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Short articles (3 to 6,000 words) in English or Italian commenting the most recent issues of contemporary Italian politics & society.
Please submit your proposal to christophe.roux@univ-montp1.fr

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Short research articles (3 to 6,000 words) in English or Italian about modern Italian politics & society.
Please submit your proposal to christophe.roux@univ-montp1.fr

IERI E OGGI / THE STUDY OF ITALIAN POLITICS

Short articles (3 to 6,000 words) in English about departments, research centers, research groups, publishers, books series, journals, database, PhD programs (The Study of Italian Politics) or past works or individual scholars who contributed to the development of the study of Italian politics (ieri e oggi).
Please contact christophe.roux@univ-montp1.fr before submission.

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Books for review should be sent to the Jeffrey Hamill, IPS Book Review Editor at the following address:

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Greetings from the New CONGRIPS President

CONGRIPS Newsletter: Welcome Back!

It is a real pleasure to greet old and new members of CONGRIPS back to the Newsletter that resumes, from this Spring 2012 issue, its publication. *Italian Politics & Society* (IPS) has been a fixture of CONGRIPS almost from the start and one of the main bonuses – the other being the annual CONGRIPS panel – for the North-American Italianists that have created and supported CONGRIPS throughout the years. Although arguably surpassed in timeliness and scope by the web as a means of keeping the community of Italianists in North America, Europe and the rest of the world connected, *Italian Politics & Society* retains the coziness and warmth of an old friend whose visit is always welcome.

After a two-year-long suspension this 70th issue is particularly rich, thanks to two concomitant events. In 2011, in Seattle, we celebrated not only the 150th anniversary of Italian unification, but also CONGRIPS’s 40th anniversary! This was the perfect opportunity to re-vitalize CONGRIPS and get back in touch with the membership. It also gave us the energy to resume publication of the Newsletter with a better and shinier format, thanks to a renewed editorial team composed of Christophe Roux (University of Montpellier 1) as IPS General Editor, Jeff Hamill (University of Florida) as Book Review Editor and Alessandro Cagossi (University of West Virginia) as co-Managing Editor with Christophe and Jeff. The complete Executive and the other Officers that keep CONGRIPS ticking – as well as past Presidents, Editors and Award receivers – can be seen on CONGRIPS’ webpage http://www.arts.mun.ca/congrips/executive.html. Starting from the Home page http://www.arts.mun.ca/congrips/index.html you can also find past Newsletter issues, the Constitution and much more (included the membership renewal form!).

I would like to thank particularly Christophe Roux for putting so much enthusiasm and expertise in rejuvenating the layout of *Italian Politics & Society* and for assembling such a rich issue. Before leaving it to him to illustrate his plans for the future of the Newsletter, there is one piece of news that I can anticipate myself. At the 108th APSA annual meeting, which is going to take place in New Orleans between August 29 and September 2, 2012, CONGRIPS will award Prof. Sidney Tarrow of Cornell University the Lifetime Achievement Award. Sid has been
one of the founding members and past President of CONGRIPS and has greatly contributed to making Italy into a crucial test case for many important political and social developments, among which Communist mobilization, center-periphery relations, clientelist relations and much more. Come join us in this celebration both at the CONGRIPS business meeting and at the European Politics and Society/European Consortium for Political Research/Wiley and Blackwell joint reception in New Orleans!

Looking forward to seeing you in New Orleans, a presto!

Simona Piattoni, CONGRIPS President
University of Trento
simona.piattoni@unitn.it

A Word From the New IPS General Editor

Avanti IPS!

It is a great honor and a privilege to become the 14th General Editor of Italian Politics & Society. I am grateful to the members of the CONGRIPS Executive Committee for having entrusted me with this challenging and exciting task at the APSA 2011 Annual Meeting in Seattle (at that time I was a visiting researcher at the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin and these lines give me the opportunity to thank again Gary Freeman and John Higley for their hospitality and generosity).

Despite some apparent degree of change (as a scholar born a few months after the creation of CONGRIPS, partly trained in Italy and based in a French university), I aim at perpetuating and when possible improving the tradition built around IPS. It wishes to reflect the long-standing tradition of international academic excellence built in America regarding the study of Italian politics throughout decades. The international context dramatically changed in the early 1990s but the upheavals Italy has had to face since then have fuelled the intellectual creativity of researchers.

However by no means should Italian Politics & Society be insular – and not only because Italy can be depicted as a “normal country” (Newell 2010). The so-called “Italianists”, while sharing a specialized knowledge of Italy and a specific linguistic ability, are scholars willing to engage in broader debates that are essential to the discipline. Italy is not, as such, their research object but rather the place where they can collect data and do fieldwork in order to test hypotheses, elaborate theories, and improve concepts. It is not necessary to recall here the role of prominent scholars in the study of topics such as clientelism, party factionalism, social capital or populism – just to name here a few. For this reason I hope that scholars whose first interest doesn’t deal with Italian
politics will pay attention to the works that are presented and discussed in IPS as well.

As readers must know, *Italian Politics and Society* has gradually evolved like many other newsletters from being a mere news bulletin to something more substantial with comments on the current state of Italian affairs, short research articles and book reviews. After a two-year break, IPS, back with a new layout, will keep on following this winning formula in its sections “News and Announcements” (including a more detailed “publications” sub-section with journal contents), “Italian Affairs”, “Research Trends” and, under the editorship of Jeff Hamill, “Book Reviews”. In addition to this, IPS will also make an effort to highlight more clearly the framework in which Italian politics is studied through a specific sections. One will deal with departments, research centers, PhD programs, journals, series and so on, that have given a specific space for research and teaching about Italy (“The Study of Italian Politics”). The other, entitled “ieri e oggi” (“Yesterday and Today”) will revisit the contribution of great scholars and major works of the past on Italy.

Thanks to the support of Simona Piattoni, Amie Kreppel, and all the members of the Executive Committee, and together with Jeff and Alessandro we hope to do our best to serve the Italianist, Europeanist, and comparativist communities. Buona lettura.

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**Conference Announcements and Call for Papers**

**CONGRIPS Panel**

**Silvio Berlusconi and the problems of representation in Italy**

108th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association
August 30 – September 2, 2012 | New Orleans, LA
Info provided by Jim Newell (University of Salford, UK)
http://www.apsanet.org/content_56690.cfm

Love him or loath him Silvio Berlusconi must, in terms of his political longevity and the power he has been able to wield, be considered one of the most successful European party leaders of modern times. Having in early 1994, created an entirely novel kind of political party, he went on, within the space of a few weeks, to win the first of three general elections which, for the next decade and a half confirmed his role as the fulcrum around which everything of any importance in Italian politics essentially revolved. On the one hand, he and his party have been the pivot around which the centre right has been built and whose unity has depended almost entirely on his continued popularity. On the other hand, opposition to Berlusconi has been the only common denominator of the parties on the centre left – and thus the source of their weakness and division as they have each struggled to find a way to oppose him without leaving themselves exposed to the electoral incursions of their allies. In short, it has for long been the case that ‘to be on the centre right [has meant] to support Berlusconi, to be on the centre left... to oppose him’ (Urbani,
The possibility that he is forced to leave the political scene sooner rather than later remains a real one, but though his epitaph has been written on numerous occasions in recent years he has hitherto always managed to survive crises which would probably have overwhelmed political leaders elsewhere in similar circumstances. Many would therefore argue that since his emergence as a significant political actor, Berlusconi has brought about major, and possibly long-lasting, shifts in the political and social culture in Italy.

If, then, it is possible to refer to the years since his political debut as ‘the Berlusconi era’, this fact raises several questions of importance for comparative politics as well as for an understanding of politics and society in Italy. What kind of a leader is Berlusconi? How is the success of a leader of this type to be explained? What does his success tell us about the direction in which Italian politics and society are evolving? What is likely to be his legacy? To what extent is ‘the Berlusconi experience’ indicative of electoral, party and other types of political – and indeed social – change taking place cross-nationally? And to what extent, on the other hand, is he an untypical phenomenon, reinforcing arguments about Italy as some kind of ‘democratic anomaly’? Papers are invited which, from a comparative perspective or from the perspective of a better understanding of the Italian case, help to throw light on questions such as these.

The theme of the 108th annual meeting is ‘Representation and Renewal’ – bearing in mind that (as the meeting organizers have pointed out) ‘relationships of representation often go awry and are always and everywhere subject to skepticism, disillusionment, and calls for fundamental reform’. As is well known, political scientists have often viewed the Berlusconi phenomenon as a significant expression of precisely the disillusionment the organizers talk about, while his critics have frequently seen his role in Italian politics – with the attendant controversies over his legal difficulties and presumed conflict of interests – as the consequence, and potential cause, of serious representational shortcomings. By shedding light on the meaning and significance of the Berlusconi phenomenon, papers presented to the panel will contribute to the task of illuminating issues of representation in a major European country and thereby further understanding of how the issues play out in the advanced democracies generally.
Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, in Via Chiabrera 199, 00145 Roma.
In occasione del convegno, infine, nell’atrio della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, via Chiabrera 199, saranno ubicati gli stand di esposizione e vendita di diverse case editrici: un elenco aggiornato qui.

Linee-guida e decalogo per i gruppi di lavoro.
Le sezioni raggruppano i gruppi di lavoro per affinità tematica. Ogni sezione è organizzata da due coordinatori che ricevono le proposte di gruppi di lavoro e di relazioni e, sulla base di queste informazioni, formano i gruppi. La lista delle sezioni è formata dal Comitato Direttivo della SISP.

In ogni sezione un solo gruppo di lavoro può avere il formato di tavola rotonda. Questo formato comprende un presidente e 3 o 4 partecipanti. E’ obbligo del presidente concordare con ogni partecipante l’argomento dell’intervento e distribuire i tempi riservando 30 minuti alla discussione aperta ai presenti.

Il presidente del gruppo di lavoro deve assicurarsi che tutti i partecipanti ricevano le relazioni almeno dieci giorni prima del convegno e, inoltre, deve subito informare il coordinatore della sua sezione e la Segreteria SISP di ogni variazione che intervenga nella struttura del gruppo di lavoro.

Nell’organizzare un gruppo di lavoro, è opportuno ricordare che i gruppi migliori sono quelli nei quali (a) i partecipanti hanno differenti orientamenti teorici e metodologici, provengono da differenti istituzioni, sono a diversi stadi della loro carriera professionale, (b) il commentatore ha una vasta conoscenza del campo, (c) tutte le relazioni sono state precedentemente distribuite agli altri relatori, (d) sono rispettati i tempi di presentazione delle relazioni e di discussione. Inoltre, chi organizza e presiede un gruppo di lavoro è tassativamente tenuto ad attuare e fare rispettare il seguente “decalogo”:

1. tutti i gruppi di lavoro (panels) devono cominciare puntualmente;
2. nessuna sessione di un gruppo di lavoro deve contenere più di quattro relatori (paper-givers);
3. un gruppo di lavoro può essere suddiviso al massimo, e in via straordinaria, solamente in tre sessioni;
4. un relatore può presentare al massimo 2 relazioni (papers), ma non nello stesso gruppo di lavoro;
5. tutte le relazioni debbono “esistere” ed essere disponibili in forma scritta e/o elettronica almeno 10 giorni prima del Convegno;
6. nessuna presentazione può eccedere i 15 minuti;
7. non può esserci più di un commentatore (discussant) per sessione;
8. ad ogni commentatore vanno concessi 20 minuti e le repliche dei relatori vanno contenute in 5 minuti;
9. non si può essere presidenti e commentatori in più di due gruppi di lavoro;
10. il coordinatore conclude e chiude il gruppo di lavoro 5 minuti prima dell’inizio della sessione successiva.

Registrazione e iscrizione dei non soci. La registrazione dei partecipanti ha luogo dal primo maggio al trenta giugno. Chi non si registrerà entro tale data non comparirà in programma. I partecipanti non soci della SISP devono pagare la quota di iscrizione al Congresso pari a 80 Euro. E’ possibile pagare la quota tramite bonifico bancario, assegno o Paypal (si prega di contattare la segreteria in caso si intenda pagare con bonifico o assegno). Gli uditori dovranno invece pagare una quota di 20 euro. Le quote non corrisposte entro il 30 giugno subiranno una mora pari al 20% dell’importo.
Call for Papers from the Società Italiana di Studi Elettorali
Seminario di studi post-elettorale 2012: elezioni amministrative
Florence (Italy), July 3, 2012
Info provided by Segreteria SISE www.studielettorali.it

La tradizionale giornata di analisi e discussione “post-elettorale” quest’anno, edizione 2012, si concentrerà sulle elezioni amministrative del 6-7 maggio e dei successivi ballottaggi. Di seguito vengono suggeriti alcuni temi sui quali il seminario intende concentrarsi. Sulla base delle proposte di comunicazione che perverranno alla Sise, anche su argomenti di studio diversi da quelli indicati, la giornata verrà articolata in sezioni omogenee.
1. Il voto personale e di partito;
2. Partiti, coalizioni e liste civiche;
3. Voto e non voto;
4. Nuovi soggetti politici: il Movimento 5 Stelle;
5. Analisi dei risultati e dei flussi elettorali;

Gli interessati a presentare una relazione sono pregati di comunicare l’argomento inviando: a) titolo della comunicazione; b) nome e cognome del/i proponente/i; c) università/istituzione di afferenza; d) un breve abstract (max 10/15 righe).
La scadenza entro cui far pervenire le proposte è il 20 giugno 2012. Il comitato scientifico della Sise, in base alle proposte giunte, si incaricherà di definire il programma con la successione degli interventi. La durata prevista delle comunicazioni è di 15 minuti.
L’indirizzo a cui inviare la proposte è il seguente: segreteria@studielettorali.it.
Firenze, 3 luglio 2012 ore 10:00 Palazzo Cerretani, piazza Unità d’Italia 1 (Sala Affreschi, 1° piano).

Conference Reports

CONGRIPS Panel at APSA 2011
“The Italian Political System 150 Years On: The Risorgimento’s Relevance Today”
Simona Piattoni (University of Trento)

The 107th APSA annual meeting, which was held in Seattle on 1-4 September 2011, featured a particularly timely CONGRIPS panel entitled “The Italian Political System 150 Years On: The Risorgimento’s Relevance Today.” Prof. James Newell (University of Salford) had put together a stimulating collection of papers to celebrate Italy’s 150th anniversary that included the following: “The Risorgimento in 20th Century Italian Political Discourse”, by Rosario Forlenza (Princeton University) and Björn Thomassen (American University of Rome); “A Search Long 150 Years: Understanding Cabinet Instability in Italy”, by Arianna Farinelli (Baruch College, CUNY) and Alessandro Cagossi (West Virginia University); “Neofascist Interpretations of Risorgimento and Criticism to the Mussolinian Project on Anthropological Revolution in Italy (1945-1955)”, by Elisabetta Cassina Wolff (University
of Oslo); “Was Italian Nation-Building Really a Failure? An Empirical Investigation into the Nationalization of a Peripheral Territory: The Case of Sardinia”, by Christophe Roux (University of Montpellier 1); and “Italy at 150: Still a Divided Society”, by Laura Polverari (University of Strathclyde). I served as discussant.

All the papers were well written, informative, and rich. They were mostly qualitative and non-comparative (at least not explicitly), thus suggesting an “exceptionalist” reading of the Italian experience even while trying to dispel it. All papers engaged the longue durée as they all had to do with memory, the reconstruction of history, and the interpretation of past facts. Perhaps unknowingly, they all reflected the “turn to constructivism” in political science (though in a soft manner). And even while they tried to “normalize” Italian historical debates, all papers recognized the contested nature of historical facts and all presented this contestedness as particularly deep in the Italian case (indeed, as the very source of most Italian problems). All papers focused on Italian history by emphasizing its problems, divisions, tensions and, even as they sought to expose and distance themselves from the Italians’ fixation with what is wrong with their country, they end up re-emphasizing this very picture.

I began by commenting the Forlenza and Thomassen paper, a historical analysis of the national “myth” of the Risorgimento. In their paper, the authors provide some fabulous quotes on the role of memory in the construction of political legitimacy, in general, and on the role of memory and myth in constructing the legitimacy of the Italian state, in particular. “The Risorgimento = resurgence in the making” contains a “rhetorical code” that expresses “the idea of keeping the present anchored in a never fulfilled past”, the notion of “a forever resurgent Italy” anchored in a “paradox of building anew what is supposed to exist inherently” (Forlenza and Thomassen: 2). The essence of this myth, and the relevance of the Risorgimento today, is precisely this unfinished and never quite complete identity. The Risorgimento is the first of a series of rebirths – a myth that becomes all the more prominent in “liminal periods”, when continuity with the past is sought as guidance for present choices that will determine the future. This is not the same as manipulating the historical record, but rather using the historical record to seek guidance for the future. The paper offered also a religious interpretation of the notion of “rebirth”, which I did not find particularly convincing, as rebirth is not a specific trait of Italy’s undeniable Catholic heritage. Another interesting feature of the paper was the link between the Risorgimento and the French Enlightenment. The authors make the very interesting remark that while France appears to be the obvious comparator, it really is not because France had a direct bearing in the unfolding of Italian unification and two items must be independent, historically and logically, to be compared.

The Farinelli and Cagossi paper was a very thorough paper that covered consistently the whole unitary history of Italy (1860-1922, 1946-1992, 1992-) analyzing cabinet instability. Their argument was that cabinet instability cannot be attributed to ideological polarization – as the mainstream “attribute theory”, either of the political party system or of the governmental coalition, would argue – but to the prevalence of short-term interests over ideology as a motivation among parliamentarians. Both short-term interests and long-term ideologies discourage compromise and vaporize consensus but for diametrically opposed reasons, and the authors opt for this second explanation. Cabinet crises due to interest maximization are more “mundane” than crises due to
ideological clashes, so that arguing that cabinet crises are due to short-term interests is a way of normalizing the Italian record (against the thesis that the Italian political systems is characterized by “polarized pluralism”). However, ideological polarization keeps popping up throughout the paper as a background condition for the more instrumental and mundane choices on the part of Italian political leaders. Behind the choices of Depretis, Giolitti, De Gasperi, Togliatti, Moro and Berlusconi to cater to the parliamentarians’ short-term interests is the attempt to avoid the emergence of ideological conflicts: a sort of pragmatic move in the face of potentially devastating rifts. Ideology, however, also pops up as immediate cause of a series of cabinet crises: the battles over divorce, abortion, same-sex marriage, biological testament, stem-cell research and so on are all instances of fiercely ideological battles that caused cabinet crises (in addition to the one mentioned in the article, such as the withdrawal of RC from the Prodi cabinet).

The Cassina-Wolf paper acted as a sort of “transition paper” between the first two more historic papers and the second two more applied papers. This paper shared the same interest in reviewing the Italian myth, collective memory and identity as characterized by self-criticism and rallies for re-births, but it offered a new perspective in that it looked at the Fascist and neo-Fascist elaboration of that myth, memory and identity. The paper identified three Fascist ideological sub-groups – the “left-wing” group, the “conservative” group, and the “intransigent” group – with the Repubblica Sociale Italiana (RSI) portrayed as an attempt at modernizing the Fascist program. The RSI, in particular, is presented, by the Fascist historiography studied by the author, as attempting to rescue Italian pride that had been compromised by the 1943 turn-around and side-switching during the war. The author illustrates it as an attempt to rescue the spirit of the Risorgimento, that is, a spirit of independence and self-reliance. I personally know too little about Italian cultural history and Fascist ideology to assess this analysis, but I could not refrain from asking myself what argument this paper really tried to make. What is the implicit message behind treating Fascist ideology as a possible spin-off of Risorgimento? Are we not treading dangerous ground? Despite its obvious contestedness, can we really allow the historical significance of the Risorgimento to be appropriated and reinterpreted by whichever political ideology and partisan formation?

