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ABBREVIATION

CAF	Craxi- Andreotti- Forlani Axis of Power
CPUS	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DC	Christian Democratic Party
EEC	European Economic Community
PCI	Italian Communist Party
PD	Democratic Party
PDS	Democratic Party of the Left
PLI	Italian Liberal Party
PRC	Communist Refoundation Party
PRI	Italian Republican Party
PSDI	Italian Social-democratic Party
PSI	Italian Socialist Party
SEA	Single European Act
SEL	Ecologic and Freedom Party
USSR	Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics
WECPs	Western European Communist Parties

1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present work focuses on one case of party change, namely the transformation of the Italian Communist Party (PCI).

Founded in 1921 by seceding from the *Partito Socialista Italiano*, the Italian Communist Party always had a unique political and ideological nature. Despite of the name communist, the PCI presented itself as the *terza via* (the third way) between Stalinism and capitalism, openly criticizing the communist orthodoxy (Barbagallo, 2010). This unique nature made the party able to obtain consent from quite an heterogeneous electoral base, therefore becoming the strongest political party of the Italian left and the biggest Western communist party. Nevertheless, already after the death of the beloved leader Berlinguer in 1984, and due to the radicalization of the left as a reaction of the liberalization wave, which was shaking the traditional balance of powers, the party lost its *élan vital* (Fouskas, 1998). With the intent to revitalize the party, Berlinguer's successor Natta attempted to renew the PCI, but without much success. Natta's leadership lacked charisma, and only during Occhetto's office (1988-1991) the party succeeded in undergoing a necessary change.

The end of the 1980s was a period of intense revolutions both in the national and in the international arenas. The Italian power-relations were challenged by the international neo-liberal wave and by the failure of socialism practices and values. The altered geopolitical scenario required the pursuit of a new set of ideals and goals that would fit the time (Abse, 2010). On November 12, 1989, the Secretary of the PCI Achille Occhetto announced that the party was to change both its name and its symbols. The dissolution of the party took fourteen months to officially complete on February 3, 1991, during the Rimini Congress. On that occasion, the majority of the delegates decided to found the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), while a minority formed the Communist Refoundation Party (PRC).

The demise of the biggest Western communist Party begs the following research question:

RQ Which factors did determine the transformation of the Italian Communist Party during the period 1986-1991?

In order to define the causes that brought about the end of the PCI, specialized scholarship on party change will be employed as a theoretical framework. The study on party change was initially intended to analyse parties and their variations as a tool to provide evidence for a more general systemic change. This literature studied party change from diverse angles. Whereas the “systems-level” approach emphasized the role played by environmental stimuli (see Harmel and Janda, 1982), the “life-cycle” approach considered internal dynamics responsible for any partisan transformations (Michels, 1911).

Only since the end of the last century, party change theories have indicated the complementarity of exogenous and endogenous stimuli, intra-party factors playing a role when combined with external pressures (Wilson, 1989). According to that scholarship (see Harmel and Janda, 1994), a broader transformation must involve “a good reason and a coalition of support” (ibid. 270). External stimuli impact on parties, inasmuch they make them, i.e. the leadership of the party that holds the decisional power, reevaluate the effectiveness of their performance in achieving the desired goal.

In reviewing previous party change theories, three key concepts of party change will be discussed: party organizations, i.e. intra-party power relations (Panebianco, 1988), party goals, distinguishing among diverse ideal types of parties’ behaviours (Müller and Strøm, 1991) and party environment. These narratives will serve as a theoretic bridge for the explanation of Harmel and Janda’s “Integrated Theory of Party Goal and Party Change” (1994).

Drawing on this theoretical background, more specific inquiries, i.e. three sub-questions, on the PCI’s transformation can be formulated:

- I. *Which are the main changes in party organization during the period 1986-1991?*
- II. *How and to what extent did external factors affect the PCI's organization?*
- III. *How did external shocks, combined with a transformed intra-party organization affect the PCI's political stances?*

A mixed methods approach will be used to operationalize the research questions.

By combining statistical textual analysis techniques (Laver and Garry, 2000; see also Laver, Benoit and Garry, 2003), which measure both the saliency of and the position on specific policy dimensions (position), with interviews to key players involved in the PCI's change, the present work would not only determine the factors that possibly contributed to the PCI's demise, but it will also provide further insight into the rationalities behind actions.

The final sections will examine the results of the analyses, and in doing so, I will attempt to draw some conclusions as which factors caused the dissolution of the Italian Communist Party and to what extent the lessons from the PCI's split can be generalized.

2. THEORETICAL GROUNDWORK

For quite some time, the study of political parties has focused on the standard typologies of the mass (or socialist) parties of Duverger (1954) primarily around the importance of the party's relationship with the society as a whole. In defining a party this way, we assume that they are the legitimated to represent the will of particular segments of the society (Katz and Mair, 1995). Such a concept implies that parties need an extensive membership that is committed and involved in the party's policy-making process of the party.

Yet, parties are not what they once were (Schmitter, 2001:67). Over the course of the past fifty years, the decrease in of traditional rifts weakened collective political identities (Kirchheimer, 1966; see also Whiteley, 2009). The consequent decline in the voluntary base of the party undermined the relationship between citizens and state, thus challenging the central role played by political parties in the functioning of democracies (Mair, 2005)¹.

The elaboration of literature on party change has been stimulated by the surprising ability of parties to survive their decline, adapting themselves to the continuous evolution of their surroundings and preserving their prominent political role (see Pizzorno, 1981). Embryonic studies on party change initially focused on the variations of parties as a tool to provide evidence for a more general systemic change (see Wolinetz 1988; Mair, 1989; Mair and Smith, 1990). Only since the end of the last century, the issue of individual party change has become an autonomous field of inquiry (see Panebianco, 1988; Harmel and Janda, 1994; Müller and Strøm, 1999). According to such scholarship, party change regards “any alteration and/or modification of party, ideology/policy, structure or resources” (Harmel and Janda, 1994:275). Political scientists distinguish between two sources of change: the environment and the intra-party dynamics.

¹ By definition, parties serve as mobilizing agents thanks to the engagement of citizens in the political process of representative democracies (Gunther and Diamond, 2003).

Environmental events become change catalysts, only if they are able to affect the parties' primary goal (Harmel and Janda, 1994:271), as such they do not impact on all parties in the same way. In fact, every party seeks a different goal, and even the same party tends to vary preference across time (Strøm, 1990). Consequently, the type of change relies on the type of goal that a party seeks. To put it simply: the primary goal pursued by a party establishes how that partisan organization changes and to what extent the performance the party adjusts. The party's objective in turn, is fixed by the preferences of party leaders, as well as by the constraints, whether intra-partisan or environmental or both, that they have to face (Schlesinger, 1985:1154; see also Strøm 1990).

The implications of the above-mentioned independent variables for party change, namely, internal organization and external stimuli, will be discussed in the following sections. They will serve as a theoretical bridge for the explanation of Harmel and Janda (1994) *Integrated Theory of Party Goal and Party Change*.

2.1 Party goals

A political party is an organization that pursues the goal of placing its avowed representatives in political offices by running candidates for offices in competitive election.
(Harmel and Janda, 1994:272)²

Rational choice tradition of party behavior assumes that political actors are self-interested and tend to maximize their utility. In the case of parties, the "utility can be translated as votes, offices, or policy" (Lefkofridi, 2008:9). As a matter of fact, real parties pursue the three goals simultaneously, but rarely have the opportunity to realize them all (Müller and Strøm, 1999: 9). The pursuit of one objective may conflict with the

² If modern political systems are chiefly democratic, and thus competitive, when we refer to political parties in such systems, we implicitly mean competitive political parties.

party's ability to achieve another goal³, so to oblige the party to prioritize one goal against the others (Lefkofridi, 2008; see also Müller and Strøm, 1999). The Behavioral Theory of Competitive Political Parties (Strøm, 1990; see also Müller and Strøm, 1999) identifies three archetypes of parties' behavior linked to the different goals a party may pursue: *vote-seekers*, *office-seekers*, and *policy-seekers*⁴.

I. Vote-seekers

The *vote-seeker* category derives from Downs' work (1957) on electoral competition. Parties are not unlike corporations in that they try to maximize their "profits" (i.e. votes). As such they function not just as "vote seekers; they are rather vote-maximizers"⁵ (Strøm 1990:566). According to this model, the formulation of policies is purely instrumental (Downs, 1957:28), as "parties are ideologically flexible inasmuch they are willing to shift policies in order to win election" (Müller, 2003:278). However, one may observe that not all parties aim at winning elections. Many of them (e.g. communist parties or green parties) defy the logic of "catching all" parties (Strøm, 1990: 568) thus disconfirming the Downsian model.

II. Office-seekers

With regard to the previous model, some parties (niche parties) may also sacrifice the benefits of entering in the government. In some cases parties may benefit from "office spoils without becoming an incumbent party" (e.g. *sottogoverno* in Italy; see Müller and Strøm, 1999:6). Alternatively, a party might strive to capture portfolios in order to be

³ For example, policy preferences might be sacrificed in order to find coalition partners. In some other cases, policy pursuit may jeopardize the opportunity to extend the electoral basis to regular voters. Vice versa, the pursuit of the "median electorate" votes is normally at the expense of particular policy preferences (Müller and Strøm, 1999:9-10).

⁴ Harmel and Janda (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 271-273) add a fourth goal. According to this model, political parties are specialized interest aggregations that structured and linked contemporary societies to the political world (Almond and Powell, 1978:205-206). Parties have a representation mission (Bruce et al., 1991), which is translated in the *implementation of democratic intra-partisan organizational methods* (Harmel and Janda, 1994:273).

⁵ "The success of a vote seeker is measured by the percentage of votes (seats) a party wins in legislative elections" (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 273).

able to influence the policy outputs (Budge and Laver, 1986:490) or because “it thinks to gain favor with the voters by exploiting the advantages of incumbency” (Müller and Strøm, 1999:6). *Office-seekers* are those parties that tend to gain control over political executive offices⁶. As Strøm explains, “the study of office-seeking party has been developed in the study of government coalitions” (1990:567). Harmel and Janda also stress the crucial importance of the willingness of parties to form a coalition insofar the success of office-seeking parties is estimated by the “participation in the executive cabinet and by the number of ministers held” (1994: 270).

III. Policy-seekers

The *policy-seeking* model challenges Downs’s assumption that parties pursue electoral goals in order to be able to influence policy. Parties that advocate policies give more importance to ideology than to electoral concerns. Such parties would be willing to sacrifice their electorate basis if it thwarted the policy pursuit (Bruce et al., 1991). The loyalty to the party’s policy stances appears to be more important than an exclusion from the coalition cabinet as well. Yet, after World War II, we witnessed a radical secularization, as well as a de-ideologization of the historically rooted identities of parties (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). The phenomenon caused parties to undergo changes to their policy lines in order to be able to join the government (Strøm, 1990: 568, see also Laver, 1990).

Müller and Strøm (1999) use the triangle in Figure 1 as an illustrative device to represent the trade-offs a party faces when pursuing a goal. Each of the three dimensions represents a specific object, respectively votes (A), offices (B), or policies (C). “The compromises a party is willing to make are thinkable in terms of weights, i.e. importance, that a party give to each pursuit, and the sum of these weights are assumed to be constant” (ibid. 572-573). It follows that all feasible trade-offs are located within

⁶ In a two-party system, such as the USA and the UK, we cannot distinguish between vote-seekers and office-seekers, corresponding the electoral victory with the gain of seats in the government (Harmel and Janda, 1994:273).

the ABC triangle. Alternatively, parties that do not pursue any of these goals fall on one of the sides of the figure.

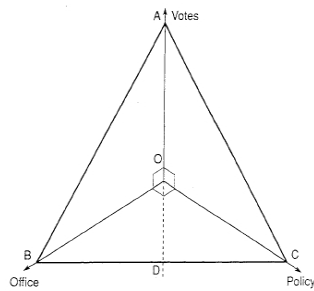


Figure 1: Range of Feasibility Party Behaviors (Müller and Strøm, 1990:572)

Each of the above-mentioned models reacts and changes according to different stimuli. Electoral failure was thought to be the “mother of change” (Deschouwer, 1992:9), since votes were conceived as the party’s only goals (Downs, 1957). However, if we assume that parties may pursue alternative goals with respect to votes, it means that an electoral defeat cannot be considered the sole factor of party change. For those parties, which are office maximizers, the event that would send shock waves through the party concerns the possibility to participate in the government (Harmel and Janda, 1994:269). The entrance in the government relies on the party’s ability to make itself congenial in policy terms for other parties which will be willing to build a coalition.

Party variations for office-seekers will be more likely to happen when other parties retain your party not to be an acceptable coalition partner, or vice versa, if they declare their unwillingness to join your party in the coalition. If other relevant parties have modified themselves, deepening the ideological/strategic distance between themselves and your party, your party will be obliged to change. The alteration of social circumstances may also affect your party, undermining its perception as potential partner. Another potential stimulus is the collapse of a reliable coalition partner, because it may also make necessary to modify your party’s conduct. (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 270).

For policy seekers, neither an electoral defeat nor the impossibility to gain executive benefits will be shocks for the party. The party will change only if it believes that the correctness of its key positions or ideas is threatened (Harmel and Janda, 1994:270).

In his work, Strøm (1990: 569-70), despite being aware of the need to use pure types, underlines the weakness of these models. Party behavior models, in their basic forms, are *unrealistic* (Strøm, 1990:569). They are *static*, since they seem to be uprooted from the temporal *milieu* (concerning both the historical development and the expected future benefits) in which they operate (Schlesinger, 1985). Parties are also studied as if they were *unconstrained*. Nevertheless, party leaders have to take into account the preferences of other members within the party, when making a decision (Müller and Strøm, 1999:4).

External factors also influence and encumber the choices of party leaders. The environmental setting has been long ignored as a potential determinant of party conduct. In reality, the institutional setting affects the way a party behaves, “since the political good, policy influence and institutional benefits, varies between political systems” (Strøm, 1990:570).

2.2 Environmental Stimuli

Political parties are conservative organizations⁷. Their resistance to change relies on two main reasons. On the one hand, political parties are unwilling to alter the identity of the electorate, because it could undermine their constituency. On the other hand, they are resistant to bring about changes that could threaten the organizational cohesion of a party (Panebianco, 1988).

Most of the changes in parties have occurred in recent years. The environment in which parties operate has undergone radical economic, social and political changes. The

⁷ “If it’s broken, don’t fix it”. This quote describes the conservative tendency of political parties (Panebianco, 1988; see also Schlesinger, 1984).

globalization wave brought new trials to democratic political systems and to their actors. Capitalism developed a transnational form, challenging the power of national states. Furthermore, threats to the environment and to population have become too broad to be handled only at a national level. These transformations have, therefore, affected the character of the civil society, whose identity was no longer frozen along the historically rooted orientations of religion, class and periphery. Instead, the civil society acquired a supranational connotation at the expense of both national and class identities (Mann, 1997: 473). Such changes have been translated as citizen disengagement by conventional politics, whose vital players were and still are, indeed, political parties⁸. The alterations in the political mode, which took place in recent decades, may have suggested a radical decline of such political actors. But, if we analyze the diverse partisan features, we observe, in its place, a surprising ability to adapt to new challenges and thus to survive the change.

Assuming that parties are shaped by the surroundings (Harmel and Janda, 1994), one implies that parties will modify themselves and, accordingly, will adapt in response to any variation of the *milieu* in which they operate (Katz and Mair, 1990). This presumption departs from the thesis that “the environment selects only the parties that fit with it. If parties are not suitable for the features of their setting, they have to change (Deshouwer, 1992:17).

Nevertheless, not all external stimuli succeed in affecting a party deeply enough to shake it up. Environmental events are “specific happenings that occur at a particular time and that publicly recorded [e.g. election]” (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 275-276). Such events become shocks only when they have “severe consequences for one party” (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 276). Specific external events must be perceived by critical actors within the party as potential threats to its survival, in order for the environmental alterations to cause a reaction in terms of an organizational, strategic and programmatic change (Harmel and Janda, 1994:275)⁹.

⁸ “Parties are not therefore merely appendages of modern government; they are in the center of it and play a determinative and creative role in it” (Schattschneider, 1942:1).

⁹ The failure of the Soviet Union represented an external shock for communist parties, which have undergone radical internal and strategic changes.

An exogenous factor may impact a party in two different ways (Müller and Strøm, 1999: 19). It may influence a party directly. In this case, the external stimulus must relate to performance consideration of the party's primary goal, namely, votes, offices, or policies (Janda, 1990; see also Harmel and Janda, 1994:276). A party faces different incentives in different institutional settings, so that it will be more willing to pursue one goal rather than others, because in that particular setting that specific goal benefits the party. The environment may also affect a party indirectly. The stimuli will have consequences according to the organizational features of the party, such as intra-party democracy, recruitment modes, and leadership accountability.

Yet, a broad change occurs when external stimuli coincide with internal dynamics of alteration¹⁰. Factors that are exogenous to the party can "set the stage" (Samuels 2004; 1001), while the intraparty features and relations can clarify the reasons why the party reacted the way it did (Lefkofridi, 2008:6).

2.3 Party Organization

Modern specialized literature has tended to avoid the autonomous value of partisan organization, focusing on party systems rather than on individual parties. While the systemic approach has gone a long way forward (especially with regard to electoral dynamics), it has, however, lost sight of the very core of parties, namely, the fact that they are organizations and, as such, they must be analyzed with an organizational perspective.

From this point of view, a well-defined concept of power is needed. Power is no longer seen as property of the minority over the majority (Michels, 1911), but as a relation of influence (Panebianco, 1988:2). Contrary to the *Iron Law of Oligarchy* (Michels, 1911) that has stressed the oligarchical predisposition of party leaders to behave as entrepreneurs, recent studies describe the relation between the leader and his followers

¹⁰ For example, changes in leadership and/or in the dominant coalition.

“[as a] relation of unequal exchange in which the leader gets more than the followers, but must nonetheless give something in return” (Panebianco, 1988:22). The definition given by Panebianco entails to some extent both the idea of hierarchical order and the idea of division of labor and internal democracy. So, albeit it appears uncontested that parties are controlled by few people, i.e. party leaders and their ruling faction, it is likewise clear that they are not completely unconstrained when taking decisions (Panebianco, 1988: 38-39; see also Strøm, 1990: 573-574).

Parties have five main organizational actors (Harmel and Janda, 1994:274): (1) top leaders, who lead the decision-making process of a party; (2) middle level leaders, who structure the internal order of a party; (3) activists, who promote the strategy of a party; (4) members, who occasionally support the party; (5) supporters, who vote for the party at the elections.

Since acting collectively facilitates the achievement of common ideals and purposes, party actors tend to comprise party factions at all levels. “A faction is any intra-party combination, clique or grouping, whose members share a sense of the common identity and purpose” (Zariski, 1960:30). The party ruling faction (dominant coalition) controls “the most vital zones of uncertainty (e.g. professional knowledge, environmental relations, communications, rules, financing and recruitment) [making it] the principal distribution center of organizational incentives within the party” (Panebianco, 1988:38). The strength of the dominant coalition of a party depends on the degree of power loss within the party. The more structured the dominant coalition is, the more powerful it is. Dominant coalitions may be described through two features, namely their conformation and their composition (Panebianco, 1988:39). Variations in the conformation, namely, the distribution of a power relationship between party leaders and the dominant faction of a party, may affect the party, even though the composition, which refers to the specific people serving at the top, remains unaltered (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 274). Changes in the dominant coalition¹¹ determine shocks for the party, if the party’s identity, organization or strategy differs from the identity, organization or strategy of

¹¹ Changes in the dominant coalition are often parallel to changes in leadership. Harmel and Janda assume the two changes to be additive (Harmel and Janda, 1994:262).

the new ruling faction. Harmel and Janda identify another independent variable, which can determine party change: leadership change (Harmel and Janda, 1994). Party leaders may be replaced due to personal reasons (e.g. death, illness, age, interests) or, alternatively, because the head of a winning faction succeeds in taking on the position of party leader. While a new leader detected to fill vacancies does not have a clear and broad mandate to bring about decisive changes, the victorious leader will pursue the goal of its faction, leaving other party dimensions unchanged (Harmel and Janda, 1994:262).

