

THE ECONOMICS OF THE POLITICAL CLASS.
AN ANALYSIS OF THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENT (1946-2008)

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PRELIMINARY AND INCOMPLETE VERSION

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1. Introduction

Who does actually make the public choices in the fiscal area? Three main protagonists emerge in a democracy: the electorate, the politicians composing the representative assembly and the government, and the bureaucracy. In public economics there is an abundant literature on the theory of voting and on the theory of the various kinds of bureaucracies, but not much has been so far done as for the theory of the political class that makes the decisions in the assemblies and in the governments. The economists of the Austro-Italian-Swedish marginalistic school of public finance as Von Sax, von Wieser, Ferrara, De Viti de Marco, Einaudi, Wicksell and Lindhal,..., have adopted a simplified paradigm of efficient relationship between electorate and politicians representing it, by assuming that when they represent the interests of the (great) majority of taxpayers, as expressed by their utility, the economic equilibrium is reached. If politicians will not behave in that way, eventually their parties shall replace them with others. And if this does not happen because politicians pursue particular interests acting uneconomically (in the sense of systematic violations of the marginal equilibrium between the utility of public and private goods) bad consequences shall take place until the equilibrium shall be restored. Developing this seminal line of thought the relationship between electors and politicians has been dissected through the paradigm of the principal-agent relation. By applying the paradigm of opportunistic behaviour – quite usual in the agency theory for market economy, under asymmetric information - to the politicians as agents of the electors, it has been assumed that the politicians try to maximize their own interest, while trying to be re-elected. To achieve this objective politicians are assumed to focus on positive economic results *easily perceivable* by the electors. On this basis, it is argued that politicians with short run perspective shall be more inclined to fiscal deficits that may give tangible benefits to the electors in the present, while increasing the burden of the debt on the future. The shorter and less stable the legislatures, the greater the risk that these opportunistic behaviours of the politicians shall prevail. Therefore great attention has been paid by several economists to the electoral systems assuming that they are much relevant to determine the length of the legislature. This approach, however, appear too simplistic. On the one hand, politicians normally do not play the political game alone, but as members of political parties. Nevertheless, the theory of political parties considered as firms has received scant attention aside the seminal contributions of Giovanni Montemartini and Joseph Schumpeter, related to the role played by the political entrepreneurs. Political parties, not individual politicians, have a paramount interest to get the maximum consensus of the electorate: not merely to be reelected - i.e. to keep their seats - but also, possibly, to increase their votes. Their horizon, however, cannot be the single parliamentary legislatures if their chances to remain in power appear high. Borrowing from Leoni (1967) one may argue that the different political parties pursue interests and values of different sections of the electorate and, simultaneously, some general objective that satisfies the generality of the members of the community which they shape from their own point of view. On the other hand, one may argue that political parties, in addition to their own

objectives, pursue those of organized groups of interest in exchange for their support given in various forms. Here, economists may refer to the contributions by Gary Becker on the theory of pressure groups, by Mancur Olson on interest groups and to the stream of researches on rent seeking inaugurated by Gordon Tullock and James Buchanan. Political parties, however, in both the parliament and the government, are represented by individuals who, to the objectives of their parties, add the pursuance of their own interest and of those of the pressure groups which support them. Here, economists have produced an huge casuistry of different behaviours, a jungle of cases in which almost everyone may feel to be lost. Economists, however, to build the proper models of the behaviour of the political organizations and of the politicians may fruitfully look in the neighbouring areas of political and sociological science, in its interdisciplinary connection with public economics.

Very important contributions to the theory of the political class *as elite* have been offered by Wilfredo Pareto¹ and his school from a sociological point of view; by Gaetano Mosca from a politico-sociological perspective; and by Luigi Einaudi with an economic sociological approach. By *elite* these authors means a class of peoples in some sense superior. By extension, however, one may think of a class or category of people who devote themselves to a superior task, as that of ruling a community politically organized. In order to do this, this category of people must have or develop peculiar skills. In this sense, the Max Weber theory of the political class may be considered to belong to the elites theory. In another approach, one may consider as elites not a set of superior individuals in some sense, but organizations: here the theories of Karl Kautsky (1882) and Robert Michels (1912 and 1925) of the (dominating) parties come into play. In the more complex models of Robert Dahl (19--) and Charles Linblom (1977) of the polyarchic democracy the elites are the economic, bureaucratic and military powers that conditions the political parties through the influence of the preferences of the electorate.

In this paper we focus on Pareto, Mosca and Einaudi. Let us briefly consider the distinctive characters of the three approaches to the theory of the elites.

Those of **Pareto**'s theory appear to be the followings:

a) The elites, meaning by this expression those who exert the political power in a given community or may succeed to the existing rulers, are composed of individuals of superior talents in their own activity; the distribution of their qualities is similar to that of the wealth curve, with a campanula's shape, which implies that the elite is necessarily a minority, but the distribution of talents that enables the elite to get the power does not (necessarily) coincide with that which is behind the existing wealth distribution.

¹Pareto contribution is in three books: *Le Sistemmes Socialistes* (1901), *Manuale di Economia Politica* (1906) and *Trattato di sociologia*. The latter is particularly relevant for the interdisciplinary research in fiscal sociology because of its interconnections with his sociological theory of the maximum of utility of the community which constitutes the interface of the economic theory of the welfare maximization.

- b) Each elite may be subdivided into two components, a small minority that actually rules the community and a larger minority which supports it; the ruling minority pursues its own interests and those of the supporting minority more than the interests of the others and particularly of those of the alternative(s) elite(s)
- c) Any individual and social group act via logical and non logical actions, driven by sentiments and beliefs in some ethical or religious credence. This cannot be avoided because the distinction between logical and non logical actions does not coincide with the distinction between experimental actions (i.e., those whose causal or interdependent nexus may be tested by experience) and non experimental actions. Thus, there are logical non experimental actions and non logical experimental actions. Individuals may easily be led to consider true and valid the latter more than the former, because they are driven by sentiments and a priori beliefs which the experience cannot falsify. The non logical actions consists of derivations, i.e., principles, rules, actions *derived* from residuals not susceptible of experimental test. The elites, actual and potential, when exerting to those activities that require the logic, such as those of managing something, may be expected to have a more logical attitude than the other elites and the majority of the people, who are down in the relevant curves of talents.
- d) However, in order to get the power and to maintain it, the ruling elite, being a minority, needs to use the non logical actions, consisting in derivations to convince the majority that it is pursuing the interests of the country. There may be an interaction between this way of ruling and the way the elite “reasons”, i.e. between its mix of logical and non logical behaviour also in pursuing its own interests.
- e) There is, also for this reason, an inevitable decay of the elite in power and a replacement by other elites. Thus, there is a law of circulation of the elites which may be explained by three main causal factors: biological (age), changes of the prevailing psychology (i.e., new cultural models) and decadence (in which the reduction of logical capacity and the submission to the non logic beliefs, derivations, of the opposing elites, may play a paramount role).
- f) Therefore, the circulation of elites takes place both inside same type and between different types: one important classification of the types of elites is that between speculators and rentiers. The speculators, first type of elites, in Pareto terminology consists of the individuals with a cultural model of risk taking. Therefore, they are the innovators and, among them, there are the entrepreneurs. The rentiers, the second type of elites, consist of the individuals with risk adverse cultural models and, therefore, of people who are conservative against changes and innovations. Among them, we find those who like to survive by rents, not necessarily from real estate or from financial property, but also from a stable job in the public administration.
- g) The social dynamic of the community is explained by the circulation of the elites, but there is also an interaction between cultural changes and changes of elites which shape the community.
- h) However, the socio-economic equilibrium of the community may be characterized by excessive instability or by a static situation or by a stable development according to whether there is a an absolute prevalence of

the first type of elites and, hence, of the community over the second or the opposite situation or a combination of the first and the second type, with prevalence of the first, but not elimination of the second type of elites.

There are other theories and models of the elites' behaviours with a smaller room for the non logical actions, because of the different origin and nature of the elites and of the different view of the political process. **Gaetano Mosca** sociological political theory of the elites differs in many respects from Pareto.²

- a) Mosca elites are a minority, but of superior natural talents in their activities.
- b) Mosca has no necessary stratification of the elites in two subgroups, a narrow one at the top and a broader one immediately below.
- c) Mosca "political formula" by which the elite gets the power and maintains it may not be non logical in the Paretian sense.
- d) Mosca's elites appear to pursue their objectives and consensus mostly by a political rationality.
- e) In Mosca's theory the law of circulation of the elites is paramount.
- f) However, the dichotomy between speculators and rentiers is replaced by a dichotomy between the middle class, that is more suited to pursue the general interests by means of a democratic regime, and the other classes.
- g) Mosca's theory appears more suited to describe and prescribe the conditions for the political stability than the conditions for the economic progress.