The Roux paper looked at the strategy of the Italian state to create a national identity in a peripheral territory, Sardinia. It did not ask what this identity was, but whether or not an actual effort was made to create a national identity. The paper compared this effort with the comparable effort to create a French nation as described by the work of Eugen Weber. Roux argued that Italy can indeed be compared to France because, even though the French state existed since the twelfth century and it had ample time to develop state infrastructure to sustain its national identity, in his work Weber looked only at the 1870-1914 period. Attractive as it might appear, this argument appeared somewhat weak: centuries of state-building do matter even if they did not form the object of Weber’s famous work. Italy’s exceptionalism may indeed be attributed to its much weaker state structures: while France has an equally polarized society, its state manages to command much greater respect and allegiance than the Italian state does. Roux contains the potential damage of this counter-argument by measuring the efforts to build the Italian state in a particular region, Sardinia: the schooling system, migration and political participation, and roads and other means of transportation. The question was
raised of what these measures really mean: What is the benchmark against which the effort at nationalization should be measured? How many children in schools, how many kilometers of roads, how large political participation indicates a sincere effort at nationalizing Sardinia?

Finally, the Polverari paper appeared to be the most present-centered and factual paper as it dealt with regional development policy in contemporary Italy, but it too had to do with the interpretation of what constitutes an “urgent issue” – whether to redress the North-South divide or facing up “economic emergencies” – and of how interpretation of the past determines choices for the future. It also described the fatigue – the Sisyphean task – of building institutions in Italy as embodied in the attempts of the Dipartimento per lo Sviluppo e la Coesione Economica to stabilize regional policy (rather than chasing after emergencies), to give certainty to regional authorities and let them make their choices (a more federalist agenda than the government’s agenda), and to sediment a culture of investment and programming is more innovative (a real Risorgimento) than the fake southern agenda of the current Berlusconi government made of bombastic announcements and very few facts. Polverari’s paper connected to the other papers also in that it suggested that Italy often needs an “external constraint” (like the support of foreign powers during the Risorgimento) in order to carry out its national agenda of regeneration.

In all, it was a fine set of papers that helped us think about the legacy of the Risorgimento today. Celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Italy’s unification included also an evening reception at which the outgoing CONGRIPS President, Prof. Robert Leonardi, held a short but very incisive speech signaling how Italy has always been, and still is, a crucial case for studying most social and political developments that take place in Europe and in the western world. The road to understanding the dynamics of the Cold War as well as the rise and demise of extremist political terrorism, the development of new party formats as well as the economic and fiscal crisis of the Euro-zone pass through Rome. All too often, the most intriguing problems of political science can also be studied by looking at this complex, but fascinating political system.

The 25th Annual Meeting of the Società Italiana di ScienzaPolitica
Palermo, Italy | 8-10 September 2011
Marta Regalia (University of Bologna / SISP) and Marco Valbruzzi (European University Institute)

From the 8th to the 10th of September, 2011, the Italian Political Science Association (SISP) held its most important event: its annual general meeting. The congress was hosted by the Department of Politics, Law and Society “G. Mosca” (Palermo University) in the beautiful city of Palermo.

As in the past, also this year the congress attracted a high number of participants. There were 283 contributors, among which 125 were SISP members. The 12 thematic sessions hosted 87 panels, where 222 papers were presented. Most of those papers are available online in the paper room of the SISP website (http://www.sisp.it/convegno/2011/paper/).

During the three days devoted to Political Science, it was possible to attend some significant events. The first plenary session saw the participation of the President
of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano in a dialogue with SISP President, Gianfranco Pasquino, on the topic “Re-making the Italians in order to stay in Europe”. It was a meeting of great interest not only for political scientists, but also for public opinion. This enabled the SISP to celebrate, in the best possible way, the 150th Anniversary of the Italian Unification. During the second plenary session one of the SISP founders, Giovanni Sartori, chose the stage offered by the SISP Annual Congress to present, together with Mauro Calise and Oreste Massari, his new book Logica, metodo e linguaggio nelle scienze sociali (Bologna, Il Mulino 2011). Finally, in the third plenary session, two scholars, Giandomenico Majone and Gian Enrico Rusconi, dueled on a topic highly relevant for Italy and Europe: federalism within and among European states.

In addition to these events, the Congress hosted a number of round tables devoted to the foundation of the Italian State. Through participants’ contributions, the Italian Political Science Association was able to show the capabilities and potentialities of Political Science in the analysis of a central phenomenon in the discipline: the formation of modern nation-states.

The annual general meeting was also the occasion for conferring to a SISP member the “Carlo Maria Santoro” award for the best paper presented during the previous year congress. The award was given to Alessandro Pellegata for his paper “"Throw the Rascals Out": Gli Effetti dell'Alternanza di Governo sul Controllo della Corruzione Politica”.

Finally, the annual general meeting offered the opportunity to think about the future of political science in Italy and on the role political scientists may or should have within the political community. This reflection will be at the center of the next meeting that SISP will organize in Siena, in the Fall of 2012, in collaboration with its official journal: the Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica (RISP). There, we will celebrate the 40th Anniversary of RISP, the journal that formed and inspired a number of generations of Italian political scientists.

The Italian Political Science Association preserves its vitality thanks to the active contribution of all its members. For this reason, during the Congress, all members joined in making a formal tribute to the late Giorgio Fedel, a scholar that gave a relevant contribution, with his numerous studies, to the analysis of political communication and to our Association.

The next annual Congress will be held in Rome from the 13th to the 15th of September, 2012. The Congress will be hosted by the Faculty of Political Science of Roma Tre University. The fil rouge of the Congress will be "Democracy, Technocracy, Europe". Works are organized in 12 thematic sessions: Democracy and democratization, Political theory, Comparative politics, Italian political system, Political communication, Participation and social movements, Administration and public policies, International relations, Elections and voting behavior, Regionalism and local politics, Research methods, and Politics and policies of the European Union. Each session hosts a number of panels, which are all available online. A call for papers is now open and we encourage interested participants to send a paper proposal to Panel Chairs (http://www.sisp.it/convegno/2012/sezioni/) before May, 1st. During the Congress a number of plenary sessions and social events will also be organized. This is also a great opportunity to visit Italy and Rome and enjoy life under a "non-political" government!
Publications

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Recently Published Books
(By Christophe Roux)


Journal Articles
(by Alessandro Cagossi)


English-speaking Journals on Italy: Contents
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Introduction

On 12 November last year, Silvio Berlusconi resigned as Italian prime minister, forced out of office by the growing Euro-zone crisis. Berlusconi is of course a larger-than-life figure, one who has survived sexual and financial scandals that would have swept other politicians from office long ago. Indeed, love him or loath him Berlusconi must, in terms of his political longevity and the power he has been able to wield, be considered one of the most successful European party leaders of modern times. Having in early 1994, created an entirely novel kind of political party, he went on, within the space of a few weeks, to win the first of three general elections which, for the next decade and a half confirmed his role as the fulcrum around which everything of any importance in Italian politics essentially revolved. On the one hand, he and his party have been the pivot around which the centre right has been built and whose unity has depended almost entirely on his continued popularity. On the other hand, opposition to Berlusconi has been the only common denominator of the parties on the centre left – and thus the source of their weakness and division as they have each struggled to find a way to oppose him without leaving themselves exposed to the electoral incursions of their allies. In short, it has for long been the case that ‘to be on the centre right [has meant] to support Berlusconi, to be on the centre left... to oppose him’ (Urbani, 2009). Many would therefore argue that since his emergence as a significant political actor, Berlusconi has brought about major, and possibly long-lasting, shifts in the political and social culture in Italy. Why, then, did he resign? And with what consequences? Does his resignation represent the end of his political career or just his temporary eclipse? We deal with each of these questions in the three sections that follow before concluding in the fourth.

Why the resignation?

In order to be understood in the fullest sense, the resignation has to be seen against the background of the Euro-zone crisis and the global financial meltdown, with which the crisis was directly linked. We begin with the global financial meltdown, which started with the US subprime mortgage crisis.

In the early years of the twenty-first century, US mortgage lenders were encouraged to market to low income households by low interest rates – designed to stimulate the economy in the wake of the Twin Towers attack – and by securitization – the bundling together of large numbers of mortgages, sold on to banks and investors – enabling lenders to avoid the risks of mortgage defaults. The resulting boom in subprime lending, with a relaxation (underwritten by government policy to expand home ownership) of the traditional
barriers to buying a home, encouraged low-income borrowers to purchase – while growing demand led to a boom in house prices thus further encouraging subprime lending: lenders and investors felt guaranteed, by rising property prices, against the possibility of defaults by subprime borrowers. Borrowers likewise felt guaranteed by rising prices: if they got into difficulties they could sell the property at a profit, pay off the mortgage and walk away or else borrow against the increased value of the property; but in any case defaults among subprime borrowers were relatively low at this time thanks to economic expansion generally.

The decision by the Federal Reserve under Alan Greenspan to raise interest rates from late 2004 made house purchases more expensive – causing a slow-down in the property market, preventing subprime borrowers from refinancing their mortgages, leaving many of them with mortgage repayments they could not afford, creating an increase in foreclosures and billions of dollars of loses. Because of the way in which the mortgages had been securitized, it was uncertain which financial institutions – which relied on short-term, low-interest loans from other institutions in order to purchase the mortgage-based securities – were most and which less exposed to the subprime loans. This created a liquidity crisis as banks reacted to this general uncertainty by refusing to lend to each other. Meanwhile, the collapse in the housing market began to affect the broader US economy thanks to a drop in construction and a decline in consumer confidence, with knock-on effects for retailing and other sectors. Fears of an economic slowdown brought a cutback in the availability of credit for businesses and individuals – the so-called credit crunch – while governments around the world stepped in to rescue financial institutions reporting bad debts, and to reassure consumers by guaranteeing their deposits.

The financial crisis then left countries with lower growth and this left those such as Greece, which had run large structural deficits during the period of high growth of the initial years of the century, with mounting debts. Having joined the euro in 2001, Greece had been able to borrow much more cheaply than before thanks to the Growth and Stability Pact and therefore investors’ belief that placing money there was as safe as investing in the stronger northern economies. The Greek government had spent considerable sums on infrastructural improvements; then, when the economic slowdown hit, it faced still larger debts thanks to the decline in tax revenues and the costs of growing unemployment. The public debt had already exceeded 100 percent of Gross Domestic Product in 2000 despite the 60 percent ceiling stipulated by the Stability and Growth Pact whose rules had in any case not been properly enforced. After 2008, the budget deficit and the public debt increased dramatically. Investors realized that Greece was borrowing very large amounts compared to the size of its economy and began demanding higher interest rates – which aggravated the debt problem even more.

As part of the euro, Greece’s options for dealing with the situation were considerably limited since it could not devalue. On the one hand, this would have made its debts cheaper by reducing the value of the bonds that had been bought by the holders of non-Eurozone currencies. On the other hand, it needed to kick-start growth, which also required devaluation as productivity was generally lower than in other Euro-zone countries. With interest rates and the level of debt beginning to spiral out of control, in May 2010 the Greek government was forced to accept a bailout of €110 billion
from the EU, the IMF and the European Central Bank in exchange for severe austerity measures. Thanks to the continuing pressure on the debt from growing recession, the package proved inadequate and in July 2011 a further bailout of €109 billion had to be arranged. As it became clear that even this would not solve Greece’s problems, investors began to worry about other Euro-zone countries including Italy, whose public debt in 2011 stood at €1.9 trillion representing about 120% of GDP and second in size only to that of Greece.

The risk here was that a self-fulfilling prophecy might take hold. Investors were aware that Italy’s debt problem was being compounded by the economic slowdown. They were aware too that underlying both were several years of very low growth that were at least in part the result of various structural problems in the economy. These included regulations restricting competition in a number of markets; inefficiencies in the delivery of public services, thus raising firms’ transaction costs; the specialization and small size of industrial companies, making it more difficult for Italy than for other countries to engage in the kind of industrial restructuring necessary to meet the shift that has taken place in world demand in the direction of high tech products and to meet growing competition from the newly industrialized countries. With awareness of all of this beginning to generate fears that Italy too might be unable to sustain its debt, in the summer of 2011, interest rates on Italian bonds began to rise. And with the prospect that rising interest rates might bring about that very un-sustainability that was driving rates up in the first place, so did the possibility that Italy might follow the road taken by Greece come to seem increasingly real.

The pressures this created on the Italian government were not just those of the debt itself but ones deriving from the stakes that the entire international community had in the crisis. In the first place there was the risk of financial contagion. For example, much of Italy’s debt was owned by French banks which, in the case of an Italian default would put the French banking system and economy under considerable pressure which would in turn affect France’s creditors and so on. In the second place, the crisis was perceived as one for the Euro-zone as a whole. On the one hand, if the stronger countries refused to support the ones in difficulties, then the risk was that the situation might spin out of control with growing debt and spiraling interest rates on government bonds leading eventually to the weaker countries’ insolvency. On the other hand, to the extent that attempts to avoid such a scenario required bailouts and austerity measures, there was the likelihood and the actuality of resistance to austerity in the debtor countries, and popular resentment against financial aid packages in the creditor countries – with all that that implied for the political project of European integration (Der Spiegel, 2011)

If these pressures provided the general context in which the Berlusconi resignation took place, then the second aspect that has to be grasped in order to understand the resignation itself is how each of the main Italian actors responded to the pressures. In the first place, the Prime Minister himself reacted by insisting that Italy’s position was fundamentally sound. Thus in a speech to Parliament on 3 August designed to reassure markets, he pointed out that Italy’s banks were ‘liquid, solvent, and [had] easily passed the European stress tests’; that the country had ‘also seen significant signs of recovery despite the uncertainty of the economic situation’; that ‘the crisis and emergency [the
Government had] had to deal with in recent weeks [were] the direct consequence of a crisis of confidence affecting international markets ... thanks both to uncertainties surrounding the euro and to financial speculation’. The underlying message was clear: there was nothing to worry about; the crisis was an international one and Italy was well placed to weather it.

Second, therefore, the Government reacted by falling prey to internal divisions, most conspicuously between the Prime Minister himself and Finance Minister, Giulio Tremonti. While Berlusconi was concerned to win back declining popularity by public spending, Tremonti called for spending cuts secure in the knowledge that he could afford to defy the Prime Minister: he could claim the support both of President Giorgio Napolitano and the ratings agencies and the markets which seemed as though they might threaten financial disaster in the event of the Finance Minister’s forced resignation (Walston, 2011). In July, Parliament passed a budget involving cuts of €47 billion aimed at eliminating the budget deficit by 2014 but (in what was a watered-down version of more severe proposals that had been presented by Tremonti the previous month) postponing most of the cuts to 2013 and 2014.

The budget was therefore a sign both of the inability of the executive to pass decisive measures and of a decline in Berlusconi’s authority which – thirdly – created space for an enhanced role of the President of the Republic in responding to the crisis. The powers of Italian presidents have been famously likened to an accordion (Pasquino, 2011): when the parties are strong, presidents are limited in the discretion they have in exercising their (not precisely circumscribed) formal powers as heads of state; when the parties are weak, the room for presidential discretion is much greater and presidents are able to play their accordion to its full extent. This is what happened in the case of the July budget. The severity of the crisis and the weakness of the executive considerably enhanced the authority of President Napolitano who was therefore able to play an active role in getting the budget measure passed in record time. Publicly calling for national cohesion and reportedly setting up an unofficial committee of senior politicians and treasury officials (Moody, 2011) the President urged government and opposition to take concerted action to deal with the crisis. In the event, therefore, the budget passed without obstruction from the opposition (which had little choice but to accept the President’s counsel on pain of being blamed for aggravating the situation); and most importantly for present purposes, the manner of the budget’s passage revealed that Berlusconi (already weakened by the outcome of local elections in May and four referenda in June), had effectively been sidelined by the President.

The third major element that has to be grasped in order to understand the Berlusconi resignation therefore concerns the nature and extent of the power the entrepreneur had exercised until that point. In accordance with a cross-national tendency bound up with the decline of ideology since 1989 and developments in the mass media, Italy has seen a growing personalisation of politics (meaning a growing focus on, and significance for, election outcomes of individual candidates and their characteristics) and especially a growing significance of personalised leadership (Newell, 2010). Berlusconi’s power directly reflected this. His party – Forza Italia (FI) and then the Popolo della libertà (PdL) – was a ‘personal party’ (Calise, 2000). It was set up by him, with his own resources, designed to enable him, as he
himself conceived it, ‘to establish an unmediated, direct relationship with ordinary Italians’ (Mariotti, 2011: 44). Consequently, the power he exercised within it was essentially patrimonial in nature. It was a type of power he was able to continue to exercise not just because of his financial resources, but also because of his charismatic authority as a leader who had achieved political success thanks precisely to perceptions of his exceptional personal qualities, to his ability to ride the wave of anti-political sentiments, to his populism. As Claudia Mariotti (2011) has shown, based on a careful analysis of in-depth interviews with FI parliamentarians, the entrepreneur’s followers have tended not only to identify with the person of Silvio Berlusconi rather than with any political ideal. They have also tended to perceive him ‘as a father figure ... to whom they are tied by feelings of child-like devotion’ (Mariotti, 2011: 48); for they have been fully aware of their dependency upon him thanks to the fact that it is he who brings votes to them, not they who bring votes to him.

In the nature of the case, when charismatic authority begins to wane, its decline threatens the survival not only of the person wielding it but also of the organization that is built upon it. And the danger is that once followers begin to flake off, the process becomes self-generating in an increasingly rapid downward spiral. Something like such a scenario appeared to be becoming an increasing possibility for Berlusconi in the months leading up to his departure. Already with the formation of the PdL in 2008 there had been a decline in the ability of Berlusconi to dominate his party – and then a further decline with the growing rift with Gianfranco Fini (and the consequent emergence of factions, which had never really existed in FI) culminating in the party split in the summer of 2010. Thanks to the effects of the split on the parliamentary arithmetic, the stability of the Government was undermined. Then, as the spread on Italian and German bonds grew wider and wider, the entrepreneur seemed gradually to lose the support of followers aware that he was 75 and lead a party which might not survive his political exit. With Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy making strong hints from August that a solution to the Italian debt crisis required a change of government, followers began to look for new political homes.

Thus it was that Berlusconi was forced out, caught between opposing pressures deriving from his followers on the one hand and the EU and European leaders on the other. With yields on 10-year Italian bonds again rising towards the 6 percent level they had topped in early August, in mid September, Parliament approved a supplementary budget designed to eliminate the deficit, in 2013, a year earlier than originally planned. However, the bill’s passage exposed once again the Government’s internal divisions as well as sparking street protests. Doubts therefore remained about its will to follow through on the measures (Babington, 2011) and on 26 October the Prime Minister was obliged to pledge further measures in a letter to EU leaders meeting for debt crisis talks. Meanwhile, on 10 October, the Government lost a vote to approve the previous year’s public accounts thanks to numerous absences among the ranks of its own MPs and was obliged to hold it again on 8 November. The vote was important because without it, Parliament would have been unable to pass the measures pledged to the EU. In the event, the vote was won – but with 308 votes, which was eight votes short of an absolute majority in the 630-member Chamber of Deputies. Eight of Berlusconi’s followers had sided with the opposition parties, which had agreed, in the national interest, not to oppose the
measure but also not to participate in the vote in order that it could be used as a means to reveal how much support the Government could actually muster. By the time the answer came, an increasing number of party loyalists had been calling for Berlusconi to step aside for the good of the country and the vote effectively sealed his fate. It was to have been followed up a confidence vote sponsored by the opposition parties but Berlusconi outmanoeuvred them by promising to resign once the package of measures agreed with the EU had been passed. It was a last-ditch attempt to retain office: there could be no confidence vote while the measures were being discussed; and the promise might calm the markets. In the meantime, the Prime Minister might salvage his majority and avoid, in the end, actually having to deliver on the promise. Instead the markets were not calmed and on 9 November President Napolitano issued a statement reiterating Berlusconi’s promise (thus effectively locking him into it); clarifying that, on the basis of agreements with the presidents of the Chamber and Senate the measures would be passed within days; declaring that presidential consultations for a solution to the government crisis consequential upon Berlusconi’s resignation would begin immediately. It was a highly curious event politically and constitutionally: in effect, Berlusconi had been dismissed by the President.

