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Europeanisation of flexicurity: What impact on Italian employment policy?

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Statutory Declaration

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Abstract

Since 2006 flexicurity has been one of the main concepts promoted by the European Employment Strategy. Since then, the European Union has advised Member States to adopt the EU flexicurity model through the soft law mechanism of the Open Method of Coordination. But while the EU has been promoting this policy strategy, it is possible to cast doubts on the effective implementation of this model, as the success of the successful promotion of flexicurity relies on the willingness of member states to implement its guidelines. Italy as well, a country severely hit by the economic crisis, with a fragmented labour market and a political class unable to introduce substantial reforms in the field of employment policy, has been subject to this EU pressure to modernise its labour market according to those principles.

This thesis analyses to what extent the EU's non-coercive promotion of flexicurity from 2006 onwards has led to change in the Italian employment policy. By drawing on a top-down analysis in the framework of Europeanisation, the factors and actors that have facilitated or impeded such EU-induced domestic change are identified. The study case takes into account the role of three subsequent governments: Prodi Government (2006–2008), Berlusconi Government (2008–2011) and Monti Government (2011–2013).

The thesis concludes that firstly, in presence of a high degree of policy misfit with EU flexicurity model, only a combination of external constraints (*vincolo esterno*) and a positive stance of key actors may lead to accommodation to the non-coercive EU pressure to reform Italian employment policy (Monti government). Instead, domestic policy change may only result in absorption, when key institutional actors support the EU and more specifically the flexicurity strategy in absence of external constraints (Prodi government). When those external constraints are present, no change should be nonetheless expected if the executive is characterized by hard Euroscepticism (Berlusconi government). Thus the policy misfit is a cause of change only when the “creative appropriation” of willing Europeanised domestic actors is in line with EU prescriptions in times of external restraints.

Secondly, it has been found that the economic crisis has been at the same time both an opportunity to reform and a constraint impeding a major overhaul of the Italian employment policy. Even though the moment was ripe for reform, as arguably the economic crisis has de facto prompted the adoption of the Fornero reform, the crisis itself has also restrained the action of the willing government to go further with the reform. As a result, the crisis – as an opportunity – has allowed for accommodation with the EU, by a partial

adoption of the flexicurity model, but the crisis itself – being a constraint – has jeopardized the transformation of the Italian labour market policy according to the EU flexicurity model. As a result the reform introduced by the Monti government could only take one step towards flexicurity, whereas the original objective was to take two.

Keywords

Flexicurity

Europeanisation

European Employment Strategy

Italian Labour Market Policy

Open Method of Coordination

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List of Abbreviations

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy
ASPI	Social Insurance for Work
CGIL	Italian General Confederation for Work
CIACE	Inter-ministerial Committee for UE Affairs
CISL	Italian Confederation of Workers' Trade-unions
ECB	European Central Bank
EES	European Employment Strategy
EPL	Employment Protection Legislation
ESF	European Social Fund
ESM	European Social Model
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LN	Northern League
NRP	National Reform Programme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
PD	Democratic Party
PDL	People of Freedom Party
PES	Public Employment Services
RC	Communist Refoundation Party
SC	Civic Choice Party
UIL	Italian Labour Union

Introduction

*'Discussing labour market reforms and the validity of flexicurity is highly topical. In a period as transformative as this one, it is more than necessary to think how employment policy can help Europe emerge from the crisis with a stronger labour market'*¹.

As L. Andor, the EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, critically explained in his speech at the High-level Conference on Flexicurity in November 2011, discussions about flexicurity keep being important for today EU politics. Especially in times of economic crisis, achieving more responsive labour markets is an imperative for the European Union as a whole.

Flexicurity, a concept adopted by the EU in 2007, with the aim of being equipped with a labour market model that could effectively cope with the challenges posed by globalisation, is

'a policy strategy that attempts, synchronically and in a deliberate way, to enhance the flexibility of labour markets, work organisation and labour relations on the one hand, and to enhance security – employment security and social security – notably for weaker groups in and outside the labour market, on the other hand'².

Hence, as its first supporter T. Wilthagen has demonstrated, flexicurity aims to create a win-win situation both for employers and employees. It views flexibility and security as complementary, rather than opposite³. This reflection comes from the acknowledgement that still today

'on one hand, there is the demand for increased flexibility in order to reinforce the competitive power and performance of companies, sectors, countries and the EU as a whole. On the other hand, unease is mounting with respect to processes of social exclusion, segmentation, modern poverty and jeopardised social integration and cohesion'⁴.

Manifestly this concern is more and more relevant today, in an EU severely hit by a serious economic crisis that is both impeding growth and undermining social cohesion. Today, labour market situation in the EU still faces important challenges. Unemployment is higher as never before in most Member States: according to Eurostat, the EU unemployment

¹ L. Andor, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, *High-level Conference on Flexicurity*, 14 November 2011, retrieved 17 April 2013, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-11-751_en.htm?locale=FR.

² T. Wilthagen and F. Tros, 'The concept of "flexicurity": a new approach to regulating employment and labour markets', *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, vol. 2, n. 4, 2004, p. 169.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁴ T. Wilthagen and F. Tros, 'Dealing with the "flexibility-security nexus": Institutions, strategies, opportunities and barriers', *Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies Working Paper*, n. 10, 2003, p. 6, retrieved 5 April 2013, <http://dare.uva.nl/document/115526>.

rate was at 10,9% in March 2013⁵. Even if Member States are unevenly hit by the impact of the economic crisis, the consequences on their labour market is nonetheless significant, leading to further interrogation as to which point this situation is sustainable. Therefore even today in the EU 'there is a clear need for new kinds of labour market flexibility as well as new forms of security that respond to the needs and insecurities of modern economies'⁶.

Even though employment is not a competence of the EU, it is a European concern since the 1970s oil price shocks, 'when the first initiatives were taken with the aim of building a European level of regulation'⁷. Nevertheless it is only from the 1990s, after the introduction of a new Title on Employment in the Treaty, that more specific measures to tackle the issue have been taken at the EU level. The European Employment Strategy (EES) is then become the European 'strategy for full employment and better jobs for all'⁸, relying on the soft law governance mechanisms of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC)⁹. It is thus in this context that, after long discussions on flexicurity at the EU level, starting from 2007 it has been officially incorporated in the Lisbon Strategy¹⁰, i.e. the EU policy strategy that since 2000 aims at making of the EU 'the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world'¹¹. Indeed while flexicurity is seen as a possible response to today challenges and it is therefore gaining new momentum with the advent of the economic crisis, it has moved centre-stage in the policy community since the 1990s. At that time in fact a balanced combination of flexibility and security was retained as a necessary instrument for the construction of a successful European labour market in the context of the EES¹². Today flexicurity continues to be part of the EU policy agenda and is now part of the Europe 2020 Strategy¹³.

Since the adoption of flexicurity, the EU has been advising Member States to reform their labour market policy according to the agreed principles of European flexicurity, i.e.

⁵ Eurostat, *Unemployment statistics*, retrieved 25 April 2013, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics.

⁶ European Expert Group on Flexicurity, *Flexicurity Pathways: Turning hurdles into stepping stones*, Brussels, 2007, p. 4.

⁷ G. Falkner, *European Social Policy*, cited in P. R. Graziano, 'The European Employment Strategy and National Welfare States: Italy and France compared', *Les cahiers européens de Science Po*, vol. 2, 2008, p. 6.

⁸ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission: The future of the European Employment Strategy (EES): A Strategy for Full Employment and Better Jobs for All*, COM (2003), 6 final, Brussels, 14 January 2003.

⁹ This argument is developed in part 1.1, cfr. *infra*, pp. 6-10.

¹⁰ Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusion: Towards common principles of flexicurity*, 16201/07 SOC 523 ECOFIN 503, Brussels, 6 December 2007.

¹¹ Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions*, Lisbon, 24 March 2000, p. 5.

¹² European Commission, *Green Paper, Partnership for a New Organisation of Work*, COM (1997), 128 final, Brussels, 16 April 1997.

¹³ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission: Europe 2020. A strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, COM(2010) 2020, Brussels, 3 March 2010, p. 19 et ss.

'increased flexibility in contractual arrangements and increased universal security, coupled with active labour market policies and lifelong learning strategies'¹⁴. Italy as well, a country severely hit by the economic crisis, with a fragmented labour market and a political class unable to introduce substantial reforms in the labour market policy, has been subject to this EU pressure to modernize its employment policy according to the principles of flexicurity. But while the EU has been promoting the adoption of this model by the mechanisms of the OMC, one can ask to what extent the EU's non-coercive promotion of flexicurity from 2006 onwards has led to change in the Italian labour market policy? And if so, which are the factors that have facilitated or impeded such EU-induced domestic change?

By taking the Italian case as a study case, this contribution demonstrates that the effects of the promotion of flexicurity are mixed, depending on a number of variables. Drawing on the conceptual framework of Europeanisation, the hypotheses formulated in Chapter 2 provide evidence for analysing to what extent Europeanisation of flexicurity is more likely to occur. It is hypothesized that, proved that the degree of misfit with EU policy is present, domestic policy change will occur when key institutional actors support the EU and more specifically the flexicurity strategy, above all in presence of external constraints, while no change is expected if the executive is characterized by hard Euroscepticism. If national elites are in favour of Europe, but external constraints are not relevant, then usages of Europe will not be fully positive.

After having introduced flexicurity, the concept of Europeanisation of flexicurity – defined in Chapter 2 as the impact the EU flexicurity model has on national labour market policy – will be analysed. The hypotheses formulated on the basis of T. Risse *et al.*'s theoretical framework¹⁵ will be subsequently tested in Chapter 3 on the Italian labour market policy from 2006 onwards, by taking into account the role of three subsequent governments: Prodi Government (2006–2008), Berlusconi Government (2008–2011) and Monti Government (2011–2013). Italy presents a segmented labour market, with a clear division between protected “insiders” and precarious “outsiders” (*precari*), and a rate of unemployment of 11,5% at March 2013, well above the EU average¹⁶. Even if starting from 1990s some specific reforms have been adopted with the aim of tackling the fragmentation of the Italian labour market, 'specific aspects of the Italian employment performance remain quite distant from other European countries and from the European Union in average'¹⁷.

¹⁴ Cfr. *infra*, Chapter 1, pp. 13-16; the concept of EU flexicurity is described more in detail in Chapter 1.

¹⁵ M. G. Cowles, J. Caporaso and T. Risse, *Transforming Europe: Europeanisation and Domestic Change*, Ithaca NY and London, 2001, Cornell University Press.

¹⁶ Eurostat, *loc.cit.*

¹⁷ P. R. Graziano, 'The European Employment Strategy', *op.cit.*, p. 5.

Thus the Italian case represents an excellent context to test the hypotheses formulated: the Italian labour market policy is indeed 'characterized by an incompatibility between the original national policy and the EU flexicurity strategy'¹⁸: therefore the presence of a high policy misfit is more likely to produce quite high adaptation pressures.

This study uses a qualitative research design in order to analyse to what extent there has been Europeanisation of flexicurity in the Italian labour market policy. Qualitative research is helpful inasmuch as it allows for an observation of the role of the main Italian institutional actors and of the processes that may lead to transformation of the Italian employment policy. Throughout the study case, the hypotheses, hereinafter presented more in detail, will be then tested on the basis of official, secondary sources, and semi-structured interviews conducted with the main Italian institutional actors involved in the labour market policy. By triangulating the information acquired, i.e. official documents, interviews and observations on the specific case, the contribution aims both at identifying the main actors and factors which are more likely to impede or facilitate an EU-induced domestic change and at shading a light on whether the non-coercive promotion of EU flexicurity has led to major change in the Italian employment policy from 2006 onwards.

This contribution situates itself in the more general framework of the Europeanisation of employment policy of the EU Member States. The identification of the main mechanisms in the field of Europeanisation of flexicurity in the Italian labour market policy is a relevant question for a number of reasons, both from a theoretical perspective and from the viewpoint of Italian policy-makers. Firstly, this study represents a contribution in the analysis of the effects of the OMC on domestic labour market policy in the area of flexicurity. Indeed, while the Europeanisation literature has extensively examined the impact of the EES on the domestic level¹⁹, less attention has been paid to Europeanisation of flexicurity. Hence, the research supplements flexicurity literature in the field of Europeanisation mechanisms. Secondly, this study might help to assess the EU influence on the Italian labour market policy. In fact, even though flexicurity is a well-known concept among the Italian policy-makers, it is possible to find reference to the model only in the official documents: in fact 'Italian policy-makers hardly refer publicly to the EU flexicurity model, as it is a concept that the public opinion itself does not accept or cannot understand'²⁰.

¹⁸ A. Gwiazda, 'The Europeanization of flexicurity: the Lisbon Strategy's impact on employment policies in Italy and Poland', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 18, n. 4, 2011, p. 547.

¹⁹ See M. Heidenreich and J. Zeitlin, *Changing European Employment and Welfare Regimes: The Influence of the Open Method of Coordination on National Reforms*, London, Routledge, 2009.

²⁰ Interview with Emiliano Rustichelli, Policy Analyst, Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Rome, 27 March 2013.

The Law 92/2012 of the Monti government, also known as Fornero Reform, situates itself in this context. It represents the last intervention brought to a labour market that, despite being in extreme need for structural reforms, has not yet been rightly reformed. Therefore 'the Italian labour market remains still today unfit to cope with the consequences of the economic crisis'²¹. Assessing the role of the EU might therefore help understanding the relevance flexicurity and the EES mechanisms have in the Italian context, inasmuch as they may indeed be of support in 'helping *Italy* emerge from the crisis with a stronger labour market'²². The EU pressure may indeed result in an additional – and needed – facilitating factor, helpful in overcoming the main national vetoes that impedes any substantial reform of the Italian employment policy.

The remainder of this thesis is divided in three parts: in Chapter 1 the concept of flexicurity is defined and discussed in the context of the Lisbon Strategy with the aim of providing the reader with the main characteristics of the EU flexicurity model. Chapter 2 presents the analytical framework of Europeanisation of flexicurity. Here the hypotheses will be defined more in detail, together with an analysis of the main Italian institutional actors, which are more likely to be involved in the implementation of the EU flexicurity model. Then in Chapter 3 the hypotheses presented will be tested in the empirical analysis of Europeanisation of flexicurity of the Italian employment policy in the period of 2006–2013. Finally, the concluding section will summarize the main findings and bring evidence of the necessity of further research on the subject.

²¹ Interview with Stefania Rossi, Responsible for Employment and Social Policy, Confindustria, Rome, 15 April 2013.

²² L. Andor, *op.cit.*

1. Flexicurity

Flexicurity is not only an European concept. Despite the fact that flexicurity has recently attracted attention from policy-makers at the EU level, it comes from the tradition of two Member States, the Netherlands and Denmark. The two countries introduced flexicurity in their labour market policy already in the 1990s. Because of the low unemployment rate and the flexibility of their labour markets, they have been regarded as a model for both the construction and the implementation of flexicurity in the EU. Arguably, the Danish model, also called the “Golden Triangle”, has been identified as the successful proof of the concept, attracting interest from both policy-makers and academics.

Flexicurity has thus been adopted in 2007 by the European institutions as the method to promote growth and social cohesion. At that time the EU was not only far from achieving the targets set out by the Lisbon agenda; it had also to come up with a strong response to face the challenges the modern global economy was posing in terms of both competitiveness and productivity. The promise of a win-win situation, coupled with the successful proof of the formula, created momentum for the reaching of a fast agreement among all the main European stakeholders for the adoption of the EU flexicurity model. As a result, flexicurity has been regarded as the main concept of the EES since 2007.

Hence there is a need to explain carefully the origins, the meaning, the success attached to the concept of flexicurity, a buzzword that has attracted interest at the EU level and that is now at the centre of the EES. In this Chapter a detailed definition of flexicurity will be given, with the aim of providing the reader with a clear understanding of the concept. In the first part of the Chapter, the mechanisms of construction of Social Europe will be presented. In the second part, a definition of flexicurity will be provided, together with an explanation of the Danish “Golden Triangle”. Then the EU flexicurity model will be presented with the aim of explaining both the emergence and the EU definition of the concept. It is indeed the EU flexicurity model – arguably more generic than the Danish one – that will be then tested in Chapter 3 in the Italian context.

1.1 Constructing Social Europe through the Open Method of Coordination

Since the very beginning of the European integration process, EU Member States have been spending much of their efforts in creating a Single Market and in integrating their national economies. It is however only starting from the 1990s that the EU could start

developing a sensibility towards employment policy. Despite the fact that it remains, still today, a national competence, the EU influence in this domain is not irrelevant anymore. In fact today,

'especially with regard to policy-making, it is currently very rare to find domestic policies which are not somehow connected to European ones. Without considering the European sources of domestic policies, today any domestic-centred policy analysis would neglect important international constraints and opportunities for political actors'²³.

Since 1997, the EU has been advising Member States to implement specific reforms in the field of employment policy by means of the OMC. Starting from 2007 the EU has then specifically encouraged Member States to adopt the EU flexicurity model, by recurring to the very same mechanisms.

The OMC, 'a new governance model developed at the 2000 Lisbon Summit'²⁴, 'represents – in contrast to the traditional Community Method – a more flexible and decentralised approach to policy-making in which Member States develop their own policies in response to common European objectives'²⁵. The March 2000 European Council Conclusions describes the OMC as a

'means of spreading best practice and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals. This method, which is designed to help Member States to progressively develop their own policies, involves, *inter alia*, a) fixed guidelines with specific timetables, b) quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks, c) setting specific targets, and d) periodic monitoring, evaluation and peer review which can aid in mutual learning'²⁶.

Resistance from the Member States to give up their sovereign power in the field of employment policy has forced the EU to recur to this soft-law instrument. Thus it could be said that 'the EES gives up the legal force of traditional regulations in order to allow the EU to deal with some core areas of employment policy that were hitherto solely reserved for the Member States'²⁷. As a result it extensively relies on the voluntary participation of the Member States.

Thus at the EU level, the Member States, together with the Commission, agree on a set of common goals and guidelines which may be then put into practice at the national level²⁸. To illustrate their efforts, Member States are required to assess their progress by

²³ P. R. Graziano and M. P. Vink, 'Europeanization: Concept, Theory, and Methods', in S. Bulmer and C. Lequesne (eds.), *The Member States of the European Union*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 34.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ P. Copeland and B. ter Haar, 'The (In)Effectiveness of the European Employment Strategy', *Paper prepared for the Twelfth Biennial EUSA conference in Boston on 3-5 March 2011*, Boston, 2011, p. 2.

²⁶ Council of the European Union, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

²⁷ J. S. Mosher and D. M. Trubek, 'Alternative Approaches to Governance in the EU: EU Social Policy and the European Employment Strategy', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 41, n. 1, 2003, p. 71.

