

A stronger leadership within a delicate balance of powers: executive leadership, professional administration, and democracy in Woodrow Wilson's theory and practice

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1. *Woodrow Wilson: an 'outside force' in a 'transformational' moment*

Today, the U.S. system of checks and balances is decidedly skewed in favor of the executive branch. Opposite to a Congress, which «struggles to perform the basic functions of a legislative body, such as appointing» the Speaker of the House, «keeping debate civil, organizing votes»¹, and approving the budget, stands a President, who, for ninety years now, has progressively strengthened and refined its instruments of executive action and legislative direction. In this respect, the first two decades of the 21st Century have marked a new evolutionary stage of the *Modern Presidency*², as noted by Bruce Ackerman some years ago³. The transformative age that has been unravelling in the past two decades of the 2000s reminds us of another «transformational» moment in the presidential leadership, which is rooted in the Progressive Era⁴.

Certainly, one of the most distinctive interpreters of the Progressive presiden-

cy was Woodrow Wilson, who stood out among both his predecessors and successors for being not only a politician, but first and foremost an acknowledged scholar of American democracy and administration and who spent his entire academic career paving the way to his future political life⁵. The 240 years of US Federal history do not show any other President so deeply engaged in the study of the lights and shadows in the American constitutional design and its historical development.

Hence, it is difficult to separate Wilson's theories of government, democracy and leadership from his statesmanship. As Daniel Stid has recently put it, «Indeed, he decided on an academic career because he believed it was the best outlet for his ambitions, that he could maximize his impact by serving as an 'outside force' in politics»⁶.

The assessment made by 20th century scholars on Wilson's achievements as President in light of his academic writings has been extremely controversial. Two main schools of thought have come out of the

historical and political analyses. On the one hand, the traditional school, led by the greatest biographer of Wilson, Arthur Link, has considered him an «inspiring exemplary for contemporary presidents» and has praised the merits of «[destroying] the wall between the executive and legislative branches» laying the foundations for the «expansion and perfection of the powers of the presidency»⁷. On the contrary, the revisionist approach has heavily criticized Wilson for introducing in theory and practice a presidential leadership able to bypass the institutional boundaries placed by the framers of the Constitution between the Chief Executive and the public opinion; this innovation would have weakened the original institutional design. Recently, a third, more balanced view of Wilson's statesmanship denies that he challenged and subverted the US separation of powers, and rather points to the moderation of Wilson's presidency, considering, in particular, «his persistent ambivalence regarding his program for 'responsible government *under* the Constitution', and the resilience of the separation of powers»⁸.

In taking up the issue of leadership in Wilson thought and practice, I will follow in the footsteps of the third interpretation of Wilson's statesmanship, drawing specific attention to its connection with the two co-related issues of democracy and administration. Every scholar who has dealt with Wilson's scholarship and political career – such as Arthur Link, Niels Thorsen, Peri Arnold, Bryan James Cook, Daniel Stid – has also dealt with the place of leadership within his theory of state and democracy. In particular, by analysing Wilson's entire literary production – from his early writings to his last academic essays – Thorsen has

noted that Wilson's attention to political leadership came as a consequence of a constant concern for the «failings of American democracy»⁹. This urgent need was connected to the peculiar historical context surrounding the future 28th President of United States.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born in 1856, in Staunton, Virginia, in the mid of the sectional conflict that would have led to the American Civil War. After the war, since the conflict over slavery was not fully settled, and rather continued to thrive in disguise during the Reconstruction period, Wilson «grew up in an atmosphere haunted by a fear of political disintegration»¹⁰. Meanwhile, the new national political economy supported by Republican majorities in Congress paved the way to the formation of large-scale organizations of capital and labour which, in turn, posed new challenges to the State and opened new areas of public policy¹¹. Unchecked speculations on the stock market created the conditions for a financial crisis, while the concentration of capital in big Trusts and Companies affected free competition and labor relations. Therefore, most of the 1870s was punctuated by financial panics, economic depression, and strikes, increasing «the sense of the precariousness of the social order»¹². In the meantime, freed from the bonds of slavery, the United States relaunched its global image as a progressive nation now ready to join European imperialism. Against this economic, social and international background stood an almost powerless federal government, driven more by local interests than by a national vision and marked by an endemic political corruption, of which the Compromise of 1877 represents the main example. The Compromise was the result of

the heavily disputed presidential election of 1876, which pitted Samuel J. Tilden, the Democratic governor of New York, against the Republican Governor of Ohio, Rutherford B. Hayes. Even though Tilden had prevailed over Hayes by securing 184 electoral votes, he was one vote short of the majority for the Electoral College, while 20 electoral votes from 4 states were still disputed. Hence, Congress took up the issue and, after intense bargaining, cut a deal that entailed the Democrats' approval of Hayes as President in exchange for federal economic investments in strategic infrastructures in the South and, most importantly, for the removal of troops from Southern states. The extremely contested presidential election of 1876, «close beyond all precedent»¹³, increased suspicions of electoral frauds and outraged young Wilson. In a speech given on November 15th at the College of New Jersey he talked of a Union «endangered by the traitors who have crept into favor certain parts of the country by the miserable ambition of petty politicians» and spoke of the «great political crisis» it was facing¹⁴.

An even stronger indignation was manifested by Wilson's friend Douglas McKay, whose ideas he likely shared:

The great American Republic is a failure. When I see so plainly that there is an endeavour to make the will of the people subservient to the wishes of a few unblushing scoundrels, such as some of those in power at Washington, I am the more persuaded that while the government of the Republic is beautiful in theory, its practical application fails entirely¹⁵.

It was at this point that Wilson took upon himself the mission of saving the American republic from its deficiencies¹⁶ and began to reflect upon the Union, the weaknesses of its constitutional system and the need

to provide a new foundation for American democracy. In two decades of theoretical speculation, Wilson finally resolved to identify in the Executive, both the Cabinet and the President, the means through which to found anew the US political system. In other words, in Wilson's mind, the issue of how to make American democracy work in a changing national and international environment went hand in hand with concern for the development of a more efficient executive in the US constitutional design. And yet, this goal should have been reached without compromising the two main pillars of the constitutional system, namely self-government and separation of powers.

This essay examines Wilson's efforts, first as a scholar and then as the President of United States, to uphold his vision of leadership and democracy within America's delicate balance of power. After analysing Wilson's main scholarship on the subject, I will focus on Wilson's presidential management of the administrative apparatuses and the civil service – an issue that represents well his ambivalent attitude between affirmation of the executive leadership and respect of the checks and balances enshrined in the US constitution.