The consequences of the resignation

The most immediate consequence of the resignation was that Italy acquired, under economics professor, Mario Monti, a ‘technocratic’ government staffed entirely by unelected professionals, a government that took office in circumstances that were eloquent about a deficit of democracy at the heart of Europe and therefore of Italy. If one could dismiss as over-colourful rhetoric Giuliano Ferrara’s claim that the change of government showed that Italian democracy had been overthrown by the spread on government bonds ‘where once upon a time tanks would have been used’ (il Giorno, 2011), then his suggestion touched on an issue that could not be dismissed entirely. Governments have always been dependent on markets for their ability to mobilize (through taxation and borrowing) the economic resources required to fund their policies. However, the institutions surrounding the single currency arguably enhance this dependency while making it very difficult for citizens of the Eurozone countries to hold politicians to account for their policies in responding to markets; for there is a single currency but no single, democratically elected EU-wide institution able to hold to account the policy-making bodies, the Commission and the Council of Ministers – which in any case have none of the taxation and spending powers that usually go with monetary sovereignty. So when Der Spiegel (2011) argued that debt-crisis policies were being made at more or less secret meetings of a handful of European leaders and central banks and ‘then handed to the parliaments to rubber-stamp’, it was tempting to conclude from the Italian experience (as well as the Greek) that the same leaders, and the markets, were handing the parliaments governments to rubber-stamp too.

The new government could also be termed ‘presidential’ insofar as it derives a very significant part of its authority from the support of the President of the Republic. Legally, of course, the Government depends for its tenure on the confidence of the two chambers of Parliament. However, the choice of Mario Monti and his ministers was Napolitano’s, whose formal power of appointment had become a very real one thanks to the international crisis and the effects it had had in undermining what
capacity the political parties may have had to oppose a president whose foremost constitutional duty is to mediate and regulate political processes with the aim of ensuring on-going national integration.

Once the task of forming a government had been given to Monti, by the President, the parties fell into line. The day after the presidential announcement of 9 November that sealed Berlusconi’s fate, part of the PdL called for fresh elections – partly, no doubt, out of principle; partly because, though Berlusconi was short on popularity it was not certain that the centre left could beat him when memories of the litigious government under Romano Prodi were still relatively fresh. For the same reason the Democratic Party (PD) along with the remainder of the PdL supported, in place of elections, the appointment of a technocratic government – which would make it easier for the parties to avoid any political costs associated with unpopular austerity measures. The Northern League (NL) said that it would not support the appointment of a technocratic government under Monti, presumably aware that its opposition would enable it to have the best of both worlds: on its own, it would be unable to stand in the way of the incoming government and its policies but its stance would enable it to pose as the most reliable critic of an executive that clearly promised measures of economic hardship. In the event, Monti was given the necessary confidence with record levels of support in both the Chamber (with 556 of 630) and the Senate (with 281 of 315).

That is as far as the political consequences of Berlusconi’s departure are concerned. As far as the consequences for policy and the economy are concerned, it should be noted, first, that in presenting his government for the votes of confidence, Monti promised ‘budget discipline, growth and fairness’. The government’s programme was presented as a highly integrated one: the future of the Euro and therefore of the single market depended at least in part on Italy’s efforts to convince markets that it had begun ‘a lasting reduction in the ratio of public debt to GDP’ – efforts that would, however, not be credible if the country did not start to grow, which in turn required measures whose effectiveness would depend on the extent to which they were equitable. There would be support for proposals, already before Parliament, to introduce a balanced-budget requirement into the Constitution and for administrative reforms; measures to eliminate, in the area of pensions, disparities of treatment between generations and categories of worker; a fight against tax evasion including legal limits on the size of transactions that could be undertaken in cash; tax reform, including a probable return of the tax on primary residences and the possibility of lower tax rates for women in order to raise rates of female participation in the labour force (one of the lowest in Europe); a shift in the burden of taxation away from employment and enterprise in the direction of property and consumption.

By 24 February 2012, 100 days after it had assumed office, the Government had introduced eight decree laws (of which five had been converted into ordinary law by Parliament), two bills and seven legislative decrees, besides eight bills ratifying international agreements. The highlights of this legislative activity, from the point of view of the international crisis that had brought the Government into office in the first place, were the ‘decree law for growth, fairness and consolidation of the public accounts (Salva-Italia)’, approved by Parliament on 22 December 2011, and the ‘decree law containing urgent provisions concerning
competition, the development of infrastructure, and competitiveness’ introduced on 20 January 2012. Salva-Italia involved tax increases of between €17 and €18 billion (including a new property tax) and spending cuts of between €12 and €13 billion, for a total of €30 billion. Of this, €20 billion was to be used to reduce the debt, €10 billion to be spent on projects designed to encourage growth. The 20 January measure contained a range of provisions designed to increase market competition in various sectors (such as the professions) and to improve infrastructural facilities (including a fast-track court for the resolution of business disputes).

The extent to which these measures were in fact consistent with the three objectives/principles with which the Government began could be, and of course was, debated. But what was more important – again, from the point of view of the immediate crisis that had brought the Government to office – was how the measures were perceived, especially by the markets. As Monti himself had said in the above-mentioned confidence speech,

The objection that is often made to these measures is that ... they have little effect on growth in the short run (which is true) ... But ... the choices of the investors who buy our government bonds are driven ... also by their expectations about the state of Italy in ten or twenty years when the bonds they are buying today mature. So there is no conflict between the things we must do or start doing today, even if their effects will only be felt in the long-run because the investors who favour or punish us also act today but look at the long-run effects. Even reforms that have a gradual impact on growth, by influencing investors’ expectations, can lead to an immediate reduction in rates of interest with positive consequences for growth itself.

From this point of view the Government had to be judged as successful: by 1 March, the gross yield on 10-year Italian government bonds had fallen back to 4.95 percent – the lowest it had been since 22 August 2011 and at about the level it had been a year previously, before the Italian debt crisis took off. Perhaps not surprisingly then, the Monti government was viewed positively by a wider sphere of actors. Having succeeded, at least for the time being, in re-establishing the confidence of the markets to a degree, Monti was also successful in re-establishing the weight and authority of Italy in European and other international circles. Success breeds success. On 20 February, Time magazine dubbed Monti ‘the most important man in Europe’ (Schuman, 2012) and this newfound prestige was reflected in domestic opinion-poll ratings which, though down from the 62 percent they had reached in December, nevertheless remained above 50 percent in February (Dell’Olmo, 2012).

Such ratings undoubtedly made a not insignificant contribution to the Government’s ability to retain the support of the political parties (on which, despite everything, it remained dependent) and therefore to its stability. In essence, it had from mid-December been supported by a broad coalition of the PD, the PdL and the centre but excluding the two ‘radical/extreme’ parties – the NL and Italy of Values (IdV) – in the former centre-left and centre-right coalitions. Neither of the two main parties had any incentive to put the survival of a prestigious government at risk at a time when the aftershocks of the crisis could still be felt, and this enabled the Government – by making proposals such as Salva-Italia matters of confidence – to pass measures which, in other circumstances, would probably have been unacceptable to both parties.
Berlusconi’s future

None of this necessarily means that Berlusconi’s political career has come to an end. Most importantly he had not, as he pointed out in a video message broadcast immediately following the resignation announcement, been forced from office thanks to the loss of a confidence vote. He remained the head of Italy’s largest party and therefore a very significant interlocutor for the Government. Initially, he had made statements containing the implicit suggestion that he either could or might topple the Government given that he had not actually lost his majority in the Senate. But by March 2012, he was saying that he saw ‘no obstacles for the current government between now and the end of its term in office. “Only if the government’s work were not to be in line with the country’s interests,” he said, “but frankly I can’t see it”’ (AGI, 2012a). Meanwhile, the Prime Minister was giving assurances that he was ‘not interested in anything that happened after the next election, which he anticipated would take place ‘at the natural end of the government’s term’: ‘I only care about what happens after because actions and decisions have effects over time. I do not care about what individuals do after that. It is not an issue I ponder’ (AGI, 2012b). For these reasons, the most likely scenario early in 2012 was that fresh elections would take place some time in the Spring of 2013.

Opinion polls at the end of the first 100 days of the Monti government suggested that the outcome of an election could be wide open: although Berlusconi’s party and the parties of the centre right generally seemed to be trailing badly (Table 1), they were by no means out of the game and most importantly, the undecided, at about one fifth of the respondents, remained significantly large. Indeed, either because of indecision or a desire to abstain, the proportion of those willing to name a party when asked had declined dramatically since the start of the legislature (from about three quarters to little more than a half). All of this augured well for Berlusconi in the event that he led the centre-right parties into a Spring 2013 campaign: if there were large numbers of undecided and disillusioned voters available to be mobilised then he arguably remained the politician best placed to take advantage of this situation, precisely as he had at the 2006 election when he had been able to come from behind and almost snatch a victory. And what seems especially important is that, to an even greater extent than he had been able to do in 2006, he would once again be able to pose as an outsider, that is, to pass himself off as an opponent of the political establishment, avoiding the image of a former prime minister with an indifferent record of government to have to defend – because crucially, by the Spring of 2013, he would have been out of office for something approaching a year and half.
Table 1: Voting intentions at the end of February 2012.
‘If there were a general election tomorrow, which party would you vote for?’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties of the center left</th>
<th>Parties of the center right</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party %</td>
<td>Party %</td>
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<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>27.0</td>
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<td>IdV</td>
<td>9.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEL</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>API</td>
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<tr>
<td>FdS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
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Source: Demopolis, [http://www.sondaggipoliticoelettorali.it/](http://www.sondaggipoliticoelettorali.it/)

In the immediate aftermath of his resignation announcement, in an interview with the editor of La Stampa, Berlusconi said that he would ‘not be standing again’ and that the centre right’s leader at the next elections would be the secretary of his party, Angelino Alfano (Calabresi, 2011). The pronouncements were widely reported at the time but from the same interview two additional pronouncements, less widely reported, were significant. Asked whether he was really willing to take a step back he replied that he could perhaps give a hand in the election campaign, an activity he had ‘always been very good at’; and asked what he would do following his resignation he replied that he would ‘act as the founding father of [his] party’. Not only did he envisage retaining a high political profile but his answers were eloquent about the political power he would unavoidably continue to wield regardless of his formal role: as the founder of a patrimonial party he would remain the inevitable puppet master of any new leader.

In such a capacity he would revert to pursuing his commercial interests in the way he had done before his political debut – essentially, by paying others to do his bidding rather than doing it personally. Berlusconi has, from the start of his career, had a close relationship with the world of politics in a country where the overlap between political and economic interests has, from an international comparative perspective, always been close. From this point of view his political exploits of recent years represent much less of a novelty than is widely assumed. Having found in a relationship with one-time Prime Minister, Bettino Craxi, the key to the growth of his media empire in the 1980s, the demise of the old political class in the early 1990s led him to conclude that if his interests were threatened thereby, then he could simply take its place (Fiori, 1995: 223).

**Conclusion**

It would therefore be extremely premature to conclude that we have seen the last of Silvio Berlusconi however events unfold over the coming months. In resigning when he did, Berlusconi saved the political capital he had at that point, preventing the trickle away of his supporters from turning into a haemorrhage. In that sense, the resignation, if not exactly a victory, was not a defeat either.

Whatever the precise nature of his future political involvement, the involvement itself will continue simply because his commercial interests will oblige him to continue to operate on the ‘ill-defined border separating (or failing to separate) the world of
politics from the world of economics’ (Newell, 2000: 106) – and also because, despite everything, he retains a political profile and a political following which he will not want to squander: the Rome street celebrations that greeted his resignation were widely reported; somewhat less widely reported were the counter-demonstrations of his diehard supporters.

Ultimately, Berlusconi lost his position as Prime Minister thanks to forces that toppled others equally as powerful, so there seemed to be little or no damage accruing from his fall alone; and the video message in which he claimed to have resigned out of a sense of responsibility, to save Italy from the attacks of further financial speculation, revealed that he was ever the master at turning a set-back into an advantage. It would not be unreasonable to expect him to push the advantage still further. The notion that he had been the victim of a coup d’état by international speculators was colourful but not without the necessary grain of truth to enable it to be exploited. It would chime perfectly with the underdog themes that have ever been central features of his political message since the famous ‘discesa in campo’ itself (Castro and Newell, 2011). People who enjoy betting should not stake a great deal of money on the end of Berlusconi’s political career quite yet.

References


Italy: It’s Like That, If You Think So

Joseph LaPalombara
Yale University

I
Introduction

I am pleased to be here today, at the beginning of York University’s celebration of Italy’s 150th anniversary as a unified nation-state.

Creating a unified nation on the peninsula was a chancy undertaking.

Powerful European nations opposed unification, and some committed military forces to keep this from happening. The Vatican called on France to help it hang on to the Papal States which comprised most of Central Italy. Once that failed, the Pope ordered Catholics, on pain of excommunication, not to participate in the New Nation’s national elections.

The Non Expedit endured until 1929 when, in exchange for that papal favor, Mussolini signed a Concordat which made Catholicism Italy’s official religion.

Contrary to myth, the Risorgimento was anything but a popular movement. Given any chance to vote for or against a united Italy, a huge majority would almost certainly have rejected the proposal.

Giuseppe Garibaldi’s Mille did wrest Sicily and Naples from the Bourbons in favor of incorporating them in the New Italy, only to be bitterly disappointed in what then ensued. His protests against the shape the New Italy took under the House of Savoy were so vociferous that he went off for a while into voluntary exile — to Staten Island, of all places!

Massimo d’Azeglio, a Founding Father who unlike the other Piedmontese was well-traveled on the peninsula, had doubts about the new nation’s viability, reflected in his famous warning: “Fatta l’Italia, bisogna fare gli italiani.”

Clichés die hard, and this one is no exception. For example, the Financial Times qualified its description of the onset of Italy’s 150th birthday celebration with this caveat: “But Italians Still Lack a National Identity.”

What can this mean? The FT sees a lack of common Italian national identity where I and others see many signs of it. The problem here involves one’s angle of vision. What we perceive depends, metaphorically, on where we stand. For this reason, Pirandello’s great play, “Cosi’ e’ (Se vi pare),” inspired the title I’ve given these remarks.

Three questions about contemporary Italy come to mind.

First, is it fair to describe Italy today as a united country whose residents share a common identity?

Second, are there noteworthy achievements of Italy that we can logically attribute to its status as a united nation?

Third, if the answer to this second query is positive, how does one explain the persistence of so many negative images of Italy, and particularly those that compare it unfavorably with other nations?

The Italy I refer to is not the beautiful peninsula that draws millions of admiring tourists each year. Not the place identified by UNESCO as the home of well over half of the
world’s historically important cultural artifacts. Not the contemporary Mecca of high fashion, or the country whose pasta and pizza have conquered more of the earth than did the ancient Romans.

I mean Italy as a working nation-state, whose basic political and governmental institutions are similar to most of the other entities, large or small, which we identify as independent nations.

I believe that it is inaccurate, or simply wrong, to depict Italy as less stable, more rent by internal strife and division, more corrupt, and, above all, less internally united than are other countries, and especially those which qualify as democratic republics.

Two hundred years ago (1815) Austria’s Prince Metternich derisively dismissed Italy as nothing more than a geographic expression. He excluded the possibility that those then living on the peninsula would never be able to form a single, coherent, viable nation-state. Along with Massimo d’Azeglio’s shopworn cliché, this one should also be retired.

II
The Question of Identity

Home towns mean a great deal to Italians. Some of these places were once wealthy, powerful city-states, with glorious histories dating back many centuries. This fact has helped to breed among Italians something they call campanilismo, that is, a local extremely parochial self-identity that centers not just on one’s place of birth on that space within it encompassed by a single parish and its bell tower.

There is also a well known tendency of Italians to tell public opinion pollsters that they disdain, distrust, and hate the government located at Rome, and that they would prefer, for example, government by the E.U.’s Commission located at Brussels.

Evidence like this understandably creates the impression that, as many (including myself) have written, Italy is markedly deficient in “national unity.”

However this is not really the case. Italy today is not so different from many other democracies. That is, it seems to be at least as unified as are the others in the sense of the existence of a common language, and the absence of internal separatist movements or schisms based on religious, racial, ethnic, ideological, or other characteristics.

Ideology certainly did divide Italy at war’s end. North and South voted on opposite sides when it came to monarchy vs. republic. Some in Sicily publicly entertained the truly absurd thought that the island might become the forty-ninth American states. The Christian Democrats, backed by the Vatican, faced the Communists who identified with the U.S.S.R.

These were serious schisms, but most of them have since abated or disappeared. By comparison to those Cold War years, The Northern League and Umberto Bossi’s description of the regions abutting on the Po Valley as a separate country called Padania is little more than pure rhetoric.

One might go further to argue that from the earliest years of its history as a single nation, Italy has never experienced anything like the separatist problems that afflicted and afflict European countries like Canada, Great Britain, Spain, Belgium, the former Czechoslovakia, and many others.

Consider this: At Italy’s unification, in 1861, Italian was a foreign language for most of the 25 million persons who at that time inhabited the peninsula and islands. Only one-in-forty of them spoke Italian, and most of those who did lived in Tuscany. Even Count
Camillo Cavour, Italy’s Unifier-in-Chief, had much better French than Italian.

Today Italian is Italy’s universal language. Indeed, the growing concern is that dialects may be dying out. If a common language, written, spoken and understood be almost everyone is one mark of a cohesively unified country, Italy today meets that standard as well do most European countries, and better than do the United States or Canada.

Some wrongly believe that only Fascism succeeded, however temporarily, in forcing Italians to accept a common national identify. Fascism not only intensified older internal divisions—like the one over the monarchy, which was complicit in Mussolini’s creation of a brutal dictatorship. It also created newer ones, for example, in the form of the Republic of Salò’, Fascism’s dying gasp, which plunged a part of the peninsula into civil war.

During the Cold War years, the Vatican made its own major contribution to a polarized Italian politics. Echoing 1861, a Pope once again warned that Catholics who supported the political left electorally ran the risk of being ex-communicated. For many years, this warning rang out in the sermons of priests who urged the faithful to shun the political left in favor of the Christian Democrats.

Today most of these divisions look and feel like ancient history. The monarchists have disappeared. The once-ferocious and dangerous Neo-Fascists are also history—so much so that their current leader, Gianfranco Fini, has been welcomed, literally with open arms, in Jerusalem.

Italy’s current president, Giorgio Napolitano, is a former leader of the Italian Communist Party. He regularly stops in to visit with the Pope. He enjoys from Italian citizens a level of popular support that national leaders all over Europe, to say nothing of President Obama, can only dream of. It is emblematic of today’s Italy that President Napolitano should title the book he published in celebration of Italy’s 150th birthday: Una e indivisibile: Riflessioni sui 150 anni della nostra Italia.

III
The Question of Italy’s National Achievements

In the decades following World War II, Italy experienced extraordinary transformations, most of them for the good, which would scarcely materialize in a country deprived of a common national identity and purpose, or at risk of falling apart.

Fascism left Italy economically and psychologically prostrate. Postwar diplomatic traffic in the West accurately described the country as a basket case. It required much arm-twisting, for example, before President Truman agreed, to include Italy in the Atlantic alliance.

I witnessed some of these conditions as first hand, several years after war’s end. Everywhere I went, Italians bemoaned la brutta miseria. The transportation system was still a shambles. Official unemployment exceeded twenty percent. Agriculture accounted for additional hidden unemployment and under-employment.

In Naples, well into the 1950s, the maimed victims of war lined the main streets, selling all manner items most of which one way or other, originated in the American naval base located there. Near the port, hundreds of families still resided in crowded, fetid caves. In those years in the Mezzogiorno, winter brought extreme hardship even for those privileged enough to derive some heat from ground-up olive pits burned in brass braziers.

The positive side of the postwar American presence is that it greatly helped
alleviate these conditions. The Marshall Plan helped the national government to launch a series of reconstruction policies which were destined radically to transform the peninsula, including the Mezzogiorno. To be sure, many of these policies were marred by bad planning as well as by corruption. Nevertheless, in relatively short order, illiteracy shrank very sharply, a first-rate railway and road system came into existence, and living conditions, including those in the South, improved.