²⁸ P. Copeland and B. ter Haar, *loc.cit.*

submitting a report, the National Reform Programme (NRP), to the Commission. It will be then responsible to evaluate them, together with the Labour and Social Affairs Council, and to give specific recommendations to each Member State²⁹.

In this flexible method of working also the regional and local actors are involved in the whole process: thus the decentralised nature of the process allows for an open method, that helps creating a multi-level framework in which all willing stakeholders may help to pursue national change. The peer-assessment process and the sharing of the best practices then make Member States more willing to emulate successful models: therefore the actors, and especially the executives, are constantly engaged in a learning process³⁰.

This method is the backbone of the EES. By relying on these mechanisms, the EU has been advising the Member States to introduce specific reforms with the aim of modernizing their employment policy. The European Social Fund (ESF) has been the key financial instrument available for all Member States willing to modernize their labour market, according to the EU guidelines. The ESF thus *de facto* represents the financial incentive for the Member States to reform in accordance with EU pressure and recommendations.

Especially today, in view of the persisting high unemployment rate in the whole European Union, this pressure to voluntarily conform to the EU suggested guidelines has an undeniable relevance: having a responsive labour market, able to cope with the problems posed by the economic crisis, is relevant for all Member States, especially for those countries, as Italy, who are unable to overcome specific obstacles that impedes substantial reforms.

Still, the OMC has been criticised as being ineffective in creating momentum for reforms³¹. Lack of sanctions to ensure adherence to the EU guidelines is seen as the major obstacle for advancing real progress. Thus one can ask whether the European Union may effectively affect national policy only by means of soft-law mechanisms, or instead the lack of a binding framework jeopardises the implementation of a specific model. These are fundamental questions not only for the assessment of the effectiveness of the OMC, but also for the understanding of the extent of Europeanisation of national policies.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ R. Dehousse, 'The Open Method of Coordination: A New Policy Paradigm?', *Les cahiers européens de Science Po*, n. 3, 2003, p. 4.

³¹ C. de la Porte and Ph. Pochet, 'The OMC intertwined with the debates on governance, democracy and social Europe', *Research prepared for Minister Frank Vandenbroucke, Minister for Social Affairs and Pensions*, 2003, pp. 10-11, retrieved 21 April 2013, <http://eucenter.wisc.edu/conferences/OMCnetOct03/delaportePochet.pdf>.

Up until now, research on the impact of the EES on national policy has shown mixed results. Even though it appears that it has had little effect, policy-makers sometimes may recur to the EES instruments as a way to legitimate the measures taken to tackle unemployment³². It has been suggested in fact that the EES guidelines may affect consistently national policy, but only 'if and when actors react to or utilize it'³³. Indeed, 'the strongest mechanism of OMC influence on national social and employment policies [...] operates through creative appropriation by domestic actors'³⁴. Thus a strong consensus among domestic stakeholders has proved to be one effective variable promoting major reform at the national level. Therefore, even though soft-law mechanisms lack specifically the effectiveness of a binding norm, they can have nonetheless a normative effect 'as a result of the voluntary compliance of the instrument'³⁵. Indeed the OMC 'potential for learning does not hinge on sanctions but on convictions'³⁶. This reasoning proves to be relevant especially for the Italian case: as it will be argued in Chapter 2 and more specifically in Chapter 3, Europeanisation of flexicurity in Italy is likely to depend, *inter alia*, also on the willingness of Europeanised actors to implement specific EU recommendations.

When talking about the OMC, it has nonetheless to be acknowledged that it is nothing more than an instrument specifically 'designed to help Member States to progressively develop their own policies'³⁷. Thus, even though this method has received some specific criticisms, one cannot deny that it may help to strengthen national employment policy coherence and foster discussions on the need to reform labour market policy, according to the principles of flexicurity.

Still, whereas the adoption of flexicurity at the national level requires both time and willingness on the part of the national actors, the adoption of flexicurity at the EU level has been made in a relatively little time. Even though the necessity to balance flexibility and security in the EU labour markets has been seen as a necessity since 1997, the Commission has integrated the concept of flexicurity in the EES framework from 2006. Moreover, while

³² K. Jacobsson and H. Schmid, 'Real integration or just formal adaptation? - On the implementation of the National Action Plans for Employment' in C. de la Porte and Ph. Pochet (eds.), *Building Social Europe through the Open Method of Co-ordination*, Brussels, European Interuniversity Press, 2002, p. 83.

³³ T. J. Weishaupt and K. Lack, 'The European Employment Strategy: Assessing the Status Quo', *Germany Policy Studies*, vol. 7, n. 1, 2011, p. 11.

³⁴ J. Zeitlin, 'The Open Method of Coordination and reform of national social and employment policies: influences, mechanisms, effects', in M. Heidenreich and J. Zeitlin (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 231.

³⁵ P. Copeland and B. ter Haar, 'Busting the myth that European soft coordination methods create no "ripples" in national legal orders', *Paper presented at the ECPR Fifth Pan-European Conference, Porto 24-26 June 2010*, Porto, 2010, p. 2.

³⁶ S. Bulmer and C. Radaelli, 'The Europeanisation of National Policy', cited in R. Ladrech, *Europeanization and National Politics*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 184.

³⁷ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission: Streamlining the annual economic and employment policy co-ordination cycles*, COM (2002), 0487 final, Brussels, 3 September 2002, p. 1.

the EU has been promoting this model from a number of years now, this very same concept comes from the national level, two Member States – the Netherlands and Denmark – having adopted it since the 1990s. Thus it seems to be relevant not only to explain the EU flexicurity model, but also to trace back the origins of the concept. This will be the aim of the following paragraphs.

1.2 Combining flexibility and security

*'At the end of the day, the aims of flexicurity policies should be to ensure the welfare and well-being of our societies and all its members, now and in the future'*³⁸.

It is by recurring to these words that in 2008 T. Wilthagen, the first defensor of flexicurity both at the EU level and among scholars, explained the relevance of the flexicurity model for the EU. Flexicurity, 'an integrated strategy to enhance, at the same time, flexibility and security in the labour market'³⁹, has been presented as an instrument helpful in 'maintaining social protection in the face of fluctuation, instability and, in many cases, fragmentation that appear as ever increasing features of working lives'⁴⁰. Having been conceptualised by scholars as a win-win situation, it is not surprising then that flexicurity has become an influential concept in both academic and political discourses.

From an academic point of view, flexicurity is an analytical concept, encompassing different available combinations of flexibility and security. It is thus a framework of categorization of possible combinations of certain degrees of flexibility and security in a matrix structure (cfr. table 1). There are indeed four different types of flexibility, i.e. internal-numerical, external-numerical, functional and wage flexibility, to be connected with four different forms of security, i.e. job security, employment security, income security, and finally, combination security⁴¹. Thus according to this reasoning, there exists sixteen potential combinations of flexibility and security. On the flexibility side, one finds four types of flexibility. 'External-numerical flexibility concerns the possibility for a company to have less strict hiring and firing measures'⁴²; 'internal-numerical flexibility is about the ease for

³⁸ T. Wilthagen and S. Bekker, 'Europe's Pathways to Flexicurity: Lessons Presented from and to the Netherlands', *Intereconomics*, March/April, 2008, p. 73.

³⁹ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission: Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and better jobs through flexibility and security*, COM (2007), 0359 final, Brussels, 29 June 2007, p. 2.

⁴⁰ T. Wilthagen and F. Tros, 'The concept of "flexicurity"', *op.cit.*, p. 179.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁴² P. K. Madsen, 'Flexicurity – A new perspective on labour markets and welfare states in Europe', *CARMA Research Paper*, vol. 3, 2006, p. 5.

the employer to modify the amount of working hours, without having to hire and fire⁴³; 'functional flexibility instead regards the ability for the company to change elements of work organisation⁴⁴; finally, 'wage flexibility is about the ability for the company to alter wages in response to changes in labour market conditions⁴⁵.

Table 1: Flexicurity as an analytical framework⁴⁶

	Job security	Employment security	Income security	Combination security
Numerical flexibility				
Working time flexibility				
Functional flexibility				
Wage flexibility				

Source: T. Wilthagen and F. Tros, 'The concept of "flexicurity": a new approach to regulating employment and labour markets', *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, vol. 2, n. 4, 2004, p. 171.

Thus, according to the matrix, these four forms of flexibility are to be connected to four forms of security. Job security is about 'the possibility for an employee to keep its specific job with the same employer throughout his life⁴⁷, whereas employment security refers to 'the certainty to remain employed throughout the life⁴⁸; income security regards instead 'the possibility of having an income protection⁴⁹, whereas combination security is about 'the ability to combine private with professional life⁵⁰.

According to this framework of analysis then, it is possible to have different approaches of flexicurity, as there is not a single way of implementing it. Flexicurity is thus a descriptive framework with a balanced combination of flexibility and security for the labour market, its composition being rather diversified.

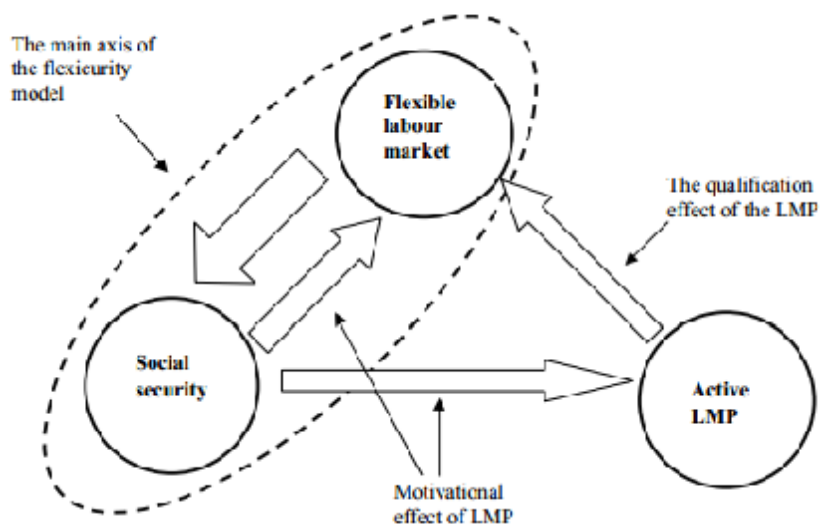
Even if the concept of flexicurity has been developed extensively by academicians, the appearance of flexicurity as a policy strategy may be traced back to the 1990s, when a number of successful labour market policy reforms were introduced in the Netherlands and in Denmark. These reforms enabled the two countries to improve their labour market

43 *Ibid.*
 44 *Ibid.*
 45 *Ibid.*
 46 *Ibid.*
 47 *Ibid.*
 48 *Ibid.*
 49 *Ibid.*
 50 *Ibid.*

situation and to reduce unemployment rates. As a result, 'their flexicurity models have been put forward as the explanation for these successful labour market developments'⁵¹.

The Danish model particularly has attracted attention especially among the EU policy-makers. The Danish “Golden Triangle” 'combines high mobility between jobs with a comprehensive social safety net for the unemployed and an active labour market policy'⁵². By referring to the matrix categorisation above presented, the Danish model is thus one of the possible way of constructing flexicurity, as it represents a combination of 'high external numerical flexibility with a high level of income security and high level of employment security'⁵³.

Figure 1: The Danish flexicurity model⁵⁴



Source: P. K. Madsen, 'Flexicurity – A new perspective on labour markets and welfare states in Europe', *CARMA Research Paper*, vol. 3, 2006, p. 8.

As explained in figure 1, it relies on a combination of three interconnected mechanisms, i.e. a flexible labour market, a number of active labour market policies and a degree of social security. The arrows in the graph illustrates the flows of the workers: unemployed receive a certain degree of security in the form of unemployment benefits until they find a new job. This period is usually not a long one: because of the flexibility of the system, they manage quite easily to be employed again in a new job that matches their

⁵¹ M. Keune and M. Jepsen, 'Not balanced and hardly new: the European Commission's quest for flexicurity', *European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety (ETUI-REHS)*, vol. 1, 2007, p. 6.

⁵² T. Wilthagen and S. Bekker, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

⁵³ C. Giannetti and M. Madia, 'Flexicurity Pathways in Italy: Learning from Denmark?', *European Economic Association - ESEM*, 2009, p. 9, retrieved 13 April 2013, http://www.eea-esem.com/files/papers/EEA-ESEM/2009/578/flexicurity_giannetti_madia.pdf.

⁵⁴ P. K. Madsen, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

competences. Those who instead may end up being unemployed for a longer period have the possibility to take advantage of the active labour market policies, e.g. job training and education⁵⁵.

Thus the “Golden Triangle” has proved to be an effective mechanism to cope with unemployment, as it creates advantages in the search for a new job or in improving possibilities to get one:

'on the one hand, the participants in various programmes improve their chances of getting a job. On the other hand, the measures can have a motivational effect in that unemployed persons who are approaching the time when they are due for activation may intensify their search for ordinary jobs, in case they consider activation a negative prospect'⁵⁶.

As such, the Danish labour market is characterised by a high flexibility compensated by a high social security system for temporary unemployed. In fact the Danish Employment Protection Legislation (EPL) is rather loose in comparison with the European average, as a result of less strict restrictions of hiring and firing measures. This flexibility is highly counterbalanced by an effective mechanism of social security, with an average net replacement rate of almost 80% and a high expenditure on active labour market policies⁵⁷. Thus the effective combination of these mechanisms, coupled with a high qualifying and motivational effect, has led to a system that highly contributes to a low degree of unemployment, below 5%⁵⁸ in 2007, when the EU decided to take it as the model for the EES.

Given the attractiveness of the concept and the success it has had when implemented at the national level, it is not surprising then that the EU, in search for a successful European Social Model (ESM), developed an interest towards flexicurity. After having traced back the origins of the concept and explained its significance at the academic level, it is now relevant to present the model developed by the EU. It is this model that will be applied in Chapter 2 and in Chapter 3, when analysing to what extent there has been Europeanisation of flexicurity of the Italian employment policy.

1.3 The EU Flexicurity model

'The question at stake, in essence, is about the future and the further concretization of the idea of a distinct European social and economic model. Can Europe indeed have its own

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁷ J. Zhou, 'Danish for All? Balancing Flexibility with Security: The Flexicurity Model', *IMF Working Paper*, WP/07/36, 2007, p. 11.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

*way compared to the rest of the world?*⁵⁹

Starting from 1997, flexicurity has been a major concept in the context of the EES discussions. As the above quotation demonstrates, the EU has been looking for an ESM that could differentiate the Union from the rest of the world. In 2003 the Kok report tried to give a first relevant input, by calling for the necessity to finally develop a model that could 'make labour markets more flexible while providing workers with appropriate levels of security'⁶⁰. Thus, even though flexicurity had been formally adopted only in 2007, it has been on the agenda of policy discussion at the EU level already well before.

The EU flexicurity is defined as the 'integrated strategy for enhancing, at the same time, flexibility and security in the labour market, [a strategy that] attempts to reconcile employers' need for a flexible workforce with workers' need for security'⁶¹. When adopted in 2007, the EU flexicurity model was seen indeed as a possible response to adjust the EU labour markets to the global economy, i.e. a way to both create more and better jobs and reduce segmented labour markets, without damaging the social security mechanisms. Thus flexicurity became the new remedy for the EU labour markets.

In 2007, the flexicurity principles have been formally adopted at the EU level, and they are now a fundamental element of the EES⁶². Today, despite the social consequences of the economic crisis and the impact it has having on the public finances of the Member States, flexicurity keeps being part of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and it contributes to the achievement of the 75% employment rate at the EU level⁶³. The Guideline 7 of the Europe 2020 Strategy more specifically stresses the importance for the Member States to

'integrate the flexicurity principles into their labour market policies and apply them, making full use of ESF support with a view to increasing labour market participation and combating segmentation [...] whilst reducing structural unemployment'⁶⁴.

Thus in this perspective, flexicurity keeps representing the approach that should guide the Member States in modernising their labour market, and that should help the EU achieve the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

⁵⁹ T. Wilthagen, 'Mapping out flexicurity pathways in the European Union', *Tilburg University: Flexicurity Research Programme*, March 2008, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Employment Taskforce, *Jobs, Jobs, Jobs – Creating More Employment in Europe*, Report of the Employment Task Force chaired by Wim Kok, Brussels, November 2003, p. 9.

⁶¹ European Commission, *Communication of the Commission: Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity*, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

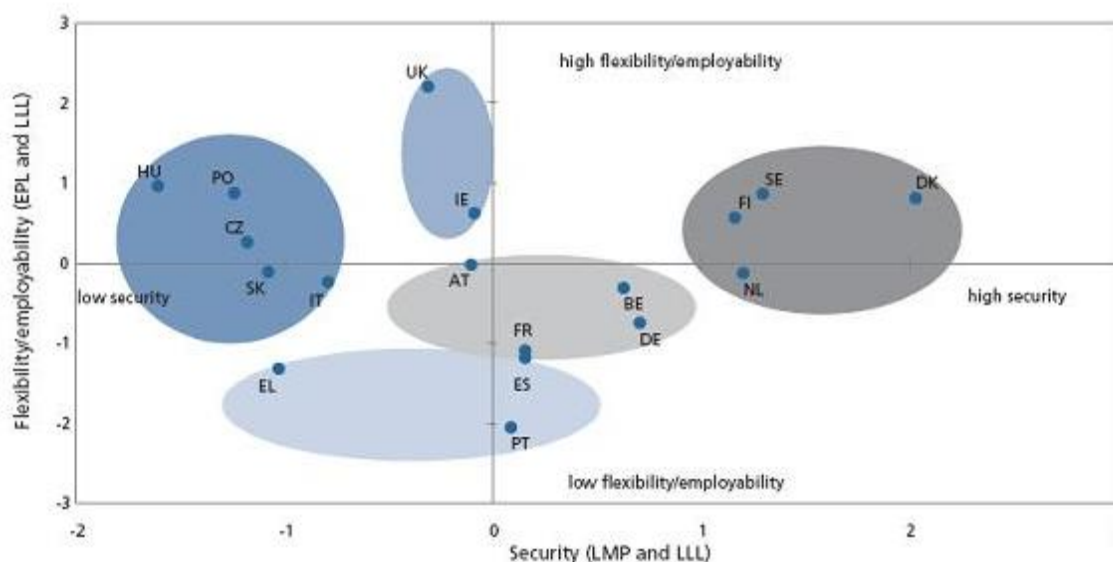
⁶² Council of the European Union, *Conclusions of the Council. Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity*, *op.cit.*

⁶³ European Commission, *Communication of the Commission: Europe 2020, A Strategy for a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*, *op.cit.*

⁶⁴ Council of the European Union, *Council decision of 21 October 2010 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States*, 2010/707/EU, Brussels, 21 October 2010, guideline 7.