Luigi Einaudi's economic sociological theory of the elites is closer to Mosca than to Pareto, although it differs from both.³

- a) The political elite does not consist of any one who has the political power, but only of those who deserve the name of "elite", i.e., provide a good government, meaning a government that observes the economic laws leading to economic progress, according to the accepted definitions of it;
- b) therefore, there are two kinds of political classes, those who may deserve the name of elite and those who do not deserve it: politicians who make the public choices according to the cooperative model may deserve the name of elite;
- c) politicians may act by logical and non logical actions, elites act rationally and they do so not only because they do not take opportunistic behaviour, but also because the elites are competent, i.e., they know the economic laws;
- d) the elites succeed in getting power and in remaining in power when there is robust middle class that expresses them; the middle class in doing its various activities and in keeping the household knows the basic

² See FORTE and SILVESTRI quoted above.

³ See FORTE and SILVESTRI quoted above.

economic laws and, therefore, it is possible for the elite to express them in the public economy with the support of the elites;

e) the circulation of the political classes in power is an undeniable reality and the elites often are not in power. However, the institutions that they adopt when they are in power do last, while the institutions of the bad politicians perish;

f) it is the circulation of the elites and not the mere circulation of the political classes that makes the long run equilibriums, if any;

g) whenever there is a social and economic progress, with the development of a robust middle class which expresses its own elite, there is a tendency to the equilibrium: the economic laws of public economy cannot be continuously violated in the way described by Pareto.

2. Some stylised facts

Many empirical researches might be done drawing from the above theories of the political class. In this paper, we focus on the composition of the Italian democratic parliament of the postwar Republic, from 1946 to 2006.⁴

We shall consider education and professions, that, according to the Paretian theory of elites, may influence the non logical and logical mix of the public choices and that is relevant also in the theory of the political elites as professional elites of Weberian type. The political affiliation, in combination with the education and profession is also interesting to test the Weber theory of the different role of the politicians belonging to the mass parties of the left-wing or to opinion parties. Its also relevant to test the theory of the parties as elites of Kautsky in comparison with that of Michels because, in the first, the politicians who emerge in the left-wing mass parties are supposed to be the most qualified from the political point of view in relation to the task assigned to them, whereas in the second the politicians who tend to emerge are the most powerful in the parties' bureaucracies and for those who are most faithful to them. The age of the parliamentarians may be interesting as an indicator of the time required for a person to become a politician and therefore to verify the theories (as those of Weber, Kautsky and Michels, but also of Lindblom) that tend to conceive the political activities of the modern democracies, as careers requiring particular skills or/and affiliations. The determinants of re-election are important to test the principle of "elites circulation".⁵ In order to perform the tasks above described we shall classify the elected members of the parliament by their

⁴ Actually the Republic begins in 1948, with the two years (1946-1948) before the referendum pro or cons the monarchy called "Costituente".

⁵ The duration of the legislatures and governments, in relation to the different types of electoral laws, is interesting to test the theories that maintain that the proportional system causes brief legislatures and short living governments.

education and prevailing profession, by their political affiliation, by the age, by their re-election one or more times.⁶

A preliminary picture is reported in the tables 1 to 5.

⁶ The Paretian distinction between dynamic communities, with a prevalence of innovative elites, and static communities, with prevalence of conservative elites, might also be relevant from the point of view of the comparison of the composition of the Italian Parliament as for the members elected in the Northern (dynamic industrialized) and Southern (static, less industrialized) regions. This shall be object of a further research.

Table 1 . The elected representatives by prevailing professions: Chamber of Deputies from 1946 to 2007

LEGISLA	Cost.	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV	XVI
Beginning	1946	1948	1953	1958	1963	1968	1972	1976	1979	1983	1987	1992	1994	1996	2001	2006	2008
end	1948	1953	1958	1963	1968	1972	1976	1979	1983	1987	1992	1994	1996	2001	2006	2008	
med_far_vet	3.4%	3.9%	3.1%	2.5%	3.7%	3.4%	3.4%	3.1%	2.9%	2.6%	2.4%	3.5%	8.7%	6.1%	6.4%	5.2%	5.7%
manager	4.1%	2.1%	3.2%	4.6%	2.9%	6.7%	4.8%	5.5%	7.5%	7.8%	8.3%	9.7%	5.9%	9.7%	10.6%	13.0%	12.6%
avv_mag_not	35.0%	30.4%	31.3%	24.1%	24.8%	23.0%	24.7%	18.8%	18.2%	17.7%	13.9%	15.3%	15.7%	15.9%	18.1%	12.2%	15.3%
impiegato	4.1%	3.7%	3.4%	4.2%	4.8%	6.6%	9.2%	11.4%	8.1%	5.0%	6.7%	7.9%	7.9%	10.8%	9.0%	6.3%	8.3%
insegnanti	19.8%	25.3%	20.6%	23.4%	23.6%	20.2%	20.4%	20.3%	18.8%	19.0%	21.8%	17.1%	20.2%	19.6%	14.8%	14.4%	11.9%
dirig_pol	6.8%	13.3%	13.1%	18.6%	14.3%	18.9%	12.0%	16.3%	20.6%	23.6%	23.4%	22.6%	10.6%	12.1%	12.9%	12.2%	10.2%
artig_comm-c	2.0%	1.9%	1.4%	0.3%	1.3%	1.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%	0.8%	1.8%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%
giorn_pub-i	8.5%	4.4%	4.6%	6.1%	7.4%	6.7%	9.0%	8.5%	8.8%	7.7%	7.2%	7.1%	8.5%	7.5%	8.3%	8.3%	9.6%
consulenti-i	0.7%	0.9%	1.7%	1.5%	2.2%	1.1%	1.8%	2.3%	1.8%	1.8%	1.6%	1.4%	1.4%	0.8%	1.5%	4.6%	6.6%
mil_dipl	0.4%	0.9%	0.7%	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.8%	0.3%	0.9%
arch_ing	3.1%	2.1%	2.7%	2.0%	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%	2.4%	2.6%	2.4%	3.0%	3.0%	3.2%	3.3%	2.1%	2.2%	2.4%
operaio	3.1%	3.5%	4.1%	2.9%	2.2%	1.9%	3.1%	2.6%	1.9%	2.4%	0.8%	0.5%	0.8%	0.5%	0.2%	0.8%	0.6%
agric	2.0%	2.3%	2.7%	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1.1%	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%	0.8%	0.5%	1.4%	0.8%	0.7%	0.0%	0.2%
commercial-t	2.2%	2.3%	4.3%	4.2%	5.4%	3.5%	4.4%	3.9%	2.7%	3.2%	3.7%	3.6%	3.4%	2.9%	2.6%	2.3%	2.5%
industr_im-t	2.5%	3.0%	2.4%	3.1%	2.1%	1.9%	2.1%	2.3%	2.4%	1.8%	2.1%	4.1%	10.8%	6.9%	10.1%	8.2%	11.2%
altros	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%	0.3%

AGGREGAZIONE DELLE PROFESSIONI

1 med_far_vet= FARMACISTA+ MEDICO+ VETERIN

2 manager= DIRIGENTE_AZIENDA+ DIRIGENTE_BANCA+ DIRIGENTE_CAMERA_COMMERCIO+ DIRIGENTE_COLDIRETTI +PRES_CAM_COMM

3 avv_mag_not= AVVOCATO+ MAGISTRATO + NOTAIO

4.impiegato= IMPIEG_AZ +IMPIEG_BAN+ IMPIEG_STAT

5.insegnanti= INSEGNANTE_ELE+ INSEGNANTE_M_INF+ INSEGNANTE_M_SUP+ INSEGNANTE_MUSICA +DOCENTE_UNI

6.dirig_pol= DIRIGENTE_PARTITO+ SINDACALISTA

7.artig_commerc= ARTIGIANO+ COMMERCIANTE+ RAPPR_COMM

8.giorn_pub_scri= GIORNALISTA+ PUBBLICISTA+ SCRITTORE

9.consulenti_vari= CONSIGLIERE+AGRONOMO+ GEOLOGO+ LAUREATI IN LEGGE E SIMILI+ LIB_PROF+ PER_AGR+ PER_IND+GEOMETRA

10.mil_dipl= MILITE+ DIPLOMATICO

11. arch_ing= ARCHITETTO+ INGEGNERE

12.operaio= OPERAIO

13.agric= AGRICOLTORE

14.commercialist= COMMERCIALISTA+RAGION

15.industr_impredit=IMPRENDIT +INDUSTRIALE

16.altros= PSICOLOGO+ STUDENTE+PITTORE+ATTORE

Table 2 . The elected representatives by prevailing professions: Senate from 1946 to 2007