Nonetheless, a substantial identity or organizational change requires both “a clear reason for change *and* a power configuration that facilitates the change” (Harmel and Tan, 2003:410)¹². The clear reason refers to both choices of party leaders and environmental aspects. Most of the previous theories have studied parties as if their behaviors were determined by the inclinations of their rulers (Strøm, 1990: 572-573). Yet, as we have already discussed in the previous section, parties have to face different pressures in different operative arenas. Such pressures may affect the conduct of parties inasmuch specific systemic properties may push parties towards different types of behavior and thus towards different objectives (Strøm, 1990:579).

2.4 Party Change

Morlino defines the crisis of a party:

The process by which one or more factors of a social, cultural or even economic kind produce a detectable inconsistency between the existing party, characterized by a well defined identity, organization, policy positions, and a broadly established electorate, and also supporting interest groups. (Morlino, 1996:5-6).

¹²Another internal variable is the age of a party, which diminishes the impact of all other variables. The older a party is, and thus the more institutionalized it is, the more resistant it is to change (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 266).

The crisis of a party causes (or is caused) by the change of features within the existing party system, which determines a reconsideration of the party's effectiveness in achieving the primary goal.

Nevertheless, the outcomes of the process may vary considerably. Without changing itself, a party might just overcome the inconsistency, i.e. its own inability to meet the "demand" of the civil society. A party could also decide to adjust itself, in one or more dimensions, and to different degrees, in order to better fit the altered operative setting (Deschouwer, 1992:17). Sometimes, a change may be so deep that a split within the party with the concomitant creation of a new formation could represent the only possible result of the transformation process. In other cases, a party may not have the strength to undergo a radical change, so it disappears.

Thus, a party change is (by definition):

Any variation, alteration or modification in how parties are organized, what human resources and material resources they can draw upon, what they stand for and what they do. (Harmel and Janda, 1994:275).

The change in a given party characteristic is detected through measurement over time, by observing the difference from time t (usually a year) to time $t+1$.

Party change is thought to be functional, i.e. "the change helps an organization adapt in case of adversity" (Janda, 1990: 13). Nonetheless, adaptation to the environment is only one form of party change. The following Figure 2 classifies party change according to two dimensions: the scope of the change and its timing¹³. On the basis of these two variables, Nadler and Tushman identify four possible forms of change (1989:534):

- *Tuning* is when a part of the organization undergoes changes (such as hiring new staff members in order to do better, for example at the elections) before the occurrence of the external event in order to guard against potential negative consequences for the party.

¹³ The scope of the change may be *incremental* involving only parts of the organization, or *strategic*, involving the organization as a whole. The timing of change explains if the change has occurred in advance (*anticipatory*) or as a reaction (*reactive*) to the environmental change (Janda, 1990: 3).

- *Re-orientation* is a form of party change that concerns changes *ex ante* in the policy aimed at making the party able to fit its operative environment.
- *Adaptation* is the reaction of the organization to an event.
- *Re-creation* is an *ex post* change that affects the entire organization (changes in name and ideology of former communist parties, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, may epitomize this specific typology).

SCOPE OF THE CHANGE		
Incremental	Strategic	
<i>TUNING</i>	<i>RE-ORIENTATION</i>	Anticipatory
<i>ADAPTATION</i>	<i>RE-CREATION</i>	Reactive

TIMING OF THE CHANGE

Figure 2: Typology of Party Organization Change (Nadler and Tushman, 1989:534)

Janda (1990:4) tries to simplify the aforementioned classification using the concept of transformation to describe significant changes, specifically “that type of party change that produces new styles, organization, tactics, and interparty relations” (Wilson, 1980:526). Transformation thus embraces both re-orientation and re-creation. Nevertheless, analysis on party organization change fails to make such distinctions.

Traditional parties studies (Michels, 1911; see also Panebianco, 1988) retained that parties tend to preserve their *status quo*, and consequently their power, by protecting themselves from external destabilizing factors. In doing so, old parties, which are more institutionalized and thus less maneuverable (Lefkofridi, 2008:7), are better. In other words: the older a party is, the more resistant it will be to change.

Moreover, parties normally change only under pressure (Harmel and Janda, 1994:278).

Since modifications entail costs in terms of human and material resources, a party will undergo a change only “if it considers that the benefits derived from the change will exceed the costs” (Lefkofridi, 2008:8).

Concerns about the evaluation of change or non-change pertain to the guide of the party¹⁴.

When taking decisions, however, they are not completely free. They have to take into account both other individuals in the parties, whom their power depends on, and the environment in which they operate. “If the immediate source of change is to be found in a party’s internal workings¹⁵, the ultimate source is the party’s surroundings” (Katz and Mair, 1990:18)¹⁶.

In line with Lefkofridi’s probabilistic model (2008, 12-13), I assume that the two possible outcomes from the interaction between a party and its operative environment are the awareness, which is not directly goal related, and the action within which a party change occurs (see Figure 3).

The dominant coalition (dominant faction and the party leader) must perceive strategic and organizational alternations of the party, determined by changes in the environment, as functional for the achievement of a better performance¹⁷ (Harmel and Janda, 1994:261-262).

Namely, “the dominant coalition will engage in modifications only if it believes that a change could advance its primary goal, as external stimuli affect a party’s performance by influencing the capability of a party to achieve a primary goal” (Harmel and Janda,

¹⁴ Leadership and a dominant coalition lead the decision-making process of a partisan organization.

¹⁵ The *life-cycle* approach was formulated by Whetten (1987) and follows the thesis of Michels (*The Iron Law of Oligarchy*, 1911), which postulate the hierarchical structure of political parties.

¹⁶ The *system-level* approach (Harmel and Janda, 1982) departs from the belief that parties are shaped by their environment.

¹⁷ With this regard, Lefkofridi’s work (2008) is enlightening. Talking about the relationship between the European Union and political parties, she differentiates two possible outcomes, which range from party awareness of the European context to specific action induced by this context (ibid. 4). This assumption may be valid for all environments, since they alter the *structure of political opportunities* by providing national political parties with a new policy arena and a new institutional environment (Hix and Goetz, 2000).

1994: 278). Alternatively, party changes may be triggered by changes in the organization which are independent from alteration of the operative setting. Nonetheless, changes caused as a reaction to environmental stimuli are deeper than if they were caused only by internal variations (Harmel and Janda, 1994:2).

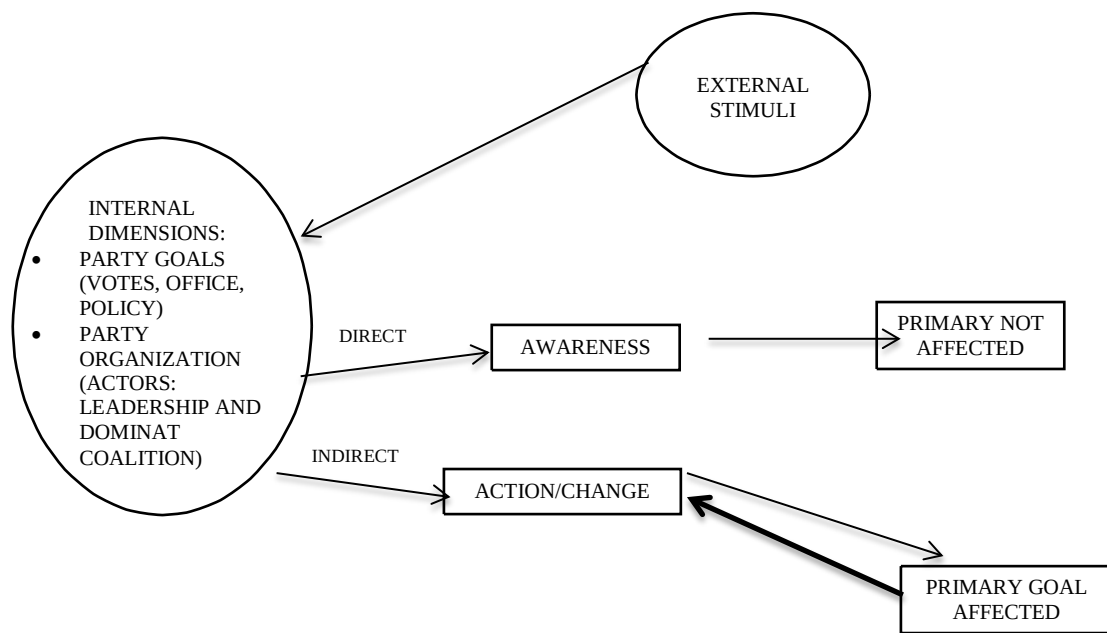


Figure 3: Party Response to External Stimuli (see Lefkofridi, 2008:13)

2.5 Integrated Theory of Party Goal and Party Change

In this chapter, the integrated model of Harmel and Janda (1994) will be briefly discussed. It serves as a theoretical *nexus* to describe the dynamic relationship between external stimuli, party goals and party organization. The theory tries to explain not only the occurrence of party change but also the magnitude and the type of this change (Harmel and Janda, 1994:262).

Other internal changes, such as changes in leadership personnel, factional dominance or financial resources are not exposed in Harmel and Janda's theory, even though they are considered causal factors for party change. The model is a *hybrid* archetypal, as it has elements that derive both from Panebianco's work (1988) on partisan organization, as well as from Strøm's theory (1990) on party goals.

Similar to Panebianco, Harmel and Janda (1994) consider parties as conservative organizations, which do not change easily. Moreover, they assume that "the high level of party institutionalization will reduce the effect of those stimuli that promote change" (ibid. 20). Party change may be determined by external factors. When affecting the internal organization of a party, they make a party reevaluate its effectiveness for the attainment of the primary goal. Vice versa, certain transformations in parties may be completely independent from external stimuli and have been caused by internal variations only. Nonetheless, a process that ultimately results in a deep change will be initiated both by external factors, which act as catalysts, and internal dynamics which, in turn, perceive a change as necessary.

On the basis of the assumptions formulated by Harmel and Janda (1994: 277-279), in the next chapter specific hypothesis will be formulated.

A1: parties are conservative organizations, which resist change

A1.1: parties will change only under pressure

A2: the decision to change is taken by the dominant coalition of a party and by its leadership

A3: the dominant coalition and the party's leadership will decide for a change, only if they estimate that the benefits derived from a change overcome the costs

A3.1: a change will be introduced if such change is considered able to preserve or consolidate the dominant coalition and leadership power

A3.2: a change will be introduced if such change is considered able to advance the primary goal of a party

A4: a party will change if its primary goal is affected

A5: the criteria for the evaluation of a party's performance rely on the nature of the primary goal of a party¹⁸

A5.1: if the primary goal is to seek votes, the performance is measured by the capability of winning votes or seats

A5.2: if the primary goal is to seek office, the performance is measured by the capability of participating in the government

A5.3: if the primary goal is to advocate policies, the performance is measured by the capability of satisfying the clientele of a policy.

¹⁸ Harmel and Janda consider a further goal, i.e. intra-party democracy, which I do not take into account, while formulating my thesis. The goal "implementing democracy" refers to a new set of parties (such as green parties) that had/have as primary goal the implementation of democracy within the party itself. Yet, the Italian Communist Party guaranteed the internal open critics throughout a specific practice, i.e. the democratic centralism.

3. HYPOTHESES, DATA AND METHODS

3.1 Hypotheses

The assumptions formulated by Drawing on Harmel and Janda theory (1994), outlined, the number of assumptions in the previous section, previously formulated will now guide the analysis. All the hypotheses presented here pertain to the task of highlighting the factors that trigger a party change. However, since the present research endeavor is a case study, it is beyond the scope of this research to find generalizable truths about party change. This work constitutes an exploratory task; as such it aims to confirming or refuting the hypotheses with regard to the specific party under investigation. Yet, even though the analysis does not seek to become a watershed in the scholarly literature on party change, the present work might be helpful in that it intends to shed light on a field, i.e. the study of party change, that has long been overlooked.

Western European Communist Parties (WECPs) have always had to face the dilemma of either remaining faithful to Soviet Union ideology or conforming their political line and organization to the democratic rules of the parliamentary systems in which they operated (Keith, 2010:1; see also Greene 1973:345). Since the early years of the 1980s, such systems have undergone radical changes that WECPs had to adjust to. Many of the Western European Communist parties had already attempted to reform their “orthodox communism” before 1989 (Keith, 2010:1), following the model of social democracies. For instance, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) underwent a process of full social democratization since the very begin of the 1980s. Rejecting the Marxist-Leninist socialism and showing its willing disposition to participate in the government, it became the emblem of the WECPs transformative process.

The hypotheses of the present work will follow the essential ideas on party change of Harmel and Janda (1994: 279-283). The first concept concerns goal-motivated stimuli. External factors affect a party insofar as they impact the party’s ability to achieve the primary goal they pursue (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 263). Since parties are conservative

organizations, they will change only if the benefits of modification exceed the costs of the transformation. Vice versa, a party will be unwilling to change if it considers its performance, aimed at achieving its desired goal, satisfactory. So, “a party will undergo a change if it considers that the transformation could improve and thus make more effective its performance aimed at accomplishing the desired object” (ibid. 1994: 279). The change in both the line and the organization of the Italian Communist Party is assumed to typify that specific category¹⁹ (Panebianco, 1988; see also Harmel and Janda, 1994).

The success of policy-seekers depends on their ability to change public policy to their preferred position (Müller and Strøm, 1999). They need, therefore, the support of the part of the public that also promotes the achievement of the party’s specific issue. Such parties will change only if they conclude that the correctness of its key positions/ideas is threatened, so that to determine the disaffection of their voters (Harmel and Janda, 1994:270). It follows that “for policy seekers, the more pronounced their failures to satisfy the party clientele is, the more likely they are to change” (ibid. 1994: 281).

A party’s internal dynamics of power might also favor or prevent its predisposition to change. Harmel and Janda assume that “the more structured a party is, the more powerful it is” (ibid. 1994: 266). This concept refers to the degree of power concentration in the hands of both the party leader(s) and the dominant coalition. Panebianco (1988) identifies two features that help us measure the stability of a party and thus its strength. On the one hand, he finds that conformity within the party indicates the distribution of power between the party leader and the dominant coalition. On the other hand, the composition refers to the specific individuals serving at the top. The dominant coalition within a party is normally resistant to alteration, because it could menace its power. Therefore, the dominant coalition will decide to undergo a change only if it considers that that change could preserve and/or consolidate its power. There are several variables that affect the extent of the change caused by a change in composition. First, the change is dependent on how the modifications of the

¹⁹ Communist parties are considered to be policy-seekers. Albeit its peculiarity, the PCI has been included in this category.

composition have taken place, namely if they have been determined by natural reasons (e.g. death of the head of the dominant coalition) or by other events (e.g. an electoral loss). The magnitude of a change depends on the nature of the goal pursued. “If the dominant coalition is replaced by a faction that favors a different goal, the new dominant coalition will engage both in power and in goal motivated changes” (Harmel and Janda, 1994:282). It may also happen that a change in the dominant coalition coincides with a change in the leadership, and vice versa. This phenomenon triggers a more radical modification compared to changes within the coalition or party leadership alone. The party’s age constitutes a further internal variable that reduces the effect of all other variables (Harmel and Janda, 1994:266). It serves as indicator of its institutionalization (Lefkofridi, 2008:7), which refers in turn to the process by which organizations and procedures aim to acquire value and stability (Janda, 1980). So, “the older a party, the more resistant to change it is” (ibid. 282). Like the party’s age, the history of a party is an additional variable related to its propensity to change, namely the more difficult the history of a party, the more unwilling to change it is.

Using these concepts as starting points, hypotheses about the Italian Communist Party dissolution can be formulated. During the period at stake, both the national and the international systems have been subject to radical changes. The political actors operating in these settings have been therefore affected by this transformative wave. Albeit the PCI’s originality, which had enabled it to survive for long time, it was not able to go through this period unscratched. The present study has identified three main stimuli that may have determined the makeover and the consequent dissolution of the PCI.

H1. The main external factors that could have influenced the PCI’s transformation during the period 1986-1991 are the collapse of Soviet Union, developments at the European level and the crisis of the First Republic in Italy.

H1.1 These environmental events are catalysts of both the positional as well as the organizational change in the Italian Communist Party.

The detachment of the PCI from the Soviet Union at the end of the 1950s has been attributed to the PCI's gradual repositioning on social-democratic stances. In the 1980s, under Gorbachev's leadership, CPUS began to modernize itself following the path that the PCI had already taken at the end of the 1960s. Its failure made clear the unfeasibility of reforming communism without abolishing it. The PCI's decision to eliminate the term "communism" in the name of the party can be understood as a formal but not substantial change.

H2.1 The intra-party tensions regarding adequate responses to the collapse of the Soviet Union have been rather moderate.

H2.2 The intra-party tensions regarding adequate responses to the collapse of the Soviet Union have neither determined changes in the conformation nor in the composition of the dominant coalition.

European Integration is symbolized in the Single European Act (SEA), signed on 17 February 1986. This act revised the Treaties of Rome in order to add new *momentum* to European integration and to complete the internal market. It amended the rules governing the operation of European institutions and expanded the Community powers. The developments at the European level thus triggered the beginning of the crisis of the national state. Moreover, "through the internationalization of capital a new analytical framework concerning the relationship between public and private and between national and international was developed" (Fouskas, 1998:102). From that point on, a crisis in Keynesian economics, which underpinned the PCI's economic values, was unavoidable.

The PCI had therefore to break with the past and put an end to its internal tensions between those who wanted to reform capitalism and those who wanted to dispose of it. The *new internationalism* was formulated in order to go beyond the political left's historical division between socialism and communism and create a European left.

H3.1. The importance of European Integration in the PCI's agenda has grown in indirect proportion to the importance of the "real socialism", thus affecting in a deeper manner the party.

H3.2. The rather heated intra-party tensions regarding adequate responses to the European developments have determined changes both in the conformity and in the composition of the dominant coalition.

The changes at national level cannot be considered as the sole stimulus for a party change, but neither should they be overlooked. In the 1980s, Italy was undergoing a period of both crisis and renewal. The main parties were affected by the both political and economic readjustments at the international level; the financial and economic crisis was revealing corruption ingrained within the system, which threatened the political life. The PCI was separate from that situation. It appeared, consequently, to be the only possible savior for Italy and it also considered itself in this way. For instance, "*Cambiare il PCI per cambiare l'Italia*", i.e. transforming the PCI to change Italy, was the slogan of the PCI's electoral campaign from 1986-1987. Nonetheless, the fact that a communist party could have entered the government to save the country was not only unconceivable but also unacceptable to the democratic world. So, when the decay of the DC-PSI political axis of party seemed to be imminent, the PCI decided to undergo a radical transformation. Beginning with the elimination of the term "communism" from the name of the party, the PCI tried to overcome what Alberto Ronchey defined "*fattore K*", that is the fact that the term communist in the name of the party had always hampered the PCI's possibility to become an incumbent party.

H4.1. The crisis of the first Republic in Italy determined a transformation in the PCI's perception of its national and international role.