2. *A new leader for a new order. Wilson's idea of statesmanship from Cabinet Government to Constitutional Government*

From his first writings in his youth to his later, more articulated reflections about politics, government and state, Woodrow Wilson maintained a concern focused on three main recurrent topics: democracy,



Rogers, W. A. (William Allen), *Cheer up Mr. President--it is not Congress which shows lack of confidence*, "New York Herald", May 17, 1918, p. 7, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. Description: Uncle Sam presenting Woodrow Wilson with paper "Congress passes Overman bill, administration measure majority in the house, 295 to 2"; portrait of Abraham Lincoln on wall

leadership and administration. Those concepts make the three pillars which underpinned Wilson's political theory, and they are inextricably interconnected. In particular, it can be said that Wilson's reflection on leadership and administration originated from the need to understand how to best manage the features of a modern democracy – namely, liberal institutions, political freedom and universal suffrage. This connection, evident since *The Ideal States-*

man (1877)¹⁷ would have shown in different forms in his later political writings. Indeed, in all his political and constitutional works, Wilson dealt with the issue of leadership. However, at the core of his political analysis stood always, first and foremost, the observation of American democracy's deficiencies in a historical context dramatically changed after the Civil War and demanding new governmental solutions: in this respect, his new conception of leadership

would have helped to build a new conception of government.

The topic of institutional reforms for a new democratic government dominated his first political essay, written in 1879: *Cabinet Government in the United States*¹⁸. This was a direct and harsh critique on the US divided government, which, from the local to federal level, expressed «a decline in statesmanship, a rule of levity and folly instead of wisdom and a sober forethought in legislation». These defects threatened «to shake our trust not only in the men by whom our national policy is controlled, but also in the very principles upon which our Government rests»¹⁹. Rejecting the idea, supported by some of his contemporaries, that the origin of these defects lay in the expansion of male suffrage, Wilson turned his attention to the constitutional architecture of the American system and its strict separation of powers. By comparing the US checks and balances with the British parliamentary system, which entailed a connection between the executive and the legislative branches through the practice of parliamentary confidence, Wilson called for the need to break the boundary between the legislative and executive branches in the United States, and thus for a reform of the separation of powers established in the Constitution of Philadelphia. In particular, he advocated for a constitutional reform that allowed the executive branch to enter into the law-making process through the legislative initiative, challenging the then absolute dominion of legislative committees. The historical development of legislative procedures had led to the division of parliamentary work into a large number of committees, which retained the power to determine the future of any bill. Since these

committees usually met in secret sessions, law-making now was conducted by denying one of the main features of self-government, «the discussion of public business», which was granted on principle by the US Constitution. This legislative process had, thus, turned the standing Committees into Executive Departments, and had encouraged several lobbying activities, less concerned with the national wellbeing than with personal interests and bargaining. And yet, they practically carried out ministerial functions without being accountable, leading to a paradoxical situation: «the absorption of all power by a legislature which is practically irresponsible for its acts»²⁰. While the system of divided government made the executive meaningless and lacked a true leadership, it had not prevented the concentration of power in the legislative branch. Hence, legislative standing committees were the main target of Wilson's claim on democratic deficiencies in the federal system.

It was at this point that Wilson introduced his reflection on leadership in the executive, which would have entailed a process of overcoming the isolation between the executive and the legislative branches by making the presidential cabinet populated by members picked from Congress and dismissed by the lack of parliamentary confidence. These could have sat in Congress and, most of all, they would have retained legislative initiative. Thus, the legislative debate would have become necessarily public, since the President and the cabinet would have used the initiative prerogative to lead the Congress through its business, and a wide political debate would have ensued as a result of the role played by the parliamentary opposition. All in all, the

need for executive Department Secretaries to gain the confidence of the majority in Congress would have led to three positive results: a selection of responsible and principled leaders, the «lifting [of] the lid of concealment» placed on public debate by the standing committees, and it would have allowed a cooperation – rather than an «isolation» – between politics and administration, which would have improved the process of law-making²¹.

Above all, as Niels Thorsen has noted, Wilson's proposal for reform «is probably best understood as an attempt to reconcile the idea of the nation with the practice of universal suffrage». Indeed, while many contemporary pundits blamed the deficiencies of the political élites on the ignorance of the voting masses, Wilson reversed the problem: «The suffrage need not weaken governmental efficacy; instead, it can actually legitimize the power and authority of the nation»²², provided that the constitutional design allowed for a public legislative debate and a responsible government. It is, thus, evident that, according to this logic, in Wilson's thought, the issue of leadership was consequent to the issue of making American representative democracy work in tune with the new times by introducing a full executive political accountability.

However, after *Cabinet Government*, Wilson soon realized that this type of accountability could be hardly reached by subverting the system of divided government enshrined in the Constitution. Six years later, the book drawn by his doctoral dissertation, *Congressional Government*²³, stopped short of «diagnosing» the inefficiencies of the government caused by standing committees, without aiming at prescribing any «remedies»²⁴. It was at

this point, by realizing that a true constitutional reform geared toward a responsible government would not have been feasible, that Wilson turned to the US chief executive as the key to improve American democracy by bridging the executive and legislative branches, without formally compromising the original system of checks and balances²⁵. Notwithstanding this theoretical turn, a general overview of Wilson's further works on state, democracy and politics²⁶ confirms that he placed his discourse on leadership in a broader frame of analysis²⁷. Wilson conceived a political leader for a new system of government, which, in turn, was needed in order to connect the state with the nation and address the challenges of modernization – namely, the manifold effects of both industrial development and technological advancements, the expansion of trusts and corporations, the rise of public opinion through the influence of the press²⁸, and the organization of a plurality of interests in various trade unions.

Certainly, in *Congressional Government*, the President was not yet the ideal political leader imagined by Wilson. Indeed, this book described the President merely as the federal top-rank official, an inevitable outcome of two main factors: a decline in the character of the Presidents, and also in the prestige of the office. The first problem was due to the internal logic of national party conventions in the selection of the candidates, which led to single out people of «clean and irreproachable insignificance»²⁹. The second problem was related to the predominance of Congress, described as a «despot» that makes «the Secretaries its humble servants». Accordingly, the President was «scarcely the executive», rather only the head of an

administrative system he could not even control. Indeed, he could neither direct the law-making, similarly to a British Prime Minister, and not even lead his own Cabinet, since each Secretary was independent on a matter of principle³⁰. On the contrary, it was Congress that supervised not only the law-making process, but also the «faithful execution of the law»³¹. Thus, if it were not for the right of veto, the President could have been made a «permanent officer [a member] [...] of the official rather than of the political machinery of the government»³².

Only fifteen years after *Congressional Government*'s first edition, Wilson had to recognize a decisive increase in the prestige of the presidential office, connected to some extra-constitutional changes in law and political practices, such as the abrogation of the Tenure of Office Act (1887)³³ and the growing authority of the Secretary of the Treasury in influencing the money market and managing both the funds of the Treasury and the bond issues of government. However, the most important change for its implications on the role played by the President within the federal system came from the new imperial posture assumed by the United States after the Spanish-American War of 1898. In Wilson's words, the «war's most striking and momentous consequence» had to be found in «the greatly increased power and opportunity for constructive statesmanship given the President, by the plunge into international politics and into the administration of distant dependencies»³⁴. This observation provided the soon to be governor of New Jersey and future POTUS with the opportunity to share a belief he would reaffirm several times throughout his presidential

terms: the idea, dating back to Hamilton, according to which international politics represented the President's peculiar realm of unilateral action. In Wilson's vision, the opportunity represented by the transformation of the United States into an imperial power would have provided the necessary impetus to create a «new leadership of the Executive Branch», and thus initiate a new process of «extra-constitutional» change to counterbalance congressional 'absolutism' and redefine the foundations of American representative democracy through a system no longer based on the dogma of the separation of powers, rather on the idea of a responsible executive, capable of interpreting its times, reforming its party, and establishing a direct connection with the nation. It was also at this time that Wilson began to cultivate ideas that would eventually lead him to join the progressive camp, a crucial step in cementing his ambition to reform American democracy through leadership³⁵.

