Part 4

Italy

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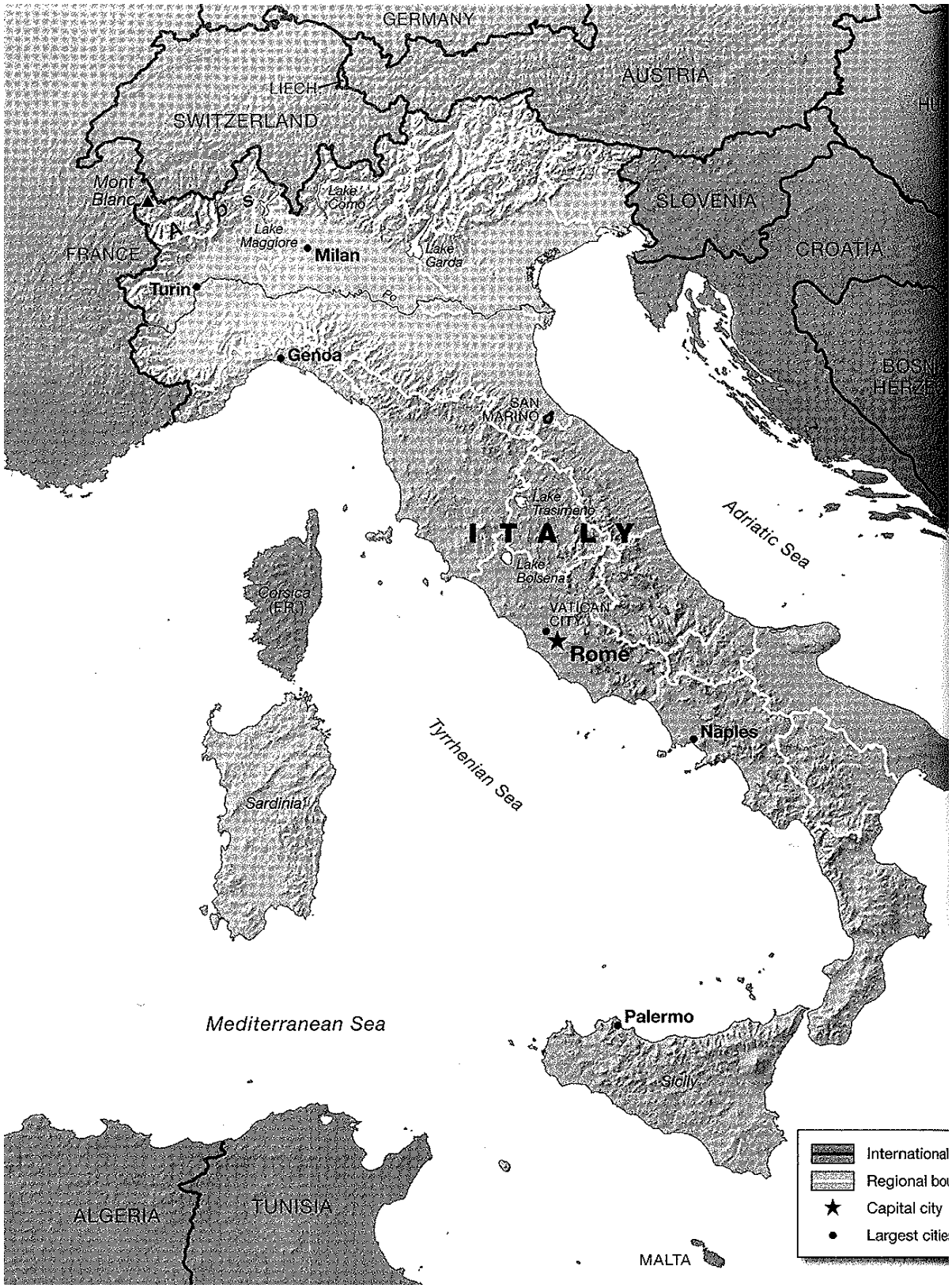
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The Context of Italian Politics 4.1

