational justifications.

Regardless the underlying mechanisms that link policy conflicts and mediated deliberation, in order to verify the hypotheses, the mediated deliberation on the PV policy should be significantly different from the other two, excluding the influence of other possible variables.

#### 4. Knowing public policies: facts and concepts

Knowing the contents of the policy measures is the first necessary step to understand them and to be able to reflect on their objectives, rationales, implications and consequences, and mass media are potentially the most efficient and easy mean to collect information on public policies. Did Italian newspapers actually provide clear and exhaustive information on the reforms that were proposed on three of the most debated and conflictual policies in the last twenty years?

The analysis of the newspaper sample seems to answer negatively to this question. The articles offered generally weak and selective descriptions of the policy measures: overall, although the PV policy performed a little better<sup>10</sup>, only a minority of articles provided detailed information, and the descriptions were mainly focused on the most controversial or appealing policy aspects (tab. 1).

*Table 1. Descriptions of the policy measures (%)*

	No description of policy measures	Description of controversial policy measures	Description of non controversial policy measures	Description of all the policy measures	Total
<b>PV policy</b>	60,3	37,7	0,0	2,0	100 (N=151)
<b>Labour policy</b>	86,5	10,3	0,0	3,2	100 (N=156)
<b>Citizenship policy</b>	78,7	18,7	0,0	2,7	100 (N=150)
<b>Total</b>	75,3	22,1	0,0	2,6	100 (N=457)

The information on the labour reforms was focused on the flexibility measures and the changes to the Art. 18. During the Treu reform, the abolition of the public monopoly of the employment services did not get any visibility and no information was provided on this significant policy change. During the Maroni reform, the articles were focused almost only on the changes to the Art. 18, that was at the centre of a hard political and social conflict: according to the supporters of the reform, it was crucial to boost the economy of the country; on the contrary, the opponents considered the measure as a threat to the workers' dignity, the first step of the progressive dismantling of social rights, and an irrelevant stimulus to economic growth. Other reform aspects, like new forms of temporary contract, the staff leasing and other job categories received almost no

<sup>10</sup> The number of descriptive articles was higher and the difference with the other two policies statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 27,3$ ,  $p < 0,01$ , PV policy vs. the others).

attention. During the Fornero reform, the articles containing timely information on the contents of the policy were comparably more numerous and the information was less selective, but it did not reverse the general picture.

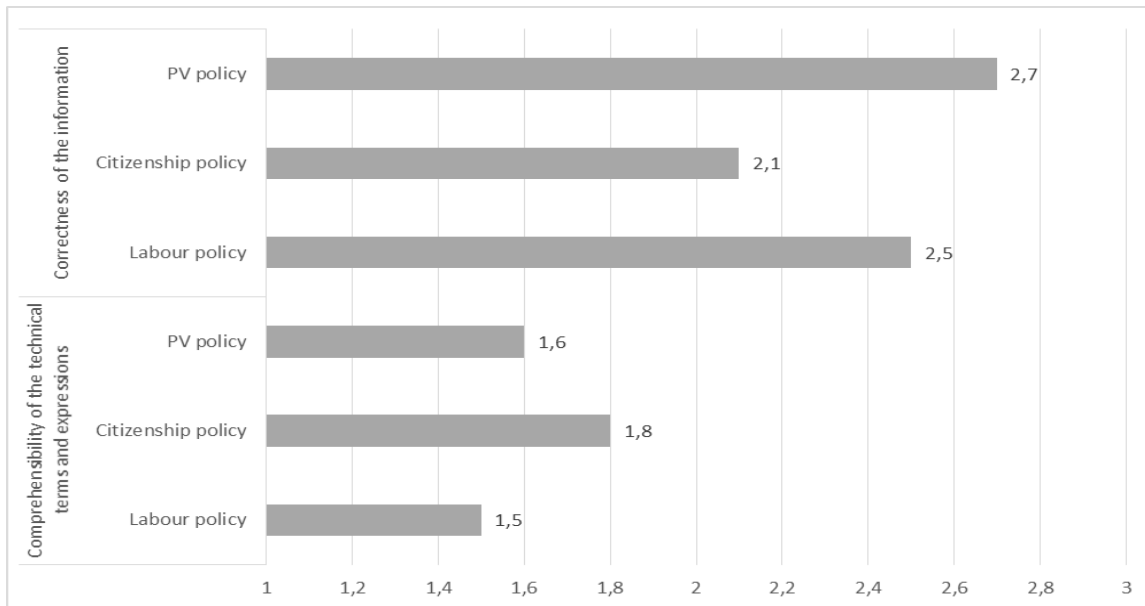
Regarding the 2006 and the 2009 citizenship draft laws, the attention of the newspapers focused on the most controversial issues concerning the *jus domicilii*. The proposal to shorten the necessary period of residence to request the citizenship (present in both bills) was considered by some as a measure that would have a significant and unpredictable impact in different sectors (the extension of the right to vote and the acquisition of the right of access to public offices for a consistent portion of the population) and that would irreversibly undermine the dominant cultural values and the main religious orientations within the Italian society. Others saw the reform of the *jus domicilii* as an act of public recognition for people who had been contributing to the progress of the Italian society for years. On the contrary, the new rules for children born in Italy and the exclusion rules were instead overly neglected. The newspaper information on the Manconi-Tronti draft law was concentrated instead almost exclusively on the issues concerning the *jus soli*, that became more controversial after several grass-roots groups of second-generation immigrants mobilized many people in support of this proposal, while the changes to the *jus domicilii* and the rules for children born in Italy were never mentioned.