Thus the EU has been advising the Member States to design and implement a flexicurity approach across four main reinforcing principles, agreed by the European Commission in 2007 and formally adopted by the Council at the end of the same year⁶⁵. The EU flexicurity model thus requires the presence of 'flexible and reliable contractual arrangements, in accordance with labour laws, collective agreements and work organisation'⁶⁶; 'modern social security systems that provide adequate financial support, encourage employment and facilitate labour market mobility'⁶⁷ (e.g. unemployment benefits, healthcare and pensions); 'comprehensive lifelong learning strategies to support the continual adaptability of workers, especially the most vulnerable'⁶⁸; and finally 'effective active labour market policies (ALMP) to help employees cope with unemployment and ease transitions to new jobs'⁶⁹.

Figure 2: National flexicurity patterns and country clusters⁷⁰



Source: European Commission, *Employment in Europe Report*, Brussels, 2006, p. 106.

Even though the European Commission has identified the four main principles indispensable to implement flexicurity at the national level, nonetheless it acknowledges that Member States need to adapt their flexicurity strategies to their specific labour market. As shown in figure 2 indeed Member States present different degrees of flexibility and security, some of them having a more flexible rather than secure labour market, as Italy, whereas

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ European Commission, *Communication of the Commission: Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity, op.cit.*, p. 6.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ European Commission, *Employment in Europe Report*, Brussels, 2006, p. 106.

others having a greater focus on security and less on flexibility.

Thus 'since the existing initial arrangements in the different EU countries can be characterised by various combinations of flexibility and security, [...] the objective of balancing the two elements may require quite different interventions'⁷¹. Having acknowledged the variety of the specific features of the labour markets of the Member States, the European Commission has thus identified four possible pathways, which may help the Member States to assess the specific challenges they have to face and to identify the available instruments they may use in their design of flexicurity.

According to the Commission, a Member State may follow the first pathway of 'tackling contractual arrangements'⁷², if the problem that the country faces is a segmented labour market; or the second pathway of 'developing flexicurity within the enterprise and offering transition security'⁷³ for those countries with low job-flows; or a third one of 'tackling skills and opportunity gaps among the workforce'⁷⁴ where the problem lies in 'large skills and opportunity gaps among the population'⁷⁵, or finally the fourth pathway of 'improving opportunities for benefit recipients and informally employed workers'⁷⁶ when the country has to deal with the problem of 'high numbers of people on long-term benefits with difficult perspectives of returning to the labour market'⁷⁷.

Having identified the principles and pathways of the EU flexicurity model, the key challenge remains then to implement them accordingly at the national level. Having traced the path to be followed by the Member States, what the EU should do is then to evaluate how flexicurity is adopted at the national level, i.e. to what extent there is Europeanisation of flexicurity of the Member States' labour market policy.

1.4 Conclusions

Flexicurity, a policy strategy that tries to strike the right balance between flexibility and security, has attracted attention both from academicians and policy-makers. Scholars have introduced a framework of analysis, according to which flexicurity is a combination of different forms of flexibility and security, that leads to a win-win situation both for

⁷¹ EUROFOUND, *Flexicurity and Industrial Relations*, p. 4, retrieved 17 April 2013 <http://air.unimi.it/bitstream/2434/53811/1/tn0803038s.pdf>.

⁷² European Commission, *Communication of the Commission: Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity*, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

employers and employees.

Starting from the 1990s, the EU has been looking at flexicurity as the solution for its labour market policy. For its adoption at the national level, the EU extensively relies on the mechanisms of the OMC, and bases its soft-law pressure on specific incentives such as the ESF and on processes such as policy learning.

However, while the EU has developed its model of flexicurity, the concept comes from the national level, two countries, Denmark and the Netherlands, having introduced it since the 1990s. Their labour market reforms have attracted more and more attention, because of their low rate of unemployment. The Danish “Golden Triangle”, more specifically, has been regarded as the model of reference by the European Commission. However, when comparing the Danish model with the EU flexicurity model, one realizes that the model proposed by the Commission relies on a broader definition and application, so as to suit the different features of the 27 Member States.

Having presented the EU flexicurity model, it is now fundamental to ask to what extent there has been effectively Europeanisation of flexicurity since its adoption in the EU labour markets. This question proves to be a relevant one especially for those countries, as Italy, which situates itself in the first of the specific pathways identified by the EU⁷⁸, and is characterised by a high degree of flex-insecurity⁷⁹. Having discussed the importance of flexicurity, traced back its origins and explained its model and principles at the EU level, the thesis will introduce the theoretical framework with the aim of providing the reader with an understanding of the dynamics that may lead to Europeanisation of flexicurity in the Italian labour market policy.

⁷⁸ C. Giannetti and M. Madia, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

⁷⁹ F. Berton, M. Richiardi and S. Sacchi, *Flex-insecurity: Perché in Italia la flessibilità diventa precarietà*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009.

2. Europeanisation of flexicurity

As shown in Chapter 1, the EU has called for implementation of reforms according to the common principles of EU flexicurity. Italy as well has been subject to this horizontal indirect pressure operated by the EU. Still one can ask whether this top-down pressure has indeed resulted in domestic change: to what extent the EU affects Italian domestic policy? Is the EU the relevant variable explaining welfare state reforms in a country such as Italy, characterised by a segmented labour market and a high degree of flex-insecurity⁸⁰?

These questions are relevant as arguably Italy is a country that has responded to the EU pressures to different extent and with different results. In fact despite the EU has been calling for reforms, the Italian 'economic policy adjustment remains nationally specific and path dependent'⁸¹. The Italian policy-makers are indeed reluctant to invert a specific path of reforms – if specific advantages do not outweigh costs⁸².

To understand the real impact of the EU and its effectiveness in overcoming the unintended consequences of path-dependency in employment policy, the relevant literature of Europeanisation is reviewed, with the aim at developing some preliminary hypotheses on the factors that are more likely to explain Italian domestic change in response to the EU pressure. In Chapter 3, these hypotheses will be then tested in the Italian labour market policy. Thus, having explained in Chapter 1 how the EU may induce policy change, it is now necessary to analyse the conditions under which Europeanisation of flexicurity of the Italian employment policy is more likely to occur. In fact,

'in order to study Europeanisation we need to start at the domestic level, analyse how policies or institutions [or other political phenomena] are formed at the EU level, and subsequently determine the effects of political challenges and pressures exerted by the diffusion of European integration at the domestic level'⁸³.

2.1 Defining Europeanisation

Europeanisation is a relatively recent theoretical framework that analyses the process of 'domestic adaptation to the European regional integration'⁸⁴. The first definition of

⁸⁰ F. Berton, M. Richiardi and S. Sacchi, *op.cit.*

⁸¹ V. A. Schmidt, 'Europeanization and the Mechanisms of Economic Policy Adjustment', *European Integration Online Papers*, vol. 5, n. 6, 2001, p. 1.

⁸² P. Pierson, 'Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 94, n. 2, 2000, p. 251.

⁸³ P. R. Graziano and M. P. Vink, 'Europeanization: Concept, Theory, and Methods', *op.cit.*, p. 38.

⁸⁴ P. R. Graziano and M. P. Vink, *Europeanisation: New Research Agendas*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 7.

Europeanisation has been provided by R. Ladrech in 1994, according to whom Europeanisation is 'an incremental process re-orienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EU political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making'⁸⁵. Thus Europeanisation refers to the mechanisms under which the EU institutions may induce change at the domestic level, upon domestic politics, polity or policy.

Still Europeanisation does not refer exclusively to the analysis of the EU influence on the domestic level. At this “top-down” perspective – also called “downloading” – Europeanisation combines a “bottom-up” approach, intended to understand the mechanisms under which the Member States “upload” their national preferences onto the EU policy-making process⁸⁶. Thus Europeanisation should be conceived as an 'interactive process'⁸⁷, which includes both dynamics and eventual processes of feedback. A more encompassing definition of Europeanisation is thus the following:

'Europeanisation consists of processes of a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies'⁸⁸.

According to this view, Europeanisation relies not only on specific rules and institutions, but also, more importantly, on beliefs, informal rules and on a “logic of appropriateness”, as change may indeed occur in the “mental frameworks” of the domestic political actors: 'the socialization provided by the EU is likely to create political change if domestic actors decide to refer to the EU discourse, so as to legitimate their specific national preferences'⁸⁹.

Applied to the research of this thesis, Europeanisation is identified as the independent variable which impacts on the Italian employment policy by a top-down process relying on the indirect soft methods of the OMC. Thus Europeanisation of flexicurity in the Italian context can be defined as the indirect impact the EU has on the Italian employment policy, through its recourse to flexicurity elements in EU documents and discourses, starting from 2006 until today. Building on this definition, it is possible to expect that a policy change,

⁸⁵ R. Ladrech, 'Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France', cited in R. Ladrech, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

⁸⁶ R. Ladrech, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

⁸⁷ K. E. Howell, 'Developing Conceptualisation of Europeanization: Synthesising Methodological Approaches', *Queen's Papers on Europeanization*, n. 3, 2004, p. 3.

⁸⁸ C. Radaelli, 'The Europeanization of Public Policy', in K. Featherstone and C. Radaelli (eds.), *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 30.

⁸⁹ P. R. Graziano, *Europeanization and Domestic Policy Change: The Case of Italy*, New York, Routledge, 2012, 11.

driven by the EU discourse on flexicurity, is more likely to result in the introduction of a flexicurity agenda in Italy in presence of specific intervening factors.

Drawing on the literature presented, it is now possible to identify the causal mechanisms through which EU political discourses and strategies on flexicurity are more likely to affect the Italian employment policy. In the following parts of the thesis, it will then be analysed not only where Europe hits Italy, but also the mechanisms and the type of change produced by the EU non-coercive promotion of flexicurity from 2006 onwards. Indeed now 'the issue is no longer whether Europe matters but how it matters, to what degree, in what direction, at what pace, and at what point of time'⁹⁰.

2.2 Factors of domestic change

In this part, the mechanisms under which Europeanisation of flexicurity is more likely to occur are presented. As argued before, it is hypothesized that, proved that the degree of misfit with EU policy is present, domestic policy change will occur when key institutional actors support the EU and more specifically the flexicurity strategy, above all in presence of external constraints, while no change is expected if the executive is characterized by hard Euroscepticism. If national elites are in favour of Europe, but external constraints are not relevant, then usages of Europe will not be fully positive. There is thus a need to start operationalize the intervening variables hereinafter presented.

The working hypotheses are constructed on the basis of the concepts of policy misfit and mediating factors, proposed by Maria G. Cowles, James Caporaso and Thomas Risse in 2001⁹¹:

'the differential impact of Europe is explained by the "goodness of fit" between European and national policy on the one hand, and the existence of "mediating factors" or intervening variables that filter the domestic impact of Europe, on the other hand'⁹².

An external variable is introduced, by referring more specifically to the impact played by the economic crisis.

Risse *et al.*'s framework departs its analysis from the concept of "misfit" as the *conditio sine qua non* for domestic change. According to the scholars,

'the degree of adaptational pressure generated by Europeanisation depends on the

⁹⁰ T. A. Börzel and T. Risse, 'Conceptualizing the Domestic Impact of Europe', in K. Featherstone and C. Radaelli (eds.), *The Politics of Europeanisation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 60.

⁹¹ M. G. Cowles, J. Caporaso and T. Risse, *Transforming Europe*, *op.cit.*

⁹² T. A. Börzel, 'How the European Union Interacts with Its Member States', *Reihe Politikwissenschaft Political Science Series*, n. 93, November, 2003, p. 5.

“fit” or “misfit” between European institutions and the domestic structures. The lower the compatibility (fit) between European institutions, on the one hand, and national institutions on the other, the higher the adaptational pressures⁹³.

Some scholars have found this condition inappropriate for the mechanisms of the OMC, as 'high levels of “misfit” are neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for (...) domestic influence⁹⁴. It is nonetheless an useful variable, inasmuch as even 'softer forms of integration [...] may equally challenge domestic institutions, policies, and processes'⁹⁵. Thus the EU policy can *de facto* challenge the Italian labour market policy in presence of a considerable incompatibility between the EU and the Italian labour market policy. Applied to the research of the thesis, this predictions leads to formulate the first of our working hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: *The Europeanisation of EU flexicurity model depends on the degree of misfit between the EU and the Italian policy.*

Indeed the higher the policy misfit, the greater the pressure from the EU to reform national policy. If the policy difference is not relevant, then there is low misfit and low adaptation pressure coming from the EU; if instead more than one dimension considerably differ from the EU model, the misfit is higher, and therefore the adaptation pressure will be greater. Table 2 sums up the operationalization of the “misfit” variable:

Table 2: The Operationalization of “Misfit” Hypothesis⁹⁶

EU / National policy	Fit	Low misfit	High misfit
No differences	x		
Differences in one dimension		x	
More than one difference			x

Source: P. R. Graziano, 'Bringing the Actors Back in. Europeanisation and Domestic Policy Change: The Case of the European Employment Strategy in Italy and France', *Politiques publiques, Action Politique, Territoire*, Working paper n. 10, 2009, p. 4.

⁹³ M. G. Cowles, J. Caporaso and T. Risse, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

⁹⁴ J. Zeitlin, 'The OMC and Reform of National Social and Employment Policies: Influences, Mechanisms, Effects', *op.cit.*, p. 230.

⁹⁵ T. A. Börzel, 'Europeanization: How the European Union Interacts with its Member States', in S. Bulmer and C. Lequesne (eds), *The Member States of the European Union*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 51.

⁹⁶ P. R. Graziano, 'Bringing the Actors Back in. Europeanisation and Domestic Policy Change: The Case of the European Employment Strategy in Italy and France', *Politiques publiques, Action Politique, Territoire*, Working papers, n. 10, 2009, p. 4.

The presence of a “misfit” helps to generate pressure to reform, but domestic change nonetheless depends on specific intervening variables. As T. Risse *et al.* explain in fact, while “misfit” is the *conditio sine qua non* for the EU pressure to become relevant, the necessary condition for change is the presence of mediating factors⁹⁷, i.e. multiple veto points, facilitating formal institutions, political cultures, differential empowerment of actors and learning – that can formally impede a EU-induced domestic change, or partly facilitate it.

Firstly, multiple veto points may represent the 'major factor impeding structural adaptation'⁹⁸, as they may empower domestic actors with diverse advantages to avoid reforms and slow down Europeanisation pressures. Thus if power is dispersed across the political system and the veto players are effective in vetoing change, then it will be rather unlikely that the “willing coalition” of Europeanised actors may introduce domestic change as a result of the EU pressure⁹⁹. If this reasoning is applied to the current research then, it is possible to identify the first of the hypotheses related to the role of the mediating factors:

Hypothesis 2.1: *The Europeanisation of EU flexicurity depends on the absence of multiple veto players in the Italian labour market policy.*

Secondly, facilitating formal institutions are important actors not only because they are conducive to consensus-building and thus create the “willing coalition” that pursue domestic reforms, but more importantly because they 'provide actors with material and ideational resources to induce structural change'¹⁰⁰. Applying this concept to our framework of analysis allows to predict that the more influence facilitating formal institutions have in the domestic context, the more the willing domestic actors will refer to these specific resources in their discourses, and thus the more they will be successful in creating consensus towards the concept of flexicurity at the national level. Thus the second hypothesis will be as follows:

Hypothesis 2.2: *The Europeanisation of EU flexicurity depends on the influence of facilitating formal institutions in the Italian labour market policy.*

⁹⁷ M. G. Cowles, J. Caporaso and T. Risse, *op.cit.*, pp. 9-12.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

Thirdly, political and organisation cultures as well affect EU-induced domestic change, as they 'define the realm in which actors legitimately pursue their interests following a logic of appropriateness, which sees actions as rules-based'¹⁰¹. A national consensus-oriented culture is a facilitating factor for the introduction of domestic reforms, inasmuch as it can overcome the multiple veto points and help the “willing coalition” to introduce substantial innovation, without having to change the society. Therefore:

Hypothesis 2.3: A political culture based on consensus will facilitate Europeanisation of flexicurity.

Fourthly, the domestic balance of power is an important factor explaining national change. According to Moravcsik, 'national executives have powerful resources that enable them to alter the domestic balance of power in favour of themselves'¹⁰². Applied to the research of analysis then, it can be argued that an Europeanised executive is more likely to be successful in creating a coalition willing to implement reforms inspired to the EU flexicurity model, if it has considerable power. It can indeed undermine the role of the veto players, by taking advantage of the substantial assistance from the facilitating formal institutions. This is the reason why:

Hypothesis 2.4: A domestic balance of power in favour of a willing national executive will provide it with enough influence to pursue reforms based on flexicurity in the Italian labour market policy.

Finally, elite learning may play a significant role in changing the interests of the executive actors towards the implementation of flexicurity. The EU may indeed 'give actors a fundamental understanding of what their interests are and what appropriate means may be to pursue these interests'¹⁰³. There is indeed a process of socialisation of the national elites at the EU level, i.e. of Europeanisation of norms and identities of national actors. They internalize the EU discourse and thus transfer it at the national level. These “norm entrepreneurs” – as the literature defines them – in fact persuade the domestic actors 'of the

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰² A. Moravcsik, 'Why the European Community Strengthens the State: Domestic Politics and International Cooperation', Cambridge, Harvard University, 1994, cited in M. G. Cowles, J. Caporaso and T. Risse, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

¹⁰³ T. A. Börzel, 'Europeanization: How the European Union Interacts with its Member States', *op.cit.*, p. 54.

appropriateness of the new norms and ideas in a process of persuasion and social learning'¹⁰⁴. The more the “norm entrepreneurs” internalize this reasoning, the more likely they will be willing to pursue reforms according to the EU norms¹⁰⁵. Hence if this process of socialisation is applied to flexicurity, it can be argued that once national actors have internalized the EU flexicurity discourse, concept and ideas, they are more willing to pursue reforms that reflect the principles of flexicurity at the national level. Therefore:

Hypothesis 2.5: The EU discourse on flexicurity will depend on the effectiveness of the process of appropriateness by the national actors of norms and ideas on flexicurity.

Thus, according to this framework, Europeanisation has to be intended as

'the emergence and development at the European level of distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal, and social institutions associated with political problem solving that formalize interactions among the actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules'¹⁰⁶.

Europeanisation is channelled through different processes, such as a redistribution of resources resulting in a differential empowerment of the national actors, and a process of socialisation through social learning¹⁰⁷.

To this specific framework, a last external variable will be added. It seems indeed relevant to take into appropriate consideration the role played by the economic crisis on the Europeanisation of flexicurity. In fact, the economic crisis – starting to have its impact on Italy from 2008 onwards¹⁰⁸ – has proved to have had an influential role.