H4.2. The crisis of the first Republic in Italy create intra-party tensions, inasmuch it obliged the party to look further the national borders and thus to present itself as an interpreter of developments in the European supranational arena.

Yet, the transformation of the PCI took a turn that differed completely from the desired outcome. The initial purpose of the party was to become a government force in order to bring vigor and dignity to a country languishing in the doldrums. The biggest communist party in Western Europe was, nonetheless, unable to survive the radical change and perished. The reason being can be found in the fact that the structure of democratic centralism had not been suitably replaced, so that the internal democracy became increasingly constrained and little room was given to debate the reforms (Fouskas, 1998).

H5.1. The elimination of the practice of democratic centralism caused an increasing factionalism within the party.

H5.2. Any party group of factions within the PCI proved to be unable to handle the political consequences of a deep transformation, thus determining the split.

Once these hypotheses are empirically tested, the broader picture of the factors that determined the PCI's transformation and eventually the split will emerge.

3.2 Data and Methods

The present case study employs an explanatory approach that involves both quantitative and qualitative methods. The two traditions have been long engaged in ardent dispute (Burke and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 14). Historically, qualitative methods have had a

secondary role in the social sciences since they have been considered as not rigorous enough to be able to produce usable results. Vice versa, quantitative approaches permit, through their formulaic precision, to better predict and control the natural phenomena (Guba and Lincoln, 1995: 106). Yet, there are also some critiques against quantitative methods. Human behaviors are not understandable without taking into account the intention behind the human activities. Moreover, the general data on which quantitative researches rely are inapplicable when referring to individual cases.

Nevertheless, as both are “hard to do well” (Brady et al., 2004:10), “instead of struggling for methodological supremacy, they should be treated as complementary” (Laver, 2001: 9). Triangulation is the mixing of data or methods so that diverse standpoints shed light upon a topic (Olsen, 2004). In the field of navigation and land surveying, this term refers to a simple method for determining the position of a point C using observations from two points A and B (see Figure 4): “Having adequate information about the distance between A and B it becomes easy to determine the distances between B and C, and A and C” (Kelle, 2001: 8-9). Mixing methodologies is, therefore, the most profound form of triangulation.

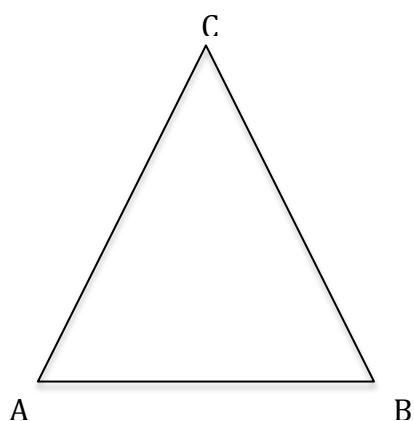


Figure 4: Triangulation (Kelle, 2001)

Case studies have recently tried to gain a competitive edge on other methods, promoting the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods and devoting considerable attention to issues of design in order to assure scientific rigor (Yanow et. al., 2008: 9). While it is clear that case studies can offer insight into real-life phenomena, their capacity to assure scientific rigor is not assured. The implementation of statistic with a qualitative approach allows for insights that might have been missed by quantitative methods.

The present work makes use of what is termed *mixed methods research* (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). The mixed methods approach involves both collecting and analyzing close-ended (quantitative) scores and open-ended (qualitative) information (Creswell et. al., 2006). By mixing these datasets, the researcher provides a better understanding of the problem than if a dataset had been used alone. “A mixed methods approach not only encourages the use of multiple paradigms, but it makes researchers combine inductive and deductive thinking” (Burke et al., 2007). Despite the complicated knowledge and procedures of inquiry required for mixed methods investigation, the value-added offsets the difficulties incurred by using both qualitative and quantitative data.

There are different ways to operationalize and to mix the datasets (Creswell, 2007: 7-8). Qualitative and quantitative data could be connected together by building one upon the other. One can also embed one dataset within the other so that one type of data provides a supportive role for the other.

The present work will make use of the last mixing form. Combining the two datasets permits us to counterbalance the defects of one and/or the other methods of inquiry. Moreover, mixed methods studies may involve the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data within a single study or within multiple studies in a program of inquiry. Single studies, typically, collect qualitative and qualitative methods at the same time and make use of them together (Figure 5).

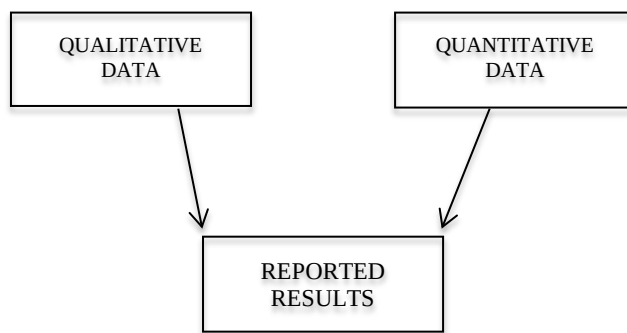


Figure 5: Single Case Study (Creswell, 2007:8)

3.2.1 Determining the party's policy positions from political texts

Political texts are, “concrete byproducts of a strategic political activity and are the only able to reveal important information about the political stances of their actors”. (Laver et. al., 2003:311)

Techniques of text analysis allow us to extract parties’ policy positions from the political texts they generate. The most renowned method of inquiry is in the manual coding of textual documents (in this case post-war electoral manifestos) conducted by Manifesto Research Group: the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) (Cerone, 2010: 70).

In recent years, in order to quicken the analysis of parties’ stances, computerized coding schemes have been developed. Those most often employed are *Wordscores* (Laver, Benoit and Garry 2003), *Rhetorical Ideal Points* (Monroe and Maeda 2004) and *Wordfish* (Slapin and Proksch 2008; Proksch e Slapin 2009a).

Despite their undeniable applicability, they are not perfectly suited for the purpose of the present work, as its aim is not only to assess the party’ stances on a left/right scale, but also to provide evidence for the changes in the saliency and in the position of well-defined policy dimension.

Finding a new technique of content analysis appropriate for the particular case under investigation was therefore necessary. The purpose underlying the methodology of this study is dual, as it estimates not only the *saliency* of a party's policy positions, i.e. the importance of a policy dimension in the party's discourse, but also the *position* given to well-defined policy dimension, i.e. whether pro, contra, or neutral party's stances.

Words can provide information about the party positions on definite concerns, as "texts [are treated] as collections of word data containing information about the position of the texts' authors on predefined policy dimensions." (Laver and Garry, 2000:619;)²⁰. Word usages are employed, thus, as units of measurement for the estimation of a party's stances on fixed dimensions (Laver et. al., 2003:313). It follows that the focus is on those terms that may improve the knowledge about the policy aspects that concern the present research. The calculation of the words' relative frequencies allows us to determine how often a term appears in a document.

Thus:

$$F_{wt} = \frac{n_w}{N_t}$$

The proportion depends on the length of the documents, so that the relative frequency F_{wt} of word w in text t is strictly dependent on the total number of words of the text.

Pursuant to Laver and Garry (2003; see also Laver et al., 2000), we claim that "the more often a word related to a policy dimension is used in a document, the more the author appraises the policy addressed by the term(s)". Arithmetically, the importance of a dimension is understood as the total number of occurrence of the words referring to the policy at stake. The total number of the terms n_{pct} that refer to a predefined policy concern c in a text t must be them be compared to the total number N_t of the words contained in a text t . Put simply: F_{pct} is the sum of the relative frequencies of those terms that refer to a well-defined policy dimension.

²⁰ The basic assumption is that word usage does not change over time (Laver et al., 2003).

$$F_{Pct} = \frac{n_{Pct}}{N_t}$$

$$F_{Pct} = f_{1t} + f_{2t} + f_{3t} + \dots + f_{nt}$$

The proportion F_{Pct} serves to estimate the *weight* given to a well-defined policy dimension c in a text t . The outcome is assumed to be a number greater or equal to 0 and less or equal to one.

$$0 \leq F_{Pct} \leq 1$$

The closer F_{Pct} is to zero, the less weight is assigned to the policy dimension. Vice versa, the closer F_{Pct} is to one, the more relevant the policy dimension.

Although determining the frequency that a policy dimension is mentioned in a political text may be helpful to assess its saliency in the political discourse of a party, it still does not indicate the *position* a party gives to a policy put to voters; that is to say, the way a party addresses that specific policy dimension. A party can be *pro* some well-defined policy position, *con*, or even *neutral*. In contrast to the inductive and unidimensional style of analysis recently adopted by Gabel and Huber (2000), this study follows the Laver and Garry approach (2000: 627-628) and codes all policy stances in a *tripolar* way: pro, con, neutral/not mentioned (Laver and Garry, 2000:622).

To ensure coherence, hierarchical structure schemes will be designed. In accordance with Laver and Garry (2000: 623), coding schemes will be constructed for every specific issue. At the highest level of every coding scheme, the set of policy domains will be defined. Within every group, the party's policy stances concerning each of the previous broad fields will be outlined. Afterwards, every aspect that may regard the policy positions of the party in the dimensions under consideration must be sketched. The manifesto coding-scheme used by Laver and Garry (2000) is reported below (Figure 6). The pattern is not uniform for all of the cases. Branches can be added or deleted, as long as a ranked structure is maintained when analyzing the documents.

1. ECONOMY

Role of state in economy

1.1 ECONOMY/+State+

Increase role of state

1.1.1 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget

Budget

1.1.1.1 ECONOMY/State+/Budget/Spending

Increase public spending

1.1.1.1.1 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Spending/Health

1.1.1.1.2 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Spending/Education and training

1.1.1.1.3 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Spending/Housing

1.1.1.1.4 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Spending/Transport

1.1.1.1.5 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Spending/Infrastructure

1.1.1.1.6 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Spending/Welfare

1.1.1.1.7 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Spending/Police

1.1.1.1.8 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Spending/Defense

1.1.1.1.9 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Spending/Culture

1.1.1.2 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Taxes

Increase taxes

1.1.1.2.1 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Taxes/Income

1.1.1.2.2 ECONOMY/State+/Budget/Taxes/Payroll

1.1.1.2.3 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Taxes, Company

1.1.1.2.4 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Taxes, Sales

1.1.1.2.5 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Taxes, Capital

1.1.1.2.6 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Taxes/Capital gains

1.1.1.3 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Deficit

Increase budget deficit

1.1.1.3.1 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Deficit/Borrow

1.1.1.3.2 ECONOMY/+State+/Budget/Deficit/Inflation

Figure 6: “Abridged Section of Revised Manifesto Coding Scheme” (Laver and Garry, 2000:623)

For every text, we must assign a value of the position P_c of the party under investigation P on some policy concern c (Laver and Garry, 2000:627)²¹. The party can be pro some substantive position on that issue P_{cpro} , neutral P_{cneut} , or contra P_{ccon} ²².

²¹ According to coding conventions (ibid. 2000: 624), every text unit must be allocated to only one coding category.

²² Furthermore, “if a neutral text unit is embedded in a paragraph that otherwise expresses a pro position on some policy concern, it is coded pro. If it is embedded in a paragraph that express a con position, it is

As the present work makes use of quantitative methods, we must be able to calculate numerically every party position. Depicting an ideal scale, whose endpoints are +1 and -1, every pro is expressed as $P_{cpro} = +1$; every con is expressed as $P_{ccon} = -1$; and every neutral policy position is expressed as $P_{cneut} = 0$. Based on that, we can now estimate the *position* of a precise dimension P_{ct} , derived from a text t on the policy concern c as follows:

$$P_{ct} = \frac{P_{cpro} - P_{ccon}}{P_{cpro} + P_{ccon}}$$

The proportion gives us some information about the position of the party, whether pro or contra²³, on a specific policy concern, in a specific document.

Once we have calculated both the frequency and position of each policy dimension, we must compare all the results throughout time. A timeline analysis of the political texts is possible, since the words a party use, when formulating manifestos or official documents, are assumed to be steady elements overtime. The positioning of political texts along an imaginary time continuum allows us further interpreting the development of the positions.

3.2.2 Qualitative Approach: Focus (Semi- structured) Interview

Content analysis is helpful in understanding of the positioning of the actors with regard to specific issues. Nevertheless, in order to understand the intentions that lead to well-defined decisions, we must cross-validate the text content analysis outcomes by way of

coded con" (Laver and Garry, 2000: 624).

²³ This formula considers the total number of pro and contra text units. Neutral units are not taken into account, as their value is equal to 0.

independent sources, such as interviews.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods has been developed with the purpose of offering insight into the social and political phenomena under investigation. As previously mentioned, such an approach has been used to supplement or to further test empirical results. The collection of data from different sources and their analysis with different strategies could thus improve the validity of the results (Hopf, 2000).

The previous section has illustrated the quantitative technique the present work employs. In order to cross-validate the outcomes obtained through the content analysis, a qualitative methodology will be integrated with a mathematical method.

“Interviewing is a key data-collection practice used in political science research to access the views and interpretations of the subjects under investigation” (Guión et. al., 2011: 1-3). This technique is assumed to provide a deeper understanding of individual participants’ insights. Even though all interviews aim at exploring the experiences, views, and motivations of individuals on a specific topic, the way they are directed is not always the same. There are three different interview-types: the structured interview, the unstructured interview, and the semi-structured interview.

The first two types present some disadvantages. While the structured interview is unable to examine in depth the issue under consideration, conversely, the unstructured interview is very time consuming and provides very little guidance on the topic at stake. Because of that, the decision to employ a semi-structured interview is quite logical (Di Cicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006: 314-316).

Semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help define the areas to be explored, but also allow the interviewer or interviewee diverging in order to pursue an idea or a response in more detail (Flick, 2011:183-184). The flexibility of this method also permits further elaboration upon questions that could be essential for the research, but may have been overlooked in the original draft. Thus, few a preliminary inquiries are usually implemented with the addition of a few spontaneous questions

(Hermans, 2000:316).

Designing an interview-schedule is not only one of the most vital steps in this methodology. The management of the interview is just as important as the design of the interview-schedule. Its arrangement must follow four specific criteria. The key criteria include the *non-interference* of the respondent and, consequently, the neutrality of the interviewer. The *specificity* of the point of view of the respondent is also of paramount importance, since the primary purpose of interviews is to shed light on the intentions behind human actions. It should also reflect the *profundity* of the interview-partner's commitment to the issue. Another key criterion is open-ended questions, which allows for the *expansion* of the spectrum of information and thus guarantees the possibility to delve deeper into the matter (Flick, 2011:195).

The choice of the respondents is likewise essential. As the present work is a case study of party change, interviewing politicians who directly experienced the transformative process of the party under investigation presents many benefits, as they can explain the reasons and the intentions behind particular decisions. Interviewing a political elite can be rather frustrating. Despite some difficulties, such interviews are “one of the most potent, high yield ways of studying political elites”, as they allow us to experience a direct form of participant observation, and thus elicit salient perceptions on the topic (Peabody et. al., 1990:455).

On more practical aspects of the interview, when contacting political elites, an email explaining the project can be a good way to get in touch with the person you have chosen to interview. The explanation of the nature of the project should be written in an academic way in order to gain credibility (Lilleker, 2003:209). A greater hurdle arises when one seeks to interview those who are no longer active in public life or politicians who are running for an office, which is here the case.

An interview with a politician is often a challenge requiring the interviewer to have three mindsets: persistence, patience and a strong ego. We must be aware of the fact that their public role makes politicians a particular group of respondents. Politicians are

usually busy. Therefore, they value their time wisely, as should the person who decides to interview them (Lilleker, 2003). The number of questions one can ask is directly proportional to the amount of time one can spend with the respondent (Peabody, 1990: 452). It follows that the interview should be kept short (i.e. normally you have 20-30 minutes at your disposal, which means 8-10 questions), albeit one must be prepared to expand if time affords (Hermans, 2000). Consequently, the questions should be well thought-out so as not to waste precious time. A recorded interview assures a complete and accurate transcript of what is said. Moreover, it permits the interviewer to maintain on eye contact and gives a feeling of informal conversation (ibid., 209-210).

As Lilleker claims, “the chief difficulty with elite interviews is how to interpret the data”(2003: 211). Individuals often have diverse perceptions of the event. They may also try to distance themselves from decisions that have brought about disastrous changes. The only precautions one can take to prevent any manipulation of the facts and thus guarantee their corroboration is the cross-validation of interviews with primary or secondary sources and the systematic comparison of the results.

It is clear that interviews should not be employed as the sole methodology. Qualitative and quantitative datasets should endorse one another.

4. OPERATIONALIZING THE SINGLE CASE STUDY

4.1 Historical Overview

Founded in 1921 by seceding from the Italian socialist party, the Italian Communist Party was legalized only in 1943. After World War II, it became the biggest and, at the same time, the most anomalous communist party of Western Europe. Some scholars have attributed this peculiarity to its ability to seek and find compromises not only among its own ranks and files, but also with the other political forces in Italy at an international level. Two wings coexisted within the party: the Ingrao group pursued an alternative to the capitalist ideology, while the Amendola/Napolitano wing can be seen as social democratic (Abse, 2001:61).

Although the PCI maintained the name “communist” until 1991 and its affinity to the European social democracy officially came after the death of its beloved leader Berlinguer in 1984 (Abse, 2001:61), it underwent a transformative process well before. Since the end of the 1950s, the PCI had presented itself as the *terza via* (the third way) between Stalinism and capitalism. From that date on, the PCI’s gradual makeover was incessant (Höbel, 1982; see also Barbagallo, 2010: 94).

The developments in the PCI’s operative settings (both in the national and international setting) might have expedited or deepened the transformative process of the party. It therefore follows that when considering the PCI’s change, the pivotal transformation that affected Italy, the Soviet Union, and the European Community cannot be ignored.

As an investigation of the whole history of the PCI is probably unnecessary for the purposes here, I decided to concentrate on the period from 1986 to 1991. In those years, important changes at on the national as well as in the international horizon occurred. However, the complexity of the change could hamper an unbiased understanding of the

events, which is essential for the understanding of PCI's transformative process. Therefore, international and national change are presented separately to reduce complexity

Whereas the crisis of the first Republic in Italy was changing the traditional balance of powers, European integration was shifting the locus of political control from the national states to the supranational level (Marks et al., 1996, 34:3: 343). The Soviet Union also started a radical modernization process (*perestroika*), which altered the established socio-political structures.

The 1980s started with a new ruling coalition in Italy: Christian democrats (DC), socialists (PSI), social democrats, republicans and liberals.

The traditional *functional democracy*, based on the DC/PCI alternation, was no longer valid (Fouskas, 1998), since the PSI had taken over the PCI's role, acting as the hegemonic force of the left, and since the demise of the Christian-democrats' political power monopoly. The DC's 18th Congress further consolidated the DC/PSI partnership. The modified set-up in Italy, represented by the new DC-PSI axis, also called CAF (Craxi, Andreotti, Forlani), shifted to the right and aimed to re-distribute the power throughout the entire Italian political system (Fouskas, 1998:153). These changes had a spinoff effect. On the one hand they radicalized the social dynamics, favoring the birth of extreme right parties (e.g. Lega Nord was created by Umberto Bossi in 1989). On the other hand, they shed light on the corruption in the system, which had its climax in the scandal of *Kick Back City* (i.e. *Tangentopoli* or *Mani Pulite* began on 17 February 1992).

