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Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche
Dottorato di Ricerca in Studi Politici

Candidato
Dott. Carlos Cruz Infante

Tutor
Proff.ssa. Erica Antonini
Prof. Enrico Graziani

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INTRODUCTION

Since the time of Aristotle and his work *On Rhetoric*, humans have been deeply engrossed in the art of persuasion. Whether in the realms of politics, religion, economics, law, or advertising, the ability to convince others to adopt a particular viewpoint or proposition has been a constant for millennia.

In the twentieth century, during the rise of totalitarianism in Europe, communication and persuasion became powerful but potentially perilous tools in the hands of leaders aiming to mobilize the masses for their national projects. In the post-World War II era, these tools were harnessed to establish significant political and institutional consensuses, fostering democracy and the welfare state in Europe and democracy and free-market capitalism in the United States. The end of the Cold War ushered in an era of optimism, marked by the belief in a linear progress toward democratic, globalized, and prosperous nations. Regrettably, the twentieth century would, to some extent, prove these optimists wrong.

As of the publication of this doctoral thesis, Europe is grappling with its most significant conflict since World War II due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Populism has surged unexpectedly in Europe, Latin and North America, while authoritarianism has made significant inroads in the global south. Simultaneously, welfare systems are teetering on the brink of collapse. The aging population and the sustainability of public services are under grave threat. In essence, the not-so-long-ago universally accepted parameters of social life are being questioned.

While the remedies for this situation lie beyond the scope of this research, many experts argue that the necessary interventions are likely to be unpopular. Measures such as fiscal austerity, public spending cuts, tax increases, and increased individual contributions to pension savings are proposed by policymakers. However, proposing these reforms can be politically challenging, as they may risk losing voter support.

Moreover, as highlighted in the 2021 OECD Report on Public Communication, governments and civil servants are ill-equipped to effectively communicate and engage with citizens.

In this grim scenario, governments are left with limited alternatives: adopting an authoritarian approach to enforce necessary reforms or ignoring these reforms and shifting the burden to future generations. In both cases, the stability of democracy and underlying institutional systems is at stake.

This leads to our central research question: Is there a way to persuade citizens to embrace difficult and painful policy reforms? To address this question, we delve into a myriad of communication strategies spanning philosophy, sociology, economics, and social psychology. We propose an analytical model to evaluate the persuasive potential of public and government communication and apply this model to analyze two cases of government communication for unpopular reforms: Mario Monti and Elsa Fornero in Italy (2011 - 2012) and Sebastián Piñera in Chile (2018 - 2019).

While our proposed model is a work in progress, we hope it can serve as a resource for fellow researchers and provide communication practitioners with actionable tools to enhance their effectiveness in addressing the citizens they serve.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Communication: Persuasion and Understanding

Through his Theory of Social Systems, the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann conceptualized communication as the most elemental and irreducible manifestation of the social phenomenon (Luhmann 2006). His most valuable -or at least the most controversial- contribution to the sociological theory was putting the communication in the center of social theory -its "emerging unit", he would say- instead of the human being. A quotation from his *Theory of Society* (2012, p. 42) summarizes the idea:

> Communication has all the required properties [to carry out the autopoiesis or demarcation of the social system primarily]: it is a genuinely social operation (and the only genuinely social one). It is genuinely social in that, although it presupposes a multiplicity of participating consciousness systems, it cannot (for this very reason) be attributed to any individual consciousness.

Regarding communication as a concept,

> Luhmann defined communication explicitly as the unity of information, message and understanding. By taking the communication of an information and its reception as a single -albeit complex- unity, the concept of `meaning' could be made constitutive of his idea of a social system. (Leydesdorff 2000, p. 276)

This conceptualization overcomes the sender-receiver model of communication. Instead, it requires a mutual understanding: intentionality and comprehension from both sides of the process. Accordingly, it will result in *meanings* instead of mere *information*. Agent A can and might understand something very different from what agent B has said, and vice versa[1].

Another element that is worth noting about Luhmann's construct, is how he conceptualizes the human being. Contrary to what some claim, he does not exclude the subject from society; instead, he implicitly means that the human condition has a social dimension, among many others. "His social systems theory is a special theory focusing exclusively on human interactions as events. The human being itself is defined outside this

[1] Leydesdorff (2000, p. 279) enlightens the social dimension of understanding when talking about meaning in communicative contexts: "According to Luhmann's theory, the observable events have to be provided with meaning - that is, understood by a psychological system- (…)."

domain of sociology as another system of reference; Luhmann attributes this subject to psychology" (Leydesdorff 2000, p. 276). The author will be even more poetic, referring to this issue: "The human subject has always been the vanishing point for the humanities" (p. 181). What, instead, would be genuinely social about human beings is communication.

The German sociologist added another element to the discussion: since communication entails an endless selection of meanings, communication would be contingent -neither necessary nor impossible. There is no final destination or ultimate goal but a constant actualization of alternatives. It keeps entropy under stability. That idea crushes directly with the teleological and anthropocentric perspectives that preceded Luhmann's social systems theory, whereby the subjects would inevitably tend to consensus. He would sustain that

> The improbability of a communicative operation is shown by the requirements that have to be fulfilled for it to come about. Communication is a synthesis of three selections, as we have seen. It comprises information, utterance, and understanding. Each of these components is in itself a contingent occurrence. Information is a difference that changes the state of a system, thus generating another difference. But why should one particular piece of information and no other impress a system? Because it is uttered? But the selection of a particular item of information for utterance is also improbable. Why, given the many possibilities for meaningful activity, should anyone turn to someone at all, and why with this particular utterance? Finally, why should anyone concentrate his attention on another's utterance, seek to understand it, and adapt his behavior to the information uttered when he is free to refrain from doing so? All these improbabilities are then multiplied in the time dimension. How can it be that communication attains its goal rapidly enough? And, above all, how can it be that one communication is succeeded by another (not the same!) with expectable regularity? (2012, p. 79).

Although viewing communication as improbable may appear counterintuitive, let us think of unpopular reforms. Who would say that the chances of getting the citizens to *understand what we mean* is an easy task? Is it more likely to make them dislike the painful reform's promoters or agree with them? Those questions and Luhmann's view will be central to our research; it is, better said, its leitmotif.

Of course, Luhmann's was not the first nor even the most well-known effort to relocate the center of attention from the subject to the social phenomena. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Edmund Husserl's phenomenology postulated that reality manifests to conscious beings. Jürgen Habermas, contemporary to Luhmann, developed his social theory based on those concepts. One of the most relevant theoretical contributions of Habermas was the idea of communicative action (Habermas 1998). As Gottweis explains, "In his *Theory of Communicative Action*, (…) Habermas has developed the idea of 'communicative rationality,' which he defines as rational what is communicatively, intersubjectively justified or justifiable. Rationality comes into existence via intersubjectively grounded argumentation" (2007, p. 238).

Habermas disagreed to a great extent with Luhmann. The former kept the subject at the center of his theory[2]. He believes in the teleological character of communication and social life, which, according to his ideal conditions of deliberation, will lead to social coordination and consensus, the noblest destination of communicative action. He also argues that behind understanding are rationality and argumentation, giving the former a central place in his theory, as Johnson (1991, p. 184) shows:

> Habermas views all [his] five types of action as rational in a specific sense. To be rational an action minimally must be capable of being "defended against criticism." Habermas argues that each type of action is tied to a characteristic "validity claim" in light of which particular actions of that type, in principle, can be criticized, defended, and hence regarded as potentially rational. Moreover, he treats the connection between rational action and validity claims as a matter of conceptual necessity. Instrumental and strategic action raise claims to *truth or effectiveness*. Normative action raises a claim to *rightness*. Dramaturgical action ralses a clam to *sincerity* or *authenticity*. Parties to communicative action can - whether implicitly or explicitly - raise validity claims of each sort.

The philosopher gives action and social interactions normative aims: *truth, authenticity, sincerity, or rightness*. From a Luhmaniann perspective, instead, those concepts stay above most sociological pretensions[3]. Luhmann, as we saw, considered social coordination through communication highly improbable and absent of moral implications: it may happen (or not). Nevertheless, he gives a hypothesis in this regard,

> The outdifferentiation of a society that uses language and employs signs gives rise to the problem of *error* and *deception*, of the *unintentional* and *intentional abuse of signs*. It is not only that communication occasion- ally miscarries, goes astray, or takes the wrong track. The problem, since it can occur *at any time, is always present*—a sort of

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[2] Leydesdorff (2000, p. 279) cites Habermas himslef:

> The flow of official documents among administrative authorities and the monadically encapsulated consciousness of a Robinson Crusoe provide the guiding images for the conceptual uncoupling of the social and psychic systems, according to which the one is supposedly based solely on communication and the other solely on consciousness.

In that passage, Habermas criticizes Luhmann's and others' vision about conceiving the human subjects in terms of partialized systems -i.e., psychic and social-.

[3] It is true, though, that Luhmann will assign some *values* to partial social systems, but in terms of communication *means* and not as at ends in themselves. For example, he would say that the subsystem of Science codes communication in terms of truth/untruth, and that of Morality does the same in terms of right/wrong. Either way, for Luhmann, those codes have *functional* implications for social coordination, not -necessarily- ethical ones.

> universal problem of the type discovered by Hobbes with his example of violence. With this in mind, it is understandable that society morally appreciates sincerity, truthfulness, and the like, and in the communication process has to rely on trust. But this only confirms that what nevertheless remains possible should not occur. If we ask how the communication process itself reacts to this problem, we realize the advantage of coding, for it makes it possible to doubt what has been uttered, to refrain from accepting it, to explicitly reject it, and to express this reaction understandably, thus reintroducing it into the communication process. Reference to psychological and moral qualities such as uprightness and trust retains its sense, but because no communication process can test psychic premises of this sort (the test itself would destroy what it seeks), the conditions have to be psychologically deconditioned and treated as topics of communication itself. This requires the yes/no coding of language. (2012, p. 135).

Both authors developed a theoretical rivalry with many supporters on each side. According to Luhmann, communication is society's irreducible unit: “If reproduced autopoietically though recursions, communications form an emergent reality sui genesis. Human beings cannot communicate; only communication can communicate” (2012, p. 57). Then, since society is contingent, people sharing communication spaces will need coordination mechanisms to augment the probability of understanding and acceptance. Therefore, social systems -including the social dimension of human beings- would constantly develop generalized communication media, such as love, money, and power, facilitating or standardizing the information flows within society.

> Symbolically generalized communication media do not (like law, above all) serve primarily to safeguard expectations against disappointment. They are independent media relating directly to the problem of the improbability of communication. However, they presuppose the yes/no coding of language and assume the function of rendering expectable the acceptance of a communication in cases where rejection is probable. They come into being only when there is writing and when the rejection of communicated meaning proposals therefore becomes even more probable. They react to the problem that more information normally means less acceptance. (2012, p. 190).

Note Luhmann's affirmation about the symbolically generalized communication media: they *do not (like law, above all) serve primarily to safeguard expectations against disappointment*. Namely, they do not have any moral pretension; instead, they merely "(…) transform no-probabilities into yes-probabilities in miraculous ways—for example, by enabling us to offer payment for goods or services we would like to obtain" (p. 192). The media's purpose is limited to its function.

Habermas, on his side, postulates his communicative action theory, which starts by considering communication as an intersubjective moment, wherein actors *can* reach an understanding (1998, p. 108). Therefore, it would not be an instantaneous phenomenon but rather a complex and uncertain one. Within a democratic context, i.e., one where communication is pacifically developed, the author argues that communicative action will reach its more virtuous point at the deliberation, leading to shared truth -consensus. Johnson (1991, p. 185) describes how to subjects coordinate in the communicative process:

> Actors have two options when the process of reciprocal interpretation implicit in everyday interaction deteriorates. They can have recourse to discourse or argument "as a court of appeal that makes it possible to continue communicative action with other means when disagreements can no longer be repaired with everyday routines." Alternatively, they might resort to strategic action, abandoning in the process, their joint endeavor after consensus. In short, they can orient their action either to understanding or to success. The resulting Interactions will be coordinated by quite distinct "mechanisms"- by "consent" in the case of communicative action and by "influence," "arbitrary choice," or "complimentarity of interest" in the case of strategic action.

Another commonality between the two German theoreticians is the relative importance of the *point of reference* in the communication process, which will be crucial later in this theoretical framework. As Luhmann promotes his closed-autopoietic social systems, Habermas will refer to the *lifeworld* as the body of knowledge of every subject based on their previous experiences. Both notions of point of reference will determine the likeability of acceptance or understanding within the communication process, which coincides with several authors' views regarding the status quo wherein our study cases took place.

We have illustrated only some points about Luhmann's and Habermas's approaches to communication. We did so to show their differences, but mainly to depict that both theorists arrive at the same conclusion about communication: the most complex social challenge is getting a 'yes' from this interaction process. With the independence of the mechanisms we use to communicate, the most probable output will be a misunderstanding or a sad indifference to our content's meaning. This, of course, applies to the political realm too. From now on, we will revise literature in that field, always keeping in mind this improbability of communication.

2. Political Communication

Our two Germans' question was mainly about the role of communication in social life, its difficulties, and the mechanisms to reach an agreement. When considering Western democracies, where violence should be a latent menace but not a medium to gain acceptance, politics is the communication sphere par excellence. That is when political communication becomes fundamental. In a nutshell, "Political communication tends to have three major objectives: to inform, persuade or mobilize" (Lilleker 2014, p. 44). In another interpretation of strategic political communication, Kaid and Holtz-Bacha (2008, p. 765) affirm that "The goal of a strategic political communications campaign is to create an image of reality in which a party's or candidate's positions about important issues appear consistent with those of the audience being targeted." In any case, both definitions center on the low-acceptance odds of communication.

Moreover, Enrico Graziani (2021, p. 187), referring to Cedrino, goes beyond theory, illustrating how real-world cases show political communication's clear and concrete effects:

> When a politician or a party leader makes use of these words (those relative to hate speech), "consequential effects" are generated and a real "production of real effects". This produces effects on two levels: a) at the level of the public sphere in relation to the formation of opinion on a matter; b) at a systemic level for the formation and implementation of output and outcomes in policy decision-making processes.

What about the evolution of this discipline? The study of communication in the politics realm is far from new. In the fourth century B.C., *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle wrote, perhaps, the first comprehensive method not to necessarily make the speakers more virtuous but more convincing:

> Further, even if we were to have the most exact knowledge, it would not be very easy for us in speaking to use it to persuade [some audiences]. Speech based on knowledge is teaching, but teaching is impossible [with some audiences]; rather, it is necessary for *pisteis* and speeches [as a whole] to be formed on the basis of common [beliefs]. (Aristotle 2007, p. 35)

Although the Stagirite was incredibly rigorous in writing his Rhetoric, the professionalization and academic effort to understand political and social communication came much later in history. It occurred in the twentieth century, reaching its maturity at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Blumler & Gurevitch 2004). Diverse political and social communication fields have emerged since the First World War. By then, the new European societies needed to integrate and persuade around a new nation-state notion and, a little after, the highly effective propaganda system of the Nazi Party consolidated the new disciplines (Hallin & Mancini 2004; Kallis 2006). After the war, the "expansion media" as Hallin and Mancini (p. 33) call it, occurred:

> (…) it is accurate in many ways to say that there has been an expansion of media in the post–World War II period. There are fewer newspapers but they are bigger enterprises, with more pages; the number of journalists has increased; and, most dramatically, new forms of media have evolved. The most important form of media expansion is clearly the growth of electronic media. It is very plausible that the unprecedented reach of electronic media, and their ability to carry messages to the entire population simultaneously, across social and political divisions, changed political communication in important ways, encouraging political parties and other organizations to abandon earlier forms of communication in favor of centralized use of mass media as well as to

> target audiences outside their original social bases. (Other new information technologies may also have encouraged the shift toward more professionalized and individualized patterns of political communication, including the development of polling, direct mail marketing, and eventually the Internet.) It is also very likely that the increased reach of electronic media, combined with the increased assertiveness of journalists and with commercialization (…) have made the media an increasingly central so- cial institution, to a significant extent displacing churches, parties, trade unions, and other traditional organizations of "civil society" as the central means by which individuals are connected to the wider social and political world.

Then, Lilleker (2014, p. 22) argues that "This [expansion media] led to campaigns developing a more national character, and the beginning of a centralisation of strategy and a professionalisation of communication". The scholar also describes the current environment for political communication:

> More recently, electoral political organisations find themselves competing with a range of single-issue pressure groups that, enjoying celebrity support and tapping into highly emotive local, national or global issues, are able to drain support and activism away from electoral political organisations constrained by realpolitik (Rodgers, 2005; Micheletti, 2003). The 21st century communication environment is highly cluttered with multiple sources of information, catering for every niche interest. The plethora of television stations, newspapers, magazines, websites, Facebook accounts and Twitter feeds all constantly add to the clutter. To be heard is a challenge. (pp. 20-21).

"To be heard is a challenge," sentences Lilleker. It becomes even more challenging when considering the Internet revolution and the way that politicians communicate:

> While there will be an informational component, retaining the persuasive emphasis to messages, a range of interactive actions are also facilitated. Items are created to allow ease of sharing to facilitate messages going viral across the Internet (Boynton, 2009), and political organisations may find value in permitting the online audience to comment on and adapt messages. We therefore find political communication now existing not within a broadcasting environment, involving dissemination, but within an ecosystem. Media feed media, from YouTube to main news channels, from newspapers to Twitter and back (Chadwick, 2011). This hybridised media environment may be converting passive audiences into active participants, although it is suggested that this occurs only among a minority (Norris, 2003; Norris & Curtice, 2008; Hindman, 2009). Regardless it provides a more complex agora, where multiple voices compete for attention, where multiple messages can be read, adapted and further disseminated, where official and unofficial communication may be blurring, and where persuasion is harder to achieve (p. 23).

This evolution of communication media interested Luhmann a lot as well. He noticed the difficulties both written, televised, and online media set out in the communicative process. In his words (2012, p. 36):

> This is true of all components of communication: information, which can surprise only once; utterance, an act tied to a point in time; and understanding, which also cannot be repeated but at best recalled. And it is true of both oral and written communication, with the difference that the dissemination technology of writing can distribute the communication event in time and space to many addressees and can thus be realized at unpredictably many points in time.
>
> With this time-point related concept of communication, we also correct a popular conception of information. Information is a surprising selection from among several possibilities. As a surprise, it can be neither enduring nor able to be transported; and it has to be produced within the system, since it presupposes comparison with expectations. Furthermore, information cannot be gained purely passively as a logical consequence of signals received from the environment. It always contains a volitional component, that is to say, foresight into what can be done with it. Before information can be produced, interest in it must therefore develop.

To summarize, the current context for political communication is marked by significant obstacles. Firstly, "to be heard is a challenge." Due to content excess, human beings interpret most of it as noise – not information[4]. Then, if the communicator makes it to be heard, they have one shot: "information can surprise only once." But that is not all. Finally, if we reach to surprise, "interest in it must therefore develop" to provoke the chance of an understanding. This process comes as an improbability funnel, where each stage is more demanding than the previous one. To overcome this funnel, Lilleker (2014, p. 11) would say that:

> Political communication is classified here as *strategic messages* produced by political candidates and parties seeking office, governments once elected, as well as parties in opposition within or outside parliament, the mass media and, now, a range of independent actors using digital and social media platforms.

From that general conception, many sub-disciplines of political communication have emerged. For example, we find the relationship between mass media, political communication, and the health of democracy (Norris 2000); the communication encoding techniques to motivate or change some attitudes and behavior toward a policy (Cialdini et al. 2007; Cialdini & Goldstein 2004); the study of psychological and mental processes involved in communication stimuli (Kahneman 2012; Thaler & Sunstein 2009); the innovation in political campaigning techniques to win elections (Mancini & Swanson 1996

[4] Turning to Gregory Bateson's famous statement: "a difference that makes a difference".

as cited in Blumler & Gurevitch 2004, p. 328), and even the meticulous study of proxemics and how they influence political leader's performance and electoral outcomes (Ekman 1992; Verhulst et al. 2010; NYU 2020).

The current debate on political communication is rich and far from over. There are discussions about the dynamics between political culture, mass media, and politics (Blumler & Gurevitch 2004), as about transforming trends such as Americanization, globalization, and secularization (Hallin & Mancini 2004). There are too big debates regarding the popularization, disintermediation, and personalization of political communication (Bracciale & Martella 2017). Discussions on rhetoric and how it serves populist or discriminatory causes also abound (Graziani 2021, 2022; Cedroni 2013; Reisigl 2008a). Either way and considering all the current and potential fields in the area, Canel and Sanders summarize (2012, p. 87) the state-of-the-art on political communication research and perspectives in the following:

- Rhetorical analysis of political discourse;
- Propaganda studies;
- Voting studies;
- Mass media effects;
- The interplay of influence between government, press, and public opinion.

Although Canel and Sander's categories are exhaustive and precise, we must mention Martin Reisigl's. He is one of the most prominent politolinguists. Following his discipline's approach, he provides a framework to come to grips "to various political dimensions: formal, of content, and as a process of decisions making" (Cedrino 2013, p. 222). Those dimensions are *polity*, *policy*, and *politics.* Nevertheless, we will center solely on the second and the third ones. Those, following the author's schema, remit to *political action* (Reisigl 2008a, p. 98). About the policy, it

> (…) involves the content-related dimension of political action that aims at shaping the various political areas and is performed primarily by members of the government and civil servants of respective political institutions (ministries) (…). Policy rhetoric is frequently bureaucratic (for example administrative decisions) and often programmatic (for example inaugural addresses). Its main goals are political justification (*probare*), political instruction (*docere*) and winning political allies (for example coalition partners) over to one’s side (*conciliare*).

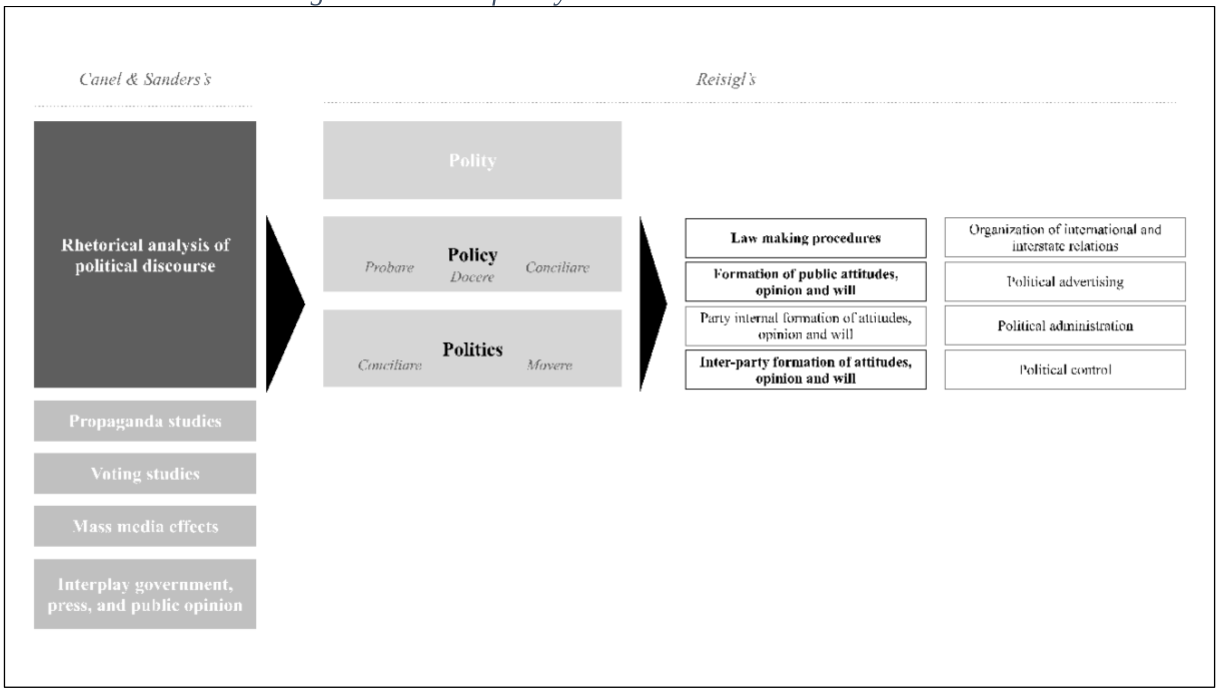
As we can infer, the policy dimension touches mainly on governmental communication since it aims to make intentions converge around a particular program. It can involve both the executive and their cabinet. Concerning the other feature of Riesigl’s political action,

> Processes regarding the articulation of political interests and positions of dissent or consent are labelled as politics. This political dimension concerns conflicts among

single or collective actors. The crucial aim of political actors doing politics are to assert themselves against opponents, to gain followers, and to persuade addresses to adopt a promoted political opinion. Speaking in rhetorical terms, *conciliare* (in the sense of gaining party affiliation) and *movere* (in the sense of rapid political mobilization) are the center of political goals.

Then, according to their purposes, we can classify the discursive practices, as the scholar calls them, into eight political fields. We present them in the following figure.

Figure 1. Areas of study in Political Communication



Source: own elaboration based on the work of Canel & Sanders (2012) and Reisigl (2008a).

For this thesis, we consider figure 1's dimensions in **bold**. Therefore, we can narrow the scope of the research to the rhetorical analysis of political discourse. Within that, we refer to the elements related to policy and politics; and, in turn, to those related to law-making procedures, the formation of public attitudes, opinion and will, and inter-party formation of attitudes, opinion and will. Next, we will reduce the analysis even further, first to the literature on government communication. Then, we will check that relative to unpopular policies.

2.1. Government Communication

According to Canel and Sanders (2012, p. 87), the studies on governmental communication, in early stages yet, have comprehended a wide variety of domains: (1) chief executive communication; (2) the development of the permanent campaign (3) government advertising and publicity; (4) the structure and organization of government communication, and (5) the development of news management strategies. This research concerns more than one of the listed domains above. On the one hand, it is about the chief executive communication. On the other hand, it examines the more general "government social marketing communication" (p. 88), which is about public campaigns to promote and explain some of the executive's policies. Regarding government communication, Canel and Sanders (pp. 85-86) provide a concise definition:

> (…) refers to the aims, role and practice of communication implemented by executive politicians and officials of public institutions in the service of a political rationale, and that are themselves constituted on the basis of the people's indirect or direct consent and are charged to enact their will.

In this case, defining what we should intend for *the government* is vital. "The term 'government communication' is often used to refer solely to top-level executive communication. But it can also be used to refer to institutions established by government to do its work at national, regional and local levels" (p. 85). Accordingly, the authors sustain that government communication does not include the action of legislatures or other civil services, like the National Health Service in the UK or Europe's state universities. "These institutions clearly have an executive function in that they seek to execute politically defined public policies but their primary end is the *provision or delivery* of public goods such as health and education" (p. 86).

Then, the authors clearly distinguish between government communication and its close relative, corporate or private communication. They postulate that there are more constraints for the former due to the nature of public structures. So, they present three fundamental dimensions to point out the differences: the *environment* wherein the communication occurs, the *organization-environment* in which it takes place, and the *internal structures and processes* (p. 86):

> Graber (2003: 6–18) distinguishes public from private organizations along three key dimensions (…). First, the *environment* of public sector institutions is typically less open to market competition with less incentive to reduce costs, less concern with consumer preferences and more subject to legal and formal constraints affecting managers' choices of procedures and operational areas than in the private sector.
>
> Second, *organization–environment* transactions in public organizations are more subject to sanctions and controls and to significant public scrutiny in line with public interest expectations including fair and accountable action. The context of intense public and media scrutiny is linked to the organizational orientation to the public good and often finds regulatory expression in freedom of information legislation and/or commitments to transparency and openness. Ultimately, public organizations are usually required to have a high degree of accountability to political and public constituencies. On the one hand, as Graber (2003: 11) has noted, this can lead to cautious operating styles as

> managers seek to avoid bad publicity. On the other, it can ensure a flow of information that enhances the quality of civic life.
>
> Finally, in relation to *internal structures and processes*, public sector organizations tend to be more complex than their private sector counterparts. There is more diversity and uncertainty about objectives and decision-making criteria and a greater possibility that goals will clash. They tend to have less decision-making autonomy and flexibility; less flexibility in establishing performance incentives; more application of formal regulations and more political roles for top managers. *Public organizational communication and, in particular, government communication, operates in a political environment.* This often leads to short-termism. Political considerations, events and culture structure resources, personnel and goals. Heads of communication in government ministries, agencies and institutions may be appointed on the basis of partisan rather than professional criteria.

To add a third perspective on the debate about government communication, the OECD (2021c, p. 11) prefers a non-political definition:

> (…) *public communication*, as distinct from political communication that is linked to elections or political parties, is understood as *the government function to deliver information, listen and respond to citizens in the service of the common good*. This publication therefore provides evidence and examples of how communication can be used to greater effect in improving policies and services, promoting a two-way dialogue with citizens, and strengthening transparency, integrity and accountability. It demonstrates how governance arrangements, institutional structures, and professionalisation can help the communications function go beyond the provision of information and fulfil its potential to help strengthen democracy and trust in government (emphasis added).

Of course, this definition is far more normative as it aligns with the OECD's institutional nature. However, it is valuable to consider its approach since promoting technical, non-partisan, and policy-driven communication should professionalize the discipline.

To summarize, government communication has some particularities. It aims not to win elections but to reach a political consensus and the citizens' support regarding a political rationale. Due to the former, it occurs in a peculiar context. Having the citizenry as the main "shareholder" demands accountability and restricts the communicative processes. Moreover, it can lead to short-termism because communication practitioners must watch over political goals. Nevertheless, the supranational perspective concerning the discipline injects some novelty: instead of political support, government communication should aim at strengthening democracy and promoting good-quality information for virtuous policy agendas.

2.2. Policy Communication

If political communication aims to "inform, persuade or mobilize", Gottweis (2007, p. 240) adds that

> Often associated with the art of persuasion, rhetoric is typically defined as an integral moment of policy making, and the idea of rhetoric points to the necessity to convince, persuade, and communicate efficiently in the context of shaping and implementing public policies.

Likewise, the pioneer in this field, Giandomenico Majone (1997, chapter Prefacio affirms), sustains that "(…) if policy analysis is limited only to finding a good or satisfactory policy and does not ensure that such a policy is actually implemented and enforced, those traditional tools will be insufficient." Majone's assertion condenses the objective of policy communication. Let us see why in more detail.

According to Griggs (2007, p. 178), rather than a strategic cost-benefit process, the policy-making process faces "the politics of ambiguity and uncertainty," making it more a matter of persuasion and communication than a problem-resolution one. In that context, Majone, through his seminal work *Evidence, Argument, and Persuasion in the Policy Process,* postulated in 1989 that dialectical arguments are more fundamental than technical impeccability to carry out a policy (1997, chapter Análisis de las políticas y deliberación pública). Moreover, subsequent inquiries have reinforced the importance of arguments in policy debate, as Crow and Jones (2018, p. 217) show:

> There is plenty of science, philosophy and literature pointing to the importance of narrative in human affairs. One way to understand the findings and arguments presented is that people, by nature, are inclined to impose meaning on the world and that when they do, they rely on information shortcuts (heuristics) to develop quick and easy emotional renderings of the world that fit with who they think they are and what they know.

We may say that the Majone's book's first phrase of the first chapter summarizes his thinking: "As politicians know all too well -and as social scientists too often forget- public policy is made up of words."

In that same vein, Gottweis (2007, p. 242) affirms that

> Majone's Evidence, Argument, and Persuasion in the Policy Process (1989) contextualizes the need for argumentative policy analysis by reference to the "crisis of scientific expertise" in regulation policy, which was to became visible during the 1970s: "Increasingly, public debates about regulatory decisions, nuclear safety, technology assessment, and similar trans-scientific issues tend to resemble adversary proceedings in a court of law, but with an important difference—the lack of generally accepted rules of

> procedure". This "crisis of scientific rationality," identified by Majone in the late 1980s, has hardly ceased to define everyday life of regulation and other fields of policy making.

Consequently, the author suggests that argumentative policy analysis is necessary to overcome mere rationality-driven policy analysis and the 'crisis of scientific expertise'. He argues it allows us to understand the policy-making process comprehensively (Gottweis 2007, p. 238):

> (…) one of the most important alternative directions in current, critical policy analysis in the last decade is argumentative policy analysis. The term argumentative policy analysis subsumes a group of different approaches toward policy analysis that share an emphasis on language as a key feature and thus as a necessary key component of policy analysis. Argumentative policy analysis links post-positivist epistemology with social theory and methodology and encompasses theoretical approaches such as discourse analysis, frame analysis and interpretative policy analysis. Although these different approaches are hardly synonymous, they nevertheless share the special attention they give to argumentation and language and the process of utilizing, mobilizing and weighing arguments and signs in the interpretation and praxis of policy making and analysis
>
> Proponents of argumentative policy analysis do not believe that policy analysis can be a value-free, technical project, and argue that both policy making and policy analysis involve argumentation that needs to be at the center of policy. One of the key characteristics of argumentative policy analysis is its conceptualization of the role of policy analysis and of the policy analyst in the policy process. This viewpoint sweepingly rejects the idea of the "neutral" and "objective" policy analyst qua social technician and, rather, espouses the idea of the policy analyst as something like a lawyer (Majone 1989), an advocate, deeply engaged in the policy process itself.

So, how could we define policy communication? As Gottweis also suggests, we think it relates to Habermas' *communicative action*, which "[...] can be distinguished from strategic action in the following respect: the successful coordination of actions does not rely on the purposive rationality of the respective individual plans of action but rather on the *motivating power of feats of reaching understanding*" (Habermas 1998, p. 222). Hence, policy communication would be the set of strategies and tactics to perform a persuading process around a policy to achieve specific outcomes from the debate around that policy (i.e., citizenry acceptance, parliament support or withdrawal, and further relevant stakeholders' reactions). This strategic set can contain the means and how the content will be delivered, considering agenda-setting and policy narrative (Crow 2018; Crow & Lawlor 2016; Fischer 2007).

Among those who have studied policy communication, Fischer identifies four discourse types that policy analysts and the government's spokespersons tend to adopt and perform during the policy debate. They are dynamic and do not explicitly correspond to particular policy process stages. However, we show them from the most particular subject, namely the policy itself, to its most abstract context -the society as a whole. Table 1 shows the four types of discourses.

Table 1. Fischer's types of discourse in the argumentative debate of the policy process

Type of discourse	Aim	Underlying questions	The task of the policy's analyst
Technical-Analytical	Program verification	● Does the program fulfill its stated objective(s)? ● Does the empirical analysis uncover secondary or unanticipated effects that offset the program objectives? ● Does the program fulfill the objectives more efficiently than alternative means available?	To produce quantitative assessment
Contextual	Situational validation	● Is the program objective(s) relevant to the problem situation? ● Are there circumstances in the situation that require an exception to be made to the objectives? ● Are two or more criteria equally relevant to the problem situation?	To elaborate interpretative reasoning about the immediate policy's context
Systems	Societal vindication	● Does the policy goal have instrumental or contributive value for the society as a whole? ● Does the policy goal result in unanticipated problems with significant societal consequences? ● Does a commitment to the policy goal lead to consequences (e.g., benefits and costs) that are judged to be equitably distributed?	To estimate the impact on the social order
Ideological	Social Choice	● Do the fundamental ideals (or ideological principles) that organize the accepted social order provide a consistent basis for a legitimate resolution of conflicting judgments? ● If the social order cannot resolve basic values conflicts, do other social orders equitably accommodate the relevant interests and needs that the conflicts reflect? ● Do normative reflection and empirical evidence support the justification and adoption of alternative principles and values?	To find the transcendental values derived from the policy

Source: own elaboration based on the work of Fischer (2007).

Government and policy communication converge when politics and policy -and its economic effects on society- do. So here we are in the political economy field, which

> (…) is about how politics affects the economy and the economy affects politics (see box). Governments try to pump up the economy before elections, so that so-called political business cycles create ebbs and flows of economic activity around elections. By the same token, economic conditions have a powerful impact on elections (Frieden 2020, p. 6).

Therefore, a policy solution should meet multiple requisites. It ought to be adequate in technical terms, desirable in ethical terms (van Eeten 2007), and politically feasible (Frieden 2020). If the government would only care about elections theoretically, why would any decide to persuade about its reforms? There are at least two explanations for this decision frame, an ethical and a practical one. Regarding the ethical explanation, democracy demands government communication not just as propaganda but as a genuine dialogue with citizens. As the OECD (2021c, p. 14) posits:

> Communication by governments has often been associated with political actors and processes and as the means to promote partisan agendas and manage reputations through one-way dissemination of information and narratives: in other words, propaganda. While this perception (and practice) persists, it is an outdated approach that undermines the potential for communication to contribute to policy making and good governance.

About the second explanation, the practical one, democracy stipulates political leaders and heads of the states to gain acceptance (König 2016b, Canel & Sanders 2012) and assure their continuity through ballotage. "Governments (…) that have been perceived as ineffective in solving the problems most salient to voters have been electorally penalized" (Bellucci and Maraffi, 2014: 45). Errington and van Onselen abridge it perfectly: "the selling of public policy cannot be easily divorced from the government's electoral strategy" (2005, p. 27).

Some may think that a technically flawless policy will do to the government getting support. Nevertheless, unfortunately, as Passarelli and Del Ponte (2020, pp. 6 – 7) explain:

> (…) people may have trouble evaluating the consequences of a reform proposed in a legislature or in a direct ballot. The reason could be that voters find the proposal complex and ambiguous, or they may simply be uninformed about the analytical background. Hence, voters might not know for sure if they will gain or lose from it.

Another work, this time by Bojar et al. (2022), hypothesizes a little further about how important it could be to study policy changes. "This focus on policy decisions is all the more important during economic crises because in such circumstances macro-economic aggregates may not be the main reference point for voters when they assign responsibility to incumbents" (p. 182).

In sum, policy communication and implementation may be crucial for a government's electoral revenue. Moreover, to analyze some of the government's communication strategies, we chose unpopular policy communication for this research. In the following sections, we will describe why unpopular policies would be so attractive from an academic approach, what lessons we can get from them and why this could be the right time in Western democracies' history to study them.

2.3. Unpopular Policy Communication

A sub-category of government and policy communication is the unpopular policy communication. But first, what does the term unpopular policy refer to? According to Vis, an eminence in this field, "Unpopular reforms are those policy changes that do not favor the median voter, which is the voter holding the median policy position" (2010, p. 14). She also provides another interpretation:

> (…) let me elaborate the definition and operationalisation of unpopular reform adopted here. 'Reform' is defined broadly and ranges from radical changes overhauling the welfare state system to (minor) cutbacks in unemployment benefits. The extent of unpopular reform is a combination of the extent of reform and its unpopularity. (2009, p. 38).

In his seminal work, Paul Pierson analyzed US's Ronald Reagan and UK's Margaret Thatcher administrations and how they proposed ambitious austerity measures (1994). From that, he describes historical circumstances that made governments shift from welfare state expansion to, as he calls them, "politics of retrenchment." Then, he conceptualizes what makes this policy trend unpopular:

> A combination of economic changes, political shifts to the right, and rising costs associated with maturing welfare states has provoked growing calls for retrenchment. At the heart of efforts to turn these demands into policy have been newly ascendant conservative politicians. Conservative governments have generally advocated major social policy reforms, often receiving significant external support in their effort, especially from the business community. Yet the new policy agenda stands in sharp contrast to the credit-claiming initiatives pursued during the long period of welfare state expansion. The politics of retrenchment is typically treacherous, because it imposes tangible losses on concentrated groups of voters in return for diffuse and uncertain gains. Retrenchment entails a delicate effort either to transform programmatic change into an electorally attractive proposition or, at the least, to minimize the political costs involved. (1996, p. 145).

The politics of retrenchment is typically treacherous, because it imposes tangible losses on concentrated groups of voters in return for diffuse and uncertain gains. Justly, Vis relates such reforms to the *politics of risk-taking* (2010), as she brands them. Taking a closer look, according to Wenzelburger and Hörisch (2016b), unpopular policy frequently relates to cuts in popular social programs, such as benefits in health care and pensions. König (2016a) argues that austerity measures and tax increases would also be unpopular. In the same line, Jacques and Haffert (2021) link unpopular policy to fiscal consolidations; to impose austerity, governments often cut public spending or increase taxes.[5]

As their name tells, unpopular policies are usually detrimental to its promoter's popularity in different ways. Jacques and Haffert (p.189) show that "spending cuts decrease government approval, especially during economic downturns, but tax increases' impact on approval remains minimal." Accordingly, "in bad times, fiscal consolidations' impact on government approval is very clear" (p. 190). In that same direction, Bremer and Bürgisser's work (2020) demonstrates that people give more importance to the short-term effects of policies than the long-term ones and to those measures that affect their disposable income than those that do not. For instance, tax-based fiscal consolidations hurt less politically than the expenditure cuts leading to consolidations. Conversely, "the negative effect of spending-based consolidation can be mitigated if economic growth is high, because citizens do not feel the negative effect of the cuts" (p. 205). Moreover, they found that tax augments -which tend to be unpopular- become popular when applied to top-income individuals.

Approval is crucial for any president or prime minister[6], no matter the country and the period. As Edwards (2003, p. 19) underscores citing a former United States president Carter's advisor:

> ‘‘When the President is low in public opinion polls, the Members of Congress see little hazard in bucking him. . . . After all, very few Congressmen examine an issue solely on its merits; they are politicians and they think politically. I'm not saying they make only politically expedient choices. But they read the polls and from that they feel secure in turning their back on the President with political impunity. Unquestionably, the success of the President's policies bears a tremendous relationship to his popularity in the polls.’’

Unfortunately for those seeking popularity while in charge, when contemplating the unpopular policy's effect on political support, the citizenry's perception might not be as rational as expected. Let us bring up Passarelli and Del Ponte's posit: "Voters are also too indulgent toward bad politicians and too demanding toward good performers" (2020, p. 21). We will go deeper into this idea later on.

Considering it all, thinking that the unpopular policy trend will undermine the welfare state might be rash, at least. We say that because, on the one hand, painful reforms occur within different contexts, and governments use diverse paths to retrench public spending. Some are more severe than others. Conversely, on the other hand, history has proven that big

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[5] It is crucial to notice that all of the works cited above studied large-implemented welfare states in developed European countries.

[6] Edwards will prove presidents and prime ministers wrong. By studying six United States presidential periods (1969 – 2001), he demonstrates that higher popularity does not necessarily benefit the president's policy agenda.

welfare states remain strong so far, and little welfare states have grown[7]. Pierson (1996, p. 173) gives some light on this regard:

> Yet if one turns from abstract discussions of social transformation to an examination of actual policy, it becomes difficult to sustain the proposition that these strains (the ones derived from unpopular policies) have generated fundamental shifts. This review of four cases (Germany, Sweden, the United States, and the United Kingdom) does indeed suggest a distinctly new environment, but not one that has provoked anything like a dismantling of the welfare state. Nor is it possible to attribute this to case selection, since the choice of two prototypical cases of neoconservatism (Britain and the United States) and two cases of severe budgetary shocks (Germany and Sweden) gave ample room for various scenarios of radical retrenchment. Even in Thatcher's Britain, where an ideologically committed Conservative Party has controlled one of Europe's most centralized political systems for over a decade, reform has been incremental rather than revolutionary, leaving the British welfare state largely intact. In most other countries the evidence of continuity is even more apparent.

2.3.1. Emotionality and Unpopular Policy

When asked about Ronald Reagan's pension reform to cut public spending in the 1980s, his former Director of the Office of Management and Budget, David Stockman, pointed out the zero conveniences of engaging in unpopular reforms:

> As [David] Stockman told the *Washington Post*'s William Greider, he had no interest in spending "a lot of political capital solving some other guy's problem in 2010 (it was the 1980s). The Social Security problem is not simply one of satisfying actuaries . . . Its one of satisfying the here-and-now of budget requirements". (Pierson 1994, p. 65)

Present-focused politics tend to disregard long-term results from retrenchment, whether due to a budgetary restriction, ideological conviction, or common-good-oriented policy. Stockman's words prove that. After all,

> Politicians in democratic systems generally worry first and foremost about getting elected. Helping improve the economy may make that easier, but not if it requires hugely unpopular policies, and not if the economic benefits are likely to appear at some point in the distant (that is, postelection) future. (Pierson 1996, p. 149).

So, why would any experienced politician adopt a measure that most likely will have negative electoral repercussions, hurt their popularity, and which people care little about (Bremer & Bürgisser 2029)? The answer may lay in Kahneman and Tversky's prospect theory (Passarelli & Del Ponte 2020; Alesina & Passarelli 2019; Kahneman & Tversky 2013; Kahneman 2012;

[7] Perhaps the most emblematic case in Western democracies is the 2009 so-called *Obamacare* (Affordable Care Act) health program in the United States (The Economist 2016).

Vis 2009). The theory holds two primary principles. In the first place, people resent losses more than enjoy gains, or as Vis puts it brilliantly, "losing twenty euros hurts more than finding twenty euros please" (2009, p. 35). Secondly, since we resent losses more, our risk propensity increases in an adverse scenario: if we perceive losing as more probable, we will aggressively bet to avoid that situation.

As the creators of the theory state:

> Choices among risky prospects exhibit several pervasive effects that are inconsistent with the basic tenets of utility theory. In particular, people underweight outcomes that are merely probable in comparison with outcomes that are obtained with certainty. This tendency, called the certainty effect, contributes to risk aversion in choices involving sure gains and to risk seeking in choices involving sure losses. In addition, people generally discard components that are shared by all prospects under consideration. This tendency, called the isolation effect, leads to inconsistent preferences when the same choice is presented in different forms. An alternative theory of choice is developed, in which value is assigned to gains and losses rather than to final assets and in which probabilities are replaced by decision weights. The value function is normally concave for gains, commonly convex for losses, and is generally steeper for losses than for gains. Decision weights are generally lower than the corresponding probabilities, except in the range of low prob- abilities. Overweighting of low probabilities may contribute to the attractiveness of both insurance and gambling. (Kahneman & Tversky 1979, p. 263).

In sum, "individuals are cautious in their decision-making (risk averse) when facing favorable prospects (gains), but tend towards bold decision-making (risk acceptance) when confronting threats to their well-being (losses)" (Vis 2010, p. 133). Indeed, Vis (2009, pp. 32 - 33) found out the conditions under which governments decide to promote painful policy changes:

> Specifically, I contend that the extent to which a government undertakes unpopular reform in a given period in office is conditional on the 'losses' it faces. If a government confronts a comfortable socio-economic situation (e.g., a flourishing economy, low levels of unemployment) and/or a solid political position (e.g., a large parliamentary majority), it displays risk averse behaviour and shies away from the risk of pursuing unpopular measures. Conversely, if a government faces a deteriorating socio-economic situation (e.g., a plummeting growth rate, rising levels of unemployment) and/or a weakening political position (e.g., a fall in the polls), it demonstrates risk accepting behaviour and accepts the dangers of pursuing unpopular reform. Consequently, the presence of 'losses' is necessary for governments to engage in risky reform (cf. Vis & Van Kersbergen 2007).

It is also notably interesting what underlies this aversive loss experience: Passarelli and Del Ponte claim that it is the human property rights experience (2020, p. 6).

> People have an evolved sense of ownership that motivates them to defend what they own, store resources for hard times, and attribute greater value to owned objects. In ancestral hunter-gatherer societies, our progenitors faced an uncertain food supply, which posed a constant threat to their survival. Hence, feeling a special pain for losses may have been critical to induce our ancestors into balancing two delicate ends: the necessity to make risky gambles to catch game, and the prudence required in a dangerous environment to survive the attacks from predators and other humans.

The idea, then, is that when facing an adverse scenario, politicians and government representatives will take greater risks, which could result in unpopular reforms. Literature proves this: Vis (2009) analyzed the cases of the British, Danish, Dutch, and German cabinets pursuing policy reforms from 1979 to 2005. She concluded that a deteriorating socio-economic situation and (or) a weakening political position was necessary triggers for governments to go on unpopular reforms. Moreover, she argues that "without this contextual factor, governments abstain from risky reforms" (p. 31). Likewise, "(…) when the current economic situation deteriorates, people turn more favorable toward reform" (Passarelli & Del Ponte 2020, p. 14). To reaffirm this point and based on his professional experience of implementing a budget consolidation in his home country, the former political advisor and State Secretary of Sweden, Jens Henriksson (2007, p. 3), argues that:

> (…) a country in serious problems faces no trade-off among competing objectives. It is thus easy to communicate what you are doing, since everyone knows and understands that the main priority is tackling the [fiscal] deficit. Since there is no alternative, people will not blame you for your actions. The bottom line may thus be: if you have to consolidate, wait for a deep crisis to occur, and it will be easy to do, easy to communicate and easy to be re-elected afterwards.

As early as 1938, Merton (p. 674) warned about the societal conditions to demand sacrifices:

> (…) Continuing satisfactions must derive from sheer *participation* in a competitive order as well as from eclipsing one's competitors if the [social] order itself is to be sustained. *The occasional sacrifices involved in institutionalized conduct must be compensated by socialized rewards*. The distribution of statuses and roles through competition must be so organized that positive incentives for conformity to roles and adherence to status obligations are provided *for every position within the distributive order*. Aberrant conduct, therefore, may be viewed as a symptom of dissociation between culturally defined aspirations and socially structured means.

Suppose we extrapolate Merton’s quote to the unpopular policy realm. In that case, the policy promoter should not only equally distribute the sacrifices throughout social groups, but to be sure beforehand that there is some conformity with the reigning social order – i.e., the status quo.

But then, how to explain the necessity of a challenging context to engage in an unpopular reform? First, Kahneman and Tversky (cited in Alesina & Passarelli 2019, p. 936) affirm that the voters perceive policy outcomes as gain and losses "rather than as final states of wealth or welfare." Thus, again, loss aversion plays a fundamental role not only for the unpopular measure's promoters but also those who must embrace it or consent to it afterward -i.e., the Legislative power, public opinion, civil society. In addition, Alesina and Passarelli (2019) sustain that people seek to maintain their status quo,[8] so the conceptualization of what is a 'gain' and what constitutes a 'loss' will depend on what extent the current situation will change and into what direction. Besides, the status quo exerts a kind of inertia on human beings' decision making: "(…) people tend to stick with the status quo even though the current policy puts them at a disadvantage." (Passarelli & Del Ponte 2020, p. 14, and Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). Then, when voters finally support and adopt a policy change, it becomes the new status quo for the upcoming reforms.

This conception of the state-of-affairs as the reference point [9]could mean that the first action when designing a political strategy for any policy reform should consider the recent policy history of the country and some demographic parameters. Stating the initial point of reference is crucial when comparing different societies experiencing policy and political changes. For instance, "Older societies are more prone to preserving the status quo than the younger ones" (p. 2), and they are also more politically cohesive around that status quo. However, on the other hand, if we consider a pension reform, the youngsters will be more willing to change the current state of things since the decision will affect their position in the long run. According to the authors, "The reason is that the young are more willing to bear the psychological cost of changing the policy today because tomorrow they will enjoy the benefits of a better status quo" (p. 18). So, both the politicians' and voters' leanings may vary on their individual preferences and their societies' aging trends.

There is also empirical use of point of reference in social policy. Seibold (2019) shows that in Germany most people retire when they achieve one of the three statutory retirement ages. As he narrates, "I first document that financial incentives alone fail to explain retirement patterns in the data. Second, I show that there is a large direct effect of "presenting" a threshold as a statutory retirement age" (p. 1). To the latter, we should add a noticeable distinction made by the authors: the partisan and nonpartisan policy. "A

[8] As several behavioral economics experiments (Thaler and Sunstein 2009) show, everyday life situations corroborate this. Default options such as automatic renewal of a magazine subscription, organ donation upon death, button choices in e-commerce, insurance contracting alternatives, automatic enrollment in retirement savings plans at the start of a career, and so on all respond to the choice architecture. That architecture facilitates people's decision-making without compromising too much effort and allows them to keep the status quo.

[9] Luhmann's (2012) and Habermas's (1998) work are crucial. The first talks about the *point of reference* of the systems, whereas the latter uses the *lifeworld*. Whatever the conception we use, understanding the status quo at which every communicative agent stands becomes transcendental to reaching an understanding through the improbable communication process.

nonpartisan policy (for instance, national defense) yields the same gains and the same losses to different people, independently of their wealth. The reason is that nonpartisan policies tend to provide public goods, which are non-rivalrous and non-excludable in consumption." (p. 13). In that case, the authors postulate that voters' approval toward the policy will be independent of their income -i.e., their particular status quo.

On the other side, things change if we consider a partisan policy, such as a tax increase to redistribute wealth to the poor or public cut spending for the middle and high-income groups. Here income is another game-changing socio-demographic variable. Since their status quo is favorable, rich agents will be more open to measures favoring the poor -they see no significant losses in these new scenarios. Otherwise, the poor may be more sensitive when the reform implies significant changes. From their precarious point of reference, changes seem riskier, and, in consequence, losses appear larger.

Complementing those findings, we must include another element in the policy-making process:

> Many key policy decision processes seem to be neither the outcome of the application of scientific rationality nor the result of deliberation processes, but can only be explained by the appeal and impact of the personality of a key decision maker and his or her skills to persuade, the credibility of certain actors, or the anxieties or hopes that influence the dynamics of decision making. Some policy topics are endlessly negotiated with armies of stakeholders; other policies are simply imposed onto the citizenry without much discussion. Both types of policies (and many others) occur simultaneously in the same policy context, such as on the local level, in a particular country, or on the transnational/global level. Whereas certain policy-making processes, such as the reform of banking regulations, seem to be dominated by the exchange of rational argumentation and deductive reasoning, other policy-making processes, such as the introduction of a law dealing with aspects of global warming or legal measures dealing with abortion, are characterized by impassioned speech, expressions of anger or language ridden with anxiety. A style of arguing that would cause consternation in one policy milieu might be perfectly legitimate in another. (Gottweis 2007, p. 237).

There is vast literature regarding some emotions and political behavior, which has tended to focus on fear and anger (Wagner & Morisi, 2019). The authors argue that "The three appraisals that are generally seen as the most relevant for creating fear and anxiety among individuals are certainty, control, and agency," meaning that as those diminish, fear and anxiety increase. We could expect it to happen when a crisis takes place. Then, what about those sensations? Erisen[10] (2020) affirms that:

[10] Beyond the academic realm, the *Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication Manual* (CERC, 2018abc) develops a whole chapter regarding the psychology of a crisis. In that chapter, the institution affirms that

> Fear leads to two competing actions: fight or flight. Flight gets one away from the cause of the emotion, whereas fight makes people take action against the cause itself. Thus, although the behavioral outcome of fear can involve a decision of either fight or flight, both aim to remove the cause of uncertainty. In either case, one also needs to gather information about the source of the uncertainty, be risk-averse through conciliatory behavior, and adopt self-protective behavior.

The feeling of fear would make people hypersensitive to the context's information since "political habits like party identification do not provide sufficient safety" (Erisen 2020). That, in turn, would lead fearful subjects to eager seekers for new data to reduce their anxiety "to avoid danger, reduce threat, and maintain stability," even if their heuristic drops drastically (Wagner & Morisi 2019). Therefore, they would omit how reliable the sources and the arguments of the information are.

One example of the above is what happened with Google searches' peak regarding the term "coronavirus" in the first months of 2020 after the Covid-19 outbreak in different countries (Beytía & Cruz Infante 2020). Let us recall that during the first quarter of that year, almost nobody had any clue about the spreading trends and causes; if it would be any vaccine and when, and how would going to die due to the disease. Therefore, we may infer that people worldwide started looking for the virus's information compulsively due to the lack of certainty, control, and agency.

If fear makes individuals more cautious and avid information-seekers, anger turns them active fighters to eliminate the source of that feeling. As Erisen (2020) points out, "Anger leads people to cause the object of anger to suffer by initiating the inclination of seeking revenge". They would do that by "taking punitive actions against out-group members", exacerbating partisan engagement and political participation, and "blocking their willingness to learn".

We can illustrate the anger effect in political behavior turning to former US President Donald Trump (2017 – 2021) and his supporters. Trump's rhetoric *us* -Americans- versus *the others* -immigrants, China, Europe, Latin America- might well have been an incitement to annoyance, which was demonstrated when a mob following Trump's urgings invaded the US Capitol in November 2020 (The Economist 2021b). Instead of adopting a fear-like attitude of self-protection, the tycoon's supporters violated one of the most sacred North American republican symbols led by anger.

people's mental states when facing a crisis abound in uncertainty, fear, anxiety, dread, hopelessness, and helplessness, in concordance with Erisen's findings.

Then, could anyone set a scenario that wakes up fear and anger among his or her audience? Nobel Prize Richard Thaler and his colleague, Cass Sunstein, talk about the *availability of heuristics* (2009, chapter Biases and Blunders):

> They [most people] assess the likely of risks by asking how readily examples come to mind. If people can easily think of relevant examples, they are far more likely to be frightened and concerned than if they cannot. A risk that is familiar, like that associated with terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11, will be seen as more serious than a risk that is less familiar, like that associated with sunbathing or hotter summers. Homicides are more available than suicides, and so people tend to believe, wrongly, that more people die from homicide.

It is crucial to clarify that we cannot equate emotionality with irrationality. Gottweis argues that "Historically, the image of the wild and uncontrolled passions as a deep threat to humankind and civilization is deeply rooted in Western philosophy" (2007, p. 239). However, we should look at it with more attention. The author quotes Fortenbaugh's analysis in this regard (p. 239):

> When men are angered, they are not victims of some totally irrational force. Rather, they are responding in accordance with the thought of unjust result. Their belief may be erroneous and their anger unreasonable, but their behaviour is intelligent and cognitive in the sense that it is grounded upon a belief which may be criticised and even altered by argumentation.

So, both the message and the messenger are vital to manage emotions. Lilleker illustrates this:

> If a government spokesperson appears serious, providing bad news about the economy, and if the receiver is already concerned about their own financial situation, but also thinks that the government is partially or totally to blame, the result will be heightened anxiety and a negative impression towards the spokesperson and who they represent. Injecting hope into the message may work; that would depend on the trust in the government's perceived ability to correct the situation. A complex cognitive process appears to be occurring, but actually it is a combination of simple cues interacting with existing perceptions. It is the affective dimension of political communication that is argued to be highly powerful, but without adopting an evaluative cognitive mode will simply leave an impression in the schema of the individual. For example, if the spokesperson is linked to a negative emotional reaction, future views of that spokesperson will remind the individual of the negative mood invoked and there is greater likelihood of ignoring his or her message.

Now, suppose a spokesperson wants to exacerbate emotionality during an unpopular reform campaign. In that case, they should provide the public with clear, abundant, and close examples related to the problem they want to resolve through the policy. Emotions are crucial in communicative contexts:

> (…) emotions could also be conceptualized as a discursive practice. Emotions belong to the repertoire of rhetoric, and emotional display and the language of passion may very well coexist with argumentative and ethical discourse. This rhetorical position allows us to explore how speech and language provide the means by which emotions have their effects and therefore take on significance. Thus, this view emphasizes the interpretation of emotions as pragmatic acts and communicative performances, and thus as modes of argumentation. Emotions, then, should not be seen as 'things' being carried by the vehicle of discourse and rhetoric, but as a form of rhetorical praxis that creates effects in the world. (Gottweis 2007, p. 240).

We must consider these discoveries when designing a strategy to push unpopular policies. First, politicians should expect not to have their traditional supporters' permission to make painful changes if they arouse fear. Moreover, they should be particularly concerned when deploying their message and skeptical about its efficacy in convincing their audiences. Secondly, they should observe the opposition's strategies to incite anger among their backers since they could provoke actions that interfere with the reforming process. Lastly, the unpopular reform promoters should elaborate on and disseminate reliable and timely information for those more anxious about the proposed changes, as the CERC's manual, which we will revisit later, sustain (2018a).

3. Political Strategies for Unpopular Policy

Paul Pierson (1996, p. 147) affirms that the trend of welfare retrenchment led to new political dynamics:

> In short, the shift in goals and context creates a new politics. This new politics, marked by pressures to avoid blame for unpopular policies, dictates new political strategies. Retrenchment advocates will try to play off one group of beneficiaries against another and develop reforms that compensate politically crucial groups for lost benefits. Those favoring cutbacks will attempt to lower the visibility of reforms, either by making the effects of policies more difficult to detect or by making it hard for voters to trace responsibility for these effects back to particular policymakers. Wherever possible, policymakers will seek broad consensus on reform in order to spread the blame. Whether these efforts succeed may depend very much on the structure of policies already in place.

In that context, we can expect government executives to design and deploy political strategies when facing challenging policy processes. Following Pierson's logic, Wenzelburger (2011) would say that unpopular policy promoters' political strategies aim to overcome two significant challenges: veto players from other political actors and electoral considerations. Therefore, the promoter must face two publics: politicians and public opinion. Consequently, they can adopt two strategic resorts: adjust the policy deployment strategically and (or) communicate directly with the electorate to dim the voter's disapproval of the reform. Later, Wenzelburger and Hörisch (2016b, p. 115) will refer to these two dimensions of public political strategy as "strategic organization" and "strategic communication" (see Table 2).

Table 2. Political Strategies Dimensions for Unpopular Policy

Challenges	Sphere	Strategic Resort	Examples
Veto players	Political	Political maneuvers	• Parliamentary negotiations • Ruling coalition negotiations. • Subnational powers negotiation (federal, regional or local governments).
Electoral punishment	Public	Strategic organization	• Timing of the reform • Equal distribution of the 'pain' of the reform.
		Strategic communication	• Blame avoidance tactics.

Source: own elaboration based on the work of Wenzelburger (2011) and Wenzelburger & Hörisch (2016b).

To characterize the strategic organization of the unpopular reforms, Wenzelburger and Hörisch (2016) establish the following questions to respond: what is the timing of the reform (i.e., is it at the beginning of the political cycle? What are the main events surrounding that reform?), and how distributed is the 'pain' it will provoke (i.e., who is sacrificing the most with the reform? Who are the winners and who the losers?). Even though we are not analyzing to great extent the strategic organization of the reforms we chose, it is vital to answer the general questions that the authors propone. They will allow us to complement and to better understand the analysis of the communication schemes.

One crucial topic is the unpopular policy's pain distribution. As Henriksson concludes in his *Ten Lessons About Fiscal Consolidation*, "An ad hoc hodgepodge of measures will only have a limited chance of success. Presenting the consolidation measures in one package makes it clear to all interest groups that they are not the only ones being asked to make sacrifices." (2007, p. 18). This necessity of making all pay comes from a rooted human inclination, as Storr (2019, chapter Status play) shows:

> As much as we might feel like the beloved Oliver Twist, we're also wired to despise the cruel higher-status Mr. Bumbles that surround us. Even when they're not actually deserving of our wrath, as Dickens's pompous workhouse boss surely is, we naturally dislike them. When people in brain scanners read of another's wealth, popularity, good looks and qualifications, regions involved in the perception of pain became activated. When they read about them suffering a misfortune, they enjoyed a pleasurable spike in their brain's reward systems.

> Similar findings have been revealed by researchers at Shenzhen University. Twenty-two participants were asked to play a simple computer game, then told (falsely) they were a 'two-star player'. Next, in a brain scanner, they were shown pictures of various 'one-star' and 'three-star' players receiving what looked to be painful facial injections. Afterwards, they claimed to have felt empathy for all the injectees. But their scans betrayed the lie: they only tended to experience empathy for the lower status 'one-star' players.

Consequently, adequate distribution of sacrifices could attenuate the reform's perceived impact, especially among the less fortunate. Former Greece's Finance Minister George Papaconstantinou (2023) thought alike. Moreover, he adds that "you must tell everything at first. You need to prepare the people for the crisis". However, Papaconstantinou also admits that "the principle that 'everyone suffers' is correct, but it's too difficult to measure the pain [that each group is receiving]."

Now, going back to the political strategies to promote unpopular policies, Bojar and Kriesi (2021) studied 60 *contentious episodes* in 12 European countries between 2008 and 2015 in the aftermath of the financial crisis. They define that concept as a

> (…) 'continuous stream of interactions regarding policy-specific proposals between the government and its challengers, involving also some other actors'. In other words, for us, the key defining element of a contentious episode is the dyadic interaction between two stylised types of actors – the government and its challengers – each making claims on behalf of its own interests and/or on behalf of some other actors (p. 47).

According to their perspective, unpopular policies like fiscal consolidation measures, pension, and labor market reforms would be contentious episodes. Their work is of great help when analyzing a communication strategy. Upon media content, they identify the government and its challengers' actions and address the third parties that intervene in those interactions. In their own words,

> In the contentious episodes we are studying, the government's policy proposal is opposed by a challenger – an actor whose opposition is articulated by means of 'contentious performances' and other public claims making. The challenger can be an individual organisation or a coalition of organisations and their representatives. (…) In addition to the government and the challengers, there is a third set of stylised actors who contribute to the sequence of interactions constituting the episodes – a heterogeneous category of 'third parties.' (p. 48)

To prevent the government from carrying out its policies, challengers can adopt different measures such as protests, petitions, verbal statements in press conferences, and confrontative and violent actions. Likewise, to stick to its policy agenda, the government can adopt strategies to repress the challengers directly or delegitimize them. Among those dynamics, each actor has to address the political costs of persisting or refraining from keeping the chosen course of action. The entire process starts when the government announces a disputable policy. After that, actors can react in accommodative ways -e.g., the government will take on concessions, and the challengers will cooperate- in unamenable ways -e.g., the government will repress the challengers, and the challengers will adopt disruptive actions- or not do anything. On the other hand, third parties can intervene by leaning to one side, augmenting or lowering the political cost to the parts in conflict (see table 3).

As Bojar and Kriesi call it, we could precis the *actions repertoire* that the different actors take during a controversial policy process:

Table 3. Actors' repertoires when facing contentious episodes

Actor	Action
Government	Concession[11]
	Sticking
	Repress
Challengers	Cooperation
	Non-disruptive
	Disruptive
Third parties	Support to the government
	Support to the challengers
	Mediate

Source: own elaboration based on the work of Bojar & Kriesi (2021).

The core of the authors' publication is about the action repertoires that the actors took based on their previous actions and their adversaries'. However, the methodology they employ interests us more, identifying the policy players and characterizing their actions. From that methodological endeavor, we can systematically analyze the political strategies of unpopular reforms (Wenzelburger & Hörisch 2016a; 2016b; Wenzelburger 2011) and examine their actions and the impact they had.

To zoom into the strategic communication dimensions addressed above, we should look at the promoter's discourse rhetoric and narrative, where our research focuses.

[11] Bojar and Kriesi found that third parties might be crucial within contentious episodes: "The stronger pattern, however, concerns the beneficial impact of third-party mediation. In such cases, the probability of governments providing concessions to challengers rises to an estimated 0.4" (2021, p. 63). Then they add (p. 64):

> (…) For both governments and challengers, third party attempts to mediate between them tend to be followed by cooperative behaviour on the part of the two adversaries. In essence, third parties appear to be more successful in steering the contending actors towards cooperation via mediation than in decisively settling the debate by firmly taking sides on behalf of either the government or their challengers.

These findings are worth considering when describing the government's communication strategy. Did the government resort to a mediator? If yes, at what moment did it do it? To whom did it resort?

4. Analyzing the Promoter's Political Communication

As we have seen throughout this theoretical framework, Professor König is a must-read in the unpopular policy communication field. As he claims (2016a, p. 540):

> Besides directly targeting and manipulating these two points of reference—policy and responsibility—policy communication can also refer to a third element: it is possible to affect the popularity of the reforms more indirectly by communicating certain qualities of the policy actors themselves. The evaluation of political actors can transfer—via cues and heuristics—to the evaluation of concrete policies (…). Successfully communicating a positive image may thus also mean to increase public acceptance of one's policies.

We should add Lasswell and Leites's thinking (1949 in Cedrino 2013, p. 221) to enrich König's assertion: "(…) political language is the language of power, the language of decision; making politics is equivalent to a persuasion exercise, it is a 'verbal negotiation', a contractual interaction that can determine cooperation or competition".

There are, of course, general conditions that social and political scientist have identified to make communication more effective. For instance, as political communication has taken some findings from health crisis communication, which gained special attention due to the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. According to Coman and his coeditors (2021), in this regard the Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication manual is the more authorized work. It was conceptualized by the Cambridge Environmental Research Consultants and employed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) of the United States.

The CERC establishes six principles of effective communication[12] that political spokespersons should use for any message at any time of the communication strategy (2018a):

i. *Be first*. The public tends to trust more in the first source of information.
ii. *Be right.* The more accurate the information, the more valid it becomes.
iii. *Be credible.* Honesty must be kept even -and overall- during crises.
iv. *Express empathy.* Since crises create harm -as unpopular policies do-, the speaker should address what people are feeling and the challenges they face.
v. *Promote action.* Giving people meaningful things to do give them a feeling of control of the situation.
vi. *Show respect.* Respectful communication becomes even more fundamental when facing a crisis.

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[12] CERC's principles are in reality pretty close to the policy narratives' since delivering a credible story depends on the forms we use to it. "Storytellers in these situations thus need to present themselves as the right kind of character: innocent, in legitimate need, competent, and honest" (Polletta 2015, p. 45).

Then, the manual points out four stages during a crisis communication strategy, as shown in table 7.

Table 7. Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) rhythm

Stage	Activities or main tasks
Preparation	Draft and test messages
	Develop partnerships with key stakeholders
	Create communication plans
	Determine approval process for releasing information
Initial	Express empathy
	Explain risks
	Promote action
	Describe response efforts
Maintenance	Explain ongoing risks
	Segment audiences
	Provide background information
	Address rumors
Resolution	Motivate vigilance
	Discuss lessons learned
	Revise plan

Source: own elaboration based on the CERC manual (2018a).

Another element that is crucial for this thesis is the CERC manual's premise: "During an emergency, the right message, from the right person, at the right time can save lives" (2018b). So, if we reformulate the phrase according to our field of study, we might say that *when promoting an unpopular reform, the right message, from the right person, at the right time can save a cabinet (and a government)*. Hence, a core concern of policy communication planning would be finding the fittest spokesperson(s) to communicate the policy narrative while meticulously using political timing to deploy the communication campaign.

Complementing the CERC's principles, the US Congressional Research Service published 2007 a brief guide for US Congress members to communicate effectively (Neale & Ely). Albeit some can consider it over said, "One of the first rules of the speechwriting profession is that a sentence written to be heard should be simple, direct, and short." (chapter Writing For The Spoken Word: The Distinctive Task of The Speechwriter). *Simple, direct and short* are long-valued attributes in political discourse. For example, in 1945, George

Orwell's famous *Politics and the English Language* already established rules for a clear political speech:

i. Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
ii. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
iii. If it is possible to cut a word, always cut it out.
iv. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
v. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
vi. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

Neale and Ely (2007, chapter Writing For The Spoken Word: The Distinctive Task of The Speechwriter) go even further in the political speech analysis. They sustain that

> The average spoken sentence runs from eight to 16 words; anything longer is considered more difficult for listeners to follow by ear, and according to one expert, may be too long for the average listener to absorb and analyze quickly. By comparison, written sentences of up to 30 words are easily understood by average readers.

Consequently, the authors (chapter Time and Length) show the findings regarding the ideal speech's length:

> The question of length of time, however, must be dealt at some point. A number of classic speech authorities suggest that in most cases 20 minutes should be the upward limit. Conventional wisdom often holds that most listeners tune out, perceptibly or not, after that period. Ritual or pro forma speeches, such as occasional remarks at schools, churches, or public functions where the Member is a guest, but not the main attraction, benefit from brevity, perhaps being limited to five to 10 minutes. Although substantive public policy speeches may merit greater length, in modern America, only presidential inaugural and State of the Union messages seem to exceed the 20-minute limit regularly, with the latter often weighing in at over an hour.
>
> The question of pace is also important; is the Member a fast talker? Different speakers exhibit considerable variety in pace, ranging from 115 to 175 words a minute. Once again, the speechwriter will factor these personal differences into his work. As a benchmark, however, an often-cited rule-of-thumb is that the average 20-minute speech contains about 2,600 words, or, about 130 per minute.

Considering the formal and vital abovementioned aspects, we will analyze the promoter's political rhetoric in terms of narrative and persuasion resorts as Professor Martin Reisigl understands it: "(…) rhetoric can be characterized as the practical science and art of effective or efficient speaking and writing in public. It is the science and art of persuasive language use (…)" (2008a, p. 96). Although rhetoric comprehends the argumentation (logos), we focus on the "forms of *non-argumentative linguistic force*, such as emotionalization, suggestion, demagogy and propaganda, and the use of threats (manipulative persuasion)" (p. 97)[13]. The latter aims to fulfill the goals of pathos and ethos, as the author understands them.

On the other hand, Resigil (2008b) distinguishes among three types of political speeches. The one that interests us the most is the *deliberative* genre. We systematize its characteristics below:

Table 4. Deliberative Genre of Political Speeches and Its Characteristics

Dimensions	Deliberative Genre
Thematic focus or guiding norm	Expediency or harmfulness
Main function	Exhorting or dissuading
Aim / purpose	Decision
Place of delivery	Deliberative/people's/citizens' assembly, parliament
Time reference	Future
Appropriate "argumentation" form	Example (*exemplum*)
Prototypical speakers	Speakers in deliberative/citizens' assembly (kings, consulates, senators, citizens) or in advisory/parliamentary committees (politicians, advisors)
Role of addressees	Those who pass judgement on the future (deliberators and decision-makers)
Model cases	Political speech (debate, discussion), promotional speech, didactic poem, utopia, sermon

Source: own elaboration based on the work of Reisigl (2008b).

In the following sections, we will go deeper into, first, the rhetoric analysis, second, the narrative analysis to understand what techniques, resorts and modal elements unpopular policy promoters can use to carry out their reforms' communication.

4.1. Analyzing the Promoter's Political Rhetoric

Reisigl defines the analysis of political rhetoric as "the analysis of the use of rhetorical means of persuasion by professional politicians" (2008a, p. 97). To run that study, we refer to a closed-related friend of Critical Discourse Analysis, the politolinguistics[14]. Apart from Reisigl, Cedroni is another author-of-reference in that field. As she explains

[13] Several authors have studied these limbic tools from social psychology and behavioral science. For instance, we already saw the case of Kahneman and Tversky, and that of Thaler and Sunstein. Later we will also revise Cialdini's indispensable work. All of them relate to the "non-argumentative linguistic force."
[14] Translation from the German term *politolinguistik*, coined by Burkhardt in 1996 (Cedrino 2014, p. 11).

> This new methodology of research has a strong interdisciplinary orientation in connection with political philosophy, sociology, political science, history and social psychology, integrating the linguistic perspective and the critical discourse analysis. The background of politolinguistics is, on one hand, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, textual linguistics and semiotics; and, on the other, there are various sociological approaches as critical theory, and most of all, political science, that can be considered. (2013, p. 221).

Perhaps, and paraphrasing Cedroni (2014, p. 22), the central element of this approach is that this is not a neutral analysis, but a critical one, in that it imposes on researchers the responsibility of providing a plausible explanation without blindly accepting the dictates of an aseptic and non-evaluative methodology. This critical, compromised approach entails also working the historical context wherein the discourse takes place.

The point regarding the historical context is crucial for politolinguistics. Wodak (2011, p. 2), another referent of that current, quotes Parris on this:

> In his reflections on the speeches given by David Cameron and Gordon Brown at their respective party conferences in 2007, Parris identifies another important factor in a speech's perceived success – namely the relevance of audience expectations. He concludes that there are no 'objective' criteria by which one can 'measure' the relative effectiveness of a given particular speech. Rather, its impact can only be assessed in relation to a much larger socio-political context.

As we saw earlier, politolinguists analyze three dimensions of political communication – polity, policy, and politics. Reisigl (2008b, p. 246) affirms that

> The dimensions of policy and politics both relate to political action, albeit in a different way. Policy concerns the content-related dimension of political action. It regards the formulation of political tasks, aims and programmes in the different fields of policy, such as foreign policy, domestic affairs, social policy, cultural and educational policy, economic policy, family policy etc. This political dimension answers the questions of what policy is aimed at whom and for what purpose. Its central purpose is shaping the social by political means. Political speeches strongly relating to policy are, amongst many others, chancellor's speeches like inaugural speeches, ministerial speeches, opening speeches on the occasion of commercial fairs, speeches of resignation and (presidential) speeches of appointment. Such speeches represent an important contribution to the "government by speaking".

Regarding the method politolinguists adopt, Reisigl (2008a, p. 99 – 100) establishes five analytical categories we should seek in any political speech: nomination, predication, argumentation scheme[15], perspectivation, and mitigation vs. intensification. In addition, he

[15] This dimension is vital for our research due to its connection with democracy. As Reisigl (2008b, p. 254) explains:

posits five questions the researcher must ask when facing the text. Wodak (2008, p. 302) would add that those analytical categories are, at the same time, discursive strategies. So, she describes the objectives and the devices lying under them. We will see all of this in detail at the end of the current section.

Now, why is it important to have this analysis done? As van Eemeren and Grootendorst sustain, "In order to assess the quality of the individual arguments, it must be determined whether the underlying reasoning is logically valid and starts from premises that are acceptable" (2016, chapter Analyzing and Evaluating Argumentative Discourse). If that is not the case, we face a fallacy. And why do people and, in this particular case, politicians use arguments to persuade? Because

> A person who puts forward an argumentation anticipates criticism, and by choosing a particular type of argumentation, using the one argumentation scheme rather than the other, he implies that he thinks he knows which route will lead to the justification of his standpoint.

Then, we must focus in one particular strategy, the *argumentation schemes*. Studying them will enable us to determine the policy promoter's arguments' quality. The authors define them as "(…) a more or less conventionalized way of representing the relation between what is stated in the argument and what is stated in the standpoint. In our opinion, each argumentation can be characterized by the argumentation scheme that is being employed".

They then distinguish three general types of argumentation schemes:

> In the first type of argumentation, someone tries to convince his interlocutor by pointing out that something is *symptomatic* of something else. (…) [T]here is a relation of *concomitance* between that which is stated in the standpoint (…), as in "As Daniel is an American (and Americans are inclined to care a lot about money) he is sure to be concerned about the costs."
>
> In the second type of argumentation, someone tries to convince by pointing out that something is *similar* to something else. This type of argumentation is based on an argumentation scheme in which the acceptability of the premises is transferred to the conclusion by making it understood that there is a relation of *analogy* between what is stated in the argument and what is stated in the standpoint. (…) [A]s in "The method I

> In history, whenever freedom of political decision had been restricted by the political form of rule (e.g. by despotism, dictatorship or strict absolutism), the consequence was that speeches for the most part lacked longer sequences of explicit plausible argumentation and contained – as in the case of many of Hitler's, Goebbels' and Mussolini's speeches – much more dramatisation, hyperbolic exaggeration and fallacious suggestion instead. On the other hand, in times of a strong democracy and parliament, that is to say, of the political participation of many, argumentation played and plays a much more important role in political speeches.

> propose worked last year (and this problem is similar to the one we had last year), so it will work again."
>
> In the third type of argumentation, someone tries to convince by pointing out that something is *instrumental* to something else. This type of argumentation is based on an argumentation scheme in which the acceptability of the premises is transferred to the conclusion by making it understood that there is a relation of *causality* between the argument and the standpoint. (…) [A]s in "Because Tom has been drinking an excessive amount of whiskey (and drinking too much whiskey leads to a terrible headache), Tom must have a terrible headache."

Finally, they clarify that within each type there are many more sub-categories. For example,

> Among the (sub)types of argumentation based on a relation of concomitance, for instance, are those presenting something as an inherent quality or as a characteristic part of something more general. Argumentation (sub)types based on a relation of analogy are, for example, making a comparison, giving an example and referring to a model. Argumentation (sub)types based on a relation of causality include those pointing to the consequences of a course of action, presenting something as a means to a certain end, and emphasizing the nobility of a goal in order to justify the means.

For politolinguists, each argument needs a justification, which they call *topos*:

> Reisigl and Wodak (2001) define *topoi* as parts of argumentation which belong to the obligatory premises of an argument, whether explicit or tacit. *Topoi* are the content-related warrants or 'conclusion rules' which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion or the central claim. As such they justify the transition from the argument or arguments to the conclusion. Less formally, topoi can be described as reservoirs of generalized key ideas from which specific statements or arguments can be generated (Richardson, 2004: 230). As such, *topoi* are central to the analysis of seemingly convincing fallacious arguments which are widely adopted in all political debates and genres. (Wodak 201, p. 42).

There are various lists of the most common *topoi* in political discourses, but there is still no consensus regarding which one is the most valid (Zagaz 2010). However, according to Wodak, "when negotiating specific agenda in meetings, or trying to convince an audience of one's interests, visions or positions" (2011, p. 42), these nine types are the most common (p. 44):

1. *Burdening* – if an institution is burdened by a specific problem, then one should act to diminish it.
2. *Reality* – tautologically infers that as reality is as it is a particular action should be performed.
3. *Numbers* – if sufficient numerical / statistical evidence is given, a specific action should be performed.

4. *History* – because history teaches that specific actions have specific consequences, one should perform or omit a specific action in a specific situation.
5. *Authority* – if one refers to somebody in a position of authority, then the action is legitimate.
6. *Threat* – if specific dangers or threats are identified, one should do something about them.
7. *Definition* – a person or thing designated X should carry the qualities/traits/attributes consistent with the meaning of X.
8. *Justice* – if persons/actions/situations are equal in specific respects, they should be treated/dealt with in the same way.
9. *Urgency* – decisions or actions need to be drawn/found/done very quickly because of and beyond one's own reach and responsibility external, important and unchangeable event.

At this point comes the most relevant for our research:

> (…) most of them (the *topoi*) are applied to justify and legitimize positions by providing 'common-places', instead of substantial evidence (for example, 'something is a burden, a threat, costs too much', and so forth). In this way, other groups or positions are constructed as scapegoats; they are blamed for trouble or for causing potential failure or discontent (with politics, with the European Union, etc.) (p. 43).

Why are *topoi* that important? As we revised previously, unpopular reforms occur preferably in times of crisis. According to the visited literature, some of the topoi exposed by Wodak are very present in painful reforms communication. For instance, that is the case for the topos of *threat* – "the economic crisis demands us to do something…"- and *urgency* – "…and we must do it now, before the crisis worsen the scenario".

After crumbling the arguments strategies and their *topoi*, we should be able to conclude the discourse's augmentative quality, so we must look for fallacies. As we said before, we will face fallacies if the justifications do not center on the logical aspect. Again, Wodak (2011, p. 43) sums up the four most common fallacies she has found in political discourses:

> (…) *argumentum ad baculum*, i.e. 'threatening with the stick', thus trying to intimidate [the adversary] instead of using plausible arguments; the *argumentum ad hominem*, which can be defined as a verbal attack on the antagonist's personality and character (of her or his credibility, integrity, honesty, expertise, competence and so on) instead of discussing the content of an argument; the *fallacy of hasty generalization*, when making generalizations about characteristics attributed to a group without any evidence; and finally, *the argumentum ad populum* or *pathetic fallacy* which consists of appealing to prejudiced emotions, opinions and convictions of a specific social group or to the *vox populi* instead of employing rational arguments.

Bearing in mind Wodak's findings, we think it is appropriate to enrich that list using van Eemeren and Grootendorst's work (2016). However, the scope is again limited to those fallacies more applicable to political speeches[16]. Firstly, regarding the fallacies in the distribution of discussion roles, the authors point out *evading the burden of proof*. When committing it, the speaker presents a standpoint as self-evident when there is no logical proof to support it. To do so, the standpoint defendant will use formulas such as "it is as clear as daylight that…", "of course, there is no need for me to tell you that…" or "the church is conservative/liberal by nature." (chapter Fallacies in the Distribution of Discussion Roles). Through those resorts, they can disguise an assertion as valid without necessarily justifying it.

Secondly, the authors refer to fallacies when representing a standpoint. Here we find the fallacy of the *straw man*, which is imputing a fictitious argument to the speaker's opponent in a caricatured way to make them easier to attack. To illustrate this, Grootendort and his colleague affirm that "This mechanism seems to work to even greater effect when the standpoint presented contains a negation: *I don't think church schools should be allowed to practice discrimination*. Who thinks they should? The opposing party?" (2016, chapter Fallacies in Representing a Standpoint). The speaker's assertion implicitly contains a way to make the adversary look in a less favorable position. We can find this technique repeatedly. Consider when leaders assert things like "I do think that the government must defend women's rights" or "I was not the one who defended those kids' murderers." Again, who would say that the government should not care about women's rights? Likewise, which politician, in their sane judgment, would defend a murderer? The speaker is not directly telling who or attacking someone else straightforwardly but certainly implies it, avoiding examining and justifying the rival's statements. To make the *straw man* more effective, the speaker who distorts their opponent's position use often a mix of "simplification, exaggeration, absolutization, generalization, and the omission of nuances or qualifications."

Thirdly, we find the fallacies in choosing the means of defense. In this regard, the scholars sustain that

> First, a standpoint may be defended by means other than argumentation. Second, a standpoint may be defended by argumentation not relating to the standpoint advanced at the confrontation stage. In the first case, we are dealing with *nonargumentative means of persuasion*; in the second, with *irrelevant argumentation*. (chapter Fallacies in Choosing the Means of Defense).

[16] Some apply better for debates or active discussions; others, for forensic discourse and other situations distant from the political speeches.

The nonargumentative means give place to two fallacies: the already seen *argumentum ad populum*[17] and the fallacy of *argumentum ad verecundiam*. The latter means winning the audience by solely underscoring or attributing one's qualities. If the only substance of the speaker's statement is their expertise or personal prestige instead of using it as a complement to the actual arguments, this becomes an ethical fallacy. As the authors see it,

> In relying too heavily on ethos, blind faith may take the place of rational considerations. People then accept the standpoint not because they have been convinced by sound arguments, but simply because they have faith in the authority of the protagonist. If ethos takes in this way over from argumentation, we are dealing with the fallacy of the *argumentum ad verecundiam*.

The *argumentum ad verecundiam* can also go in the other direction; instead of relating their strengths, the protagonist could adopt the exact opposite strategy:

> The protagonist then very modestly presents himself as a layman. By electing for the position of an underdog he attempts to sow the seeds for a climate of sympathy and benevolence on the part of the audience, so that it will be more inclined to believe what he says.

This turn made by the protagonist to gain the audience's favor is known as the fallacy of *argumentum ad misericordiam*.

The fourth realm of fallacies is the utilization of starting point of the discussions or assertions. If the speaker assumes that their opponent shares their exact conception about a particular idea and draws it as apparent to augment their speech's persuasive potential without giving a clear, logical argument, we face new fallacies. The most common in this respect is what we may refer to that as the *false premise*[18] fallacy. In this case, "the protagonist tries to evade the burden of proof: He prevents the proposition from being questioned and thus requiring a defense" (chapter Fallacies in Utilizing Starting Points), disguising their premises as self-evident truths and logically impeccable. It is very similar to the fallacy of evading the burden of proof. In this case, however, the speaker does not even provide ground for the argumentative sequence of premise: *if*; *then;* conclusion, but the premise lays by itself. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst provide an example of this:

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[17] To Wodak's definition, van Eemeren and Grootendorst add another component that is crucial for unpopular policy communication, namely, the audience's emotions:

> The true demagogue knows how to play on both positive and negative emotions and how to touch both the group as a whole and the individuals composing it.
> The positive emotions that may be exploited include, for example, feelings of safety and loyalty; the negative ones, fear, greed, and shame. Negative group emotions often have to do with social and ethnic prejudice.

[18] Van Eemeren and Grootendorst do not call this kind of fallacy in such a way. Instead, they describe some resorts the speaker may use to disguise a premise as an entire argument, even when it lacks ground. Coining this term will facilitate classifying different statements when analyzing our study cases.

In an article in The Sunday Times (December 9, 1990), Neil Lyndon accused "modern feminism" of wrongly suggesting, in pseudo-Marxist propositions, such an inviolable and common starting point, "despite its shaky basis in reason and fact":

It became axiomatic that women, as a class, were oppressed by men, as a class, and that a state of war existed between them.

The statement might be true, and maybe it is not unreasonable. Nevertheless, there is no argumentative sequence to prove or discuss about it. In the same vein, we can find the *circular reasoning* fallacy. It occurs when

> [A protagonist] acts as if his standpoint has been adequately defended when, in fact, the starting point on which he relies in his defense is identical to the disputed proposition.
>
> The simplest form of circular reasoning is "A, therefore A." To be persuasive, of course, the wordings of the two A's will generally have to be slightly different:
>
> *I think Leo is a real hypochondriac, because he's a melancholy type of person who is easily depressed.* (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2016, chapter Fallacies in Utilizing Starting Points).

In the example, the speaker does not define what "hypochondriac" means but, instead, *assumes* its definition as a known and shared fact, disguising the argument as entirely logical. So, the protagonist justifies their assertion by saying that *if* Leo is a melancholy type of person who is easily depressed, *then* he is a hypochondriac. Subsequently, the authors suggest an even more obvious example: "God exists, because it says so in the Bible and the Bible is the word of God." Hence, the speaker attempts to infer that the existence of god derives from the fact that *His* word says so, which lacks a logical basis. Instead, we see the *circular reasoning* more easily: "A is B because B is A."

Fifthly, we have fallacies in utilizing argumentation schemes. As we saw previously, the valid argumentation schemes to defend standpoints are the argument from authority, the argument from analogy, and the argument from consequence. If applied inappropriately, each could turn from argument to fallacy. Regarding the first of those arguments, the corresponding fallacy would be the seen *argumentum ad verecundiam* and the *argumentum ad populum*. In both cases, the speaker appeals to a distorted sense of authority, namely, themselves or "the people." For the argument from analogy, its negative correlation would be the *false analogy*. The analogy misuse results in a defective relation in which the speaker and their antagonist do not have initially agree on the conditions for using that comparison. A perfect example is the famous saying of comparing apples with oranges; it is simply not admissible to do so to prove a point using logic.

Concerning the argument from consequence, misemploy can derive in the *argumentum ad consequentiam*. It refers to the permissibility to test an assertion -description- addressing an undesirable effect of that assertion. The authors set the following example: "*Rationality and an analytical faculty cannot be called male attributes. If we do regard them as such, we give men an unwarranted advantage in job applications and promotion*". In this case, they sustain that "Whether the assertion that rationality and an analytical faculty are male attributes is true or false (descriptive proposition) cannot be decided by pointing out that giving men an advantage in job applications and promotion is undesirable (evaluative proposition)" (Eemeren and Grootendorst 2016, chapter Fallacies in Utilizing Argumentation Schemes).