Since the turn of the century, in response to the social and economic problems spurred by industrial modernization, a reform movement had spread from local to state and federal governments. This progressive movement was a reaction to a capitalist society that had left behind several socio-economic categories, and it now began to organize politically, mainly against railroads companies and large corporations³⁶. Regarding national politics, Progressivism was a cross-party movement; yet, in the first decade of the 20th Century, it represented a minority in the Democratic Party led by William Jennings Bryan.

By this time, Wilson had become an acknowledged national scholar and the President of Princeton University. Even though

his thought had always hinted at moderate reformism, until then *The Professor* had been mostly prominent among the democratic conservative side³⁷. And yet, during his Princeton Presidency, he had pursued several truly liberal reforms. Indeed, «Wilson's conservatism, [...] was very different from [the one] that prevailed in American business circles around the turn of the century». For example, Wilson did not share «the contemporary celebration of *laissez faire*» and his «faith in the supremacy of government institutions [contrasted with] the conservative [stand to keep the] government to a minimal police function and [...] to emancipate the corporations from all social and political constraints»³⁸.

However, it was not until 1910, after being elected governor of New Jersey, that he embraced the progressive cause. Wilson's decision proved to be extremely timely, because it came at a time when the progressivists in the Republican party were highly disillusioned by the conservative turn of President William Howard Taft, while the Democrats had gained a solid majority in the House of Representatives after almost twenty years. By stepping into the progressive field, though, Woodrow Wilson could picture himself as a new leader for a new order. Furthermore, this was a choice that offered him the tools to implement his most cherished institutional reform project, which, from then on, would have hinged entirely on a new executive leadership³⁹.

This idea of a leadership, which was developed in his late academic writings and lectures, was based on a new form of political legitimacy, not rooted in the party nor Congress, but rather in public opinion, and is well described in *Constitutional Government*, published in 1908, soon before he

left his position as President of Princeton to enter politics as the Democratic candidate for the New Jersey governorship⁴⁰. Once again, his theoretical statement on leadership was functional to his «theory of politics». Indeed, in *Constitutional Government*, Wilson was first and foremost interested in the «changed context in which leadership was to take place», a social environment made by «a more demanding public, ready to pressure the government for help» to realize its material interests⁴¹. Hence, the government should have become an agent of national growth and national power, meant to give the American people more opportunities for achievement. It was against this background that Wilson styled the President as the representative institution best equipped to embark in the task of strengthening the nation. In *Constitutional Government*, Wilson draws the idea of the President not only as a responsible Chief administrator, but also as the «leader of the nation» and the symbol of American power. He was the «vital link of connection [between its party and] [...] the thinking nation [...] the spokesman for the real sentiment and purpose of the country» and the one the country would have looked at for guidance and statements of policy⁴². This guiding function, i.e., being the main representative of the people, was exploited by Wilson to argue for a legitimate expansion of presidential authority within the system of checks and balances⁴³. Hence, Wilson strongly advocated a decisive intervention of the executive in the «law-making part of the government», since in «times of stress and change», the President was to become «originator of policies»⁴⁴. It was thus no longer the case that the President could be considered a mere executive official. This



Woodrow Wilson's speech to Congress on April 8, 1913, on the revision of customs duties. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.

last point also implied that the President had necessarily to delegate his merely administrative functions to be able embrace the «larger sort of executive questions»⁴⁵. Therefore, in *Constitutional Government*, Wilson did not seem to attribute to the public administration any importance in enhancing the role of the President as the leader of the nation. Yet, as a scholar, he had dedicated a good deal of his work to the study of the administration, so much so that he is considered the father of administrative science in the United States⁴⁶. Indeed, since *Cabinet Government* and *Congressional Government*, Wilson had paid great attention to administration as «a political institution

in its own right». When he took up the issue of remaking the public executive within a modern American national government, he expressed the conviction that the administration and the exercise of administrative powers had become «the central mode of politics and governance». Hence, he began to explore «the proper structure and institutional status of administration under a popular constitutional regime»⁴⁷.

First of all, contrary to a most simplistic interpretation, Wilson did not claim a strict separation between politics and administration⁴⁸. Just as a strict separation of powers could not work in modern democratic systems, so did a strict distinction between

policy design (law-making function) and policy management (administrative function). Politics and administration should go hand in hand, an outcome that would be naturally obtained by making the executive responsible *vis à vis* the legislative branch. It was exactly an increased accountability of the executive that would have improved the skills of both political and permanent executive officials, in that the «heads of departments would seek to demonstrate their administrative prowess and successes in order to gain or sustain their positions of leadership», while legislators would not have had incentives in interfering with administrative details, since they would have no longer had the chance to take policy-making decision behind the secrecy of the standing committees⁴⁹. All in all, similarly to other contemporary supporters of civil-service reform, Wilson stated the need for more prepared and professional civil servants at all levels of government. However, from a theoretical point of view, it was not easy to give the idea of a professional, impartial and neutral bureaucracy, recruited through criteria of merit, primacy over the much more traditional idea of 'democratic recruitment' implicit in the holy principle of self-government. The idea that civil servants ought to be chosen by the people or appointed by the representatives of the people was rooted in the very origins of the American Republic and was at the base of the spoils-system. Consequently, *The Professor* was extremely conscious that most Americans would have resisted a rational method of recruitment in exchange for «a little self-government»⁵⁰.

Indeed, part of *The Study of Administration*, his seminal work on the topic (1887)⁵¹, addressed public concern about profes-

sional officials, in particular the fear that «corps of civil servants, prepared by special schooling» could become a «semi-corporate body with sympathies divorced from those of a progressive, free-spirited people»⁵². In the American system, such a bureaucracy could be perceived as a danger to self-government. Wilson answered these concerns arguing that the administration could be legitimized «as a neutral means of obtaining government efficiency»⁵³. Trained officials, conforming to the policy of government, would clear any apprehension that «such a body will be anything un-American»⁵⁴. Thus, Wilson's answer to the dilemma of making the merit-system fit the democratic regime can be synthesized in the concepts of efficiency and competence.