In the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev a new leader of the party was appointed (Benvenuti, 1999: 37). Gorbachev first became a member of CPUS only in 1952. He was free of the dogmatism typical of the old party generation. During the 17th Congress of the CPUS, in February and March 1986, the new Secretary General presented an innovative plan for a re-organization of the Soviet Union's economic and political structure, which relied on two pillars. A new course (*perestroika*) was to be introduced to reform the centralized economy through the introduction of liberal elements, in order

to integrate the Soviet Union in the global market. Likewise, the relationship between the party and the State was to be modified, so as to guarantee transparency (*glasnost*). Yet, whilst the process of reconciliation with the West was about to be achieved, the Warsaw Pact's internal dynamics stressed the decline of popular support for the old Soviet system. The year 1989 embodied the climax of the conflict between liberal democracy and communism. The popular uprisings that began in Poland soon reached all the soviet satellite countries. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the consequent reunification of East and West Germany in October 3, 1990 clearly showed that there was no going back. On February 7, 1990, the government passed a law allowing the Soviet Republics to secede with a two-third majority in a referendum.

At European level the wind of change was also blowing. In 1986 the Single European Act, which established a qualified majority voting in the Council of Ministers and increased the power of European Parliament, was signed. The Maastricht Treaty (1993) further expanded the European Community competencies and the scope of the qualified majority voting in the Council. It also provided the European Parliament with veto power for certain types of legislation. The consequences of European integration over the last decades dramatically affected the autonomy of the states in Europe (Marks et al., 1996: 342).

If we draw three imaginary time lines with regard to each of the three probable causes that triggered the PCI's change, we observe that the internal transformation of the party is strictly correlated with the developments in the aforementioned PCI's operative settings. The changes in these environments I deem to be the catalysts of both the positional as well as organizational change in the PCI, which altered the party so substantially that never recovered its position in Italian politics. .

The 17th Congress of the Italian Communist Party symbolized the beginning of in-depth internal restructuring. The PCI's new ideological and socio-political approach (*new internationalization*) represented a total rupture with the traditional PCI's dual interpretation of capitalist modernization. It created an insurmountable fissure between the alternative model of capitalism promoted by Ingrao's left faction, the reformed

capitalism idea of the right group led by Amendola, and with the togliattian principle of *progressive democracy*, which implied a transitional phase from capitalism to socialism. Nonetheless, with Achille Occhetto as leader of the party²⁴, the PCI took the risk to undergo necessary reforms.

The end of the 1980s was a period of intense revolutions. The process of capitalist restructuring was fully subverting traditional values and beliefs. The collapse of the Soviet Union seemed to be leading not only to the demise of socialism in practice, but also to socialist doctrines in general. It followed that it was necessary for communist parties, and thus for the PCI, to find a new set of ideals and goals that would fit the time. In March 1989, the 18th Congress of the PCI introduced a *nuovo corso* (new revisionism). The party committed to work for the reconstruction of the Italian Republic via the reestablishment of the Italian left, even hypothesizing a coalition with the PSI for the establishment of a shadow cabinet. Moreover, it also promoted European integration, supporting the constitution of a European system of governance through the action of the social democratic European left, whereof Italian communist party considered itself as an integral part.

Going beyond the Cold War fronts had always been one of the basic objectives of the Italian party. Nonetheless, the PCI officially presented its new liberal identity and thus the willingness to change the party's name, eliminating the term communist, only one day after the fall of Berlin Wall. The *svolta* took place on November 12, 1989. Addressing the old partisans, Occhetto expressed the urgency to reform the party in order to move with the times:

Traggo l'incitamento a non continuare su vecchie strade, ma ad inventarne di nuove per unificare le forze di progresso. Dal momento che la fantasia politica di questo fine '89 sta galoppando, nei fatti necessario andare avanti con lo stesso coraggio che allora fu dimostrato con la Resistenza²⁵.

²⁴ A landslide majority elected Achille Occhetto on the 21th June 1988, after the resignation of Natta because of health reasons.

²⁵ Based on the Bolognina discourse of Achille Occhetto, on November 12, 1989: "We must invent new paths of progress in order to merge the Leftist forces. Today we must go ahead on this transformation like the Resistance did in 1945" (my translation).

The changes in the policy stances of the PCI run parallel to the changes in the organizational structure of the party. The electoral defeats that the PCI suffered since the mid 1980s reflected its incapability of institutionalizing the new requests of civil society. The decision to undergo modification in the *forma-partito* thus was the PCI's further effort to get consent of the society. Reducing its bureaucratic apparatus and abolishing democratic centralism, the PCI was no longer mass party. It became what it is technically called cadre party (or *partito leggero*), dominated by politically élitarian groups of activists. In the *extraordinary Congress* of 1990, three motions were presented, mirroring the never-ending internal debates about the party line. Occhetto's proposal to call up a constituent phase, which should have shaped a new partisan organization, was approved by an overwhelming majority (67,46%).

The dissolution of the Italian Communist Party was officially formalized on 3rd February 1991, during the 20th and last Congress. The majority of the delegates decided to found the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), while a party of the PCI's members who had opposed the change launched the Communist Refoundation Party (PRC). Why did the biggest and most powerful communist party in the West not survive its transformative process?

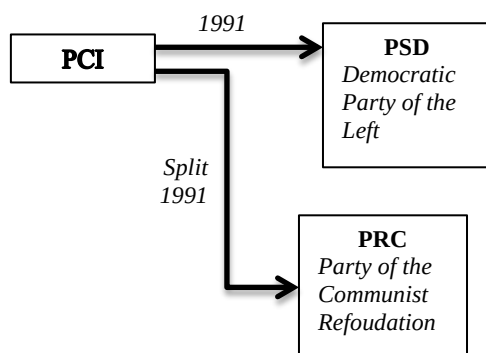


Figure 7: Scission of the Italian Communist Party

4.2 Estimating PCI's policy positions

To assess the role played by the aforementioned factors in the PCI's orientation towards a more social democratic course, we need to know the importance assigned by the party to each issue. Political actors generate, infer, and frame political texts (i.e. electoral manifestos, or legislative speeches), in which they reveal their positions on continuous policy dimensions (Laver et. al., 2003: 311). We are also interested in the intentions behind the decisions on the political stances under investigation. This study therefore makes use of two different but complementary analysis methods. First, the party manifestos and pledges of the period 1986-1991 will be examined using a quantitative content analysis; and subsequently the results obtained from the statistical approach will be cross validated by means of interviews with critical members of the Italian Communist party at the time of the split.

4.2.1 Measuring Italian Communist Party policy positions

Party official documents can give us reliable and valid estimations about the political line of a certain party, as parties use political texts to address specific issues they put to voters. Nevertheless, not all parties employ programmatic texts to the same extent. The production of party manifestos by the Italian Communist Party has been rather limited, as the party informed its members as well as the electorate about its policy concerns during the congresses, through the party's leader discourses, or through the appointed press service (i.e. the newspaper *L'Unità* and the magazine *Rinascita*). The collection of the PCI's political documents will therefore not be limited to the party manifestos, but it will be extended to all the official pledges appeared and published during the period 1986-1991 (see Appendix 10.1). In the light of the foregoing, it appears necessary to analyze the party's pledges distinguishing between the PCI's congressual and the PCI's non-congressual documents. Nevertheless, one must be aware of the fact that the choice of documents might have been influenced by the limited availability to the PCI's

archives. This methodological problem might have therefore impacted on the outcomes of the present analysis.

The present work focuses on the stimuli that could have occurred to cause the Italian Communist Party's transformation and consequent split. The party's policy dimensions therefore refer to the catalysts of change of the Italian Communist Party: the collapse of the Soviet Union, the developments at European level, as well as the crisis of the First Republic in Italy. The purpose here is check if the PCI's stances towards the aforementioned policy dimensions have undergone modifications through the years, to an extent where they played a large enough role in the PCI's agenda to trigger change.

Since the present study not only estimates whether or not the party has attached importance to a well-defined policy dimension but also how it has been evaluated, the extraction of information from PCI's policy pledges is a multi-step process. . In the first step, we must evaluate the *saliency* of each stated policy dimension. Once we have defined the categories of focus, we will design dictionaries for each dimension by selecting terms in the texts relevant to the policy concerns under investigation (Giannetti, 1999). Each word of Figure 8 has been chosen on the basis of the documents analyzed: each term is linked to the policy dimension to which it refers; moreover it must appear at least once in the "reference" texts.

PCI's relation to the Soviet Union

Berlino
bipolare
blocchi
centralismo
democratizzazione
disarmo
distensione
dottrina
Est
fredda
Gorbaciov
guerra
ideali/idealità
identità
ideologico/ideologia
Lenin
lotta
Marx/marxista
Mosca
movimento operaio
muro
Patto di Varsavia
PCUS
potenze
regime
scongelo
sovietico
Stalin/staliniano
superamento
Unione sovietica
URSS

capitalistico
Comunità Europea
CEE
comunitaria
cooperazione
Europa
europea
europei
europeistica
europeo
integrazione
internazionale
internazionalizzazione
istituzioni
mercato
mondiale
mondo
nazionale
neoliberismo
neoliberista
produttivo
produzione
profitto
relazioni
sistema
Sme
socialdemocratici
sovrnazionale
sovranità
Stati
trattati
umanità
Unione
unitaria

PCI's relation to the European Union

capitalismo

PCI and the Crisis of the Italian First Republic

alternativa

anticomunista
coalizione
compromesso
conservatrice
nuovo corso
Craxi
crisi
DC
democristiani
destra
dialogo
dirigente
intesa
Italia
italiano
morale
nazionale
governo ombra
opposizione
partiti
pentapartito
PSI
Repubblica
salvare
sinistra
socialismo
socialisti italiani
solidarietà nazionale
stato
subalterno
unità

Figure 8: Words lists related to the policy dimensions

The occurrences of each word in each category are counted throughout the documents, so to enable the assessment of the relative frequency of terms of a particular category. Let us assume that the dictionary for the category *PCI's relation to the European Union* contains two terms. The word *Europe* comes up 15 times in the 1200 word-long document number 1, while the word *integration* appears only 3 times. Thus, the respective relative frequencies of the terms turn out to be 0,0125 for the word *Europe* and 0,0025 for the word *integration*.

$$f_{Europe1} = \frac{15}{1200}$$

$$f_{integration1} = \frac{3}{1200}$$

Yet, in order to establish the saliency of a policy dimension, we need to determine how often the author decides to address that particular issue in the document, which is easily computable, summing the relative frequencies of all the terms in the particular category.

$$P_{ct} = 0,0125 + 0,0025 = 0,015$$

The closer the value P_{ct} to one, the more saliency the party has given to the topic. For each dimension, we will then estimate if the saliency of that specific policy has been altered or has remained unchanged by comparing the P_{ct} on that policy through time (Figure 9). We will then map a developmental pattern that demonstrates the variations throughout the years.

Yet, estimating policy positions is not only ascertaining the *saliency* of a dimension, but also verifying its *position*, that is to say, estimating the party viewpoint on a specific policy dimension. For each policy category, a coding scheme will be developed, in which each domain is represented by several policy (sub-) categories that can be coded

in a tripolar way, i.e. defining its antithesis and a neutral position²⁶.

1. PCI's relationship with the Soviet Union

- Is the Soviet economic model positive or negative for Italy?
- Is the Soviet foreign policy good or not for Italy?
- Does the PCI commit itself to the cause of the end of the Cold War?
- Have the relations between CPUS and PCI been intensified?

2. PCI's relationship with the EU

- Has the internationalization of capital and the crisis of national state brought about changes in the role played by the Italian Communist party?
- Is the European Integration process good for (Italian and European) left parties?
- Is the European Integration process good for the Italian economy?
- Is the reinforcement of the European Community good for Italy?

3. PCI and Crisis of the Italian First Republic

- Is the PCI willing to cooperate with other Italian leftist parties?
- Has the “*pentapartito*” induced a modification of the role played by the PCI in the Italian society?
- Has the decay of the DC-PSI political axis accelerated the PCI crisis?

Figure 9: Texts Coding Schema

The paragraphs of the document are categorized into the coding schema reported in Figure 9. The stances on the policy issues are classified according to the values assigned to them. For instance, if the Italian Communist Party is determined to be favorable to a stance, it will be valued $P_{\text{cpro}} = +1$. Conversely, if it is contra, the position will be scored as $P_{\text{ccon}} = -1$. We then calculate “the proportion of all text units conveying information on a well-defined issue, pro or contra” (Laver and Garry, 2003: 628)²⁷. The higher the value

²⁶ The answer to the questions of the schema can only be *yes* or *no*; the neutral position can be translated as “*not mentioned*”.

²⁷ The policy positions that are considered neutral will not play a role in the estimation of the position of

P_{ct} of a policy concern, the more positively the party assesses the dimension.

For example, if we want to generate a scale related to *PCI's relationship with the Soviet Union*, i.e. if the relationship between the Italian Communist Party and the Soviet Union has improved or worsened over time, we will have to compare the values of each of its component domains over time. For each document, the pro and contra positions of the Italian Communist Party regarding the Soviet dimension will be assessed by respectively summing the pro and the contra-stances. After having done so, the position of each text- that is if the view of the party taken in the text is pro or contra- will be calculated by means of the Laver and Garry's formula (2000: 24):

$$USSR = \frac{USSR_{cpro} - USSR_{ccon}}{USSR_{cpro} + USSR_{ccon}}$$

Where:

$USSR_{pro}$ = Total text units in the category "*good relation with the Soviet Union*"
(Soviet economic model good for Italy; Soviet foreign policy good for Italy; PCI's commitment to the end of the Cold War; intensification of the relations between CPUS and PCI)

$USSR_{con}$ = Total text units in the category "*bad relation with the Soviet Union*"
(Soviet economic model obsolete or not functional for Italy; PCI's criticism of Soviet foreign policy; PCI's indifference to the end of the Cold War; PCI's detachment from CPUS)

The average of the position-values in a defined year will be then estimated.

Let's assume that the sum of the pro-stances $USSR_{pro}$ with regard to the Soviet dimension in document t_1 from 1986 is 14, while the total of the contra-stances $USSR_{con}$ in the same document is -4. Applying Laver and Garry's formula, we obtain a position-value that equals 0,55555556. We do the same for all documents published in 1986. The position values of t_2 and t_3 are 1. The average of the position-values in 1986 is

the party on a well-defined concern and thus their value will be $P_{neut} = 0$.

0,85185185, which suggests that the PCI regarded the Soviet dimension positively in that year.

4.2.2 Cross-validation throughout interviews

To substantiate the outcomes obtained by the multidimensional scored analysis of political texts, the present work employs semi-structured interviews, whose key questions help us to define the areas under investigation. They also allow for the possibility to diverge from the set questions, and consequently scrutinize an idea or an answer more thoroughly (Flick, 2011:183-184).

The interview partners are native Italian speaker. Hence, the questions have been formulated in the language that makes them feel at ease (i.e. Italian). Nevertheless, the translation of the interview-schedule is not the main problem. Quite the opposite; the peculiarity of the interviewees presented the greatest hurdle. Interviewing politicians requires framing clear questions so that they cannot be skipped, but it also means being very flexible in order to have a greater chance of obtaining an interview. Three politicians and one intellectual have been interviewed. Franco Giordano (56) was member of the national leadership of the young communist federation (FGCI) from 1985 to 1987, and from 1987 to 1990, of the local PCI's coordination for the Province of Bari. When the party split, Giordano joined the Party of Communist Refoundation. Massimiliano Smeriglio (47) was member of the local leadership of the FGCI for the Province of Rome. As a member of the PCI's national Secretary since 1988, Walter Veltroni (58) played a pivotal role in the PCI's shift towards more social democrat stances, adhering to the Democratic Party of the Left in 1991. Guido Liguori (59) was editor of the communist journal *Critica Marxista* since 1983. The interviews of the present study have been conducted face-to-face, by telephone and by email. The reason for that choice is purely practical, since the electoral campaign in Italy just ended it was difficult to obtain face-to-face interviews. .

The interview-schedule reflects the main concepts in the theoretical groundwork on party change. The central concern is to find the stimuli that determine party change, and in this specific case, what factors played a role in the transformative process of the Italian Communist Party.

<u>Original interview's layout</u>	<u>Author's translation</u>
• <i>A quale data riconduce la svolta del PCI?</i> • <i>Secondo Lei, quali furono i fattori che determinarono la trasformazione del partito comunista italiano nel periodo 1986-1991?</i> • <i>Che ruolo giocò il collasso dell'Unione Sovietica?</i> • <i>Gli sviluppi nell'Unione Europea influenzarono la trasformazione del PCI?</i> • <i>Che ruolo giocò il nuovo assetto politico e partitico Italiano?</i> • <i>La sconfitta delle elezioni del 1987 può essere considerata uno dei fattori che determinarono il cambiamento?</i> • <i>Che ruolo ebbe Occhetto nella svolta?</i> • <i>Le dinamiche interne al partito, così come gli sviluppi a livello extra-partitico determinarono delle modifiche nella linea politica del partito?</i> • <i>Che tipo di cambiamento ebbe luogo? (Posizioni del partito?; struttura interna?)</i> • <i>In quale modo avvenne tale cambiamento?</i> • <i>Se sì, in quale misura avvenne una</i>	• <i>When has the PCI's transformation started?</i> • <i>In your opinion, which factors have determined the PCI's transformation during the period 1986-1991?</i> • <i>Which role did the demise of the USSR play?</i> • <i>Did the European developments affect the party's transformation?</i> • <i>Which role did the new Italian political and partisan set-up play?</i> • <i>The 1987 electoral defeat can be considered a change stimulus?</i> • <i>Which role did the Party Secretary Achille Occhetto have in the PCI's transformation?</i> • <i>Did the intra-party dynamics and the external developments trigger modifications in the party's line?</i> • <i>Which type of change did occur? (Party's policy stances?; party's internal structure)</i> • <i>In which manner did the change occur?</i> • <i>To what extent did the change in the</i>

<i>svolta della linea politica del PCI?</i>	<i>PCI's political line occur?</i>
• <i>Quali furono le Sue reazioni a questa trasformazione?</i> • <i>Come fu percepita tale svolta dal partito?</i> • <i>Secondo Lei, lo scioglimento del PCI fu un evento inevitabile?</i>	• <i>How did you react to that transformation?</i> • <i>How did the party perceive that change?</i> • <i>In your opinion, was the PCI's split inevitable?</i>

Figure 10: Guideline-base interview

The first set of inquiries (from one to six) refers to external factors that are assumed to have triggered the PCI's transformation, namely the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Europeanization process, and the crisis of the political system in Italy²⁸.

Yet, according to the theory (see Harmel and Janda, 1994), a broad change occurs when external stimuli coincide with internal dynamics of alteration. Questions seven and eight try to analyze to what extent the figure of the new leader of the party played a role in affecting both the internal structure and the political line, and subsequently what kind of change took place (nine and ten). The remaining questions aim to shed light on the standpoints of the individual participants under investigation (i.e. how the subject has perceived the change and how he/she thinks the rank and file perceived the transformation).

The transcription of the interviews follows the formal rules of *manageability*, *readability* and *interpretability* (Flick, 2011:380f). A good transcript provides an effective device for the assessment of the interviews and thus simplifies the answer to the research questions

For the interpretation of interviews, diverse methodological strategies (i.e. *summarization*, *explication* or *patterning*) can be employed. The purpose here is to

²⁸ Even though the electoral loss in 1987 is treated here as a potential cause for the renovation of the PCI, we are aware that it cannot be considered a primary source of change (see Fouskas, 1998).

underline and test the core statements and concepts that have been confronted in the theoretical groundwork and the outcomes of the word scores.

The reduction of the datasets seems to perfectly fit to this end, as results in a short descriptive text (Mayring, 2000:472), omitting superfluous information and thus focusing only on important observations. After interviews are read and paraphrased the texts, the pivotal data must be classified into definite categories, which should be derived from the theory²⁹.