LEGISLA	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV	XVI
Beginning	1948	1953	1958	1963	1968	1972	1976	1979	1983	1987	1992	1994	1996	2001	2006	2008
end	1953	1958	1963	1968	1972	1976	1979	1983	1987	1992	1994	1996	2001	2006	2008	
med_far_vet	7.6%	8.1%	8.3%	6.7%	5.1%	3.8%	3.2%	5.0%	5.8%	4.1%	5.7%	8.7%	7.3%	9.2%	3.9%	8.1%
manager	6.5%	5.5%	4.7%	2.9%	4.4%	5.8%	7.7%	8.5%	7.3%	8.2%	8.2%	6.4%	4.8%	10.1%	14.0%	13.1%
avv_mag_not	39.0%	34.9%	31.9%	33.2%	24.1%	27.2%	21.7%	18.6%	19.5%	15.4%	16.0%	14.4%	18.1%	18.4%	16.4%	18.1%
impiegato	3.8%	3.4%	7.5%	4.2%	3.5%	6.7%	5.1%	6.0%	4.2%	4.4%	6.9%	7.4%	9.8%	7.3%	6.9%	4.7%
insegnanti	13.8%	11.5%	11.8%	17.9%	21.3%	24.4%	23.3%	18.0%	18.2%	23.2%	26.4%	26.9%	25.7%	20.3%	17.0%	16.8%
dirig_pol	4.4%	5.1%	6.7%	13.1%	21.0%	10.9%	16.3%	23.3%	23.0%	21.9%	13.5%	8.7%	8.9%	7.9%	6.3%	7.2%
artig_comm~c	1.5%	3.0%	0.8%	1.0%	1.3%	0.6%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.9%	0.3%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.3%	0.6%
giorn_pub~i	5.9%	7.2%	6.7%	4.8%	7.6%	6.7%	8.3%	8.8%	9.9%	9.7%	6.3%	4.2%	6.7%	4.7%	12.5%	8.4%
consulenti~i	1.8%	1.3%	2.8%	0.6%	0.0%	1.6%	1.3%	1.3%	1.6%	1.3%	1.9%	1.0%	0.6%	1.3%	5.1%	4.7%
mil_dipl	2.3%	3.8%	3.1%	1.6%	1.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.9%	0.3%	0.3%	0.9%	1.9%	1.9%	0.6%	0.6%	0.9%
arch_ing	2.6%	3.8%	3.5%	4.5%	4.1%	1.9%	1.6%	2.2%	2.9%	1.9%	1.9%	2.6%	2.5%	3.5%	4.5%	4.7%
operaio	3.8%	3.4%	2.8%	1.9%	1.3%	1.3%	1.9%	1.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.9%	0.3%	0.6%	0.3%	0.6%	0.0%
agric	2.3%	2.6%	2.0%	1.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.0%	0.9%	0.9%	1.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
commercial~t	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	2.2%	2.9%	5.1%	2.9%	2.2%	1.6%	2.8%	3.5%	3.5%	2.9%	3.2%	1.5%	1.9%
industr_im~t	2.6%	3.8%	3.5%	2.9%	0.6%	1.3%	2.6%	2.2%	3.5%	2.5%	4.7%	9.9%	6.7%	8.9%	9.9%	10.6%
altros	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.3%

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Table 3. Re-election rates: Chamber of deputies and Senate in the republican period

Legislature	beginning	end		CAMERA E SENATO INSIEME	CAMERA	SENATO
				Percent	Percent	Percent
I	1948	1953	New entry	62.46	59.65	67.16
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	37.54	40.36	32.84
II	1953	1958	New entry	39.9	40.89	37.45
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	60.09	59.11	62.55
III	1958	1963	New entry	36.49	38.64	31.5
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	63.51	61.36	68.51
IV	1963	1968	New entry	40.34	39.74	41.53
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	59.66	60.25	58.47
V	1968	1972	New entry	38.62	37.6	40.63
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	61.38	62.4	59.36
VI	1972	1976	New entry	38.45	37.8	39.74
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	61.55	62.19	60.27
VII	1976	1979	New entry	44.33	46.22	40.58
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	55.67	53.78	59.43
VIII	1979	1983	New entry	30.12	32.11	26.18
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	69.88	67.91	73.82
IX	1983	1987	New entry	39.19	41.85	33.87
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	60.83	58.15	66.13
X	1987	1992	New entry	39.81	39.01	41.38
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	60.19	60.99	58.62
XI	1992	1994	New entry	46.53	46.99	45.6
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	53.5	53.02	54.4
XII	1994	1996	New entry	68.91	72.07	62.5
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	31.09	27.93	37.49
XIII	1996	2001	New entry	46.71	48.17	43.81
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	53.3	51.84	56.18
XIV	2001	2006	New entry	49.52	50.57	47.47
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	50.48	49.43	52.53
XV	2006	2008	New entry	47.71	49.69	43.88
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	52.28	50.31	56.13
XVI	2008		New entry	38.66	38.52	38.94
			Re-election rate 1 or more time	61.32	61.47	61.05

Table 4 . Education and average age of the elected representatives: Chamber of Deputies from 1946 to 2007

			eta media	laurea	media_sup	media_inf	eleme	% di risposte sul titolo di studio
COST.	1946	1948	50.5	75.50%	7.75%	1.08%	7.57%	91.89%
I	1948	1953	45.4	74.39%	12.11%	2.11%	10.88%	99.47%
II	1953	1958	47.0	73.25%	12.10%	1.36%	10.05%	96.76%
III	1958	1963	46.7	73.39%	12.20%	2.03%	4.75%	92.37%
IV	1963	1968	47.8	72.28%	11.70%	1.92%	2.08%	87.98%
V	1968	1972	48.5	70.88%	12.80%	1.28%	1.44%	86.40%
VI	1972	1976	49.2	71.41%	12.28%	0.81%	0.97%	85.46%
VII	1976	1979	47.5	68.28%	11.92%	0.97%	0.64%	81.80%
VIII	1979	1983	48.3	68.21%	14.22%	1.60%	0.48%	84.50%
IX	1983	1987	48.7	65.34%	17.41%	2.72%	0.48%	85.94%
X	1987	1992	49.6	68.47%	17.83%	2.07%	0.32%	88.69%
XI	1992	1994	49.6	71.20%	23.73%	1.27%	0.32%	96.52%
XII	1994	1996	47.0	69.50%	28.73%	1.12%	0.32%	99.68%
XIII	1996	2001	48.1	67.30%	29.51%	2.23%	0.00%	99.04%
XIV	2001	2006	50.3	71.29%	25.94%	0.98%	0.16%	98.37%
XV	2006	2008	52.0	62.65%	25.00%	1.08%	0.15%	88.89%
XVI	2008		50.8	67.92%	30.19%	1.26%	0.00%	99.37%

Table 5 . Education and average age of the elected representatives: Senate from 1946 to 2007

