ITALIAN POLITICS & SOCIETY

THE REVIEW OF THE CONFERENCE GROUP ON ITALIAN POLITICS AND SOCIETY

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IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT H. EVANS

By **Robert Leonardi**

Bob Evans died last year in Atlanta, Georgia after an illustrious career in academia as a scholar, administrator and inspirational leader. He was a special type of person. He was complex and subtle, and personified the definition of the quintessential "cosmopolitan" man. He was at ease in different cultural and educational environments. Born in Great Britain; he was educated in France; and he was formed as a scholar in the U.S. The impact of these various backgrounds was evident in his scholarly work in Political Science. Bob began his teaching career in the 1960s with his first job at the University of Denver. He then moved to Notre Dame University in South Bend, Indiana. Two of his three books were published with the University of Notre Dame Press: *Coexistence: Communism and Its Practice in Bologna, 1945-1965* (1967) and *Life and Politics in a Venetian Community* (1976).

His first book represented a novel departure from the usual treatment in vogue at the time in studying the Communist Party. Bob looked at the how the PCI managed power in the city of Bologna at that time rather than how it would manage power if it were to win a parliamentary majority. The book stressed the PCI's pragmatic approach to decision-making and its willingness to incorporate diverse sectors of society in the formulation of policy—trade unions and employers organizations, small shop keepers and professional groups and youth and retired people. From his analysis is was clear how the PCI had been able to achieve and then consolidate its dominant role in Bologna and how the city continued to represent the "buckle" of the red belt. Bob did a lot of the interviewing himself. He was used to getting personally involved in field work and engaging in face-to-face contacts with the representatives of civil society, the economy, and political leadership. In doing the interviews he was able to blend into the community and assume the role of a participant observer. In other words, he became for all practical purposes a Bolognese, helped in this process by the support provided by his Bolognese wife Maria.

His approach to field research was repeated in his second major project on attempting to explain how in the Veneto the Catholic sub-culture became rooted in civil society and was able to fend off challenges from the Communist and Socialist parties on the one hand and the Liberals and MSI on the other. To carry out the study he chose a small town, Santa Maria, in order to become intimately acquainted with the people, culture and background of the political community. Also, in this case he and his family became one with the community. As he wrote in the Introduction, not only did he study the community, but he became its official photographer and historian. He was able to find himself at home in a Venetian community and become fluent in the local dialect.

In re-reading the writings of Bob Evans we can understand even better the man and scholar. To a certain extent what we write represents an extension of ourselves and not only the analysis of our subject matter. In his first two books, one is able to discern the

scholar and the man.

After leaving Notre Dame, Bob began to become more heavily involved in the administrative tasks associated with running a Political Science Department (University of Virginia), a graduate center (Johns Hopkins Bologna Center) and, finally, an undergraduate educational institution (American University in Rome). All of those who came into contact with Bob's administrative work report that he was an extraordinary administrator: firm in his choices, supportive of his faculty, and a strategic thinker. He was what many academic boards hope to find in an administrator—an institution builder. The institutions that he managed always emerged stronger after his tenure in office than when he arrived.

His third book, *Political Transitions and Foreign Affairs in Britain and France: Their Relevance for the United States* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1986) reflected the shift in emphasis in Bob's later years to the consideration of broader issues of presidential transitions and foreign policy. In his typical fashion, Bob was not satisfied in using only documentary evidence or secondary accounts of events. In studying the transition from Giscard d'Estaing and Francois Mitterand in 1981 Bob undertook to interview all of the relevant actors (reminiscent of the research methodology used in his first two local studies). The technique was the same but the range of the analysis was much broader. From his case study in France, Bob tried to generalize to a higher level in comparing transitions in the UK and the US. The section on France is by far the best part of the book.

Bob Evans will be remembered as an important contributor to Political Science in general and in particular to Italian studies. He was a strong supporter of CONGRIPS and he will be missed by his family and by his colleagues.

PROFESSOR FELIKS GROSS: SOCIOLOGICAL HUMANIST

by **Jerome Krase**

Brooklyn College Professor Emeritus Feliks Gross, my good friend, colleague, and mentor, died peacefully in his sleep on 9th November 2006. Feliks Gross had celebrated his 100th birthday on June 17, 2006. To mark the occasion, the Academy of Humanities and Sciences of the City University of New York and the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America (PIASA) held special events. The CUNY Academy, which he helped to found in 1980, held a special "Feliks Gross Endowment Award" luncheon at the CUNY Graduate Center. The honor is given annually to emerging scholars for their research and scholarly achievements. After lunch, friends and colleagues spoke of his contributions to the intellectual life of the university and the Graduate Center's President, William P. Kelly, gave the keynote address. PIASA honored Gross with an exhibition from its archive on his exceptional century-long life. Two sessions focused on his life and work during its 64th Annual Meeting at Hunter College. The first, "Feliks Gross: The

Enlightened Pluralist" featured presentations by Jan Kubik, Rutgers University, "The Humanism of Feliks Gross's Social Science"; an illustrated presentation "Feliks Gross and His Cracovian Roots" by Grazyna Kubica-Heller, Jagiellonian University, and my own "Feliks Gross: Between Assimilation and Multiculturalism". The second session, which I chaired, "Feliks Gross: Teacher, Friend and Colleague," brought together many former friends, students, and colleagues. Henry Wasser, CUNY Academy on the Humanities and Sciences; Hans Trefousse, Brooklyn College; Joseph Wieczerzak, editor of The Polish Review; and Thaddeus V. Gromada, Executive Director of PIASA spoke about his life and works. His daughter, Eva Gross Friedman was also in attendance as her father was recognized not only for his intellect but also for his exceptional character, charity and respect for people of any social station.

Feliks Gross was born June 17, 1906 in Krakow. At that time Krakow (Cracau) was part of the autonomous Austrian province of Galicia and a vibrant center of Polish intellectual and cultural life. Gross was raised and educated in this city and studied at the esteemed Jagiellonian University where he earned a Doctorate in Jurisprudence. (LLM 1930, LLD 1931) Later, on a fellowship to the University of London, he came to know the great Anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski whose influence led him into the Social Sciences. As a member of a prominent Jewish Polish family, Gross became a courageous and respected social and political activist as well as a scholar. He was the founder and Director of the Labor Social Science School in Krakow 1934-38, a committed and energetic labor lawyer, and a member of the prewar Polish Socialist Party. Despite all his ample credentials however, he was denied the opportunity for a university appointment as he once put it, "… because of my religion, origin, and political views." (1986: 563)

There is no need to explain why he and his wife Priva hastily left Poland in 1939, fleeing both Nazis, and, later, Soviet Communists, before making his way to the United States. It is also understandable that, without ignoring its all too many lapses, Gross sees America as a model Civic State; a multiethnic state founded upon the principles of democracy. After settling in New York City, he became a member of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America which was established in 1942 by Malinowski along with other prominent Polish scholars. Gross helped convince Malinowski to become PIASA's first President. The Institute has served as a democratic and independent beacon for Polish scholars and scholarship until Poland again become "free" in 1989. He and Priva were married for 55 years and he has frequently said that if not for her, he could not have done as much as he did. At the Brooklyn College Sociology Department from 1946 to 1977, Gross also lectured at the CUNY Graduate Center on political sociology. Over the years his interests expanded to include American issues of civil rights and developing African nations.

Over his long career he held positions at the League of Nations, London School of Economics, Eastern European Planning Board, and lectured at New York University, University of Wyoming, University of Virginia, and the Universities of Florence, Paris, Rome, College of Europe. He authored more than twenty books beginning with *The Polish Worker* (1945) and countless articles which have been published many different languages including, as he told me most recently, Chinese. His *Ideologies Goals and*

Values (1985) is an important synthesis of his work and he published *The Civic and the Tribal State* (1998), *Citizenship and Ethnicity* (1999) during the last decade. His many honors come from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, Order of Polonia Restituta, Polish National Archive, and the Phoenix King of Greece. Gross also received awards from the Public Affairs, Sloan, Rockefeller, Fulbright, and Columbia University Foundations.

For Feliks Gross the answer to the question of what makes it possible for people who are different from each other to live in peace was a perennial quest. He noted that diverse groups can be bound together by coercive means, but that to do so by consensus calls for different techniques and principles. “Such an association of different peoples, ethnic groups with equal rights for all, free of discrimination by public authorities, necessitates the need for a common bond that would embrace all, a broad bond, and in the hierarchy of accepted standards, one that rises above ethnic or racial identification; in a word, a common denominator for all. Citizenship is such a bond, it is also a vital common denominator.” (Feliks Gross. *Citizenship and Ethnicity: The Growth and Development of a Democratic Multiethnic Institution.* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999, xiii).

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

APSA 2006 ANNUAL MEETING, PHILADELPHIA, 31 AUGUST-3 SEPTEMBER

CONGRIPS organized two successful sponsored panels at the APSA annual meeting held in Philadelpia last September, on the theme 'Italy in the International Arena'. The following papers were presented:

'Italy and EU High Politics'
Federiga M. Bindi, University of Rome Tor Vergata (federiga.bindi@uniroma2.it)
Palma D'Ambrosio, University di Roma Tor Vergata (palma_d_ambrosio@libero.it)

'Italy and the Reform of the UN Security Council'
Marco Pedrazzi, University of Milan (marco.pedrazzi@unimi.it)

'Italy and the South of the World: a Laggard in International Development'
Maurizio Carbone, University of Glasgow (m.carbone@socsci.gla.ac.uk)

'Italy and EU Enlargement: A Comparative Analysis of Left and Right Governments'
Fabio Fossati, University of Trieste (fossati@pug.univ.trieste.it)

'Italy and Africa: New Stakes and New Tasks; How to Forget Colonialism'
Giampaolo Calchi Novati, University of Pavia (cngp@unipv.it)

'Italy and Russia Since the End of the Cold War'
Osvaldo Croci, Memorial University (ocroci@mun.ca)
Bill McGrath, Memorial University (bmcgrath@mun.ca)

'Italy and Asia: China as a Threat or as an Opportunity?'
Francesco Stolfi, University of Pittsburgh (frsst10@pitt.edu)
Franco Algieri, Ludwig Maximilians University Munich
(franco.algieri@lrz.uni-muenchen.de)

'A Wolf in Sheepskin? Italy's Policies Toward International Organizations'
Giovanna Antonia Fois, University of Siena (foisga@unisi.it)
Fabrizio Pagani, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris (fabrizio.pagani@oecd.org)

Abstracts and full papers can be downloaded from the APSA site at:

http://64.112.226.77/one/apsa/apsa06/index.php?cmd=apsa06

REPORT ON THE CONGRIPS BUSINESS MEETING, 2006

Congrips held its annual business meeting at the APSA Conference in Philadelphia on September 1, 2006. A 13-point agenda was distributed. The meeting was chaired by Raffaella Nanetti, who welcomed the members in attendance and called on Vice-President Tony Masi to address them. On Congrips' slate of officers, the nominations of Simona Piattoni and Alan Zuckerman to serve a two-year term on Congrips Executive Committee received unanimous approval. The issue of 'broadening of the membership' was discussed in terms of academics working on Italy in fields less familiar to Congrips' main strengths; Raffaella is reaching out to Planning schools such as the Politecnico di Milano, and others are interested in making the effort as well. The intent was also expressed of strengthening the links with SISP by, for example, collaborating on our respective newsletters.

Dick Katz' detailed financial report was shared, informing us that Congrips had a balance of $9,345.97 but also that there were 17 Congrips members paid up only through 1995. While the pledge was made to contact them, the issue was raised of the importance of producing and distributing the newsletter on time to the members. Jonathan Hopkin was present to give us his update. He apologized for and explained about the delay regarding the spring-summer 2006 issue and assured the meeting that the issue would be out shortly, as he had acquired the help of an assistant. There was a discussion of whether the newsletter should go 'all electronic', as per Jonathan's suggestion. The consensus was that it should be made available in printed form to those, particularly institutional members, who would request it. Eleonora Pasotti who could not be in attendance, had reported earlier that numerous reviews had been completed and were available for the forthcoming issues of the newsletter.

Sincere thanks were expressed to Osvaldo Croci for his work as Congrips' webmaster, including the uploading of the past newsletter issues. Maurizio Carbone's report followed, reminding us of the two panels that Congrips was sponsoring at the APSA Conference. A number of announcements about recent and upcoming activities were made by Raffaella Nanetti: letters of congratulations to Giorgio Napolitano, Romano Prodi and Arturo Parisi (former Congrips member) on becoming, respectively, Presidente della Repubblica, Presidente del Consiglio and Ministro della Difesa, together with their responses thanking Congrips; a Congrips conference to be held in Rome on the 60th anniversary of the Italian Constitution (2947-2007). The meeting closed with the tribute paid to Bob Evans whose memorial plaque was sent to Maria Evans as she could not be in attendance.

Update since Business Meeting:

Maurizio Carbone is busy working on the 2007 Conference program. The Spring-Summer issue of the newsletter went out, and you are reading the Fall-Winter issue. Maria Evans has attended the Memorial for Bob Evans, organized by SAIS Bologna Center, on November 11. The Committee on the Congrips conference on the 60th anniversary of the Italian constitution is made up of Tony Masi, Bob Leonardi and

Vincent Della Sala, and has issued a 'call for papers' which appears in this issue. They and I are thanking warmly Joe LaPalombara and Filippo Sabetti for their insights and suggestions during the early phase of the Committee's deliberations.

Raffaella Nanetti
President, Congrips

SISP: SOCIETA' ITALIANA DI SCIENZA POLITICA

Si chiude il XX Convegno SISP (Bologna, 12-14 settembre 2006) e si prepara il XXI Convegno SISP (Catania, settembre 2007)
Il convegno annuale della SISP ha celebrato a Bologna il 25° anno della sua fondazione attirando un numero straordinario di partecipanti. Ben 272 studiosi (più della metà dei quali non soci) hanno partecipato a 11 sezioni tematiche composte di 37 panels, spesso suddivisi in sessioni, e a 5 panels fuori sezione. Sono stati presentati e discussi 183 papers. La Segreteria SISP ha messo tutti i papers che sono pervenuti nella paper room, (http://www.sisp.it/sisp_convegnoannuale_paperroom.asp) dove potranno essere consultati ancora per alcuni mesi. La larga partecipazione ai lavori e l'attenzione che la stampa ha rivolto al convegno sono segni tangibili del suo successo. Complimenti alla Prof.ssa Francesca Zannotti e ai suoi collaboratori per l'impeccabile organizzazione.
Durante l'Assemblea dei soci è stata consegnata una targa ai past-presidents della SISP (Alberto Spreafico, Mario Stoppino, Luigi Bonanate, Giorgio Freddi, Leonardo Morlino e Maurizio Cotta). Pierpaolo Settembri (Università di Firenze) è stato premiato come autore del miglior paper presentato da un giovane "non incardinato" nel Convegno 2005.
I coordinatori di sezione del XX Convegno SISP che non hanno già segnalato i migliori papers presentati da un giovane "non incardinato" per l'assegnazione del premio C.M. Santoro, sono invitati a segnalarli alla Segreteria SISP (mailto:segreteria@sisp.it) entro il 31 ottobre 2006 indicando: a) Nome, cognome, qualifica e indirizzo e-mail dell'autore; b) titolo del paper e del panel nel quale il paper è stato presentato; c) testo del paper se questo non è inserito nella paper room del sito della SISP.

SEMINARIO: UNIVERSITA' DI TRENTO

La Scuola di Studi Internazionali dell'Università di Trento, in collaborazione con la Commissione europea (DG Educazione) e le Università di Pittsburgh (USA), Carleton (Canada) e Bratislava (Slovacchia), organizza una serie di Seminari dal titolo 'Europe's Democratic Challenges: EU Solutions?' A conclusione dei seminari si terrà una conferenza internazionale aperta anche a studenti di dottorato e giovani ricercatori.

Il programma dei seminari, il call for papers per la conferenza finale, informazioni sull'attribuzione di alcune borse per la mobilità di dottorandi e giovani ricercatori sono disponibili sul sito http://www.soc.unitn.it/eudemocracy.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

TAKING STOCK OF THE ITALIAN CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCE AFTER SIXTY YEARS--WHAT LESSONS CAN BE LEARNED?

Conference Organized by Robert Leonardi, Vincent Della Sala and Anthony Masi on behalf of The Conference Group on Italian Politics & Society (CONGRIPS)

The Conference Group on Italian Politics and Society (CONGRIPS), a sub-group of the American Political Science Association, is planning to organize in 2007 a major conference in connection with the 60th anniversary of the birth of the Constitution of the Republic of Italy. The conference will take place in Rome. Those who participate, either as paper givers or as discussants will be North American and European (especially Italians) academic specialists drawn from several fields of specialization, as well as a number of experts who have had more direct, hands-on, experience in Italian constitutional matters.