According to the theory (Harmel and Janda, 1994), both exogenous and endogenous shocks concur to determine a party change. Hence, for the case of the transformation of the Italian Communist Party, five broad genres have been identified:

- *PCI's change due to the collapse of the Soviet Union*
- *PCI's change due to e developments at the European level*
- *PCI's change due to the crisis of the Italian First Republic*
- *PCI's change due to intra-partisan organization makeover*

Eventually, for a cross-validation of the results of the statistical technique, each of these specific categories has to be compared with the mathematical results.

²⁹ „Ein wesentliches Kennzeichen ist die Verwendung von Kategorien, die häufig aus theoretischen Modellen abgeleitet sind: Kategorien werden an das Material herangetragen und nicht unbedingt daraus entwickelt, wenngleich sie immer wieder daran überprüft und gegebenenfalls modifiziert werden“ (Flick, 2011:409).

5. MULTIDIMENSIONAL MIXED METHODS ANALYSIS

For each of the three dimensions explained in section four, both saliency and position analyses are conducted. On the basis of the dimensional relative frequencies, the prominence as well as stances on policies of the Italian Communist Party can be assessed for every potential external change factor.

5.1 Quantitative multidimensional Analysis

5.1.1 Dimensional Saliency Analysis

Table 1 presents the results of the dimensional relative frequencies series³⁰. The values are graphically represented in Figure 11, which provides evidence of changes in the salience of the three policies in the period 1986-1989.

In this chapter, the three dimensions—i.e. the external stimuli assumed to have triggered the transformative process of the Italian Communist Party—are examined separately. For each stimulus, the present work empirically tests if significant alterations in the value of the relative frequencies³¹ might be due to specific environmental events. For added precision, the textual analysis differentiates between the PCI's congressional and non- congressional documents. In Table 1, f_{w3} , f_{w5} , f_{w7} , f_{w10} , f_{w12} , f_{w14} , f_{w18} , and f_{w20} refer to the relative frequencies of the Italian Communist Party's congressional documents, while f_{w1} , f_{w2} , f_{w4} , f_{w6} , f_{w8} , f_{w9} , f_{w11} , f_{w13} , f_{w15} , f_{w16} , f_{w17} , and f_{w19} are the relative frequencies of the PCI's non-congressional documents (see the Appendix 10.1).

³⁰ The dimensional relative frequency is a number between 0 and 1. The closer the number is to 0, the less salient the policy dimension. Vice versa, the closer the number is to 1, the more salient the policy dimension.

³¹ The highest saliency values, called climaxes (or acmes), correspond to an increase in importance of a well-defined policy dimension in the party discourse.

Table 1: Dimensional Saliency Analysis - Soviet Union

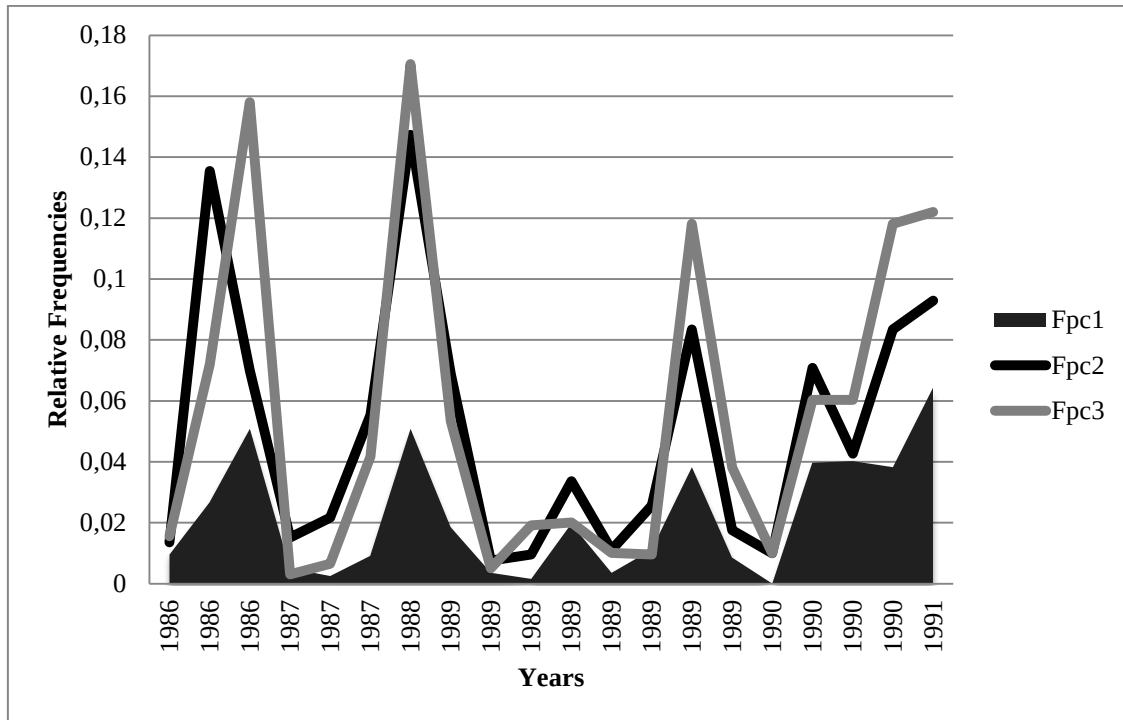
	1986	1986	1986	1986	1986	1986	1987	1987	1987	1987	1987	1987	1988	1988	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1990	1990	1990	1990	1990	1990	1990	1991	1991		
Dimension	1049	fw1	15928	fw2	18185	fw3	5183	fw4	4900	fw5	8596	fw6	21442	fw7	5380	fw8	756	fw9	1000	fw10	2334	fw11	685	fw12	1344	fw13	9140	fw14	5178	fw15	1751	fw16	10609	fw17	9628	fw18	9140	fw19	15984	fw20
URSS																																								
Berlino	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	0	0
bipolare	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	1	0,0005	2	0,001	
blocchi	0	0	6	0,003	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	4	0,002	0	0	0	0	0	3	0,0015	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	8	0,004	3	0,0015	0	0	1	0,0005	
centralismo	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	0	4	0,002	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	1	0,0005		
democratizzazione	0	0	11	0,0055	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	4	0,002	10	0,005	0	0	0	0	3	0,0015	0	0	2	0,001	5	0,0025	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	7	0,0035	5	0,0025	5	0,0025	
disarmo	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	5	0,0025	0	0	1	0,0005	3	0,0015	0	0	0	0	0	6	0,003	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	4	0,002	3	0,0015	1	0,0005	2	0,001	
distensione	1	0,0005	0	0	11	0,0055	0	0	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	
dottrina	0	0	0	0	3	0,0015	0	0	0	0	0	10	0,005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005		
Est	0	0	2	0,001	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	3	0,0015	2	0,001	3	0,0015	3	0,0015	0	0	0	4	0,002	0	0	6	0,003	5	0,0025	1	0,0005	0	0	15	0,0075	8	0,004	5	0,0025	6	0,003	
Fredda	0	0	0	0	3	0,0015	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0,0015	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	3	0,0015	8	0,004		
Gorbaciov	0	0	2	0,001	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	7	0,0035	0	0	0	8	0,004	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	1	0,0005	0	0	1	0,0005	
Guerra	1	0,0005	0	0	8	0,004	0	0	0	0	0	3	0,0015	0	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	7	0,0035	0	0	0	0	3	0,0015	3	0,0015	7	0,0035	36	0,0181		
ideali	1	0,0005	0	0	9	0,0045	0	0	0	0	0	9	0,0045	3	0,0015	1	0,0005	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	16	0,008	6	0,003	0	0	4	0,002	14	0,007	16	0,008	26	0,0131	
identità	0	0	0	0	5	0,0025	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	6	0,003	3	0,0015	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	7	0,0035	5	0,0025	0	0	2	0,001	
ideologico	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	4	0,002	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	7	0,0035	4	0,002	0	0	6	0,003	12	0,006	7	0,0035	9	0,0045	
Lenin	1	0,0005	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	
lotta	6	0,003	0	0	23	0,0116	0	0	0	0	3	0,0015	26	0,0131	0	0	2	0,001	3	0,0015	0	0	0	0	0	9	0,0045	0	0	0	0	3	0,0015	11	0,0055	9	0,0045	5	0,0025	
Marx/marxista	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0,0015	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	3	0,0015	0	0	
Mosca	0	0	5	0,0025	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
movimento operaio	3	0,0015	1	0,0005	9	0,0045	0	0	0	0	0	11	0,0055	1	0,0005	2	0,001	0	0	3	0,0015	0	0	1	0,0005	11	0,0055	2	0,001	0	0	3	0,0015	1	0,0005	11	0,0055	0	0	
Muro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	3	0,0015		
Patto di Varsavia	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	
PCUS	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Potenze	0	0	0	0	4	0,002	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	0	0	2	0,001	3	0,0015	
Regime	1	0,0005	4	0,002	4	0,002	0	0	0	1	0,0005	3	0,0015	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	0	0	2	0,001	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	
Scongelo	0	0	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Sovietico	0	0	1	0,0005	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Stalin/staliniano	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	
Superamento	2	0,001	9	0,0045	4	0,002	0	0	0	5	0,0025	4	0,002	3	0,0015	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	11	0,0055	3	0,0015	1	0,0005	4	0,002	
Unione sovietica	0	0	2	0,001	5	0,0025	0	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0,001	7	0,0035	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
URSS	0	0	2	0,001	1	0,0005	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	2	0,001	0	0	0	3	0,0015	2	0,001	2	0,001	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,0005	1	0,0005	0	0	9	0,0045	
Fpc1	19	0,01	53	0,027	101	0,051	10	0,005	5	0,003	18	0,009	101	0,051	37	0,019	7	0,004	3	0,002	39	0,02	7	0,004	22	0,011	76	0,038	17	0,009	0	0	79	0,04	80	0,04	76	0,038	128	0,064

Table 2: Dimensional Saliency Analysis – European Union

	1986	1986	1986	1986	1986	1986	1987	1987	1987	1987	1987	1987	1988	1988	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989	198
--	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------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Table 3: Dimensional Saliency Analysis - Italian Crisis

[illegible]



* F_{c1} , F_{c2} , and F_{c3} are the relative frequencies related to the dimension 1, 2, and 3.

Figure 11: Saliency explained by changes in the dimensional relative frequencies

5.1.1.1. Relative Frequencies Serie relative to the Dimension “PCI’s Relationship with the Soviet Union”

In this section, the relative frequencies’ series concerning the changes in the saliency afforded to the Soviet Union by the Italian Communist Party in the period 1986-1991 is presented. For added precision, and to avoid methodological problems that might impact on the analysis, the congressional documents, i.e. official instruments presented during the PCI’s Congresses, and non- congressional documents, including discourse, letters, and declarations, are analysed separately

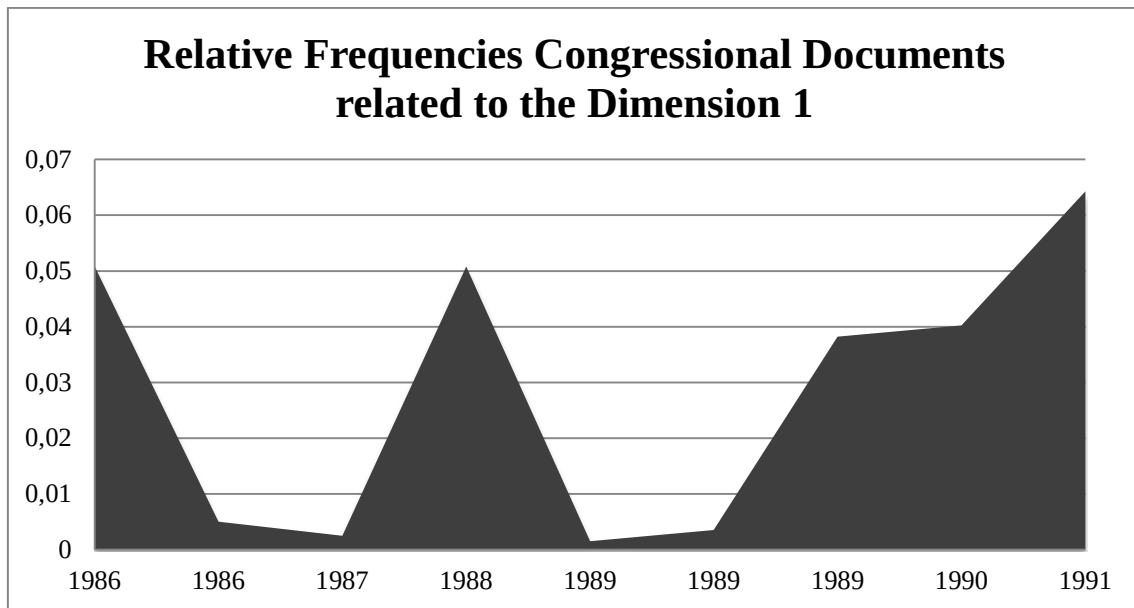


Figure 12: Relative Frequencies Series on the Soviet Union Dimension (Congressional Documents)

Figure 12 shows the series of the relative frequencies of the Italian Communist Party's congressional documents related to the dimension "PCI's relationship with the Soviet Union". It can be observed that the weight attached to the Soviet dimension is moderate and can be statistically estimated by assessing the average of the relative frequencies of the diverse documents analysed. The average of the saliency-values related to the "PCI's relationship with the Soviet Union" is 0,022, where zero is not important and one is very important. Since the 1950s the Italian Communist Party had a clear stance on the Soviet practices, which contrasted with the party nature. Since the end of the 1950s, the party had in fact criticized the Stalinist practices implemented in the East Bloc. Such a position contrasted with the PCI's communist (even original) nature. In order to avoid dangerous discussions on the interpretation of communism, the party agreed on the downplay of the topic.

In 1986 the saliency of Soviet policies was relatively high. The climax-value 0,05 suggests the PCI's support for the introduction of the reforms *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness) that occurred in 1986. The emphasis placed on the Soviet Union is not surprising, as the party welcomed the reorganization of the East Bloc, since it followed the example of the Italian Communist Party and aimed to find an economic

and political alternative to capitalism. With the intent of keeping up with transformations in the national as well as in the international arenas, a radical restructuring of the party's organization and agenda (*nuovo corso*) was launched during Occhetto's office (1988-1991). The 1988 climax 0,05 can be ascribed to these internal changes. The fall of the Berlin Wall the end of the Cold War in November 1989 marked the increasing importance attached to the Soviet Dimension by the Italian Communist Party. The collapse of *real Socialism*, symbolized by the physical and juridical dissolution of the Union of the Soviet Socialists Republics in 1991, is represented by the fact that, from that date onwards, the saliency of the Soviet issue increases. The collapse of Communism corresponded to the establishment of a new democratic system within the East Bloc, which had always been encouraged by the Italian Communist Party.

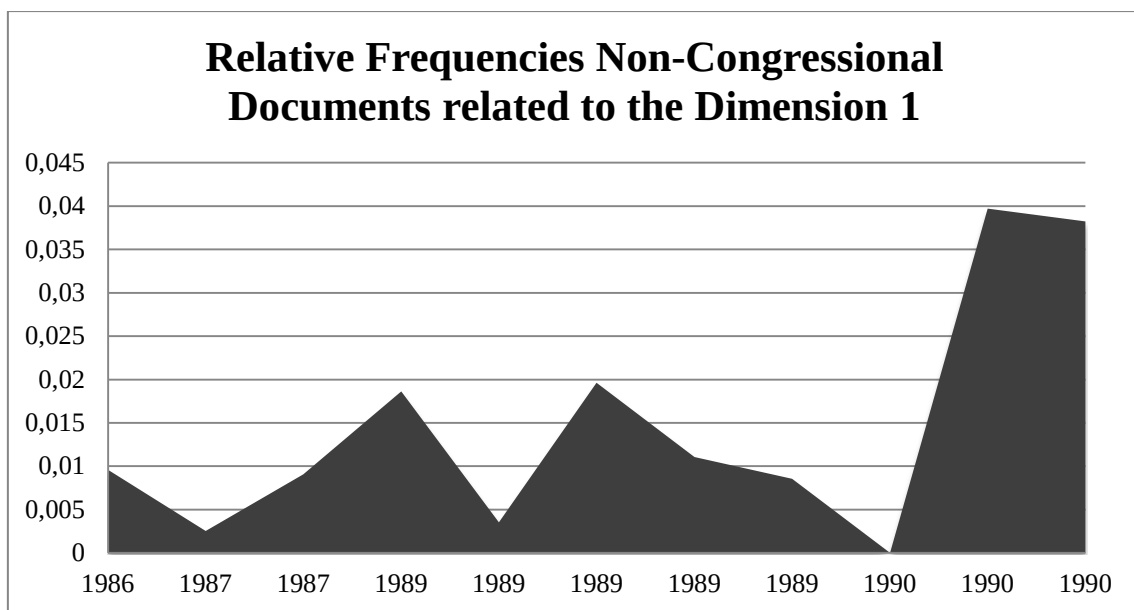


Figure 13: Relative Frequencies Series on the Soviet Union Dimension (Non-Congressional Documents)

Figure 13 graphically represents the relative frequencies obtained by the textual analysis of the PCI's non-congressional documents. The graph shows that the saliency of the non-congressional documents follows developmental path similar to that of the congressional documents shown in Figure 12, even though the values are clearly lower.

As one can observe, the climaxes correspond to the years 1989 and 1990 and suggests the Italian Communist Party's support for the new political and economic system set-up after the end of the Cold War and the consequent demise of the Soviet Union.

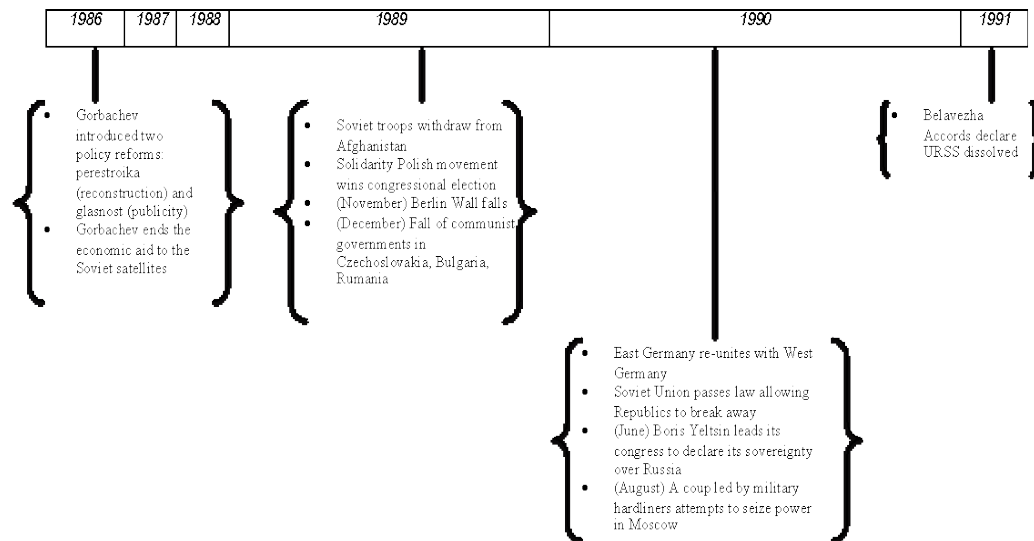


Figure 14: Timeline of the Collapse of the Soviet Union

5.1.1.2 Relative Frequencies Serie of the Dimension “PCI’s Relationship with the European Integration Process”

As for the textual analysis of the PCI’s relationship with the Soviet Union, the present work examines the European Integration policy dimension studying the congressional and non- congressional political texts separately. Since 1984, the Italian Communist Party considered the EEC³² as a compulsory condition for the improvement of the social productive forces in Italy and integrated it into the party’s agenda (Sassoon, 1976). Nevertheless, a real shift towards a pro-European stance can be traced back to the launch of the Euroleft program in 1986, which definitively put an end to the pursuit of

³² After the introduction and the implementation of the treaty in December 1991, the *European Union (EU)* replaced the *European Economic Community (EEC)*.

alternative regimes to the capitalist system and thus to the PCI's internal duplicity. The growing saliency of the European Integration dimension during the period 1986-1991 mirrors developments at the European level (see Figure 15 and Figure 16). The saliency-values are on average much higher than those of the Soviet dimension (the average of the European dimension is 0,05, while the average of the Soviet dimension is 0,02).