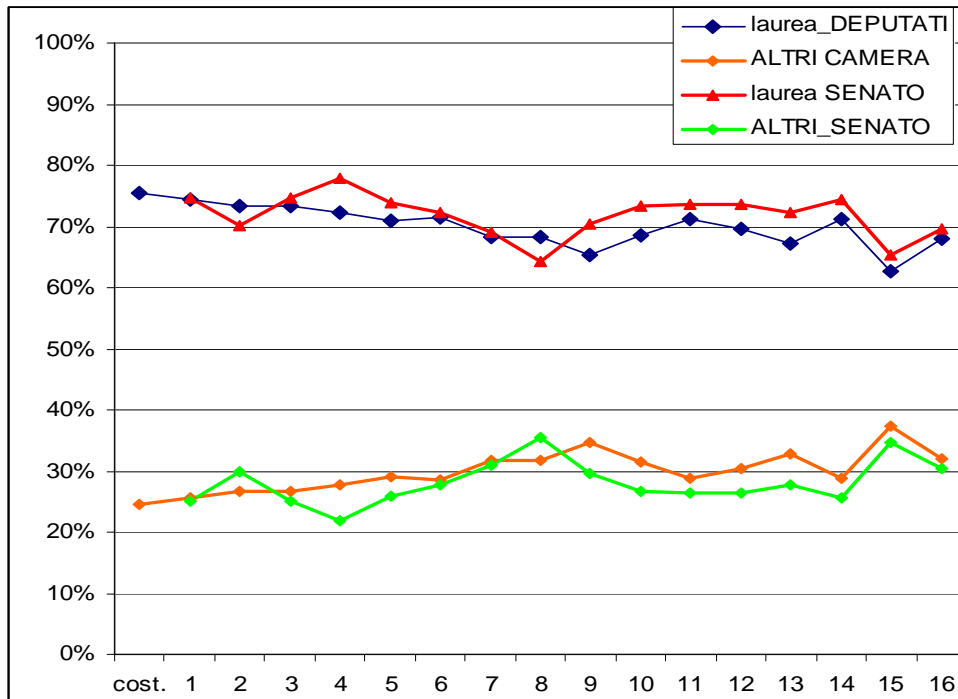
legislatura			eta'	laurea	media_sup	media_inf	eleme	% di risposte sul titolo di studio
I	1948	1953	57.9	74.8%	5.6%	1.2%	2.1%	83.6%
II	1953	1958	57.9	70.2%	6.4%	0.9%	2.1%	79.6%
III	1958	1963	57.8	74.8%	8.3%	0.4%	1.2%	84.6%
IV	1963	1968	56.8	78.0%	8.6%	2.2%	6.1%	94.9%
V	1968	1972	54.3	74.0%	15.2%	3.8%	3.5%	96.5%
VI	1972	1976	54.0	72.4%	14.1%	4.8%	1.6%	92.9%
VII	1976	1979	53.5	69.0%	17.9%	4.2%	2.6%	93.6%
VIII	1979	1983	54.4	64.4%	22.4%	6.0%	3.5%	96.2%
IX	1983	1987	55.8	70.3%	17.3%	4.8%	2.9%	95.2%
X	1987	1992	55.5	73.4%	18.2%	2.5%	0.9%	95.0%
XI	1992	1994	55.1	73.6%	20.1%	2.5%	0.3%	96.5%
XII	1994	1996	53.6	73.7%	22.1%	2.2%	0.3%	98.4%
XIII	1996	2001	53.8	72.4%	18.4%	1.9%	0.0%	92.7%
XIV	2001	2006	54.9	74.4%	19.9%	0.9%	0.3%	95.6%
XV	2006	2008	57.8	65.4%	18.2%	0.3%	0.0%	83.9%
XVI	2008		56.4	69.5%	12.5%	0.6%	0.0%	82.6%

Clearly the socio political changes requiring new professional qualifications to perform the political activity, according to the theories of Weber, Linblom, Einaudi and, to some extent, Kautsky had a great relevance for the composition of the political class by profession and degree of education for both the chamber of deputies and the senate. In the post-war new democracy (excluding the Contitueny), the largest part of the members of the Italian Parliament had a university degree: 74.4% in the chamber and 74.8% in the

senate but there was also a substantial share of member of both chambers with only elementary education degree, likely those politicians who had organized the parties participating to the new democracy 10.9% in the chamber and 2.1% in the senate. The percentage of deputies with elementary degree went down to about 1% in the chamber (VI Leg.) with the generational change post 1968 and then below 1% in the subsequent legislatures. In the Senate, the diminution of the members with a mere primary schools degree is slower to 0.9% and begun since the X Leg., likely because some senior deputies with lower education moved from the chamber of deputies to the senate, thus, confirming the theories a là Kautsky of the political profession as an inherently political activity

The second republic is characterised by great change of the political class that took place with the disappearance of most political parties of the first republic. The renewal of the political class initially did not cause a reduction of the share of both the members of the chamber and of the senate with a university degree. However, their percentage did fall in the XV and XVI legislature in either chambers, even if in Italy the share of citizens with a university degree had greatly increased in comparison with the period immediately after the world war.

Figure 1. Education in the Italian parliament



Another interesting change relates to the members of the parliament with an high school degree (see tables 4 and 5): they were about 12.11% in the chamber and 5.1% in the senate in the I Leg.. The share

remains almost unchanged in the chamber up to the VIII Leg., but it increases in the senate to 15.2% since the V Leg.. In both the chamber and the senate they increase very much and, in the “second republic”, in the chamber of deputies, they arrived to a 28.7%. One might argue that the petit bourgeois, active in the small business and minor professional activities were more able to emerge as politicians in the new situation of less organized political movements, in which the various interest groups could have more influence. This inference might be confirmed by looking at the very substantial changes in the professions of the members of the Republican parliament. These changes give interesting information on the characters assumed by circulation of the political elites in Italy in the last half century. Legal professions and teachers (mostly with a university degree), covered more than 40% of the universe considered, both in the chamber and in the senate, with a net predominance of lawyers (see tables 1 and 2 and figures 1 and 2).

New professions emerged in the political class considered in our research from the second period to the second republic: that of managers and that of white collars, the first in a pronounced way both in the chamber and in the senate, the second in a more pronounced way in the chamber than in the senate. In the second republic the true novelty is given by the entrepreneurs and managers that remarkably increase with respect to the I Republic. On the other hand, the unions leaders and political managers whose share, in the first republic constantly increased in both chambers, after the initial period, went down substantially in the second republic, still maintaining a significant value, likely with differences in the right and left political movements. The party model a la Kautsky or Michels is declining .