The newspaper articles on the PV policy focused mainly on the controversial reduction of the public subsidies. According to the supporters of the tariffs' reduction, the subsidies for PV energy producers were too generous and too costly: on the one hand, they could feed speculation and instrumental uses of the incentives; on the other hand, they could lead to an excessive increase of energy costs for the consumers, with negative impacts on the competitiveness of the domestic companies. According to the pro-incentives coalition, the reduction of the subsidies represented an unexpected and sudden obstacle to the development of the PV sector, that would generate a shock both on the labour demand side and on the level of private investments in renewable energies. Less controversial measures, such as changes in the rules on the location and the size of the plants and the introduction of additional incentives for the use of European technological components, were mentioned and described only in fewer articles.

The evaluations of the pool of experts confirmed that the articles were mainly constructed to tickle the attention of insiders rather than to offer simple and clear information on the policy for ordinary citizens. The selected articles were in fact judged satisfactory in terms of correctness of the conveyed information on the selected policy measures, but discouraging in terms of comprehensibility of the technical terms and expressions, that were usually not explained (fig. 2). Some examples may clarify the critical assessment provided by the experts. Expressions like

‘regime of *hire and fire*’, ‘*downsizing*’, ‘agencies of *staff leasing*’, ‘*outsourcing*’ on the labour policy and expressions like ‘green certificates’, ‘*grid parity*’, ‘*feed-in-tariff*’, ‘*feed-in-premium*’ on the PV policy were mostly reported in English and were not explained. Expressions like *jus soli*, *jus sanguinis*, *jus domicilii*, ‘integrationism’ and ‘securitism’ were used to address some issues on the citizenship reforms, but almost never explained.

Figure 2. The expert assessments



Overall, it can be stated that the communication of the main Italian newspapers on the three considered policies was broadly similar: poor in terms of description of all the policy components and unsatisfactory in terms of comprehensiveness of the conveyed information. The clarity and the exhaustiveness of the information were mostly sacrificed by virtue of the newsworthiness and in favour of a semi-professional jargon that could be mainly directed at professionals or people with a specific expertise. The information on the PV policy, although little more descriptive, did not deviate significantly from this picture.

## 5. Understanding public policies: the arguments

The picture that emerges from the analysis of the arguments shows a journalism that offers mostly opinions and anecdotes and only weakly accounts for the different and often conflicting reasons that are raised by policy actors in the various public discourse venues (Parliament, committees, academic institutions, civil society organizations and groups). However, the mediated deliberation on the PV policy seems to stand out positively in several respects.

The articles on the PV policy counted more arguments around the issues at stake, with a higher average number of arguments per article (1,2 compared to 0,7 of the labour policy and 0,4 of the citizenship policy) and a significantly lower number of articles without arguments (tab. 2).

*Table 2. Articles with and without arguments (%)*

	Articles that contain at least one argument	Articles without arguments	Total
<b>PV policy</b>	68,2	31,8	100 (N=151)
<b>Labour policy</b>	44,9	55,1	100 (N=156)
<b>Citizenship policy</b>	34,7	65,3	100 (N=150)
<b>Total</b>	49,2	50,8	100 (N=457)

$\chi^2 = 32,5$ ,  $p < 0,01$  (PV policy vs. the others)

Considering the orientation of the arguments, newspapers tend to be unbalanced in support of, or in opposition to, the debated policies: most arguments around the labour reforms and the citizenship reform proposals were in favour of the reforms, while the arguments around the reform of the PV policy were mostly against. However, as it can be seen in table 3, the unbalance was less marked in the case of the PV policy.

*Table 3. Argument orientation (%) and balance index*

	Neutral	Favorable	Unfavorable	Not attributable	Total	Balance index (Unfavorable vs. Favorable) min=0 max=1
<b>Labour policy</b>	4,0	63,4	24,8	7,9	100 (N=101)	0,4
<b>Citizenship policy</b>	6,2	66,2	15,4	12,3	100 (N=65)	0,2
<b>PV policy</b>	0,0	37,9	62,1	0,0	100 (N=174)	0,6
<b>Total</b>	2,4	50,9	42,1	4,7	100 (N=340)	

$\chi^2 = 45,7$ ,  $p < 0,01$  (PV policy vs. the others)

The arguments were then analysed in order to assess the type of inference and their underlying logic.

The inference indicator was already used by Steenbergen and colleagues within the Discourse Quality Index (Steenbergen et al. 2013), to establish the level of complexity of an argument by assessing whether the connections between the statement and its justification were clarified. In the

same way, the argument inference is here considered ‘complete’ when the links between the supposed causes and effects are explained, ‘incomplete’ when a causal relationship is adduced without justifying the connections that give validity to this relation. From the deliberative perspective, a complete inference argument is clearly preferable to an incomplete inference argument, because, by clarifying the elements from which the causal relationship is presumed, not only the understanding of the argument, but also its criticism is facilitated, so stimulating what the literature on deliberation commonly calls ‘constructive thinking’.