Economically, Italy quickly went from an overwhelmingly agricultural country to one in which, today, that sector represents only 6% of GDP. Combined with a modernized agriculture, industrialization brought about several so-called economic “miracles” that baffled the earlier Cassandras. Changes were so rapid that Italy moved very rapidly to join other advanced industrial economies dominated by the third or “services” sector.

Universal health and other welfare services also helped to transform the Italian standard of living. Italy put a floor on poverty. Today immensely fewer Italians than Americans fall below the so-called poverty line, to say nothing of the number of homeless persons.

Regarding indicators that measure rates of health, disease, mortality, longevity, crime, home ownership, educational achievement, etc., Italy is not markedly different those countries we find at or near the top of the rank-orderings. Indeed, as the tourists quickly learn, despite mounds of rotting garbage piled up on the streets of Naples, Italy and Italians seem to be if not rich then by and large “well off.” So much is the case that, beginning three decades ago, more Italians who had emigrated from Italy earlier returned home, while the number of those who left steadily declined.

One reason for all of this well-being is the so-called “black” or “hidden” economy. Bettino Craxi once told a joint session of the U.S. Congress that Italy’s real GDP would jump above one-quarter were the hidden economy to be factored into the so-called national accounts. I once asked one of Italy’s leading economists to explain the other-than-tax-evasion aspects of the black economy. He replied: “Beh, non lo sappiamo. Pero’ guai se cercassimo di toccarla!”

Here, are a few of the products of a united and not of a fragmented Italy.

1. Italy’s political leaders found a way to make a powerful Communist Party, with no hope of joining a governmental coalition, an active participant in the making of domestic policies. In return, the PCI added substantially to the evolution of Italy as a thriving democratic republic.
2. The Christian Democrats, as early as 1954, were able to remove the Vatican from its obtrusive direct participation in the electoral and political processes.
3. Far from representing a danger to the Atlantic Alliance and NATO, Italy became a vital participant in both these organizations. The PCI supported several Western international policies.
4. Italy managed to pull off without major trouble a within-national migration involving millions of persons who moved from countryside to city and from South to North. A peaceful transformation of this magnitude had never before taken place in Europe.
5. In the so-called “leaden years,” Italy, more than any other European country, experienced a degree of terrorist violence that resulted in the murder of large numbers of magistrates, judges, business executives, professors, political leaders, journalists, labor organizers, and so on. Italy managed this terrorist
challenge without the enactment of the kind of Draconian laws and violations of civil rights that characterized the post-9/11 events in the United States.

6. Italy today is also more secular than ever in the past. Pace the Vatican, Italy now has the lowest birth rate in the world. Its people strike me as more of one mind than are those of many other democracies when it comes to the public’s attitudes about marriage, procreation, the death penalty, abortion, separation of church and state, gun control capital punishment, and so forth.

Italians who have welcomed and are proud of these and other remarkable achievements will assure us that they materialized not because of the government at Rome but in spite of it. “Piove, governo ladro!” is an ancient adage that sums up this mentality.

We need better to appreciate what is actually going on here. These Italians behave much like Americans who say that they hate Washington and “big government” but who want no reduction in the benefits (like Medicare, social security, the interstate highway system, etc.) that Washington provides. In the Italian case, even the fiercest critics of Rome rush off to buy, in record numbers, the inflation-indexed bonds issued by the “despised” government at Rome.

IV

The Question of the Persistent Negative Images

Given what I have described, how does one explain the persistent negative images and judgments of Italy? Italy as “The Sick Man of Europe.” Italian government as immobilist or paralyzed. Italy as a country in the hands of the Mafia. Italy ridden by corruption, ruled by even more corrupt politicians. Italy as a democracy in permanent crisis, and governed by a “clown.”

Such descriptions are not limited to the tabloids. Leading newspapers and magazines abound in them. Foreign offices together with their embassies or consulates in Italy, communicate these same images. A recent dispatch to Washington from a U.S. ambassador to Rome included the flat statement that Italy suffers from “endemic corruption.”

Transparency International, in its “Perception of Corruption” index, regularly groups Italy not with European but, rather, with several Third World countries. In TI’s founding meeting at Berlin in 1994 I heard, of all people, a former Nigerian president declare that such an organization might help developing countries avoid becoming as corrupt as was Italy.

When the Eurozone spun into its ongoing crisis, the press unjustly coupled Italy with Greece. Despite the profound differences in the economic “fundamentals” of the two countries, the pundits treated Italy as just another profligate South European country on the brink of defaulting on its sovereign debt. More than one enraged Italian pointed to an Italian banking system which, much like Canada’s was in much better shape than those of Germany, France, Britain and the United States. As one Italian industrialist sardonically reminded me, “le nostre banche fanno prestiti solo a coloro che i soldi ce l’abbiano gia’ in abbondanza.”

Even a minimum effort on the part of journalists would compel them to correct their sloppy reporting. Italy’s family saving rate is essentially the highest in Europe. Italians are largely free of mountains of credit-card debt. Over half of Italy’s admittedly huge public debt is in the hands of the Italians—and not French or German banks, or of the Chinese.
The persistence of these negative images has many sources. History books will repeat forever the ignominy of the Italian army’s military rout at Caporetto, or flamboyant Fascist claims about Italy’s war-fighting muscle. From Leopardi to Luigi Barzini, Italian writers have themselves reveled in pointing to the foibles of the Italians, as well as aspects of Italian private and public life that appear bizarre or worse. The film and television industries depict all manner of organized criminals as belonging to an “International Mafia,” whose headquarters are located at “Corleone,” in Sicily.

The academic community has also made its contribution. Decades ago, an American scholar who had little or no knowledge of Italian or Italy, published a deeply flawed book egregiously titled, Moral Basis of a Backward Society. Since then other titles from academic works include such titles as these: Italy: The Politics of Uneven Development; Divided Italy; Italy: Republic without Government; Permanent Crisis of Italian Democracy; Italy on Borrowed Time; Italy: the Politics of Ambiguity; In Pursuit of Italy; and, very recently, Not a Normal Country: Italy after Berlusconi. Unintentionally, the title of one of my own books, Democracy, Italian Style, suggests that there is something queer or aberrant about that country.

Some of the media’s negative reporting if of course factual. For example, the miles of uncollected, festering garbage that for months lined the streets of Naples. Or the antics, and much worse, of Prime Minister Berlusconi that led more than one newspaper to depict him as “Unfit to Govern!” Or, more recently, the almost burlesque behavior of the sea captain who was apparently one of the first to abandon his cruise ship, lying on its side off the Tuscan coast.

It is impossible to over-estimate the damage single-handedly done to Italy’s image by Silvio Berlusconi. To my knowledge no estranged wife of a ruling prime minister has ever accused him of having sex with teenagers. And when one of the latter has a nickname like Ruby Break-Your-Heart and Berlusconi springs her from jail by misrepresenting her as a niece of Egypt’s Mu’Barak, the media understandably go on a feeding frenzy. Rightly or wrongly, no prime minister rivals Berlusconi when it comes to the number and variety of felonies of which he or she is formally accused.

That said, the Italian press has played a major role in sullying the image of Italy. In the press’s symbiotic relationship with Italy’s magistrates, the press has greatly fortified the idea that Italy, among democratic countries, is wallowing in corruption.

The Italian press is also notoriously “political,” and for this reason unusually biased, in its reporting as well on its editorial pages. The political bias changes with every transfer of ownership from one private family or group to another. Thus, whatever may have been the objective truth about Berlusconi, leading papers greatly exaggerated matters as a means of driving him from office. The price Italy pays for this worldwide is very high and will persist for decades.

The Italian media handled the so-called “Clean-Hands” or “Kick-Back City” scandals of the early 1990s much in the same way. Superficial reporting led to the erroneous belief, in Italy as well as abroad, that every recipient of an avviso di garanzia was probably guilty of corruption. The New York Times once carried a front-page story to the effect that magistrates had sent these letters to over seven thousand Italians. It did not carry any explanation that it was against the law for magistrates to leak such information. And it failed to note that the avviso is nothing more than a notice which a magistrate is required by law to send to any person against whom an investigation might be undertaken.
Several of the “Clean Hands” magistrates traveled widely abroad to make speeches about their campaign, and wound up defaming their own country. In sharp contrast to this image-eroding activity, neither the Japanese press nor its magistrates behaved similarly, even though, in those same years, Japan’s so-called “Recruit Scandal,” rivaled the Italian case in every way.

Unhappily for Italy the situation I have described is destined to remain unchanged. The stereotypes are too deeply implanted. The media is unlikely to reform itself. Italians will continue to tell the pollsters that they would rather be governed from almost anywhere except Rome. Italian political rhetoric will remain so fiery that the world press will continue to depict Italy as on the verge of falling apart.

The never-ending irony remains, as Pirandello knew so well, how difficult it is to find the right angle of vision from which to perceive and evaluate things as they really are.
Seeing Italy Through a Glass Darkly: 
How Foreign Friends View an Unlikely Country

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This article asks how foreign scholars formed an image of Italy over the last half-century and how their visions intersected with those of privileged interlocutors from inside the country. Italians project a particular image of their country, one that has profoundly influenced several generations of foreign friends. These foreigners abstract, foreshorten, and sometimes distort this image. The result is an image of the country seen, as it were, “through a glass darkly.”

Premise: The Difficulties

One of the problems in getting beyond the stereotypes that foreigners hold of Italians is that Italians’ behavior often seems to validate the worst stereotypes. Consider what happened off the coast of Giglio on Friday, January 14, 2012:

- The ship’s captain took the Costa Concordia wildly off course in order to give the tourists on board and the inhabitants of the island a thrill;
- Because of approximate navigation, the ship hit an undersea rock and turned on its side;
- Despite inadequate safety procedures and great confusion on board, although a small number were lost, 4,000 passengers and crew miraculously escaped;
- The captain left his post, was cursed out by the Captain of the Port (“Vai a bordo, cazzo!” he was heard shouting), and was arrested – before being released into arresto domiciliare;
- Not only that: the captain seems to have been dining with an unregistered passenger at the time his ship collided with the rocks and apparently told his crew to claim that nothing serious was amiss even as the ship was foundering.

How is it possible for foreigners to shape a non-stereotypical image of a country whose citizens often seem so determined to reify the stereotype? A brief look at how foreign friends have imagined Italy may help to unravel this mystery. From the Risorgimento onward, unrealistic assumptions and images projected from their own countries have combined with Italians’ own image to produce a strange amalgam of realism and imagination.

The Risks of Imagining Italy

Asking how foreign friends construct an image of Italy involves a number of risks. The first, of course, is the need for selectivity and to recognize that selectivity risks projecting a one-sided image. A second is that there are as many images of Italy as there are Italians. A third is that various generations of Italy’s foreign friends have perceived a different Italy because each encountered the country during different periods of its recent history. The Italy of the postwar reconstruction that Joseph La Palombara encountered in the early 1950s
might look very different than the Italy of the *miracolo* when this author first went there. Both would be different again from the Italy of 1968 or the *anni di piombo*, the Italy of the (still-murky) 1980s or 1990s, or the last decade, when the country’s politics was dominated by a slick-haired dandy with a taste for young women.

For example, Robert Putnam and I both encountered Italian Communist leaders during our dissertation years in Rome in the 1960s. (Putnam 1971; Tarrow 1967). I had little difficulty gaining access to moderate PCI leaders like the country’s current President, Giorgio Napolitano, but less luck with the more radical wing of the party. I put this down to accidents of access but Putnam feared a more substantive explanation: perhaps, he worried, the moderate face of the party that was beginning to dominate political scientists’ accounts in the 1960s was the result of selective exposure. Putnam and I saw different Communists and out of this we formed different images of the Communist Party. Both were correct for the facet of the party we were exposed to in the 1960s.

**Backward from the Sixties**

The sixties were a decade of (re)discovery of Italy on the part of foreigners, after the long parentheses of fascism and postwar recovery. It was, in part, due to the Kennedy-inspired “opening to the [moderate] left” in politics and in part to the revival of its film industry through the internationally-acclaimed work of Antonioni, Fellini and Visconti. But ironically, it was historians -- and not social scientists -- who were in the vanguard (but see LaPalombara 1964). The Briton Denis Mack-Smith came out with a string of studies, mainly centered on the *Risorgimento* (1954) while the American William Salamone published his provocative essay “The Nineteenth Century Discovery of Italy” in the magical year 1968.

A year later, Ernesto Ragionieri was so taken with foreign observers’ fascination with his country that he collected over a hundred extracts from British, American, German, French and other writers written between 1861 and 1945 (Ragionieri 1969). In *L’Italia giudicata*, Ragionieri opened with a quote from the southern Italian historian, Pasquale Villari, who was writing for a German audience in the decades after unification. Continuamente, wrote Villari,

*s’incontrono stranieri intelligenti ed imparziali, che ossevano, studiano il nostro paese, sul quale sanno tante cose, forse anche più degli italiani stessi, e tuttavia esprimono su di noi giudizi diversissimi fra loro, qualche volta anche contrari alla verità, nel modo più singolare* (Villari 1977).

What was most interesting about Ragionieri’s book was its intersection between foreigners’ views of Italy and Italians’ reflections about their own country.

Three main themes can be identified in Villari’s sardonic commentary: the theme of *encounter*, the theme of *amazement*, and the theme of *disillusionment*.

*Encounter:* Since even before the *Risorgimento*, foreigners have been taking the well-worn Grand Tour to Italy. In his *Nuovo discorso sugli italiani*, probably written in 1824, Leopardi already saw Italy as “the object of universal curiosity,” more than in any other period (Ferrucci, 1993: 87). But what foreigners were looking for was not always contemporary Italy, but Italy as “*terra classica,*” often dismissing contemporary Italians as no more than “custodians of a museum”, life tenants (*usufruttuari*) of its
various antiquities, places of interest, and museums, in Leopardi’s words (Ibid., p. 170).

**Amazement:** Writing in the 1880s, Villari remarked on foreigners’ infatuation with Italy. “Ecco,” he wrote, “quel che segue nel maggior numero dei casi. Uno straniero attraversa le Alpi, e vede che tutto si è rapidamente, quasi magicamente mutato fra noi ….A questo lieto spettacolo naturalmente egli esclama: “L’Italia ha fatto miracoli!” But what enchanted foreigners was not always what the country had produced. Especially the Victorians, escaping from the tight strictures of puritanical societies, saw Italy as a historical garden in which they could breathe the air of the Renaissance, intone the verses of the Divine Comedy, and imagine themselves as free and creative as they imagined the Italians to be.

**Disillusionment:** Mixed with this brightly-colored sense of wonder there was a tint of disappointment. Focusing on the same foreigners whose ecstatic reactions to Italy were quoted above, Villari observed that “… se questo medesimo straniero rimane più a lungo fra noi, a poco a poco segue nel suo animo uno strano mutamento” (quoted in Ragionieri, p. 43) The new unified legal system produced molasses-like judicial outcomes; the tax system was less than fair; and (already!) the trains seldom ran on time.

Most foreigners limited themselves to the wonders of Rome, Florence and Venice, but those who went further afield began to produce bleaker images. Only four years after his idyllic *Siren Land*, Norman Douglas wrote *Old Calabria* (1915). He still loved the *Mezzogiorno*, but in this new book there was little of the idyllic gushing that we find in British memoirs of Florence, Venice and Rome.

Douglas’s book exposed what would turn out to be a leitmotif in foreigners’ writings about Italy: a combination of frustration, raw humor, and acid commentary that overlaid their attachment to the peninsula. Four main tropes recur over and over:

- **What looks modern frequently isn’t.** The British historian, A.J.P. Taylor wrote that, in Italy, “Il cambiamento fu più nominale che reale” (1961:10).

- **Things are no longer what they were.** Jakob Burkhardt, the great Swiss historian of the Renaissance, saw in the railroad a threat to the Italy he loved. “Soltanto là dove c’è la ferrovia, è stata passata in gran fretta una mano di modernità sulla vecchia misère, ma un giorno tutto andrà in rovina,” he wrote in distress. (quoted in Ragionieri, p. ix).

- **Italy is a rich country full of poor people.** The theme soon emerged that Italy was potentially rich, while its peasants die of hunger. Even Douglas seemed to buy into this view when he asked of the crowds he saw in Lucera; “Are they all brigands, or only some of them?” (1915: 5).

- **Italy is governed by a corrupt political class.** It was the sordid reality of Italian politics, especially after 1876, that most depressed Italy’s foreign friends. From the British Bolton King, to the German Fischer, to the Austrian Olberg, visitor after visitor deplored what Ragionieri refers to as “le disfunzioni dell’ordinamento giudiziario... così come l’esistenza di un immenso proletariato intellettuale, di una piccola borghesia di formazione umanistico-retorica, gravitante
In summary, from the unification onward, foreign fascination with Italy built, in part, on reverence for the past and, in part, on projection to an imagined utopia, tempered, from the first, by disillusionment.

**The Sources of Disillusionment**

What were the sources of this disillusionment? In 1968, when Ragionieri collected these anecdotes, he saw a number of different ones:

First, united Italy – born in the quest for freedom and solidarity -- soon revealed that it was just as grasping – if somewhat less effective at it -- than its northern neighbors in repressing its own people.

Second, Italy’s growing attempt to lap up the North African crumbs of colonialism after the great powers had fed at the trough met with both resentment and outrage from friends abroad. German, French and British observers objected furiously when, in the 1880s, Italian governments attempted to match their neighbors’ imperial conquests. The Libyan adventure – so close to France’s recent conquests in North Africa -- was a cause for particular alarm (Ragionieri pp. xliii-xliv).

There was a third influence that led foreign observers to see the country through a glass darkly: the views of Italians about their own country! The Jacini report had starkly revealed the backwardness, the inequalities and the poor organization of Italian agriculture. But Jacini’s reports were objective and clinical; more damning were the popular writings of Italian intellectuals, who tended to take a hypercritical attitude towards their own country, and had no hesitation sharing their views with foreign friends.

Some of these did so professionally. Pasquale Villari wrote regularly for the German review, *Italia*; Benedetto Croce – no friend of Italy’s political practice – was Italy’s most widely-read philosopher abroad (Croce 1929). After exile to the United States, Gaetano Salvemini became a major anti-fascist publicist, who was unsparing in his criticisms of the responsibility of Italy’s non-fascist politicians for the March on Roma (1936).

**Self-Deflating Rhetoric**

All of this negative image was darkened by the Italian rhetorical style -- the sweeping gesture; the dramatic condemnation; the approximation that leaves important details to the imagination. This – taken without the pinch of salt that Italians know how to administer implicitly -- could deceive foreign friends into thinking were hearing about reality rather than rhetoric. Take the fabled anecdote: ”Piove, governo ladro!” I was astonished at a conference a number of years ago to hear a noted Italian economist describe Italian politics as an expression of this morsel of proverbial wisdom. Such rhetorical properties are easy for other Italians to balance with what they know from their own experience. But foreigners, no matter how many times they have visited Italy, have few filters with which to interpret what they are told by local experts.

The tendency of Italians to lightheartedly criticize themselves and each other could become, in the eyes of foreigners, analytical categories, rather than rhetorical devices. Listen to how Leopardi (who, to my knowledge, never set foot outside Italy), described the difference between his
countrymen and foreigners. “In our social intercourse,” he wrote,

Cynicism is such that it exceeds by leaps and bounds that of any other people, proportionally for every social class. We laugh at everything, and this is the main object of every conversation. Other peoples, more philosophical than we are, but with more sense of life and society, when they laugh, they laugh at things, and not at men; they laugh at those who are absent, rather than those who are present. A tightly organized society cannot survive where men are continually occupied in laughing in each others’ faces and exchanging lack of respect for one another (In Ferrucci pp. 125-6).

It is almost as if Leopardi is proud of the country that manages to survive without a society.

**Back to the Present**

In the post-1945 period, we find similar evidence among foreign observers of both fascination for Italy’s remarkable progression over the past century’s progress and evidence of the negative tropes sketched above: the deceptive nature of Italy’s modernity; the longing for an imagined past; the contradiction between a rich country and its deep pockets of poverty; and the corruption and incapacity of the political class.