We should add one more fallacy: the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* ("after this, therefore because of this"). This argumentative contravention affects the cause-effect argumentation scheme. As its name states, the speaker commits this fallacy by spuriously assigning causality to a relation. In the authors' words:

> The purpose of using causally related descriptive propositions is to establish that one event is the consequence of another, or that one event must be regarded as the cause of the other. To be able to say that there is a cause-effect relation between two events, it is necessary for one of them (the "cause") to precede the other (the "effect"). That in itself is naturally not enough: It is also possible for this chronological sequence to be purely coincidental, or there could be a third factor at work which causes first the one event and then the other. Most shops are open on Saturdays and closed on Sundays, and this is always so, but the fact that the shops are shut on Sundays is not the result of their being open on Saturday. For a cause-effect relation it is necessary to establish that the second event could not have taken place if the first had not taken place before it.

To summarize, we present the thirteen described fallacies in the following table:

Table 5. Argumentative Fallacies in Political Discourse

Situation	Name of the fallacy
Confrontation	Argumentum ad baculum
	Argumentum ad hominem
	Hasty generalization
Distribution of discussion roles	Evading the burden of proof
Representing a standpoint	Straw man
Choosing the means of defense	Argumentum ad populum
	Argumentum ad verecundiam
	Argumentum ad misericordiam
Utilizing starting points	False premise

	Circular reasoning
Utilizing argumentation schemes	False analogy
	Argumentum ad consequentiam
	Post hoc ergo propter hoc

Source: own elaboration based on the work of Wodak (2011) and that of van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2016).

Policy promoters can also make use of other techniques when deploying their narrative. Lilleker (2014, p. 40) outlines the five more common: message framing, targeted messages, the repeat-remind tactic to maximize the message exposure, media management strategies, and the use of negativity. Given the theme of our research, we will center on those deploys that researchers have studied the most regarding painful policies.

The first of those strategies is the renowned framing[19] (Lilleker 2014; Nelson 2016; Wenzelburger & Hörisch 2016; Hansson 2018; König 2019; Tobin et al. 2021; Thaler & Sunstein 2009). To frame the messages is to control the narrative around a particular issue providing an initial reference point on the topic, which, as we saw, would be critical for the policy promoters' success. "Framing, or second-level media agenda setting (McCombs, 2004), is primarily a cognitive concept that refers to the influence of transmitted messages on individual knowledge and beliefs" (Crow & Lawlor 2016, p. 476). Likewise, König (2019, p. 61) affirms that framing is "the selective emphasis of aspects of an issue that invokes certain evaluative standards." Similarly, Lilleker (2014) sustains that determined frames on certain topics condition how the citizenry responds to specific stimuli.

Empirical evidence about framing's effects abounds. A study from Behagel and Blau (2010, p. 6) shows "that the manner of framing a policy (pension) reform can have a sizeable effect on its impact on retirement behavior in the presence of reference dependence." Another, from Seibold (2019, p. 1), depicts that "Using a model of retirement with reference points for counterfactual simulations, I demonstrate that shifting statutory ages can be an effective policy tool to influence retirement behavior and such reforms can be generate a positive fiscal impact." Moreover, he explains that

> It is arguably natural that workers perceive a salient benchmark presented by government policy as a “normal” time to retire as a reference point, in particular given that retirement is a one-off decision where other potential reference points such as previous outcomes or a status quo are not available. Evidence from surveys and experiments additionally supports this view. For instance, Merkle et al. (2017) find experimental support for

[19] In politolinguistics, they call it *perspectivation* (Wodak 2011, p. 42). So, when running the discourse analysis, we will treat both concepts as one.

> framing effects and behavior consistent with statutory ages as reference points. (pp. 22 – 23).

Despite this evidence, Jerit's (2008) work is worth referring to. She analyzed Bill Clinton's communication strategy for his health care reform in the United States during 1993 – 94. Using approval rates as the dependent variable, she demonstrated that framing could sometimes be counterproductive when persuading the public. Instead, she suggests that engagement would be a more effective strategy. To clarify the difference between the two tactics, "when opposing elites talk about the same considerations, they are engaging in a dialogue. When they highlight different considerations, they are said to be framing" (p. 7). Jerit found that support for Clinton's reform "increased as proponents devoted more resources to engagement—that is, as proponents talked less about aspects of the issues they 'owned' like security, and more about topics they did not 'own' such as the economic impact of the bill" (p. 13).

Closely related to framing, the most studied communication strategy in unpopular reform communication has been the *blame avoidance* (Weaver 1986; Vis & van Kersbergen 2013; Wenzelburger & Hörisch 2016a, 2016b); Nelson 2016; Hansson 2018). Using blame avoidance means making public opinion believe that the government must take painful measures given an adverse and external element that escapes from its interference. The blame avoidance tactic seems effective; in fact, Wenzelburger and Hörisch (2016b) list a series of research suggesting that blame avoidance might prevent some governments from being punished when pursuing unpopular reforms.

Now, how does blame avoidance work? Vis (cited in Wenzelburger and Hörisch 2016b, pp. 160-161) characterizes three ways communicators use it. The first one is manipulating procedures (i.e., shifting the decision making to another institution or power), manipulating perceptions (i.e., reframing the reform, making it to be seen as unavoidable or as a result of a transversal political consensus), and manipulating payoffs (i.e., compensating the biggest losers of the policy reform or delaying the loses for future generations). Of course, each of the abovementioned strategies demands finding a scapegoat whom to blame instead of the reform's promoter to dodge the responsibility effectively.

Less studied than the first two, the third ploy of interest for this research is *Scheherazade's strategy.* Based on the Vizier's daughter who married the Persian sultan in the *One Thousand and One Nights* and her ruse to prevent his husband from assassinating her, the American political communication advisor Karl Rove argues that

> When policy dooms you, start telling stories—stories so fabulous, so gripping, so spell-binding that the king (or in this case, the American citizen who theoretically rules our country) forgets all about a lethal policy … The Scheherazade policy … plays on the

insecurity of Americans who feel that their lives are out of control (in Salmon 2017, chapter Turning Politics Into a Story).

In a nutshell, when the scenario gets complicated -as it happens with unpopular policies- Rove suggests exaggerating the citizenry's fears to distract public opinion from the heart of the political matter. That would protect the government and its speakers' reputation.

Having looked at the politolinguistics discourse analysis -nomination, predication, argumentation schemes, perspectivation, and mitigation vs. intensification- and at the most studied strategies when communicating unpopular policy -framing, blame avoidance, and *Scheherezade's* strategy-, we arrived at the following analytical model.

Table 6. Politolinguistics analytical categories

Strategy	Question	Objective	Device
Nomination	How are social actors -either individual, persons or groups- linguistically constructed by being named?	Construction of in-groups and out-groups	Membership categorization: biological, naturalizing and depersonalizing metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches (*pars pro toto, totum pro parte*)
Predication	What positive or negative traits, qualities and features are attributed to the linguistically constructed social actors?	Labeling social actors more or less positively or negatively, deprecatorily or appreciatively	Stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits, implicit and explicit predicates
Argumentation schemes	Through what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify or deligitimize claims containing specific nominations and predications? (for example, claims of discrimination or others)	Justification of positive or negative attributions	*Topoi* used to justify political inclusion or exclusion, discrimination or preferential treatment, and type of argument:
Perspectivation or framing	From what perspective or point of view are these nominations, predications and argumentations expressed?	Expressing involvement and positioning the speaker's point of view to control the *agenda-setting* and policy debate	Reporting, description, narration or quotation of events and utterances
Mitigation vs Intensification	Are the respective utterances (nominations, predications, argumentations) articulated overtly, are they intensified or are they mitigated?	Modifying the epistemic status of a proposition	Intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force or utterances
Blame avoidance	Do the statements take the blame away from the speaker, or those they represent, by blaming others instead?	Exonerating the policy promoter to prevent them from public opinion and electoral sanctions	Identifying a scapegoat and blaming they for the sacrifice the unpopular policy entails

Scheherezade's	Are the utterances exaggerating some aspect of reality to create fear and deviate attention?	Deviating attention from a particular problem to prevent the policy promoter from public opinion and electoral sanctions	Inventing or exaggerating a story to make people worry and turn their attention to it

Source: own elaboration based on the work of Reisigl (2008a); Wodak (2008); Lilleker (2014); Vis (2009; 2010); Salmon (2017).

Cedrino states that discourse analysis is a proven qualitative social science method (2014; 2013). That is why we will use it for this research. However, we could also go deeper into a symbolic dimension that is not always profoundly developed. As she claims, among linguistic symbols -the origin of which is often a *myth*, i.e., a figurative narrative of events in the past of the political community or its destiny- essential for the purposes of constituting political identities is the denomination assumed by groups, parties, and coalitions (2014, p. 23). It is this mythical form and its constitutive elements wherein we would like to extend in the following about storytelling as a complement to politolinguistics.

4.2. Assessing the Persuasive Potential of the Promoter's Communication

Reisigl's and Cedrino's politolinguistics will allow us to understand the promoter's discourse structure and strategies. Regardless of the immense utility of that approach, there is an idea that still goes around. We refer to Wodak's reasoning we quoted before: "[Parris] concludes that there are no 'objective' criteria by which one can 'measure' the relative effectiveness of a given particular speech." We do not pretend to question that thinking; we are talking about renowned and experienced scholars who most probably tried to do the same many times before us. However, what if we look beyond linguistic analyses to complement them? We will explore narrative or storytelling analysis and persuasion behavioral studies in that spirit.

4.2.1. Analyzing the Promoter's Communication's Narrative

As Luhmann, we think narrative is central to increase the communicative process:

> In the case of oral communication, sociality is, as it were, automatically ensured. Speakers and listeners hear the same, and in hearing what he says, the speaker includes himself among his listeners. This is also true, and particularly so, for staged and stylized communication: for storytelling (terms such as "oral texts," "oral literature" are inappropriate and comprehensible only in retrospect) and for the reading aloud of texts that have already been written down. Communication extracts the narrative from the performer, as it were; we recognize this from the forms it requires, such as rhythm, music, set phrases, and, above all, an audience, without which even a personal memory of the singer would not function. A very limited and standardized vocabulary appears to suffice for normal communication, too (Luhmann 2012, p. 150).

Apart from the work of the scholars centered on communication strategies for unpopular policy, there are elements that we should consider from other disciplines to implement unpopular reforms successfully and study how well the communication strategies worked. For example, some authors affirm that we can extrapolate corporate communication findings and conclusions to political communication studies (Lilleker 2014; Coman et al. 2021).

One of the elements political communication took from corporate and strategic communication studies is the so-called storytelling. Even though it is a millenarian technique that has been present since the beginning of civilization (Campbell, 2004), for instance, through *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and the *Old Testament*, and to which historians relate closely (Bojar & Kriesi 2021), we could say it became a professional technique beyond the scholarly realm thanks to branding and marketing practices since the 1990s (Salmon 2017). It gained worldwide fame in politics after 2007, with the campaign that allowed Barack Obama to become the first African-American president of the US. Captivated by his performance -and his incredible results- several European leaders turn to the technique and the storytelling gurus. Such was the case of the French Socialist Party, former Spain president of the Government José Luis Zapatero, and the former candidate for the Italian Government Mario Monti (Salmon 2014).

Storytelling is anything but delivering determined content using some formal elements to make that content meaningful, understandable, and more likable for its listeners. In Luhmannian terms, storytelling would be a functional equivalent to the symbolically generalized media (Luhmann 2012), turning no-probabilities into yes-probabilities in the communicative process. As Polletta (2015, p. 37) points out,

> Research shows that stories are better able than other kinds of messages to change people's opinions (…). This is especially true when audiences are not already invested in the issue in question. The latter is a situation that political actors confront routinely. Moreover, the attitudinal change brought about by stories tends to persist or even increase over time.

Accordingly, Crow and Jones sustain that "Congruent narratives are found to strengthen policy beliefs (…), increase the likelihood of accepting new policies (…), favourably structure how people recall policy consequential information (…), and lead to increased empathy (…)" (2018, p. 221). In that same vein, Crow and Lawler (2016, p. 478) claim that

> Narratives are how we communicate about the world around us, how we organize complex sets of facts, and how we persuade one another. Narratives are one type of the broader set of human communication activities, an important variable in understanding policy processes, and a piece of the policy puzzle that had largely been overlooked in policy research until relatively recently.

Storytelling is a powerful tool to persuade because “(…) audiences are less likely to hear ambiguity in stories as imprecision or error”, and “People may cognitively process stories differently than they do non-narrative messages, suspending their natural proclivity to counterargue when they are absorbed or transported by a story” (Polletta et al. 2011, p. 112). Then, turning to Luhmann again, “The sense of communicating myths lay not in surprise but in participation. This is different in the case of written communication, because temporal distances between utterance and understanding occur and have to be reflected on” (2012, p. 156). Thus, we could hypothesize that storytelling and narrative effectiveness comes from giving a sense of co-presentiality. Telling each other stories lay *not in surprise but in participation.* Perhaps, we already know what to expect from a policy speech. We know the speaker, their manners, and their tag phrases; we may even know the policy proposal already. We know the kind of structure a policy explanation has. However, we can think that citizens want to make sense of that proposal. They want to feel part of the decision-making process. Storytelling could provide that.

Of course, this does not suggest that storytelling has to be oral but oral-like. Even when writing stories, reproducing the sense of co-presentiality through the text structure is fundamental to reaching the desired effect. "Writing thus makes it possible to shift the focus from communication to information. In oral communication, the talented distinguish themselves by an ability to talk even when there is nothing to say" (2012, p. 165). Again, we can infer that what matters the most is the participation mimicking instead of the particular communication's content.

Let us now look at some prototypical examples of this narrative form. Some of the most well-known are Steve Jobs, Apple's tech company founder (Miller 2017; Salmon 2017), and his resounding product launchings. US courts also have many emblematic litigation processes (Polletta 2015). On the other hand, perhaps the most studied case in the political realm is former US president Barack Obama's public communication to get his policy initiatives passed by Congress. From his case, Crow and Jones (2018, p. 226) illustrate how to apply narrative analysis in public policy. But first, let us see Obama's speech fragment:

> *Look, if anybody still wants to dispute the science around climate change, have at it. You'll be pretty lonely, because you'll be debating our military, most of America's business leaders, the majority of the American people, almost the entire scientific community, and 200 nations around the world who agree it's a problem and intend to solve it. But even if the planet wasn't at stake; even if 2014 wasn't the warmest year on record – until 2015 turned out even hotter – why would we want to pass up the chance for American businesses to produce and sell the energy of the future? Seven years ago, we made the single biggest investment in clean energy in our history. Here are the results. In fields from Iowa to Texas, wind power is now cheaper than dirtier, conventional power. On rooftops from Arizona to New York, solar is saving Americans*

> *tens of millions of dollars a year on their energy bills, and employs more Americans than coal – in jobs that pay better than average.*

Then, it follows Jones and Crow's analysis, which contains several elements (in *italic*) that we will see later.

> Both of these definitions of the climate change problem are true in the sense that they are supported by ample scientific evidence. The first narrative of climate change does not include *blame* for the underlying problem of climate change. We are introduced to *victims* of climate change, however. The second example narrated by President Obama introduces *heroes* in his narrative including businesses, politicians, and implicitly his administration. President Obama also implies that climate deniers are the *villains* of the narrative and that climate change is an opportunity for economic progress. The second narrative is also tied to more specific policy prescriptions while the first is more about *consequences* of a changing climate.

From this narrative or storytelling perspective, scholars identify two fallacies as pitfalls for effective communication: the knowledge fallacy and the empathy fallacy. The *knowledge fallacy* goes back to the philosophical orientation of the Enlightenment, whereby reason and science will be the ultimate -and exclusive- means for human progress. As they claim,

> The central ideas of this approach are that policy is complex and ambiguous, people do not understand policy in the way that experts do, and that individuals need to be educated on the relevant facts. Once educated, people will then 'reasonably' accept the position of the expert(s) (Crow & Jones 2018, p. 219).

The limit of this belief, which, as the authors posit, would be the most extended among policy actors, is that people tend to receive information emotionally rather than logically. Moreover, Kahan (2014 cited in Crow & Jones 2018, p. 219) "describes what he calls the 'motivated reasoning hypothesis' wherein people make decisions based upon cultural beliefs rather than evidence or knowledge." In that same direction, König (2016b, p. 543) points out that "It is a common assumption in research on communication of unpopular (welfare) reforms—partly grounded in cognition and persuasion research—that communicated ideas, values, and norms only resonate positively with the addressees if they fit pre-existing ideas."[20] The latter will be confirmed by König himself: "Overall, the findings are reconcilable with the notion that the welfare culture affects the extent (and content) of normative and value-based justifications to be found in policy communication" (p. 554). Therefore, the policy's support gap between policy experts and the citizenry may reside in sociological dimensions instead of rational ones.

[20] Again, what Thaler and Sunstein call the *availability of heuristics.*

Regarding the empathy fallacy, the experts attribute it to the interpretivists, who "presume to not believe in any authoritative objective truths; for this community, there are multiple truths, as we all understand the world individually. Narrative is frequently a centerpiece of their approach" (Crow & Jones 2018, p. 219). The followers of this trend give exaggerated importance to empathy when delivering policy matters. They argue that developing an emotional narrative will persuade people to adhere to those matters due to their universal human empathy. French writer Christian Salmon illustrates the empathy pitfall very vividly when talking about former US president Roland Reagan, a well-known storyteller:

> Under Reagan's presidency, official discourse made more use of colorful stories that spoke to Americans' hearts rather than their intellect, and to their emotions rather than their opinions. Anecdotes replaced statistics in official speeches. And the president's inventions replaced reality. He sometimes evoked episodes from old war movies as though they were part of the real history of the United States (2017, chapter Turning Politics Into a Story).

Then, as in the knowledge fallacy, people's perception is tainted by biases and previous cultural beliefs, which are far from universal. If policy experts are more prone to the knowledge fallacy, voters are to the empathy fallacy. In sum,

> While the knowledge fallacy relies upon the veracity of 'objective' facts and relationships, and the empathy fallacy relies on 'authentic' emotion to communicate policy consequential information, both approaches share commitments to the assumption that a message can be unassailably true independent of all else (Crow & Jones 2018, p. 220).

In the end, narratives tend to communicate values; they are collective moral learning. We think Polletta and her co-authors summarize this idea (2011, p. 111):

> Finally, events in a story project a desirable or undesirable future. They make a normative point. Storytellers rarely say explicitly to their audiences, "and the moral of the story is." Rather, the story's larger meaning seems to be given by the events themselves (White 1980), while requiring interpretation on the audience's part (…). Insofar as stories draw on a cultural stock of plots, they communicate the normative values that are associated with those plots.

To overcome the two fallacies and reach effective policy communication, Crow and Jones propose to use the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF). It is a conceptual tool to analyze and create ways of communicating policy effectively. According to them, the NFP recognizes four main narrative form components (2018, pp. 220) that every well-done policy narration should include:

1. *Setting* - The setting consists of policy consequential features such as geography, laws, evidence and other facets of the policy subsystem. Many parts of the settings

appear fixed (such as the US Constitution); others are highly contested (for example, the science on LGBT parenting).

2. *Characters* - Characters are typically defined as victims who are harmed or potentially so, villains who are responsible for the harm or threat, and heroes who promise relief for the victim.
3. *Plot* - Plots are organizing devices that link characters to each other via motive and relationships and situate the story and its occupants in time and space.
4. *Moral of the story* - This is the point of the story, usually manifesting as a policy solution or a call to action.

Of course, this a schematic point of reference, but as Crow and Lawler (2016, pp. 478 – 479) warn:

> This does not mean that every narrative contains all of these elements, but only that a fully constructed narrative would do so. Importantly for incorporating narratives into policy research, a "policy narrative" identifies the moral of the story as a policy solution to a problem. To specify a policy narrative, recent scholarship indicates that such a narrative would at least contain one character and a reference to a policy issue (…).

Accordingly, Chautard and Collin-Lachaud (2019, p. 31) claim that

> We define stories as 'narratives with plots and characters, generating emotion in narrator and audience, through a poetic elaboration of symbolic material. This material may be a product of fantasy or experience, including an experience of earlier narratives' (Gabriel, 2000: 239). This definition goes beyond the mere chronology of events and is in line with Ricœur's (1990) view that a story 'must be more than just an enumeration of events in serial order; it must organize them into an intelligible whole [...] In short, emplotment is the operation that draws a configuration out of a simple succession'.

In fact, as Reisigl (2008b, pp. 253 – 254) notes,

> In their composition, political speeches are often more freely organised than other speeches (Schmitz 2005: 699). They seldom contain clearly separate sections of argumentation and narration. This deviation from the antique rhetorical ideal is due to the fact that political orators – especially nowadays – are concerned with many new demands in addition to deliberative advising and epideictic demonstration.

This non-linear structure makes the discourse analysis harder, of course. Then, how do we organize these form elements into a narration? "Before building a narrative, the narrator must first establish her goals, her audience, and her purpose for constructing the narrative" (Crow & Jones 2018, p. 221). Although the authors argue that the narrative does not necessarily follow a linear development, they point out five steps when creating a policy narrative. The first is to realize that one is telling a story, which sets the mood for aiming not to get a policy approved by its respective stakeholders but to tell a good story. That might seem trivial, but it is climacteric to the following steps.

The second step is to *set the stage* wherein the narrative will occur. We will dwell on this idea, because it is crucial for the unpopular policies. As Alesina and Passarelli claim, "the definition of a political leader may be (…): somebody who manages to change the reference point of voters" (2019, p. 946). Likewise, Vis and Van Kersbergen (2013, p. 850) conclude that the executive has to clarify that "the reform is necessary because the status quo is untenable." To exemplify this, the authors recall the case of the Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers when he had to defend an unpopular reform: "the Netherlands is sick," he claimed. Lubbers invoked a crisis imperative (Kuipers cited in Vis and Van Kersbergen 2013), which created the loss-scenario feeling among the speech's audience.

Besides the task of convincing voters that the status quo needs to change, we know that offering them a new policy to correct the current situation is a task that is just as difficult, if not more. An excellent and well-thought approach does not assure the voters' support and the subsequent implementation. As Passarelli and Del Ponte state (2020, p. 20):

> (…) according to prospect theory, voters are irrationally attracted by platforms that are ambitious but possibly difficult to achieve, rather than by incremental and detailed policy changes.
>
> People are too skeptical of good reforms and too credulous of bad ones. They fail to appreciate the potentially enormous costs that come with their voting decisions when those costs are attached to low probability events.

So, how to change the voter's perception of reference point gaining their support to a policy change that makes them suspicious? First, as we saw, it is necessary to create the feeling of potential deprivations or loss-alike scenarios, triggering a riskier propensity on voters – as in the Lubbers' crisis imperative invoking. To do so, in politics, "Narrative often have fear or threat at their heart, fear of the consequences of making the wrong choice" (Lilleker 2014, p. 77). Then, putting the status quo concept in the center, we will go back to the setting component. Attending to the researchers' recommendation:

> The trick in setting the stage is to faithfully narrate the best assessments of the empirical reality of the policy environment – leveraging science, evidence and best practices – but doing so in a way that inspires people to feel something about the policy narrative, while simultaneously avoiding the pitfalls of knowledge and empathy fallacies (p. 222).

This device is also found in literary works under the name *foreshadowing*. Reinsborough and Canning (2017, chapter Winning the Battle of the Story) bring up Margaret Thatcher to illustrate foreshadowing use in politics:

> *Foreshadowing* is a literary device in which an author drops subtle hints about plot developments to come later in the story. Incorporating foreshadowing into social change narratives means offering vision, posing solutions to the problem we're highlighting, and including the future in our narrative frame. How will the conflict come to resolution?

> What is our vision for a solution to this problem? What does a better world look, feel, and taste like? When we forecast the future we desire, we invite people to imagine and embrace a visionary solution.
>
> Foreshadowing is essential for taking on one of the most common control mythologies: “There Is No Alternative” or TINA. The term was coined by Margaret Thatcher—the leader of Britain’s Conservative Party throughout the 1980s—but it is undoubtedly an ancient strategy of manipulation. The TINA narrative acknowledges that the controversial proposal in question is not ideal, but it is the only realistic option, and so it must move forward.

Consequently, the “There Is No Alternative” (rather than adopting the policy) claim should be included in an unpopular reform narrative to make it compelling.

The third step of the NPF is to *establish the plot*. Chautard and Collin-Lachaud (2019, p. 33) illustrate clearly what we talk about when thinking on a plot:

> The eloquent example given by Forster (1962) provides the following distinction: ‘the king died and then the queen died’ is a story; ‘the king died and then the queen died of grief’ is a story with a plot (p. 93). The latter is more than a mere chronology of events, but contains intrigue – albeit simple – linking the characters whereby the meaning of one action can only be understood in reference to the other. A story presents a clear structure, one with a beginning, middle and end (BME), according to Aristotle; this is the structure widely associated with stories.

As Crow and Jones (2018, p. 222) explain succinctly: “Public policies always exist because of a problem.” Thus, the task is to identify and fence in the problem because “Establishing the cause necessarily points to what can be done,” making the policy solution logical and desirable. We should answer how the problem is defined, namely, what makes it a problem, and who is to blame for the problem, which will be part of step four. When pointing out the problem, we must notice that we have to link the characters to the setting.

Additionally, Neale and Ely (2007, chapter Thematic Clarity) underscore how important it is the thematic clarity of the political speech for the spokesperson to make their point:

> Throughout the speech, the writer ought to be constantly asking: "What is it I am trying to say?" and, after it is written: "Have I, in fact, said it clearly, succinctly, and well?" Every speech seeks in some way to move an audience, to win support, to motivate, to convince, perhaps to inspire, or simply to entertain.
>
> (…) Do not try to say too much, particularly when the speech is intended as the vehicle for a major announcement or initiative. The most memorable presidential inaugural addresses have been those that set a single theme, or coherent group of related themes. Stick to no more than three major points, rather than attempting to say a little something

> about everything. Anything more risks running afoul of Churchill's famous comment concerning a bland dessert: "This pudding has no theme."

The fourth narrative step is to *cast the characters*. When doing so, we should look at these recommendations closely (Crow & Jones 2018, p. 223):

> Victims [of the story] should be sympathetic and the narrator should portray singular human beings where possible and appropriate, only using abstract statistics as supporting evidence for the plight of the victim (Small et al, 2007). Protagonists have been consistently found to play a driving role in policy narratives. The more a hero is liked, the more agreement with the narrative (Jones, 2014) and emphasising heroic action (for example, the solution) and ignoring or downplaying the opposition also appears to be a winning strategy (Shanahan et al, 2013).

At least in policy narrative, "villains are important as they establish the nature of the blame in a problem definition". In that same regard, Polletta exhibits that characters in general are of the outmost importance since "people tend to adopt the views of the character with whom they identify" (2015, p. 38), and

> Characters are powerful because we connect to them emotionally in relations of admiration, fear, anger, or disdain. We imagine who we are, who we want to be, and who we are not in and through our response to narrative characters. When we hear stories, we zero in on the characters involved, judging the believability of the story based on whether characters act in ways that make sense to us and judging the moral of the story based on the characters' fate (pp. 38 – 39).

In that same vein, science-based Storr's work led him to state that

> It's people, not events, that we're naturally interested in. It's the plight of specific, flawed and fascinating individuals that makes us cheer, weep and ram our heads into the sofa cushion. The surface events of the plot are crucial, of course, and structure ought to be present, functional and disciplined. But it's only there to support its cast (2019, chapter Introduction).

It is relevant to notice that Polletta analyzes how political actors put themselves as the protagonist of their narratives, which can result in undesired effects. In doing so, they can play their stories' hero, martyr, or victim roles. For instance, Professor Polletta shows that "when poor people represent themselves as heroic in the stories they tell, they are disbelieved" (2015, p. 47). To illustrate her point, the author studied women's reactions to a fictional narrative from a raped lady. In that fictional telling, the invented victim testified that she accompanied a man to his room, and then, when they started kissing, she would tell him not to go any further in the encounter. The man disagreed, so he raped her. Surprisingly, since the imagined victim positioned herself in the story's center, the readers blamed her naivety instead of the abuser's responsibility.

Polletta's findings indicate that painting politicians in the center of their narrative may not always benefit them. So, Donald Miller (2017), a business bestseller author and consultant introduces a twist that can prevent leaders from engaging in misleading narratives that we have adapted for political communication purposes:

1. He suggests that the story's *hero* or protagonist has to be the audience he or she wants to convince and not the storyteller.
2. The latter should adopt a *guiding* role for the hero. The politician asks the voters to change the status quo, which always implies risks and uncertainty, so as a guide, he or she must ease them. "Ultimately, then, we could say the mission of the brain is this: control. Brains have to perceive the physical environment and the people that surround it in order to control them." (Storr 2019, chapter Creating a world).
3. The guides' plan comes to overcome the hero's challenges, which the NFP contemplates for its fifth step.

The fifth step, then, is to clearly *specify the moral solution*, i.e., the policy. In this stage the guide establishes a plan. In this regard, the authors urge to "Whether the policy narrative culminates in a call to action or a specific policy solution, the point of the story should be clear" (Crow & Jones, p. 223). But be aware! Clear does not mean obvious. Part of the efficacy of the storytelling lays in humans' yearning for cognitive closure in the face of challenges (*Zeigarnik effect* in Cialdini 2016). As Polletta et al. show (2011, p.111):

> Storytellers rarely say explicitly to their audiences, "and the moral of the story is ...." Rather, the story's larger meaning seems to be given by the events themselves (White 1980), while requiring interpretation on the audience's part (Iser 1972, Polletta 2006).

As the same work illustrates, people expect a logical sequence and well-defined beginning and middle from a story. Nevertheless, they do not expect stories to have a straightforward resolution (p. 112).

Lastly, the success and efficacy of the policy's promoter stem from "clarity, simplicity, and consistency" (p. 227). Salmon goes a bit further into this point:

> The gurus' stories last from twenty seconds to four minutes. The vast majority (87 percent) of their themes relate to daily life and to everyday activities that are, a priori, unlikely to fire their listeners' enthusiasm: eating in a restaurant, booking a hotel room, traveling, filling up the car with gas, driving, going to a management conference, and so on" (2017, chapter The Invention of Storytelling Management).

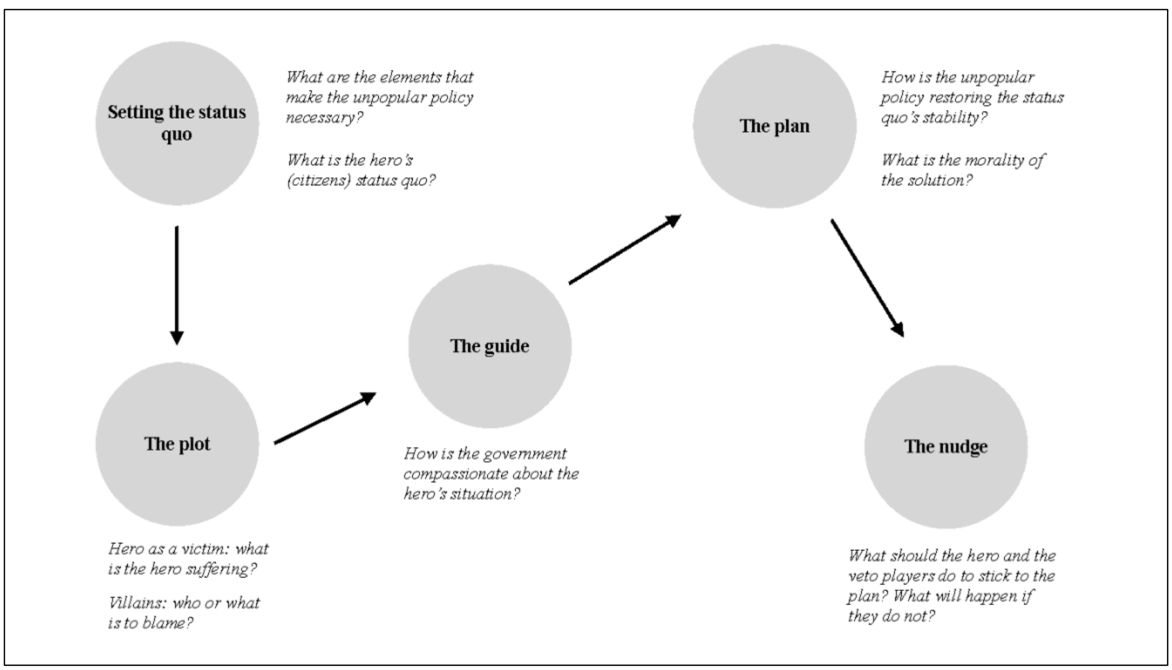
Crow and Jones' NPF is of utmost help. However, a further element may lack yet. When examining unpopular policies' communication strategies, Crow and Jones' and Polletta's analyses could be missing a final step for compelling storytelling. Miller (2017) names it a call to action, a notion that Crow and co. include but not as a separate milestone in the policy narrative. We think we should split it, however. Why is this last step important? We can enumerate two reasons. Firstly, as we saw earlier, anger and fear can affect people's political decisions and even paralyze decision-making. Secondly, we humans tend to be unrealistically optimistic and underestimate some risks. In response to those reasons, Thaler and Sunstein will argue that we need what they call a *nudge* (2009, chapter Biases and Blunders):

> Unrealistic optimism is a pervasive feature of human life; it characterizes most people in most social categories. When they overestimate their personal immunity from harm, people may fail to take preventive steps. If people are running risks because of unrealistic optimism, they might be able to benefit from a nudge.

What finally closes the whole narrative is exposing the consequences of sticking to the plan or ignoring it (Miller 2017). Does this sound familiar? It has to do with Kahneman and Tversky's prospect theory. To impel action -the nudge- it is mandatory to distinguish gains and losses in upcoming scenarios intelligibly. The narrative's spectators could make their decision more nimbly from this point.

Considering the last missing step and picking what would be more beneficial for our research, we will combine and summarize the findings on storytelling. We will re-interpret the models to propose a new one comprising five narrative phases. In doing so, we hope to obtain a more comprehensive framework to analyze the communication strategy's narratives of unpopular reforms (see figure 2).

Figure 2. Unpopular Policy Narrative Model



Source: own elaboration based on the work of Crow & Jones (2018), Polletta et al. (2015), Polletta (2015), Thaler & Sunstein (2009), and Miller (2017).

4.2.2. Identifying the Political Narrative's Persuasion Resorts

Back to Lilleker's contribution, to employ any communication strategy with the independence of the speaker's election, elaborating the messages is vital. We may say that the messages -not only the words but visual and other associations- are the expression of the chosen strategy. A work of great importance in this regard is Robert Cialdini's (1993, 2004, 2007, 2016), a behavioral psychologist who has deeply studied influence and persuasion processes through large-scale social experiments. As Lilleker points out, in his *Influence*, Cialdini identified six mechanisms used in communication to increment the likeability of acceptance. Later, in *Pre-Suasion*, he added a seventh. We have summarized those principles in table 8.

Table 8. Seven Principles of Social Influence according to Cialdini

Mechanism	Description	Mechanism's maximizers
Reciprocation	People feel compelled to agree when they perceive that they have received something from the messenger.	The donation gesture should be*:* ● *Meaningful* – it must be of relative importance. ● *Unexpected* – more than we think we should receive. ● *Customized* – based on the receiver's needs.
Consistency	People tend to evaluate better messengers and messages that follow the same behavior path.	Apart from the speaker's behavior, the audience tends to stick to their past behavior. Therefore, to enhance the persuasion, the speaker could remind the public how their former actions coincide with those they are asking to engage in.
Social proof	People tend to find appropriate arguments and actions accepted by comparable others.	● *Validity* –more frequent is a new practice, more valid we find it morally and practically. ● *Feasibility* – "if others can make it, so can I."
Liking[21]	People tend to consent to messages from whom they like or find attractive.	Regarding their audience, the messenger should pursue: ● *Similarity* – the way he or she speaks, looks, expresses him or herself should emulate his or her audience's. ● Be *flattering*. ● *Authenticity* – to show genuine caring.
Authority	People tend accept information given by a legitimate speaker.	● *Expertise* – to be an authority on the matter. ● *Trustworthiness* – to be credible.

[21] This is what most politicians call "empathy". As Miller (2017, chapter And meets a guide) shows:

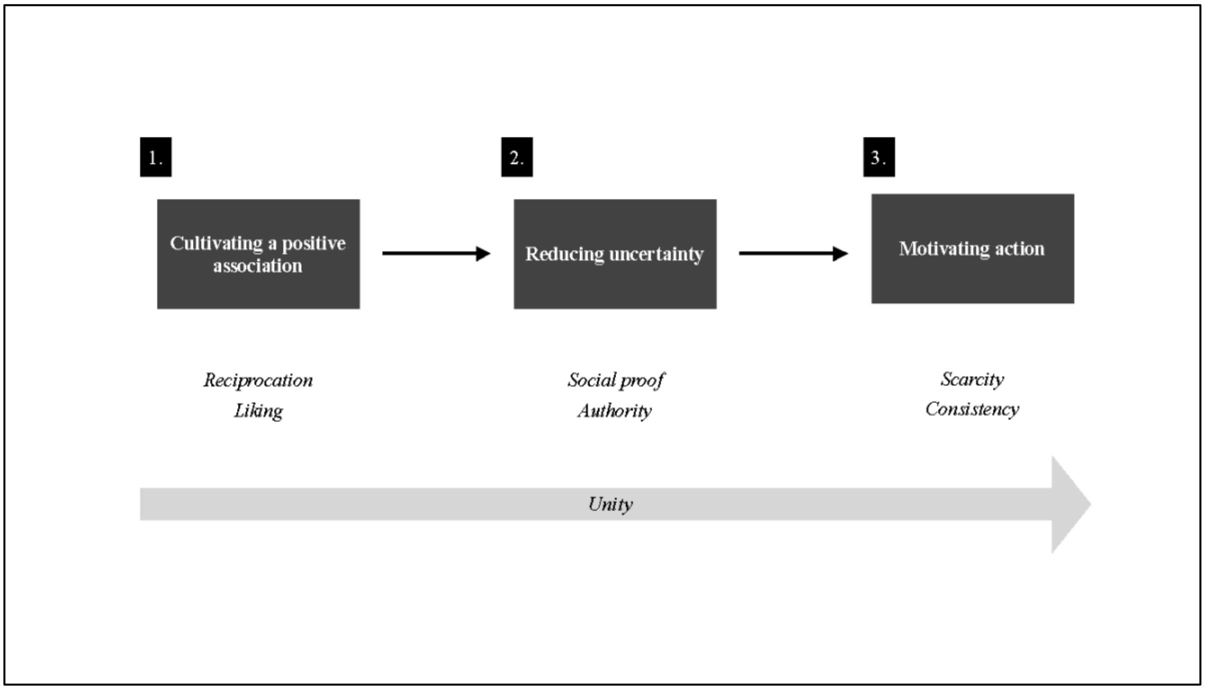
> When Bill Clinton delivered his now-famous line "I feel your pain" in 1992, he did more than just clinch a victory over George H. W. Bush; he positioned himself as the guide in the American voters' story. A guide expresses an understanding of the pain and frustration of their hero. In fact, many pundits believe Clinton locked up the election during a town hall debate in which Bush gave a rambling answer to a young woman when she asked what the national debt meant to the average American. Clinton countered Bush's linear, cerebral answer by asking the woman if she knew anybody who'd lost their job. He asked whether it pained her that she had friends out of work, and when the woman said yes, he went on to explain how the national debt is tied to the well-being of every American, even her and her friends. That's empathy.

Scarcity	People will take options that prevent them from losing something that seems to be a unique opportunity.	
Unity	People will tend to agree more with others with the same identities.	• *Kinship* – being part of the same family (genetic or fictive) is the ultimate feeling of unity. • *Place* – sharing the same location or situation with others generates the feeling of unity. • *Locality* – sharing the same neighborhood or community is also a bonding feeling.

Source: own elaboration based on the work of Cialdini (2007, 2016) and Lilleker (2014).

Furthermore, Cialdini argues that some principles are preferable to others depending on the stage of the persuasion process (see Figure 1). For instance, he points out that the primary goal is cultivating a positive association between the audience and the communicator in the first stage, so *reciprocation* and *liking* would be the most effective principles. In the second stage, the objective is reducing uncertainty for the audience to make the messengers appear more secure. In this phase, *social proof* and *authority* would be the fittest principles. Finally, the third stage of the persuasion process aims to motivate action, for which *scarcity* and *consistency* would be the most suitable techniques. About the seventh principle, *unity*, we can infer that its use is transversal to the whole communicative process.

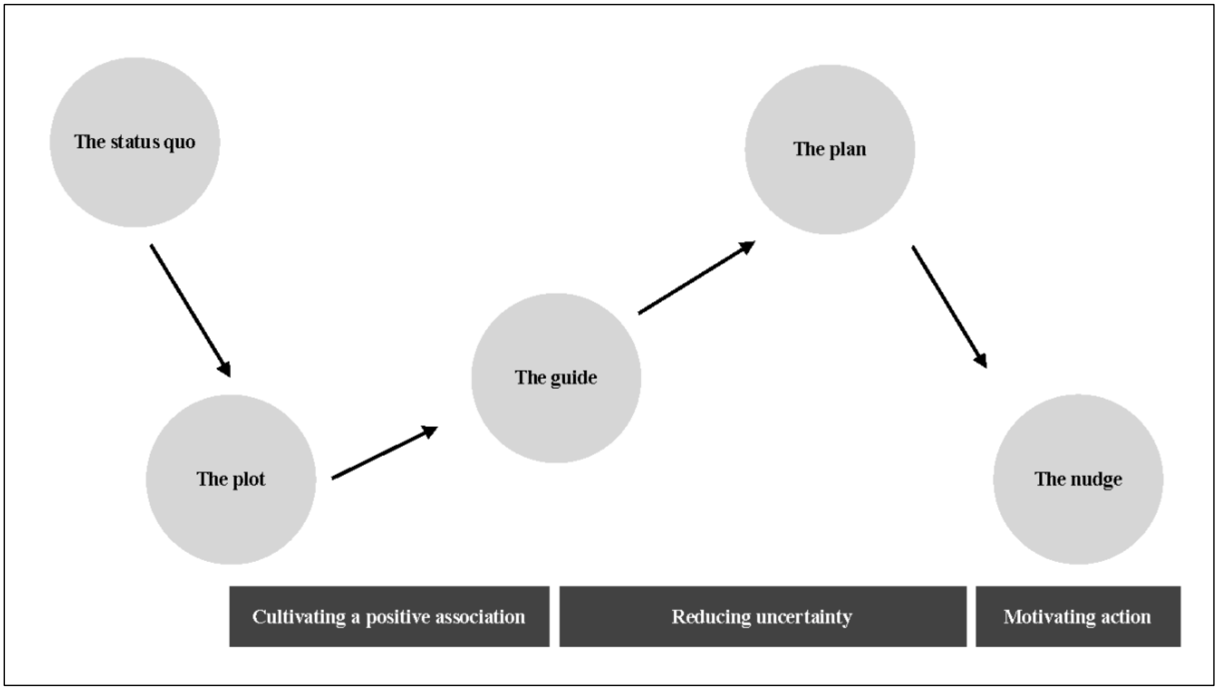
Figure 3. The fittest persuasion principles regarding each phase of the persuasion process



Source: own elaboration based on the work of Cialdini (2007; 2016).

Surprisingly, the policy narrative findings mostly lay with those of Cialdini. If we overlap both models, we will have something like the following diagram:

Figure 4. Commonalities between the Unpopular Policy Narrative Model and Cialdini's Phases for the Persuasion Process



Source: own elaboration based on the work of Crow & Jones (2018), Polletta et al. (2015), Polletta (2015), Thaler & Sunstein (2009), Miller (2017), and Cialdini (2007; 2016).

As figure 3 depicts, the fit is not perfect. Two narrative stages transit from one persuasion phase to another: *the plot* and *the guide*. Firstly, we can find the plot step only partially in the cultivating a positive association phase of the persuasion process. That is because two simultaneous things will happen when presenting the narrative's characters: whereas the storyteller introduces the hero -which tends to generate positive associations- they also make the villain known, which will alter the audience's status quo rather than make them like the character. Secondly, when presenting the guide, the speaker has a twofold goal. On the one hand, to generate positive associations -that is why they come across as compassionate about the hero's situation- and, on the other hand, to reduce uncertainty -they present a policy plan with expected results-.

Additionally, the first stage of the narrative, namely setting *the status quo*, does not coincide with any of Cialdini's phases. Why is it so? Because Cialdini's model assumes the speaker already has their audience's attention. It is strange, though, since the author actually warns about the difficulty of getting humans to pay attention:

> Research on cognitive functioning shows us the form of the fee: when attention is paid to something, the price is attention lost to something else. Indeed, because the human mind appears able to hold only one thing in conscious awareness at a time, the toll is a

> momentary loss of focused attention to everything else (2016, chapter Privileged Moments).

Cialdini's omission of the difficulty in gaining people's recognition in his model is significant. Despite spending several pages discussing the challenges of capturing the audience's attention, his model fails to incorporate this crucial aspect. This oversight is not unique, as many theorists, such as Lilleker and Luhmann, have noted the difficulties in the communication process and "the challenge of being heard." Fortunately, as we saw throughout this theoretical framework, many authors have given clear clues to overcome this arduous task. For example, Kahnemann and Tversky's idea of drawing a *loss scenario,* or Passarelli and Alesina's concept of *status quo* are clear *distinctions from the background* that will make the difference that make the difference. Therefore, they introduce *novelty* into what persons perceive, mobilizing them to listen and react. In this regard, Luhmann would say that

> And it is true that communication of a distinction gives expression to the context of what is distinguished. But precisely to the context of what is distinguished. Unity (of the operation) and difference (of the observation schema) have to be actualized in one move. Only thus can differentiation be reproduced. The forms of societal differentiation therefore differ depending on what distinctions are imposed on observations to maintain their connectivity as operations." (Luhmann 2012, chapter Differentiation).

"What is distinguished" is of outmost importance. Even at a biological level,

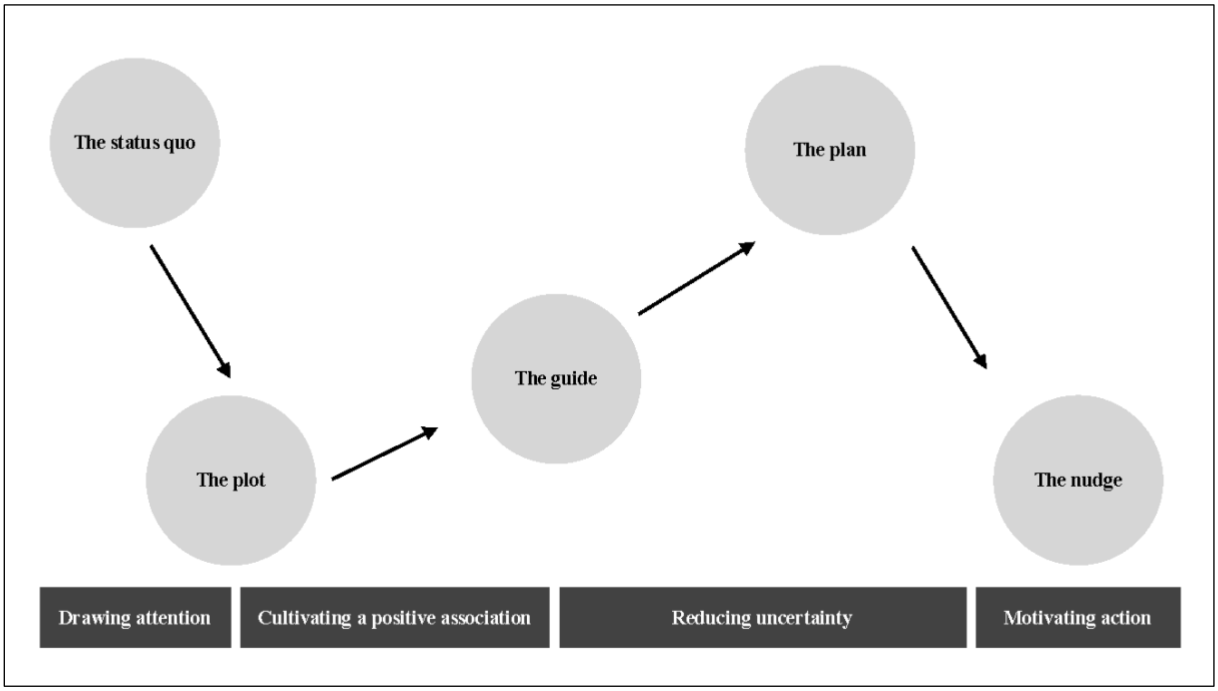
> Change is endlessly fascinating to brains. 'Almost all perception is based on the detection of change' says the neuroscientist Professor Sophie Scott. 'Our perceptual systems basically don't work unless there are changes to detect.' In a stable environment, the brain is relatively calm. But when it detects change, that event is immediately registered as a surge of neural activity (Storr 2019, chapter Creating a world).

Lastly, Chip and Dan Heath's *Made to Stick* (2008 chapter Unexpected) offers recommendations about how to get and keep an audience's attention:

> - *Surprise* gets our attention. Some naturally sticky ideas propose surprising "facts": The Great Wall of China is the only man-made structure visible from space! You use only 10 percent of your brain! You should drink eight glasses of water a day! Urban legends frequently contain surprising plot twists.
> - *Interest* keeps our attention. There are classes of sticky ideas that maintain our interest over time. Conspiracy theories keep people ravenously collecting new information. Gossip keeps us coming back to our friends for developments.
>
> Naturally sticky ideas are frequently unexpected. If we can make our ideas more unexpected, they will be stickier.

Considering all the aforementioned, we decided to add a fourth phase to the persuasion process, *drawing attention*. Thanks to that addition, the policy promoter's story goes from making the public listen to their message to mobilizing the listeners to act. Additionally, the storytelling's setting of the status quo stage fits now in a coherent model with the other stages. Figure 4 depicts the ultimate version of our model:

Figure 5. Unpopular Policy Narrative Model and Cialdini's Phases for the Persuasion Process



Source: own elaboration based on the work of Crow & Jones (2018), Polletta et al. (2015), Polletta (2015), Thaler & Sunstein (2009), Miller (2017), and Cialdini (2007; 2016).

Of course, there is no persuasion principle related to this new first stage, drawing attention. Turning to Cialdini's work again, we propose introducing a new principle, the *confirmation bias*. We came up with this concept based on Cialdini's findings around the attention problem and how people's approach to new information depends enormously on how it is presented to them. He affirms that we tend to confirm what is presented initially to us from the first moment[22]

> If I inquired whether you were unhappy in, let's say, the social arena, your natural tendency to hunt for confirmations rather than for disconfirmations of the possibility would lead you to find more proof of discontent than if I asked whether you were happy there. This was the outcome when members of a sample of Canadians were asked either

[22] Kahneman (2012) studied this widely. He refers to it as our mental "System 1", which functions fast and automatically, with low or no effort and without any sensation of voluntary control. System 1 is our primary mode to solve daily-basis problems. Only when we realize reality does not work as quickly do we face problems actively, rationally, and reflexively, namely, using our System 2.

> if they were unhappy or happy with their social lives. Those asked if they were unhappy were far more likely to encounter dissatisfactions as they thought about it and, consequently, were 375 percent more likely to declare themselves unhappy. (Cialdini 2016, chapter Privileged Moments).

Neale and Ely (2007, chapter Structure) have addressed the confirmation bias in political speeches, and suggest "stimulating the interest of the audience, usually with attention-grabbing examples of a problem that needs to be recognized and confronted."

Certainly, using this confirmation predisposition can also be used in unethical ways. For instance, the author shows that

> Cult recruiters often begin the process of seducing new prospects by asking if they are unhappy (rather than happy). I used to think this phrasing was designed only to select individuals whose deep personal discontent would incline them toward the kind of radical change that cults demand. But now I'm convinced that the "Are you unhappy?" question is more than a screening device. It's also a recruiting device that stacks the deck by focusing people, unduly, on their dissatisfactions. (…) In the unfairly engineered instant after such an admission, the cult's moment maker is trained to strike: "Well, if you're unhappy, you'd want to change that, right?"

In conclusion, we propose modifying the Unpopular Policies Narrative model (figure 4) considering the described elements. Besides the *status quo* narrative stage, we added the eighth persuasive principle: *confirmation bias*. This device would make the audience internalize the policy problem -the one presented in the status quo- from a particular perspective and, therefore, change their predisposition toward that problem and its proposed solution. For instance, when introducing the crisis, the speaker can say, *we all know that this year has been difficult. In fact, about 20% of our elders are struggling with their pensions' amount*. Alternatively, if using the confirmation bias, they could state: *maybe you feel your pension is not enough, or perhaps your mother's pension is insufficient. If that is not case, please just think about one person who is struggling as the 20% of our elders is.*

In the first way to present the policy problem, the policy promoter introduces factual figures to draw that problem. That is not argumentative incorrect but may lack some persuasive or mobilizing energy. In the second case, the promoter urges the audience to internalize the problem from a personal and egoistic perspective and calls them to attempt to *find the problem by themselves* among their peers[23]. That, in turn, can ramp up the audience's likeability toward the narrative.

[23] This is also similar to Thaler and Sunstein *heuristic availability*, seen in this chapter as well.

As we will see in the next chapter, Methodology, we will dissect and operationalize our model in actual questions to respond. This conceptual simplification will allow us to analyze the policy promoters' discourses.

5. Research Questions

Before presenting the questions, it is important to consider that the state of the art on the communication of unpopular reforms' research is still incipient. According to Wenzelburger and Hörisch (2016b, p. 115),

> [It] is unsatisfactory because no attempt has been made to bring together the diverging approaches in a coherent framework. (…) we lack clear expectations as to why, under which circumstances and in what political systems a specific strategy is most useful.

Following that diagnosis, we propose to map the elements for an effective government strategy communication, following the *logographoi* concept as Niklas Luhmann understood it:

> Precisely when the public could be expected to have textual knowledge, the techniques of persuasion and rhetoric were particularly strongly cultivated—although *logographoi* [speech writers] were then employed to set out in writing the texts to be presented orally. Thus, the technique I have mentioned for training the memory developed, along with the concomitant *topos* that imagines "places" where words, phrases, sayings, and arguments that might be useful can be "found." (2012, pp. 171 – 172)

As the quote posits, we pretend to "map" the narratives and persuasive resorts that could be useful for policy and decision-makers when promoting unpopular reforms. The idea is to systemize the academic knowledge about the topic and confront that schema with actual political performances to carry out risk-taking policies. To do so, the following are the research questions:

5.1. *How can governments promote unpopular reforms successfully through communication strategies?*

5.2. *What are the main political strategies governments use to pursue unpopular policies?*

5.2.1. *Did our policy promoters use the resorts that bibliography addresses as effective practices for unpopular policy communication?*

5.2.2. *If present, is there any correlation between the use of those resorts and the government's approval rates?*

5.3. Can we establish a relationship between how the policy promoter delivers their message and the support they get?

6. Relevance and Contribution of the Research

Sanders and Canel (2012, p. 85) think that "The quality of government matters for human well-being. Governing necessarily involves constant exchanges of information and communication about policies, ideas and decisions between governors and the governed". We subscribe to that vision, and so, luckily, this theoretical framework will allow us to illuminate some clues about how policy promoters could communicate unpopular reforms successfully -i.e., implementing the policy's expected outcomes while keeping the office.

To find out how policy promoters have expressed themselves when delivering policy content, we will confront their public speeches in the context of two pension reforms from the 2010s: Chile (2018 – 2019) and Italy (2011 – 2012). These are two different cultural and political contexts, although both countries are members of the OECD, which, as shown ultleriorly, makes them comparable from many points of view. In the next section, Methodology, we will explain our analytical models. Nevertheless, we will now discuss why this research is relevant and how it may contribute to the academic literature.

6.1. Unpopular Policies as a Worldwide Trend: Squaring the Circle

Before entering into the policy trends, we should go back to the principle: Why are reforms generally needed? Vis, who has made substantial contributions to unpopular policy research, and van Kersbergen explain which forces make governments engage in undertaking and painful reforms, distinguishing between internal and external challenges (2013, p. 844). The first ones "concern increasing economic internationalization and (financial) interdependence, which force policymakers to react continuously to new facts and which are, strictly speaking, outside their domain of influence." On the other hand, the OECD sustains that there are some internal challenges, such as demographic phenomena, changes in the family structures and gender roles, life cycle dynamics, and the transformation of the labor market.

> (…) putting pension systems on a solid footing for the future will require painful policy decisions: either asking to pay more in contributions, work longer, or receive less pensions. But these decisions will also be painful because pension reforms are among the most contentious, least popular, and potentially perilous reforms. (OECD 2021d, p. 9).

Finally, Caplin et al. sustain that

> Policy communication is not a focus in social security reform. In this paper we show it should be: coordinating policy change with communication and measurement of public

> perception is crucial. With populations aging and fiscal pressures growing, reforms such as delays in eligibility age [for retirement] are being considered and instituted worldwide (Börsch-Supan and Coile, 2018). Such changes are highly salient to workers: social security is a notoriously powerful determinant of late-in-life labor supply, and hence impacts spending and savings decisions (2022, p. 2)

As we saw previously, these policy decisions are indeed painful. As Bremer and Bürgisser sentence, "(…) academics have identified inconsistent preferences and a lack of congruence in people's thinking about fiscal programs for a long time" (2020, p. 5). Putting it short: people love when the government spend more and hate when it cuts the expenditure -or asks them for higher taxes payment. The same authors foresee that "As government debt is soaring again in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments may do well to remember these costs when calls for austerity grow louder again" (p. 30). The whole situation puts politicians and government executives in a difficult conundrum: How to square the circle? How to promote responsible and necessary policies to sustain a social system when probably nobody will like it?

Experts' opinions are univocal: firstly, sooner than later, governments worldwide will have to pursue unpopular reforms, and secondly, that is even more evident in the case of pensions, as Seibold shows (2019, p. 1)

> For many countries, population aging poses looming questions over the fiscal sustainability of public pension systems. The average OECD country already spends 8% of GDP or 18% of total public expenditure on pensions (see OECD 2015). The old-age dependency ratio, measuring the number of individuals aged 65 and above relative to the working-age population, is projected to rise from currently 27% to 49% by 2050. In addressing these issues, a widely shared policy goal is to extend the working lives of the elderly population.

Bremer and Bürgisser (2020, p. 8) discovered that pensions expenditure is the most popular social spending in advanced welfare states; therefore, the most sensible area wherein to make cuts. Besides, there is empirical evidence of properly communicating pension policy -and social policy in general-. In 2022 Caplin and his co-authors measured it following a growing trend from economists concerned about the matter:

> How long is the information treatment [about a pension reform] retained? One might anticipate a rapid deterioration in knowledge since the treatment is so brief and there may be no immediate change in behavior for younger workers who are still decades away from claiming age. Our finding is otherwise: the information is well retained. A follow-up survey one year later shows that the effect of the information treatment in the original survey dissipates only slowly. This reveals that our simple information treatment had a durable influence on beliefs and to a large extent broke the grip of the past. Our positive results on the value of active communication highlight the need to

> treat such communication and allied measurement of perception as an integral part of policy design beyond the monetary policy arena (p. 4).

Despite the transversal consensus regarding policy communication's relevance, "Policy communication is rarely an integral part of policy design, except when it comes to monetary policy. Social security is a case in point" (p. 16). In sum, we can confidently conclude that studying two pension reform cases will be pertinent given the current context.

6.2. Strengthening Democracy from a Practical Approach

Putting aside the main objective of this research, namely its academic relevance, we also know that democratic systems are struggling around the world. The comments on the latest version of the Economist Intelligence Unit's *Democracy Index 2021* (2022, p. 4) are strikingly eloquent in that regard:

> According to our measure of democracy, less than half (45.7%) of the world's population now live in a democracy of some sort, a significant decline from 2020 (49.4%). Even fewer (6.4%) reside in a "full democracy"; this level is down from 8.4% in 2020, after two countries (Chile and Spain) were downgraded to "flawed democracies". Substantially more than a third of the world's population (37.1%) live under authoritarian rule, with a large share being in China.
>
> In the 2021 Democracy Index, 74 of the 167 countries and territories covered by the model, or 44.3% of the total, are considered to be democracies. The number of "full democracies" fell to 21 in 2021, down from 23 in 2020. The number of "flawed democracies" increased by one, to 53. Of the remaining 93 countries in our index, 59 are "authoritarian regimes", up from 57 in 2020, and 34 are classified as "hybrid regimes", down from 35 in 2020.

Likewise, many authors have found that populism trends are proliferating in all latitudes (Bracciale & Martella, 2017; Hawkins, Riding & Mudde, 2012; de Vrees et al., 2018; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Aalberg et al., 2016). For instance, Inglehart and Norris (2017, in De Vreese et al. 2018, p. 424) note that populist preferences are rising across European countries:

> The mean vote share for populist right parties doubled from less than 7 percent in the 1960s to almost 14 percent in the 2010s. On the left, populist party support went from less than 3 percent to almost 13 percent in the same period.

Nevertheless, populism is not the only menace. Lilleker (2014, p. 31) talks about the *marketization of politics* due to the adoption of corporate marketing tools and techniques, which sees citizens as consumers:

> What the early work on political marketing established was that marketing strategies and tactics were being applied to aspects of politics as well as that politics could be

> understood using the conceptual tools developed within the academic study of marketing. Synergies in practice between political campaigning and marketing are recognised and highlighted (Baines et al., 2002), but equally criticised for advocating poll-driven politics (Scammell, 1999). Political marketing suggests that 'the very essence of a candidate and political party's interface with the electorate is a marketing one' (O'Cass, 1996: 47). Such works reinforce the notion that voting is an exchange, a purchase even, on which value can be placed.

Then, he notices how this perspective endangers democracy's quality and distorts political communication's aims:

> There are significant problems with this notion. Firstly, no single voter can guarantee that the product chosen is attained; equally the multifaceted product may not be consumed equally; opponents can benefit more than supporters. More interestingly, one can also not guarantee the product will satisfy; *certainly you cannot expel an incompetent government as easily as you can return a faulty product*. Secondly the construct of the voter, a logic-driven citizen seeking to make a wise choice, is replaced by the construct of *the political consumer, a selfish and more emotional being*. The perceived bipolarity of the citizen is founded on a false dichotomy, with logic and emotion treated as competing rather than complementary cognitive states, therefore much political marketing may not give the citizen the respect they deserve in terms of communicating appropriately for their cognitive sophistication. Introducing the consumer into politics also draws in notions of political consumption, buying a political product, value for money (in taxation) and returns on investment (the investment of hope in a party or candidate); these are all cognitive constructs some citizens might experience (…).

After that, Lilleker exposes his argument referring to the marketization of politics. It is clear there that there is no final answer in the debate, but at least he offers solid arguments about why the solely consumer-instead-of-citizen approach is simplistic (pp. 32 – 33).

> There is debate regarding whether political parties, and in particular governments, do or should actually follow the market and to what extent (…). The extent to which voters become part of the process of policy development is hotly debated. Contestation arises around the level of citizen participation that is optimal in a democratic political system. Theorists such as Schumpeter (1957) and more recently Riker (1989) have argued *participation has to be limited because of the scale of the modern nation state, and the lack of political knowledge of much of the citizenry* (emphasis added). Democracy is argued to operate best as an open system of competition for selecting representatives; citizen participation is limited to voting in periodic ballots. Yet others suggest this limited participatory role is contrary to the democratic ideal of collective decision-making, where all individuals subject to collective decisions should be equal participants in the decision-making process (for example, see Pettit, 2006; Hyland, 2011). (…). The theory of the political market orientation intersects these debates, suggesting that optimal

> levels of participation need to be reconsidered by parties wishing to engage with voters as well as reinvigorating democracy.

Finally, the author argues that a more deliberative approach -let us recall Habermas- could indeed strengthen representative democracy, whereas the consumer-centered vision could undermine its quality (pp. 33).

> Gidengil (2012: 54) expresses well the argument for moving towards a market orientation thus: 'If the parties simply use [marketing] techniques to hard-sell their "product," the relationship between voters and parties is unlikely to improve. If on the other hand, parties put voters' needs and wants at the centre of their activities, the prognosis may be more positive'. The mechanisms by which voters' needs and wants are identified, interpreted and then developed into policy is unclear, and certainly less than transparent for the observer, but the argument is that marketing rhetoric is insufficient; what is needed is a marketing approach to politics based around more deliberative models of democracy (Lees-Marshment, 2011a: 233–6).

Thus, if democracy is under threat due to authoritarian trends, radical politics-marketization and populism arise (Economist Intelligence Unit 2021), then finding how governments could promote responsible and unpopular policies could help, at least minimally, to enhance the democracy and its virtues for society. Even the OECD (2021c) has followed the same trend. As it affirms referring to its first *Report on Public Communication*, it would be "an instrument of government; an enabler of the open government principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation; and as a tool for reinforcing democracy". Likewise, Bojar and Kriesi (2021, p. 47) sustain that "the study of the dynamics of the 'elementary forms' of interaction between key actors in political episodes is also important because it may help us understand the basic mechanisms that operate in contemporary policy making."

6.3. Tackling Knowledge Inequality

Although connected to the former, knowledge inequality is perhaps a different issue in policy communication, or at least one deserving especial attention. As Lilleker says (2014, p. 71),

> Governments focus on abstract notions, such as the budget deficit that has preoccupied most of the Western world from 2008 to 2013 as opposed to the needs of the people. The abstract goals in their own way condition a certain understanding of politics, one that is devolved from states and their polities, because they are rooted in global economics that few understand. Van Wessel (2010: 512) suggests, 'the meaning of politics is thus derived from experiences of daily reality seen as being inflicted by politics, and defined by its faulty relation with reality as citizens experience it.' Prescient for much of the analysis in this book, it is suggested that this rests at the core of political cognition.

The former goes far beyond theoretical assumptions. For instance, Gustman and Steinmeier (2005, pp. 382 – 384) proved in a fascinating experiment in the US that different groups of society differ regarding how much information they have and how well they understand the one they do. Some of their conclusions are shocking. Regarding social security policy, they state that

> Women do a poorer job than men in estimating their benefits. Women are 11 percent more likely to say they don't know their benefits, and 10 percent fewer women estimate their benefits within 25 percent than men. Among the other categories, those in the oldest cohort do better in estimating their benefits than their younger counterparts, whites have a better idea of their benefits than blacks or Hispanics, married people are better informed as, in general, are those with more schooling. Those in the lowest lifetime income decile are almost 20 percent more likely to say they don't know their benefits than are those in the highest lifetime income decile, and 25 percent more of those in the highest decile estimate their benefits within 25 percent than do those in the lowest lifetime income decile. Similar differences are observed between those in the top vs. the bottom wealth deciles.

About pension policy, in particular, the authors found out that

> (…) women have a poorer understanding of their pensions than men. Women are 7 percent less likely to correctly identify plan type and are 15 percent more likely to say they don't know their benefits. Four percent fewer women estimate their benefits within 25 percent of the value predicted from the employer provided pension formula than men. Moreover, women are much more pessimistic about the value of the pension they will receive than men, with twice as many women underestimating their benefits as overestimating their benefits. (…) Once again, whites have a better idea of their plan type and of their benefits than blacks or Hispanics, and as we found with Social Security benefits, married people are better informed, as are those with more schooling. Those in the lowest household lifetime income deciles are less likely to correctly identify plan type than are those in the highest lifetime income deciles, are more likely to say they don't know what their benefits are, but are not much less likely than those in the highest decile to estimate their benefits within 25 percent of the value computed from the employer-provided plan descriptions. Those in the top decile of the population arrayed by total household wealth are 13 percent more likely to have correctly estimated their pension values.

So, in terms of welfare assistance, gender, education, ethnicity, and schooling are reliable predictors of how people will predict policy information. Going further, communication techniques, like *framing* -that we largely revised in previous sections- can affect, to a greater extent, the less informed people, which sets ethical considerations. Brown and his colleagues reflected on this (2016, p. 144): "we investigate how sensitivity to framing varies across subgroups, and we find that the financially less literate, individuals with credit card debt, and those with lower earnings are more influenced by framing than others."

But then, even if we were to omit the moral factor behind knowledge inequality, information asymmetry can undermine the expected policy outcomes:

> Since models of retirement and saving typically assume well-informed individuals, the existence of imperfect knowledge raises a number of important questions about standard models. How exactly does imperfect knowledge of benefits relate to retirement saving and retirement outcomes? Time preference, which we find does affect knowledge outcomes, also is a central determinant of saving and retirement. A central question is how a person who does not pay attention to the future because of high time preference will generate sufficient information to make the kind of rational, forward-looking decisions visualized in the life cycle model. (p. 394).

Chan and Huff Stevens (2003) studied the effects of misinformation around a pension policy. As they declare,

> We find that well-informed individuals are five times more responsive to pension incentives than the average individual when knowledge is ignored. We further find that the ill-informed individuals do respond to their own misperception of the incentives, rather than being unresponsive to any incentives (p.1).

Considering the above, articulating nationally broadcasted speeches, such as those we are studying, should clearly explain the main policy points or, at least, the ones of most interest to disadvantaged groups. Likewise, the speeches should give a *nudge* to influence citizens' behavior towards their own well-being (*libertarian paternalism*, as Thaler and Sunstein refer to it[24]). This research outputs point to that direction.

6.4. A Cross-Cultural Analysis Along Two Western Democracies

Although there is a vast literature and academic interest regarding political communication in Europe and the United States, that is not the case for Latin America. According to Waisbord (2012), this could be, on the one hand, due to the lack of comparative studies in that region to generate new knowledge globally. On the other hand, Waisbord (2012, p. 446; also, Aalberg et al. 2016) denounced the narrow scope of analysis: "the literature remains focused on the study of community broadcasting, media reform movements and civic media advocacy."

[24] The authors suggest explain their concept with the following:

> (…) people should be free to do what they like – and to opt out of undesirable arrangements if they want to do so (…). The paternalistic aspect lies in the claim that it is legitimate for choice architects to try to influence people's behavior in order to make their lives longer, healthier, and better. In other words, we argue for self-conscious efforts (…) to steer people's choices in directions that will improve their lives. In our understanding, a policy is 'paternalistic' if it tries to influence choices in a way that will make choosers better off, as *judged by themselves.*

Suppose Latin America remains out of this debate. In that case, the risk for the region is enormous due to its weak democracies:

> (…) after the initial surge in the early 1990s, many electoral democracies in Latin America, Central Europe, and Sub-Saharan Africa remain fragile and only poorly consolidated, often divided by ethnic conflict and plagued by a faltering economic performance, with excessive executive power in the hands of one predominant party and a fragmented opposition. (Norris, 2004: 115).

Additionally, the recent events in the region, such as the massive social agitations in 2019 (Busso & Messina 2020b) and the Covid-19 pandemic (Busso & Messina 2020a), have menaced the already weak democracy in Latin America. Moreover, according to Waisbord (2012, p. 438), the particular use that Latin American political leaders have made of political communication strategies has aggravated the institutional distrust in the region:

> Whereas strategies for 'going public' in US politics are typically intended to drum up popular support for presidential agendas, Latin American presidents have used it to bypass the adversarial press. [Those strategies] (…) are not designed to promote dialogue between elites and citizens, or to hold presidents accountable. Rather, they are calculated strategies to promote personalistic leaderships and reinforce plebiscitary politics.

If we look at the *Democracy Index 2021* (2022, p. 3), "The pandemic has had a negative impact on the quality of democracy in every region of the world, but some regions have fared far worse than others, with Latin America having suffered especially badly." The report shows that "Latin America suffered a big setback in 2021. The change in the region's score in 2021 was the biggest year-on-year decline experienced by any region since the start of the Democracy Index in 2006" (p. 9). Going into detail, to the traditional autocratic regimes like Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua, Andrés Manuel López Obrador's (AMLO) Mexico, Jair Bolsonaro's Brazil, and Nayib Bukele's El Salvador joined the club of non-democracies in the region.

Therefore, Blumler and Gurevitch's (2004, p. 329) conclusion becomes critical: media and political communication could be vital to adopting democratic norms in transitional democracies, which would be the case in most Latin American countries. That is why we chose the latest attempt at pension reform in Chile as a case of analysis. In the next chapter, Methodology, we will look at the approach we adopt to answer the research queries planted in the current theoretical framework.

CHAPTER II

METHOLODOGY

1. Research Questions

As seen in chapter I, Theoretical Framework, the research questions are the following:

1.1. *How can governments promote unpopular reforms successfully through communication strategies?*

This is the central question of this research. When formulating it, we assume that policy communication has an extraordinary power to catalyze crucial reforms for societies (Crow & Jones 2018; Majone 1997). Therefore, we first need to define what makes an unpopular reform implementation successful. We will do this not only in terms of policy implementation or regarding what literature says but in terms of the *Realpolitik* behind statecraft. For Realpolitik we will understand what John Bew (2016, p. 17) points out in his history of the concept:

> In the first instance, the creation of the concept of Realpolitik was an attempt to answer a domestic political conundrum: how to build a stable and liberal nation-state in an unsteady and rapidly changing environment, without recourse to violent convulsion or repression. Realpolitik held that it was the first act of statecraft to identify the contending social, economic, and ideological forces struggling for supremacy within the state. The second act of statecraft was to attempt to achieve some equilibrium and balance among these forces so that they would not hinder the development of the nation-state.

1.2. *What are the main communication strategies governments use to pursue their unpopular policies?*

This second question defines how we will answer the first one. To complement the academic findings, we have to contrast some governments' unpopular reform cases with what bibliography sets as good practices in the field. To conduct the analysis, we have chosen two pension reforms: Mario Monti's in Italy (2011 – 12), and Sebastián Piñera in Chile (2018 – 19). Upon those, we will answer the following:

1.2.1. Did our policy promoters use the resorts that bibliography addresses as effective practices for unpopular policy communication?

1.2.2. *If present, is there any correlation between the use of those resorts and 1) the legislative processing, and 2) approval rates?*

1.3. *Can we establish a relationship between how the policy promoter delivers their message and the support they get?*

Following the logic of the previous questions, we attempt to link some practices identified in 1.2. that, according to scholars, may have allowed each government to get a poor or satisfactory reception of their reform.

Next, we will describe the means to answer the research questions: the case selection criteria, the analyses we will run on those cases, and the sources we will employ in the task.

2. Case selection

We opted for a comparative study using two countries because we think it can contribute more to this incipient field than the theoretical work, which usually comes after enough data is available. In that vein, Canel and Sanders (2012, p. 93) argue:

> (…) there are, as far as we are aware, no general comparative studies of government communication. Such studies can provide helpful insights into the role of culture, structure and agency in political communication as well as providing baseline empirical data for theoretical development and hypothesis building. They can be useful for clarifying concepts and for discovering the scope of their application, making us more aware of the dangers of overgeneralization and ethnocentrism. Case studies are a useful starting point for generating basic data as seen, for example, in Semetko's (2009) four-country study (Kenya, Mexico, the Russian Federation and Turkey) of election campaigns and news media partisan balance.

To explain why we specifically chose Monti's and Piñera's governments, we will answer four questions.

2.1. Why did we choose pension reforms?

Since unpopular policy goes from public cut spending to taxes to labor market reforms, we needed to narrow the scope. So, let us recapitulate what we said in chapter I, Theoretical Framework, about the several reasons we should look at pension reforms attentively.

Firstly, pension is one of the decisive challenges for the future of high-income economies. In 2018 *The Economist* highlighted that pensions and healthcare would be the primary obstacles for developed societies as their aging pace accelerates. Furthermore, citizens think likewise. According to the OECD's *Risks that Matter* survey (2020b), the top perceived risks are "financial security in old age, and securing good-quality and affordable long-term care." On the other fence, scholars agree: "As government debt is soaring again in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments may do well to remember these costs when calls for austerity grow louder again" (Bremer & Bürgisser 2020, p. 30).

Secondly, in terms of research, reforming pension systems is complex and unpopular enough. For instance, Bremer and Bürgisser (2020), who had recently made remarkable contributions to understanding the political economy of unpopular policy, discovered that pension expenditure is the most popular social spending in advanced welfare states. Therefore, cutting or modifying voters' annuity should most likely impact the citizens' support for the government. In its *Pensions at a Glance* 2021(a), the OECD sentences:

> (…) putting pension systems on a solid footing for the future will require painful policy decisions: either asking to pay more in contributions, work longer, or receive less pensions. But these decisions will also be painful because pension reforms are among the most contentious, least popular, and potentially perilous reforms (p. 9).

The people's pain regarding this issue might have been increasing, as the same entity warned in 2013: "growing public discontent with the results of private pension funds due to high administrative fees and disappointing returns of pension funds" (p. 10). The topic is even more delicate because "The retrenchment of public pension systems, trends towards working longer and more reliance on private pensions may increase inequality among retirees" (p. 15).

Either way, modifying the retirement schemes seems to be unavoidable. Also, in 2013(c), the OECD highlighted the pension systems' critical role in its members' financial sustainability: "given their large incidence in overall public spending – about 17% on average across OECD countries (ranging from 3% in Iceland to 30% in Italy) – pensions are now also being targeted in fiscal consolidation programmes" (p. 9).

Thirdly, there are multiple approaches from which policy scientists and policymakers can deal with pensions. However, maybe the main question is "how to ensure that pension systems are financially sustainable and how to give citizens an adequate income in retirement. Tension between these two objectives is not new, but the economic crisis with its impact on public deficits and debts and thus the need for fiscal consolidation has added urgency" (OECD 2013c, p. 9). In seeking sustainability, "The most widely discussed component of a pension system is the age at which workers can retire." (p. 26).

In the light of the presented reasons, we chose two pension reforms in which demanding citizens to make sacrifices was crucial. In both cases, raising the retirement age or delaying retirement was a core policy matter. Therefore, it ensures not only to have uncherished reform cases but to compare them from that same component and its outputs in terms of policy implementation and political positioning of the policy promoters.

2.2. Why did we choose Chile and Italy?

The main criterion for choosing those countries was the lack of research about them and, therefore, the potential contribution of this research to the field of government communication for unpopular reforms. For instance, even mainly recent, we realized that investigation abounds on high-income Central and north European countries and the United States[1] (Jerit 2008; Vis 2009, 2010; Wenzelburger 2011; Vis & van Kersbergen 2013; Elmelund-Præstekær & Emmenegger 2013; Wenzelburger & Hörisch 2016; König 2019; Tobin et al. 2021), but we found very little about southern European countries, except for some academic articles about Monti's government in Italy (Schärdel & König 2013; Belluci & Maraffi 2014; König 2016, 2019; König & Wenzelburger 2017). Those articles will serve as a starting point, putting the current research in an already existent investigation thread.

Concerning the other case, Chile, there is some research about painful reforms and the political economy around them (Bril-Mascarenhas & Maillet 2019; Niedzwiecki & Pribble 2018; Bergman 2003), but nothing related to how the government communicate them.

The other selection criterion was the diversity among the countries. They have different historical origins, political systems, policy records, and languages. Moreover, they speak Italian in Italy; in Chile, they speak Spanish, which makes communication research even more fascinating. Of course, on the other side, diversity makes it harder to look for generalizable success strategies. However, this is a challenge rather than a problem: we seek *functional equivalents* that increase acceptance in political processes (Luhmann 2012). Ergo, we should expect to encounter general conclusions that do not depend that much on culture, language, and specific political systems but on the human political experience and the leaders' ability to relate to their audiences.

This approach is certainly not new. For instance, Merton (1968, pp. 100 – 101) argues, "The currency of a functional outlook has been repeatedly noted." Then, he utilizes a beautiful and eloquent quote from the philosopher Gerhart Niemeyer to illustrate his point:

> The currency of a functionalist outlook has been repeatedly noted. For example: "The fact that in all fields of thinking the same tendency is noticeable, proves that there is now a general trend toward interpreting the world in terms of inter-connection of operation rather than in terms of separate substantial units. Albert Einstein in physics, Claude Bernard in physiology, Alexis Carrel in biology, Frank Lloyd Wright in architecture, A. N. Whitehead in philosophy, W. Koehler in psychology, Theodor Litt in sociology,

[1] The most studied countries are Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the UK, the United States, and Sweden.

> Hermann Heller in political science, B. Cardozo in law: these are men representing different cultures, different countries, different aspects of human life and the human spirit, and yet all approaching their problems with a sense of `reality' which is looking not to material substance but to functional interaction for a comprehension of phenomena.

Because of the notion of functionalist outlook, we chose the long-established storytelling and narrative methods as analysis tools (Campbell 2004; Salmon 2017; Polletta 2015; Crow & Jones 2018; Polletta et al. 2011) and we embraced the extensively-tested work on behavioral sciences and health crisis communication (CERC 2018c; Cialdini 2016; Kahneman & Tversky 2013). Those approaches center on *functional equivalents* and socially-proved experiences and reactions instead of the underlying structures of society.

2.3. What makes Chile and Italy and their reforms comparable?

Even though the countries should be diverse enough, we need them to be comparable to arrive at general conclusions. First and foremost, our two subjects are high-income countries[2] (World Bank 2022j) and members of the OECD, an organism that reunites some of the wealthiest countries in the world to share and discuss good practices for reaching and maintaining development. Of course, there are much more requisites to belong to the OECD, but the entity officially dictates that

> Countries wishing to become OECD members must demonstrate a 'readiness' and a 'commitment' to adhere to essentially two fundamental requirements: (i) democratic societies committed to rule of law and protection of human rights; and (ii) open, transparent and free-market economies (2018b).

Besides those minimum values, there are several policy standards to which country members must adhere concerning diverse matters (OECD 2018b). The issues include corporative affairs, taxes, pensions & finance; the UN's Sustainable Development Goals; employment & economic policy; environment, climate & energy; innovation & digital economy; public governance & regulation; responsible business conduct; social policy, skills & training; trade, investment & competition.

Beyond the abovementioned commonalities, there are other indicators regarding economic and social dimensions to compare Chile and Italy (see table 1).

[2] According to the World Bank, high-income countries are those whose income per capita equals or surpasses US$12,696 per year.

Table 1. Indicators to compare Chile (2018) and Italy (2011)[3]

Country	GDP per capita (current US$)	Poverty headcount ratio at $5.50 a day (2011 PPP, %)	Doing Business Ranking	Democracy Index (ranking)	Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism (percentile rank)	Government Effectiveness (percentile rank)	Public pension spending (%GDP)
Chile (2018)	15,881	4	55	23	60.85	81.73	2.8
Italy (2011)	38,649	2	80	31	54.50	66.51	15.4

Source: own elaboration based on the World Bank (2010, 2017, 2021c, 2022g), the OECD (2022c) and The Economist Intelligence Unit (2011, 2018).

As table 1 shows, the two countries are consolidated democracies -among the top fifty worldwide- and above the world average regarding political stability and government effectiveness. Besides, they had relatively low poverty rates (below 5% of the population) and were reasonably good economies for doing business (among the best eighty).

Regarding their differences, Chile's per capita income in 2018 was not even half that of Italy in 2011. Likewise, Chile’s poverty rate was twice as high as that of Italy. On the other hand, the European case’s institutions performed slightly worse than Chile’s.

Notwithstanding the differences between our choices, we have two arguments to overcome those differences. On the one hand, both countries perform well compared to the world’s average in every aspect so that we could apply our conclusions to the broad spectrum of high-income and consolidated democracies. On the other hand, we have two types of societies here: one quite rich but whose institutional functioning could be improved -Italy- and one whose institutions work well enough but still lacking in economic and social issues – Chile. Despite the latter, Chile’s compliance with the OECD standards has two folded implications: free media is assured, which is necessary to analyze the communication strategy, and socio-demographic and economic data is available and comparable to those of Italy.

Finally, neither of the cases held national elections the year their reforms started. That is of paramount consideration. If any election were to take place, we could have expected dynamics between the government and its challengers to change dramatically, affecting our analysis.

[3] For every country, we used the figures relative to the year we will be studying. Therefore, we are not simply comparing Italy to Chile, but Italy in 2011 to Chile in 2018.

2.4. What period of time shall we study and why?

We chose 12 months of analysis for each case, counting from the date each government officially announced its pension reform. The main reason lies in a previous analysis of Monti's government by König. The author compared that government with three other European countries. To do so, he adopted the following criterion:

> Turning first to the period of observation, a constraining factor is the government duration in the Italian case as its head of government [Mario Monti] was in office only for about 14 months (November 2011 to December 2012). For this case, the sample [of the date] covers the entire term. With regard to the other three cases, the observation periods should not be considerably longer in order not to impair comparability (…) (2016a, p. 546).

In addition, Bojar and others already used a 12-month window to estimate the long-term effects on approval rates from an austerity measure, another unpopular policy. "We estimate the impact via step shifts in the series for time windows of multiple lengths, allowing for short-term (3 months), medium-term (6 months) and long-term (12 months) effects in the electoral response" (2022, p. 186). In that same vein, we sustain that one year is ideal because we can observe almost every event within a society's cycle: from the start of the working year to holidays and festivities; from autumn to summer. Hence, we will try to isolate how those annual cycle stages may affect the policy promoter's approval.

To fix the starting point for each case, we are considering the government announcing the reform. By 'government,' we mean the national government (Bojar and Kriesi's 2021, p. 47). Its announcement will be the landmark of the contentious episode we are studying. Probably the following quote explains it more clearly.

> (…) we define a *contentious episode* as a 'continuous stream of interactions regarding policy-specific proposals between the government and its challengers, involving also some other actors'. In other words, for us, the key defining element of a contentious episode is the dyadic interaction between two stylised types of actors – the government and its challengers – each making claims on behalf of its own interests and/or on behalf of some other actors. The *government* for our study is the national government that can be represented by the cabinet, the head of government (the prime minister, or the president in semi-presidential regimes), by some ministers, offices or individual members of the civil service. The contentious episodes we are studying are initiated by the government which introduces a policy proposal into the public debate.

3. Case Analysis

For the case analysis, we contemplate the following five stages: i) drawing the reform status quo; ii) describing the unpopular reform in terms of public policy; iii) analyzing the promoter's political communication; iv) evaluating the communication strategy's success; v) conclusions. We will explain the stages below.

3.1. Drawing the Reform Status Quo

"According to Rochau, [the author of the concept *Realpolitik* back in 1853], successful statecraft depended on an appreciation of the historical circumstances in which the stateman operated" (Bew 2016, p. 6). Therefore, as evident as it may sound, we must draw the context where the policy occurs before analyzing how the reformer communicates it. It might be even more critical in the case of unpopular reforms or contentious episodes, using Bojar and Kriesi's concept, since previous research has shown that heads of state shy away from policies people reject (Vis 2009, 2010; Wenzelburger & Hörisch 2016; König 2016b; Jacques and Haffert 2021; Bremer & Bürgisser 2020).

We also turn to Gottweis' vision regarding argumentative policy analysis, which gives great significance to the describing the context (2007, p. 245):

> The way a certain policy problem is depicted and defined gives rise to particular scenarios of interaction and involvement, describes involved actors, a particular timing and the location for a policy development to take place. In turn, such a scenography explains and justifies why it is precisely that chosen scenography which is needed for a policy-making process to take place, to take form and to solve a problem.
>
> A government might, for example, decide that a particular desirable solution for a policy problem is best attained if it capitalizes from trust in certain of its key policy makers; conversely, it might want to keep issues of trust and emotions on the backburner and create a mainly rational decision-making process around an issue. It might be also an issue of bringing in or leaving out particular actors in a policy setting.

Hence, following König's (2016b) recommendations and Passarelli and Del Ponte's (2020), and Alesina and Passarelli's (2019) conceptualization, we will describe the status quo our pension reforms sought to change. That will allow us to understand each strategy and its outcomes. According to König, we should consider at least three elements when describing the contexts:

3.1.1. Political-institutional Context

As König states, "Thoughts on how the political and institutional context may condition the use of reform communication by creating incentives, opportunities and limitations" (2016b, p. 179). From that assumption, we should examine the political system and its power dispersion, the government's political stance (i.e., left or right), and how competitive the analyzed country's democracy and media system are. Then, to complete the picture of the status quo, we added some historical and immediate political circumstances explaining how each country arrived at its respective pension reform.

3.1.2. Political-cultural Factors

This refers to the society's pre-existing ideas, norms, and values wherein the reforms occurred (Blumler & Gurevitch 2004). As König (p. 180) sentences: "In order to be convincing, the communication of (unpopular) reforms, it is commonly presumed, needs to resonate with pre-existing ideas, norms and values." Likewise, Crow and Jones (2018, p. 221) claim that "One of the most consistent N[arrative] P[olicy] F[ramework] findings is that whether or not a narrative is congruent with an individual's values or beliefs matters in terms of how the narrative influences the recipient's interpretation of the narrative."

To describe the political-cultural panorama of each country, we turned to several sources:

- Political, sociological, and historical bibliography regarding each case.
- Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International).
- Democracy Index (The Economist Intelligence Unit).
- Trust in the polity, political institutions, and satisfaction with democracy (OECD's Government at a Glance).
- Political, societal, and religious values (World Values Survey).
- Media control (Freedom House).
- Governance Indicators (World Bank).

3.1.3. Socioeconomic Conditions

This would be the last dimension to characterize each reform's status quo. Knowing each country's socioeconomic conditions at the moment of the reform will allow us to determine whether the contentious episodes took place amidst an economic crisis (Vis 2009; Henriksson 2007). Accordingly, understanding the country's inhabitants' material well-being will be the baseline to answer the following questions: What was at stake with the reform? What could the people lose or win if pursuing it? How did each government cope with that?

Again, we used some indicators available for our cases:

- Human Development Index (UNDP).
- GDP growth (IMF).
- Unemployment rate[4] (*DG EMPL*, for Italy; *Casen Survey*, for Chile).

[4] We use a part of the Bojar et al.'s methodology:

> For the economic context, we employ the most commonly used measure in the eco- nomic voting literature: unemployment. We contend that it is the trend in unemployment, rather than its level, that best captures the

- Inflation (IMF).
- Fiscal deficit (OECD).
- Social spending (OECD).
- Poverty (World Bank).
- Inequality (World Bank).
- Demographics (World Bank).
- Doing Business Ranking (World Bank).

3.2. Describing the Unpopular Reform in Terms of Public Policy

After drawing the status quo, we describe each pension reform as a policy. Pointing out its objectives and the means to achieve them will allow us to explain why they were unpopular, which flanks they left open to challengers, and how the spokespersons dealt with those. Additionally, it will enable us to compare the two experiences easier.