AMONG THE LARGER INDUSTRIAL STATES OF EUROPE, ITALY POSSESSES certain striking characteristics. It is one of the world's seven leading industrial powers, yet the southern half of Italy is relatively underdeveloped and still lags behind the rest of the country and much of Europe in per capita income, levels of employment, and investments. Italy has achieved spectacular social and economic progress since World War II, and yet the Italian Communist Party once was the strongest Communist Party in western Europe. Although Italy has attained a high degree of modernization in its economic structures, it is burdened with an antiquated, inefficient central bureaucratic apparatus. At the same time, its reform of the national institutional structure—that is, the creation of regions in 1970 and the subsequent reinforcement of local governments—set the trend for state reform in most large and medium-size states in the European Union. The year 2013 proved to be one of significant and dramatic changes. The parliamentary elections of February 24–25 produced for the first time a *hung parliament,* forcing the major parties of the center-left and center-right to forge a coalition that no one expected or wanted; the reigning pope, Benedict XVI, unexpectedly resigned due to ill health and inability to control the forces that were tearing apart the Vatican and the result was the election of a new pope, Francis, from Latin America and a Jesuit, the first time that a member of the Jesuit order had ever ascended to the papacy; in April for the first time since the post of president of the republic was created in 1946 a president, Giorgio Napolitano, was reelected in the attempt to bring order out of a chaotic political situation that had been created by the February elections; and finally a new government headed by Enrico Letta was given the task of finding a solution to the critical economic and financial situation in order to put the country back on the road toward economic growth and prosperity.

Italy has always presented a dramatic contrast between rapid economic and social change, on the one hand, and the survival of regional imbalances, political cleavages, and administrative deficiencies, on the other. During the 1970s and 1980s the changes in the Italian polity had lagged behind the changes in the Italian economy, which during the same period was inventing "industrial districts" and experiencing an unprecedented expansion of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the northern and, especially, central parts of the country. Then, between 1992 and 1994, the Italian political system underwent a swift but thorough and peaceful change of electoral rules, parties, and forms of democratic representation that was unprecedented in the rest of democratic Europe. Only after the collapse of the Fascist military regimes in 1974 (Greece and Portugal) and 1976 (Spain) and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 have similar peaceful transitions taken place elsewhere in Europe. Again in 2013 Italy went through another radical political change that saw the emergence of a new "anti-system" party (the Five Star Movement [M5S] led by Beppe Grillo) that deprived the traditional coalitions of the center-left or center-right a

working majority in parliament. As a result of these elections Italy has shown that it can engage in a profound renewal of its political party system and political class without placing at risk the country's political, economic, or social stability, or its role in Europe. What Italy has demonstrated is that in the postwar period and within a new European context significant change in the political structure, parties, and leaders is possible without revolution or the spilling of blood. In 2013 another cycle of political change was initiated in order to bring to the fore a new political class through generational change in addition to a drastic reform of the Italian welfare state.

The thesis that underlines this section of *Politics in Europe* is that for a significant period of time after the end of World War II Italian politics presented an "outlier" in the European party system given that the major opposition party (i.e., the Communists) were excluded from the holding of government office at the national level and the ruling party (the Christian Democrats) held on to power in an uninterrupted fashion from 1946 to 1993. After 1994 the Italian party system began to assume more the characteristics of other western European systems with a periodic alternation in government between center-left and center-right and a significant renewal of the political class. It is the opinion of the authors that the 2013 elections mark another significant change in the form of "destructuring" the 1994–2012 political system.[1] That destructuring has taken the form of a new large party led by Beppe Grillo (M5S) that has refused to participate in government or in the formulation of reforms in parliament on the basis of broad coalitions with other parties. Therefore, the Italian system has joined the systems in northern Europe (i.e., Belgium, Denmark, and Holland) where stable political majorities are difficult to come but where it is still possible to govern. That is the responsibility assumed by the government led by Enrico Letta. He and his government have set out to undertake the crucial reforms in the economy that have eluded previous governments. We will discuss these reforms in the other chapters of this section on Italy. However before going further into the changes that have characterized the Italian political system during the past years we now need to look at the continuities and changes which have characterized the Italian political system over the last decade.