Building on the known typology of March and Olsen (2000), two argument logics were also distinguished: the *logic of appropriateness*, that characterizes arguments that invoke principles, norms or standards, and the *logic of consequentiality*, that characterizes arguments that instead focus on the nexus action-consequences. From a deliberative viewpoint, consequentialist and appropriateness logics can coexist and should be in some way complementary, but the logic of consequentiality should be prevalent, in order to allow learning processes on the issue at stake and the exchange of counterarguments that challenge each other.

As the three tables below show, the mediated deliberation on the PV policy stands out as being significantly better than the one on the other two policies. Although the logic of appropriateness could be correlated with the presence of a value conflict, consequentialist arguments were actually the majority in all the policies, but the mediated deliberation on the PV policy was significantly more based on consequentialist arguments than the other two ( $\chi^2 = 50,7$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ). Regarding the level of inference, the mediated deliberation was instead low for all the three policies, but again the PV policy presented a significantly higher use of complete inference arguments ( $\chi^2 = 44,0$   $p < 0,01$ ).

On the labour reforms, the newspapers reported a series of recurring themes (tab. 4). Consequentialist arguments concerned mainly the causal link between input/output flexibility and employment rate. However, the arguments were largely expressed without clarifying the causal link between flexibility (cause) and employment rate (effect). An example is the following:

The President of Confindustria [the main Italian industrial association], Giorgio Fossa [...]: ‘Is it better to have more unemployed people or to have a more flexible labour market? I choose the latter option’. [...] In order to make clear what he means by rethinking the welfare state, Fossa reminds the UK and USA: ‘Simply importing their models would be wrong. But how can we forget that the unemployment rate fell under 6%?’. The magic word that can make us approach the Thatcher’s miracles is flexibility. ‘Input and output flexibility, that certainly does not mean the Far West, but clear and simple rules, behind the times’, Fossa highlights. (Il Sole 24 Ore, June 20, 1997)

The following argument is one of the few that explained the presumed connection between flexibility and employment and focused on the relationship between the introduction of the

temporary jobs and the benefits that young companies could have, especially in the most deprived areas of Southern Italy. This argument did not offer any justification about the validity of this presumed causal relationship, but at least it clarified the logical basis behind the argument:

The temporary contract - Pillitteri explains - is a useful door, especially in the areas of the country where the labour market is weaker. In the South, where there is a greater number of young companies, the temporary work is used especially by the start-ups. (*Il Sole 24 Ore*, July 6, 2002).

The arguments based on the logic of appropriateness focused on the external imperatives (European directives and legislative acts, pressures from the International Monetary Fund) or on the universal value of the protection of workers' rights. However, also these arguments were not explained and clarified by the newspaper journalists or by interviewed actors.

*Table 4. Type of inference and justification logic in the arguments on the Labour policy*

	<b>Complete inference</b>	<b>Incomplete inference</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Logic of appropriateness</b>			
“18 Articles” does not protect fundamental rights of workers	1	13	14
“18 Articles” protects fundamental rights of workers	0	13	13
The flexibility of the labour market is made necessary by external constraints (EU, markets and international institutions)	0	10	10
Total	1	36	37
<b>Logic of consequentiality</b>			
The input flexibility increases employment	7	22	29
The output flexibility does not increase employment	2	7	9
The output flexibility overcomes the existing dualism between protected and not protected workers	0	6	6
The output flexibility increases employment	0	5	5
Other kind of reforms increase employment	1	3	4
“18 Articles” Reform increase the discretion of the judiciary	0	2	2
Labour reform makes hiring more difficult for firms	0	2	2
The Labour reform generates social conflict	1	1	2
The Labour reform does not generate social conflict	2	0	2
The rigidity of the labour market limits unemployment during crisis	1	0	1
“18 Articles” Reform reduces the discretion of the judiciary	0	1	1
Policy measures regarding freelances workers does not overcome the existing dualism between protected and not protected workers	0	1	1
Total	14	50	64
<b>Total arguments</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>101</b>

About the citizenship reforms, during the debate on the first draft law, consequentialist arguments monopolized the debate and focused, on the one hand, on the relationship between integration and citizenship and, on the other hand, on the potential social and cultural effects of the restrictive requirements contained in the draft (language exam, evaluation of the knowledge of the Italian Constitution, the oath on a Charter of values). On the other two draft laws, the articles reported both consequentialist arguments and arguments based on the logic of appropriateness. In most cases, the causal links were mentioned but not explained. One of the most reported arguments, which established a relationship between acquiring citizenship (cause) and greater integration of naturalized immigrants (effect), was no exception. Topics such as the following were marginal:

When this draft will become law, it will be easier to go to school [...] as well as to get a position in public offices. For example, many immigrants, once having obtained citizenship, could become public transport drivers. The law will foster immigrant integration and will strengthen integration processes that are already in progress. (La Repubblica, August 5, 2006).