The proposed conference will use the sixtieth anniversary of the Italian Republic Constitution to do several things: to review the calculus of consent that was and remains the foundation of the Italian constitutional experiment; to assess the challenges the constitution faced when it was first promulgated as it sought to learn from the past constitutional experience in Italy and beyond; to explore the extent to which those challenges have been met; and to see what the Italian practice of constitutional development, within a growing European union, may tell us about the foundations of constitutional democracy and the practice of constitutional development in the increasing multiple world of constitutional political economy in Europe. In the process, we may also provide answers to the puzzle as to why the post-war Italian constitution has showed more resilience than the French post-war experiment and how the changes in the political system that took place during the 1990s have left the Italian Constitution relatively unscathed. The general question animating the conference is expected to be "What are the impacts of Constitutions?" and the general objective is to take stock of the Italian constitutional experience after sixty years. We expect the papers and discussion to furnish an inspiring blend of normative and analytical, citizenly and scholarly, sympathetic and disinterested contributions to further the Italian constitutional political economy of the twenty-first century.

The Italian postwar constitution turns out to be one of the more durable and interesting constitutions developed in Europe during the post World War II period. Even as its framers drew on the experiences of other constitutional systems, they were able to introduce aspects of the Italian document that were quite innovative, in both the immediate as well as gradual implementation of the constitutional provisions. Particularly for this reason, the conference organizers believe that it will be essential for the conference to emphasize both the inter-disciplinary approach to understanding the Italian

experience of these last six decades, as well as to draw comparisons between and among other constitutional systems and experiences, in Europe and elsewhere.

The four sections that will structure the two day conference will cover:

1. The comparative and historical aspects of the Italian Constitution.
2. The impact of the Constitution on social and economic developments during the last sixty years.
3. The institutional impact of the Constitution in terms of the structuring of national organs—i.e., relationship among national institutions—as well as the impact on center-periphery relations and EU-Italy relations.
4. The future development of the Italian Constitution.

These papers, and aspects of the discussions as well, will later be edited with a view to the publication of two commemorative volumes, respectively published in Italy and the United States. We expect to select twenty papers to be presented at the conference. Each section will have five papers and two discussants. Our hope is that the conference can be scheduled for the autumn of 2007 and can be held in Rome at a venue still to be selected. This conference has also received the 'Alto Patronato' of the President of the Republic which will enhance its profile and facilitate its organization.

Anyone interested in participating should contact one of the organizers: Robert Leonardi (mailto:r.leonardi@lse.ac.uk), Vincent Della Sala (Vincent.Dellasala@sis.unitn.it) or Anthony Masi (Anthony.Masi@mcgill.ca)

ITALIAN POLITICS SPECIALIST GROUP: POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF THE UK

The Italian Politics Specialist Group of the Political Studies Association (PSA) was founded five years ago by Jim Newell and Felia Allum with the aim of maintaining interest in Italian politics amongst British political scientists, by organizing panels and roundtables about Italy at the PSA's annual conference. Up to now the group has mainly focused on encouraging closer links between British political scientists working on Italy. More recently, the group has also sought to extend its activities within the Italian political science community. The first steps in this direction were the organization of a workshop on the 2006 Italian election at the University of Pisa in June, and a panel at the annual conference of the Italian Political Science Association (SISP) in Bologna in September 2006. Anyone interested in participating in the group's activities in Italy should contact Caterina Paolucci (ccpaoluc@syr.fi.it), the group's Italian representative, who is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Italian Politics Specialist Group.

More information is available at http://www.psa.ac.uk/spgrp/italian/italian.asp. The group's first newsletter is available online at http://www.psa.ac.uk/spgrp/italian/pdf/newsletter06.pdf.

PSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, UNIVERSITY OF BATH, 11-13 APRIL 2007
CALLS FOR PAPERS

The Italian Politics Specialist Group is organizing panels for the UK Political Studies Association Conference in Bath, 11-13 April 2007. The following describes the intended focus of the panels and the issues we would wish papers to address.

Prodi's Narrow Victory and Italian Politics: One Year On

The general election of April 2006 marked a further milestone, and possibly a turning point, in the recent trajectory of Italian politics. Unexpectedly narrow, the election outcome brought to government a coalition which, in the immediate aftermath of the campaign, appeared to face one of two possibilities: that either it would find the very precariousness of its position to be, paradoxically, its strength, giving it a degree of cohesion it might otherwise not have had, or that it would succumb to opposition attempts to exploit the divisions in its ranks and therefore fail to last for any length of time. Early indications pointed in both directions. In the second place, if the immediate consequence of the outcome appeared to be a strengthening of the position of Berlusconi (since he had been expected to lose by a wide margin and had instead apparently staged a dramatic comeback) then the 2006 defeat has created the need for a redefinition of the Casa delle libertà, with a reduction in the role of Berlusconi himself and a new prime-ministerial candidate. Third, in bringing about the second alternation in government since the party-system upheavals of the early 1990s, the outcome appeared to represent the consolidation of a bi-polar party system based on fragmented coalitions. However, precisely because of the system's fragmentation and the seeming preciousness of the in-coming government's position, there appeared to be room for considerable doubt about the likely direction of future party-system developments. In short, if the election appeared to represent the confirmation of past trends, in other respects it looked as though it might also represent the start of a new period of uncertainty in Italian politics.

At the most general level therefore, the purpose of the panel(s) – which will be held almost exactly a year after the vote – is to look back at the election of 2006 and to consider, in the light of interim developments, its implications for the nature of the Italian political system. Within this broad theme, papers focussing on any specific aspect of Italian politics are welcome. The substantive foci of papers could include: political behaviour and culture; foreign policy; economic policy; interest groups and social movements; voting behaviour and party politics; institutional and constitutional reform – though papers focussed on other areas will be equally welcome.
Anyone who wants to give a paper should e-mail Jim Newell (J.L.Newell@salford.ac.uk) by 25th September with a short abstract (circa 300 words) describing the paper they want to present.

'Outsider parties in western Europe: the opposition in government?'

The last fifteen years have seen an increasing number of parties which were previously excluded from office (whether voluntarily and/or due to a *cordon sanitaire* imposed by the other parties) decide to enter broad centre-right and centre-left governing coalitions in western Europe. Examples include parties as diverse as Rifondazione Comunista in Italy, the FPÖ in Austria, and Green and regionalist parties in various states. The decision to take office is often extremely contentious for such parties, with inevitable internal disputes over the validity of the decision to move from long-term 'pure' opposition to the compromises and constraints of coalition government. Moreover, once in office, these parties are faced with the dilemma of how to behave: should they play the role of the 'opposition in government', thus reassuring their core electorate that they have not 'sold out' or should they attempt to show that they too can be responsible members of government, capable of governing just as effectively as mainstream political actors and thus possibly attracting new support? Or should they try and walk a fine line between the two? Whichever approach (or mixture of approaches) is adopted, how is this then pursued? And with what degree of success?
The purpose of this panel is to look at how such parties manage, or fail to manage, these conflicting demands in different western European democracies. We particularly welcome comparative papers, but single party case-studies will also be considered.

Anyone who would like to give a paper should e-mail Jim Newell (J.L.Newell@salford.ac.uk) or Duncan McDonnell (duncanmcdonnell@yahoo.com) **by 25 September** with a short abstract (circa 300 words) describing the paper they want to present. The following describes the intended focus of the panels and the issues we would wish papers to address:

Details of the conference can be found on the PSA's web site at:
http://www.psa.ac.uk/2007/default.htm

The Italian General Election of 2006 and the Social Construction of Reality

James L. Newell

University of Salford

Introduction

The general election of 2006 was the closest fought contest since the party-system upheavals of the early 1990s. However, what was most striking about the outcome was less the sheer narrowness of the centre left's victory (in terms of votes in the Chamber, in terms seats in the Senate) than the way in which the result so roundly confounded expectations. Narrow victories are possibly less unusual than is realised.[1] Nor is it unheard of that the party that loses in terms of votes nevertheless wins in terms of seats.[2] No, what was undoubtedly more depressing for centre-left supporters as, in the afternoon and evening of 10 April, they watched the results come in was the awareness that what had initially seemed like a certain victory (with exit polls amply confirming the poll results of previous weeks) was instead an outcome that would be uncertain until almost the last of the votes had been counted.

The most likely explanations for the large divergence between the poll predictions and the votes actually cast will presumably be offered by polling experts in the coming days and weeks. Here we pursue somewhat more modest goals, offering some reflections on the causes of the outcome itself and on its significance for the general thrust of Italian politics. Our point of departure is the thought that the outcome of any parliamentary election anywhere can be conceived as the product of three interrelated sets of variables: the configuration of party and candidate line-ups among which voters are called upon to choose in the first place; the social, political and other factors impinging upon voters' choices between these alternative configurations; the nature of the electoral system. The impact of the electoral system is both direct – in terms of the way in which it translates a given distribution of votes into a given distribution of parliamentary seats – and indirect – through its impact on perceptions of its *likely* effects and thus its impact on parties' decisions about the line-ups to offer, and on voters' decisions about the choice to make between such line ups.

With this is mind, the remainder of this paper is divided into four main sections. In the section following we offer some reflections on what it was, in the run-up to the election, that resulted in voters being presented with a choice that was essentially one between the parties of one or the other of two heterogeneous coalitions whose votes would be translated into seats by means of an electoral system that, against advice, I insist on calling a 'mixed system'.[3] The

[1] The Israeli Knesset contest of 1981 saw Menachem Begin's Likud party beat Labour by just 10,405 votes or 0.5 percent of the total. The United States presidential contest in 2000 was decided by just 537 votes in the state of Florida. The German federal election in 2005 saw the CDU/CSU emerge ahead of the SPD by just 1 per cent of the vote.

[2] If this is what happened in the case of the 2006 Italian Senate contest, then the outcome was one to be placed alongside one US presidential outcome (that of 2000) and two British general election outcomes (those of 1951 and February 1974) since the war.

[3] The reason for my insistence is that it seems to me that the system is mixed in the sense that it is

section after describes those features of the campaign that seem to us most relevant for an understanding of the election outcome. The subsequent section considers the outcome itself in terms of vote and seat distributions, the penultimate section the election aftermath. The final section concludes.

The run-up

One of the most striking – and, as we shall see, significant – features of the 2006 outcome was the sharp decline in the support for 'third forces', unattached to either of the two coalitions. If in 2001 support for these forces (Lista Bonino, Italia dei Valori, Movimento Sociale – Fiamma Tricolore (MSFT), others) amounted to some 10 percent, in 2006 it was less than 1 percent: see Table 1. The proximate cause was a decline in third-force candidacies in the first place, a development that was strongly encouraged by the electoral law with its higher thresholds for non-aligned than for aligned forces, and its provision that the votes of all parties – not just the votes of those eligible to receive seats – were to count in determining allocation of the majority premium. In the case of the centre left, however, it was a development that had begun much earlier, in the immediate aftermath of the previous general election.

This was because in 2001 it was widely believed that the centre left had lost because it had been divided, and especially because it had failed to reach stand-down agreements with Di Pietro's Italia dei Valori and, in the Senate election, with Rifondazione Comunista (RC). There must be at least a degree of uncertainty about this interpretation since it is based on rather strong assumptions about the summability of the votes of RC and Di Pietro on the one hand and those of the rest of the centre left on the other. Nevertheless, the belief that these divisions had cost the centre left the election was sufficiently powerful to set in motion, in the years leading up to 2006, a coming together of forces that was somewhat paradoxical – paradoxical because if, on the one hand, the process represented a growing unity of intents, on the other hand each addition or merger only served to reduce cohesion by rendering the coalition ever larger and more heterogeneous. There were four stages to the process.

First, driven by the relative success of their joint list in 2001, the Margherita parties attempted merger in March 2002. However, if the Democrats had hoped that the new formation would be a first step towards the creation of a unitary political actor able to impose its sovereignty on the coalition, the Udeur refused to join at all and it soon became clear that the organisation was divided internally between those who saw themselves as secular, left-of-centre reformists committed to a bi-polar future for Italian party politics, and those who hankered after the idea of a party able to hold power by exploiting its location in the centre of the political spectrum, much as the Christian Democrats had done for so many years.

Second, the emergence, in 2004, of the Federation – the agreement for closer cooperation between the Democratici di Sinistra (Left Democrats: DS), Margherita, Socialists (SDI) and the Repubblicani Europei that took shape after the European Parliament elections – induced Rifondazione Comunista to seek membership of the centre left coalition, probably as the consequence of a realisation that it faced a real risk of isolation and a loss of influence in the event that the Federation succeeded in drawing more radical forces, such as the Verdi (Greens) and the Partito dei Comunisti Italiani (Party of Italian Communists, PdCI)

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majoritarian and proportional in equal measure. With *one and the same* vote, the voter makes a choice *both* of coalition (where the coalition with most votes wins an automatic majority of seats) *and* of party (to which seats are allotted in proportion to its vote).

Table 1
Chamber of Deputies Election Results 2001 and 2006

Proportional vote 2001			*Vote 2006*			
Parties and alliances	**Vote (%)**	**Parties and alliances**	**Vote (no.)**	**Vote (%)**	**Vote (%)***	**Seats (no.)**
		Unione				
Rif. Com.	5.0	Rif. Com.	2,229,604	5.8	5.6	41
PdCI	1.7	PdCI	884,912	2.3	2.3	16
DS	16.6	L'Ulivo	11,928,362	31.2	30.4	220
Margherita	14.5					
Girasole	2.2	Verdi	783,944	2.1	2.0	15
Lista Bonino	2.2	La rosa nel pugno	991,049	2.6	2.5	18
Italia dei Valori	3.9	Italia dei Valori	877,159	2.3	2.2	16
		Udeur	534,553	1.4	1.4	10
		Svp	182,703	0.5	0.5	4
		Other Unione parties	590,533	1.5	1.5	0
		Total	19,002,819	49.7		340
		Foreign constituency				
		Unione	422,330		1.1	6
		Italia dei Valori	27,432		0.1	1
		Udeur	9,692		0.0	
Total	**46.1**	Total (National plus foreign const.)	19,462,273		**49.6**	347
		Casa delle libertà				
CCD-CDU	3.2	UDC	2,582,233	6.8	6.6	39
Forza Italia	29.5	Forza Italia	9,045,384	23.7	23.1	137
National Alliance	12.0	National Alliance	4,706,654	12.3	12.0	71
New PSI	1.0	DC-New PSI	285,744	0.7	0.7	4
Northern League	3.9	Northern League	1,749,632	4.6	4.5	26
MSFT	0.4	MSFT	231,743	0.6	0.6	0
		Other Cdl parties	380,914	1.0	1.0	0
		Total	18,982,304	49.7		277
		Foreign constituency				
		Forza Italia	202,407		0.5	3
		Per Italia nel mondo – Tremaglia	73,289		0.2	1
		UDC	65,794		0.2	
		Lega Nord	20,227		0.1	
		Other Cdl parties	8,235		0.0	
Total	**50.0**	Total (National plus foreign const.)	19,352,256		**48.5**	281
		Others				
		Autonomie Liberté Democratie (Valle d'Aosta) +	34,167	0.1	0.1	1
		Vallée d'Aoste +	24,118	0.1	0.1	
		Forza Italia-AN (Valle d'Aosta) +	13,372	0.0	0.0	0
Others	3.9	Others	173,263	0.5	0.4	
		Others (foreign const.)	146,008		0.4	1
Total	100	National total	38,230,043	100.1	97.5	618
		Foreign const. total	975,414		2.5	12
		Overall total	39,205,457		100	630

* The percentages in this column are based on the overall total of votes cast, i.e. including the foreign constituency

+ These parties were linked to the two main coalitions: Autonomie Liberté Democrazie and Vallée d'Aoste were associated with the Unione, and Forza Italia-AN with the Cdl. They are listed separately because votes cast in the single-member Valle d'Aosta constituency are not included in the totals used to determine allocation of the majority premium.