Beyond technical implications, we will paraphrase experts' analyses from national records, supranational organisms' policy briefings, and public administration partitions' documents. While doing it, we will identify the reforms' objectives using the 2013(c) OECD's *Key goals of pension reform* (p. 18) as an analytical frame:

> 1. Pension system coverage in both mandatory and voluntary schemes.
> 2. Adequacy of retirement benefits.
> 3. The financial sustainability and affordability of pension promises to taxpayers and contributors.
> 4. Incentives that encourage people to work for longer parts of their lifetimes and to save more while in employment.
> 5. Administrative efficiency to minimise pension system running costs.
> 6. The diversification of retirement income sources across providers (public and private), the three pillars (public, industry-wide and personal), and financing forms (pay-as-you-go and funded).
>
> A seventh, residual, category covers other types of change, such as temporary measures and those designed to stimulate economic recovery.

Of course, estimating the economic impact and the weight of each goal is not the objective of this research. Nevertheless, identifying each reform's goals will provide some notions regarding the main costs, benefits, and sacrifices the stakeholders were asked to endure (Jerit 2008; Henriksson 2007). It will also make the two cases more comparable.

current and future prospects of the economic climate and serves as a more appropriate reference point for electoral accountability. We thus use the annual change in unemployment between t0 and t−12 as our first contextual variable (2022, p. 186).

3.3. Analyzing the Promoter's Political Communication

After characterizing the status quo (section 3.1) and the policy aspect of the reform (section 3.2), we arrive at the core of this research: the communication analysis. We will approach that issue from three perspectives: rhetoric analysis, narrative analysis, and persuasion principles in communication. Regarding the first, we will use politolinguistics and the most commonly studied techniques in unpopular policy communication. Concerning the second and third perspectives, we propose an analytical model combining the narrative or storytelling analyses and Cialdini's persuasion principles.

Before running the analysis mentioned above, we describe some of the speeches' quantitative data: their word quantity, estimated time length[5], and how those statistics distribute among the speeches' sample. Additionally, using the Sinclair and Rockwell's (2023) Voyant Tools free-access text analysis software, we got the speeches' most frequent words[6] and the relationships among the most used terms. We expect to comprehensively assess the policy promoter's communication performance by applying such varied methods along with our proposed qualitative analytical model.

3.3.1. Understanding the Promoter's Political Rhetoric

For us, politolinguistics is the fittest methodology to analyze a policy promoter's rhetoric. As Reisigl (2008a, p. 99) argues: "The politolinguistics approach is more function and persuasion oriented than other attempts to analyze political rhetoric. It establishes a transdisciplinary conjunction of disciplines and integrates argumentation theory as well as other components of rhetoric."

Based on Riesigl's definition, first, we examine the speeches' macro-structures: "The ideal typical rhetorical macro-structure of speeches is formed by the succession of the speech parts of (1) introduction (*exordium*), (2) narration (*narratio*) and argumentation (*argumentatio*), and (3) conclusion (*peroratio*)" (2008b, p. 253). That is the archetypal structure, although we will see that discourse not always develops in that way. Secondly, we combine the most typical dimensions of politolinguistics discourse analysis -nomination, predication, argumentation schemes, perspectivation, and mitigation vs. intensification- with the most studied strategies when communicating unpopular policy: framing, blame

[5] As we saw in Neale and Ely (2007, chapter Time and Length), regarding the optimal speech length, "an often-cited rule-of-thumb is that the average 20-minute speech contains about 2,600 words, or, about 130 per minute."
[6] The most mentioned words are usually "stop words." Dr. Kavita Ganesan (2023) sustains that the concept includes noun determiners, coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions. In general, stop words are elements that do not add value to the text analysis since they do not alter the meaning of the discourse content. Therefore, researchers do not count these words when analyzing a text corpus to get cleaner and more meaningful text data.

avoidance, and *Scheherezade's* strategy. Finally, combining all these resorts, we ended with Table 2's analytical model.

Table 2. Politolinguistics analytical categories

Strategy	Question	Objective	Device
Nomination	How are social actors - either individual, persons or groups- linguistically constructed by being named?	Construction of in-groups and out-groups	Membership categorization: biological, naturalizing and depersonalizing metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches (*pars pro toto, totum pro parte*)
Predication	What positive or negative traits, qualities and features are attributed to the linguistically constructed social actors?	Labeling social actors more or less positively or negatively, deprecatorily or appreciatively	Stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits, implicit and explicit predicates
Argumentation schemes	Through what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify or delegitimize claims containing specific nominations and predications? (for example, claims of discrimination or others)	Justification of positive or negative attributions	*Topoi* used to justify political inclusion or exclusion, discrimination or preferential treatment, and type of argument
Perspectivation or framing	From what perspective or point of view are these nominations, predications and argumentations expressed?	Expressing involvement positioning speaker's point of view to control the agenda-setting	Reporting, description, narration or quotation of events and utterances
Mitigation vs Intensification	Are the respective utterances (nominations, predications, argumentations) articulated overtly, are they intensified or are they mitigated?	Modifying the epistemic status of a proposition	Intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force or utterances
Blame avoidance	Do the statements take the blame away from the speaker, or those they represent, by blaming others instead?	Exonerating the policy promoter to prevent them from public opinion and electoral sanctions	Identifying a scapegoat and blaming they for the sacrifice the unpopular policy entails
Scheherezade's	Are the utterances exaggerating some aspect of reality to create fear and deviate attention?	Deviating attention from a particular problem to prevent the policy promoter from public opinion and electoral sanctions	Inventing or exaggerating a story to make people worry and turn their attention to it

Source: own elaboration based on the work of Reisigl (2008a); Wodak (2008); Lilleker (2014); Vis (2009; 2010); Salmon (2017).

Regarding the sampling method and following Professor Enrico Graziani's[7] recommendations, we took two cases for every speaker. In the Chilean case, there was one speaker, President Sebastián Piñera. Instead, in the case of Italy, we have two speakers, President of the Council Mario Monti and Minister of Labor and Social Policies Elsa Fornero. Consequently, we analyzed six speeches in total. We selected each speaker's first ever recorded speech containing the word "pension" pension-related terms in each case – three in total. The idea was to observe how our speakers presented themselves and the unpopular policy from the first moment - the first impression sets the mood.

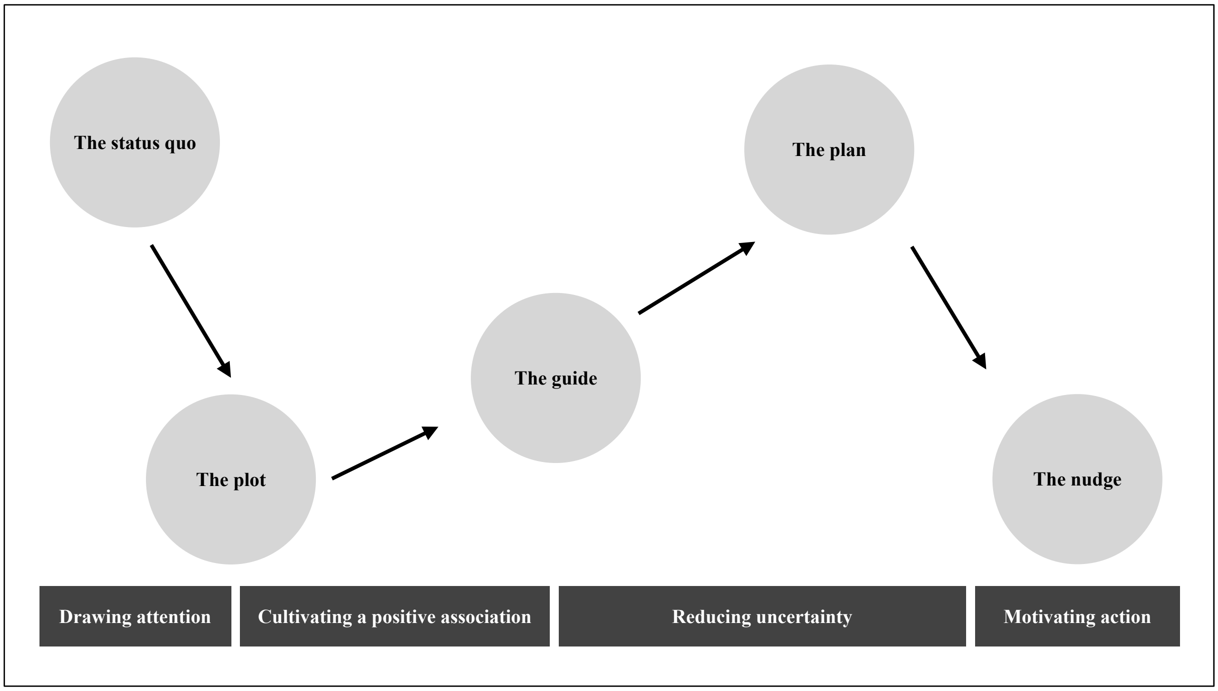
For the remaining three speeches, the criteria diverged. Regarding Piñera, we used a discourse given six months after introducing the bill in Congress. It was a critical occasion because the President expected the Congress members to approve the reform earlier, so the speech centers on the pension reform and the executive's call to action. Concerning Monti, we chose an intervention he made eight months after assuming. It was a press conference about the spending review, so the audience and the tone were quite different from his first speech – the inaugural discourse to the Senate. Lastly, for Fornero, we also opted for a speech she gave eight months after her first. In that opportunity, she addressed the Senate regarding the doubts around her labor market reform.

3.3.2. Assessing the Persuasive Potential of the Promoter's Communication

Having done the contentious episode analysis, we will study their political rhetoric. For that, we use the scheme we developed in chapter I, Theoretical Framework, recoursing to several authors:

[7] Professor and Researcher at the Faculty of Political Studies, Sapienza Università di Roma, Italy.

Figure 1. Unpopular Policy Narrative Model and Cialdini's Phases for the Persuasion Process



Source: own elaboration based on the work of Crow & Jones (2018), Polletta et al. (2015), Polletta (2015), Thaler & Sunstein (2009), and Cialdini (2007; 2016).

Then, we must answer the questions in Table 3 to check if the policy promoters used some of the narrative and persuasive elements in their official speeches.

Table 3. Operationalization of the Unpopular Policy Communication's Persuasive Potential

<table>
<tr><th>Phases</th><th>Concepts</th><th>Dimensions</th><th>Questions</th><th>Attributes</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">DRAWING ATTENTION</td><td>Narrative</td><td>Setting the status quo</td><td>1. Are there elements that set a status quo-altering crisis scenario that make the unpopular policy necessary?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td>Persuasion principles</td><td>Confirmation bias</td><td>2. Does the narrator make concrete examples about the problem to help the audience to internalize the problem and mobilize their leaning toward the narrative?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">CULTIVATING A POSITIVE ASSOCIATION</td><td rowspan="2">Narrative</td><td rowspan="2">The plot</td><td>3. Is there a hero/victim suffering from something?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td>4. Is there any villain to blame for the hero's suffering?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Persuasion principles</td><td>Reciprocation</td><td>5. Does the narrator make any meaningful, unexpected and/or customized gesture to the audience?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td>Liking</td><td>6. Is the narrator similar to their audience, flattering to them, and/or seen as authentic?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
</table>

REDUCING UNCERTAINTY	Narrative	The guide	7. Is the government compassionate about the hero’s situation?	1 = Yes 0 = No
		The plan	8. Does the unpopular policy proposal (the plan’s *what*) restore the status quo’s stability?	1 = Yes 0 = No
			9. Is there a clear policy solution (the plan’s *how*)?	1 = Yes 0 = No
	Persuasion principles	Social proof	10. Does the narrator include social validity and feasibility arguments to convince others? Are others like the audience going through the same?	1 = Yes 0 = No
		Authority	11. Does the narrator turn to trustworthy experts or well-reputed sources to make the policy more persuasive?	1 = Yes 0 = No
MOTIVATING ACTION	Narrative	The nudge	12. Is it clear what the hero and the veto players/challengers should do stick to the plan?	1 = Yes 0 = No
			13. Is it clear what would happen if the hero and the veto players/challengers do not stick to the plan?	1 = Yes 0 = No
	Persuasion principles	Scarcity[8]	14. Did the narrator present their policy as a unique opportunity?	1 = Yes 0 = No
		Consistency	15. Did the narrator remind the audience how the current requests correspond to the audience’s or the speaker’s past actions?	1 = Yes 0 = No

Source: own elaboration based on the work of Crow & Jones (2018), Miller (2017); Polletta et al. (2011), Polletta (2015), Thaler & Sunstein (2009), and Cialdini (2007; 2016).

Based on Table 3 Questions, we will manually classify the speeches’ fragments corresponding to some of the persuasive resorts. Here we will count each time the speakers employed one of the resorts. Therefore, one speech can contain several persuasive mentions. Then, upon Table 3 scores (column “Attributes”), we will generate two indexes to rate the communication’s *persuasive potential*. The first is the sum of the values to indicate whether each checklist element was present. In this case, we will get values from 0 (none of the elements were present in the discourse) to 15 (all the elements were present in the discourse). In such a way, we can assess the *General Persuasive Potential* of every speech.

The second index, the speaker’s *Persuasive Preferences*, ponders the importance the speaker gave to each element in relative terms. For this, we will count every time they included each element (for instance, in one peroration, they can use 20 times *social*

[8] Although it may seem redundant, we initially wanted to repeat question 12 for the scarcity dimension. It is a good sign that very distant authors, such as Cialdini, Thaler and Sunstein, and experts in policy narrative converge on this. As we saw in the Theoretical Framework of the current research, individual action within a crisis context stems from Kahnemann and Tversky's seminal prospective theory. Finally, we discarded re-doing the question not to alter the final index calculation.

proof resorts but none of the *consistency*) and divide that by the total of times they use any technique. Then, we multiply that by 100 to get a percentage within the persuasive potential pool of each discourse. For example, Monti used some checklist elements in his first speech 73 times. Of those, five corresponded to setting the status quo of the reform (question 1 of Table 3). Then, we obtain:

$$(5 / 73) \times 100 = 6.8\%$$

From that, we can affirm that 6.8% percent of Monti's first speech's narrative and persuasive elements referred to setting the status quo. This relative and standardized index allows us, on the one hand, to compare each discourse to other discourses and, on the other hand, to correlate the persuasive potential variable with other variables, such as government or presidential approval ratings. We are aware that approval rates might not be the best variable to correlate. A speech can have multiple impacts -not only to get citizens to support more or less their representatives- and approval ratings are affected by several dimensions -not solely by a unique reform's communication.

After obtaining our two indexes -the *General Persuasive Potential* and the speaker's *Persuasive Preferences*- we will run *r* Pearson correlation analyses to determine if there is any significant relationship between the use of the elements we pointed out and the success of the reform. The following section explains how to assess the communication strategy's success.

The speeches' selection was different than in the rhetoric analysis. Since we are considering 12 months for the analysis, we study at least a monthly public intervention for each case of study, namely, 12 for the Italian case and 12 for the Chilean case.

3.4. Evaluating the Communication Strategy's Success

As we can infer from the research questions, we want to establish is there is any relationship between the unpopular policy promoter's communication strategy and the promoter's attempt success. For the latter we considered the government approval rates, the vetoes and passes in the legislative process and reform implementation, and the government continuity in power. In the subsequent paragraphs, we will explain why.

3.4.1. Effective Implementation of the Reform

To weigh to what extent the communication strategy was effective, the first variable we will observe is getting the reform passed through the legislative process and, afterward, implemented. We chose this variable for two reasons. Firstly, because it is of easy access – whether Monti and Piñera passed their bills and implemented their reforms is public information. Secondly, there is evidence that "getting the things done" is essential for voters to assess their president's competence regarding other aspects of the presidential figure. Newman (2004) was intrigued by US President Bill Clinton's approval not collapsing after his sex scandal with Monica Lewinsky. As the author concludes:

> Assessments of Clinton's ability to get things done and whether he shares one's values both significantly affect approval. A ten-point increase in the percentage of people who thought Clinton could get things done would immediately translate into about three additional points of approval, while a ten-point decline in the percentage of people who thought Clinton shared their values would immediately depress approval by about four points. (p. 444).

Although we will look at the approval ratings in another section, getting things done is relevant for voters. Likewise, it demonstrates the executive's capacity to mobilize resources to accomplish particular goals – obtaining a *yes* in the communicative process (Luhmann 2012).

3.4.2. Office keeping

We consider it necessary but insufficient to study approval rating and reform implementation as dependent variables. Jacques and Haffer (2021, p. 195) said, "The main weakness of the approval measure is that it may be considered as 'cheap talk'. To put it bluntly, governments care about re-election, not about approval". This coincides with the notion of *Realpolitik* we discussed before: "Ideas were important in politics —increasingly so, in the democratic age— but their importance was to be judged by their political force rather than their purity or elegance" (Bew 2016, p. 6).

Then, if we turn to unpopular policy experts' judgment, Wenzelburger (2011, p. 1154) argues that

> (…) when analysing political strategy, we should focus on the agenda-setter in a certain policy field – in this case the minister of finance – and begin exploring her preferences. What are her preferences? From a public choice perspective one can argue that politicians in governments – or, in our case, ministers of finance – have two main utility-generating objectives: the implementation of 'their' policy programme (policy-seeking) and their re-election (office-keeping)

In that same vein,

> Following Parsons, Luhmann furthermore focuses on the differentiation of society in relation to symbolic media: each subsystem generates a specific code that allows it to speed up the communication by reducing complexity selectively. For example, the science system communicates according to Luhmann insofar as its communications are assessed in terms of their truth value, while in political communications power provides another medium of communication (Leydesdorff 2000, p. 280).

There is evidence that painful reforms can frustrate political aspirations, like re-election: “Based on experimental evidence from five European countries, Hübscher, Sattler and Wagner (2018) show that governments’ chances of re-election decrease when they propose fiscal austerity measures” (Bojar et al. 2022, p. 183).

3.4.3. Approval rates

As we detailed in chapter I, according to various scholars, what makes a policy unpopular is its potential adverse effect on its promoter's support. Moreover, the experts in the field have found approval rates to work as a dependent variable of the communication strategy (see Jerit 2008; Wenzelburger & Hörisch 2016; König & Wenzelburger 2017; Jacques & Haffert 2021; Bojar et al. 2022). As Erikson (cited in Jerit 2008, p. 12) claims: "Changes in aggregate opinion, when they occur, reflect measured movements in response to real world events, such as the argument and counter-argument of major policy debates."

Then, suppose we seek to find the most effective way to communicate an unpopular policy. In that case, approval rates should indicate if the public opinion backs or rejects how the promoter performs. Those rates, being a slightly inaccurate indicator -knowing the precise support to the pension reform would be the optimal indicator- should provide a proxy for the general promoter’s support. Indeed, Koliastasis (2020, p. 238) sustains that “Premiers’ popularity actually tends to be considered as the core political resource, allowing executive leaders to maintain or strengthen their political authority or to achieve.” Nevertheless, we must also remember that this variable is far from perfect. The author alludes to the famous George C. Edwards study that shows that

> Having explored the impact of 107 presidential nationwide live televised addresses delivered from January 1981 up to January 2003, he has concluded that only 13 of them had a significant positive effect on presidential approval, 6 of them were negative, while 88 failed to change president’s ratings at all (Koliastasis 2020, p. 238).

Additionally, we must consider that “in the parliamentary majoritarian systems of Europe (…) party approval is the key measure of success” (p. 238). Some of the most prestigious pollsters show political party’s approval ratings instead of the Premier’s (POLITICO 2023). However, we stayed with the executive’s approval to compare Monti and Piñera with the same rule. Therefore, we must be highly cautious when reflecting on the final results of this study.

Lastly, Jung and Oh (2019, p. 251) sustain that “a positive evaluation influences the success of the incumbent party in passing legislation (Barrett and Eshbaugh-Soha, 2007; Canes- Wrone and de Marchi, 2002; Rivers and Rose, 1985) and achieving reelection (Abramowitz, 2008; Newman and Ostrom, 2002).” Therefore, popularity is expected to be closely related to the other two success metrics: policy implementation and keeping office.

What is interesting about the approval rating regarding the other two success variables is its numeric character. That will allow us to run new *r* Pearson correlation analyses using our previous indexes: the *General Persuasive Potential* and the speaker's *Persuasive Preferences* (section 3.3.2.). This way, we can estimate some covariance between approval rates and the speakers' communication persuasiveness. That covariance could, ultimately, suggest some causality, but that will not be part of the analysis of the current research.

3.5. Conclusions

The last step is to establish the lessons from each study case. Here, we briefly tell what happened after the 12-month analysis: Did the government implement the reform? How did each premier end in terms of public approval? Were other contextual elements, like other reforms or external events, that may have affected the study subjects' outcomes? Upon that, we attempt to answer the research questions, identifying best and bad practices for government unpopular policy communication.

Finally, following Merton's contribution, we analyzed the unintended consequences of each case and how they change given the specific contexts. The motivation to do this, stems from one of the author's warnings regarding functional analysis:

> Review of the second postulate of universal functionalism, which holds that all persisting forms of culture are inevitably functional, resulted in other considerations which must be met by a codified approach to functional interpretation. It appeared not only that we must be prepared to find dysfunctional as well as functional consequences of these forms but that the theorist will ultimately be confronted with the difficult problem of developing an organon for assessing the net balance of consequences if his research is to have bearing on social technology. Clearly, expert advice based only on the appraisal of a limited, and perhaps arbitrarily selected, range of consequences to be expected as a result of contemplated action, will be subject to frequent error and will be properly judged as having small merit. (1968, p. 90).

Although we aim to find universal conclusions from our analysis, we should avoid oversimplifying those. We designed a comprehensive methodology to prevent the *arbitrarily selected* elements. However, we must also examine the *range of consequences to be expected*, suggest ways to improve our methodology, and propose new veins of research for policy communication. That last point is vital to notice overgeneralization in the final sentences of the thesis.

4. Sources

4.1. National Congress or Parliament Public Archives

We adopted more experienced researchers' sources to collect data, such as the session acts, the reform bills and the government's leaders' speeches in each study case. We chose these documents following Jacques and Haffert's (2021, p. 196) conclusion:

> The main independent variable [when analyzing unpopular policies] relies on the narrative approach to fiscal consolidation, which consults policy documents such as budget speeches, reports from national fiscal authorities and from international organizations (IMF, OECD, and World Bank) to identify the precise amount of tax increases and spending cuts implemented to reduce budget deficits, relative to a baseline of no policy change.

By presenting this authorized and public data, we guarantee at least two things. On the one side, every figure and statement are official and therefore irrefutable. On the other side, it allows other researchers to access open and available data for themselves.

Regarding the presidential-ministerial speeches and public interventions we had divergence experiences. In the case of Chile, we did find all the speeches in the Presidency website. In the case of Italy, we gathered the material from different sources. Tables 4 and 5 present the electronic links to the material.

Table 4. Sebastián Piñera 12-Speech Sample

Speech ID	Link
181028_P	https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discurso.aspx?id=85692
181214_P	https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discurso.aspx?id=88676
190111_P	https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discurso.aspx?id=89797
190118_P	https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discurso.aspx?id=90498
190228_P	https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discurso.aspx?id=91886
090319_P	https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discurso.aspx?id=92280
190502_P	https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discurso.aspx?id=95142
190506_P	https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discurso.aspx?id=95213
190601_P	https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discurso.aspx?id=96642
190613_P	https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discurso.aspx?id=96929
190926_P	https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discurso.aspx?id=102450
191016_P	https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discurso.aspx?id=103681

Source: own elaboration.

Table 5. Mario Monti and Elsa Fornero 12-Speech Sample

Speech ID	Link
111117_M	https://www.repubblica.it/politica/2011/11/17/news/monti_al_senato_per_la_fiducia_il_testo_integrale_del_discorso-25168289/
111229_F	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3Z5tfiJNf8
120126_F	https://sitiarcheologici.lavoro.gov.it/Priorita/Documents/InterventoFornero_questionefemminile_26gennaio2012.pdf
120220_M	https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/346180/il-presidente-del-consiglio-mario-monti-incontra-la-comunita-finanziaria?i=465484
120308_F	https://sitiarcheologici.lavoro.gov.it/Ministero/ilMinistro/Documents/interventoQuirinale8marzoMinistroForneropdf.pdf
120516_M	https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/352510/le-conclusioni-della-missione-annuale-del-fondo-monetario-internazionale-di?i=430503
120517_F	https://sitiarcheologici.lavoro.gov.it/Ministero/ilMinistro/Documents/Guadalajara_G20_sessioneincontropartisociali_EF_fv.pdf
120619_F	https://www.lavoroediritti.com/?dl_name=19062012_Senato_discorso_Fornero1112.pdf
120706_M	https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/356306/consiglio-dei-ministri-approvato-il-decreto-legge-sulla-spending-review?i=413232
120819_M	https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/358844/meeting-rimini-2012-i-giovani-per-la-crescita-incontro-inaugurale-xxxiii-meeting?i=404712
120918_F	https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/360309/presentazione-del-rapporto-sul-mercato-del-lavoro-2011-2012
121010_F	https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/362399/commissione-lavoro-previdenza-sociale-del-senato

Source: own elaboration.

4.2. Country-specialized Literature Regarding the Political and Cultural Context

As expected, we use a plethora of material to contextualize each government's context. Nevertheless, we did select some "bedside books" which we turned to continuously during the entire research for their significance and completeness:

- Mario Monti's Italy: *Il Sistema Politico Italiano*, by Carlo Guarnieri, and *Italian Democracy: How it Works*, by Giancarlo Pasquino.
- Sebastián Piñera's Chile: Social Revolt in Chile: *Triggering Factors and Possible Outcomes*, edited by Carlos Peña and Patricio Silva.

4.3. Secondary Data from Open Databases

Lastly, we ought to gather and systematize each country's economic, policy, and social data to characterize the context surrounding each reform before, during, and afterward. Then, we have chosen supranational organisms, databases, and pollsters. We detailed the sources in section 3.1.

4.4. Key Agents' Perspectives: Problem-centered Expert Interviews

We attempted to recreate, as faithfully as possible, the communication strategies we studied as they occurred. Then, after looking at the available data, we turned to *key agents* involved in them, exploring some underlying or 'backstage' details of the strategies' design and execution. One approach could be the Problem-centered Expert Interviews (PCI) (Döringer 2021). Although this qualitative technique takes some aspects from the expert interview, it widens its scope when choosing the interviewees and the exploration topics.

Regarding the interviewees, the PCI shift from the traditional *expert* to the *key agent.* Let us show the differences using some of Döringer's statements. The first (2021, p. 267) defines the criteria social researchers use to pick experts:

> According to Meuser and Nagel (1991), experts can be defined as persons who are responsible for the development, implementation, or control of a solution, or persons who have privileged access to people or decision-making processes. The theory-generating expert interview draws upon these considerations and describes experts as persons with specific knowledge who hold a certain status or exercise a function in decision-making processes in a particular field of action (Bogner & Menz, 2009, 2018)

This another one, instead, shows what we should understand by key agents:

> What connects these various types of theoretical concepts [of key agents] is the fact that they offer an analytical perspective on individuals or groups of individuals that are deemed to make 'the' difference within policy, institutional, or organizational change processes. They manage to influence decision-making processes decisively, by having special characteristics, capabilities (e.g., persistence, creativity, persuasiveness), and knowledge (Petridou et al., 2015). While experts are characterized as having the knowledge and the position 'to structure a particular field of social action in a meaningful way' (Bogner et al., 2018, p. 655), key agents take an 'outstanding' structural and social position that allows their opinions to be heard over those of others. s. This does not imply that their power is necessarily tied to a professional or official position in decision-making processes. (p. 270)

Then, "it can be concluded that every key agent can be defined as an expert, but not every expert that is interviewed can be identified as a key agent" (p. 270). As we said before, the key agent is more than an expert. It is someone who also influences the decision-makers, or that is a decision-maker themselves.

Concerning the topical dimension, the expert interviews focus more on specific and technical areas of interest concerning the topical specter. Therefore, the questions are narrower and knowledge or competence oriented. Instead, in the PCI, we expect the key agents to provide biographical narratives about their concourse in the episodes we want to explore: "Based on a sensitising theoretical framework, the researcher should actively encourage participants to tell their stories. By doing so, the method additionally accommodates the preconditions that shape the interviewees' orientations and opinions" (Döringer 2021, p. 268). Then, the main counterpoint between the traditional expert interview and the PCI is that "While the theory-generating expert interview contributes to the analysis of the social relevance of implicit expert knowledge, PCI highlights individual perspectives by providing an interview technique that encourages the interviewees to unfold their personal relevancies and perceptions" (p. 269).

Unfortunately, we could not get any interviews for the Italian case. However, we did get a European approach to the problem of promoting unpopular reforms and communicating in times of crisis, aiming to compensate for the Italian expert absence. Therefore, the interviewees were:

- *Gonzalo Blumel, former General Secretary of the Presidency of Chile*. Mr. Blumel's most critical task was to send President Piñera's bills to the National Congress and follow up the political strategies and negotiations on behalf of the president. Additionally, he was in charge of coordinating the cabinet's communication deployment.

- *George Papaconstantinou, former Minister of Finance of Greece*. Mr. Papaconstantinou had a protagonist role in the Greek financial crisis of 2010. He negotiated the credit conditions for his country with the European Union and the IMF while implementing a painful and ambitious austerity plan for his compatriots.

Through Mr. Papaconstantinou and Mr. Blumel's testimonies, we tested the literature's findings from their practical and first-person experience. That contributed to realistic communication analyses of the Chilean and Italian cases.

5. Limitations of the Research Methodology

As with any research methodology, ours present some limitations. We detected at least three before running the investigation. In the first place, although we chose comparable cases, their polities, culture, languages, and necessities are different, so we have to be highly cautious when pointing out our conclusions, as Merton warns.

In the second place, we left social media and news media data out of the research. Some may argue that political communication analysis must consider those means since they reach far more people than traditional media. However, even if we find them of utmost importance, our referents in unpopular policy communication have opted to study traditional broadcast and public record speeches and interventions. At least we know our investigation design has been proven. Additionally, our interest is to study the source, not the medium of the speeches. Perhaps, including media analysis for this topic should be the next step in later research.

Lastly, we could make at least two improvements to enrich our analysis. One is to include further key agents' perspectives, and the other is to study the contentious episodes throughout the policy debate, comprising the actors and concrete actions involved. We will explain both approaches in the following sections.

5.1. Mapping and Analyzing the Reforms' Contentious Episodes

Based on media records, one could identify the main actors involved in the policy cycle, their actions, and the consequences they provoked. Following Bojar and Kriesi's (2021, p. 54) work, media content could be categorized to determine the following:

> *The actor undertaking the action* (both in terms of the three-way stylised actor categories and in terms of their institutional characteristics (e.g., opposition parties, supranational actors, trade unions etc.).
>
> *Date of the action*. To establish the specific date we relied on the content of the news article as well as the publication date. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the articles provided explicit information on the date of the action relative to the publication date by such references as 'last Wednesday', or 'yesterday'. In a few cases where no such explicit reference was forthcoming (such as 'two weeks ago' or 'last month') we relied on a consistent coding rule and used the middle of the designated time frame as the action date.
>
> *Procedural and substantive dimensions of the actions* based on a detailed set of action repertoires that we ended up recoding to the three broader categories for each actor type as introduced in the theory section. The procedural dimension refers to the relationship between two actors. It can range from conflictive to cooperative. The substantive dimension refers to the substance of the actors' claims which they address to each other. It can range from rejection to acceptance. The only exception in this regard is mediating acts of third parties as in such cases no clear distinction can be made between the policy and the actors' actions.
>
> In the case of contentious action by challengers, the *form of mobilisation*.
>
> *Action triggers*, that is the preceding action in the action chain that triggered the action in question.

Table 6 shows a slightly reformulated model of the researchers to study the actors' dynamics during a policy debate.

Table 6. Mapping the Contentious Episodes of Unpopular Policy Communication Strategies[9]

Category	Attributes	Utility
1. Actor	• Government; • Challenger; • Third party.	To clarify the forces in tension and assign a univocal responsible to any relevant action or event during the policy process.
2. Date of action	dd/mm/yyyy	To set a temporal line and isolate some notable events when necessary. Time is crucial, and determining it will enable us to establish the following: • A cause-consequence scheme for the communication strategies. • The tipping points that could have altered the government or the challengers' strategy.
3. Nature of the action	• Cooperative; • Conflictive; • Unclear[10].	The nature of the action specifies the outcome of performing one strategy or the other through the policy process and the way government representatives convey it.
4. Action triggers	(Description of the action)	This will permit us to directly evaluate the government's strategy execution from a single event. That facilitates assessing precise actions instead of always looking at the general picture.

Source: own elaboration based on Bojar and Kriesi (2021, p. 18).

How to choose the episodes? Suppose we treat every and each one of the government's statements and their consequences as an episode. Then, we could make at least two mistakes: on the one hand, to select irrelevant events with no valuable information regarding the research questions. On the other hand, we could overestimate an event's importance due to our own biases. In this regard, Bojar and Kriesi plumped for those episodes with the more extensive international media coverage. As they argue:

> (…) we took special care not to select episodes by the dependent variable (…), that is by the extent of popular mobilisation that the policy proposals entailed. Instead, we chose those episodes that received the most extensive immediate coverage by the international press, suggesting heightened importance even for an international audience and by extension making them the most likely candidates for 'policy proposals at risk' (2021, p. 53).

It is essential to consider, though, that those scholars studied only major European economies -Italy included- whose issues tend to affect the economy worldwide. Since that it is certainly

[9] We omitted the fourth step the scholars applied -*the form of mobilization*- because they wanted to measure, besides the nature of the action, its intensity. Nevertheless, in this case, that is not of interest to our research.
[10] Since third parties can act as mediators, neutral spectators.

not the case for Chile, we also include the episodes those governments broadcasted nationally, even if worldwide newspapers of records did not cover them.

Ultimately, we opted not to follow this analysis due to the complexity involved. Besides analyzing the promoter's discourse -the core of this work- Bojar and Kriesi's approach entails extracting and processing enormous amounts of data. The task was too demanding for a one-researcher thesis.

CHAPTER III

STUDY CASES: MARIO MONTI'S PENSION REFORM IN ITALY (2011 – 2012)

By the time a professor of economics at Bocconi University and former EU Commissioner, Mario Monti was appointed as prime minister of Italy in November 2011 by the left-wing president of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano. Monti's cabinet did not have even one member of the parliament, and Monti himself was a non-partisan head of the executive. According to Pasquino (2020, p. 143), the designation enjoyed transversal support in the parliament. When Napolitano disarmed the predecessor of Monti's government, the last one of Silvio Berlusconi, he wanted to avoid anticipated elections and "to empower a government capable of making a number of unpopular reforms in the full knowledge that a non-partisan government could achieve a lot, partly because it did not have to be exposed to the risks of electoral accountability" (2020, p. 143).

Monti's main task was to counterbalance the fiscal deficit. His background in economics was essential to gaining the parliament's support, and he also acted as minister of Economy of his government (Corriere Della Sera 2011a). To revert to the adverse Italian scenario, he resolved to undertake the country's fiscal consolidation with a comprehensive package of measures (Guarnieri 2016, chapter La Repubblica dei premi), which literature commonly describes as unpopular policies (Vis 2010; Wenzelburger & Hörisch 2016; König 2016b; Jacques & Haffert 2021). Furthermore, Monti contemplated an aggressive pension reform, wherein increasing the retirement age was crucial. As said in the chapter Methodology, raising the retirement age was the most politically challenging measure to make the countries' pension systems more sustainable, according to the OECD (2013c). Therefore, Monti's case fits perfectly with our research questions.

In the ongoing chapter, we will analyze the most fundamental traits of the Italian context -both the historical and the immediate- and the reform in question to understand the status quo the unpopular policy faced. Finally, we will peruse Monti's communication strategy to carry out his policies and that strategy's outcomes.

1. Drawing the Reform Status Quo

Monti's government was the third of Italy's so-called technocratic government (*governo tecnico*). Such a government arises when the President of the Republic (Italy elects a

President of the Republic and a President of the Government) asks a distinguished trajectory person to fix a critical situation in the country. In Monti's government case, the crisis subprime of 2008 and an unwise economic policy had dragged Italy to a profound financial crisis. As Papaconstantinou narrates (2016), the crisis hit almost every Southern Europe economy, and the world had seen Greece struggling with the European Union -particularly with Germany and France- and the International Monetary Fund to prevent a default. That was unprecedented for the bloc. Consequently, the situation was critical. The Monti government had no chance of failing.

Behind this critical scenario lie a series of different elements, both historical and circumstantial, that we will try to draw on in the subsequent sections.

1.1. Political-Institutional Context

1.1.1. General Conditions: Italy's Political System and Historical Antecedents

Since 1948's constitution, Italy has been a parliamentary democracy, wherein the parliament elects the government (Pasquino, 2020). Even though most European democracies are parliamentary, Italy's "revolves around three institutions: Parliament, the Presidency and the government. In fact, in no other European parliamentary democracy has the Presidency been in a position to affect and, in some circumstances, effectively to steer the course of national politics" (Pasquino, p. 16). This triad and the understanding of the president of the Republic's figure are crucial for our research. However, Italian democracy did have in common with its European peers, the party government. Hitherto 1992, Italy was a "partiocracy" (Pasquino 2020, p. 5):

> From the very beginning of the Republic, Italian parties were the backbone of the political system. In a short period of time, they acquired and wielded so much power of all kinds – not only political, but also economic, social and cultural – that they gave birth to what was called partitocrazia ("partyocracy", which is discussed later; see especially Hine 1993). All those Italian parties that were dominant systemic actors for almost four decades either disappeared in the 1992–94 period or have been obliged to transform profoundly.

Concretely, this meant that once the parliament elected the government, crucial political decisions and the highest officials' designations depended strongly on the party's members' support rather than electoral success and the citizenry's evaluation. As Katz (1986 cited in Pasquino, p. 98-99).

> Firstly, all major governmental decisions must be taken by people chosen in elections conducted along party lines, or by individuals appointed by and responsible to such people. Secondly, policy must be decided within the governing party, when there is a "monocolour" government, or by negotiations among parties when there is a coalition

> ... Thirdly, the highest officials (e.g. cabinet ministers and especially the prime minister) must be selected within their parties and be responsible to the people through their parties. Positions in government must flow from support within the party rather than party positions flowing from electoral success.

The partiocracy would last until the political crisis of 1992 due to the fall of the Berlin Wall and Communism (Pasquino 2020, p. 117), whereby political parties lost the adherence and popular support they had had from 1946 (Guarnieri 2016, chapter La Repubblica (quasi) maggioritaria). This change in the game's rules and the gravitational center of Italian politics will be crucial for the country's democracy changes. Following Guarnieri's work, the debilitation of the parties would have had at least three consequences for the entire political system. First, in 1993, for the first time in the history of the Italian Republic, Carlo Ciampi, a non-political or parliamentary member, led a technocratic government as president of the Council designated by the president of the Republic[1]. The second consequence is that the figure of the president of the Republic gained importance: a legitimate government will need their support from this point, even above the party's back. The third upshot will be the central role of mass media in Italian politics, which translated into public opinion judging the government directly. In addition to the former, from 1996, the Italian government will reflect the citizenry's votes. On balance, before 1992, the prime ministers were accountable to their party only; after that, they had to comply with three additional stakeholders: the president of the Republic, the public opinion through mass media, and the people's electoral preferences. These changes might be the most determinant trait of Monti's communication strategy for his unpopular reforms.

We must consider another fundamental trait of Italian polity for our research: although it is unitary, it is still relatively decentralized. Guarnieri (chapter Prima della Repubblica) explains this is a response to the post-country unification process in the nineteenth century. At that point, the historical Right decided to abandon its original propensity for a decentralized and English-style structure, with substantial local autonomy, in the face of the risk of seeing the project of national unity fail. That leaning will deepen after the 1992 crisis and the subsequent constitutional reforms (chapter La Repubblica (quasi) maggioritaria).

Of course, this element will affect the Monti government's communication strategy since strong regional authorities could undermine its messages to show political disagreement or protests regarding each power's competency.

[1] Guarneri (2016, chapter La Repubblica Proporzionale) details some of the most critical presidential attributions. One is designating the cabinet's president (presidente del Consiglio), who performs as prime minister. Another is to dissolve the parliament and call for anticipated elections if the country's political situation gets critical. These elements allow us to understand the emergence of Mario Monti's government before the end of its predecessor.

A final element that has fed the debate regarding the Italian democracy is its quality. It is relevant to point out that the average tenure of Italian governments is slightly more than one year, about 14–15 months (Pasquino, p. 97). As the author sentences, “The fact that all parliamentary governments might encounter some problems concerning their formation, functioning and duration is not a recent discovery” (p. 121). However, the scholar argues that equating the government’s instability with Italian democracy’s instability would be a mistake, as some may claim. Rather, Pasquino argues that “In the light of government instability, the continuity of Italian public policies is more than remarkable” (p. 117). Moreover, he makes positive assessments regarding Italy’s democracy continuity (p .124).

> Although I would reject the often repeated statement that Italy fares better when there is no government, I would be equally critical of those who believe that the Italian problem has been and still is that of governmental instability. On the contrary, most of the time, changes in the composition of Italian governments and even govern- mental crises have been the oil that has kept the political system running, transforming itself, adapting to challenges.
>
> (…) It (this chapter) has found good reasons for governmental instability and has argued that, instead of being a significant problem for the political system, instability (plus ministerial reshuffles) has served as a surrogate for alternation and, more recently, as a way of periodically (re)synchronizing politics with society.

Although Pasquino argues that Italian democracy is in good health, he affirms that the Rule of Law does not work entirely in Italy. In addition to various intents to change the 1946 Constitution -*the Law that should Rule*- (p. 205-207) and insufficient accountability towards the citizenry (p. 215-218), political corruption and organized crime are two of the main problems in Italy (p. 191) that severely undermine its democracy. When looking at the 2011’s European Union (EU) rank of perception of corruption -the year Monti assumed-Italy stood at the 24th position among the 27 countries of the bloc (Transparency International 2021).

On balance, the Italian political context for the Monti administration was complex to develop a political communication strategy. In the first place, the Council president was accountable to at least three key actors beyond their political party: the president of the Republic, the parliament, and the public opinion. (However, the first two seem to be more determinant in the prime minister’s continuity than the latter). On top of that, to get a policy done, the head of the cabinet needs to convince, again, the parliament and the public opinion, besides the regional presidents, which can catalyze or impede some of the policies’ implementation. Thirdly, we must consider government volatility, a half-hearted rule of Law, and the citizenry’s skepticism about the government.

1.1.2. The Trigger Factors: Mario Monti Assumed as President of the Council to Carry Out Unpopular Reforms

According to Guarnieri (2016, chapter La Repubblica (quasi) maggioritaria), the fragmentation of the right-wing parliamentary majority and the financial crisis subprime of 2008 had nudged the president of the Republic to the forefront of Italian politics. The crisis had hit Italy hard. In the 2000s, its GDP per head had fallen (The Economist 2011f), and the fiscal deficit was dangerously high. In this context, Silvio Berlusconi had been president of the government since 2008 for his fourth time. His Economy minister tried to reduce public spending to prevent Italy from falling into a financial debacle.

> (…) The Minister of the Economy [of Berlusconi], Giulio Tremonti, assumes a role of considerable influence within the government, succeeding in centralizing control of public spending in his hands and pursuing a policy of great prudence, which is reinforced by the serious international economic crisis that had developed since the autumn of 2008. Thus, in an initial phase, a relatively strict budgetary policy managed to avoid a financial crisis in Italy, an event that was always possible due to the country's very high public debt. However, the economic context remains difficult and does not allow the government to launch the promised reform program. Efforts are concentrated, with mixed fortunes, in the attempt to rationalize sectors of public employment - such as ministries and schools, traditional fiefdoms of the center-left - reducing public spending. The same federalist reform, although supported by the Northern League, does not take off, also because of the potentially very high costs.

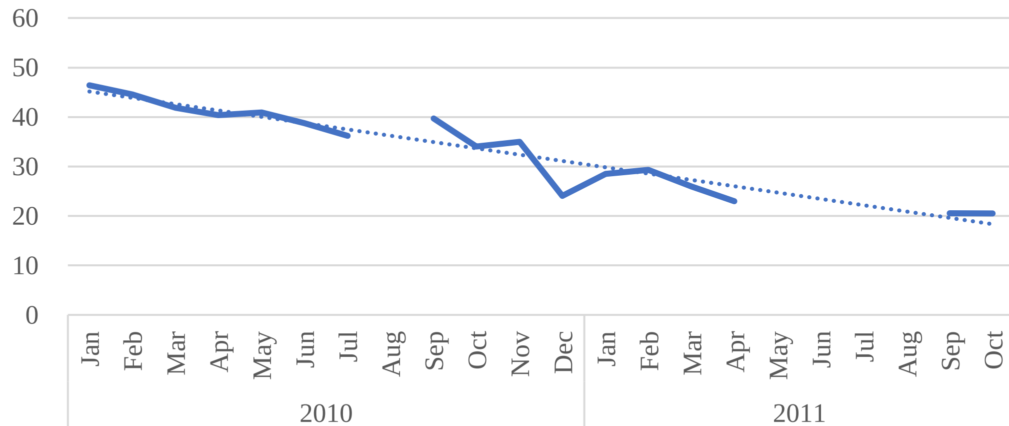
Despite the government efforts, by June 2011, the Italian public debt of around 120% of GDP was the third-biggest in the rich world (The Economist 2011f), which brought pressure not only from inside Italy but from its main international partners:

> Moreover, Italy's entry into the Euro prevents recourse to exchange rate devaluation and, in general, to the ‘monetization’ of public debt, i.e., its reduction through a more or less controlled inflationary process. Thus, probably also as a consequence of the poor result achieved by the center-right in the local elections of May 2011 - and the fact that some in the majority attribute it to the budgetary policy pursued by Tremonti (the Minister of Economy), judged too severe - the attitude of the international financial community towards Italy began to become negative. On June 17, the Moody's rating agency announces a possible downgrade of Italy's public debt: this is the beginning of a phase of growing turbulence on the financial markets that damages the prices of our government bonds.

Then, at the end of June 2011, Berlusconi announced a package of fiscal austerity measures and economic recovery via tax exemptions (Corriere della Sera 2011c). Later that year, the EU demanded Italy to have a plan to save 35 billion euros per year until 2014 in exchange for financial help. The EU would closely control the plan's execution (Corriere della Sera 2011b).

Regarding the whole situation of the country and his prime minister, *The Economist* sentenced: "Perhaps because of the distraction of his legal tangles (which we will describe later), he has failed in almost nine years as prime minister to remedy or even really to acknowledge Italy's grave economic weaknesses" (2011f). Apparently, Italians agreed with the British magazine. Firstly, 96% declared in the Eurobarometer Survey 2011 that the crisis had impacted the country, and the mood was one of the most pessimistic in the EU. Secondly, public opinion polls at that time show that Berlusconi's support dropped from a little under 50% to a low 20% between January 2010 and October 2011.

Figure 2. Italian government approval rate January 2010 – October 2011 (%)



Source: own elaboration based on Archivio CIRCaP - UNISI.

By November 2011, the Italian government bonds registered a low-yield record. Berlusconi resigned briefly after. Mario Monti took on as premier in the same month. According to the Archivio CIRCaP – UNISI, his administration reset the approval rate, reaching 67%.

Among the cabinet members, one person is of utmost importance for this research, Minister of Labor and Social Policies Elsa Fornero. Fornero was then a leading academic known for her thoroughness and long-standing experience in pension policy (Altalex 2011). Due to Fornero's experience, Article 24 of the *Salva Italia* bill was called the Fornero Reform (*riforma Fornero*). Even today, Italians take it as a canon for Italy's pension system (Il Sole 24 Ore 2022).

Despite the fact Mario Monti's was a technocratic government, it would be extremely naive to consider it exempt from the traditional political dynamics. Therefore, communication was central to Monti's strategy when promoting unpopular measures. In this regard, The Economist (The Economist 2011b) commented on the challenging scenario for the Italian and the Greek government in post subprime crisis scenario:

> Even a wholly technocratic government can never fully escape politics. In any country powerful lobbies bargain and wrangle. In a parliamentary system technocrats must deal with the partisanship and intrigues of an elected legislature (in Athens and Rome, lawmakers are eagerly waiting to trip up the newcomers). They also face public ire if

> they are seen as sharing out gains or pains unfairly. A brilliant economist see exactly the needed fiscal adjustment. But deciding how and where to cut spending or raise taxes requires acute political senses. Few technocrats arrive in office with those; learning them can be a slow, costly and politically fatal process.

Bearing the politics-centrality in mind, we should now describe Italy's political-cultural context when Monti's technocratic administration assumed.

1.2. Political-Cultural Factors

Bellucci and Maraffi affirm that "It is a well-known and enduring trait of Italy's political culture, which has portrayed Italian citizens as distrustful of politics and politicians" (2014 p. 39). But why? Let us seek for some explanations.

The answer to what Bellucci and Maraffi describe as distrust may lay in Pasquino's postulates regarding the erosion of the Italian civil society: the "selfish turnaround" and what he called the *amoral familism*. About the first, he affirms that the decline of Italian civic association started with Fascism. "In its totalitarian drive, which remained unachieved, Fascism (1922–43) deliberately tried to destroy all existing associations. On the whole, it was largely successful, but it encountered an insurmountable obstacle in the Catholic Church." (p. 156). The political center found fertile ground in the church's ideology, and it rapidly gained adherents. Then, with the collapse of Fascism in 1943, the left ramped up to rebuild the country's civil society to a pre-fascist networking state. Following Gramsci's hegemony strategy of achieving consensus in a fragmented society, the Socialist and Communist parties thrived. Then, until the 1960s, the center and the left political forces undertook to revive Italy's societal bonds. After that, Pasquino depicts that the secularization of the country and the decline of the political ideology led -following the author's assessment- to social fragmentation since the catholic church had lost its cohesive potential for society (p. 156):

> With the passing of time and the appearance of the post-war generation, two phenomena surfaced in the late 1960s. On the one hand, secularization, and on the other, the decline of ideology not only gradually weakened the ties between many associations and the two major parties, but were also responsible for the shrinking of the number of members in those associations and for the spread of social fragmentation.

According to the scholar, the events we have just described led to a selfish turnaround, which reached its climax in the 1990s. Civil society associations left national interest goals aside from their pretensions, "such as improvements in the functioning of the political system, social justice, cultural advancement or equality of opportunities." Instead, "They have come to seek almost exclusively the immediate fulfilment of the demands of their members (privileges, rejection of state interference, preservation of the status quo) (…), often at the expense of competing associations." (p. 157). Bellucci and De Angelis (2013, p. 452) seem to restate Pasquino's supposition. They claim that after the 1990s crisis, "the state of the economy, government performance, and leaders' image" will define the short-term voting intention, replacing traditional Italian cleavages as class and religion. In that same vein, politolinguistics expert Lorella Cedroni (2013, p. 223) talks about the "language of crisis" to describe a new way how Italian politicians communicate:

> Italian [1990s] transition is a blocked process where the democratization process has been suspended; in this situation there is a gap between the traditional political language ("politichese") and a "new" political language that I call the "language of the crisis".
>
> In the meaning of the term "crisis" a connection has been established between the acceptance of a situation of deprivation and the idea of the break that has been given to political language starting form the Nineties. As Edelman (1968) wrote: «a crisis, like all the events introduced from the political news, is a creation of the language in order to describe it, and the appearance of a crisis represents a political action»
>
> In the Italian case, the language of the crisis is expressed through the false "new" political language, that is new not because it is composed of new words, but for the fact that it turns the meaning of the "old" words upside down. It is an "enantiosemic" language, in fact.

Cedroni's observation is of utmost importance for the unpopular policy context. As we saw before, drawing a critical scenario is vital when communicating a painful reform. It makes the reform inevitable and, thus, politically feasible.

The second essential aspect that, according to Pasquino, we must consider when analyzing Italian *amoral familism* is Banfield's notion of it. He sustains that "(…) in a society of amoral familists it will be assumed that whatever group is in power is self-serving and corrupt" (1958 cited in Pasquino 2020, pp. 157-158). Although the concept emerged after a 1955-56 field study in the southern region of Montegrano that unfortunately has not been replicated in other regions of Italy, Pasquino believes that it is a trait of the whole country manifests to a greater or lesser degree (p. 158).

> When it came to politics, each of the various families proved more than willing to exchange their votes for resources that were promised and later possibly provided by candidates and office holders. Competitive clientelism has characterized public life in a very large number of Italian towns, by no means not only those located in the South, which have generally been marked by socio-economic and behavioural features similar to Montegrano's.

To illustrate Pasquino's point, let us recall an episode from when we are looking at the current chapter. Let us go to the 2009 earthquake in the city of L'Aquila, located at Abruzzo, in the center of Italy -notice we are not talking about any southern region. At that opportunity, we can argue that Italy's prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, exploited amoral familism among

Italian voters. The media photographed the prime minister wearing a firefighter helmet while visiting the victims of the tragedy, which, according to CNN (2009), earned him massive applause among the affected ones. Nevertheless, some locals affirmed that Berlusconi was "taking care of the elections." Seven months later, amidst accusations against the premier for briberies, tax fraud (The Economist 2009b), and critics for scandalous parties with prostitutes (The Economist 2009a), the L'Aquila staging proved efficacious to Berlusconi. According to The Guardian (2009):

> In a society where cynicism about the state is ingrained, and where the victims of natural disasters have often been ignored, if not exploited, that (Silvio Berlusconi visited them) is a novelty. It helps explain why, despite scandal and controversy, almost 50% of voters continue to back him.

This particular but elucidatory example corroborates, at least in part, that amoral familism might apply to a greater area of the country than the merely south. A claim from The Economist (2009a) confirmed this tension or trade-off between self-interest and a common-good orientation when most Italians supported Berlusconi:

> But there is a further explanation, rarely mentioned, which recent events have brought to the fore: that many voters, including some critics of Mr Berlusconi, see him as soft on tax evasion and so vote for him out of self-interest. Supporters of this theory often point to the unreliability of Italian exit polls, which produce results skewed leftward. Some people who vote for Mr Berlusconi's party lie to pollsters because they feel ashamed.

Amoral familism implies putting the own domestic sphere at the center of society as a source of welfare and protection from the outside world's menaces, pushing politics and higher social values to the background. The World Values Survey (WVS) of 2005 confirms this: 93% of Italians believed family is "very important," 87% "trusted completely"[2] it, and only 9.3% claimed politics are significant. Likewise, the Survey shows that around 70% of Italians trust little or none in traditional organizations like the catholic church, the police, the worker's unions, and the media. Those preferences make it challenging to promote unpopular policies that appeal to self-sacrifice for a better society beyond the domestic realm. Catanzaro (2018 cited in Pasquino 2020, p.159) has a similar judgment:

> Amoral familism has proved quite unlikely to transform itself and to become a solid ground on which to build a decent, strong society capable of pursuing its own goals without relying on political favours, even less so in those situations when serious socio-economic difficulties make their appearance.

It is this lack of mechanisms for citizens to pursue their own goals, that crime -in this case, the mafia and the organized crime- become normalized. This thesis is certainly not new.

[2] Less than 1% did not trust their family.

Indeed, Merton elaborated brilliantly on it back in 1938. This brief quotation summarizes the postulate: will put it: “Capone represents the triumph of amoral intelligence over morally prescribed "failure," when the channels of vertical mobility are closed or narrowed in a society which places a high premium on economic affluence and social ascent for all its members.” (p. 679).

To reaffirm the preceding, König (2016b, p. 546), who has studied Monti’s reforms extensively, argues that within the Italian culture, “(…) the principles of social persistence and status conservation are strong (…) and solidarity is tied to occupational groups and the family.” Regarding this “status quo’s inertia,” we see that Italians sought low-risk scenarios. When asked what the first reason to look for a new job was, the most dominant was to “Have a safe job with no risk.” Safety was even more important than having an important job, working with people they like, and earning a good income (WVS 2005, q. 48).

We can argue that these political and cultural elements may have weakened Italian democracy. Data corroborates that. Since the beginning of the Democracy Index in 2006 and until 2011, Italy repeatedly appeared as a "flawed democracy" (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2011), with a score of 7.74[3]. In 2010, it had been 7.83. Its lowest marks in the 2011 ranking were those referring to the functioning of government (6.43) and political participation (6.67). As expected from the preceding antecedents, by 2012, a right under 30% of Italians trusted their national government. This ratio did not vary significantly from 2007, and it was one of the lowest among OECD members, whose average scored 40% (OECD 2013b, p. 25). Moreover, Italy's trust in government and political parties was a little over 10%. Among the EU, only Portugal, Slovenia, Greece, and Spain scored worse than Italy (p. 30). Likewise, in all the World Bank's Governance Indicators, in 2010 the country attained less than the OECD's high-income members (World Bank 2021c). When going into the detail, Italy scored the worst in Rule of Law (percentile 60), Government Effectiveness (66), and Control of Corruption (66)[4].

Going back to the 2005 WVS, we have additional elements to describe 2011 Italy's political culture. First, regarding political ideology -left and right- Italians were in the center of the specter[5]. To some extent, they wanted the government to take care of each one's well-being instead of people themselves – which may stem from the amoral familism theory. However, in some dimensions, Italians adhered to more typical rightist ideas. For instance, they preferred some income differences rather than income equality. About Italian's policy priorities, for the next ten years, they named: "A high level of economic growth" (59%), "A

[3] The index goes from 0 to 10. Zero represents an Authoritarian Regime, and 10 constitutes a Full Democracy. There are Flawed Democracies and Hybrid Regimes between those extremes, a mix of authoritarianism and democracy.
[4] To give an idea, the same year Chile, another study case of this research, located in percentile 88 in Rule of Law, 85 in Government Effectiveness, and 91 in Control of Corruption.
[5] On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "Left," and 10 is "Right," Italians scored an average of 5.09.

stable economy" (45%), "Fighting against crime" (39%), "People have more say about how things" (38%), "fighting rising prices" (35%), and "protecting freedom of speech" (28%).

From the former, we can interpret that economic issues -growth, stability, inflation-and democracy quality -having more say and freedom of speech- were the essential topics in Italy by 2005, even if delinquency still was relevant.

Nevertheless, there is another aspect we must include when describing the status quo, and that is age. Let us recall Alessina and Del Ponte's pose: "Older societies are more prone to preserving the status quo than the younger ones" (p. 2). So, how old was Italian society when Mario Monti took office? According to the World Bank (2022a), in 2011, one out of five people in Italy was above 65 years old. This rate might not seem that high but compared to the Euro area and high-income countries' rates (of 15.6% and 18.6%, respectively), Italy's is undoubtedly over the average. Furthermore, the dependency rate was higher than that of high-income economies and the Euro area. As a result, a little under one-third of the adult population was above 65 years old in 2011.

Table 7. Age-related data for the Mario Monti government, 2011 (%)

Variables	Italy	High-income countries	Euro area
Population ages 65 and above (% of total population)	20.7	15.6	18.6
Age dependency ratio, old (% of working-age population)	31.7	23.3	28.2

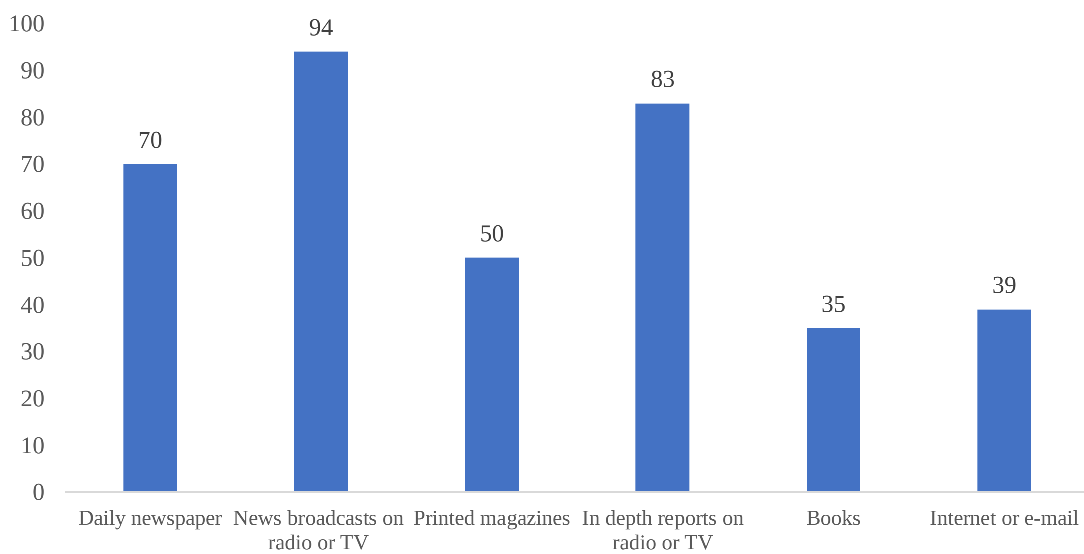
Source: own elaboration based on the DataBank of the World Bank.

The media is a last but critical point for analyzing the Italian case context. It is important noticing that almost three out of four Italians did not trust “very much” or “at all” on press and TV (WVS 2005). Despite those findings, Bellucci and De Angelis found that the news coverage shaped strongly Italians' perception of their governments' performance when Monti started (2011 – 2012): "(…) in Italy both economic perceptions and television communication retain a direct effect on government approval" (p. 458-459). They also verified that that effect was more significant among people with a lower interest in politics – let us say, the *amoral familyists*. Lastly, the TV effect tends to be very influential in Italy, and both the government and the Italian parliament exercise substantial control of public television (p. 454). To get an idea of TV's influence on Italian voters, by 2010, it was the primary source of political information for 80% of Italians (Legnante & Baldassarri 2010 in Belluci & De Angelis 2013). About the Italian media system, the scholars describe some particularities worth to notice (p. 454):

> In particular, among its key features (low development of mass press, strong political parallelism of news outlets, low professionalization and high state intervention) it shows strong control of public television by parliament and the government, and a fairly limited pluralism: the public television RAI network and the private-owned Mediaset network (established in the 1980s) account for over 80% of television viewership. Moreover, since 1994 the owner of Mediaset – Silvio Berlusconi – entered directly the political arena by founding a personal party and successfully competing for the vote, exposing a gigantic conflict of interest.

We can infer, then, that politics and media are highly intertwined in Italy, so we must evaluate later if this is either a vantage or an advantage when designing and implementing a government communication strategy. It may be the former if the executive can manage the agenda-setting, but it may also be a tremendous problem if those closest to the broadcasting are in the opposition.

Figure 3. People use different sources to learn what is going on in their country and the world. For each of the following sources, please indicate whether you used it last week or did not use it last week to obtain information (%)



Source: own elaboration based on WVS 2005, Italy, questions 223 – 228.

As Figure 2 depicts, Italians mainly used news broadcasting, followed by daily newspapers. Regarding the former, over nine out of ten turned into TV or radio. About the latter, 70% looked at daily newspapers. However, we must also consider that above 80% consumed radio or TV in-depth reports. In conclusion, we can infer that TV and radio were still the predominant media on which Italy's citizens got an idea about the government’s agenda. That correlates to Bellucci and De Angelis' findings that TV coverage is the most influential factor in government approval.

On the other hand, by 2005, the Internet and e-mail were not as important as information media. However, we would expect they gained some by 2011, when Monti assumed, but their effect on people's perception is not as clear as TV's.

In summary, when Monti took on, the political-cultural factors were as follows. First, Italy's population was relatively old, so Italians were probably reticent to changes, to which we must add amoral familism, which not only accentuated the status quo inertia but also made it difficult for people to make sacrifices in the name of the common good. Secondly, we find a weakened democracy with significant deficiencies in public governance and a mistrust of the government and political parties, so we could expect the citizenry to be suspicious of Monti's reform agenda. Thirdly, TV, closely connected to politics, was the leading and most influential media regarding political issues. Probably due to the former, Italian had little trust in the press. In conclusion, Monti's communication challenges in passing his pension reform were immense.

1.3. Socioeconomic Conditions

"When Europe's economies shrink, Italy's shrinks more; when they grow, it grows less (…) only Zimbabwe and Haiti had lower GDP growth than Italy in the decade to 2010. In fact GDP per head in Italy actually fell". The Economist was categorical when describing Italy's situation in its 11 June 2011(f) leading article. We gave a nutshell before about the country's public debt, the government's plans for fiscal consolidation, and the political crisis that this entailed. Let us examine some figures and indexes to make the picture complete.

It is to consider that economic and fiscal situation in Southern Europe was grim. In illustrative passage, the Greek former Finance Minister George Papaconstantinou quotes the European Commissioner Rehn describing the panorama:

> We have a systemic crisis – there are exceptional circumstances. We have been behind the curve, now we need to get ahead of it… We need more consolidation in 2010 – Portugal and Spain need to announce new [fiscal] measures – *today*. We need a financial backdrop – *today*. (Papaconstantinou, 2016, p. 140).

Then, after the 21 July European summit the crisis apparently reached a peak:

> A few days after the summit, Moody’s and Standard and Poor’s joined Fitch in again downgrading Greece. In early August, Spain’s 10-year bond reached a record 6.5%. Alarmed, the ECB voted to resume its bond-buying programme, picking up Portuguese and Irish debt, and then Italian and then Spanish debt as well. In Italy, spreads soared higher than the Spanish ones. (p. 213)

When Mario Monti became premier, Italy had one of the highest worldwide Human Development Index (HDI). It occupied position 24 (UNDP 2011) and had a GDP per capita of US$35,416 (2010 PPP, IMF 2023). Regardless of its good quality of life, the country's economy severely resented the 2008 financial crisis. In 2009 its GDP contracted by -5.3% (the world's decreased by -0.1% that year), surmounting it to 1.7% in 2010 (IMF 2023). Labor productivity's stagnation since the 1990s certainly aggravated the contraction (OECD 2020a). In 2010 the economy grew by 1.7%, less than a third of the world's expansion. When Monti assumed, in 2011, Italy's GDP grew only 0.7%. The world's average was 4.3%. Likewise, the unemployment rate had soared from 6.1%, in 2007, to 8.4% in 2011, and consumers' prospects of finding a job were among the EU's lowest (DG EMPL 2012).

Additionally, Italy's labor participation was low, and the labor market rigid, as The Economist (2012b) pointed out:

> Italy's failure to exploit its labour resources is apparent in an employment rate among 15- to 64-year-olds of just 57% in 2011, the second-lowest in the euro area and far below Germany's 73%. That reflects early retirement, low female participation and a dual labour market, in which long-standing employees are virtually impossible to sack and newcomers—called the *precari* because of their precarious grip on work—have to take one temporary job after another.

Finally, the public debt was about 119% of the country's GDP, which is high if we consider the EU's at around 83% (IMF 2021) and the OECD's at 69% (OECD 2022b) by then.

Even though Italy's poverty rate was not much higher than in the preceding years, inequality rose dramatically. The former reached almost 20% in 2011 from 18,4% in 2008 (World Bank 2021b), and about one in four families could not make mortgage payments by the first quarter of 2011 (DG EMPL 2012). Regarding income inequality, the 2011 Gini index went up to 35.3, as high as 1995's (World Bank 2021a).

So, besides the economy's stagnation and the poverty increase, social spending in Italy in 2011 was high comparatively speaking, moreover considering its weakened fiscal position. Around 26% of the country's GDP went to welfare expenditure, one of the highest of the OECD (OECD 2021b), and 14% of the product was destined for retirement pensions, more than any other OECD country (The Economist 2011e).

In sum, when Monti's government arose, the crisis was evident. Despite Italy's high HDI, its GDP had contracted. Poverty, unemployment, and income inequality had increased. The already high public debt continued augmenting given the significant social expenditure, and the country's competitiveness was decaying. As expected, the Italian economy was losing appeal to the rest of the world. It came "80th in World Bank's Doing Business index, below Belarus and Mongolia, and 48th in the World Economic Forum competitiveness ranking, behind Indonesia and Barbados" (The Economist, 2011f). Despite the critical scenario, by 2011 Italy's pension replacement rate compared to pre-retirement earnings was 64.5%, higher than OECD members' average of 60% (OECD 2011, p. 119).

This situation was the perfect scenario to promote unpopular reforms. Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Republic between 2006 and 2015, understood this. Pasquino (p. 143) relates the arrival of the Monti government in these terms:

> Then, he (Napolitano) invited Berlusconi to resign in order to avoid losing a vote of no confidence that might have had to be followed by an inevitable, constitutionally grounded request of the centre-left for yet another early dissolution of Parliament. Finally, he appointed Monti Prime Minister of a non-partisan government supported mostly by parliamentarians belonging to the centre-left as well as many coming from the centre-right. Napolitano's main, but undeclared, motivation was twofold. On the one hand, he wanted to avoid general elections that might have further destabilized the Italian political system, and, on the other, he wanted to empower a government capable of making a number of unpopular reforms in the full knowledge that a non-partisan government could achieve a lot, partly because it did not have to be exposed to the risks of electoral accountability.

We must notice a fragment from above due to its importance for our research. "he (Napolitano) wanted to empower a government capable of making a number of unpopular reforms in the full knowledge that a non-partisan government could achieve a lot, partly because it did not have to be exposed to the risks of electoral accountability." There are at least two elements of particular interest to us. First, Napolitano was allegedly pursuing unpopular reforms through his designation. Second, his diagnosis regarding the electorate might have been mistaken and even naïve. Even though citizens could not effectively and directly stop Monti from implementing the unpopular program since they did not vote for the prime minister, he had to gain their acceptance to carry it out.

Moreover, late in his government, Monti decided to pursue the election to be the next Prime Minister. Most likely, that decision influenced his way of conducting the administration. We will go back to this later in the chapter, of course.

2. The Main Monti Government Reforms

In June 2011(d), with Berlusconi still in charge, The Economist claimed that the country needed "tweaks to microeconomic policy" and labor market liberalization. In December of that same year, the incoming cabinet launched a law decree with an extensive plan of measures known as *Salva Italia* (Save Italy). (Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana 2011). The program "included a pension reform and aimed at total savings of €30 billion between 2012 and 2014 (mainly through tax increases, an increase in VAT, luxury taxes and the reintroduction of a housing tax)" (König 2016b, p. 9), and aimed to expand Italy's GDP by 4% in the ten proceeding years (OECD 2012a). Hence, more than a “tweak,” Monti was looking for substantial recasts to enhance the Italian economy’s “*rigore, crescita ed equità*,” – rigor, growth, equality (Corriere della Sera 2011d).

The labor market reform, also led by Minister Fornero, was another crucial element of the package to make that market more flexible. As The Economist presented in 2012(a), the reform stood from this diagnosis:

> Today firms with more than 15 workers cannot get rid of employees even in a downturn without risking legal proceedings that can last years. If a judge then decides the company has acted unfairly, it can be forced to rehire the worker and pay him his lost earnings. Employers say this is a colossal deterrent to hiring when times are good, and helps to explain why a third of Italy’s youths are jobless.

Among the measures, the government proposed redesigning the unemployment benefit to avoid the “free-riders” and to promote apprenticeships to tackle youth unemployment.

The government announces caused great enthusiasm among the international community. In an OECD conference held in Rome in 2012(b), the former Secretary-General of the organization, Ángel Gurría, sentenced:

> Let me start by congratulating Prime Minister Monti and his government for the courageous decisions they have taken so far to address head-on several long-standing obstacles that have held back Italy’s performance, and we have among us here the Ministers who worked with us, and I would truly like to congratulate all members of the government.

According to Mr. Gurría, OECD estimations were that Italy’s GDP would grow 4% in ten years if the reforms fully implemented.

2.1. The Pension Reform

As the OECD (2013a, p. 9) shows, Italy's public spending was twofold more than the OECD countries' average: 30% versus 17%. Moreover, whereas Italy spent 15.4% of its GDP on pensions in 2011, the rest of the OECD members spent only 7.7% (OECD 2022a). In that scenario, the organism argued that "pensions are now (in the 2010s) also being targeted in fiscal consolidation programmes."

As we said earlier, it is essential to draw the policy status quo regarding the particular case of pensions. The Vigilance Commission on Pension Funds (*Commissione di Vigilanza* *sui Fondi Pensione* - COVIP, 2018, p. 1) depicts an informative summary of the last decades of the twentieth century policy history in Italy in that matter, which will allow us to understand the context with more ease:

> During the 1970s, like most Western countries, Italy was affected by a strong economic slowdown, determined mainly by the oil crisis of 1973-1976 which upset the country's economic framework. The State was faced with increased spending to support those who could not find employment and businesses, which were also in crisis; this contributed to generating a difficult situation for public finances, determined by the sharp increase in public debt.
>
> In the course of the 1980s, most industrialized countries became aware of the need to rebalance public finances by reducing current expenditure. In Italy, it was only at the end of the decade that a maneuver was implemented to correct budget deficits based on an increase in the tax burden.
>
> Starting in the 1990s, structural reforms were launched that also involved the pension sector.

The most significant modification of the 1990s was the so-called Dini's reform of 1995. However, it was actually the 1992 Amato's pension reform the one that inspired the Monti – Fornero initiative. As minister Fornero affirmed in 2020, "The [2011] reform actually had its origins in 1992 under the Amato government, which took steps to control the level of pensions by indexing them to prices instead of wages" (p. 59). Nadayet (2020, p. 59) explains that

> As for old-age pensions, the Amato Reform of 1992 initiated a very gradual increase in the minimum age, differentiated by gender (from 55 to 60 for women and from 60 to 65 for men), and an increase in the number of contribution years (from 15 to 20 years).

As a result, the Italian pension system went from a retribution regime to a contribution regime. In the former -also called the earning-related system- the retiree's pension corresponds to a rate of their income during their last period as active; in the latter, it depends directly on their contribution to the pension funds during their active years. Therefore, the contribution system considers every pensioner's whole active life and not only their last working years, which lowers the replacement rate between active income and the pension income, lessening the actual pension significantly (OECD 2013c, pp. 41-42).

Briefly, Dini's contributions were the following:

> Law Aug. 8, 1995, No. 335 changed the parameters for access to the old-age pension. As of January 1, 1996, the contribution requirement, regardless of age, is gradually raised until it reaches 40 years as of 2008. With regard to age-related old-age pensions

(early old-age pension), access to the pension is subject to the attainment of a contribution period of 35 years in addition to the attainment of specific gradually higher age thresholds (57 years in 2008). (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2023, transalation by the author).

After the 1995 reform, the Italian governments had raised retirement age persistently. Under the third government of Berlusconi (2005-6), in 2004, his minister of Labor and Social Security, Roberto Maroni, promoted the retirement postponement through a bonus and increased the retirement age (COVIP 2018). Then, in his second term (2006-8), Romano Prodi passed a bill to progressively increase the requirements to retire, which faced stiff opposition from the worker unions (The Economist 2007). He did it based on the retiree's age and their work activity years. Again, in 2009, in his fourth time as premier, Berlusconi increased the retirement age for public servants and linked the retirement age for the general citizens to life expectancy (COVIP 2018).

On the other side, Berlusconi's minister, Maurizio Sacconi, sent a comprehensive pension bill in 2010. The bill underscored the following:

- the entry of the so-called "life expectancy" into the pension system. Access to retirement is pegged to trends in life expectancy, verified by ISTAT every three years (…). If the probability increases, the retirement age also undergoes an increase (the first update materialized in 2013 with an increase of 3 months);

- the gradual raising of the age of access to the old-age pension for women in the civil service to 65 (…);

- the introduction of the so-called "moving window." The pension treatment is achieved 12 months - for employees - or 18 months - for the self-employed - after the accrual of the right;

- the abandonment of the free system of reconciliation of insurance periods (the free linking of insurance periods aimed at retirement is, however, guaranteed in the hypotheses of totalization of contribution seniority pursuant to Legislative Decree 42/2006 and, for the purposes of the attainment of the old-age treatment referred to in Decree Law 201/2011, in the hypothesis of "accumulation of insurance periods" pursuant to Article 1, paragraph 239 of Law 228/2012). (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2023, transalation by the author).

Even though the Sacconi reform was ambitious, most of its components were supposed to be effective from 2015 and subsequent years (Qupotidiano Nazionale 2010). In consequence, Monti's amendment de facto suppressed the 2010 bill. Likewise, even though all the changes seen may seem like a lot, they partially took place. Every reformist delayed the entry into force of each modification until they were no longer in charge, and therefore, their successors would introduce new changes over the changes. We might postulate that this constant debate on pension sacrifices from the people could have had a tiring effect on their predisposition to welcome or even hear about new pension reform. If that was the case, Monti could have started his Save Italy far from a comfortable stand.

So, what about the Fornero Reform? It was massive and comprehensive. The Dini's 1995 framework kept more or less unaltered until Fornero Reform. Then, displacing the retirement age limit as high as 67-year-old and stating that those willing to retire needed to account for a minimum pension contribution set a new frontier for Italy's pension debate (Il Sole 24 Ore 2022).

In the first term, Monti-Fornero extended the contribution-based system to all workers as of 2012, even to those that before Monti's changes were in the earnings-related regime (OECD 2013c). Secondly, the reform increased the retirement age for both men and women, which, according to the OECD, is the most difficult modification in terms of political risk. The age of retirement for women would go up from 60 in 2011 to 66 in 2018; for men, from 65 to 66 in the same period (Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana 2011, pp. 284-285). Third, the policy changed the structure for early retirement: for men, they had to contribute 42 years and one month; for women, 41 years and one month. In addition, the minimum contribution period would adjust to changes in life expectancy of the three preceding years. Fourthly, the reform increased farmers and self-employed mandatory contribution rates (OECD 2013c). Lastly, the reform created incentives for people to postpone their retirement (Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana 2011, p. 284).

According to the OECD (2015, p. 4),

> The impact of the reform in terms of reduction in pension expenditures has been noteworthy (according to the official projections of the Ministry of Finance, the pension expenditure will be reduced by about 20 GDP percentage points in the period 2012–2050).

Turning to the six OECD's *Key goals of pension reform* (2013c), Italy's case touched five[6]:

1. Pension system coverage in both mandatory and voluntary schemes.
2. Adequacy of retirement benefits.
3. The financial sustainability and affordability of pension promises to taxpayers and contributors.

[6] It is not clear if they were any measures to gain administrative efficiency to diminish the pension system running costs, the lacking key goal.

4. Incentives that encourage people to work for longer parts of their lifetimes and to save more while in employment.
5. The diversification of retirement income sources across providers (public and private), the three pillars (public, industry-wide and personal), and financing forms (pay-as-you-go and funded).

Concerning the reform's quality, The Economist would praise it later, in December 2012(b):

> Mr Monti has made some changes. A pension reform which was part of the "Save Italy" programme will help by extending working lives. It clamps down on early retirement and switches all workers into the contribution-based state pension first introduced in 1995, which makes it worthwhile for people to work longer. Elsa Fornero, the labour minister, acknowledges that the reform has hurt many workers, especially women in their late 50s, but says it was vital to restore fiscal sustainability and "generational equity" to pensions. It will contribute annual savings that will reach 1.2% of GDP in the 2020s.

Either way, probably owing to the technocratic character of Monti's government, the *Salva Italia* decree was passed and promulgated on February 2012 (Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana 2012). Therefore, Monti and Fornero aimed to convince the citizens and Parliament to support the implementation of the unpopular reforms contained in the package.

3. The President Monti's and Minister Fornero's Communication Strategy

Monti's government was politically clever when presenting its bills to Parliament. He was probably aware that no government can escape the politics inherent obstacles, so he acted as Henriksson (2008) advised[7], as we saw in the Theoretical Framework. Firstly, by introducing all the painful measures as a package – Monti proposed a pension reform, a labor market reform, and severe public administration spending cuts, among other measures. Secondly, by doing it at the beginning of the government – Monti introduced the bill on 6 December 2011, less than a month after assuming. Thirdly, as we will see afterward, Monti's and Fornero's communication highlighted the sacrifices that all groups of society faced, attempting to make the reforms' package seen as just.

[7] We do not have proof that he encountered the former Secretary of State of the Ministry of Finance of Sweden, Jens Henriksson. However, as George Papaconstantinou attests in his *Game Over*, at least the Greek government faced a similar situation and did hire Henriksson's services. Therefore, it would not be surprising that Monti or someone close to him would have met Henriksson. At least his strategy is very similar to what Henriksson establishes as good practices to promote unpopular reforms.

The former set a crucial precedent when approaching the rhetoric and persuasion potential analyses. Therefore, we can think there was a clear strategy, which we will analyze in the following. To do so, as suggested in the Methodology, we studied President Monti and his Minister's public speeches and interventions containing the term "pension" or its related ones (e.g., pensions, pensioners). Then, we began the examination with the reform announcement speech, which Monti addressed on 17 November 2011, right after getting the Senate's trust (*Fiducia*) to exert as President of the Ministers Council.

Before presenting all the speeches' politolinguistics and persuasiveness analyses, we show some quantitative data. Table 2 lists the speeches' length.

Table 8. Monti – Fornero's Speeches' Length (quantity of words)

Speech	**Words**
111117_M	4,830
111229_F	1,116
120126_F	3,274
120220_M	3,491
120308_F	1,384
120516_M	1,457
120517_F	687
120619_F	3,001
120706_M	825
120819_M	4,692
120918_F	4,166
121010_F	1,474

Source: own elaboration.

The table above shows that the most extensive speech is a little over 4,800 words. On the other hand, the shortest is almost 700 words. This sets out a first challenge: different word-length text can affect the persuasive potential analysis. Table 3 exhibits Monti and Fornero's speeches' duration distribution:

Table 9. Monti – Fornero's speeches duration[8] (minutes) and distribution

Descriptive statistics	Words	Speech Duration (minutes)	Deviation regarding the optimal
Average	2,533	19.5	-2.6%
Median	2,238	17.2	-13.9%
Standard Deviation	1,543.9	11.9	NA

Source: own elaboration.

President Monti's and Minister Fornero's average speech duration is 19.5 minutes, almost identical to the 20-minute optimal length (Neale & Ely 2007). This discourse' mean length should have secured some of their speeches' persuasive potential. Moreover, the speech length distribution is relatively homogeneous: the standard deviation is only 11.9 minutes, and the 17.2-minute median is very near the average. These numbers will allow us to add another variable to the rhetorical and persuasion analyses, enriching them.

The third quantitative variable is Monti's and Fornero's most-mentioned words. Figure 3 depicts the top 25 most frequently repeated concepts throughout the twelve analyzed speeches.

Figure 4. Monti and Fornero's 12 speeches' 25 top-mentioned words

Source: own elaboration using Sinclair and Rockwell's (2023) Voyant Tools text analysis software.

Due to Monti's government strategy of delivering the unpopular reforms together, the speakers will rarely refer solely to pensions. Instead, they will also point out labor, economic

[8] As we saw in Neale and Ely (2007, chapter Time and Length), regarding the optimal speech length, "an often-cited rule-of-thumb is that the average 20-minute speech contains about 2,600 words, or, about 130 per minute."

growth, and austerity issues. Figure 3's biggest words represent those policy issues: "jobs" (*lavoro*), "growth" (*crescita*), and "market" (*mercato*). On the contrary, "pensions" (*pensioni, pensionamiento*) got fewer mentions, with distance. Again, this suggests they were a relevant part of Monti's policy strategy but subordinated to the ultimate goal – *"rigore, crescita ed equità"* was the leitmotiv. Besides, recall that Monti was a *governo tecnico* and, therefore, he was expected to deliver high-quality and evidence-based policy proposals, which would explain why those topics were the most repeated words among the studied speeches.

The second conceptual category is the population segments the speakers refer to, like "workers" (*lavoratori*), "youth" (*giovani*), and "women" (*donne*). Those three were indeed the most affected by the pension reform. The first ones were pension fund contributors that would sooner or later retire. The youth were those meant to experience and benefit from the new pension schema, and women were expected to take advantage of earlier retirement. However, it tells a lot that the elders nor retirees were not mentioned more frequently in Monti's and Fornero's interventions. That insinuates that they were not the primary target for political support nor for policy impact.

The third conceptual category points out those the government had to convince quickly and effectively. Here we find references to the European Union (*europea, europeo, commissione*), the firms (*imprese*), and the Italian Parliament (*parlamento*). As in the Greek case, Italy was to prove its capability to overcome the crisis by using European assistance efficiently. As Monti told the Senate in his first speech as *Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri*:

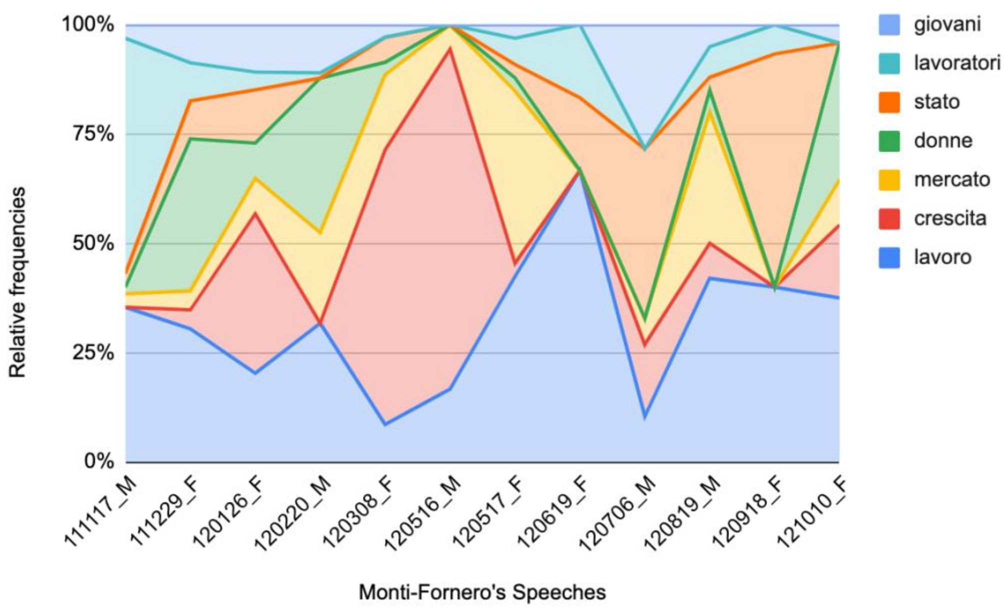
> From this perspective - as I was saying - in response to the request made by territorial institutions during the consultations, I have decided to assume directly at this first stage the competencies related to regional affairs. I hope in this way to manifest a shared awareness about the fact that joint work with territorial autonomies must continue and strengthen, despite the difficulties of the economic agenda. With this in mind, work should be done without delay on the effective use of the European Union's structural funds.[9]

The same was the case for the firms that resented the subprime crisis and of which the country needed to invest and keep creating employment. Lastly, the Parliament is a central piece in Italy's political strategy. Without the Parliamentarians' support, Monti's reforms would end fast.

[9] "In quest'ottica - come stavo dicendo - per rispondere alla richiesta formulata dalle istituzioni territoriali nel corso delle consultazioni, ho deciso di assumere direttamente in questa prima fase le competenze relative agli affari regionali. Spero in questo modo di manifestare una consapevolezza condivisa circa il fatto che il lavoro comune con le autonomie territoriali debba proseguire e rafforzarsi, nonostante le difficoltà dell'agenda economica. In tale prospettiva si dovrà operare senza indugio per un uso efficace dei fondi strutturali dell'Unione europea."

Another interesting analysis is how Monti and Fornero distributed their seven most mentioned concepts in time. Figure 4 illustrates that:

Figure 5. Monti-Fornero's top-mentioned words distribution through the 12 speeches sample

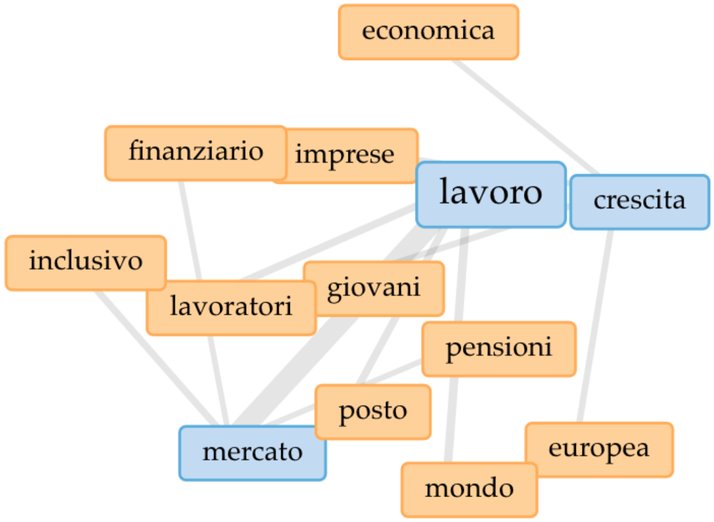


Source: own elaboration using Sinclair and Rockwell's (2023) Voyant Tools text analysis software.

To start, *jobs* (blue area in Figure 4), *growth* (red), and *market* (yellow) are the most constant concepts throughout Monti and Fornero's interventions. Then, as we affirmed, they put the pension reform communication within a changing policy context. *Jobs* and *growth,* although constant throughout the speeches, gained relatively more presence between March 2012 (120308_F) and September 2012 (120619_F). A second feature of Fornero and Monti's perorations is that they apparently started focusing on their labor market reform. Both related terms to that reform, *jobs* (blue area) and *workers* (green-like light blue area), were particularly prominent in the first Monti (111117_M) and Fornero (111229_F) interventions. Thirdly, *women* (green area) appeared relatively more in the first trimester of the government. Lastly, the *State* term (in orange) played a central role in two particular vocabularies: July and September 2012 (120706_M and 120918_F, respectively).

Regarding the main concepts' proximity, Figure 5 depicts interesting frequency relationships between terms.

Figure 6. Monti - Fornero's 12 speeches' words in proximity[10]



Source: own elaboration using Sinclair and Rockwell's (2023) Voyant Tools text analysis software.

Figure 5 shows more detail about what words tend to go together. This allows us to understand some of their occurrence within the speeches. In the same vein with what we observed earlier, jobs (*lavoro*), market (*mercato*) and growth (*crescita*) were the primary of the concepts' networks. However, "jobs" is the most prominent word. It strongly relates to "market", but there are also other concepts, like workers (*lavoratori*), youngsters (*giovani*), labor world (*mondo*), firms (*imprese*), job position (*posto*) and growth (*crescita*). At the same time, growth links to European [Union] (*europea*), youngsters (*giovani*) and economic growth (*economica*). Finally, market (*mercato*) refers to many markets: inclusive market (*inclusivo*), financial market (*finanziario*), labor market (*lavoro*). It also connects with the pension reform.

The repeated use of these terms gives Monti and Fornero themselves away as renowned economists. As we will show later, by times the adopted an extremely technical jargon who may have made them hard to explain their complex reforms both to the Parliament and the citizenry.