*Table 5. Type of inference and justification logic in the arguments on the Citizenship policy*

	<b>Complete inference</b>	<b>Incomplete inference</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Logic of appropriateness</b>			
Citizenship is a democratic right as the right to vote	4	1	5
Citizenship involves the respect of shared rules and not the adherence to a dominant culture	0	1	1
Jus soli is a right for all people who are born and live in a country	3	2	5
There is no a recipe that is the absolute best	4	1	5
Total	11	5	16
<b>Logic of consequentiality</b>			
Integration is a social process that takes place independently of the acquisition of citizenship	5	6	11
The acquisition of citizenship would facilitate the integration of foreigners by reducing a number of social risks	4	10	14
The reduction of the period of residence required for the acquisition of citizenship would promote the spread of cultures in conflict with the Italian culture	1	4	5
More Italian citizens of foreign origin would mean more economic growth and younger population	2	3	5
New rights to immigrants would mean fewer rights for Italians	0	1	1
There is no certainty about the existence of causal relationships between	1	2	3

citizenship, level of crime and cultural integration			
The strict requirements (language examination, oath) for the acquisition of citizenship would discourage opportunistic behaviour	0	4	4
The strict requirements would not discourage opportunistic behaviour	1	1	2
The strict requirements for the acquisition of citizenship would foster the development of a sense of national identity	1	3	4
Total	15	34	49
<b>Total arguments</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>65</b>

The newspaper debate on the PV policy was mostly populated by consequentialist arguments, that were focused on the effects of the reform on private investments, employment in the PV sector and public costs (tab. 6). Among the five arguments that were based on the logic of appropriateness, the leitmotif was the reference to external EU constraints, neglecting more known arguments on environmental sustainability and energy long-term strategies. The arguments that were characterized by incomplete inference were numerous, especially those that claimed a link between the reduction of the incentives and the consequent crisis of the PV sector. An example of such unexplained arguments is the following:

Concerning the rumors of a substantial and immediate cut to incentives, the group of the Italian PV Companies Association Anie (Gifi) ‘expresses a deep concern’, considering these rumors ‘unrealistic because the cut would severely undermine the development of the PV market’. (Il Sole 24 Ore, April 13, 2011).

However, the mediated deliberation on the PV policy performed significantly better in terms of complete inference arguments. A clear example is the following extract from one of the newspapers, in which the link between reduction of incentives and reduction of private investment in the PV sector was explained in terms of uncertainty that yet another regulatory action on the matter would generate for potential investors:

The most serious aspect is not in the drastic reduction of the generous subsidies, but the umpteenth threat to legal certainty [...] the will to change the rules while you are playing. [...] Moreover, the frequent negotiations on the introduction of a deadline, after which the subsidies will cease, is a sort of ‘random generator of uncertainty’. [...] This new decree, in other words, is the last in a series of dots that, when connected, give us the image of a contradictory and unreliable country: a country that does not keep its promises and that has an ever changing regulatory framework. [...] A country that would need lots of investments in technology, and that just complicates these investments - or increases their costs - because of a constant but irrepressible political risk. (Il Sole 24 Ore, March 3, 2011).

Table 6. Type of inference and justification logic in the arguments on the PV policy

	Complete inference	Incomplete inference	Total
<b>Logic of appropriateness</b>			
The measures are in contrast to external constraints (European Union)	3	0	3
The measures stem from external constraints (European Union)	1	1	2
Total	4	1	5
<b>Logic of Consequentiality</b>			
The measures have adverse effects on investment and employment	42	38	80
The measures eliminate excessive economic benefits for photovoltaic producers	19	7	26
The measures reduce the cost of energy to consumers	13	10	23
The measures do not produce negative effects on investment and employment	11	4	15
The measures do not reduce significantly the cost of energy to consumers	11	4	15
The measures do not fully eliminate the excessive economic benefits for photovoltaic producers	4	1	5
The measures favour the return to nuclear power	1	4	5
Total	101	68	169
<b>Total arguments</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>174</b>

To summarize, it can be stated that the information on public policies that Italian newspapers have offered in the last decade is poor, selective, often incomprehensible for ordinary citizens, generally unbalanced and mostly only weakly oriented to report diverse viewpoints and well argued reasons. This confirms the image of a media system that is far away from the deliberative ideal. However, the mediated deliberation on the PV policy performed significantly better, slightly in terms of information exhaustiveness, more in terms of argument density, level of inference and the systematic adoption of the consequentialist logic.