Table 2
Senate Election Results 2001 and 2006

Vote 2001			*Vote 2006*			
Parties and alliances	**Vote (%)**	**Parties and alliances**	**Vote (number)**	**Vote (%)**	**Vote (%)***	**Seats (no.)**
		Unione				
Rif. Com.	5.0	Rif. Com.	2,518,624	7.2	7.1	27
L'Ulivo	38.7	Insieme con l'Unione (PdCI and Verdi)	1,423,226	4.1	4.0	11
SVP-L'Ulivo	0.5	DS	5,977,313	17.2	16.7	62
		Margherita	3,664,622	10.5	10.3	39
Pannella-Bonino	2.0	La rosa nel pugno	851,875	2.4	2.4	0
Italia dei Valori	3.4	Italia dei Valori	986,046	2.8	2.8	4
		Udeur	476,938	1.4	1.3	3
		L'Unione-SVP	198,153	0.6	0.6	3
		SVP	117,500	0.3	0.3	2
		Other Unione parties	927,640	2.7	2.6	3
		Total	17,141,937	49.2		154
		Foreign constituency				
		Unione	387,145		1.1	4
		Italia dei Valori	26,134		0.1	
		Udeur	13,265		0.0	
Total	**49.6**	Total (National plus foreign const.)	17,568,481		**49.3**	158
		Casa delle libertà				
Casa delle libertà	42.5	UDC	2,311,448	6.6	6.5	21
		Forza Italia	8,201,688	23.6	23.0	78
		National Alliance	4,234,693	12.2	11.9	41
		Forza Italia-AN	11,505	0.0	0.0	0
		DC-New PSI	190,724	0.5	0.5	0
		Northern League	1,531,939	4.4	4.3	13
Fiamma Tricolore	1.0	MSFT	219,707	0.6	0.6	0
		Other Cdl parties	658,050	1.9	1.8	2
		Total	17,359,754	49.8		155
		Foreign constituency				
		Forza Italia	185,438		0.5	1
		Per Italia nel mondo – Tremaglia	63,474		0.2	
		UDC	57,200		0.2	
		Lega Nord	18,455		0.1	
		Other Cdl parties	8,433		0.0	
Total	**43.5**	Total (National plus foreign const.)	17,692,754		**49.6**	156
		Others				
		Others	307,344	1.0	0.9	0
Others	6.9	Others (foreign const.)	120,389		0.3	1
		National Total	34,809,035	100	97.6	309
		Foreign const. Total	879,933		2.5	6
Total	100.0	Overall total	35,688,968		100.1	315

Note: * The percentages in this column are based on the overall total of votes cast, i.e. including the foreign constituency

into its orbit. The problem was that if for most of the rest of the centre left elections are above all about winning government power – so that policies are to be judged primarily in terms of the degree to which they make this possible – for RC elections are above all a means, but not the only means, of exerting political pressure to defend the poor and the vulnerable. Therefore, there are significant limits on the compromises RC is prepared to make for the sake of coalition unity.

Third, while the even more rapid decision of Italia dei Valori to seek alliance with the centre left was a decision that made 'ideological' sense – its central mission being to combat illegality and less-than-impartial application of the law, its natural home was in a coalition that questioned Berlusconi's right to govern on similar grounds – the decision cannot have been unrelated to the 'opportunist' consideration that independence in 2001 had resulted in failure to elect a single deputy. And its presence was a potential source of disunity within the coalition if for no other reason than the fact that it was an additional party with its own goals and values: parties everywhere are entities for which alliance with other parties has instrumental but not intrinsic value – while unity and cohesion are public goods necessarily exposed to the collective action problem.

Finally, in November 2005, the formation of 'la Rosa nel pugno', bringing together the SDI and the Radicals, drew into the orbit of the Unione a party that had previously found it difficult to coalesce with either of the two main coalitions as its emphasis on individual responsibility – meaning a strongly libertarian stand on civil rights issues combined with firmly liberal positions in matters economic – gave it an uncertain location on the left-right spectrum. This was an ideological profile that had the potential to bring the new formation into conflict with the DS on economic issues, and the even greater potential to bring it into conflict with the Margherita on religion-related issues. Secularisation notwithstanding, the number and significance of such issues has grown, not diminished, in recent years as scientific progress has brought to the fore new problems on which the Church has wanted to take a position (Rémond, 1999: 36). The proportion of regular Church goers among supporters of the Margherita is larger than among voters generally – meaning that it cannot afford to stray too far from conservative positions on issues on which the Rosa nel pugno takes diametrically opposed stances; for, as well as winning over *new* voters, it must retain the support of *existing* voters if it is to grow. Hence the potential for conflict between the two entities is significant.

Ideological heterogeneity on the centre left was mirrored to some degree on the centre right. True, three of the coalition's four largest components – Forza Italia (FI), Alleanza Nazionale (AN) and the Northern League – have been reasonably united in representing different shades of the ideological profile to which Mastropaolo (2005) refers by using the label 'new right'. This is an ideology that involves an attachment to social and cultural conformity, the conventional family, Christianity (as a cultural identity rather than a set of precepts), the nation (an invented one – 'Padania' – in the case of the League), free markets and welfare chauvinism. The profile is an advantage to the coalition; for it provides the basis for a profitable 'division of labour' between the parties. With its most strident and crude expressions being delegated to the League and the other two offering more 'respectable' versions, all three parties are able to maintain reasonably distinct profiles. The problem is that at the same time, the ideology can bring the parties into conflict. In the case of the League, for instance, welfare chauvinism is also often directed against southerners, and that is, against precisely that part of the electorate in which AN, and also the Union of Christian Democrats and Center Democrats (UDC), find their strongholds.

However, the greatest difficulty for the centre right, in government after 2001,

was Berlusconi's leadership. On the one hand, the extraordinary degree to which FI depends for its image, its finances and its organisation on its leader makes it difficult to imagine the party continuing to have a meaningful existence after Berlusconi leaves the political scene; and this has always reinforced the aspirations of AN and the UDC to capture leadership of the coalition for themselves given that they might, perhaps, expect to capture parts of the entrepreneur's party in the process. On the other hand, while Berlusconi was in an extraordinarily powerful position immediately after the 2001 election (which he could claim had been won largely thanks to him) the sheer weight of campaign emphasis on his supposedly extraordinary personal qualities subsequently became a distinct liability – leaving few alternative means of retaining voter loyalty when economic difficulties began tarnishing the leader's image. For these two reasons, Berlusconi's capacity to impose discipline on his coalition declined as time went by – and especially after the 2004 European elections with their revelation that, if a government in difficulties was going to have to pay an electoral price, then it would be paid by FI rather than its allies and that they rather than the opposition parties would be the principal beneficiaries.[4]

It was in this context that towards the end of 2005, the centre-right parties reached agreement on a new electoral law, which appeared to offer them at least three specific advantages. First, by allowing each of the parties to compete in relative independence, each with its own prime ministerial candidate, it considerably reduced the likely significance of Berlusconi's personal popularity for the prospects of his allies and those of the coalition as a whole. As the 2005 regional elections appeared to confirm,[5] had the parties been obliged – as they would have been had the 1993 electoral law remained in force – to line up behind single candidates representing the coalition as a whole, then they might have suffered badly; for in such a situation voters dissatisfied with Berlusconi and FI would have had no means of giving expression to their dissatisfaction other than by action (abstention or voting for the centre left) also damaging to the entrepreneur's allies. Second, therefore, the new law held out the prospect of considerably reducing the leadership issue as a source of friction and instability within the centre right. Third, the results of the two previous general elections suggested that in the proportional arena the centre right's constituent parties had a collective reach that extended beyond the pool of voters prepared to support their candidates in the plurality arena.[6] This therefore provided an additional argument in favour of the new law.[7]

[4] FI's vote declined from the 29.5 percent it had won in 2001 to 21.0 percent while both the UDC and the League saw their vote shares rise (to 5.0 and 5.9 percent respectively). Meanwhile, the parties of the centre left made only modest gains to take 46.1 percent in 2004.

[5] The elections were a disaster for the Casa delle libertà insofar as the coalition: emerged the loser in 12 of the 14 regions where voting took place; took 12,220,858 votes (43.9 percent) to the centre left's 14,632,412 (52.6 percent), and lost control of six of the eight regions it had won in 2000.

[6] That is, in 1996, the centre right won 40.3 percent of the vote in the plurality arena, but 42.1 percent (not including the vote won by the Northern League) in the proportional arena – while in 2001, when it took 45.5 percent in the plurality arena and 49.7 percent in the proportional arena, the difference was even larger.

[7] Space does not permit going into the technical details of the new law, but in essence, for elections to the Chamber of Deputies, parties present lists of candidates in each of 26 multi-member constituencies, voters being required to make a single choice among the lists with which they are presented. Parties can either field lists independently or as part of a coalition with other parties. Seats are distributed between the parties proportionally except that to be eligible to participate in such distribution, parties must obtain at least 4 percent of the national total of valid votes cast if they are running independently or as part of a coalition whose combined total

The campaign

The centre right went into the campaign with a lacklustre record to defend and it was this above all that appeared to underpin confidence in predictions of a comfortable centre-left victory; [8] for if Berlusconi had won in 2001 on the basis of his personal charisma and therefore of considerably heightened expectations of what he would be able to achieve, then economic stagnation and the consequent difficulties for the government in delivering on its promises (especially in the area of taxes) had created a level of public disillusionment and a degree of pessimism that appeared particularly deep seated: as polls constantly testified, the gap between expectations and reality fed perceptions of the state of the economy and standards of living that were sometimes much worse than official data suggested (Guarnieri and Newell, 2005).

Under these circumstances, the apparent decision of Berlusconi, from the start of the campaign, to do all he could to ensure that he remained at the centre of media attention and to ensure that the election acquired the significance of a referendum for or against himself might seem puzzling. In fact there is a very reasonable explanation for it. In the first place, the strategy was in one sense unavoidable given that FI is a party that lacks a clear ideological profile while having an image that is heavily bound up with the personality and qualities of its leader. This meant that in the face of evidence that the 'man of action' capable of 'getting things done' had not got things done, Berlusconi was left with little alternative but simply to

turns out to be less than ten per cent. If they are part of a coalition whose combined total is ten percent or more, then they must obtain at least 2 percent of the national valid vote total. If an initial proportional distribution of seats results in the largest party or coalition receiving less than 340 seats, then it is assigned as many seats as are necessary to bring it up to that figure, this so-called *premio di maggioranza* (or majority premium) thus ensuring, for the party or coalition concerned, an overall majority in the 630 seat Chamber. The remaining seats are distributed proportionally among the other parties and coalitions. Given the fragmentation of the Italian party system, the effect of the law is, on the one hand, to encourage parties to field their lists as coalitions rather than independently while removing the pressure upon them to unite behind candidates representing the coalition as a whole; and on the other hand, to combine, for the voters, the choice of party and coalition into a single choice, while allowing them to support a coalition without having to cast a vote for a candidate drawn from a party other than their most preferred party.

Arrangements for the Senate are essentially the same, but with the importance differences that: (1) seats are assigned to regions (in accordance with their populations) rather than to constituencies; (2) seat distribution (including assignment of the *premio di maggioranza*) takes place region by region (that is, seat assignment depends on parties' and coalitions' regional, not their national totals); (3) the *premio* in each region consists in the number of seats, awarded to the largest coalition or party, that is necessary to bring it up to 55 per cent of the seats assigned to the region; (4) in order to be eligible to participate in the distribution of seats, parties have to have attracted, if running independently or as part of a coalition whose combined regional vote total turns out to be less than 20 percent, at least eight percent of the valid votes cast in the region concerned. If it is running as part of a coalition whose combined vote is above 20 percent, then it must have attracted at least three percent of the region's valid vote total.

[8] Since 1990, Italy's economic performance has been well below that of earlier decades and nothing that the government did changed this. Between 2000 and 2005 the economy grew at an average rate of 1.1 percent and in 2005 the rate of growth was almost zero. Having taken office confidently predicting that it would reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio from 110.5 percent in 2000 to 98.0 percent in 2004, in 2005 the government faced a level of public debt that still stood at 106.5. In that year, with Italy's budget deficit standing at 4.3 percent, the European Commission decided to recommend application of the Excessive Deficit Procedure, giving the government until 2007 to bring the percentage to below the 3 percent ceiling required by the Stability and Growth Pact.

deny the evidence, claiming that perceptions of economic stagnation were false impressions put about by 'the usual' commentators working for the left-wing press. Precisely this, however, enabled Berlusconi to turn a necessity into a distinct virtue; for, by insisting on the image of a leader hampered and unjustly attacked from all sides (from the left-wing press to communist inspired judges and occasionally his own allies), the entrepreneur was able to avoid fighting the campaign on his government's record and to assume, instead, the appearance of an *opposition* leader whose dynamic qualities could still deliver much once freed, through reforms introduced in a second term, from the institutional and other shackles of his left-wing tormentors. This in turn enabled him, in the final stages of the campaign, to wrong-foot the centre left.

Prior to that, the Unione had had good reasons to be optimistic. In the first place, the primary elections held on 16 October – an experiment successfully repeated in Sicily in December and in Milan at the end of January – had done much to reduce the power of accusations that the centre left was necessarily unreliable because it lacked a leader with a party able to impose discipline on the coalition. By demonstrating the sheer weight of the popular support Prodi was able to mobilise the elections considerably raised his stature, and considerably strengthened, at least in the short term, the project for coalition unity that he represents. Second, the centre left had then gone on to publish a 281-page election manifesto which, while the object of some ridicule for its length, was presented as a coalition-wide agreement the very detail of which offered assurances that a centre-left government could remain united. Third, one or two slips notwithstanding, the parties of the Unione did manage to sing from the same hymn sheet most of the time. Particularly noticeable in this regard was the stance adopted by RC whose position furthest to the left on the political spectrum naturally fed expectations that the greatest challenges to coalition unity would come from this quarter. The unusual 'moderation' of the party's public pronouncements almost certainly had to do with a conscious or unconscious decision to bow to the logic of centripetal competition in light of an awareness that, if the Unione were to win the elections, then the implications of the new electoral law were such that the party could expect to quadruple its parliamentary representation and to be indispensable to the maintenance of a centre-left majority. Finally, if the enforced resignation of two government ministers[9] combined with the histrionic quality of the prime minister's pronouncements to feed the impression of a government increasingly desperate and lacking in credibility, then this enabled the centre left the more effectively to convey the image of a coalition led by a man whose quiet competence offered the opportunity of 'a new start' – '*L'Italia riparte*' was one of the principal campaign slogans – after the economic 'disasters' of the previous five years.

Unfortunately for the centre left, the fiscal aspects of the new start it was proposing allowed centre-right spokes-persons to push it into a corner and keep it on the defensive for the last ten days of the campaign – thus reinforcing the impression of a reversal of governing and opposition roles, with the centre left, not the centre right, being forced to account for its policy choices. The problem was essentially two-fold. On the one hand, the centre left's manifesto proposed the reintroduction of inheritance tax for 'large estates' – but without saying what 'large estates' were.

[9] In February, the Minister for Institutional Reform, the Northern League's Roberto Calderoli, was forced to resign after appearing on television sporting a tee-shirt showing an anti-Islamic cartoon, an incident that provoked violent protests outside the Italian consulate in Bengasi leaving eleven people dead. Less than a month later, in March, the Minister of Health, Francesco Storace, resigned, following suggestions that he may have been involved in spying and hacking activities designed to damage his opponents in the regional election the year before.

The almost inevitable consequence was that interpretations of what these amounted to differed as between the coalition's spokespersons thus fuelling uncertainty about how far down the scale the tax might extend. On the other hand, the centre left proposed to harmonise the tax rates on financial activities by introducing a uniform rate of 20 percent, which would not, however, apply to state bonds already in circulation. Although this apparently left no room for ambiguity, the centre right was able to claim that since the Unione also wanted to reduce by five percent the gap between net salaries and employers' labour costs (the so-called *cuneo fiscale*), the centre left would inevitably be obliged to attack the interests of small savers despite its protestations to the contrary. Finally, at the end of the concluding television debate, when nearness of the vote meant that his allies were in no position publicly to question policy improvisations, Berlusconi made sure that the high tax label thoroughly stuck to his opponents by suddenly announcing his intention of abolishing ICI (*Imposta comunale sugli immobili*), the local property tax, in the event that he was victorious. In the immediate aftermath of the vote, among the hypotheses advanced to account for the unexpected narrowness of the centre left's victory, one of the most widely circulating was the suggestion that through the tax issue above all, Berlusconi was able, in the final days of the campaign, successfully to mobilise, in the centre right's favour, voters that would otherwise have abstained (Augias, 2005; Diamanti, 2005).

The vote

From a purely descriptive point of view, the most salient features of the election outcome were the following.

Turnout: This rose from 81.4 percent in 2001 to 83.6 in 2006. Widely interpreted as an indicator of the way in which the bitterness of the competition had aroused an unusually high level of interest, the increase also appeared to give credence to claims made by the centre right that it would be favoured by an increased turnout. However, as the Istituto Cattaneo (2006) pointed out, in 2006 the electorate used to make the calculation did not include those entered in the Register of Italians Resident Abroad – who as a result of the passage of law no. 459/2001 were for the first time given the option of voting in a new, overseas constituency. When the electors making up this constituency are built into the calculation the turnout falls to 81.8 percent (AGIPolitiche2006: 2006).

Distribution of the vote between coalitions: In the case of the Chamber, the 20,515 votes[10] separating the Unione from the Casa delle libertà (Cdl) gave the former the majority premium and, with its deputies elected in the overseas constituency, a majority of 64. In the case of the Senate, the Unione was behind the Cdl by 217,817 votes and 1 seat in the national arena. When the overseas constituency was added, the Unione remained behind by 124,273 votes, but by taking four of the six overseas seats, it ended up with a majority of 2. There was very little change in the proportion of the vote won by each of the two coalitions as compared to 2001.[11] The most noteworthy changes were, rather, ones that took place

[10] The final difference between the two coalitions, confirmed by the Court of Cassation, came to 24,755 votes. The difference between this, and our figure, is to be explained partly by the fact that ours does not take account of the votes cast for candidates in Valle d'Aosta (which, however, does not count for the purposes of award of the majority premium) or of the 2,131 contested, and therefore initially unallocated, votes.