In conclusion, Monti-Fornero's speeches mentioning the terms related to "pension" are consistent between them. Their length varies. However, they settle for around 2,500 words on average, close to the optimal length. Secondly, from the most used words, we can infer two things: that the speakers were constantly aware of the whole reform picture, relating the

[10] According to Sinclair and Geoffry (2023), "This represents a network graph where keywords in blue are shown linked to collocates in orange. You can hover over a term to see its frequency (for keywords it's the corpus frequency, for collocates it's the frequeny in the context of the linked keywords)."

pension reform with the labor market and economic growth, and that they stand from a scientific approach to the policy problem. Thirdly, they were not as consistent regarding the characters in their speech. Sometimes they gave more importance to the *victims* in their narrative – women, workers, and youth; some addressed the Parliament and the European Union; some spoke to the firms. The following section will see two Monti and two Fornero discourses' politolinguistics analyses to explore more in-depth these and other questions.

3.1. Understanding Mario Monti and Elsa Fornero's Rhetoric

As defined in Methodology, we selected two speeches for each spokesperson to apply the politolinguistics analysis, using several authors. However, among those outstands Reisigl's (2008) complete speech analysis example.

> As a context, König defines the tone of the Monti administration's communication:
>
> As Wiggan (2012) argues, the government developed a comprehensive deservingness discourse which comprised a morally charged diagnosis of a broken society and that ascribed the causes of poverty and societal problems to a culture of dependency and a lack of individual responsibility (…) the Monti government acted under conditions of financial and economic crisis, it clearly was in a position to make use of communicative "crisis exploitation". (2016a, p. 181).

Bearing König's appreciation, we will initially expose Mario Monti's two speeches. After that, we will do the same with Fornero's.

3.1.1. Mario Monti's Speeches

The first discourse we examine is Monti's pension reform announcement in his first speech to the Senate on 11 November 2011 (see Table 4). The second Monti peroration we chose occurred eight months later, on 6 July 2012, in a press conference after a spending review-dedicated cabinet meeting, whereby the President exhibited the austerity measures' expected impacts (see Table 9).

Table 10. Mario Monti Speech #1's Macro and Mesostructures Analysis – 17 November 2011

DISCOURSE 1 - ANNOUNCEMENT	***MACRO - MESOSTRUCTURE***
Paragraph 1	
Signor Presidente, onorevoli senatrici, onorevoli senatori, è con grande emozione che mi rivolgo a voi come primo atto del percorso rivolto ad ottenere la fiducia del Parlamento al Governo ieri costituito.	Section 1. Introduction: Continuing the republican tradition, framing the speech.
Paragraph 2	

L'emozione è accresciuta dal fatto che prendo oggi la parola per la prima volta in questa Aula nella quale mi avete riservato qualche giorno fa un'accoglienza che mi ha commosso. Sono onorato di entrare a far parte del Senato della Repubblica. Desidero rivolgere un saluto deferente al Capo dello Stato, presidente Napolitano che con grande saggezza, perizia e senso dello Stato ha saputo risolvere una situazione difficile in tempi ristrettissimi nell'interesse del Paese e di tutti i cittadini.	
Paragraph 3	
Vorrei anche rinnovargli la mia gratitudine per la fiducia accordata alla mia persona, per il sostegno e la partecipazione che mi ha costantemente assicurato nei miei sforzi per comporre un Governo che potesse soddisfare le richieste delle forze politiche e, al contempo, dare risposte efficaci alle gravi sfide che il nostro Paese ha di fronte a sé.	
Paragraph 4	
Rivolgo il mio saluto ai Presidenti emeriti della Repubblica, ai senatori a vita e a tutti i senatori. Mi auguro di poter stabilire con ciascuno di voi anche un rapporto personale come vostro collega, sia pure l'ultimo arrivato.	
Paragraph 5	
Il Parlamento è il cuore pulsante di ogni politica di Governo, lo snodo decisivo per il rilancio e il riscatto della vita democratica. Al Parlamento vanno riconosciute e rafforzate attraverso l'azione quotidiana di ciascuno di noi dignità, credibilità e autorevolezza. Da parte mia, da parte nostra, vi sarà sempre una chiara difesa del ruolo di entrambe le Camere quali protagoniste del pubblico dibattito. Un ringraziamento specifico e molto sentito desidero, infine, esprimere al vostro, al nostro, Presidente. Il presidente Schifani ha voluto accogliermi, fin dal primo istante di questa mia missione - come potete immaginare, non semplicissima - svoltasi, in gran parte, a Palazzo Giustiniani, con una generosità e una cordialità che non potrò dimenticare.	
Paragraph 6	
Rivolgo, infine, un pensiero rispettoso e cordiale al presidente, onorevole dottor Silvio Berlusconi (APPLAUSI) mio predecessore, del quale mi fa piacere riconoscere l'impegno nel facilitare in questi giorni la mia successione nell'incarico.	
Paragraph 7	
Il Governo riconosce di essere nato per affrontare in spirito costruttivo e unitario una situazione di seria emergenza. Vorrei usare questa espressione: Governo di impegno nazionale. Governo di impegno nazionale significa assumere su di sé il compito di rinsaldare le relazioni civili e istituzionali, fondandole sul senso dello Stato. È il senso dello Stato, è la forza delle istituzioni, che evitano la degenerazione del senso	*Section 11.: Introduction to the political problem (Problem 1)- Political crisis: institutional and civil relationships are frayed.* *The crisis involves not only Italy but the whole European Union project.*

di famiglia in familismo, dell'appartenenza alla comunità di origine in localismo, del senso del partito in settarismo. Ed io ho inteso fin dal primo momento il mio servizio allo Stato non certo con la supponenza di chi, considerato tecnico, venga per dimostrare un'asserita superiorità della tecnica rispetto alla politica. Al contrario, spero che il mio Governo ed io potremo, nel periodo che ci è messo a disposizione, contribuire in modo rispettoso e con umiltà a riconciliare maggiormente - permettetemi di usare questa espressione - i cittadini e le istituzioni, i cittadini alla politica.	Monti goes back to the myth of the European Union. The section also illustrates the *amoral familism* as part of the political crisis.
Paragraph 8	
Io vorrei, noi vorremmo, aiutarvi tutti a superare una fase di dibattito, che fa parte naturalmente della vita democratica, molto, molto, accesa, e consentirci di prendere insieme, senza alcuna confusione delle responsabilità, provvedimenti all'altezza della situazione difficile che il Paese attraversa, ma con la fiducia che la politica che voi rappresentate sia sempre più riconosciuta, e di nuovo riconosciuta, come il motore del progresso del Paese.	
Paragraph 9	
Le difficoltà del momento attuale. L'Europa sta vivendo i giorni più difficili dagli anni del secondo dopoguerra. Il progetto che dobbiamo alla lungimiranza di grandi uomini politici, quali furono Konrad Adenauer, Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman e - sottolineo in modo particolare - Alcide De Gasperi (APPLAUSI) e che per sessant'anni abbiamo perseguito, passo dopo passo, dal Trattato di Roma - non a caso di Roma - all'atto unico, ai Trattati di Maastricht e di Lisbona, è sottoposto alla prova più grave dalla sua fondazione.	
Paragraph 10	
Un fallimento non sarebbe solo deleterio per noi europei. Farebbe venire meno la prospettiva di un mondo più equilibrato in cui l'Europa possa meglio trasmettere i suoi valori ed esercitare il ruolo che ad essa compete, in un mondo sempre più bisognoso di una governance multilaterale efficace.	
Paragraph 11	
Non illudiamoci, onorevoli senatori, che il progetto europeo possa sopravvivere se dovesse fallire l'Unione Monetaria. La fine dell'euro disgregherebbe il mercato unico, le sue regole, le sue istituzioni. Ci riporterebbe là dove l'Europa era negli anni cinquanta.	
Paragraph 12	
La gestione della crisi ha risentito di un difetto di governance e, in prospettiva, dovrà essere superata con azioni a livello europeo. Ma solo se riusciremo ad evitare che qualcuno, con maggiore o minore fondamento, ci consideri l'anello debole dell'Europa, potremo	The national crisis: if governance problems remain, Italy will loose its influence in the EU

ricominciare a contribuire a pieno titolo all'elaborazione di queste riforme europee. Altrimenti ci ritroveremo soci di un progetto che non avremo contribuito ad elaborare, ideato da Paesi che, pur avendo a cuore il futuro dell'Europa, hanno a cuore anche i lori interessi nazionali, tra i quali non c'è necessariamente una Italia forte.	
Paragraph 13	
Il futuro dell'euro dipende anche da ciò che farà l'Italia nelle prossime settimane, anche e non solo, ma anche. Gli investitori internazionali detengono quasi metà del nostro debito pubblico. Dobbiamo convincerli che abbiamo imboccato la strada di una riduzione graduale ma durevole del rapporto tra debito pubblico e prodotto interno lordo. Quel rapporto è oggi al medesimo livello al quale era vent'anni fa ed è il terzo più elevato tra i Paesi dell'OCSE. Per raggiungere questo obiettivo intendiamo far leva su tre pilastri: rigore di bilancio, crescita ed equità.	*Section 2: Exemplification of the problem (Argumentation) - Figures Italy's economy affects its governance and international reputation.*
Paragraph 14	
Nel ventennio trascorso l'Italia ha fatto molto per riportare in equilibrio i conti pubblici, sebbene alzando l'imposizione fiscale su lavoratori dipendenti e imprese, più che riducendo in modo permanente la spesa pubblica corrente. Tuttavia, quegli sforzi sono stati frustrati dalla mancanza di crescita. L'assenza di crescita ha annullato i sacrifici fatti. Dobbiamo porci obiettivi ambiziosi sul pareggio di bilancio, sulla discesa del rapporto tra debito e PIL. Ma non saremo credibili, neppure nel perseguimento e nel mantenimento di questi obiettivi, se non ricominceremo a crescere.	Again, the problem: the Italian GDP needs to grow to make the country recover its credibility. However, solutions depend on Italian's will.
Paragraph 15	
Ciò che occorre fare per ricominciare a crescere è noto da tempo. Gli studi dei migliori centri di ricerca italiani avevano individuato le misure necessarie molto prima che esse venissero recepite nei documenti che in questi mesi abbiamo ricevuto dalle istituzioni europee. Non c'è nessuna originalità europea nell'aver individuato ciò che l'Italia deve fare per crescere di più. È un problema del sistema italiano riuscire a decidere e poi ad attuare quanto noi italiani sapevamo bene fosse necessario per la nostra crescita.	
Paragraph 16	
Non vediamo i vincoli europei come imposizioni. Anzitutto permettetemi di dire, e me lo sentirete affermare spesso, che non c'è un loro e un noi. L'Europa siamo noi.	
Paragraph 17	
Quelli che poi ci vengono in un turbinio di messaggi, di lettere e di deliberazioni dalle istituzioni europee sono per lo più provvedimenti rivolti a rendere meno ingessata l'economia, a facilitare la nascita di nuove imprese e poi indurne la crescita, migliorare l'efficienza dei	*Section 3: Conclusion - We know the solutions to promote growth: entrepreneurship, more efficient*

servizi offerti dalle amministrazioni pubbliche, favorire l'ingresso nel mondo del lavoro dei giovani e delle donne, le due grandi risorse sprecate del nostro Paese.	*public services, and increasing labor participation.*
Paragraph 18	
L'obiezione che spesso si oppone a queste misure è che esse servono, certo, ma nel breve periodo fanno poco per la crescita. È un'obiezione dietro la quale spesso si maschera - riconosciamolo - chi queste misure non vuole, non tanto perché non hanno effetti sulla crescita nel breve periodo (che è vero che non hanno), ma perché si teme che queste misure ledano gli interessi di qualcuno. Ma, evidentemente, più tardi si comincia, più tardi arriveranno i benefici delle riforme. Ma, soprattutto, le scelte degli investitori che acquistano i nostri titoli pubblici sono guidate sì da convenienze finanziarie immediate, ma - mettiamocelo in testa - sono guidate anche dalle loro aspettative su come sarà l'Italia fra dieci o vent'anni, quando scadranno i titoli che acquistano oggi.	Why should we start now? Reforms are urgent not because of their immediate effect on the economy but to regain the investors' credibility
Paragraph 19	
Quindi, non c'è iato la tra le cose che dobbiamo o fare oggi o avviare oggi, anche se avranno effetti lontani, perché anche gli investitori, che ci premiano o ci puniscono, agiscono oggi, ma guardano anche agli effetti lontani.	
Paragraph 20	
Riforme che hanno effetti anche graduali sulla crescita, influendo sulle aspettative degli investitori, possono riflettersi in una riduzione immediata dei tassi di interesse, con conseguenze positive sulla crescita stessa. I sacrifici necessari per ridurre il debito e per far ripartire la crescita dovranno essere equi. <u>Maggiore sarà l'equità, più accettabili saranno quei provvedimenti e più ampia - mi auguro - sarà la maggioranza che in Parlamento riterrà di poterli sostenere</u>. Equità significa chiedersi quale sia l'effetto delle riforme non solo sulle componenti relativamente forti della società, quelle che hanno la forza di associarsi, ma anche sui giovani e sulle donne. <u>Dobbiamo renderci conto che, se falliremo e se non troveremo la necessaria unità di intenti, la spontanea evoluzione della crisi finanziaria ci sottoporrà tutti, ma soprattutto le fasce più deboli della popolazione, a condizioni ben più dure.</u>	
Paragraph 21	
La crisi che stiamo vivendo è internazionale; questo è ovvio, ma conviene ripeterlo ogni volta, anche ad evitare demonizzazioni. È internazionale, lo sto dicendo a tutti. Ma l'Italia ne ha risentito in maniera particolare. Secondo la Commissione europea, al termine del prossimo anno il prodotto interno lordo dell'Italia sarebbe ancora quattro punti e mezzo al di sotto del livello raggiunto prima della crisi. Per la stessa data, l'area dell'euro nel suo complesso avrebbe invece recuperato la perdita di prodotto dovuta alla crisi. Francia e Germania raggiungerebbero il traguardo di riportarsi al livello precrisi nell'anno in	<u>Section 2: Exemplification of the problem (Argumentation)</u> - Contrast. While Germany's and France's economies had already recovered from the 2008 crisis, Italy was going even worse. "The problem precedes the crisis beginning."

<table>
<tr><td>corso. La relativa debolezza della nostra economia precede l'avvio della crisi.</td><td rowspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 22</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tra il 2001 e il 2007 il prodotto italiano è cresciuto di 6,7 punti percentuali, contro i 12 della media dell'area dell'euro, i 10,8 della Francia e gli 8,3 della Germania. I risultati sono deludenti al Nord come al Sud. E non vi propongo un paragone con la Cina o con altri Paesi emergenti, ma con i nostri colleghi ed amici stretti della zona euro. La crisi ha colpito più duramente i giovani. Ad esempio, nei 15 Paesi che componevano l'Unione europea fino al 2004, tra il 2007 e il 2010 il tasso di disoccupazione nella classe di età 15-24 anni è aumentato di cinque punti percentuali, in Italia di 7,6 punti percentuali.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 23</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Il nostro Paese rimane caratterizzato da profonde disparità territoriali. Il lungo periodo di bassa crescita e la crisi le hanno accentuate. Esiste una questione meridionale: infrastrutture, disoccupazione, innovazione, rispetto della legalità.</td><td rowspan="17"><u>Exemplification of the problem (Argumentation)</u> - Localization of the problem: north, center, south.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 24</td></tr>
<tr><td>I problemi nel Mezzogiorno vanno affrontati non nella logica del chiedere di più, ma di una razionale modulazione delle risorse.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 25</td></tr>
<tr><td>Esiste anche una questione settentrionale: costo della vita, delocalizzazione, nuove povertà, bassa natalità.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 26</td></tr>
<tr><td>Il riequilibrio di bilancio, le riforme strutturali e la coesione territoriale richiedono piena e leale collaborazione tra i diversi livelli istituzionali.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 27</td></tr>
<tr><td>Occorre riconoscere il valore costituzionale delle autonomie speciali, nel duplice binario della responsabilità e della reciprocità.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 28</td></tr>
<tr><td>In quest'ottica, per rispondere alla richiesta formulata dalle istituzioni territoriali che, devo dire, ho ascoltato con molta attenzione...</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td rowspan="2"><u>Conclusion 2</u>. Monti himself is taking the responsibility for the regional affairs. It is his sacrifice.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 29</td></tr>
</table>

Se dovete fare una scelta - mi permetto di rivolgermi a tutti - ascoltate, non applaudite!	
Paragraph 30	
Non ripeterò l'importanza del valore costituzionale delle autonomie speciali, perché altrimenti arrivano di nuovo applausi; l'ho già detto e lo avete ascoltato.	
Paragraph 31	
In quest'ottica - come stavo dicendo - per rispondere alla richiesta formulata dalle istituzioni territoriali nel corso delle consultazioni, ho deciso di assumere direttamente in questa prima fase le competenze relative agli affari regionali. Spero in questo modo di manifestare una consapevolezza condivisa circa il fatto che il lavoro comune con le autonomie territoriali debba proseguire e rafforzarsi, nonostante le difficoltà dell'agenda economica. In tale prospettiva si dovrà operare senza indugio per un uso efficace dei fondi strutturali dell'Unione europea.	
Paragraph 32	
Sono consapevole che sarebbe un'ambizione eccessiva da parte mia e da parte nostra pretendere di risolvere in un arco di tempo limitato, qual è quello che ci separa dalla fine di questa legislatura, problemi che hanno origini profonde e che sono radicati in consuetudini e comportamenti consolidati. Ciò che si prefiggiamo di fare è impostare il lavoro, mettere a punto gli strumenti che permettano ai Governi che ci succederanno di proseguire un processo di cambiamento duraturo.	
Paragraph 33	
Per questo il programma che vi sottopongo oggi si compone di due parti, che hanno obiettivi ed orizzonti temporali diversi. Da un lato, vi è una serie di provvedimenti per affrontare l'emergenza, assicurare la sostenibilità della finanza pubblica, restituire fiducia nelle capacità del nostro Paese di reagire e sostenere una crescita duratura ed equilibrata. Dall'altro lato, si tratta di delineare con iniziative concrete un progetto per modernizzare le strutture economiche e sociali, in modo da ampliare le opportunità per le imprese, i giovani, le donne e tutti i cittadini, in un quadro di ritrovata coesione sociale e territoriale.	Conclusion 3: the Plan. Two parts: Firstly, the emergency of public finances and international credibility. Secondly, long-term structural reforms.
Paragraph 34	
In considerazione dell'urgenza con la quale abbiamo dovuto operare per la formazione di questo Governo - ed in questo senso voglio ringraziare le diverse forze politiche che, nei miei confronti, figura estranea al vostro mondo, si sono gentilmente e con sollecitudine apprestate all'ascolto e all'offerta di contributi dei quali ho cercato di tenere conto - quello che intendo fare oggi è semplicemente presentarvi gli aspetti essenziali dell'azione che intendiamo svolgere. Se otterremo la fiducia	

del Parlamento, ciascun Ministro esporrà alle Commissioni parlamentari competenti le politiche attraverso le quali, nei singoli settori, queste azioni verranno avviate.	
Paragraph 35	
È in discussione in Parlamento una proposta di legge costituzionale per introdurre un vincolo di bilancio in pareggio per le amministrazioni pubbliche, in coerenza con gli impegni presi nell'ambito dell'Eurogruppo. L'adozione di una regola di questo tipo può contribuire a mantenere nel tempo il pareggio di bilancio programmato per il 2013, evitando che i risultati conseguiti con intense azioni di risanamento vengano erosi negli anni successivi, come è accaduto in passato. Affinché il vincolo sia efficace, dovranno essere chiarite le responsabilità dei singoli livelli di Governo.	<u>Call to action</u>: to pursue the policy plan, the government needs the Parliament's support and approval.
Paragraph 36	
A questo proposito ed anche in considerazione della complessità della regola, ad esempio l'aggiustamento per il ciclo, sarà opportuno studiare l'esperienza di alcuni Paesi europei che hanno affidato ad autorità indipendenti la valutazione del rispetto sostanziale della regola, dato che in questa materia la credibilità nei confronti di noi stessi e del mondo è un requisito essenziale. Sarà anche necessario attuare rapidamente l'armonizzazione dei bilanci delle amministrazioni pubbliche. Opportunamente la proposta di legge in discussione in Parlamento già prevede l'assegnazione allo Stato della potestà legislativa esclusiva in materia di armonizzazione dei bilanci pubblici. Nell'immediato daremo piena attuazione alle manovre varate nel corso dell'estate, completandole attraverso interventi in linea con la lettera di intenti inviata alle autorità europee.	
Paragraph 37	
Nel corso delle prossime settimane valuteremo la necessità di ulteriori correttivi. Una parte significativa della correzione dei saldi programmata durante l'estate è attesa dall'attuazione della riforma dei sistemi fiscale ed assistenziale. Dovremmo pervenire al più presto ad una definizione di tale riforma e ad una valutazione prudenziale dei suoi effetti. Dovranno inoltre essere identificati gli interventi, volti a colmare l'eventuale divario rispetto a quelli indicati nella manovra di bilancio.	
Paragraph 38	
Di fronte ai sacrifici che sono stati e che dovranno essere richiesti ai cittadini sono ineludibili interventi volti a contenere i costi di funzionamento degli organi elettivi. I soggetti che ricoprono cariche elettive, i dirigenti designati politicamente nelle società di diritto privato, finanziate con risorse pubbliche, più in generale quanti rappresentano le istituzioni ad ogni livello politico ed amministrativo, dovranno agire con sobrietà ed attenzione al contenimento dei costi, dando un segnale concreto ed immediato. Si dovranno rafforzare gli interventi effettuati	Other resorts: *distributing the sacrifice (Henriksson 2007)* First: the citizens will make sacrifices. Therefore, those that receive public funding will make sacrifices soon as well. Second: the Presidency will go through budget cuts.

con le ultime manovre di finanza pubblica, con l'obiettivo di allinearci rapidamente alle best practices europee.	Third: the ministries will suffer budget cuts. Fourth: the privileged ones from the pension system will make sacrifices. Fifth: the wealthiest will make sacrifices.
Paragraph 39	
Per quanto di mia diretta competenza, avvierò immediatamente una spending review del Fondo unico della Presidenza del Consiglio. Ritengo inoltre necessario ridurre le sovrapposizioni tra i livelli decisionali e favorire la gestione integrata dei servizi per gli Enti locali di minori dimensioni. Il riordino delle competenze delle Province può essere disposto con legge ordinaria. La prevista specifica modifica della Costituzione potrà completare il processo, consentendone la completa eliminazione, così come prevedono gli impegni presi con l'Europa.	
Paragraph 40	
Per garantire la natura strutturale della riduzione delle spese dei Ministeri, decisa con la legge di stabilità, andrà definito rapidamente il programma per la riorganizzazione della spesa, previsto dalla legge 14 settembre 2011, n. 148, in particolare per quanto riguarda l'integrazione operativa delle agenzie fiscali, la razionalizzazione di tutte le strutture periferiche dell'amministrazione dello Stato, il coordinamento delle attività delle forze dell'ordine, l'accorpamento degli enti della previdenza pubblica, la razionalizzazione dell'organizzazione giudiziaria.	
Paragraph 41	
Gli interventi saranno coordinati con la spending review in corso, che intendo rafforzare e rendere particolarmente incisiva con la precisa individuazione di tempi e responsabilità. Negli scorsi anni la normativa previdenziale è stata oggetto di ripetuti interventi, che hanno reso a regime il sistema pensionistico italiano tra i più sostenibili in Europa e tra i più capaci di assorbire eventuali shock negativi. Già adesso l'età di pensionamento, nel caso di vecchiaia, tenendo conto delle cosiddette finestre, è superiore a quella dei lavoratori tedeschi e francesi.	
Paragraph 42	
Il nostro sistema pensionistico rimane però caratterizzato da ampie disparità di trattamento tra diverse generazioni e categorie di lavoratori, nonché da aree ingiustificate di privilegio.	
Paragraph 43	
Il rispetto delle regole e delle istituzioni e la lotta all'illegalità riceveranno attenzione prioritaria da questo Governo. Per riacquistare fiducia nel futuro dobbiamo avere fiducia nelle istituzioni che caratterizzano uno Stato di diritto, quindi si procederà alla lotta all'evasione fiscale e all'illegalità, non solo per aumentare il gettito (il che non guasta), ma anche per abbattere le aliquote: questo può essere fatto con efficacia prestando particolare attenzione al monitoraggio della	

<table>
<tr><td>ricchezza accumulata (ho detto monitoraggio della ricchezza accumulata) e non solo ai redditi prodotti.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 44</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>L'evasione fiscale continua a essere un fenomeno rilevante: il valore aggiunto sommerso è quantificato nelle statistiche ufficiali in quasi un quinto del prodotto. Interventi incisivi in questo campo possono ridurre il peso dell'aggiustamento sui contribuenti che rispettano le norme. Occorre ulteriormente abbassare la soglia per l'uso del contante, favorire un maggior uso della moneta elettronica, accelerare la condivisione delle informazioni tra le diverse amministrazioni, potenziare e rendere operativi gli strumenti di misurazione induttiva del reddito e migliorare la qualità degli accertamenti.</td><td rowspan="10"><u>Conclusion 4:</u> progressive policies to increase tax revenue and liberalization measures to promote economic growth.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 45</td></tr>
<tr><td>Il decreto legislativo n. 23 del 14 marzo 2011 prevede per il 2014 l'entrata in vigore dell'imposta municipale che assorbirà l'attuale ICI, escludendo tuttavia la prima casa e l'IRPEF sui redditi fondiari da immobili non locati, comprese le relative addizionali. In questa cornice intendiamo riesaminare il peso del prelievo sulla ricchezza immobiliare: tra i principali Paesi europei, l'Italia è caratterizzata da un'imposizione sulla proprietà immobiliare che risulta al confronto particolarmente bassa. L'esenzione dall'ICI delle abitazioni principali costituisce, sempre nel confronto internazionale, una peculiarità - se non vogliamo chiamarla anomalia - del nostro ordinamento tributario.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 46</td></tr>
<tr><td>Il primo elenco di cespiti immobiliari da avviare a dismissione sarà definito nei tempi previsti dalla legge di stabilità, cioè entro il 30 aprile 2012. La lettera d'intenti inviata alla Commissione europea prevede proventi di almeno 5 miliardi all'anno nel prossimo triennio. A tale scopo verrà definito un calendario puntuale per i successivi passi del piano di dismissioni e di valorizzazione del patrimonio pubblico. Tuttavia, è necessario volgere tutte le politiche pubbliche, a livello macroeconomico e microeconomico, a sostegno della crescita, sia pure nei limiti determinati dal vincolo di bilancio.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 47</td></tr>
<tr><td>La pressione fiscale in Italia è elevata nel confronto storico e in quello internazionale (nel testo scritto che avrete a disposizione si danno ulteriori elementi). Nel tempo e via via che si manifesteranno gli effetti della spending review sarà possibile programmare una graduale riduzione della pressione fiscale; tuttavia anche prima, a parità di gettito, la composizione del prelievo fiscale può essere modificata in modo da renderla più favorevole alla crescita. Coerentemente con il disegno della delega fiscale e della clausola di salvaguardia che la accompagna, una riduzione del peso delle imposte e dei contributi che gravano sul lavoro e sull'attività produttiva, finanziata da un aumento del prelievo sui</td></tr>
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<table>
<tr><td>consumi e sulla proprietà, sosterrebbe la crescita senza incidere sul bilancio pubblico.</td><td rowspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 48</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dal lato della spesa, un impulso all'attività economica potrà derivare da un aumento del coinvolgimento dei capitali privati nella realizzazione di infrastrutture. Gli incentivi fiscali stabiliti con legge di stabilità sono un primo passo, ma è anche necessario intervenire sulla regolamentazione del project financing, in modo da ridurre il rischio associato alle procedure amministrative. Occorre inoltre operare per raggiungere gli obiettivi fissati in sede europea con l'agenda digitale. Ho quasi concluso.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 49</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Con il consenso delle parti sociali dovranno essere riformate le istituzioni del mercato del lavoro, per allontanarci da un mercato duale dove alcuni sono fin troppo tutelati mentre altri sono totalmente privi di tutele e assicurazioni in caso di disoccupazione.</td><td rowspan="10"><u>The labor market reforms</u>: to protect the unemployed while increasing productivity. They will promote labor mobility and increase labor participation of women and the youth.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 50</td></tr>
<tr><td>Le riforme in questo campo dovranno avere il duplice scopo di rendere più equo il nostro sistema di tutela del lavoro e di sicurezza sociale e anche di facilitare la crescita della produttività, tenendo conto dell'eterogeneità che contraddistingue in particolare l'economia italiana. In ogni caso, il nuovo ordinamento che andrà disegnato verrà applicato ai nuovi rapporti di lavoro per offrire loro una disciplina veramente universale, mentre non verranno modificati i rapporti di lavori regolari e stabili in essere.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 51</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intendiamo perseguire lo spostamento del baricentro della contrattazione collettiva verso i luoghi di lavoro, come ci viene chiesto dalle autorità europee e come già le parti sociali hanno iniziato a fare, che va accompagnato da una disciplina coerente del sostegno alle persone senza impiego volta a facilitare la mobilità e il reinserimento nel mercato del lavoro, superando l'attuale segmentazione. Più mobilità tra impresa e settori è condizione essenziale per assecondare la trasformazione dell'economia italiana e sospingerne la crescita.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 52</td></tr>
<tr><td>È necessario colmare il fossato che si è creato tra le garanzie e i vantaggi offerti dal ricorso ai contratti a termine e ai contratti a tempo indeterminato, superando i rischi e le incertezze che scoraggiano le imprese a ricorrere a questi ultimi. Tenendo conto dei vincoli di bilancio occorre avviare una riforma sistematica degli ammortizzatori sociali, volta a garantire a ogni lavoratore che non sarà privo di copertura rispetto ai rischi di perdita temporanea del posto di lavoro. Abbiamo da affrontare una crisi, abbiamo da affrontare delle trasformazioni</td></tr>
</table>

strutturali, ma è nostro dovere cercare di evitare le angosce che accompagnano questi processi.	
Paragraph 53	
È necessario, infine, mantenere una pressione costante nell'azione di contrasto e di prevenzione del lavoro sommerso. Uno dei fattori che distinguono l'Italia nel contesto europeo è la maggiore difficoltà di inserimento o di permanenza in condizioni di occupazione delle donne. Assicurare la piena inclusione delle donne in ogni ambito della vita lavorativa ma anche sociale e civile del Paese è una questione indifferibile.	
Paragraph 54	
È necessario affrontare le questioni che riguardano la conciliazione della vita familiare con il lavoro, la promozione della natalità e la condivisione delle responsabilità legate alla maternità da parte di entrambi i genitori, nonché studiare l'opportunità di una tassazione preferenziale per le donne.	
Paragraph 55	
C'è poi un problema legato all'invecchiamento della popolazione che si traduce in oneri crescenti per le famiglie; andrà quindi prestata attenzioni ai servizi di cura agli anziani, oggi una preoccupazione sempre più urgente nelle famiglie in un momento in cui affrontano difficoltà crescenti.	
Paragraph 56	
Infine un'attenzione particolare andrà assicurata alle prospettive per i giovani; dico "infine" nel senso di finalità di tutta la nostra azione. Questa sarà una delle priorità di azione di questo Governo, nella convinzione che ciò che restringe le opportunità per i giovani si traduce poi in minori opportunità di crescita e di mobilità sociale per l'intero Paese. Dobbiamo porci l'obiettivo di eliminare tutti quei vincoli che oggi impediscono ai giovani di strutturare le proprie potenzialità in base al merito individuale indipendentemente dalla situazione sociale di partenza. Per questo ritengo importante inserire nell'azione di Governo misure che valorizzino le capacità individuali e eliminino ogni forma di cooptazione. L'Italia ha bisogno di investire sui suoi talenti; deve essere lei orgogliosa dei suoi talenti e non trasformarsi in un'entità di cui i suoi talenti non sempre sono orgogliosi. Per questo la mobilità è la nostra migliore alleata, mobilità sociale ma anche geografica, non solo all'interno del nostro Paese ma anche e soprattutto nel più ampio orizzonte del mercato del lavoro europeo e globale.	
Paragraph 57	
L'ultimo punto che desidero brevemente presentarvi - ed è una caratteristica spero distintiva del nostro Esecutivo, se consentirete al	The Monti government's seal: micro-economic policies for the growth

nostro, o vostro, Governo di nascere, è quella delle politiche micro-economiche per la crescita.	
Paragraph 58	
Un ritorno credibile a più alti tassi di crescita deve basarsi su misure volte a innalzare il capitale umano e fisico e la produttività dei fattori. La valorizzazione del capitale umano deve essere un aspetto centrale: sarà necessario mirare all'accrescimento dei livelli d'istruzione della forza lavoro, che sono ancora oggi nettamente inferiori alla media europea, anche tra i più giovani. Vi contribuiranno interventi mirati sulle scuole e sulle aree in ritardo, identificando i fabbisogni, anche mediante i test elaborati dall'INVALSI, e la revisione del sistema di selezione, allocazione e valorizzazione degli insegnanti. Nell'università, varati i decreti attuativi della legge di riforma approvata lo scorso anno, è ora necessario dare rapida e rigorosa attuazione ai meccanismi d'incentivazione basati sulla valutazione, previsti dalla riforma. Gli investimenti in infrastrutture, di cui tante volte e giustamente abbiamo parlato e si è parlato negli corso degli anni, sono fattori rilevanti per accrescere la produttività totale dell'economia.	Measures to increase human and physical capital
Paragraph 59	
A questo scopo, abbiamo per la prima volta valorizzato in modo organico nella struttura del Governo la politica, anzi, le politiche di sviluppo dell'economia reale, con l'attribuzione ad un unico Ministro delle competenze sullo sviluppo economico e sulle infrastrutture ed i trasporti. Questo vuole indicare quasi visivamente e in termini di organigramma del Governo che pari attenzione e centralità vanno attribuite a ciò che mantiene il Paese stabile, la disciplina finanziaria, e a ciò che ad esso consente di crescere e, quindi, di restare stabile a lungo termine, cioè appunto la crescita.	Public administration modernization to catalyze economic growth: Government organization; bureaucracy; public services' quality
Paragraph 60	
Occorre anche rimuovere gli ostacoli strutturali alla crescita, affrontando resistenze e chiusure corporative. In tal senso, è necessario un disegno organico, volto a ridurre gli oneri ed il rischio associato alle procedure amministrative, nonché a stimolare la concorrenza, con particolare riferimento al riordino della disciplina delle professioni regolamentate, anche dando attuazione a quanto previsto nella legge di stabilità in materia di tariffe minime.	
Paragraph 61	
Intendiamo anche rafforzare gli strumenti d'intervento dell'Autorità garante della concorrenza e del mercato in caso di disposizioni legislative o amministrative, statali o locali, che abbiano effetti distorsivi della concorrenza, accrescere la qualità dei servizi pubblici, nel quadro di un'azione volta a ridurre il deficit di concorrenza a livello locale, ridurre i tempi della giustizia civile, in modo tale da colmare il divario con gli altri Paesi, anche attraverso la riduzione delle sedi giudiziarie, e	

rimuovere gli ostacoli alla crescita delle dimensioni delle imprese, anche attraverso la delega fiscale.	
Paragraph 62	
Un innalzamento significativo del tasso di crescita è condizione essenziale non solo del riequilibrio finanziario, ma anche del progresso civile e sociale. In tal senso, una strategia di rilancio della crescita non può prescindere da un'azione determinata ed efficace di contrasto alla criminalità organizzata e a tutte le mafie, che vada a colpire gli interessi economici delle organizzazioni e le loro infiltrazioni nell'economia legale.	The most impopular measure: tax increasing. He also mentions, fighting the mafia and informal aspects of the economy
Paragraph 63	
Il risanamento della finanza pubblica ed il rilancio della crescita contribuiranno a rafforzare la posizione dell'Italia in Europa e, più in generale, la nostra politica estera: vocazione europeistica, solidarietà atlantica, rapporti con i nostri partners strategici, apertura dei mercati, sicurezza nazionale ed internazionale rimarranno i cardini di tale politica. Voglio qui ricordare i nostri militari impegnati in missioni all'estero, le Forze Armate ed i rappresentanti delle forze dell'ordine, che sono in prima linea nella difesa dei nostri valori e della democrazia.	Expected results of the plan: to strengthen Italy's global position. *Unity*: he equates citizens with the militia. Those are the agents that make Italy great.
Paragraph 64	
L'Italia ha bisogno di una politica estera coerente con i nostri impegni e di una ripresa d'iniziativa nelle aree dove vi siano significativi interessi nazionali.	
Paragraph 65	
Dimenticavo di dirvi, a proposito di militari impegnati in missioni all'estero, che se non vedete ancora in questi banchi il nostro collega Ministro della difesa, è perché l'altra sera l'ho svegliato alle tre di notte in Afghanistan, pensando che fosse a Bruxelles dove si trova la sua sede ordinaria di lavoro. Ho notato prima una certa esitazione e poi grande entusiasmo nell'accettazione della proposta. (Applausi dai Gruppi PdL e PD). Ecco un esempio di militare impegnato all'estero che sta facendo i salti mortali per arrivare a giurare nelle mani del Capo dello Stato nelle prossime ore. Scusate quindi la sua assenza.	
Paragraph 66	
La gravità della situazione attuale richiede una risposta pronta e decisa nella creazione di condizioni favorevoli alla crescita nel perseguimento del pareggio di bilancio, con interventi strutturali e con un'equa distribuzione dei sacrifici.	Conclusion 5: urgency distributing the sacrifices
Paragraph 67	

Il tentativo che ci proponiamo di compiere, onorevoli senatori, e che vi chiedo di sostenere è difficilissimo; altrimenti ho il sospetto che non mi troverei qui oggi. I margini di successo sono tanto più ridotti, come ha rilevato il Presidente della Repubblica, dopo anni di contrapposizione e di scontri nella politica nazionale. Se sapremo cogliere insieme questa opportunità per avviare un confronto costruttivo su scelte e obiettivi di fondo avremo occasione di riscattare il Paese e potremo ristabilire la fiducia nelle sue istituzioni. Vi ringrazio.	Call to action 2: "we" instead of "I".

Source: own elaboration.

Regarding the speech's macro and mesostructures, Monti framed the political problem within Italy's republican tradition. First, he starts complimenting and thanking the Senate, the President of the Republic, and his predecessor before introducing any novelty or debate (paragraphs 1 to 6 in Table 4). Then, the speaker goes to the problem. Interestingly, he does not address the economic or social crisis but attempts to describe the policy problem as part of a deep political crisis (paragraphs 7 to 11). In that passage, Monti identifies the *amoral familism* we defined earlier as a clear obstacle and posits himself as a mere technical servant for the common good:

> The government recognizes that it was created to deal in a constructive and unified spirit with a serious emergency situation. I would like to use this expression: government of national commitment. Government of national commitment means taking upon itself the task of strengthening civil and institutional relations, basing them on a sense of the State. *It is the sense of the State, it is the strength of institutions, that prevent the degeneration of the sense of family into familism, of belonging to the community of origin into localism, of the sense of party into sectarianism*. And I have from the first moment intended my service to the state certainly not with the haughtiness of those who, considered technical, come to demonstrate an asserted superiority of technique over politics. On the contrary, I hope that my government and I will be able, in the period that is made available to us, to contribute in a respectful and humble way to reconcile more--let me use this expression--citizens and institutions, citizens to politics.[11]

Moreover, to illustrate the grandiosity of that historical moment, he alludes to the foundation of the European Union project almost in a mythical fashion:

[11] "Il Governo riconosce di essere nato per affrontare in spirito costruttivo e unitario una situazione di seria emergenza. Vorrei usare questa espressione: Governo di impegno nazionale. Governo di impegno nazionale significa assumere su di sé il compito di rinsaldare le relazioni civili e istituzionali, fondandole sul senso dello Stato. È il senso dello Stato, è la forza delle istituzioni, che evitano la degenerazione del senso di famiglia in familismo, dell'appartenenza alla comunità di origine in localismo, del senso del partito in settarismo. Ed io ho inteso fin dal primo momento il mio servizio allo Stato non certo con la supponenza di chi, considerato tecnico, venga per dimostrare un'asserita superiorità della tecnica rispetto alla politica. Al contrario, spero che il mio Governo ed io potremo, nel periodo che ci è messo a disposizione, contribuire in modo rispettoso e con umiltà a riconciliare maggiormente - permettetemi di usare questa espressione - i cittadini e le istituzioni, i cittadini alla politica."

> The difficulties of the present moment. Europe is experiencing its most difficult days since the years after World War II. The project that we owe to the foresight of great politicians, such as Konrad Adenauer, Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman and - I emphasize particularly - Alcide De Gasperi (APPLAUSE), and which for sixty years we have pursued, step by step, from the Treaty of Rome - not coincidentally of Rome - to the Single Act, to the Treaties of Maastricht and Lisbon, is undergoing its most severe test since its founding.[12]

After drawing this big-picture scenario, Monti reflects on the policy problem: Italy's income-debt is unsustainable since the country is losing its influence at the European level and investors are distrusted regarding the Italian economy's solvency. After that, cleverly again, Monti lists those -not him, of course- that had made explicit the needed reforms. He names the OECD, the European Union and some national experts. Here is an example:

> What needs to be done to start growing again has long been known. Studies by the best Italian research centers had identified the measures needed long before than they were incorporated into the documents we have received in recent months from European institutions. There is no European originality in having identified what Italy needs to do to grow more. It is a problem of the Italian system to be able to decide and then implement what we Italians knew well was necessary for our growth.[13]

The speech continues providing more examples for the political problem. It points out not only different policy issues but also make the problem tangible at a geographical level – north, center and south of Italy experience the issues differently. Around the middle point of the speech (paragraph 33) Monti details the policy solutions will be a two-part plan: first, to attend the emergency and tranquilize the international stakeholders[14], and second, to promote structural reforms – wherein the pension reform was included. Then, immediately, the President asks for the people and the politicians support.

Having drawn the government's plan, the speaker treats a critical aspect of unpopular policy: its sacrificial nature. By showing the surrenders to make and how they will distribute along the diverse societal groups (paragraphs 38 to 43), he suggests compassion and

[12] "Le difficoltà del momento attuale. L'Europa sta vivendo i giorni più difficili dagli anni del secondo dopoguerra. Il progetto che dobbiamo alla lungimiranza di grandi uomini politici, quali furono Konrad Adenauer, Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman e - sottolineo in modo particolare - Alcide De Gasperi (APPLAUSI) e che per sessant'anni abbiamo perseguito, passo dopo passo, dal Trattato di Roma - non a caso di Roma - all'atto unico, ai Trattati di Maastricht e di Lisbona, è sottoposto alla prova più grave dalla sua fondazione."

[13] "Ciò che occorre fare per ricominciare a crescere è noto da tempo. Gli studi dei migliori centri di ricerca italiani avevano individuato le misure necessarie molto prima che esse venissero recepite nei documenti che in questi mesi abbiamo ricevuto dalle istituzioni europee. Non c'è nessuna originalità europea nell'aver individuato ciò che l'Italia deve fare per crescere di più. È un problema del sistema italiano riuscire a decidere e poi ad attuare quanto noi italiani sapevamo bene fosse necessario per la nostra crescita."

[14] As George Papaconstantinou (2016) shows, this task was fundamental during the Greek crisis that preceded the Italian one.

impartiality, making the painful measures somewhat bearable. Additionally, President Monti previewed how the pension reform entered this schema:

> The interventions will be coordinated with the ongoing spending review, which I intend to strengthen and make particularly incisive with the precise identification of timeframes and responsibilities. Over the past few years, pension regulations have been the subject of repeated interventions, which have made the Italian pension system, when fully implemented, among the most sustainable in Europe and among the most capable of absorbing any negative shocks. Already now the retirement age, in the case of old age, taking into account the so-called windows, is higher than that of German and French workers.[15]

From paragraphs 49 to 56, Monti details his labor market reform which, as we sustained, was a fundamental part of the reform package. After that, he continues explaining further measures to boost the country's economic growth until the final call to action of paragraph 67:

> The attempt that we propose to make, ladies and gentlemen senators, and that I ask you to support is a very difficult one; otherwise I suspect I would not be here today. The margins for success are all the narrower, as the President of the Republic has pointed out, after years of opposition and confrontation in national politics. If we can seize this opportunity together to engage in constructive discussion on basic choices and goals, we will have a chance to redeem the country and be able to restore confidence in its institutions. I thank you.[16]

Again, for Mario Monti, the government's mission has to do with a politic-institutional crisis, not a fiscal or economic one. This narrative will accompany his communication strategy throughout his entire administration.

Next, we detail the speech's nominations and predications. In this section, we interpret which subjects Monti identifies and what he says about them. In Table 5, we find to whom he refers when talking about him and his allies and what actions and traits he attributes to

[15] "Gli interventi saranno coordinati con la spending review in corso, che intendo rafforzare e rendere particolarmente incisiva con la precisa individuazione di tempi e responsabilità. Negli scorsi anni la normativa previdenziale è stata oggetto di ripetuti interventi, che hanno reso a regime il sistema pensionistico italiano tra i più sostenibili in Europa e tra i più capaci di assorbire eventuali shock negativi. Già adesso l'età di pensionamento, nel caso di vecchiaia, tenendo conto delle cosiddette finestre, è superiore a quella dei lavoratori tedeschi e francesi."

[16] "Il tentativo che ci proponiamo di compiere, onorevoli senatori, e che vi chiedo di sostenere è difficilissimo; altrimenti ho il sospetto che non mi troverei qui oggi. I margini di successo sono tanto più ridotti, come ha rilevato il Presidente della Repubblica, dopo anni di contrapposizione e di scontri nella politica nazionale. Se sapremo cogliere insieme questa opportunità per avviare un confronto costruttivo su scelte e obiettivi di fondo avremo occasione di riscattare il Paese e potremo ristabilire la fiducia nelle sue istituzioni. Vi ringrazio."

them. Table 6 contains the same analysis regarding the government's opponents and outsiders.

Table 11. Mario Monti Speech #1's Nominations and Predications Analysis: Monti and Friends

THE POLICY PROMOTER AND GROUPS OF FRIENDS			
I/we		***You, ours***	
Nomination	*Predication*	*Nomination*	*Predication*
I	As a member of the Senate	Senators	Honorable
	Colleague of the former Presidents	President of the Republic	Wise, skilled and with sense of State
	One considered as a technician/an alien of politics	the Parliament	The beating hart of every government policy, the decisive hub for the revival and redemption of democratic life
	Aware of the great challenge and difficulty of changing long-standing national problems	President of the Senate	Supportive, generous and kind
	The one that acts immediately reducing the budget	President Berlusconi	Helpful and honorable
The Government	Born to face the urgency with a sense of unity: "Governo di impegno nazionale"	The "fathers of Europe"	Great politicians
Italians	The ones that have to convince the world we are making the right things to overcome the crisis	Europe/ans	Submitted to "the gravest crisis since its foundation"
	The ones we have the power to decide what is best for the country's economy		Us
			Our colleagues and close friends
		Italy	An economy that have made great efforts for 20 years to balance the public accounts
			To be considered "the weakest link" of Europe due to the crisis
			A relatively weakened economy among European countries
			With Europeanist vocation, Atlantic solidarity, and caring of relations with the strategic partners and opening markets
		The women	Our wasted resources
		The youth	Our wasted resources

		Armed Forces and Law Enforcement	Our first line of defense of democracy and our values
		Minister of Defense	Our colleague and exemplary military man

Source: own elaboration.

To start, Monti presents himself in his many roles: as a member of the Senate, as a former president's colleague, as an outsider of politics, as a technician, as someone aware of the grim panorama, and as a reformist. Of course, some characters, like the Senator and the political outsider, might conflict. However, Monti was skillful enough to present those edges at the right moment in his narrative. Then, he adds the government to the "we" category. Regarding the latter, the president underscores that the administration is meant to unite the nation and overcome the crisis. By doing this, he establishes an unequivocal goal. Thirdly, Monti positions himself as an Italian. With this, he takes the task of convincing the world and demonstrating the Republic's capacity to carry out successful governance personally. This last element could have gained Monti some favorability; we are used to listening to politicians chitchatting about "the peoples" instead of including themselves in that group.

About the *yours/ours* segment, President Monti points out several actors. Here we find a mixture of segments. For instance, we can find the Republic symbols, the unity[17] archetypes, the supranational agents, and the *victims* of his narrative. Regarding the first, we find the Senators, the President of the Republic, the Parliament, the President of the Senate, and the outgoing President Berlusconi. He has only good words for all of them. Monti used adjectives like "wise," "kind," and "honorable" and referred to the Parliament as "the beating heart of every government policy" [18]. By doing this, Monti used Cialdini's *reciprocation* principle – a meaningful, unexpected or customized donation gesture. Why? Because the flattered ones tend to agree more and, more importantly, feel indebted to the person who made the gesture. Therefore, when opening his administration in this stance, Monti secured the political class friendship or at least paved their responsiveness.

Second, Italy, the Armed Forces, and the Minister of Defense constitute the unity archetypes. Here, the president transmits mixed feelings. There is a certain nostalgia for Italy's glorious past. On the one hand, he talks about a diminished economy that lags in the European scene. On the other side, he acknowledges the sacrifices the country has made hitherto then and its long-standing international vocation. By stretching that argument to the extreme, Monti alludes to the Armed Forces as "our first line of defense of democracy and

[17] In the sense of Cialdini's (2016) principle.

[18] "Il Parlamento è il cuore pulsante di ogni politica di Governo, lo snodo decisivo per il rilancio e il riscatto della vita democratica. Al Parlamento vanno riconosciute e rafforzate attraverso l'azione quotidiana di ciascuno di noi dignità, credibilità e autorevolezza."

our values" [19] and even refers to only one of his ministers, the Defense Minister, as "an example of a military member." [20]

In the third place, we have the supranational agents. Here Monti addressed the "fathers of Europe" – Adenauer, Monnet, Schuman, and De Gasperi, calling them great politicians. And then, he equates being Italian to being European: "Europe is us."[21] Through these allusions again, Monti puts Italy on a podium of modern Europe's founders, which marks a clear difference with respect to the other economies experiencing the same crisis then – Greece, Portugal, and Spain (Papaconstantinou 2016). Most probably, Monti's advisors knew they had to set high costs for the European authorities to treat Italy as harshly as they had treated Greece so far. Indeed, König sustains that "(…) a pervasive and dominant feature of the [Monti] government's reform communication is a heavy negative framing of the status quo. (…) partly complemented by means of negative comparisons (e.g. to Greece)" (2016b, p. 184).

Lastly, the president established some of the status quo's victims: the women and the youngsters. However, overall, the apparent victim is Italy. Although the literature shows that pointing out some victims/heroes can enhance a story's appeal, Monti does so in a markedly technical manner. Instead of showing some compassion or empathy towards women and youth suffering from the crisis, he talks of the Italian economy's "wasted resources" [22] to boost growth, a gelid and economically-driven way of describing a human group.

Having seen Monti's friends or allies, in Table 6 we analyze Monti's opponents and outsiders' nominations and predications.

Table 12. Mario Monti Speech #1's Nominations and Predications Analysis: Monti's Opponents and Outsiders

GROUPS OF OPPONENTS/ENEMIES/OUTSIDERS			
Enemies		***Outsiders***	
Nomination	*Predication*	*Nomination*	*Predication*
European countries	Countries that, bearing in mind the future of Europe, also have their own national interests	International investors	Those who hold half of the Italian debt, and the ones we must convince

[19] "(…) le Forze Armate ed i rappresentanti delle forze dell'ordine, che sono in prima linea nella difesa dei nostri valori e della democrazia."
[20] "Ecco un esempio di militare impegnato all'estero che sta facendo i salti mortali per arrivare a giurare nelle mani del Capo dello Stato nelle prossime ore."
[21] "Non vediamo i vincoli europei come imposizioni. Anzitutto permettetemi di dire, e me lo sentirete affermare spesso, che non c'è un loro e un noi. L'Europa siamo noi."
[22] "(…) favorire l'ingresso nel mondo del lavoro dei giovani e delle donne, le due grandi risorse sprecate del nostro Paese."

	which do not consider a strong Italy		
European institutions/authorities	Those that then come to us in a flurry of messages, letters and deliberations		Those who reward or punish us
	Those that demand us to make a difficult labor market reform	The best Italian research centers	Those who have given us the solution to the crisis for years
The mafia/organized crime	Those we must fight against to allow the economy to grow	The weakest segments of the population	Those who will suffer the crisis the most if we do not take care of the crisis.
The financial crisis	The one that will submit all of us if we do not do anything	Individuals who hold elective offices	Those that will have to act soberly and with attention to cost containment
	It is international	Politically appointed executives in private-law companies financed with public resources	Those that will have to act soberly and with attention to cost containment
	The one that has hit young people hardest	Representatives of political and administrative institutions	Those that will have to act soberly and with attention to cost containment
	The one that has accentuated Italy's territorial disparities	The citizens	Those who are making the sacrifices of the reforms

Source: own elaboration.

President Monti listed several enemies and outsiders of his government, which all served well to draw a critical scenario with univocal actors to blame. Recall that as many scholars on unpopular policy communication have sustained, the *blame avoidance* strategy helps to promote painful measures effectively.

In the first category of enemies, we find a strong contradiction in Monti's reasoning line: first, he classified Europe and Europeans as his and his country's friends. Then, instead, he casts European countries, institutions, and authorities as his enemies. To some extent, he does so skillfully. Regarding the European countries, he does not mention any people or countries in particular but reaffirms Italy's relative weakness: those countries will act according to their interests instead of Italy's. However, Monti gets more incisive when alluding to Europe's authorities. For example, Monti claims the European Union representatives demanded that Italians reform their labor market – one of his core policy proposals. Moreover, he incarnates the annoyance that many Italians may have felt by then toward European entities: "What then comes to us in a flurry of messages, letters and deliberations from European institutions are mostly measures aimed at making the economy less plastered."[23] Later on, when campaigning for the 2013 election, Berlusconi "(…) accused the former economics professor of driving Italy deeper into recession and submitting to Germany's dominion over European policies" (Financial Times 2012).

The second enemy is probably the most obvious one: the financial crisis. Monti utilizes it to make two points when drawing his pension reform's status quo and, therefore, to make the reforms unavoidable. Firstly, to explain all the wrong happening to the country: the crisis has affected the most vulnerable and accentuated the country's disparities. Secondly, through the crisis, he also states the worst-case scenario – the prospective theory resort:

> We must realize that if we fail and if we do not find the necessary unity of purpose, the spontaneous evolution of the financial crisis will subject us all, but especially the weaker sections of the population, to far harsher conditions.[24]

Lastly, Monti brings up a historical Italy's rule-of-law contenders: the mafia and organized crime – let us recall that he introduces the political crisis problem first. Although he is not very detailed, he probably refers to them to make another point: *"those in my reform's side will see this country grow; those against, will ruin it as our most legendary enemies."* This makes sense from the behavioral point of view as well. As Storr shows, "gossip: studies reveal that, not only is gossip universal, with around two-thirds of our conversation being devoted to social topics, most of it concerns moral infractions: people breaking the rules of the group" (2019, chapter The roots of the dramatic question; social emotions; heroes and villains; moral outrage).

About the government's outsiders, the groups are pretty mixed. First, there are international investors, those to whom the country must prove it is still attractive and trustworthy. Then, there are the experts, the "best Italian research centers" [25], as Monti calls them. Those play Cialdini's *authority* resort, backing the government reforms formulation. In the third place, we find Monti giving a *consistency* strike (Cialdini 2016; 2007). The president demands austerity and sacrifices for politicians or politically-dependent executives, and he also announced several spending cuts in the public administration and his Presidency's budget.

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[23] "Quelli che poi ci vengono in un turbinio di messaggi, di lettere e di deliberazioni dalle istituzioni europee sono per lo più provvedimenti rivolti a rendere meno ingessata l'economia, a facilitare la nascita di nuove imprese e poi indurne la crescita, migliorare l'efficienza dei servizi offerti dalle amministrazioni pubbliche, favorire l'ingresso nel mondo del lavoro dei giovani e delle donne, le due grandi risorse sprecate del nostro Paese."

[24] "Dobbiamo renderci conto che, se falliremo e se non troveremo la necessaria unità di intenti, la spontanea evoluzione della crisi finanziaria ci sottoporrà tutti, ma soprattutto le fasce più deboli della popolazione, a condizioni ben più dure."

[25] "Gli studi dei migliori centri di ricerca italiani avevano individuato le misure necessarie molto prima che esse venissero recepite nei documenti che in questi mesi abbiamo ricevuto dalle istituzioni europee."

Finally, Monti lists some *victims*. Although we had pointed out some victims among his "friends" (see Table 5), here, he also addresses some other groups but, this time, in a very impersonal way. To start, he talks about "citizens": "In the face of the sacrifices that have been and will have to be demanded of citizens (…)."[26] He does not include any human or familiar expression to that, and even suggests that "sacrifices will have to be demanded" – instead of "sacrifices we are asking." Accordingly, he refers to the most vulnerable in a scholarly manner: "We must realize that if we fail and if we do not find the necessary unity of purpose, the spontaneous evolution of the financial crisis will subject us all, but especially the *weakest sections of the population*, to far harsher conditions." [27]

Since the speaker uses nominations and predications, he needs argumentative devices (i.e., if *x*, then *y*) to deliver them persuasively. As we affirmed before, it is common for people to use argumentative fallacies when trying to convince others. Consequently, Table 7 shows Monti's central argumentation schemes when not appealing to mere logic. This analysis aims to identify patterns in using *topoi* and certain types of fallacies when government spokespersons must promote unpopular reforms.

Table 13. Mario Monti Speech #1's Argumentation Schemes and Fallacies

Name of topos	***Name of fallacy***	***Paraphrase***
History	Circular reasoning	p.9. Europe is going through the most difficult days since the postwar period. Why? Because the European project made by Adenauer, Monnet, Shchuman and De Gasperi, is submitted to the gravest test since its foundation. Then, there is a crisis.
Burdening	False premise	p.7. It it is the "sense of the State" and "the institutions' force" that can solve the political crisis.
Urgency	Evading the burden of proof	p.21. The crisis is international because "it is obvious".
Justice	Evading the burden of proof	p.38. Since the citizens will make sacrifices, therefore all of us should make sacrifices.
	Argumentum ad consequentiam	p.66. Due to the situations' gravity, we must act by distributing sacrifices equally.
Reality	False premise	p.5. The Parliament is the heart of every government policy.
	Evading the burden of proof	p.51. If we want to boost the Italian economy it is "essential" to promote worker mobility throughout companies and sectors
	Evading the burden of proof	p.62. If we want financial equilibrium and social progress, economic growth is an "essential" condition
	Evading the burden of proof	p.63. The Armed Forces and Law Enforcement are the first line of defense of democracy

[26] "Di fronte ai sacrifici che sono stati e che dovranno essere richiesti ai cittadini sono ineludibili interventi volti a contenere i costi di funzionamento degli organi elettivi."
[27] "Dobbiamo renderci conto che, se falliremo e se non troveremo la necessaria unità di intenti, la spontanea evoluzione della crisi finanziaria ci sottoporrà tutti, ma soprattutto le fasce più deboli della popolazione, a condizioni ben più dure."

	Straw man	p.18. Only those who feel their insterests affected by the reforms will oppose to them.

Source: own elaboration.

Monti employs five of the nine identified *topoi* when committing argumentative fallacies: *history, burdening, urgency, justice, and reality*. Fallacies concern three issues: one is drawing the status quo and explaining why the country is going through a crisis. The second is about the unpopular policies he is promoting. The third one refers to predications, especially those that flatter the president's interlocutors: the Senate and the Armed Forces.

Regarding the crisis, Monti referred to the history topos using the circular reasoning fallacy (see Table 7). In that case, by alluding to a crucial Europe historical moment, he attempted to illustrate the gravity of the current one. Then, he recurred to the urgency topos and did so evading the burden of proof: "The crisis we are experiencing is international; *this is obvious*, but it bears repeating every time, also to avoid demonization. It is international, *I am telling everyone*." [28]

The majority of Monti's fallacies went to defend his painful reforms. Here, he employed the justice and reality *topoi*. In the first case, he brings up the sacrificial aspect of the reform (see Table 7): "*We all should make sacrifices, that is the right thing to do*." Then, he tells the audience some supposedly well-known facts, like worker mobility will boost the country's economy or that economic growth is fundamental for financial equilibrium. Although these last two postulates sound logical, no argument sustains them. Why is it that worker mobility can boost Italy's economy? Why is it that economic growth is fundamental for financial equilibrium? We cannot find the answers to that in Monti's statements. As we saw earlier, that does not necessarily imply that the speaker acted maliciously. Instead, we suggest President Monti was caught by the Curse of Knowledge and the knowledge fallacy. The Curse of Knowledge alludes to the difficulty of un-learn or empathizing with those unaware of what we are. In Heath and Heath's words,

> Once we know something, we find it hard to imagine what it was like not to know it. Our knowledge has "cursed" us. And it becomes difficult for us to share our knowledge with others, because we can't readily re-create our listeners' state of mind. (2008, chapter Principle 6: Stories)

Likewise, as we saw in the Theoretical Framework when committing the knowledge fallacy, the speaker overestimates the audience's reasoning and the outcomes of that reasoning. As Crow and Jones sustain:

[28] "La crisi che stiamo vivendo è internazionale; questo è ovvio, ma conviene ripeterlo ogni volta, anche ad evitare demonizzazioni. È internazionale, lo sto dicendo a tutti."

> The central ideas of this approach are that policy is complex and ambiguous, people do not understand policy in the way that experts do, and that individuals need to be educated on the relevant facts. Once educated, people will then 'reasonably' accept the position of the expert(s) (2018, p. 219).

Lastly, Monti uses the straw man fallacy to gain support for his reforms. He does so by insinuating that some who oppose the reforms are actually protecting their own interests instead and, therefore, they are wrong. Here is the fragment:

> The objection that is often raised against these measures is that they are needed, of course, but in the short run they do little for growth. It is an objection behind which is often masked-let's face it-those who do not want these measures, not so much because they have no effect on growth in the short run (which it is true that they do not), but because *there is a fear that these measures will harm someone's interests*.[29] (Emphasis by the author).

Finally, the politolinguistics' perspectivation analysis entails three key components:

1. It involves the reclassification of nominations made by different speakers.
2. It includes actors that a speaker mentioned without any predications.
3. This examination provides insight into how the orator frames all the actors involved in their speech based on their nominations, predications, and argumentations, which we have already analyzed.

Table 8 summarizes the speech's characters, after which we will interpret the discourse's framings.

Table 14. Mario Monti Speech #1's Characters

Supporters of the Government		***Not supporters of the Government***	
I/we	***Not those against the reform***	***Not us***	***Those against/not in favor of the reform***
Me; the government; Italy; Senators; Minister of Defense; Armed Forces	The Italian workers; the citizens; best Italian research centers; weakest segments of the population; international investors; European institutions/authorities; European countries; the women; the youth; the "fathers of Europe"; President of the Republic; the Parliament; President of the Senate	Politically appointed executives in private-law companies financed with public resources; individuals who hold elective offices; Europeans; President Berlusconi; the financial crisis	The mafia/organized crime

[29] "L'obiezione che spesso si oppone a queste misure è che esse servono, certo, ma nel breve periodo fanno poco per la crescita. È un'obiezione dietro la quale spesso si maschera - riconosciamolo - chi queste misure non vuole, non tanto perché non hanno effetti sulla crescita nel breve periodo (che è vero che non hanno), ma perché si teme che queste misure ledano gli interessi di qualcuno."

Source: own elaboration.

It is interesting how President Monti frames the crisis as a political-institutional problem. By doing this, he alludes to Cialdini's *unity* concept. Describing the situation in such a way allows Monti to introduce a "Government of national commitment" (*Governo di impegno nazionale*). That also gives the idea that his unpopular reforms are a national matter instead of a financial one; Italy's survival and sovereignty are at stake. Indeed, when we look at Table 8, the *I/we* supporters of the government are primarily Republican symbols – Italy, Senators, Ministers, and Armed Forces. Likewise, in the speech, European authorities, institutions, and countries are not against the reform, and even the "fathers of Europe" themselves appear to support Monti's claim. Moreover, when individuating the *Not us* category, he points out politically appointed executives, representatives, and President Berlusconi.

Here is an element that could have affected Monti's narrative: the crisis victims are unclear. The speaker fully assumed his expert role, lacking compassion and political touch. As we suggested, Monti treated the stereotypical victims -the median voter and some particular society groups- from a cold policy-making perspective. Additionally, he did not provide clear examples about persons' lives, which is crucial when considering amoral familism: people will bear risks when facing personal or familiar difficulties. No calling for the common good can assure the citizenry's open support. In conclusion, Monti's technical approach probably made it harder for the citizens to internalize the policy problem and its solution and, on the other side, did not provide the Parliament -his audience in this speech- with persuasive tools to defend the reform in their constituencies.

It is plausible to assert that due to the tense European political environment - remember that Greece, Spain, and Portugal were also in trouble - Monti prioritized the approval of investors and multinational organizations to his government before that of the citizens.

On the contrary, there is a common thread in Monti's narration. All the villains, namely, the *Not supporters of the government*, are seen as privileged in Italian society: those related to the public apparatus and politics and the mafia and organized crime. Furthermore, as we revised in the context, many clues pointed out to Monti's predecessor Silvio Berlusconi as the one to blame for the crisis. Then, the speaker's main claim regarding the pension reforms addresses the privilege question: "However, our pension system remains characterized by wide disparities in treatment between different generations and categories of workers, as well as unjustified areas of privilege." [30] Here Monti reinforces his justice-pursuing administration, distributing sacrifices equally throughout society. He does so when referring to the labor market reform: "With the consensus of the social partners, labor market

[30] "Il nostro sistema pensionistico rimane però caratterizzato da ampie disparità di trattamento tra diverse generazioni e categorie di lavoratori, nonché da aree ingiustificate di privilegio."

institutions will have to be reformed to move us away from a dual market where some are far too protected while others are totally unprotected and uninsured in case of unemployment."[31]

In balance, Mario Monti's cleverly framed his unpopular policies and the pension reform. First, he alluded to a political crisis, wherein privileges and the privileged ones incarnated the problem. Besides, Monti reinforced the necessity of the reform by referring to the European authorities and institutions, which took the blame out on his administration. This allowed him to present a reform package instead of isolated measures – it is the *country*, not the *economy*, that he was announcing to save. Similarly, the president shielded himself with Republican symbols, transmitting that he represented Italian institutionality instead of a political party.

The conclusions converge with those of Pascal König, who has studied Monti's communication strategy in-depth. König had previously noted Monti describing the status quo and employing the unity resort: "The Italian head of government painted a very negative picture of the status quo warning of possible catastrophic and devastating consequences without the austerity policies. This was often combined with appeals to national unity." (2016a, p. 552)

President Monti bared in mind whom exactly his audience was when performing the discourse. He needed the Parliamentarians to see him as an ally, who desperately needed them to implement the reforms. He flattered them and addressed them directly repeatedly during the peroration. That was to the detriment of the general public, who might have perceived Monti as too technical and defending the Senators' and Deputies' interests instead of theirs.

We present Monti's second speech analysis to infer how the narrative followed.

Table 15. Mario Monti Speech #2's Macro and Mesostructures Analysis – 6 July 2012

DISCOURSE 2 – FOR THE CONGRESS APPROVAL	***MACRO - MESOSTRUCTURE***
Paragraph 1	
Abbiamo preferito fninire in una sola seduta il Consiglio dei Ministri, anziché, come ci aspettavamo l'inizio, dover andare in parte su domani mattina, il Consiglio dei Ministri dedicato essenzialmente alla spending review.	<u>Section 1. Introduction</u>: The spending review. The explanation about why they chose reviewing the spending rather than cutting spending immediately. And how they did it.
Paragraph 2	

[31] "Con il consenso delle parti sociali dovranno essere riformate le istituzioni del mercato del lavoro, per allontanarci da un mercato duale dove alcuni sono fin troppo tutelati mentre altri sono totalmente privi di tutele e assicurazioni in caso di disoccupazione."

Voi sapete che fin dall' inizio dell'attività del Governo, per quanto riguarda il controllo della spesa pubblica, abbiamo preferito scartare la via più semplice, quella dei tanti lineari, e accingerci a quella un pochino più complessa, ma strutturalmente più proficua, di esaminare a fondo la natura, la struttura della spesa nelle sue diverse articolazioni, nelle diverse articolazioni della Pubblica Amministrazione.	
Paragraph 3	
Abbiamo prima fatto un esplorazione sistematica dell' argomento grazie al lavoro del Ministro Giarda. Successivamente dopo la presentazione del suo rapporto di inquadramento e di base dello spending review, abbiamo mobilitato la persona, a nostro giudizio, più adatta a darci un contributo operativo concreto in questo campo -il dottor Enrico Bondi- che ringrazio per la profondità e la serietà con cui -non sorprendendoci- si è messo al lavoro come commissario per questo compito. E abbiamo lavorato con un Comitato di ministri che ha individuato nell' ambito della spesa, prima di tutto, di competenza del Governo centrale, una serie di interventi possibili che poi si sono estesi anche alle altre articolazioni del settore pubblico italiano.	
Paragraph 4	
Abbiamo varato un paio di settimane fa, il quindici giugno, il primo decreto legge di questa serie *spending review*, i provvedimenti relativi alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri e al Ministero dell' economia e delle finanze. E quella di oggi è una seconda e la principale rata di intervento di *spending review*.	Section 1.1. The product: the spending review bill.
Paragraph 5	
Voglio dire che tutti i ministri hanno dato prova di grande, di grandissimo, direi, senso di responsabilità per dare il loro contributo a questa missione collettiva di dare più razionalità e più efficienza ai settori di rispettiva competenza. È infatti un'operazione che mira a ridurre gli eccessi di spesa pubblica in una logica di aumento della produttività della pubblica amministrazione e senza intaccare il livello dei servizi.	Section 2. The political problem: to enhance public sector's productivity
Paragraph 6	
Abbiamo oggi deliberato nel decreto legge, che sarà pubblicato domani nella Gazzetta Ufficiale, una serie di interventi che il viceministro Grilli vi descriverà nella loro ossatura principale. Poi il commissario Bondi vi darà il senso del metodo che, grazie a lui, abbiamo potuto utilizzare nel condurre questo lavoro, lavoro che riguarda un po' tutti i settori ma che vede nel comparto della spesa sanitaria -ministro Balduzzi- una componente molto centrale e molto rilevante, così come lo è la parte relativa al pubblico impiego e alla articolazione periferica della pubblica amministrazione -ministro Patroni Griffi- e tutto lo stato.	The experts behind the policy solution.
Paragraph 7	

Per la Presidenza del Consiglio ho seguito con la consueta attenzione etica e capacità di coordinamento dal Sottosegretario alla Presidenza, Antonio Catricalà.	
Paragraph 8	
Spero di non aver dimenticato nessuno tra i principali protagonisti di questa operazione che da i seguenti risultati sul piano quantitativo. Questo, credo che questo possa interessare oltre alla metodologia e oltre all'impatto strutturale.	
Paragraph 9	
Il risparmio sarà di quattro miliardi e mezzo per il 2012 in questa questa metà residua del 2012-, di dieci miliardi e mezzo per 2013, e di undici miliardi per il 2014. Questo ci consente di dire fin da ora che è possibile evitare l'aumento di due punti percentuali dell' IVA -quell'aumento che sarebbe scattato il primo ottobre di quest'anno- è possibile evitare questo aumento di due punti sia nell' ultimo trimestre del 2012 sia per l' intero primo semestre del 2013.	
Paragraph 10	<u>Section 3. Political solution</u> - the outcome of the government policy
Grazie ai risparmi ottenuti sarà inoltre possibile estendere la clausola di salvaguardia in materia pensionistica, prevista dal decreto legge *Salva Italia*, ad altri 50.000 soggetti, anche se maturano i requisiti per l' accesso al pensionamento successivamente al 31 dicembre 2011. Complessivamente, l'importo a favore dei lavoratori salvaguardati è di 1,2 miliardi a partire dal 2014.	
Paragraph 11	
Sempre grazie al beneficio di questa spending review sono infine previsti stanziamenti per la ricostruzione delle zone danneggiate dal sisma che ha colpito Emilia Romagna, Lombardia e Veneto -500 milioni sono stati già stanziati con il decreto d' urgenza per le zone terremotate- la spending review garantirà ulteriori risorse un miliardo per il due 2013 e un miliardo per il 2014.	
Paragraph 12	
Prevediamo nelle prossime settimane un terzo provvedimento di spending review che riguarderà le agevolazioni fiscali, la revisione strutturale della spesa e i contributi pubblici sulla base, tra l' altro, delle analisi effettuate per incarico del Governo ai professori Amato e Giavazzi.	What is next? Further spending reviewing
Paragraph 13	
Mi fermo qui. È chiaro che all' inizio della nostra attività, presi dalle esigenze dell'emergenza e dell'urgenza, abbiamo dovuto fare pesanti	Introduction to the political problem: setting the status quo

interventi di consolidamento del disavanzo pubblico basati, più di quanto avremmo desiderato, sull'aumento delle entrate, proprio perché abbiamo voluto evitare la impostazione un po'semplicistica dei tagli lineari dal lato della spesa. È ovvio che l'impostazione che abbiamo seguito ha richiesto diversi mesi in più, ma è anche ovvio che porta a risultati più soddisfacenti.	
Paragraph 14	
Mi fermo qui. Prego il ministro Grilli di voler delineare l'articolazione di questo provvedimento.	

Source: own elaboration.

We chose this speech for three reasons. First, because being a press conference, it is nationally broadcasted and goes directly to the media representatives and citizens. Second, because it treats Monti's public spending cut (or, as he called it, *spending review*), and third because it shows the government's technical character in all its splendor. Of course, the piece tangentially alludes to the pension reform, which must be understood within an austerity package.

Regarding the speech's macro and mesostructures, Monti started exhibiting the difficulty of the challenge: how to cut public spending without severely affecting the quality of public services. In this case, the president did not use the status quo to justify the unpopular measure but Cialdini’s *authority* card. He turned, then, to the expert that quantified the problem and suggested the action course:

> Subsequently after the presentation of his report framing and grounding the spending review, we mobilized the person, in our judgment, best suited to give us concrete operational input in this field -Dr. Enrico Bondi- who I thank for the depth and seriousness with which -not surprisingly- he set to work as commissioner for this task.[32]

Following this technical approach, President Monti portrays the policy problem with a scientific tone. First, regarding the spending review, he sustains that “It is in fact an operation that aims to reduce excess public spending in a logic of increasing the productivity of public administration and without affecting the level of services”[33]. After, when delivering the policy solution, Monti reaffirms the technical path:

> The savings will be four and a half billion for 2012 in this remaining half of 2012-, ten and a half billion for 2013, and eleven billion for 2014. This allows us to say as of now

[32] “Successivamente dopo la presentazione del suo rapporto di inquadramento e di base dello spending review, abbiamo mobilitato la persona, a nostro giudizio, più adatta a darci un contributo operativo concreto in questo campo -il dottor Enrico Bondi- che ringrazio per la profondità e la serietà con cui -non sorprendendoci- si è messo al lavoro come commissario per questo compito.”

[33] È infatti un'operazione che mira a ridurre gli eccessi di spesa pubblica in una logica di aumento della produttività della pubblica amministrazione e senza intaccare il livello dei servizi.”

> that it is possible to avoid the two-percentage point increase in VAT -that increase that would have been triggered on October 1 of this year- it is possible to avoid this two-point increase both in the last quarter of 2012 and for the entire first half of 2013.[34]

Even when he had the chance to highlight concrete and attractive pension benefits for citizens, he failed to do so. Instead, he presented them dully:

> Thanks to the savings obtained, it will also be possible to extend the safeguard clause on pensions, provided for in the Salva Italia decree law, to another 50,000 individuals, even if they accrue the requirements for 'access to retirement after December 31, 2011. Overall, the amount in favor of safeguarded workers is 1.2 billion from 2014.[35]

As we saw in the first Monti speech, the manners are scholarly. So here we have two hypotheses: either he chose the specialists -investors and the European authorities- as his audience, or he is a victim of the Knowledge Curse and the knowledge fallacy. Which one was true, we cannot corroborate, but we lean toward the latter. The speaker could have mixed the technical and the empathetic way to explain the pension benefits. He would have tranquilized the specialist and pleased the voters.

Now, as we did in the first speech examination, we next detail the discourse's nominations and predications. In Table 10, we find to whom Monti refers when talking about him and his allies and what actions and traits he attributes to them.

Table 16. Mario Monti Speech #2's Nominations and Predications Analysis: Monti and Friends

THE POLICY PROMOTER AND GROUPS OF FRIENDS			
I/we		***You, ours***	
Nomination	*Predication*	*Nomination*	*Predication*
We	Those who chose the harder but more effective policy solution	Dr. Enrico Bondi	The most capable expert to give concrete policy solutions
		The Ministers	Those who have shown responsibility and taken care of efficiency

[34] "Il risparmio sarà di quattro miliardi e mezzo per il 2012 in questa questa metà residua del 2012-, di dieci miliardi e mezzo per 2013, e di undici miliardi per il 2014. Questo ci consente di dire fin da ora che è possibile evitare l'aumento di due punti percentuali dell' IVA -quell'aumento che sarebbe scattato il primo ottobre di quest'anno- è possibile evitare questo aumento di due punti sia nell' ultimo trimestre del 2012 sia per l' intero primo semestre del 2013."

[35] "Grazie ai risparmi ottenuti sarà inoltre possibile estendere la clausola di salvaguardia in materia pensionistica, prevista dal decreto legge *Salva Italia*, ad altri 50.000 soggetti, anche se maturano i requisiti per l' accesso al pensionamento successivamente al 31 dicembre 2011. Complessivamente, l'importo a favore dei lavoratori salvaguardati è di 1,2 miliardi a partire dal 2014."

		The Vice-Secretary of the Presidency, Antonio Catricalà	Who has ethically coordinated the government's activity

Source: own elaboration.

Unlike in the previous speech, Monti underscores his government's teamwork in this one. It is not Monti the Senator, the economist, Monti the President that counts but those behind the policy work. The president even omits the *I* nomination. Instead, he highlights the *we* form. He repeatedly thanks and acknowledges the cabinet's labor. Finally, the only external figure is the expert Dr. Bondi. He serves the government as an authoritative figure and, eventually, as a scapegoat for the painful adopted measures. Moreover, he made Dr. Bondi to explain the measures himself: "Then Commissioner Bondi will give you a sense of the method that, thanks to him, we have been able to use in conducting this work (…)"[36].

Some may claim this was a smart strategy. In fact, as Storr's *Science Behind Storytelling* shows:

> Even pre-verbal babies show approval of selfless behaviour. Researchers showed six-to ten-month-old infants a simple puppet show in which a goodie square selflessly helps a ball up the hill while a baddie triangle tries to force it down. When offered the puppets to play with almost all these children chose the selfless square. Psychologist Professor Paul Bloom writes that 'these were bona fide social judgements on the part of the babies.' (2019, chapter The roots of the dramatic question; social emotions; heroes and villains; moral outrage)

However, there is no narrative in Monti's second speech. There are no victims, no heroes, only *guides* – himself, his cabinet, and the expert (Miller 2017). Furthermore, there are no government opponents, villains, or enemies. In consequence, there is no plot. Where there is no plot, there is no story (Ricoeur in Chautard & Collin-Lachaud 2019). There is only information, a succession of data. Recall that "facts tell, but stories sell" (Carville and Begala in Salmon 2017, chapter Turning Politics Into a Story). As we saw in the literature, enemies can illustrate the policy solution's point and make it more bearable. As Monti said in his first speech, the pension reform, supposed to "end with privileges," should restore society's moral equilibrium. To underscore the villains' nature, Storr turned to "A study of over 200 popular nineteenth- and early twentieth-century novels found the antagonists' most common flaw was an ineffably chimpish 'quest for social dominance at the expense of others or an abuse of their existing power'." (2019, chapter Status Play).

After analyzing the speaker's nominations and predications, we examined his argumentative devices, as in the preceding piece. However, we did not observe any

[36] "Poi il commissario Bondi vi darà il senso del metodo che, grazie a lui, abbiamo potuto utilizzare nel condurre questo lavoro."

argumentative fallacy, which is not completely surprising. There was little space for alluding to argumentative *topoi* or evading logical reasoning. Since this intervention was more about explaining data instead of giving arguments to defend a point of view. Table 11 summarizes Monti's second speech's characters.

Table 17. Mario Monti Speech #2's Characters

Supporters of the Government	
I/we	***Not those against the reform***
We; the Ministers; the Vice-Secretary of the Presidency Antonio Catricalà	Dr. Enrico Bondi

Source: own elaboration.

As told in advance, this second intervention contains only favorable actors to the government and the reform. Reinforcing our idea above, Monti's comments to his team in this piece show the general public and the press its expert performance. Likewise, he brings up a non-governmental expert that backs the reform and the policy solution.

To summarize, second Monti's speech is a rare piece. Firstly, because of its overuse of highly technical jargon. A business financial convention or a government's top executives' summit may need this sophistication. Instead, it calls attention that Monti employed that manner, considering that potentially all citizens would listen to the intervention. Secondly, it is uncommon that people do not include any enemies or villains in their narrative. As Barthes reminds us: "there is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative; all classes, all human groups, have their stories [...]. Like life itself, [narrative] is there" (1975, in Chautard & Collin-Lachaud 2019, p. 29). This villain does not refer to the twisted old guy or the archetypical bully; it can reasonably be "the crisis," some "political difficulties," "unemployment," and so forth. Thirdly, surprisingly, President Monti did not take a more significant profit from the pension benefit he was announcing. Despite helping extra 50,000 families, he merely referred to it as a passing anecdote.

George Papaconstantinou (2023), who years before Monti faced the worst fiscal and financial Greece crisis in its history, sustains that amidst the calamity, "you forget the need to tell the story." That could explain part of Monti's narrative deficit in his second analyzed peroration.

In conclusion, Monti's politolinguistics analyses produced fascinating results. First, the announcement speech is rich and shows some of the classical unpopular policy communication findings: the notion of sacrifice and how to distribute it throughout different groups, neatly describing a critical and unbearable status quo, and scapegoats to play the blame avoidance. On the narrative side, it does its part. Monti presents a problem, a clear victim -Italy- and perpetrators, the correspondent hero (himself), and that hero's proposed solution to overcome the initial problem. Second, the spending review press conference was bold, an informative piece with no narrative whatsoever. Instead, Monti's government's scholarly character becomes apparent in that case. It radicalizes the reform's communication by quoting an excellency team backed by a renowned expert to the detriment of more empathetic resorts. Indeed, some media criticized the President's "patronising attitude or his posse of hard-nosed academics" (Open Democracy 2013).

In the following, we show President Monti's Minister of Labor and Social Policies Elsa Fornero's interventions' analyses.

3.1.2. Elsa Fornero's Speeches

Fornero's speeches took place in different months than those of Monti. The first was an intervention to the Senate on 29 December 2011 to explain the government pension system's reform, weeks after Monti thanked the Senator's trust (see Table 12). We can state that this intervention is famed in Italy. Due to the tension and the hardship behind the pension reform, Minister Fornero could not finish her speech and burst into tears. That is, evidently, a communicative act regardless of intentionality. In that sense, working on this piece was unavoidable: it was the first Fornero's exposition of the reform and set the tone for the coming months.

The second peroration occurred on 18 September 2012, also to the Senate, when the minister argued in favor of her labor reform, which worked in tandem with the pension reform (see Table 17).

Table 18. Elsa Fornero Speech #1's Macro and Mesostructures Analysis – 29 December 2011

DISCOURSE 1	***MACRO - MESOSTRUCTURE***
Paragraph 1	
Ringrazio il presidente anche per questa precisazione che per me è molto importante. Perché io credo che questa riforma previdenziale che presentiamo sia o possa segnare la fine di un periodo nel quale le pensioni sono state viste essenzialmente come un trasferimento dello stato, deciso nominalmente secondo criteri di giustizia, secondo criteri di equità, ma spesso in maniera un po' arbitraria. E sicuramente nascondendo molti privilegi, a un periodo in cui tutti, ma proprio tutti, devono capire che il principale meccanismo per fare pensioni è il lavoro.	Section 1. Introduction to the political problem. The current pension system's vices and arbitrariness. Therefore, it is necessary to change that situation. The most salient framing is that of shifting from a State-transferred pension to a work-earned one
Paragraph 2	
Quindi questa è la riforma delle pensioni ma la riforma del mercato del lavoro completerà questo primo pezzo. Viene prima per necessità, per vincoli finanziari e ci sarà, siccome non possiamo pensare che tutti nella vita possano essere fortunati da avere un adeguato livello di risparmio di	Section 1.1. The context. The pension reform can and should be understood as a package with the labor reform.

contributi, noi diremo che gli ammortizzatori sociali sono parte integrante di questo pacchetto.	
Paragraph 3	
Allora, a ispirare questa riforma sono esattamente i criteri di equità tra, ma anche entro, le generazioni. Tra generazioni vuol dire essenzialmente evitare la vecchia pratica di promettere a qualcuno presente oggi trasferendo l'onere di questa promessa a qualcuno che oggi conta poco o magari che non c'è ancora, cioè, le generazioni future.	
Paragraph 4	
Vogliamo l'equità entro le generazioni e quindi vi posso assicurare che abbiamo passato al setaccio il sistema pensionistico nel suo complesso per cercare di individuare delle posizioni differenziate, che però potevamo chiamare privilegi, e attenuare o eliminare questi privilegi, ma volevamo anche affermare il principio -vi ho detto- della pensione come risultato del lavoro. E questo vuol dire un metodo uniforme di calcolo della pensione. Vuol dire che la pensione si calcola grosso modo per tutti al secondo la stessa formula.	Section 3. The solution - first principle. Inter and intra generational fairness, eliminating every privilege, and considering each one's pension as the result of each one's work.
Paragraph 5	
Questa formula -che ormai sapete, si chiama metodo contributivo- dice due cose fondamentali. Che nessun euro di quelli che i lavoratori contribuisce al sistema deve essere perso; quindi c'è un implicito forte richiamo a eliminare il lavoro nero. E gli euro versati da giovani contano di più perché stanno di più capitalizzano di più come si può dire in gergo tecnico. E la seconda cosa è che, se si va in pensione prima, la pensione è un po più bassa.	
Paragraph 6	
E quindi leggo all'altro principio -metodo contributivo, vi ho detto- l'altro principio che è la flessibilità nel pensionamento. Io trovo abbastanza paradossale che lo stato, che non ci dice quando dobbiamo comprare la casa, quando dobbiamo sposarci, quando dobbiamo fare figli, però, ci debba dire quando dobbiamo lasciare il lavoro. Noi vogliamo reintrodurre una flessibilità e a questa flessibilità accompagnare incentivi al proseguimento dell'attività lavorativa. Incentivi che per qualcuno varranno; per altri magari -per considerazioni familiari, personali- non varranno. Ma sarà libero. Sarà libero al pensionamento a partire da un'età minima. Quindi questo vuol dire che c'è un pensionamento dettato da un'età minima e da una fascia di flessibilità che induce al proseguimento, che incentiva al proseguimento.	Section 3. The solution - second principle. People must be free to choose when to retire (the cases wherein the State does not tell people what to do with their lives is a good example of argumentation).
Paragraph 7	
L'età minima dobbiamo, però, tener conto del fatto che l'europa ci chiede oggi un innalzamento dell'età media di pensionamento. Quindi l'età minima non può essere troppo bassa, perché altrimenti la riforma tutta non sarebbe credibile sul piano europeo. Questo vuol dire che noi abbiamo dovuto alzare l'età minima per le donne e l'abbiamo portata a 62 anni con una fascia di	Section 3. The solution - third principle. However, we need a minimum age to retire. Section 2. Argumentation -

flessibilità che va fino a 70. Questa età 62 incorpora le finestre, un bizantinismo che abbiamo cancellato: non ci sono più finestre e non ci sono più quote. Non ci sono più... c'è trasparenza e uniformità nel sistema, quindi l'età minima per le donne è 62 e la flessibilità è fino a 70. L'età minima degli uomini oggi è 65. Ma attenzione! 65 più uno fa 66 non fa 65. Noi inglobiamo la finestra e quindi partiamo dal 66. Attenzione ancora! Perché le donne innescano un processo di adeguamento all'età maschile e questo processo termina nel 2018. Nel 2018, perciò, l'età minima per accedere al pensionamento sarà 66.	exemplification of the "privileged" problems regarding the age windows.
Paragraph 8	
E questo di nuovo sì è coerente con l'impegno preso dal precedente governo di portare l'età media di pensionamento a 67 entro il 2026. Noi anticipiamo, ma la crisi finanziaria non si è allentata; anzi, si è aggravata.	Setting the status quo - the financial crisis is worsening, so we should act now.
Paragraph 9	
Introduciamo poi il principio della convergenza, quindi vuol dire che alcuni regimi che sono stati finora privilegiati, in termini di trattamento o in termini di aliquote, convergeranno verso il regime generale applicato ai lavoratori dipendenti pubblici e privati. Questo vuol dire qualche aumento di aliquota contributiva per il lavoro per i commercianti, per gli artigiani, per i coltivatori diretti e imprenditori agricoli.	Section 3. The solution - fourth principle. Convergence. This should end with all the privileges among different economic groups.
Paragraph 10	
Sappiamo anche che ci sono i giovani con le loro partite iva. Non abbiamo potuto fare molto -l'aliquota loro è già abbastanza convergente- ma abbiamo esteso un minimo di tutela, che vuol dire le maternità e paternità -cioè i coingeneri, che noi incoraggiamo sia per le donne, sia degli uomini- e abbiamo dato qualche tutela di salute in più.	Section 3. The solution - fifth principle. Justice in distributing the sacrifices. For young adults, parental benefits. For the median-age women, to anticipate elderly benefits. For the rich to pay for the poor.
Paragraph 11	
Abbiamo chiesto un contributo di solidarietà alle pensioni più ricche e avvantaggiate. E abbiamo -per quanto riguarda il capitolo che so essere il più dolente per molte persone, le pensioni di anzianità- abbiamo deciso di, sempre incorporando la finestra, lasciare l'anzianità per le donne a 40 più uno -perche c'è già, c'è già, è già dentro- che fa 41 più mese che è già scattato. Quindi il numero oggi è 41 e un mese, e partiamo di lì per le donne. Per gli uomini chiediamo un sacrificio -ma abbiamo alzato l'età delle donne- quindi per gli uomini l'anzianità si acquisisce con 42 e un mese a partire dal primo gennaio 2012. Sarà possibile andare in pensione anche prima dell'età minima stabilita per le donne ma bisognerà pagare una piccola penale. Noi escludiamo che qualcuno vada prima, ma dovrà pagare una piccola penale.	
Paragraph 12	
Abbiamo cercato di fare tutto questo sotto, in maniera non rituale, non semplicemente come omaggio a principi sempre dichiarati e spesso disattesi. Abbiamo avuto a cuore l'equità. Sappiamo bene che richiediamo	The nudge. What will happen if we do not take this course of

sacrifici ma speriamo che questi sacrifici siano compresi proprio in nome di quella possibilità di crescita che si accompagnerà a un rafforzamento del lavoro senza il quale è la quale anche questa riforma del sistema previdenziale rischia di essere vanificata in un impoverimento collettivo. Ma questo impoverimento collettivo è esattamente il rischio che questa manovra vuole evitare.	action? Everyone will become poorer.
Paragraph 13	
C'è un'ultima cosa che forse per molti è la più dolorosa. Questa è la riforma pensionistica con questi principi. E poi ci sono i vincoli finanziari. I vincoli finanziari oggi sono severissimi. Allora nessuna riforma pensionistica da, nell'anno successivo alla sua introduzione o nell'anno della sua introduzione, risparmi. Perché il sistema pensionistico è un meccanismo lungo tra le generazioni. E allora abbiamo dovuto… e questo sì che ci è costato anche psicologicamente chiedere un… (*piange*)	The abrupt ending. The speaker collapses.