## 6. Type of conflict and alternative explanations

In order to verify the second hypothesis of the article, this section tests other explanations alternative to the type of policy conflict. In particular, four other factors could explain the better mediated deliberation on the PV policy: the technical complexity of the issues at stake (a policy with more technical issues could receive a better mediated deliberation); the salience of the policy (a more salient policy would be associated with a worse mediated deliberation); the specificity of the newspaper (Il Sole 24 Ore, that mostly covered the PV policy, could offer systematically a better mediated deliberation on public policies); or the type of actors whose arguments are

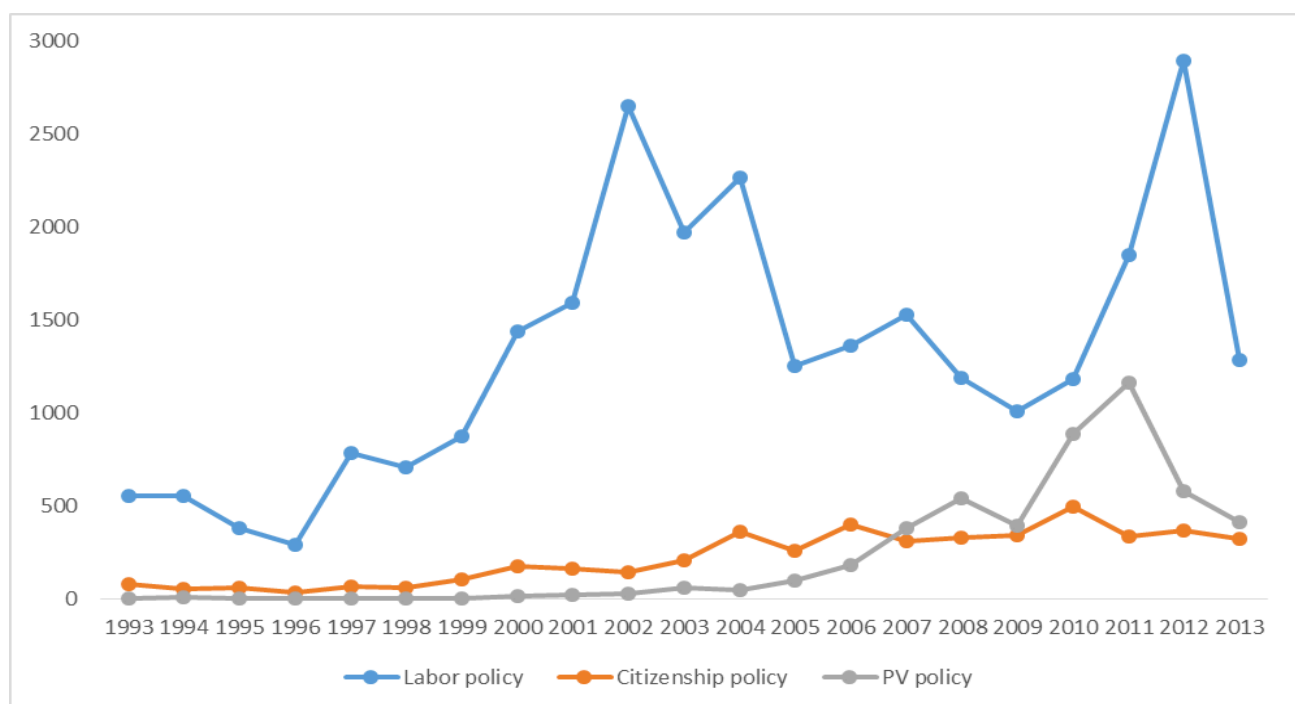
conveyed through the newspapers (some actors could be more deliberative than others regardless the type of policy conflict).

Let's argue about each of these alternative explanations.

Can the three policies be clearly distinguished for their level of technical complexity? According to Gormley (1986, 598), a technically complex issue 'requires substantial expertise to understand and address'. The PV issue is undoubtedly a technically complex issue, but there are no reasons to consider the citizenship issue and the labour issue as technically less complex. Both on the labour and the citizenship topics, specific disciplines have been developed within the fields of economics, law, sociology and political science, and all the proposed or implemented reforms concerned several issues and required the recourse to a multi-level governance system, involving European, national and local institutions, as well as several civil society actors. This hypothesis can thus be neglected as non applicable to the selected cases.

Policy salience is usually measured through the media coverage (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). A higher media coverage of a policy, because of the already mentioned media logic, is thus expected to produce a lower mediated deliberation. Did the newspapers cover more the labour reforms and the citizenship reform proposals than the PV reforms? The labour policy actually received a higher media attention than the PV policy, but the citizenship policy did not (fig. 3), therefore this alternative hypothesis can be rejected.

Figure 3. The salience of the three policies in Repubblica and Corriere della Sera (1993-2013)



\*The articles of Il Sole 24 Ore were not considered in this analysis because of its neglect of the citizenship issue

The three main national newspapers could be characterized by different communication styles and, more specifically, by different types of mediated deliberation, regardless of the type of policy conflict. As far as the inference level of the arguments is concerned (the main indicator on which the mediated deliberation on the PV policy performed significantly better), Il Sole 24 Ore actually contained a higher number of complete inference arguments than the other newspapers, but the portion of complete inference arguments was significantly lower on the labour policy within the same newspaper, and the other two newspapers showed a significant difference between the articles on the PV policy and the articles on the other two policies (tab. 7).