More specifically, in Italy 'many have seen in the economic crisis and in the demands coming from the EU an opportunity to overcome the main national vetoes present in Italy and to reform Italian national policy according to the principles of flexicurity'¹⁰⁹, as it has proved to be a successful model for dealing with high unemployment rates and a fragmented labour market. Thus, in this framework of analysis, external constraints as those posed by the economic crisis are seen as an opportunity for reform. Therefore we expect that:

Hypothesis 3: the greater the external constraints, the greater the pressure to reform the

¹⁰⁴

Ibid.

¹⁰⁵

T. A. Börzel, 'How the European Union Interacts with Its Member States', *op.cit.*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁰⁶

M. G. Cowles, J. Caporaso and T. Risse, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁷

T. A. Börzel, *op.cit.*, pp. 8-13.

¹⁰⁸

EUROFOUND, Effects of economic crisis on Italian economy, EIROOnline, n. 3, 2010, retrieved 25 April 2013, <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2010/03/articles/it1003019i.htm>.

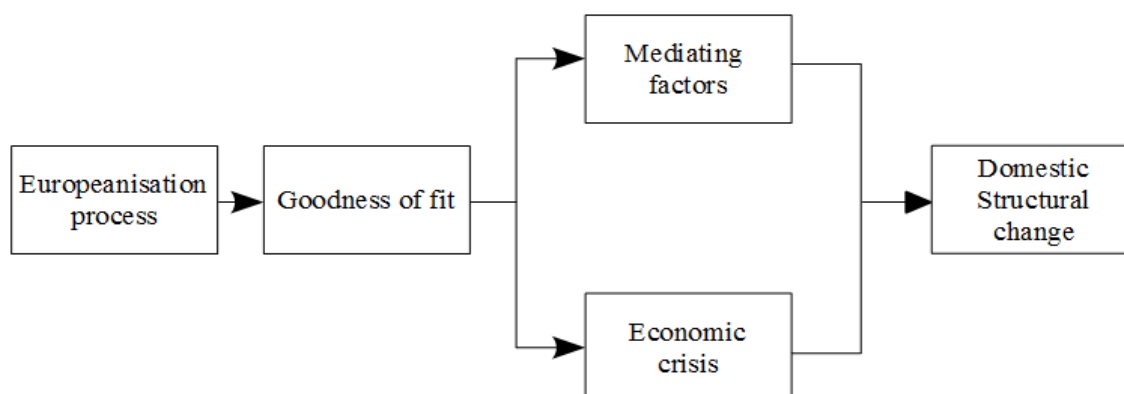
¹⁰⁹

Interview with Elisabetta Gualmini, Professor of University of Bologna, School of Political Science, Forlì, 20 March 2013.

Italian labour market policy.

When applied to the Italian framework, one realizes that when these constraints have not been present, the government has not implemented the EU non-coercive policy guidelines. Instead, when this has happened, responsible national executives have followed them and justified action by referring to the EU in their public discourses. As A. Cole and H. Drake pointed out, 'the EU has appeared simultaneously as a powerful constraint on domestic public policy, and a source of unrivalled opportunity for contemporary governments to [...] effect domestic change'¹¹⁰. Thus the economic crisis may be seen as the opportunity for the Italian labour market to implement the much needed substantial reforms. Arguably indeed the presence of the famous *vincolo esterno* (external restraint) in the 1990s, at a time when Italy had to fulfil the EU criteria to join the Eurozone, has proved to have been successful for the introduction of reforms necessary to cope with structural problems of the Italian economy – reforms that could have not otherwise been implemented. Indeed 'the changes [brought by the government at that time] were much overdue [...]. The “European objective” catalysed action on some politically difficult reforms, which were eventually pushed through'¹¹¹.

Figure 3: Mechanisms of top-down Europeanisation of a National Policy¹¹²



Source: elaborated on the basis of M. G. Cowles, J. Caporaso and T. Risse, *Transforming Europe: Europeanisation and Domestic Change*, Ithaca NY and London, 2001, Cornell University Press, p. 6.

The above figure sums up the hypotheses here formulated, with the aim of providing the reader with a substantial understanding of the dynamics that are likely to lead to an EU-

¹¹⁰ A. Cole and H. Drake, 'The Europeanization of French Polity: continuity, change and adaptation', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 7, n. 1, 2000, p. 39.

¹¹¹ L. Quaglia and C. M. Radaelli, 'Italian Politics and the European Union: A Tale of Two Research Designs', *West European Politics*, vol. 30, n. 4, 2007, p. 934.

¹¹² M. G. Cowles, J. Caporaso and T. Risse, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

induced domestic change in the Italian framework. This graph substantially relies on the one presented by T. Risse *et al.* in 2001, but takes into consideration the new intervening variable of the economic crisis.

Having explained the mechanisms under which Europeanisation of flexicurity is more likely, it seems relevant to present the relevant outcome of Europeanisation. According to T. Borzel and T. Risse the domestic responses to the EU pressures may be either absorption, accommodation or transformation, depending on the degree of domestic adaptation¹¹³. Whereas in the case of absorption, Member States 'incorporate EU requirements without substantial modifications of their existing structures'¹¹⁴, in the case of accommodation 'Member States accommodate European pressure by adapting existing policy without changing nonetheless their core features'¹¹⁵, and in the case of transformation 'Member States replace existing policy [...] to a degree that affects the core of the political and economic system'¹¹⁶.

Having identified the channels that are likely to introduce or impede substantial EU-induced change for the Europeanisation of flexicurity, it is relevant to identify and to present *in extrema ratio* the Italian actors and mechanisms that might play a substantial role in the implementation of flexicurity in the Italian labour market system.

2.3 *The Actors Responsible of Europeanisation: the Italian Context*

As shown previously, the implementation of flexicurity in Italy relies on a number of factors and on the interaction among domestic actors. This is also the result of the mechanisms of the OMC, which 'engages multiple levels, promotes dialogue [...] and fosters local experimentation'¹¹⁷. Thus it creates domestic bargaining arenas in which all main stakeholders are called to take a stand and constitute a pressure in favour (or against) implementation of a specific policy.

Hence the executive is not the only actor involved in the implementation of flexicurity. Instead ultimately the presence of a "willing coalition" of key actors is more likely to introduce flexicurity at the national level. When applying those concepts to the Italian context, one realizes that it is thus essential to identify the actors and factors responsible for the implementation of flexicurity in Italy, so as to better understand the

¹¹³ T. A. Börzel and T. Risse, 'Conceptualising the domestic impact of Europe', *op.cit.*, pp. 57-82.

¹¹⁴ T. A. Börzel, 'Europeanization: How the European Union Interacts with its Member States', *op.cit.*, p. 59.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ J. S. Mosher and D. M. Trubek, *op.cit.*, p. 84.

internal political dynamics of a country that is still defined as abnormal¹¹⁸.

Italy, a parliamentary democracy, characterised by a limited regional decentralisation, and a fragmented political party system¹¹⁹, is a country that relies on a parochial culture¹²⁰, and on a weak degree of social capital¹²¹. It is characterised by a high degree of political instability, as the relationships among the executive and the legislative have always been conflictual rather than cooperative – unless the executive has relied on a strong parliamentary majority¹²². This political instability has coexisted *de facto* with a social stability¹²³: since the 1990s the Italian *concertazione*, resulting in national tripartite agreements, has been the traditional way of dealing with employment policy, by helping the executive to reach – by means of a social dialogue with the social partners – consensus for advancing major labour market reforms. In this context the trade-unions – *Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori* (CISL) and *Unione Italiana del Lavoro* (UIL), but especially the Communist *Confederazione Generale Italiana per il Lavoro* (CGIL) – have tried to protect the workers' interests, by putting in practice their traditional role of veto players. Nonetheless their action has been effective only as long as the government itself has been willing to take their pressure into consideration. Thus, as L. Morlino has suggested, 'a consensual neo-corporatist democracy in Italy is possible only as long as a left-wing executive with a strong parliamentary majority engages in a social dialogue with the different trade-unions'¹²⁴.

The presence of a consensual democracy is indeed more the exception than the rule in the country. Italian politics has always been based on a conflictual political culture. Not only Italy is characterised by a 'conflictual democracy'¹²⁵; it is deprived of a genuine civic culture, thus fundamentally hindering the formation of any substantial consensus towards the decisions taken by the government. According to Almond and Verba indeed:

'the Italian political culture contains unusually strong parochial, alienative subject, and alienative participant components. Democratic aspirational

¹¹⁸ D. Franceschini, *Speech at the National Parliament*, 4 August 2010, cited in D. Sassoon, 'L'exception italienne?' in M. Telò, G. Sandri and L. Tomini (eds.), *L'état de la démocratie en Italie*, Brussels, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2013, p. 21.

¹¹⁹ L. Morlino, 'L'impossible transition et le nouveau compromis instable: l'Italie de 1992 à 2012', in M. Telò, G. Sandri and L. Tomini (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 69-75.

¹²⁰ G. A. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, London, SAGE Publications, 1989.

¹²¹ R. Putnam, 'Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 6, n. 1, 1995, p. 67.

¹²² L. Morlino, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹²⁵ A. Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy, Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, London, Yale University Press, 1999.

tendencies are also present [...] but these are relatively weak in comparison with the widespread mood of rejection that affects the attitudes of the great majority of Italians toward their political system in all its aspects¹²⁶.

Thus the lack of social capital, of a civic commitment, of entrustment towards the political institutions manifestly is more likely to undermine the effective adoption of a model – flexicurity – that arguably necessitates instead the maximum consensus on the part of the society itself, as Hypothesis 2.3 has suggested. This is confirmed by Y. Algan and P. Cahuc, according to whom Italy – as a Mediterranean country – cannot adopt flexicurity because of the specific lack of civic virtues:

'Mediterranean European countries are unlikely to be able to implement the Danish Model because the lack of public-spiritedness of their citizens raises moral hazard issues which hinder the implementation of efficient public unemployment insurance¹²⁷.

This has been confirmed by an interviewee, according to whom

'if we want to introduce flexicurity in Italy we need first to change the Italian society. The Italian culture is not a culture of activation; because of the assistance provided by the unemployment benefits, unemployed remain highly passive¹²⁸.

Hence having realized that the lack of a civic culture – one fundamental impediment for the adoption of flexicurity in Italy – represents a permanent character of the Italian society, this factor will be held constant during the analysis of the study case.

The introduction of flexicurity in Italy necessitates not only a consensual political culture, but more importantly also a domestic balance of power in favour of the national executive, as argued by Hypothesis 2.4. Instead the Italian system is characterised by a 'politics of "bipolarism plus fragmentation"¹²⁹, resulting in a 'high degree of conflict within the executive'¹³⁰. Indeed 'governing coalitions have been subject to permanent internal conflicts that make it difficult to set public-policy objectives and to determine means and time-fames for their achievement'¹³¹. Thus, unless the executive can rely on a strong parliamentary majority, it is not likely to have a strong influence *vis-à-vis* the legislative actors. This is the result of the majority premium and the exclusion thresholds of the 2005 electoral law that obliges parties to construct broad coalitions¹³². It may then be argued that

¹²⁶ G. A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *op.cit.*, p. 38.

¹²⁷ Y. Algan and P. Cahuc, 'Civic attitudes and the design of labor market institutions: which countries can implement the Danish flexicurity model?', *IZA Discussion Papers*, n. 1928, 2006, p. 1, retrieved 26 April 2013, <http://vef.merit.unu.edu/docs/50621172X.pdf>.

¹²⁸ Interview with Marta Belforte, Responsible for Public Employment Services and Labour Market, Piemonte Region, Torino, 15 April 2013.

¹²⁹ S. Fabbrini, 'The Transformation of Italian Democracy', *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, vol. 1, n. 1, 2009, p. 41.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41-42.

¹³² D. Albertazzi, D. McDonnell and J. L. Newell, 'Di lotta e di governo: The Lega Nord and Rifondazione Comunista in Office', *Party Politics*, vol. 17, n. 4, 2011, p. 479.

the lack of a strong executive highly decrease the likelihood of implementation of flexicurity in Italy. The executive should be indeed the actor who creatively appropriate the notion of flexicurity and act as “norm entrepreneur”, by convincing the other actors of the appropriateness of the concept. Being deprived of such a mechanism, the Europeanisation of flexicurity may encounter the second difficulty in the Italian context.

To overcome those obstacles and be effective then the governments are called specifically to find support in the Parliament. Governments have therefore to rely usually on a coalition of forces across the political spectrum so as to be able to rule effectively¹³³. However small Eurosceptic “outsider” political parties – as *Rifondazione Comunista* (RC) or the regionalist populist *Lega Nord* (LN) – may play a major role – if they have a strong power inside the coalition – and may thus highly influence the political agenda. The potential blackmail that may come from these small parties makes a difference especially in the context of Europeanisation. Indeed 'Euroscepticism hinders the adoption of EU-induced policies at the domestic level'¹³⁴. Even if Europe does not constitute a cleavage in Italy¹³⁵, these parties have tried to hinder the process of European integration. Arguably LN, representing the interests of the Northern – and developed – part of Italy, has been the most Eurosceptic party so far and has thus tried to use its pressure to undermine the Europeanisation of the national government:

'Lega Nord has generally a strong influence within the government, also redirecting Italian foreign policy and remodelling consolidated pro-Europe attitudes. Thus Europe was transformed from a consensual to a competitive issue, and then launched in the battlefield'¹³⁶.

Consequently it can be argued that the more those actors have an influential role and are effective in blackmailing the leading executive, the less likely the executive will act as a Europeanised “norm entrepreneur”, and thus the less likely a significant policy change will occur.

The role of veto players in the field of flexicurity is however played especially by other actors, i.e. the Italian trade-unions, CGIL, CISL and UIL. Trade-unions have indeed 'some veto power in the political decision-making process [...] and they often have multiple means to influence political decision-making'¹³⁷, by means of the *concertazione*. Italy is a

¹³³ G. Sandri, M. Telò and L. Tomini, 'Le système politique, la société civile et les institutions en Italie: la qualité de la démocratie', in M. Telo, G. Sandri and L. Tomini (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 9-20.

¹³⁴ A. Gwiazda, *op.cit.*, p. 552.

¹³⁵ P. R. Graziano, *Europeanization and Domestic Policy Change: The Case of Italy*, *op.cit.*, p. 36.

¹³⁶ P. R. Graziano and M. Jessoula, “Eppur si muoveva”: The Italian trajectory of recent welfare reforms; from “rescued by Europe” to Euro-scepticism', in P. Graziano, S. Jacquot and B. Palier (eds.), *The EU and the domestic politics of welfare state reforms : Europa, Europae*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 151.

¹³⁷ J. Timmermans and A. Lassandari, *The role of the Social Partners*, Kaunas, Kauno Kolegija, 2009, p.

country with 'a long tradition of deep involvement of the unions in policy-making'¹³⁸. Their role of veto players is manifestly present also in the implementation of flexicurity. They have indeed extensively criticised the introduction of 'policies to facilitate hiring and firing by enterprises' as being 'neither effective nor necessary to improve the country's employment situation'¹³⁹. According to the interviewee from CGIL, 'flexicurity is an ambiguous concept, that allows for bad interpretations'¹⁴⁰. Therefore trade-unions, if taken into consideration by the executive, are likely to represent a strong pressure against the implementation of flexicurity in Italy.

Despite this negative context, a number of factors may potentially be of assistance for the introduction of flexicurity in Italy. Organized business may have an influential role when it comes to deal with labour market policy. *Confindustria*, the leading employer association in Italy, may act indeed as a facilitating institution towards the implementation of flexicurity in the Italian labour market policy. *Confindustria* has endorsed the concept of flexicurity since 2006, by agreeing that the development of strategies centred on a correct balance between flexibility and security 'would enhance the competitiveness of enterprises, creating at the same time more occasions for regular and protected employment'¹⁴¹. This support has been confirmed by the interviewee, according to whom *Confindustria* has agreed to the principles of flexicurity since its adoption at the EU level, and has called for its implementation. 'Flexicurity is indeed an opportunity for modernising the Italian labour market policy'¹⁴².

Still *Confindustria* is not the only actor facilitating the introduction of flexicurity in Italy. As a result of the Constitutional framework, Italian Regions as well may play an influential role. The 469/1997 Decree transferred competences for the activation of labour market policies and job placement services to the regional administrations through a system of employment centres (*Servizi per l'impiego* or Public Employment Services, PES). The reform of Chapter V of the Italian Constitution confirmed this process of administrative decentralisation. As a result Regions have 'concurrent legislative powers in the field of security, and exclusive powers in the field of labour policies'¹⁴³. Thus they may potentially

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¹³⁸ P. R. Graziano, M. Jessoula and I. Madama, 'Italy', *Paper prepared for the task 'The Politics of Flexicurity in Europe'*, Oslo, 10-14 June 2008, p. 5.

¹³⁹ EUROFOUND, *Italy: Flexicurity and Industrial Relations*, retrieved 25 April 2013, <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0803038s/it0803039q.htm>.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Ornella Cilona, Responsible for Employment Policies, CGIL, Rome, 15 March 2013.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Interview with Stefania Rossi.

¹⁴³ Fondazione Giacomo Bradolini, *Regional Disparities and Flexicurity Policies: An Integrated Approach*, p. 7, retrieved 25 April 2013, <http://www.ees-italy.org/sites/default/files/Italy%20Report.pdf>.

have a strong involvement in the implementation of flexicurity. Being the responsible for active labour market policies, they are indeed able to attract funds from the ESF. This has proved to be an undeniable incentive for the adoption of a regional model of flexicurity¹⁴⁴. As confirmed by an interviewee indeed, 'Italian regions are keen to adopt plans aimed at introducing flexicurity at the regional level [...]. The ESF represents [...] the main instrument we have to carry out services without having to increase local taxes'¹⁴⁵.

To sum up, the hypotheses before presented have been applied to the Italian context. It has been showed that Italy presents already some peculiarities that are more likely to undermine the adoption of flexicurity, as for example the lack of a consensual political culture. Having presented this framework of analysis, this research will analyse to what extent there has been Europeanisation of flexicurity in Italy, a country for which employment is an undeniable concern, not only for structural reasons, but more importantly because of the incapacities by the governments to solve once for all the main problems related to the fragmentation of the labour market.

¹⁴⁴ J. Zeitlin, 'The Open Method of Coordination and reform of national social and employment policies: influences, mechanisms, effects' in M. Heidenreich and J. Zeitlin (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 227.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Fabio Montanini, Responsible for Public Employment Services and Labour Market, Marche Region, Ancona, 11 April 2013.

3. Case study: Europeanisation of flexicurity in Italy

In the previous chapters an overview of flexicurity and of the main mechanisms that may lead to Europeanisation of flexicurity in Italy have been presented. It has been shown that specific factors are more likely to facilitate EU-induced domestic change. On the basis of the theory of T. Risse *et al.*, two specific hypotheses have been formulated. To this framework of analysis an external variable has been added, so as to take into appropriate consideration the impact of the economic crisis on the Italian labour market policy.