Italy covers only 116,341 square miles, compared with the 210,626 square miles that make up the domestic territory of France. In 2010 Italy's population (60.5 million) was slightly smaller and rising at a slower level than that of France (64.9 million).[2] Nevertheless, Italy's population density, while impressive by US standards, is actually lower than that of Belgium, Great Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands. Moreover, Italy's birthrate of 9.1 births per 1,000 population (2011 estimate) is now one of the three lowest in western Europe: only Germany and Austria have equivalent low birthrates. Due to significant immigration, the population of the country rose to 60.626 million at the beginning of 2011, with 27.763 million residents in the north, 11.950 in the center, and 20.912 million in the south and islands.[3]

Thanks to its mountainous alpine frontier, which clearly defines its northern boundary, Italy has an overwhelmingly Italian-speaking population. Ethnic minorities are relatively insignificant: 250,000–300,000 German-speaking people in the northeastern province of Bolzano, fewer than 100,000 French-speaking people in the northwestern Valle d'Aosta region, and a few thousand ethnic Slovenians near the border with Slovenia. The religious composition of Italy's population is also quite homogeneous. With the exception of about 75,000 Protestants and about 30,000 Jews, the population is at least nominally Catholic.

For all of their homogeneity, the people of Italy are divided by significant regional differences. These differences can be attributed partly to Italy's mountainous terrain. The Apennine mountain range divides central and southern Italy from the Po Valley in the north and impedes east–west transportation between the major cities of the south. Regional differences also stem from the many waves of invaders that have swept across the Italian peninsula, Sicily, and Sardinia. Phoenicians, Latins, Greeks, Etruscans, Celts, Germans, Huns, Moors, Normans, and Spaniards have settled and intermingled in various parts of Italy, producing a great variety of regional customs and dialects. Although the Italian language and its dialects are based on Latin, the transformations Latin has undergone reflect the ethnic background and composition of each region, so that the dialect of Piedmont in the northwest bears some resemblance to French, and Spanish surnames are common in Sicily. The Italian language, however, which derives from Tuscany, with Dante as its linguistic father, prevails in the schools and in the political and commercial life of the country.

Historical Context

Like Germany, Italy did not attain national unification until the latter half of the nineteenth century. This long delay in the nation-building process stemmed from various reasons. For several centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire, northern Italy was under German political domination in the form of the Holy Roman Empire, and most of the south was under Byzantine or Moorish rule. The Normans helped to oust the Moors, but later, the south came under the control of the centralized, autocratic, but largely inefficient Kingdom of the Two Sicilies with Naples as its national capital, and northern and central Italy was divided into prosperous but mutually antagonistic city-states. This internal division permitted foreign powers such as Spain, and later Austria, to dominate large portions of Italy. Not until the French Revolution of 1789–1793 and Napoleon Bonaparte's subsequent invasion of Italy did a sense of Italian nationality begin to gain ground among Italy's educated elites. Even so, after Napoleon's defeat in 1814–1815, Italy was still split into eight territorial units: the Kingdom of Sardinia (Piedmont) in the northwest; the Lombard and Venetian possessions of the Hapsburg Empire in the north and northeast; the duchies of Parma and Modena in north-central Italy; the duchy of Lucca, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Papal State in central Italy, and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in the south.

Nationalist agitation in the nineteenth century culminated from 1848 to 1870 in a resurgence of nationalistic sentiment known as the Risorgimento. During that period, the Kingdom of Sardinia (Piedmont) led the drive for national unification after a republican movement headed by Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi launched several unsuccessful uprisings against Austrian and papal rule. The Kingdom of Sardinia received military support from France in 1859 and from Prussia in 1866 and then exploited and took control of Garibaldi's unexpectedly successful invasion and occupation of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and by 1870 occupied the entire Italian peninsula. Backed mostly by an urban educated middle class, the Risorgimento resulted in the creation of a unified Kingdom of Italy. The process of unification varied greatly from one area of the country to another. In the north, unification was cobbled together by the military victories of Piedmont. In the center, it was fueled by spontaneous revolts organized by educated elites at the grass roots. And in the south, unification was achieved through "a revolution from

above" by means of Garibaldi's campaign of liberating the southern half of the peninsula from the Bourbon monarchy.