[11] In the case of the Chamber, for example, when to the centre-left's earlier vote is added that of parties (RC, Lista Bonino, Italia dei Valori) that ran independently in 2001 but as part of the coalition in 2006, and when that total (46.1 percent) is compared with the 2006 total (49.7 per cent) the difference is only 3.6 percent. In the case of the Cdl, when from its earlier vote is subtracted that of the MSFT, which ran independently in 2001 but as part of the coalition in 2006, and when that total (49.6 percent) is compared with the 2006 total (49.7 percent) the difference is almost non-existent.

within each coalition in terms of changes in the

distribution of the vote between parties. Of these changes, the ones that stand out most are the improved performance of RC, especially in the Senate, and the disappointing performance of the DS which, against expectations, won only 17.2 percent of the vote in the Senate contest. Comparisons were also made in the immediate aftermath between the combined performance of the DS and the Margherita in the Senate contest (27.7 percent) and the performance of their joint, Ulivo, list in the Chamber contest (31.2 percent) to draw the conclusion that the Ulivo had a capacity to attract votes that was greater than the sum of the capacities of its individual components. If true, then comparison with the combined performance of the DS and the Margherita in the 2001 Chamber contest (31.1 percent) suggests that the difference is easily overstated. On the centre right, the 5.8 percent drop in support for FI combined with an improvement of a very similar amount (4.6 percent) in the support for Berlusconi's three principal allies (especially the UDC) to suggest an image of disappointed FI supporters defecting to other centre-right parties.

The geographical distribution of the vote in broad terms reflected established patterns and saw the Cdl prevail in the North, and the Unione in the central 'Red Belt' regions, with neither coalition clearly on top in the South and islands (Figures 1 and 2). What struck commentators most was the clear victory, against expectations, of the centre left in the overseas constituency,[12] combined with its failure to hang on to regions it had captured from the Cdl in the regional elections a year earlier. Of these,[13] Ligura, Abruzzo and Calabria returned comfortable Unione majorities in both chambers, while Puglia returned a comfortable Cdl majority (again, in both chambers). What must have been especially disappointing for centre-left leaders were the outcomes in Piemonte and Lazio where, in the Senate contest, the majority premium in each case went to a Cdl that was ahead by just 1.0 and 1.1 percent of the vote respectively.

How are these data to be interpreted and what clues do they give us as to an explanation for the election outcome? Given what we said at the beginning of the paper about the three sets of variables in terms of which election outcomes can be understood, one is initially tempted, in the present case, to give particular emphasis to the specific configurations of party line-ups with which voters were presented in different parts of the country and to attribute a large role to 'chance' factors. Specifically: much was made in the immediate aftermath of Progetto Nord-Est, a small non-aligned party whose 92,000 votes would have been sufficient to deliver the majority premium to the Cdl in the Chamber. However, such reasoning also works the other way around: had Alternativa Sociale and Gianfranco Rotondi's Democrazia Cristiana remained independent of the rest of the centre right in Piemonte and Lazio, as they had been at the 2005 regional elections, then the Unione might just have repeated its wafer-thin victories in those regions – in which case it would have taken the majority premium in both cases and had the more comfortable majority of 14 rather than 2 in the Senate. The problem with such intellectual games is that they are counterfactual – for example, in the absence of any additional information, it makes as much sense to deny the significance of the votes won by Progetto Nord-Est arguing that at least some of its supporters might have defected had it been aligned with the Cdl – and there is no limit to them: had the Cdl not included the MSFT, for example, its vote might have been smaller; but one might equally suggest that it would have been larger had the coalition decided to shun a party as extreme as the MSFT.

[12] The centre left had an approximate 10 percent vote lead in both the Chamber and the Senate.

[13] In April 2005, the Unione captured Piemonte, Liguria, Abruzzo, Lazio, Puglia and Calabria, previously governed by the centre right.

Figure 1
Vote by Geographical Area, Chamber, 2006

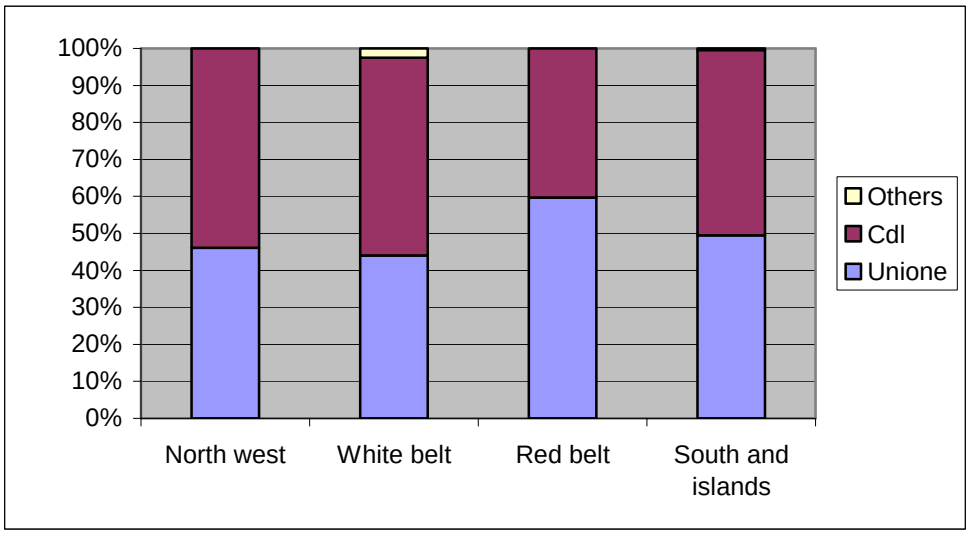
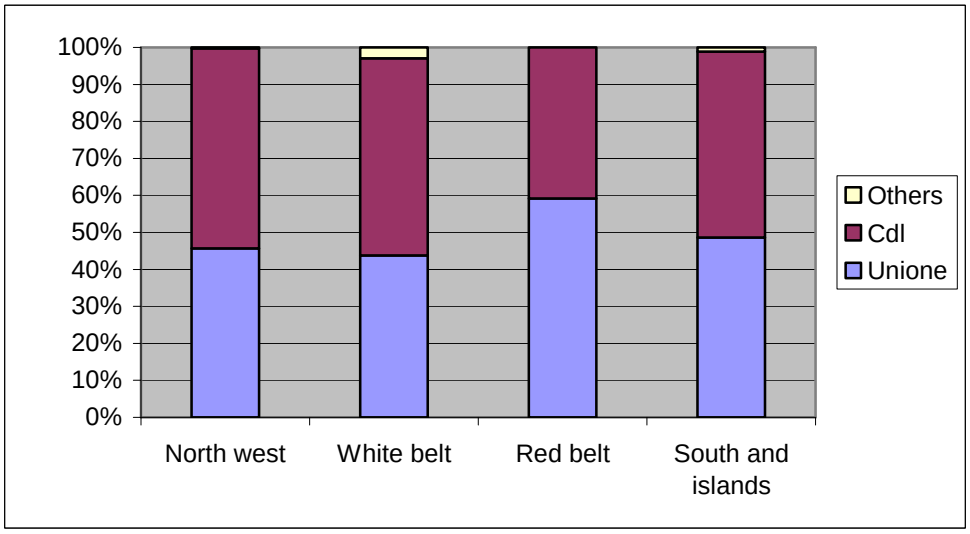


Figure 2
Vote by Geographical Area, Senate, 2006



Note: 'North west' = Piemonte, Liguria, Lombardia
'White belt' = Trentino Alto Adige, Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia
'Red belt' = Emilia Romagna, Toscana, Marche, Umbria
'South and islands = Lazio, Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicilia, Sardegna.

Unfortunately, we are not much better placed if, from the party line-ups we shift our attention to the second of the sets of variables in terms of which we said election outcomes could be understood, namely, the social, political and other factors impinging on voters' choices. For example, among these factors one clearly has to include the effects of the parties' campaigns. In the immediate aftermath much was therefore also made of the presumed shortcomings of the centre left's campaign to explain why it had failed to achieve the decisive victory so many were expecting. It was said, for example, that while Berlusconi 'imposed his frantic populism with the aim of dislodging every voter "disillusioned" by the absent miracle', the centre-left's campaign was 'now dull, now affected'; that while Berlusconi's messages were 'all inspired by individual wealth, houses, cars, mobile phones', Prodi 'condemned the elimination of the primary surplus, an entity impossible to grasp'; that while Berlusconi 'was highly effective in describing and promising private satisfactions', Prodi responded 'by appealing to competence, having recourse to the need to unite a country divided by five-years of centre-right government' (Berselli, 2006: 32-8). The problem with this is that it is pure conjecture: had Prodi achieved his convincing victory, then it would have been said that he had done so because while Berlusconi's frantic populism failed to convince voters disillusioned by the absent miracle, Prodi's campaign was sober and highly effective in appealing to governing competence.

Unfortunately, until good survey data becomes available, answers to 'why' questions about the outcome cannot be much more than more or less well informed speculation based on the little evidence that is available. I offer the following interpretation. In the first place, we need to ask the right question. That is, the question should not be, 'Why did the centre left fail to do as well as expected/the centre right do better than expected?' as this assumes that the pre-election poll results, which appear to have been at variance with reality, can instead be taken as an accurate benchmark against which to measure performance, shifting the focus and burden of explanation away from the technical problems associated with polling to supposed anomalies in the objective behaviour of parties and/or voters. That there has long been reason to be doubtful of the polling evidence would have been clear prior to the election had observers reflected on the fact that the discrepancy between the coalitions' poll ratings and their actual performance is not new but long-standing. For example, with just one exception, the opinion poll reports on the site, 'Il termometro politico', at http://brunik.altervista.org/index.html put the centre left ahead by some five percent throughout the year 2004. The one exception was the report giving the actual results of the European Parliament election, where the distribution of the vote between the centre left and the centre right (46.1 percent to 45.4 percent) was similar to and every bit as close as the result for the 2006 election.[14]

No, the correct question is 'Why did the centre left win?', the correct benchmark its performances at previous general elections. These show that at the elections of 1994, 1996 and 2001, the centre left trailed the centre right, in the latter case narrowly (see Table 3). This year, the centre left scored a narrow victory to take it from a position just behind the centre right in the Chamber plurality arena in 2001 (with 43.7 percent to the centre right's 45.5) to a position just ahead of it in 2006 (with 49.6 percent to 48.5). In order to furnish an explanation, we need to know where the two

[14] It is for this reason (as well as the fact that opinion polls and exit polls told the same story) that, while I am reasonably persuaded by the hypothesis according to which some centre-right supporters are unable or unwilling to reveal their true sympathies (Natale, 2006), I am somewhat less persuaded by the hypothesis according to which the poll results were largely accurate and that there was a significant shift of support in favour of the centre right in the final stages of the campaign that was not publicly registered because of the ban on publishing poll findings after 24 March (Jampaglia, 2006).

coalitions' votes came from. This information is provided by data drawn from the 2001 Itanes survey and a 2006 Swg survey and shown in Table 4. The picture that emerges from the figures is that the shifts that took place in 2006 were of an entity similar to the corresponding shifts that took place in 2001, but that they took place *in the opposite direction*:

As in 2001, very few of those who had voted for one of the two coalitions at the earlier contest switched to the other and what switches there were, were largely self-cancelling – *but this time the net flow was from centre right to centre left*.

In 2001, the centre right was more successful than the centre left in winning the support of those who, at the previous contest had supported 'third forces' or been too young to vote – *but this time the centre left was more successful than the centre right*.

In 2001, the centre right was more successful than the centre left in winning the support of those who had abstained at the earlier contest and it remained more successful, *though to a lesser degree in 2006 when, unlike in 2001, it also lost more of its previous supporters to abstention than did the centre left*.

I therefore think that the most plausible explanation for the election outcome is simply that voters were disillusioned with the promise of an economic miracle that never came and that they voted against Berlusconi as a consequence. The shifts were never going to be dramatic because, if by far the largest pool of voters at any election consists of supporters of one or the other of the two coalitions, then very few *ever* switch between them, and voters who want to 'punish' Berlusconi appear to do so by switching to one of his allies: the information we have available is consistent with the suggestion that 2006 was quite in line with previous contests in this respect. It may be that Berlusconi was able to mount a partial come back as a result of the tax issue in the final stages of the campaign, but the information we have available does not throw any light on this. What the data does tell us is that besides being more successful at retaining its existing supporters, the centre left was more successful in the relatively small pool consisting of those who had failed to support either coalition or had been two young to vote on the previous occasion. Thus a modest victory is what one would expect. And the most parsimonious explanation for it is that after the experience of five years of centre right government, voters were on balance more convinced by the offering of the centre left.

The attempts that have been made to dramatise the narrowness of the centre left's victory stem essentially from its possible consequences – but the dramatic nature of the potential consequences should not be allowed to mask the reality of what actually happened. True, the centre left has a majority of just 2 in the Senate – but it might easily have had a majority of 14 (in which case no one would have got excited) and both the 1994-96 and the 1996-2001 legislatures saw very small majorities in one or the other of the chambers. The image of a country 'split down the middle' must also be taken with a pinch of salt: the country *is* split, but the two coalitions were closely matched well *before* 2006 when the salience of the division was heightened as the result of an electoral law that significantly reduced the vote for 'third' forces by pushing these to line up on one side or the other.

The aftermath

As W. I. Thomas (1923), famously remarked, 'a situation defined as real is real in its consequences', and in the immediate aftermath of the campaign the belief that the election had bequeathed a country divided into two provided the basis for a series of political skirmishes whose common denominator was a denial of the legitimacy of the centre-left's victory. In the first place, it was immediately apparent that if Berlusconi had lost the contest numerically, then he had not been defeated politically. On the contrary: the fact that he had been expected to lose by a wide margin and had instead apparently staged a dramatic

Table 3
Chamber of Deputies election results, 1994 – 2001

	Majoritarian arena					
	N votes	% votes	N votes	% votes	N votes	% votes
	Centre left		Centre right		Others	
1994	12,614,738	32.8	15,179,764 Polo 2,561,546 AN	39.4 6.7	8,148,110	21.1
1996	15,729,124 Ulivo 1,000,244 Prog.	42.2 2.7	15,028,275 Polo 4,038,511 League	40.3 10.8	1,508,969	4.0
2001	16,284,443	43.7	16,936,038	45.5	4,004,342	10.8
	Proportional arena					
	Centre left		Centre right		Others	
1994	13,298,244	34.3	17,944,799	46.4	7,474,000	19.3
1996	13,017,475	34.7	19,775,087	52.7	4,696,765	12.5
2001	12,976,189	35.0	18,433,911	49.7	5,673,061	15.3

Table 4
Vote flows 1996 – 2001 (Chamber Plurality Arena) and 2001 – 2006

Column percent	*Vote in 1996*				
Vote in 2001	Centre right	Centre left	Other	Abstention/ blank ballot	Too young
Centre right	84.7	9.0	40.4	29.3	34.2
Centre left	4.9	80.7	17.3	15.3	27.6
Other	1.5	1.4	28.8	1.3	4.8
Abstention/blank ballot	9.0	8.8	13.5	54.1	33.4
Column percent	*Vote in 2001*				
Vote in 2006	Centre right	Centre left	Other	Abstention	Too young
Centre right	77.2	7.2	32.0	26.9	34.6
Centre left	8.1	80.7	40.5	25.6	42.1
Abstention	14.4	11.8	25.4	47.3	23.3

comeback to bring his coalition within a handful of votes of victory meant that, despite the heavy loses suffered by FI, his position as leader of the centre right was strengthened. This gave the coalition the compactness required to enable Berlusconi and its other spokespersons to launch an all-out attack on the new government-in-waiting. In the first place it made a series of insinuations about presumed irregularities – eventually revealed to be without foundation – in the way the votes had been counted, suggesting that their correction would be sufficient to overturn the result in its favour. Second, and somewhat incongruously in view of the insinuation that victory belonged to it and not the centre left, it argued that the closeness of the result implied that a future government could not be legitimate unless it took the form of a grand coalition on the German model. If this was to obscure the obvious differences between the German and Italian cases (in the former, there was no single entity able to command a majority of seats, in the latter there was) it served the political purpose of keeping the centre left under pressure and presaged a future in which the new government could expect its measures to be constantly denounced as illegitimate on the grounds that it itself had the backing of only half the country. The approach was one that was in keeping with the anti-political attitudes – emphasising the importance of 'the people' and intolerant of established political conventions and of institutional limitations on the use of power – that many on the centre right, and especially Berlusconi himself, represent. Under this kind of pressure, two alternative responses on the part of a future centre-left government could be envisaged: either it would succumb to opposition attempts to exploit the divisions in its ranks and therefore fail to last for any length of time, or it might find that the very precariousness of its position was, paradoxically, its strength, giving it a degree of cohesion it might otherwise not have had. At the time of writing (the week following the election) it is not possible to know which of these two scenarios, or something in between, will be closest to the truth, early indications pointing in both directions.