*Table 7. Type of inference of arguments for newspaper and for policy*

	Number of arguments		
	Complete inference	Incomplete inference	Total
<b>Labour policy</b>			
Corriere della Sera	3	30	33
La Repubblica	4	21	25
Il Sole 24 Ore	8	35	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Citizenship policy</b>			
Corriere della Sera	17	24	41
La Repubblica	9	15	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>PV policy</b>			
Corriere della Sera	6	3	9
La Repubblica	31	19	50
Il Sole 24 Ore	68	47	115
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>174</b>

PV policy vs. the others: Il Sole 24 Ore:  $\chi^2 = 20,6$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ; Repubblica:  $\chi^2_{\text{Yates}} = 12,7$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ; Corriere della Sera:  $\chi^2_{\text{Yates}} = 5,5$ ,  $p < 0,025$

Table 8 allows to say something about the last plausible explanation. The sources of the arguments that were reported by the newspapers were relatively constant over all the policy reforms (some commentators, some political actors, some experts) except for the stakeholders, that were significantly higher in the articles on the PV policy. However, on the PV policy, the percentage of complete inference arguments resulted high not only among stakeholder statements but also among all the other actors' statements, while the inference of the stakeholders' arguments was again mainly incomplete in the case of the labour and citizenship policies. Also this last alternative hypothesis can be rejected.

Table 8. Type of inference of arguments for actors and for policy

	Number of arguments		
	Complete inference	Incomplete inference	Total
<b>Labour policy</b>			
Stakeholder	3	34	37
Authors of articles /columnist	8	20	28
Political actors	2	22	24
Experts	2	9	11
Civil servants	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Citizenship policy</b>			
Political actors	8	18	26
Authors of articles /columnist	9	15	24
Experts	6	3	9
Citizens	2	2	4
Stakeholder	1	1	2
Civil servants	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>PV policy</b>			
Stakeholder	58	45	103
Authors of articles/columnist	15	10	25
Political actors	12	10	22
Experts	17	2	19
Civil servants	3	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>174</b>

PV policy vs. the others: Stakeholder:  $\chi^2 = 24,4$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ; Other categories:  $\chi^2 = 26,3$ ,  $p < 0,01$ .

Net of all the here mentioned alternative explanations, the initial hypothesis has been confirmed: the mediated deliberation of the main Italian newspapers on three controversial policies varied among policies and the better mediated deliberation that was registered on the PV policy is explainable by the more pragmatic type of conflict that has characterized the policy subsystem.

## Conclusion

Through an analysis of the mediated deliberation of the main Italian newspapers on three different public policies, this article had two main aims: 1) to measure the existence of different degrees of mediated deliberation; 2) to test whether the variance can depend on the type of conflict that characterizes the policy subsystem.

In order to answer these two research questions, an in-depth analysis was conducted on 457 articles covering three controversial policies that had been characterized by different kinds of conflict over the last twenty years: the reforms of the labour policy, that have been characterized by conflicts on core values; the attempts of reform of the citizenship rights, that have been characterized by conflicts centred on fundamental normative precepts; the reforms of the PV policy, that have been characterized by conflicts focused on precepts with a substantial empirical component.

The picture that emerges is that of a generally poor mediated deliberation, that nevertheless varies and is significantly better in the case of the PV policy. Italian newspapers are still a clear example of the mediterranean model described by Hallin and Mancini (2004): partisan, mainly focused on newsworthy issues, oriented to an expert audience, not interested in accounting for the arguments that support different positions. In the analysed sample of articles, the descriptions of the policy measures were not easily understandable by ordinary citizens and were mainly focused on the most controversial aspects (in some cases totally neglecting some elements of the reforms). Moreover, the arguments were generally unbalanced and incomplete, even when the arguments were consequentialist. However, the mediated deliberation on the PV policy has proved to be better: more exhaustive in terms of information provision and more balanced, consequentialist and sophisticated in terms of arguments. A further data analysis was presented to test other plausible explaining factors: the technical complexity of the policy, its salience, the newspaper style, the actors who were reported as sources of the arguments. The rejection of all the alternative explanations has confirmed the hypothesis that the more pragmatic conflict around the PV policy was the main factor that could explain the diverse mediated deliberation on this policy.

## References

- Baumgartner F. R., Jones B. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press
- Baumgartner F. R., Berry J. M., Hojnacki M., Kimball D. C., Leech B. L., 2009. *Lobbying and Policy Change. Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago e London
- Beyers J., 2009. Policy Issues, Organisationa Format and the Political Strategies of Interest Organisations, *West European Politics*, Vol. 31, N. 6, pp. 1188-1211.
- Bennett, W.L., Pickard, V.W., Iozzi, D.P., Schroeder, C.L., Lagos, T., Caswell, E. 2004. Managing the public sphere: journalistic construction of the great globalization debate, *Journal of Communication*, 54 (3), 437-55.
- Berkowitz, D., Pritchard, D. 1989. Political knowledge and communication resources, *Journalism Quarterly*, 66 (3), 697-701.
- Binderkrantz A., 2005, Interest Group Strategies: Navigating Between Privileged Acces and Strategies of Pressure, *Polical Studies*, Vol. 53, pp. 694-715
- Blumler, J.G., Gurevitch, M. 1995. *The crisis of public communication*, London: Routledge.
- Borah, P. 2011. Conceptual issues in framing theory: a systematic examination of a decade's literature, *Journal of Communication*, 61 (2), 246-63.
- Chaffee, S., Frank, S. 1996. How Americans get political information: print versus broadcast news, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 546 (1), 48-58.
- Cohen, J. 1989. Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy, in A. Hamlin e P. Pettit (a cura di), *The Good Polity*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Delli Carpini, M.X., Williams, B. 2001. Let us infotain you, in L. Bennet e R. Entman (a cura di), *Mediated politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 160-181.
- Dente, B. 2011. *Le decisioni di policy*, Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Dryzek, J.S. (2010). *Foundations and Frontiers of Deliberative Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Elster, J. 1985. *Sour grapes. Studies in the subversion of rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Elster, J., Hylland, A. (Eds.) 1986. *Foundations of social choice theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Entman, R.M. 1993. Framing: toward clarification of a fractured paradigm, *Journal of Communication*, 43 (4), 51-8.