The newly established Kingdom of Italy was a constitutional democracy with a parliamentary form of government, but it faced a profound problem of legitimacy. First, Italy had been unified by a series of military conquests, involving the elimination of several existing Italian states through their annexation by the Kingdom of Sardinia. Second, the fait accompli was ratified in the various Italian regions by plebiscites in which only the educated and propertied classes qualified as voters. Third, a rigidly centralized unitary system was erected, despite the considerable support for regional autonomy among the Risorgimento elites in several regions.[4] This extreme centralization followed the French model of a prefectoral unitary system. Finally, by annexing the Papal States and occupying Rome in 1870, the Kingdom of Italy provoked a conflict with the Catholic Church. As a result, devout Catholics abstained for almost half a century from playing an active role in Italian politics. They, and many other Italians, did not feel a moral obligation to obey the Italian government. When obedience is based mainly on expediency, a political system lacks full legitimacy.

In addition to its problem of legitimacy, the Kingdom of Italy faced the difficult task of achieving national integration—that is, of creating a sense of nationhood among Italians with diverse regional allegiances and ethnic origins. The elitist character of the Risorgimento had failed to give the peasant masses a feeling of participation in the nation-building process. It also tended to create certain contempt for majority rule among many Italian intellectuals, who were fully aware that the Risorgimento had been the work of an active minority. There was also a feeling among Italian elites that only new foreign conquests and foreign wars could create a sense of national allegiance among the common people of Italy. This sense of incomplete integration helps to explain the fight for the right to vote that was withheld from most industrial workers and peasants until 1912 and from women until 1946.

The Italian constitutional monarchy lasted less than a century, its last period shared with the Fascist regime. Italy's costly participation in World War I, in which more than 600,000 Italian soldiers died, brought the crises of legitimacy and integration to a head. The Italian masses—male workers and peasants barred from the polls until 1912—voted mainly for the Socialist and Popular (Christian Democratic) Parties, both of which threatened to encroach on the rights of private property. Also, these parties had shown a marked reluctance to support Italy's entry into World War I in 1915. After the war, the rise of Benito Mussolini's Fascist Party represented, to a considerable degree, a middle-class backlash against the redistributive and pacifist implications of the entry of the Italian masses into politics. With the aid of an armed militia financed by industrialists and large landowners, the Fascist Party unleashed between 1920 and 1922 a reign of terror against the Socialist and Popular Parties in local communities all over the country. The army and police, like the Italian government itself, were unable or unwilling to intervene effectively against Fascist violence. Finally, in October 1922 Mussolini's militiamen (the "Blackshirts") marched on Rome. The king refused to sign a government decree to declare a state of emergency, the government resigned, and the king appointed Mussolini to be the next prime minister. Mussolini soon took advantage of his executive powers to establish a Fascist dictatorship under the guise of a constitutional monarchy—a regime that was to last until July 1943.

Mussolini's Fascist regime differed in some ways from Adolf Hitler's Nazi dictatorship. Italian fascism was far less totalitarian. Controls over Italian business and agriculture were nowhere near as thoroughgoing as those in Germany, although labor unions were suppressed and replaced by Fascist-sponsored organizations. In Italy, corruption and inefficiency reached incredible levels. Italian fascism never placed a primary emphasis on doctrines of racial supremacy or the physical elimination of the political opposition. In addition, it retained the king as nominal constitutional monarch, whereas Hitler assumed the position of chief of state as well as head of government after President Paul von Hindenburg's death in 1934. By keeping the monarchy, Italian fascism paved the way for its own legal demise. In July 1943, with the Allied armies newly landed in Sicily and Italian forces in full disarray, the king was persuaded by military and civilian notables to exercise his rarely used constitutional prerogative to remove the prime minister. He appointed Marshal Pietro Badoglio to replace Mussolini, and the Badoglio government signed an armistice with the Allies on September 8. This act was followed by the rapid German occupation of continental Italy and Mussolini's creation of the Fascist Salò Republic in the north—events that spawned the popular resistance movement of liberation (la Resistenza) led by partisan forces. Until May 1945, which marked the Allied victory over Nazi Germany, the Italian government exercised some limited authority only over the Allied-occupied areas of central and southern Italy, while in the north the resistance movement continued to engage the Germans and Italian Blackshirts in a protracted guerrilla campaign until the Allies moved north with their armies.[5]

The democratic parties that emerged in the liberated zones of Italy under the protection of the Western Allies did not forget the failure of the monarchy to support the legally elected government of Italy in 1922 during the march on Rome. After considerable discussion, an institutional referendum was held on June 2, 1946, on whether the monarchy should be retained. About 12 million Italians voted for a republic, and about 10 million voted to keep the monarchy, splitting the country along geographic lines. A majority in the north voted for the republic, and a majority in the south supported the monarchy. Following the referendum, the royal family went into exile, and Italy became a republic. An elected Constituent Assembly then drew up and ratified the new republican constitution, which went into effect in 1948.