Having thus presented the theoretical framework of analysis, in Chapter 3 these hypotheses will be applied to the context of the Italian labour market policy. Doing so will allow to identify which are the main factors, or combination of factors, that are more likely to bring about domestic change in Italy.

3.1 Data and Methodology

From a methodological standpoint, the research aims at demonstrating, by a top-down analysis, the effects of Europeanisation of flexicurity on Italian employment policy. It does so by recurring to the research strategy of process tracing, aimed at establishing the interconnections of Italian and EU policies in the field of flexicurity. The investigation refers to the 2006–2013 period so as to fully grasp the effects of Europeanisation on the Italian labour market policy. Indeed, even though the concept of flexicurity had been formally adopted in 2007 by the European Commission before and then by the Council of the EU, it is at the centre of the agenda since 2006¹⁴⁶.

Thus, taking into consideration this time-frame, the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2 will be tested on the three specific Italian governments from 2006 until 2013: the Prodi government (2006–2008), the Berlusconi government (2008–2011) and the Monti government (2011–2013). Interestingly, these governments are very different one from the other, even though some similarities may be found. Whereas the Prodi government relied on an alliances of centre-left forces, and the Berlusconi government on a strong centre-right majority, the Monti government has headed a technocratic government, formed to comply with the demands coming from the EU in times of economic crisis. Still, Monti and Prodi may be both defined as Europeanised actors, “norm entrepreneurs”, willing to internalize the EU discourse and to persuade domestic actors to introduce substantial reforms that follow

¹⁴⁶ S. Bekker, *Flexicurity: The Emergence of a European Concept*, Cambridge, Intersentia, 2012, p. 128.

the path identified by the EU.

In order to increase the reliability of the research, the assessment of whether there has been Europeanisation of flexicurity in Italy is based on multiple data sources. The hypotheses and the framework of analysis rely indeed on primary and secondary sources, and on interviews conducted with some Italian actors in the months of March–April 2013. The triangulation of the data collected strengthen the analytical framework of analysis, by providing a greater reliability to the findings hereinafter presented in the course of this framework of analysis.

First, the Italian labour market policy has been analysed in comparison to the EU guidelines, by taking into consideration the NRPs of the Italian government from 2007 until 2013, and the relevant literature on the issue. The observation thus collected have been complemented with semi-structured interviews conducted with the main actors in the Italian labour market policy and with two specialists on Europeanisation and on Italian labour market policy. The interviewees are representatives from the institutions identified in Chapter 2 as being responsible for Europeanisation of flexicurity in Italy, i.e. representatives from trade-unions, *Confindustria*, from the executive and the Italian Regions. The exact list of people interviewed may be found in the bibliography, together with a list of the questions that have been asked¹⁴⁷.

Even if the research relies on such data and mechanisms, some specific weaknesses should be recognized. Firstly, representatives from the political parties have not been interviewed. The relevant literature on Europeanisation has underlined the relevance of their role in the Europeanisation in the field of policy¹⁴⁸. Thus, having acknowledged the first gap of this thesis, it seems relevant that future research should focus on the different influence and role the most relevant Italian political parties, i.e. the Democratic Party (*Partito Democratico*, PD), the People of Freedom (*Popolo della Libertà*, PDL) and Civic Choice (*Scelta Civica*, SC), have on the domain of flexicurity.

Secondly, assessing the causes, the mechanisms and the impact of Europeanisation on Member States is not an easy task¹⁴⁹. As pointed out by the Europeanisation literature, finding evidence supporting the argument that a specific change has occurred because of the EU may sometimes meet a number of difficulties. This is even more difficult in this study case for two different reasons: firstly because the EU-induced pressure relies on the soft

¹⁴⁷ See Annex I.

¹⁴⁸ R. Ladrech, 'Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 32, n. 1, 1994, pp. 69-88.

¹⁴⁹ M. Haverland, 'Does the EU Cause Domestic Developments? The Problem of Case Selection', *European Integration online Papers*, vol. 9, n. 2, 2005, pp. 1-14.

mechanisms of the OMC; secondly because the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as well has been playing a relevant role in promoting flexicurity. As one civil servant of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies specifically observed, 'much of the input on flexicurity comes from the OECD as well'¹⁵⁰. Hence interviews have been conducted to overcome these pitfalls. However, further research should address this specific concern, with the aim of separating the different impact the EU and the OECD are having on Italian employment policy.

Having presented data and methodology, the attention of this research will now focus on the specific study case of Italy, applying the hypotheses before presented to the Italian labour market policy from 2006 onwards. Before embarking on the analysis of the specific study case, a brief outline of the Italian labour market policy before the adoption of flexicurity at the EU level will be given. It will be shown that Italy represents a good case for our analysis, as before 2006 the Italian labour market was characterised by a high policy misfit with the EU model of flexicurity. In fact since the mid-1990s major labour market reforms in the country have led to a model based on flex-insecurity¹⁵¹. The main characteristics of the Italian model before 2006 will be then presented in the following paragraph with the aim of providing the reader with an overview of the characteristics of the Italian labour market before the adoption of flexicurity at the EU level.

3.2 Italian Employment Policy before 2006: A Case of Flex-insecurity

Italy has been considered by the welfare state literature as a clear example of Mediterranean employment and welfare regime¹⁵², i.e. one characterised by 'an extremely rigid labour market with a familial-particularistic system of social protection'¹⁵³. Still, when it comes to compare Italy in the framework of flexicurity, the country does not appear in the Mediterranean cluster, but in the Eastern European one¹⁵⁴. It is indeed a country characterised by high flexibility and low security¹⁵⁵, i.e. flex-insecurity¹⁵⁶. This situation is the result more specifically of two labour market reforms introduced in Italy in 1997 and 2003, i.e. the Treu package (Law 196/97) and the Biagi law (Law 30/2003), which focused

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Emiliano Rustichelli.

¹⁵¹ F. Berton, M. Richiardi and S. Sacchi, *op.cit.*

¹⁵² J. Gal, 'Is there an extended family of Mediterranean welfare state?', *Journal of European Social Policy*, vol. 20, n. 4, 2010, pp. 283-300.

¹⁵³ J. Preunkert and S. Zirra, 'Europeanization of Domestic Employment and Welfare Regimes: The German, French and Italian Experiences', in M. Heidenreich and J. Zeitlin (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 203.

¹⁵⁴ European Commission, *Employment in Europe Report*, *op.cit.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ F. Berton, M. Richiardi and S. Sacchi, *op.cit.*

on introducing greater labour market flexibility, while ignoring security, thus resulting in a distorted balance between flexibility and security.

The Treu Package, introduced by a left-wing government, promoted an increase of flexibility in the Italian labour market. It introduced new types of flexible contracts, thus starting the process of deregulation that would have continued later on. Moreover it legalized temporary agency work and developed active labour market policies, as *contratti di formazione e lavoro* (vocational training contracts) were introduced¹⁵⁷. The Biagi Law, introduced by the Berlusconi government of 2001–2006, continued to enhance flexibility at the expense of security. The law privatised the employment service and introduced new flexible contracts¹⁵⁸. Even though before the introduction of the law, the White Book on Employment of 2001 of the very same government referred explicitly to the necessity to strike the right balance between flexibility and security¹⁵⁹, no reforms in social security were advanced by the government. As a result, 'the Biagi Law seemed to have moved towards the flexible path and not much towards the flex-security path'¹⁶⁰. In line with these reforms, mechanisms activating labour market policies were introduced, thus increasing the expenditure for ALMPs, even if they remained considerably limited in comparison with the EU average¹⁶¹.

Moreover the Italian unemployment benefit system remained highly fragmented, lacking universal coverage. Indeed specific benefits existed only 'for some categories of workers, depending on the length of the previous job relationship'¹⁶². 'Partial unemployment benefits (*cassa integrazione guadagni*) were provided' but only in case of 'collective firing in firms with more than 15 employees' according to Article 18 of the *Statuto dei Lavoratori*¹⁶³. No benefits were assured for atypical workers. It was estimated that in 2005 only 28.5% of the Italian unemployed received some benefits¹⁶⁴.

Thus this led to a situation in which 'while Italy became one of the top-ranking countries in terms of flexibility within companies, the degree of employment security, especially for non-open-ended workers, decreased'¹⁶⁵. In 2006, 64.2% of the employed had

¹⁵⁷ S. Zirra, 'The Bounded Creativity of Domestic Appropriation: Explaining Selective Flexicurity in Continental Countries', *Les cahiers européens de Science Po*, n. 2, 2010, p. 18.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ P. R. Graziano, 'From a Guaranteed Labour Market to the "Flexible Worker" Model? The Transformation of Italian Employment Policy in the '90s', *Les cahiers européens de Science Po*, n. 4, 2004, p. 26.

¹⁶¹ S. Zirra, *op.cit.*

¹⁶² G. Ciccarone and M. Raitano, 'Italy', *European Employment Observatory*, 2006, p. 4.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 'Protocollo Welfare', cited in A. Gwiazda, *op.cit.*, p. 553.

¹⁶⁵ A. Gwiazda, *op.cit.*

open-ended contracts¹⁶⁶, the EPL indicator for Italy was very low¹⁶⁷ and only 1.3 % of GDP was spent for ALMPs¹⁶⁸: indeed in 2006 only €6.3 billion was the amount destined to active labour market policies well below the EU average¹⁶⁹.

Thus the policy provisions of 1997 and 2003 'institutionalize flexibility [...] but at the same time they do not introduce elements of security'¹⁷⁰. As a result in 2006, Italy was characterised by 'low security, ineffective PES, limited ALMPs and relevant segmentation of the labour market, elements that made Italy far from the Danish model'¹⁷¹ (author's translation). It is possible to conclude then that 'Italy's implementation of flexibility without significant improvement in social security has led to a system deserving the definition of flex-insecurity'¹⁷².

The Italian labour market system was thus characterised by a high degree of policy misfit before 2006, as arguably more than one policy dimension differed in comparison with the EU model: indeed Italy was doing pretty well only in terms of flexibility, while leaving apart both the security and ALMPs dimensions.

As a result we can expect that the presence of a policy misfit with the EU model has been more likely to bring to a major pressure on Italy to adopt the flexicurity principles. As we will see in the following paragraphs, even if the EU has indeed exerted its pressure towards Italy, the pressure did not result in a transformation of the Italian employment policy. Instead the three governments domestically appropriated the concept of flexicurity with a different degree. As it will be shown later, only a combination of external and internal factors has led to a major introduction of flexicurity in Italy. Thus in the following paragraphs, the hypotheses presented in Chapter 2 will be operationalized, with the aim of providing an answer to our fundamental question: to what extent has the EU's non-coercive promotion of flexicurity (2006 onwards) led to change in the Italian labour market policy?

¹⁶⁶ ISFOL, *ISFOL Plus Survey*, 2005, cited in G. Ciccarone and M. Raitano, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁷ European Commission, *Employment in Europe Report*, *op.cit.*, p. 82.

¹⁶⁸ Fondazione Giacomo Bradolini, 'Flexicurity in the Italian labour market: evaluation of implemented policy measures', 2009, retrieved 15 April 2013, <http://www.ees-italy.org/>.

¹⁶⁹ CIACE, *National Reform Programme 2008-2010*, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Rome, 6 November 2008, p. 101.

¹⁷⁰ P. R. Graziano, M. Jessoula and I. Madama, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁷¹ F. Lauria, 'La flexicurity nel dibattito europeo e in rapporto al mercato del lavoro italiano', *Incontro Esperti Categoriale e Territoriali del Mercato del Lavoro*, Centro Studi CISL, Firenze, 23-24 Gennaio 2008, p. 17.

¹⁷² G. Meardi, 'Flexicurity and State Traditions, The Europeanisation of Employment Policies before and after the Economic Crisis', *European Sociological Association's Conference Geneva*, 7-10 September 2011, p. 10.

3.3 Prodi Government – a case of policy absorption

The centre-left government headed by Prime Minister Prodi (2006–2008) was willing to introduce major welfare reforms following the principles of flexicurity. As underlined by the NRP of 2007,

'Italy's policies on employment are inspired by the indications provided under point 21 of the Integrated Guidelines of the Lisbon Strategy. Initiatives will be undertaken with a view to ensuring that flexibility is effectively matched by security for workers. [...] The Italian government believes that adopting such safeguards will give rise to a balanced, shared strategy of flexicurity'¹⁷³.

In fact Prodi, a pro-European actor, was willing to promote EU guidelines. Not only his government was supportive of the process of European integration, it was also 'strongly in favour of a social Europe'¹⁷⁴. Flexicurity was indeed retained as necessary, as

'a policy of flexicurity, which ensures adequate protection for the worker against a backdrop of increased flexibility and more frequent job changes, [...] will contribute to a more active and fairer society by reducing the forms of social exclusion currently reflected in Italian society'¹⁷⁵.

Thus it is possible to argue that Mr Prodi, former president of the European Commission at a time when the Lisbon Strategy was initiated¹⁷⁶, was willing to act domestically as a “norm entrepreneur”. With this aim, the government re-launched the method of *concentrazione* – suspended by the Berlusconi government of 2001–06 – in order to reform the welfare system and to reduce segmentation in the labour market. The dialogue with the social partners was successful and resulted in the adoption of “The Protocol on Pensions, Work and Competitiveness: Towards Equity and Sustainable Growth” (enforced by Law 247/2007), a document proposing *inter alia* 'an Italian approach to flexicurity'¹⁷⁷. The law 'referred to different instruments of the flexicurity strategy'¹⁷⁸: it proposed particularly a reform of the unemployment benefits¹⁷⁹ – to be implemented by the end of 2008 – with the aim of creating a 'gradual harmonization of unemployment provisions to create a uniform system'¹⁸⁰ in the years to come. Thus the Protocol aimed at proposing an initial solution to the main problem of the Italian labour market – i.e. social security

¹⁷³ CIACE, *Lisbon Strategy: National Reform Programme, Second implementation report*, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Rome, 23 October 2007, p. 130.

¹⁷⁴ L. Quaglia, 'The Left in Italy and the Lisbon Treaty: A Political Europe, A Social Europe, and an Economic Europe', *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, vol. 1, n. 1, 2009, p. 84.

¹⁷⁵ CIACE, *National Reform Programme 2006-2008. Update on Progress*, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Rome, 18 October 2006, p. 5.

¹⁷⁶ A. Gwiazda, *op.cit.*, p. 553.

¹⁷⁷ CIACE, *Lisbon Strategy, op.cit.*

¹⁷⁸ A. Gwiazda, *op.cit.*, p. 554.

¹⁷⁹ Parlamento Italiano, 'Legge 24 Dicembre 2007: Norme di attuazione del Protocollo del 23 luglio 2007 su previdenza, lavoro e competitività per favorire l'equità e la crescita sostenibili, nonché ulteriori norme in materia di lavoro e previdenza sociale', *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, n. 301, Rome, 29 December 2007, Article 28.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Article 29.

coverage.

Interestingly this policy proposal has been advanced with the support of the three main trade-unions, which by means of *concentrazione* could be successful in their negotiations with the government¹⁸¹. As a result they did not veto – but only eventually postponed of one year – the adoption of an act that was likely to introduce flexicurity in Italy – if carefully implemented in the future. The 2008 budget law took the first path towards the effective implementation of Law 247/2007, as it 'extended the duration of benefits to eight months and increased the amount to 60% of the previous average daily wage for the first six months'¹⁸².

However even if 'the proposal for reform of social benefits in the direction of the Danish model was discussed under the centre-left government of 2006–08'¹⁸³, Law 247/2007 represented only 'a minor improvement to unemployment benefits'¹⁸⁴. Indeed a number of impediments – i.e. the lack of support from the facilitating formal institutions and above all of a favourable balance of power – jeopardised the effective implementation of the act. The facilitating factors could not help promoting the model, as arguably 'flexicurity, even if in the intention of the government, was off the agenda, as there were other priorities'¹⁸⁵. 'In those years flexicurity was regarded more as a model only for the benefits that it could guarantee to the society'¹⁸⁶, and 'it represented nothing more than an object of discussions: that is why the government did not propose us a real strategy to be implemented'¹⁸⁷.

Thus, even though Prodi was willing to promote flexicurity in Italy, and the signing of the Protocol of 2007 was going in that direction, flexicurity was *de facto* not supported by the facilitating institutions responsible for advancing flexicurity at the national level. Even if they agreed on the principles of flexicurity from the very beginning, they did not take any strategy towards a more effective and rapid implementation of the model, as flexicurity was off the national agenda¹⁸⁸. *Confindustria* for example clearly expressed its support by stating that it 'fully approved the contents of the European Commission's Communication on flexicurity', by hoping that 'the Commission's indications [...] will become concrete measures to apply in the Italian labour market'¹⁸⁹. Still its support did not materialize in any

181 Interview with Ornella Cilona.

182 EUROFOUND, *Italy: Flexicurity and Industrial Relations, op.cit.*, p. 3.

183 G. Meardi, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

184 *Ibid.*

185 Interview with Fabio Montanini.

186 Interview with Stefania Rossi.

187 Interview with Marta Belforte.

188 Interview with Fabio Montanini.

189 EUROFOUND, *Italy, loc.cit.*

substantive action because of the lack of a clear strategy from the government¹⁹⁰.

Indeed even if Law 247/2007 introduced some changes in the employment benefits scheme¹⁹¹, it cannot be regarded as an encompassing reform to implement flexicurity in Italy¹⁹². Moreover Prodi had other policy priorities at the beginning of its mandate¹⁹³: this is confirmed by the 2006 Implementation Document, that underlined that the priority for the government was to raise employment rates and to increase labour supply¹⁹⁴. Thus, had the government eventually had the opportunity to create a strategy for the implementation of flexicurity at the national level, the action of the facilitating institutions would have been different. The early government collapse ultimately hindered any progress in this direction¹⁹⁵.

In fact, the Prodi government, which lasted only 23 months, faced relevant coalitional challenges, which not only jeopardized a more stable action of the government – that would have otherwise proposed a more structured strategy of flexicurity – but also ultimately resulted in the government collapse. Thus the lack of a balance of power in favour of the willing Europeanised executive has proved to be one of the factors hindering the implementation of flexicurity in the Italian labour market. In fact 'the proposed social reforms of the Prodi government have not been implemented [...] due to blockages within the coalition'¹⁹⁶ coming especially from *Rifondazione Comunista*.