Figure 2. Prevailing professions CAMERA DEI DEPUTATI

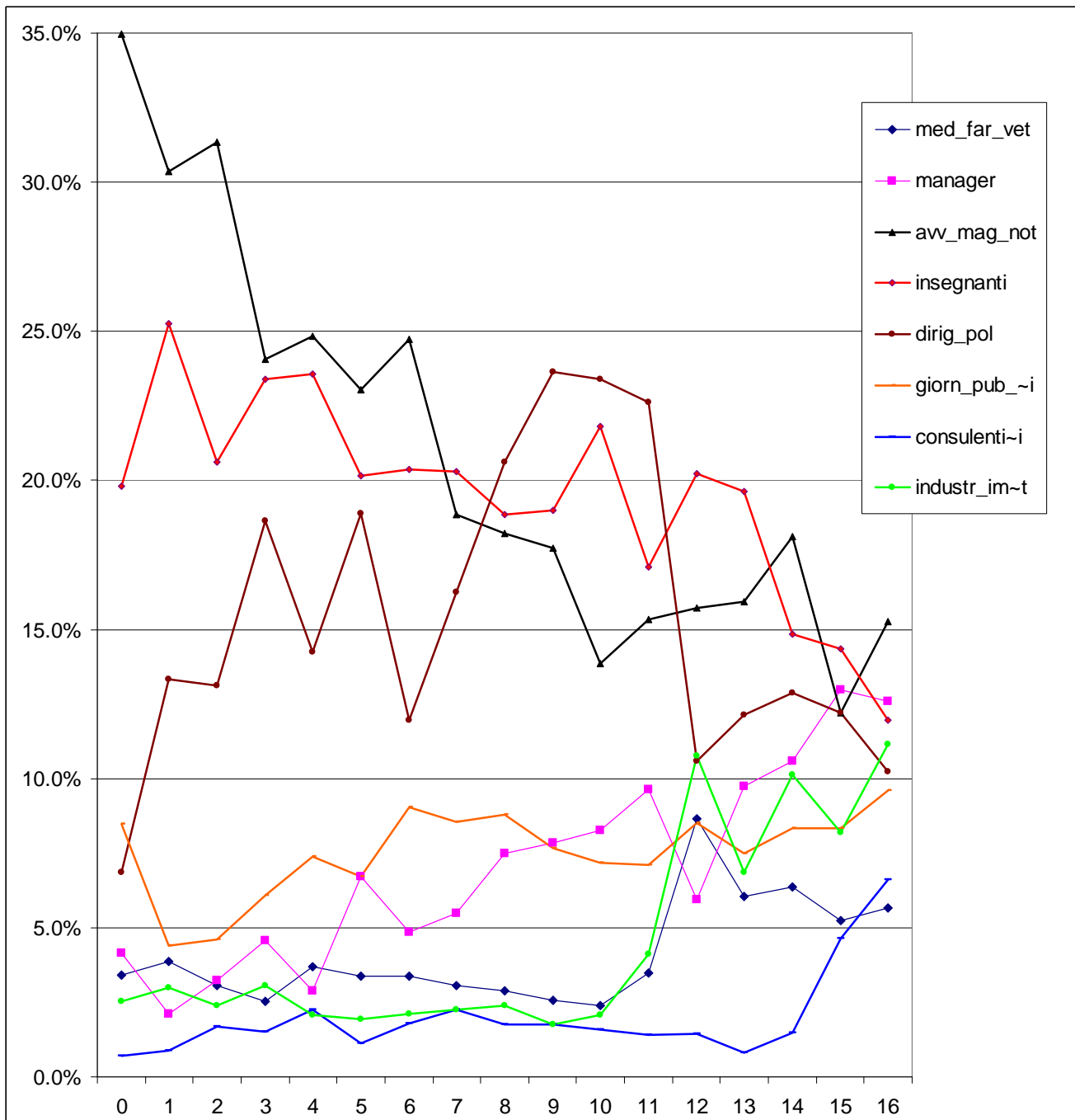
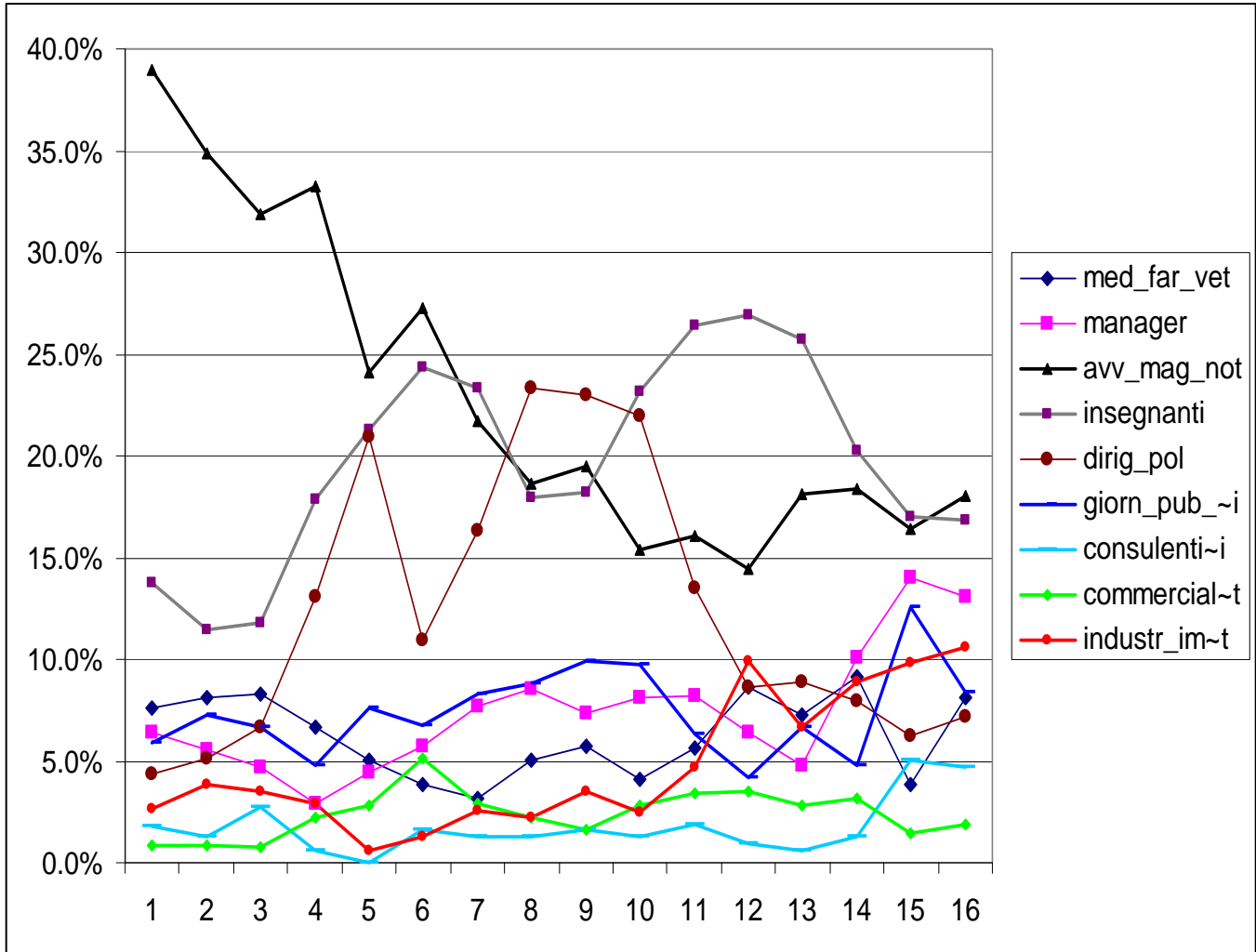
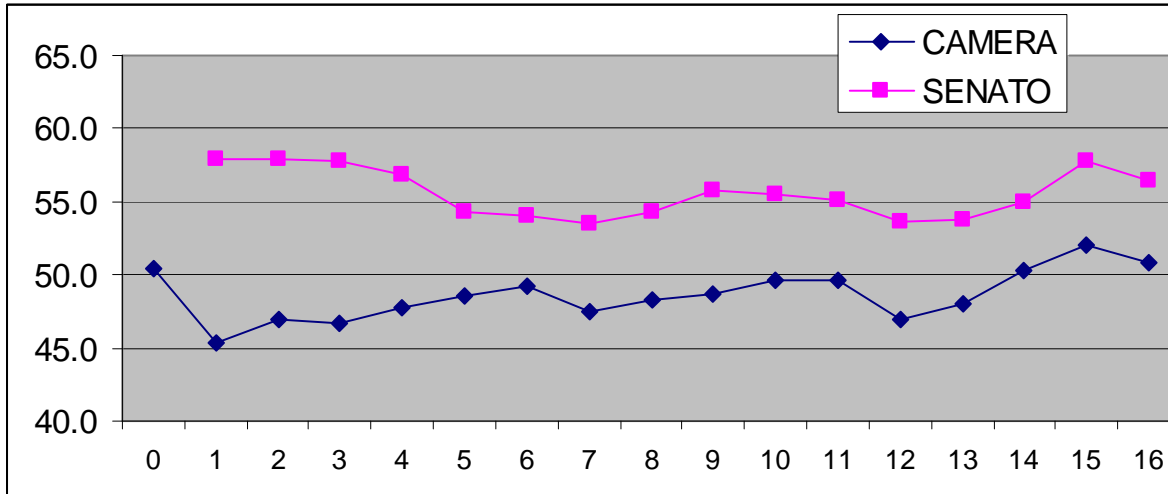


Figure 3. Prevailing professions SENATE



The average age of the Italian member of the parliament remains rather high in both chambers (see figure 4), over the first and the second republic. It oscillates between 42-52 years in the Chamber and between 53-58 in the senate (see tables 4 and 5). The age appears comparatively higher for the chamber (where the minimum age requisite is only 25 years) than in the senate where the minimum age requisite is 40 years. Two combined explanations for the higher average age of the members of the Italian parliament seem to emerge. A first is that it is hard to enter without a successful curriculum, say, in the local administrations or in the professions that validates the affiliation to the political elites. A second reason is that most of the members of the chamber are re-elected two or more times. In the senate the rate of re election is slightly less pronounced at the beginning because of the age requisite. It increased afterward, likely because the earlier cohorts of senators were too old .

Figure 4. Average AGE IN THE Italian parliament



3. The empirical analysis of the determinants of the circulation of the elites in the postwar Italian parliament

Our data set for contains all the individual members of the parliament and this allows us for different types of empirical analysis. Here, we estimate a probit model analysing the probability of re-election for the members of the parliament. We split the period into two segments of the first republic (from 1948 to 1994, i.e., we exclude the Costituente) and of the second republic and, controlling for the legislatures, we provide separate estimates for each branch of the Parliament. We consider as a dependent variable for the models presented the reelection of the members of the parliament. Reelection takes the value of 0 if the members of the parliament are present in the chambers or in the senate only one time. It takes the value of 1 for those members re-elected one or more time in any branch of the parliaments. Table 6 shows the dependent variable distinguishing for the branch and the two broad period of the first and the second republic.