But we find a great deal that is new as well:

- A deep appreciation for the native ingenuity and resourcefulness of its people and its industry – including the economy’s resilience under fascism;

- a recognition of its capacity to maintain its democratic institutions in the face of enormous change and recurring crises;

- a growing appreciation for its intellectual contributions and a growing integration between its intellectual classes and their homologues abroad – especially in the social sciences, but also in the physical sciences and the humanities.

- The occasional reprieve from the tawdry politics of a Craxi or a Berlusconi, when, for example, a Monti appears on the scene.

The trouble is that every time we see Italian resilience, ingenuity, and sensibility taking flight, someone like Captain Schettino comes along and seems to validate the stereotypes we have inherited from the past.
References


What Can Italy Teach Us About Post-conflict Violence?

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Introduction

On 31 October 2011, NATO’s Operation ‘Unified Protector’ was officially over and Libya ‘liberated.’ Just a few months later, however, violence is escalating between former rebel forces, challenging the post-Qadhafi Cabinet’s efforts to a peaceful reconstruction (ICG December 2011; UN SG Report 2012; BBC 2012). Since its recent inception, the Government of Southern Sudan has repeatedly clashed with rebel groups led by the same militia leaders who fought united against Khartoum (ICG 2011; UN SG Report 2012).

Why does violence continue after a war’s end? The social sciences do not offer a conclusive answer to this question. However, the legal and analytical distinction between war and peace rarely coincides with an equally definite end to the violence after an armed conflict’s official cessation. In many countries emerging from war, a peace that is not peaceful threatens the security, the human rights, and the physical integrity of the civilian population. It also poses endless obstacles to the rebuilding of national politics and domestic institutions. Often, an external military presence influences these dynamics.

The violence that occurs after the end of an armed conflict remains under-theorized in the academic literature, and too often discarded as ‘residual’ by practitioners. This omission occurs despite the widely recognized centrality of violence in shaping state-building processes (Tilly 1992; Ertman 1997), in distorting democratization dynamics (Paris 2004; Sunde et al. 2011), and in curtailing economic development (Moser & McIlwaine 2006; World Bank 2011). Understanding the determinants of post-conflict violence is crucial not only to add to our knowledge of political violence in general but also to further our chances of limiting its occurrence (Wood 2006) and possibly inform more suited policies. Scholars of conflict and peace studies agree that postwar violence is a crucial element in understanding postwar politics (Toft 2010, 153).

But explaining post-conflict violence has been difficult, for various reasons. For one, there is not a generally agreed definition of what the phenomenon exactly is. When considered empirically, therefore, its analysis intertwines with the many other dynamics at play in postwar environments: economic reconstruction, state-building, institutional development, etc. The phenomenon escapes comprehensive theory-building also because it takes different forms in different contexts. Post-conflict violence can emerge as domestic violence, public lynching, extrajudicial killings, mob violence, riots, targeted punishments, violent strikes, police brutality, human trafficking, transnational criminal networks, etc. Many more countries than it is commonly acknowledged faced this challenge at some point of their history.
In Italy, the violence did not end when the Second World War ended in April 1945. At a lower scale and in some of the above-mentioned forms, it continued for months. Its extent did not pass unobserved to historians. Together with journalists, they documented it richly, but not necessarily in a systematic way. As a result, numerous interpretative issues remain under-explored. The literature on the Italian resistance movement, the rise and collapse of the fascist regime, the armistice and the liberation struggle is vast. Despite the comparable political significance, however, few scholars (and even less social scientists) have engaged with the causes and dynamics of violence in post-WWII Italy. As a result, we have a limited theoretical understanding of this case, both in its own right and within the broader category of post-conflict violence.

Furthermore, the immediate postwar period with its high incidence of targeted assassinations remain highly contested in contemporary Italian history. As a result, the issue falls easily prey of factious political debates. For years, heated controversies developed around the mere number of people killed. The estimates diverged greatly according to the political affiliations of the contributors, ranging from a few hundreds to several thousands (Scelba 1952; Pisano’ 1966). Only recently, thorough scholarly research has established some reliable figures: From the end of April 1945 through 1946, between 8,000 and 10,000 individuals were killed in Northern and Central Italy in an extra-judicial fashion (Onofri 1994, 2007; Pavone 1991; Magnanini 1992).

Besides the sheer magnitude of the phenomenon, its significance rests in the far-reaching consequences for Italy’s political development (Chabod 1961; Ginsborg 1990; Pavone 1991). An in-depth study of political violence in post-WWII Italy is useful also because it presents patterns similar to those we find today in countries emerging from war: The presence of a military occupier, a domestic government constrained by both economic disruption and allegiance to a much more powerful international ally, an irregular army of former ‘freedom-fighter’ with own political agenda and interests, the need to reorder the political system, the challenge to rebuild the state, and the nascent democratic competition.

In sum, studying post-WWII Italy can shed light on a wide range of issues and offer an important contribution to the literature on political violence. Theoretically, drawing attention to one typology of post-conflict violence and explaining its micro-level dynamics can further our understanding of the phenomenon at large. Rather than being ‘inertial’ or residual, postwar violence in Italy followed a specific logic, whose dynamics, albeit related, were different from those regulating wartime violence. Empirically, ‘re-discovering’ the Italian case is interesting in itself. But more importantly, it offers rich insights. In particular, the demobilization of former resistance combatants and their reintegration influenced the development and institutionalization of parliamentary democratic competition. Methodologically, the Italian case uncovers an important missing link in existing explanations of post-conflict political violence: The level of analysis should focus on the disbanded military organizations, their units, and their mid-level commanders.

The Study of Post-conflict Violence and its Limits

Since pledging ‘to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war’ in 1945 (United Nations Charter, Preamble), the international community devised increasingly sophisticated strategies to end wars and put war-torn countries onto the path of
sustainable peace (Doyle et al. 1997; Otunnu and Doyle 1998; Snyder and Walter 1999; Hamburg 2002; Sambanis and Doyle 2006). Some succeeded, some failed, and some performed better than others in different circumstances (Crocker et al. 2001; Stedman et al. 2002; Fortna 2004). As a result, we became increasingly aware of what contributes to a ‘virtuous cycle’ of peace consolidation (Russett and Oneal 2001). We lack, however, a systematic understanding of the mechanisms transforming successful peacemaking into equally successful peace-building (Snyder 2000; Paris 2004) and, more specifically, of what prevents violence from emerging in post-conflict societies. The consequences of this uncertainty have been dire.

In the five years after President George W. Bush’s ‘Mission Accomplished’ speech in 2003, more than 150,000 people died – 80% of whom civilian (Iraq Body Count 2012). Just weeks after the signing of the 2006 Peace Agreement, fighting and massacres resumed in the Sudanese region of Darfur when rebels splintered into dozen runaway factions. Three years after the United Nations (UN) declared the Democratic Republic of the Congo a ‘post-conflict country,’ low-level fighting deteriorated into a major confrontation between government and renegade troops in the Kivu region (Autesserre 2010). In the year following the end of WWII, around 9,000 individuals were killed in France (Kritz 1995). ‘The example of El Salvador is notorious: On average, more persons died a violent death in the first four years of peace than during the civil war itself’ (CMI, 2006). The list is longer.

Although disparate, these examples share one element: the violence happened after the war’s official end. The Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations notes that ‘in post-conflict situations, there is an absence of war, but not necessarily real peace’ (Brahimi Report 2000). Indeed violence continues to affect many countries long after the official cessation of the hostilities, with staggering consequences in human suffering (e.g. Angola, Sierra Leone, Guatemala), as advocated in the ‘human security’ agenda (UNDP 1994; UCDP 2002; SIRP 2007; SIPRI 2007). A dedicated research project argues that ‘sometimes [violence] even increases after the big guns have been silenced’ (Suhrke and Berdal 2012). According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, in Africa ‘almost 20% of one-sided violence takes place in a country that is at peace (Sundberg 2009).

So, both its magnitude and its frequency justify studying post-conflict violence as a separate phenomenon within the broader category of political violence, even if the violence does not lead to a relapse into war.

Neither scholars nor practitioners do that, however. For example, the academic literature does not consider the killing of former enemies at a war’s end as a puzzle, but rather portrays it as the natural consequence of past violence. While the study of post-conflict violence rests at the juncture of the comparative politics and the international relations literatures, none engages it as such. The comparative politics literature looks at post-conflict violence as the by-product of other dynamics rather than the variable of interest (Humphreys and Weinstein 2007; Collier 2008; Bellow and Miguel 2009; Blattman and Miguel 2010; Chaves and Robinson 2010; Blattman and Annan 2010). As a result, its determinants and effects are not distinguished from many other factors operating simultaneously. Similarly, the UN does not disentangle post-conflict violence from political transition processes (e.g., security surrounding elections) or the peace-building agenda enshrined in its peace operations (e.g., the strengthening of democratic institutions). The World Bank focuses on economics and subsumes violence
into the ‘daunting reconstruction and development challenges facing societies emerging from conflict’ (World Bank 2011).

The IR literature preoccupies itself mostly with peace sustainability, war termination, successful occupations, and conflict recurrence, focusing on what types of settlements are achieved and how durable they are (Kaufmann 1991; Lake and Rothchild 1996; Walter 1997; Walter and Snyder 1999; Fortna 2004; Doyle and Sambanis 2006; Edelstein 2008). A recent extension of this scholarship looks at who (rebels or incumbents) wins the war as a way to predict whether peace will last (Toft 2010). In this framing, post-conflict violence becomes theoretically relevant only if followed by a renewed conflict. Wallersteen and Moeller (2003) argue, for example, that ‘cases such as the genocides in Rwanda, ethnic wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and state failure in Somalia pointed to the necessity of finding means to avert conflicts from escalating into war (emphasis added’). The practice of international cooperation reinforces this approach by emphasizing the prevention of post-conflict violence as a means to avoid war recurrence (Boutros-Ghali 1992; Call 2012).

Post-conflict violence varies in forms, spatial distribution (within and across countries), and temporal frequency. In theoretical terms, considering it as ‘residual’ means assuming away rather than explaining this variation and equating the dynamics that drive it with those determining wartime violence. In fact, whether the causes of violence during and after a war are different is an empirical question. The UCDP Human Security Project offers an important insight in this respect: ‘Armed conflicts and one-sided violence do not always overlap in time […] It is thus probable that the factors that initiate one-sided violence are at the least somewhat dissimilar from those that cause the onset and continuation of armed conflicts’ (Sundberg 2009).

Furthermore, despite the countries experiencing post-conflict violence are numerous, in some contexts the postwar period is virtually free of violence (e.g. Rwanda, Mozambique, Banda Aceh, Germany and Japan after WWII). Killings in post-WWII France did not affect the whole postwar period, but rather concentrated in the immediate aftermath of the war (Attal 2008). In contemporary Libya, they began after several weeks. In Iraq, the North experienced lower levels of violence than the South after May 2003. In Cambodia, violence after the Paris Accords concentrated in the region along the Thai border. Postwar Angola was much more violent than postwar Mozambique.

Why? If postwar violence is not a ‘natural’ consequence of a war, then it is legitimate to ask why it affects some societies more than others? Such variation suggests also that the dynamics driving post-conflict violence should be studied separately from those regulating wartime violence. If ‘post-conflict violence’ is not simply a continuation of the prior conflict at a lower scale, then what dynamics drive it? Does the presence of international actors influence them? If so, how? How does violence intertwine with democratic consolidation in societies emerging from war? Answering these questions is important: A rigorous analysis of post-conflict violence can address not only the above-mentioned theoretical pitfalls, but also existing empirical, methodological and practical issues.

Empirically, treating post-conflict violence as ‘residual’ translates into either classifying it as ‘low-intensity conflict,’ or dropping it all together from existing datasets if the violence does not reach the threshold defining a conflict. The UCDP, for example, equates ‘conflict termination’ with ‘low activity conflict,’ thereby failing to account for
the violence happening outside a war. Among the existing measures, the UCDP data on ‘one-sided violence’ (Eck et al. 2004; Sundberg 2009) and the Cingranelli-Richards Human Rights Dataset (CIRI) on ‘extrajudicial killings’ are the closest to capture the category ‘post-conflict violence’ empirically. Still, the overlap is only partial for these datasets focus either on highly institutionalized actors or on timeframes that do not correspond precisely to the aftermath of a war.

Finally, treating post-conflict violence as ‘residual’ impedes our capacity to prevent and curb it. International actors have increasingly intervened military in countries emerging from war with state-building strategies aimed at promoting democratic transitions. Our understanding of the dynamics of violence in these contexts has not adequately supported those interventions. If designed according to faulty assumptions, the strategies meant to address violence in post-conflict societies are doomed to fail (Stedman 1996; Brahimi Report 2000; Paris 2004).

In sum, the incidence, the magnitude, and the consequences of the violence affecting countries after a war’s end beg a more thorough theoretical engagement with the issue. Drawing clearer conceptual boundaries ought to be the first step of this research agenda. Only with a more precise definition of the phenomenon we will be able to identify the scope conditions of any theoretical frameworks and the universe of cases to which they may apply (Sartori 1970). A rigorous empirical strategy is the second, fundamental element. Given the limits of existing databases, explanations of post-conflict violence based on a large-N cross-national analytical strategy would lead to misleading conclusions. A case study approach offers a more solid theoretical grounding and a more systematic understanding of the micro-level dynamics driving violence in post-conflict environments.

What to Learn from Post-WWII Italy?

Post-WWII Italy is not the first obvious case for such research agenda. Yet, this historical example offers many theoretical insights as well as a solid empirical base. This is what this section aims to show – after a brief historical background.

The Second World War in Italy

On 9 July 1943, American and British troops landed in Sicily to launch their first anti-German offensive on the European continent. The war had reached the Italian soil. In a matter of weeks, Mussolini – arrested at the King’s order – saw his regime crumble. The new government began immediate negotiations with the Allies, eventually announcing the signing of an armistice on 8 September 1943. But popular hopes for a swift end to the conflict were soon crashed. Not ready to accept his ally abandoning the war, Hitler moved soldiers into Italy to defend the ‘soft belly of the Reich’ from the Allies’ advancement. Liberated Mussolini from jail, he put him to lead the Repubblica Sociale Italiana (Italian Social Republic, RSI) – a puppet state reconstituted in the Nazi-controlled area (Aga Rossi 2000). During its 600 days (from 8 September 1945 to 28 April 1945), the RSI saw its territory shrinking continuously. As the Allies progressively liberated the peninsula, the German army retreated northward behind the fortified lines of defense built through the Apennines between the Tyrrhenian to the Adriatic Seas.

While the two foreign armies confronted each other along that shifting frontline, Italians living behind it had to negotiate a difficult co-existence with the Nazi troops. Many did not accept the resurged fascist state and its continued collaboration
with the ‘master-ally.’ Resistance sprung in different ways: Soldiers deserted, new recruits did not respond to Mussolini’s numerous mandatory drafts, political activists organized clandestine activities, sabotage, and passive disobedience, workers went on strike. Soon after the 1943 armistice, small, autonomous, armed units began coalescing around long-time anti-fascist leaders or former army officers. For the rest of the war, the Italian anti-fascist political parties and the Allies strove to coordinate and reign in this irregular army. Their political guidance and material support was crucial for the combatants, but by no means made them into mere executioners of orders. Indeed, during the armed struggle, the resistance grew more institutionalized, organizationally coherent, and militarily sophisticated. In some areas (e.g., Emilia-Romagna) the partigiani (partisans, or how the combatants called themselves) even engaged the Wehrmacht in regular open-field battles.

Civilian involvement was initially limited to hide fugitives, who risked their lives disobeying the RSI mandatory calls to arms. As the combatants stepped up their military activity, however, the population became more ‘complicit’ by providing food, information, logistical and communication support (Battaglia 1953). Thus, WWII in Italy between 1943 and 1945 was simultaneously a liberation war and a civil war (Pavone 1991). The resistance was a political as much as a military movement that fought against a foreign invader, but also against a domestic political enemy. For many partisans, the anti-fascist struggle was the opportunity of a profound renewal of the socio-political establishment that brought Mussolini to power in the first place.

*Violence in Post-WWII Italy*

With the war’s end came the onus of rebuilding the country, but also the possibility of redrawing its political character and the opportunity for dealing with its fascist past. The task of economic reconstruction was daunting. By the end of the war, 30% of the country’s railroads and 15% of its bridges were damaged; around five million Italian mothers and children relied on food assistance from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which delivered 45 million monthly rations in the 27 months of its activity (from April 1945 to June 1947) (ASI 1944-1948: 268, 113-114).

The state struggled to deliver public goods, but also to project its control over the territory. The Allied Control Commission (ACC) – the administrative branch of the Allied Military Government (AMG) – and the *Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale* (National Liberation Committee, CLN) – the coalition of anti-fascist political parties and the wartime coordinating body of the resistance – assisted the central government in regaining such capacity. These three entities defined the institutional landscape of post-WWII Italy. The Allies were the uncontested winners of the war and had vast authority over the reconstruction process, economic and political. Established in November 1943, the ACC administered liberated Italy until the national authorities regained this power in August 1945 (Mercuri 1997). The CLN had a solid moral authority earned through the struggle against fascism. It was also an indispensable partner for reconstruction as it enjoyed the population’s trust and commanded a capillary organizational network – decentralized at the regional, provincial, and municipal level.

All actors were committed to maintain security and public order (stability in today’s practitioners’ parlance). Yet, violence emerged frequently and in various forms (ACS PS 1944-1946, boxes 150-166). The months
following the official cessation of the hostilities were sufficiently violent to earn the historians’ appellatives of ‘long wave of violence,’ or ‘time of the showdown,’ or the ‘long liberation’ (Crainz 1995; Morgan 2002; Dondi 2004). Existing studies do not engaged, however, with the violence’s variation. Despite documenting multiple aspects of the phenomenon, the extant literature offers explanations that are either structural (and therefore uniform) – based for example on socio-economic challenges (Crainz 1992; Dondi 2004) – or thoroughly descriptive – and therefore focused on the micro-realities of specific places and people (Fantozzi 1990; Gorrieri and Bondi 2005). Attempts to connect the two levels exist (Storchi 1995), but generally, scholars of post-WWII Italy shy away from comparative analysis. Yet, leveraging the empirical variation would offer not only a better understanding of the case, but also a solid basis for a more general theory of post-conflict violence.

In post-WWII Italy, there were episodes of mob violence, which targeted high-level fascist officials – angry crowds lynched the former governor of the main prison in Rome (Ranzato 1997) and publicly disfigured the dead bodies of Mussolini, his lover, and 15 members of his entourage (Pesce 1977) – as well as common people that profited from collusion with the regime – many women who fraternized with Nazi-fascists had their heads shaved in public. There were protests and strikes that turned violent, anonymous acts of intimidation (e.g., grenades launched against houses and offices), armed robberies, and countless physical aggressions between sympathizers of different political parties. Former RSI cadres were ostracized or summarily executed after being sentenced in ‘Special Tribunals.’ There were also extrajudicial executions en mass – the ‘Schio massacre,’ in which 54 fascist prisoners were killed in the night of 6 July 1945, was one of the most famous (Morgan 2002) – as well as individual targeted assassinations – former partisans abducted former fascists from their homes at nighttime, shoot them, and concealed their bodies (Magnanini 1992; Storchi 1995, 1998).

This variation in the forms of violence offers a valuable analytical resource if we subscribe to the idea that the limits in our understanding of post-conflict violence ‘arise from the common premise that there is one, predominant type of post-war situation’ (Suhrke and Berdal 2012). I agree with the CMI Project researchers that rather than ‘generic,’ the features constraining or fostering post-conflict violence are specific to the society that produces them and therefore different types of violence ‘create distinct types of post-war environments’ (Suhrke and Berdal 2012). At the same time, as contemporary cases of post-conflict societies show, similar patterns repeat themselves across countries and time. Hence, creating a typology of post-conflict violence would illuminate the dynamics that lead to different types of post-conflict scenarios.