Source: own elaboration.

Regarding the speech's macro and mesostructures, Fornero communicated the traditionally included points: the problem, the argument, and the solution. First, Fornero portrayed the political problem. Then, she provided the policy solution and its underlying principles. In the third place, she launched a *nudge* to make the pension reform idea more compelling: "But this collective impoverishment is exactly the risk that this maneuver wants to avoid."[37]

Minister Fornero adopted a different approach to introducing the political problem than her superior. If Monti spoke about Italy's political crisis, Fornero presented a more economistic-philosophical notion. She poses the debate into the welfare vs. individual effort ideological axis or trade-off (Tanner & Hughes 2013), as we show next:

> (…) I believe that this pension reform that we are presenting is or can mark the end of a period in which pensions have been seen essentially as *a transfer from the state*, nominally decided according to criteria of justice, according to criteria of fairness, but often in a somewhat arbitrary way. And certainly, hiding a lot of privileges, to a period when everyone, but really everyone, has to understand that *the main mechanism for making pensions is to work*.[38] (Emphasis by the author).

This realistic approach resembles that of US former president Ronald Reagan when he promoted an unpopular pension reform in the 1980s. Pierson (1994, p. 15) studied that case well, and so we took a fragment from his work:

[37] "Ma questo impoverimento collettivo è esattamente il rischio che questa manovra vuole evitare."
[38] "(…) io credo che questa riforma previdenziale che presentiamo sia o possa segnare la fine di un periodo nel quale le pensioni sono state viste essenzialmente come un trasferimento dello stato, deciso nominalmente secondo criteri di giustizia, secondo criteri di equità, ma spesso in maniera un po' arbitraria. E sicuramente nascondendo molti privilegi, a un periodo in cui tutti, ma proprio tutti, devono capire che il principale meccanismo per fare pensioni è il lavoro."

> Welfare states require revenues: Where there is no money there can be no programs. Ronald Reagan recognized this when he compared big government to an unruly child, arguing that the way to discipline children's "extravagance" was "by simply reducing their allowances.

Without using Reagan's crude analogy but following a similar inspiration, Fornero's speech revendicates individual choice and individual freedom in contrast to the welfare State:

> I find it quite paradoxical that the state, which does not tell us when we have to buy a house, when we have to get married, when we have to have children, however, has to tell us when we have to leave work. We want to reintroduce flexibility and accompany this flexibility with incentives to continue working.[39]

As König states, this type of argument is not common among Southern European politicians. After analyzing several unpopular reforms in Europe and Anglo-Saxon countries, the author concludes that "while the two cases from Anglo-liberal countries have repeatedly employed corresponding normative ideas of individual responsibility and welfare dependency, this cannot be said of the two Southern European heads of government" (2016a, p. 554). Therefore, Fornero's move might have been risky due to the Italians' ideologically centrist position (WVS 2005). However, the minister seemed to interpret the amoral familism well. Introducing the concept of the State dominating the citizens' domestic sphere – *"when to buy a house, when we have to get married, when we have to have children"*- and equating that to the people's choice of when or when not to work, most probably made sense to most of the speech's listeners.

Even though Fornero took a different perspective for her argumentation, she did align with Monti regarding the justice aspect of the reform. She repeatedly underscores the persisting privileges of the Italian pension system - "hidden privileges," she would say. She also brings up the latent rich/poor – powerful/weak contradictions: "We asked for a solidarity contribution from the richest and most advantaged pensions." [40] As we saw in Monti's analyses, pointing that crusade up can be effective because humans tend to condemn the outstanding individuals – recall we ever feel pain when that happens. In this case, however, the references may be too subtle. The minister refers not to people but to "the richest pensions," debilitating her point.

The last element that sharply contrasts Monti's first speech is that Fornero focused on the domestic actors of the reform. Unlike Monti, she barely mentioned international agents.

[39] "Io trovo abbastanza paradossale che lo stato, che non ci dice quando dobbiamo comprare la casa, quando dobbiamo sposarci, quando dobbiamo fare figli, però, ci debba dire quando dobbiamo lasciare il lavoro. Noi vogliamo reintrodurre una flessibilità e a questa flessibilità accompagnare incentivi al proseguimento dell'attività lavorativa."

[40] "Abbiamo chiesto un contributo di solidarietà alle pensioni più ricche e avvantaggiate."

Nevertheless, she once brought up Europe or the European authorities in a clear *blame avoidance* move: “The minimum [retirement] age we must, however, take into account the fact that Europe is now asking us to raise the average retirement age. So, the minimum age cannot be too low, because otherwise the whole reform would not be credible at the European level.”[41]

To further explore Fornero’s first piece, we detail its nominations and predications. In Table 13, we depict Fornero’s supporters. Then, in Table 14, we show her detractors and outsiders.

Table 19. Elsa Fornero Speech #1's Nominations and Predications Analysis: Fornero and Friends

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">THE POLICY PROMOTER AND GROUPS OF FRIENDS</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">I/we</th><th colspan="2">You, ours</th></tr>
<tr><td>Nomination</td><td>Predication</td><td>Nomination</td><td>Predication</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="8">We</td><td>Those who want to introduce flexibility in the pension system to give people a choice</td><td rowspan="5">The president</td><td rowspan="5">Who made an important distinction</td></tr>
<tr><td>Those introducing the convergence principle in the pension system</td></tr>
<tr><td>Those aware of young people using partita IVA</td></tr>
<tr><td>Those who give parental benefits to young people</td></tr>
<tr><td>Those calling for a solidarity contribution from the richer pensions to help the poorer ones</td></tr>
<tr><td>Those who ask men to make a sacrifice for women</td><td rowspan="3">The previous government</td><td rowspan="3">The one that already proposed to raise the age of retirement</td></tr>
<tr><td>Those that care about equity</td></tr>
<tr><td>Those who have suffered psychologically by demanding sacrifices</td></tr>
</table>

Source: own elaboration.

The first element that calls attention is that Fornero uses the *I* nomination. Instead, she always collectively refers to the government. Regarding the *we* predications, they are abundant. She alludes to the government for almost every measure or judgment she makes. According to Miller's (2017) predicament, that is not necessarily bad, but it puts the Monti administration at the center of the speech when it should be a mere *guide*.

The other actors the minister lists in the friends’ category are President Monti and the previous government. Concerning the former, there is not much to say. Fornero solely notes that President Monti, who spoke before her, had made a distinction. About the latter, instead,

[41] “L'età minima dobbiamo, però, tener conto del fatto che l'europa ci chiede oggi un innalzamento dell'età media di pensionamento. Quindi l'età minima non può essere troppo bassa, perché altrimenti la riforma tutta non sarebbe credibile sul piano europeo.”

it is interesting that Fornero acknowledges her predecessor's efforts regarding increasing the retirement age:

> And this again yes is consistent with the commitment made by the previous government to raise the average retirement age to 67 by 2026. We anticipate, but the financial crisis has not eased; on the contrary, it has deepened.[42]

Alluding to the preceding administration was risky. On the one side, Berlusconi's government ended abruptly with low popularity. Then, why bring up that example? Perhaps, Fornero did so to lower the pension's reform dramatism. As the OECD (2013c) sustains, raising the retirement age is the most unpopular measure a government can take regarding pensions, an idea later demonstrated by Bremer and Bürgisser (2020). Therefore, by remembering that Berlusconi had tried to raise it, the policy loses its spectacularism and uniqueness; instead, it becomes more quotidian, an already discussed topic, sort of say.

Moreover, the minister frames increasing the pension age as a continuity policy and has an excuse to remind the public that before, the reform was not as necessary as it is now – *the financial crisis has not eased; on the contrary, it has deepened*. On the other side, references to Berlusconi had to be careful. "'It is important to remember that the largest party in the coalition was Mr Berlusconi's, so there were some things that just could not be done,' says Mr [Fabio] Basagni." (BBC 2012).

Having seen Fornero’s friends or allies, in Table 14 we analyze her opponents and outsiders’ nominations and predications.

Table 20. Elsa Fornero Speech #1's Nominations and Predications Analysis: Fornero’s Opponents and Outsiders

GROUPS OF OPPONENTS/ENEMIES/OUTSIDERS			
Enemies		***Outsiders***	
Nomination	*Predication*	*Nomination*	*Predication*
The financial crisis	The situation that has worsened	The future generations	Those who are not here today and yet will have to pay for the burden of today's promises
The privileged pension regimes	Those who will end with this reform	The State	The one who tells us when to retire
		Europe	The one who asks us to raise the age of retirement

[42] “E questo di nuovo sì è coerente con l'impegno preso dal precedente governo di portare l'età media di pensionamento a 67 entro il 2026. Noi anticipiamo, ma la crisi finanziaria non si è allentata; anzi, si è aggravata.”

		The women	The ones who trigger the men's age of retirement adjustment
		Dependent public and private workers	Those who will converge to a general pension regime
		Merchants, artisans, direct farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs.	Those who have to contribute more to the pension system

Source: own elaboration.

Unlike President Monti, minister Fornero listed few enemies. Furthermore, while Monti addressed concrete ones, Fornero pointed out abstract villains: the financial crisis and the privileged pension regimes. She was pretty succinct regarding both enemies' predications and used them to portray the pension reform's status quo: the financial crisis makes it the reform necessary, and the privileged pension regimes must stop.

On the other hand, Fornero identified multiple outsiders, with a couple of innovations with respect to Monti's approach. Firstly, she introduces the intergenerational aspect of pension reform. For the first time in the Executive's communication, the pension issue has in sight the country's future with the independence of the European authorities' mandates, the financial crisis, and the other contingent status quo elements. With this, the minister underscores the unfairness of making those come to pay for the present's mistakes. Secondly, rather negatively, Fornero talks about the State as a third party: the State should not tell us when or when not to work.

Regardless of the differences with Monti, Fornero also reminds the listeners that Europe has asked the government and Italians to raise the retirement age, as we saw previously. Likewise, she treats other impacted groups from a scientific point of view. Here she included the women, the dependent workers, and some guilds – merchants, artisans, farmers, and agricultural entrepreneurs. However, as in Monti's case, Fornero lacks compassion for the approach. Regarding women, she asserts some differences with women in terms of retirement age. Regarding the others, she announces the end of privileges:

> We then introduce the principle of convergence, so it means that some regimes that have been privileged so far, in terms of treatment or in terms of rates, will converge to the general regime applied to public and private employees. This means some increases in labor contribution rates for traders, for artisans, for direct farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs.[43]

[43] "Introduciamo poi il principio della convergenza, quindi vuol dire che alcuni regimi che sono stati finora privilegiati, in termini di trattamento o in termini di aliquote, convergeranno verso il regime generale applicato ai lavoratori dipendenti pubblici e privati. Questo vuol dire qualche aumento di aliquota contributiva per il lavoro per i commercianti, per gli artigiani, per i coltivatori diretti e imprenditori agricoli."

The announcement is far from innocuous from a political point of view. The minister is describing a significant change for some pension regimes as who would announce building a new hospital or signing a new municipal ordinance. This lack of touch probably affected Fornero's reputation among the citizenry.

In using these nominations and predications, Fornero used argumentative devices (i.e., if *x*, then *y*) to deliver them persuasively. Consequently, Table 15 shows her central argumentation schemes when not appealing to mere logic. This analysis aims to identify patterns in using *topoi* and certain types of fallacies when government spokespersons must promote unpopular reforms.

Table 21. Elsa Fornero Speech #1's Argumentation Schemes and Fallacies

Name of topos	***Name of fallacy***	***Paraphrase***
Justice	Post hoc ergo propter hoc	p11. Since we have lowered women's seniority pension age, then it is fair to raise men's.

Source: own elaboration.

We observed one argumentative fallacy regarding Fornero's nominations and predications. It may seem innocuous, but in reality, it provides rich information. The fallacy recurs to the justice *topos* and entails a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* ("after this, therefore because of this") argumentation:

> (…) And we have -for the chapter that I know is the most painful for many people, the seniority pensions- we have decided to, again incorporating the window, leave the seniority for women at 40 plus one-because it's already there, it's already in there-which makes 41 plus one month which is already triggered. So, the number today is 41 plus one month, and we start from there for women. *For men we are asking for a sacrifice -but we raised the age for women- so for men seniority is acquired with 42-and one-month* starting January 1, 2012. It will be possible to retire even before the minimum age set for women, but a small penalty will have to be paid. We rule out anyone going earlier, but they will have to pay a small penalty.[44]

The fallacy is subtle but denotes that appealing to fairness can be a tricky move. In the fragment, Fornero's argument is the following: since we already helped women by lowering their seniority pension age, then the just thing to do is increase men's. There is no

[44] "(…) E abbiamo -per quanto riguarda il capitolo che so essere il più dolente per molte persone, le pensioni di anzianità- abbiamo deciso di, sempre incorporando la finestra, lasciare l'anzianità per le donne a 40 più uno -perche c'è già, c'è già, è già dentro- che fa 41 più mese che è già scattato. Quindi il numero oggi è 41 e un mese, e partiamo di lì per le donne. Per gli uomini chiediamo un sacrificio -ma abbiamo alzato l'età delle donne- quindi per gli uomini l'anzianità si acquisisce con 42 e un mese a partire dal primo gennaio 2012. Sarà possibile andare in pensione anche prima dell'età minima stabilita per le donne ma bisognerà pagare una piccola penale. Noi escludiamo che qualcuno vada prima, ma dovrà pagare una piccola penale."

argumentative logic in that. The minister is assuming a relationship that is not necessarily there: that of one group's seniority pension age affecting the other. Moreover, suppose such a relationship existed; why would it be fair? Maybe the argument makes sense from a global-panorama perspective, but it is hardly so from the audience's point of view.

Lastly, Table 16 summarizes the speech's characters, after which we will interpret the discourse's framings.

Table 22. Elsa Fornero Speech #1's Characters

Supporters of the Government		***Not supporters of the Government***	
I/we	***Not those against the reform***	***Not us***	***Those against/not in favor of the reform***
The president; We	The previous government	The financial crisis; the State; Europe; the women; dependent public and private workers; merchants, artisans, direct farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs; the future generations	The privileged pension regimes

Source: own elaboration.

At first sight, Table 16 shows one of Fornero's narrative problems: too many actors in the *not us* quadrant are no clear enemies. Furthermore, the one undeniable villain -the privileged pension regimes- is not even a person to blame but an extremely abstract idea. For instance, drawing the concept in people's heads is relatively straightforward when one blames Europe or the financial crisis. Either through media concepts, prejudices, or work talks, ordinary people bear in mind a notion of Europe and the 2008 financial crisis. That was hardly the case for the *privileged pension regimes*. Who are they? What do they even mean? Think of Gustman and Steinmeier (2005), who measured substantial knowledge gaps regarding social security policies in general and pensions in particular — in their study, conducted in the US, less educated women and nonwhite citizens knew notably less than well-educated white males. If that were the case for Italy, too, then Fornero's example using the privileged reforms would likely be unsuccessful.

We can also highlight the opportunities Fornero missed. Most of the actors she cast in the *not us* list could have gone to allies or enemies. Her narrative probably turned less compelling by treating the not us characters objectively and distantly instead of expressing opinions or enriching the predications. The latter is particularly notorious regarding the pension reform's victims. Fornero portrayed the government as the one making all the efforts. However, she almost did not say anything about the suffering groups and how the government was taking care of that suffering. If addressing, say, the dependent public workers and the women in a more empathetic way, we could likely have inferred those groups were part of the government's allies backing the reform.

Finally, Minister Fornero committed a potential minor mistake. In Table 16, Berlusconi's government is the only non-governmental actor supporting the reform in her speech. Recall that perhaps the minister alluded to it to show policy continuity. However, having that administration as the sole external supporter seems inadequate, considering its approval rates before Mario Monti's arrival to power and the role voters likely thought Berlusconi played in the crisis.

To summarize, Elsa Fornero’s December 2011 speech responds to the traditional way of transmitting unpopular reforms, at least in the sense that Pierson (1994) studied it from Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Reagan in the United States cases in the 1980s:

1. Fornero does that by relating the policy solution with ideological or cultural aspects instead of a mere contingency necessity, like the financial crisis.
2. As Monti did, she plucked up the reform with fairness, promising to end with privileges.
3. Unlike the *Presidente del Consiglio*, she focused on domestic matters and the intergenerational dimension of pension reform.
4. She depicts her marked technical profile by explaining the policy problems and solutions in an elevated manner, lacking more compassionate gestures toward the audience.
5. Connected to the former, apparently, Fornero addresses the investors and European authorities. The economic jargon and the scholarly details do not seem suitable for the less knowledgeable public.

In the following, we present Elsa Fornero's second speech analysis. The minister attended the Senate to defend her labor market reform -another unpopular one- that had entered into force in July 2012. The Senators, probably facing the moment to explain the measure to their constituents, had manifested several questions for Fornero to answer. As we said, this reform went in tandem with the pension one, and the minister indeed refers to pensions in this piece.

Table 23. Elsa Fornero Speech #2's Macro and Mesostructures Analysis – 18 September 2012

DISCOURSE 2 - INTERVENTION AT THE SENATE	***MACRO - MESOSTRUCTURE***
Paragraph 1	
Grazie. Magari presto il tavolo ma preferisco parlare in piedi. Ringrazio intanto dell'invito alla presentazione di questo rapporto, importante, del quale Carlo Dell'Aringa ha tracciato adesso una sintesi che non fa onore al rapporto e alla complessità del rapporto, ma certamente da una dimostrazione di quanto -se posso dire- non solo sia la capacità espositiva di Carlo Dell'Aringa ma anche la sua passione civile. Di questo lo ringrazio.	

<table>
<tr><td>Paragraph 2</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Chiedo anche scusa per questo cambiamento di programma ma oggi si sono inserite delle cose nel primo pomeriggio ed è davvero impossibile per me fermarmi anche a sentire gli interventi successivi. Quindi mi scuso in anticipo; è in generale molto brutto che uno parli e poi, subito dopo o quasi… -io cercherò di fermarmi ancora un momento- vada via.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 3</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Carlo Dell' Aringa diceva una cosa che mi da la occasione per parlare della riforma del mercato del lavoro, inserendola all'interno di un contesto -che Carlo ha attribuito all'OCSE- nel quale si dice che il ruolo delle politiche del lavoro potrebbe essere quello di accompagnare il processo di crescita quando arriva e anche di limitare i danni della recessione. In particolare, di evitare la disoccupazione di lunga durata.</td><td rowspan="4"><u>Section 1. Introduction to the political problem</u> - the labor market reform should accompany economic growth and protect the workers from the recession.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 4</td></tr>
<tr><td>Io devo dire -non a caso, non è che è successo che a posteriori; ci siamo accorti, o almeno io mi sono accorta e ne sono profondamente convinta- che la riforma del mercato del lavoro nostra, approvata di recente, si inserisca molto bene all'interno di questo schema. Il fatto di dire “la riforma del mercato del lavoro deve accompagnare il processo di crescita quando arriva” è importante perché serve, secondo me, a dare respiro agli interventi ma anche a rompere quella parossistica, vorrei dire, corrispondenza che si è cercata fin dai primissimi giorni dall'approvazione della riforma -che è entrata in vigore il 18 luglio- tra quello che succedeva nel mercato del lavoro e la riforma stessa.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 5</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Quindi le accuse di “nessun contratto viene rinnovato a tempo determinato… viene rinnovato, e questo naturalmente colpe della riforma”. Il panico tra le partite IVA, i licenziamenti… i primi licenziamenti [inintelligibile] Fornero… Tutte queste cose che hanno alzato anche la temperatura -secondo me, ripeto- stabilendo in maniera parossistica e non obiettiva la corrispondenza tra ciò che succede il giorno dopo giorno nel mercato del lavoro e, invece, il cambiamento della, profondo e complesso, della cornice normativa. Quindi questo respiro che viene dato, secondo me, è importante per poter discutere in maniera più pacata della riforma.</td><td rowspan="4"><u>Section 2. Exemplification of the political problem</u> - The myths surrounding the reform:
1. "Independent workers will lose their jobs".
2. " The reform will fix everything immediately and will assist everyone to protect them from the crisis".</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 6</td></tr>
<tr><td>Seconda cosa, limitare i danni della recessione. Quindi, di nuovo bisogna intendersi. I danni della recessione sono gravi, sono anzitutto i danni di chi perde il posto di lavoro e, quindi, qui l'intervento ci deve essere… però, poi c'è anche l'idea di evitare disoccupazione di lunga durata. Noi abbiamo alimentato per troppo tempo una</td></tr>
</table>

disoccupazione di lunga durata attraverso il ricorso a schemi di protezione sociale che non puntavano all'occupabilità e alla rioccupazione delle persone, ma puntavano a una mera assistenza prolungata nel tempo. Questa è disoccupazione nascosta, anche se nascosta attraverso una successione di cassa integrazione ordinaria, cassa integrazione straordinaria, mobilità lunga deroghe, mobilità lunga o allungata.	
Paragraph 7	
Questa cosa che poteva continuare per anni è rinuncia -sostanzialmente- a un concetto che invece la riforma mette al centro, ad applicare, a mettere in pratica un concetto che la riforma mette al centro e cioè che, purtroppo, le persone possono perdere il loro posto di lavoro. Purtroppo le persone possono perdere il posto di lavoro ma è compito della società assisterle sia attraverso un trasferimento monetario, sia -vorrei dire anche soprattutto- nella ricerca di una nuova occupazione. Questo è il tema centrale della riforma degli ammortizzatori sociali che voi sapete proprio, perché si tiene conto della fase recessiva nella quale la riforma viene introdotta, entrerà in vigore più lentamente di altre cose.	*Section 3 Conlcusion. Policy solution* - Authenticity at the center of the reform: "unfortunately, people can lose their jobs". The reform will assist those who lose their jobs and help them to find a new one. The Dahrendorf anecdote is vital: a clear example with a dialogue can reinforce the "stickiness" of Fornero's statements.
Paragraph 8	
Questo è il quadro. Io ho già detto molte volte che questa riforma del mercato del lavoro ha il duplice obiettivo finale di rendere più inclusivo il mercato e di renderlo anche più dinamico. Renderlo più inclusivo vuol dire… mi riallaccio anche qui alla questione a cui Carlo Dell'Aringa ha fatto riferimento prima, e cioè l'occupazione degli anziani, magari forzata da riforme pensionistiche che spostano in avanti l’età di pensionamento. Quindi l'occupazione forzata dei lavoratori anziani spiazza i giovani. Nelle statistiche probabilmente avviene questo, probabilmente avviene. Però anche qui bisogna rovesciare il ragionamento… ricordo, parecchi anni fa, una volta una conversazione con Ralf Dahrendorf, e si parlava di occupazione femminile. E lui diceva “ma in Italia com’è che le donne lavorano così poco”. E poi gliel'ho spiegato, e poi lui mi dice “va beh, ma poi se le donne lavorano, non riducono l'occupazione degli uomini?” In sintesi, la risposta è stata “non necessariamente” e non… se noi facciamo, modelliamo il nostro mercato del lavoro in modo da includere sia al lavoro delle donne, sia il lavoro dei giovani, sia il lavoro degli anziani.	
Paragraph 9	
Mercato inclusivo è esattamente l'opposto di un mercato segmentato. E quello che noi abbiamo avuto con un segmento protetto e sempre più piccolo, sempre numericamente meno importante; e viceversa, segmenti molto importanti, che sono i giovani, le donne, i lavoratori anziani esclusi o ai margini. Questo è il mercato segmentato. Di questo noi non dobbiamo andare orgogliosi perché semplicemente era un mercato dalle fattezze inaccettabile. Si può dire, abbiamo sbagliato qualche misura nel cercare di realizzare questo obiettivo. E questa è una discussione che ovviamente è non solo accettabile, ma	*Section 3.1. Policy solution - First objective*: Problem: the women, the youth and the elderly have remained outside the labor market for too long. Solution: inclusive market.

desiderabile. Però è difficile dire che l'obiettivo del mercato inclusivo, cioè, che accomoda tutti e rifiuta la logica del “vai fuori tutti entra un altro”, perché questa è la logica che noi abbiamo per troppo tempo incoraggiato, per troppo tempo incoraggiato. Allora noi dobbiamo domandarci quali sono le fattezze che caratteristiche di un mercato inclusivo.	
Paragraph 10	
E poi ho detto dinamico. Dinamico vuol dire una cosa molto chiara, perché qui bisogna realizzarla. Vuol dire un mercato che ha un tasso di disoccupazione strutturale tendenzialmente più basso. E come si realizza? Riducendo i tempi della transizione -mercato dinamico- tra scuola e lavoro. Noi abbiamo tempi di transizione, anche documentato, tra scuola e lavoro troppo lunghi. Inaccettabilmente lunghi. Ma non è l'unica cosa. Noi dobbiamo ridurre -questa è anche una delle scommesse importanti- tempi della transizione tra situazione di disoccupazione e nuova occupazione. Quello, quello è un altro punto importante. Noi dobbiamo -in qualche modo, l'ho detto prima- purtroppo le persone possono perdere il loro posto di lavoro ma è importante che lo ritrovino in tempi accettabili, in tempi che sono simili a ciò che avviene in altri Paesi europei, dove il mercato del lavoro funzione in maniera più dinamica e più inclusiva.	*Section 3.1. Policy solution - Second objective*: Problem: the transition periods from school to the labor market and from unemployment to employment are too long. Solution: dinamic market
Paragraph 11	
Come abbiamo cercato di realizzare tutto questo? La riforma -che ho detto prima, è abbastanza ampia e sicuramente complessa- poggia su quattro o cinque assi portanti. E hanno tutti l'obiettivo di migliorare il percorso lavorativo delle persone. Diciamo quello che si chiama “il ciclo di lavoro” nella vita delle persone.	
Paragraph 12	
Allora si tratta di flessibilità in entrata, flessibilità in uscita; ammortizzatori sociali, politiche attive e servizi per il lavoro, monitoraggio e valutazione della riforma. Perché anche questo è un asse importante, perché noi abbiamo la pessima abitudine in questo Paese di far le riforme, di dire subito che funzionano o non funzionano sulla base non di una oggettiva valutazione, possibilmente scientifica di ciò che accade, ma sulla base della nostra appartenenza a un partito, piuttosto che a un sindacato o a una parte.	*Section 3.2. Policy detail - five axes:* entrance flexibility, exit flexibility, social shock absorbers, active policies, and implementation and evaluation of the reform
Paragraph 13	
Noi invece dobbiamo predisporci: la riforma non è dogmatica, è pragmatica e quindi, noi dobbiamo predisporci a valutarla per quello che riuscirà a conseguire.	
Paragraph 14	

Flessibilità in entrata e in uscita e ammortizzatori sociali; servizi per il lavoro… tutto si tiene in maniera molto stretta. Cosa vuol dire? Che tutto si tiene in maniera molto stretta.	
Paragraph 15	
Oggi pomeriggio andrò a discutere il libro di [Giuliano] Cazzolla: *Figli miei precari immaginari.* Lui ritiene che la precarietà sia una situazione immaginaria, cioè, sia una condizione della mente, non una condizione dello spirito, non una condizione, invece, reale. [inintelligibile] dove si trovano le persone -esso banalizzato un po'- dove si trovano le persone. Ebbene la mia domanda, la domanda che noi ci dobbiamo fare ed è una accusa, accusa che ci veniva fatta sempre -come sa bene Carlo Dell'Aringa- da istituzioni come l'OCSE, come la Commissione europea: "voi avete troppa precarietà, concentrata tutta sui giovani e sulle donne". Ho detto prima, segmenti ai margini del mercato del lavoro.	
Paragraph 16	
Allora se noi riteniamo che la precarietà sia un problema, tutta questa operazione fatta sulla flessibilità in entrata -per cui io ho ricevuto critiche indescrivibili- è un'operazione che cerca di cambiare la convenienza relativa delle forme contrattuali. Di spostare e rendere un po'meno conveniente l'uso di forme contrattuali tipo "mordi e fuggi" e, invece, rendere un po' più –è relativo, quindi è un po' più e un po' meno- un po' più conveniente il contratto di lavoro a tempo indeterminato. Non tanto per traghettare l'economia in questi mesi di recessione, perché so bene che le imprese nel mese di recessione non assumono, ma perché dobbiamo agganciare con buona cornice normativa la crescita quando tornerà, e lavorare perché quella crescita torni.	The entrance flexibility and the "hit and run" contracts.
Paragraph 17	
Allora l'operazione sulla flessibilità in entrata -adesso non sto a dirvi tutte le norme ma voi le conoscete più di me- del contratto di lavoro a tempo determinato, che abbiamo reso un po' più oneroso ma di cui abbiamo incoraggiato anche la stabilizzazione, e che abbiamo flessibilizzato rendendo sostanzialmente privo di causale il primo contratto per un anno, che non è una piccola cosa tra quelle che le imprese volevano.	
Paragraph 18	
Il messaggio è: volete tempo determinato, non avete bisogno di tanti appesantimenti burocratici. Però il tempo determinato alla società costa, perché la probabilità di essere disoccupati dopo che si è passati attraverso tempi determinati in sequenza è più alta. E bisogna che la società in qualche modo imputi un pochino all'impresa la maggiore costo di questo. Questo è, diciamo, uniforme in questa parte.	The sacrifices of the reform

Paragraph 19	
Flessibilità all'entrata è -anche questo detto molte volte- non rifiuta la flessibilità; anzi, la valorizza, ma rifiuta un'altra cosa, cioè, l'uso, chiamiamolo un po' spregiudicato, che alcune imprese hanno fatto dei contratti flessibili per l'appunto, trasformandoli in precarietà.	What does "flexibility" mean and why is it important? *PRODUCTIVITY*
Paragraph 20	
E dico questo perché qui si dice “contrario all'interesse delle imprese”. E invece io credo di no. Io credo che non sia contrario all'interesse dell'imprese. Perché? Perché Carlo Dell'Aringa ha mostrato che in termini di produttività tutta la flessibilità di cui noi abbiamo goduto in questi anni passati, che magari ha tamponato in un certo senso la caduta dell'occupazione, però tutta questa flessibilità non ha sicuramente giocato all'altra questione, che si chiama produttività.	
Paragraph 21	
Ma lo capirebbe anche un bambino che i contratti che ho chiamato “mordi, fuggi” non sono contratti che favoriscono la produttività. Nessuno vuole il contratto rigido da quando entri a quando esci per andare in pensione, però una stabilizzazione maggiore da alle persone occupate una prospettiva e da l'occasione di investire in capacità, in professionalità, in esperienza, in training professionale… Tutte quelle cose che -guarda un po'- servono come il pane alla produttività.	"Even a child would understand"... "hit and run", the use of graphic metaphors (stickiness)
Paragraph 22	
Sempre per la produttività. E quindi, io sono convinta che se le imprese colgono questo punto di vista, vedono anche loro come i contratti, le tipologie, le relazioni di lavoro sono un elemento fondamentale per l'aumento della produttività.	
Paragraph 23	
Ma qui sta un'altra cosa che è centrale nella nostra riforma del mercato del lavoro. E, cioè, l'apprendistato. Apprendistato non è nuovo. Io qui non è che ho innovato chissà che. C'era, era già stato fatto dal mio predecessore. Abbiamo modificato e valorizzato che cos'è che non andava. E, diciamo, non andava l'applicazione di quest’apprendistato. Perché se io assumo apprendisti solo perché costano meno e li posso non stabilizzare, di nuovo, non è che faccio l'operazione che va bene per i lavoratori e per l'impresa; perso la produttività e la competitività.	<u>Problem</u>: the aprenticeship and its misuse. It made lose productivity and competitiveness. <u>Solution</u>: to acknowledge the aprenticeship its social formative role <u>Exemplification of the solution</u>: the case of Germany <u>What does it take to promote the effective aprenticeship?</u>
Paragraph 24	
Allora, se noi diciamo “l'apprendistato è un periodo di formazione" e quello è il primo punto. Secondo, siccome per la società la	

formazione anche scolastica… no, la formazione scolastica non basta. E quindi, occorre integrare la formazione scolastica con formazione di tipo professionale. E quindi la società da sgravi contributivi perché questo obiettivo sia riaggiunto. Quindi, prima c'è formazione. Secondo, c'è lo sgravio che riconosce il ruolo sociale della formazione. Allora vuol dire che qui abbiamo le basi, le premesse per fare di nuovo buone relazioni industriali tra lavoratori e imprese, che sono la premessa per rilanciare la competitività.	
Paragraph 25	
Vi dico anche -perché una delle cose a cui tengo- che proprio su questo tema noi in Italia accusiamo sempre la Germania di volere solo il rigore finanziario. Ma voi sapete che la Germania ha, in un certo senso, fortemente corretto la disoccupazione giovanile proprio ricorrendo all'apprendistato. E la Germania ha chiesto a noi la partnership su un progetto, che è un progetto per l'apprendistato duale che lanceremo a novembre ed è un progetto, non è un seminario di studi. Cioè, dietro c'è l' idea di mettere insieme imprese che operano contemporaneamente in Germania e in Italia, scuole che si prestano a fare questo apprendistato duale, ragazzi che vengono avviati, monitorati nei loro percorsi in due Paesi… Certamente non saranno numeri stravolgenti, però, è per dire "noi all'apprendistato dobbiamo crederci", perché è il modo migliore perché le giovani generazioni superino quel gap che c'è per l'appunto tra la formazione scolastica e, invece, la capacità di lavorare all'interno delle imprese.	
Paragraph 26	
Questo è un punto importante e su questo guardate, io lo dico così: è veramente necessario -Carlo l'ha detto prima- bisogna collaborare. Solo scrivere le norme sull'apprendistato serve a niente. Bisogna che ci sia la volontà delle parti di ricorrere e di valorizzare questo strumento, non per avere dei risultati tra due mesi, ma per portare l'Italia sul sentiero di crescita. Quindi questo è un lavoro per il Governo, per il sindacato, per le imprese, per le Regioni, per le Province, per tutti gli attori che devono occuparsi di questo.	
Paragraph 27	
Abbiamo delle realtà bellissime in questo Paese, in questo ambito; possono anche fungere da benchmark – li sapete, non sto a identificarli. Però ci sono Regioni dove invece questo aspetto è deserto, non esiste niente. E noi non possiamo crescere così, non possiamo.	
Paragraph 28	
Ammortizzatori hanno flessibilità in uscita; va beh', flessibilità in uscita è l'altra parte. Rendi il mercato un poco meno precario all'entrata e anche un po' meno rigido sull'uscita. Questa è la modifica dell'articolo 18 -non ne parlo ora, possiamo anche parlarne in un'altra occasione. Secondo noi questa modifica di nuovo risponde	Exit flexibility: what should the companies do to protect their workers?

a una esigenza di equilibrio tra le ragioni dell'imprese che, per motivi economici, per motivi anche disciplinari, non devono veder sempre re integrato il lavoratore nel proprio posto di lavoro, ma deve tutelare il lavoratore e anzi deve tutelarlo maggiormente quando c'è un’ipotesi di licenziamento discriminatorio.	
Paragraph 29	
Noi crediamo che la soluzione scelta sia equilibrata e, quindi, in questo senso io penso che sia una norma di civiltà, oltre che di modernità – perché non è che la modernità è sempre un valore. Ma qui c'è una norma di civiltà che accompagna alla modernità, il cambiamento della nostra economia.	
Paragraph 30	
Ammortizzatori sociali. Ammortizzatori sociali -abbiamo detto prima- limitare i danni della recessione, evitare la disoccupazione di lunga durata. Cosa sono lavoratori che vengono assistiti monetariamente per otto anni senza che nessuno chieda loro niente? Magari incoraggiati a lavorare in nero… e cos'è questo se non un grandissimo spreco sociale? Si dice “non c'è nient'altro”; beh’, proviamoci. “Non c'è nient’altro” … è troppo facile dire “non ci sono altre possibilità”. Qualche volta si tratta invece della soluzione più comoda, ma grande sperpero di denaro pubblico. Ci lo possiamo permettere? No, non ci lo possiamo più permettere. E quindi il denaro pubblico va oculatamente indirizzato.	The problem: the misuse of social shock absorbers Solution: shift the approach from "unemployed assistance" to "assistence for employment".
Paragraph 31	
E allora, che cosa abbiamo detto? Qui anche i nomi contano: assicurazione sociale per l'impiego. Non è indennità di disoccupazione; è un'assicurazione sociale per l'impiego. Cosa vuol dire? Qual è il messaggio dato al lavoratore ma anche il messaggio dato a tutte quelle istituzioni che debbono lavorare per far sì che il mercato del lavoro funzioni meglio di quanto non abbia funzionato finora? Il messaggio al lavoratore è: ti accompagniamo, ti siamo vicini. Vogliamo preoccuparci che tu non perda il tuo capitale umano e vogliamo aiutarti a cercare una nuova occupazione.	
Paragraph 32	
Questo è da una parte. Allora, dall'altra, io ti devo poter offrire qualcosa; corsi veri, non corsi finti che hanno sprecato rivoli di denaro pubblico; dove non c'erano corsi, non c'era nessuno che sapesse formare e pochi anche a essere formati. E ci sono tanti casi che possiamo citare. Non è adesso il momento, però noi questo tipo di approccio alla riqualificazione nel mercato del lavoro lo dobbiamo abbandonare, lo dobbiamo… dobbiamo dire chiaramente che non lo vogliamo più. Dobbiamo avere dei professionisti che si occupano della formazione dei lavoratori che hanno perso un posto di lavoro. Perché qui parliamo di lavoratori, assicurazione sociale per l'impiego, qualcuno che l'impiego non c’è l’ha.	The problem: misuse of training benefits for workers Solution: to study the problem in conjunction with the regions, which are the decision-makers in this matter. To find the best match between the jobs' demand and the jobs' supply.

Paragraph 33	
Quindi, ci vogliono politiche attive e ci vogliono servizi per il lavoro degni di questo nome. Questa è la grande scommessa. Tra l'altro qui abbiamo una delega, la Scrivia Remo, lavorando con le parti sociali, lavorando con le regioni -perché le Regioni hanno un grosso ruolo, anzi, una parte esclusiva competenza in questo ambito- e noi possiamo fissare una cornice, ma poi sta a loro. Però noi dobbiamo vigilare affinché le cose si facciano.	
Paragraph 34	
Non è detto che altri Paesi possano migliorare il mercato del lavoro. Non è un mercato dove le occasioni piovono dal cielo, è un mercato dove l'informazione è fondamentale. La qualificazione e fondamentale. I servizi che aiutano l'incontro e la domanda, la capacità di capire in anticipo quali saranno le domande anche per orientare la formazione. Non fare tutti che si occupano di una certa cosa quando la domanda di quella cosa, di quella professionalità sta invece decrescendo. Questo matching tra competenze e domanda di lavoro da parte delle imprese va molto migliorato. Non può essere lasciato al caso, non può essere lasciato a professionalità del tutto inadeguate ad affrontarlo. Questo è il quarto pilastro.	
Paragraph 35	
Quinto pilastro, ho detto, monitoraggio e valutazione. Noi stiamo lavorando per impostare un metodo. Impostare un metodo vuol dire che il monitoraggio si fa nel tempo. Si fa con dati, non con aggettivi – in Italia siamo sempre con gli aggettivi. Si fa con dati appropri e cioè, qui c'è un lavoro sulle banche dati che è importante. È un lavoro che io vorrei fare anche dicendo chiaramente che le banche dati devono essere messi a disposizione della comunità scientifica, interna e internazionale, che li prende e gli valuta. Non devono esserci accordi privilegiati, separati con qualcuno che arriva prima di altri ai dati; i dati devono essere… sono pubblici, sono patrimonio pubblico. Devono essere a disposizione di chi li chiede per fare valutazioni. Poi ci vogliono bandi di ricerca, perché una valutazione scientifica la si fa non con cercatori improvvisati, scusate, ma la si fa affidando bandi di ricerca a ricercatori professionisti.	<u>Problem</u>: in Italy they usually use "adjectives" instead of data to evaluate the public policy. They need to shift to the data-based approach. <u>Solution</u>: to use data experts, such as the ones at universities, to evaluate the public policy objectively.
Paragraph 36	
Questo si può fare -non è un'occasione di spreco, non deve esserlo; anzi deve costare molto poco- l'università in fondo fa ricerca di professione, e quindi non deve essere pagata in maniera addizionale, però deve essere messa in condizioni di fare. Ovviamente bisogna fare le domande giuste e cercare di avere dei metodi adeguati per la valutazione. La valutazione poi data alle parti sociali, al decisore politico, perché vadano di nuovo in maniera pragmatica sulla base dei risultati che sono emersi, che cos'è che non ha dato i risultati sperati e che cosa invece che ha funzionato. E allora, con mente	

aperta, si deve rafforzare ciò che ha funzionato e magari scartare ciò che non ha funzionato senza nessun tipo di battaglia ideologica e senza nessun tipo di fallimento completo se un aspetto della norma non ha funzionato. Questo è la descrizione della riforma del mercato del lavoro.	
Paragraph 37	
Adesso è chiaro, ma è chiaro a tutti, che una riforma può essere -noi ne abbiamo avute tante nel nostro Paese- una riforma può essere un esercizio di scrittura che rimane in un cassetto.	
Paragraph 38	
Noi non vogliamo questo. Questa riforma deve essere calata nella realtà. Deve essere vissuta nella realtà. Penso agli aspetti positivi -ho detto prima- modificata negli aspetti che non danno i risultati sperati. E perché questo accada, bisogna che cosa? Bisogna che la riforma in qualche modo diventi patrimonio comune delle parti. Bisogna allora rifuggire i giudizi di un tipo o dell'altro. Bisogna guardare le cose con mente aperta. Bisogna cercare di dire… vi posso fare molti esempi, perché poi io in questo periodo mi sto molto occupando di cercare di lavorare per l'applicazione della riforma. Ho scritto a tutti i miei direttori, dicendo "per favore non fate così mero esercizio burocratico quando scrivete le circolari. Prima di tutto le scrivete sempre facendole vedere al Gabinetto, al ministro". E in secondo luogo, prima di scriverli, vi confrontate con le parti che possono -l'ho detto- che possono avere -adesso non è che si intavola una trattativa, non pensate che ogni volta che si scrive una circolare si deve intavolare una trattativa- però sentire le parti per dire "esatto, è problematico qui, è problematico là", in modo da arrivare da vere circolari che agevolano l'applicazione delle norme, non che complicano questa applicazione.	The reform needs to be concrete, reality and consensus-based in order to succeed.
Paragraph 39	
Quindi questo l'ho fatto, e ho anche chiesto proprio una collaborazione nel senso della segnalazione. Però poi ci sono… non sono cose che mi vengono raccontate… incontro il direttore de il Sole ventiquattro Ore che mi dice "ministro lei ha fatto una grande riforma delle pensioni, ma certo, con il mercato del lavoro non ci siamo. Guardi c'è qui -sventola un biglietto da visita- un imprenditore che mi diceva che lui adesso rinuncerà alla collaborazione di un centinaio di partite IVA". Io ho detto "senta, direttore, vediamo di ragionare con calma. Anzi, faccia una cosa" e gli ho strappato il biglietto da visita -no, non strappato, glielo preso di mano- ho chiamato questo signore e gli ho detto "scusi, lei è un imprenditore. Mi dicono che lei gli ha più o meno mille dipendenti e che lei vuole liberarsi di cento collaboratori in partita IVA. Vogliamo parlarne un momento?" E lui era un po' agitato, però abbiamo un appuntamento per la prossima settimana. "È un problema reale? Se è problema reale, vediamo… non è che uno adesso… mettiamo le cose in questa prospettiva. Se lui aveva bisogno della collaborazione di cento persone che lavoravano per queste imprese in partita IVA, non	Exemplification of the problem with a real-life case

è possibile che adesso, sulla base di una norma, che tra l'altro relativamente alle partite IVA anche per gli emendamenti al Parlamento, andrà in vigore del 2014 perché è sui due anni che si considerano i requisiti -non è che uno dice subito “adesso butto via a cento partite IVA". Infatti parlando con me questo imprenditore è stato molto più aperto. Ha detto “ma sì, ci saranno dei problemi”. La stessa cosa è capitata in altri ambienti. Cioè, guardate, mi scrivono persone che mi dicono “per colpa della sua riforma il mio contratto non viene rinnovato”. Beh, è anche vero che qualche volta uno usa la riforma per eliminare una collaborazione che magari non avrebbe rinnovato.	
Paragraph 40	
Allora io chiedo onestà intellettuale, collaborazione. Credo che se noi ci mettiamo -io sono disposta a mettere tutta la mia energia per questi restanti sei mesi di Governo- per fare in modo che, alla parte proprio del Governo questo sforzo per fare vivere bene, per mettere le premesse perché la riforma viva bene nella società, sapendo che nessuno si illuda, sapendo comunque che il clima è e resterà recessivo per i prossimi mesi – speriamo, solo mesi… però io ci metterò tutta l'energia, tutta la buona volontà, anche tutta la competenza che ho.	Call to action: intellectual honesty and collaboration.
Paragraph 41	
Ma io sono convinta che se collaboriamo con mente aperta e onestà intellettuale, questa riforma del mercato del lavoro potrà dare i risultati nel senso auspicato da Carlo. E cioè di fornire una spinta alla crescita nel momento in cui questa si manifesta -non è che origina la crescita- e di aiutare le persone in difficoltà nel momento della recessione.	
Paragraph 42	
Aggiungo un'ultima considerazione. Abbiamo aperto il tavolo sulla produttività. E io lo dico: guardate, che io considero la riforma del mercato del lavoro la grossa premessa per questo tavolo. Il tavolo è stato presentato da Mario Monti come -direbbe un inglese: *it’s up to you*-. “Adesso mettetevi a lavorare e cercate di fare uscire comportamenti che enfatizzano la produttività”. E il senso è che noi abbiamo la cornice normativa e alcune importanti premesse; quelle sull'apprendistato, le politiche attive… su cui bisogna lavorare, lavorare e lavorare ancora.	Why is the reform important? It determines the country's productivity
Paragraph 43	
Il resto, in effetti, richiede collaborazione delle parti sociali per le cose che qui non sono state affrontate. Parliamo della flessibilità degli orari, parliamo di altre modalità che riguardano i contratti di lavoro, dove c'è ancora spazio per un'azione che può restituire al Paese la possibilità di re incamminarsi su un sentiero che sia di crescita ma anche di occupazione e di occupazione buona. Grazie.	

Source: own elaboration.

Regarding the speech's macro and mesostructures, Fornero, again, follows a logical thread. She adopted a *problem-exemplification-solution* schema this time, applying that sequence several times throughout the speech. By doing this, she chunked the ideas, allowing her to explain each aspect of the policy solutions clearly and shortly. That is why she goes: *problem 1 can be exemplified in x ways, so we propose solution 1*. In many senses, this peroration is much richer than the first Fornero gave. Although still technical, it has more persuasive resources and a more personal approach to treating policy issues.

Fornero opens the discourse by turning to an external expert – Cialdini's *authority* principle. The expert had previously presented to the Senate. President Monti also did that in one of the speeches we analyzed, as we see below:

> Carlo Dell'Aringa was saying something that gives me an opportunity to talk about labor market reform, putting it within a context-which Carlo attributed to the OECD-in which they say that the role of labor policies could be to accompany the growth process when it arrives and also to limit the damage of recession. In particular, to avoid long-term unemployment.[45]

Then, although the matter to discuss is incredibly complex, Fornero presents the economic arguments using more daily-based examples, something she did not do in the first speech. When recounting some of these examples, the minister vividly details the situations, making it easier for the listener to follow and retain the story (Heath & Heath 2008). Here is a fragment:

> But then there are -these are not things that are told to me- I meet the editor of *Il Sole 24Ore* who tells me, "Minister you made a great pension reform, but of course, with the labor market we are not there. Look, there's here -he waves a business card- an entrepreneur who was telling me that he will now give up the cooperation of a hundred VAT numbers." I said, "Look, director, let's reason calmly. In fact, do one thing" -and I tore up his business card- no, not tore it up, took it from his hand. I called this gentleman and said "sorry, you are an entrepreneur. They tell me you have more or less a thousand employees and you want to get rid of a hundred collaborators on VAT. Shall we talk about that for a moment?" And he was a bit agitated. However, we have an appointment for next week. "Is it a real problem? If it's real problem, let's see ... it's not that one now ... let's put things in this perspective. If he needed the cooperation of a hundred people working for these companies on VAT numbers, it is not possible that now, on the basis of a rule, which by the way in relation to VAT numbers also for amendments to the

[45] "Carlo Dell'Aringa diceva una cosa che mi da la occasione per parlare della riforma del mercato del lavoro, inserendola all'interno di un contesto -che Carlo ha attribuito all'OCSE- nel quale si dice che il ruolo delle politiche del lavoro potrebbe essere quello di accompagnare il processo di crescita quando arriva e anche di limitare i danni della recessione. In particolare, di evitare la disoccupazione di lunga durata."

> Parliament, will go into effect of 2014 because it is on the two years that the requirements are considered – it is not that one immediately says "now I throw away to a hundred VAT numbers." In fact, talking to me this entrepreneur was much more open. He said "but yes, there will be problems."[46]

The minister also used Cialdini's *social proof* in this speech. Recall that social proof assumes that we will adopt specific actions when someone with whom we identify performs those actions, making them look more valid and feasible. In this case, Fornero made a risky choice by turning to Germany. Germany can be a controversial figure in Italy, which was probably the case during the Monti administration. As the fragment shows, the German government sort of watched the Italian economy and how well Monti was complying with the European Union's demands:

> I also tell you -because one of the things I care about- that on this very issue (the labor market reform and unemployment) we in Italy always accuse Germany of only wanting financial austerity. But you know that Germany has, in a way, strongly corrected youth unemployment precisely by using apprenticeships. And Germany has asked us for partnership on a project, which is a project for dual apprenticeship that we will launch in November and it is a project, it is not a study seminar.[47]

Another aspect that calls attention is how Fornero goes a step before "selling the data." Instead of pointing out that data says one thing or another, as most science people do, she encourages Senators to listen to the policy phenomena from a data-centered approach. We may consider this as slightly overcoming the Knowledge Curse. The minister does not come to the audience with the "data truth" but urges the Senators to embrace the underlying logic:

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[46] "Però poi ci sono… non sono cose che mi vengono raccontate… incontro il direttore de il Sole ventiquattro Ore che mi dice "ministro lei ha fatto una grande riforma delle pensioni, ma certo, con il mercato del lavoro non ci siamo". "Guardi c'è qui -sventola un biglietto da visita- un imprenditore che mi diceva che lui adesso rinuncerà alla collaborazione di un centinaio di partite IVA". Io ho detto "senta, direttore, vediamo di ragionare con calma. Anzi, faccia una cosa" e gli ho strappato il biglietto da visita -no, non strappato, glielo preso di mano- ho chiamato questo signore e gli ho detto "scusi, lei è un imprenditore. Mi dicono che lei gli ha più o meno mille dipendenti e che lei vuole liberarsi di cento collaboratori in partita IVA. Vogliamo parlarne un momento?" E lui era un po' agitato, però abbiamo un appuntamento per la prossima settimana. "È un problema reale? Se è problema reale, vediamo… non è che uno adesso… mettiamo le cose in questa prospettiva. Se lui aveva bisogno della collaborazione di cento persone che lavoravano per queste imprese in partita IVA, non è possibile che adesso, sulla base di una norma, che tra l'altro relativamente alle partite IVA anche per gli emendamenti al Parlamento, andrà in vigore del 2014 perché è sui due anni che si considerano i requisiti -non è che uno dice subito "adesso butto via a cento partite IVA". Infatti parlando con me questo imprenditore è stato molto più aperto. Ha detto "ma sì, ci saranno dei problemi"."

[47] "Vi dico anche -perché una delle cose a cui tengo- che proprio su questo tema noi in Italia accusiamo sempre la Germania di volere solo il rigore finanziario. Ma voi sapete che la Germania ha, in un certo senso, fortemente corretto la disoccupazione giovanile proprio ricorrendo all'apprendistato. E la Germania ha chiesto a noi la partnership su un progetto, che è un progetto per l'apprendistato duale che lanceremo a novembre ed è un progetto, non è un seminario di studi."

> We are working to set up a method. Setting a method means that monitoring is done over time. It is done with data, not with adjectives - in Italy we are always with adjectives. It is done with appropriate data, and that is, here there is work on databases that is important.[48]

There is another novelty in this address with respect to the previous one. Fornero is pretty straightforward and candid regarding the status quo and the reform, and their impact at a human level:

> This thing that could go on for years is giving up -substantially- a concept that the reform puts at the center instead, to apply, to put into practice a concept that the reform puts at the center and that is that, unfortunately, *people can lose their jobs. Unfortunately, people can lose their jobs,* but it is society's job to assist them both through a monetary transfer and also -I would like to say even more importantly- in finding new employment.[49]

Despite having a technical profile and being known as infallible, the minister addresses this reality with touch and does that by talking about *people* – not "segments of population." Naturally, this tends to increase the speaker's credibility. Cialdini (2016, chapter Being Together) illustrates this point by narrating how the US multimillionaire Warren Buffet -also known for his infallibility- does the same in his company's annual reports:

> Rather than burying, minimizing, or papering over difficulties, which seems to be the tack taken all too frequently in other annual reports, Buffett demonstrates that he is, first, fully aware of problems inside the company and, second, fully willing to reveal them. The emergent advantage is that when he then describes the formidable strengths of Berkshire Hathaway, readers have been pre-suaded to trust in them more deeply than before. After all, they are coming from a discernibly credible source.

Lastly, and related to the former, near to the speech's end, Fornero makes her call to action. She seeks collaboration and patience, as well as "intellectual honesty" as she calls it:

> So, I call for intellectual honesty, cooperation. I believe that if we put -I am willing to put all my energy for these remaining six months of government- to make sure that, at the very part of the government this effort to make live well, to set the stage for the reform to live well in society, knowing that no one is under any illusions, knowing anyway that the climate is and will remain recessionary for the next months – hopefully,

[48] "Noi stiamo lavorando per impostare un metodo. Impostare un metodo vuol dire che il monitoraggio si fa nel tempo. Si fa con dati, non con aggettivi – in Italia siamo sempre con gli aggettivi. Si fa con dati appropri e cioè, qui c'è un lavoro sulle banche dati che è importante."

[49] "Questa cosa che poteva continuare per anni è rinuncia -sostanzialmente- a un concetto che invece la riforma mette al centro, ad applicare, a mettere in pratica un concetto che la riforma mette al centro e cioè che, purtroppo, le persone possono perdere il loro posto di lavoro. Purtroppo le persone possono perdere il posto di lavoro ma è compito della società assisterle sia attraverso un trasferimento monetario, sia -vorrei dire anche soprattutto- nella ricerca di una nuova occupazione."

only months... but I will put all the energy, all the good will, even all the expertise I have.[50]

Asking for intellectual honesty seems fair from someone who has admitted the ugly truth behind the labor market policy, that people can lose their jobs. To further look at this speech development, we next detail its nominations and predications. First, in Table 18, we depict Fornero's supporters. Then, in Table 19, we show her detractors and outsiders.

Table 24. Elsa Fornero Speech #2's Nominations and Predications Analysis: Fornero and Friends

THE POLICY PROMOTER AND GROUPS OF FRIENDS			
I/we		***You, ours***	
Nomination	*Predication*	*Nomination*	*Predication*
We (Italians)	Those who have prolongated for too long the unemployment through inadequate social assistance	Carlo Dell'Aringa	An excellent exhibitor with civil passion
	Those who decide wether a policy reform is effective or not based on partisanship and not on objective parameters	You (Senators)	Those who know the norms of the fixed-term working contracts even better than Fornero
	Those who always blame Germany for watching the financial responsibility	My predecesor	Who already had promoted the apprenticeship to increase youth employability
	Those who cannot afford to spend public money on long-lasting unemployees without asking them anything in exchange	Mario Monti	The one who has instructed his team to work for increase the productivity
	Those who always put the "adjectives before the data" concerning social policy		
I	The one that has received indiscriptible criticism for her reforms		
	The one who is investing the most of her effort to make the reform work		

Source: own elaboration.

The first element that calls attention is that Fornero did not make any friendly predication regarding the reform's or the status quo's victims. Instead, she was critical regarding the Italians (*we*), keeping her blunt manner. In the speech, she highlights some supposed traditional vices of Italy's political culture, such as blaming other countries for demanding

[50] "Allora io chiedo onestà intellettuale, collaborazione. Credo che se noi ci mettiamo -io sono disposta a mettere tutta la mia energia per questi restanti sei mesi di Governo- per fare in modo che, alla parte proprio del Governo questo sforzo per fare vivere bene, per mettere le premesse perché la riforma viva bene nella società, sapendo che nessuno si illuda, sapendo comunque che il clima è e resterà recessivo per i prossimi mesi – speriamo, solo mesi… però io ci metterò tutta l'energia, tutta la buona volontà, anche tutta la competenza che ho."

Italy a determined way of operation or keeping inadequate policies because of political criteria instead of scientific standards. Using the *we* resort that much could have served the minister to evoke *unity*. However, that was not the case.

Secondly, regarding herself, Fornero alleges that the reform "for which I have received unspeakable criticism," [51] has demanded all of her effort and hard work. It is unclear whether she is putting herself as the victim of this speech's narrative or simply explaining her sacrifices during the reforming process. Either way, recalling her past endeavor could have highlighted her *consistency* (Cialdini), giving her a sort of moral leverage to make her call to action. Although we have already brought up the quote, it is worth pointing out where we think the *consistency* device is operating (italicized):

> So, I call for intellectual honesty, cooperation. I believe that if we put -*I am willing to put all my energy for these remaining six months of government*- to make sure that, at the very part of the government this effort to make live well, to set the stage for the reform to live well in society, knowing that no one is under any illusions, knowing anyway that the climate is and will remain recessionary for the next months – hopefully, only months... but *I will put all the energy, all the good will, even all the expertise I have*.[52]

In the third place, it is important to note the Senator's predication. Whether intentional or not, in this episode Fornero establishes the distance from the Parliament in terms of practical and political knowledge:

> So, the operation on inbound [labor] flexibility -*now I'm not going to tell you all the rules but you know them more than I do*- of the fixed-term employment contract, which we made a little more onerous but whose stabilization we also encouraged, and which we made more flexible by, basically, making the first contract causeless for one year, which is not a small thing among those that businesses wanted.[53]

That little and subtle statement indeed reflects much more than it is implied. Fornero's way of communicating was very technical throughout Monti's mandate. Although that denoted Fornero's competence, it also showed her difficulty in coding policy reforms more

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[51] "(…) per cui io ho ricevuto critiche indescrivibili."

[52] "Allora io chiedo onestà intellettuale, collaborazione. Credo che se noi ci mettiamo -io sono disposta a mettere tutta la mia energia per questi restanti sei mesi di Governo- per fare in modo che, alla parte proprio del Governo questo sforzo per fare vivere bene, per mettere le premesse perché la riforma viva bene nella società, sapendo che nessuno si illuda, sapendo comunque che il clima è e resterà recessivo per i prossimi mesi – speriamo, solo mesi… però io ci metterò tutta l'energia, tutta la buona volontà, anche tutta la competenza che ho."

[53] "Allora l'operazione sulla flessibilità in entrata -adesso non sto a dirvi tutte le norme ma voi le conoscete più di me- del contratto di lavoro a tempo determinato, che abbiamo reso un po' più oneroso ma di cui abbiamo incoraggiato anche la stabilizzazione, e che abbiamo flessibilizzato rendendo sostanzialmente privo di causale il primo contratto per un anno, che non è una piccola cosa tra quelle che le imprese volevano."

understandably. Consequently, in this fragment, ironically or authentically, she admits that Senators know better how ordinary people's work contracts work.

Let us now analyze the government's enemies and outsiders from Minister Fornero's perspective.

Table 25. Elsa Fornero Speech #2's Nominations and Predications Analysis: Fornero's Opponents and Outsiders

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">GROUPS OF OPPONENTS/ENEMIES/OUTSIDERS</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Enemies</th><th colspan="2">Outsiders</th></tr>
<tr><th>Nomination</th><th>Predication</th><th>Nomination</th><th>Predication</th></tr>
<tr><td>The entrepreneur that wanted to lay off several independent workers</td><td>The one who was using the reform as a scapegoat to fire many workers</td><td rowspan="2">Society</td><td>The one who must assist the unemployed with monetary transfers or with the search for a new job</td></tr>
<tr><td>The Director of Sole24Ore</td><td>The one who was unjustly criticizing the labor market reform</td><td>The one that makes tax exemptions to make the labor market and training interact with each other</td></tr>
<tr><td>Workers who get unemployment assistance for 8 years without being asked for anything in exchage</td><td>Social waste</td><td rowspan="4">The labor market reform</td><td>Ample and complex</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bogus training courses</td><td>Those that have wasted rivulets of public money</td><td>Puts in the center the idea that people can lose their jobs</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Has two objectives: to make the market more inclusive and more dynamic</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>It is not dogmatic; it is pragmatic</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Institutions like the OECD and the European Commission</td><td>Those who have told the Italians they have labor precariousness concentrated in women and youth</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Germany</td><td>The one that has lower youth unemployment through apprenticeship</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>The Government</td><td>Who must coolaborate to improve the apprenticeship</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>The unions</td><td>Who must coolaborate to improve the apprenticeship</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>The firms</td><td>Who must coolaborate to improve the apprenticeship</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>The Regions</td><td>Who must coolaborate to improve the apprenticeship</td></tr>
</table>

			Those whit exclusive competence regarding the unemployment assistance
		The Provinces	Who must coolaborate to improve the apprenticeship
		The scientific community	Those who should take and evaluate the social policy data
		The policymaker	The one who ought to take the scientific data to apply it pragmatically
		The youth	A very important and traditionally excluded labor market segment that we should protect
		The women	A very important and traditionally excluded labor market segment that we should protect
		The elderly workers	A very important and traditionally excluded labor market segment that we should protect

Source: own elaboration.

Both from the quantity and quality of Fornero's nominations and predications in this second speech, we can infer this is a denunciation speech. Recall the context of this peroration: the government had received several criticisms from elsewhere for its unpopular reforms, and Fornero was trying to either answer or back-flip those criticisms. Considering that, the minister alluded to several groups: the self-serving, the unjust, the needed actors, the authoritative figures, and the policy targets.

Regarding the first, the *self-serving*, it is clear they go into the villain's category. Here Fornero mentions an entrepreneur that, blaming the reform, wanted to lay off a large number of employees. She also touched upon the workers enjoying unmerited social assistance for long - "social waste"[54], as she would call them. Lastly, she mentions the bogus training courses and their trainers that "have wasted rivulets of public money." [55] It is inevitable to link those nominations and predications with the privileges the government wanted to undertake, making that narrative continuous. Additionally, those people have made the reform necessary – the scapegoat. If every citizen acted as expected, Italy would not have

[54] "Cosa sono lavoratori che vengono assistiti monetariamente per otto anni senza che nessuno chieda loro niente? Magari incoraggiati a lavorare in nero… e cos'è questo se non un grandissimo spreco sociale? Si dice "non c'è nient'altro"; beh', proviamoci."

[55] "(…) io ti devo poter offrire qualcosa; corsi veri, non corsi finti che hanno sprecato rivoli di denaro pubblico; dove non c'erano corsi, non c'era nessuno che sapesse formare e pochi anche a essere formati."

these problems. Here Fornero refers, as in Merton's example of Capone, to those amoral familyists that justify their wrongdoing because of the alleged system vices.

Concerning the *unjust*, the minister points out to the director of the prestigious financial-specialized newspaper *Il Sole 24Ore*. She alleges that the media manager is among those who have unfairly criticized the labor market reform and then provides a detailed story of their encounter (quoted before). However, Fornero did not approach the narrative aggressively; instead, she limited herself to narrating her conversation with the director and reproducing what she said to him and her actions.

About the *needed actors* to carry out the reform and improve the country's situation, Minister Fornero recalls the government, the workers' unions, the firms, the Regions, and the Provinces of Italy. By this, she underscores the reform's complexity and broad scope. Then, Fornero brings up some *authoritative figures* to back the reform's main postulates. Here, the OECD and the European Commission had a role in the policy diagnosis. As a result, the reform could have become more technically credible, or the government could have been exonerated from committing to such rugged policy solutions by referring to those actors. Finally, in another tone, Fornero turns to Germany as an example of good practices. By illustrating Germany's efficacy in lowering youth unemployment, she utilizes Cialdini's social proof, as we affirmed previously.

Lastly, Minister Fornero recalls the policy targets: the youth, the women, and the elderly workers. As we have addressed, the treatment is extremely cold or too specialized. She calls them "very important segments (…) excluded or on the margins." [56] It is plausible that replacing groups of people struggling for "segments on the margins" makes it difficult for citizens to back Fornero's policy.

In using these nominations and predications, Fornero used argumentative devices (i.e., if *x*, then *y*) to deliver them persuasively. Consequently, Table 20 shows her central argumentation schemes when not appealing to mere logic. This analysis aims to identify patterns in using *topoi* and certain types of fallacies when government spokespersons must promote unpopular reforms.

Table 26. Elsa Fornero Speech #2's Argumentation Schemes and Fallacies

Name of topos	***Name of fallacy***	***Paraphrase***
Reality	Circular reasoning	p13. Since the reform is pragmatic and non dogmatic, we must evaluate it according to its practical results
	False premise	p16. We must make it a little more affordable for permanent employment contracts because we need to lock

[56] "(…) segmenti molto importanti (…) esclusi o ai margini."

		in with good regulatory framework the growth when it comes back
	Evading the burden of proof	p21. Even a child would understand that "hit and run" job contracts do not help to increase the labor productivity
	Post hoc ergo propter hoc	P29. Since we believe this is a balanced solution, then it is a solution of civility rather than a modernity solution
Justice	Argumentum ad consequentiam	p7. Since people can lose their jobs, then society must help them when that happens

Source: own elaboration.

Unlike her first speech, Fornero’s second piece contained several argumentative fallacies. The most used *topos* was *reality – things are like they are*. Within that category, the minister performed four fallacies: circular reasoning, false premise, evading the burden of proof, and *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Regarding the first of those, the fallacy is pretty apparent once pointed out: “Instead, we need to prepare ourselves: the reform is not dogmatic, it is pragmatic, and therefore, we need to prepare ourselves to evaluate it for what it will achieve.[57]”

The circularity is the following: since the reform is pragmatic, then we must evaluate its achievements. But then, why should we evaluate its achievements? Because it is pragmatic. Then, again, why is it pragmatic? Because it is not dogmatic. So, why is it not dogmatic? Because it is pragmatic, and so forth. Next, both the false premise and evading the burden of proof fallacies relate to an expression Fornero used only twice in the discourse: “hit and run” (*mordi e fuggi*), referring to the fix-time contracts. In both opportunities, we hypothesize that she assumed everyone in the audience knew what she was discussing. Therefore, maybe she found an explanation too redundant. Finally, the last reality-related fallacy, the *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, contains a moralizing aspect. Here we show the exact paragraph:

> We believe that the solution chosen is balanced and, *therefore*, in this sense I think it is a norm of civilization as well as modernity –because it is not that modernity is always a value. But there is a norm of civilization here that accompanies modernity, the change in our economy.[58]

Bear in mind that in this type of fallacy, the speaker spuriously assigns causality to a relation of elements. In this case, Fornero sustains that her policy solution is balanced, making it “a norm of civilization as well as modernity.” Let us suppose the policy solution is well-balanced. Then, why exactly that constitutes a norm of civilization and modernity? It may

[57] “Noi invece dobbiamo predisporci: la riforma non è dogmatica, è pragmatica e quindi, noi dobbiamo predisporci a valutarla per quello che riuscirà a conseguire.”
[58] “Noi crediamo che la soluzione scelta sia equilibrata e, quindi, in questo senso io penso che sia una norma di civiltà, oltre che di modernità – perché non è che la modernità è sempre un valore. Ma qui c'è una norma di civiltà che accompagna alla modernità, il cambiamento della nostra economia.”

well be an effective, responsible policy, but the fact that it is balanced is not necessary nor enough to affirm that it will result in civilization and modernity.

Another *topos* the minister used in this speech was justice, a fair common one when discussing unpopular reforms. In this opportunity, Fornero urges the audience to help those people that could lose their jobs, in a passage we previously visited: "Unfortunately, people can lose their jobs, but it is society's job to assist them both through a monetary transfer and -I would like to say even more importantly- in finding new employment.[59]"

Few may consider Fornero's asseveration incorrect, but the fallacy is there. The fact that people can lose their jobs and the unjust that can be, does not suffices as a logical premise for society to help those people. There might be ethical motives, but no logic argumentation. That is a classical *argumentum ad consequentiam* fallacy.

Lastly, Table 21 summarizes the speech's characters, after which we will interpret the discourse's framings.

Table 27. Elsa Fornero Speech #1's Characters

Supporters of the Government		***Not supporters of the Government***	
I/we	***Not those against the reform***	***Not us***	***Those against/not in favor of the reform***
We (Italians); I; the Government	Carlo Dell'Aringa; the Senators; my predecesor; Mario Monti; the youth; the women; the elderly workers	Society; institutions like the OECD and the European Commission; Germany; the Government; the workers' unions; the firms; the regions; the scientific community; the policymaker	The Director of Sole24Ore; workers who get unemployment assistance for 8 years without being asked for anything in exchange; the entrepreneur that wanted to lay off several independent workers; job trainers offering bogus courses

Source: own elaboration.

Firstly, Fornero's frame for the reform was quite clear: it is impeccable because experts have worked on it. The minister covered her back from the beginning of the discourse by using her technical jargon and Dell'Aringa as a source of authority. That, of course, is natural: she attended the Senate because of the criticism of the reform. Nevertheless, relying upon the expertise, she omitted the people for whom the policy had been made. That is the second point of our character analysis.

If in her first speech Fornero failed to portray concrete villains, in this one, she failed to point out the *victims*, the heroes starring in the reform. Indeed, the enemies of the reform are clear: the newspaper director that unjustly criticized the policy, the free riders of the

[59] "Purtroppo le persone possono perdere il posto di lavoro ma è compito della società assisterle sia attraverso un trasferimento monetario, sia -vorrei dire anche soprattutto- nella ricerca di una nuova occupazione."

system, the opportunistic business people, and the shoddy job trainers. On the contrary, however, the minister's allies are government members or population segments – the youth, the women, and the elderly workers. Perhaps, if treating the latter more humanely or compassionately, they would have obtained a victim and heroic status.

In balance, Elsa Fornero changed markedly from her December 2011 to her September 2012 speech. In the former, she was extremely technical, even philosophical, omitting real-life villains, and literally putting justice behind her policy. In that same vein, we can infer her audience was knowledgeable – investors, European authorities, the market. In the September 2012 address, instead, she showed a clear improvement in terms of communication. Keeping her academicist essence, she successfully identified the enemies of the reform and provided with graphic examples of the policy problems. Finally, although she was somewhat compassionate to her compatriots – "people can lose their jobs, therefore society must help them"- the speech lacked clear victims. Thus, there was no a clear narrative.

Then, what is the ultimate balance for the Monti-Fornero politolinguistics analysis? Firstly, there is an apparent complementarity between the president and his minister. If the former portrayed the political and international aspects of the crisis, the latter gave domestic and internal explanations of the situation. If Monti adopted Italy's Republican symbols, Fornero made use of her widely recognized expertise as an economist. If the president flattered his audiences more, the minister chose a straightforward and honest approach.

Secondly, Monti and Fornero's strategies have some commonalities. For example, both used the notion of sacrifice and how to distribute it throughout society, appealing to justice in the last term. Likewise, they both utilized the blame-avoidance strategy.

Thirdly, both speakers committed narrative mistakes. They were preyed upon by the Knowledge Curse and knowledge fallacy: it was simply too challenging for them to abstain from excessively technical jargon and be overconfident about their audience's reasoning capacity. Additionally, they both had difficulty listing the main characters of every story: villains and victims. They would probably miss one group if they identified the other well. That made Fornero and Monti's perorations less easy to follow and less compelling.

In the following section we will examine the speakers' communication's persuasive potential.

3.2. Assessing the Persuasive Potential of Mario Monti and Elsa Fornero

As defined in Methodology, we attempt to complement the politolinguistics analysis by applying our proposed Unpopular Policy Narrative Model. Although we have analyzed two speakers, we will consider both as part of the same strategy for the persuasive potential analysis, so we will examine them as a whole and comprehend one government's communication strategy. As we sustained, Fornero's and Monti's speeches are complementary and have elements in common.

As a reminder of our analytical model, see the following table's operationalization.

Table 28. Operationalization of the Unpopular Policy Communication's Persuasive Potential

Phases	Concepts	Dimensions	Questions	Attributes
DRAWING ATTENTION	Narrative	Setting the status quo	16. Are there elements that set a status quo-altering crisis scenario that make the unpopular policy necessary?	1 = Yes 0 = No
	Persuasion principles	Confirmation bias	17. Does the narrator make concrete examples about the problem to help the audience to internalize the problem and mobilize their leaning toward the narrative?	1 = Yes 0 = No
CULTIVATING A POSITIVE ASSOCIATION	Narrative	The plot	18. Is there a hero/victim suffering from something?	1 = Yes 0 = No
			19. Is there any villain to blame for the hero's suffering?	1 = Yes 0 = No
	Persuasion principles	Reciprocation	20. Does the narrator make any meaningful, unexpected and/or customized gesture to the audience?	1 = Yes 0 = No
		Liking	21. Is the narrator similar to their audience, flattering to them, and/or seen as authentic?	1 = Yes 0 = No
REDUCING UNCERTAINTY	Narrative	The guide	22. Is the government compassionate about the hero's situation?	1 = Yes 0 = No
		The plan	23. Does the unpopular policy proposal (the plan's *what*) restore the status quo's stability?	1 = Yes 0 = No
			24. Is there a clear policy solution (the plan's *how*)?	1 = Yes 0 = No
	Persuasion principles	Social proof	25. Does the narrator include social validity and feasibility arguments to convince others? Are others like the audience going through the same?	1 = Yes 0 = No
		Authority	26. Does the narrator turn to trustworthy experts or well-reputed sources to make the policy more persuasive?	1 = Yes 0 = No
MOTIVATING ACTION	Narrative	The nudge	27. Is it clear what the hero and the veto players/challengers should do stick to the plan?	1 = Yes 0 = No

			28. Is it clear what would happen if the hero and the veto players/challengers do not stick to the plan?	1 = Yes 0 = No
	Persuasion principles	Scarcity[60]	29. Did the narrator present their policy as a unique opportunity?	1 = Yes 0 = No
		Consistency	30. Did the narrator remind the audience how the current requests correspond to the audience's or the speaker's past actions?	1 = Yes 0 = No

Source: own elaboration based on the work of Crow & Jones (2018), Miller (2017); Polletta et al. (2011), Polletta (2015), Thaler & Sunstein (2009), and Cialdini (2007; 2016).

After completing questions 1 to 15 for each speech, we ended with the general persuasive potential index. As shown in Table 15, "1" signals that the speech did contain a particular resort, whereas "0" suggests it did not. Then, we run a simple sum for every speech's results to obtain the general persuasive potential index.

Table 29. Monti-Fornero's Speeches' General Persuasive Potential[61]

Speech	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15	General Persuasive Potential
111117_M	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	12
111229_F	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	8
120126_F	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	9
120220_M	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	11
120308_F	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	7
120516_M	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	10
120517_F	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	6
120619_F	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	8
120706_M	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	5
120819_M	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	12
120918_F	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	12
121010_F	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	6
Average General Persuasive Potential																**8.83**

60 Although it may seem redundant, we initially wanted to repeat question 12 for the scarcity dimension. It is a good sign that very distant authors, such as Cialdini, Thaler and Sunstein, and experts in policy narrative converge on this. As we saw in the Theoretical Framework of the current research, individual action within a crisis context stems from Kahnemann and Tversky's seminal prospective theory. Finally, we discarded re-doing the question not to alter the final index calculation.

61 We identified the speeches by date and by author. For instance, in "111117_M", the date is 17 November 2011, and the author is Mario Monti (M). Therefore, the speeches whose letter in the identification is F belong to Elsa Fornero.

Standard deviation	**2.55**

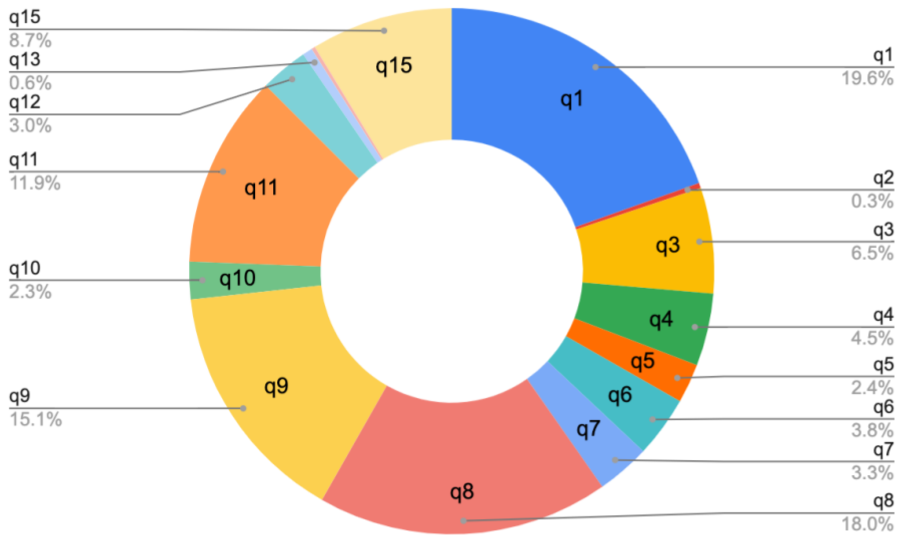
Source: own elaboration.

The average general persuasive potential was 8.83 (the index goes from 0 to 15), with a 2.55 standard deviation. That average tells that considering our 12-speeches sample, Monti and Fornero scored about 58.8% (8.83) out of the originally 15-listed persuasive resorts. The highest scores were recorded in Monti's first intervention in November 2011 (111117_M) and in the August 2012 (120819_M) and September 2012 (120918_F) interventions by Monti and Fornero, respectively.

On the other hand, the standard deviation suggests that Monti and Fornero were somewhat irregular in using persuasive resorts: in some disquisitions, they used many; in others, very few. For instance, in the July 2012 (120706_M) speech, Monti used only five out of 15; in others, he scored 12 out of 15. Regarding the most used resources, the speakers described the status quo (q1 in Table 23) and addressed policy plans (q8) in every speech. Instead, they never offered their policy solution as a unique opportunity but once. The exception was Minister Fornero's September 12 speech (120918_F).

This first analysis, although practical, is incomplete. It provides a panoramic impression of Monti and Fornero employing the literature-documented persuasive tools but does not assign relative importance to every particular tool. The examination is limited to a persuasive resort's mere presence or absence. To overcome that, we followed a simple logic to obtain details about the resources the speakers chose when delivering his speeches and how they distributed those resorts. Then, using each resort's relative frequencies, we can answer more specific questions. For instance, did the orators use more reciprocation or nudge-related techniques? Did they distribute those resorts regularly throughout our year of analysis, or did that distribution change? Which one was Fornero's and Monti's favorite or most frequent persuasive resource? To do so, first, we added up all the passages of the speeches that fit into our classification of persuasive resources. Then, for each piece, we estimated the proportion that each of these resources represented with respect to the total. Figure 6 depicts the average proportion of each persuasive tool in Monti's and Fornero's performances.

Figure 7. Mario Monti's and Elsa Fornero's Average Persuasive Preferences



Source: own elaboration.

Firstly, the figure confirms what we saw before: Monti and Fornero gave relatively considerable importance to drawing the status quo of the reform (q1, 19.5%) and delivering defined policy plans (q8, 18%; q9, 15.1%). Moreover, the policy plan questions (q8 and q9) add a third of the discourses' persuasive extracts. The latter should be no wonder since it is expected of a *governo tecnico* to deliver and implement harsh policy measures.

The fact that the speakers focused that much on portraying the critical situation and pointing out the corresponding policy solutions seems to have gone to the detriment of showing the plot by including characters (q3, 6.5%; q4, 4.5%). We have argued how fundamental victims, heroes, and villains are for any narrative. Reinsborough and Canning sustain that:

> In an effective story the audience can relate to the characters. This helps people see themselves reflected in the story and choose sides. Sometimes these characters are the subjects of the story and sometimes they are the protagonists, or even narrators who act as messengers to deliver the story. Messengers are just as important as the message itself, because they put human faces on the conflict and embody the story. The institutional biases of the media often present politically marginalized people as at fault for their own problems, as helpless victims, or do not let them speak at all. The dynamics of who gets to speak, how the "sympathetic" roles are cast, and who is represented as the heroes, victims, and villains, are key to how power operates in the story. (2017, chapter The Elements of Story).

Secondly, Fornero and Monti did little to help the audience to internalize the political and policy problems by providing real-life examples (q2, 0.3%). As we showed in the politolinguistics analysis, the speakers tended to speak to international investors and top-level authorities and not so much to the median citizen. That is coherent with the importance they gave to the authoritative opinion of external experts, which ranked as the fourth most used persuasive resort (q11, 11.9%).

Thirdly, Monti and Fornero could have made more to motivate the audience's action. On the one hand, they barely used the *prospect theory*'s advantages -it hurts more to lose x than it satisfies winning x. In this case, it would have helped explaining what would have happened if the veto players did not stick to the government's plan (q13, 0.6%). On the other hand, they did not present their policy solutions as a unique opportunity but once throughout the 12 revised speeches (q14, 0.002%).

However, it is essential to point out that König disagrees with this judgment. He argues that "The status quo was portrayed not only as a crisis, an emergency and a situation of great urgency, but the government also warned about the potential even greater harm and loss if the reforms were not carried out (e.g. November 17, 2011; December 13, 2011). In sum, the communication conforms very much to the idea of risk framing (Vis and van Kersbergen 2007)" (2016a, p. 184-185). Nevertheless, König addresses the 17 November speech – the announcement- wherein we also found President Monti portraying the worst-case scenario. Unfortunately, and König does not prove this, the premier did not maintain that strategy consistently, which is why we affirm that Monti and Fornero underutilized the resort.

The fourth element that calls attention is how persistently they used the consistency resource. Recall consistency is reminding the audience about one's or others' previous behavior to compel the listeners to judge the proposed actions in one way or another. In this case, Fornero and Monti included the resource in 10 of the 12 speeches. The times they used it represent 8.7% of the total persuasive passages of the speeches (q15).

To continue analyzing the persuasive resources more in-depth, Table 24 details the speaker's persuasive preferences throughout the 12 analyzed speeches.

Table 30. Monti's and Fornero's Persuasive Preferences

Speech	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15
111117_M	0.07	0.00	0.16	0.04	0.16	0.07	0.03	0.12	0.16	0.00	0.07	0.03	0.04	0.00	0.04
111229_F	0.16	0.05	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.21	0.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.05
120126_F	0.36	0.06	0.21	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.06	0.15	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
120220_M	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.14	0.04	0.10	0.02	0.10	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25
120308_F	0.39	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
120516_M	0.07	0.00	0.03	0.03	0.07	0.14	0.00	0.10	0.14	0.00	0.31	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.07

120517_F	0.20	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.40	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00
120619_F	0.13	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.06	0.16	0.42	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.13
120706_M	0.21	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.36	0.14	0.00	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14
120819_M	0.28	0.00	0.12	0.09	0.05	0.07	0.00	0.12	0.05	0.02	0.07	0.02	0.05	0.00	0.07
120918_F	0.20	0.02	0.12	0.10	0.05	0.00	0.10	0.07	0.15	0.02	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.05
121010_F	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.27	0.00	0.18	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.09

Source: own elaboration.

The red-marked numbers correspond to the most utilized persuasive resort within each speech (every row refers to a speech). The primary trend, once again, is defining the status quo (q1). It concentrates the most mentions in four of the 12 speeches. It is important to note that three of those speeches belong to Minister Fornero. Moreover, in her March 2012 speech (120308_F), she dedicated 39% of the persuasive devices to drawing the policy status quo. The second most utilized resources were drawing policy plans (q8) and specific policy solutions (q9). The speakers gave particular attention to those resorts during May (120515_F), June (120619_F), and July 2012 (120706_M). The policy-solution referring fragments occupied around 40% of the persuasive excerpts on those occasions.

One outlier speech we must address is Monti's May 2012 (120516_M). Thirty-one percent of his persuasive resources went to citing authoritative experts or entities. That does not surprise though. In that opportunity, the president gave a peroration at the end of the mission of the International Monetary Fund in Italy, so he mostly alluded to the Fund's recommendations and other well-famed sources.

Tu summarize, Monti's and Fornero's communication persuasive analysis suggests that:

- Although they used a significant amount of our 15 literature findings on persuasive, they used most of them irregularly.

- However, our Italian speakers' style gives prominence to some resorts, like portraying the reform's status quo and specifying plans and policy solutions. As in many cases, here, quantity does not necessarily imply quality. As we saw in the politolinguistics analysis, the tone in whereby Monti and Fornero explained their policy plans was generally too scholarly, difficult to understand, and lacking humanity. That may have provoked apathy and a lack of interest in the ordinary people. A policy should help someone, not something.

- On the contrary, some other devices may have given more efficacy to the analyzed speeches. For instance, casting better the victim/heroes of the pension reform and the villains behind it would probably result in a better narrative. That would have caught the median citizen's attention and made the reform more understandable. Likewise, the motivating action part was somewhat weak, particularly addressing the unpromising outcomes of not adhering to the reform (q13) and depicting the reform as a unique opportunity (q14).

We will look into more detail these conclusions by evaluating Monti's and Fornero's strategy outcomes. Were they successful in implementing and getting others to support the pension reform? Could the persuasive elements relate to those results?

4. Evaluating Monti's and Fornero's Communication Strategy's Success

In general, the specialized media considered the Monti government successful. For instance, Open Democracy (2013) sustained that

> Monti's measures reassured markets and European partners that Italy had learnt its lesson and was beginning to put its house in order. This allowed Monti to shift the discourse in Europe towards growth. In Italy, Monti talked like a liberal, behaved impeccably, even renouncing his salary, and proved authoritative, but he ultimately failed the task of making Italy fit for the twenty-first century.

In a similar tone, the BBC (2012) claimed that we must evaluate the Monti administration as a whole, not only for his particular reforms:

> (…) Mr Monti's greatest achievement was not to do with the specifics of pension reform, it was in the restoration of credibility for the Italian political system, according to Fabio Basagni, chairman of Actinvest, a corporate financial adviser specialising in Italy.
> "His biggest job was to keep Italy from the precipice," he says.
> "The specifics were not as important as establishing the systems."

Despite the positive balances, Guarnieri presents some nuances of the Monti government's achievements:

> The Monti government succeeds in its goal of bringing the financial crisis under control, but the sharp increase in taxation contributes to further depressing the economy, increasing unemployment and fueling deep dissatisfaction in the electorate. It is especially the center-right electorate -traditionally hostile to a policy of tax increases- that suffers from supporting Monti, a fact that prompts Berlusconi to withdraw his support in late 2012. New elections are thus called a few months in advance (2016, chapter La Reppublica dei premi, translated by the author).

In that same vein, an OECD report sustained in 2015 that

> (…) the [pension] reform met with strong opposition from large groups of the population not only because of the evident harsh effects on those individuals who at the

> time of the introduction were near to retirement, but also because of the incomplete and misleading understandings that many individuals had of the aims and effects of the reform as a whole. The economic literature has already highlighted the key role of correct information in determining the success of a reform, as the lack of sufficient knowledge of the aims and content of a reform can not only prevent its acceptance, but also induce behaviors capable of neutralizing (in part or as a whole) its positive effects. (p. 4).

In the following, we will examine into more detail Monti's and Fornero's success according to three variables: the effective implementation of the reform, whether Monti was able to hand office to any successor or political ally, and his approval rates during the 12-month analyzed period.

4.1. Effective Implementation of the Reform

As we affirmed earlier, the Parliament approved the pension reform contained in the Save Italy decree on 12 February 2012 (Normattiva 2023), little after the Senate ratified Monti as President of the Council of Ministers on November 2011. However, there was skepticism that the president would implement that reform whatsoever. Close to the Monti government's end, The Economist (2012b) argued that

> Many worry whether Mr Monti's reforms will be properly implemented. And there is still so much to do, says Guido Tabellini of Bocconi University in Milan: cutting through the tangles of bureaucracy, for instance, or improving the efficiency and quality of Italian public services such as schools and universities.

It turned out that the government did not fully implement the reform. Fornero (2020, p. 59) succinctly explains what happened after the Monti government:

> After Italy was hit by the financial crisis of 2009 and the sovereign debt crisis, it was forced to appeal for European support in 2011. This support was obtained in return for ambitious reforms. It was in this context that the Monti-Fornero reform was passed, with the main measures being an acceleration of the Dini reform agenda and a significant rise in the minimum retirement age. Although the reform was transparent and financially sustainable and therefore capable of restoring confidence in the level of future pensions, it was nevertheless unpopular. Since the end of the Monti government, Italy's political parties, including those that had supported the reform, have tended to distance themselves from the measure or even to oppose it quite fiercely. The Northern League in particular has made its opposition an electoral battle-cry. Yet the League's entry into the government in 2018 did not see any fundamental change in the reform but only some provisional measures easing it.