Not surprisingly, in *Constitutional Government*, the same idea of efficiency in administration through the selection of the best men for the offices was the essential condition to free the President from the details of administration, allowing him to guide the nation. Therefore, in Wilson's mind, both modern democracy and modern leadership could be enhanced by competence and administrative design⁵⁵. Indeed, at a certain point of his theoretical speculation, he also advanced the idea that, in order to address «the needs of a changing social and industrial organization», and, in particular, to remedy the distorted competition that had «enabled the rich and the strong to combine against the poor and the weak», a certain degree of administrative reform was required⁵⁶. Hence, administrative reform was another «of several ideas that occurred to him as having promise of making government more responsible and efficient»⁵⁷. He supported his view

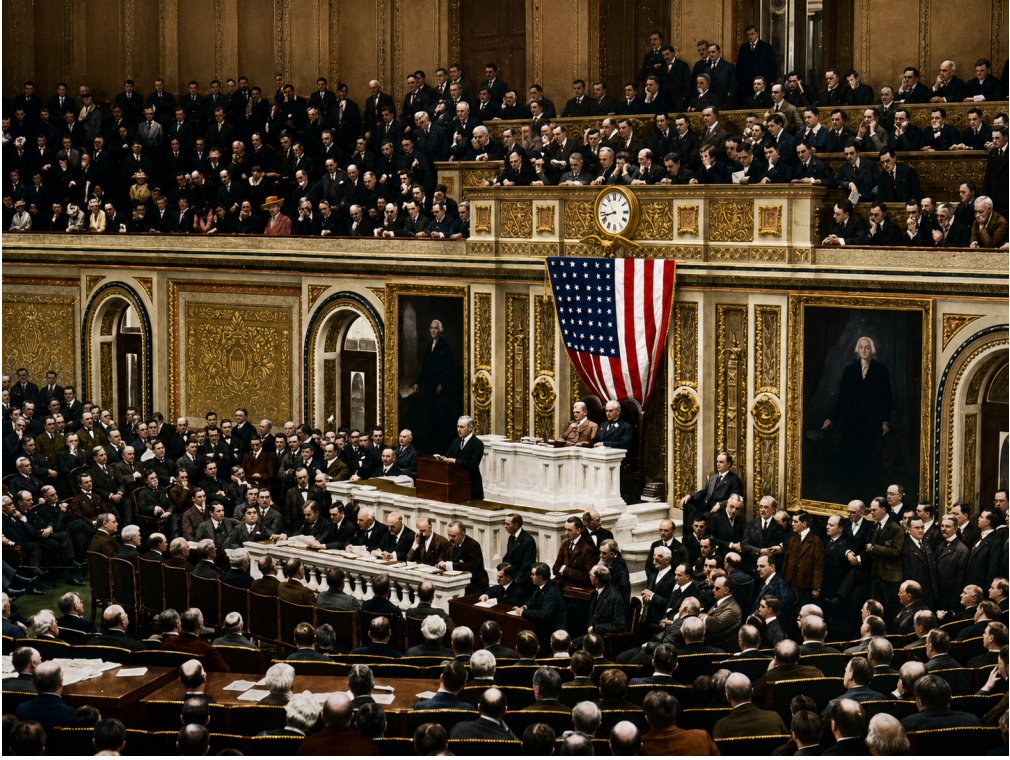
even during his brief mandate as Governor of New Jersey⁵⁸.

Yet, by the time he stepped into the presidential political competition, Wilson thought of the administration as mostly focusing on the character and competences of political appointments and permanent civil servants, rather than on the apparatuses of government. Contrary to other intellectuals or progressive politicians such as Herbert Croly or Theodore Roosevelt – who favored a broad federal regulation of financial trusts, great corporations, and trade competition through federal commissions – in his *New Freedom* platform of 1912, Wilson envisioned a minimal intrusion by the federal government in individual enterprises, because he «believed the federal power should be used only to sweep away special privileged and artificial barriers to the development of individual energies, and to preserve and restore competition in business»⁵⁹. This scope could have been reached through legislation, rather than through an expansion of administrative apparatuses. Greatly influenced by the thought of Louis D. Brandeis⁶⁰, Wilson did not want to create a number of technocratic bodies, which could have controlled and potentially curbed economic and commercial competition⁶¹. Furthermore, he was wary of bodies that could exercise autonomous power and be exposed to lobbying activities. Even if he had always admitted the need to expand the administrative scope of the state, he was extremely cautious in advocating for his aggrandizement. This attitude, which had certainly to do with his Southern origins and his previous conservative democratic positions, and also with the need to create a large consensus behind his Democratic Party's leadership, was also

unquestionably related to his theoretical path, which had been constantly concerned with making his ideas of responsible government fit the system of delicate balance of powers enshrined in the US Constitution. This concern would have also deeply affected his practice of government.

3. *Woodrow Wilson's Presidency: a struggle between theory and practice*

Anyone who comes across with Wilson's thought and government practices must admit that, «over his long academic and political career» he «struggled with the question of how to achieve vigorous leadership and effective administration»⁶² in the American democratic system. There are basically two schools of thought on Wilson's governing practices. The first states that Wilson's actions must be explained only in light of his intellectual formation. The alternative view sees Wilson «as a practicing politician», who adopted and dismissed positions only according to his political interests⁶³. Contrary to these two opposite interpretations, Daniel Stid and Brian James Cook have introduced a more sophisticated view. While Stid has focused on the struggle between «Wilson the reformer» and Wilson the «pragmatic politician»⁶⁴, Cook has analysed in depth the strengths and weaknesses of Wilson's style of government and leadership and has attempted to relate each choice in his governing style to a specific theoretical premise⁶⁵. Building on the sophisticated perspective conveyed by Stid and Cook's studies, I wish to advance the hypothesis of a conceptually original drift in Wilson's theoretical frame, which may



Announcement to Congress of the Declaration of War on Germany, April 2nd, 1917. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.

have led to the contradiction between the expansion of administrative powers and responsibilities invoked in his writings and the ambivalent attitude toward expansion of the federal public administration adopted in his presidency. In this respect, many scholars, like Kendrick Clements, have acknowledged that, notwithstanding his conviction that administrative reform could give government the power to address the challenges of a modern organized society without the need for constitutional change⁶⁶, ultimately «Wilson largely failed in pushing for and achieving general administrative reforms»⁶⁷.