A comprehensive typology ought to consider at least three variables: the motives (socio-political, or economic, or justice-based), the modes (predatory vs. constructive), and the organizational characteristics of the violent act – do groups or individuals perpetrate the violence, do they do so in a coordinated and guided fashion, or spontaneously, with no structure leading their actions? I define ‘constructive’ as the attempt to build a system that is alternative to the one existing or emerging at the time the violence occurs. ‘Predatory’ is the opposite: Violence is perpetrated to extract immediate benefits within/from the existing system, but without challenging it. With these criteria, it is possible to isolate different types of post-conflict violence and analyze them separately. It is also possible to argue whether and which
type (more than others) characterizes the postwar period. In Italy, contrarily to mob violence against former fascists – that virtually disappeared after a few weeks (Storchi 2008) – targeted assassinations continued well into 1946 and 1947. Thus, they should prevail when analyzing and classifying the Italian case.

Isolating one form of post-conflict violence – ‘extrajudicial individual killings’ – can improve conceptual clarity around the phenomenon while at the same time quantifying it more precisely. Still it does not explain why it happens. The second source of variation of post-conflict violence in Italy – its territorial distribution – can shed further light on this aspect. Targeted assassinations in Italy (from now also ‘the violence’) concentrated in the territory of the former RSI. In those central and northern regions, however, the incidence of the killings was not uniformly distributed, but varied greatly from province to province and even from municipality to municipality. Italy offers, therefore, the opportunity of using more disaggregate data for a rigorous sub-national empirical study that would help to overcome both the conceptual fuzziness of cross-national research strategies and the empirical limits of existing studies.

Elements for an Explanation

The actors, or the protagonists, of the violence are the third, fundamental aspect that the extant literature on post-WWII Italy does not problematize sufficiently. At the time, the victims, the perpetrators, and the institutional actors perceived the targeted assassinations as political acts, different from common criminality (Dondi 2004,71; ACS, PS 1944-46; CCRR 1945). Indeed, theft or otherwise lucrative activities rarely accompanied the killings. The victims’ general political profile – prominent RSI military and political personnel, long-standing fascist supporters, Nazi aides, etc. – suggests all but political motives (Storchi, 1995, 1998). On what exactly these political motives where, however, there are less consensus and clarity. I argue that a closer look at the victims, but especially at the perpetrators – small groups of former resistance combatants – can improve our understanding of the dynamics that determined their behavior. It can also illuminate which aspects of post-conflict violence in Italy can be generalized to other contexts.

Conventional wisdom wants the Italian Communist Party (Partito Comunista Italiano, PCI), its inherent tendency toward military organization and armed struggle, and its strong following in some of the most violent areas (e.g., Reggio Emilia and Modena in Emilia-Romagna) to be central to any explanations. The killings indeed happened amid mounting tensions within the CLN. Communists and Christian Democrats (DC), in particular, became soon rivals in view of upcoming elections. PCI’s internal factions wavered between a role in coalition governments with the DC and the possibility to use violence to solve political conflicts. Indeed the political context is crucial to fully understand violence in postwar Italy; particularly the intuition that the violence had a ‘forward-looking’ dimension (Crainz 1992, 1995; Alessandrini 1999). In other words, the perpetrators had strategic goals that transcended mere revenge, and used violence as a means to obtain future gains.

Some partisans among the minority of those who killed former fascists after April 1945 had links to the PCI and some of their former commanders were local party cadres. But they acted primarily as combatants. This aspect of the violence – usually overlooked in explanations relying exclusively on political party interests – has the potential to better account for the spatial distribution of the killings. The perpetrators were organized in
small units; they had specific targets, whom they ‘arrested’ before executing: Leadership played a crucial role in this process. Since no other political or military body in postwar Italy had more control over the behavior and discipline of former combatants than their former commanders, the individual capacity for violence ultimately ought to depend on the perpetrators’ relation with different levels and types of the resistance’s military leadership. The production of violence was local in nature rather than centrally orchestrated and the military and organizational legacy of the armed resistance shaped it. A sub-national comparative study could test this claim and show whether the incidence of violence coincided with the mid-level commanders’ area of influence. The fact that targeted assassinations concentrated in the regions where the partisans operated in 1943-1945 is a first, albeit general, confirmation of this idea.

The insight that former commanders were crucial in determining where violence occurred draws from the ‘spoilers’ literature – according to which ‘the losers of [the] peace’ initiate violence in post-conflict environments. But it adds a nuance to it. The ‘leaders and factions who [did] not achieve their war aims’ (Stedman 1997:7) in post-WWII Italy were combatants who had actually won the war. Like most insurgent struggles, the Italian resistance had a dual nature, political and military (Pavone 1991) and therefore it had two types of actors, with different interests and incentives. Once the armed struggle’s urgency and immediacy were over, the combatants became soon the losers within the winning coalition: In a matter of weeks they were demobilized and stripped any institutional weight. The emerging democratic competition led to the inevitable prominence of political actors at the center. This conflict generated the violence at the periphery, but not uniformly. Mid-level commanders’ organizational capacity – i.e., their control on networks of former combatants – and their commitment to the center’s orders to ‘legality’ determined the variation.

In sum, the political context influenced how violence emerged in post-WWII Italy: A closing political space and an emerging system of electoral competition led to the fracture of the anti-fascist coalition. The war’s end did not, however, break the anti-fascist resistance movement solely along party affiliations. Another crucial fault line was the mismatch within the resistance, between the interests of decentralized combatant networks and the central political leadership. If we understand post-conflict violence as extrajudicial killings perpetrated after the official end of an armed conflict by non-state actors, then Italy belongs to the class of cases in which demobilized resistance commanders organized and used violence to achieve political goals. Today’s Iraq, Libya, and South Sudan possibly belong to the same category.

Concluding remarks

As US Senators Webb, Lautenberg and Menendez noted in 2008, ‘the Iraq war was over five years ago in classical terms — and what began was a very contentious occupation that placed our military in [...] a holding position, totally dependent on the ability of the political process to reach the type of solution that would allow this occupation to end.’ International actors (bi- or multilateral) face this challenge each time they are involved in a post-conflict situation. At this crucial juncture, violence complicates the links between international peace-building strategies and the re-emergence of domestic political competition.

The simple fact that not all post-conflict societies are violent suggests that the dynamics driving violence during and after a
war ought to be different. But the latter remain under-theorized and not well understood. One reason is that post-conflict violence can take different forms. This article argued that by focusing on one type and studying it with a rigorous empirical strategy, we could illuminate the micro-level dynamics that lead to its emergence in different contexts across time and space. This exercise can contribute to a more comprehensive theory of post-conflict violence.

Post-WWII Italy offers an unusual but insightful case for such aims, particularly to analyze extra-judicial killings perpetrated by non-state actors against former enemies. Like in contemporary cases, violence then was used to shape the country's political future. Variations in the incidence of the killings followed from former combatants' strategic choices in that respect. As we often witness in today's wars, external actors side with one domestic group on the ground and devolve combat responsibilities to it. Italian resistance fighters allowed the Allies to open a front within the Nazi-fascist territory and eventually accelerated the enemy's demise. Like today, however, the conflict's end strained the wartime politico-military coalition and the wartime choices of (whether and how) using proxy fighters revealed its unintended consequences.

In seeking interlocutors for peace, peacemakers implicitly decide which national actors will legitimately participate in the new political system. We need a more comprehensive theory to guide these choices. One of the most important lessons learned about how peace consolidates is that all sides to a conflict must be recognized, represented, and accommodated to the extent possible (Stedman 1997). Theoretically and practically, however, this framing leads to treat parties to a conflict as black boxes, with the preferences of all its members assumed to be constant. Albeit sound, the prescription that 'all sides should be included' glances over the differences within those sides, and their intra-group dynamics (Fearon & Laitin 2000). The Italian case suggests that a closer focus on the actors of the wartime violence would illuminate the mechanisms determining post-conflict violence, expand our understanding of political violence in general, and ultimately benefit today's policy-making in countries where international military actors strive to consolidate peace and promote political stability.

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Archival Sources

Introduzione

La Serie A, massima divisione professionistica del calcio italiano, ha registrato per la stagione 2010-11 la sua undicesima perdita finanziaria consecutiva. Nel giugno del 2009, in occasione della sua nona perdita consecutiva, la Gazzetta dello Sport, il più importante quotidiano sportivo italiano, scrisse che tali difficoltà erano dovute al fatto che i club italiani hanno preferito importare giocatori stranieri già affermati piuttosto che investire nello sviluppo di giovani calciatori italiani e al fatto che l’Uefa non applica regole che permettono alle squadre europee di competere su un piano di parità (Palombo 2009: 15). In breve, secondo la Gazzetta, la crisi del calcio italiano sarebbe dovuta al ‘processo di europeizzazione’ iniziato dalla ‘sentenza Bosman’ e, allo stesso tempo, al fatto che tale processo non abbia ancora penetrato tutti gli aspetti del calcio europeo.

Questo articolo esamina le ragioni per cui la Serie A, che fino a pochi anni fa capeggiava la classifica Uefa delle leghe professionalistiche europee, sta attraversando un periodo di declino che potrebbe renderla ‘la minore delle grandi leghe’ europee. L’articolo è diviso in tre parti. La prima illustra i principali aspetti della crisi del calcio italiano e identifica alcune sue caratteristiche nazionali che potrebbero aver contribuito alla crisi, ma non la spiegano in maniera sufficiente. La seconda esamina l’impatto del ‘processo di europeizzazione’ sul calcio italiano. La terza parte valuta quanto tale processo possa aver contribuito alla crisi e passa in rassegna le misure che sono state adottate o prese in considerazione per superarla. L’articolo conclude che le difficoltà attuali del calcio italiano non sono la conseguenza diretta del ‘processo di europeizzazione’ ma piuttosto del tentativo maldestro dei principali club italiani di cercare il successo nel periodo susseguente alla ‘sentenza Bosman’ attraverso l’acquisto di calciatori già affermati invece di cercare di raggiungerlo dopo averne costruito delle basi più sicure.

Le principali manifestazioni della crisi del calcio italiano

Calo spettatori

L’aspetto più visibile della crisi che affligge il calcio italiano è il calo degli spettatori. Come mostra il grafico della Figura 1, il calo della media di spettatori per partita comincia a manifestarsi agli inizi degli anni 1970, ma la tendenza è rimasta invariata fino a oggi.
Novanta. Dapprima si tratta di un calo relativamente basso. La media decennale passa infatti da 32.422 spettatori per partita negli anni Ottanta a 30.994 negli anni Novanta. Il calo accelera però nell’ultimo decennio (2000-9) quando la media scende a 23.150 spettatori per partita. La media più bassa, dovuta forse all’assenza della Juventus retrocessa d’ufficio in Serie B per una serie di irregolarità commesse nelle stagioni precedenti, viene toccata nella stagione 2006 (18.756 spettatori per partita). Le cose non sembrano essere destinate a migliorare dal momento che la media per la stagione 2010 è scesa ancora, anche se di poco, a 23.092 spettatori per partita. La situazione è ancora peggiore per quanto riguarda la Serie B che tra il 2002 e il 2010 ha visto la propria media spettatori per partita dimezzarsi, da poco più di 10.000 a poco meno di 5.000.\(^5\)

\(^5\) È anche interessante notare che solo sei squadre italiane sono presenti nella lista delle cinquanta squadre al mondo con la più alta media di spettatori per partita per la stagione 2008 e nessuna di loro è nelle prime cinque posizioni. L’Inghilterra e la Germania hanno invece undici squadre a testa fra le prime cinquanta e la Spagna ne ha sette (World Soccer, agosto 2009, pp. 22-3).
Quali sono le ragioni del progressivo svuotamento degli stadi italiani? L’inizio del calo del numero di spettatori coincide con l’avvento della televisione a pagamento (pay-TV e pay-per view TV) che ha condotto a una crescente privatizzazione del consumo calcistico. Il calo però non può essere interamente imputato alla televisione a pagamento perché in altri paesi la sua introduzione non ha avuto un impatto così pronunciato sul calo degli spettatori come in Italia. Altri fattori devono quindi essere presenti. Due di questi sembrano particolarmente rilevanti poiché sono di carattere strettamente nazionale e quindi, al contrario di altri, (quali, per esempio, l’aumento del prezzo d’ingresso, il teppismo negli stadi, etc.) non si ritrovano nelle leghe professionistiche di altri paesi.

Il primo è il numero elevato di squadre professionistiche. Dal 1978, il calcio italiano è organizzato su quattro livelli: Serie A (20 squadre), Serie B (22 squadre), Lega Pro Prima Divisione (36 squadre divise in due gironi) e Lega Pro Seconda Divisione (54 squadre divise in tre gironi). Il calcio italiano conta quindi un totale di 132 squadre professionistiche, un numero di gran lunga superiore a quello di qualsiasi altro paese europeo.

Il secondo fattore è che il calcio italiano è afflitto da scandali sempre più gravi. In passato la maggior parte di questi riguardava il truccaggio di alcune partite da parte di scommettitori o, a fine stagione, da parte di squadre bisognose di punti per ottenere la promozione od evitare la retrocessione. Lo scandalo del 2006, conosciuto come Calciopoli, ha rivelato invece

La Germania, per esempio ha solo 38 squadre professionistiche, la Spagna 42 e l’Inghilterra 92. A livello semiprofessionistico l’Inghilterra ha 24 squadre nella cosiddetta Nationwide Conference mentre l’Italia, nella sua Serie D, ne ha ben 162 divise in nove gironi.
l'esistenza di una rete di dirigenti, procuratori (dei quali l'Italia vanta il più alto numero in tutta Europa - Poli 2006: 25), ed arbitri che hanno tramato non per truccare il risultato di alcune partite ma per pilotare l’esito d’interi campionati (Bartolozzi and Mensurati 2007). Sebbene la Juventus sia stata la sola squadra ad essere sanzionata (revoca di due scudetti e retrocessione in Serie B), l’impressione generale è stata che anche altri club fossero colpevoli e che tutto il mondo del calcio fosse profondamente corrotto. Tale impressione è stata inoltre corroborata dal fatto che la Federazione italiana gioco calcio (Figgc) è stata commissariata. Gli scandali in generale e Calciopoli in particolare hanno contribuito a delegittimare il mondo del calcio e quindi anche a fargli perdere fascino agli occhi del pubblico, cosa che si è inevitabilmente tradotta anche in un calo di spettatori.

**Perdite a fallimenti**

Un altro aspetto della crisi, meno visibile tuttavia importante, riguarda la persistente incapacità dei club professionali di essere finanziariamente autosufficienti. Come si vede nella tabella della Figura 2 sotto, i club di Serie A nel loro insieme non hanno registrato profitti dalla stagione 1999 ed hanno perso oltre € 2 miliardi nelle ultime nove stagioni, vale a dire una perdita media di oltre € 200 milioni a stagione..

**Figura 2**

Profitte e perdite nette della Serie A 1998-2008, in € milioni

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stagione</th>
<th>Profitti (perdite)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>-11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>-133.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>-279.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>-535.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>-452.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>-175.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>-63.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-148.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>-198.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-210.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>-193.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-285.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fonte: Gazzetta.it (29 Marzo 2012) e Gazzetta dello Sport (24 giugno 2009).

Tre punti sono da notare a proposito di queste perdite. Il primo è che le perdite d’esercizio sono molto più alte delle perdite nette riportate nella tavola sopra poiché queste ultime includono le entrate in conto capitale derivanti dalla vendita di giocatori ancora sotto contratto. Le perdite di esercizio per la stagione 2008, per esempio, sono state stimate a circa € 300 milioni (Dragoni 2009). Il secondo è che i ‘grandi’ club sono quelli che registrano le perdite più alte. L’Inter, ad esempio, ha vinto lo scudetto nel 2006, 2007 e 2008 ma in queste tre stagioni ha accumulato una perdita di esercizio di oltre € 500 milioni (Iaria 2009: 15; Dragoni 2009). Nella stagione 2010 i club con le più alte perdite nette sono stati la Juventus (€ -95.4), l’Inter (€ -86.8) e il Milan (€ -69.8). Questi tre club sono anche
quelli che hanno accumulato i debiti netti più elevati (Inter € -335, Juventus -241,9 e Milan -238,5) \(^7\). Il terzo punto è che le difficoltà finanziarie sono solo marginalmente legate al calo degli spettatori. I proventi di botteghino, infatti, rappresentano solo circa il 10% dei redditi dei club di Serie A. In Spagna, invece, essi rappresentano il 25% e in Inghilterra il 33% (Porro 2008: 120). Persino nel caso del Milan, club che ha una media di spettatori molto più alta della media della Serie A nel suo insieme, i proventi da botteghino rappresentano oggi appena il 15% dei redditi totali mentre nel 1986 essi rappresentavano il 90% (Crosetti 2006).


Se il calo di spettatori è solo marginalmente legato alle difficoltà finanziarie perché tanti club di Serie A sono sull’orlo del fallimento? Per trovare altri indizi che possano contribuire a formulare una risposta a questa domanda si passa ora ad esaminare le ragioni suggerite dalla Gazzetta, vale a dire i cambiamenti occorsi a livello nazionale in seguito al processo di europeizzazione del calcio.

### Il processo di europeizzazione ed il calcio italiano

Verrà qui esaminato l’impatto a livello nazionale di vari processi di europeizzazione e più precisamente la rimozione del numero chiuso al tesseramento di giocatori stranieri, l’eliminazione dei compensi per il trasferimento di calciatori a fine contratto (entrambe conseguenza della ‘sentenza Bosman’), le modifiche apportate al regime di vendita dei diritti televisivi, la nascita del G-14, ed il nuovo formato delle competizioni europee organizzate dall’Uefa.

#### La rimozione del numero chiuso all’impiego in gara di giocatori comunitari

La ‘sentenza Bosman’ emessa nel 1995 dalla Corte di giustizia dell’Unione europea fu il culmine di una serie di sfide legali contro il numero chiuso all’impiego in gara di giocatori la cui nazionalità è quella di un paese della Comunità Europea. Alcuni casi riguardanti altri sport erano stati esaminati dalla Corte di giustizia nei primi anni Settanta. Il primo caso riguardante il calcio, il cosiddetto ‘caso Donà’ del 1976, ebbe origine in Italia. La Corte di giustizia reiterò in quest’occasione il principio già enunciato in una sentenza emessa due anni prima nel quadro di un caso concernente il ciclismo, vale a dire che le attività sportive erano soggette alla legislazione della Comunità europea nel caso lo sport in questione rappresentasse un’attività economica\(^8\). Non v’è alcun dubbio

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\(^7\) Gazzetta.it, 29 marzo 2012.

\(^8\) Sul ruolo della Comunità europea (poi ribattezzata Unione europea nel 1992) nella regolamentazione dello
che il caso Donà fu fabbricato all’uopo dal presidente del Rovigo (all’epoca militante in Serie D) Mario Mantero proprio per verificare la compatibilità della norma della Figc concernente il numero chiuso al tesseramento di stranieri con le norme della Comunità europea\(^9\). Quello che non è chiaro è se egli abbia preso l’iniziativa per semplice curiosità professionale (Mantero era avvocato) o perché incoraggiato da qualche dirigente di un grande club di Serie A. La seconda ipotesi è plausibile in quanto i grandi club furono pressoché i soli attori nel mondo dello sport ad accogliere positivamente la ‘sentenza Bosman’ in cui videro un’opportunità di guadagnare vantaggi competitivi nei confronti dei loro rivali nazionali ed internazionali\(^10\).