On the one hand, it looked as though the prospects for the talked-about merger of the DS and the Margherita in a Partito Democratico – the successor to the Federation project, which Prodi considered essential to cohesive government – had been improved by the election outcome. The reason is that the 'added value' of the two parties' joint, Ulivo, list argued in favour of the view that it had been essential to the coalition's victory in the Chamber, and suggested that it was essential to balance the coalition's 'extremes': in the Chamber contest, so the reasoning went, some of RC's voters had been prepared to reinforce Prodi and the entire coalition by voting for the Ulivo; in the Senate contest, where the Ulivo symbol had not been present, they had voted for their own party (which had done exceptionally well). Second, it looked as if many if not all of the leaders of the coalition's parties would join the new government or assume positions close to government (as in the case of the presidency of the Chamber of Deputies for which Fausto Bertinotti was being widely tipped). In this it looked as though Prodi was imitating Berlusconi five years earlier in a move that was unusual for post-war Italy but that could be expected to increase the stability of the administration (Newell and Partridge, 2002). That is, by including the party leaders in his cabinet, Prodi would bind the prospects of any one of the parties individually closely to the success or otherwise of the government as a whole, in the process strengthening his own hand *vis-à-vis* the parties and that of the executive *vis-à-vis* Parliament.

On the other hand, there were also signs that the Partito Democratico might have considerable difficulties in taking off. If a first step towards its creation had by common consent always been recognised to lie in the creation of unified groups in the two chambers after the election, then for supporters of the project, the voices that began suggesting that Parliament's standing orders would delay their formation had to be

considered worrying.[15] Similarly worrying had to be considered the suggestions of some within the DS that the project should be delayed on the grounds that far from balancing the 'extreme left' the project would increase its vote (De Marchis, 2006a: 10). And its chances of success have to be considered much less than even in any event simply because of the fundamental ideological incompatibilities of the two parties involved (the one having roots in the communist tradition, the other in Catholicism) and because of the potential losers from the project in both parties (Dilmore, 2005; Newell, 2006). Second, the new government will take office at a time of considerable economic difficulties, the pressures to reduce the budget deficit and the level of public debt bequeathed by its predecessors leaving it very little room for popular public spending measures. Some were therefore prepared to argue that the most likely scenario was that of a government diligently delivering austerity measures and thereby paving the way for defeat at the next election by a right-wing coalition once again enjoying all the conditions necessary to allow it to raise levels of public spending and reduce taxes (D'Eramo, 2006). Under pressure to accept labour-market and welfare reforms, supposedly essential to the recovery of international competitiveness, the position of RC is likely to be particularly uncomfortable, entrapped as it is between a government whose survival depends on it, and the aspirations of its working-class supporters. The party was already coming under heavy pressure from its allies, few of whom appear to have much interest in the egalitarian causes it seeks to defend, as soon as the election result was known.

[15] In essence, it was suggested that a unified group would risk the loss of the coalition's majority in the Senate's commissions and a reduction in funding of €32,000 per month (De Marchis, 2006: 7).

Conclusion

The 2006 election was a classic case of the 'social construction of reality' in the sense that the meanings political actors ascribed to the parties' and voters' behaviour – and therefore the very real consequences of the election outcome – owed less to what parties and voters *actually* did than to preconceptions of what they were *expected* to do. Quite unrealistically on the basis of previous trends, Prodi was expected to defeat Berlusconi by a large margin, so that when, sure enough, the margin instead turned out to be modest, it was the *centre left* that was deemed to have failed, *Berlusconi* the one deemed to have been the political, if not numerical, victor – with the consequence that the entrepreneur's position has been *objectively* strengthened beyond what would otherwise have been the case. The idea that the centre left lost votes because it ran an ineffective campaign is sheer conjecture, yet one whose repetition must objectively weaken it in the election's aftermath. But the most exquisite example of the social construction of reality comes with the image of a country 'split down the middle'. Little more than the straightforward, and to-be-expected consequence of an electoral law that creates very strong disincentives for 'third force' candidates, it is nevertheless an enormously powerful image. In a bipolar system it is hardly reasonable to expect voters to be split *other* than in two ways. Nor is it reasonable to suggest that a country that divides its votes in the proportions 50.1 to 49.9 is any *more* split than a country that divides 48 to 52, say (D'Eramo, 2006). The problem is that the belief is likely to have real consequences and to be particularly insidious for the new government. The 2006 election offers a very good example in support of the point that political scientists, pollsters and other observers are part of the world they seek to study, so that the idea that they can adopt a position of value neutrality and study it in a way that is without political consequences is simply false. 'Neutrality' is itself a political

position, theory construction itself a political activity. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the prospects for the new government will be enhanced if this point is taken to heart.

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Figure 1: own elaboration of data drawn from http://www.repubblica.it/speciale/2006/elezioni/camera/index.html?ref=hppro

Figure 2: own elaboration of data drawn from

http://www.repubblica.it/speciale/2006/elezioni/senato/index.html
Table 3: figures for vote flows 1996 – 2001 based on own elaboration of Italian National Election Study (Itanes) data available at: http://csa.berkeley.edu: 7502/cattest.html; figures for vote flows 2001 – 2006 taken from the results of an Swg survey published in *la Repubblica*, 13 April 2006, p.13.
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Knocking on Europe's Door: Islam in Italy

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Shortly after the July 7, 2005 bombings in London, Italian interior minister Giuseppe Pisanu warned his compatriots that "terrorism is knocking at Italy's door." Pisanu's remark seemed prescient when one of the failed copycat bombers fled London two weeks later and sought refuge with a brother-in-law in Rome. (It did not comfort the authorities that the terrorist had attended grade school in Italy and spoke passable Italian.) In fall 2005, Italian news media reported that the Jordanian insurgent leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, had sent "an agent" to Italy to prepare attacks, at the same time reporting that hundreds of undocumented immigrants continued to arrive on the shores of Southern Italy. Combined with the riots in neighboring France, these developments have led the Italian government to move forward on an ambitious program creating new structures to include "moderate Muslims" in the apparatus of Italian state-society relations.

The Center-Right government of 2001-6 led by Silvio Berlusconi had to balance objections to integrating Muslims from the *Lega Nord* party, while trying to defuse domestic opposition to Italian participation in the "war on terror." The accidental killing of a top Italian intelligence official in Iraq and the alleged CIA rendition of a Milan imam to his native Egypt were a source of embarrassment for the Berlusconi government. In mid-August 2005, Berlusconi announced he would begin a planned withdrawal of 10% of Italy's 3,000 troops one month earlier than the planned September date; defense minister Antonio Martino informed a parliamentary committee that the Italian military presence in Iraq would end by December 2006.

The Berlusconi government also went to great lengths to signal that it was not capitulating to the threat of violence. A series of new measures marked a definitive shift from the police and judiciary's traditional focus on leftist radicals and mafia violence, towards the new exigencies of the state's efforts against Islamic radicalism. After earlier delays, a new anti-terror law was quickly approved in August 2005 in the wake of the London attacks. The law gives the Interior ministry expanded powers, including expedited deportations of foreigners deemed to pose a national security threat or who are suspected of belonging to a terrorist organization. And, at the insistence of the *Lega Nord,* a junior partner in the governing coalition, heavy fines and jail time were introduced to punish anyone wearing a Burqa in public, updating existing legislation against face coverings. The first major antiterrorism exercises involving thousands of rescue workers and extras took place in Milan and Rome soon thereafter, simulating attacks on the airport, commuter rail and the city's subway. Prosecutors in Milan and Rome ordered dozens of raids in the aftermath of the London bombings, resulting in almost 200

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arrests. Four expulsions of suspected Muslim extremists followed – including an imam, a vice-president of an Islamic institute in Como, and a suspected member of an armed Algerian fundamentalist group. But the heart of the government's program involves extending its hand to those it deems "moderate." After nearly three years of discussion, Pisanu announced in November 2005 that the government had completed preparations for a "Consultative Council for Islam" (*Consulta islamica*) with representatives from a range of civil society associations. One way of integrating Muslims, officials have come to believe, is by making a place for Islam amongst the recognized religions in Italian state-church relations. Pisanu also affirmed the government's faith in the national education system as a primary site of integration: "Muslim students should attend state schools and learn the Italian language… There is room for Muslim students in schools today, as there will be room for them tomorrow in the workplace, which they will have access to so long as they grow up in respect of our laws."

A New Immigration Society

To understand why it has taken so long to formally engage leaders from immigrant communities, it is worth noting that until the late 1970s, Italy was still primarily an *exporter* of manual labor, not a country of immigration.[2] Italy was never a colonial power of great significance, and Muslims arrived in contemporary Italy via a haphazard (and frequently undocumented) labor migration of the 1980s and 1990s – a far cry from the planned recruitment and bilateral association agreements of the 1950s and 1960s in Germany and France. The early 1990s witnessed the emergence of the first Muslim umbrella organizations that regrouped the several hundred prayer spaces that opened up across Italy. Before their numbers doubled in the course of the 1990s (from 300,000 in early 1990s to more than 650,000 in 2000), public debate was still dominated by "first generation" issues – such as prayer space and prayer time during work. There was not much in the way of second-generation pressures (for example, Muslim students in schools.) One study found that only 10,000 of Italy's half-million legally resident Muslims in 2000 were Italian citizens (not including converts; children born to immigrants in Italy are eligible to apply for Italian citizenship at age 18).

But the first signs of significant demographic changes caused alarm bells to ring in government ministries. An internal Interior Ministry memorandum estimated the number of Muslims in Italy at roughly 1,000,000 in 2004, and it is thought that Muslim immigrants now account for 35-40% of all foreign residents. The number of foreigners in Italian jails nearly quadrupled (to 14,000) between 1990 and 2002.[3] Statistics showed the number of students of North African origin attending Italian schools nearly doubled from 10,312 to 19,044 from the 1996-97 to the 1998-99 school years. In absolute terms, foreign students still account for less than 7% (and Muslims pupils, around 2%) of the general student population of 7.5 million. Moreover, the number of immigrant small business owners from Muslim countries has more than doubled since 2000, to 51,000.[4]

But it should be noted that Muslims in Italy constitute an unusually heterogeneous population, unlike French Muslims, who are predominantly of North African origin or Muslims in Germany, who are overwhelmingly Turkish. Muslims in

[2] Stefano Allievi, "Immagini di un Islam plurale," *Humanitas* 55 (6/2000), 858-873.

[3] "Clandestino & criminale: pregiudizi e realtà," *GNOSIS* no. 1, October-December 2004; see also Open Society Report on Islam in Italy (2004).

[4] Moroccan nationals made up a majority of these small business owners (61%), followed by Tunisians (15%), Egyptians (13%), Libyans (3%) and Algerians (2.5%). See "L'islam in Italia ha voglia di impresa," *Agenzia Internazionale Stampa Estero*, January 3, 2006.

Italy hail from thirty different countries: roughly a quarter are of Albanian origin, another quarter are of Moroccan origin followed by smaller Egyptian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, and finally, a small (but vocal) group of between 20,000 and 50,000 Italian converts.

Divisions amongst the center-right parties have prevented the government from being consistent in its efforts to reach out to Muslims. The *Lega's* inflammatory rhetoric has caused considerable tensions with Muslims, and deep divisions have also emerged concerning immigration policy between the *Lega* and Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* party. One issue at the center of debate is the proposal to give legal immigrants the right to vote in local elections: originally put forward by the left-wing opposition party it was embraced and re-launched by the leader of the right-wing *Alleanza Nazionale*, Gianfranco Fini, who was also foreign minister. Such a proposal remains anathema to the *Lega*.

Islam, Italian-Style: *La Consulta Islamica* (2003-2005)

The presence of a growing proportion of persons of Muslim origin in state institutions has raised a number of practical questions that require policy responses: from the issue of religious schools, to the creation of Muslim cemeteries, to the nomination of chaplains in prisons. The multiplication of Muslim prayer spaces in the last two decades—there are now around 450—also caught the attention of government officials who had little oversight of the provenance of mosque financing and imams in Italy. Beginning in 2003, the Center-Right government began to assume political responsibility for state-Islam relations. Interior Minister Pisanu declared that he would set out to find a moderate majority in order to marginalize the extremist minority: "Italian mosques must be liberated from preachers of violence, from the recruiters of holy war, and the agents of foreign interests."[5]

Previous sluggishness in granting recognition to Muslim communities was intended to avoid the unknown consequences of ending the representative monopoly of the Saudi and Moroccan dominated *Centro Culturale Islamico d'Italia* (CCII) in Rome, which had served as a de facto representative for organized Islam since 1974. Chartered well before the settlement of any significant number of labor migrants, the CCII's administrative council is made up mostly of ambassadors of most Muslim countries accredited with the Italian state and Vatican City. CCII boasts the largest mosque in Europe (5,000 person capacity including outdoor spaces), but counts only twenty-five other prayer spaces under its organizational umbrella. The centre-right government was loath to jeopardize diplomatic relations with these international guardians of Islam, who oversaw the creation of prayer spaces for labor migrants in the 1970s and 1980s. Italian administrators shared the same anxieties as their counterparts in other European countries regarding the integration of a new religious community that outgrew the "Embassy Islam" that emanates from the guardian states. Several other umbrella organizations claiming to represent Islam in Italy have competed for government recognition since the 1990s. The largest is the Ancona-based *Unione delle Comunità ed Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia* UCOII (1990), which is associated with the political Islam of the Muslim Brotherhood. The UCOII claims to represent 200-300 Muslim associations and approximately 70-120 prayer spaces.

In a crucial change from previous models of consultation in Italy that relied almost exclusively on representatives of "Embassy Islam," the new Consultative Council will include a representative of the UCOII along with "lay" civil society leaders and non-prayer associations in Italy. The UCOII secretary general, Mohamed Nour Dachan, had previously been snubbed in

[5] *La Repubblica,* May 2003.

Table 1
Official Number of Legally Resident Muslims [6]

Country	**1991**	**1998**	**2001**	**2003**
Morocco	91,009	145,843	194,617	227,616
Albania	28,816	91,537	163,868	233,616
Tunisia	47,793	47,261	60,441	60,572
Senegal	28,041	35,897	39,708	47,762
Egypt	25,576	27,664	37,674	44,798
Pakistan	7,593	10,817*	17,693	30,506
Bangladesh	--	--	--	32,391
Total	**288,357**	**391,150**	**c.444,725**	**677,261**

Table 2
Muslims and other Legally Resident Immigrants in Italian Regions[7]

	Muslims as % of immigrants in region (1998)	As % of Muslim Population in Italy (1999)	As % of all Immigrants in Italy (2003)
North	38.3%	54.2%	57.9%
Center	26.7%	29.2%	28%
South	40.3%	11.8%	10.5%
Sicily/Sardegna	44.5%	6.8%	3.6%

[6] Based on citizenship in a Muslim-majority country of origin; Sources: Commissione per le politiche dell'Integrazione 2002; Caritas-Migrantes Dossier Statistico 2002 and 2004; 2001 data from ISTAT.
[7] Sources: For 2002, Zincone; For 2003 data, Caritas/Migrantes Immigrazione Dossier Statistico 2004; for 1999 data, - Ministero Evangelico *tra* Arabi (MEtA) at www.meta.it.

official meetings. But he has increasingly tried to burnish the UCOII's image as a moderate organization, including organizing nation-wide demonstrations on September 11, 2004 "against war and terrorism." Dachan also volunteered his aid in negotiations to free Italian hostages in Iraq and, more recently, Yemen. Pisanu said of his decision to include Dachan, "I took into account what the UCOII is today—not its past—and the efforts it has made for a positive evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood in the whole world."[8]

The interior ministry has eliminated the earlier embargo on his political Islam federation's participation in the Consultative Council. But the Italian government proceeded slowly, crafting its response without rushing headlong into a final institutional arrangement. The Consultative Council was not, for now, accorded the status of a recognized community body as outlined in the Italian constitution. Pisanu argued that the Muslim population was not ripe for formal representation via the existing state-church mechanism, called an *Intesa*, used with assorted Christian and Jewish communities and which can only be signed with Italian citizens. Instead, the interior minister used a non-traditional formula to make individual appointments to the Consultative Council. In contrast with the French government's *Conseil Français du culte musulman*, which is explicitly aimed to represent the "6-7% of the mosque-going public," the Consultative Council targets those whom Pisanu called the "95% of moderate Muslims who attend neither mosques, nor madrassas nor Islamic cultural centers and who only came to our countries to improve their living conditions and with the sincere intention to respect our law and order."[9]

The chosen participants were thus not restricted to religious leadership. The Consultative Council reflects the range of Muslim civil society in Italy without any pretense of "representing" Muslims in Italy. The 16 members named in November 2005 and approved by the government in February 2006, include an UCOII representative, a CCII/Muslim World League representative and a representative of the *Comunità religiosa islamica d'Italia* (COREIS) alongside three association leaders, three journalists, two health workers, an imam, a literature professor, a student leader, an author, and a charity worker. There are four women; one 22 year old student; twelve national origins are represented (only nine of the sixteen members are of Arab origin); and eight of the sixteen are Italian citizens (several have been naturalized). This is a sharp departure from the short-lived *Consiglio Islamico d'Italia* (Islamic Council of Italy, 1998-2001), which included just five leaders from religious federations, and which fell apart because of differences between representatives of the Muslim World League and the UCOII before it could present a common request for an *Intesa*.