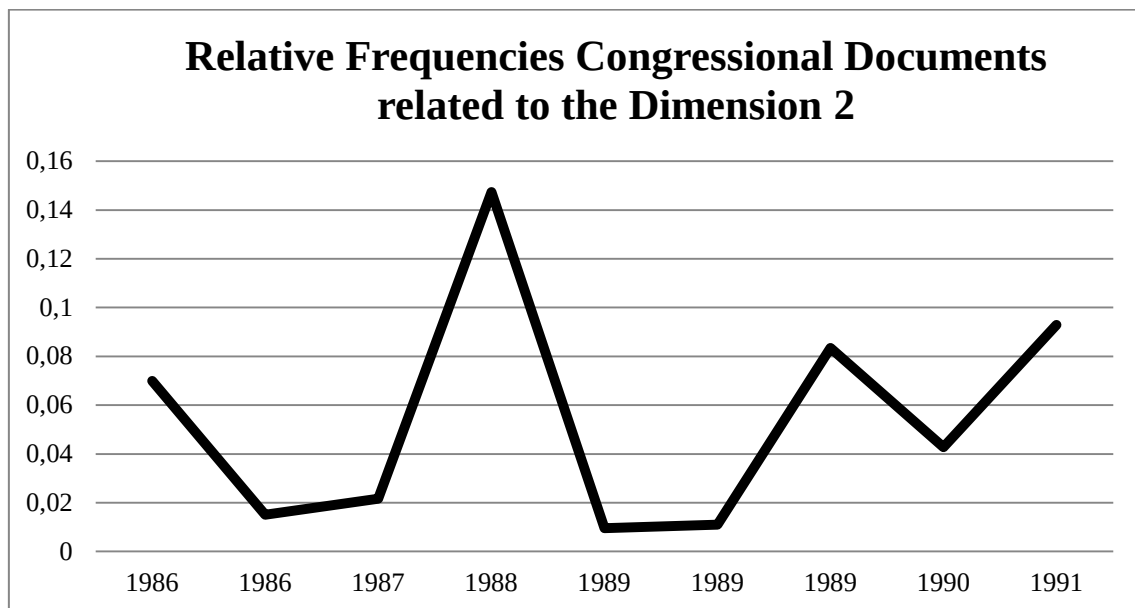


Figure 15: Relative Frequencies Series on the European Integration Dimension (Congressional Documents)

In Figure 15 the saliency-climaxes correspond to the years 1986, 1988, 1989 and 1991. The 1986 saliency-climax, whose value is 0,07, can be attributed to the signature of the *Single European Act* in 1986. The *SEA* endorsed a single market neo-liberal economic program on a monetary basis, thereby creating the basis for the *Maastricht Treaty*. The growing importance attached by the PCI to the European dimension was in response to it being necessary precondition and issue in national politics and thus also for the party agenda. With the aim of competing with the wave of neoliberal policies, the Italian Communist Party launched a plan in 1988 that operated within the boundaries of capitalism and foresaw a closure of the historical division between socialism and

communism. As one can observe on the graph, to this plan corresponds a saliency-climax: the relative frequency of the 1988 congressional documents is 0,15. The collapse of communism in 1989 began a new phase. The general failure of socialist ideals called for the pursuit of new ideas beyond the communist horizon. The climaxes in 1989 and 1991 (0,08 and 0,1) might resemble the party's awareness of the pivotal role played by the European Community in the international arenas, as Europe was becoming a global player able to compete with the United States, as well as at the national level, as European regulations were also affecting national politics.

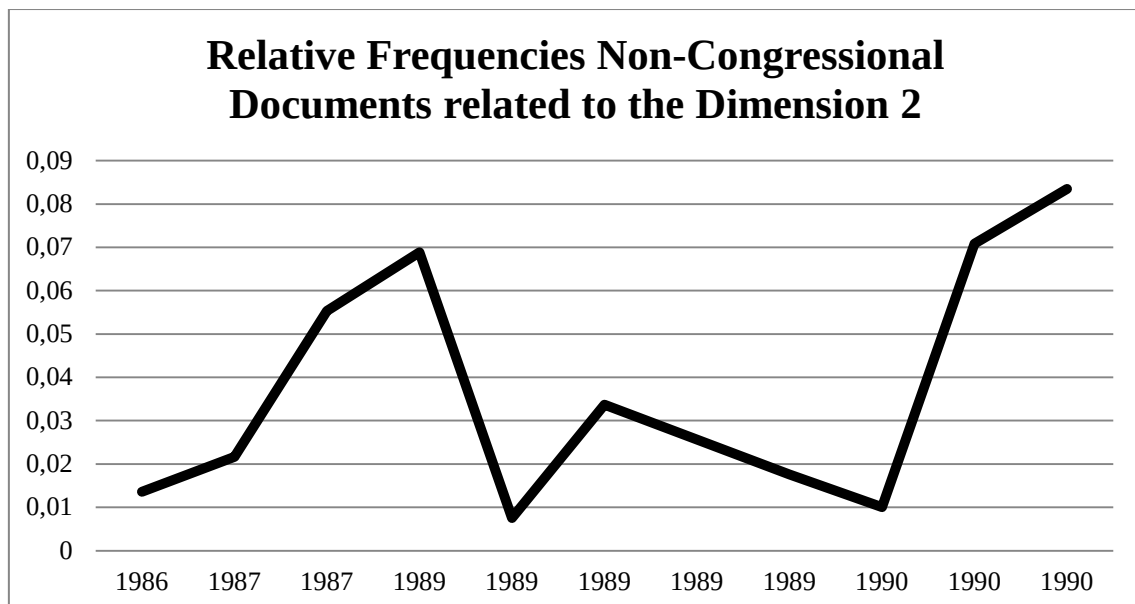


Figure 16: *Relative Frequencies Series on the European Integration Dimension (Non-Congressional Documents)*

The Italian Communist Party attached great importance to the European dimension not only in the official congressional documents, but also in the “every-day” party discourse, as Figure 16 shows. The 1989 saliency-climax, with a value of 0,07, corresponds to Occhetto’s discourse at the PCI’s Directorate meeting on November 14, 1989. The report was written as a reaction to the crucial events occurring in Germany and the whole East Bloc in that period. On November 9, 1989 the Berlin Wall—built on August 13, 1961 to divide the East Communist German territories from the democratic

Federalist Republic of Germany—collapsed, marking the beginning of the end of the bipolar system. With the definitive demise of *real Socialism* in 1990, the Italian Communist Party was obliged to seek a new set of ideological values and ideals. The PCI’s re-positioning to more moderate and social democratic stances is graphically represented by the increasing saliency of the European dimension since 1990, which became the party’s new point of reference.

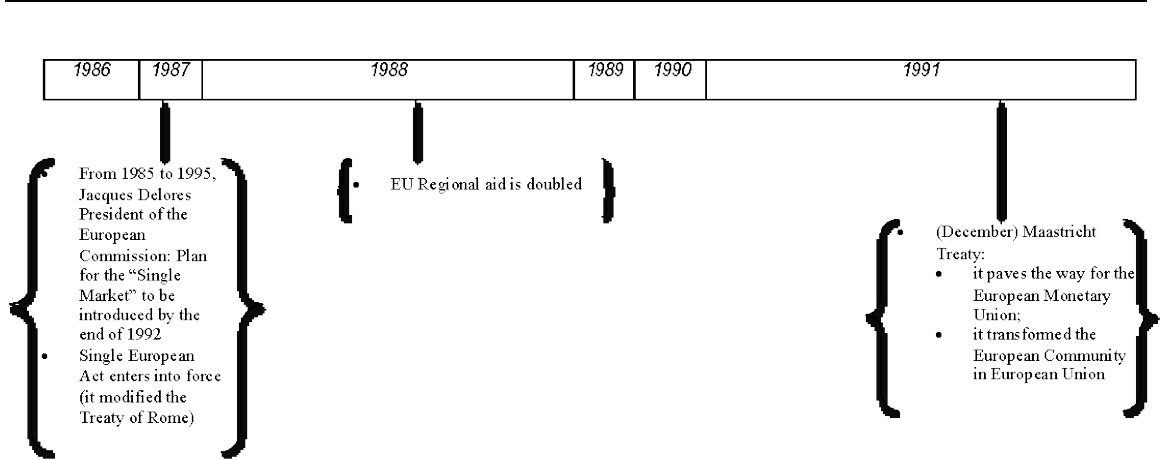


Figure 17: Timeline of the European Integration Process

5.1.1.3 Relative Frequencies Serie of the Dimension “PCI’s Relationship with the Crisis of the Italian First Republic”

The dissolution of the Italian Communist Party goes hand in hand with the collapse of the Italian First Republic. After the failure of the *compromesso storico*³³ in 1979, radical changes upset the Italian partisan constellation. On the one hand, the PCI was losing its

³³ The *compromesso storico* foresaw the solution of the problem of “lame democracy” (*democrazia zoppa*) through an accommodation between the Christian Democrats (DC) and the Italian Communist Party. Lame democracy refers to the impossibility of an alteration in the government. The practice known as *principium ad excludendum* had kept the PCI away from the government for almost forty years.

leading role in the Italian left, and on the other hand, the *pentapartito*-axis³⁴, formed by DC/PSI (together with PSDI, PLI and PRI), seized power.

The multiple climaxes presented by Figure 18 and Figure 19 suggest that the PCI attached a rather high importance to the Italian crisis dimension.

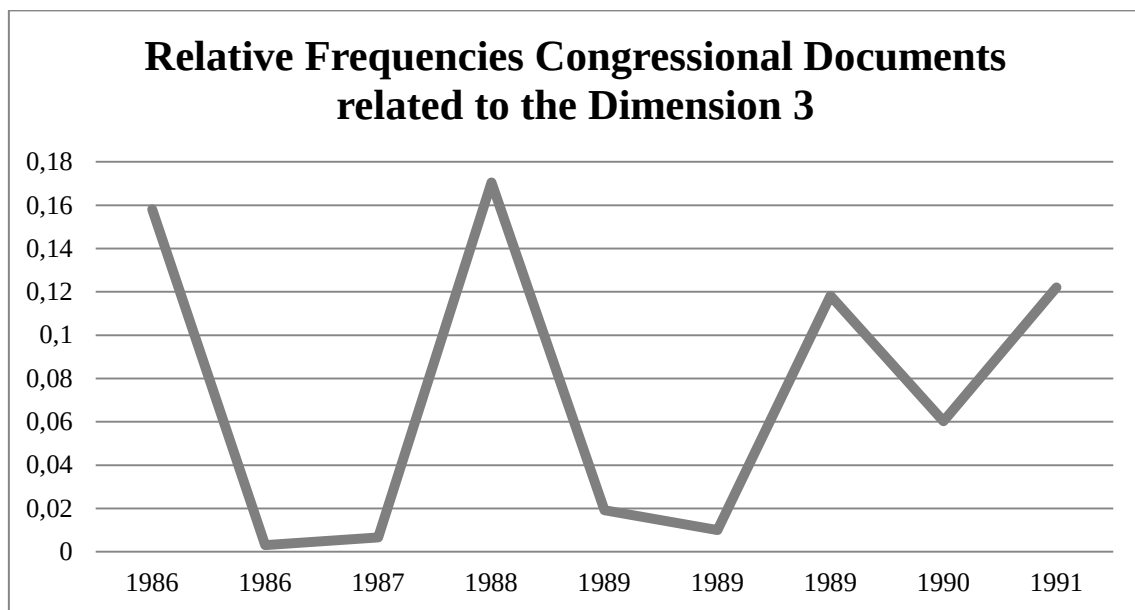


Figure 18: Relative Frequencies Series relative to the Crisis of the Italian First Republic (Congressional Documents)

Figure 18 graphically represents the weight of the dimension “Crisis of the Italian First Republic” in the PCI’s congressional documents. As one can observe, the first saliency-acme (0,17) occurs in the year 1986. During the electoral campaign that year, the Italian Communist party proposed a partnership with the Socialist party, challenging its communist (though original) nature. A co-operation with the Socialist Party seemed to be an obvious outcome of the restructuring process that the PCI has been undergoing since the death of the leader Enrico Berlinguer in 1984. The collapse of real *Socialism*

³⁴ The pentapartito-axis was a government coalition, established in 1981 by the agreement of five center-right parties: DC, PSI, PSDI, PRI, PLI. Another term used to define the pentapartito is CAF, named after the party-leaders who signed the *pentapartito*-agreement: Craxi (PSI), Andreotti (DC), and Forlani (DC).

in 1989 (which corresponds with a climax of 0,1) and the definitive demise of communism as alternative system to capitalism in 1990 (represented by ascending line beginning in 1990 suggesting the increasing importance of the national issue in the PCI's discourse) released the party from any ideological ties. Such events could have paved the way for a political rebirth of the PCI, definitively resolving the PCI's ideological issue. Nevertheless, the *pentapartito*'s shift further to the right, led by the axis Craxi (PSI)- Andreotti (DC)-Forlani (DC)³⁵, perpetuated the *principium ad excludendum* at the expense of the Italian Communist Party.

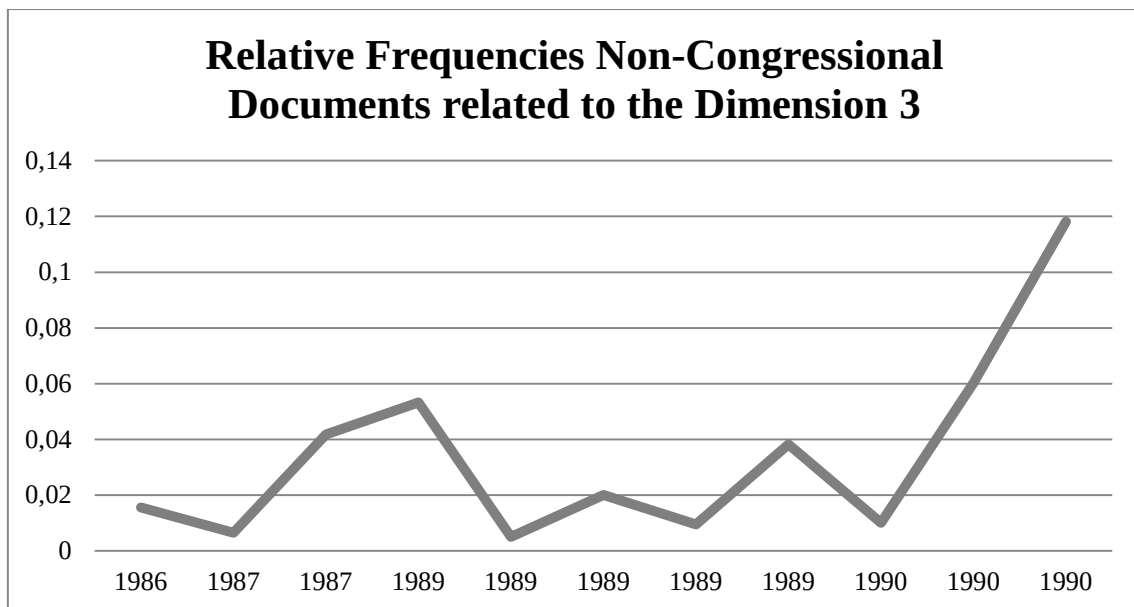


Figure 19: Relative Frequencies Series relative the Crisis of the Italian First Republic (Non-Congressional Documents)

The ever-growing saliency of the Italian Crisis dimension can also be observed in Figure 19. In the PCI's non-congressional documents, the national issue seemed to be quite moderate. Even though the saliency-climaxes reflect those of Figure 18, they are

³⁵ "The CAF political pact was a step backward compared with the era of De Mita: it consolidated corporatist practices at the moment when national and international constraints were painting the opposite direction" (Claudio Petruccioli, *Qualche Domanda al Congresso DC*, L'Unità, February 17th 1989, p. 2).

less pronounced. Only the 1990 acme, which reaches a value of 0,12, address the PCI's openness to change in order to be finally legitimized as a force in government.

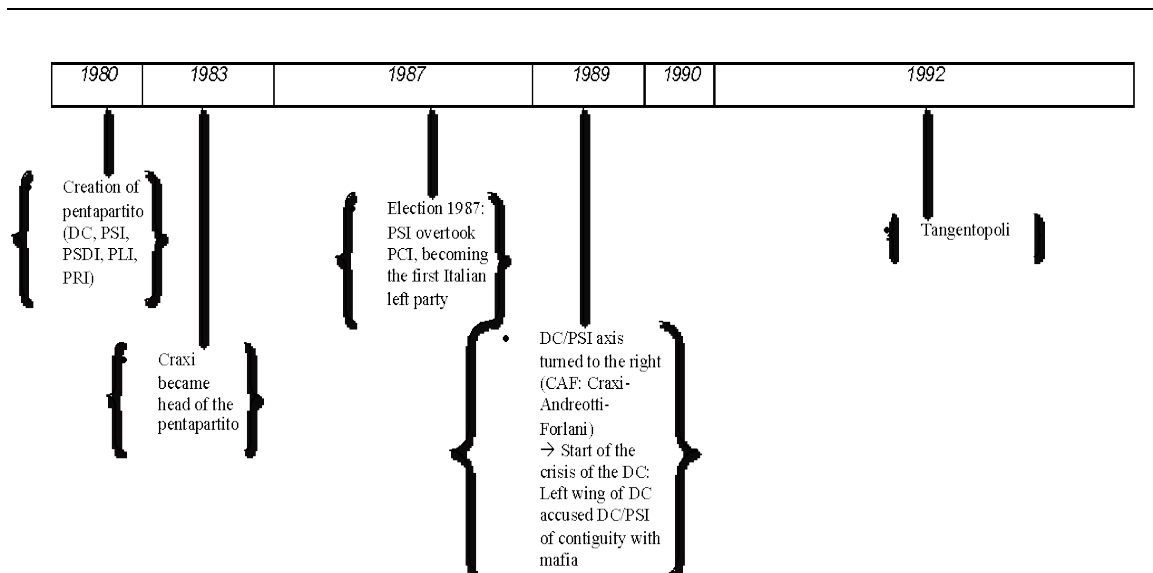


Figure 20: Timeline of the Crisis of the First Republic in Italy

5.1.2 Dimensional Position Analysis

In the previous section, the dimensional saliency analysis is conducted in order to estimate if and to what extent the Italian Communist Party has been affected by the exogenous stimuli considered as the triggers of the transformation that the party experienced over the course of the 1980s. It is important to note that the saliency of a topic is not directly related to whether an issue is viewed positively or not, Table 2 shows the temporal sequence of the PCI's policy stances on the three policy concerns under investigation: the *PCI's relationship with the Soviet Union*; the *PCI's relationship with the European Integration Process*; and the *PCI's relationship with the Crisis of the Italian First Republic*. The policy positions are calculated using Laver and Garry's formula (2000:24) as point of departure. As illustrated in the third chapter of the present

work, Laver and Garry's proportion assesses how a party addresses an issue and if its stances have undergone any changes throughout time.