Table 6. The dependent variable: reelection

		Obs	Mean	Std.Dev.	min	max
1948	2008	14845	0.557225	0.496731	0	1
	SENATO	3350	0.590448	0.491825	0	1
I REPUBLIC						
	CAMERA	6748	0.582543	0.493176	0	1
	SENATO	1599	0.52783	0.499381	0	1
II REPUBLIC						
	CAMERA	3147	0.482682	0.499779	0	1

Notice that the dependent variable considers as re-elected also those members of the parliament who enter for the first time into a branch (generally the chamber of deputies) and are re-elected in the other. Moreover, the information from the Costituente is taken into account when building the dependent variable, so that we have re-elected member even in the first legislature. The following figures 5 to 7 show the behaviour of the dependent variable in the whole parliament and distinguishing the chamber of deputies and the senate

Figure 5. Reelection rates in the Italian Parliament

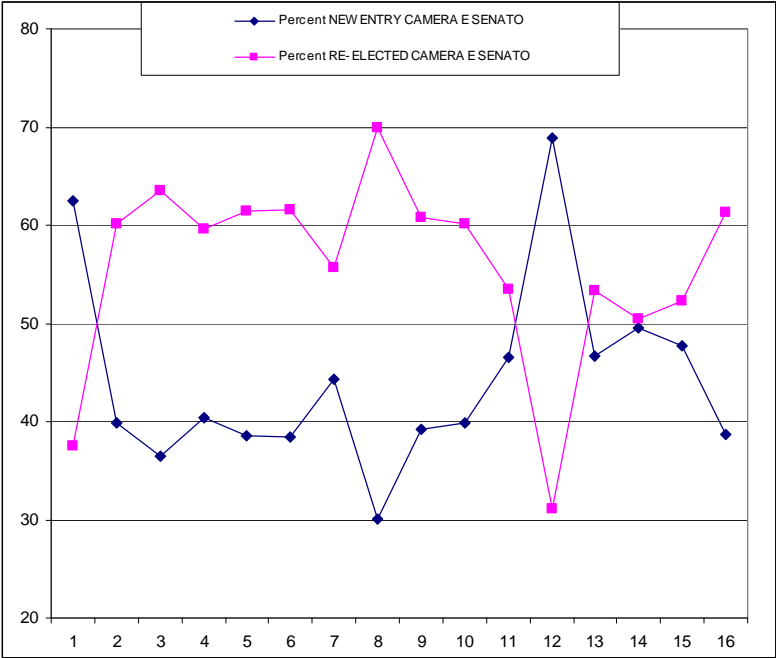


Figure 6. Reelection rates in the Chamber of Deputies

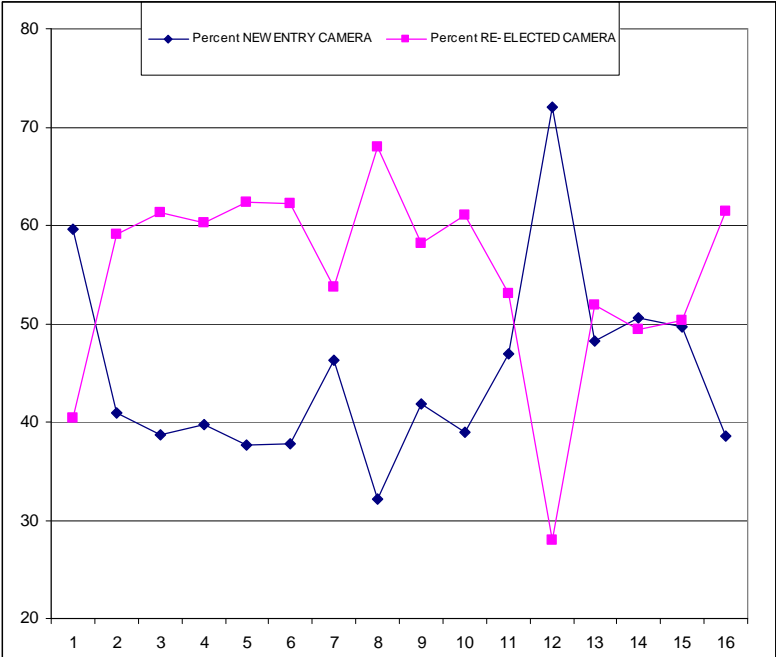
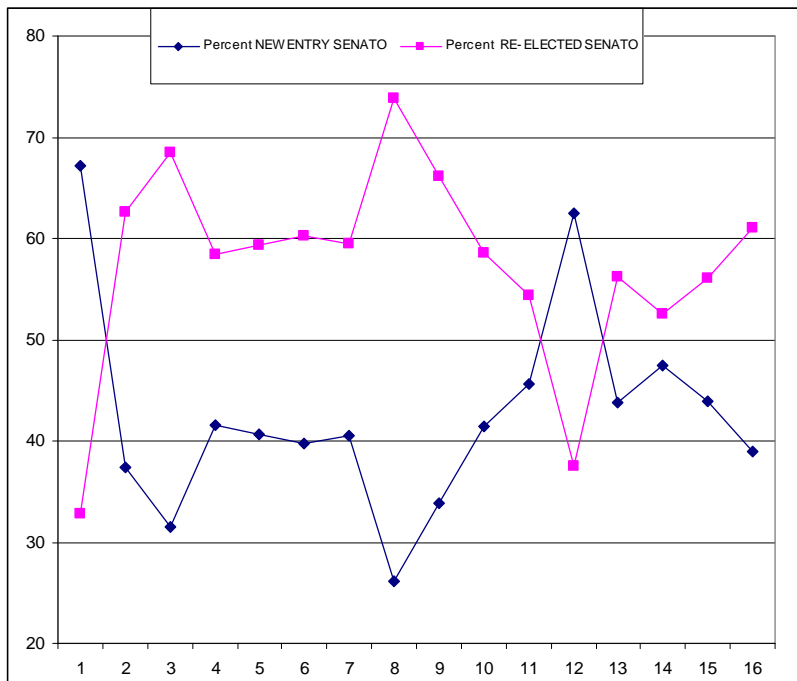


Figure 7. Reelection rates in the Senate



We used as regressors the political groups (we shall exclude from the estimates the broad category of “non attached” or GRUPPO MISTO), the professions (excluding from the estimate the broad category of “consulenti+altros”) of the elected representatives, their gender (women) and education (excluding from the estimate to elementary and primary school). The age of the member of the parliament is highly correlated with the dependent variable and cannot be used as regressor. As mentioned, in each of the reported estimates, we control for temporal dummies related to the legislatures.

Consider, first the Chambers of deputies. The following tables 6 and 7 report the results obtained by splitting the period into two segment: I Republic containing the firsts 12 legislatures (1948-1994) and II Republic with the remaining 4 Legislatures. As for the determinants of the re-election in the Chamber of deputies of the I Republic, among the political groups are significant with positive sign the following DC, MSI, PCI, PLI, PRI, PSDI, PSI and PSI-PSDI. The groups RETE, LEGA, PRC and VERDI are significant with negative sign, whereas the other groups are not significant. The University degree is significant and positively affect the re-election, whereas high-school is not. The gender (women) negatively affects the probability of reelection. All the professions resulting significant also positively affect the probability of re-election. They are: manager, avvocato/mag./notaio, teachers (including university professors), dirigenti politici e sindacali e amm.loc., giornalisti/pubblicisti, operai, commercialisti/ragionieri, industriali/imprenditori.

Table 7. Probit estimates of the probability of reelection in the chamber of deputies in the I Republic period 1948-1994

bysort II_Rep: probit rielezione an fi pdl cod dc dp ds rete lega margher msi pci pli ppi prad pro pri psdi psi psi_psdi ri svp verdi dipietro pd ulivo pdci rc_se rosa udeur udc_gen femmine laurea media_sup med_far_vet manager avv_mag_not impiegato insegnanti dirig_pol artig_commerc giorn_pub_scri mil_dipl arch_ing operaio agric commercialist industr_impredit t1 t2 t3 t4 t5 t6 t7 t8 t9 t10 t11 t12 t13 t14 t15 t16 if depu_1==1