Because the Consultative Council has no representative ambitions, Pisanu argued that it does not need to correspond to the balance of power amongst Muslim federations and prayer spaces in Italy. As Pisanu freely admitted, the Consultative Council would be a loose organization at first: "The *Consulta Islamica* does not want to be and cannot ever be a place for effective representation of the Muslims of Italy…My project is only an organism of consultative character, composed of people of my trust whom I will choose among Muslims who speak Italian, are of sure democratic faith and proven institutional loyalty."[10] Pisanu thus formulated this definitive (if slow-

[8] "La Consulta islamica condanna," *Libertà*, February 10, 2006.

[9] Giuseppe Pisanu "La sfida delle religioni alla democrazia," ACLI Convegno nazionale di studi, Orvieto, September 11, 2004.

[10] Giuseppe Pisanu "La sfida delle religioni alla democrazia," ACLI Convegno nazionale di studi, Orvieto, September 11, 2004.

Table 3
Composition of the Islamic Consultative Council (November 2005)

	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	PROFESSION/ORGANIZATION
Yahya S.Y. Pallavicini	Italy	Imam/Italian Islamic Religious Community
Mario Scialoja	Italy	Muslim World League
Mohamed Nour Dachan	Syria	Union of Islamic Communities in Italy
Ejaz Ahmad	Pakistan	Journalist
Khalil Altoubat	Jordan	Physiotherapist
Rachid Amadia	Algeria	Imam (Salerno)
Kalthoum Bent Amor	Tunisia	Arabic professor (Univ. of Urbino)
Khalid Chaouki	Italy/Morocco	Student/Young Muslims of Italy
Zeinab Ahmed Dolal	Somalia	Health worker
Gulshan Jivraj Anivalle	Italy/Kenya	Ismaelite Community of Italy
Tantush Mansur	Libya	Islamic Union in the West
Mohamed Saady	Italy/Morocco	"Beyond Borders" association
Souad Sbai	Morocco	Journalist/ Moroccan Women's Association
Roland Seiko	Albania	Journalist
Younis Tawfik	Italy/Iraq	Writer
Mahadou Siradio Thiam	Senegal	Charity worker

Table 4
Working Agenda – Islamic Consultative Council (February 2006)

1) Integration issues at home, school and the workplace;
2) Safeguarding the specificities of religion and Muslim traditions – men and womens' rights; use of the veil; observance of Muslim holidays and precepts; ritual animal slaughter; Muslim cemeteries;
3) Italian-language sermons in mosques and the training of imams;
4) Registration of prayer spaces, to normalize 'critical situations, e.g. in Conegliano, Gallarate, Colle Valdelsa);
5) Social conditions and rights of immigrants (asylum, humanitarian protection, residence permits, family reunification, citizenship);
6) Access of Muslim chaplains to prisons and hospitals

moving) overture to Islam in terms aimed to appeal both to the conservative Italian majority as well as the Muslim associations that are the object of this new policy instrument.

Outlook for the future

In general, news of the Consultative Council was welcomed by Muslim civil society leaders—including the representatives with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood—and greeted cautiously by leaders of "Embassy Islam" tied to diplomatic representatives.[11] In response to Pisanu's announcement of plans for the Council, a number of prominent Muslims published a "Loyalty Pact to the Italian Republic" in May 2003. In addition to the Consultative Council, the Interior Minister encouraged a complementary process of political integration at the level of local government, which some local administrators have started to explore (e.g. in Siena and Imperia). In a three-page memorandum on "Inter-religious Dialogue" sent to all Italian prefects, the Minister laid out instructions to the prefects to engage in informal consultations with the broad reality of associational life in Italian towns and cities. Quietly, a pragmatic solution was being put in place to make contact with Muslim representatives—including the UCOII—on the local level.

In their first meeting, the Consultative Council members condemned violent protests against caricatures of the prophet Muhammed, as well as the caricatures themselves: like their French counterparts, the UCOII has called for the application of laws against inciting racial hatred (*Legge Mancini*) against newspapers that reprinted the cartoons. The Danish embassy released a common declaration with UCOII. Pisanu commented: "anyone participating in this meeting would have understood that there is a moderate Islam in Italy."[12] In their second meeting, one month later, leaders asked the government to develop an optional Muslim religious hour in public schools (seen by many as an alternative to qur'an schools).

The next few years will be decisive for the *Consulta*'s future; given its unofficial nature and reliance on the presence of Pisanu, the *Consulta* inevitably changes shape and meaning in the hands of his successors as interior minister. In some respects, it therefore resembles the 1990 French Council for reflection on Islam in France (CORIF), a consultative body named by interior minister Pierre Joxe. Disagreements among participants and successive ministers' abandonment of the project led to two more attempts before arriving at the formula of indirect CFCM elections held by Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy in spring 2003. But like the CORIF, the *Consulta's* very existence reflects a new consensus among politicians in Italy regarding the importance of integrating Muslims and engaging in structured dialogue.

The efforts of Pisanu won out, for example, over increasingly strident objections of the *Lega Nord*, some of whose leaders have insisted "there is no such thing as Muslim moderates." That party's newspaper, *La Padania*, has waged a print campaign against individual Consultative Council participants. Moderate Muslim environments "are the water in which fundamentalist fish swim," said Roberto Castelli, the *Lega* minister of justice. He later said that he would have voted against the *Consulta* but had missed the cabinet meeting where it was approved: "it is a bad signal, typically Italian, that we are a weak country."[13]

[11] Interview by the author with Abdallah Redouane, General Secretary of the CICI, January 2004.

[12] "La Consulta islamica condanna," *Libertà*, February 10, 2006.

[13] Gian Maria de Francesco, "Consulta islamica, la Lega si «dissocia» dal governo," *Il Giornale*, February 11, 2006. (Another Lega minister, Roberto Calderoli, sparked riots in Libya after wearing a t-shirt with the offending caricatures

But both the Catholic Church and former Christian Democratic Party members within the former governing coalition demonstrated sympathy for the respect of religious customs and interdictions – from the creation of the Consultative Council to support for religious expression like the headscarf and caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed. In a country with more than 100,000 nuns, forbidding Muslim women from wearing a head covering has never been under serious consideration. Pisanu has said he could not imagine banning headscarves because his own mother "wore a Sardinian outfit, including a headscarf, and in wintertime she would cover herself up to the eyes with a heavy scarf." Pope Benedict XVI, whose recent forays into domestic Italian politics have been noticeable, was thought to encourage the government's consultation in a July 2005 speech calling for the search for "elements for dialogue within Islam." Two important Catholic periodicals, *Famiglia Cristiana* and the *Osservatore Romano*, criticized the caricatures of the Prophet: "The intelligence of reason is sometimes forced to abdicate when faced with vulgarity and insult."[14] Even after an Italian priest was killed in Turkey, apparently in connection with the caricature controversy, Pisanu stated that "If the symbols of my religion were offended, I would feel authorized to protest energetically."

Although it includes representatives of political Islam, the Consultative Council still lacks the legitimacy of the French consultation process because no formal elections have been held. By including so many "lay" civil society representatives, the Italian state is freeing its state-Islam consultations from the strict constraints within the actual landscape of prayer rooms. A spokesman for the interior minister said in an interview "No European country has the correct solution at the ready. Every solution is the work of a tailor – there are no *prêt-a-porter* solutions. Since one must take measures to promote social integration, each state is looking for the right responses to a complex problem."[15] Meanwhile, a durable and meaningful sign of integration came about in the 2006 parliamentary vote when the the Rifondazione comunista and the left-wing Margherita party elected Italy's first two Arab Muslim deputies. The center-left government that succeeded the Berlusconi-led coalition has indicated it will maintain the Consulta, and Interior Minister Amato met with Muslim leaders in June 2006 to ask their advice on a new citizenship law and naturalization practices. The Consulta thus holds the distinction of being one area where center-left has not set about undoing the center-right's policies from the moment elections were conceded.

on Italian television; he then resigned under pressure from Berlusconi.)

[14] Francesco M. Valiante, "Progresso di libertà o arretramento di civiltà?" L'Osservatore Romano, February 6-7, 2006.

[15] Interview with Luca Mantovani by the author, September 2004.

BOOK ESSAYS AND REVIEWS

Allegretti on **Bobbio**'s *A piu' voci. Amministrazioni pubbliche, imprese, associazioni e cittadini nei processi decisionali inclusive,* **Piazza** on **Caciagli and Di Virgilio**'s *Eleggere il sindaco. La nuova democrazia locale in Italia e in Europa,* **Barisione** on **Calise**'s *La Terza Repubblica. Partiti contro Presidenti,* **Chiarini** on **Capano and Gualmini**'s *La pubblica amministrazione in Italia,* **Attinà** on **Cotta, Isernia and Verzichelli**'s *L'Europa in Italia. Elite, opinione pubblica e decisioni*, **Drake** on **Gardner**'s *Mission Italy: On the Front Lines of the Cold War,* **Cento Bull** on **Iaccarino**'s *La rigenerazione. Bagnoli: politiche pubbliche e societa' civile nella Napoli postindustriale,* **Tronconi** on **Mastropaolo**'s *La mucca pazza della democrazia. Nuove destre, populismo, antipolitica.*

Luigi Bobbio, *A piu' voci. Amministrazioni pubbliche, imprese, associazioni e cittadini nei processi decisionali inclusivi*
Napoli: Edizioni ESI, 2004, pp.152, ISBN: 88-495-0925-1.

Rarely was a title so well-chosen. In fact, this book edited by Luigi Bobbio (professor at the University of Turin), shifted from the idea of a handbook to a sort of plural symphony. It targeted a specific group of readers, being funded and strongly supported by the Department of the Public Function and by the Ministry Council Presidency (curiously at the time of Berlusconi government), and dedicated to public administrators developing inclusive decision making processes. But, also due to his democratic distribution (it is downloadable from many websites of institutions adhering to the "*Programma Cantieri*") it was immediately redirected to, and appreciated by, a wide variety of different social actors. No doubt that the language helps, being simple and understandable by different competence-holders. The handbook-structure and the clear editing multiply the attractive effect.

The book reflects a point of view on 'social dialogue' that is likely to be shared by its supporting institutions and by the main targeted readers: the idea of stakeholders' participation to decision-making as 'tool' of a 'governance' approach to the urban and territorial management. But, beyond and between the lines, there is space for other and different points a view. That possibility emerges because the volume structure is also plural, studded with dozens of 'voices' reported in more than 50 special boxes through interviews and short case-study tales. This framework allows alternative visions of social dialogue to emphasize the political dimension of an 'epochal change' that sees shared government as 'ordinary practice' (rather than exceptional). There is even space for more "eccentric" perspectives, presenting popular participation in policy planning as an educating tool for all involved actors.

The book opening celebrates the paradigm of complexity. It argues that increasing resource scarcity requires a shift in thinking about local policies, and observes that techniques introduced in recent years (like management control by objectives, strategic assessment, customer satisfaction, benchmarking and so on) have

been targeted to improve the service delivery, to control and modify the 'output' of local institutions' performance.

Yet, local authorities do not develop public policies only to deliver services, but also to set rules, redistribute resources, stimulate social actors to change behaviours and adopt different perspectives. This complexity reflects the fact that 'public policies' are set not only by public institutions, but increasingly by private or third sector's actors dealing with public interests in "unconventional forms".

In this setting – where the system of progressively outsourcing public services is not even put into discussion, but accepted as a quite natural event - the accent of inquiry needs to shift to the organisation of decision-making processes, with a focus on novel approaches to outputs and methods. Following the metaphor that Bobbio uses: to create a "negotiation or participation table", *a table* is not always needed. And sometimes, also *the chairs* could be counter-productive in trying to stimulate new relationships between social actors…

As a result, Bobbio's book includes the 'soul' of a handbook, but it is mainly a tool aiming to help readers to pose themselves the "right questions". When is it worthwhile to begin inclusive processes? How can the appropriate participants be identified? How can a positive interaction among participants be reached and which is the most appropriate way to solve conflicts? Which are the professional skills required? What steps need to be taken to transform informal choices into administrative decisions? How can social conflicts promote further understanding? Which results should one expect, and how should these results be assessed?

The handbook answers these questions proposing approaches, techniques and methods that are currently being applied in Italy. It also contains some useful examples and case studies based on the experience of local authorities.

In sum, this work by Luigi Bobbio is a handbook, because it offers some answers, instruments, examples, and possible solutions. It is also more than a handbook, because the wide variety of nuanced answers is used to reflect on the need of contextualisation. It has been honestly conceived, explicitly presenting the perspectives of the author and supporting institutions, but also leaving an open space for readers to elaborate in the perspective of what David Osborne and Ted Gaebler have named "catalytic government". Hence, it presents a tool that could be improved and revisited in future versions with even more 'plural' work. Behind this work lies the implicit but clear idea that local institutions share a duty to continuously "experiment" because on them and their constructive interaction with society also depends the destiny of larger institutions, like states and supranational organisations.

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Mario Caciagli e Aldo Di Virgilio (a cura di), *Eleggere il sindaco. La nuova democrazia locale in Italia e in Europa*
Novara: UTET, 2005, pp. 210, ISBN: 88-7750-971-6.

The reform of local government institutions in Italy, characterized by the introduction of direct mayoral election in 1993, undoubtedly represented one of the newest elements in the political-institutional system. The new *demoelected* Italian mayors, nevertheless, are not an isolated case in the European panorama, because also other countries of the Old Continent introduced this change in the '90s, and others experimented or proposed it.

The book edited by Mario Caciagli & Aldo Di Virgilio is composed of a collection of essays about eight European countries: it contributes to local power studies by providing "a cognitive contribution to the «mechanisms of selection and choice of the political personnel», in particular to the way of election of the first citizen" (p. 191), and

developing “the first elements of a compared analysis, in order to, of course, discover common motivations and trends, and also diversities and differences in goals and outcomes” (p. 192).

In the ‘90s, the direct election of the mayor has been formally introduced in three out of the nine examined countries: in Italy (A. Di Virgilio), in every municipality; in Germany (N. Kersting) in every Land, except for the three Land-cities; in Austria (G. Pallaver) in six Lander out of nine. In two other great systems, “the mayor is not directly elected, but it is as if he was” (p. 193). In Spain (L. Lopez Nieto) a proportional system determines elections for city-councillors, who in turn elect one among them as mayor. Yet, the competition is strongly personalized between the head-list candidate mayors of the two main parties (PSOE and PP); this is the reason why the municipal government form is defined «semi-presidential». In the case of France, E. Dupoirier even talks of «municipal monarchy», because the strongly personalized competition between the head-list of right and left coalitions produces the “permanence in charge, also for decades, of many mayors, who sometimes, at least in the smallest municipalities, hand the sceptre to their sons” (p. 193). In England (G. Stoker), direct elections have been introduced only in the Great London municipality, whilst the labour proposal to extend it to all the communes encounters resistances in the city-council tradition of self-government. In Norway (H. O. Larsen) the mayors’ demoelection has been experimented in some communes alone, although the option has been extended to everyone by the legislator. In the Flanders region of Belgium (J. Ackaert), the reform, in 2004, was still in progress. Denmark (U. Kjaer) is the only exception to the new rule in the nine studied systems.

The Italian case is the one with the strongest and clearest reasons for the reform, which changed the municipal form of government to «semi-parliamentarist» (p. 11): to achieve the stability of the executives, to strengthen their leader and to bring citizens closer to institutions, stating a direct relation with their rulers, supplanting and punishing the parties, and offering a tool of clear and effective choice. In Germany, Austria and Norway, the introduction of mayoral elections has been placed in a context of «phobia against parties» (p. 195) widespread among the electorate. Reform was pursued with the aim of bringing citizens closer to politics, increasing the electoral participation and fighting against the abstention. The pro reform motivations in the New Labour proposal in England – to obtain more responsibility and efficacy – met strong resistances and criticisms: from the excessive concentration of powers in the hands of the mayors to the risks of stalemate caused by the separation between the executive and the council; from the risks of a personalization of the local politics to the incompatibility of a strong executive with the development of decentralized policy-making and wider participation.