At a first glance, the legislative and administrative agenda connected to the *New Freedom* platform was particularly rich. In his first years, Wilson successfully accomplished a number of legislative goals: a substantial tariff reduction, the introduction of a national income tax, and the institution of the Federal Reserve and of the Federal Trade Commission⁶⁸. This way, he had practically completed his *New Freedom* Agenda. Besides, both the FED and the FTC are considered by contemporary historiography as evidence of Wilson's change of thought on the expansion of autonomous «independent – i.e., “irresponsible” – commissions», which contrasted with his previous oppo-

sition to the introduction of technocratic "un-American" bodies into the federal system. This reversal was «prompted in large part by politics», but also by an increasing belief that «a combination of governmental control and administrative autonomy was needed to deal with the problems of the financial sector and the trusts»⁶⁹. A similar reliance on neutral, autonomous and professional administration subsumed also the implementation of his major progressive reforms of 1916⁷⁰. However, when practical necessity called, Wilson was also open to abandon his program and theoretical support for professional administration; indeed, the government experience forced him to acknowledge the difficulty of matching political expediency with his administrative standards in terms of appointments, to the point that he frequently resorted to the spoils system in exchange for Congressional consent, or else he delegated practices of the spoils system to his cabinet Secretaries⁷¹. Thus, supposedly, Wilson renounced his ideal of efficient administration placed under the control of a responsible ministerial leadership. Ultimately, some aspects of Wilson's presidency lead us to conclude that administration was no longer for him a strategic tool to be implemented to break the boundaries between the executive and the legislative branches. Indeed, it seems that Wilson often preferred to rely on the ministerial, interpretative and rhetorical skills of leadership, which are described in *Constitutional Government*.

To enhance the ministerial and rhetorical role of the President, he introduced four main innovations: he appeared in front of Congress to report the State of the Union (a practice previously abandoned by US Presidents after John Adams); he used the Pres-

ident's room in the Capitol to frequently confer with Democratic congressmen and legislators⁷²; he worked with the Democratic committee chairs as they drafted the *New Freedom* bills; and he constantly kept the leadership of Democrats in Congress in order to carry out his progressive reform. Through those specific practices, he tried to convey some elements of a parliamentary system to a divided government. Besides, while part of Wilson's presidential choices turned to leadership, instead of administration, in order to solve the problem of responsible leadership in a divided government, there were numerous occasions when *The Professor* resisted a number of administrative reforms and innovations. Several of these, on the one hand, would have given the federal government the correct tools to address the challenges of the twentieth century, but, on the other hand, they would have made the President effectively able to control the administration, leading to the creation of a true responsible leader in both legislative and administrative terms, as invoked in *Constitutional Government*.

An example may be found in the absence of Wilson's efforts to support an executive budget reform suggested by the Commission on Economy and Efficiency, established by President Howard Taft. As the Commission had stressed, the reform would have allowed the President to send Congress a single spending proposal for all Departments and agencies⁷³. Hence, it would have allowed him «to assume responsibility for the coordination and control of the administrative departments, the independent agencies, and federal civil service personnel»⁷⁴. On this point, Bryan Cook has observed that «here [...] was a means for administrative integration and policy co-

ordination that Wilson could obtain without the unlikely constitutional changes his cabinet government scheme required»⁷⁵. However, until the United States entered WWI, Wilson refused to support the executive budget and «only recommended that all appropriations be centralized in a single House Committee». Eventually, the need to manage war time expenditures won Wilson to the cause of reform, and, in 1921, a Bureau of the Budget was created under the Treasury Department. According to Kendrick Clements, by that time Wilson «had lost confidence in administrative reform as the route to enlarging the [...] functions of government»⁷⁶.

The wartime period offers another crucial example of Wilson's deflection from his own theory. During the war, administrative expansion was inevitable. In August 1917, Congress passed *The Lever Food and Fuel Control Act*⁷⁷, which increased tremendously Presidential administrative authority by allowing the Chief Executive «to regulate the production, distribution, and price of food, as well as to control the price and production of all other products, including fuel, used in raising food»⁷⁸. Through this delegated authority, Wilson created a Food Administration led by Herbert Hoover and a Fuel Administration directed by Harry Garfield. One year later, this presidential discretionary authority was further expanded with the *Overman Act of 1918* (May 20, 1918), named after the proponent Democratic Senator, Lee S. Overman of North Carolina⁷⁹. This Act was actually Wilson's last move to contrast the mounting Congressional criticism over the inability of his administration to manage and coordinate industrial production. Until then, for this, the US government had relied on two bod-

ies with an extremely weak authority. The first was the Council of National Defence (CND), which was placed under the leadership of the Secretary of War and worked through committees of industrialists⁸⁰. The second was the War Industry Board (WIB), created by the CND with the scope of overseeing mobilization and it included representatives of the military and the civilians. Both these bodies proved to be inefficient: on the one hand, neither of those organizations had a real coercive authority over either administrative agencies or industries; on the other, the members of CND were suspected by Congress of a conflict of interests, and many businessmen abandoned it. At that point, Congress introduced a bill to create a special civilian war cabinet to take over from the President. Hence, Wilson responded by introducing, through senator Overman, a bill «giving the president virtually unlimited authority to reorganize federal agencies to make mobilization more efficient»⁸¹. It was the first time that the Presidential Reorganization Authority entered the delegated powers granted to the President by Congress. Twenty years later, the Reorganization Authority became the tool that Franklin Delano Roosevelt would have used to reform the Presidency, through the establishment of the Executive Office of the President.

Instead, despite an emergency situation, which would have amply justified an extensive use of the Reorganization Authority, «Wilson made little use of the powers granted by the Overman Act»⁸². In March 1918, he actually used that authority to issue an executive order that turned the WIB into an independent agency. However, he placed the chairman under his direct control and kept the agency's authority very

limited. In a letter to the soon to be WIB's chairman, Bernard Mannes Baruch, Wilson stressed that he was to «let alone what is being successfully done and interfere as little as possible with the present normal processes of purchase and delivery in the several Departments»⁸³. And yet, the Papers of Woodrow Wilson show evidence that, in the President's mind, the *Overman Act* was also a tool to enact both administrative efficiency and accountability. Indeed, in a message to Lee S. Overman, dated 21 March 1918, Wilson manifested his satisfaction for having obtained the necessary authority to work directly on the administrative machine: «Senator after Senator has appealed to me most earnestly to "cut the red tape". I am asking for the scissors»⁸⁴. A few days later, writing to Grosvenor B. Clarkson⁸⁵, Wilson seemed to praise himself for having made the WIB a «directive administrative agency». At the same time, he admitted of looking positively at the idea, suggested by Clarkson, of keeping the Council of National Defence even after the war⁸⁶. However, at a closer look, this expansion of federal war administrative capacities was always meant to be confined within the remit of the departmental structure and under the Executive. This main scope was remarked also at the end of war, in the State of the Union Address of 1918, when Wilson clarified that the war agencies were not only temporary, but also that they «[had] not been isolated agencies; they [had] been directed by men which represented the permanent Departments of the Government and so [had] been the centres of unified and cooperative action»⁸⁷. In general, throughout the war, Wilson expressed his concerns about creating a centralized and bureaucratic organization, which, first of all, may not have

worked within the parameters of the American system, and further – as he had anticipated to the Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels in January 1917 – it might have given «Big Business» the privileges and tools to gain «control of government» after the war; at that point no-one would have lived to see «the government returned to the people»⁸⁸. Consequently, the President was determined that, as soon as the War was over, the wartime structure be dismantled⁸⁹.