The constitution of the Italian republic provided for a parliamentary system but with some deviations from the classic parliamentary model. To be sure, it included the customary provisions for an elected parliament—a prime minister and cabinet responsible to that parliament—and an indirectly elected president to function as guarantor of the constitution. It also possessed features that differentiated it from most other parliamentary systems. First, both houses of the Italian parliament were to be popularly elected and were to be roughly equal in power, in contrast to the weaker, less representative upper houses in Great Britain, France, and Germany. Second, a constitutional court was to exercise the function of judicial review over parliamentary legislation. This was consistent with constitutional innovations in postwar Germany or with most other pre–World War II parliamentary systems. Third, there was an element of direct democracy in the form of provisions for the initiative and referendum. Finally, certain specified powers were entrusted to semiautonomous regions listed in the constitution. These regions were not to have as much power as states in the United States, but they would enjoy a much higher status than did

the subnational units of government in a unitary system such as the British or the French. In short, the Italian constitution established neither a unitary nor a federal system, but an intermediate form—regional devolution—as was later introduced in Spain and Poland.

One flaw in the operationalization of the Italian constitution by the centrist coalitions that ruled the country during the first ten years of the republic was the slow pace at which the provisions just cited were implemented.[6] The Constitutional Court was not set up until 1955. Legislation to implement the referendum was not passed until 1970. As for the regions promised by the constitution, four "special regions" with special ethnic or separatist problems—Sardinia, Sicily, Trentino-Alto Adige, and Valle d'Aosta—were created shortly after World War II; the fifth special region, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, was established by the parliament in 1963. The fifteen "ordinary regions" listed in the constitution were not instituted until 1970.

The delays in implementing the constitution could be attributed to the unwillingness of the ruling Christian Democracy to share power with the opposition or to tolerate potentially crippling restraints on its power to govern Italy. Before 1948, when the Communists, Socialists, and Christian Democrats had governed together in a tripartite cabinet, the Christian Democrats had been staunch advocates of decentralization, judicial independence, and other checks on the executive. The Communists and Socialists, by contrast, had favored a strong parliament and cabinet and had opposed any checks on absolute majority rule, because they expected that a leftist government was just around the corner. After the 1948 parliamentary elections, which gave the Christian Democrats an absolute majority and made it clear that they would be the dominant force in Italian politics for many years to come, the roles were reversed. Now the Communists and Socialists demanded regional autonomy, judicial review, and similar checks on the government indicated by the constitution, and the Christian Democrats dragged their feet on implementing such measures.

The political history of postwar Italy was characterized during the first forty years by the ideological clash between Christian Democrats and Communists, and that period can be divided into phases corresponding to the type of government formula that usually, but not invariably, prevailed. Between 1945 and 1947 the three major parties—the Christian Democrats, the Communists, and the Socialists—collaborated in cabinet coalitions, with the help of several minor parties of the center. This period of tripartite rule ended in 1947 when the Communists and their Socialist allies were ousted from the cabinet in response to a US demand made of Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi so that Italy could partake in the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe. From 1947 through 1962 Italy was usually governed by centrist coalitions that were always dominated by Christian Democracy. The minor center parties (Social Democrats, Republicans, and the business-oriented Liberals) were junior partners in these coalitions. Then, in 1962, the first center-left government came into existence: the Christian Democrats and the minor center parties formed a cabinet with the favorable abstention of the Socialist Party, which had gradually drifted away from its former close alliance with the Communists. After abstaining on confidence votes for a year and after sixteen years in opposition, the Socialist Party finally entered the cabinet in December 1963. The center-left formula simply subtracted the Liberals from and added the Socialists to the governing coalitions. The Liberals reentered the government at the beginning of the 1980s and shared power with the other center parties, Socialists and Christian Democrats, until 1993.[7]