Where the mayors’ demoelection has been introduced, it satisfied the expectations of the legislators and citizens, but not all, because rules are not sufficient alone to solve problems (p. 197). In Italy, increased administrative stability; personalization of the electoral competition; incumbency effect and the possibility of alternation join the satisfaction among citizens for being able to choose clearly and immediately the mayor, showing autonomy with regard to national politics. Nevertheless, the reform “has not inverted the trend of the decline in electoral participation” (p. 19). Similarly, in Germany and Austria the main goal of lowering abstention has not yet been achieved, and some criticisms emerged regarding the risks of excessive personalization to the detriment of programmatic politics. In Norway, electoral participation diminished, whilst the experiment of the Great London in England seems to have achieved a positive evaluation.

Finally, Caciagli outlines “the balance that comparison allows” (p. 191) in ten years of experience in Europe, asserting that, except for the Danish case, “a common

tendency appears sure enough: the strengthening of the leader of the executive which passes also through its direct election" (p. 200). Caciagli concludes that "a new local democracy is becoming established in Europe" (p.201). The author nevertheless wonders about its meaning, stating that "it would be illusory, or simply wrong, to think that a «new local democracy» means «more participation»" (p. 201): citizens do not seek more participation, rather they delegate to rulers, and expect transparency, efficiency and services from them, organizing themselves in interest groups and seeking clear and responsible interlocutors. The result is an exclusively institutional conception of the new local democracy, explicitly focused on the mechanisms deriving from the mayors' direct election (p. 191). This perspective fails to take into account the pressures for participation from below that, in the last decade, have been shown in Italy and in Europe (from the increase of the spontaneous citizens' committees to the first experiments in «participative budgeting»).

In conclusion, the book represents an important contribution to the study of local government and politics in Europe and, above all, in Italy. However, in the Italian case, research carried out on mayoral and municipal politics since the '93 reform has not been considered.

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Mauro Calise, *La Terza Repubblica. Partiti contro Presidenti*
Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2006, pp. 160, ISBN: 88-420-7851-4.

Dopo la Seconda Repubblica, che ha lasciato in eredità al paese il sistema dell'alternanza, il libro di Calise annuncia l'avvento, nell'Italia di oggi, della Terza Repubblica. Ma senza trionfalismi: la Terza Repubblica è presentata come l'esito di una "rivoluzione tradita", come "un'età di mezzo, indefinibile, senza qualità". Un'era dai tratti poco decifrabili, frutto di compromessi tra spinte diverse, tanto velleitarie quanto confuse: un vago mix di presidenzialismo timido, incompiuto, e di neo-partitocrazia latente. Un assetto "parapresidenziale" all'italiana, insomma.

All'orizzonte della Prima Repubblica morente si stagliava la "repubblica ideale", o "immaginaria", del bipartitismo perfetto, vagheggiata fin dalla crisi del 1992, e dotata di un vero e proprio mito fondatore: il credo maggioritario. Ma il sistema elettorale maggioritario, in un paese dal territorio politicamente disomogeneo, ricco di minoranze ideologicamente centrifughe, e in assenza di due partiti già predominanti sulla scena politica, invece dell'atteso bipartitismo finiva per produrre un bipolarismo multipartitico e frammentato. Però la ricetta di fondo, "l'accoppiata vincente tra bipartitismo e direttismo", piantava solide radici nella nuova cultura politica degli italiani: agli elettori sembra ormai normale poter scegliere direttamente il proprio governo. L'idea, peraltro estranea ai modelli costituzionali europei, si è affermata in Italia anche attraverso la pratica del referendum, istituto di democrazia diretta così familiare alla politica nazionale, specie degli ultimi decenni.

Per certi aspetti, l'Italia appare in effetti un caso paradigmatico di presidenzializzazione del processo politico in assenza di un sistema presidenziale. Una prova: il forte rafforzamento del governo, ormai divenuto il principale produttore di atti normativi. Così, anche senza una vera riforma costituzionale, l'Italia degli ultimi vent'anni ha vissuto un processo di riforma amministrativa molto netto, benché poco visibile per il grande pubblico, nel funzionamento delle istituzioni: da un parte, l'esecutivo ha notevolmente aumentato la propria capacità di iniziativa autonoma, dall'altra ha potenziato la propria influenza sul parlamento. E questa crescita del "Governo in Parlamento" ha reso la premiership la vera posta in gioco della politica italiana.

Di certo, un'importante premessa

per questo rafforzamento dell'esecutivo va ricercata nella legittimazione elettorale diretta del capo del governo. Il profondo sentimento antipartitico diffuso in Italia già fin dalla fine degli anni '80 produceva infatti una forte domanda verso un sistema che scavalcasse la mediazione dei partiti. Se a livello locale ciò si è tradotto in leggi elettorali in grado di definire giunte e consigli comunali, provinciali e regionali in modo diretto, senza le estenuanti trattative partitiche dell'era proporzionale, a livello nazionale l'elezione diretta del governo è da attribuire – questo il riconoscimento di Calise al ruolo inconsapevolmente giocato da Silvio Berlusconi – alla nascita di Forza Italia, partito centripeto, riaggregante, vero portatore del bipolarismo in Italia. La coalizione di centrosinistra nasceva infatti anche per simmetria strategica rispetto alla nuova aggregazione di centrodestra, e l'elemento discriminante fra i due schieramenti restava per dodici anni l'opzione pro o antiberlusconiana. Non solo: Berlusconi apportava anche alla politica italiana quel registro di comunicazione televisiva moderna, americana, che nel caso esemplare degli *infomercials* – il canale già prediletto da Ross Perot - permetteva al candidato un rapporto diretto, privo della mediazione giornalistica e del contraddittorio politico, con l'elettore. Questo, a sua volta, guardava all'offerta elettorale con uno sguardo presumibilmente diverso, più orientato al leader, al candidato nazionale pseudopresidenziale, configurando talvolta un tipo di voto che è stato definito "carismatico e/o populistico", con un passaggio da un modello "razionalista" a un modello "impressionista" di spiegazione delle motivazioni psicologiche degli elettori, o almeno di un segmento rilevante di questi. D'altra parte, l'affermarsi del primo "partito personale" in Italia dava il via a un'accelerazione di tutti i personalismi, sia nell'identificazione crescente dei partiti con i rispettivi leader nazionali, sia nell'esasperazione dell'azione particolaristica dei politici locali. Qui Calise mostra bene un paradosso della trasformazione dei partiti italiani, costretti a diventare organizzativamente sempre più leggeri per l'impossibilità di finanziare – dopo Tangentopoli – un apparato ipertrofico, ma divenuti i pivot di una classe politica elettiva che conta decine di migliaia di rappresentanti sul territorio. Al partito dei funzionari si sostituisce così il partito degli eletti, il "party in public office", sorta di incubatrice di dipendenti pubblici in carriera, con un costo non meno ingente per le casse dello stato. Il "partito leggero" – commenta allora Calise – era forse il "bersaglio sbagliato".

Nella Terza Repubblica, la sfida di fondo si gioca allora fra due opposte tendenze, verso un centro di potere presidenziale/esecutivo più forte, o verso una riaffermazione della vecchia oligarchia partitica, dove "ricatti, veti incrociati e minacce più o meno esplicite", anche e soprattutto all'interno di una stessa coalizione, dettano i tempi dell'azione politica. Anche in questo, l'analisi di Calise appare più che mai d'attualità.

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Giliberto Capano e Elisabetta Gualmini (a cura di), *La pubblica amministrazione in Italia*
Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006, pp. 273, ISBN 88-15-106960.

Di un volume che registrasse i cambiamenti avvenuti nella pubblica amministrazione italiana nel corso degli ultimi quindici anni si avvertiva certamente la necessità. L'esigenza di fissare un punto fermo, di descrivere assetti, funzioni e processi del settore pubblico, di fornire chiavi di lettura capaci di ricostruire le caratteristiche d'insieme di un sistema amministrativo che tra il 1990 e il 2005 ha visto un ciclo di innovazioni senza precedenti, ispira il lavoro curato da Giliberto Capano ed Elisabetta Gualmini. Nell'Introduzione (Giliberto Capano ed Elisabetta Gualmini), i due curatori fissano le quattro dimensioni

cruciali del fenomeno amministrativo: le strutture, le funzioni, il personale, i processi decisionali. Le *configurazioni strutturali* sono il risultato dei principi di differenziazione e di integrazione delle attività amministrative e da esse derivano conseguenze rilevanti sotto vari profili: il modo di dare corso al lavoro amministrativo, la condivisione dei valori e delle norme formali e informali, il tipo di relazioni interpersonali e le modalità di gestione delle risorse umane. Le *funzioni* costituiscono le attività di base, che ovviamente possono essere di diverso tipo (dalle attività burocratico-certificative, a quelle di produzione di beni e servizi sociali, a quelle di promozione di iniziative para-imprenditoriali), attraverso le quali le organizzazioni si riproducono, si consolidano ed estendono la loro presenza sul territorio. Il *personale*, con caratteristiche socio-anagrafiche e con modalità d'azione che evidentemente risentono dei criteri della gestione da parte dell'organizzazione, è la risorsa fondamentale di un'amministrazione di fronte all'esigenza di rispondere efficacemente alle domande espresse dai cittadini. Infine, l'esame dei *processi decisionali* consente di osservare le amministrazioni "in azione" (non solo durante l'attuazione, ma anche nella fase della progettazione delle politiche pubbliche, nonché in quella della valutazione e controllo), le diverse logiche di azione e le specificità del comportamento amministrativo. Intorno a tali dimensioni è stata organizzata la descrizione – oltre che dell'evoluzione storica dell'amministrazione italiana (Giliberto Capano) – di ciascuno dei settori in cui la nostra amministrazione si articola: i ministeri (Elisabetta Gualmini), le autorità indipendenti (Sabrina Cavatorto), gli enti pubblici non economici (Elisabetta Gualmini), le regioni (Brunetta Baldi), gli enti locali (Andrea Lippi), il servizio sanitario nazionale (Federico Toth), il sistema scolastico (Giliberto Capano).

Il pregio dei singoli contributi è di perseguire con intelligenza quelle finalità prevalentemente descrittive (ma non mancano spunti interpretativi nell'ambito di ciascun contributo) esplicitamente dichiarate nell'Introduzione e finalizzate a costruire una conoscenza empirica capace di mettere a fuoco le caratteristiche morfologiche e di funzionamento delle amministrazioni italiane nel primo decennio del Duemila. Sotto questo profilo, il testo in esame ha la capacità di illustrare con competenza e precisione un quadro di insieme delle multiformi esperienze amministrative del nostro paese e costituisce una ulteriore conferma della capacità della scienza dell'amministrazione di restituire e decifrare la complessità delle amministrazioni pubbliche. Correttamente i curatori collocano il volume nell'ambito della scienza dell'amministrazione di derivazione politologica, la quale iscrive il dato positivo in un più ampio sfondo politico-istituzionale e dimostra che le politiche di riforma amministrativa risentono intensamente delle dinamiche del sistema politico, inclusi i valori, le ideologie e i sistemi di preferenze degli attori che tali riforme promuovono o ostacolano. Inoltre, la prospettiva prescelta valorizza gli strumenti che la teoria dell'organizzazione mette a disposizione di coloro che intendono esaminare il funzionamento delle strutture pubbliche in quanto organizzazioni complesse, al fine di comprendere il condizionamento che le proprietà organizzative sono in grado di sviluppare nei confronti del comportamento amministrativo. Infine tale approccio, di cui i curatori opportunamente sottolineano la natura interdisciplinare - data la contiguità con discipline quali la teoria dell'organizzazione, l'analisi delle politiche pubbliche, la sociologia, l'economia aziendale - è orientato a ricostruire il processo di messa in opera delle politiche pubbliche, nella consapevolezza che ambiguità e incertezza siano fattori spesso ineluttabili del percorso attuativo, dai quali scaturiscono disfunzioni, tensioni e scollamenti tra obiettivi iniziali e risultati finali.

Un merito che spetta ai curatori è quello di svolgere, sempre nella parte introduttiva, alcune considerazioni di

carattere generale e tran/settoriale, allo scopo di mettere in evidenza le tendenze comuni ai diversi comparti pubblici presi in esame. Per quanto riguarda gli *assetti organizzativi*, l'elemento più rilevante da registrare è il superamento del modello amministrativo centralizzato e uniforme, a favore di un pluralismo organizzativo che nel periodo più recente (1990-2005) è stato certo favorito da politiche di decentramento e di autonomismo. Nel periodo sopra indicato, si è assistito infatti ad una vera e propria esplosione della differenziazione dei moduli organizzativi (enti pubblici non economici, agenzie amministrative, autorità indipendenti) con la conseguente frammentazione del sistema amministrativo. In secondo luogo, il modello gerarchico/funzionale è stato affiancato da quello divisionale, che centra la distribuzione del lavoro sul prodotto/servizio da fornire e implica un'ampia autonomia gestionale. Sul piano delle *funzioni*, va evidenziato un consistente decentramento delle competenze dal centro alla periferia: alle regioni è stato assegnato uno spettro ampio e variegato di funzioni amministrative e deliberative, mentre gli enti locali hanno visto aumentare il loro carico funzionale, a causa delle nuovi compiti di programmazione e di erogazione dei servizi. E' aumentata l'interdipendenza tra i diversi livelli di governo, ma sono anche cresciute le funzioni di regolazione (che impegnano i ministeri, le regioni, gli enti pubblici e le autorità indipendenti), nonché quelle di programmazione e pianificazione (che riguardano regioni, ministeri ed enti locali) e, infine, i compiti di produzione ed erogazione dei servizi (a carico di comuni, aziende sanitarie, istituzioni scolastiche, ma anche di enti pubblici e agenzie amministrative). Anche il *personale* è stato investito, al pari delle altre dimensioni, dal processo di modernizzazione amministrativa ed il cambiamento, in questo caso, è stato ricercato attraverso la omogeneizzazione delle regole del lavoro pubblico con quelle del lavoro privato e la piena contrattualizzazione del rapporto di impiego, al fine di garantire flessibilità ed efficacia alle politiche di gestione delle risorse umane. Luci ed ombre accompagnano tali riforme, inclusa quella relativa al nuovo sistema di inquadramento del personale che, introdotta nel 1998, certamente ha razionalizzato l'assetto precedente, ma non ha eliminato alcune prassi tradizionali, come la distribuzione senza criteri selettivi della retribuzione accessoria o la tendenza generalizzata all'avanzamento di carriera. L'esame delle caratteristiche socio/anagrafiche, nonostante alcune significative differenze tra i comparti, mostra un pubblico impiego con un'età media elevata, un grado di istruzione ancora modesto, una maggioritaria presenza femminile e un'elevata presenza di posizioni dirigenziali. L'analisi dedicata ai *processi decisionali* mette in evidenza che le nostre amministrazioni hanno ormai incorporato nuove capacità e nuove razionalità. Sono state così rilevate: capacità di mediazione, confronto e negoziazione, anche nell'ambito di un sistema di *multi-level governance* che stimola tali logiche d'azione; capacità di ascolto e raccolta di istanze provenienti dall'esterno, di consulenza e indirizzo; abilità di pianificazione e programmazione, nonché di valutazione e monitoraggio, attività finalizzate ad esercitare un controllo sulle prestazioni che sappia rispondere ai criteri della trasparenza e della responsabilità operativa.

In definitiva, il libro rende conto – nell'ambito dei vari contributi – sia degli elementi di dinamismo e innovazione, che rappresentano ormai un dato acquisito per alcune amministrazioni (ministeri, regioni, enti locali), sia degli elementi di continuità (enti pubblici non economici), sia degli elementi di ambivalenza e di incoerenza (è il caso delle autorità indipendenti, del servizio sanitario nazionale, del sistema scolastico), che caratterizzano il complesso mondo delle amministrazioni pubbliche.

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Maurizio Cotta, Pierangelo Isernia e Luca Verzichelli (a cura di), *L'Europa in Italia. Elite, opinione pubblica e decisioni*
Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005, pp. 407, ISBN: 88-15-102698.

This book presents the first scientific study of the European beliefs, strategies, and attitudes of the Italian political elite and people during the integration process. The Authors of the seven chapters are Italian political scientists with a long-time experience in the analysis of Italy's political class and public opinion. They collected a wide range of primary and secondary source data to give the most accurate empirical foundation to their study, and have examined the data within a definite framework of concepts and arguments. In addition to the general interpretation, which is proposed in the introductory chapter and reviewed in the Conclusions by Maurizio Cotta, each chapter is framed within an explanatory scheme that contains also the analytical questions and hypotheses analyzed in the chapter. The book dissects the following matters: the 'political discourse' of the Italian political parties on Europe in the last fifty years, the opinions of the Italian public on Europe over both the first twenty years and last twenty years of European integration, the Italian political elite viewpoints on European issues at the time of the Berlusconi's governments and in the post-Maastricht era of EU's great decisions.