Ultimately, as Bryan Cook has noted, Wilson's plan and development of the structure of war administration «revealed his considerable caution on administrative expansion and centralization, especially when outside the regular, existing administrative structures»⁹⁰. For the most part, this caution was due to Wilson's extreme «attention to legitimacy» and to avoid even the «perception of the growth of a centralized, bureaucratized national administration»⁹¹. Kendrick A. Clements has also reached similar conclusions, together with the fact that «the wartime experience emphasized a dilemma that had always been inherent in Wilson's ideas about administrative reform. From the outset he had had difficulty in explaining how administrative responsibilities could be enlarged [...] without creating a dangerous threat to democratic control of government»⁹².

4. *The core of Wilson's dilemma between responsible leadership and democracy*

At the end of this overview of Wilson's thought and practice, I wish to propose a possible explanation of Wilson's ambivalence in

his government and administration, which builds on his theoretical premises. I believe that the very core of Wilson's dilemma may be found in the most important pre-condition to his theory about responsible government, which he chose to adopt since his PhD thesis, *Congressional Government*: the withdrawal of constitutional reform.

The decision to pursue responsible leadership in a divided government without constitutional reform forced him to elaborate complicated and sophisticated arguments in order to legitimize the new role of the President, to the point of finding legitimacy for executive action outside the boundaries of the Constitution. It was ultimately this original choice that exposed Wilson to a number of inconsistencies once he entered politics. However, it was also this original choice of weakening his claim for constitutional reform that ultimately allowed him to become a political leader and the President of the United States. Wilson continued to work on his theoretical frame all his life, but, when he became President, the incredible effort to make his theory of leadership fit with the reality of government became almost unbearable for him. This decision must have been suffered, and, in some way, it is possible that Wilson was haunted by it all his life. A proof of this utmost regret can be found in the *Papers of Woodrow Wilson* that relate to his presidency. There are at least three main occasions which show Wilson's continuing distress for the lack of a constitutional reform geared toward a parliamentary government.

The first is a letter written to Democratic Congressman Alexander Mitchell Palmer on February 5th, 1913. In this letter, after summarizing the characteristics of the leader as explained in *Constitutional Gov-*

ernment, Wilson suggested that reform was needed to relieve the «quite abnormal» burdens and tensions of the presidency and to provide a more responsible government. He stated that the President «must be made answerable to opinion in somewhat more informal and intimate fashion – answerable, it may be, to the Houses whom he seeks to lead, either personally or through a cabinet, as well as to the people for whom they speak». However, Wilson did not explain when or how this change would come: «That is a matter to be worked out – as it inevitably will be, in some natural American way which we cannot yet even predict»⁹³.

Another excerpt from the papers, reported also by Bryan Cook, relates to a letter written on February 1st, 1914 to Mary Allen Hubert – his lover – to whom he often confided his distresses and frustration. While describing the burdens related to the presidential office, he confessed of feeling an «unbearable strain»; soon after, he admitted he considered this heavy workload as «the penalty for having held ever since youngster a distinct theory of what a President ought to and ought not to attempt. One ought not to write books until he knows whether he will be called on to do what they say ought to be done»⁹⁴.

The most important evidence of Wilson's belief in, and regret for, constitutional reform can be found in a confession he made to his good friend and first adviser, William Mendell House, soon after winning the re-election to the presidential office. In his diary, on November 15, 1916, House reported a «two hours talk» with the President on how to bring «more representative government» in the United States:

The President believes that a slight amendment to the Constitution making members of Con-

gress eligible to Cabinet places and, at the same time, retaining their congressional membership would be the only move necessary for its accomplishment. I am not altogether sure he is right, but his argument is convincing. He believes the best talent of the country would go into the Senate and the House rather than striving for the Presidency, and if they once reached either the Senate or the House, they could compel any President to place them in the Cabinet, and the President would be largely under their control⁹⁵.

The above passages show that, even in his later years, Wilson was still thinking about his original theoretical framework, and we may infer that this constant concern for constitutional reform might have been one of the reasons why he could not take a clear stand as a President over the correct

way to solve the dilemma between responsible leadership and democratic government. He was constantly thorn between the need of an efficient and independent bureaucratic apparatus headed by a strong executive official and the need for a much accountable government, similarly to a parliamentary system. Hence, he played the role of a wise acrobat, careful in reserving a delicate balance of powers and leaving to the future generations the burden of coping with the constitutional implications of his presidential legacy.

¹ J.D. Mayer, M.J. Rozell, *Il Congresso non funziona più*, in «Limes», 3, 2024, pp. 231-239, p. 233 [translated by the author].

² The expression *Modern Presidency* refers to a presidential style of leadership that developed around the 1900 and was based on some specific features, such as the leadership of the legislative branch, the expansion of executive authority especially over the federal bureaucratic apparatuses, the consolidation of a more independent role of Commander in Chief and the direct appeal to the public in order to sponsor a political agenda. Cfr. S. Skowronek, *Franklin Roosevelt and the Modern Presidency*, in «Studies in American Political Development», vol. 6, 1992, pp. 322-358; M.S. Ambar, *How governors built the Modern American Presidency*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012, p. 14.

³ B. Ackerman, *The Decline and Fall of the American Republic*, Cam-

bridge (MA) - London, Belknap Press, 2010, pp. 9-10.

⁴ P.E. Arnold, *Remaking the Presidency. Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson*, 1901-1916, Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2009, p. 191. Arnold refers specifically the adjective "transformational" to Woodrow Wilson's leadership style. A good account on the relation between Wilson and the Progressive Age see A.S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era: 1910-1917*, New York, Harper, 1954.

⁵ Several studies account for Wilson's passage from academic to political career. See i.e. A.S. Link, *Wilson: The Road to the White House*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1947; Arnold, *Remaking the Presidency*, cit., chapters 6 and 7.

⁶ D.D. Stid, *The President as Statesman. Woodrow Wilson and the Constitution*, Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2021, pp. 3-4; *Woodrow Wilson to E. L. Axson*, October 30, 1883, in A.S. Link (ed.),

The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 2, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1967, pp. 499-502. The same belief in the impossibility of separating Wilson's thought from his political action is shared also by other scholars: see i.e., Arnold, *Remaking the Presidency*, cit. and B.J. Cook, *Democracy and Administration. Woodrow Wilson's Ideas and the Challenges of Public Management*, Baltimore (MD), Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.

⁷ A.S. Link, *Wilson*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 5 vols. (1947-1965), vol. 2, p. 145.

⁸ Stid, *The President as Statesman*, cit., p. 5. Stid provides an effective synthesis of the main schools of thought on Wilson's presidential legacies.

⁹ N.A. Thorsen, *The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson (1875-1910)*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988, p. x and pp. 31-32.

¹⁰ Ivi, p. 3.