After 1963 there was an extensive depolarization of the Italian political system. Most notably, the Communist Party became increasing moderate in its stances toward social and economic policies and especially on foreign policy. The Communists were actually treated as part of the parliamentary majority between 1976 and 1979 when their surging electoral strength placed them right behind the Christian Democrats (although they were not granted any cabinet posts), and Italy seemed for a time to be on the verge of being governed by a grand coalition of all non-Fascist parties. A second and related development was the declining strength of Christian Democracy.[8] This trend compelled the party to make greater concessions to its allies as the price for preserving the center-left formula. One concession was a willingness to relinquish the party's monopolistic stranglehold on the position of prime minister, so that in 1981 Italy had its first non-Christian Democratic prime minister in thirty-five years: Giovanni Spadolini, leader of the Republican Party. And in 1983 the Socialist leader, Bettino Craxi, was able to form a cabinet. During the next ten years the five-party, center-left majority dominated the political system, but its domination led to internal party decay rather than a renewal of the leadership and system of government.

In February 1992 corruption scandals began to emerge in Italy, and during the next two years they implicated a very large proportion of Italy's political elites. Meanwhile, the parliamentary elections of April 1992 and March 1994 produced an electoral earthquake. The result was that the traditional Italian coalition formulas began to undergo some startling changes. After the 1992 elections, the four-party coalition formula (Christian Democrats, Socialists, Social Democrats, and Liberals) was adopted once again. Its leader, however, was not a Christian Democrat but a Socialist, Giuliano Amato (Craxi's nomination was vetoed by the Christian Democrats). When Amato nominated a short-lived, reshuffled cabinet in February 1993, he included nonpolitical technocrats. These developments were accompanied by other signs of the Christian Democrats' political eclipse—the loss of twenty-eight seats in the Chamber of Deputies in 1992 and the growing strength of the fledgling and novel regional party the Lombard League (La Lega) in the north.

As the corruption scandals continued to unfold in 1993 and voter confidence in the traditional parties continued to decline, the Italian party system and the composition of Italian cabinets underwent truly fundamental changes. In April 1993 Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, director of the Bank of Italy, took over as prime minister. He was the first nonpolitician and nonparliamentarian to occupy that post. His cabinet included not only the four parties of the Amato coalition and nonpolitical technocrats but also three members of the PDS (the Democratic Party of the Left, the former Communist Party) and one Green Party member. Although the PDS members and the Green resigned less than twenty-four hours after their appointment in protest of the refusal of the Chamber of Deputies to lift Craxi's parliamentary immunity so he could face corruption charges, the fact remained that the former Communist Party, for the first time in forty-six years, had been invited to enter a cabinet.

The parliamentary elections of April 1994 fatally weakened the parties that had hitherto dominated Italian politics and brought some new parties to parliament. It was clear that the old coalition formula was not merely going to be revised but had to be drastically transformed. The new cabinet, formed in May 1994, was headed by Silvio Berlusconi, a media magnate and leader of Forza Italia (Go, Italy), a new catchall party of the center-right

that he had established and financed only a few months before the election. The other major parties in the coalition were the Northern League, an interregional and relatively new federalist and quasi-separatist party of the center-right, and the National Alliance, a party of former Fascists and monarchists whose central core was the MSI—the neo-Fascist Italian Social Movement. A few center-right cabinets had been formed in Italy since 1945 but never one that actually included a party dominated by former Fascists and that included some leaders who refused to renounce their Fascist past. For the first time since 1945, Italy veered sharply to the right, and former Fascists entered the corridors of power. Italian coalition politics had entered new and uncharted waters.