The Prodi government relied in fact on a nine-party coalition, with four different ideological factions¹⁹⁷, consisted of no less than 103 members¹⁹⁸, where the majority in the Senate was only two seats more, thus leading to a highly fragmented system 'where every single vote was essential'¹⁹⁹. As a result, the power of minority vetoes coming from small parties were likely to threaten not only the adoption of any major reform – as this party fragmentation made it hard for Prodi to take decisions – but more importantly the existence of the government itself. The frequently blackmailed Prodi government 'managed to survive this *guerrilla* warfare only for two years'²⁰⁰, being defeated in January 2008 in a vote of

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Marta Belforte.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² Interview with Paolo R. Graziano, Professor of Bocconi University, Department of Analysis of the Policies and Public Management, Milan, 20 March 2013.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ A. Gwiazda, *op.cit.*, p. 553.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Marta Belforte.

¹⁹⁶ A. Gwiazda, *loc.cit.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ S. Fabbrini, *op.cit.*, p. 36.

¹⁹⁹ C. Fusaro, 'Party System Developments and Electoral Legislation in Italy', *Bullettin of Italian Politics*, vol. 1, n. 1, 2009, p. 60.

²⁰⁰ S. Fabbrini, *op.cit.*, p. 38.

confidence in the Senate, provoked by the decision of a small party, *Unione Democratici per l'Europa - Popolari*, representing only a small portion of the Italian electorate.

Moreover, this policy process came in a period – 2006–08 – in which the economic crisis was not yet posing any challenge to the Italian public finances, making thus the government less prone to a responsible behaviour. In fact, 'it was only in 2008, when Prodi's government collapsed and Berlusconi and the Right regained power in Italy that the global crisis was just kicking in'²⁰¹. The economic crisis being absent, it could not represent the opportunity to override political instability and to reform substantially the Italian labour market policy. This is confirmed by the NRPs of the Prodi government which never referred to the challenge posed by the economic and financial crisis in meeting the Lisbon targets²⁰².

Hence it can be argued that the policy action of the Prodi government resulted mainly in absorption of the flexicurity model, i.e. the EU flexicurity model has been incorporated without substantial national change. Despite the fact that Prodi has acted as a Europeanised “norm entrepreneur”, capable of overriding the resistance coming from the trade-unions, the willingness to introduce major overhaul of the employment policy was ultimately jeopardized by the early collapse of the government. The lack of a positive balance of power in favour of the executive has thus stopped the process of adoption of flexicurity in the Italian labour market. The little policy change experienced during this government can be then explained not only by the absence of an influential role by key national actors but also by the absence of external constraints, as those posed by the economic crisis. Having the crisis been present, the outcome could have been different. Thus it is possible to conclude that even if national elites are in favour of Europe, but external constraints are not relevant, then usages of Europe will not be fully positive.

3.4 Berlusconi Government – a case of policy absorption

Following the early collapse of the Prodi government, Berlusconi's PDL won the general election and formed a coalition government in May 2008 with a solid parliamentary majority. Despite the presence of a number of favourable factors, the government did not take any step towards the implementation of flexicurity principles, even though 'the government seemed to acknowledge the risks for social cohesion that employment trends might entail in the light of the shortcomings of the Italian employment policy'²⁰³. Berlusconi

²⁰¹ R. Di Quirico, 'Italy and the Global Economic Crisis', *Bullettin of Italian Politics*, vol. 2, n. 2, 2010, p.

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²⁰² See CIACE, *Lisbon Strategy. National Reform Programme, Second implementation report, op.cit.*

²⁰³ P. R. Graziano and M. Jessoula, “Eppur si muoveva”, *op.cit.*, p. 166.

indeed ultimately decided to abandon the path chosen by Prodi, by ignoring the task of implementation of the unemployment benefit system by the end of 2008, a major development that would have brought Italy much closer to EU flexicurity guidelines²⁰⁴.

Indeed the government did not demonstrate a strong interest towards the principles of flexicurity for two fundamental reasons. Firstly Mr. Sacconi, the Minister for Social and Labour Policies, 'was rather convinced of the effectiveness of the Biagi Law, and did not retain flexicurity as an useful model for the functioning of the Italian labour market'²⁰⁵. However his conviction proved soon to be wrong as 'the 2008 crisis demonstrated [...] the deficiencies of the Italian labour market policies'²⁰⁶. Secondly, the government had other priorities in other policy areas, and 'flexicurity was off the agenda'²⁰⁷.

It was only with the aim of coping with the economic crisis, however, that the government had to turn its attention to employment policy. However its focus was only on short-term measures, as the government did not develop any structural reform. So, even though the greatest challenge for Italy was to come up with an immediate structural reform, 'Berlusconi's priority had only been to find resources to finance wage supplement schemes'²⁰⁸ (*cassa integrazione guadagni straordinaria*)²⁰⁹. Hence not only the Berlusconi government did not come up with a proper policy strategy to respond to the challenges posed by the economic crisis, it prioritised only short-term needs, dampening the momentum for reforms already under way with the Prodi government. In fact 'the Berlusconi government since 2008 was completely reluctant to reforms'²¹⁰. As a result 'the global crisis has turned out to have been a lost opportunity for Italy to reverse its economic and political decline'²¹¹.

Other decisions have been taken by the government in the field of labour market policy, but those arguably either went against the policy framework designed by Prodi or tried to suit the interests of the coalition. In fact, on the one hand, Berlusconi reintroduced more – unnecessary – flexible job contracts²¹², thus *de facto* ignoring both the European

²⁰⁴ Interview with Stefania Rossi.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ A. Kwiatkiewicz, 'The Implementation of flexicurity and the role of the social partners: Italy', *Joint Study of the European Social Partners*, March, 2011, p. 13.

²⁰⁷ Interview with Paolo R. Graziano, Stefania Rossi, Fabio Montanini.

²⁰⁸ Parlamento Italiano, 'Decreto-Legge: Misure urgenti per il sostegno a famiglie, lavoro, occupazione e impresa e per ridisegnare in funzione anti-crisi il quadro strategico nazionale', *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, n. 280, Rome, 29 November 2008.

²⁰⁹ Interview with Stefania Rossi.

²¹⁰ S. Zirra, *op.cit.*, p. 22.

²¹¹ R. Di Quirico, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

²¹² Parlamento Italiano, 'Decreto-Legge: Disposizioni urgenti per lo sviluppo economico, la semplificazione, la competitività, la stabilizzazione della finanza pubblica e la perequazione Tributaria', *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, n. 147, Rome, 25 June 2008.

Commission's suggestions of 2008²¹³ and the Law 247/2007 scheme that had called for a limitation of the abuse of flexible contracts²¹⁴. On the other hand, with a view of increasing decentralisation and introducing an Italian version of federalism – proposed by the coalition ally LN – the government delegated responsibility to regions to recur to the ESF for introduction of passive and active labour market policies²¹⁵, by the signing of the Italian State-Regions Agreement in February 2009.

The introduction of this new provision created *de facto* momentum for the adoption of experimentation of flexicurity at the regional level²¹⁶. The Italian Regions – even if with a different degree – were much interested in investing in flexicurity²¹⁷. Some Regions – Molise, Marche, Piemonte, Lombardia, Veneto, for instance – tried to recur to the ESF resources to finance both active and passive labour market policies. However the lack both of input from the government and of major resources in presence of economic crisis has undermined much of their efforts²¹⁸. For instance, a call for proposal²¹⁹ made in 2010 by a Region whose representative has been interviewed has been unsuccessful:

'the presence of the economic crisis has diverted attention from the firms to develop new risky experimentations of a model that is not even sponsored by the national government [...]. Much of the input we receive comes in fact only from the European Commission'²²⁰.

Thus even if the Italian Regions potentially may represent the driving force behind an effective adoption of flexicurity, a number of factors have jeopardized this – otherwise possible – success²²¹.

The Berlusconi government indeed could have been successful in the implementation of flexicurity, if only it would have been willing to do so. For instance, not only the trade-unions were willing to talk, as 'in urgent situations social partners manage to reach agreements'²²² – as the Reform of the collective bargaining system in 2009 had already proved²²³. *Confindustria* as well was favourable to the adoption of flexicurity. In 2008, Mrs.

²¹³ European Commission, 'Implementation of the Lisbon Strategy structural reforms in the context of the European economic recovery plan', 2008, cited in A. Gwiazda, *op.cit.*, p. 554.

²¹⁴ S. Zirra, *loc.cit.*

²¹⁵ P. Tridico, 'Flessibilità, sicurezza e ammortizzatori sociali in Italia', *Working Papers of the Department of Economy of Università Roma Tre*, n. 107, 2009, p. 21.

²¹⁶ Interview with Marta Belforte.

²¹⁷ LAB Italia, *Flexicurity regionale per risollevere il mercato del lavoro*, retrieved 28 April 2013 http://www.adnkronos.com/IGN/Lavoro/Politiche/Flexicurity-regionale-per-risollevere-il-mercato-del-lavoro_130336765.html.

²¹⁸ Interview with Marta Belforte.

²¹⁹ See Annex II.

²²⁰ Interview with Fabio Montanini.

²²¹ Interview with Paolo R. Graziano.

²²² A. Kwiatkiewicz, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

²²³ *Ibid.*

Marcegaglia was appointed as the new president of *Confindustria*. In her first speech, she clearly referred to flexicurity as the strategy *Confindustria* was willing to pursue in time of crisis – a period propitious for reforms. Finally also the balance of power was manifestly in favour of the executive: in fact 'the Government seemed capable of achieving considerable success in Parliament', thanks to its strong parliamentary majority, that enabled Berlusconi to rule the country according to its (personal) interests.

Instead not only Berlusconi did not engage in a dialogue with the trade-unions – not playing the role of veto players – which were instead marginalized by the government²²⁴; it did not even try to take advantage of the positive balance of power in favour of its executive to introduce major – needed – reforms. This was basically because 'he was not interested in the adoption of flexicurity'²²⁵. Thus, despite the NRPs of the government constantly referred to flexicurity – by reporting that 'Italy identifies with the common principles of flexicurity'²²⁶ – it has never been a policy priority for the Euro-sceptic government.

In fact Berlusconi has not been unsurprisingly an Europeanised “norm entrepreneur” as Mr. Prodi. During the Berlusconi government, the relationship with Europe has always been problematic for both idealistic and practical reasons. Indeed not only Berlusconi's eurosceptic attitude comes from his negative view of the European integration process; he has not been supportive of the EU also because LN – the racist party but nonetheless its most important coalition member – has developed hard Euroscepticism. Therefore unsurprisingly Berlusconi has always been less keen to consider EU guidelines.

As a result, even if Berlusconi faced high pressure to reform, it tried to resist and ignore it, rather than adapting to the EU recommendations²²⁷. Even a secret letter coming from the European Central Bank (ECB) in August 2011 asking for important labour market measures has not been enough to finally see the introduction of major structural reforms in Italy. Indeed while the ECB was asking for adoption of flexicurity, i.e.

'a thorough review of the rules regulating the hiring and dismissal of employees conjunction with the establishment of an unemployment insurance system and a set of active labour market policies capable of easing the reallocation of resources towards the more competitive firms and sectors'²²⁸,

the government, despite having presented emergency measures, did not implement them.

²²⁴ Interview with Ornella Ciona.

²²⁵ Interview with Paolo R. Graziano.

²²⁶ CIACE, *National Reform Programme 2008-2010. Implementation Report and response to the economic crisis*, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Rome, 28 October 2009, p. 10.

²²⁷ L. Quaglia and C. M. Radaelli, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

²²⁸ 'Un'azione pressante per ristabilire la fiducia degli investitori', *Corriere della Sera*, 29 September 2011, retrieved 28 April 2013, http://www.corriere.it/economia/11_settembre_29/trichet_draghi_inglese_304a5f1e-ea59-11e0-ae06-4da866778017.shtml.

Eventually the technocratic government headed by Mario Monti would have introduced the reforms that had been asked by the EU for a while.

As a result, it is possible to conclude that the Berlusconi government ended in policy absorption. The EU pressure has not resulted in any substantial change, as the government did not implement neither a flexicurity strategy nor successful measures going in that direction. Despite the presence of an external constraint and the opportunity posed by the economic crisis, the euro-sceptic Berlusconi government was unwilling to comply with Europe.

Thus the only presence either of the economic crisis – as with the Berlusconi government – or of Europeanised actors – as with the Prodi government – cannot be retained as a condition under which flexicurity is more likely to be adopted at the national level. As the next paragraph will show, only the presence of both variables prove to be rather successful for the introduction of major reforms promoting flexicurity in Italy. Hence, proved that the degree of misfit with EU policy is present, domestic policy change will not occur when key institutional actors support the EU and more specifically the flexicurity strategy in absence of external constraints. When those external constraints are present, no change should be nonetheless expected if the executive is characterized by hard Euroscepticism.

3.5 Monti Government – a case of policy accommodation

Despite the intention of Berlusconi to hold on, in November 2011 he had to give his resignation, leaving Italy in the eye of the financial storm, in a deep economic decline and in an unwelcome political isolation. On November 16th the President of the Republic, G. Napolitano, managed to form a technical government headed by the former European Commissioner Mario Monti, whose cabinet was formed by unelected professionals appointed with the aim of saving Italy. Under the pressure of the EU, the technical government soon adopted a number of measures in order to counterbalance the damaging effects of the economic crisis and 'to solve the problems the Berlusconi government did not had the courage to face'²²⁹, as *inter alia* the labour market fragmentation. The reforms brought represented thus the so much needed response to the requests coming from the EU, formulated in the 2011 Council's Recommendations²³⁰, and supplemented by those coming

²²⁹ Interview with Stefania Rossi.

²³⁰ Council of the European Union, *Council Recommendation on the National Reform Programme 2011 of Italy and delivering a Council opinion on the updated Stability Programme of Italy, 2011-2014*, 2011/C 215/02, Brussels, 12 July 2011.

from the ECB in August 2011²³¹. *Inter alia*, the recommendations were asking the Italian government to:

'reinforce measures to combat segmentation in the labour market, also by reviewing selected aspects of employment protection legislation including the dismissal rules and procedures and reviewing the currently fragmented unemployment benefit system taking into account the budgetary constraints'²³².

As the NRP of 2012 explicitly explain, 'following the Council Recommendation, the Italian government unveiled a systematic reform of the labour market in April 2012'²³³, called Fornero Reform (Law 92/2012), taking the name of the Minister of Labour and Social Policies of the government. Monti – in contrast with Berlusconi – and Mrs. Fornero especially in fact were actors willing to 'take into consideration the recommendations coming from the EU aiming at strengthening the Italian labour market'²³⁴. This is because 'the Italian government retained partnership and cooperation with the EU as essential and thus Italy fully committes to the ambitious targets of Europe 2020'²³⁵ (author's translation).

As a result, it is not surprising that, when drafting the reform for the Italian labour market policy, the Minister Fornero took flexicurity as a model: 'we have well in mind the principles of flexicurity which inspired the labour market reform'²³⁶. According to Mrs Fornero indeed 'flexicurity is a winning model'²³⁷.

Both Monti and Fornero are thus Europeanised “norm entrepreneurs”, actors that 'have endeavored to link solidly the Italian agenda of reforms to the European objectives'²³⁸ (author's translation). The technocratic government, keen on structural reform, has in fact been willing to 'use EU commitments to promote much needed domestic economic reforms'²³⁹. Thus the Monti government has, to the eyes of the Italian policy-makers, 'ruled the country following the only path compatible with the EU'²⁴⁰ (author's translation).

²³¹ 'Un'azione pressante', *op.cit.*

²³² Council of the European Union, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

²³³ CIACE, *National Reform Programme 2012, Economic and Financial Document*, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Rome, 26 April 2012, p. 47.

²³⁴ Interview with Elsa Fornero, Italian Minister of Labour and Social Policies, Monti Government, Rome, 27 March 2013.

²³⁵ 'Fornero: “Riforma in pochi giorni”. Si va verso l'innalzamento dell'età pensionabile', *Il fatto quotidiano*, 1 December 2009, retrieved 29 April 2013, <http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2011/12/01/accelerazione-innalzamento-delleta-pensionabile-fornero-riforma-annunciata-pochi/174510/>.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ Interview with Elsa Fornero.

²³⁸ Governo Italiano, *Analisi di un anno di governo*, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 31 December 2012, p. 1, retrieved 30 April 2013, http://www.astrid-online.it/-il-lavoro/Documenti/Analisi_Gov-Monti_Lavoro.pdf.

²³⁹ L. Quaglia and C. M. Radaelli, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

²⁴⁰ P. Ichino, 'La flexsecurity in Italia si può fare', *Italiafutura*, 2 March 2012, retrieved 29 April 2013, http://www.italiafutura.it/gw/producer/dettaglio.aspx?ID_DOC=112899&t=/documenti/stampa.htm.

However, even though flexicurity has been the model compatible with Monti's path, the final outcome of the reform itself is only the introduction of a softer form of flexicurity. Indeed, despite the fact that 'the reform rests on five major pillars, i.e. entry flexibility, exit flexibility, social protection schemes, employment services and activation policies, and follow up, monitoring and evaluation of the reform at work'²⁴¹ – corresponding with the four principles adopted by the European Commission in 2007 – 'in the reform there are only some elements of flexicurity'²⁴². Because of a number of factors indeed, 'the reform only goes towards flexicurity'²⁴³, and 'starts the Italian path towards [it], representing the first version of the Italian flexicurity'²⁴⁴, but not its final adoption.

In fact, if the new *vincolo esterno* and the requests coming from the EU have arguably proved to be the catalytic effect toward the final adoption of a labour market reform by the Europeanised executive, the economic restraints on the public have impeded the final complete adoption of the EU flexicurity model and thus the transformation of the Italian labour market policy – which instead has only partially accommodated the EU recommendations. As a result, even though 'the economic crisis has opened a window of opportunity to foster adoption of structural reforms in order to stimulate growth'²⁴⁵ (author's translation), it has proved to be also the main impediment for the complete adoption of the EU flexicurity model²⁴⁶. On the one hand, 'reforms were necessary to rescue Italy from the financial crisis'²⁴⁷; on the other hand, the persistent economic crisis and the budget restrictions – posed by the EU itself – have jeopardized the possibility to have a balanced flexibility-security nexus²⁴⁸. As the Minister Fornero explicitly reported, 'had the government had the possibility to rely on more resources, the final outcome of this reform would have been different'²⁴⁹. As a result, 'the labour market reform is a lost opportunity'²⁵⁰. In fact, 'the instruments that have been found in order to cope with a fragmented labour market, are too soft'²⁵¹.

Indeed if originally the Fornero reform aimed at reducing the segmentation of the

²⁴¹ E. Fornero, *Speech at the Employment Policy Conference, Jobs for Europe*, Brussels, 6 September 2012, p. 2.

²⁴² Interview with Paolo R. Graziano.

²⁴³ Interview with Elsa Fornero.

²⁴⁴ Interview with Paolo R. Graziano.

²⁴⁵ CIACE, *Programma Nazionale di Riforma 2013, Documento di Economia e Finanza*, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Rome, 10 April 2013, p. 4.