According to Nadayet (2020, p. 66), Italy's pension reforms between 1992 and 2011 were not entirely carried out due to policy fragmentation and constant dissonances with the Italian Constitution:

> As we await this umpteenth major reform, our review of the recent history of the pension system in Italy has shown that even though compliance with the constitutional framework has been the focus of legal experts' attention, it is clear that whether they are making structural reforms or counter-reforms, however episodic they may be, lawmakers have long tended to act in response to exigencies at times entirely contrary to the provisions of the Constitution. Caught between society's demands for the protection of labor and the imperative of ensuring financial balance, they have at times been led to adopt criteria for access to retirement that simply act as accounting adjustment variables, even though for the calculation of pensions this function is already served by the instrument of the annuity transformation coefficient used in the contributory method. (p. 66)

On balance, Monti-Fornero passed their pension reform in Parliament, but they implemented it only partially. Therefore, the first criterion to assess Monti and Fornero's success is unsatisfactory.

4.2. Office-keeping

The second success factor to look at is office keeping. After losing support from Berlusconi's party in Parliament, in December 2012 Monti resigned as prime minister and announced he would run for the election (Financial Times 2012). As stated by Belucci and Maraffi,

> (…) the context of the 2013 election was characterized by three broad themes: 1. widespread worry and uncertainty caused by a deep economic crisis; 2. bitter disappointment with established political parties and political institutions in general; 3. deep disillusionment with «old» political leaders and the rise of new challengers for leadership. (2014, p. 37).

Monti bet for the centrist voters – "From the centrists I received broad and credible support," he affirmed (Financial Times 2012). However, when analyzing the ballot box outcomes, he failed. The center-left *Partito Democratico* (PD) obtained the majority in both the Chamber of Deputies (Table 25) and the Senate (Table 26). Conversely, Monti's *With Monti for Italy* ranked fourth as a political force in the Parliament. It got a little over 10% in the Chamber of Deputies and 9.1% in the Senate.

Table 31. February 2013 Italian Chamber of Deputies Election Results[62]

Coalition	Party	Italy (19 regions)			Total seats	+/–
		Votes	%	Seats		
Italy. Common Good	Democratic Party	8,646,034	25.43	292	297	+80
	Left Ecology Freedom	1,089,231	3.20	37	37	*New*
	Democratic Centre	167,328	0.49	6	6	*New*
	South Tyrolean People's Party	146,800	0.43	5	5	+3
Centre-right coalition	The People of Freedom	7,332,134	21.56	97	98	−178
	Northern League	1,390,534	4.09	18	18	−42
	Brothers of Italy	666,765	1.96	9	9	*New*
Five Star Movement		8,691,406	25.56	108	109	*New*
With Monti for Italy	**Civic Choice**	**2,823,842**	**8.30**	**37**	**39**	***New***
	Union of the Centre	**608,321**	**1.79**	**8**	**8**	**−28**
Others		2,443,360	7.19	0	0	—

Source: own elaboration based on Ministero dell'Interno, 2023(a).

Table 32. February 2013 Italian Senate Election Results[63]

Coalition	Party	Italy (19 regions)			Total seats	+/–
		Votes	%	Seats		
Italy. Common Good	Democratic Party	8,400,255	27.43	105	111	−7
	Left Ecology Freedom	912,374	2.97	7	7	*New*
	The Megaphone	138,581	0.45	1	1	*New*
	SVP – PATT – UPT	—	—	0	4	±0
Centre-right coalition	The People of Freedom	6,829,373	22.30	98	98	−49
	Northern League	1,328,555	4.33	17	18	−7
	Great South	122,100	0.39	1	1	*New*
Five Star Movement		7,285,850	23.79	54	23.79	54
With Monti for Italy		**2,797,486**	**9.13**	**37**	9.13	**18**
Others		3,936,776	9.21	0	9.21	0

Source: own elaboration based on Ministero dell'Interno, 2023(b).

[62] We did not consider the votes for the Associative Movement of Italians Abroad, the South American Union of Italian Emigrants, and the Aosta Valley (UV-SA-FA). Since those groups obtained few preferences, including them would not contribute to the central analysis.
[63] We did not consider the votes for the Associative Movement of Italians Abroad, the South American Union of Italian Emigrants, and the Aosta Valley (UV-SA-FA). Since those groups obtained few preferences, including them would not contribute to the central analysis.

Open Democracy (2013) gives a possible explanation for Monti failing to conquer the presidency democratically:

> The main fault of Monti is not so much his patronising attitude or his posse of hard-nosed academics, but his lack of understanding of power. He was granted power from above when he became Prime Minister without ever standing for elections. He was also appointed as a European Commissioner and academic. This is not to question his hard work and ability, rather to point out that 'appointment' gives one a different perspective on one's position.
>
> Appointment comes from above and vests one with power on the basis of abilities to be exercised according to one's better judgement. Democracy is the government of people, who elect candidates to be their representatives, to speak and act on their behalf.
>
> In a representative democracy, people are the 'sovereign', not subjects: thus representation requires politicians to act in accordance with the views and values expressed by the people. Monti's political venture, however, is fought from the comfort of his (appointed) seat in the Senate without actually facing the electorate.

In a similar tone, The Economist (2012b) commented:

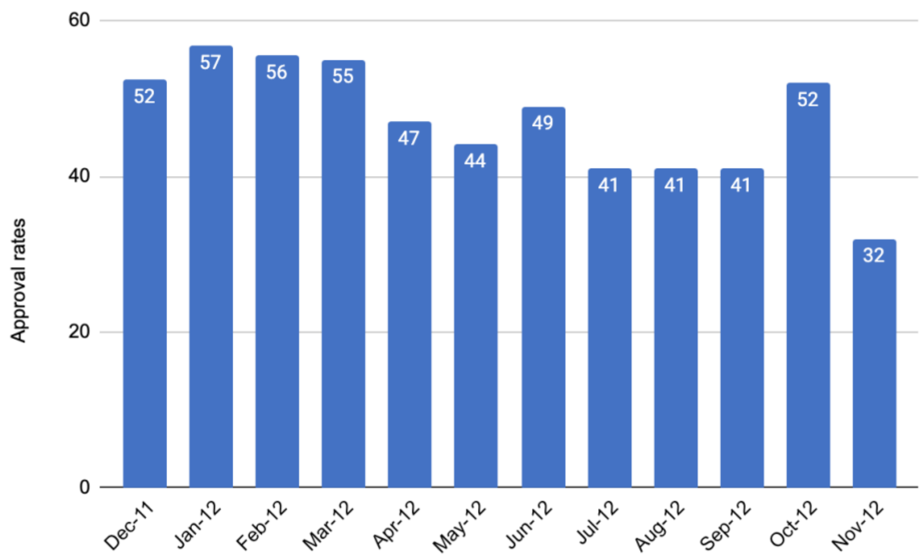
> Mr Monti's government wins more plaudits from the markets than the public, which may be the right way round for a country with the highest ratio of sovereign debt to GDP in Europe, bar Greece, and the biggest absolute debt pile anywhere bar America, Japan and Germany. Helped by the actions of Mario Draghi, who became boss of the European Central Bank just days before Mr Monti took over, Italian ten-year bond yields have fallen to a two-year low. The Italian electorate is less grateful. Confidence in the government has ebbed away.
>
> A loss of popularity was inevitable. The very point of a non-partisan government was to go where elected ministers feared to tread. Thanks to Mr Monti's doses of austerity—and to the malaise affecting the euro zone as a whole—the economy, in recession since mid-2011, is forecast by the European Commission to shrink by 2.3% this year and by a further 0.5% in 2013. The overall unemployment rate has jumped from 8.8% a year ago to 11.1% (still below the euro-zone average); for young people, it is a desperate 36.5% (well above it).

Connecting to the former, the last success dimension to consider is the approval rate evolution. As we will see, although Monti's popularity suffered, it kept steadily high during his mandate – over 40%.

4.3. Approval Rates

As the methodology specified, we used presidential approval rates as a proxy for the citizenry's consent. For the Italian case, we utilized the Archivio CIRCaP - UNISI data, provided by professor Paolo Bellucci. As Figure 7 shows, President Monti's support evolution for the selected period (December 2011 – November 2012) was the following:

Figure 8. Mario Monti Approval Rates, December 2011 - November 2012 (%)



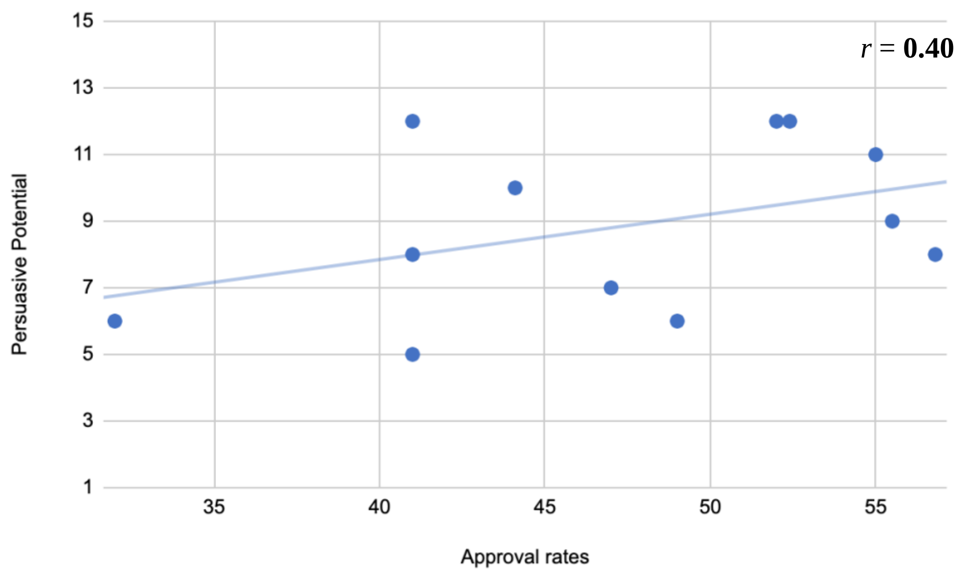
Source: own elaboration based on the Archivio CIRCaP - UNISI data.

As anticipated, Monti's approval rate kept relatively high throughout his administration. He started with 52% and immediately raised it to 57%. Five months after assumed, his ratings decreased and kept below 50%. By July 2012, he recorded 41% of approval until October, when it rose again. Finally, in November, it soared once more to 32%, his lowest support. All things considered, Monti did well in terms of citizenry support. The most valued party during his government was the *Partito Democratico*, whose highest national Parliament voting intention, a key variable in Italy's political system, did not surpass 33% at the end of 2012 (POLITICO 2023).

Since approval rates constitute a numerical index, we explored their relationship with our persuasive potential indexes. Searching for that relationship quantitatively measures the persuasive resort's efficacy -despite its perfectibility-. It also allows us to compare this case with Chile's. We ran some correlation analyses using Pearson's *r* coefficient to find out if there was any statistical relationship. The results are exciting and could motivate some further research on this matter.

Firstly, we analyzed the correlation between the speeches' General Persuasive Potential index and Mario Monti's approval rates.[64] By doing this, we attempted to identify if Monti's communicative performance was related to his popularity performance.

Figure 9. Correlation Monti-Fornero's General Persuasive Potential and Monti's Approval Rates (r Pearson)



Source: own elaboration using the Archivio CIRCaP - UNISI data.

As Figure 8 shows, there is a correlation between Monti-Fornero's General Persuasive Potential and Monti's approval rating, but still far from conclusive. The correlation analysis suggests a Pearson's *r* coefficient of 0.40, a moderate correlation[65]. The trend line in the figure shows how the variables' covariance behaves: when one increases, the other also increases, although slightly. In other words, when the speakers included more persuasive resources in their speeches, it coincided with higher approval rates. In any case, this does not sustain causality.

Nevertheless, as we said before, considering solely the General Persuasive Potential can be reductionist when analyzing the orators' persuasive performance. Therefore, we analyzed the correlations between every 15-listed persuasive resort prevalence throughout the 12 speeches and Mario Monti's approval rates (see Table 27). This analysis considers each variable in terms of relative frequency. That means we attempt to measure what happens

[64] We hypothesize that Fornero's communication also impacted Monti's popularity.

[65] The Kent State University (2023) sets as general guidelines that $.1 < |r| < .3$ correlation represents a small/weak correlation; $.3 < |r| < .5$ constitutes a medium/moderate correlation, and that r greater than .5 is a large/strong correlation.

when a persuasive resort's share respect to the entire persuasive "pool" changes and how that relates to the approval rates.

Table 33. R Pearson Correlation Monti-Fornero's Persuasive Preferences vs Approval Rates

Persuasive resort	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15
***r* pearson**	0.00	**0.60**	**0.50**	**0.51**	0.21	0.08	**0.58**	-0.16	**-0.47**	0.16	**-0.46**	**-0.49**	0.21	0.20	-0.14

Source: own elaboration based on the Archivio CIRCaP - UNISI data.

Table 27 shows four persuasive resources whose prevalence has a significant and robust relationship with Monti's approval rates and three with a moderate relationship. The most salient is one of the most underutilized resorts: giving examples to take advantage of the audience's confirmation biases (q2, *r* = -0.60). According to the correlation coefficient, we could expect higher approval rates when the speaker introduces concrete examples to draw the status quo, consistent with the literature findings. Conversely, we can observe a higher approval rating when the orator shows compassion toward the hero/victim's situation (q7, *r* = 0.58). Lastly, the plot -casting the characters- has a robust relationship with the premier popularity. We infer that from identifying the villains of the policy narrative (q4, *r* = 0.51) and pointing out the heroes/victims of it (q3, *r* = 0.50). In the Monti-Fornero case, the storytelling-related resorts have a stronger relationship with the premier's popularity than others.

On the other hand, it is remarkable that all those persuasive devices whose covariance with approval rating is moderate behave negatively; namely, when they are more prevalent, approval ratings go down and vice versa. First, we find the nudge (q12, *r* = -0.49). Thus, when the speakers insisted on what the veto players should do to stick to their policy plan, the lower Monti's approval rates were. Likewise, when the speakers provided more concrete policy solutions (q9, *r* = -0.47), Monti's popular support tended to decrease. Finally, the premier's approval was scarcer when the authoritative resorts were more abundant -i.e., alluding to experts (q11, *r* = -0.46). Considering these relationships were just moderate, we must value them carefully. Either way, they correspond to our previous hypothesis: overusing the technical-oriented resorts, like including too many policy plans or abusing calling authoritative figures, can, indeed, be counterproductive in terms of persuasion.

Additionally, we would have expected other persuasive resorts to have a significant relationship with approval rates based on our Unpopular Policy Narrative Model. For instance, drawing the status quo seemed particularly important in an unpopular reform context. However, at least following these data, it has none correlation with approval rates (q1, *r* = 0.00). Likewise, showing the potential losses of not adhering to the painful policy (q13, *r* = 0.21) and presenting the reform as a unique opportunity (q14, *r* = 0.20) should also have shared more covariance with Monti's approval rates. Instead, their correlations with the rating variable were weak.

There exist several plausible explanations for the dissonance between Monti-Fornero's persuasive analysis and the academic findings. Firstly, approval rates, as a dependent variable, are subject to distortion by a multitude of factors, with communication of unpopular policies being only one among many. Therefore, it is conceivable that the impact of communication on approval rates may be relatively marginal.

Secondly, it is important to acknowledge that our analysis only considered speeches in which Mario Monti and Elsa Fornero explicitly mentioned the term "pension" or its variants. While this approach provides a robust evaluation of the speakers' performance, it neglects the potential contributions of other influential actors, such as high-ranking government officials, industry actors, civil society or NGO representatives, and opposition politicians. Failing to account for their perspectives and contributions may thus limit the comprehensiveness and nuance of our analysis.

5. Conclusions on the Monti Government Communication Strategy

President Monti's reform was not a success. Although his administration passed the bill, the government could not implement it entirely. Additionally, Monti did not get elected. Neither did any of his political allies. As we sustained earlier, probably many factors converged to that. For instance, as Open Democracy affirmed, the premier lacked the political instinct to get support and did not have any Parliamentary members backing his intentions. In that sense, the pension communication is a small show of the situation rather than the cause of the political failure. However, there are elements in that communication strategy that are worth examining.

Firstly, from the politolinguistics analysis, we infer that Monti-Fornero's rhetoric mainly appealed to the *sacrifices* behind the reform package and how it was the fairest way to distribute those sacrifices throughout society. The speakers underscored the untenable status quo that made the reforms inevitable, which, as we saw from Papaconstantinou's quotes, was the European Union mood at the time. Monti and Fornero took advantage of it and used the blame avoidance strategy. Monti's scapegoat was mainly the Union and Italy's "usual suspects" - the mafia and organized crime. For Fornero, it was the privileged ones taking unfair advantage of the Italian economy.

Secondly, both speakers were prey to the Curse of Knowledge and the knowledge fallacy. They did not realize they knew too much and relied on the ordinary voter's reasoning capacity to process complex policy-making jargon. Likewise, their policy narrative lacked a plot. They have identified the villains and the heroes of their stories better. If we combine unachievable language with a confusing story, there are low chances of getting the audience's attention and even less convincing them.

Thirdly, our persuasive potential examination confirms that Monti and Fornero emphasized detailing the policy plans and listing the status quo considerably. Indeed, our analysis suggests it might have been too much. Additionally, they failed to cast the victims/heroes and the villains of their policy narrative, and could have made use of more explicit motivating-action factors. For instance, drawing the worst-case scenario of not carrying out the reforms and selling the pension reform as a unique opportunity. Lastly, providing more vivid examples of the crisis might have made the communication more compelling.

Fourthly, the chosen success variables indicate that Fornero and Monti did not do entirely well regarding their pension reform. There is still no consensus about its implementation, even more than 10 years after the Parliament passed it in 2012. Monti ultimately decided to run for President of the Council but obtained poor election results. However, he kept unusually high approval rates during his administration, which should be noted.

Lastly, our model of analysis needs to be perfected. On the one side, the speakers' General Persuasive Potential does not provide very helpful information; instead, the orators' Persuasive Preferences deliver more eloquent clues about their performance. Furthermore, running a correlation analysis gives the impression to help understand communicative performance's persuasive power. Again, however, choosing a more suitable dependent variable is mandatory. Instead of approval rates, it would be ideal for counting on quantitative evaluation of the speeches -which government communication offices commission routinely- or at least a public opinion survey regarding the reform in question at different times. Having such a variable could allow us to understand whether there is a causality between the speakers' communication performance and the audience's evaluations of that particular performance.

CHAPTER IV

STUDY CASES: SEBASTIÁN PIÑERA'S PENSION REFORM IN CHILE (2018 – 2019)

After a runoff voting in December 2017, center-right Sebastián Piñera came back in charge in March 2018 after getting the 54% of the votes at the age of 68 in the 2017 presidential elections (The Economist 2017). He had already ruled the country between 2010 and 2014 as the first conservative president since Chilean democracy reset in 1990. This second time, he defeated the Socialist candidate Alejandro Guillier, who wanted to keep the center-left in power after the second mandate of President Michelle Bachelet[1], Guillier's political fellow.

Piñera's victory was unexpectedly robust (Benedikter et al. 2018), and the left resented the defeat (The Economist 2017). However, unlike in Mario Monti's Italy, a crisis in Chile was not evident when Piñera won. Either way, among his central campaign promises, was to ameliorate the pension system in Chile (Piñera, 2017). Then, shortly after the start of his term, he launched four main reforms: a tax reform, a labor reform, a pension reform, and a reform to the healthcare system.

In the ongoing chapter, we will analyze the most fundamental traits of the Chilean context -both the historical and the immediate- and the reform in question to understand the unpopular policy's status quo. Finally, we will peruse Piñera's communication strategy to implement his policies and the outcomes.

1. Drawing the Reform Status Quo

Piñera's government was the seventh after the so-called Chile's Return to Democracy (*Retorno a la Democracia*) in 1990 following General Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-90). How did Piñera conquer office? He is a doctor of Economics from Harvard University and a business tycoon who made his fortune mainly through financial assets management and share investments (The Economist 2017). He also started a political career in 1990. The businessman won a seat on the Senate in the first elections held after Augusto Pinochet had

[1] In Chile, consecutive presidential reelection is not allowed. Perhaps that is why, between 2006 and 2022, only two presidents alternated in power. One is center-left Michelle Bachelet (2006-10; 2014-18). The other is center-right Sebastián Piñera (2010-14; 2018-22).

lost the plebiscite to keep his regime, back in 1988. Although Piñera had run for president in 2005, it was not until 2009 that he succeeded. Then, his government was not able to keep the presidency. Michelle Bachelet defeated the president's political allies in the ballot boxes in 2013, and then Piñera went for a second term in 2017.

Piñera's diagnosis and campaign strategy of 2017 was that of Chile "drifting off course" (Piñera 2017, p. 23). On the one hand, he recognized the vital role that his center-left predecessors played in strengthening democracy, improving institutions, boosting economic growth, and reducing poverty. On the other hand, however, he also blamed President Bachelet's second term (2014-18) of diverting the course. According to Piñera, she had eroded the center-left government's legacy due to her radical and leftist policies.

> This extraordinary transformation of our country (referring to the center-left governments since 1990) was wrongly interpreted by minority groups (namely, Bachelet's closest allies), which gave it a highly ideologized and rupturist character. Instead of proposing the improvement of the foundations of our progress, they proposed a refoundational change, inspired by old utopias and repeatedly failed statist recipes, and set in motion the disastrous logic of the backhoe.

So even though there was no apparent crisis -history proved later there was one[2]- Piñera's campaign team betted to signal how the country was going away from the "development path," a figure he repeatedly used during both his terms (Benedikter et al. 2018 support this, as we will see later).

Now, to better understand the historical and circumstantial elements that drove Piñera to win the presidency for a second time, we will draw the reform's status quo in the following sections.

1.1. Political-Institutional Context

1.3.1. General Conditions: Chile's Political System and Historical Antecedents

As in the rest of Latin America, the 1990s was a critical decade for Chilean society and its political regime. The United States (US) either openly or covertly supported various military regimes and coup d'états throughout the region (Friedman 2003). For example, after Chile's democratically-elected president, Salvador Allende, was overthrown and replaced by General Augusto Pinochet in 1973, Baud argues that "the United States had turned Latin America into a testing ground for its Cold War ambitions, which became particularly pronounced following the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba in 1961" (2018 cited in Cruz

[2] As we show briefly in this chapter, in October 2019, when our analysis period ended, a social upheaval led to an ongoing Constitutional process to change the country's Magna Carta.

Infante 2022, p. 202). Even after the Soviet Union's influence in the region began to decline, the US continued to fear the "communist threat," as Baud describes it. By this point, the region was experiencing high inflation, a lack of fiscal responsibility, and near-crippling closed economies due to a devastating debt crisis (Phillip & Panizza 2011; Federal Reserve History 2022). Poverty and inequality were widespread. In that context, in 1990

> The US government summited the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to renegotiate the loans and advise Latin American governments to handle the imminent crisis. They were willing to help, but with three conditions (Williamson 1990):
>
> - Reduce the budget deficit and control inflation. In short, establish a fiscal rule.
> - Reform the trade conditions, removing protectionist policies, and freeing up exchange rates to participate fully in the new world economy.
> - Reduce state control and cut subsidies and instead promote privatization and private investment.
>
> Following this logic, Latin American governments would enjoy democracy and a role in the world economy (Cruz Infante 2022, p. 204).

This deal is known as the Washington Consensus. Of course, Chile was not the exception to Latin America’s poverty and inflation increases.

Although Pinochet's dictatorship was particularly close to the US government and its economic model, the US probably looked suspiciously at the arrival of new center-left actors, even though they were radically more moderate than that of Salvador Allende's Popular Unity Pinochet had overthrown in 1973 (Góngora 1986). In fact, before the Washington Consensus, General Pinochet had already imposed a new Magna Carta in 1980, following some of the Chicago University Economics School, as we will see in this section. The 1980 Constitution set a path for the just-assumed center-left government in 1990 to continue a free-market agenda and adhere to Washington's demands (Barton 2002).

After this brief introduction, we would like to take the Chilean context from 1990 to a little before Piñera's first administration. Some authors have called this the *transition* period between Pinochet's regime and democracy (Barton 2002). We think this particular milestone in Chilean history settled socioeconomic, cultural, and political bases that ultimately triggered the popular demands that made Piñera promote a pension reform. Hence, in the following, we will describe the Chilean political system and enumerate some key historical antecedents to draw the status quo wherein our study case took place.

According to its 1980 Constitution[3] (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional 2005, from now on, BCN), Chile's political system is presidential and unitary. That means that citizens vote for their president directly. Therefore, until 2019 -when our analysis period ends- the president would rule the entire country with no local counterweights apart from the mayors, who have relatively little power regarding regional and national policies. In addition, the Chilean Republic has a National bi-cameral Congress. Both chambers are due to co-legislate with and make the Executive accountable for its actions while in charge.

Like most Latin American countries, Chile has a strong presidential figure (Pereira & Melo, 2012) [4]. As we find in BCN (2005), the president is both Chief of State and Chief of Government and will assume as Commander-in-chief in case of war. So, the office concentrates a significant amount of attributions. Who occupies the position can designate all the ministers and the country's representatives abroad. If the Senate agrees with the president's submissions, he or she also nominates the Central Bank's president, the head of the Supreme Court, and the General Comptroller of the Republic. In addition, hitherto 2018, it was the presidential prerogative to modify the Constitution, nominate the local representatives of the government across the national territory, and legislate about fiscal budget use.

Pereira and Melo (2012) describe Chile as a *multiparty presidentialism*, which may have made democracy work reasonably well. Although various experts were skeptical about how such a system could operate, Chile and Brazil -which also functions that way- have proved successful governance models in the region. The authors do not affirm it directly, but this system in between the European multiparty parliamentary democracies and the two-party presidential US regime may have, in fact, prevented the Executive from concentrating excessive power: "Good governance hinges on the delegation of extensive powers to both presidents and autonomous institutions that can and will check the executive branch" (p. 159). At least in Chile, the General National Comptroller, the Supreme Court of Justice[5], and the Central Bank are autonomous.

Of course, this system entails some political complexities, as Pereira and Melo point out:

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[3] During the *transition*, former Socialist President Ricardo Lagos (2000-06) reformed the Constitution in 2005. However, he kept most of the original one’s core regarding the free market and the reduced role of the State in providing social assistance.

[4] In the authors' words: “By ‘strong,’ we mean equipped with extensive constitutional powers that allow the president to change the status quo while simultaneously avoiding unwelcome initiatives from the opposition.”

[5] “In the widely cited index of judicial independence devised by Lars P. Feld and Stefan Voigt for the Inter-American Development Bank, Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, and Costa Rica are the top performers” (Pereira & Melo 2012, p. 162).

> Coalition-based multiparty presidential regimes succeed if the president 1) is constitutionally strong, 2) has “goods” to trade in order to attract and keep coalition partners, and 3) faces institutionalized and effective checks on presidential actions.
>
> (…) Executives also must often use particularistic benefits (such as pork-barrel projects) along with political transfers (cabinet posts, other presidential appointments, and policy concessions) in complex efforts aimed at garnering needed votes in congress (pp. 159-160).

The former translates into tangled political networks of reciprocity and bargaining. Due to that, the country's political elite is highly homogeneous, as Garrido-Vergara (2020) shows

> Studies of the political elites in post-Pinochet Chile have argued that most of their members elected to Congress not only had a similar social origin, but were also part of social networks through which they interacted frequently, allowing them to narrow their ideological differences and become more compact and effective at keeping outsiders and newcomers out of the political system (p. 122).

Based on the 2012 *Survey of Elites in Chile*, the author analyses the similarities between former top-level politicians between 1990 and 2010. His findings are astonishing. Almost 45% live in four districts with the highest income in the Santiago capital. A little under 60% identify as Catholic, and more than 40% studied at private religious schools -almost all of their children also attend private schools. In addition, 32% have undergraduate degrees, 20% hold a master's degree, and 12% got a Ph.D. Most political elite members pursued their undergraduate at one of Santiago's two most prestigious universities. One out of four who followed a postgraduate program did so in the US.

To the former, the author adds that

> (…) family capital is significant for both positions (ministers and deputies), reflecting the fact that, in most cases, there is a generation (for example, a father or a mother) that held the position in the first decade, followed by a second generation (for example, a son or daughter) in the subsequent decade. These results provide empirical evidence for the prevalence of this form of capital in the elites in Latin America since the oligarchic regimes (p. 138).

Even though Chilean political leaders are highly educated, we can think that they constitute a narrowly closed caste. Therefore, entering could be almost impossible, even after proven outstanding academic or professional competence. We will go deeper into this dimension when describing the political-cultural factors of Piñera's pension reform. It greatly influenced the president's diagnosis and affected the policy debate.

The last element regarding the historical antecedents that will directly intervene in the Chilean polity is the 1980 Augusto Pinochet's Constitution's *subsidiarity principle*. In 1986, Mario Góngora (pp. 133 -134) had already pointed out that subsidiarity was one of the most significant traits of that institutional framework. The principle comes from Milton Friedman and Arnold Harberger's school of thinking. They taught for years at the Chicago University in the US, where they formed several young Chilean economists during the 1950s and 1960s, utterly branded as the *Chicago Boys*. Paraphrasing Góngora, subsidiarity means that societies or larger groups should not absorb the very being or functions that can be efficiently exercised by individuals or 'intermediate groups' (p. 133). In practice, the principle confined the state intervention to barely guaranteeing public order and allowing the functioning of the free market. Consequently, it exempted the government's obligation as the leading provider of essential social assistance if individuals or intermediate groups were willing to do it. This notion jumps out in the first article of the 1980 Constitution: "The State recognizes and protects the intermediate groups through which society is collected and structured, and guarantees them adequate autonomy to fulfill their own specific purposes" (BCN 2005).

In sum, we have a centralized regime wherein the Executive holds the most salient attributions, with a highly-skilled group of homogenous politicians and servants in Congress as in the government. Due to the subsidiarity, their primary duty is not to secure basic welfare to voters but to check the counterpart's performance and keep an eye on public finances to "let the market work." We could expect all of this to relate to Chilean society's political-cultural, which may have determined how it perceived Piñera's pension reform.

Now, let us revise the trigger factors that made Piñera win the presidential elections for a second time and what led him to promote unpopular reforms.

1.3.2. The Trigger Factors: Sebastián Piñera Returns to Deploy a Package of Unpopular Reforms

Before looking at Piñera's second period in detail, we must consider some elements of his first administration and his predecessor's. Those could have affected his communication strategy and its outcomes.

The first thing is that Chileans got used to Piñera's quick and effective responses to crises and how he applied those responses to public policy issues, like employment, crime-fighting, economic growth, and poverty reduction. Days before assuming, on 2010 February 27, a magnitude 8.8 (Mw) earthquake and the aftermath tsunami shook the country and troubled roughly 2.6 million people, over 15% of the population. According to the *Swiss Re* insurance company, the event had been the costliest for the insurance industry in the world (Mella Polanco 2012). Grabbing the opportunity, in his March 11 inauguration speech, Piñera branded himself as the "reconstruction president" (Witte-Lebhar, 2010). Later that year, in

October, he rescued 33 trapped miners from a mine in the Atacama Desert in the north of Chile (The Economist 2010). Against all the odds, he managed to articulate the human expertise from the state-owned copper firm Codelco (*Corporación del Cobre*) and the Chilean navy and to bring the resources from private multinational mining firms operating in the country to get the rescue done. As the Economist describes it:

> It was a risky move, but it paid off. Probes by Codelco's engineers found the miners still alive 17 days after the rockfall. Codelco mobilised contractors and equipment from around the world to drill three separate rescue shafts. Some lay near at hand. The rig that drilled the successful shaft was supplied by a contractor at Collahuasi, a mine controlled by two multinationals, Anglo American and Xstrata.
>
> The government also brought in Chile's navy, whose submariners have experience working at great depths in confined spaces. The wire rescue capsules were made at the naval shipyard in Talcahuano, in southern Chile, and two navy paramedics were lowered to check the men's health.

We could argue that upon these two occurrences -the miners' rescue and the earthquake's reconstruction- Chileans developed the idea that the country and the government were doing "things well" (The Economist 2010). In fact, according to the *Centro de Estudios Públicos* of Chile (CEP 2010), at the end of 2010, 80% of public opinion considered the government had managed the miners' rescue "very well" or "well." Likewise, 62% expected that the year after would be "good" or "really good" for them and their families[6]. Moreover, "In his (Piñera's) first term (2010–2014), the country's economy thrived, and unemployment decreased to unprecedented minimums" (Benedikter et al. 2021, p. 175).

Bachelet's second administration (2014 - 2018) mistakes also explain Sebastián Piñera winning a second term. Firstly, in 2017 -her penultimate year in charge- Latin America's economic growth stagnated, along with its capacity to reduce poverty (Cruz Infante 2022). Some inaccurately claimed that growth stopped due to Bachelet's policies. However, others, like Cadena et al. (2017), point to the end of the commodities-price boom, which also affected the Chilean economy (Benedikter & Zlosilo 2017). Nevertheless, compared to the average yearly economic growth of 5.2% during the uninterrupted center-left governments period (1990 – 2009) and Piñera's first government's 5.4% expansion rate, between 2014 and 2018, Chile's GDP growth under Bachelet was a meager 1.8% per year (World Bank 2022c).

Secondly, in her second term, Bachelet lacked political ability. The far left, the center-left ruling coalition, and the rightist opposition criticized her policy proposals for diverse reasons. The leftists disapproved of the timidity of the reforms and branded the president as

[6] The CEP made the same question in 2008. In that opportunity, only 48% of interviewees thought the following year would be "good" or "really good" for them and their families.

a continuist of Pinochet's neoliberal model (Benedikter & Zlosilo 2017; Benedikter et al. 2018). Regarding the center-left, who held the majority in Congress, "While Bachelet was criticized during her first term for exaggerated rounds of dialogue to define laws, she is now criticized for eschewing them altogether" (Benedikter et al. 2016, p 10). The right-wing, Piñera included, argued that Chileans did not want radical and leftist transformations like those Bachelet promoted (Benedikter et al. 2018; Piñera 2017).

Thirdly, Bachelet lost a big part of her political capital in 2015 due to a scandal that mixed nepotism, cronyism, and corruption accusations (Benedikter et al. 2016). Those evils are common in Latin America (Cruz Infante 2022) but were not that typical in Chilean politics. As Benedikter and his co-authors (2016, p. 5) describe:

> At the beginning of 2015 the relationship between money and politics arrived squarely at the center of public discussion in Chile. This is because of the ongoing conflicts of interest, corruption scandals, and cases of subsidy fraud in Chile’s educational sector, and it also represents a more general problem at the interface between Chile’s government and the private sector. According to the *Corruption Perceptions Index* by the non-governmental organization *Transparency International*, Chile has long been considered a comparatively well-functioning democracy with one of the lowest corruption levels worldwide. In 2014, Chile was ranked 21st of the 174 countries examined. This not only made Chile formally the least corrupt country in South America, but even showed corruption in Chile to be less of an issue than in some European countries (for e.g. Austria 23rd, France 26th, Portugal 31st, Poland 35th, Spain 37th in the international ranking). But the February 2015 revelation of scandals involving both right- and left-wing parties changed civic perception, and led to a profound examination of the mechanisms at play between the private and public spheres.

Referring to these episodes, President Bachelet affirmed that

> We have seen some people using the power of their money to influence decisions of democracy, this is to say, decisions that affect us all. And we have seen some people in democratic and public offices using their influence to obtain personal advantages instead of serving the interests of the citizenry (Bachelet cited in Benedikter et al. 2016, p. 5).

That same year, a renowned Chilean magazine revealed accusations of influence trafficking against Bachelet's son Sebastián Dávalos Bachelet and the then-director of the Presidential Office of Socio-Cultural Affairs (Benedikter et al. 2016). In 2013, he had applied for a significant loan from the biggest Chilean bank to develop a real estate project. Randomly, the bank approved the loan the day after Bachelet won her second presidential election. Consequently, the president's allegations against influence-peddling politicians returned to her. From that incident, her figure lost political strength and credibility. For instance, Cadem Research, a local pollster, showed that "64 percent of respondents believed the case badly damaged Bachelet's image, while 76 percent thought that Sebastián Dávalos used his influence as the son of the President to obtain economic benefit" (Benedikter et al. 2016, p. 6).

Lastly, Bachelet let Chileans down in essential policy questions, pensions among them. According to the *CEP survey*, the most prestigious national public opinion pollster by then, delinquency was the most critical policy topic for voters in 2017. Nevertheless, from the citizen's point of view, the government did not give it as much attention as demanded. As the 2017 *Fundación Paz Ciudadana – GfK Adimark's Índice de Paz Ciudadana* (Civic Peace Index) showed, since 2014, Chileans' fear of becoming victims of a crime had risen. Conversely, they assessed Bachelet's government on the matter much worse than the preceding one.

Pensions were not a relevant citizenry concern in 2016 (CEP 2016). The following year, however, 38% of Chileans ranked pensions as the second priority issue for the government to attend (CEP 2017). People's pretensions were vague[7], but 51% wanted to transition from a private-capitalization system to one whereby every worker contributes to the other's annuity (CEP 2016). Concerning Bachelet's management on the matter, 75% of Chileans assessed it with a "4" (on a scale from 0 to 10). To revert this, Bachelet sent a bill to Congress in August 2017 (El Mostrador 2017c; 2017d). However, some analysts said it was too late -she was in her last presidential semester- so the reform did not prosper (Emol 2016).

On balance, Piñera's first administration's recalls and Bachelet's political and policy mismanagement converged into a perfect storm for the latter's and her coalition's pretensions to stay in power. Even though she recovered the citizenry's sympathy in her last year in charge, she ended her second administration with 39% support and around the same rate of disapproval (GfK Adimark 2018). That backing is dramatically low compared to the 81% she recorded when leaving the office in her first term (La Tercera 2010). As said earlier, this might have hampered Socialist Alejandro Guillier from winning the elections that center-right Piñera won in 2017. As Benedikter et al. (2018, p. 352) conclude,

> The Piñera team's capacity and effectiveness on the ground—going from door to door and from street to street—also contributed to making a dif- ference by providing his campaign with a human face. This was particularly important, as the billionaire was depicted as detached, snobbish, and socially merciless by his opponents. (…) Piñera's digital team developed successful social network campaigns based on both highly trained humans and bots, similar to those used in recent elections in the United States, Great Britain, and Germany (Saleh 2017).

[7] Later, we will analyze people's perception of the Chilean pension system when characterizing Piñera's pension reform.

Regardless of Piñera's convincing victory, we must note that the Congress composition was adverse to his interests. Until 2017, the center-left *New Majority* (Nueva Mayoría) and the center-right *Go Chile* (Chile Vamos) shared 96.7% of the seats of the Chamber of Deputies and 97.4% of the Senate. Then, due to an electoral reform to end with the bipartisan composition of the legislative branch, a third left-wing political force burst in that year's elections – the same whereby Piñera was chosen. The irruption left Piñera's coalition in the Chamber of Deputies with 72 out of 155 places against the opposition's 83 seats (Llorente y Cuenca 2017). As a result, the government did not have the majority to legislate.

1.2. Political-Cultural Factors

According to Góngora (1981), Chile became a "land of war" since the beginning of the Spanish colony in the sixteenth century. For the Spanish crown, the settlers were due to protect the empire from the aborigines of southern Latin America, where Chile locates. Against that backdrop, *Creoles* -Spanish descendants born in the Americas- living in Chile were simply strategical squandering. The country did not provide significant amounts of gold and silver as its neighbors due to extractive investment lacking. Besides, arriving and settling was extremely difficult given the geographical obstacles -the Atacama Desert from the north, the Pacific Ocean from the west, and the Andes Mountains from the east. In addition, miscegenation was particularly intense because of the regular encounters with the indigenous people. Mixing led to a highly hierarchized society, wherein each ethnicity had a determined place and a role to play. Góngora affirms that the local-landed aristocracy ruled with no institutional counterbalances until the later twentieth century.

Another author, Sebastián Mazzuca (2021), analyzes the state formation in Latin America and its capacities across the continent. Mazzuca's central thesis is that the region's nation states have low capacities except for Chile, Uruguay, and Costa Rica. Despite Chile's good position on the matter, the author emphasizes that the Chilean state was born from trade necessities rather than military reasons[8], which is not optimum.

> [In the nineteenth century] Chile’s economy had two engines, the recently discovered silver mines of Chañarcillo and the port of Valparaíso, which the English transformed into a vibrant entrepôt linking together markets in East Asia, the South Atlantic, and northern Europe. An exceptional combination of circumstances made Chile a precursor of trade-led state formation (chapter 3 Independence: Origins and Failure of Trade-Led State Formation, 1808–25).

[8] This is critical since Mazzuca compares the Latin American state formation process to the one in Europe. As he sees it, the former’s lower state capacities are due to its commercial-born nature. Instead, European states would have been born from a warfare need, which led to a more significant investment in state capacities.

Mazzuca (chapter Conclusion) adds that "(…) the main source of Chile's [state] capacity is not social structure, institutional design, or elite ideology. The main source is that Chile, in its formation, incorporated no patrimonial peripheries". That would have exempted the Chilean lawmakers and politicians from negotiating with the land owners or caudillos to continue with national state formation and development. Even though this questions Góngora's perspective – that landowning aristocracy ruled with no counterweight- it does not necessarily conflict with it. In that sense, Saylor's (2012, p. 302) thesis offers someplace between the two. He argues that in Chile, commodity booms led to state development in two ways: a material one and a political one. Regarding the material one, the author sustains that

> The country developed a significant, and fairly integrated, railroad network, which aided the deployment of state agents throughout the countryside. The government provided a number of other public goods during this time as well, including an overhaul of the country's credit market, new primary schools, and a growing court system, all of which promoted the growth of state capacity.

Then, about the political way of state expansion, the author mentions that

> Government policy favored landed elites in Chile's northern central valley, who formed the core of the ruling political coalition. Politically-marginalized exporters, specifically small-scale wheat farmers in the southern central valley and copper miners in the desert north, did not receive new public goods. Their frustration with government policy boiled over into armed conflict in 1851. Ruling coalition members, recognizing that opposition forces constituted an exigent threat, overhauled municipal institutions and inserted state agents into localities in order to suppress the opposition.

In sum, there was a tension between the landed ruling aristocracy and some "proto-industrial" -as Saylor calls them- wheat and copper extractors that acted as a precarious but existent counterbalance part.

All things considered, we think that Chile's trade-led state formation may have set the bases on which the country's societal model went through the beginning of the twenty-first century: rapid capitalist modernization, radical improvement of institutions, and, paradoxically, a *modernity frustration*, as we will call it. In the following, we will develop this aspect that will be crucial to understand why Piñera decided to reform the pension system and why his stakeholders perceived it in the way they did.

Regarding capitalist modernization, we should look at the narrow links between the 1990s US economic policy and Latin America. In the previous section, we explained the 1990 Washington Consensus succinctly; nevertheless, what made US – Latin America bond concrete at a political level was the first Summit of the Americas of 1994 in Miami -also branded as the "Miami Consensus." One of the US American attendees to the reunion relates:

> I'll never forget the sense of limitless possibility. During a remarkable 48 hours in 1994, leaders from every nation in the Americas but one joined together in Miami for a celebration of an entire hemisphere, newly emerging from Cold War darkness, united in a vision of the world's first fully democratic region committed to open markets and social development. As hard as it may be now to envision, the first Summit of the Americas promised to put aside deep divisions to pursue a robust agenda agreed, improbably, by consensus (Farnsworth 2022).

Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, president of Chile between 1994 and 2000, represented the country in Miami, and led the effort to re-integrate the country into the global economy after Pinochet's regime. In this regard, Thomas O'Keefe wrote in 1998:

> In the early 1990's Chile was committed to a policy called "open regionalism" that created new markets for the country's exports but allowed it to avoid getting itself entangled in compromising situations with its trade partners. In particular, "open regionalism" allowed Chile to sign bilateral or multilateral trade accords which would not interfere with the country's ability to negotiate trade agreements with other nations or trade blocks, while also retaining its autonomy with respect to macroeconomic policymaking.

Chile's main exports during the 1990s and the 2000s were raw materials and intermediate goods – about 80% of its exports. These included copper (Chile is the biggest copper exports worldwide), other minerals, wood by-products, and some agricultural commodities. In exchange, the country imported mainly consumer and capital goods – 60% of imports combined (WITS 1990; 2000). The US was Chile's primary trading partner. As Phillip and Panizza argue, "There was a broad consensus across most of Latin America on the desirability of free trade, market reform, representative democracy and 'good governance'" (2011, chapter Introduction: the triumph of politics in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador).

As expected, probably Chile's close relationship with the US improved its institutions and made it adopt some of its commercial counterpart practices and technologies (Levchenko, 2008). In this regard, Washington's approach to exerting influence in Latin America was strategic and multi-faceted. Truman's Four Point Plan, introduced in the late 1940s, emphasized "self-help," private investment, and community-allocated assistance for LAC economies (Maceruka 2013). In return, the US gained new investment and trading opportunities and worked to prevent the spread of European communism. The World Bank (Cameron 2004) and the International Monetary Fund (Babb 2014) acted as watchdogs, overseeing LAC countries' macroeconomic promises and strengthening institutional relationships.

Having to deal with the US institutions, Latin American governments turned out to US universities to professionalize their policy-makers and learn the bargaining jargon of the lenders. That generated an "epistemic community" of high-technical economists pushing for market liberalization and international openness (Babb 2014). This was also the case of Chile, as we previously see in the Chilean political elite's study (Vergara-Garrido 2020).

Carlos Peña, a well-known Chilean intellectual, would argue that the Chilean US-like model -the combination of institutional robustness and the free market- reduced poverty drastically. It went down from almost 50% to a little under 10% between 1990 and 2010. Likewise, that model augmented Chileans' material well-being significantly. He thinks that that is of utmost importance when examining the Chilean society:

> (…) the analysis must bear in mind what is perhaps the most relevant phenomenon in contemporary Chile: the huge and rapid change the country has experienced in terms of the material conditions of its population. This phenomenon -which, in line with the language of social sciences, we could call modernisation, has transformed the country's culture, modified its political cleavage, created a generational distance that has given way to multiple concessions of a cultural nature and left unanswered certain questions that, in dynamic societies, need urgent answers, such as the distribution of the risk of illness and old age (Peña 2022).

Latin American governments had high expectations of adopting the American lifestyle, and Latin Americans embraced this model with the same expectations. Benedikter and others (2018) use one of Peña's op-ed to illustrate this point.

> America-leaning societal model—including the preference for malls and credit cards—instead of the search for a society defined by the state and the strengthening of public welfare. To put it in the words of renowned Chilean analyst Carlos Peña González: (…) the middle class, which in Chile is actually not strictly a class, but an unruly trajectory, an ethos forged in the mall, the insecure expansion of a conglomerate of consumption, mobility and [dubious] self-confidence" (in Benedikter et al. 2018, p. 354).

Consequently, when Latin Americans realized that the North American societal model's whole "benefit package" did not entirely work in their local realities, they got frustrated. Several authors back this idea. For instance, Phillip and Panizza (2011, chapter Introduction: the triumph of politics in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador) hypothesize in this direction when talking about Argentina turning to the left in the early 2000s:

> Carlos Menem, president [of Argentina] throughout the 1990s, pursued essentially a 'Miami Consensus' agenda – though his critics saw his presidency as somewhat autocratic. Argentina's radical free market economic policies ended in severe crisis in 2001-3, for which they were largely blamed. Argentina then moved to the left as a reaction.

Likewise, regarding the 2022 political crisis in Peru, in 2022, Simeon Tegel (2023) states that "the fury over Castillo's dramatic ouster is deeply bound up with issues of identity, stark economic inequity, and the long-term failure of Peru's radically laissez-faire economic model to fairly distribute the benefits of its boom of the last two decades". Moreover, Panizza and Phillip sentence: "In the respect that Argentina moved to the left in reaction to the perception that market economics had failed, there is an evident similarity in political trajectory with Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador" (2011, chapter Introduction: the triumph of politics in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador).

According to Peña, the frustration has to do with Tocqueville's paradox: "when material wellbeing increases, expectations change and what seemed reasonable yesterday becomes insufferable today." Peña sustains that dizzy Chile's capitalist modernization affected its inhabitants in various ways. Firstly, they transit constantly between defining and affirming the identities they choose and the impersonal and technocratic logic that has allowed them to improve their material conditions. Between spontaneity and rationality, he will say. Secondly, facing these processes, societies would lack a cohesive glue, and the most traditional institutions will lose some of their appeals. Thus, politics suffer a legitimacy crisis.

Piñera's government faced Chile's inhabitant's inability to meet their expectations - the *modernity frustration*. Inequality had decreased from a Gini Index of 57.2 in 1990 to 44.4 in 2017 (World Bank 2022e). Nevertheless, what made it unbearable was that inherited social, cultural, and financial capital still decided a significant part of the Chileans' future, as Garrido Vergara showed us, despite the meritocracy promises of capitalist modernization. As González T. and others show,

> (…) it can be seen that there are two explanations for poverty, which account for the majority of mentions [in Chile]. These are: "lack of education" and "laziness and lack of initiative". The first of these explanations can be associated both to circumstances -either because the family's economic situation required the individual to work or because he or she did not have the economic resources to do so- and to effort -an individual did not achieve adequate grades to reach higher levels of studies-; however, the second can be unequivocally linked to merit. On the other hand, the injustices of the economic system, the lack of government aid, poor government economic policies, having poor parents, lack of generosity of the rich, and bad luck could be unequivocally linked to circumstances, because they are beyond people's control. Although these alternatives capture a broad and very varied set of situations, the sum of these mentions always turns out to be lower than those associated with effort. (2017, p. 88. Translated by the author).

The loss of control the fragment talks about is crucial to understand 2018 Chile's mood. From feeling powerless, the citizens probably began advocating for more equality, an unprecedented preference in Chilean society since 1990 (González T. et al. 2017). In that direction, the 2018 World Values Survey (WVS) shows that 55% of Chileans wanted higher income equality, and 57% found "equality" more important than "freedom" (39%). Correspondingly, institutions seemed to work justly and rapidly for the richer and the powerful but not as well for the middle and lower classes (Cruz Infante 2022). Furthermore, 72% of respondents in the WVS believed that business executives were involved in corruption.

In consequence, Chileans translated inequality into injustice and, as Peña (2022) means, "Another factor that has undoubtedly contributed to the phenomenon of growing discontent [in Chile] is the relative failure of how inequality is legitimised." In this regard, he also points out that

> In simpler terms, as a result of capitalist modernisation, there is a culture inspired by the meritocratic fantasy, according to which the fairest society is the one whose distribution is in proportion to personal effort but which, in many aspects, resists doing so.

Peña suggests that the meritocratic fantasy entailed Chileans trusting education to get qualifications and status. It did so during the 1990s and the 2000s, when a relatively low proportion of the population had access to superior instruction. In the 2010s, instead, when a wider proportion of Chileans went to tertiary instruction, education had lost its capacity to make people gain status[9]. However, education was still a sensitive topic in 2018: two-thirds of citizens were concerned about not giving their children a good education (WVS 2018).

As expected, the *modernity frustration* will affect policy and political demands from the citizenry. Here we go back to the Theoretical Framework and Merton's (1938, p. 674) thought:

> Continuing satisfactions must derive from sheer participation in a competitive order as well as from eclipsing one's competitors if the order itself is to be sustained. The occasional sacrifices involved in institutionalized conduct must be compensated by socialized rewards. The distribution of statuses and roles through competition must be so organized that positive incentives for conformity to roles and adherence to status obligations are provided for every position within the distributive order. Aberrant conduct, therefore, may be viewed as a symptom of dissociation between culturally defined aspirations and socially structured means.

For example, Chileans' satisfaction with public services was among the lowest in the OECD. In its 2017 *Government at a Glance*, the entity shows that less than four out of ten citizens were satisfied with healthcare services, and the country ranked among the most down satisfaction levels with the education system. Here, Merton (1938, p. 679) shows the contradiction between requiring people to behave in a socially valued way while depriving them of opportunities to achieve socially valued goals or status:

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[9] The most critical challenge Piñera faced during his first period was the university students' protests. They objected to the high fee rates of tertiary education in Chile and the low quality of public education and criticized the sector's private providers. We can trace the institutional roots of this discontent back to the Chicago Boys' doctrine and the subsidiarity principle (BBC News 2011).

> For our purposes, this situation involves two important features. First, such antisocial behavior is in a sense "called forth" by certain conventional values of the culture and by the class structure involving differential access to the approved opportunities for legitimate, prestige-bearing pursuit of the culture goals. The lack of high integration between the means-and-end elements of the cultural pattern and the particular class structure combine to favor a heightened frequency of antisocial conduct in such groups. The second consideration is of equal significance. Recourse to the first of the alternative responses, legitimate effort, is limited by the fact that actual advance toward desired success-symbols through conventional channels is, despite our persisting open-class ideology, relatively rare and difficult for those handicapped by little formal education and few economic resources. The dominant pressure of group standards of success is, therefore, on the gradual attenuation of legitimate, but by and large ineffective, strivings and the increasing use of illegitimate, but more or less effective, expedients of vice and crime. The cultural demands made on persons in this situation are incompatible. On the one hand, they are asked to orient their conduct toward the prospect of accumulating wealth and on the other, they are largely denied effective opportunities to do so institutionally.

The feeling of injustice and lack of institutional participation motivated several left-wing intellectuals and scholars to publicly and formally criticize the allegedly Pinochet's neoliberal model. Although their denunciation started in the 1990s, since 2010 -the year the first rightist government after Pinochet's regime took office- they reached a more considerable part of the average citizen (Silva 2022). The private pension system[10] and private healthcare providers, whose corporate reputations were among the worst (Emol 2017), were the main rebukes targets. Consequently, the 2018 WVS portrays Chileans wanting the government to engage more in the citizens' wellbeing: 48% sustained that it "should take more responsibility to ensure that anyone is provided for," versus 31% that thought the other way.

As a result, the modernity frustration may have derived into anomia, using Durkheim's term, and a kind of tedium from the dangerous and disappointing public life. It looks, then, that Chileans shied away from encountering strangers. Moreover, there is extensive evidence to sustain that. In the first place, the WVS 2018 depicts that only 10% of Chileans believed politics is "very important," and 70% are not interested in it. Moreover, they gave relatively little importance to collective or societal attitudes. For example, only 54% thought that tolerance and respect for other people were important values to teach a child (in Monti's Italy, it was 73%), and only one-third sustained that being unselfish was a valuable lesson for kids (44% of Italians claimed it was). On top of that, only 13% affirmed that "most people can be trusted" (28% of Italians did so). That may explain why people participate that little in social

[10] As Bril-Mascarenhas and Maillet (2019) show, Pinochet imposed the first case of pension privatization in the world in Chile.

associations. Except for religious or sports organizations, less than 20% get involved in any type of association.

Something quite relevant for our analysis is that a meager 1.1% of Chileans declared being an active member of a political party (in Italy, it is 3.4%), which might relate to the high corruption perception regarding the state authorities: 70% responded that most or all of them were involved in corruption. On the other hand, Chileans cared little for work-related values[11], another public-sphere activity. Accordingly, almost 60% declared leisure time was "very important" (twofold that in Italy).

Despite the collective feeling of needed transformation, Chileans did not want to make abrupt changes and were conservative in ideological terms. Regarding the former, 63% thought that the government had to improve society through gradual reforms (WVS 2018), as Benedikter and his co-authors had also claimed (2018). Concerning Chileans' political ideas, two out of three found "security" to be more important than "freedom" (31%). On the other hand, the most named priorities for the next ten years were: "A high level of economic growth" (48%), having a "stable economy" (45%), "maintaining order in the nation" (36%), and "the fight against crime" (27%). Notwithstanding their right-alike policy priorities, Chileans' self-positioning in the political spectrum was relatively centrist[12].

The question, then, is, did the modernity frustration impact Chile's democracy? At first sight, it is not clear that the frustration affected it. Since the beginning of the Democracy Index in 2006 and until 2018, Chile kept a status of "flawed democracy" (Economist Intelligence Unit 2018). Moreover, the year Piñera assumed the country scored its highest score of 7.97[13]. However, its lowest mark in the 2018 edition was that of political participation (4.4), which was the same as those of Honduras (a hybrid regime) and Venezuela (an authoritarian regime). That coincides with the WVS facts we saw earlier. As the Economist Intelligence Unit refers, political participation is about voter turnout, membership in political parties, and minorities and women's involvement in politics.

Regardless of Chile's good performance in the Democracy Index, Chileans' trust in government left much desired. In 2016, among all the OECD members, Chile ranked as one of the lowest; only Greece pointed lower. Merely 20% of citizens trusted the national administration, 43 percentage points less than in 2007 (2017, p. 215). On the other hand, Chile's Governance Indicators (World Bank 2021c) scored relatively high. All of them, except one, were above the world's 80 percentile.

[11] These include: Independence; hard work; a feeling of responsibility; and determination, perseverance.

[12] On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "Left" and 10 is "Right," Chileans scored an average of 5.10.

[13] The index goes from 0 to 10. Zero represents an Authoritarian Regime, and 10 depicts a Full Democracy. There are Flawed Democracies and Hybrid Regimes between those extremes, a mix of authoritarianism and democracy.

Nevertheless, there is another aspect we must include when describing the status quo: age. Let us recall Passarelli and Del Ponte's pose: "Older societies are more prone to preserving the status quo than the younger ones" (p. 2). So, how old was Chilean society when Sebastián Piñera took office? According to the World Bank (2022a), in 2018, 11.5% of people in Chile were above 65 years old. The rate was much lower than in the Euro area and high-income countries, at 20.6% and 17.9%, respectively. Furthermore, the dependency rate was lower than that of high-income economies and the Euro area. As a result, 17% of the adult population was above 65 years old in 2018.

Table 34. Age-related data for the Sebastián Piñera government, 2018 (%)

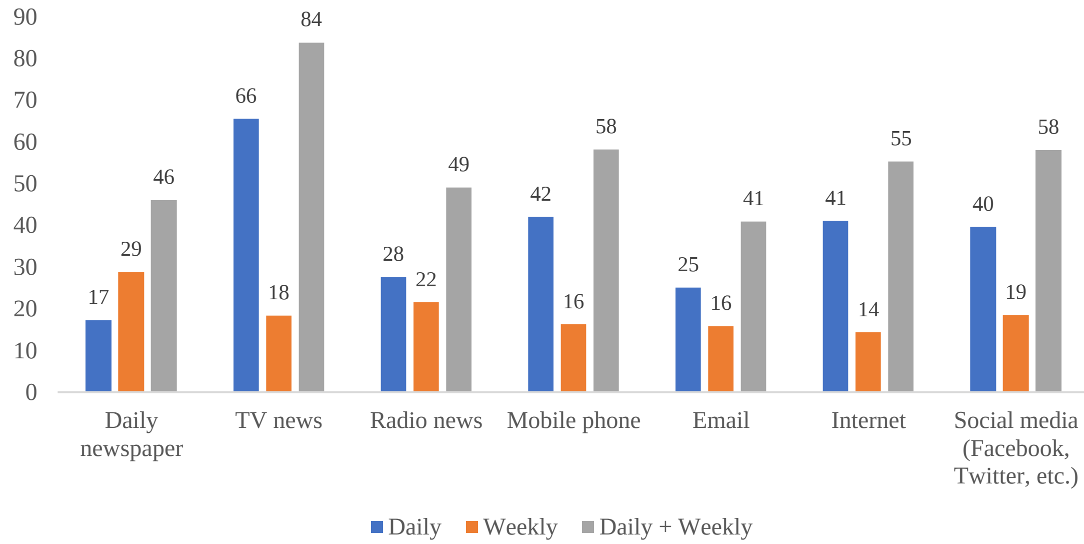
Variables	**Chile**	**High-income countries**	**Euro area**
Population ages 65 and above (% of total population)	11.5	17.9	20.6
Age dependency ratio, old (% of working-age population)	16.9	27.3	32

Source: own elaboration based on the DataBank of the World Bank.

The media is a last but critical point for analyzing the Chilean case context. The WVS (2018) shows that about 45% trusted the press, and over 50% thought journalists and media were involved in corruption. Nevertheless, almost 60% had confidence in television, and 65% got their information daily from TV news (84% if we consider daily plus weekly), the most preferred source of information, as the following chart depicts.

How did Chileans get informed in 2018? Over 80% got an idea about what happened in their country from TV news. Nevertheless, digital means were hugely important as well. Indeed, mobile phones, the Internet, and social media all reached over 55% as weekly sources of information, and 40% turned to them daily to get information.

Figure 10. People learn what is going on in this country and the world from various sources. For each of the following sources, please indicate whether you use it to obtain information daily, weekly, monthly, less than monthly or never... (%)



Source: own elaboration based on WVS 2018, Chile, questions 201-208.

Despite the data, Navia and Osorio (2015, p. 471) sustain that "Television channels tend to shy away from political issues and, although television is Chileans' main source of information, its influence over the political agenda is therefore less than that of the print media (Valenzuela and Arriagada, 2011)". Therefore, we must also consider the authors' opinion on the press' political leaning:

> The print media have historically had ties with the right (Portales, 2000; Sunkel and Geoffroy, 2001; Correa Sutil, 2005; Dussaillant, 2005) and their evolution has been influenced by the legacy of authoritarianism (Tironi and Sunkel, 1993; Dermota, 2002). Under the [Augusto Pinochet] dictatorship, the left-wing media were persecuted while those sympathetic to the regime were privileged. After the return of democracy, the media that had opposed the dictatorship experienced notable difficulties in consolidating their position (Mönckeberg, 2009).

In summary, when Piñera assumed, the political-cultural factors were as follows. First, Chile's population was relatively young, so engaging people in a pension reform should not have been as difficult. However, and this is the second aspect, the modernity frustration may have made Chileans suspicious of reforming a long-standing private sector such as pensions. In fact, the system did get massive criticism, at least since 2016. The former, combined with people's lack of interest in public issues and low political participation, could have also lowered the policy debate's quality. Lastly, the prominent local newspapers' biases and the variety of means involved -TV, newspapers, digital media- should have difficulted for Piñera's government to control the agenda regarding the reform.

1.3. Socioeconomic conditions

Peña and Silva (2022, chapter Introduction) condense the collective expectations when Piñera assumed for a second time:

> Since democratic restoration in 1990, Chile has been considered globally as one of the most successful countries in Latin America. There are reasons for this. Over the last three decades, Chile has, indeed, been characterized by strong economic growth, a high degree of political stability and a spectacular decrease in poverty. For a long time, Chile has, therefore, been seen by different international bodies as the main candidate for becoming the first developed country in Latin America.

As we saw earlier, during the preceding Bachelet's administration, the economy grew by only 1.8% a year, a third of what it did in the first mandate of Piñera (5.4%). Moreover, in 2017, Bachelet's last year, the country registered the sparsest GDP expansion of her period,1.4%.

When Piñera took office, the economic situation was not worrying, not the best either. Firstly, the 2010 earthquake reconstruction had given the activity's expansion a notable boost, so the baseline for Bachelet's economic performance was distorted. On the other hand, perhaps due to her left-leaning agenda, foreign direct investment plummeted from 9.4% of GDP in 2014 to 2.2% in 2017 (World Bank 2022b), and the fall of copper price -the leading country's export commodity- had stagnated economic growth (OECD 2018a). Regardless of the former, inflation stood in line with the Central Bank of Chile's monetary policy -between 2% and 4%- (World Bank 2022f). Moreover, unemployment remained around the country's full employment (6.5%) (World Bank 2022i), and poverty continued descending (World Bank 2022h). However, inequality kept the same (World Bank 2022b), which did not correspond to the citizens' expectations of Bachelet's progressive program (BBC 2014).

Besides the macroeconomic panorama, there are other figures we must consider. When Sebastián Piñera became president, Chile had a "very high" Human Development Index (HDI). In 2018 it occupied position 43 -the same as Croatia's- (UNDP 2020) and had a GDP per capita of US$23,671 (2017 PPP, IMF 2023). Regarding Chile's appeal for business, it occupied post 57th in the World Bank's Doing Business index worldwide (2017). Likewise, the World Economic Forum's competitiveness ranking ranked the country 33rd (2017). On balance, the country looked attractive to invest in and even live in from an outsider's perspective.

Regarding Chile's fiscal finances, a key indicator when looking at pension and unpopular reforms in general, they were healthy and sustainable when Piñera took charge in 2018. Public debt was about 29% of the country's GDP -the same as Luxembourg's- relatively sparse, considering the OECD's average was around 81%. Furthermore, about 12% of the country's GDP went to welfare expenditure, one of the bottommost of the OECD, and a little under 3% of the product to retirement pensions, the lowest of the OECD after Iceland (OECD 2022a).

In conclusion, the economy seemed in good shape. Nevertheless, foreign investment had decayed markedly and, perhaps the most significant thing, inequality remained high. By 2017 Chile's Gini index was 44.4, higher than African countries like Benin and Bhutan and slightly over Bolivia's. The OECD (2018a) explained a good part of that structural inequality because of the low redistribution after the government's action. In 2015, Chile's Gini coefficient decreased by a scrawny 5% after taxes and transfers -OECD's average was 25%. On the other hand, the net pensions replacement rate was 37.2% of what people perceived during their working lives, which might have aggravated the high inequality (OECD 2023). Consequently, it might be that a pension or financial crisis was not that apparent, but there were signs of a social one.

2. The Main Piñera Government Reforms

In many ways, the Chilean pension system incarnated the multidimensional viciousness of the post-dictatorship country and the *modernity frustration*. For its 30th anniversary in 2011, the local newspaper *El Mostrador* published a provocative article: “Old and Poor: The B side of the 30th AFP birthday.” The article criticized the pension system showing stories of the first pensioners under the 1980s-settled retirement regime. Those various criticisms would follow in the years to come.

Firstly, the private-managed pension funds offered meager pension replacement rates after promising precisely the other way. That made not only Chileans question the model but also the OECD (Diario Financiero 2013) and the Economy Nobel Prize Joseph Stiglitz. They claimed the system needed complementary public support for the solely private actors since the current schema left the poorest behind (El Mostrador 2015). Secondly, people mistrusted the AFPs and their executives due to their “excessive” profits (López 2016) without increasing the retirees’ pensions. Thirdly, owing to its origins, the AFP system did not include the military, prolonging its privileged position in Chilean society. The Armed Forces, instead, adhered to a pay-as-you-go model, which Pinochet’s regime substituted for the contribution one (El Mostrador 2013). Moreover, uniformed services pensioners would get 100% of their last active income, something almost nobody from civil society would get (Radio Universidad de Chile 2013).

Consequently, 2016 was the Chilean pension system’s tipping point (El Mostrador 2017a). No More AFPs (No+AFP), an NGO, summoned massive protests for higher pensions, demanding to end the uniformed services’ privileges and allowing the State to run a public pension fund administrator (El Mostrador 2016). The following year, amidst

Bachelet II’s pension reform debate and while many pensioners were struggling with their low pensions, executives of one of the largest AFPs launched a corporative yacht party in the Caribbean. The AFPs profits come from the administration fee they charge to every contributor. Therefore, the party was a massive public scandal (El Mostrador 2017b).

Piñera's government program tried to respond to the foremost citizens' demands - pensions, education, and healthcare. Apart from the pension reform, which we will detail later, the center-right president promoted three emblematic reforms in the first year of his second period:

- A tax system modernization. It was a kind of counter-reform to his predecessor's. It aimed to simplify the tax declaration to get additional revenues due to the incorporation of more taxpayers. However, he did not want to increase the baseline tax load (Emol 2018; El Mercurio 2018). According to Piñera’s former General Secretary of the Presidency, Gonzalo Blumel (2023), “the tax reform was essential to finance the expansion of the solidarity component of the pension reform.”
- A labor reform to lower the labor unions' negotiation leverage to make the labor market more flexible (Biobío Chile 2019).
- A reform of the private health care system, which discriminated against women and the elderly, making their insurance more expensive than that of working-age men (France24 2018).

In general, Piñera's policy agenda was relatively moderate regarding the ideological spectrum, following the trend of his first term and the center-right in Latin America (Niedzwiecki & Pribble 2017). However, he had promised to double Bachelet's administration's GDP growth, increase the investment rate by three percentage points, and augment productivity (Piñera 2017). So, the president faced a complex policy trade-off: strengthening the welfare system while promoting pro-market policies. In this context, Piñera proposed a comprehensive pension reform.

2.1. The Pension Reform

The diagnosis of pensions in Chile was crystal clear. When commenting on Piñera’s electoral victory in 2017, The Economist foresaw the necessity of modifying the system:

> He (Piñera) must also tackle the country’s strained pension system. In 1980 the then-dictator, Augusto Pinochet, introduced obligatory private pension funds (as it happens, the brainchild of Mr Piñera’s brother, José). But rising life expectancy and the fact that many workers have contributed only intermittently to their pots mean that many have ended up with smaller pensions than they hoped for. Mr Piñera wants extra top-ups for the lowest pensions. He also wants to encourage more funds to compete to manage pensions, and perhaps to create a state-run fund.

Chileans were unsatisfied with their annuity system in 2018. As they got only 40% of their average salaries after retiring (OECD 2018a), in 2016, one out of three pensioners declared that their allowance was insufficient to satisfy their needs. Likewise, only 4% of active workers thought their future pension would cover their expenses (Ciper Chile 2017). Additionally, Bril-Mascherenhas and Maillet (2019, p. 102) show that already in 2008 around 90% of Chileans argued that "pensions should be mostly in the hands of the state rather than in those of private companies." And then, they add that

> Yet in 2018, democratic Chile maintains essentially the same privately-run pension system that the Chicago Boys designed in the late 1970s (p. 102) (…). In contrast to the multiple cases of pension privatization reversal in Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe, pension regulation has proven surprisingly resilient in democratic Chile (1990–2018), despite decades of majoritarian voter discontent with Pinochet's privatization, multiple reformist attempts by center-left governments, and even under increasingly high issue salience, which conventional wisdom expects to diminish business power (p. 105).

Although we will not reflect on the system's high resilience, it is noteworthy looking at its policy history. The following quote summarizes its origins:

> In November 1980, Pinochet signed Decree Law 3,500, setting a landmark in the global history of pension reforms. Chile's pioneering privatization radically retrenched the publicly administered PAYGO defined-benefit pension system. Authoritarian reformers set up an individual savings scheme with defined contributions, privately managed by for-profit pension fund administrators (AFPs). Under this pension system, 10 percent of workers' monthly salary is transferred to an AFP; the private pension fund, in turn, charges a commission fee (Bril-Mascherenhas and Maillet 2019, p. 105).

If Chileans were unsatisfied with the system, which at the same time lacked democratic legitimacy, why had no government changed it by 2018? Maillet and his co-author offer quite reasonable motives. Firstly, as we showed before, capitalism became a funding pillar of Chilean society, and pension funds were the basis upon which that model grew explosively. For instance, through the AFP, by 1990, the pension system managed financial assets equaling 23% of the country's GDP. In 2014 it was over 65%. That would explain successive administrations abstaining from reforming: "Government leaders, facing the evidence that any regulatory change affecting pension funds could have an impact on the economic cycle, would automatically think twice before proposing a pension reform bill" (p. 107). A second motive would be revolving-door dynamics that could have affected policy-makers directly. Since many former ministers and high-rank servants would become high-level executives of the AFP system (El Mostrador 2016a), they could have shied away from boycotting their future career prospects, increasing the status quo's inertia.

Apart from changes in the margin of Pinochet’s Decree Law 3,500, probably the only significant reform was that of President Bachelet in 2008. She created a state-financed “solidarity pillar” to cover those with no or minimum contributions to their pension funds. In 2017, in her second term, Bachelet presented another bill to increase the worker’s mandatory contribution from 10% of their job income to 15%, create a collective savings fund and augment the system’s coverage. However, the national Congress rejected it in January 2018, two months before Piñera took office (BCN 2019).

So, what about Piñera’s reform? It was an ambitious project to conciliate more welfare while promoting a free market. As a report of the BCN shows (2019), the main objectives of the reform were:

- To increase the amount of the monthly allowances for retirees,
- To protect the property rights of the workers over their funds,
- To allocate public aid for vulnerable groups, middle-class and women,
- To not have an effect into economic growth,
- To guard fiscal responsibility and the pension system’s sustainability.

To meet these objectives, Piñera's bill demanded employers contribute four additional percentage points to their employees' monthly compulsory contribution to the funds, going from 10% of the salary to 14%. Secondly, it gave tax incentives for voluntary contributions. Thirdly, it included inducements for workers to postpone their retirement age: delaying the retirement time by five years would increase people's monthly pension by 40%. Fourthly, the reform considered state-funded aid to middle-class workers whose annuity would be below a certain amount. The aid targeted women who had contributed for 16 years and men who had done it for 22 years. Fifthly, the reform envisaged monetary transfers to elders over 65 with severe functional dependency, and reinforcing 2008 Bachelet's solidarity pillar. Lastly, the reform opened the pension funds administration to new actors. It would allow private agents from other sectors willing to comply with the regulatory requirements to manage the worker's contribution funds to increase the industry's competition (Radio Universidad de Chile 2018; El Mostrador 2018b). The latter aimed to lower the AFP commission fees and the administrative costs.

Although the reform bill did not increase the retirement age explicitly, people were supposed to delay their retirement owing to the reform's incentives. In this regard, Piñera repeatedly argued that he adopted that alternative "to respect people's freedom, because some people at the age of 60 may feel like and have opportunities to continue working and we are going to reward those people." (El Mostrador 2018a).

All things considered, President Piñera promised that the adopting the whole pension reform package would increase monthly pensions by 40% once approved and implemented (Radio Universidad de Chile 2018).

3. President Piñera's Communication Strategy

As suggested in the Methodology, we limited our political communication analysis to President Piñera's public speeches and interventions wherein he said "pension" or its related terms (e.g., pensions, pensioners). Then, we began the analysis with the reform announcement speech, which he addressed on 28 October 2018, seven months after assuming.

Before presenting President Piñera's speeches' politolinguistics and persuasiveness analyses, we show some quantitative data about them. Firstly, Table 2 lists the speeches' length.

Table 35. Piñera's Speeches' Length (quantity of words)

Speech	Words
190601_P	13,842
090309_P	5,775
190228_P	5,279
181214_P	4,071
190502_P	3,144
190926_P	2,090
181028_P	1,908
190613_P	1,891
190118_P	1,772
191016_P	1,582
190506_P	955
190111_P	559

Source: own elaboration.

The table above shows that the most extensive speech is a little under 14,000 words. On the other hand, the shortest does not surpass 600 words. This sets out a first challenge: different word-length text can affect the persuasive potential analysis. Table 3 exhibits Piñera's speeches' duration distribution:

Table 36. Piñera's speeches duration[14] (minutes) and distribution

Descriptive statistics	Words	Speech Duration (minutes)	Deviation regarding the optimal
Average	3,572.3	27.5	27.2%
Median	1,999	15.4	-30.1%
Standard Deviation	3,626.5	27.9	NA

Source: own elaboration.

President Piñera's average speech duration is 27.5 minutes, 27.2% longer than the 20-minute optimal length (Neale & Ely 2007), which could have affected their persuasive potential. However, we should also consider the speech duration heterogeneity. Its standard deviation is as high as 27.9 minutes. In any case, having these numbers will allow us to add another variable to the rhetorical and persuasion analyses, enriching them.

The third quantitative variable is Piñera's most-mentioned words. Figure 2 depicts the top 25 most frequently repeated concepts throughout the twelve analyzed speeches.

Figure 11. Piñera's 12 speeches' 25 top-mentioned words

Source: own elaboration using Sinclair and Rockwell's (2023) Voyant Tools text analysis software.

The first concepts that come to our attention relate to the speaker's community: his country and nationals: "Chile", "Chileans (*chilenos*), and "compatriots" (*compatriotas*). As Cialdini

[14] As we saw in Neale and Ely (2007, chapter Time and Length), regarding the optimal speech length, "an often-cited rule-of-thumb is that the average 20-minute speech contains about 2,600 words, or, about 130 per minute."

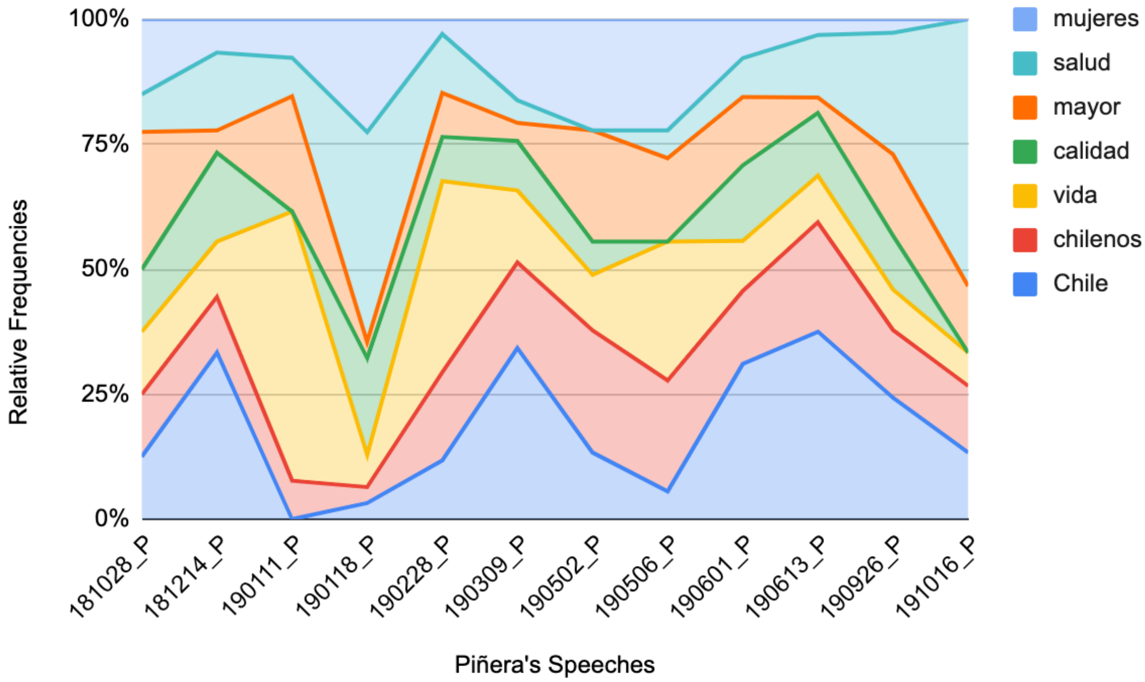
(2016) shows, the *Unity* principle leverages persuasion. People tend to agree more with others with the same identities. One way to trigger that action is by referring to a kinship – being part of the same genetic or fictive family. Hence, it is highly probable that Piñera aimed to appeal to the unity principle when addressing his compatriots and repeatedly mentioning Chile.

The second conceptual category is the population segments the president refers to, like elders (*adultos mayores/mayor*), women (*mujeres*), and the middle class (*clase media*). On the other hand, Piñera time and again mentioned the word Congress (*Congreso*) due to his references to his main political counterpart during the policy debate. Employing all those nouns makes sense from a narrative perspective: policy storytelling needs characters, namely, victims, heroes, and villains. How adequate or effective this technique was in Piñera's communication is something to evaluate later, but quantitatively we can attest that he alluded to them regularly.

The third conceptual category points out the policy issues that Piñera's reform brought up. Here we can find health (*salud*), education (*educación*) and employment (*empleo*). Lastly, there are attributes around the policy that Piñera hinted at often, like offering a clear solution (plan/project – *plan/proyecto*). He also endorsed some key concepts to that solution, like quality *(calidad),* solidarity (*solidaridad),* and life (*vida*). And, finally, his political *leitmotiv*: development (*desarrollo*).

Another interesting analysis is how Piñera distributed his seven most mentioned concepts in time. Figure 3 illustrates that:

Figure 12. Piñera's top-mentioned words distribution through the 12 speeches sample



Source: own elaboration using Sinclair and Rockwell's (2023) Voyant Tools text analysis software.

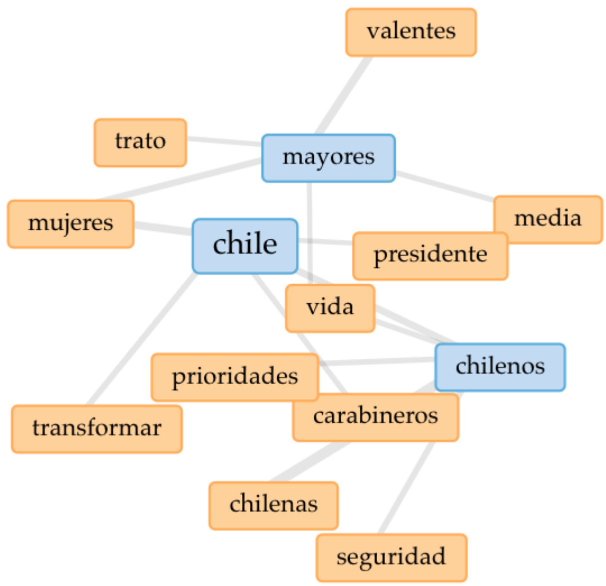
To start, *Chile* (blue area in Figure 3), *Chileans* (red area), and *life* (yellow area) are the most constant concepts throughout Piñera's interventions. Regarding the first two, the finding is consistent with what we said before: it is probably his primary way to transmit unity. About *life*, the word appears mainly in pre-made phrases the president often uses, like "improve the quality of life," "the end of life," "for you to enjoy life," and so forth and so on. Moreover, he used it notably when most of the audience were elders, like on 1 January 2019's speech. Consequently, *quality's* relative frequency (green area) correlates with *life's*. However, *quality* also refers to ethical assertions ("the human quality") and policy ("health of quality," "a service of quality").

Regarding *elders*[15] (orange area), the term becomes more preponderant when the pension reform is central to the speech, like those of October 28, 2018 -the announcement- and May 2019. Lastly, *health's* frequency (calypso area in Figure 3) increases at the end of the analyzed period, and *women's* appearance (light blue area) is somewhat random. The concept gained some importance in May 2019 speeches, when the president gave new

[15] Here, we left the most representative concept among three: older (*mayor*), adult (*adulto*), and ancestors (*mayores*). That is because almost all of their mentions refer to the elders, and we saw that "older" was the most representative.

impetus to the reform and attempted to get Congress to approve it, probably pointing to the victims of not doing so.

Figure 13. Piñera's 12 speeches' words in proximity[16]



Source: own elaboration using Sinclair and Rockwell's (2023) Voyant Tools text analysis software.

Figure 4 shows more detail about what words tend to go together. This allows us to understand some of their occurrence within the speeches. In the same vein with what we observed earlier, Chile, Chileans (*chilenos*) and elders ([adultos] *mayores*) were the primary of the concepts' networks. However, "Chile" is the most prominent word. It strongly relates to transform (*transformar*), the Chilean police (*Carabineros* de Chile), the Chilean women (*mujeres*), and President of Chile (*presidente* de Chile). From that first sight, we can conclude President Piñera talked about many topics when addressing his pension reform, because we cannot find an apparent relationship between those concepts. The second most repeated keyword was "elders". The term links to life (*vida*), the middle class ([clase] *media*), women (*mujeres*), deal (trato), like in "a new deal", and disabled elders ([no] *valente*). In this case, Piñera was consistent. The words make sense within and context, and the elders appear connected with other "victims". Lastly, Chileans (*chilenos*) is the third highest frequency word. It occurs along with female Chileans (*chilenas*), safety (*seguridad*), Chile, life (*vida*),

[16] According to Sinclair and Geoffrey (2023), "This represents a network graph where keywords in blue are shown linked to collocates in orange. You can hover over a term to see its frequency (for keywords it's the corpus frequency, for collocates it's the frequeny in the context of the linked keywords)."

and priorities (*prioridades*). Some of that makes sense by itself, but recall Piñera used unity-related words intensively, so that word's high frequency is most likely owing to that.

In conclusion, Piñera's speeches mentioning the terms related to "pension" are heterogeneous. Their length varies widely, and also the most used words on them. However, it is clear that Piñera repeatedly employed unity-like words and addressed the characters of his reform narrative. Finally, he attempted to link the reform to other policy issues and his government's metanarrative aiming at the country's development. The next section will see two Piñera discourses' politolinguistics analysis.

In conclusion, Monti-Fornero's speeches mentioning the terms related to "pension" are consistent between them. Their length varies. However, they settle for around 2,500 words on average, close to the optimal length. Secondly, from the most used words, we can infer two things: that the speakers were constantly aware of the whole reform picture, relating the pension reform with the labor market and economic growth, and that they stand from a scientific approach to the policy problem. Thirdly, they were not as consistent regarding the characters in their speech. Sometimes they gave more importance to the *victims* in their narrative – women, workers, and youth; some addressed the Parliament and the European Union; some spoke to the firms. The following section will see two Monti and two Fornero discourses' politolinguistics analyses to explore more in-depth these and other questions.

3.1. Understanding Sebastián Piñera's Rhetoric

As defined in Methodology, we selected two speeches to apply the politolinguistics analysis, using several authors. However, it outstands Reisigl's (2008) complete speech analysis example. The first discourse we examine is Piñera's pension reform announcement on 28 October 2018. It was a broadcast nationally televised lecture. The second peroration we chose occurred more than six months after the pension bill was officially introduced to the Deputies Camera to be discussed on 6 November 2018 (Cámara de Diputadas y Diputados 2023). On that occasion, President Piñera urged the Congress members to approve the bill – the government expected to have it promulgated much earlier (Blumel 2023).