Yet the Berlusconi cabinet lasted only seven months; he was compelled to resign in December 1994 after serious disagreements split his center-right coalition. His successor was Lamberto Dini, a technocrat and top official of the Bank of Italy. Unlike the Ciampi cabinet of 1993–1994, which was partly composed of technocrats, the Dini caretaker cabinet of 1995 was all technocratic—another new development that was only repeated once again in 2011 to fill the political void left by another Berlusconi government. Dini resigned on December 30, 1995, and the elections of March 1996 produced a center-left victory. Romano Prodi, a former Christian Democrat running under the party's new label, Olive Tree coalition (Ulivo), became prime minister. His cabinet coalition was center-left, but with one major difference from the earlier center-left coalitions: it included members of the Popular Party, the Italian Renewal (a new small party formed by Dini), the Democratic Union (a moderate party of the center-left), the Greens, and the PDS, which had become a more moderate center-left movement. Nevertheless, the admission of the former members of the Communist Party to the cabinet as the dominant partner in the coalition marked a sharp break with the past and a confirmation that the structure of the Italian political system had been transformed.[9]

This break with the past was further confirmed in October 1998, when the Prodi cabinet resigned and Massimo D'Alema, leader of the PDS and then DS (Democrats of the Left), became the new prime minister. His cabinet, too, was largely center-left, but it included an extreme left element and a center-right element. They were, respectively, Armando Cossutta's small and newly formed Communist Party of Italy (a far cry from the old and much more powerful Italian Communist Party [PCI] of pre-1992 days) and the Democratic Union for the Republic (UDR), a center-right party of former Christian Democrats led by former president Francesco Cossiga and former labor minister Clemente Mastella in the first Berlusconi government. Cossiga and Mastella aspired to construct a vast centrist movement that would appeal to both moderate Catholic and secular forces, as well as to those voters who were currently supporting Forza Italia. Cossiga saw Prodi, who was a member of the Catholic Popular Party, as an obstacle to his strategy, but a short time later Cossiga abandoned active politics. Mastella persevered and remained with the center-left bloc until 2008. After the May 2001 elections, Berlusconi returned to office as head of a center-right coalition with an ambitious program to completely restructure Italy's social, economic, and political system.[10] But despite his promises, the period between 2001 and 2006 saw few of the reforms championed during the 2001 electoral campaign. The economy stagnated, and the main legislative innovations—decriminalizing accounting fraud, granting immunity from prosecution of the country's main political leaders, muzzling the judiciary, a new law on the media, and a constitutional

reform that weakened the president and strengthened the prime minister—generated considerable controversy. Berlusconi's international initiatives also divided the country, especially his participation in the war in Iraq and the critical position he assumed toward the European Union.

The April 2006 parliamentary elections returned Romano Prodi to power in the closest election in Italian history. Taking advantage of the new electoral law passed by the Berlusconi government one month before the election, the Prodi coalition was able to translate a 0.5 percent majority in votes in the Chamber of Deputies into a 55 percent majority of seats, and in the Senate, despite having fewer votes (49.2 percent versus the 49.9 percent for the center-right), it was able to obtain a slim two-seat majority. The Senate majority eventually succumbed to the defections of a few members of the extreme left unhappy with Italy's continued engagement in the peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan and a small number of senators from Mastella's UDR and Antonio DiPietro's Italy of Values political group. The Prodi government resigned in January 2008 and opened the way for a new round of parliamentary elections.

As expected, the electorate severely punished the parties of the former center-left coalition and brought Berlusconi's center-right coalition back to power in the April 2008 elections. Berlusconi's Popolo della Libertà (PdL) won a resounding victory and elected solid majorities in both the House and Senate. Therefore, as the economic crisis rolled over Italy and the rest of Europe in 2008, the fourth Berlusconi government was called upon to respond to the fall in gross domestic product (GDP), employment, industrial production, and investments.[11] As a result of the 2008 elections the extreme parties of the left that had not sought an electoral arrangement with the the center-left led by the Democratic Party (PD) completely disappeared from parliament and ran into difficulty in surviving as viable political parties outside of parliament. The left part of the political spectrum thus remained in the hands of the PD and a small libertarian party (Sinistra, Ecologia e Libertà, SEL—Left, Ecology, and Liberty) led by Nichi Vendola, the president of the regional government of Puglia. As for the far right, the bulk of the voters were transferred into the PdL. Gianfranco Fini, former leader of the National Alliance and president of the Chamber of Deputies between 2008 and 2013, had vigorously renounced the Fascist past, particularly its racial excesses. With the merger of the National Alliance with Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia to form the PdL in 2008, Italy's center-right of the political spectrum became comparable to the Popular Alliance in Spain or the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom. The changes produced by the five elections in Italy from 1992–2008 revealed that the country had clearly moved toward a bipolar system alternating between reformist left and moderate right ruling coalitions. However, in 2010 the PdL began to lose its various pieces as Giancarlo Fini came under attack by Berlusconi for not supporting his appointees to oversight authorities and preparing to succeed Berlusconi as leader of the PdL. Into the mix entered the Catholic Church's reaction to the sex scandals that began to swirl around Berlusconi and his entourage. The final blow to the role of the PdL as Italy's relative majority party was dealt in November 2011 when Berlusconi coalition lost its majority status in the Chamber of Deputies. Under the hammer blows of international speculators against Italian bonds, Berlusconi and his government were forced to resign.[12] A completely new technocratic government was appointed under the leadership of Mario Monti, which was supported in parliament by a "grand coalition" composed of the PdL, PD, and the Union