Probit estimates
 Number of obs = 6748
 LR chi2(43) = 498.47
 Prob > chi2 = 0.0000
 Pseudo R2 = 0.0544
 Log likelihood = -4335.7447

rielezione	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
dc	.5870206	.1071207	5.48	0.000	.3770679	.7969733
dp	-.2706465	.3212182	-0.84	0.399	-.9002227	.3589297
ds	.0172882	.1743852	0.10	0.921	-.3245006	.3590769
rete	-1.284929	.5418747	-2.37	0.018	-2.346984	-.2228747
lega	-1.974605	.4315948	-4.58	0.000	-2.820516	-1.128695
msi	.3342403	.1257444	2.66	0.008	.0877858	.5806948
pci	.2664887	.1108853	2.40	0.016	.0491575	.4838199
pli	.5697134	.1399558	4.07	0.000	.2954051	.8440217
prad	-.0697261	.2088512	-0.33	0.738	-.4790669	.3396147
pro	-.6702412	.2682739	-2.50	0.012	-1.196048	-.144434
pri	.3220995	.1467577	2.19	0.028	.0344597	.6097393
psdi	.4731319	.1407868	3.36	0.001	.1971949	.749069
psi	.4375829	.1142612	3.83	0.000	.2136352	.6615307
psi_psdi	.4148723	.169585	2.45	0.014	.0824918	.7472528
svp	.2157963	.2810285	0.77	0.443	-.3350095	.7666021
verdi	-.7601786	.2920533	-2.60	0.009	-1.332593	-.1877647
femmine	-.1903179	.0678104	-2.81	0.005	-.3232239	-.057412
laurea	.1371686	.0641563	2.14	0.033	.0114246	.2629126
media_sup	.0096209	.0675362	0.14	0.887	-.1227476	.1419894
med_far_vet	.1559117	.1294611	1.20	0.228	-.0978274	.4096507
manager	.2602034	.1127867	2.31	0.021	.0391454	.4812613
avv_mag_not	.4016548	.1001396	4.01	0.000	.2053849	.5979248
impiegato	.0403533	.108045	0.37	0.709	-.171411	.2521176
insegnanti	.3273214	.098889	3.31	0.001	.1335026	.5211403
dirig_pol	.5059959	.0965705	5.24	0.000	.3167212	.6952707
artig_comm~c	-.0273044	.2107195	-0.13	0.897	-.440307	.3856982
giorn_pub~i	.4383882	.1072164	4.09	0.000	.2282478	.6485285
mil_dipl	.1198264	.2464724	0.49	0.627	-.3632507	.6029034
arch_ing	.1211337	.1349804	0.90	0.369	-.143423	.3856904
operaio	.3158085	.1429792	2.21	0.027	.0355744	.5960427
agric	.2847714	.1723989	1.65	0.099	-.0531243	.6226671
commercial~t	.2975447	.1207779	2.46	0.014	.0608243	.5342651
industr_im~t	.3405803	.1372617	2.48	0.013	.0715522	.6096083

TEMPORAL DUMMIES NOT REPORTED

_cons	-.4416563	.1542557	-2.86	0.004	-.7439919	-.1393207
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As for the determinants of the re-election in the II Republic in the chamber of deputies, among the political groups are significant with positive sign the following VERDI, SVP, whereas DI PIETRO and UDEUR are significant with negative sign. Other groups are not significant. The University degree and high school are significant and positively affect the re-election. Again the gender (women) negatively affects the probability of reelection. All the professions resulting significant positively affect the probability of re-election. They are: medici/farmac./veter., avvocati/mag./notaio, impiegato, managers, teachers (including university professors), dirigenti politici/sindacali/amm.loc., giornalisti/pubblicisti, operai

Table 8. Probit estimates of the probability of reelection in the chamber of deputies in the II Republic 1994- 2009

Probit estimates Number of obs = 3147
LR chi2(42) = 322.99
Prob > chi2 = 0.0000
Log likelihood = -2017.9494 Pseudo R2 = 0.0741

rielezione	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
an	.2225025	.1495251	1.49	0.137	-.0705613	.5155663
fi	.0185996	.1448972	0.13	0.898	-.2653936	.3025928
pdl	.1259355	.1944481	0.65	0.517	-.2551757	.5070467
ccd	-.2569816	.191393	-1.34	0.179	-.6321051	.1181418
ds	.1624104	.1485596	1.09	0.274	-.128761	.4535818
rete	-.162841	.4868175	-0.33	0.738	-1.116986	.7913037
lega	.0686115	.1543007	0.44	0.657	-.2338123	.3710353
margher	.167499	.2009461	0.83	0.405	-.2263482	.5613461
ppi	-.0479011	.188592	-0.25	0.800	-.4175345	.3217323
prc	.0119275	.1761241	0.07	0.946	-.3332694	.3571244
psi	.0174926	.3976197	0.04	0.965	-.7618276	.7968128
ri	-.5812571	.3408806	-1.71	0.088	-1.249371	.0868566
svp	.8451603	.3936018	2.15	0.032	.073715	1.616606
verdi	.5266005	.246666	2.13	0.033	.0431439	1.010057
dipietro	-.4675622	.2410768	-1.94	0.052	-.9400641	.0049398
pd	.0350607	.1979389	0.18	0.859	-.3528925	.4230139
ulivo	.0002998	.1715518	0.00	0.999	-.3359356	.3365351
pdci	-.3801717	.4115485	-0.92	0.356	-1.186792	.4264486
rosa	-.0724768	.3397517	-0.21	0.831	-.738378	.5934243
udeur	-.8840123	.4841024	-1.83	0.068	-1.832836	.064811
udc_gen	.4496294	.2137102	2.10	0.035	.0307651	.8684937
femmine	-.273548	.066998	-4.08	0.000	-.4048617	-.1422343
laurea	1.074757	.1567047	6.86	0.000	.7676214	1.381892
media_sup	.9881759	.1558052	6.34	0.000	.6828032	1.293549
med_far_vet	.3198695	.1464659	2.18	0.029	.0328016	.6069374
manager	.249252	.1303459	1.91	0.056	-.0062213	.5047253
avv_mag_not	.2915712	.1288304	2.26	0.024	.0390682	.5440741
impiegato	.2951644	.135547	2.18	0.029	.0294973	.5608316
insegnanti	.3169507	.128181	2.47	0.013	.0657205	.5681808
dirig_pol	.5680819	.1301354	4.37	0.000	.3130212	.8231426
artig_comm~c	.3033376	.2757344	1.10	0.271	-.2370919	.8437671
giorn_pub~i	.4310222	.1351112	3.19	0.001	.166209	.6958354
mil_dipl	.2801395	.3266507	0.86	0.391	-.3600841	.9203631
arch_ing	.295501	.1817995	1.63	0.104	-.0608196	.6518215
operaio	1.065712	.3260873	3.27	0.001	.4265925	1.704831
agric	.0836535	.3363321	0.25	0.804	-.5755453	.7428522
commercial~t	.2921924	.1811056	1.61	0.107	-.0627681	.6471529
industr_im~t	.2028239	.1333287	1.52	0.128	-.0584956	.4641435
TEMPORAL DUMMIES NOT REPORTED						
_cons	-1.431276	.215818	-6.63	0.000	-1.854271	-1.00828

The Senate shows peculiar features with respect to the chamber of deputies. Moreover it shows a remarkable change from the I to the II Republic. As for the determinants of the re-election in the senate of the I Republic, among the political groups are significant with positive sign the following DC, PCI, PSI. The group LEGA is the only significant with negative sign, whereas other groups are not significant. Education is not significant for re-election, as well as gender (women). The professions of manager, avvocato/mag./notaio, teachers (including university professors), dirigenti politici/sindacali/amm.loc.,

giornalisti/publicisti, archit./ingegnere, operai, commercialisti/ragionieri are significant and positively affect the probability of re-election.

Table 9. Probit estimates of the probability of reelection in the senate in the I Republic 1948-1994

bysort II_Rep: probit rielezione an fi pdl ccd dc dp ds rete lega margher msi pci pli ppi prad prc pri psdi psi psi_psd ri svp verdi dipietro pd ulivo pdci rc_se rosa udeur udc_gen femmine laurea media_sup med_far_vet manager avv_mag_not impiegato insegnanti dirigi_pol artig_commerc giorn_pub_scri mil_dipl arch_ing operaio agric commercialist industr_impredit t1 t2 t3 t4 t5 t6 t7 t8 t9 t10 t11 t12 t13 t14 t15 t16 if senat_1==1