¹¹ Cfr. R.F. Bensel, *Yankee Levia-*

- than. *The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859-1877*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- ¹² Thorsen, *The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, cit., p. 4.
- ¹³ *Wilson's Shorthand diary*, November 10, 1876, in Link (ed.), *PWW*, cit., vol. 1, p. 223.
- ¹⁴ T.W. Wilson, *The Union*, in *ivi*, pp. 226-228, pp. 227-228.
- ¹⁵ Douglas McKay to Woodrow Wilson, November 23, 1876, in *ivi*, pp. 231-232; p. 231.
- ¹⁶ Thorsen, *The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, cit., p. 16.
- ¹⁷ In this speech, given at Princeton on January 30 1877, Wilson basically argued for the need of a statesman able to lead the masses empowered by the enlargement of the political franchise mainly through his oratory abilities. See *The Ideal Statesman*, in Link (ed.), *PWW*, vol. 1, cit., pp. 241-245; p. 244.
- ¹⁸ T.W. Wilson, *Cabinet Government in the United States*, in «International Review», VI, August 1879, pp. 146-163. This was Wilson's first essay to appear on a major national journal. Also in Link (ed.), *PWW*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 493-510.
- ¹⁹ Wilson, *Cabinet Government*, cit., p. 146.
- ²⁰ Ivi, p. 147.
- ²¹ Ivi, p. 150; p. 153; p. 155.
- ²² Thorsen, *The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, cit., p. 32.
- ²³ T.W. Wilson, *Congressional Government. A Study in American Politics*, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1885. Between 1879 and 1885 Wilson had restated the need for constitutional reform in other two writings: *Congressional Government* (unpublished article) and *Government by Debate* (partially published in 1884). Cfr. Thorsen, *The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, cit., p. 47.
- ²⁴ Wilson, *Congressional Government*, cit., p. 315: «I am pointing out facts, - diagnosing, not prescribing remedies». Cfr. also Thorsen, *The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, cit., p. 66: «The ideas behind Congressional Government were presented, not as a constitutional proposal, but as a theoretical venture».
- ²⁵ After all, Wilson's reflections on the current despotism of Congress started from the observation that, over the course of ninety years, the federal system had changed through extra-constitutional means, due to the extreme difficulty «to move the cumbrous machinery of formal amendment erected in Article Five». By 1885, he was then conscious that a formal amendment of the federal constitutional architecture would be rather impracticable. Wilson, *Congressional Government*, cit., pp. 242-243.
- ²⁶ The most important of which are, *The Study of Administration*, in «Political Science Quarterly», vol. 2, 1887, pp. 187-222; *The State: Elements of Historical and Practical Politics. A sketch of Institutional History and Administration*, Boston, D.C. Heath, 1889; *Constitutional Government in the United States*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1908.
- ²⁷ For a general overview of Wilson's thought on leadership, other than Thorsen, *The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, cit., see also the collection of Wilson's selected writings with editorial commentary by E. David Cronon (ed.), *The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson (1875-1910)*, Indianapolis-New York - Kansas City, Bobbs-Merrill, 1965; Link, *Wilson*, cit.
- ²⁸ On this point see i.e. a passage from *Notes on administration*, where Wilson stated that, since public opinion was unstable and did not have any determinate means of expression, it had to be counterbalanced by «a new machine of government - a machine which may have thought for one of its motive powers, by having officers through whose interests in the public thought, and capacity for catching it, is to be controlled» [T. W. Wilson, *Notes on administration*, in Link (ed.), *PWW*, cit., vol. 5, p. 49, quoted by Thorsen, *Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, cit., p. 109].
- ²⁹ Wilson, *Congressional Government*, cit., p. 42. The same subject is developed at pp. 244-245.
- ³⁰ Ivi, pp. 254-259.
- ³¹ Ivi, pp. 45-47; according to art. II, sec. 2 of the Constitution of the United States, the President is invested with the power of «taking care that the laws be faithfully executed».
- ³² Ivi, p. 254.
- ³³ The Tenure of Office Act of 1867 was a federal law enacted during Radical Reconstruction that limited the President's authority to dismiss certain executive officials without the consent of the Senate.
- ³⁴ From the preface written by Woodrow Wilson to the fifteenth edition of *Congressional Government*. T.W. Wilson, *Congressional Government. A Study in American Politics*, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1901, pp. v-xiii.
- ³⁵ On this respect, Wilson's reflections fit perfectly in the development of the American political thought of the time, that was rethinking the foundations of American constitutionalism and the relations between State and society. On this topic cfr. R. Baritono, *Oltre la politica. La crisi politico-istituzionale negli Stati Uniti fra Otto e Novecento*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1993.
- ³⁶ A.S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era: 1910-1917*, New York, Harper & Row, 1954, pp. 1-2.
- ³⁷ Ivi, pp. 8-9.
- ³⁸ Thorsen, *The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, cit., p. 188.
- ³⁹ From the preface written by Woodrow Wilson to the fifteenth edition of *Congressional Government*. T.W. Wilson, *Congressional Government. A Study in American Politics*, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1901, pp. xii-xiii. On Wilson and