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10 Le organizzazioni sportive, invece, criticarono la sentenza come una intollerabile ingerenza nel mondo dello sport mentre i politici nazionali suggerirono una via di mezzo argomentando che le libertà fondamentali garantite dalla Comunità europea dovevano essere rispettate ma che si doveva anche essere sensibili ai bisogni specifici dello sport (Croci 2009: 142-3).
Come mostra la linea continua, la percentuale di giocatori stranieri in Serie A aumentò in maniera constante e in parallelo con l’aumento del numero di giocatori in rosa (linea tratteggiata) tra il 1995 quando era del 13,2% (a quell’epoca solo due giocatori stranieri potevano essere schierati contemporaneamente) e il 2001 quando toccò il 36.8%. Tale picco fu toccato in seguito alla decisione della Figc nel maggio del 2001 di liberalizzare completamente il movimento dei giocatori ponendo fine alla distinzione tra giocatori comunitari ed extra-comunitari in seguito al cosiddetto ‘scandalo dei passaporti’. La sentenza Bosman aveva infatti creato due categorie di giocatori: i comunitari (categoria che successivamente venne ad includere anche cittadini dei paesi dell’Associazione europea di libero scambio e cittadini di paesi con cui l’Unione europea aveva firmato accordi di associazione) che potevano circolare liberamente e gli extra-comunitari a cui il vecchio numero chiuso continuava ad applicarsi. Per aggirare tale restrizione le squadre che desideravano impiegare extra-comunitari si ingegnarono a trovare improbabili nonne italiane o combinare matrimoni di convenienza e farli così diventare ‘comunitari’. Alla fine del 2001, in Italia, dove la maggior parte delle squadre preferisce impiegare giocatori provenienti dall’America del sud (specialmente Brasile, Argentina e Uruguay), la situazione era diventata esplosiva. Decine di casi erano sotto investigazione non solo da parte delle autorità sportive ma anche della magistratura. Di conseguenza, nel maggio del 2001, la Figc decise di liberalizzare anche il tesseramento degli extra-comunitari.

Figura 3  
Percentuale di stranieri e numero medio di giocatori in rosa per squadra  
Serie A: 1995-2011

Fonte: Compilato con i dati del sito http://www.calciatori.com

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11 Per i dati sui paesi di provenienza dei giocatori impiegati nelle varie leghe europee, si veda Besson, Poli and Ravenel (2008: 42).

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Dopo il 2001, la crescita della percentuale di giocatori stranieri in Serie A smise di aumentare e subì persino una leggera flessione. Nel 2007, però, essa cominciò a crescere di nuovo fino a raggiungere l’attuale 45.6%. Sebbene tale percentuale possa sembrare alta in termini assoluti, essa non lo è quando la si confronta con quella di altri paesi europei. La Serie A, infatti, è al nono posto (i dati si riferiscono al 2008) nella classifica europea indicante la percentuale di giocatori stranieri impiegati, di gran lunga dietro alla Premiership inglese (prima con il 59.1%) e alla Bundesliga tedesca (quarta con il 51.9%) ma davanti alla Liga spagnola (undicesima con il 37.2%) e la League 1 francese (diciottesima con il 32.2%).

V’è anche da notare che se fino a qualche anno fa in Serie A esisteva una correlazione positiva tra squadre con ambizioni di scudetto ed alta percentuale di giocatori stranieri in rosa, negli ultimi due anni tale correlazione è scomparsa.13

Dopo la ‘sentenza Bosman’ ha cominciato a manifestarsi anche il fenomeno dell’espatrio di calciatori (e allenatori) italiani. Sebbene ancora limitato, al contrario di quanto avviene in paesi come la Francia o l’Olanda (solo una ventina di giocatori emigrano dall’Italia ogni anno, la maggior parte con destinazione Spagna, Germania, Francia ed Inghilterra) tale fenomeno è

12 Oltre all’Inghilterra ed alla Germania, i paesi con una percentuale di giocatori stranieri superiore a quella Italiana sono Portogallo, Belgio, Grecia, Russia, Svizzera e Scozia (Besson, Poli e Ravenel 2008: 36).

13 Nel 2008, le squadre con una percentuale di stranieri superior al 35% erano Inter, Udinese, Milan, Roma, Juventus e Lazio. Nel 2011, invece, solo quattro squadre hanno una percentuale di stranieri minore del 40%. Esse sono Novara (37%), Cagliari (30%), Siena (25%) e Atalanta (14%). Le percentuali più alte sono quelle di Palermo (69%), Inter (68%) e Udinese (64%). Le percentuali sono state calcolate sulla base dei dati forniti dall’Associazione italiana calciatori http://www.calciatori.com

14 Per i dati, si veda Professional Football Players Observatory www.eurofootballplayers.org

Le modifiche al regime dei trasferimenti

Avendo ribadito che lo sport professionistico era un’attività economica, la sentenza Bosman stabilì anche che le squadre non potevano più esigere compensi per il trasferimento di un giocatore il cui contratto fosse scaduto. Questo cambiamento preoccupò i piccoli club italiani molto più della rimozione del numero chiuso al tesseramento di stranieri. Per essi, infatti, tale modifica significava la fine di una delle loro maggiori fonti di reddito, vale a dire la ‘vendita’ di giovani e promettenti talenti alle grandi squadre, e molto probabilmente, la relegazione a un ruolo permanente di semplici comprimarie.

Per aiutare i piccoli club ad adattarsi a questo nuovo regime, il governo italiano approvò nel settembre 1996 una legge che trasformò tutte i club professionistici in società per azioni (Juventus, Roma e Lazio decisero anche di far quotare i loro titoli in borsa). Gli obiettivi principali di questa legge erano: permettere ai club di svolgere anche altre attività economiche capaci di generare redditi e alleviare così le perdite derivanti dalla vendita di giocatori a fine contratto, incoraggiare la riorganizzazione delle loro finanze, e obbligarli a una maggiore trasparenza finanziaria. Il governo intervenne anche per alleviare le difficoltà finanziarie a breve termine create dal nuovo regime. I club usavano calcolare il valore di mercato dei loro giocatori e inserire tale somma come un attivo sul bilancio patrimoniale. Dopo la sentenza Bosman però, i giocatori in scadenza di contratto non avevano più alcun valore di mercato. Nel settembre 1996, quindi, il governo approvò un decreto legge, subito ribattezzato decreto spalma perdite, che permetteva ai club di calcio di continuare tale pratica anche per i giocatori in scadenza di contratto. Tale valore fittizio poteva poi essere ammortizzato nel corso di tre anni.

Le finanze dei club però non migliorarono e così nel 2003 il governo dovette intervenire di nuovo. Il cosiddetto decreto salva-calcio permise ai club di inserire negli ‘attivi’ del bilancio patrimoniale il valore, di solito infilzionato, dei giocatori sotto contratto e di ammortizzarlo in termini contabili e fiscali in dieci rate annuali. In pratica, il decreto permetteva ai club di rimanere a galla lasciando loro creare un attivo largamente fittizio che avrebbero ammortizzato durante un periodo più lungo di quello permesso a società non operanti nel settore calcistico15. Le somme in questione non potevano certo dirsi insignificanti. Nel 2003, per esempio esse ammontarono a € 319 milioni per l’Inter, 242 per il Milan, 234 per la...


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Roma e 213 per la Lazio\textsuperscript{16}. La Commissione europea giudicò che il \textit{decreto salva-calcio} equivaleva ad un aiuto statale ed obbligò quindi il governo italiano a modificarlo in maniera tale che l’ammortamento permesso avrebbe avuto solo valore contabile ma non avrebbe dato luogo a vantaggi fiscali \textsuperscript{17}. Anche così modificato il decreto rappresentò un vero e proprio salvagente per molti club. Soprattutto se si pensa che esso si accompagnava a molte altre pratiche contabili ‘creative’ quali per esempio quella della vendita a prezzi inflazionati (ma di fatto semplice scambio) di calciatori tra due squadre fatto al solo fine di aumentare la voce ‘attivi’ nel conto patrimoniale (Levante 2005). Nemmeno un anno più tardi il governo prese in considerazione (ma fu poi costretto dall’opposizione politica e pubblica a lasciar cadere l’idea) un altro decreto legge che avrebbe permesso ai club di rateizzare nel corso di cinque anni il pagamento delle tasse arretrate (per lo più trattenute sui redditi relativi agli stipendi) ammontanti ad oltre € 500 milioni (Bianchi 2004). Il governo inoltre, sollecitato dai piccoli club e dalla Figc, premette con successo sulla Commissione europea affinché le modifiche apportate al regime di trasferimento non si applicassero ai giocatori under-23 e i club continuassero a ricevere un compenso per il loro addestramento.

\textit{I diritti televisivi}

La Commissione europea non prese una posizione netta sulla questione della legalità della vendita collettiva dei diritti televisivi, lasciando che fossero le autorità garanti della concorrenza degli stati membri a decidere tale questione (Croci 2009: 146-7). In Italia era tradizione che la Lega vendesse i diritti televisivi. Dopo l’arrivo della pay-TV e pay-per-view-TV però i grandi club cominciarono a mettere in discussione tale pratica ed alla fine l’Autorità garante della concorrenza e del mercato decise in favore della completa liberalizzazione, almeno per quanto riguardava la pay-tv e la pay-per-view-TV, e così, nel 1999, i club italiani cominciarono a vendere direttamente i diritti televisive delle proprie gare. La vendita collettiva rimase in vigore solo per la televisione terrestre (free-to-air, unencrypted television) ma riguardava solo le fasi salienti di un incontro (highlights) ed il suo valore era quindi minimo. La conseguenza di tale liberalizzazione fu che i grandi club avrebbero ricevuto i maggiori benefici. Milan, Inter e Juventus, per esempio, nel 2008 intascavano circa € 100 milioni all’anno a testa, l’equivalente del 37% di tutti i diritti televisivi della Serie A (Deloitte 2008: 32).

Nel 2005, la Figc, preoccupata del futuro finanziario dei piccoli club e del sistema calcio nella sua totalità, cominciò a caldeggiare il ritorno alla vendita collettiva. Il ritorno al vecchio regime fu approvato nel 2007 ed è tornato in vigore nel 2010, data di scadenza dei contratti individuali allora in esistenza. Alcune dei grandi club si opposero con veemenza a tale cambiamento\textsuperscript{18} ma alla fine la Lega diede il suo assenso nella speranza che la vendita collettiva potesse aumentare i proventi della Serie A da € 800 milioni ad oltre il miliardo. Questo sembrava potesse avvenire, ma una sentenza della Corte di giustizia europea dell’ottobre 20\textsuperscript{18} che permette di seguire partite di calcio di un

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\textsuperscript{16} ‘Salvacalcio: così le grandi’, 2 novembre 2003, \url{http://www.citadini.com.br/alambrado/salvacalcio2003_1102.htm}

\textsuperscript{17} Commission Decision of 22 June 2005 on the measure implemented by Italy for professional sports clubs ( Decreto Salva Calcio) \url{http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:353:0016:0018:EN:PDF}

\textsuperscript{18} ‘Berlusconi attacca la Melandri: no alla legge sui diritti televisivi’, \url{La Repubblica.it} (29 ottobre 2006) \url{http://www.repubblica.it/2003/h/rubriche/spycalcio/berlusconi-melandri/berlusconi-melandri.html}
paese europeo con una scheda di decodificazione acquistata in un altro stato membro e a prezzo più basso, potrebbe deflazionare la vendita dei diritti. In tal caso i grandi club potrebbero finire col riscuotere ancora meno poiché il nuovo regime prevede anche una ripartizione più equa dei ricavi e quindi peggiora la loro situazione finanziaria sia in modo assoluto sia relativamente alle loro concorrenti europee. In Spagna, per esempio, tale meccanismo di ridistribuzione è molto più debole. La posizione dei club italiani in questo senso è già precaria. Secondo la classifica dei ricavi compilata da Deloitte (2007: 1; 2008: 2; 2009: 2), solo quattro club italiani (Milan, Inter, Juventus, e Roma) appaiono tra i primi venti nella lista per gli anni 2005, 2006 e 2007. La loro posizione in tale classifica inoltre è scesa ogni anno ed il loro reddito ammonta ad appena la metà di quello del club al primo posto, il Real Madrid.

Come nel caso della fine al numero chiuso per stranieri, anche per quanto concerne i diritti televisivi, la reazione italiana ai cambiamenti apportati dall’Unione europea è andata al di là di quanto era strettamente necessario. Non c’è stata infatti alcuna richiesta da parte della Commissione europea di aprire a tutti gli stranieri né tantomeno di liberalizzare completamente la vendita dei diritti televisivi. Eppure i grandi club, che a tutti gli effetti dominano la Lega, domandarono ed ottennero proprio questo. Il G-14 e l’europeizzazione transnazionale

Il cosiddetto G-14 (o gruppo dei quattordici) è un’associazione di grandi club europei che tra il 2000 e il 2008 hanno agito come un gruppo di pressione transnazionale per promuovere i loro interessi specifici. Esso costituisce un esempio di processo di ‘europeizzazione orizzontale’. La loro iniziativa può essere vista come un esempio di ‘ribellione delle elite’ (Lasch 1995) poiché i club membri del gruppo avevano vinto collettivamente più di 250 scudetti nazionali e quarantuno Coppe dei campioni su cinquantuno disputate. Il G-14 ha cercato di trascendere la dimensione nazionale del mercato del calcio, percepita come ostacolo alla potenziale crescita economica dei club associati, a favore di una dimensione europea.

arma di pressione per convincere l’Uefa a cambiare il formato delle competizioni europee ed assicurarsi una fetta più grande dei profitti da esse generate. Poiché l’Uefa accolse la maggior parte delle loro richieste, i club abbandonarono, almeno temporaneamente, l’idea della Superlega (Croci 2009: 152-3). Rimane da vedere se il compromesso raggiunto con l’Uefa durerà o se i grandi club decideranno di fare defezione dalla dimensione nazionale e opteranno per una dimensione europea permanente rispolverando l’idea della Superlega.

Le competizioni europee organizzate dall’UEFA

Un altro tipo di ‘europeizzazione’ concernente sia la dimensione percettiva che quella finanziaria è sorto in seguito alla ristrutturazione delle competizioni europee organizzate dall’Uefa. Il nuovo formato ha reso la Champions League e l’Europa League molto simili a una lega nazionale operante però al livello europeo, molto più di quanto fosse il caso con la Coppa dei Campioni e la Coppa UEFA. In Italia, la Champions League ha più prestigio dello scudetto ed è fonte di maggiori redditi. Il nuovo formato ha anche dato una dimensione europea alla Serie A. Le squadre infatti non competono solamente per lo scudetto ma anche per conquistarsi un posto in Europa, vale a dire il diritto di partecipare in una delle due competizioni organizzate dall’Uefa.

Questo processo di ‘europeizzazione’ della Serie A’ ha avuto conseguenze positive e negative. Quella positiva è che la Serie A ha acquisito un nuovo elemento d’interesse competitivo poiché almeno una mezza dozzina di club competono regolarmente per un posto in Europa (che va alle prime cinque nella classifica finale), di solito fino all’ultima giornata di campionato. Sebbene difficile da stabilire con certezza, si potrebbe sostenere che in assenza di questo nuovo elemento competitivo la Serie A avrebbe perso un numero ancora maggiore di spettatori. La conseguenza negativa è stata che i club hanno ritenuto necessario aumentare il numero di giocatori in rosa. Tale fenomeno inoltre non riguarda solo quei club che partecipano alle competizioni europee, ma anche quelli che stanno semplicemente lottando per ‘un posto in Europa’ e persino i club nelle serie minori.\(^21\)

Come si vede nella linea tratteggiata nel grafico della Figura 3 sopra, il numero medio di giocatori in rosa per le squadre di Serie A è aumentato in maniera stabile fino al 2001 per poi livellarsi attorno ai 30, un numero quasi doppio di quello tipico negli anni 60, per esempio.

Europeizzazione competitività e rendimento finanziario

Qual’è stato l’impatto che i vari processi di europeizzazione hanno avuto sulla competitività della Serie A rispetto ad altre leghe professionistiche europee, la competitività dei club italiani nelle competizioni europee e l’equilibrio competitivo tra club di Serie A? È la crisi finanziaria del calcio italiano dovuta ai processi di europeizzazione, come suggerito dalla Gazzetta dello sport, e se così, qual è il nesso? Poiché i processi di europeizzazione hanno condotto a una significativa liberalizzazione del mercato del calcio ci si dovrebbe attendere, almeno nella misura in cui il calcio è un’attività economica, che le conseguenze di tale liberalizzazione siano le stesse di quelle che si osservano in altri settori dell’economia, vale a dire che ci si dovrebbe...

\(^21\) Questo fatto suggerisce che il nuovo formato delle coppe europee non sia la sola ragione alla base di questo fenomeno. La ragione principale è probabilmente dovuta la facoltà che il calcio odierno è molto più atletico di quello di alcuni decenni fa e che oggi si gioca un numero maggiore di gare che in passato. Si verificano quindi più infortuni e ci sarebbe bisogno di più riposo tra una gara e l’altra.
attendere che la differenza (gap) tra le grandi leghe e quelle piccole in Europa e la differenza tra grandi e piccoli club in Serie A (e in altre leghe europee) siano aumentate.


22 Un’analisi dettagliata del metodo usato dall’UEFA per compilare la classifica e dei risultati della stessa si trova in http://kassiesa.home.xs4all.nl/bert/uefa/data/method4/crank2012.html
sono qualificati per la Champions League ma solo quattro di essi per più di tre volte (Inter otto volte, Juventus e Milan sette volte e la Roma sei volte). Sedici club si sono invece qualificati per la Europa League, nessuno più di tre volte. Si può concludere quindi che in Serie A i processi di europeizzazione hanno aumentato, sebbene solo in maniera marginale, le probabilità che uno dei tre grandi club si aggiudichi un posto nella Champions League. Per il resto, la Serie A sembra aver mantenuto l’equilibrio competitivo che ha sempre avuto, vale a dire un equilibrio tra due diverse categorie di club: quelli (un numero sempre minore) che competono per lo scudetto e quelli che competono per non retrocedere. L’Europa League, e in misura minore la Champions League, hanno però aggiunto un elemento d’interesse competitivo fornendo un nuovo obiettivo a un gran numero di piccoli club, vale a dire concorrere per ‘un posto in Europa.’

Dopo aver stabilito che a partire dalla seconda metà degli anni Novanta, i club italiani hanno subito un relativo declino in Europa sia in termini di risultati che in termini finanziari, v’è da stabilire quale sia il nesso tra processi di europeizzazione ed indebolimento finanziario. Nonostante la tesi della Gazzetta dello Sport che la crisi finanziaria del calcio italiano sia dovuta alla presenza di troppi stranieri, i dati esaminati sopra suggeriscono che non esiste nessun nesso diretto tra la percentuale di stranieri presenti in una squadra e la sua posizione finanziaria. I club italiani sembrano essere coscienti di questo fatto dal momento che, come mostra il grafico della Figura 3 sopra, all’inizio della stagione 2009, per contenere i costi, essi cominciarono a ridurre il numero medio di giocatori in rosa (da 31.1% a 27.8%, poi risalito a 29.4% e 29.7% nelle ultime due stagioni) ma non hanno ridotto il numero di stranieri la cui media, di conseguenza, è aumentata dal 37.5% nel 2008 al 45.6%.