Table 37. Sebastián Piñera Speech #1's Macro and Mesostructures Analysis – 28 October 2018

<table>
<tr><th>DISCOURSE 1 - ANNOUNCEMENT</th><th>MACRO - MESOSTRUCTURE</th></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 1</td><td rowspan="5"><u>Section 1: Introduction to the political problem</u>
<u>Chileans' social policy priorities are those of their government.</u> One of those priorities is how society treats the elders, which is necessary to improve because the</td></tr>
<tr><td>Queridos compatriotas:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Paragraph 2</td></tr>
<tr><td>Las prioridades de nuestro Gobierno son las prioridades de todos los chilenos: seguridad ciudadana, empleos, salarios, salud, educación y un</td></tr>
</table>

nuevo y mejor trato a nuestros niños, nuestra clase media, nuestras regiones y nuestros adultos mayores, de forma que los Tiempos Mejores lleguen a todos los hogares chilenos.	*population is aging. Its quality of life is not improving late in life.*
Paragraph 3	
Un nuevo y mejor trato a nuestros adultos mayores es el objetivo y motivación central de este proyecto de Reforma a las Pensiones, que hoy compartimos con todos nuestros compatriotas.	
Paragraph 4	
Esta misión se hace más urgente al constatar que nuestra población está envejeciendo, porque cada día nacen menos niños, y tenemos que promover la natalidad. Y porque cada día vivimos más, y tenemos que mejorar la calidad de esos años adicionales de vida.	
Paragraph 5	
Hoy en Chile ya existen 3 millones de adultos mayores, los que, por primera vez en nuestra historia, superan el número de nuestros niños y jóvenes menores de 15 años.	*Section 2: Exemplification of the problem (Argumentation) - the main figures*
Paragraph 6	
Y hoy la tercera edad dejó de ser la antesala al otro mundo y debemos transformarla en una nueva y fructífera etapa de nuestras vidas, en la que los adultos mayores, que quizás han dejado de trabajar, pero ciertamente no han dejado de vivir, puedan cosechar con dignidad, con alegría, con esperanza lo que sembraron durante sus vidas: sus hijos, nietos, familia, amigos, afectos y amores.	Why the elders deserve a better quality of life
Paragraph 7	
Sabemos que hoy las pensiones son muy bajas y muy inferiores a las necesidades y expectativas de nuestros adultos mayores. Hoy tenemos 2,8 millones de pensionados, de los cuales 1,5 millones tienen pensiones tan bajas que necesitan y se benefician del Pilar Solidario, a través de la Pensión Básica Solidaria y a través del Aporte Previsional Solidario. De los beneficiarios de este Pilar Solidario, un 62% son mujeres.	Exemplification with low pensions. *Instrumental* argumentation: With the current pensions the elders cannot afford the cost of living. Hence, we should increase them.
Paragraph 8	
¿Por qué son tan bajas las pensiones en Chile? Básicamente por tres razones: • Primero, porque el ahorro previsional de sólo 10% de nuestros sueldos es claramente insuficiente. • Segundo, porque producto del desempleo y la falta de desarrollo, existen	Explanation of the problem: causes of low pensions. Instrumental argumentation: pensions are meager due to *a*, *b*, and *c*. Then, we should intervene in those variables to increase those pensions.

demasiadas y muy extensas lagunas previsionales y los sueldos son muy bajos. • Y tercero, porque dado el aumento en las expectativas de vida, cada vez se extiende más el período de jubilación que se debe financiar con nuestro ahorro previsional. De ahí la vital importancia de concentrar nuestros esfuerzos en crecer con mayor fuerza, en crear más y mejores empleos, en mejorar los salarios y las oportunidades, para poder así incrementar las pensiones futuras.	
Paragraph 9	
Pero también la importancia y urgencia de dar un nuevo y mejor trato a nuestros adultos mayores, nos exige actuar hoy día fomentando una nueva cultura de respeto, dignidad, cariño e integración de nuestros adultos mayores a nuestra sociedad. Esto requiere más integración a sus propias familias, mejor salud, mejor transporte público, mejores oportunidades de trabajo, deporte, cultura y recreación. Porque nuestros adultos mayores tienen mucho que enseñarnos, y nosotros tenemos mucho que aprender de ellos.	*Section 3: Conclusion - The government's values are to care for the elders, so the government must improve their situation.*
Paragraph 10	
Nuestro Sistema Previsional se basa en dos grandes pilares: el Pilar Contributivo, a través del cual todos los trabajadores aportan mensualmente para su ahorro previsional que financiará sus futuras pensiones. Y el Pilar Solidario, con que el Estado aporta recursos públicos para incrementar las pensiones de los grupos más vulnerables y más necesitados.	The reform in terms of policy: increase individual contribution and augment the state's contribution to the pensions funds.
Paragraph 11	
El proyecto de Reforma a las Pensiones que presentamos hoy, apunta a fortalecer ambos pilares: el contributivo y el solidario. Su objetivo central es mejorar las pensiones actuales y futuras, pero con un cariño y una urgencia muy especial con aquellos grupos más vulnerables, con la clase media, con las mujeres y con aquellos que voluntariamente extiendan su permanencia en el mundo del trabajo, para permitir que todos nuestros adultos mayores puedan superar y dejar atrás situaciones de pobreza o vulnerabilidad y vivir sus vidas con mayor calidad, mayor seguridad y con más dignidad.	Targeting: the most vulnerable ones, middle-class women and those willing to work after their retirement age.
Paragraph 12	
Chilenas y chilenos: ¿Cuáles son los pilares fundamentales de esta Reforma Previsional? • Primero: aumentar el ahorro previsional de los trabajadores, mediante el aporte adicional y mensual del 4% del sueldo de cada trabajador, que será financiado por los empleadores. Este mayor aporte crecerá en forma gradual, de forma de no afectar nuestra capacidad de crear nuevos y	The reform's mechanisms: what does the reform do? To increase the worker's pensions through their employer's contribution.

buenos empleos, y en régimen va a significar un aumento del 40% en las pensiones de todos los trabajadores.	
Paragraph 13	
• Segundo: fortalecer el Pilar Solidario, que crecerá gradualmente hasta llegar a un 40% y va a pasar del 0,8% actual a un 1,12% del PIB, y significará un incremento del gasto público para fortalecer ese Pilar Solidario cercano a los USD 1.000 millones, que va a ser financiado con mayores aportes del Estado. Este fortalecido Pilar Solidario nos permitirá mejorar inmediatamente la Pensión Básica Solidaria y el Aporte Previsional Solidario en un 10%, y estos continuarán creciendo en función de la edad del pensionado, hasta un 50% a la Pensión Básica Solidaria y hasta más de un 70% el Aporte Previsional Solidario.	To increase social protection by expanding the government's contribution.
Paragraph 14	
• Tercero: Además, el Estado aportará recursos adicionales para financiar un nuevo aporte a los pensionados de la clase media que superen un mínimo de cotizaciones, y que será creciente con los años de cotización de cada trabajador.	To support the middle-class people who contribute to the formal pension system for longer.
Paragraph 15	
• Cuarto: Este aporte adicional a los pensionados de la clase media será aún mayor para las mujeres, de forma de compensar parcialmente su menor participación en la fuerza de trabajo y sus menores salarios, que muchas veces se debe a la maternidad o al cuidado de su familia.	To compensate for women's other tasks, such as maternity or taking care of their families. *Instrumental argumentation*: since women tend to take care of their families, they do not always can contribute to their pension funds. So they need an additional help.
Paragraph 16	
• Quinto: El Estado también hará aportes adicionales a quienes voluntariamente posterguen su permanencia en la fuerza de trabajo y su edad de jubilación. De hecho, una permanencia adicional de 5 años en la fuerza de trabajo aumenta en más de un 40% el monto de la pensión.	Finally, to reward those who delay their retirement age.
Paragraph 17	
La mitad de ese mayor ahorro por postergar la edad de jubilación irá a financiar las futuras pensiones, y la otra mitad podrá ser retirada libremente por las personas una vez que estén jubiladas, para poder disponer de ella de acuerdo a sus propias necesidades o preferencias.	Ideological components of the reform: freedom to choose and individual savings
Paragraph 18	
En síntesis, el fortalecimiento del Pilar Solidario y los mayores aportes que hará el Estado, favorecerán en forma preferente a los más vulnerables, a la clase media, a las mujeres y a quienes incrementen voluntariamente su	The policy targeting

permanencia en el mundo del trabajo más allá de la edad legal de jubilación.	
Paragraph 19	
Esta Reforma Previsional aumentará también las opciones de los trabajadores para que ellos puedan elegir libremente quien administrará este 4% adicional, a través de la creación de nuevas instituciones, que podrán ser con o sin retiro de utilidades, y también podrán ser formadas por filiales de Cajas de Compensación, Cooperativas de Ahorro y Créditos, Administradoras Generales de Fondos, AFP, Compañías de Seguros de Vida, etc., las cuales podrán administrar este mayor ahorro previsional, sujeto a las reglas de operación e inversión que establecerá la Superintendencia de Pensiones.	Ideological component: individual savings, freedom to choose, and market competition
Paragraph 20	
Igualmente, esta reforma aumentará la competencia en la Industria de Administración de Fondos de Pensiones, mejorando la información a los trabajadores y las licitaciones de los nuevos afiliados y permitiendo descuentos en las comisiones en función del tamaño del grupo que se incorpora y de su compromiso de permanencia en el tiempo, con un sólo objetivo: bajar los costos, bajar las comisiones y mejorar sus pensiones.	
Paragraph 21	
En nuestra concepción, el ahorro previsional pertenece a los trabajadores y, en consecuencia, ellos y sólo ellos tienen el derecho a elegir quién y cómo administra sus ahorros previsionales. Este derecho es no sólo reconocido, sino también respetado y fortalecido por esta Reforma Previsional.	
Paragraph 22	
Esta reforma mejorará las pensiones apenas entre en vigencia, pero dado que tendrá una aplicación gradual, este incremento, esta mejoría será creciente en el tiempo, favoreciendo siempre en forma preferente y más rápida a los pensionados con menores pensiones, con más cotizaciones, con mayor edad, a los pensionados de clase media, a las mujeres y a quienes incrementen voluntariamente su permanencia en el mundo del trabajo.	The reform will start benefiting those in a less favorable position.
Paragraph 23	
Adicionalmente, esta Reforma Previsional contempla un Seguro Solidario, que será financiado con una cotización adicional del 0,2% de cargo del empleador, para financiar una pensión adicional y creciente con la edad, para aquellos adultos mayores que, por sufrir una dependencia severa, física o mental, no sean autovalentes y requieran un apoyo y una ayuda especial.	The social component of the reform. Consequently, it promotes a united effort from the business people and the state to pay for the most vulnerable

Paragraph 24	
Queridos compatriotas: Estamos convencidos que esta Reforma Previsional es justa, es urgente y es necesaria, y requiere un mayor esfuerzo, gradual y creciente, tanto de los empresarios que deberán financiar el 4% de la cotización adicional, como del Estado, que deberá hacer un gran esfuerzo para aportar en régimen recursos adicionales al mundo de la previsión, del orden de USD 3.500 millones.	
Paragraph 25	
Esta reforma no sólo va a incrementar las pensiones de la mayoría de los pensionados, sino que se inserta dentro de nuestro compromiso de un Nuevo y Mejor Trato con nuestros adultos mayores, que se materializa a través de políticas e iniciativas como “Envejecimiento Positivo” o “Adulto Mejor”, y que permitirá a todos nuestros adultos mayores una tercera edad más integrada, más plena y más feliz, junto a sus seres queridos.	How the pension inserts into the general government agenda
Paragraph 26	
De esta forma, de manera responsable y sustentable desde el punto de vista de las finanzas públicas, complementando la reforma del año 2008 y recogiendo muchas propuestas de los distintos sectores, estamos cumpliendo con nuestro compromiso, con nuestro deber de ayudar a nuestros adultos mayores a que puedan cumplir sus sueños, a que puedan mitigar sus temores, a que puedan desarrollar sus talentos y garantizarles una tercera edad con mayor calidad de vida, con mayor seguridad y con más dignidad. Es justo y sabio que tratemos hoy a nuestros adultos mayores, como queremos que nos traten a nosotros mañana.	Ideological component: fiscal responsibility, and policy continuity with previous governments
Paragraph 27	
Hago un sentido llamado a todos los parlamentarios, de Gobierno y de Oposición, a aportar con un sentido constructivo, pero también con un sentido de urgencia a esta noble y hermosa misión de mejorar la calidad de vida de todos nuestros adultos mayores.	Call to action: political mobilization of the Congress members to process the reform
Paragraph 28	
Muchas gracias, muy buenas noches y que Dios bendiga a Chile y a todos los chilenos.	Enforcing the community idea referring to God, the motherland, and the nation (unity)

Source: own elaboration.

Regarding the speech's macro and mesostructures, Piñera started with the classical *problem–argumentation–conclusion* structure. First, he presented the policy diagnosis – paragraphs 1 to 7: "population is aging and pensions are low, so we need to increase the elder's pensions"- the figures to back that diagnosis and the subsequent policy measures to overcome the problem. Then, in the third part, Piñera elaborated more. From paragraph 11 onwards, he detailed the policy mechanisms, the policy's targeting, and its underlying ideological principles. He also finished with a clear call to action: to Congress to approve the bill (paragraph 27).

Additionally, Piñera exhibits a quite technical approach to the pension problem: figures and policy details play a significant role in his line of reasoning, which could have been perceived as cold or tactless. For instance, when explaining the reform's status quo and the policy problem:

> We know that today pensions are very low and far below the needs and expectations of our senior citizens. Today we have 2.8 million pensioners, 1.5 million of whom have pensions so low that they need and benefit from the Solidarity Pillar, through the Basic Solidarity Pension and through the Solidarity Pension Contribution. Of the beneficiaries of this Solidarity Pillar, 62% are women.[17]

And when elaborating on one of the reform's axes:

> Second: to strengthen the Solidarity Pillar, which will gradually grow to 40% and will increase from the current 0.8% to 1.12% of the GDP, and will mean an increase in public expenditure to strengthen this Solidarity Pillar close to USD 1,000 million, which will be financed with greater contributions from the State. This strengthened Solidarity Pillar will allow us to immediately improve the Basic Solidarity Pension and the Solidarity Pension Contribution by 10%, and these will continue to grow according to the pensioner's age, up to 50% for the Basic Solidarity Pension and more than 70% for the Solidarity Pension Contribution.[18]

Next, we detail the speech's nominations and predications. In this section, we interpret which subjects Piñera identifies and what he says about them. In Table 5, we find to whom he refers when talking about him and his allies and what actions and traits he attributes to them. Table 6 contains the same analysis regarding the government's opponents and outsiders.

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[17] "Sabemos que hoy las pensiones son muy bajas y muy inferiores a las necesidades y expectativas de nuestros adultos mayores. Hoy tenemos 2,8 millones de pensionados, de los cuales 1,5 millones tienen pensiones tan bajas que necesitan y se benefician del Pilar Solidario, a través de la Pensión Básica Solidaria y a través del Aporte Previsional Solidario. De los beneficiarios de este Pilar Solidario, un 62% son mujeres."

[18] "Segundo: fortalecer el Pilar Solidario, que crecerá gradualmente hasta llegar a un 40% y va a pasar del 0,8% actual a un 1,12% del PIB, y significará un incremento del gasto público para fortalecer ese Pilar Solidario cercano a los USD 1.000 millones, que va a ser financiado con mayores aportes del Estado. Este fortalecido Pilar Solidario nos permitirá mejorar inmediatamente la Pensión Básica Solidaria y el Aporte Previsional Solidario en un 10%, y estos continuarán creciendo en función de la edad del pensionado, hasta un 50% a la Pensión Básica Solidaria y hasta más de un 70% el Aporte Previsional Solidario."

Table 38. Sebastián Piñera Speech #1's Nominations and Predications Analysis: Piñera and Friends

THE POLICY PROMOTER AND GROUPS OF FRIENDS			
I/we		***You, ours***	
Nomination	*Predication*	*Nomination*	*Predication*
We	The responsible ones that oversee public spending, considering the policy proposals from the whole specter.	Compatriots	The beloved ones who must judge the reform
	The ones complying with our duty to the elders	The Chileans	With clear social policy priorities
Our government	Tuned with the Chileans' priorities	The middle-class	Subjects of rights
		The vulnerable	Subjects of rights
		Our elders	Worthy of living better lives
			The wise who can teach us
			The ones who can suffer age-related incidents and therefore need an extra help
			The ones who will benefit the most from the reform
		The workers	The ones free to choose how to invest their individual contributions
			The owners of their pension funds
		The women	Subjects of rights. Are the ones who take care of their sons or their families and so cannot work and contribute as much as men.
		God	Taking care of Chile and Chileans

Source: own elaboration.

Interestingly, Piñera does not refer to himself in the first person (I/me). Instead, he alludes to the collective: we/us. The speaker says that they are promoting the reform to comply with the elders, and, at the time, they do so by taking care of fiscal responsibility. Moreover, he affirms that "their government" knows Chileans' priorities. This is consistent with his government agenda and his diagnosis during the campaign, as we saw earlier: Chileans were worried about their pension system. Although we will watch at this attentively later, when running the persuasive potential analysis, it is noticeable that Piñera puts the government as the guide: being aware of the victim's problem and proposing a solution. Then, Piñera lists the victims of the story in three groups.

On the one hand, there are the subjects of rights: the middle-class, the vulnerable and the women. By doing this, he equals those three groups from a policy and narrative perspective. On the other hand, he underscores the workers, not as subjects of rights but as individuals who own their pension funds and contribution investments. In third place, Piñera dedicates more complex predications for the elders, the reform's protagonists. Above the other three groups, older adults would deserve special attention and care, not only because of their disadvantaged position but because society owes it to them. Finally, Piñera brings up Chileans as those with defined policy priorities. By this, he attempts to recognize their autonomy as individuals and to put himself as the citizens' representative. Likewise, the orator sets up the judges of the reform: not any particular interest group but all of his countrymen and countrywomen. Finally, he situates God above Chileans as the people and the country's caretaker.

Table 6 shows Piñera’s opponents and outsiders’ nominations and predications.

Table 39. Sebastián Piñera Speech #1's Nominations and Predications Analysis: Piñera's Opponents and Outsiders

GROUPS OF OPPONENTS/ENEMIES/OUTSIDERS			
Enemies		***Outsiders***	
Nomination	*Predication*	*Nomination*	*Predication*
		The Pension Funds Administrators (AFP)	The entities governed by the Chilean institutional framework
		The employers	The enterprises owners who must pay for the workers' contribution increase
		The Congress members	Those who ought to carry out the reform constructively and urgently
		The State	The one who spends to help the most in need
			The one who needs to ramp up its effort

Source: own elaboration.

President Piñera was careful in this first speech when designating and addressing his government's detractors. He did so even when people blamed the AFP and resented the influential businessmen ("employers" in Piñera's words), as we already discussed. So, instead of pointing out villains -which enhances policy narratives-, Piñera treated potential opponents -the Congress, to start- just as non-government actors. There were no enemies in Piñera's nominations and predications.

Concerning the AFPs, the orator highlighted that they were governed by the Chilean institutional framework, probably to transmit that nobody is above the law and, therefore, there would be no privileged sectors. Regarding the employers, he said they -and not the workers- would pay for the reform's proposed contribution increase. About the Congress members, the president acknowledged their role and called them to work "constructively" (instead of obstructively) and to approve the reform "urgently." Finally, it cached our attention how he treated the State. Despite being the Chilean State's head, Piñera talks about it as a foreign and abstract entity that will help the poorest by committing to a significant effort. That is consistent with the Chilean and Latin American center-right, which has historically advocated for the free market and the subsidiarity principle.

Since the speaker uses nominations and predications, they need argumentative devices (i.e., if *x*, then *y*) to deliver them persuasively. As we affirmed before, it is common for people to use argumentative fallacies when trying to convince others. Consequently, Table 7 shows Piñera's central argumentation schemes when not appealing to mere logic. This analysis aims to identify patterns in using *topoi* and certain types of fallacies when government spokespersons must promote unpopular reforms.

Table 40. Sebastián Piñera Speech #1's Argumentation Schemes and Fallacies

Name of topos	***Name of fallacy***	***Paraphrase***
Reality	Post hoc ergo propter hoc	P.4. Since birth rates are lower, the population is aging, and because we should take care of the elders, the reform is urgent.
	Post hoc ergo propter hoc	P.6. Since the elders retire in a better physical and mental shape, then they should enjoy the rest of their days.
Urgency	Evading the burden of proof	P.24. Since the speaker is convinced that the reform is "fair, urgent and necessary," we need the state and the privates to make an effort.
Justice	Circular reasoning	P.26. It is our duty to help the elders so we will help our elders.
	Evading the burden of proof	P.26. It is just to treat our elders today as we want to be treated tomorrow.
	Argumentum ad consequentiam	P.9. The elders can teach us a lot, then the moral thing to do is take care of them.

Source: own elaboration.

Piñera employs three *topoi* when committing argumentative fallacies: reality, urgency, and justice. The first, reality, is perhaps one of the most used. It shortens the receptor's thinking when receiving new information due to its *it is apparent* effect. The second topoi, urgency, makes sense with the unpopular policy literature: there must be a crisis to promote painful reforms – or at least the crisis feeling. Then, it is expected to find crisis-related arguments. Finally, the justice topos could mobilize the audience's actions. Remember that the narrative's morality makes the story persuasive (Polletta 2015) and that anger can mobilize people's actions (Erisen 2020). In this respect, a revised Fortenbaugh's quote comes helpful: "When men are angered, they are not victims of some totally irrational force. Rather, they are responding in accordance with the thought of unjust result" (in Gottweis 2007, p. 239). Thus, appealing to injustice might trigger the audience's anger and an active pose regarding the reform.

In fact, Piñera uses fairness-related concepts repeatedly. For example, he claims the reform is “fair, urgent, and necessary” and talks about “our moral duty” to take care of the elder and the justice in treating them today as we want to be treated tomorrow.

Concerning Piñera’s fallacies, the most common are the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy and the *evading the burden of proof*. In the first one, the speaker assigns a spurious causality between the premise and the consequence (e.g., “Since the elders retire in a better physical and mental shape, then they should enjoy the rest of their days”). Both fallacies in the reality topos adopt this form. In the second kind of fallacy, the orator exposes statements as self-evident, implying there is no need to further argumentation (e.g., “It is just to treat our elders today as we want to be treated tomorrow”). Of course, it might be just treating anyone as we want to be treated, but the why is missing.

Finally, the perspectivation analysis entails three key components:

1. It involves the reclassification of nominations made by different speakers.
2. It includes actors that a speaker mentioned without any predications.
3. This examination provides insight into how the orator frames all the actors involved in their speech based on their nominations, predications, and argumentations, which we have already analyzed.

Table 8 summarizes the speech's characters, after which we will interpret the discourse's framings.

Table 41. Sebastián Piñera Speech #1's Characters

Supporters of the Government		***Not supporters of the Government***	
I/we	***Not those against the reform***	***Not us***	***Those against/not in favor of the reform***
Our government	Dear countrymen; all the Chileans; our children; our middle class; the women, our elderly; our regions; the Chilean households; the neediest; the workers; the State; those who voluntarily choose to delay their retirement; God	The Pension Fund Administration industry; the Superintendence of Pensions; the businessmen/employers; the Congress members; the Opposition	

Source: own elaboration.

President Piñera sets the framing in the first paragraph of the speech: “Our government’s priorities are those of all the Chileans (…)[19].” As argued earlier, Cialdini’s *unity* has a central

[19] “Las prioridades de nuestro Gobierno son las prioridades de todos los chilenos (…).”

justifying role in Piñera's communication. He constantly brings up the country, his compatriots, the State, and even God. Additionally, we can say Piñera framed or exposed his vision regarding three groups of actors: the victims/heroes, Chile's new modernity role models, and functional agents for the country's new modernity. Finally, remember that Piñera's myth of "promised land" was an achievable development idea.

Piñera tends to use the possessive adjective *our* when talking about his narrative's *victims/heroes*: "our government," "our population," "our children and youth," "our older adults," "our middle class," and "our regions." By doing this, Piñera might have aimed to create a community sense in a sort of paternalistic way in which he, as head of the State, would take care of all the inhabitants under his protection. However, it is interesting that he did not treat women in such a way despite them being victims as well. Although he mentions the women repeatedly throughout the speech, he does not "possess" them.

Two characters outstand in Piñera's narrative as Chile's *new modernity role models*, despite the fact that they do not play a fundamental part in his speech. The first ones are the workers. Of course, any pension reform is about society's workers – those who pay for the system somehow. However, in his pension reform Piñera splits Chilean society in two: those who work and those in need, as shown below:

> Our Pension System is based on two main pillars: the Contributory Pillar, through which all workers contribute monthly to their pension savings to finance their future pensions. And the Solidarity Pillar, with which the State contributes public resources to increase the pensions of the most vulnerable and needy groups.[20]

The president does not praise to workers in any particular way, but we can say he does replace the *citizens* concept with that of *workers*. For instance, when explaining the first pillar of the pension reform, Piñera affirmed:

> First: to increase *workers'* pension savings, through the additional monthly contribution of 4% of each *worker's* salary, which will be financed by the employers. This increased contribution will grow gradually, so as not to affect our capacity to create new and good jobs, and will mean a 40% increase in the pensions of all *workers.*[21]

[20] "Nuestro Sistema Previsional se basa en dos grandes pilares: el Pilar Contributivo, a través del cual todos los trabajadores aportan mensualmente para su ahorro previsional que financiará sus futuras pensiones. Y el Pilar Solidario, con que el Estado aporta recursos públicos para incrementar las pensiones de los grupos más vulnerables y más necesitados."

[21] "Primero: aumentar el ahorro previsional de los trabajadores, mediante el aporte adicional y mensual del 4% del sueldo de cada trabajador, que será financiado por los empleadores. Este mayor aporte crecerá en forma gradual, de forma de no afectar nuestra capacidad de crear nuevos y buenos empleos, y en régimen va a significar un aumento del 40% en las pensiones de todos los trabajadores."

Finally, to top this framing, Piñera recurs to some deeply imbedded concepts in Chilean society: individualism and market-related freedom. The following fragments illustrate that:

> In our conception[22], pension savings belong to the workers and, consequently, they and only they have the right to choose who manages their pension savings and how. This right is not only recognized, but also respected and strengthened by this Pension Reform[23].

> This Pension Reform will also increase workers' options so that they can freely choose who will manage this additional [contribution to the pension accounts of] 4% (…).[24]

Following the same work-leaning argument, let us recall that Piñera did not propose to increase the retirement age. He did want, nevertheless, people to delay their going-to-pension passage and extolled it. Those would be the second Piñera's new modernity role model, as shown in the next paragraph:

> The State will also make additional contributions to those who voluntarily postpone their stay in the labor force and their retirement age. In fact, an additional 5 years in the labor force increases the amount of the pension by more than 40%.[25]

By recognizing these exemplary workers, who voluntarily want to extend their working life beyond the socially required age, Piñera enhances the liberality of his reform *–it is not mandatory-* and its sacrificial character *–but you will be greatly rewarded*. We can observe that in this fragment as well:

> Half of the increased savings from postponing the retirement age will go to finance future pensions, and the other half can be freely withdrawn by individuals once they are retired, so that they can dispose of it according to their own needs or preferences.[26]

How effective this strategy was is debatable. Some may argue that a hard-working ethos would make sense to Piñera's conservative voters and middle-class Chileans. However, as

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[22] We could also relate this to the royal we or Spanish plural mayestático. As in English, it is employed to express kings' and popes' authority (RAE 2023).

[23] "En nuestra concepción, el ahorro previsional pertenece a los trabajadores y, en consecuencia, ellos y sólo ellos tienen el derecho a elegir quién y cómo administra sus ahorros previsionales. Este derecho es no sólo reconocido, sino también respetado y fortalecido por esta Reforma Previsional."

[24] "Esta Reforma Previsional aumentará también las opciones de los trabajadores para que ellos puedan elegir libremente quien administrará este 4% adicional (…)."

[25] "El Estado también hará aportes adicionales a quienes voluntariamente posterguen su permanencia en la fuerza de trabajo y su edad de jubilación. De hecho, una permanencia adicional de 5 años en la fuerza de trabajo aumenta en más de un 40% el monto de la pensión."

[26] "La mitad de ese mayor ahorro por postergar la edad de jubilación irá a financiar las futuras pensiones, y la otra mitad podrá ser retirada libremente por las personas una vez que estén jubiladas, para poder disponer de ella de acuerdo a sus propias necesidades o preferencias."

we saw before, according to the World Values Survey 2018 in Chile, people cared very little about work-related values.

About the functional agents of Chile's new modernity, they gather in a sort of institutional trinity:

- *Democracy* (the Congress members and the Opposition),
- *Bureaucracy* (the Superintendence of Pensions), and
- The *market* (businessmen/employers and the Pension Fund Administration -AFPs, in Spanish- industry).

Piñera alludes to the first group only in one paragraph, which is central because it is the call to action at the end of the speech:

> I make a heartfelt call to all parliamentarians [sic][27], government and opposition, to contribute with a constructive sense, but also with a sense of urgency to this noble and beautiful mission of improving the quality of life of all our seniors.[28]

Then, the president refers to the Superintendence of Pensions when proposing the entrance of new actors in the pension system. Apparently, Piñera calls the Superintendence to make clear that no matter the oncoming changes, every private agent must comply to the regulatory framework:

> This Pension Reform will also increase workers' options so that they can freely choose who will manage this additional 4%, through the creation of new institutions, which may be with or without withdrawal of profits, and may also be formed by subsidiaries of Compensation Funds, Savings and Credit Cooperatives, General Fund Administrators, AFPs, Life Insurance Companies, etc., which may manage this increased pension savings, subject to the operating and investment rules to be established by the Superintendence of Pensions[29].

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[27] Chile is a Presidential Republic, so it has a National Congress, not a Parliament like in most European democracies.

[28] "Hago un sentido llamado a todos los parlamentarios, de Gobierno y de Oposición, a aportar con un sentido constructivo, pero también con un sentido de urgencia a esta noble y hermosa misión de mejorar la calidad de vida de todos nuestros adultos mayores."

[29] "Esta Reforma Previsional aumentará también las opciones de los trabajadores para que ellos puedan elegir libremente quien administrará este 4% adicional, a través de la creación de nuevas instituciones, que podrán ser con o sin retiro de utilidades, y también podrán ser formadas por filiales de Cajas de Compensación, Cooperativas de Ahorro y Créditos, Administradoras Generales de Fondos, AFP, Compañías de Seguros de Vida, etc., las cuales podrán administrar este mayor ahorro previsional, sujeto a las reglas de operación e inversión que establecerá la Superintendencia de Pensiones."

Finally, *the market* group: businessmen/employers and the AFPs. Although people had made clear those were their enemies, Piñera treated them with touch. Rather than crucifying them or using them as scapegoats for the low pensions, he named them in a neutral, aseptic tone:

> We are convinced that this Pension Reform is fair, urgent and necessary, and that it requires a greater, gradual and increasing effort, both from the employers who will have to finance the 4% of the additional contribution.[30]
>
> (…) to increase workers' pension savings by means of an additional monthly contribution of 4% of each worker's salary, to be financed by employers.[31]
>
> Likewise, this reform will increase competition in the Pension Fund Management Industry, improving information to workers and bidding for new affiliates and allowing discounts on commissions according to the size of the group that joins and its commitment to permanence over time, with a single objective: to lower costs, lower commissions and improve their pensions.[32]

All three quotes reflect the functional character of private actors in Piñera's government project. Furthermore, it is plausible that the president did not attack them because of his own origins. He was a renowned and successful businessman before being president, and his brother, José Piñera, conceived and implemented the Chilean pension system as Pinochet's minister of Labor. That must have been a difficult conundrum: a trade-off between attacking long-standing allies and signaling the obvious pension debate's villains, which would have made the policy narrative much easier to assimilate for the audience.

In balance, Sebastián Piñera's first speech was well-structured, following a clear problem-argumentation-conclusion format. He used various unity figures and highlighted the victims or potential heroes for the policy narrative, with older adults taking center stage. He aimed to position the government as a compassionate and decisive guide for those victims. Interestingly, Piñera did not point at any particular enemy or someone to blame. Instead, he introduced the remaining characters in what we can classify as three functional groups: democratic institutions, modern bureaucracy, and the capitalist market. By doing so, his peroration may have generated confusion among the listeners.

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[30] "Estamos convencidos que esta Reforma Previsional es justa, es urgente y es necesaria, y requiere un mayor esfuerzo, gradual y creciente, tanto de los empresarios que deberán financiar el 4% de la cotización adicional."

[31] "(…) aumentar el ahorro previsional de los trabajadores, mediante el aporte adicional y mensual del 4% del sueldo de cada trabajador, que será financiado por los empleadores."

[32] "Igualmente, esta reforma aumentará la competencia en la Industria de Administración de Fondos de Pensiones, mejorando la información a los trabajadores y las licitaciones de los nuevos afiliados y permitiendo descuentos en las comisiones en función del tamaño del grupo que se incorpora y de su compromiso de permanencia en el tiempo, con un sólo objetivo: bajar los costos, bajar las comisiones y mejorar sus pensiones."

It is not clear who is Piñera's audience; the fact that it was a nationally broadcasted speech does not mean that the objective public is every person in the country, but from his allocutions, it seems so. This is of utmost importance. According to the CERC's indications (2018), audience segmentation is vital for an effective communication deployment. We will find this pattern repeated throughout the president's discourses.

Then, in advocating for the necessity of his pension reform, the orator chose the reality and justice *topoi*. Finally, he emphasized two of Chile's new modernity role models: the workers and those willing to extend their working life beyond the fixed retirement age.

In the following pages, we present the second speech analysis.

Table 42. Sebastián Piñera Speech #2's Macro and Mesostructures Analysis – 6 May 2019

DISCOURSE 2 – FOR THE CONGRESS APPROVAL	***MACRO - MESOSTRUCTURE***
Paragraph 1	
Yo recuerdo que nuestro padre siempre nos decía “traten a los adultos mayores hoy día, como van a querer que los traten a ustedes mañana”. Eso se me quedo grabado no sólo en la cabeza, también en el corazón.	<u>*Section 1. Introduction to the political problem*</u> - There is a debt with the elders. Pensions are too low. The bill has been sent, but it is not passed yet.
Paragraph 2	
Por eso, una de nuestras primeras iniciativas fue reconocer que las pensiones en Chile son muy bajas y que la gente de la tercera edad, nuestros adultos mayores, necesitan, merecen y con urgencia mejores pensiones, para poder tener una vida más plena, una vida más feliz.	
Paragraph 3	
Y por eso, hace ya más de 6 meses, enviamos al Congreso un proyecto de ley que busca mejorarles las pensiones a todos y cada uno de los pensionados chilenos.	
Paragraph 4	
¿Cómo lo busca? Ustedes saben que el sistema de pensiones en nuestro país tiene una doble naturaleza, que es un Pilar Contributivo, que es lo que cada persona aporta para su ahorro previsional y tiene un Pilar Solidario, que es el aporte de la sociedad para mejorar las pensiones de los sectores más vulnerables y de escasos recursos.	<u>*Section 3. Conclusion*</u> - the policy solution. Strengthening the two pillars of the system, raising people's contribution to their funds, and making the State contribute more.
Paragraph 5	
La reforma que presentamos al Congreso fortalece los dos pilares: el Pilar Contributivo, pidiéndole a los empleadores que aporten, de su propio cargo, un 4% adicional al 10% que aportan los trabajadores al ahorro previsional de cada trabajador chileno, y eso en el largo plazo va	

a significar un aumento del 40% en las pensiones de todos y cada uno de los pensionados chilenos.	
Paragraph 6	
Pero, además, el Estado tiene que hacer un mayor esfuerzo, y por eso estamos aumentando el aporte del Estado al Pilar Solidario en un 40%.	
Paragraph 7	
¿Para qué? Para beneficiar, en primer lugar, a las pensiones más bajas de nuestro país.	
Paragraph 8	
Quiero decirle, hoy día, a ese millón y medio de chilenas y chilenos que reciben una Pensión Básica o un Aporte Previsional Solidario que apenas esta reforma se apruebe va a haber un incremento inmediato en la Pensión Básica y en el Aporte Previsional Solidario que va a partir en 10%, pero que en el tiempo va a llegar hasta un 50%. Y eso es una muy buena noticia para el millón y medio de chilenas y chilenos que reciben la Pensión Básica o el Aporte Previsional Solidario.	
Paragraph 9	
Pero eso no es todo, estamos construyendo un segundo piso al Pilar Solidario, para beneficiar a la clase media de nuestro país que no recibe, muchas veces, no recibe ninguna ayuda del Estado y la necesita y la merece;	The expected outcomes of the reform: restoring the status quo's equilibrium
Paragraph 10	
Pero, además, para beneficiar a las mujeres de nuestro país que, por razones -muchas veces- relacionadas con la maternidad y la familia, tiene menos salarios, tiene más lagunas previsionales y merecen una ayuda del Estado;	
Paragraph 11	
Pero también para favorecer a los adultos mayores no valentes, es decir que tienen una dependencia severa, que no se pueden valer por sí mismos y que necesitan una ayuda especial, y por eso el Estado les va a entregar un aporte especial.	*Section 3.1. Conclusion* - the policy solution. Dependency insurance
Paragraph 12	
Como ustedes ven, en el Pilar Solidario vamos a favorecer a un millón y medio de pensionados que hoy día lo merecen y lo necesitan, y con el segundo piso del Pilar Solidario que estamos construyendo -clase media, mujeres y adultos mayores no valentes- vamos a beneficiar a otro millón de personas. O sea, en total 2 millones 600 mil pensionados, de los 3	Expected outcomes. Exemplification of the impact (numbers)

millones de pensionados que tenemos en nuestro país, se van a ver favorecidos, en forma inmediata, con esta reforma a nuestro sistema previsional.	
Paragraph 13	
Yo creo que es una causa justa, estoy convencido que es una causa urgente. Por eso le quiero pedir, representando e interpretando a todos mis compatriotas, a los parlamentarios que no sigan haciendo esperar esta reforma de las pensiones. Ésta es una reforma justa, necesaria y urgente, y cada día que sigue durmiendo en el Congreso, significa un día más de espera para 2,6 millones de hombres y mujeres chilenas que dedicaron su vida al trabajo y que hoy en la tercera edad tienen derecho -se lo merecen- a una tercera edad con más tranquilidad, con más oportunidades, con mejores pensiones, con más dignidad y con mayor bienestar.	<u>Call to action.</u> To the congress members to pass the bill "The reform is urgent and just," so Congress members should pass it, or else, they will harm 2.6 million Chileans
Paragraph 14	
Por eso, desde el fondo del corazón, les quiero pedir a los parlamentarios que este miércoles, de una vez por todas, aprueben una Reforma a las Pensiones, que la necesitan, la merece y la están pidiendo 2,6 millones de hombres y mujeres de nuestro país que están en la tercera edad.	
Paragraph 15	
La tercera edad antes era una antesala al otro mundo; hoy día es una tercera edad para cosechar lo mucho que han sembrado durante sus vidas.	
Paragraph 16	
¿Qué es lo que siembra una persona durante su vida? Lo más importante: amor, cariño, familia, hijos, amigos, y por eso nuestros adultos mayores tienen derecho a cosechar lo que sembraron durante su vida, teniendo una tercera edad con más felicidad, con más oportunidades y con más dignidad.	The moral goal of the reform is to allow our elders to enjoy their last years. "As they sowed the shall reap"
Paragraph 17	
Ése es el objetivo justo, noble, necesario y urgente de la Reforma a las Pensiones, que presentamos al Congreso hace ya más de 6 meses y que le llegó el momento de transformarse en realidad.	
Paragraph 18	
Quiero también agradecer a nuestros adultos mayores, porque tenemos tanto que aprender de ellos y ellos tienen tanto que enseñarnos.	The liking: complimenting the "heros" of the reform
Paragraph 19	

Y el Programa "Adulto Mejor", que lidera mi mujer Cecilia, apunta no solamente a mejorar las pensiones, apunta a mejorar el acceso a la salud, a integrarlos mejor a la sociedad. Porque, al fin y al cabo, todos tenemos algún pariente que hoy día es adulto mayor, pero hay algo más: todos, salvo que Dios nos mande a llamar antes de tiempo, vamos a llegar a la tercera edad, y por eso termino mis palabras, tal como las comencé: tratemos a nuestros adultos mayores hoy día, como vamos a querer que nos traten a nosotros mañana.	
Paragraph 20	
Muchas gracias.	

Source: own elaboration.

Regarding the speech's macro and mesostructures, Piñera started with the problem but mixed the conclusion and the argumentation parts. In this case, there were two types of problems. On the one hand, the policy problem -*pensions are too low*- and, on the other hand, the political problem – *the Congress has not approved the reform yet*. That adds complexity to the argumentation since the public must switch from one problem -its victims, villains, and solutions- to another. In this case, Piñera chose moral and numerical arguments for the reform after claiming that Congress members must pass the bill (paragraphs 8 to 13). He probably acted in such a way that Congress members -and also the citizens- could tell what was at stake.

As we did in the first speech examination, we next detail the discourse's nominations and predications. In Table 10, we find to whom Piñera refers when talking about him and his allies and what actions and traits he attributes to them. Table 11 contains the same analysis regarding the government's opponents and outsiders.

Table 43. Sebastián Piñera Speech #2's Nominations and Predications Analysis: Piñera and Friends

THE POLICY PROMOTER AND GROUPS OF FRIENDS			
I/we		***You, ours***	
Nomination	*Predication*	*Nomination*	*Predication*
I	The one whose father taught him to care for the elder	My father	The one who taught us to care for the elder
	The one who interprets his compatriots' thinking	Our senior citizens	Those who urgently deserve higher pensions
We	Those who immediately recognized that pensions were too low		Those who have so much to teach us

	Those who sent a bill to Congress to remedy the situation	Our country's middle class	Those who deserve and need some public assistance because they rarely get any
		Our country's women	Those who, due to family-related tasks, receive less income and therefore deserve the State's aid
		Elders with severe dependency	Those who cannot fend for themselves and therefore need the State's assistance
		Chilean men and women	The ones who dedicate their lives working and therefore deserve better pensions

Source: own elaboration.

Unlike in the previous speech, we see Piñera talking in the first person (I/me). He first refers to a personal anecdote whereby he brings up his father. Presumably, Piñera believed that recalling the father's wisdom could strengthen the liking among the elders. The second time he uses *I*, he claims to be the one who knows the citizens' policy priorities – remember, in the first speech, it was "their government" who knew those priorities. Then, the president uses the "we/us" person. Firstly, to point out that they have immediately realized the policy problem – *pensions are too low*- and, secondly, to underscore the government's active pursuit of a solution – *we sent the bill to Congress*. Remember that one of Piñera's first administration's main appeals was his capacity to act quickly and effectively.

Regarding the government's friends, Piñera recalls the victims of the current status quo –*our senior citizens, our country's middle class, women, and the elders with severe dependency*. Moreover, the president depicts all deserving more considerable public assistance, which is atypical for traditional or classical Latin American conservatives, who tended to minimize the State's agency as a public service provider (Niedzwiecki & Pribble 2017). The following fragments show how Piñera addressed the victims:

> As you can see, in the Solidarity Pillar we are going to benefit one and a half million pensioners who deserve and need it today, and with the second floor of the Solidarity Pillar we are building -middle class, women and non-valent senior citizens- we are going to benefit another million people. In other words, a total of 2 million 600 thousand pensioners, out of the 3 million pensioners we have in our country, are going to benefit immediately from this reform to our pension system.[33]

[33] "Como ustedes ven, en el Pilar Solidario vamos a favorecer a un millón y medio de pensionados que hoy día lo merecen y lo necesitan, y con el segundo piso del Pilar Solidario que estamos construyendo -clase media, mujeres y adultos mayores no valentes- vamos a beneficiar a otro millón de personas. O sea, en total 2 millones 600 mil pensionados, de los 3 millones de pensionados que tenemos en nuestro país, se van a ver favorecidos, en forma inmediata, con esta reforma a nuestro sistema previsional."

Our senior citizens:

> Therefore, one of our first initiatives was to recognize that pensions in Chile are very low and that the elderly, our senior citizens, need, deserve and urgently need better pensions, in order to have a fuller life, a happier life.[34]

Our country's middle class:

> But that is not all, we are building a second floor to the Solidarity Pillar, to benefit the middle class of our country that does not receive, many times, does not receive any help from the State and needs and deserves it;[35]

Our country's women:

> But also, to benefit the women of our country who, for reasons -often- related to maternity and family, have lower salaries, have more pension gaps and deserve help from the State;[36]

The elders with severe dependency:

> But also, to favor non-valent older adults, that is to say, those who are severely dependent, who cannot fend for themselves and who need special help, and for this reason the State will provide them with a special contribution.[37]

Piñera supported the idea of providing more State-funded benefits to vulnerable groups, which is a common welfare and more left-leaning claim — moreover, the idea tuned with Chileans demanding more responsibility from the government in this sense, as we saw earlier. However, there is a subtle difference. Despite being the leader of the government and the State, the president distanced himself from being a public services provider, as evidenced by his nominations and predictions regarding outsiders and enemies (see Table 11).

[34] "Por eso, una de nuestras primeras iniciativas fue reconocer que las pensiones en Chile son muy bajas y que la gente de la tercera edad, nuestros adultos mayores, necesitan, merecen y con urgencia mejores pensiones, para poder tener una vida más plena, una vida más feliz."

[35] "Pero eso no es todo, estamos construyendo un segundo piso al Pilar Solidario, para beneficiar a la clase media de nuestro país que no recibe, muchas veces, no recibe ninguna ayuda del Estado y la necesita y la merece;"

[36] "Pero, además, para beneficiar a las mujeres de nuestro país que, por razones -muchas veces- relacionadas con la maternidad y la familia, tiene menos salarios, tiene más lagunas previsionales y merecen una ayuda del Estado (…)"

[37] "Pero también para favorecer a los adultos mayores no valentes, es decir que tienen una dependencia severa, que no se pueden valer por sí mismos y que necesitan una ayuda especial, y por eso el Estado les va a entregar un aporte especial."

Then, as in the announcement speech, Piñera glorified those Chileans who, after having spent their lives working hard, now merit decent pensions:

> This is a fair, necessary and urgent reform, and every day that it continues to sleep in Congress means one more day of waiting for 2.6 million Chilean men and women who dedicated their lives to work and who today in old age have the right -they deserve it- to the old age with more peace of mind, with more opportunities, with better pensions, with more dignity and greater welfare.[38]

Whether intentional or not, regarding his allies, Piñera focused his discourse much better than he did in the previous one. He showed fewer victims or heroes, possibly making the narrative more compelling. To see what happened with the government's enemies and outsiders, see Table 11.

Table 44. Sebastián Piñera Speech #2's Nominations and Predications Analysis: Piñera's Opponents and Outsiders

GROUPS OF OPPONENTS/ENEMIES/OUTSIDERS			
Enemies		***Outsiders***	
Nomination	*Predication*	*Nomination*	*Predication*
Congress members	The ones who delay the just and urgent pension reform	The State	The one who must ramp up its effort to assist the senior citizens
	The ones called to pass the pension reform's bill		

Source: own elaboration.

Unlike in the announcement speech, wherein we could not find any clear villain, in this one, Piñera targeted his enemies accurately: the Congress members.

> I believe it is a just cause, I am convinced that it is an urgent cause. That is why I would like to ask, representing and interpreting all my compatriots, the parliamentarians [*sic*] not to keep this pension reform waiting.[39]

As the literature suggests, casting the bad guys enhances the storytelling aspect of communication (Crow & Jones 2018; Chautard & Collin-Lachaud 2019; Polletta 2015; Storr

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[38] "Ésta es una reforma justa, necesaria y urgente, y cada día que sigue durmiendo en el Congreso, significa un día más de espera para 2,6 millones de hombres y mujeres chilenas que dedicaron su vida al trabajo y que hoy en la tercera edad tienen derecho -se lo merecen- a una tercera edad con más tranquilidad, con más oportunidades, con mejores pensiones, con más dignidad y con mayor bienestar."

[39] "Yo creo que es una causa justa, estoy convencido que es una causa urgente. Por eso le quiero pedir, representando e interpretando a todos mis compatriotas, a los parlamentarios que no sigan haciendo esperar esta reforma de las pensiones."

2019). Additionally, as Vis and many other authors have noted, Piñera adopted one of the most classic political communication techniques, blame avoidance (Weaver 1986; Vis & van Kersbergen 2013; Wenzelburger & Hörisch 2016a, 2016b); Nelson 2016; Hansson 2018).

As we recently sustained, another interesting finding is how Piñera treats the State when relating it to public aid. In this discourse, he addresses it as an outsider, an external entity that should assist Chileans more. “But, in addition, the State has to make a greater effort, and that is why we are increasing the State's contribution to the Solidarity Pillar by 40%.”[40]

By doing this, Piñera dissociates his role as president of the government -the cabinet’s elected political leader- from the one as the president of the State –the most important representative of the Chilean public administration. This does not come as a surprise, considering the long-lasting subsidiarity principle tradition in Chile’s center-right. As discussed earlier, subsidiarity conceives the Executive as a watchdog for the free-market deployment rather than a public goods and services provider.

One possible explanation for Piñera simplifying his narrative lies in the political necessity of getting another State power to act. Piñera needed the Congress representatives to pass the bill. Hence, the audience was clear; he knew who was to blame by the people and whom he needed to act urgently. Accordingly, his message turned briefer, more straightforward and with a clear call to action near the end of the speech:

> Therefore, from the bottom of my heart, I would like to ask the parliamentarians to approve this Wednesday, once and for all, a Pension Reform, which is needed, deserved and requested by 2.6 million men and women of our country who are in the old age.[41]

After analyzing the speaker’s nominations and predications, we will examine his argumentative devices. As we did in the foregoing piece, Table 12 summarizes Piñera’s central argumentation schemes when not appealing to mere logic, i.e., the fallacies he committed. Likewise, we find his most employed *topoi*.

Table 45. Sebastián Piñera Speech #2’s Argumentation Schemes and Fallacies

Name of topos	***Name of fallacy***	***Paraphrase***
Justice	Argumentum ad consequentiam	P2-3. The pensions are too low and the elders deserve higher pensions. So, we should raise the pensions.

[40] “Pero, además, el Estado tiene que hacer un mayor esfuerzo, y por eso estamos aumentando el aporte del Estado al Pilar Solidario en un 40%.”

[41] “Por eso, desde el fondo del corazón, les quiero pedir a los parlamentarios que este miércoles, de una vez por todas, aprueben una Reforma a las Pensiones, que la necesitan, la merece y la están pidiendo 2,6 millones de hombres y mujeres de nuestro país que están en la tercera edad.”

Urgency	Evading the burden of proof	p13. Since it is a necessary and equitable cause, the Congress members should pass the pension reform's bill.
Definition	Circular reasoning	p6. The State has to make an effort, then the State is raising its pension contribution.
Reality	Argumentum ad consequentiam	p16. Since our elders sowed the most important things in life, therefore they should reap it and enjoy their lives.
	False premise	p18. I want to thank the elders because we have so much to learn from them and they have so much to teach us.

Source: own elaboration.

Like in the first speech, Piñera employs the reality, urgency, and justice *topoi* when enacting argumentative fallacies. However, he also utilizes the reality topos, which is a tautological argument. In the previous example we have already explained those *topoi*'s advantages and disadvantages, so we will go directly to describe the fallacies.

The most common fallacy in this second speech was the *argumentum ad consequentiam*. The argument holder recurs to a moral implication of his or her premises -instead of a logical one- and proposes a morally desirable conclusion to that premise. So, with the independence of the assertion's veracity, the speaker advocates for its underlying morality. Here we have two examples. In the first one, Piñera sustains that the pensions are too low, which he declares is unjust because elders deserve to get more substantial pensions than the current ones. In consequence -he argues- Chileans should get higher pensions. Perhaps all that sounds fair, but it does not logically justify increasing pensions. In the second example, the president argues that the old adults deserve to enjoy their lives because they cared for "sowing" important things like "love, affection, family, children, and friends."[42] No one will probably deny the nobility behind Piñera's words. However, the statement does not demonstrate why the elders deserve to enjoy their lives in a logical dimension.

Finally, we have the perspectivation analysis. Table 13 summarizes the speech's characters, after which we will interpret the discourse's framings.

Table 46. Sebastián Piñera Speech #2's Characters

Supporters of the Government		***Not supporters of the Government***	
I/we	***Not those against the reform***	***Not us***	***Those against/not in favor of the reform***
I; we	My father; our senior citizens; our country's middle class; our country's women; elders with severe dependency, Chilean men and women	The State	The Congress members

Source: own elaboration.

[42] "¿Qué es lo que siembra una persona durante su vida? Lo más importante: amor, cariño, familia, hijos, amigos, y por eso nuestros adultos mayores tienen derecho a cosechar lo que sembraron durante su vida, teniendo una tercera edad con más felicidad, con más oportunidades y con más dignidad."

President Piñera positions himself on the side of the victims since the first moment of the speech, and he does so with intimacy by recalling the memory of his late father:

> I remember our father always telling us "treat the elderly today, as you would want them to treat you tomorrow". That stuck not only in my head, but also in my heart.[43]

From that resort, the orator starts enlisting those disadvantaged groups to whom the reform attempts to assist. So, he expounds how he and the government's friends -the victims- are struggling due to the delay in approving the pension reform bill, as we detailed when analyzing Table 10. After that, Piñera centers all the criticism and responsibility on the Congress members.

In balance, we can summarize the most remarkable aspects of both speeches' analyses. Firstly, Piñera's argumentation was highly moralizing in both pieces. Through his argumentation schemas and *topoi*, he appealed to the reform fairness and the moral debt of society toward its elderly. Secondly, in both perorations, he draws the State as an external, mayfly entity with whom he has a scarce relationship as president of the country.

Thirdly, despite the commonalities, Piñera changed the tone and the narrative structure in diverse ways between his announcement and the to-the-Congress address. In the announcement speech, he spoke extensively, detailing many characters and no villain and underscoring the reform's underlying ideological components. In the second speech, instead, the president advocated for simpler communication. He significantly reduced the speech's length, cast fewer personae, and defined a sole villain while focusing the message on getting the reform bill's approval. The framing was also different in the two discourses. In the first one, he uses a more paternalistic stance when referring to the beneficiaries *-victims-* with a cold-technical approach. In the second one, he set a personal attachment to the victims, expressing even anger toward the bad guys -the Congress members- preventing those victims from having what they deserve. The letter introduces us to the next section.

"Facts tell, but stories sell", said Carville and Begala (in Salmon 2017, chapter Turning Politics Into a Story). In this regard, as Salmon points out,

> 'People don't want more information,' writes Annette Simmons, who wrote one of the bestselling books on storytelling. 'They are up to their eyeballs in information. They want faith—faith in you, in your goals, your success, in the story you tell. It is faith that moves mountains, not facts. Facts do not give birth to faith. Faith needs a story to sustain it—a meaningful story that inspires belief in you and renews hope that your ideas indeed offer what you promise.'

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[43] "Yo recuerdo que nuestro padre siempre nos decía 'traten a los adultos mayores hoy día, como van a querer que los traten a ustedes mañana'. Eso se me quedo grabado no sólo en la cabeza, también en el corazón."

That last idea connects with the next section, where we show Piñera's 12 speeches' narrative and persuasive potential analysis.

3.2. Assessing the Persuasive Potential of Sebastián Piñera's

As defined in Methodology, we attempt to complement the politolinguistics analysis applying our proposed Unpopular Policy Narrative Model. As a reminder of that model and how we run the analysis, see Table 14's operationalization.

Table 47. Operationalization of the Unpopular Policy Communication's Persuasive Potential

<table>
<tr><th>Phases</th><th>Concepts</th><th>Dimensions</th><th>Questions</th><th>Attributes</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">DRAWING ATTENTION</td><td>Narrative</td><td>Setting the status quo</td><td>1. Are there elements that set a status quo-altering crisis scenario that make the unpopular policy necessary?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td>Persuasion principles</td><td>Confirmation bias</td><td>2. Does the narrator make concrete examples about the problem to help the audience to internalize the problem and mobilize their leaning toward the narrative?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">CULTIVATING A POSITIVE ASSOCIATION</td><td rowspan="2">Narrative</td><td rowspan="2">The plot</td><td>3. Is there a hero/victim suffering from something?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td>4. Is there any villain to blame for the hero's suffering?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Persuasion principles</td><td>Reciprocation</td><td>5. Does the narrator make any meaningful, unexpected and/or customized gesture to the audience?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td>Liking</td><td>6. Is the narrator similar to their audience, flattering to them, and/or seen as authentic?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">REDUCING UNCERTAINTY</td><td rowspan="3">Narrative</td><td>The guide</td><td>7. Is the government compassionate about the hero's situation?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">The plan</td><td>8. Does the unpopular policy proposal (the plan's what) restore the status quo's stability?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td>9. Is there a clear policy solution (the plan's how)?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Persuasion principles</td><td>Social proof</td><td>10. Does the narrator include social validity and feasibility arguments to convince others? Are others like the audience going through the same?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td>Authority</td><td>11. Does the narrator turn to trustworthy experts or well-reputed sources to make the policy more persuasive?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
<tr><td>MOTIVATING ACTION</td><td>Narrative</td><td>The nudge</td><td>12. Is it clear what the hero and the veto players/challengers should do stick to the plan?</td><td>1 = Yes
0 = No</td></tr>
</table>

			13. Is it clear what would happen if the hero and the veto players/challengers do not stick to the plan?	1 = Yes 0 = No
	Persuasion principles	Scarcity[44]	14. Did the narrator present their policy as a unique opportunity?	1 = Yes 0 = No
		Consistency	15. Did the narrator remind the audience how the current requests correspond to the audience's or the speaker's past actions?	1 = Yes 0 = No

Source: own elaboration based on the work of Crow & Jones (2018), Miller (2017); Polletta et al. (2011), Polletta (2015), Thaler & Sunstein (2009), and Cialdini (2007; 2016).

After completing questions 1 to 15 for each speech, we ended with the general persuasive potential index. As shown in Table 15, "1" signals that the speech did contain a particular resort, whereas "0" suggests it did not. Then, we run a simple sum for every speech's results to obtain the general persuasive potential index.

Table 48. Piñera's Speeches' General Persuasive Potential

Speech	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15	General Persuasive Potential Index
181028_P	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	7
181214_P	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	13
190111_P	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
190118_P	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
190228_P	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	10
090319_P	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	14
190502_P	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	10
190506_P	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	11
190601_P	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	13
190613_P	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
190926_P	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	8
191016_P	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	10
Average General Persuasive Potential																**9.58**
Standard deviation																**2.87**

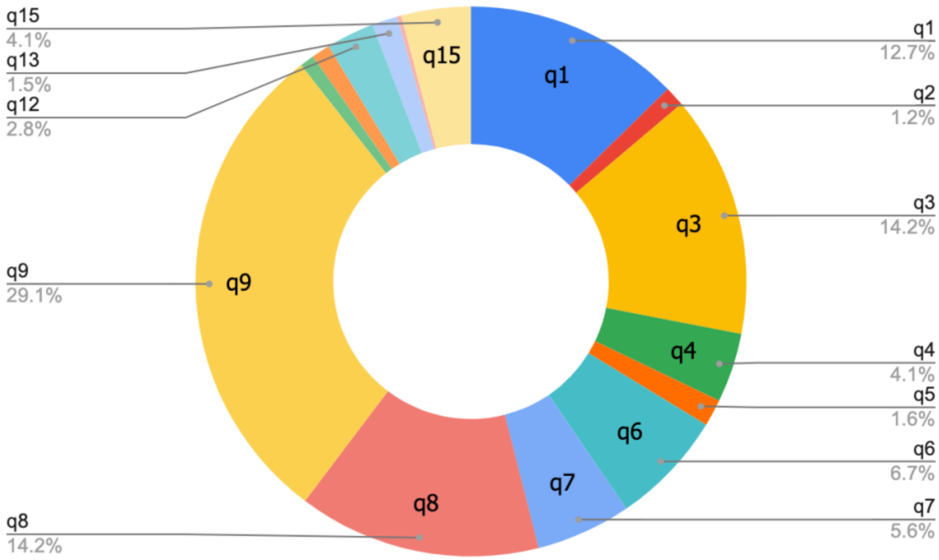
Source: own elaboration.

[44] Although it may seem redundant, we initially wanted to repeat question 12 for the scarcity dimension. It is a good sign that very distant authors, such as Cialdini, Thaler and Sunstein, and experts in policy narrative converge on this. As we saw in the Theoretical Framework of the current research, individual action within a crisis context stems from Kahnemann and Tversky's seminal prospective theory. Finally, we discarded re-doing the question not to alter the final index calculation.

The average general persuasive potential was 9.58 (the index goes from 0 to 15), with a 2.87 standard deviation. That average tells that considering our 12-speeches sample, Piñera scored about 63.8% (9.58) out of the originally 15-listed persuasive resorts. The highest scores were recorded between the February 2019 (190228_P) and the June 2019 (190601_P) speeches. Conversely, the standard deviation suggests that Piñera was somewhat irregular in using persuasive resorts: in some disquisitions, he used many; in others, very few. For instance, in one of the January 2019 (190111_P) perorations, he used only five out of 15; in the March 2019 speech (090319_P), he utilized 14. Regarding the particular resources, in every speech, Piñera drew the status quo (q1 in Table 15), pointed out heroes or victims (q3), and specified policy plans (q8 and q9). Instead, he rarely presented his policy as a unique opportunity (q14) or played the social proof tactic (q10).

This first analysis, although practical, is incomplete. It provides a panoramic impression of Piñera's employing the literature-documented persuasive tools but does not assign relative importance to every particular tool. The examination is limited to a persuasive resort's mere presence or absence. To overcome that, we followed a simple logic to obtain details about the resources Piñera chose when delivering his speeches and how he distributed those resorts. Then, using each resort's relative frequencies, we can answer more specific questions. For instance, did the orator use more reciprocation or nudge-related techniques? Did he distribute those resorts regularly throughout our year of analysis, or did that distribution change? Which one was Piñera's favorite or most frequent persuasive resource? To do so, first, we added up all the passages of the speeches that fit into our classification of persuasive resources. Then, for each piece, we estimated the proportion that each of these resources represented with respect to the total. Figure 4 depicts the average proportion of each persuasive tool in Piñera's performances.

Figure 14. Sebastián Piñera's Average Persuasive Preferences



Source: own elaboration.

Firstly, the figure confirms what we saw before: Piñera gave relatively considerable importance to drawing the status quo of the reform (q1, 12.7%), identifying heroes and victims (q3, 14.2%), and delivering defined policy plans (q8, 14.2%; q9, 29.1%). Moreover, the policy plan questions (q8 and q9) add 43.3% of the discourses' persuasive extracts. The latter should be no wonder since one of President Piñera's main strengths was *to solve problems*. As we discussed earlier, people voted for him for his previous business success. They supported his first administration due to his managerial style in two severe crises: the 2010 earthquake and the miners' rescue. Presumably, he stuck to those attributes when deploying the pension reform's communication strategy.

Recalling what we previously said is essential: "facts tell, but stories sell." Piñera may have overused his policy-maker dimension to the detriment of his narrative aspect. As Neale and Ely (2007, chapter Speech Preparation) sustain, "Statistics should be used with care and moderation. Like the points in an outline, they are better alluded to in context than cited in tedious detail. A speech filled with statistics becomes a statistical abstract, not a speech." As a result, perhaps Piñera's communication was logically solid but not necessarily convincing. Even Aristotle sustained it centuries ago:

> Further, even if we were to have the most exact knowledge, it would not be very easy for us in speaking to use it to persuade [some audiences]. Speech based on knowledge is teaching, but teaching is impossible [with some audiences]; rather, it is necessary for *pisteis* and speeches [as a whole] to be formed on the basis of common [beliefs]. (Aristotle 2007, p. 35)

Additionally, naming so many diverse victims may have played against the orator's persuasive potential. As we showed in the politolinguistics analysis, Piñera tends to individuate every single victim, which multiplies the policy problem: every group experiences the conflict from a different perspective. Consequently, the audience should expect multiple policy solutions solving the problem with the same intensity or, said negatively, multiple sacrifices affecting everybody with the same intensity. In balance, an unpopular reform communication strategy must put justice in the center. Here comes into play Henriksson's view (2007, p. 19): unpopular reforms must be presented as a package.

> The idea is to signal that you are not partisan and that the budget deficit is a general problem that everyone should participate in solving.
>
> As a politician you can never explain why you need to cut pensions alone. But if, at the same time, you cut child benefits and unemployment insurance and raise income tax for the richest, you are on safe ground. The idea is to not single out the losers.
>
> When one strong interest group complains, you are in trouble. But if everybody complains, you are not.

Secondly, we realize that even though Piñera regularly included some persuasive resorts in his allocutions, they represented a minimal proportion with respect to all the persuasive tools employed. That is the case of reciprocation (q5). He used reciprocation in nine out of 12 discourses, but the resort represents a meager 1.6% of the total persuasive mentions. That is also the case of the call to action (q12). He specified what the veto players and challengers had to do to stick to his plan in seven speeches, but those fragments constitute just 2.8% of the persuasive fragments. These two anomalies are owing to the redundancy Piñera committed when setting the status quo and explaining his policy plans: those mentions hoarded most of the mentions.

Thirdly, we find consistency regarding the less used persuasive tools. As we addressed before, scarcity (q14) and social proof (q10), the most absent resources, scored 0.2% and 0.8%, respectively. Furthermore, a slightly more used resort was turning to authoritative figures (q11). However, despite including it in five speeches, it only marked 1.1% of the persuasive passages. Lastly, Piñera used the prospective theory resource minimal (q13, 1.5%). As we previously said, showing the losses in case we do not stick to the guide's plan -namely, the unpopular policy- is vital. The "There Is No Alternative" (TINA) factor is missing in Piñera's communication, and, therefore, the nudge was probably lacking the strength to motivate action. When there is no risk, there is no emotionality. As we previously discussed, risk triggers anger, fear, and even excitement. Those are moving feelings, and, as Reinsborough and Canning (2017, chapter Winning the Battle of the Story) affirm, emotionality makes a narrative engaging:

> People don't swing into action because of a pie chart. An effective narrative should connect to real-world impacts and speak in the language of values. Engage your audience's emotions with themes like hope, anger, tragedy, and determination. Humor (as long as it strikes the right tone) can be a powerful way to make your narrative memorable.

Table 16 details the speaker's persuasive preferences throughout the 12 analyzed speeches.

Table 49. Piñera's Persuasive Preferences

Speech	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15
181028_P	0.08	0.00	0.32	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.11	0.14	0.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03
181214_P	0.10	0.00	0.11	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.14	0.40	0.05	0.06	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.02
190111_P	0.11	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.33	0.00	0.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.22
190118_P	0.10	0.00	0.21	0.00	0.07	0.17	0.10	0.07	0.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
190228_P	0.15	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.00	0.09	0.53	0.01	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.01
090319_P	0.11	0.01	0.11	0.08	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.33	0.14	0.00	0.01	0.06	0.02	0.01	0.04
190502_P	0.12	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.51	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.08	0.00	0.02
190506_P	0.07	0.04	0.26	0.07	0.04	0.04	0.22	0.07	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.04	0.00	0.00
190601_P	0.13	0.00	0.08	0.09	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.18	0.43	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.02
190613_P	0.35	0.00	0.15	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10
190926_P	0.11	0.00	0.22	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.17	0.31	0.00	0.03	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00
191016_P	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.00	0.06	0.09	0.06	0.31	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.03

Source: own elaboration.

The red-marked numbers correspond to the most utilized persuasive resort within each speech (every row refers to a speech). The primary trend, once again, is defining a precise policy measure (q9). It concentrates the most mentions in seven of the 12 speeches. The second most dominant resource was highlighting heroes and victims needing pension reform (q3). That occurred twice, in the reform announcement speech and in May 2019's, when Piñera called the Congress members to approve the reform. In both opportunities, Piñera seemed to have clarity about his target -the Congress members- and his audience -the victims. That is crucial. In that regard, Reinsborough and Canning (2017, chapter Winning the Battle of the Story) explain why this is vital:

> In order for your cornerstones to provide a strong foundation for your story-based strategy there must be an underlying strategic relationship connecting them—that is, how all these strategic elements intersect, interact, and reinforce each other. For instance, many social change efforts address a common root cause problem: power imbalances that allow a lack of accountability between the targeted power-holder and the impacted

> constituency. In other words, the target can't be persuaded just because "it's the right thing." (If they can, great! Lobby them, achieve the goal, and move on to your next campaign.) Thus the role of your story-based strategy is not to change the mind of the target, but rather to mobilize public engagement on the issue in a manner that forces the target to respond. This is why audiences are often prioritized based on their ability to influence the target, because this can help shift the larger power relationships and provoke the social conflict in ways that are advantageous for your organizing.

Lastly, we observe two outliers. One was the 1 June 2019 discourse (190601_P), the Chilean version of the US *State of the Union*. In that case, the President was particularly intense in addressing the policy problems (q1). Although a concrete plan is necessary to convince others to follow that path (Miller 2017), enumerating more than the essential aspects of it or bringing up no related policies -which Piñera does often- is counterproductive, as Neale and Ely (2007, chapter Speech Preparation) show:

> Do not try to say too much, particularly when the speech is intended as the vehicle for a major announcement or initiative. The most memorable presidential inaugural addresses have been those that set a single theme, or coherent group of related themes. Stick to no more than three major points, rather than attempting to say a little something about everything. Anything more risks running afoul of Churchill's famous comment concerning a bland dessert: "This pudding has no theme".

In that same vein, Storr (2019, chapter Cause and effect; literary versus mass-market storytelling) warns about over explaining:

> But all storytellers, no matter who their intended audience, should beware of over-tightening their narratives. While it's dangerous to leave readers feeling confused and abandoned, it's just as risky to over-explain. Causes and effects should be shown rather than told; suggested rather than explained. Readers should be free to anticipate what's coming next and able to insert their own feelings and interpretations into why that just happened and what it all means.

Now, the other outlier speech was the 11 January 2019's. Piñera not only abstained from specifying any defined policy solution as in the other perorations but emphasized the liking resort (q6). On that occasion, he inaugurated a community center for the elderly. Hence, the audience was mainly local authorities and old adult neighbors; apparently, Piñera understood and took advantage of it. Instead of addressing an interminable list of policy solutions and identifying multiple victims, he chose a few meaningful ideas that made sense to those attending the discourse.

There is abundant literature on political, corporate, and general public communication audiences. Jefferson Bates' work (in Neale & Ely 2007, chapter Writing For The Spoken Word: The Distinctive Task of The Speechwriter) is one of the most prominent guides. He would sustain that "'audience analysis' is probably the single most important factor to be considered in writing every speech: know your listeners, and you will have a much better chance of connecting with them." In doing so, Bates recommends examining the listeners' demographics, the size of the audience, and their degree of political affiliation.

Tu summarize, Piñera's communication persuasive analysis suggests that:

- Although he used a significant amount of our 15 literature findings on persuasive, he used most of them irregularly.

- However, Piñera's style gives prominence to some resorts, like specifying his policy solutions, identifying heroes or victims, and drawing the status quo. As in many cases, here, quantity does not necessarily imply quality. We can say that Piñera mentioned more than the optimal quantity of policy plans and addressed too many heroes. That may have provoked confusion or fatigue in the audience, hindering them from following and adhering to the orator's ideas.

- On the contrary, some other devices may have given more efficacy to Piñera's speeches. For instance, his *nudge* part (q12 and q13) was relatively weak, which could have been detrimental for him in convincing citizens and legislators to adopt the pension reform.

We will look into more detail these conclusions by evaluating Piñera's strategy outcomes. Was he successful in implementing and getting others to support the pension reform? Could the persuasive elements relate to those results?

4. Evaluating Piñera's Communication Strategy's Success

To start, some government officials do not see Piñera's pension reform as a complete success. For instance, former Piñera's minister Gonzalo Blumel (2023) is rather critical of the reform management:

> We presented the pension reform too late. There have passed about eight or nine years already [when we sent the bill to Congress]. You must do it at the beginning of your period, when your political muscle is the strongest. And you have to reach consensus with the opposition. If we have done so, we would have now an approved and implemented reform (translation by the author from Spanish).

In the following, we will examine into more detail Piñera's success according to three variables: the effective implementation of the reform, whether Piñera was able to hand office to any successor or political ally, and his approval rates during the 12-month analyzed period.

4.1. Effective Implementation of the Reform

Piñera managed to promulgate a pension reform bill, but it was not the one we analyzed. The approved bill was distant from the original project. It strengthened the pension system's solidarity component by creating a Universal Guaranteed Pension (PGU in Spanish). The PGU increased the State pension contribution to vulnerable elders to a significant extent (Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia 2022). However, the ultimate reform did not include any of the painful aspects of the original. It did not provide for increased contributions to individual private pension funds, no incentives for those willing to delay their retirement age, and no changes to the fund management industry. In short, Congress passed a popular policy proposal.

Despite the former, it is essential to note that some of Piñera's actions may have impacted the Congress members' stance toward the original project. For instance, after his 6 May 2019 speech, whereby he impelled the Congress members to approve the bill, the Chamber of Deputies passed the bill on 15 May 2019 (Senado República de Chile 2023) to go through the legislative process[45]. However, regardless of that victory, on 20 January 2020, the President finally took back the bill he had initially sent (Senado República de Chile 2023).

On balance, Piñera did not manage to pass and implement his pension reform. Perhaps, if he had made Congress approve it, it would have been a success. However, as sustained, he was forced to take back the original project and replace it with a popular one.

4.2. Office-keeping

The second success factor to look at is office keeping. As in the previous variable, Piñera failed to pass the presidency to his successor or political ally. Instead, the far-left young politician, 35-year-old Gabriel Boric, won the elections in 2021 after defeating the far-right José Antonio Kast in the second-round elections (Servel 2023).

When analyzing the first-round outcomes, the failure is still evident. Piñera's former minister and political pact partner Sebastián Sichel obtained 12.8% of votes, tying for third place with Franco Parisi (see Table 17).

Table 50. December 2021 Chilean Presidential Elections, First Round

Candidate	Votes	%
Gabriel Boric	1,815,024	25.8%
José Antonio Kast	1,961,779	27.9%
Yasna Provoste	815,563	11.6%

[45] It does not mean the bill is ready to be promulgated. Instead, it allows the bill to go through the legislative debate to be discussed, if necessary, modified, and then voted again.

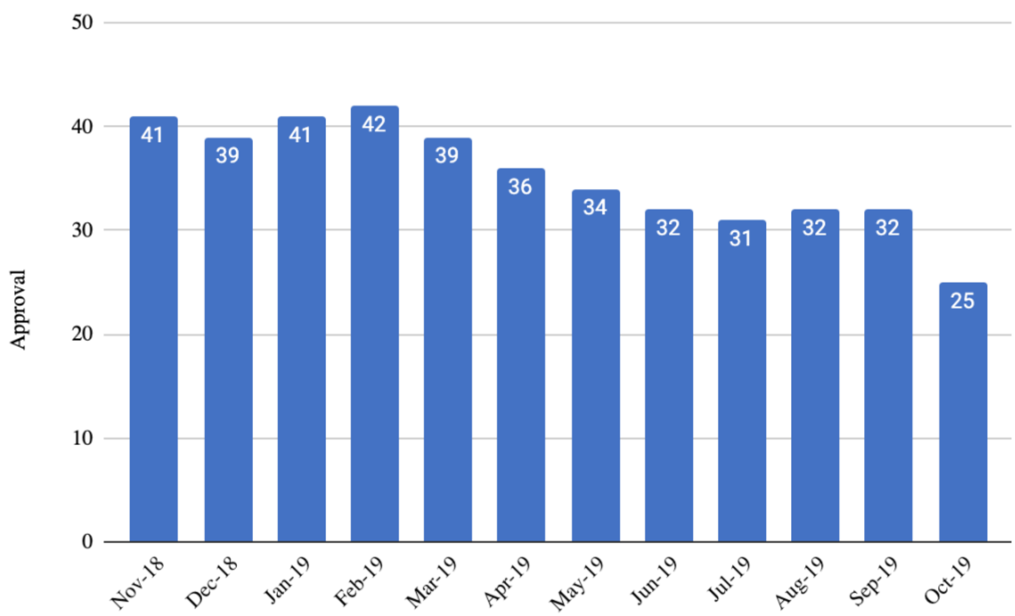
Sebastián Sichel	**898,635**	**12.8%**
Eduardo Artés	102,897	1.5%
Marco Enríquez-Ominami	534,383	7.6%
Franco Parisi	900,064	12.8%

Source: Servel 2023.

4.3. Approval Rates

As the methodology specified, we used presidential approval rates as a proxy for the citizenry’s consent. For the Chilean case, we utilized the pollster Cadem Research’s data (2022, p. 21). As Cadem shows, president Piñera’s support evolution for the selected period (October 2018 – October 2019) was the following:

Figure 15. Sebastián Piñera Approval Rates, November 2018 - October 2019 (%)



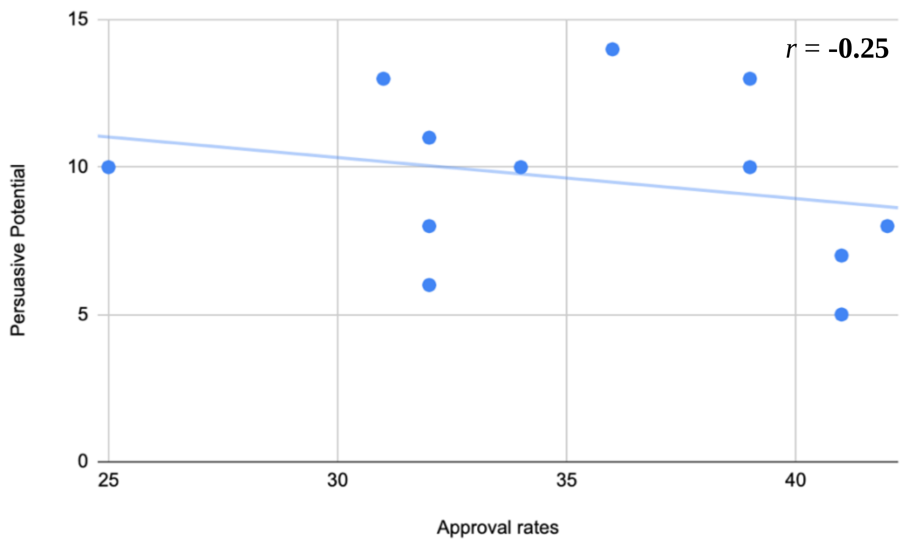
Source: own elaboration based on Cadem Research 2022.

The trend in Figure 6 shows a decline in Chilean's support for Piñera. Although around 40% of interviewees had backed him when he announced the pension reform, a year later, only a quarter did. The president's popularity kept around 40% until March 2019 (when his "honeymoon" year ended). After that, the approval rates steadily declined to 32% and stayed at those levels. Lastly, they descended to 25%, probably due to Chile's 18 October social outrage (El País 2022).

Since approval rates constitute a numerical index, we explored their relationship with our persuasive potential indexes. Searching for that relationship provides a quantitative measure of the persuasive resort’s efficacy -despite its perfectibility-. It also allows us to compare this case with Italy's. To find out if there was any statistical relationship, we ran some correlation analyses using Pearson's coefficient r. The results are exciting and could motivate some further research on this matter.

Firstly, we analyzed the correlation between the speeches' General Persuasive Potential index and Sebastián Piñera's approval rates. By doing this, we attempted to identify if Piñera's communicative performance was related to his popularity performance.

Figure 16. Correlation Sebastián Piñera's General Persuasive Potential and Approval Rates (r Pearson)



Source: own elaboration using Cadem Research data.

As Figure 7 shows, the relationship is doubtful, if not random. It suggests a Pearson's *r* coefficient of -0.25, a weak correlation[46]. Indeed, the figure shows a random distribution of the scattered values. That would indicate that when the values of one of our two variables decrease, those of the other increase slightly. However, the value is too small to assign a significant relationship between the two variables. In any case, considering that our *r*-value is negative, it negates our hypothesis that when the speaker improves his General Persuasive Potential, i.e., by including more persuasive resources in his speeches, his approval ratings increase.

Nevertheless, as we said before, considering solely the General Persuasive Potential can be reductionist when analyzing an orator's persuasive performance. Therefore, we analyzed the correlations between every 15-listed persuasive resort prevalence throughout the 12 speeches and Sebastián Piñera's approval rates (see Table 18). This analysis considers

[46] The Kent State University (2023) sets as general guidelines that .1 < | r | < .3 correlation represents a small/weak correlation; .3 < | r | < .5 constitutes a medium/moderate correlation, and that *r* greater than .5 is a large/strong correlation.

each variable in terms of relative frequency. That means we attempt to measure what happens when a persuasive resort's share of respect to the entire persuasive pool changes and how that relates to the approval rates.

Table 51. R Pearson Correlation Sebastián Piñera's Persuasive Preferences vs Approval Rates

Persusive resort	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15
***r* pearson**	-0.16	**-0.68**	0.19	**-0.77**	**0.39**	**0.47**	-0.14	0.19	-0.10	0.17	0.05	**-0.64**	-0.11	0.23	0.22

Source: own elaboration using Cadem Research data.

As Table 18 shows, there are few persuasive resources whose prevalence has a significant relationship with Piñera's approval rates. The strongest is identifying a villain (q4, r = -0.77). According to the correlation coefficient, we could expect higher approval rates when Piñera uses relatively fewer speech fragments to point out villains, which is inconsistent with the literature findings. Making concrete examples also negatively correlates with approval rates (q2, r = -0.68). Therefore, his approval rate was lower when the president provided more examples. Similarly, when the call to action is less present (q12, r = -0.64), citizens supported Piñera more, which is inconsistent with our theoretical framework. Finally, we find a moderate correlation between popularity and Piñera cultivating positive associations among his audience. When he flatters the audience (q6, r = 0.47) and makes meaningful gestures to them (q5, r = 0.39), people may back him more than when he did not use those techniques.

Additionally, we would have expected other persuasive resorts to have a significant relationship with approval rates based on our Unpopular Policy Narrative Model. For instance, drawing the status quo (q1, r = -0.16) seemed particularly important in an unpopular reform context. However, at least following these data, it has a moderate negative correlation with approval rates. Likewise, showing the potential losses of not adhering to the painful policy (q13, r = -0.11) and presenting the reform as a unique opportunity (q14, r = 0.23) should also have shared more covariance with Piñera's approval rates. Instead, their correlations with the rating variable were weak.

There exist several plausible explanations for the dissonance between President Piñera's persuasive analysis and the academic findings. Firstly, approval rates, as a dependent variable, are subject to distortion by a multitude of factors, with communication of unpopular policies being only one among many. Therefore, it is conceivable that the impact of communication on approval rates may be relatively marginal. Secondly, it is important to acknowledge that our analysis only considered speeches in which President Piñera explicitly mentioned the term "pension" or its variants. While this approach provides a robust evaluation of Piñera's performance, it neglects the potential contributions of other influential actors, such as high-ranking government officials, industry actors, civil society or NGO representatives, and opposition politicians. Failing to account for their perspectives and contributions may thus limit the comprehensiveness and nuance of our analysis.

5. Conclusions on the Piñera Government Communication Strategy

President Piñera's reform was not a success. His administration did not pass the bill to implement it, his approval rates decayed steadily as his government went forward, and he could not hand office to his allies. As we sustained earlier, probably many factors converged to that. For instance, former minister Blumel esteems that the political strategy lacked a sense of opportunity and that timing was not ideal. In that sense, the pension's communication is a small sample of the situation rather than the cause of the political failure. However, there are elements in that communication strategy that are worth examining.

Firstly, from the politolinguistics analysis, we infer that President Piñera's rhetoric mainly appealed to the *moral duty* behind the reform: for the government to ensure higher and better public assistance, for Congress, to approve a just bill, and for citizens to support a reform helping those in need and the elders in general. Academic findings suggest that the most effective -or the most used- rhetoric in this realm has been to draw a fatalist panorama wherein the unpopular reform appears inevitable and even desirable. Piñera's communication lacked that.

Secondly, the policy promoter should have slightly polished his communication efforts. For example, Piñera cast too many characters and explained too many policy solutions. That over-abundance probably overfilled the audience with information that was neither essential nor necessary for the listeners to understand and support the reform. To summarize, "Facts tell, but stories sell" is what the president should have privileged more instead of offering that many elements.

Thirdly, our persuasive potential examination confirms that Piñera emphasized detailing the policy plans and listing the status quo's victims considerably. Nevertheless, on the other hand, his calls to action were few if not inexistent in some of the discourses - the *nudge*, according to the studied authors- and he rarely stated the catastrophic effects for Chileans if they would not adhere to the reform – the *prospective theory*. The latter could have been crucial in the president's incapacity to compel the government's stakeholders to follow him.

Fourthly, the chosen success variables indicate that Piñera did not do entirely well regarding their pension reform. He could not pass the reform bill until he presented a wholly different project - a popular pension reform. Let alone implement it. On the other side, Piñera could not hand the power to his political allies, who were defeated in the first round of elections. Similarly, the president's approval decayed significantly and sustainedly in the analyzed period.

Lastly, our model of analysis needs to be perfected. On the one side, the speaker's General Persuasive Potential does not provide very helpful information; instead, the orator's

Persuasive Preferences deliver more eloquent clues about his performance. Additionally, running a correlation analysis gives the impression to help understand communicative performance's persuasive power. Again, however, choosing a more suitable dependent variable is mandatory. In this case, instead of approval rates, it would be ideal to count on quantitative evaluation of the speeches -which government communication offices commission routinely- or at least a public opinion survey regarding the reform in question at different times.

On balance, it is unclear if President Piñera designed a political communication strategy to promote his pension reform. Timings were not ideal, and his public interventions on the matter, apparently, could not convince the government's stakeholders.

CHAPTER V

MONTI-FORNERO VS. PIÑERA: COMPARING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR UNPOPULAR POLICY

In the previous chapters, we explored the relevant literature on political and government communication for unpopular policies. We delved into the use of persuasive techniques such as storytelling and examined the application of psychological and social psychology principles to enhance narrative effectiveness.

Furthermore, we conducted an in-depth analysis of two distinct cases involving unpopular policies and their respective communication strategies.

Now, it is time to compare the outcomes of these two cases, identifying their similarities and differences. We will assess the extent to which each speaker achieved their objectives and uncover the underlying peculiarities of each case. Through this comparative analysis, we aim to extract valuable insights and gain a deeper understanding of the unique aspects that must be considered when dealing with similar phenomena (Merton, 1968). Likewise, we expect to answer our research questions. The latter we will do in the next chapter, Conclusion.

Following the preceding case analysis structure, we will confront several elements between the cases:

- Each reform status quo (including the political context and the socioeconomic conditions).
- Each reform in terms of public policy.
- Each government's communication strategy (their political rhetoric and persuasive potential).
- Each communication strategy's success.

We will present the information schematically since we inquired into those aspects in detail in chapters III and IV. That will make the comparison easier to follow and allow us to omit the previous explanations to avoid excessive repetition.

1. Comparing the Reforms Status Quos

The first element that calls attention is how each analyzed president came to power. Chile's Sebastián Piñera won his second election. Italy's Mario Monti, instead, was designated by President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano. In any case, both experienced advantages and disadvantages. On the one side, Piñera enjoyed democratic legitimacy to push through his reforms. However, he was under pressure to hand the presidency to his political allies -which he could not do after his first administration- by sticking to his campaign promises. On the other side, Monti did not enjoy democratic legitimacy, which potentially could have limited his policy agenda, limiting his range of action. Nevertheless, as Monti was the chief of the *governo tecnico*, people could expect him to promote unpopular and painful reforms.

A second aspect is the use of crisis to announce the pension reforms. As we affirmed, portraying an untenable scenario in which the only option is to pursue an unpopular policy is crucial. Here there are also substantial differences between Piñera and Monti. The Chilean alluded to the country's general situation and how his predecessor was "drifting off course" of the economy. According to Piñera, that would eventually take Chile away from the "development path" it followed over the previous 30 years. By doing this, Piñera sets a contradiction for his pension reform: he promoted a painful and disruptive policy transformation while calling for a conservative attitude to keep on the development path. Luhmann 2013 (chapter The Paradox of Identity and its Unfolding Through Differentiation) beautifully describes this paradox in the following fragment:

> Society could be paradoxically defined: it was (not yet) what it was. But it was already what it not yet was. It was on the road to progress, which had to be fostered through liberalism; or it was already gathering strength for a revolution by plunging ever deeper into the necessary crisis. The present of the future served as still indeterminate locus for meeting the promise of rationality. One then sought to realize ideas and behaved *progressively*. Both planning and utopia provided counter determinations, which made flight into a still indeterminate future possible; and "democratization" promised that, when the time was ripe, it would prove possible to reach agreement. Or one resolved the paradox in the opposite direction, defining it first as tautology (that is to say, in terms of a distinction that claims not to be one) and then concluding that society is what it is. There is nothing to be done, but disasters can be prevented and aberrations forestalled. One thus becomes *conservative*.

As indicated in the quote, Piñera was appealing to the *indeterminate future possible* for *meeting the promise of rationality*. As logic as it may sound, it is a highly abstract notion for ordinary voters. Therefore, that may have hindered the pension reform instead of making it desirable.

On his side, Monti sticks to a more classical notion of the crisis. Italy's disaster was perceivable by anyone. The 2008 subprime crisis, the Greek near-to-default situation, and the European authorities' demands made it evident. Furthermore, Napolitano designating Monti confirmed the calamity and processed it institutionally. In that vein, *il Primo Ministro* employed crisis in classical terms, as Koselleck describes it (Koselleck & Richte 2006):

> For the Greeks the term "crisis" had relatively clearly demarcated meaining in the sphere of law, medicine, and theology. The concept imposed choices between stark alternatives – right or wrong, salvation or damnation, life or death. (p. 358) (…) Consequently, crisis (…) is most necessary for the community, representing what is at once just and salutary. For this reason, only one who participated as judge could be a citizen (…). For the Greeks, therefore, "crisis" was a central concept by which justice and the political order (*Herrschaftsordnung*) could be harmonized through appropriate legal decisions (p. 359).
>
> (…) With respect to both the moment of judgment and diagnosis, as well as the prescription for a therapy, the medical origins of the term clearly continue to be preserved in the usage of political language. That remains the case to this day, although the determination of the optimal time for a decision is now thought to be determined by inescapable pressures for action. At that moment, use of the concept of crisis is meant to reduce the room for maneuver, forcing the actors to choose between diametrically opposed alternatives (p. 370).

"Italy's political crisis" -as Monti called it before the Senate- demands that Italian citizens be part of the judgment. It is about preserving the Italian community within the European one. Unlike Piñera, in Monti, the change serves to stability and requests upsetting decisions.

In balance, Monti drew an apparent crisis dictating straightforward solutions, making the pension reform easier to accept by the Italians. In addition, that was Monti's job, as every *governo tecnico*-situation mandates. Piñera, on the other hand, turned to a general and abstract scenario. His crisis did not look as critical and easy to comprehend. Conversely, Chilean were probably less leaned to embrace their president's reform.

1.1. Political-institutional Context

1.1.1. General Conditions: Chile and Italy's Political Systems and Historical Antecedents

As we said earlier, each case chapter contains the detail regarding every of the analysis dimensions. Therefore, Table 1 summarizes the chapters' content. Here may lie one of the most essential differences between Chile and Italy: their political systems.

Table 52. Chile and Italy's Political Systems and Historical Antecedents

Variables	Chile	Italy
Political system	Unitary Presidentialism with a bi-cameral National Congress. Some have called it a *multiparty presidentialism.*	Parliamentary democracy with a bi-cameral Parliament. Three strong institutions: Parliament, the Presidency of the Republic, and the government.
Main challenges for implementing unpopular reforms	1. It is indispensable for the government to have the Congress majority. 2. The Constitutional *subsidiarity principle*. The State should not interfere on that where the privates can do better.	1. Rooted corruption and organized crime. 2. The government is accountable to Parliament and the President of the Republic. 3. Government volatility.

Source: own elaboration.

The political-institutional contexts between the Mario Monti administration and the Sebastián Piñera government were somewhat different. Firstly, the political systems are diverse – a multiparty presidential regime versus a parliamentary democracy. That entails several nuances in exercising power. For instance, Siaroff (2003, 287) notes that

> On the one hand, Juan Linz (1994: 70) has concluded that 'presidentialism seems to involve greater risk for stable democratic politics' due to various flaws in (most) presidential systems. On the other hand, Shugart & Carey (1992: 44–46, 40) stress that presidential systems have the advantages of accountability and transparency lacking in (coalitional) parliamentary systems, and they (and others) do not find that presidential regimes as a whole break down more frequently than parliamentary ones. However, this debate is complicated by the fact that many political.

Indeed, institutional designs affect the Executive's incentives to act in one way or another (Cheibub et al. 2004). However, as we saw, in both cases majority in the legislative was a must to approve the unpopular reform. Therefore, that should be the first variable to consider when promoting painful policies.

There are also significant dissimilarities regarding the challenges each mandatary faced. On the one hand, Monti had rooted corruption and organized crime, aspects we did not explore that much. Likewise, it seems he did not pay attention enough to government volatility in Italy. As we saw in the Monti-Fornero chapter, perhaps because he excessively relied on his government's technical character, he seemed to ignore the characteristic political demands linked to being in charge in a parliamentary republic. On the other hand, Piñera tried to deploy an ambitious reforming agenda with no majority in Congress. Despite the veto power that Chilean presidents have, they can engage in wearing conflicts, as, in fact, happened.

1.1.2. The Trigger Factors Preceding Each Government

Table 2 exhibits the differences and similarities between Monti's and Piñera's situations that led them to the presidency.

Table 53. Piñera's and Monti's Governments' Immediate Antecedents

Variables	Chile	Italy
President's political past	Senator and President of Chile (2010 – 2014). People felt Piñera was capable after his first government. He left with a thriving economy and showed good crisis management.	Member of the European Commission (1995 – 2004), as Commissioner for Italy for the Single Market first and then for Competition.
Triggering factors that led them to the presidency	1. President Bachelet's political mistakes (2015 – 2018). 2. Economic slowdown during the Bachelet administration. 3. Unattended citizenry concern regarding pensions.	1. Fragmentation of the right-wing parliamentary majority in the 2008 crisis subprime context. 2. Economic downturn and high fiscal deficit. 3. Incapacity of Berlusconi's government to calm the markets and the European authorities down. 4. Greece's almost-default situation.

Source: own elaboration.

Observing how the presidents' political past fit with their triggering factors is fascinating. Unlike Mario Monti, Sebastián Piñera had a long career as a politician, which not necessarily helped him to promote pension reform. On the one side, despite not being a politician, the Italian president had proven experience dealing with Italy's European and international stakeholders, something on which his predecessor Berlusconi failed. On the other side, Piñera, a long-standing Chilean politician, capitalized Bachelet's mistakes and misfortunes to win his second presidential campaign.

Additionally, we confirm capital divergences between the two leaders' crises. In the Chilean case, the crisis had to be pointed out in order to allow Piñera to conquer the ballot boxes. That makes it difficult to sustain if the people do not perceive the crisis as such during the president's permanent campaign. Edwards (2003, p. 4) provides an accurate definition of the term:

> Leading the public is at the core of the modern presidency. Even as they try to govern, presidents are involved in a permanent campaign. Both politics and policy revolve around presidents' attempts to garner public support, both for themselves and for their policies. The division between campaigning and governing has become obscured. Indeed, governing often seems little more than an extension of the campaign that won the president his office in the first place.

Again, in Piñera's case, the crisis sets a contradiction: a good president cannot affirm that the crisis is still affecting the country after several months in charge.