²⁴⁶ Interviews with Stefania Rossi, Elsa Fornero, Emiliano Rustichelli.

²⁴⁷ E. Fornero, *Lecture at the Italian Studies at Oxford: Challenging Reforms. Pension System and Labour Market Reforms in Italy*, Oxford, 24 October 2012, p. 1.

²⁴⁸ Interview with Stefania Rossi.

²⁴⁹ Interview with Elsa Fornero.

²⁵⁰ Interviews with Stefania Rossi, Elsa Fornero, Emiliano Rustichelli.

²⁵¹ Interview with Stefania Rossi.

Italian labour market, at providing an universal welfare coverage and at increasing the importance of labour market policies²⁵², in the end it resulted in an 'incomplete reform that left much of the Italian problems unresolved²⁵³ because of a number of impediments²⁵⁴. As a result 'the Fornero reform makes one step towards flexicurity; however the original objective was to make two²⁵⁵.

The Monti government initially tried to engage in a negotiate with the social partners and the Italian regions. However both parties exposed a number of criticisms that the government had to take – even if only partly – into consideration. As a result 'much of the initial stimulus has disappeared, as [the Minister Fornero] tried to partly satisfy all the parties after a tough bargaining²⁵⁶. The reform thus tried to introduce “good” flexibility, i.e. the result of a balanced mix of good contracts, active labour market policies and unemployment benefits effectively conditioned to proactive behaviours²⁵⁷.

Firstly and more importantly, the reform aims at improving exit flexibility, by revising the *Articolo 18* of the Statute of Workers. The reform simplifies procedures for collective dismissals, by making it easier to fire an employee for economic reasons; a “fast-judicial-track” has been designed to evaluate case-by-case to judges²⁵⁸. Secondly, concerning entry flexibility, the reform aims at reorganizing the multitude of existing contract forms and gives a new important status to apprenticeship²⁵⁹. Thirdly, a more comprehensive protection system of unemployment benefits have been introduced, and 'made more conditioned to proactive behaviour²⁶⁰. The main novelty is the creation of *Assicurazione sociale per l'impiego* (Aspi), the new unemployment benefit scheme for people in private sectors not covered by the more general *cassa integrazione guadagni*. Thus the new scheme, even if not universal, 'considerably extends social protection coverage in terms of both expenditure and recipients²⁶¹. In the meanwhile 'the employer must pay for the service of a public or private agency helping the worker to find a new job²⁶². In fact the reform tries ultimately to reinforce active labour market policies, by linking them to passive ones.

²⁵² M. Giuli, 'Flexicurity: Not for Italy', *Europe's World*, 23 March 2012, retrieved 29 April 2013, http://www.europesworld.org/NewEnglish/Home_old/PartnerPosts/tabid/671/PostID/2977/language/en-US/Default.aspx.

²⁵³ Interview with Paolo R. Graziano.

²⁵⁴ Interview with Elsa Fornero.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Emiliano Rustichelli.

²⁵⁶ Interview with Elsa Fornero.

²⁵⁷ E. Fornero, *Speech, loc.cit.*

²⁵⁸ Parlamento Italiano, 'Legge 92/2012: Disposizioni in materia di riforma del mercato del lavoro in una prospettiva di crescita', *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, n. 136, Rome, 3 July 2012, p. 6.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁶⁰ E. Fornero, *loc.cit.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² A. Jacobs, 'Flexicurity all'Italiana', *Tilburg University Working Papers*, 20 July 2012, p. 4.

These mechanisms however do not correspond perfectly to the EU flexicurity model: not only the unemployment benefits are not universal, leaving a number of *precari* without access to them, the active labour market policies – on which 'the text of the reform spends very few words'²⁶³ – have a residual importance, as few resources are assigned to them²⁶⁴.

Thus, 'although the new reform does bring Rome and Copenhagen slightly closer to each other, in no measure does it close the gap'²⁶⁵. This is the result of a number of impediments coming not much from the trade-unions, that traditionally play the role of veto players, but surprisingly from the Italian regions and *Confindustria*, which have always supported the concept of flexicurity – but arguably only in times when the economic crisis had not impacted on the Italian economy.

Firstly, CGIL exposed a number of criticisms regarding the link operated between active and passive labour market policies and the increase in exit flexibility. 'In times of economic crisis, less strict firing and hiring measures do not represent a sustainable means to assist the employee'²⁶⁶. From the very beginning of the consultations, the trade-unions tried to play a greater veto role, by threatening the recourse to the general strike. However, the Monti government, given the necessity to come up with a quick response, decided not to take their criticisms into full account, as the Prodi government did instead in 2007. As a result, the trade-unions were consulted, but the method of *concertazione* was suspended, thus *de facto* putting the end to the possibility for trade-unions to veto reforms in labour market policies. Therefore 'CGIL could have not made her voice heard'²⁶⁷ and thus could not hinder the process of adoption of the reform.

Secondly, *Confindustria*, despite having initially supported the need to intervene and reform Italian labour market policy²⁶⁸, cast a number of doubts on the proposals made by Minister Fornero, especially those concerning the security side. The main critiques regarded the new tax burden for the Italian firms, called to pay 1,4% of taxes more on fixed-term contracts so as to finance the new Aspi²⁶⁹. Other complaints referred to the fact that the reform aimed at offering 'a refund of extra payroll tax contributions only to companies that hire at least 50% of the apprentices they subsequently take on with fixed-term contracts'²⁷⁰.

²⁶³ I. Maselli, 'Flexicurity in Italy: How Far is Rome from Copenhagen?', *DIIS Policy Brief*, September 2012, p. 4.

²⁶⁴ M Giuli, *loc.cit.*

²⁶⁵ I. Maselli, *loc.cit.*

²⁶⁶ Interview with Ornella Cilona.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ Interview with Stefania Rossi.

²⁶⁹ Interview with Elsa Fornero.

²⁷⁰ 'Transcript: Italy's Labour Minister on Reforms', *The Wall Street Journal*, 26 June 2012, retrieved 15 April 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304458604577490980297922276.html>.

Because of the presence of the economic crisis, this new burden could not be bearable and thus the employer association naturally engaged more vigorously in supporting employers' interests against the reform.

Thirdly, 'the Italian Regions as well did not want to engage in a social dialogue'²⁷¹. Three regions particularly – Molise, Lazio and Lombardia – exposed a number of criticisms as they were unwilling to reform their regional schemes because of the approaching of the Regional elections²⁷². In fact in times of economic crisis, they were not interested in developing their PES, in implementing properly the ALMPs, and preferred instead to assign their resources to passive labour market policies. In fact, 'in times of economic crisis, the funds coming from the ESF 2007-2013 were almost at the end. Thus when determining priorities, a Region could not not give ineffective ALMPs prominence, and as a result ALMPs were not high in the hierarchy'²⁷³. Thus Mrs. Fornero 'had to give up the possibility to strengthen ALMPs to reach an agreement'²⁷⁴.

This conflictual policy-making process ultimately demonstrated that 'reforms are difficult to pass because they affect interests concentrated in categories with strong political representation'²⁷⁵. However, despite these impediments, the Monti government was able to come up with a quick response and then reformed the Italian labour market. In fact, the technocratic government, relying on a favourable balance of power, could successfully find a support from the Italian Parliament, highly fragmented but united in the shared conviction of the necessity to find a prompt solution to the uncertainties of the Italian economy. Thus the new *vincolo esterno* was successful in creating momentum for the adoption of the reform, and the government, alone in its endeavors²⁷⁶, could see the reform passed in the Italian Parliament.

Thus it is possible to conclude that the action of the Monti government ended in policy accommodation. The EU pressure, coupled with the presence of the economic crisis, resulted in the adoption of a labour market reform, aimed originally at introducing flexicurity in Italy. However, despite the opportunity posed by the economic crisis and the presence of a willing Europeanised executive, the Monti government could not transform the national labour market policy because of the impact of the economic crisis itself. Indeed the crisis revailed ultimately to be a constraint, one that was posing restraints not only on the public

²⁷¹ Interview with Elsa Fornero.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ Interview with Fabio Montanini.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ CIACE, *National Reform Programme 2012*, *op.cit.*, p. viii.

²⁷⁶ 'Transcript', *loc.cit.*

finances, but also on the willingness of the main facilitating institutions to comply with Europe. The action of the Monti government situates itself indeed in a particular context, one in which there was not only the need to reform labour market policy and to answer to the EU recommendations, but also one in which the need to foster economic growth encountered the main obstacle of budget restraints. Had the economic crisis not exposed Italian public finances so dramatically, Italy would have seen in the economic crisis the opportunity to finally transform its labour market policy.

3.6 Conclusion

In this Chapter, an analysis has been made of whether the EU's non-coercive promotion of flexicurity from 2006 onwards has led to change in the Italian labour market policy. Drawing on the conceptual framework of Europeanisation, we have traced the outcome of Europeanisation of flexicurity in Italy by a top-down analysis, i.e. by looking whether Italy has adapted to pressures coming from Brussels.

We found out that, in presence of a high degree of policy misfit with EU flexicurity model, only a combination of external constraints (*vincolo esterno*) and a positive stance of key actors has led to accommodation to the non-coercive EU pressure to reform Italian employment policy. Instead, proved that the degree of misfit with EU policy is present, domestic policy change has only resulted in absorption when key institutional actors supported the EU and more specifically the flexicurity strategy in absence of external constraints. When those external constraints are present, no change should be nonetheless expected if the executive is characterized by hard Euroscepticism. Thus the policy misfit is a cause of change only when the “creative appropriation” of willing Europeanised domestic actors is in line with EU prescriptions in times of external restraints.

The Prodi government was willing to implement flexicurity in the Italian labour market, but its government did not have to face high external pressures to reform in times of relatively good economic performance; by contrast both Berlusconi and Monti had to be responsive to the problems of the economic crisis and to the requests coming from the EU: Berlusconi did not take any substantial step towards implementation of flexicurity – or even any major labour market reform – because of its hard Euroscepticism; instead the Europeanized Monti government acted as a “norm entrepreneur” and used pressure as a lever for policy change, the economic crisis being an opportunity to undermine the influence of veto players and opposition from the facilitating institutions.

However, despite the window of opportunity posed both by the economic crisis and

the presence of a willing Europeanised executive, the Monti government could not transform the national labour market policy because of the impact of the economic crisis itself. Even if the restraints posed by the economic crisis have been relevant and have proved to be an opportunity for reforms and change towards flexicurity, it is nonetheless true that the economic crisis itself has also been a constraint, since it could not lead to a full transformation of the Italian labour market, thus resulting only in accommodation. Thus even if national actors 'have acted because of the EU pressure, asking for flexicurity'²⁷⁷, 'the constraints of public finances have impeded the adoption of flexicurity'²⁷⁸: thus even if 'the economic and financial crisis has been an opportunity, budget restraints have impeded the success of the reform'²⁷⁹.

Therefore the initial hypothesis has been confirmed: proved that the degree of misfit with EU policy is present, domestic policy change will occur only when key institutional actors support the EU and more specifically the flexicurity strategy, in presence of external constraints. However it should be recognized that the greater the external constraints, not only the greater the pressure for reform, but also the greater the impediments for willing Europeanised actors to pursue the chosen pathway to implement flexicurity, especially if the country has severe public debt. The economic crisis has therefore been not only the main factor creating momentum for reform by Europeanised agents, but also the main constraint for the transformation of the Italian labour market and thus for the complete Europeanisation of flexicurity in Italy.

²⁷⁷ Interview with Stefania Rossi.

²⁷⁸ Interview with Emiliano Rustichelli, Elsa Fornero, Fabio Montanini, Stefania Rossi.

²⁷⁹ Interview with Emiliano Rustichelli.

Conclusions

In this thesis, an analysis has been made of the mechanisms under which the Europeanisation of flexicurity in the Italian employment policy is more likely to recur. In doing so, the main conditions that explain domestic change under the EU indirect pressure have been identified on the basis of the theoretical framework of Europeanisation developed by Risse *et al.* in 2001.

As Chapter 1 has showed, the concept of flexicurity has been recently regarded as a successful model to combine both flexibility and security in the labour market. More importantly the Danish experience of the “Golden Triangle” has attracted attention not only from the academic world, but also from the EU. As a result flexicurity has gained salience and it represents since 2007 one of the main components of the EES, i.e. the EU's policy strategy aiming at increasing employment in the Member States. Starting from 2006, the EU has thus starting promoting the adoption of the model of flexicurity by means of OMC. The EU flexicurity model may thus be implemented by Member States on the basis of four principles: an increase in flexibility in work contracts combined with a universal unemployment insurance benefit scheme, the promotion of ALMPs and introduction of lifelong learning strategies.

While the EU has been promoting this policy strategy, this does not necessarily have resulted in the adoption of this model at the domestic level. In fact it is possible to cast doubts on the effective implementation of this model, as the promotion of flexicurity relies on the soft methods of the OMC and thus on the voluntary adaptation of the Member States. The greatest challenge comes especially from those Member States, as Italy, whose labour market policy follows a specific path-dependency, as the policy-makers have been rather reluctant to adopt the – so much needed – reforms. Hence a fundamental question of Europeanisation of flexicurity in the context of the Italian labour market has been posed: to what extent the EU's non-coercive promotion of flexicurity from 2006 onwards has led to change in the Italian labour market policy? And if so, which are the factors that have facilitated or impeded such EU-induced domestic change?

In Chapter 2, a review of the relevant Europeanisation literature has been provided with the aim of equipping the reader with a fundamental understanding of the theoretical context of analysis. In this context Europeanisation of flexicurity in the Italian labour market has been identified as the independent variable which impacts on the Italian labour market policy by a top-down process relying on the indirect soft methods of the OMC. Thus

Europeanisation of flexicurity has been defined as the indirect impact the EU is having on the Italian employment policy, through its recourse to flexicurity elements in EU's documents and discourses, starting from 2006 until today.

With the aim of striking a balance on the main question, three hypotheses were developed in the second part of Chapter 2. The theoretical framework of T. Risse *et al.* has been used to identify the main conditions under which Europeanisation of flexicurity in the Italian labour market policy is more likely. The “misfit” hypothesis and the mediating factors have thus been considered as the first intervening variables filtering the domestic impact of Europe on Italy. More specifically if the presence of a “misfit” has been regarded as the *conditio sine qua non* that helps to generate pressure to reform, domestic change nonetheless depends on specific intervening factors, i.e. multiple veto points, facilitating formal institutions, political cultures, differential empowerment of actors and learning – that can formally impede a EU-induced domestic change, or partly facilitate it. To this framework, an additional external variable has been added. Indeed the research aims at taking into consideration also the role played by the economic crisis on the Europeanisation of flexicurity in the Italian labour market policy. Indeed the economic and the financial crisis has been seen by scholars and policy-makers alike as an opportunity to reform the Italian labour market policy.

Thus, on the basis of this theoretical framework it has been hypothesized that proved that the degree of misfit with EU policy is present, domestic policy change will occur when key institutional actors support the EU and more specifically the flexicurity strategy, above all in presence of external constraints, while no change is expected if the executive is characterized by hard Euroscepticism. If national elites are in favour of Europe, but external constraints are not relevant, then usages of Europe will not be fully positive.

After having presented the main Italian actors and factors responsible for the implementation of flexicurity in the Italian labour market, and demonstrated that a relevant policy misfit between the EU and the Italian policy is present and can result in a higher EU pressure on Italy, the hypotheses have been tested in a single study case on the three specific Italian governments from 2006 until 2013 in Italy: the Prodi government (2006–2008), the Berlusconi government (2008–2011) and the Monti government (2011–2013).

In Chapter 3 thus both the intermediating factors and the impact of the economic and financial crisis have been tested on the Italian labour market policy, by triangulating the evidence coming from official documents with secondary sources and semi-structured interviews. The analysis thus brought interesting results.

Firstly, it has been found that, proved that the policy misfit is present, the main mechanism that is more likely to explain change in the Italian employment policy is arguably represented by the combined presence of both external constraints and Europeanised “norm entrepreneurs” willing to reform the Italian labour market policy. The EU-induced pressure has indeed not resulted in a major overhaul of the Italian employment policy if only key Europeanised actors were willing to introduce flexicurity in absence of external restraints. When those restraints are present, but nonetheless the national actors are characterized by hard Euroscepticism, the policy misfit does not represent a cause of change.

Thus the policy misfit is a cause of change only when the “creative appropriation” of willing Europeanised domestic actors is in line with EU prescriptions in times of external restraints. This combined mechanism allows in fact to override the major vetoes and obstacles present at the domestic level. For instance the Monti government, relying on a positive balance of power, could successfully introduce major reforms, despite the opposition coming from trade-unions, Italian Regions and employers' association. This could have not been possible under the precedent governments, where arguably either the lack of the economic restraints (Prodi government) or of a positive stance towards flexicurity (Berlusconi government) has not created momentum for reforms.

Secondly, it has been found that the economic crisis has been at the same time both an opportunity to reform and a constraint impeding a major overhaul of the Italian employment policy. The current economic and financial crisis indeed has posed an unprecedented challenge for Italy. The country is held responsible not only of reducing the ever-growing government gross debt by means of a strict fiscal policy, but also to adopt a number of structural reforms to enhance growth²⁸⁰. As a result, Mr. Monti had to come up with a labour market reform – inspired to the EU flexicurity model – in times of high budget constraint – imposed by the EU itself. Thus even though the moment was ripe for reform, as arguably the economic crisis has *de facto* prompted the adoption of a reform, the crisis itself has also restrained the action of the willing government to go further with the reform. As a result, the crisis – as an opportunity – has allowed for accommodation with the EU, by a partial adoption of the flexicurity model, but the crisis itself – being a constraint – has jeopardized the very transformation of the Italian labour market policy according to the EU flexicurity model. As a result the reform introduced could only take one step towards flexicurity, whereas the original objective was to take two²⁸¹.

²⁸⁰ Council of the European Union, *Council Recommendation*, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

²⁸¹ Interview with Emiliano Rustichelli.

On the basis of these observations, some policy implications and theoretical perspectives may be given. Firstly, a complete adoption of flexicurity in Italy may not be likely to occur, at least not in the coming future. In fact the adoption of flexicurity encounters a number of obstacles. Firstly, in times of austerity, Italy does not have the resources needed to finance an universal unemployment benefits scheme and ALMPs. Whereas Italy right now spends for employment only 1,84% of its GDP, Denmark for instance spends the 3,37% of its GDP to finance its flexicurity model²⁸². Secondly, the decentralisation of competences to the Italian Regions has created a dishomogenous framework both in the quantity and in the quality of the interventions, resulting in a lack of territorial cohesion, which is instead a characteristic of the Danish model²⁸³. Thirdly, Italy lacks specifically a culture of activation, as the one present in Denmark. As Mrs. Fornero has argued, 'Italy is not a rule-bound land but one where people right the system, tweak here and there, and engage in tailor-made adjustments'²⁸⁴ Thus 'the Danish flexicurity model cannot be implemented without specific actions aimed at changing civic attitudes'²⁸⁵. As a result, as an interviewee simply puts it, 'Italy is not Denmark'²⁸⁶.