Il nesso tra processi di europeizzazione e la crisi finanziaria del calcio italiano sembra essere di tipo indiretto e più complesso. Visti nel loro insieme, i dati esaminati sopra (vale a dire, il fatto che le grandi squadre hanno di solito un maggior numero di stranieri in rosa, la bassa percentuale di giocatori cresciuti nel club ed il loro basso tasso di utilizzazione, il crescente numero di giovani che emigra all’estero) suggeriscono che in seguito alla sentenza Bosman i club italiani abbiano inseguito il successo cercando di comprarlo ‘tutto e subito’ invece di costruirne le basi o, in parole diverse, le squadre hanno cercato di ‘massimizzare la vittoria’ invece di ‘massimizzare i profitti’ (Levante 2006-07: 49). I grandi club italiani videro nella sentenza Bosman l’opportunità di migliorare la loro situazione finanziaria e la loro competitività (anche se questa non è legata in maniera diretta e lineare alla prima) sia a livello nazionale che internazionale. Assumendo che i ricavi dalla vendita diretta dei diritti televisivi sarebbero cresciuti in parallelo con i successi sul campo, essi cercarono di dare vita a un ciclo virtuoso nel quale maggiori spese per l’acquisto e gli ingaggi dei migliori giocatori sul mercato avrebbero condotto a più successi agonistici che, a loro volta, avrebbero condotto ad ancora maggiori ricavi dalla vendita dei diritti televisivi. La sentenza Bosman permise loro di

\[\text{Tale conclusione sembra essere confermata anche da un’altra caratteristica della Serie A, vale a dire che le squadre cambiano giocatori (per non parlare di allenatori) più spesso delle squadre di altre leghe europee. La Serie A ha la più bassa percentuale di stabilità, vale a dire la percentuale di giocatori che hanno passato almeno tre stagioni consecutive nella stessa squadra. Nel 2005 la stabilità dei giocatori di Serie A è stata del 24.5% contro il 36.1% delle altre quattro grandi leghe europee (Mandard 2006). Inoltre, come è stato calcolato da Poli e Ravenel (2008: 10), il periodo medio passato da giocatori di Serie A nella stessa squadra è di 2.2 anni mentre la media UEFA è di 2.9 anni.}\]
attirare i migliori giocatori, italiani e stranieri, con la promessa di ingaggi più alti grazie ai soldi che non avrebbero più dovuti esser pagati per l’acquisto di giocatori in scadenza di contratto. Il valore dei diritti televisivi in Italia aumentò (passando da € 93 milioni nel 1993 a € 550 nel 2000, a € 800 nel 2008, ed infine superando di poco il miliardo negli ultimi due anni) ma meno di quanto ci si aspettasse e, allo stesso tempo, gli ingaggi dei giocatori aumentarono altrettanto velocemente - per esempio del 453% tra il 1993 e il 2003 (Ascari 2004; Capone 2009a: 13) - fino a quando, nel 2008, essi vennero ad ammontare esattamente alla stessa cifra ricavata dalla vendita dei diritti televisivi (Laudisa 2009). Sebbene l’aumento degli ingaggi non sia un fenomeno limitato all’Italia, esso ha avuto un impatto maggiore sui club italiani a causa del fatto che la composizione del loro reddito è meno bilanciata di quella delle loro principali competitrice europee. Essi acquisiscono, infatti, più del 60% dei loro redditi dalla vendita dei diritti televisivi (Deloitte 2007: 22-23). Nonostante la loro trasformazione in società per azioni, infatti, i club italiani non sono riusciti a diversificare le loro fonti di reddito come invece hanno fatto altri club in Europa.

Nell’estate del 2009 le autorità calcistiche decisero di far qualcosa per rimediare alla debolezza finanziaria del calcio italiano. La Lega, appoggiata dalla Figc, annunciò che dopo aver studiato altri modelli europei aveva deciso di far pressione sul governo perché passasse una nuova legge che permetterebbe ai club di diventare proprietari di stadi multifunzionali e quindi capaci di aumentare i loro redditi attraverso la gestione di altre attività economiche (Capone 2009b: 13). La Lega però sembra abbia anche deciso che non tutti i club professionistici si possono salvare. Allo stesso tempo, infatti, la Lega annunciò che a partire dal 1 luglio 2010 essa non avrebbe più rappresentato i club di Serie B. La decisione fu presentata come necessaria per mantenere alto il livello di competitività del calcio italiano in Europa e, allo stesso tempo, di ‘europeizzarlo’. Sarebbe però più corretto dire che il divorzio tra Serie A e Serie B ‘anglicizza’ più che ‘europeizza’ il calcio italiano poiché tale divorzio non fa che replicare il modello inglese, la Premiership essendo la sola lega professionistica europea ad essere separata dalle altre squadre professionistiche militanti in divisioni inferiori. Non c’è dubbio che molti club di Serie B che nel 2008 ricevettero il 10% del ricavato della vendita dei diritti televisivi dei club di Serie A (per esempio, € 80 milioni, equivalenti a quattro volte il valore dei diritti televisivi della B e al 66% delle uscite totali della Serie B) troveranno la vita difficile sotto il nuovo regime che prevede un trasferimento del 6% dei proventi dalla vendita dei diritti televisivi della Serie A alla Serie B e alla Lega Pro. Non per caso, prima del divorzio, alcuni club di Serie A suggerirono che la Serie B dovrebbe diventare un campionato per le squadre giovanili delle squadre di Serie A (Cecere 2009: 14).

Infine, due parole riguardo alla tesi della La Gazzetta dello Sport che la crisi finanziaria del calcio italiano è dovuta anche alla riluttanza dell’Uefa a sviluppare ed applicare delle regole che permettano a tutti i club europei di competere su un piano di parità. La Gazzetta si riferiva a un solo caso, vale a dire il caso spagnolo della cosiddetta ‘legge Beckham’ (così chiamata perché approvata allo stesso tempo del trasferimento di David Beckham al Real Madrid) che prevedeva una tassa del 24% (contro il 43% che invece si applicava in Italia) sui redditi generati in Spagna da residenti temporanei come appunto i giocatori di calcio stranieri. Come auspicato dalla Gazzetta, la ‘legge Beckham’ è stata nel frattempo abrogata (23
dicembre 2009) e l’Uefa sta pensando a nuove regole che possano promuovere stabilità e trasparenza finanziaria nel calcio europeo. Se, come anticipato dal presidente Platini, le nuove regole includeranno l’esclusione dalle competizioni Uefa dei club che “spendono più di quanto incassano” (Winter 2009), allora quasi nessun club italiano sarà ammesso a competere in Europa. Infatti, pochi club italiani sarebbero capaci di iscriversi al campionato di Serie A, se le regole di ammissione in Italia fossero così severe come quelle tedesche o se il governo italiano non fosse stato così accomodante nel fornire una copertura legale a pratiche contabili molto ‘creative’.

Conclusioni

Dopo la ‘sentenza Bosman’, il calcio italiano ha vissuto un periodo di declino finanziario e competitivo relativamente ad altri paesi europei. Tale declino però, non è una diretta conseguenza dei processi di europeizzazione ma del fatto che i club italiani hanno usato la ‘sentenza Bosman’, unitamente ai ricavi generati dalla vendita individuale dei diritti televisivi, per cercare di creare un circolo virtuoso connesso a maggiori spese, al successo sul campo, ad ulteriori aumenti di reddito. Questa scommessa rischiosa è fallita. Le misure prese, o prese in considerazione, per risolvere la crisi sono in parte contraddittorie poiché alcune (per esempio, il ritorno alla vendita collettiva dei diritti televisivi) prevedono una più equa distribuzione delle risorse, mentre altre (per esempio, il divorzio tra Serie A e B) suggeriscono una svolta verso quello che si potrebbe definire ‘Darwinismo sportivo.’ Tale contraddizione è dovuta al fatto che il calcio italiano è istituzionalmente organizzato lungo due assi: mentre la Figc rappresenta l’interesse generale dello sport e persegue l’obiettivo di promuovere lo sport a livello sociale, la Lega rappresenta e promuove gli interessi dei suoi membri (i club professionali) e, nel caso italiano almeno, dei grandi club in particolare. Poiché entrambe le organizzazioni partecipano alla presa di decisioni è inevitabile che le misure adottate siano spesso il risultato di compromessi e quindi contraddittorie. Nel caso in questione, le misure tentano di riconciliare due obiettivi che si escludono a vicenda: permettere ai piccoli club di Serie A di sopravvivere e rimanere competitivi e quindi assicurare un campionato nazionale più avvincente e, allo stesso tempo, permettere ai grandi club di essere più competitivi a livello europeo. Il caso italiano mostra bene le difficoltà che esistono nel tentare di riconciliare il futuro dei campionati nazionali con quelli europei. Se la contraddizione tra le due dimensioni geografiche non potrà essere risolta, è solo questione di tempo prima che una nuova Superlega europea emerga anche se al momento le squadre dell’ex G-14 (nel gennaio 2008 disciolto e riformato come European Club Association con 103 membri) sembrano aver abbandonato l’idea. Il recente annuncio di Platini di voler ristrutturare a partire dalla stagione 2016 le competizioni europee nella sola Champions League portata però a 64 squadre, potrebbe essere interpretato come la prima mossa in questa direzione26. Se e quando questo avverrà, il concetto di ‘europeizzazione’ del calcio acquisirà anche un significato letterale.

26 “Platini: dal 2016 Champions a 64 squadre”, Corriere.it, 2 aprile 2012.
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**IERI E OGGI: THE STUDY OF ITALIAN POLITICS**

**Editing an Italian Journal in English: Italian Political Science**

An Interview with Maurizio Cotta

Maurizio Cotta is Professor of Political Science at the University of Siena (Italy) and Chief Editor of *Italian Political Science*.

**Italian Politics & Society.** Maurizio, today IPS meets IPS. Could you please tell us what is *Italian Political Science*?

Maurizio Cotta. *Italian Political Science* is a very simple and rather informal electronic bulletin. It is available online at [http://www.italianpoliticalscience.eu/](http://www.italianpoliticalscience.eu/). It was started on an experimental basis in 2007 and since then approximately two issues per year have been published. In this initial phase I have been the editor together with Professor Giliberto Capano of the University of Bologna. We have been assisted in this task by a small and dedicated group of younger scholars: Annarita Criscitiello (Napoli), Luigi Curini (Milano), Stefania Panebianco (Catania), and Filippo Tronconi (Bologna). After this experimental phase we hope that *Italian Political Science* will become with the institutional support of the Italian Political Science Association (SISP) a more regular and substantial electronic journal. We do not expect to have a printed version: enough trees are being cut every day!

**IPS.** What is the specific scope of *Italian Political Science*? In what does it differ from other Italian political science journals like the *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*?

MC. The goal of *Italian Political Science* is simple and follows more or less the model of what is done on a much larger scale by *PS: Political Science & Politics* at APSA and *European Political Science* at ECPR. It is to foster the professional growth of political science in the Italian academic environment, to circulate information that is relevant for the members of this academic discipline and to offer to international observers a more clear and informed view of the state of political science in Italy. In this perspective *Italian Political Science* has concentrated its attention on the following areas and topics: new important research projects, methodological advances, the teaching of political science in university courses, the places where political science is more active. From time to time short articles are devoted to aspects of Italian politics which are particularly topical. We would like also to stimulate a more lively debate among Italian political scientists on the state of the discipline. *Italian Political Science* is obviously a very different “animal” from the *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, which is a true academic journal with a well-established scholarly tradition and is the flagship of SISP. We are just a little boat.

**IPS.** *Italian Political Science* is the only Italian political science journal (that is based in Italy and run by Italian political scientists) published in English while there are numerous political science journals in Italian. To what extent is language an issue?

MC. We decided from the beginning to do it in English as we were (and still are) convinced that this is the only way to promote a better international knowledge of the problems of Italian political science and also because we thought this would contribute to persuading Italian scholars to think more in terms of the international scientific market (or environment if we prefer a more post-materialist language).

“Chi studia la politica, non può non studiare il potere. E chi studia il potere, non può non misurarsi con il potere dei leader” ("whoever studies politics, cannot but study power. And whoever studies power cannot but deal with the power of leaders"). These are the opening words of the latest book by Sergio Fabbrini, one of the most influential Italian scholars internationally, and the author of numerous books in both Italian and English, including *Compound Democracies, Why the United States and Europe are Becoming Similar* (OUP, 2007-2010). His latest book also represents a turning-point in the academic life of the author, as he himself declares in the introduction: it was, in fact, published immediately after he had left the University of Trento, after several years of intense research and teaching, to become the first Director of the newly established School of Government of the LUISS University of Rome, a private university which aims to enhance a new approach to social sciences, integrating academic work with a specific contribution to the education of the emerging ruling class. Thus, the book encapsulates years of study and also poses a new formative challenge for the future, which is not only addressed to scholarly research, but also to those who professionally work in close contact with political power and institutions.

From a methodological point of view, the book can be set at the crossroads between a study of the institutions in question and viewing them from a comparative perspective. The evolution of the individual systems of government is, in fact, developed by presenting an in-depth re-construction of the functioning of the institutions, aiming to provide a better understanding of the Italian system by underlining both its similarities with and its differences from the US, the UK, France and Germany, while also including further comparisons with other European States. Some salient elaborations on national cultures and their reflection on political cultures are also presented. Particularly effective is the reference to the concept of “people”, which is plural in English, whereas its translations in other languages of continental Europe are always singular ("il popolo” in Italian, “le peuple” in French, “das Volk” in German, “el pueblo” in Spanish and so on). This plurality inherent to the Anglo-American concept is much more difficult to control, given its variety and the internal co-existence of bodies, associations and interest groups that mediate the relationship between the voters and the leader.

The recent evolution of western democracies reveals a common and unambiguous trend: despite the profound differences in the party systems and in the individual systems of government, the role of the leaders is undoubtedly growing and becoming crucial for the comprehensive functioning of these systems. The issue is undoubtedly not new. Since the very beginning of the modern “democratic era”, the problems of leaders and leadership have been recognized as a paradigm for the definition of the system of government, as the
debate between Hamilton and Madison in the Philadelphia Convention had already showed. However, new factors are boosting the rise of personalities, such as: the personalization of political communication (especially through the electoral campaigns via television), the declining role of political parties, and the processes of Europeanization and globalization, all of which are shifting the decision-making role from the legislature to the executive.

Even though these factors are not exactly new, given that they have been increasing during the last decades, their role has been further accelerated by their mutual intertwining in the last few years, which has produced a new outcome: this power-shift not only empowers governments to the detriment of the legislatures, but it also favors the irresistible ascent of the leaders within the executives themselves. Thus, the managing of power is far less collective, and increasingly individual and personal. Furthermore, this power-shift is a “zero sum” process, so that the more power the leaders gain, the weaker the subjects that held the same power before, mainly the political parties, become.

However, the role of political parties remains nonetheless essential, and cannot be completely substituted by the representative function of the individual leader. The answer given to the question of whether democracies can effectively work with a leader or with parties is that they are both still necessary. The presence of (active) political parties is all the more important in Europe and in Italy, where governments as collective bodies do exist, whereas in the US it is only the President who holds a popular (albeit indirect) form of legitimacy.

The work of systematizing the latest development of Italian politics is impressive, and the recurrent use of examples of comparative experience makes the reading even more accessible to non-Italian users. Hence, a further merit of the book which should to be acknowledged is that it describes Italy by giving just consideration to the role and the weight of Silvio Berlusconi, but without reducing it to a monographic description of the “country of Berlusconi” (which would have been easier, considering the specific topic analyzed), thus presenting a broader and deeper view of the big picture. A proof of that is the full topicality of the findings even after the “fall” of Berlusconi in 2011, as they are fully applicable to the Monti Government with all its exceptionalities of a technocratic cabinet.

From the point of view of a constitutional lawyer, I may partially disagree with the depiction of the evolution of European parliamentary systems, at least with regard to the entitlement of the oversight function within the legislature vis-à-vis the government. In particular, Fabbrini criticizes the recurrent mistake and even the senselessness of those who see the involvement of the parliamentary majority in overseeing the activities of the government, while he assumes that, in the new context of (quasi) neo-parliamentarism, this task is inherent and exclusive to the role of the opposition. If possible, I would argue that this claim is undeniably true in such systems as the (traditional) British one, in which the leader of the ruling party is at the same time the prime minister, but might somehow be enriched with coalition governments, including the current status of conservatives-liberals government in the UK. Fabbrini himself underlines the influence of the electoral law in shaping the loyalty of MPs to the cabinet, but the observation of the last two parliamentary terms of office (2006-2008 and 2008-to the present; the only two that have taken place under the electoral law passed in 2005) seems to show that the electoral coalition binds the MPs only to the first cabinet appointed just after the elections, while, in the case of a
subsequent executive or a cabinet re-shuffle, the electoral bond becomes weaker, thereby enhancing the independence and the capability of the oversight of the parliament as a whole.

To conclude, it is worth mentioning one of the core ideas of the book, which is also a message addressed to political scientists and professionals working in the institutions that are in touch with the leaders. This kind of “mission” is already announced in the title of the book, which calls for the “taming” of the Principe: the rise of leaders may not only be uncontested, and might even end up being practically unavoidable; however, the work of domesticating or taming them is not only possible, but also a fundamental necessity in order to safeguard the proper functioning of western democracies. It will be up to the institutions (and academia) to reject or to adjust any excessive deviation, thereby constraining leaders to operate within the boundaries of the democratic government, interpreted as the Twenty-first century requires.

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Viroli’s *The Liberty of Servants: Berlusconi’s Italy* is a critique of the Italian population, liberty, and democracy. The main thrust of Viroli’s argument is the corrosive influence that wealth, and more specifically Silvio Berlusconi’s wealth, has had on the state of Italian citizenship and democracy. The book uses classic republican theory to formulate a definition of citizenship and liberty. Using these definitions, Viroli contends that Italians resemble servants rather than citizens and Berlusconi’s wealth had turned Italy into a court system rather than a democracy. The author uses the United States as a countervailing case to demonstrate the suggestion changes he makes to improve these conditions in Italy.

Republican theories suggest that citizenship and liberty require that individuals be free from the coercive influence and “enormous” power of one or a few men. Silvio Berlusconi’s massive wealth allowed him to accumulate unprecedented power and as a result turned the country in to a court system. This means that all Italians, from citizens, politicians, and elites exist only to serve their patron Berlusconi. The court system, long since abandoned by modern societies, are defined by many of the characteristics displayed in Berlusconi’s Italy including: buffoonery, spectacle, courtiers and courtesans, corruption, flattery, lying, imitation, and a general acquiescence and desire to please their patron Berlusconi.

There are innumerable examples given in the book demonstrating the existence of this court system and I will only mention several that encapsulate the above-mentioned characteristics. One is the obsession with youth and appearances in Silvio Berlusconi’s government. Viroli’s description of seventy year-old men, physically over-the-hill, who stubbornly remain immaculately tailored and coifed and yet embarrass themselves with daily runs they are incapable of completing. Part of maintenance of these virile and youthful appearances is having beautiful, young women around the court, perhaps most purely demonstrated by the prostitution investigations into Berlusconi himself. It might be easy to write stories like Berlusconi demanding columns being inserted at the
airport for the Olympics as pure vanity or lacking significance. But, when the bowing to the power of one man leads to legislation like the Alfano Law effectively shielded the Prime Minister and his allies from prosecution while the country becomes mired in a deep economic crisis, then the author is correct, something is lacking.

The question becomes, how does a country with freedom of speech, a free and lively press, and the freedom to choose a path in life become controlled by such a court system? It is in the answer to this question that Viroli offers some of his most strident criticism of Italian citizens and elites. He argues that Italians have historically displayed a moral weakness that leads them to acquiesce easily to other men. The same holds for the political elites that the author blames for the rise and dominance of Berlusconi. Elites “let down” the country and chose to submit to the court and enrich themselves at the expense of the nation. According to Viroli, Italy may have certain particular cultural characteristics, but all nations should be aware of the corrupting influence of great wealth.

It is in that spirit that Viroli offers solutions for the problems he describes in Italy. The main one is legislation that would prevent or limit conflicts of interest. He uses the United States as an example of a nation that has successfully dealt with this issue. For example, the US requires the selling off of stock (or placing in a blind trust) before a person can become a member of the cabinet. Using the US as a countervailing example is the one minor critique that I have with this work. It seems to me that the US could be an excellent supporting case for his argument in several respects.

The Presidency, while never held by a person with the vast personal wealth like Berlusconi, often does inspire the types of behavior typified by the courts system Viroli describes, especially spectacle. For instance US presidents or presidential candidates have in recent history: worn a flight suit and flown in an F-16 to the flight deck of an aircraft carrier, photographed riding horses or running daily, shown their bloody hands to the press after a turkey shoot, and ridden in a tank. These “optics” have had varying levels of success, but what they demonstrate is that executives sometimes engage in spectacles to appeal to an electorate. Further evidence is the only recently passed bill preventing members of Congress from making trades based on insider information they receive as part of the knowledge they acquire in the conduct of their duties (passed following the publication of this book). There is not enough space in this review to detail all the similarities between the US and Italy, but perhaps future research could use Viroli’s work as a starting point for a comparative work.

What are we to make of the arguments made in Liberty of Servants now that Berlusconi has left office (presumably not to return)? Italy stands in the middle, and may prove to be the tipping point, of the financial crisis in Europe. The country also faces very difficult decisions in the immediate, near, and long-term political future. Understanding how and why the country is facing some of the difficulties and how those problems may be avoided in the future could prove extremely valuable. Viroli’s important work is certainly an important contribution to this understanding.

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