- Esser, F. 1999. 'Tabloidization' of news: a comparative analysis of Anglo-American and German press journalism, *European Journal of Communication*, 14 (3), 291-324.
- Ettema, J.S. 2007. Journalism as reason-giving: deliberative democracy, institutional accountability, and the news media's mission, *Political Communication*, 24 (2), 143-60.
- Faiella, I. 2013. Incentivi alle rinnovabili e costi dell'energia in tempi di crisi, *Energia*, 1, 26-33.
- Ferrera, M., Gualmini, E. 1999. *Salvati dall'Europa*, Bologna: il Mulino.
- Ferec, M.M., Gamson, W.A., Gerhards, J., Rucht, D. 2002. *Shaping abortion discourse: democracy and the public sphere in Germany and the United States*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Franklin, B. 1997. *News zack and news media*, London: Arnold.
- Fung, A. (2003). Recipes for public spheres: eight institutional design choices and their consequences. *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 11 (3), 338-367.
- Gualmini E., Rizza R. 2013. *Le politiche del lavoro*, Bologna: Il Mulino
- Habermas, J. 1981. *Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Habermas, J. 2006. Political communication in media society: does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research, *Communication Theory*, 16 (4), 411-26.
- Hallin, D.C., Mancini, P. (Eds.) 2004. *Comparing media systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kim, S.-H., Scheufele, D.A., Shanahan, J. 2002. Think about it this way: attribute agenda-setting function of the press and the public's evaluation of a local issue, *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 79 (1), 7-25.
- Kim, S.-H., Scheufele, D.A., Shanahan, J., Choi, D.-H. 2011. Deliberation in spite of controversy? News media and the public's evaluation of a controversial issue in south Korea, *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 88 (2), 320-336.
- Lowi, T.J. (1970), Decision making versus policy making: Toward an antidote for technocracy, *Public Administration Review*, 30, 314-25.
- Lowi, T.J. (1972), Four systems of policy, politics and choice, *Public Administration Review*, 32, 298-310.
- Maia, R.C.M. 2012. *Deliberation, the media and political talk*, New York: Hampton Press.
- Manin, B. 1987. On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation, *Political Theory*, 15 (3), 338-68.
- Mansbridge, J. 1980. *Beyond adversary democracy*, Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press.
- March, G.J., Olsen J.P. 1989. *Rediscovering Institutions*, New York: Free Press.

- March, G.J., Olsen J.P. 1990. Rediscovering institutions: the organizational basis of politics, *Journal of Public Policy*, 10 (3), 349-351.
- McChesney, R.W. 1997. *Corporate media and the threat to democracy*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Parkinson, J., Mansbridge, J. (Eds.) 2012. *Deliberative Systems. Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pomatto, G., Maggiolini, M., Seddone, A. 2013. Politiche pubbliche e deliberazione sui quotidiani italiani, *Rivista Italiana di Politiche Pubbliche*, 3, 365-94.
- Pritoni, A. 2010. Risorse di governo e cambiamento di policy nel mercato del lavoro italiano. Who Gets What? And, Especially, How Much?, *Rivista Italiana di Politiche Pubbliche*, 3, 81-114.
- Prontera, A. 2008. *L'europeizzazione della politica energetica in Italia e Francia. Il cambiamento della politica elettrica fra pressioni europee ed evoluzioni nazionali*. Macerata: EUM.
- Prontera, A. 2009. Energy Policy: Concepts, Actors, Instruments and Recent Developments, *World Political Science Review*, 5, 1–30.
- Quiring, O., Weber, M. 2012. Between usefulness and legitimacy: media coverage of governmental intervention during the financial crisis and selected effects, *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 17 (3), 294-315.
- Rokkan S. 1970. *Citizens, elections, parties: approaches to the comparative study of the processes of development*, Philadelphia: McKay.
- Sabatier, P.A. 1988. An advocacy coalition model of policy change and the role of policy orientated learning therein, *Policy Sciences*, 21 (2-3), 129–168.
- Sabatier, P.A., Jenkins-Smith, H. (Eds.) 1993. *Policy change and learning: an advocacy coalition approach*. Boulder, CO: Westview
- Sabatier, P.A., Jenkins-Smith, H.C. 1999. The advocacy coalition framework: An assessment, In P.A. Sabatier (Eds.) *Theories of the Policy Process*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 117–66.
- Sani, G. (Eds.) 2001. *Mass media ed elezioni*, Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Scheufele, D.A., Shanahan, J., Kim, S.-H. 2002. Who cares about local politics? Media influences on local political involvement, issue awareness, and attitude strength, *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 79 (2), 427-44.
- Schoenbach, K., De Ridder, J., Lauf, E. 2001. Politicians on TV news: getting attention in Dutch and German election campaigns, *European Journal of Political Research*, 39 (4), 519-31.
- Schudson, M. 2003. *The sociology of news*, London: Norton.
- Shen, F., Edward, H.H. 2005. Economic individualism, humanitarianism, and welfare reform: a value-based account of framing effects, *Journal of Communication*, 55 (4), 705-809.