Secondly, the analysis reveal the weakness of the OMC. The soft mechanisms of the OMC are indeed not likely to be enough to bring about domestic change in the field of employment policy. As Mrs. Fornero put it, 'even though flexicurity is perceived as a successful model, the pressure coming from the EU has not been enough to induce domestic change [...]. This is a model the EU should promote even more'²⁸⁷. Thus it is not surprising that the effectiveness of the OMC relies above all on the domestic appropriation of norm entrepreneurs and on the presence of external restraints, as the research has indicated.

Having presented a number of policy and theoretical observations, future promising research directions are suggested. Firstly, as shown previously, further research should separate the different impact the EU and the OECD are having on Italian employment policy, with the aim of understanding the real impact of Europeanisation of the Italian employment policy. Secondly, the role and the influence of the main political parties should be taken into consideration, given that Italy has relied for a number of years on a *partitocrazia*. This is even more important today, as now this system is exposed to a number of criticisms and challenges, as the *Movimento Cinque Stelle* of B. Grillo has recently

²⁸² F. Barbieri, 'I costi della flexicurity europea', *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 5 March 2012, retrieved 30 April 2013, <http://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/notizie/2012-03-05/costi-flexicurity-europea-063834.shtml?uuid=AbcEUR2E>.

²⁸³ F. Lucidi and M. Raitano, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

²⁸⁴ 'Transcript', *op.cit.*

²⁸⁵ Y. Algan and P. Cahuc, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

²⁸⁶ Interview with Ornella Cilona.

²⁸⁷ Interview with Elsa Fornero.

showed.

Thirdly, it seems necessary to further analyse Europeanisation of flexicurity in the Italian labour market policy in the coming years. Recent developments in the Italian politics indeed call for a renewed attention on this specific issue. In fact a Senator, Pietro Ichino, has recently advanced a reform of the labour market policy proposing *inter alia* the “Italian model of flexicurity”²⁸⁸. The success of this proposal much relies on the willingness of the new elected government of Mr. Enrico Letta, formed again on a coalition of forces across the political spectrum, to implement it. Mr. Letta has already stated that it is intended to reform the labour market, as the current situation calls for changes in the Italian employment policy. Moreover, since the very first words of its inauguration speech, he has presented himself and its government as Europeist, willing to comply with Europe, by saying: ‘the port to which our journey is heading is the United States of Europe’²⁸⁹. The indirect evidence cited in this thesis suggests that the conditions under which Europeanisation of flexicurity in the Italian employment policy is more likely under the new elected government may be present. Further research may contribute in analysing whether these mechanisms still apply and whether the economic crisis continues to be both an opportunity and a constraint for the introduction of major reforms. This proves to be relevant in the coming future, in order to find out whether Italy – that abnormal country trying to emulate Denmark – has finally taken those two steps towards the implementation of a model – flexicurity – which is likely to give the country the so much yearn economic well-being.

²⁸⁸ Parlamento Italiano, 'Disegno di legge n. 1481: Disposizioni per il superamento del dualismo del mercato del lavoro, la promozione del lavoro stabile in strutture produttive flessibili e la garanzia di pari opportunità nel lavoro per le nuove generazioni', retrieved 30 April 2013, <http://www.pietroichino.it/?p=2511>.

²⁸⁹ 'Il testo del discorso di Letta alla camera', *Panorama*, 29 April 2013, retrieved 29 April 2013, <http://news.panorama.it/politica/testo-discorso-letta-governo>.

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ANNEX

ANNEX I – Interview Questions

- 1) Which role should the European Union play in the field of employment policy?
- 2) If there is an interest in flexicurity from the part of your Institution, which are the main actions that have been implemented? Starting from when?
- 3) What do you think of the Fornero Reform? Do you retain it promotes the 'Italian version of flexicurity?
- 4) How would you assess the action of the Prodi and Berlusconi government in relation to flexicurity?
- 5) Which is the impact of the economic crisis? The economic crisis has been an opportunity or a constraint for the implementation of flexicurity in the Italian labour market?
- 6) The European Social Fund is a financial incentive for the Italian Regions to implement flexicurity at the regional level. To what extent the possibility of attracting European funds for the implementation of flexicurity makes your Region more willing to implement the Danish model? (for Italian Regions)
- 7) How has CGIL acted from 2006 onwards in relation to flexicurity? Have you been willing to compromise or have you tried to oppose the main reforms brought about by the executive in those years? (for Italian trade-union)

ANNEX II – Failure of flexicurity in Marche Region



REGIONE MARCHE
GIUNTA REGIONALE

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**DECRETO DEL DIRIGENTE DELLA
P.F. FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE
N. 2/FOP DEL 15/12/2010**

Oggetto: POR MARCHE OB. 2 FSE 2007/2013. Asse I Obiettivo Specifico b) e Asse II Obiettivo Specifico e). PROGETTO MARCHE FLEXI: reti territoriali per l'occupazione. Approvazione avviso pubblico e impegno risorse. Importo € 650.000,00

**IL DIRIGENTE DELLA
P.F. FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE**

- * * * -

- VISTO** il documento istruttorio riportato in calce al presente decreto, dal quale si rileva la necessità di adottare il presente atto;
- RITENUTO**, per i motivi riportati nel predetto documento istruttorio e che vengono condivisi, di emanare il presente decreto;
- VISTA** l'attestazione della copertura finanziaria di cui all'articolo 48 della legge regionale 11 dicembre 2001, n. 31;
- VISTO** l'articolo 16 della Legge Regionale 15 ottobre 2001, n. 20;
- VISTA** la L.R. n. 32/2009 di approvazione del Bilancio di previsione per l'anno 2010
- VISTA** la DGR n. 2191/2009 di approvazione del POA per l'anno 2010;

- D E C R E T A -

Di approvare l'Avviso pubblico denominato **MARCHE FLEXI: reti territoriali per l'occupazione**, per la presentazione di progetti rivolti a soggetti disoccupati/inoccupati finanziato per l'importo complessivo di € 650.000,00 dal POR Marche FSE OB. 2 2007/2013, a carico dell'Asse 1 Obiettivo Specifico b) e dell'Asse 2 Obiettivo Specifico e), di cui all'Allegato A (comprensivo degli allegati 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D e 7) che costituiscono parte integrante e sostanziale del presente decreto;

di dare atto che la copertura finanziaria, pari a € 650.000,00 è garantita dalla disponibilità esistente sul capitolo 32101666 del bilancio 2010 residui da stanziamento anno 2008 (E/20204002 e 20115002 acc.ti 47 e 48 anno 2008) decreto residui da stanziamento 855/2010;



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che la valutazione dei progetti pervenuti e ritenuti ammissibili avverrà da parte di una Commissione nominata dal Dirigente della P.F. Formazione professionale, con apposito successivo atto;

1. di stabilire che il Dirigente della P.F. Formazione professionale provvederà con propri atti all'esclusione dei progetti pervenuti non ammissibili ai sensi del presente avviso pubblico, all'approvazione della graduatoria di merito dei progetti ammessi a finanziamento, all'impegno di spesa delle risorse e all'erogazione del finanziamento a favore dei Soggetti beneficiari, e agli atti conseguenti all'attuazione dell'intervento;
2. di stabilire altresì che i soggetti attuatori dei progetti ammessi a finanziamento sono tenuti, sulla base degli standard previsti nel costituendo sistema regionale delle competenze, al riconoscimento e alla certificazione delle competenze acquisite dai destinatari diretti del presente intervento, connesse tanto all'apprendimento formale, quanto a quello non formale e informale effettuato on the job.
3. Di dare atto che, stante il carattere sperimentale e fortemente innovativo del presente intervento, lo stesso rientra all'interno delle linee guida per interventi residuali approvate con DGR n. 774 del 11/05/2009;
4. di dare evidenza pubblica al presente avviso completo dei suoi allegati attraverso la pubblicazione sul BUR, sul sito internet <http://www.istuzioneformazioneelavoro.marche.it> , e la trasmissione di un informativa dell'avviso mediante la posta elettronica agli Enti accreditati per lo svolgimento di attività formative ai sensi delle delibere di giunta n. 62/2001 e n. 2164/2001.



IL DIRIGENTE

(Dott. Mauro Terzoni)



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- DOCUMENTO ISTRUTTORIO -

I - NORMATIVA ED ATTI DI RIFERIMENTO

DGR n. 1867 del 16/11/2009

DGR n. 1458 del 11/10/2010

Reg (CE) n. 1081/2006 recante le disposizioni sul Fondo Sociale Europeo

Reg (CE) n. 1083/2006 recante le disposizioni generali sui Fondi Strutturali

POR FSE MARCHE 2007/2013

Documento attuativo del POR FSE MARCHE 2007/2013 approvato con DGR n. 1552 del 05/10/2009 e successive modificazioni ed integrazioni

DGR n. 774 del 11/05/2009 relativo all'approvazione delle linee guida residuali per l'attuazione di interventi previsti dal POR negli Assi prioritari I, II, III, IV e V non disciplinati da apposite linee guida regionali

II - MOTIVAZIONE ED ESITO DELL'ISTRUTTORIA

Con la DGR n. 1867 del 16/11/2009 è stato siglato il "Protocollo d'intesa per la difesa del lavoro, la coesione sociale ed il sostegno allo sviluppo", finalizzato ad attività di difesa dei livelli occupazionali e di sostegno al reddito delle fasce deboli, combinate con misure mirate a incentivare qualità e innovazione nello sviluppo, con l'obiettivo di difendere l'occupazione e la coesione sociale e, contemporaneamente, di indicare alcune priorità per la fuoriuscita dalla crisi ed il sostegno allo sviluppo.

Tra le misure indicate nel Protocollo è prevista quella denominata: **Progetto sperimentale reti territoriali per l'occupazione** relativa all'attivazione di una rete territoriale (mono o plurisettoriale) di almeno 15 imprese, che diano garanzie occupazionali nel tempo ad un gruppo di lavoratori (almeno 50) inseriti in una "lista di bacino territoriale", stanziando un importo di € 400.000,00 per n. 2 progetti sperimentali;

Con successiva DGR n. 1458 del 11/10/2010 le risorse economiche destinate a tale intervento sono state aumentate fino all'importo di € 650.000,00 al fine di rafforzare le finalità innovative ed il carattere sperimentale del programma. L'intervento infatti rappresenta una novità anche nel panorama nazionale e l'aumento delle risorse assegnate permetterà di potenziarne l'efficacia rispetto a quanto inizialmente previsto;

Il Servizio Istruzione, Formazione e Lavoro, con l'assistenza tecnica di ITALIA LAVORO SPA, ha inteso ricondurre la progettazione del presente intervento nell'ambito di attività ispirate ai principi della cosiddetta "flexicurity", termine con cui la Commissione Europea definisce la combinazione di flessibilità e sicurezza nel mercato del lavoro, con la connotazione di iniziativa sperimentale da seguire nei suoi sviluppi anche per trarne indicazioni per misure di più ampio impatto.

Finalità di tale intervento è pertanto, proporre un progetto mirato, sostenibile e replicabile che, recependo le indicazioni della politica comunitaria, ponga un raccordo fra mondo datoriale e mondo dei lavoratori, consci che un reciproco rafforzamento delle parti possa rappresentare la leva di un rinnovato miglioramento socio-economico. L'attivazione della collaborazione con le Associazioni di Categoria e le parti sociali è dirimente al fine di dare attuazione ai principi e alle indicazioni sulla flexicurity. In particolare l'iniziativa è volta a pianificare interventi ed investimenti verso le aziende e le "filieri" maggiormente rispondenti alle esigenze reali delle imprese per garantire una maggiore efficacia delle azioni intraprese.

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Nessun impegno di spesa



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L'intervento si prefigge altresì l'obiettivo di individuare una modalità innovativa per favorire nuovi inserimenti lavorativi nell'ottica appunto di politiche tese a conciliare stabilità per i lavoratori e flessibilità per le imprese.

Inoltre, in linea con gli obiettivi politici più volte enunciati di avviare una fattiva integrazione degli interventi finanziati con i Fondi strutturali, soprattutto FESR e FSE, considerata l'attuale fase di crisi congiunturale, agli interventi attuati con il presente bando sono collegati quelli finanziati con il bando a valere sulle risorse POR FESR 2007/2013 denominato: Innovazione dei processi aziendali, approvato con DDS n. 267/IRE_11 del 09/11/2010. Le finalità di tale bando sono riconducibili ad attività di stimolazione per lo sviluppo di una cultura e di una pratica di innovazione nel tessuto produttivo regionale, per sostenere la competitività del sistema regionale e la promozione del Made in Italy soprattutto nei mercati internazionali, con particolare attenzione alla promozione dell'innovazione di prodotto o al miglioramento dei prodotti già esistenti, anche in direzione di una maggiore sostenibilità ambientale, al fine di aumentare la competitività delle imprese nel mercato interno ed internazionale.

Per la realizzazione degli obiettivi sopra individuati, è stato predisposto l'allegato AVVISO PUBBLICO che in sostanza prevede i seguenti aspetti distintivi:

- Finanziamento di un progetto per ciascun ambito provinciale che sia espressione diretta dei bisogni del territorio di riferimento e con connotazione specifica in quanto a settore produttivo o ambiti di intervento;
- Costruzione dell'intervento da parte di una **rete di attori** che comprenda un gruppo di imprese (minimo 4), un ente accreditato/accreditando per la macrotipologia formazione, un Centro per l'Impiego, l'Orientamento e la Formazione o un operatore pubblico o privato autorizzato all'attività di intermediazione in ambito nazionale ai sensi del D Lgs. 276/2003 avente comunque almeno una sede operativa nell'ambito della Regione Marche, o in ambito regionale ai sensi delle DDGRR 1115/2005 e 2/2006, eventualmente le Parti Sociali, ciascuno con diverse responsabilità;
- Coinvolgimento di **grappoli di imprese** che facciano riferimento a settori produttivi in crescita (es. settore tradizionale che presenta elementi di innovazione e per il quale si registra una capacità di assorbire risorse umane; settore innovativo che presenta potenzialità di assorbimento di risorse umane), o ad una filiera produttiva, senza comunque escludere reti di carattere trasversale volte allo sviluppo di servizi alle imprese (es. internazionalizzazione);
- Identificazione dei **processi/percorsi di innovazione** da promuovere in gruppi di aziende (di filiera o di settore), finalizzati, ad esempio, ad aumentare la competitività rispetto ai mercati internazionali, favorire una riorganizzazione di impresa, promuovere la ricerca finalizzata a introdurre innovazioni di filiera (ad esempio, campionari innovativi);
- Sperimentazione di percorsi di crescita professionale attraverso il passaggio di lavoratori in più imprese della rete in cui si inserisce il processo innovativo, puntando alla qualificazione di **figure professionali che presentino caratteristiche di trasversalità** in termini di competenze e capacità, sempre più richieste dalle aziende sia per lo svolgimento di incarichi di management ("regista di produzione"), ma anche per le attività di produzione (per la gestione dei picchi di lavoro nelle diverse fasi produttive, per esempio mediante l'utilizzo dell'istituto del "distacco" così come previsto dall'art. 30 del D. Lgs. 276/2003 e ss.mm.).
- Conseguente costruzione di un **percorso di qualificazione professionale** integrato e flessibile in un'ottica di vero e proprio **investimento per l'azienda e per il lavoratore**, insieme alle imprese



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identificate, legato al processo di innovazione, in cui coinvolgere gli enti accreditati per la macrotipologia formazione superiore. Il progetto prevede di costruire un percorso di alta qualificazione che comprenda momenti iniziali di formazione in senso stretto, propedeutici all'inserimento lavorativo vero e proprio. Successivamente, con possibilità anche di coinvolgere i Fondi Paritetici Interprofessionali di categoria, si potranno prevedere ulteriori momenti formativi alternati a momenti di apprendimento al lavoro nelle diverse aziende della rete, legati al tipo di innovazione da introdurre nella produzione.

- Messa a disposizione di **incentivi** alle imprese della rete per l'attività di riorganizzazione aziendale che l'intervento comporta e per il tutoraggio degli inserimenti lavorativi iniziali;
- Messa a disposizione di **incentivi** per la trasformazione del contratto a tempo indeterminato dei lavoratori qualificati che saranno assunti a seguito della realizzazione dell'intervento
- Disponibilità, mediante costituzione di apposita riserva, di **finanziamenti per i progetti di innovazione e di sviluppo aziendale** a carico del POR FESR 2007/2013 di cui al bando intitolato "Innovazione dei processi aziendali" approvato con DDS n. 267/IRE_11 del 09/11/2010, nei seguenti ambiti:
 - o Innovazione di prodotto
 - o Innovazione organizzativa e/o di processo
 - o Tutela della proprietà intellettuale e difesa del "Made in Italy"
 - o Innovazione Commerciale

Dato il carattere sperimentale del progetto e in funzione della particolarità e innovatività delle azioni previste come sopra sinteticamente riportate, si realizzano le condizioni per l'applicazione delle disposizioni previste dalla DGR n. 774 del 11/05/2009 in funzione delle quali, qualora l'intervento attuato nell'ambito di quelli ammissibili dal POR FSE 2007/2013 Assi prioritari I, II, III, IV e V, non rientri nelle linee guida regionali appositamente approvate, si possa avviare alle stesse purchè l'Avviso pubblico rispetti i criteri e le modalità per la selezione, gestione e controllo nella medesima DGR 774/2009 previsti;

III - PROPOSTA

Per le motivazioni sopra riportate, si propone di adottare il seguente atto avente ad oggetto:
POR MARCHE OB. 2 FSE 2007/2013. Asse I Obiettivo Specifico b) e Asse II Obiettivo Specifico e).
PROGETTO MARCHE FLEXI: reti territoriali per l'occupazione. Sperimentazione di un progetto di flexicurity. Approvazione avviso pubblico e impegno risorse. Importo € 650.000,00.

IL RESPONSABILE DEL PROCEDIMENTO
(Marisa Fabietti)



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ATTESTAZIONE DELLA COPERTURA FINANZIARIA

Si attesta che la copertura finanziaria, pari a € 650.000,00 è garantita dalla disponibilità esistente sul capitolo 32101666 del bilancio 2010 residui da stanziamento anno 2008 (e/20204002 e 20115002 acc.ti 47 e 48 anno 2008) decreto residui da stanziamento 855/2010 :

IL RESPONSABILE
(Dott. Tommaso Patrizi)

- ALLEGATI -