The higher the P_{ct} value, the more positively the dimension is viewed. Vice versa, the closer to zero P_{ct} is, the more negatively the dimension is viewed. .

Table 4: Dimensional Position Analysis related to the three dimensions

		Dimensional Stances								
		Pc1			Pc2			Pc3		
Years	Documents	Pro	Con	Position	Pro	Con	Position	Pro	Con	Position
1986	t1	1	0	1	0	-2	-1	0	0	0
1986	t2	4	0	1	24	-3	0,7777778	3	-2	0,2
1986	t3	14	-4	0,5555556	9	-1	0,8	19	-4	0,65217391
1987	t4	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
1987	t5	2	0	1	8	0	1	0	0	0
1987	t6	4	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0
1988	t7	8	-2	0,6	27	0	1	37	0	1
1989	t8	5	-10	-0,3333333	10	0	1	17	0	1
1989	t9	3	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
1989	t10	5	0	1	24	0	1	16	0	1
1989	t11	9	0	1	13	0	1	0	0	0
1989	t12	8	0	1	14	0	1	27	0	1
1989	t13	4	0	1	4	0	1	0	0	0
1989	t14	0	0	0	2	0	1	7	0	1
1989	t15	3	-1	0,5	1	-1	0	6	0	1
1990	t16	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	1
1990	t17	8	-2	0,6	16	0	1	6	-1	0,71428571
1990	t18	1	0	1	2	0	1	9	0	1
1990	t19	1	-1	0	7	0	1	10	0	1
1991	t20	1	-1	0	15	0	1	11	0	1

Each resulting dimensional position will be cross-checked by the events that occurred in the represented time period, in order to study if the changes in the party's operative setting (environment) could have altered the party's political line.

5.1.2.1 Position Analysis of the Dimension "PCI's relationship with the Soviet Union"

The resulting values for the dimension, "PCI's relationship with the Soviet Union", reflect the process of modernization launched in the Soviet Union since 1986. As Figure 21 shows, in the period 1986-1989, initial support for Gorbachev's restructuring plan, symbolized by high position-values³⁶, was soon substituted by less enthusiastic discourse on the Soviet topic³⁷. Observing the graph below, a fall in the position-values can be witnessed. The shift from the PCI's moderately positive policy stances in 1989 (0,6) and 1990 (0,4) to neutral policy stances in 1991 (0) suggests the PCI's growing awareness of the inapplicability of an alternative to capitalism.

³⁶ In 1986 the tone equals 0,9; in 1987 it is 0,7; in 1988 is 0,6; while in 1989 is 0,7.

³⁷ The system designed by the Italian Communist Party (*terza via*) and then took up by Gorbachev (*perestroika*) aimed to restructure the communist economic and political system while remaining in the boundaries of a Marxist system.

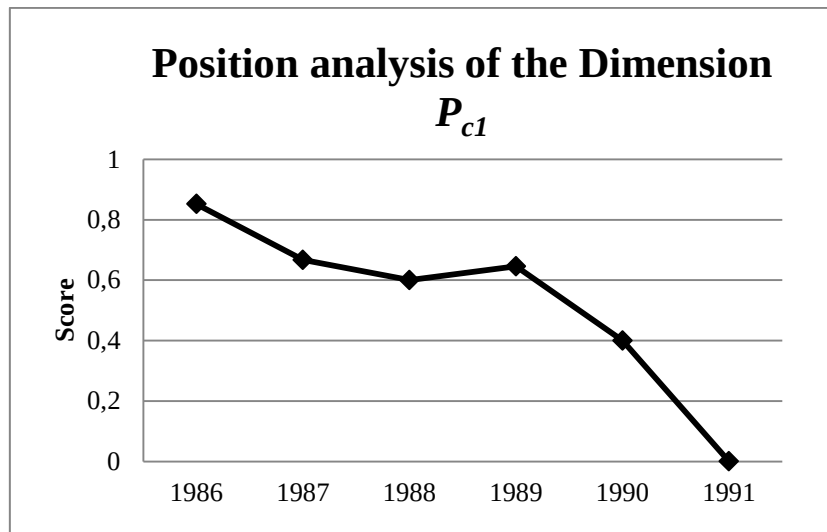


Figure 21: Position Analysis Dimension 1

5.1.2.2 Position Analysis of the Dimension “PCI’s relationship with the European Integration Process”

The Italian Communist Party had always coped with Europe, grasping the importance of the European dimension, not only as global player, but also as a change catalyst for national politics. Since the first Delors’ presidency ³⁸, the party made its pro-European policy stance official. In those years, the European Community reached important goal: in 1986, the Single European Act was signed, revising the Treaties of Rome, completing the internal market. The SEA amended the rule governing the operation of the European institutions and therefore expanded the Community’s power. The PCI’s policy stances on the European Integration process are graphically represented by an ascending line displaying the PCI’s growing interest in the issue from 1986-1991 (see figure below). From 1986 to 1987, the position-values increased from 0,2 in 1986 to 1 in 1987, maintaining this level until 1991. Only in 1989 do we observe a slight fall on the graph when the position-values are reduced from 1 to 0,9. Nevertheless, the decrease does not suggest a negative evaluation of the European dimension by the party, but rather a shift

³⁸The so-called *Delors Commission* was the administration of Jacques Delors, eighth President of the European Commission, who presided over the EU Commission three times: the first from 1985 to 1988, the second until 1992 and the third until 1994.

in the PCI's interest, which was possibly due to events occurring in the East Bloc that became a prominent concern of the party.

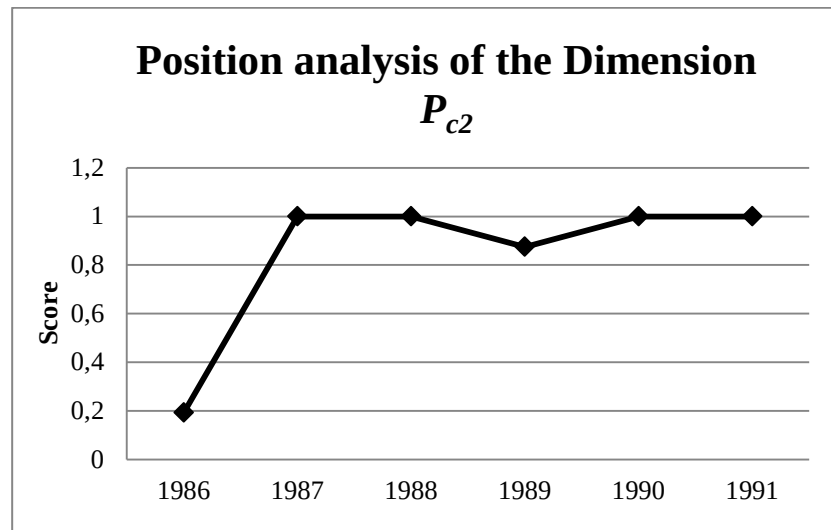


Figure 22: Position Analysis Dimension 2

5.1.2.3 Position Analysis of the Dimension “PCI’s relationship with the Crisis of the Italian First Republic”

The third dimension relates to the PCI’s reaction to the reconstitution of the political and economic system of powers in Italy over the course of the 1980s. The crisis of the First Republic seems to echo the internationalization of capitals in the European and international arenas. The urgency to keep pace with changing trends made it clear that if the party failed to adapt, it would have faced certain demise. The PCI’s positive assessment of the Crisis of the Italian First Republic is attributable to a change in the party’s conduct. The partnership with the PSI as well as the revision of the economic line represented the PCI’s efforts to handle the ideological crisis that had been undermining the party’s electoral base.

The 1986 and 1987 low position values, 0,3 in 1986 and 0,4 in 1987, are likely due to the PCI’s electoral defeat, which induced the party to rethink its political strategy, especially with the Socialist Party having achieved leadership of the Italian left. From 1987 (0,3) to 1988 (1), one can observe an increasingly positive evaluation of the

potential impact of the Italian Crisis on the party. The 1988 positive position-value can be considered as a direct result of the PCI's shift towards a more social democratic stance, which made the reconstituting of the Italian left a reality. In 1989, possibly due to the collapse of the global bipolar system that overshadowed the changing dynamics in other operative settings, we observe a slight fall in the position-values (from 1 to 0,6). The positive evaluation of the Italian issue in the years 1990 and 1991 (i.e. 0,9 in 1990 and 1 in 1991) reveals the Italian Communist Party's commitment to the restoration of a democratic system in Italy, eliminating therefore *the principium ad excludendum* that had excluded the PCI from the cabinet. The collaboration between the communists and the socialists should have been the catalyst for a left initiative to build a government for the salvation of the country. This perspective presumed a radical transformation of the party's communist ideology. By changing its name, the PCI expected to be finally able to take office. Nevertheless, the *principium ad excludendum* still obstructed the PCI from seizing power (Fouskas, 1998).

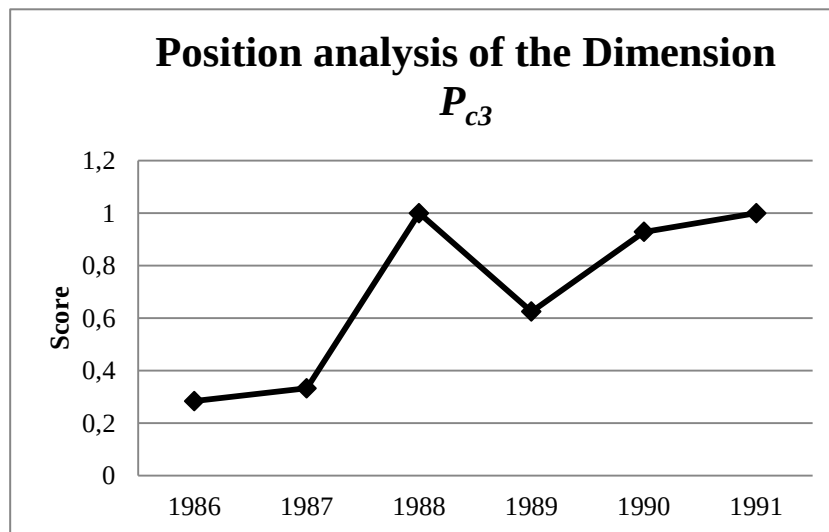


Figure 23: Position Analysis Dimension 3

5.2 Qualitative multidimensional Analysis

Interviews were employed to better understand the rationale behind the Italian Communist Party's decision to undergo radical changes. The interviewees were chosen among the persons who were directly involved in the transformation of the Italian Communist Party. *Franco Giordano* (now SEL), *Massimiliano Smeriglio* (now SEL), *Walter Veltroni* (now PD)³⁹, and *Guido Liguori*, editor-in-chief of the communist journal "Critica Marxista", reported here in alphabetical order, were key players in the transformation of the PCI.

Using a similar framework to that of the statistical method, the qualitative analysis is designed along four categories corresponding to factors assumed to have triggered the party's dissolution in 1991. Portions of the interviews have been quoted⁴⁰ to point out similarities and differences among the interviewees' diverse opinions on why the party split.

The first set of enquiries refers to repercussions of the failure of *real Socialism* on the Italian Communist Party. For all the interviewees, the defeat of the socialist system in the USSR called for a re-evaluation of the PCI's ideological background. Nevertheless, the choice to definitely detach from the communist model proved to be quite harmful. "First, there still were numerous supporters of the communist orthodoxy. Second, the public opinion was unable to distinguish among different forms of communism. Third, the PCI's political opponents took advantage of the precarious system that existed in the Soviet Union since the 1980s. Finally, the party itself counted on Gorbachev's ability to restructure the *real Socialism*⁴¹" (author's translation). Contrary to how one

³⁹ SEL, acronym for *Sinistra Ecologica e Libertà*, is the ultimate transformation of the *Rifondazione Comunista*, i.e. the PCI's Left wing that detached from the party after the split in 1991. PD, *Partito Democratico*, is the final result of the perpetual metamorphosis of the *Partito Democratico della Sinistra*, the new partisan organization born from the PCI ashes (see *Figure 1.7.*, p. 51).

⁴⁰ The transcription of the interviews follows Flick (2011).

⁴¹ Transcription of the interview with the philosopher Guido Liguori, p.1, 16-24: " (...) sia perché vi erano ancora nel Pci, nonostante gli strappi berlingueriani, correnti e culture che guardavano all'Unione Sovietica, sia perché nella opinione pubblica non sempre erano avvertite le distinzioni tra i vari tipi di comunismo, sia perché gli avversari politici speculavano sulle difficoltà dell'Unione Sovietica (non senza fondamento), sia perché la leadership del Pci aveva affidato molte speranze in Gorbaciov, che si dichiarava apertamente "seguace" del comunismo italiano in molte cose".

could expect, the breakdown of the USSR did not represent an obstacle for the party's revision, but rather an occasion to definitely become a government party⁴².

The specific set of questions relating to "PCI's relationship with the European Integration Process" is connected to the consequences of European developments on the PCI. Europe in the second half of 1980s represented "an irreplaceable dimension in the political life that required new mind-sets capable to transcend ideologies and borders"⁴³. Despite all the evidence for the importance of Europe in the PCI's transformation process, the interviewees seem to downplay its importance. This might be perhaps explained by the long-standing party's pro-European position that was perhaps an intrinsic feature of the party. The formalization of those stances traced back to Occhetto's "new revisionist" economic plan launched in 1988, and whose point of departure was a change in the relationship between the private and the public sector, therefore envisioning radical changes in the PCI's economic line. The unfolding hegemony of neo-liberalism, fostered by the European Integration process, challenged not only the party's economic stance, which drew on the Keynesianism, but also weakened the working class party's electoral base⁴⁴. This new geopolitical scenario⁴⁵ demolished the traditional ideologies upon which the party's politics had been based since the end of World War II. As a result of the process of capitalist restructuring, the party launched the *svolta*⁴⁶, a constituent phase for the creation of a new partisan organization. The *svolta* developed due to the necessity of reconstituting a left party both at the European level and in the national arena, going beyond the historical divisions in the political left between communism and socialism.

⁴² Transcription of the interview with Franco Giordano, p. 1, 22: "(...) utilizzarono quel "collasso" per rilegittimarsi".

⁴³ Transcription of the interview with Walter Veltroni, p. 4, 30-31: "(...) l'Europa diventava una dimensione sempre più insostituibile nella vita politica, e che quindi bisognava costruire una forza politica che trovava cittadinanza".

⁴⁴ Transcription of the interview with Guido Liguori, p. 1, 10-11: " (...) il pieno dispiegarsi della nuova egemonia liberale o neoliberale (...) aveva indebolito la classe operaia, quantitativamente e nelle relazioni di potere (...)".

⁴⁵ Transcription of the interview with Massimiliano Smeriglio, p.1, 17-18: "nuovi assetti geopolitici (...)".

⁴⁶ Transcription of the interview with Franco Giordano, p.1, 3-4: "La svolta (...) è riconducibile al discorso di Occhetto alla Bolognina".

The third category, “PCI’s relationship with the Crisis of the Italian First Republic”, concerns the implications of the Italian Crisis on the PCI’s party line. The interviews affirm that this dimension represented a primary cause of change inasmuch as it showed the incapacity of PCI to interpret a changed society, and to take advantage of the decline of the DC party⁴⁷. The social movements (the pacifist movement, the labour unions movement, the ecological movement, etc.) were searching for political actors willing to institutionalize their requests; and the Italian Communist Party was an obvious choice. Nevertheless, in an effort to legitimize its participation within government, the party refused to support their issues. The political gesture proved to be destructive for the party shattering its electoral base⁴⁸. The PCI had always had the support of the active civil society, which viewed the party as its primary ally among the governing bodies. Preferring to create new political partnerships than strengthening its territorial ties, the party lost its force.

Yet, the party would not have undergone a change had both the leadership and the dominant coalition not supported its transformation. The fourth set of inquiries “PCI’s change due to intra-partisan organization makeover” aims to uncover intra-party dynamics of change. The election of Achille Occhetto as Secretary of the Party⁴⁹ fostered the modernization process begun during Berlinguer’s office (1972-1984)⁵⁰.

As the interview-partners assert, a change would have not occurred had Occhetto not been brave enough to take advantage of the favourable national and international conditions in the last years of the 1980s. So why the change?

⁴⁷ Transcription of the interview with Massimiliano Smeriglio, p. 1, 21-23: “Non giocò un ruolo rilevante se non nella capacità di Craxi di interpretare la modernizzazione italiana che mise in serie difficoltà il PCI (...)”.

⁴⁸ Transcription of the interview with Franco Giordano, p. 2, 1-4: “La verità è che da tempo il Pci aveva smarrito una cultura di trasformazione. Si può addirittura risalire (...) all’incapacità di farsi carico della “rottura” democratica e del moto popolare di cambiamento (...)”.

⁴⁹ This office was created specifically for Occhetto.

⁵⁰ Transcription of the interview with Guido Liguori, p. 1, 5-8: “(...) l’assunzione da parte di Occhetto della carica di segretario (...) produsse una accelerazione”.

6. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

6.1 Methodologies cross-validation

In this unit, the outcomes of the quantitative approach will be crosschecked by the interviews. The comparison between the two different methodological approaches enables us to not only to verify the validity of the quantitative methods, but also to answer the research questions with a certain margin of confidence.

Concerning the Soviet policy dimension, to no surprise, we can affirm that the collapse of socialism existing in practice played a chiefly symbolic role that accelerated, but did not trigger the dissolution of the Italian Communist Party. Based on the results in the previous chapters, we observe both a tempered emphasis on the issue and moderate positive stances during the period 1986-1987 that tended to become more negative as the failure of perestroika policies became evident after 1989.

Europe seems to have played a pivotal role in the transformative process of the PCI. The outcomes of the saliency and the position investigations of the policy dimensions suggest that its importance grew since the signing of the Single Act in 1986. The main changes at the European level run parallel to the capitalist restructuring that was moving towards neo-liberal policies. The new economic (and political) theory promoted the liberation of entrepreneurs from state bonds and their total privatization even at the price of cutting public expenditure for social services. The main features of the neo-liberal philosophy threatened the PCI economic line, jeopardizing the social responsibility towards the working class that the party promoted since its establishment.

Of course, these supranational developments had crucial national implications. Observing the quantitative analysis, we note that the development of the “Italian Crisis” corresponds, to a large extent, to that of European integration. The interviews confirm this evidence. Hence, the dissolution of the First Republic cannot be considered as a change stimulus *per se*. Nonetheless, it displayed the incapability of the Italian

Communist Party to fulfill the plans of modernization it had promoted since the election of Occhetto as Secretary in 1988. In other words: even though the party comprehended the urgency to undergo radical changes, it was unable to translate its awareness into a tangible political design.

6.2 Testing the hypotheses

Taking into account the outcomes of the mixed methods approach employed by the present work, the hypotheses presented in chapter 3 will be tested.

As already clarified in the theory section, the most important criterion for the classification of parties is the nature of the goal they pursue, namely if they prioritize votes, offices, or policies (Strøm, 1990; see also Müller and Strøm, 1991). The Italian Communist Party has been typified as *policy-seeker*. Nevertheless, differing from other communist parties, the policy sought by the PCI was a reform of capitalism, thus operationalizing capitalist alternatives *ab imo pectore* (Fouskas, 1998:67). Hence, the Italian Communist Party intended to revise neo-liberal policies so as to instil a social conscience into laissez-fair practices.

We can deduce that the stimulus likely to have triggered the change was event or a set of internal as well as external dynamics that caused a re-evaluation of the primary goal, as stated above. During the period under investigation, namely 1986-1991, we witness a series of modifications at the partisan, national, and international/European level. These may have influenced the party, causing it to undergo a transformative process.