Probit estimates Number of obs = 3350
LR chi2(39) = 321.35
Prob > chi2 = 0.0000
Log likelihood = -2106.2533 Pseudo R2 = 0.0709

rielezione	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
dc	.5490238	.1043819	5.26	0.000	.344439	.7536086
ds	.0212733	.194768	0.11	0.913	-.3604649	.4030114
lega	-1.829508	.4975662	-3.68	0.000	-2.80472	-.8542962
msi	.1611118	.1447925	1.11	0.266	-.1226763	.4448999
pci	.4274559	.110807	3.86	0.000	.2102781	.6446337
pli	.052823	.1841655	0.29	0.774	-.3081349	.4137808
prad	-.7010043	.6872842	-1.02	0.308	-2.048057	.646048
prc	-.4937337	.3258376	-1.52	0.130	-1.132364	.1448963
pri	.1985268	.1947842	1.02	0.308	-.1832433	.5802969
psdi	.1939076	.1727007	1.12	0.262	-.1445795	.5323947
psi	.2935825	.119243	2.46	0.014	.0598705	.5272945
psi_psd	-.2847688	.2260339	-1.26	0.208	-.727787	.1582494
femmine	-.133381	.1234124	-1.08	0.280	-.3752648	.1085027
laurea	-.0230259	.0959685	-0.24	0.810	-.2111207	.1650688
media_sup	.039999	.0988699	0.40	0.686	-.1537824	.2337805
med_far_vet	.2435447	.1677635	1.45	0.147	-.0852656	.5723551
manager	.4806639	.1627818	2.95	0.003	.1616175	.7997104
avv_mag_not	.5774971	.1463189	3.95	0.000	.2907174	.8642768
impiegato	.0521079	.164567	0.32	0.752	-.2704375	.3746532
insegnanti	.4214645	.1464375	2.88	0.004	.1344522	.7084767
dirig_pol	.4928726	.1428927	3.45	0.001	.212808	.7729373
artig_comm~c	.419514	.2650107	1.58	0.113	-.0998975	.9389255
giorn_pub~i	.6064002	.1566812	3.87	0.000	.2993107	.9134896
mil_dipl	.37219	.2398563	1.55	0.121	-.0979198	.8422998
arch_ing	.8566187	.2001813	4.28	0.000	.4642705	1.248967
operaio	.8819013	.2252607	3.92	0.000	.4403985	1.323404
agric	.3993532	.2588974	1.54	0.123	-.1080763	.9067827
commercial~t	.4148326	.2001851	2.07	0.038	.022477	.8071883
industr_im~t	.3114674	.1901545	1.64	0.101	-.0612285	.6841633

TEMPORAL DUMMIES NOT REPORTED

_cons	-.6365909	.1933544	-3.29	0.001	-1.015559	-.2576232
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As for the determinants of the re-election in the senate of the II Republic among the political groups AN, DS, LEGA, PRC are significant with positive sign, RC-SE is significant with negative sign. The other groups are not significant. The University degree and high school are both significant and positively affects re-election. The gender (women) is not significant for reelection. Among the profession considered only the category of dirigenti politici/sidacali/amm.loc. is barely significant and positively affects re-election.

Table 10. Probit estimates of the probability of reelection in the senate in the II Republic 1994-2009

Probit estimates Number of obs = 1590
LR chi2(36) = 164.50
Prob > chi2 = 0.0000
Pseudo R2 = 0.0748

Log likelihood = -1017.8389

rielezione	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]
an	.5140238	.1746162	2.94	0.003	.1717824 .8562652
fi	.0284356	.1649264	0.17	0.863	-.2948142 .3516853
pdl	.4058838	.2909456	1.40	0.163	-.1643592 .9761267
ccd	.1240858	.2169778	0.57	0.567	-.301183 .5493546
ds	.601175	.1714135	3.51	0.000	.2652107 .9371393
lega	.3940461	.1871123	2.11	0.035	.0273128 .7607793
margher	.2100657	.2534746	0.83	0.407	-.2867354 .7068667
ppi	.3641771	.2264628	1.61	0.108	-.0796819 .8080361
prc	.7608404	.2808542	2.71	0.007	.2103763 1.311305
psi	.7805584	.5330591	1.46	0.143	-.2642182 1.825335
verdi	.1671517	.2400003	0.70	0.486	-.3032403 .6375437
dipietro	-.2414069	.4306437	-0.56	0.575	-1.085453 .6026393
pd	.1769486	.2951069	0.60	0.549	-.4014504 .7553475
ulivo	-.3325349	.2027565	-1.64	0.101	-.7299304 .0648606
rc_se	-.9076992	.3135839	-2.89	0.004	-1.522312 -.293086
udc_gen	-.1299365	.2850645	-0.46	0.649	-.6886527 .4287797
femmine	-.1399662	.1105685	-1.27	0.206	-.3566765 .0767441
laurea	.9112408	.1574864	5.79	0.000	.6025731 1.219908
media_sup	.9387842	.1614735	5.81	0.000	.622302 1.255266
med_far_vet	-.2680404	.2103724	-1.27	0.203	-.6803627 .1442818
manager	-.0387669	.1947185	-0.20	0.842	-.4204081 .3428743
avv_mag_not	-.0091652	.1912953	-0.05	0.962	-.3840972 .3657667
impiegato	-.0944612	.2037882	-0.46	0.643	-.4938788 .3049563
insegnanti	.0100784	.1879051	0.05	0.957	-.3582088 .3783656
dirig_pol	.3606541	.2039255	1.77	0.077	-.0390326 .7603408
artig_comm-c	-.4080816	.4729676	-0.86	0.388	-1.335081 .5189179
giorn_pub~i	.1676058	.2038864	0.82	0.411	-.2319604 .5671719
mil_dipl	-.1564246	.341029	-0.46	0.646	-.8248292 .5119799
arch_ing	-.3086616	.2440208	-1.26	0.206	-.7869335 .1696103
agric	-.2790745	.5515639	-0.51	0.613	-1.36012 .8019708
commercial~t	.2471109	.2619097	0.94	0.345	-.2662027 .7604644
industr_im~t	-.2053709	.1957768	-1.05	0.294	-.5890863 .1783444

TEMPORAL DUMMIES NOT REPORTED

_cons	-1.050828	.2552111	-4.12	0.000	-1.551032 -.5506231
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4. Conclusions

The analysis of the Italian political class has focused on different characteristics of the members of the parliament. Beginning with their average age, in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, it tends to remain constant and it is always quite high. This seems to support the thesis that in order to be admitted to the political profession in the parliament, it is necessary a specific curriculum and/or a kind of social achievement that, in turn, permits the admission to the political elite.

The fact that the political class is indeed an elite from the point of view of cultural and technical skills seems to emerge also by considering the education of the members of the parliament, in particular the high share of them having a university degree (about the 70% all over the period). Notice, however, that there is an appreciable reduction of the graduate members of the parliament in the last legislatures. This, however, is compensated (although mainly in the chamber of deputies) by the increase of the members of the parliament with a secondary school degree. This seems to support the thesis that the social elites, relevant for the

political career, are those having success in the business. In other words, the petit bourgeois class increases its role for a successful parliamentary career. In addition, the share of those with only elementary degree decreases up to disappear in the last legislatures, whereas it was remarkable in the firsts legislatures, possibly more characterised by the so called “pure politicians”.

As for the professions, in the chamber of deputies, the traditionally prevailing, which used to be lawyers, teachers (including university professors), operai and dirigenti pol., tend to decrease, with a corresponding increase of entrepreneurs and journalists. As for the senate, the prevailing professions of lawyers and operai reduce their importance; the profession of teachers (including university professors) fluctuates, whereas that of political managers shows a persistence higher than in the chamber of deputies. Notice also that medical professions are higher in the senate than in the chamber of deputies, whereas in either chamber, but mainly in the senate, the professions of managers and entrepreneurs tend to establish themselves. The share of journalists remains always remarkable, but more in the senate than in the chamber of deputies and this seems to support the thesis of new emerging professions, quite different from the traditional bourgeoisie that prevailed in the firsts legislatures. In the senate, the proper professions of the political world are more important than in the chamber: notice for example the share of journalist, which is increasing likely because they often used to be political journalists. Finally, as mentioned, also the share of medical profession is increasing and this might be due to the increasing importance of all those issues related to the national health service, but also to the ability of the mentioned profession to become an important group of pressure; a similar reasoning applies to the teachers (including university professors), mainly in the senate, where they seem to have easier access because of their prestige.

The re-election rate is always quite high in either branch of the parliament, but mainly in the senate. This, if considered jointly with the lower number of senators and their higher average age, supports the opinion of the highest prestige of the senate with respect to the chamber and explains the “transit” in the chamber of deputies before the “admission” in the senate (by (re)election). The gender (male) positively affect re-election mainly in the chamber of deputies, as well as the traditional prevailing profession. In the senate, however, the belonging to the political profession, in particular in the II Republic, is very important for re-election. This result seems quite counterintuitive because in the II Republic the role of the political parties is reduced. Nevertheless, the fact that the political parties have been destructured at the end of the I Republic might have actually increased the power of the political top management with respect to peripheral (less professional) emerging forces.

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