The overall thesis of the book is that the important changes that took place in the Italian political system at the mass and elite levels over the last fifty years match quite important changes of both the public opinion on European affairs and the Italian political class on EU policies. In spite of the universally acknowledged stable, pro-European stance of Italy, the data collected by the Authors make clear that some movements occurred. A considerable change emerged in recent times with potentially critical consequences in the future.

The main changes highlighted by the analysis are, at the level of political elite, the enlargement to all political parties of the pro-European outlook in the Sixties and Seventies, the gradual recognition by the political class of the European arena as space of political legitimation aside the national arena, and in the Nineties the emergence of critical views spanning from "functional Europeanism" to Euro-skepticism. At the level of the people, instead, two main changes come into view. First, pro-Europeanism has ceased to be founded on pro-Western attitudes, as it was in the Fifties and Sixties. Second, pro-Europeanism is less strong today than it was in the early years of the integration process and also in the Seventies. The overall reason of these changes is that both political elite and the people have become increasingly aware of integration costs. In other words, in the present time, Italians do not believe in Europe as the panacea of all the problems of Italy, as they used to. Such awareness is not equally distributed in the political class but is especially present in the centre-right parties. Centre-left parties, instead, continue to be quite adamantly pro-European. Authors warn that this change is potentially critical for the future of the double game of "Italy in Europe" and "Europe in Italy", but admit that, at the moment, relevant knowledge is lacking to ascertain the substantial impact of this change. In particular, they point to the difficulty of understanding whether people are prone to align themselves along the two sides of the new European cleavage of the political elite. Maurizio Cotta believes all the EU member states can make a three-fold choice, i.e. voice, exit, and acquiescence. In his view, as the debate on Italy's entrance in Euroland demonstrated, Italy's strong acquiescence to European integration cannot be given for granted in the time ahead. In the recent past, Italy has changed her European location, and has moved from the centre of the acquiescence space to the edge of the exit space.

Undoubtedly, all post-Maastricht debates and especially the European

constitution debate raised concern all around Europe. Italy can be considered as the latecomer to the circle of the doubtful countries. However, analysts should be clear on the "nature of the beast" and its evolution. Since the mid-Eighties, the European Union has been going through a mutation process that made her a consolidated polity that gives to the European states the way to cope with planetary problems. It ceased to be the voluntary experiment of creating United Europe that it was in the early years of the integration process. Consequently, thanks to the membership in such consolidated polity, the member governments are in the condition of exercising the right to defend their constituency interests and also opt for exceptions and delays in accepting common policies, which – incidentally - is quite misleading to take as "partial exit". Indeed, the reinforced cooperation clause, introduced by the Amsterdam Treaty, which is a potential condition of creation of an indefinite number of polities, is far from being used, although it is universally acclaimed as a great achievement for the future of the integration process.

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Richard N. Gardner, *Mission Italy: On the Front Lines of the Cold War*
Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005, pp. 349, ISBN: 0742539989.

In his "Foreword" to Richard N. Gardner's memoir, Zbigniew Brzezinski recalls that on 14 March 1977 he had described Italy as "potentially the gravest political problem we now have in Europe" (p. xi). Assistant to President Jimmy Carter for national security affairs, Brzezinski wanted and obtained the appointment of Gardner to the vital ambassadorship in Rome. By training and connections, Gardner appeared to be an ideal choice. His Harvard-Yale-Oxford academic pedigree had led to an appointment in 1957 at Columbia University in international law. The previous year he had married a native-born Italian woman, Danielle Luzzatto, and for the next two decades they had spent every summer in Italy. A political progressive much influenced by the ideals of Eleanor Roosevelt, he had risen rapidly in the Democratic Party as a foreign policy expert. While teaching as a visiting professor at the University of Rome in 1967-1968 he had made important contacts with Italian business and banking leaders. He also had come to know many of the most influential journalists in Italy. This was an appointment based not on financial contributions to a presidential campaign, but on a serious knowledge of the language, culture, and condition of the host country.

What was it about Italy in 1977, the year Gardner's tenure in Rome began, that made the country such a problem for the Carter administration? Their main fear concerned the Communist party (PCI), which in the 1976 national elections had received nearly as much support as the regnant Christian Democrats (DC) and now appeared to be on the verge of joining the government. Gardner devotes much of his book to the threat that the surging PCI posed in Italy to the Cold War strategy of the United States. In principle, he wanted to respect the sovereignty of the Italian people and shunned the precedents of President Richard M. Nixon's ambassador to Italy, Graham Martin, whose notorious support for reactionary elements in Italian politics had been documented in *CIA: The Pike Report* that very year of 1977, to the international mortification of the United States. In practice, though, the two countries did not have a democratic relationship between equals. When Gardner furnishes the very long list of American Navy, Army, and Air Force installations in Italy and comments on the capacity of the American government to affect foreign economic investment there, he makes the fundamentals of the situation clear. In a particularly vivid example of how the United States intended to have its way on crucial issues in Italy, Gardner describes

an embassy lunch with Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti at which "to convey the seriousness of American concerns and to avoid any possible misunderstanding" he read a prepared State Department-approved list of complaints about how the Italian government was handling its affairs (pp. 126-127). The "taken aback" Andreotti is made to look like a branch manager receiving a bad evaluation from corporate headquarters in Washington. Despite Gardner's insistence that the Italians were free to make their own political choices, he declares in an illuminating moment of candor: "I had to admit to myself that events had brought us pretty close to the line between 'interference' and 'non-interference'" (p. 150).

The supreme crisis of Gardner's ambassadorship occurred with the kidnapping and murder in 1978 of Aldo Moro, the country's leading political figure, by the Marxist-Leninist Red Brigades. Of the many political portraits in the book, that of Moro is the most humanly compelling. Gardner depicts him as a highly alert but brooding figure, who "seemed to have a grim foreboding of his eventual fate" (p. 125). He understood the seriousness and nature of the Red Brigades, which found support and encouragement in the country's deeply rooted revolutionary culture. Thinking it no longer prudent to quarantine the PCI, Moro had sought to include the Communists in the government majority while denying them any ministerial positions. In conversations that Gardner describes as always having been cordial and friendly, after some misgivings he came to accept Moro's reasoning about the inevitably disastrous consequences for the PCI resulting from its entry into the parliamentary majority. Without exercising any real power or obtaining through ministerial positions the means of betraying NATO to the Soviets, the PCI would bear responsibility with the DC for implementing a common program. Reflecting on an epochal PCI defeat in the June 1979 elections, Gardner concludes that Moro fully deserved his reputation for political sagacity. For the past quarter-century, no issues in Italian politics have been as controversial as the motives for Moro's murder and for the government's conduct during his kidnapping. Conspiracy theories abound regarding the Red Brigades and the Italian government itself as instruments of the CIA, which is said to have wanted to eliminate Moro because of his opening to the Communists. Gardner dismisses these theories as palpable absurdities concocted in a disinformation campaign cynically undertaken by the Soviets, eagerly promoted by the Italian left, and uncritically accepted for a variety of political and emotional reasons by large constituencies in Italy. On the basis of his first-hand observations, he claims that the Moro case only can be understood as a consequence of the ideological fanaticism that animated much of the protean extra-parliamentary left movement of the 1970s. This movement defined itself in opposition to the PCI, which in Red Brigade communications figured as the great apostate of the revolutionary tradition. The Red Brigades, volubly quoting Marx and Lenin on the irrepressible necessity of anti-capitalist revolution, had the effect of pushing the Communists toward the reformism they historically had denounced within the Marxist tradition. The ex-Marxist philosopher, Lucio Colletti, prophetically told Gardner what the result of reformism would be for a party, whose very being originated in the crusade to bring Bolshevism to Italy: "The moment they declare themselves Social Democrats, they commit suicide" (p. 211).

Gardner pays high tribute to Carter and Brzezinski for their manifold contributions in helping to win the Cold War, a compliment which in jacket cover blurbs they repay with lavish praise for his successful implementation of American policy in Italy. His memoir throws into high relief the basic continuity of Washington's concerns and aspirations in Cold War Italy. While visiting Rome in 1977, Henry Kissinger observed to Gardner that he could see no difference between Carter's position and Gerald Ford's in Italy. Gardner notes

that the Reagan administration would not make any changes there either. With due allowance for rhetorical and tactical differences, structural forces had a homogenizing effect on American foreign policy in Italy.

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Lucio Iaccarino, *La rigenerazione. Bagnoli: politiche pubbliche e societa' civile nella Napoli postindustriale*
Napoli: l'Ancora del Mediterraneo, 2005, pp. 249, ISBN 88-8325-171-7.

This is a welcome study of public policy and urban regeneration in the city of Naples, which adopts an approach informed by relatively recent political science concepts and theories, including social capital, governance, policy network and participation in policy-making of the voluntary or Third sector. As remarked by Percy Allum in the preface to the volume, *La Rigenerazione* is the first monograph in Italian which explicitly adopts this conceptual tool kit.

The study focuses on the neighbourhood of Bagnoli, previously the site of a large Italsider steel plant and a combative industrial workforce, as well as one of the few electoral strongholds of the left in Naples, but currently the 'object' of new planning and regeneration policies. Rather than discussing in detail the lengthy procedures and problematic goals of the masterplan for Bagnoli, first approved by the Bassolino administration in 1996 and finally confirmed in 2003 by the new Council led by Rosa Russo Iervolino, Iaccarino opts for a novel approach, adopting the standpoint of the many voluntary and/or non-profit organizations which make up Bagnoli's 'social and cultural capital'. The nature, links, goals, representativeness and influence of the associations which make up civil society, as well as their participation in policy-making at the local level, are explored and assessed in the volume. The fieldwork consists of semi-structured interviews and a quasi-ethnographic process of personal observation over a period of three years, a refreshing approach in the field of public policy. This is reflected in the language and style of the volume, which is highly readable and largely devoid of technical, specialist and jargon expressions.

The volume brings to life a complex and dynamic web of social relations and a high level of social capital not usually associated with Southern Italy, and least of all with Naples. Admittedly, Iaccarino's fieldwork shows that cross-cutting links are still relatively underdeveloped, and social capital is characterized by a prevalence of 'bonding' over 'bridging' ties, that is to say, of strong, often informal, links between family, friends and members of the same association, compared to weak, formal ties between different associations. 'Vertical' links between individual associations and political organizations also tend to be stronger than 'horizontal' ties between similar associations. His summing up of this situation is that the 'Third Sector' in Bagnoli is by and large subordinated to the sphere of organized politics, albeit in a much more complex and loose way than used to be the case in the era of the mass parties and their 'collateral' organizations.

Among the many interesting findings of Iaccarino's research is the often conflictual nature of 'social capital', a useful reminder of the inadequacy of Putnam's original uniformly benign version of this type of capital, seen as trascending issues of power. In reality, power is unevenly accessed by the different associations which make up Bagnoli's civil society, partly in relation to their greater or lesser ability to link up to extra-local political actors and also depending on the level of 'real' capital they possess. As a result, their influence upon policy-making and regeneration policies is also uneven, ranging from the ability of the larger associations to have a direct impact upon the masterplan for Bagnoli, to the smaller associations' dependence upon the Neighbourhood

Council (through participation in a joint Forum) in order to be heard by the Naples City Council.

Another interesting finding concerns the scarcity of what could be termed 'community' associations, that is to say, 'bottom-up' associations made up of local residents and citizens in pursuit of their collective interests, rather than associations and charities providing services to various categories of citizens (the aged, the young, the homeless, etc). The author refers to this in the conclusion, when he touches on the need to involve 'excluded' groups in local practices of social participation, and to listen to their voices in addition to those of the more established associations. It would have been interesting if the book had addressed the extent to which this was just a finding limited to Bagnoli, or indeed a characteristic of the voluntary sector and the governance approach in Italy as a whole.

The lack of a comparative scope to the research leaves many questions unanswered and constitutes, in my view, the main weakness of the volume. Are we witnessing a gradual convergence between Naples (and/or Bagnoli) and other Italian cities? Is the case study an example of exceptionalism or is it typical of other de-industrialized areas currently undertaking a process of regeneration? Are concepts such as governance, civil society, trust, used unproblematically in the Italian context or are they contested and even rejected?

These limitations are more than compensated for by the volume's strengths, in particular its high sensitivity to the historical and social context, also providing much important empirical information, and adopting an innovative viewpoint. For these reasons, the study is a valuable and original contribution to the understanding of a deeply changing Neapolitan society and politics and the new directions of urban public policies in Italy.

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Alfio Mastropaolo, *La mucca pazza della democrazia. Nuove destre, populismo, antipolitica*
Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2005, pp. 201, ISBN 88-339-1587-5.

Extreme right parties have known a widespread electoral success in the recent past, and the attention of political scientists to this phenomenon has grown consequently. Mastropaolo's book tries to both summarise in a critical way the extensive literature in this field and to broaden the topic by framing the rise of extreme right parties into a wider picture of the state of health of contemporary democracies. In this regard, this book is the last step of a decennial effort of the Author to explore the roots and the consequences of what he calls the "Great Political Depression", which he began in 1996 (*La Repubblica dei destini incrociati*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia) and continued in 2000 (*Antipolitica. All'origine della crisi italiana*, Napoli: L'ancora del Mediterraneo). The Great Political Depression is similar to the Economic Depression of the 1920s but in opposite ways: the second one emphasises the need of political responses to the deficiencies shown by market economy, while the first one de-legitimises political actors and institutions – and particularly the complex rules of representative democracy – as "artificial" in front of the "natural" auto-regulatory qualities of the market.

The original idea of the book is that extreme-right parties (even if the Author refuses this label, preferring to use Nuove destre – parties of the New Right,) are not the root of evil, but the consequence of a deeper syndrome. Indeed, in the same way that the mad cow virus emerged because of new reckless methods of farming, extreme-right is a "political entrepreneurship flourishing on the democratic disease" (p. 192). Further more, extreme-right parties are not fundamentally different from neo-liberal parties (the "traditional" right), reinvigorated by Thatcherism and Reaganism in the 1980s.

The differences are mainly in the violence of the rhetoric and insistence on some hypersensitive issues, like immigration and security. But when it comes to policy programs – in these as well as in other areas – it is more a matter of nuances than one of real disagreement (pp. 39-47).

In fact, the erosion of the legitimate support of democratic institutions began earlier, with the "divorce" of procedural and substantial interpretations of democracy, where the recognition of social rights is a fundamental goal of the State: "after thirty years of pacific cohabitation, when democratic regimes had tried hard to re-balance social inequalities through politics, many convinced themselves that the agreement on democratic values was strong enough to bear the load of a more competitive economic system, leading to increased inequalities, and a welfare state less protective of those who were not ready to compete" (p. 175).

The retrenchment of the political sphere in front of the "natural" forces of market economy is not, as someone states, a process made unavoidable by globalisation or technological progress, but the result of deliberate political acts, aiming at scattering a relevant quota of its political authority into the "labyrinths of governance" and "devolving a growing share of collective decisions to the market, to technocrats, to the free bargaining among a plurality of non-governmental specialised agencies" (p. 178).

Mastropaolo's book is a valuable reflection on the recent past and future of democratic institutions and the challenges posed by the parties of the extreme left. It is enjoyable for the reader – also the non-specialised reader – and backed by an intense civic passion. But, as a reviewer, I cannot exempt myself from some criticisms. Being more accurate in the definitions, making hypotheses more explicit, avoiding evaluative statements would have added more "scientific" value to the book, and probably would have only taken off very little readability. For instance: a definition of extreme right parties is never provided, so we do not know who exactly is inside or outside the party family. This is not just useless pedantry: at times the Author seems to include, for example, both Alleanza Nazionale and Forza Italia into the number of extreme right parties. It is a questionable choice, on which most scholars would disagree. So, why not discuss and justify this inclusion? The same is true about "traditional" right parties: who are they? The Author often refers to neo-liberal parties, but the European right is not just Margaret Thatcher. What about Christian Democratic parties? Do they follow the neo-liberal path? To what extent? Moreover, it is not clear if extreme right parties are to be considered anti-system parties or not. The Author mentions this issue briefly (p. 42), but the only conclusion, in a footnote, is that they "erode democratic legitimacy, but in a wider and deeper but also more subtle way". In what sense "wider and deeper"? What "more subtle" mean in this context? There is room here – indeed, there is an urgent necessity – for an update of the discussion on the concept of 'anti-systemness', its borders and its uses in the literature. Why not tackle it?

The list could be much longer and in a sense it would cover the whole book. It is perfectly legitimate, of course, to aim at a more immediate writing and to target a wider public than just academic readers. But if political science instruments are useful to understand politics, who else, if not political scientists, should make an effort to handle them properly?

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