H1 and H1.1 state:

H1 The main external factors that could have influenced the PCI's transformation during the period 1986-1991 are the collapse of Soviet Union, developments at the European level and the crisis of the First Republic in Italy.

H1.1 These environmental events are catalysts of both the positional as well as the organizational change in the Italian Communist Party.

I assume that there are three main exogenous factors that caused the major change within the Italian Communist Party and its consequent dissolution. Considering the statistical results and the interviews, the proposition is only partially confirmed. The outcomes of the textual analysis underline the importance of the three dimensions, particularly the role played by the European integration. However, at a first glance, only two of the four interviewees recognize the weight of European integration in the PCI's transformation. Yet, all the interview partners attribute developments in Europe as the main stimuli for the PCI's new focus on capitalist readjustment, which indeed developed in the Old Continent (e.g. Guido Liguori calls this phenomenon "neo-liberal wave", p. 1, 10).

When referring to exogenous factors of change, one must be aware of the fact that the three aforementioned occurrences have not contributed to the party's reformation equally. Based on an analysis using both the results and the theoretical groundwork, specifically the study on party change of Harmel and Janda (1994), we can affirm that only the combination of all the three factors could be the source of such radical change. If the internationalization of capital, combined with the crisis of nation-states might be seen as the reasons for a structural modification, the end of the Cold War and thus the failure of the communism were the causes for the change of the name.

The theory also suggests that the environmental factors must have had an impact on the party's internal balance of powers, inducing a reconsideration of the political line. Bearing this in mind, some hypotheses specifically related to each of the dimensions at stake will be examined.

The hypotheses 2 (H2.1. and H2.2.) refer to the PCI's response to the collapse of the Soviet Union dimension.

H2 expects:

H2.1 *The intra-party tensions regarding adequate responses to the collapse of the Soviet Union have been rather moderate.*

This hypothesis has been confirmed both by the statistical approach as well as by the interviews. Albeit the PCI's openly critical stand towards Stalinist practices since 1956, some members of the party still regarded the Leninist orthodoxy positively. Avoiding or limiting the discussion on the Soviet issue helped conserve internal unity. The only exception to this unwritten rule coincided with the election of Gorbachev in 1988. This event inspired hope for the success of a model alternative to capitalism. The initial enthusiasm soon made way for an awareness that the only enduring economic and political system should have been sought from within borders of capitalism. Only after the end of the Cold War in 1990, did the party decide to break the silence on the Soviet issue.

The third hypothesis relates to the impact the debate on the collapse of *socialism practice* had onto the Italian Communist Party.

H2.2. predicts:

H2.2. *The intra-party tensions regarding adequate responses to the collapse of the Soviet Union have neither determined changes in the conformation nor in the composition of the dominant coalition.*

The results show that there was only slight tension on the Soviet issue because the party's decision to detach from the Soviet orbit can be dated back to the 1950s. One can conclude that changes caused by this decision in both the conformity and composition of the dominant coalition took place well before there was any inkling of a dramatic end of the East communist system. Moreover, even though the Left wing of the party, which sought an alternative socialist model of economic development, was well represented in the strategy, ideology, and organization (Fouskas, 1998:30). Promoters of the *dictatorship of the proletariat* represented a minority in the PCI (around three per cent; the data are from the strength of the motion at the XIX Congress of the PCI; see Cerone, 2010). Occhetto reaffirmed this position during the XX and last Congress of the PCI:

“The phase of the global history in which the main subject, i.e. the world’s motive force, is the working class is over”⁵¹

Hypotheses 3 (H3.1.and H3.2.) concern the influence of the European Integration dimension on the Italian Communist Party.

H3.1. claims:

H3.1. The importance of European Integration in the PCI’s agenda has grown in indirect proportion to the importance of the “real socialism”, thus affecting in a deeper manner the party.

Both textual analysis and the interviews confirm the first part of this proposition, i.e. that the importance of the European integration issue has increased over time. The Italian Communist Party attached an increasing value to the European issue since Longo’s office. The supranational dimension indeed represented an important theme in the PCI political discourse; as Sassoon claimed, it was a *conditio sine qua non* for the progress of social productive forces in Italy (1976). Yet, the European economic and politic system became an applicable paradigm only after the signing of SEA, which created deeper integration between the national and the supranational settings as well as among the member states of the European Community. Before that, even though conscious of the importance of the European dimension, the party maintained what Fouskas called “inherent communist radicalism” (1998:67).

There is only partial support for the second assumption of an inverse correlation between the European issue and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the definitive demise of the PCI’s communist baseline certainly represented liberation from a heavy ideological bond that stanchied, to some extent, the social-democratization of the Italian party.

H3.2. asserts:

⁵¹ Occhetto, *Relation at the XX Congress*, Draft of the documents, PDS Archive, Rome, p. 21.

H3.2. *The rather heated intra-party tensions regarding adequate responses to the European developments have determined changes both in the conformity and in the composition of the dominant coalition.*

Previous studies have underlined the relevance of the European policy dimension in the Italian Communist Party agenda (Fouskas, 1998; see also Abse, 2001). Albeit the clear pro-Europe stance, the PCI's debates on how to approach the new supranational development of capitalist restructuring were vigorous.

Because of the internationalization of capital, we witnessed a crisis of nation-states that manifested itself by the dissolution of the traditional social classes. This was a shock for the PCI's ideology, which was based on the notion of "mass" as pivotal pre-condition for democratic systems (Fouskas, 1998:30). The obsolescence of a socialist society outvoted the party's left wing led by Ingrao and put an end to the dual line previously touted by the party. Its altered set-up emphasized in turn the weakness of Natta's governance. The fiasco of the *alternativa democratica*, epitomized by the 1987 electoral defeat, determined the rise of a young generation of politicians "quarantenni" who owed much to the European social democracies. The new identity of the PCI was translated into changes both in the composition and in the conformity of the dominant coalition. On the one hand, the appointed Deputy Party Secretary Occhetto supported by a new dominant coalition replaced the ruling centre. On the other hand, due to the abolition of the democratic centralism, Occhetto acquired a significant personal role, having the final word.

Propositions 4 (H4.1. and H4.2.) pertain the relationship between the PCI and the Italian national setting.

H4.1. states:

H4.1. *The crisis of the first Republic in Italy determined a transformation in the PCI's perception of its national and international role.*

The crisis of Italy has been chiefly political rather than economic.

For more than thirty years, the Italian government had been a prerogative of the Christian Democratic Party (DC). After 1981, the establishment of the *pentapartito* guaranteed a cabinet turnover at least among the five parties (DC, PSI, PSDI, PRI and PLI), which formed the executive coalition.

In 1989, when the *pentapartito* turned further to the right with the intent to consolidate corporatist practices, the crisis of the DC sharpened (Fouskas, 1998). In this context, the PCI was conscious of the negative consequences that anti-reformist maneuvers would have on Italy. Already in the XVIII Congress the PCI had foreseen the possibility to take the lead of the country together with the PSI. A reconstitution of the Italian Left, able to overcome the traditional division between communism and socialism, would have also succeeded in saving Italy from a conservative drift⁵².

H4.2. The crisis of the first Republic in Italy create intra-party tensions, inasmuch it obliged the party to look further the national borders and thus to present itself as an interpreter of developments in the European supranational arena.

Overlapping the diagrams of page 65 (on the EU) and 68 (on the Italian Crisis) of the present work, we can observe that the saliency of the European dimension and of the crisis seem to run parallel. Also, one of the interviews underlines this particular aspect. Smeriglio claims that, “the crisis of the First Republic has to be brought back to the incapability of facing an altered reality” (p.1, 21-23). Of course, the “reality” includes the interconnected developments at the international and national level. Fouskas’s work also confirms this hypothesis, asserting that the internationalization of capital, which the Italian Communist Party was unable to cope with, caused the Italian national crisis.

The final set of hypotheses (H5.1. and H5.2.) is concerned with the structural stability of the party at the time of the transformation.

⁵² Occhetto, *Un nuovo Partito in Italia e in Europa. E' tempo dell' Alternativa*, Relation at the XVII Congress, CSF, Rome, 18-22 March 1989.

H5.1. The elimination of the practice of democratic centralism caused an increasing factionalism within the party.

H5.2. Any party group of factions within the PCI provides to be unable to handle the political consequences of a deep transformation, thus determining the split.

The unity of a party is normally precarious. This is because they are voluntary associations composed of like-minded individuals (Aldrich, 1995) that evaluate the cooperation as beneficial (Cerone, 2010:186), but are allowed to leave if they deem that remaining in the party could harm the possibility of achieving their preferences.

The Italian Communist Party had defended itself from the menace of a split by implementing democratic centralism. This communist practice had allowed the party to “publicly maintain a common political strategy, albeit have heated discussions and criticism within the party”⁵³ (my translation). Nevertheless, in the wake of the strong reformism promoted by the new Secretary Occhetto, the practice was abolished *de facto* in 1989⁵⁴. From that date on, the growing dissent towards the new party line within the PCI weakened the structure of the party in the eyes of their voters (Cerone, 2010:196). This leads to the conclusion that there was an increasing fractionalization of the party after the abolishment of the democratic centralism, confirming the preposition *H5.1*.

Due to the urgency to keep up with the changes in the national and international settings, the party launched the constituent phase of the *svolta* (turn), though without starting adequate debate. The reform should have aimed not only at the establishment of an new Italian party organization based on the model of the European social democracies, but also at the reconstitution of the Left in the system of governance at the

⁵³ Transcription of the interview with Walter Veltroni, p.4, 11: “Dentro ci si diceva di tutto, e fuori si dava l’idea di essere uniti”.

⁵⁴ Partito Comunista Italiano, *Statuto approvato al XVII Congresso del PCI*, Iter, Rome, 18-22 March 1989, pp. 11-12.

European level (Fouskas, 1998: 139-140). The change of the name and the elimination of the hammer and sickle symbols should have served to ease the reconciliation, especially with the other Left forces in Italy (Fouskas, 1998). However, it only served to exacerbate the already crumbling internal cohesion.

Panbianco's work on the stability of a party (1988) might be of use in support of the *H5.2* assumption. He finds that the strength of a party⁵⁵ relies on the degree of power dispersal among the factions that shape the party (Panbianco, 1988:39). The more structured the dominant faction/coalition, the more powerful the party. In the Italian Communist Party, we observe a growing internal fragmentation since the abolition of democratic centralism, which was caused by the disagreement on the future of the party.

In confirmation of the hypothesis, the interviewees affirm (Smeriglio and Giordano) that the divergences within the party were due to the lack of an adequate critical examination of the communist model, which still was a reference point for the Italian Communist Party⁵⁶. Albeit Occhetto's last desperate act to include elements from Ingrao's platform in an effort to save the party, the PCI did not manage to survive its own transformation process. It disappeared without any real heirs to take up where it left off.

⁵⁵ Drawing on Cerone (2010: 186; see also Panbianco, 1988), parties are coalitions of factions that compete against each other to take control over the party and to maximize their share of payoffs.

⁵⁶ Transcription of the interview with Massimiliano Smeriglio, p. 2, 4-5: "Si saltò per intero la rivisitazione critica di un modello sociale autoritario, senza libertà individuali".

7. CONCLUSIONS

Studying the transformation of the Italian Communist Party, three stimuli have been hypothesized to have triggered the formal and structural change of the PCI. Although all with substantial impact, each factor impacted the reformation of the deeply institutionalized party, whose long-standing militancy made its members like brothers (Cerone, 2010:194), to a diverse degree. These differences have been systemically and theoretically confirmed. Considering the results of the investigation above, we are able now to answer the research questions formulated in the introduction (see p. 5 of the present work).

Contrary to classical literature on the PCI that held the collapse of the Soviet Union as the trigger for the transformation of the party (Harmel and Janda, 1994; see also Panebianco, 1988), the outcomes of both the statistical analysis and the interviews suggest that the primary cause of the change was a combination of exogenous and endogenous change. The capitalist restructuring at the European level together with the failure of the Stalinist model radically affected the national arena. The weaknesses of an obsolete and “lame democracy” in Italy violently came to light, hastening the decay of the leading axis of power DC/PSI. These interlinked global events elicited the PCI to rethink its role and thus its manner of playing politics, which implied changes, both within the rank and file of the party, including also the ruling cadre of the party.

The election of a new Secretary and the rise of a young generation of politicians to the head of the party seemed to succeed in breathing new life into the party. Important reforms were launched in order to improve, on the one hand, partisan efficiency enabling the party to keep up with the international processes of capitalist readjustment. On the other hand, the symbols and the name of the party were changed. An oak tree, on whose trunk a small version of the old PCI's logo was positioned, replaced the hammer and sickle symbol. The name *Partito Comunista Italiano* was changed into the more neutral *Partito Democratico della Sinistra* (Democratic Party of the Left), so to re-legitimatize the PCI at both the national and international level.

The formal makeover translated into a new perception of the role that the party should play in Italy. It was planned that it would enter into the national and European government, constituting a European Left Party that should have re-designed the system of governance in the supranational arena. Nevertheless, the plans of the party never came to fruition. The PCI lost its opportunity to take charge and lead the country out of the crisis and succumbed to its dramatic destiny.

The importance of studies on individual party change is twofold. First, parties continue to be the pivotal political actors of democracies. They are solely able to translate particular interests into coherent and effective strategies guaranteeing the full functionality of competitive democratic systems. Second, the identification of the stimuli that make a party reevaluate its performance serves to explain the relevance of well-defined settings or processes.

The present analysis on the transformation and consequent dissolution of the Italian Communist Party pinpoints an interesting revelation. By investigating the sources of the PCI's transformation, the study highlights the interconnected importance of both environmental stimuli and intra-party dynamics as change catalysts. Since the second half of the 1980s, alterations in both the international and the national arenas have generated a radical turn in the party's line. Nevertheless, this structural change would have not occurred if the dominant coalition had opposed the PCI's reformation.

Despite this evidence, specialized scholarship still avoids the study of political parties from this twofold perspective. Both exogenous and endogenous factors play a pivotal role in political parties' transformation. Further research could help bridge this gap, attaching an adequate significance to the correlation between external events and the party's internal predisposition.

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10. APPENDIX

10.1 List of Documents for the Quantitative Analysis

Congressional Documents

- Programma del Partito Comunista Italiano (1986)
- Relazione al XVIII Congresso “Il nuovo PCI in Italia e in Europa, è il tempo dell’Alternativa” (1986)
- La Relazione di Alessandro Natta (1986)
- Gli impegni programmatici (1988)
- La Relazione di Achille Occhetto. “ Una Costituente per aprire una nuova prospettiva della Sinistra” (1989)
- Ora si va alla prova delle elezioni europee (1989)
- Gli impegni Programmatici (1990)
- Le Conclusioni del Congresso Straordinario (1990)
- Ventesimo Congresso del Pci (1991)

Non- Congressional Documents

- Preambolo dello Statuto (1986)
- Documento Approvato dal Governo XVII Congresso: “Un nuovo PCI per un Nuovo Corso Politico” (1986)
- La Risoluzione dei Trattati di Roma (1987)
- La Risoluzione della Prima Commissione Affari Internazionali del Comitato Centrale (1987)
- “Cambia il mondo e non possiamo stare fermi” (1989)
- Il Documento approvato dal Governo Ombra sull’iniziativa italiana verso i Paesi dell’Est Europa (1989)
- “Incontri e Convergenze con le forze riformatrici: le nuove responsabilità della Sinistra Europea” (1989)

- Lettera di Occhetto a Willy Brandt (1989)
- Preambolo Statuto (1989)
- La Carta della FGCI (1990)
- Dichiarazioni d'Intenti (1990)

10.2 Abstract (English)

The present work examines the implications and sources of party change, using a case study of the Italian Communist Party. Party change refers to the ability of partisan organizations to adapt to the context in which they operate. Nevertheless, not all parties adapt in the same way. Each party reacts to diverse environmental stimuli. Hence, external factors can act as shocks for the party if they succeed in affecting the parties' primary goal, which can be the pursuit of votes, offices, or policies. In-depth change will occur in the presence of both an external event and the support of a coalition that demands a rethink of the performance of the party in order to be able to achieve the desired objectives.

This study focuses on case of the transformation of the Italian Communist Party. Following a mixed methods approach that combines statistical techniques of content analysis and interviews, the results obtained contribute to a better understanding of the topic. The results underline the saliency of intra-party, national, and international dynamics as sources of change, showing that: a) the developments of capitalist restructuring at the European level is the primary cause of the change; b) the collapse of *real Socialism* only accelerated the PCI's makeover; c) the Italian Crisis itself was a consequence of the international neo-liberal wave.

10.3 Abstract (German)

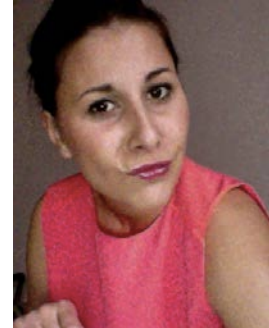
Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht Ursachen und Auswirkungen von Parteiveränderungen. Der Begriff Parteiveränderung bezieht sich auf die Fähigkeit von Parteien sich wirksam an ein sich veränderndes Umwelt anzupassen. Dennoch verändern sich nicht alle Parteien auf die selbe Art und Weise. Jede Partei reagiert verschieden auf unterschiedliche Einflüsse. Tatsächlich können externe Faktoren zu signifikanten Rückschläge führen, wenn diese sich auf die Kernziele einer Partei wie beispielsweise Stimmenanzahl, Amtssitze und *Policies* auswirken. Allerdings kann eine Partei auch dann eine Veränderung erfahren, wenn lediglich die Organisationsstrukturen umgestaltet werden (z.B. wegen der Wahl eines neuen Parteichefs oder auf Grund einer Erkrankung des Parteileaders).

Nichtsdestotrotz, kann eine radikale Veränderung nur dann stattfinden, wenn ein externes Ereignis von einer dominanten Koalition gefördert wird, die es als notwendig erachtet, eine neue Strategie einzuführen, die das Erreichen der erwünschten Parteiziele unterstützt.

Basierend auf dieser Studie, d.h. die Transformation der Italienischen Kommunistischen Partei, und einem gemischten Forschungsansatz folgend, die die Methode der statistischen Inhaltsanalyse und qualitative Interviews kombiniert, habe ich wichtige Ergebnisse erhalten, die zum vertiefen Verständnis dieses Gegenstands beitragen. Die Analyse hebt das Zusammenwirken der inneren Dynamiken der Partei mit den Entwicklungen auf nationaler Ebene, aber auch insbesondere den internationalen Entwicklungen als Ursachen der Parteien Veränderungen hervor. Es zeigt sich, dass: a) die kapitalistische Restrukturierung in Europa der entscheidende Grund für die Veränderung der PCI war; b) der Zusammenbruch des real existierenden Sozialismus die Transformation der PCI beschleunigte, aber nicht bestimmte; c) selbst die Krise der ersten Republik in Italien eine Konsequenz der internationalen politischen und wirtschaftlichen Umstellung war.

10.4 Curriculum Vitae

Silvia Dallabrida



Education

From 2001 to 2006	Secondary School in Trento	
From 2006 to 2007	Studies of Law at the University of Trento	
From 2009 to 2010	Erasmus Student at the University of Vienna	
From 2007 to 2010	Bachelor in International Relations at the University of Bologna	
From 2011 to 2013	Master in Political Science of Vienna	at the University

Professional Experience

April 2013 to September 2013	Trainee at the Representation of the European Commission in Vienna
September 2010 to December 2010	Legal protection trainee at the NGO <i>Asyl in Not</i>
November 2010 to November 2011	Project Management at the <i>Politiche Giovanili</i> in Trento