- Simon, A., Xenos, M. 2000. Media framing and effective public deliberation, *Political Communication*, 17 (4), 363-376.
- Staab J.F. 1990. The role of news factors in news selection: a theoretical reconsideration, *European Journal of Communication*, 5(4), 423-443.
- Steenbergen, M.R., Baechtger, A., Spoerndli, M. Steiner, J. 2003. Measuring political deliberation: a Discourse Quality Index, *Comparative European Politics*, 1, 21-48.
- Steiner, J. 2012. *The Foundation of deliberative democracy. Empirical research and normative implications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stroud, N.J. 2011. *Niche news: the politics of news choice*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Van Aelst, P., Shehata, A., Van Dalen, A. 2010. Members of Parliament: equal competitors for media attention? An analysis of personal contacts between MPs and Political Journalists in Five European Countries, *Political Communication*, 27 (3), 310-25.
- Van Dalen, A. 2012. Structural bias in cross-national perspective: how political systems and journalism cultures influence government dominance in the news, *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 17 (1), 32-55.
- Vesan, P. 2012. La politica del lavoro In M. Ferrera (Eds.) *Le politiche sociali*. Bologna: il Mulino, 123-184.
- Victor J. N. 2007. Strategic Lobbying. Demonstrating How Legislative Context Affect Interest Groups' Lobbying Tactics, *American Politics Research*, Vol. 35, N. 6, pp. 826-845.
- Voltmer K. and S. Koch-Baumgarten (2010) (eds.), *Public policy and mass media. The interplay of mass communication and political decision making*, New York, Routledge.
- Wessler, H. 2008. Investigating deliberativeness comparatively, *Political Communication*, 25 (1), 1-22.
- Zincone, G. 2011. The Case of Italy In G. Zincone, R. Penninx, M. Borkert (Eds.) *Migration Policymaking in Europe. The Dynamics of Actors and Contexts in Past and Present*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press - Imiscoe Serie, 247-290.

## APPENDIX. The Code book

NEWSPAPER	a) Corriere della Sera b) La Repubblica c) Il Sole 24 Ore
POLICY REFERENCE OF THE ARTICLE	a) PV policy b) Labour Policy c) Citizenship Policy
DOES THE ARTICLE DESCRIBE THE FOLLOWING PV POLICY MEASURES? (Multiple response question)	a) Reduction of incentives (controversial measure) b) Bonus for made in Europe technology for plants c) Changes in administrative procedures for the provision of incentives d) Changes in rules on the location of plants e) Changes in rules regarding the size and type of plants
DOES THE ARTICLE DESCRIBE THE FOLLOWING LABOUR POLICY MEASURES? (Multiple response question)	a) Changes to “18 Article” (controversial measure) b) Temporary work contracts (controversial measure) c) Staff-leasing contracts d) Changes to other contracts e) Public monopoly placement abolition
DOES THE ARTICLE DESCRIBE THE FOLLOWING CITIZENSHIP MEASURES? (Multiple response question)	a) Introduction of the <i>ius soli</i> (controversial measure in the third reform) b) Changes in the <i>ius domicili</i> (controversial measure in the first two reforms) c) Changes in citizenship requirements for minor children of foreigners d) Changes in citizenship requirements for foreign spouses e) Changes in exclusion requirements
CORRECTNESS OF THE INFORMATION	a) Low b) Medium c) High
COMPREHENSIBILITY OF SPECIFIC TECHNICAL TERMS AND EXPRESSIONS	a) No explanation b) Partial explanation c) Full Explanation
ARGUMENT	(Extrapolate each argument contained in the article)
ARGUMENT DESCRIPTOR	(Summarize each argument)
JUSTIFICATION LOGIC OF THE ARGUMENT	a) Logic of appropriateness (the argument refers to superior principles, rules or constraints) b) Logic of consequentiality (the argument refers to causal links between

phenomena)

POLICY ORIENTATION OF THE ARGUMENT

- a) Neutral
- b) Favorable
- c) Unfavorable
- d) Not attributable

TYPE OF INFERENCE OF THE ARGUMENT

- a) Complete inference (the argument clarify and explains the links between causes and effects)
- b) Incomplete inference (the argument does not explain the links between causes and effects)

ARGUMENT SOURCE

- a) Political actors
- b) Authors of articles /columnist
- c) Experts
- d) Citizens
- e) Stakeholder
- f) Civil servants