- Progressivism see Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era*, cit.; Arnold, *Remaking the Presidency*, cit., p. 147; pp. 167-190.
- ⁴⁰ An assessment of the idea of presidential leadership contained in *Constitutional Government* has been the object of a number of scholarly reflections. Cfr. i.e. A.J. Wann, *The Development of Woodrow Wilson's Theory of the Presidency: Continuity and Change*, in E. Latham (ed.), *The Philosophy and Policies of Woodrow Wilson*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1958, pp. 46-66; Thorsen, *The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, cit., pp. 199-213; Stid, *The President as Statesman*, cit., pp. 46-65.
- ⁴¹ Thorsen, *The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, cit., pp. 199-201.
- ⁴² T.W. Wilson, *Constitutional Government in the United States*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1908, p. 68.
- ⁴³ Ivi, p. 59.
- ⁴⁴ Ivi, pp. 72-73.
- ⁴⁵ Ivi, p. 67.
- ⁴⁶ The argument that Wilson introduced the study of administration in the United States was first stated by L.D. White, *The Republican Era, 1869-1901: A Study in Administrative History*, New York, Macmillan, 1958, p. 396.
- ⁴⁷ Cook, *Democracy and Administration*, cit., p. 30.
- ⁴⁸ This statement follows both Niel Thorsen and Brian James Cook, both of whom, by underling the strict connection between Wilson's theories on Administration and Democracy, rejected the simplistic interpretation of Wilson as a proponent of the separation of politics and administration. See Thorsen, *The Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, cit., pp. 128-131; Cook, *Democracy and Administration*, cit., p. 30.
- ⁴⁹ Ivi, p. 29.
- ⁵⁰ T.W. Wilson, *The Art of Governing*, November 15, 1885, in Link (ed.), *PWW*, cit., vol. V, pp. 50-54, p. 54.
- ⁵¹ Wilson, *The Study of Administration*, cit., pp. 187-222.
- ⁵² Ivi, p. 216. On the acknowledgment of the limits of expert knowledge and the dangers of a "domineering illiberal officialism" see also Cook, *Democracy and Administration*, cit., p. 106.
- ⁵³ Thorsen, *The Political Thought of Woodrow Wilson*, cit., p. 129.
- ⁵⁴ Wilson, *The Study of Administration*, cit., p. 216.
- ⁵⁵ On Wilson's ideas of enhancing democracy through administrative design see Cook, *Democracy and Administration*, cit., pp. 105-136. According to Cook, Wilson should be praised for having understood and confronted straightforwardly the dilemma of the democratic legitimacy of unelected bureaucrats.
- ⁵⁶ T.W. Wilson, *The State: Elements of Historical and Practical Politics*, Boston, D.C. Heath, 1889, p. 659; p. 661.
- ⁵⁷ K.A. Clements, *Woodrow Wilson and Administrative Reform*, in «Presidential Studies Quarterly», vol. 28, n. 2, 1998, pp. 320-336, p. 320.
- ⁵⁸ Ivi, p. 326; also, Arnold, *Remaking the Presidency*, cit., pp. 148-157.
- ⁵⁹ Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era*, cit., p. 20.
- ⁶⁰ Louis D. Brandeis (1856-1941) was a progressive republican lawyer and one of the main supporters of the preservation of economic freedom amid a regulated competition. He jumped into the democratic party after 1912 and during Wilson's presidency was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Cfr. M.I. Urofsky, *Louis D. Brandeis: A Life*, New York, Pantheon Books, 2009.
- ⁶¹ About Brandeis' influence on Wilson's presidential platform see G. Borgognone, *Tecnocrati del progresso. Il Pensiero americano del Novecento tra capitalismo, liberalismo e democrazia*, Torino, Utet, 2015, pp. 51-56.
- ⁶² Clements, *Woodrow Wilson and Administrative Reform*, cit., p. 320.
- ⁶³ For a more detailed account of the two schools of thought see J.A. Thompson, *Woodrow Wilson*, New York, Pearson-Longman, 2002, pp. 7-8.
- ⁶⁴ Stid, *The President as Statesman*, cit., p. 65.
- ⁶⁵ D.R. Brand, *Democracy and Administration: Woodrow Wilson's Ideas and the Challenges of Public Management* by Brian J. Cook (review), in «Presidential Studies Quarterly», n. 39/3, 2009, pp. 636-637, p. 537.
- ⁶⁶ This belief was particularly expressed in W. Wilson, *The State: Elements of Historical and Practical Politics*, Boston, D.C. Heath, 1889.
- ⁶⁷ Cook, *Democracy and Administration*, cit., p. 142; Clements, *Woodrow Wilson and Administrative Reform*, in «Presidential Studies Quarterly», n. 28/2, 1998, pp. 320-336. Cfr. also H. Turner, *Woodrow Wilson and Administration*, in «Public Administration Review», n. 16, 1956, pp. 249-257; A.W. Macmahon, *Woodrow Wilson. Political Leader and Administrator*, in Latham (ed.), *The Philosophy and Policies*, cit., pp. 100-122.
- ⁶⁸ While the Federal Reserve is the US central banking system and was created to control the monetary system in the way to prevent financial crises, and/or reduce their effects, the Federal Trade Commission is an agency empowered with the authority to fight monopolistic trade practices in interstate commerce. A detailed overview Wilson's legislative accomplishment and the political networking behind them, is offered by Stid, *The President as Statesman. Woodrow Wilson and the Constitution*, cit., pp. 109-110.
- ⁶⁹ Ivi, p. 109.
- ⁷⁰ Clements, *Woodrow Wilson and Administrative Reform*, cit., p. 330.
- ⁷¹ Stid, *The President as Statesman*, cit., p. 100.
- ⁷² To this end, he used the President's Room in the Capitol, which had not been used since the Lincoln's times, during the Civil War. See ivi, p. 92.
- ⁷³ While under the then existing

system each agency sent its own appropriation bill to the Congress. Cfr. L. Fisher, *Presidential Spending Power*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975, pp. 9-35; P.E. Arnold, *Making the Managerial Presidency. Comprehensive Reorganization Planning, 1905-1996*, Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1998 (ed. or. 1989), pp. 42-51.

⁷⁴ S. Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 187, pp. 188-189.

⁷⁵ Cook, *Democracy and Administration*, cit., p. 152.

⁷⁶ Clements, *Woodrow Wilson and Administrative Reform*, cit., p. 328.

⁷⁷ 40 Stat. 276, Public Law 41, 65th Congress, 1st Sess., August 10, 1917.

⁷⁸ Clements, *Woodrow Wilson and Administrative Reform*, cit., p. 331.

⁷⁹ 40 Stat. 556, Public Law 152, 65th Congress, 2d Sess., May 20, 1918.

⁸⁰ The CND could recommend what was needed by the government agencies and from whom to buy it.

⁸¹ Clements, *Woodrow Wilson and Administrative Reform*, cit., p. 331.

⁸² Ivi, p. 332.

⁸³ *Woodrow Wilson to Bernard Mannes Baruch*, 4 March, 1918, in Link (ed.), *PWW*, cit., vol. 46, pp. 520-522, p. 521.

⁸⁴ *Woodrow Wilson to Lee Slater Overman*, in Link (ed.), *PWW*, cit., vol. 47, p. 94.

⁸⁵ Grosvenor Blaine Clarkson (1882-1937), served as Secretary of the Council of National Defense during World War I and, since December 1918, was appointed its Director.

⁸⁶ *Woodrow Wilson to Grosvenor Blaine Clarkson*, in ivi, p. 143.

⁸⁷ *State of the Union Address*, December 2, 1918, in Link (ed.), *PWW*, cit., vol. 53, pp. 274-286, p. 279.

⁸⁸ J. Daniels, *The Wilson Era: Years of Peace. 1910-1917*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1944, p. 582. Daniels reports a talk with President Wilson on

March 1916, in which the President expressed also his resolve to "keep out country out of war if possible".

⁸⁹ R. Schaffer, *America in the Great War. The Rise of the War Welfare State*, New York-Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 59-61.

⁹⁰ Cook, *Democracy and Administration*, cit., p. 163.

⁹¹ Ivi, p. 163; p. 165. Wilson's similar concerns against the creation of any «Big piece of machinery» are shown in *Woodrow Wilson To Herbert Swope*, 21 March 1918, in Link (ed.), *PWW*, cit., vol. 47, p. 224.

⁹² Clements, *Woodrow Wilson and Administrative Reform*, cit., p. 333. On this respect cfr. also, Arnold, *Making the Managerial Presidency*, cit., pp. 48-51.

⁹³ *Woodrow Wilson to Alexander Mitchell Palmer*, Feb. 5, 1913, in Link (ed.), *PWW*, cit., vol. 27, pp. 97-101, pp. 99-100. On this passage see also Stid, *The President as Statesman*, cit., p. 89.

⁹⁴ *Woodrow Wilson to Mary Allen Hubert*, February 1, 1914, in Link (ed.), *PWW*, cit., vol. 29, pp. 211-212. See also Cook, *Democracy and Administration*, cit., pp. 137-138.

⁹⁵ *From the Diary of Colonel House*, November 15, 1916, in Link (ed.), *PWW*, cit., vol. 30, pp. 656-661, pp. 660-661.