On the other fence, Italy's crisis was undeniable. Not only the figures but international media showed that Monti's arrival was the best thing to happen. Due to that, "The confidence vote by Parliament saw the highest majority in post-War Italy" (European Parliament 2023).

In sum, Piñera had an unperceived crisis with minority in Congress. A challenging scenario to promote unpopular reforms. Instead, Monti enjoyed majority in Parliament and his crisis was apparent for Italians and worldwide. In this regard, Pierson states a fundamental issue: "Making the claim of crisis credible, however, generally requires collaboration with the political opposition." (1996, p. 177).

1.2. Political-cultural Factors

Table 3 contrasts Italy's and Chile's indicators that we chose to describe the contextual political-cultural factors of each society when Monti-Fornero and Piñera deployed their pension reforms.

Table 54. 2018 Chile's and 2011 Italy's Political-Cultural Factors[1]

Variables	Chile	Italy
Satisfaction with public services/government (OECD)	• 35% is satisfied with the health care system. • 45% is satisfied with the education system and the schools.	29% trust the government.
Political values (WVS)	• 48% think the government should take more responsibility in providing basic services. • 10% believe "politics" is very important. • 54% think that tolerance and respect for other people are important values to teach a child. • 33% thinks that being unselfish is a valuable lesson for kids. • 70% thinks most politicians are involved in corruption. • 66% thinks that "security" is more important than "freedom."	• 93% think family is "very important" • 73% think that tolerance and respect for other people were important values to teach a child • 44% think that being unselfish is a valuable lesson for kids • 9.3% claim "politics" is very important.

[1] Although the optimum would be to compare the exact same indicators, not all are available for the two countries. In this regard, it is important to note that we are analyzing 2011 Italy with 2018 Chile, which narrows the available data even further.

Political associativity (VWS)	• 1.1% is an active member of a political party.	• 3.4% is an active member of a political party.
Confidence in others (WVS)	13% think other people must be trusted.	28% thinks other people must be trusted.
Country's expected priorities for next 10 years	• 48% "a high level of economic growth". • 45% "having a stable economy." • 36% "maintaining the order of the nation." • 27% "the fight against crime."	• 59% "a high level of economic growth." • 45% "having a stable economy." • 39% "fighting against crime." • 38% "People have more say about how things." • 35% "fighting rising prices." • 28% "protecting freedom of speech."
Media (WVS)	• 45% trust the press. • 60% trust the TV. • 84% get their information from TV news. • 58% get their information from their mobile phone.	• 94% get their information from news broadcast on radio or TV. • 83% get their information from in-depth reports on radio or TV.
Democracy Index	• 7.97 out of 10 ("flawed democracy"). • "Political participation was the lowest score" (4.4).	• 7.83 out of 10 ("flawed democracy") • "Functioning of government" was the lowest score" (6.43)
Governance indicators (World Bank)	World's 80 percentile.	World's 64 percentile.
Characteristic sociological trait	*Modernity frustration*	*Amoral familism*

Source: own elaboration.

Table 3's political-cultural factors for 2011 Italy and 2018 Chile exhibit clear divergences and commonalities. Whereas Italians significantly valued tolerance, respect, and unselfishness, that was not necessarily the case for Chileans. Likewise, a little over a quarter of Italians thought others must be trusted; only 13% of Chileans did. Similarly, the rate of Italy's political parties' active members is threefold that of Chile's. Additionally, Chileans and Italians got informed through different means. The former mainly used TV news, but a significant proportion also used mobile phones. For the latter, TV and radio were the most predominant media by far (94%). Lastly, some policy priorities were also unalike. Italians claimed more political participation-related issues like people having more to say about things and protecting freedom of speech. Chileans desired more security-related topics, like maintaining the order of the nation.

Nevertheless, between the two societies, there are also similarities. The Economist Intelligence Unit classified both countries as "flawed democracies," the second-best category after "full democracies." Both nations punctuated around 10% in finding politics "very important." Accordingly, Italians and Chileans share most of their next-10-years priorities. Economic growth and a stable economy were the prime concerns, and the fight against crime ranked third and fourth for Chile and Italy, respectively.

Having looked at Chile and Italy's most apparent similarities and differences, we can now approach their most characteristic sociological traits. In the case of Chile, it is modernity frustration. Recall the Chilean case chapter: the modernity frustration occurred due to the unaccomplished expectations that the 1990s US-like model set in Chile. The merit-based society ideal that Chileans embraced never happened, so many people blamed the private actors sustaining the model. They probably felt alone and powerless due to a low-agency State.

On the other hand, Italy's most distinctive attribute is the amoral familism — the "selfish-turnaround," as Pasquino called it. Due to the erosion of the densest Italian social fabrics, and the spread perception of corruption in the State, clientelism operated better than the civil service to satisfy the Italians' demands. Consequently, they would have recurred to their domestic spheres, privileging familiar or intimate relationships and bonds over public ones. Indeed, both sociological traits correlate to some of Table 3 findings.

In the case of Chile, despite being at the bottom of the high-income level countries (we will detail this in 1.3. of this chapter), it was positioned in the 80th percentile of the governance indicators of the world distribution – the government works well. However, Chileans were relatively unsatisfied with their healthcare and education systems. Moreover, almost half of them demanded that the government have more responsibility as a provider of public services. Strangely, Chile's Democracy Index diminishes due to a low political participation score, not an inefficient public administration. The combination of the former elements suggests that in improving the relatively scarce public provisions, the consecutive administrations neglected listening to the increasingly frustrated citizens and offering them a larger supply of basic needs. Indeed, the 2017 Chilean Bicentennial Survey (*Encuesta Bicentenario,* GfK Adimark & Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile) suggests that citizens felt powerless before the State. Sixty percent declared that "people's opinion does not influence the State's decisions". Only 18% affirmed it did. Notwithstanding all the former, Chileans were not prone to abrupt changes. Recall that 63% preferred the government to make improvements gradually.

Regarding Italy, in spite of its high economic development level, it ranked at the 64th percentile of the world's governance indicators. Indeed, Italy's Democracy Index's worst-punctuated dimension was the functioning of the government, and a meager 29% of Italians trusted it. As in Chile's situation, paradoxically, Italians pushed more for protecting freedom of speech and having a say in public issues, not for a better government. A possible explanation is that they still obtained public benefits by using close networks and friends instead of institutional channels to achieve those benefits.

In the following, we will contrast Italy's and Chile's socioeconomic conditions when experiencing Monti-Fornero and Piñera's pension reforms, respectively.

1.3. Socioeconomic Conditions

As before, comparing the two countries' socioeconomic conditions greatly enriches the analysis. Table 4 shows the variables we used in this exercise.

Table 55. 2018 Chile's and 2011 Italy's Socioeconomic Conditions[2]

Dimension	Variables	Chile	Italy
Macroeconomics (IMF)	GDP per capita (PPP)	US$23,671 (2017)	US$35,416 (2010)
	Preceding year's GDP growth	1.4% (2017)	1.7% (2010)
	Inflation	2.2% (2017)	1.6% (2010)
	Unemployment	7% (2017)	8.4% (2010)
Material well-being	Human Development Index Ranking (UNDP)	43rd	24th
Markets' perception	Doing Business Ranking (World Bank)	57th	80th
	Competitiveness Index Ranking (WEF)	33rd	48th
Fiscal finances (OECD)	Public Debt (% of GDP)	29%	119%
	Welfare expenditure (% of GDP)	12%	26%
Pensions (OECD)	Pension expenditure (% of GDP)	3%	14%[3]
	Pension's replacement rate (pensions as % of pre-retirement earnings)	37.7%	64.5%
Inequality (OECD)	Gini coe1fficient (inequality)	44.4	35.5

Source: own elaboration.

At first sight, the GDP per capita indicates that Chile and Italy were at different income levels. The first was situated at the bottom of rich countries, while the second remained at the top. Likewise, although the UNDP classified both economies with a "very high" human development index, Italy has a notably higher one than Chile. Secondly, the macroeconomics figures were very similar: both economies grew little before Monti and Piñera came to power

[2] Although the optimum would be to compare the exact same indicators, not all are available for the two countries. In this regard, it is important to note that we are analyzing 2011 Italy with 2018 Chile, which narrows the available data even further.
[3] The highest of the OECD in 2010.

and had inflation and unemployment under control. The analogies change when looking at the market's perception, fiscal finances, and pensions.

The Chilean economy was more competitive and business-friendly than Italy, and its fiscal situation was in better shape. Italy's public debt was fourfold that of Chile's, and its welfare expenditure with respect to the GDP more than doubled Chile's. Likewise, Italian pension expenditure regarding the GDP was almost five times that of the Chilean rate, and was above the OECD's average[4]. Due to those and other factors[5], Chile's Gini coefficient was probably 20% higher than Italy's. Similarly, Italy's pension replacement rate is significantly higher than Chile's[6].

Here we find a crucial point. From a socioeconomic point of view, Italy's crisis was apparent for technicians and those familiar with macroeconomic and financial figures – including Monti and Fornero. Instead, the ordinary citizens' pension replacement rate was relatively high, which could have made it difficult for them to interiorize the pension system crisis and its consequences for the economy's sustainability. Similarly, Chileans' perceptions did not coincide with the international organization's -and Piñera's- optimistic diagnosis of the country. Moreover, inequality was relatively high, and the pensions replacement rate was notoriously low. The former suggests that Piñera probably missed the opportunity to underscore Chile's negative aspects -inequality and low replacement rates- to create the crisis mood.

As seen, there are many points in which 2018 Chile and 2011 Italy were similar, and many in which they diverged. However, we can summarize the comparison in the following:

- *Political context*. Both Monti and Piñera underestimated the politics when promoting their pension reforms. The former was overconfident regarding leading a *governo tecnico* and attended the markets and the European authorities more than the internal stakeholders. The latter, instead, got involved in unnecessary conflict with Congress, trying to deploy an ambitious reforming agenda with no majority to pass it.

- *The crisis*. Piñera built the crisis from the progress notion, not from a loss scenario. In doing so, he also committed a contradiction: promoting a significant transformation while championing the conservation of the status quo. On his side, Monti started from the classical definition of crisis: there is a critical moment that

[4] According to the OECD (2011), the OECD member's average pension replacement rate was 60.6%.
[5] Presumably, Italy's tax revenue and other redistributive policy tools recorded higher figures than Chile's.
[6] For instance, Italy's labor formality presumably was higher, accounting for more prominent workers' contributions to the pension system. Retribution-based systems, like 2011 Italy's, tend to have higher replacement rates than contribution-based systems, such as 2018 Chile's.

demands painful urgent decisions. The latter corresponds to Kahneman and Tversky's prospective theory.

- *Political-cultural factors.* In Italy, the amoral familism tainted the public sphere. The government does not work well, and Italians demand increased public participation. Moreover, people focus on their intimate spheres, shying away the support from common-good causes. In Chile, instead, modernity frustration defines other political-culture aspects. Although the government works fine, it is not in tune with citizens' aspirations, presumably due to low political participation. Chileans convene the State to be more active in providing basic services. They feel powerless and unheard.

- *Socioeconomic conditions.* We find reverse situations. In Chile, the macroeconomics and material conditions look well. However, the optimistic figures coexisted with high inequality and low pension replacement rates. In Italy, the general crisis was evident for all – technicians, multinational organisms, and Italians. However, Italians enjoying comparatively high pension replacement rates might have hampered Monti's attempt to convince them about the necessity of changing the pension system.

In the following, we will describe the policy context of the pension reforms. To do so, first, we present the central structural policies of each government to understand how the government agendas could have affected the pension reforms becoming. Then, we compare those reforms to highlight their commonalities and contrasts.

2. Describing the Unpopular Reform in Terms of Public Policy

2.1. The Main Government Reforms: Monti and Piñera

Table 5 shows the main structural reforms both presidents promoted.

Table 56. Mario Monti and Sebastián Piñera Main Structural Reforms

Sebastián Piñera	Mario Monti[7]
A *tax system reform* to increase the tax revenue by facilitating the rent declaration and overriding his predecessor's, which increased the baseline tax load.	A *tax reform* to increase both the VAT the income tax, and luxury taxes. It also reintroduced a housing tax.
A labor reform to make the labor market more flexible. The reform lowered the unions' leverage to negotiate with employers.	A *labor reform* to make the labor market more flexible. It modified some types of contracts and modified unemployment benefits.

[7] The *Salva Italia* decree contained all these reforms, following Henriksson's recommendation to present unpopular measures as a package.

A reform to the *private healthcare providers' market*, whose insurance charged more women and the elderly.	An austerity plan, called *spending review*, to audit and cut the most unnecessary public expenditure. It considerably affected the public healthcare system.

Source: own elaboration.

The similarities between the two structural reforms agenda is shocking. Piñera and Monti considered altering the taxes – another unpopular policy, as we saw in the theoretical framework. Both pursued liberalizing the job market – not popular among union's workers. Then, although they proposed different policy goals, they coincided in changing some aspect of the healthcare system: Piñera, by intervening the private providers; Monti, by cutting dispensable spending. It is plausible to affirm that this collection of This context is expected to create more resistance to the pension reform

Now, suppose we link this analysis with our previous ones. In that case, we can tell that both presidents presented the reforms differently and framed or contextualized them differently. As said, Italy's crisis was well-known, and Monti had the European Union authorities and international investors to blame. Contrarily, Chile's situation was debatable, and the crisis was not as apparent as in Italy.

Additionally, political timing is the most differentiating variable between Monti's strategy and Piñera's. The former deployed all the reforms as a package at the beginning of his mandate. Instead, the latter presented his reforms scattered over time. Piñera announced the tax system reform in August 2018 (Prensa Presidencia 2018), and that same month sustained that the labor market reform was "ready" (La Tercera 2018). However, he did not send the bill to Congress until March 2019 (Prensa Presidencia 2019). Lastly, he put up the healthcare system reform in April 2019 (Ministerio de Salud 2019) – recall that Piñera's pension reform announcement speech was in October 2018.

2.2. The Pension Reforms

As we did in the separate chapters for each case, to compare Piñera and Monti pension reforms, we will use the 2013(c) OECD's *Key goals of pension reform*[8]. Table 6 shows that exercise.

[8] These are the Key goals:

1. Pension system coverage in both mandatory and voluntary schemes.
2. Adequacy of retirement benefits.
3. The financial sustainability and affordability of pension promises to taxpayers and contributors.
4. Incentives that encourage people to work for longer parts of their lifetimes and to save more while in employment.
5. Administrative efficiency to minimise pension system running costs.
6. The diversification of retirement income sources across providers (public and private), the three pillars (public, industry-wide and personal), and financing forms (pay-as-you-go and funded).

Table 57. Key goals of each pension reform: Sebastián Piñera and Mario Monti [9]

Key goal	Sebastián Piñera	Mario Monti
Coverage	Yes	Yes
Adequacy	Yes	Yes
Financial sustainability and affordability	Yes	Yes
Incentives to work for longer	Yes	Yes
Administrative efficiency	Yes	No
Diversification of retirement income sources	Yes	Yes

Source: own elaboration.

Both reforms were exhaustive in complying with the OECD's key pension goals. Moreover, we cannot point out any significant difference between the two, except for Monti increasing the retirement age. As said before, increasing the retirement age is the most unpopular measure among those related to pensions. In terms of policy agenda, the two governments are directly comparable. Monti and Piñera promoted structural reforms in taxation, the labor market, and healthcare.

It is time to contrast Monti-Fornero and Piñera's communication strategies to carry out their agendas.

3. Analyzing the Promoters' Political Communication

As we did for each separate case, we will first compare some quantitative dimensions of the policy promoters. Then, we will weigh up their political rhetoric using the politolinguistics analysis, and their persuasive potential.

The first quantitative analysis is the speech's length. Table 7 compares the 12 Piñera pieces vs. the 12 Monti-Fornero interventions.

Table 58. Piñera vs. Monti-Fornero speeches duration[10]

Descriptive statistics	Words		Speech Duration (minutes)		Deviation regarding the optimal	
	Piñera	Monti-Fornero	Piñera	Monti-Fornero	Piñera	Monti-Fornero
Average	3,572.3	2,533	27.5	19.5	27.2%	-2.6%
Median	1,999	2,238	15.4	17.2	-30.1%	-13.9%

[9] For the policy details, see the corresponding chapters
[10] As we saw in Neale and Ely (2007, chapter Time and Length), regarding the optimal speech length, "an often-cited rule-of-thumb is that the average 20-minute speech contains about 2,600 words, or, about 130 per minute."

Standard Deviation	3,626.5	1,543.9	27.9	11.9	NA	NA
Minimum	559	687	4.3	5.3	-78.5%	-74.6%
Maximum	13,842	4,830	106.5	37.2	85.8%	432.4%

Source: own elaboration.

Recall the Neale and Ely 20-minute optimal length we showed in the previous chapters. President Piñera's 27.5 minutes average speech duration surpassed that optimal. Instead, Monti and Fornero's 19.5 minutes average hit it. Regardless of the speech length average, it is interesting how both samples' distributions differ. On the one side, Piñera's perorations' duration is rather dispersed: his shortest speech lasted for only 4 minutes, while his longest went over 100 minutes, about 430% longer than the optimal. On the other hand, the Monti-Fornero team recorded their shortest piece in circa 5 minutes, but their longest one reached 37 minutes, only 17 minutes more than the optimal length. Indeed, while Piñera's speeches' duration's standard deviation is around 27 minutes, Fornero-Monti's is almost 12 minutes.

From the data, we can infer that Italians were more consistent than the Chilean president at performing speeches and that some of Piñera's speeches exceeded the optimal length too far. The latter might seem trivial; however, as Heath and Heath assert,

> The French aviator and author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry once offered a definition of engineering elegance: "A designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away." A designer of simple ideas should aspire to the same goal: knowing how much can be wrung out of an idea before it begins to lose its essence. (2008, Chapter 1 – Simple).

Recall that our speakers tended to over-describe and list policy plans and concrete policy solutions, as we will see later. Regarding the speeches' duration, Piñera extended his when elaborating on those topics.

The second quantitative exam to compare our two cases is their 25 top-mentioned words throughout the 24-analyzed speeches. Figures 1 and 2 depict that exercise regarding Piñera and Monti-Fornero, respectively.

Figure 1. Piñeras's 12 speeches' 25 top-mentioned words

Figure 2. Monti-Fornero's 12 speeches' 25 top-mentioned words

Source: own elaboration using Sinclair and Rockwell's (2023) Voyant Tools text analysis software.

We can immediately find traces regarding each government's main communication strategy resorts. While Piñera constantly brought up Cialdini's unity-related concepts, like "Chile," "Chileans" (*chilenos*), and "compatriots" (*compatriotas*), Fornero and Monti stick to the policy issues they were aiming to improve: "jobs" (*lavoro*), "growth" (*crescita*), and "market" (*mercato*).

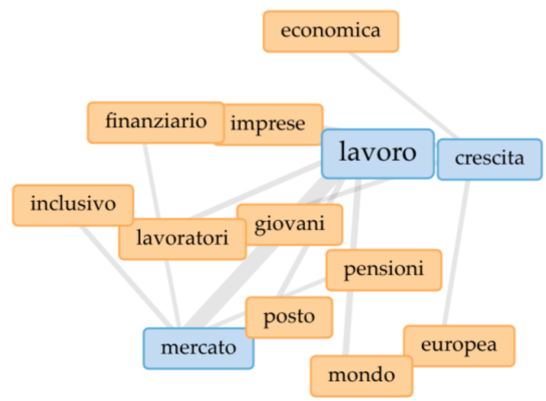
The second element catching our attention is the population groups the speakers alluded to. Firstly, "women" (*mujeres*/*donne*) had many mentions in both cases. Secondly, there are also notorious differences between the two administrations. While Piñera frequently broached the elderly (*adultos mayores*), Fornero and Monti did not mention them and, instead, raised the workers (*lavoratori*). Thirdly, the Italians included the youth (*giovani*) frequently too.

The third aspect we would like to reflect on is the policy issues the promoters touch on in their speeches. As said above, growth and jobs were central in the Fornero-Monti perorations. By contrast, they dedicated short sayings to "pensions" (*pensioni, pensionamento*), which seems odd. Finally, they referred to "balance" (*bilancio*), meaning Italy's fiscal balance. In the Chilean case, things were different. Piñera focused his discourse on two leading edges: pensions (*pensiones*) and, as we affirmed earlier, development (*desarrollo*). He also tangentially added "health" (*salud*) and "education" (educación).

This first exploratory review provides exciting clues. Monti and Fornero kept their eyes on the macroeconomic and fiscal targets. They concentrated their mentions around policy issues. In lieu, Piñera included diverse policy issues that do not seem to be related.

Figure 3. Piñera's 12 speeches' words in proximity.

Figure 4. Monti-Fornero's 12 speeches' words in proximity.



Source: own elaboration using Sinclair and Rockwell's (2023) Voyant Tools text analysis software.

Figures 3 and 4 indeed show how the core concepts of each speaker related to other concepts within their speeches.

Indeed, Piñera (Figure 3) referred to several concepts whose connections may look odd. For instance, we find that "Chile," the primary node of the concept network due to its highest frequency, is close to "Chileans" (*chilenos*), "president" (*presidente*), "women" (*mujeres*), the "police" (*Carabineros*), and "transform" (*transformar*). There is no policy issue directly linked to Chile. Moreover, the only social issue we could point out is "security" (seguridad), which is proximal to "Chileans." On the other fence, Fornero and Monti's most central topics do seem related. For example, their most repeated word, "jobs" (lavoro), connects with "market" (*mercato*), "workers" (*lavoratori*), "position" or job position (posto), and "world" or labor world (*mondo*). At least from a quantitative point of view, Chile's president's communication appears more dispersed, while Italians' look more coherent. That difference, of course, is expected to impact their communicative performance.

In the following, we will explore the quantitative discourse analyses, namely, the politolinguistics analysis and our proposed persuasive potential examination.

3.1. Understanding the Promoter's Political Rhetoric

The framework for our analysis, outlined in the Methodology chapter, is based on Riesigl's politolinguistics analysis categories and complemented with other communication strategies commonly employed for conveying unpopular policies. Additionally, we have incorporated additional elements that warrant further examination. Firstly, we examine whether the policy proponents acknowledged and addressed their most characteristic societies' trait – *modernity frustration* and *amoral familism*. Secondly, we highlight any noteworthy approaches that were not covered in our literature review. The latter obeys to the importance of context when promoting public policies in general and unpopular ones in particular. In that regard, think of Merton and his accurate idea in the particular:

> Among the elements of social and cultural structure, two are important for our purposes. These are analytically separable although they merge imperceptibly in concrete situations. The first consists of culturally defined goals, purposes, and interests. It comprises a frame of aspirational reference. These goals are more or less integrated and involve varying degrees of prestige and sentiment. They constitute a basic, but not the exclusive, component of what Linton aptly has called "designs for group living." Some of these cultural aspirations are related to the original drives of man, but they are not determined by them. The second phase of the social structure defines, regulates, and controls the acceptable modes of achieving these goals. *Every social group invariably couples its scale of desired ends with moral or institutional regulation of permissible and required procedures for attaining these ends. These regulatory norms and moral imperatives do not necessarily coincide with technical or efficiency norms.* (1938, pp. 672-673, emphasis by the author).

From that, we ended with four main dimensions to organize the comparison:

1. *The nominations and predications,*
2. *The argumentation (both obtained from the politolinguistics analysis),*
3. *The most studied strategies in unpopular policy communication strategies,*
4. *The contextual elements.*

Then, it is essential to note that Tables 8 and 9 provide a concise summary, focusing on content that facilitates comparisons or possesses inherent value in understanding the speakers' strategies. Detailed information pertaining to each dimension can be found in the corresponding chapters.

In line with the chapters dedicated to the specific cases, we provide an analysis table for the initial speeches as well as a separate table for the subsequent speeches. Typically, the first speeches served as announcements of the proposed reforms, while the second speeches captured the challenges encountered by the speakers during the policy debate. Consequently, there exist variations in the discursive devices employed between the initial and subsequent speeches, necessitating the need for distinct analyses for each.

Table 59. Piñera vs. Monti-Fornero Discourse Analysis, Speech #1

Strategy		**Piñera (28 October 2018)**	**Monti (17 November 2011)**	**Fornero (29 December 2011)**
Nominations and predications	*About the government's allies*	Victims: 1. The elders, as the story's protagonists, deserving a more compassionate treatment. 2. The women, the vulnerable, and the workers as subjects of rights.	The only clear victim is "Italy", not people. The hero, instead, is the government itself. The Republican institutions outstand among the allies.	There is no victim or hero but the government itself. The government plays the hero role.
	About the government's outsiders /enemies	No enemies. Piñera alludes to the private pension fund administrators and the employers as passive subjects of the law.	On the one side, Monti's scapegoats: Europe and the crisis. On the other side, organized crime and the mafia are the dissatisfied actors that legitimize their wrongdoing due to the system's vices – amoral familism.	Abstract villains: the privileged pension regimes and the financial crisis.
Argumentation	*Argumentation schemes*	Argumentative *topoi:* reality, urgency, justice. The argumentative fallacies aimed to: 1. Draw the status quo and make the reform look as necessary and urgent. 2. Underscore the just character of the reform and the moral duty of promoting it.	Argumentative *topoi:* history, urgency, justice, burdening. The argumentative fallacies aimed to: 1. Draw the status quo and make the reform look as necessary and urgent. 2. Justify the citizen's sacrifice due to the reform. 3. Justify the role of Italian political institutions in overcoming the crisis. 4. Justify the type of policy measures adopted by the government and their adequacy to the problem.	Argumentative *topos:* justice. The argumentative fallacy aimed to compensate the sacrifice of one group (men) by showing the benefit of the other (women).
Unpopular policy comm. strategies	*Perspectivation or framing*	1. "Our government's priorities are those of all the Chileans". 2. Then, he puts the hard-worker as Chile's new modernity's subject. 3. The reform is "fair, urgent, and necessary."	1. The crisis as a political-institutional problem. The unpopular reforms are a national matter, not an economic one. 2. The unpopular policies will end the unjustified privileges.	1. The moral ideological problem: the individual effort and its rewards. 2. The unpopular policies will end the unjustified privileges.
	Blame avoidance	There was no scapegoat to exonerate the policy promoter.	Scapegoats: the European authorities and the financial crisis.	Scapegoat: the European authorities.
	Scheherezade's strategy	There was no exaggeration regarding reality to create fear and deviate attention.	There was no exaggeration regarding reality to create fear and deviate attention.	There was no exaggeration regarding reality to create fear and deviate attention.

Contextual elements	*Dealing with the modernity frustration/amoral familism*	Instead of dealing with the modernity frustration, Piñera praised the "new Chile modernity," a society that rewards those working harder and longer.	Monti acknowledges the problem and defines it accurately but does not handle it.	Fornero acknowledges the amoral familism and takes care of it. Suppressing privileges and praising individual autonomy seem tuned to the Italians' mood. However, the enemies and examples are too vague to illustrate her point.
	Further contextual elements	The *development* idea as an achievable -but utopic or asymptotic- evolutionary state.	Technical and specialized jargon, almost apathetic in the context of amoral familism. People expect a household figure, a relative-like referent, not a scientific one.	Technical and specialized jargon, almost apathetic in the context of amoral familism. People expect a household figure, a relative-like referent, not a scientific one.

Source: own elaboration.

Table 8 shows fascinating parallels between the three speakers: Piñera, Monti, and Fornero. Let us start with the nominations and predications. Firstly, while Piñera identified clear victims/heroes of the political status quo, Monti and Fornero made the government the hero, leaving aside the people going through the status quo. Donald Miller argues that compelling storytellers do not set themselves up as saviors of history but rather paint their audience as heroes. Recalling the widely studied case of the tech colossus Apple, the former advisor to President Obama illustrates that point:

> When Apple began filtering their communication to make it simple and relevant, they actually stopped featuring computers in most of their advertising. Instead, they understood their customers were all living, breathing heroes, and they tapped into their stories. They did this by (1) identifying what their customers wanted (to be seen and heard), (2) defining their customers' challenge (that people didn't recognize their hidden genius), and (3) offering their customers a tool they could use to express themselves (computers and smartphones). Each of these realizations are pillars in ancient storytelling and critical for connecting with customers. (…)
>
> Notice, though, the story of Apple isn't about Apple; it's about you. You're the hero in the story, and they play a role more like Q in the James Bond movies. They are the guy you go see when you need a tool to help you win the day.
>
> Despite what acolytes of the cult of Mac may say, Apple likely doesn't make the best computers or phones. "Best" is subjective, of course. Whether Apple has the best technology, though, is debatable.
>
> But it doesn't matter. People don't buy the best products; they buy the products they can understand the fastest. (2017, chapter 2. The Secret Weapon that Will Grow your Business).

By sparing the victims and putting themselves at the center of the policy narrative, Fornero and Monti missed the opportunity to make their policy proposal easier to understand. “People don’t buy the best products; they buy the products they can understand faster.”

Secondly, let us look at the outsiders and enemies of the government. Piñera did not describe any antagonist to the reform or the government. Turning to Miller again, Piñera most likely lost engagement when omitting this important piece on his narrative.

> The villain is the number-one device storytellers use to give conflict a clear point of focus.
>
> Screenwriters and novelists know the stronger, more evil, more dastardly the villain, the more sympathy we will have for the hero and the more the audience will want them to win in the end. This translates into audience engagement. (2017, chapter 5. Has a problem).

In contrast, Monti and Fornero did include villains in their speeches. The former blamed the European Union and the financial crisis for the country's situation. He also placed the mafia and organized crime as opponents of the government. The latter alluded to faceless enemies. Like Monti, she spoke of the financial crisis. However, Fornero added the "privileged pension schemes."

In the third place, let us examine the argumentation. All our policy promoters used the justice *topos* to justify their policy narrative. Moreover, Monti and Piñera’s perorations also share the urgency *topos*. In general, the speakers’ argumentative fallacies aimed to give grounds for the critical status quo they described, the necessity of the proposed policy solution, and the virtue of that solution.

Fourthly, we can find the most literature-backed strategies for unpopular policy in the analyzed speeches, except for *Scheherezade’s* strategy. All the framings, regardless of their differences, drew the unpopular policy as restoring a fair and lost equilibrium. Again, verifying that Piñera, Fornero, and Monti recurred to justice as the ultimate ground for their painful measures is exciting.

Lastly, regarding whether the speakers acknowledged and embraced their context’s challenges, none did it thoroughly. On the one hand, Piñera did not acknowledge it; furthermore, he proposed a new sociological subject that praised the contrary to what the modernity frustration criticized. In that line, he offered "development" as the society’s ideal to which every compatriot was allegedly committed. Again, that contradicts the prevailing mood of his country’s citizens, who were frustrated and not necessarily looking for progress. On the other hand, Monti embraced the amoral familism – it was part of his diagnosis when he affirmed the crisis is political and institutional. However, he does not propose any better alternative in his policy solution. Fornero, too, embraced the amoral familism and did take care of it. Instead of attempting to fight it, she appealed to the Italians' domestic, private life. In any case, both Monti and Fornero were under the Knowledge Curse. So, they employed a highly technical tone rather than a friendly fashion.

As suggested earlier, Table 9 shows the same analysis for Piñera's, Monti's and Fornero's second speeches.

Table 60. Piñera vs. Monti-Fornero Rhetoric Analysis, Speech #2

Strategy		**Piñera (6 May 2019)**	**Monti (17 November 2011)**	**Fornero (29 December 2011)**
Nominations and predications	*About the government's allies*	Victims: Piñera lists the elders, the women, and the middle class as deserving of more significant social assistance.	There is no victim or hero but the government itself. The experts play a big role.	She talks about "people" once but there is no clear victim. Then, she puts herself within the victims' group.
	About the government's outsiders /enemies	Enemies: the Congress members delaying the social assistance that the victims deserve.	There are no enemies nor outsiders.	Clear villains: the self-serving and the unjust, who take undue advantage of the system.
Argumentation	*Argumentation schemes*	Argumentative *topoi:* justice, urgency, definition, reality. The argumentative fallacies aimed to: 1. Make the policy solution morally desirable. 2. Demand the Congress members approve the policy solution bill.	No argumentative fallacy.	Argumentative topoi: reality and justice. The argumentative fallacies aimed to: 1. Make the policy solution seem necessary. 2. Make the policy solution seem adequate. 3. Make the policy solution seem just.
Unpopular policy comm. strategies	*Perspectivation or framing*	1. Piñera positions himself by the victims' side. 2. The Congress members are against the victims.	Experts back the policy solution, so it is a good solution.	Experts back the policy solution, so it is a good solution.
	Blame avoidance	Scapegoat: the Congress members.	There was no scapegoat to exonerate the policy promoter.	Scapegoat: the self-serving amoral familyists.
	Scheherezade's strategy	There was no exaggeration regarding reality to create fear and deviate attention.	There was no exaggeration regarding reality to create fear and deviate attention.	There was no exaggeration regarding reality to create fear and deviate attention.
Context elements	*Dealing with the modernity frustration/amoral familism*	Piñera admits the modernity frustration. He affirms there must be State-funded	Monti does not acknowledge the amoral familism.	Fornero denounces the amoral familism but does not take care of it.

		assistance to the most vulnerable.		
	Further contextual elements	Piñera interrupts a long-standing tradition of conservative Latin American governments and promotes the expansion of State assistance.	Technical and specialized jargon, almost apathetic in the context of amoral familism. People expect a household figure, a relative-like referent, not a scientific one.	Technical and specialized jargon, almost apathetic in the context of amoral familism. People expect a household figure, a relative-like referent, not a scientific one.

Source: own elaboration.

In this second analysis, Piñera showed a better-structured speech, while Monti and Fornero converged toward a more expert-based policy narrative with scholarly manners. Now, we shall look at the detail of every category of examination. Firstly, regarding the nominations and predications, Piñera identified victims/heroes of the political status quo and treated them compassionately. On the other side, Monti put the government as the hero, and Fornero made a victim of herself. Both forsake the supposed beneficiaries of the reform. As argued in the previous analysis, Fornero and Monti's narrative is harder to follow since they omit ordinary citizens. There is no point in the policy if it is not relieving someone's pain.

Secondly, there are differences between the three pieces about the outsiders and enemies of the government. Piñera pointed out a clear and unique enemy hindering the victims' well-being – the Congress members. By contrast, unlike in his announcement peroration, Monti did not address any enemy. Therefore, he had no narrative whatsoever. With the government as a hero, no victim, and no villain, there is no story. Finally, Fornero aimed at the amoral familism subjects, the self-serving and the unjust. That could have been effective since any Italian could understand whom the minister was talking about. However, it is difficult to make the connection by putting her as the victim. Were the self-serving and the unjust affecting Fornero? Who were among the citizens the most hit by those enemies? Again, the Italian speakers missed the opportunity to draw a compelling plot for their stories and, instead, centered it on themselves and their technical assessments.

In the third place, let us examine the policy promoters' argumentation. In this case, Piñera and Fornero used the reality and justice *topoi*, following the first piece's trend. Both used them to show the moral desirability of the reform. However, there is a difference. Piñera aimed to provoke the adversary's action, while Fornero needed to defend her policy and herself from the adversary's criticism. It is important to note that Monti did not commit any argumentative fallacy or use any *topos*.

Fourthly, we can find the most literature-backed strategies for unpopular policy in the analyzed speeches, except for *Scheherezade's* strategy. Nevertheless, there are substantial differences among the speakers. Piñera used a clear scapegoat and framed the narrative as he was on the victim's side to fight the enemy. On the other fence, Fornero used the amoral familyists as the scapegoats to prove her reform's technical impeccability, not to defend any victim – but herself. Moreover, Monti did not even present a scapegoat, and his framing was justifying the reform for having been done by the most renowned experts.

Lastly, regarding whether the speakers acknowledged and embraced their context's challenges, only Piñera did it thoroughly. He acknowledged the modernity frustration and, furthermore, affirmed that the most vulnerable needed to obtain more State-funded assistance to partially overcome that frustration – a novelty for conservative Latin American governments. In opposition, Monti did not incorporate the moral familism, let alone propose any action to revert it. Then, right in the middle, Fornero recognized the amoral familism and, as said, its most representative subjects. However, she did not offer any measure to attack the root of the problem. True, she did state the government must end with those taking advantage of the majority, but said nothing about the underlying problems like poor public governance or weak institutionality.

In balance, we suggest the following conclusions for this part of the analysis:

1. All three policy promoters were inconsistent when campaigning for their reforms. Their resorts changed, improving or worsening their perorations, as did their arguments.

2. In terms of nominations and predications, Piñera was more effective than his Italian peers in identifying the policy status quo victims and portraying them as the heroes of his narrative. Unlike Piñera, Monti and Fornero struggled to pinpoint their perorations' victims and tended to put the government as their stories' hero. On the other hand, all of them strived to set the enemies of the victims, and, in consequence, their plots were confusing at best.

3. Justice and reality were the most used argumentative *topoi*. Additionally, when utilizing argumentative fallacies, those aimed to draw the policy's necessity, to prove how well-designed it was, and to sustain that the reform was morally desirable.

4. At some point, all the speakers presented a scapegoat for the policy's status quo or the reforms' delay. The framings they used were also distinguishable enough. However, we did not observe any of them using the Scheherezade's strategy to distract the public from the main points of the discussion.

5. If any strategic contextual conceptualization existed, it seems the policy promoters adhered to it only partially. From their speeches, we can find clear intuitions of their sociological diagnosis, but their treatment is inconsistent throughout their communicative performances.

Having compared the political rhetoric of the cases studied, we will consider the persuasive potential of their communication in the following section.

3.2. Assessing the Persuasive Potential of the Promoter's Communication

In the previous politolinguistics analysis we explored some narrative elements, such as the victims, the hero and the enemies the policy promoters underscored. However, that was not central part of that analysis but to critically evaluate how they referred to third parties and under what considerations or arguments. In the current exam, instead, we will focus in the persuasive aspect of the speeches, going back to our suggested Unpopular Policy Narrative Model. As a reminder of that methodology, see Table 10.

Table 61. Operationalization of the Unpopular Policy Communication's Persuasive Potential

Phases	Concepts	Dimensions	Questions	Attributes
DRAWING ATTENTION	Narrative	Setting the status quo	16. Are there elements that set a status quo-altering crisis scenario that make the unpopular policy necessary?	1 = Yes 0 = No
	Persuasion principles	Confirmation bias	17. Does the narrator make concrete examples about the problem to help the audience to internalize the problem and mobilize their leaning toward the narrative?	1 = Yes 0 = No
CULTIVATING A POSITIVE ASSOCIATION	Narrative	The plot	18. Is there a hero/victim suffering from something?	1 = Yes 0 = No
			19. Is there any villain to blame for the hero's suffering?	1 = Yes 0 = No
	Persuasion principles	Reciprocation	20. Does the narrator make any meaningful, unexpected and/or customized gesture to the audience?	1 = Yes 0 = No
		Liking	21. Is the narrator similar to their audience, flattering to them, and/or seen as authentic?	1 = Yes 0 = No
REDUCING UNCERTAINTY	Narrative	The guide	22. Is the government compassionate about the hero's situation?	1 = Yes 0 = No
		The plan	23. Does the unpopular policy proposal (the plan's *what*) restore the status quo's stability?	1 = Yes 0 = No
			24. Is there a clear policy solution (the plan's *how*)?	1 = Yes 0 = No
	Persuasion principles	Social proof	25. Does the narrator include social validity and feasibility arguments to convince others? Are others like the audience going through the same?	1 = Yes 0 = No

		Authority	26. Does the narrator turn to trustworthy experts or well-reputed sources to make the policy more persuasive?	1 = Yes 0 = No
MOTIVATING ACTION	Narrative	The nudge	27. Is it clear what the hero and the veto players/challengers should do stick to the plan?	1 = Yes 0 = No
			28. Is it clear what would happen if the hero and the veto players/challengers do not stick to the plan?	1 = Yes 0 = No
	Persuasion principles	Scarcity[11]	29. Did the narrator present their policy as a unique opportunity?	1 = Yes 0 = No
		Consistency	30. Did the narrator remind the audience how the current requests correspond to the audience's or the speaker's past actions?	1 = Yes 0 = No

Source: own elaboration based on the work of Crow & Jones (2018), Miller (2017); Polletta et al. (2011), Polletta (2015), Thaler & Sunstein (2009), and Cialdini (2007; 2016).

As we did in each case chapter, we will first compare the speakers' General Persuasive Potential. Then, we will confront their Persuasive Preferences. For the former, Table 11 presents some performance indicators for the 12-speech samples (the detail is in each case's chapter).

Table 62. Piñera's and Monti-Fornero's Speeches' General Persuasive Potential[12]

Policy promoters	General Persuasive Potential															
	S1	**S2**	**S3**	**S4**	**S5**	**S6**	**S7**	**S8**	**S9**	**S10**	**S11**	**S12**	**Average**	**Std. Deviation**	**Min.**	**Max.**
Piñera	7	13	5	8	10	14	10	11	13	6	8	10	9.58	2.87	5	14
Monti-Fornero	12	8	9	11	7	10	6	8	5	12	12	6	8.83	2.55	4	12

Source: own elaboration.

At first sight, both samples' indicators seem very similar. Since we have relatively small samples (12 speeches each), we ran a t-test analysis to compare them statistically using the data in Table 11. The t-test produced a *P*-value of 0.60. Therefore, we cannot affirm with certainty that the samples and their General Persuasive Potential are statistically different[13].

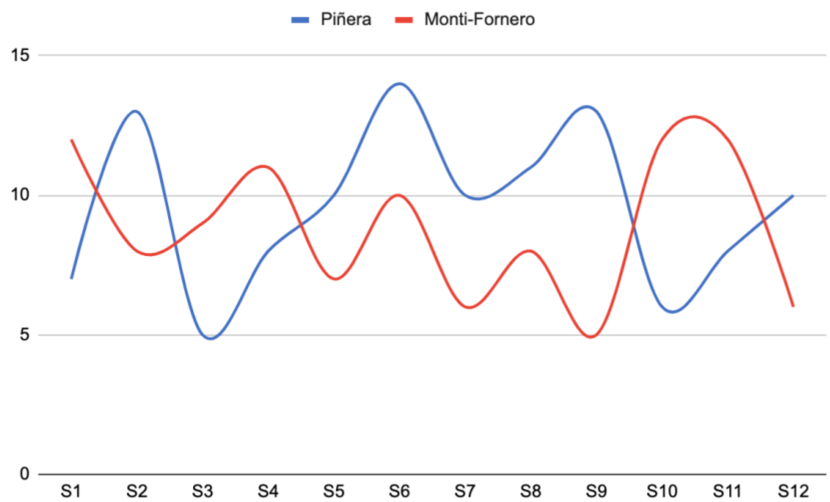
[11] Although it may seem redundant, we initially wanted to repeat question 12 for the scarcity dimension. It is a good sign that very distant authors, such as Cialdini, Thaler and Sunstein, and experts in policy narrative converge on this. As we saw in the Theoretical Framework of the current research, individual action within a crisis context stems from Kahnemann and Tversky's seminal prospective theory. Finally, we discarded re-doing the question not to alter the final index calculation.

[12] Recall that the index goes from 0 to 15, where "0" indicates that the speaker did not use any persuasive resort, and "15" indicates they used all of them.

[13] Although there is an intense debate on the idea (Yaddanapudi 2016), the scientific consensus fixed the statistical significance threshold at a P-value < 0.05. That means that any value of $P < 0.05$ indicates that H1, namely that the two samples are statistically different, is true. Instead, with a $P > 0.05$, we should conclude that

Likewise, we cannot say their averages and standard deviations are statistically unalike. Despite the former, Figure 5 depicts the General Persuasive Potential of the 24 analyzed discourses.

Figure 5. General Persuasive Potential, Piñera vs. Monti-Fornero (12 speeches)



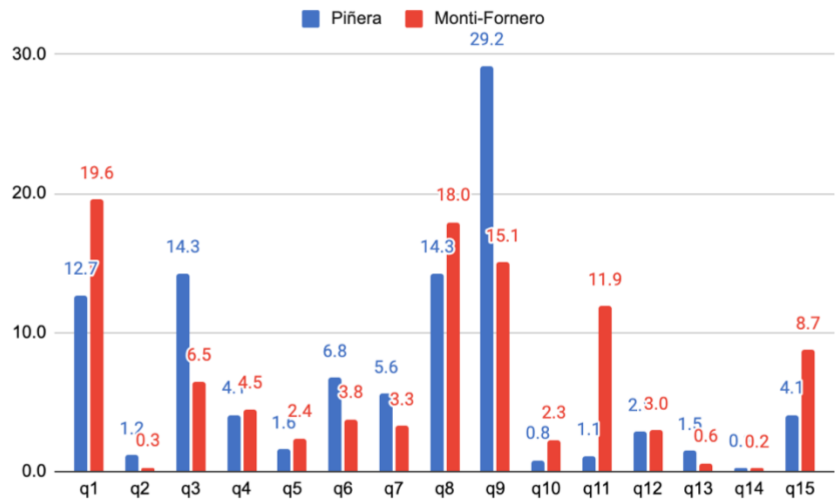
Source: own elaboration.

As Figure 5 suggests, throughout the 12 speeches, the number of persuasive resorts each speaker employs varies significantly. Piñera started low and incorporated more persuasive devices between his sixth and ninth speeches (S6 – S9). Monti and Fornero began utilizing many resources (S1) but decayed steadily from their fourth to ninth speeches (S4 – S9). They rallied up towards the end of the Monti administration, decaying again at the last piece (S12). Here is necessary to consider how Piñera's and Monti-Fornero's contexts evolved. What other measures became a priority for the policy agenda? How did the government's opponents react? What were the primary policy debates at any time? Unfortunately, that is not a concern of this research, but considering it for further eventual inquires is worthwhile.

Now, what were the persuasive preferences of our policy promoters? As in the respective chapters, we will examine the persuasive resorts' pool further. Figure 6 illustrates what was the relative frequency of each persuasive resorts respect to the total persuasive resorts uses for the policy promoters. To facilitate the reading, it would say that "among all the 15-listed persuasive resorts mentions, Piñera employed resort 1 (q1) in 12.7% of the times."

the two samples are statistically not different (H0). In this case, our p-value is far above 0.05. Therefore, we conclude that the two samples have no statistical differences.

Figure 6. Persuasive Preferences, Piñera vs. Monti-Fornero (%)



Source: own elaboration.

First, we observe that the persuasive-related mentions seem highly concentrated in both cases. In reality, that is not the case. Suppose we follow the Pareto 80/20 principle. Monti and Fornero congregated about 80% of their persuasive fragments in six out of our 15-listed resorts – 40% of the resorts, not 20% as expected. The same was the case for Piñera. As Figure 6 depicts, Piñera dedicated almost 30% of his persuasion-related mentions to explaining concrete policy solutions (q9 in Figure 6), 14.3% to presenting policy plans (q8), and almost 13% to listing victims/heroes (q3). Therefore, he spent 43.5% of his persuasive passages explaining his policy agenda. Additionally, he used a little under 13% to draw his pension reform's status quo. Second, we have that Fornero and Monti employed a little over 19% of their persuasive mentions in drawing the status quo (q1), a third in delivering policy plans and policy solutions (q8 - 18% and q9 - 15.1%, respectively), and almost 12% in citing experts to back their postulates (q11).

Thirdly, it is astonishing how little the promoters used the tools to motivate action, despite their importance in the visited literature – the *nudge*. Three percent or less of their persuasive mentions described what the veto players had to do to stick to the policy plan (q12), no more than 1.5% of the mentions said something about what would happen if the veto players did not stick to the that plan (q13), and they practically did not portray the reforms as a unique scarce opportunity worth to take immediately (q14).

The numbers partially confirm what the rhetoric analysis told us before. Piñera attempted to specify the status quo's victims and heroes and settle the status quo. Likewise, Monti and Fornero's was a more technical attempt: to deliver expert-based policy solutions. Nevertheless, we find a new element that did not appear in the comparative analysis before, Piñera's focus on the policy solution aspect. Perhaps, we could have expected a high proportion due to his academic background and experience as a crisis-solver. However, we did not expect that Piñera would utilize 43% of his persuasive mentions in the technical aspect, while Monti and Fornero -both renowned academics- reached 33%.

Despite these variations, not all the differences are statistically significant. We run the t-test for every question distribution throughout the 12-speech samples to elucidate that (see Table 12).

Table 63. T-test for Piñera's and Monti-Fornero's Persuasive Resorts Use

Persuasive resort	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15
***P*-value**	**0.03**	0.94	**0.03**	0.81	0.26	0.36	0.79	0.40	**0.05**	0.37	**0.01**	0.74	0.74	0.75	0.33

Source: own elaboration.

As we observed in Figure 6, Piñera and Monti-Fornero used all the persuasive resorts in different proportions. However, only four of those differences are statistically different. We observe the first difference in q1- drawing the status quo. Monti and Fornero employed that resource significantly more than Piñera did (19.6% vs. 12.7%). That may respond to what we concluded earlier: Italy's crisis was rather evident – it was the argument to establish Monti's *governo tecnico*. The second divergence is that Piñera's use of listing the status quo victims (q3) more than doubled that of Monti-Fornero (14.3% vs. 6.5%, respectively). Thirdly, although Monti and Fornero employed the concrete policy explanations device to a great extent, Piñera surpassed them significantly (q9). For the former, the policy solutions recorded 15.1% of their mentions; for the latter, 29.2% of them. Fourthly, Monti and Fornero recurred ten times more to experts or authorities to support their statements (q9, 11.9%) than Piñera (1.1%).

Finally, we will enter to the communication strategies' success. In the following section we will compare those dimensions and the correlation between the speakers' persuasive preferences and their approval rates.

4. Evaluating the Communication Strategy's Success

As saw in the earlier chapters, none government entirely implemented its reform. With nuances, both Piñera and Monti-Fornero failed to promote their pension reforms successfully. Regarding the details we present Table 13.

Table 64. Piñera's and Monti-Fornero's Communication Strategies's Success

Success variables	Piñera		Monti - Fornero	
	Yes/No	**Comments**	**Yes/No**	**Comments**
Implementation	No	Although Piñera promulgated a pension bill, it was very different from the original proposal. As a result, the reform only improved two of the OECD's key goals. It increased the pension coverage and diversified the pension income.	No	Although the Italian Parliament passed the *Salva Italia* relatively fast after Monti assumed, the country still debates about the legal relevance of the reform and its fit with the Constitution, hindering the implementation of the approved proposal.
Office-keeping	No	Piñera could not hand power to his political allies.	No	Monti did not get elected.
Approval rates	No	Piñera's approval rating declained abruptly and steadily in the 12-month analyzed period.	Yes	Monti kept relatively high approval rates in the 12-month analyzed period.

Source: own elaboration.

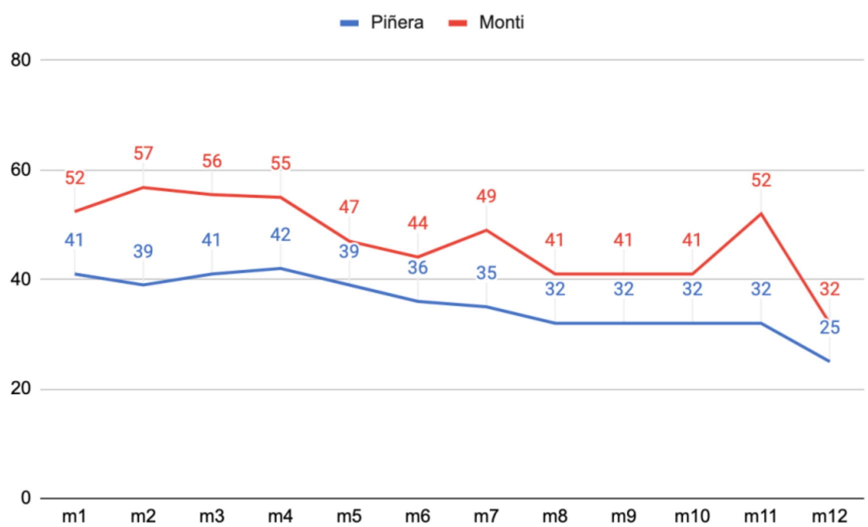
In conclusion, both policy promoters failed. None could implement their pension reform, at least not the original one, prone to make the country's pension system socially and financially sustainable in the long term. At least in the United States, with legislative success has been vastly studied, presidents fail to pass their major reforms often. In a forty-year study, Edwards (2003, p. 9) shows that:

> Some presidents want to undo the work of their predecessors while others want to break new ground in public policy. All presidents, however, wish to produce a legacy of important legislation. (…) there were 287 presidential initiatives of potentially significant legislation over the period from 1953 to 1996 period. These are the proposals that have the most potential to leave a mark on public policy. It is reasonable to infer that these are also the policies about which presidents care the most.
>
> Of these 287 presidential initiatives of potentially significant legislation, only 41 percent became law. In other words, in the majority of cases *presidents lose on their major legislative initiatives*. In addition, many of the presidential initiatives that Congress does pass are delayed or diluted by legislative opposition. In sum, presidents are typically frustrated in their efforts to bring about major policy changes.

In the same tone, none of the policy promoters kept office, which in democracy should reflect how citizens perceive the candidate's fit for the job. Nevertheless, while Piñera's citizen support declined univocally, Monti kept his at relatively high levels, at least compared to the most popular political party's voting intention[14], which is a crucial variable to follow in Italy's political environment.

As in the respective chapters, and making good use of the approval rating's numerical character, we will compare how each president's popularity correlates with their communication performance. The underlying supposition is that a more convincing policy narrative coincides with higher approval rates. Although we saw that Piñera's and Monti-Fornero's General Persuasive Potential indexes were not statistically different, we know that Piñera's and Monti's approval ratings were. After running a t-test, we obtained a P-value = 0.00000096. That is important because it allows us to affirm that there is statistical evidence that the two samples are not equivalent. Figure 7 depicts the heads of government's popularity evolution for the analyzed periods.

Figure 7. Approval Ratings, Piñera vs. Monti (12 months, %)



Source: own elaboration based on data from Cadem Research and the Archivio CIRCaP – UNISI.

Table 14 contains the conducted Pearson's *r* correlation analyses regarding Piñera's and Monti-Fornero's persuasive preferences that correlate to Figure 7 approval rating data. Although we assured that the approval rating samples differed statistically, we cannot state the same for these correlations. We ran a t-test analysis to compare the correlation samples, and the *P*-value = 0.3785893661 suggests that there is no evidence to attest that they are statistically different. Running this t-test was essential since we found notable similarities in how Piñera's and Monti-Fornero's correlations behave, implying that no matter the approval rates sample, the relationship between those approval rates and the persuasive preferences is

[14] In the same period, the most popular party, *Partito Democratico*, obtained 33% of voting intention at its best (POLITICO 2023).

not statistically different. Therefore, we can extract some conclusions applicable to more than one case.

Table 65. R Pearson Correlations: Persuasive Preferences and Approval Rates, Piñera vs. Monti-Fornero

Persuasive resorts	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15
Piñera	-0.16	**-0.68**	0.19	**-0.77**	0.39	0.47	-0.14	0.19	-0.10	0.17	0.05	**-0.64**	-0.11	0.23	0.22
Monti-Fornero	0.00	**0.60**	**0.50**	**0.51**	0.21	0.08	**0.58**	-0.16	-0.47	0.16	-0.46	**-0.49**	0.21	0.20	-0.14

Source: own elaboration.

Firstly, we detect that giving concrete examples of the policy problem in both cases strongly correlates with approval rating (q2). However, for Piñera's case, the correlation was negative, while for Monti-Fornero, it was positive. In this particular case, we need further data. The policy promoters used this resort very rarely. Recall from Figure 6 that it represented only 1.2% of Piñera's persuasive preferences and a meager 0.3% of Fornero-Monti's. Secondly, we observe the same situation when identifying the villains of the policy narrative (q4). While it negatively correlated to Piñera's popularity, it correlated positively to Monti's. This resort represented about 4% of the policy promoters' persuasive mentions.

Thirdly, the nudge variable negatively correlates with presidential approval in both cases (q12). Nevertheless, that correlation is not equally significant in the two cases. For Piñera, it is robust (r = -0.64), while for Monti-Fornero, it is still moderate (r = -0.49). This was also a scarcely employed resort. With respect to all Piñera's persuasive mentions, it represented 2.8%. For Monti-Fornero's, it was 3%.

Fourthly, two variables significantly correlate with the approval rating in Italy's case but not in Chile's. The first is showing the government as a compassionate guide for the status quo's victims (q7, r = 0.58), which aligns with the literature. Given that the orators failed to cast the victims and only occasionally showed compassion to them, the resort might be particularly effective when used. Indeed, the other resort that positively correlates to Monti's approval was identifying the victims of the status quo (q3, r = 0.50).

In sum, considering that we are not directly measuring causality between the policy promoters' persuasive preferences and the presidential approval rating, we see robust correlations between the former and the latter. As discussed in the Methodology chapter, approval rates are not the most suitable dependent variable. Many factors intervene in that result, as Merton brilliantly sustained: *Every social group invariably couples its scale of desired ends with moral or institutional regulation of permissible and required procedures for attaining these ends. These regulatory norms and moral imperatives do not necessarily coincide with technical or efficiency norms.*

In other words, we must seek further explanations of a communication strategy's success in the situational specificities of each case. We will reflect on that in the following chapter, Conclusions and Discussion.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this final chapter we will reflect on the results of the current research. Having compared the communication strategies for the pension reforms of Sebastián Piñera in Chile (2018 - 2019) and Mario Monti in Italy (2011 - 2012), it is time to elaborate the concluding remarks of this thesis. First, we attempt to answer the research questions formulated in the Methodology. Next, we propose several ways to improve our methodological approach and, thirdly, we elaborate some final reflections with a view to future research in policy and political communication.

1. Conclusions and the Research Questions

The most critical part of this thesis is the relevance of the research in answering the initially set-out questions.

1.1. How can governments promote unpopular reforms successfully through communication strategies?

This was by far the most ambitious research question. Having conducted such research, we cannot state with certainty which communication strategies are infallible in promoting unpopular reforms. However, we did draw valuable lessons from the literature review and our empirical results. Here we present the most salient ones.

The first -and perhaps the most neglected- lesson is that communication strategies start from comprehending the context. ***The policy promoters must deeply understand their political, cultural, sociological, and economic scenario -the status quo- before promoting an unpopular reform***. Moreover, attempting to characterize the core sociological tensions -in our cases, the modernity frustration and the amoral familism- seems to be the first step for designing a good communication strategy. This characterization will probably not be accurate or perfect. Nevertheless, the mere exercise of analyzing the communicative environment's history wherein we want to introduce a disrupting change - the communication coding, as Luhmann would say- will likely improve both the core messages and the communication manners. In that vein, Sebastián Piñera probably made mistakes in how he conceived his speeches because he was not fully aware of the modernity frustration. Likewise, although Monti and Fornero identified the amoral familism, they did not propose a straightforward way to combat it through their policies. As Wenzelburger and Hörisch (2016b, p. 118) sustain by citing König:

> König shows that the content of the reform communication is to a lesser extent a matter of the existence or absence of blame avoidance motives, but rather a function of contextual factors, especially the political- institutional, political-cultural and economic circumstances.

Understanding the status quo implies not only knowing the ex-ante scenario but also how the policy proposal will alter that scenario. That entails comprehending the policy-related impact as well as its sociological, political, and cultural consequences. Developing a sort of checklist could be most beneficial for the policy promoter in this case.

The second learning is that, when promoting unpopular policies, the first impression makes an enormous difference. When drawing the status quo in the unpopular policy announcements, ***adequately framing the crisis can establish the mood and make the painful measure seem necessary and logical – or dispensable and irrational***. Piñera framed Chile's situation as deviating from the country's bright "development path." In other words, the fear was based on future gaining expectations. In contrast, Monti and Fornero alluded to the traditional idea of crisis. They warned that if Italy would not act urgently and decisively, it would invariably lose its status within the European Union and its citizens' welfare. Piñera alluded to gaining something; Monti to losing something. We know that losing *x* hurts more than winning that same *x*. As a result, the former omitted Kahnemann and Tversky's (2013) prospective theory; the latter took advantage of it. Recall that without an untenable scenario, "governments abstain from risky reforms" (Vis 2009, p. 31) and that "(…) when the current economic situation deteriorates, people turn more favorable toward reform" (Passarelli & Del Ponte 2020, p. 14). Similarly, Henriksson (2007, p. 3) argues that: "(…) a country in serious problems faces no trade-off among competing objectives (…) Since there is no alternative, people will not blame you for your actions."

Almost 30 years ago, Pierson had already shown an intuition of the loss aversion concept in the unpopular policy realm. "The politics of retrenchment is typically treacherous, because it imposes tangible losses on concentrated groups of voters in return for diffuse and uncertain gains." (1996, p. 145). In the same vein, and probably unaware of it, he applies the prospective theory to this: "Recipients of social benefits are relatively concentrated and are generally well organized. They are also more likely to punish politicians for cutbacks than taxpayers are to reward them for lower costs." (p. 175).

The third lesson is that in order to thrive, ***a policy communication strategy needs a solid political strategy***. We saw that in the Theoretical Framework and reaffirmed it when interviewing our two experts, former Chilean minister Gonzalo Blumel (2023) and former Greek minister George Papaconstantinou (2023). The timing is crucial to promote unpopular policies (Blumel 2023; König & Wenzelburger 2017; Wenzelburger and Hörisch 2016a; Henriksson 2007; Pierson 1996), as it is having the Legislative power on the Executive's side (Papaconstantinuou 2016). Regarding the timing, König and Wenzelburger (2017, p. 995) concluded that launching unpopular reforms during the first year of the government can help the policy promoter due to the well-known honeymoon effect:

> Because the clarity of responsibility is troubled in the first year of a government's mandate, voters do not know if they can really hold the newly elected government responsible for the unpopular measures or if the new government just cleans up the mess left by predecessor. Hence, the clarity of responsibility proves to be a central variable in the question about whom to blame for unpopular measures (for a similar point, see König and Wenzelburger, 2014).

That corresponds to Blumel's opinion. He claimed that the Piñera administration should have announced its reform earlier in the first year of the government to take advantage of its initially high political capital at the beginning. The reason behind this lies, of course, in the impact that painful measures can provoke on the government's possibilities of office-keeping. Once more, Pierson was clear-sighted in this regard:

> Radical retrenchment may be facilitated when there is significant electoral slack, that is, when governments believe that they are in a strong enough position to absorb the electoral consequences of unpopular decisions. Thus, one reason for Thatcher's *relative* (though still limited) success may have been the division among her opponents within a first-past-the-post electoral system. This may have given her more room to pursue unpopular policies that would have been beyond the reach of a government in a precarious electoral position. However, calculating electoral slack ex ante is a tricky business, and most governments are likely to proceed cautiously. As I have indicated, even the Thatcher government generally retreated when confronted with widespread opposition. (1996, pp. 176-177).

Pierson's assertion connects to the other restriction found in the Executive's political strategy: the relationship with the Legislative power, about which he also refers:

> What is striking is how hard it is to find radical changes in advanced welfare states. Retrenchment has been pursued cautiously: whenever possible, governments have sought all-party consensus for significant reforms and have chosen to trim existing structures rather than experiment with new programs or pursue privatization. (1996, p. 174).

Wenzelburger (2011, pp. 1154 – 1155) will use a broader notion than Legislative power, namely that of veto players:

> Two possible sources of danger [to carry out unpopular policies] can be identified: first, veto players (partisan as well as institutional) can prevent ministers of finance from

> implementing the desired policy programme (Tsebelis 1995, 2002). Thus, political actors fearing that their policy project will be blocked have a strong incentive to use political strategy as a way of circumventing veto players. The greater the constraints, the more strategic manoeuvres are necessary to get the policy implemented. Secondly, governmental action is limited by electoral considerations (Ganghof and Bräuninger 2006).

The "strategic maneuvers" -as Wenzelburger calls them- to overcome the challenges planted by the veto players vary. Although that is not a matter for this investigation, studying it is worthwhile to understand unpopular policy governments' strategies better.

The fourth learning is that ***the unpopular policy should be part of a policy package***. Doing so can facilitate carrying the reform out with success. Firstly, it makes the reform look just by exposing different sacrifices taken by diverse groups. In Henriksson's words, "Presenting the consolidation measures in one package makes it clear to all interest groups that they are not the only ones being asked to make sacrifices" (2007, p. 18). Secondly, a policy package can leverage the government's negotiation position. Wenzelburger (2011, pp. 1162 – 1163) shows how this strategy worked for the Swedish government's fiscal consolidation proposal in the 1990s:

> Nevertheless, all consolidation packages needed to be approved by Parliament. Several strategic manoeuvres were used: during the period of co-operation with the Left party, package deals played a major role as some of the structural reforms of the previous centre-right government were rescinded (e.g. the re-organisation of unemployment insurance). Moreover, the government used the impetus of the victory in the election strategically and negotiated the first big adjustment package during its first weeks in office. In the negotiations with the Centerpartiet, another package deal was concluded: in exchange for support for the spending cuts, a reduction of value added tax on food was agreed. As this package deal was controversial in both parliamentary groups, the political actors increased the pressure: Go¨ran Persson and Olof Johansson, leader of the Centerpartiet, linked their political future to the package: 'And they [the members of Parliament] realised: the government will fall, we will have a new election – we will lose. So, it was a momentum I used. But that was my last chance.' Finally, the government acted strategically with regard to its own party. Carlsson and Persson had won the fight over the adjustment programme before taking office. Consequently, the parliamentary group could not easily oppose the plans.

Similarly, presenting a package of policies helps with political timing since it allows the most onerous policy agenda to be deployed at the beginning of the legislature and thus take advantage of the honeymoon effect of the political cycle. Adopting this approach also gives the unpopular reform a coherent narrative. As for the latter, presenting the plot only once can make the political narrative simpler and, thus, more compelling (Heath & Heath 2008).

The fifth lesson has to do with the unpopular policy messenger. Recall what we said in the Theoretical Framework: ***when promoting an unpopular reform, the right message, from the right person, at the right time can save a cabinet (and a government)***. Although the President of the Government is ultimately responsible for the painful decision, they are not always the best persons to deliver bad news to the population. Moreover, suppose the unpopular reform can compromise an administration's remaining policy agenda. In that case, cautiousness suggests delegating that task to the sectoral ministers o the government's communication agency or equivalent – replacing them does not endanger the entire political project of a government. Despite their proven impeccable technical career, Piñera, Monti, and Fornero made some mistakes that, hopefully, an experienced communicator would not have committed.

The sixth lesson is about segmentation. ***Each audience finds sense in different messages, so the acceptance/negation codes will change with the occasion***. Targeting is, indeed, quite an antique practice. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle (2007, pp. 149 - 151) defined some of the speaker's possible audiences and advised how to make the most of each in persuasive terms:

> 1. Next let us go through the kinds of character, considering what they are like in terms of emotions and habits and age of life and fortune. 2. By emotions I mean anger, desire, and the like, about which we spoke earlier, and by habits virtues and vices, which have also been discussed earlier, including what sort of things each type of person chooses and does. The ages of life are youth, prime, and old age. By fortune I mean good birth and wealth and powers and their opposites and in general good fortune and misfortune.
>
> 3. In terms of their character, the young are prone to desires and inclined to do whatever they desire. Of the desires of the body they are most inclined to pursue that relating (p. 149).
>
> (…) And they live for the most part in hope; for hope is for the future, and memory is of what has gone by, but for the young the future is long and the past short; for in the dawn of life nothing can be remembered and everything [can be] hoped for. And they are easily deceived for the reason given; for they easily hope for the best. (p. 150)
>
> (…) 1. People who are older and more or less past their prime have char- acters that are for the most part the opposite of these [just described]; for through having lived for many years and having been more often deceived and having made more mistakes themselves, and since most things turn out badly, they assert nothing with certainty and all things with less assurance than is needed. 2. And they "think," but do not "know" anything. And being doubtful, they always add perhaps and maybe and say everything that way, but nothing definitively. 3. And they are cynical; for a cynical disposition supposes everything is for the worse. (…) Further, they are suspicious because of their distrust and distrustful because of experience. (p. 151).

Centuries later, the audiences play a main role in effective communication. The Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication manual (2018, p. 10) devotes a whole chapter to the matter, which concludes with the following:

> Effective emergency communication requires an understanding of target audiences' differing needs, perceptions, and characteristics. In crafting and disseminating a message, carefully consider the cultural components of all audience segments. To prioritize information needs, consider audiences' relationships to the emergency event. Delivering short, action-based messages and strategizing to build credibility and trust impacts the effectiveness of your messaging. Audience analysis, feedback, and message testing allow you to adapt messages so that they are clearly understood and received by your audiences. Relevant, credible, and culturallyappropriate messaging in an emergency offers audiences the information they need to make lifesaving decisions.

Moreover, after social media burst into political advertising, audiences' knowledge and targeting have become an actual science. Recall the well-known Dominic Cummings's UK Leave campaign that led Britons to Brexit. That turned apparent when the data analysts behind the campaign, Christopher Wylie and Mark Gettleson, sent Cummings their final Technical Briefing to work on the campaign. This paragraph inaugurates that document:

> They say all politics is local. *It's not*. All politics is personal. The European Referendum will be a vote – not on pure politics – but on people's hopes and fears for the future, their conflicting identities, their perception of the 'other' and their tolerance of risk. (2013, p. 2).

Applied to this thesis, Piñera, Monti, and Fornero attempted to speak to anyone several times and ended up addressing no one. It is simply not possible to empathize with the bankers and the European authorities while trying to reach the median household whose pension funds are being changed. Similarly, Piñera aimed to the elders while sending messages to business people, the National Congress, and the pensions regulator. Mixing the audiences can kill the narrative. Suppose we radicalize the argument: if we are interested in only one of the 25 topics the speaker dealt with, we will probably lose attention and discard their message as irrelevant.

Of course, the learnings do not end here. Moreover, in the following questions we will cover more matters in government communication for unpopular reform.

1.2. What are the main communication strategies governments use to pursue their unpopular policies?

This question explores the findings from our case revision in a descriptive Luhmann-like approaching. Therefore, we are not assessing the ethical or practical implications of the techniques the policy promoters used but stating the functional coding they employed.

1.2.1. Did our policy promoters use the resorts that bibliography addresses as effective practices for unpopular policy communication?

Our policy promoters implemented some of the most studied and effective communication practices from the relevant literature. As mentioned in the Theoretical Framework, we identified three widely documented strategies: message framing (referred to as *perspectivation* in the politolinguistics analysis), blame avoidance, and Scheherezade's strategy.

Message framing involves strategically shaping the policy narrative to influence public perception and interpretation. Blame avoidance aims to deflect or minimize responsibility for the unpopular policy by shifting blame onto external factors or previous administrations. Scheherezade's strategy draws inspiration from the famous Arabian Nights storyteller, emphasizing the use of engaging and captivating narratives to keep the audience invested. Furthermore, the literature suggests that proponents of unpopular reforms often capitalize on a critical situation and a sense of loss. They present the painful policy as the only viable solution to overcome the crisis or address the pressing issues at hand.

By incorporating these communication practices and understanding the underlying theories, our policy promoters aimed to enhance their persuasive efforts and navigate the challenges associated with promoting unpopular policies.

Regarding the message framing and initial loss scenario, Piñera, Monti, and Fornero dedicated a significant part of their speech to drawing the status quo – the reason for their pension reforms. When describing that status quo, a crisis, described as a menace, was the main argument for changing the status quo – promoting the reform. In that same vein, the speakers put themselves and their governments as the people's champions. That frame helped to make the painful measures look morally desirable.

As found in the literature, blame avoidance is, without any doubt, one of the most employed resorts. Our policy promoters pointed out several scapegoats in most speeches. For instance, Monti and Fornero alluded to the financial crisis, the European authorities, and the amoral familyists. Piñera, instead, who did not address any scapegoat when announcing the reform, ended up aiming at the Congress members. Generally, these scapegoats coincided with the policy narrative's villains or enemies.

Lastly, Scheherezade's strategy was not utilized by the analyzed subjects. The reasons for it are unknown. However, we hypothesize that unpopular policy promoters tend to protect institutions and be open to citizens; otherwise, there would be no reason to undermine one's popularity and political capital by pursuing unpleasant reforms. Remember that Scheherazade distracted her audience instead of encountering it. She was the Vizier's storyteller *in One Thousand and One Nights*. By amusing him with entertaining relations, she bought herself time not to be executed. In that sense, Scheherazade resembles more a populist warlord than a democratic leader.

Beyond the most studied strategies, we found other exciting commonalities throughout the communication strategies. Firstly, all the speakers used the *justice* and the *reality* argumentative *topoi*. Justice was the ultimate end underlying the reforms in most of their perorations. All the speakers claimed their reforms were supposed to restore the original equality among their compatriots. Monti and Fornero promised to end with unjustified privileges. Piñera vowed to revindicate the forsaken ones with no privileges.

On the other hand, we studied in-depth some social psychology principles that increase the chances of persuading people, as well as storytelling as a powerful tool to make policy communication more compelling. Here the findings are also of most interest. Generally speaking, the orators we studied used an average of around 9 of our 15 identified persuasive resorts. If we look at it in detail, in the first place, both cases' policy promoters spent most of their effort addressing and describing their policy solutions. Suppose we add their mentions of policy plans and concrete policy measures. Piñera devoted around 43% of his persuasive passages to describing those measures. Likewise, Monti and Fornero occupied 33% of theirs in doing so. In the second place, Piñera, Monti, and Fornero used fewer nudge-related resorts (showing the undesirable consequences of not adhering to their policies and portraying their reforms as a unique opportunity, for example) than the literature suggests effective. In the third place, while Piñera spent time identifying the status quo's victims and expressing compassion toward them, Monti and Fornero turned to the experts advocating their policies, giving their approach a scholarly fashion.

1.2.2. If present, is there any correlation between the use of those resorts and 1) the legislative processing, and 2) approval rates?

We found some correlations between the use of the listed persuasive resorts and the presidents' approval rates, as we will see later. That was not the case regarding the legislative process, in any case. To clarify why we did not observe any correlation between the persuasive indexes and the legislative process of the reform, we hypothesize upon two elements. The first is that legislative processing can be more closely related to the political strategy aspect we described earlier than the communicative one. The second aspect relates to our methodological approach. By taking only the main speakers' speeches and public interventions, we left aside a myriad of debates, press content, opposers' statements and reactions, and other government representatives' allocutions.

Edwards (2003, p. 8) illustrates this point brilliantly:

> Why do presidents see themselves as dependent on public support to accomplish their goals, especially in Congress, and devote so much time, energy, and resources to

> obtaining it? The answer is straightforward: presidents know that without the public's backing in most instances they lack the influence to persuade Congress to support their legislative proposals and to reject congressional initiatives that the president opposes. Moreover, *presidents believe that Congress responds to public opinion.*
>
> Going public is the central strategy for governing, but it is not the only element of a governing strategy. For example, party leadership, the mobilization of interest groups, and the exercise of legislative skills, both strategic and tactical, may also be components of such a strategy. In theory, the president may not need to move the public if other elements of a governing strategy are successful in obtaining what the president wants.

Applying Bojar and Krisi's (2021) complete *contentious episodes* analysis[1] could provide essential data regarding the "other elements of a governing strategy" that Edwards discusses. That could allow us to understand how the government-challenger dynamics affect the legislative policy process.

On the other hand, we arrived at solid results regarding how our persuasive tools correlate to approval ratings. Firstly, we noticed no significant correlation between the number of persuasive tools the orators included in their discourse (the General Persuasive Index) and their approval rating. Secondly, when analyzing the Persuasive Preferences Index, we observed significant correlations. For instance, providing concrete examples of the status quo's main problem strongly correlates with approval rating – the absolute *r* Pearson for both cases was equal to or above 0.60. Unfortunately, we cannot affirm with certainty this correlation's nature. In Piñera's case, it correlated negatively; in Monti-Fornero's, it did positively. Secondly, that is also the case for identifying the policy narrative's villains. That variable shows an *r* coefficient above 0.50 in both cases, and, again, it correlated negatively to Piñera's popularity and positively to Monti's. Thirdly, addressing what the veto players have to do to stick to the speakers' policy plan correlates strongly with Piñera's public support (r = -0.64) and moderately with that of Monti (r = -0.49). This last finding questions what the literature shows.

Although these outcomes are interesting, not all of them align with what our bibliography suggests. For instance, due to its intensive use, we would have expected that the speakers' insistence in presenting their policy plans and solutions would have significantly correlated with their approval rates. For example, in one of his perorations, Piñera spent 51% of his persuasive fragments detailing policy solutions and 14% announcing policy plans or objectives (see 190502_P). In sum, 65% of that speech's persuasive resorts had to do with policy, and only 35% to the 14 remaining persuasive tools. Likewise, Fornero once employed as high as 51% of her persuasive mentions on those topics (see 120517_F). That kind of speech is challenging to follow as a mere reader. They are highly technical, and

[1] Recall that we only adopted their *contentious episode* definition. For further details, see the chapters Theoretical Framework and Methodology.

the policy information became unappealing data after providing the narrative solution to solve the narrative's plot. We would have expected that to be also the respective audiences' perception when exposed to the perorations. Nevertheless, these variables showed mainly weak correlations to approval ratings.

As noted, we observed only three statistically significant correlations between the identified persuasive resorts and approval rating. What about the other 12? The two more apparent explanations are endogenous – our methodology. Firstly, our Unpopular Policy Narrative Model might be wrong or incomplete. Secondly, the discourse analyses were made only by one Spanish native speaker coder, which most likely distort the result's quality, even if it made them comparable – all share the same biases. Thirdly, we visited only two cases with 12 speeches each. Although that can be a decent sample for qualitative purposes, that is not necessarily true for quantitative conclusions. We will discuss more possible explanations when answering the next research question.

1.3. Can we establish a relationship between how the policy promoter delivers their message and the support they get?

We cannot prove any causal relationship between how the policy promoters delivered their pension reform messages and the support they got based on our data. We could hypothesize that the previously seen strongly correlated variables would have a causal relationship with popularity, but that does not seem to be the case: in some cases, those correlations were negative -namely inversely correlated- while in others were positive -directly correlated. To explain this dissonance between the persuasion tools and the speakers' popularity, we must look at further research on determinants of presidential or premier approval rates.

To start, George C. Edwards (2003, p. 29) studied six United States presidential terms from 1969 to 2001 and how the presidents' public interventions impacted their approval rates. When talking about Bill Clinton, the most popular among the six-studied leaders, Edwards concludes:

> The president was an indefatigable traveler on behalf of his efforts to move the public. Charles O. Jones reports that Clinton traveled to 194 places and made 268 appearances in the United States between his inauguration in January 1993 and the midterm election in November 1994, mostly to sell himself and his policy proposals. Yet, as Jones concludes, the president's efforts were ‘‘a colossal failure’’—his approval ratings did not rise.

Moreover, what stroke us the most was the following:

> In comparing survey results of two samples such as those used by Gallup, differences between the results must be about 6 percentage points before we can be reasonably sure that the results reflect a real difference.

> (…) statistically significant changes in approval rarely follow a televised presidential address. Typically, the president's ratings hardly move at all.

Indeed, many variables determine a government leader's support. Therefore, we should turn to the approval determinants' evidence for both Italy and Chile. For instance, in Italy, households' perception of the economy has been a strong predictor of the government's approval rates, as Bellucci sustains:

> As would be expected, according to traditional economic voting theory (Lewis-Beck, 1988; Sanders, 2000), the economy drives government approval in Italy as well, and when voters are optimistic about the economic conditions, they support the government. A one percentage point increase in the household economic sentiment brings about, on average, a 0.23 point percentage increase in the government popularity. Political variables such as the political leaning of the executive and Italy's military involvement lack statistical significance. Time in office has an impact according the 'cost of ruling' hypothesis, and each year of tenure depresses the approval rate by one percentage point, on average, after accounting for other conditions. Finally, lagged approval, which taps other political variables not previously included, shows a significant impact, around 2.5 times that of the economy, thus confirming Paldam's (1986) earlier finding concerning the relative weight of economic and political variables. (2009, p. 4).

In Latin America, instead, after studying 20 countries from 1986 to 2016, Jung and Oh concluded that:

> (…) the effect [on people's evaluations of their political leaders] of gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate and unemployment rate are strong throughout the period considered. From the year 2000, inflation and perception of corruption become significant. (…) In countries with low approval ratings, voters generally weigh GDP growth rate more heavily. (2019, p. 257).

Based on the available data, it is evident that we need to adapt our approach to government communication for unpopular policies. Our Unpopular Policy Narrative Model, which we previously relied upon, has proven insufficient in explaining the speakers' success. We found that only a few variables related to storytelling and persuasion showed significant correlations with approval rates. We can infer they had an even weaker correlation with policy implementation and political longevity.

However, it is worth noting that these variables might not be the most suitable indicators when attempting to explain the success of a communication strategy. It appears that several independent and intervening variables have an impact on these outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to consider factors such as legislative dynamics, historical events, and the country's economic situation. By studying these aspects, we can potentially improve people's acceptance and tolerance towards painful reforms.

In the following, we will expose our thinking, suggesting alternatives for those willing to study this field and those looking for practical insights when designing unpopular policy communication strategies.

2. Discussion: What to Bear in Mind When Promoting Unpopular Policies?

Our findings confirm the context's importance when promoting general public policies and unpopular policies. If presidential public interventions do not affect the Executive's popularity and, instead, the economy's situation does, we should turn to Edwards' insights on the matter:

> (…) as we have seen, there is little evidence that public relations campaigns, as they are currently executed, actually do much educating. The public is more likely to respond to what they experience in their everyday lives than to the urgings of the chief executive in the permanent campaign. (2003, p. 248).

By considering Edwards' words, we are not suggesting neglecting the policy promoters' storytelling but adjusting how they approach it. Here we propose the following recommendations to be tested and questioned by new practitioners and researchers:

Firstly, spokespersons should focus on what the audience *experiences in their everyday*. Rather than drawing the big picture status quo (q1 of our model), they should ramp their efforts up in describing *concrete, well-thought and actual examples of the audience suffering from that status quo* (q2 and q3). If the audience is regular, they will probably resent some specific aspects of their lives, close relatives, and environment. If the public is mainly members of the Legislative power, their daily work in legislating and addressing their constituencies for reelection will be affected. Likewise, business opportunities and risks should be drawn if the listeners are investors or business people.

Secondly, instead of demonstrating how many policy solutions (q8 and q9) the policy promoters have and how technically impeccable those solutions are (q11). Here, recall Merton's statement: "[Social] regulatory norms and moral imperatives do not necessarily coincide with technical or efficiency norms" (1938, p. 673). *The orators should therefore concentrate on whether it changes the audience's daily and subjective well-being and communicate it if that is the case*. Again, for each stakeholder, the content should vary.

Thirdly, *do not persist on the same message if it does not work*. This means avoiding excessive repetition, something many marketers and speech writers have traditionally defended. In that regard, Heath and Heath sustain:

> Another genre [about making ideas to stick] concerns knowing your audience: "Know what your listeners care about, so you can tailor your communication to them." And, finally, there's the most common refrain in the realm of communication advice: Use repetition, repetition, repetition.
>
> All of this advice has obvious merit, except, perhaps, for the emphasis on repetition. (If you have to tell someone the same thing ten times, the idea probably wasn't very well designed. No urban legend has to be repeated ten times.) (2008, chapter Introduction: What Sticks?).

Lastly, politicians and government leaders should question the prevailing "going public" modern paradigm and evaluate adopting a "staying private" one in replacement. Edwards argues that former US President Bill Clinton reinforced this view of presidential ubiquity due to his aggressive practice of permanent campaign. The author states, "No president ever invested more in attempting to mold public opinion than Bill Clinton. His was a presidency based on a perpetual campaign to obtain the public's support" (2003, p. 3).

Edwards talks about presidential inertia to going public:

> There is a strong inertial component to presidential behavior. Presidents become president by going public. To reach the White House, they make dozens of commercials, commission hundreds of polls, deliver thousands of speeches, and shake tens of thousands of hands. This process now extends for at least two years as candidates endure the rigors of the lengthy process to achieve their party's nomination. (2003, p. 242).

Although that could not have been the case for Mario Monti, whose designation was not democratic, it is plausible to say that his advisors, political environment, and even the public demanded him to be in regular publicity.

Constantly going public can be detrimental to the leader's goal. "In going public, the president tries to intimidate opponents by increasing the political costs of opposition rather than attracting them with benefits (Edwards 2003, p. 248)." Moreover, the going-public posture can undermine democratic debate. Edwards sustains that the constant confrontational exposure of the head of government should be shifted to a deliberative stance:

> (…) [By going public] the president and his opponents often reduce choices to stark black-and-white terms. When leaders frame issues in such terms, they typically frustrate rather than facilitate building coalitions. Such positions are difficult to compromise, which hardens negotiating positions as both sides posture as much to mobilize an intense minority of supporters as to persuade the other side.
>
> (…) Indeed, as Hugh Heclo argues, *campaigning to govern is antideliberative. Campaigning focuses on persuasion, competition, conflict, and short-term victory*. Campaigns are waged in either/or terms. *Conversely, governing involves deliberation,*

> *cooperation, negotiation, and compromise over an extended period*. Campaigns prosecute a cause among adversaries rather than deliberate courses of action among collaborators. Campaign communications are designed to win rather than to educate or learn. Thus, the incentives for leaders are to stay on message rather than to engage with opponents and to frame issues rather than inform their audience about anything in detail. Similarly, campaigning requires projecting self-assurance rather than admitting ignorance or uncertainty about complex issues and counterattacking and switching the subject rather than struggling with tough questions. (Edwards 2003, p. 247. Emphasis by the author).

Additionally, staying private could contribute to implementing unpopular reforms. As Pierson affirms, "Those favoring cutbacks will attempt to lower the visibility of reforms, either by making the effects of policies more difficult to detect or by making it hard for voters to trace responsibility for these effects back to particular policymakers" (1996, p. 147).

3. Final Remarks

This investigation invites not only to question the persuasiveness nature; what kind of messages or communication tools enhance the probability of getting a *yes* as a response. It also proposes inquiring about the governing role and returning to some forgotten tenets for practicing political leadership in government. As seen in Lilleker, the marketization of politics incentivizes politicians to devote their agendas to spreading content instead of debating and solving real-world problems. The scholar warns about how this can threaten democracy itself by lowering the public debate's quality:

> The concept of market orientation is highly contested. There is debate regarding whether political parties, and in particular governments, do or should actually follow the market and to what extent. Research suggests that a political organisation can blend together strategic orientations to lead in some areas while follow in others (Ormrod & Henneberg, 2006; Lees-Marshment et al., 2009); for example, a party seeking election may design its manifesto around public priorities but the solutions to solve problems relating to those priorities will be developed by the party and then sold back to the public. The extent to which voters become part of the process of policy development is hotly debated. Contestation arises around the level of citizen participation that is optimal in a democratic political system. Theorists such as Schumpeter (1957) and more recently Riker (1989) have argued participation has to be limited because of the
>
> scale of the modern nation state, and the lack of political knowledge of much of the citizenry. Democracy is argued to operate best as an open system of competition for selecting representatives; citizen participation is limited to voting in periodic ballots. Yet others suggest this limited participatory role is contrary to the democratic ideal of collective deci- sion-making, where all individuals subject to collective decisions should

> be equal participants in the decision-making process (for example, see Pettit, 2006; Hyland, 2011). (2014, pp. 32-33).

In that same vein, in its first *Report on Public Communication*, the OECD (2021c, p. 3) sustains that:

> (…) while online communication and social media platforms are opening vast opportunities for governments and individuals alike to connect and engage, they have also enabled the proliferation of misleading and harmful content at unprecedented scale and speed. Ill-motivated actors, harnessing the same strategic communication tactics, have sought to manipulate information and mislead voters. In response, emerging government practices to debunk prominent rumours, pre-empt misinformation and fill information voids have demonstrated the central contribution of public communication to mitigating the spread and consequences of mis- and disinformation.

Unfortunately, the described threats are real and recent. For instance, take the cases of former US President Donald Trump and the current Russian head of State Vladimir Putin. The US was categorized in 2021 as a "flawed democracy" by the Economist Intelligence Unit. Russia, meanwhile, was rated as an "authoritarian regime" (The Economist 2021a). Trump jeopardized his country's democracy -one of the few uninterrupted democracies since its foundation- by undermining his political opponent's reputation (Sykes 2018) and questioning the US institutional functioning without solid foundations (Peters & Robertson 2023). As we saw in the Theoretical Framework, Trump's path ended with civilians besieging the US Capitol in 2020 (The Economist 2021b). Regrettably, the solution many social media platforms applied to suspending Trump's accounts is debatable, since it lies in a fine line between combating misinformation and speech censorship (Oremus 2022).

Donald Trump is probably one of the most resounding examples of recent times' populisms and how they take advantage of social media's ubiquity. This time, Putin has also made his part with a global impact, which could endanger not only national democracies but supranational relationships and equilibria.

Despite the Western general condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Latin American countries have not followed the same path. Moreover, Argentina and Brazil, the two most important South American economies, have repeatedly declared neutrality regarding the conflict. Some interpret that neutrality as an "implicit support" to Putin's pretensions (Ballester Esquivias 2023). Many analysts, as we will see, attribute this Russian political success to its vast propagandistic system in the region. According to The Economist (2022):

> Russia's early investments in building propaganda networks across the developing world appear to have paid off, at least in terms of engagement. Russian narratives are ubiquitous across social media in Latin America, says Andrew Gonzalez of Omelas, a digital-analysis firm. RT en

> Español’s 18m followers are more than twice the original RT English version’s (7.5m), and even outpace CNN’s Spanish edition (14.6m).

As seen earlier, sophisticated targeting enhances Russia’s communication effectiveness. As Professor Vladimir Rouvinsky sustains, “RT programming for the region includes topics that focus specifically on its Latin American audience, and it is more successful in getting new viewers than any other foreign channel” (2017).

It is alarming that the Kremlin's propaganda interferes with Latin American politics. In that regard, US General Laura Richardson (in Easley 2023) states, "Disinformation from Russian media sources is also prevalent in the region, with spikes of activity during times leading up to critical elections." Accordingly, Russian media also misinform its nationals. Rouvinsky suggests that “Russian activities in Latin America provide the Russian mainstream media with opportunities to portray Russia as a rising world power capable of establishing its presence even in the United States' backyard.'"

In summary, it is evident that strategic deployment of misinformation can be highly convincing. We believe that the same principle applies to informative efforts in public communication. In light of this, the purpose of our research is to reflect on policy and political communication and contribute to its professionalization. Our ultimate goal is to foster better policies, more informed debates, and stronger democracies.

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