of Christian Democrats (UDC) on the basis of a program of national salvation.[13] That government lasted for one year, and its demise opened the doors for a new round of parliamentary elections on the basis of a completely new political landscape. The parliamentary elections of 2013 produced a new political earthquake that reconfirmed the need for a new edition of the "grand coalition" but whose political foundations were unstable due to the conclusions of the trials involving Silvio Berlusconi and his potential expulsion as a member of the Senate.

Socioeconomic Context

Before World War I, the Italian economy was only partly industrialized, and most heavy industry was concentrated in the Milan–Genoa–Turin industrial triangle. Italy's total industrial production lagged far behind that of France, Germany, and Great Britain. The Fascist era was marked by a sluggish, stagnant economy, held back by the rigorously deflationary policies of the Fascist regime. World War II devastated Italian industry and transportation facilities alike. After an arduous period of postwar reconstruction, Italy managed to achieve what has been generally described as an "economic miracle." During the 1950s Italy's per capita income rose more than it had during the ninety-year span from 1861 to 1950. The occupational composition of the labor force also underwent a remarkable transformation that both fueled and reflected economic expansion. When Italy was liberated in 1945, more than 40 percent of the Italian labor force was employed in agriculture; by 2005 only 3.9 percent was so employed, compared with 30.6 percent in industry and 65.4 percent in the services sector.

The growth in per capita income and in industries and services at the expense of agriculture was accompanied by massive movements of people from rural areas to cities—from southern Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia to the northwest industrial triangle and from southern Italy to northern Europe. These migrations had far-reaching implications for the Italian economy and society. Overloaded social services in the cities, soil erosion and eventual flooding in depopulated mountainous rural areas, intolerance toward immigrants, and rising expectations were some of the less desirable side effects of the "economic miracle." Nevertheless, for most Italians the 1950s and 1960s were times of great economic progress and expanding cultural and social horizons. Rai, the national radio and television corporation, played an important role in bringing the country closer together through its programming. Italian cinema flourished, and film directors such as Luchino Visconti, Michelangelo Antonioni, Vittorio De Sica, Federico Fellini, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Roberto Rossellini became household names.

The spectacular economic growth depended on various favorable conditions. The war-shattered economy cried out for reconstruction and provided entrepreneurs with many investment opportunities. Marshall Plan aid from the United States furnished the necessary capital. A divided and weak labor movement was in no position to make major demands on Italian employers. Foreign raw material prices were conveniently low. And vigorous economic leadership was furnished by a free-spending public sector headed by giant public corporations that formed part of two industrial empires: the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction (IRI) and the national hydrocarbons corporation (Eni). The bold entrepreneurs who managed Italy's public corporations helped to create the climate of optimism and adventure that pervaded the growth-oriented Italian economy.

By the late 1960s, however, these favorable conditions were beginning to fade, and the 1970s brought a rude awakening to the Italian economy. A wave of unprecedented labor unrest during the "Hot Autumn" of 1969 sent a clear signal that Italian employers could no longer expect to deal with a docile, self-denying labor force. Employers had to grant far-reaching wage concessions, accept indexation arrangements that tied wages more closely to the cost of living, and relax discipline in the factories. Moreover, parliament passed legislation consolidating and extending the gains labor had achieved through collective bargaining. Italy's three labor confederations were impelled by these developments to work more closely together and to adopt a more militant posture. As a result, Italian labor costs rose sharply, not only in terms of wages but also in terms of social security benefits. The competitive advantage formerly enjoyed by Italian manufactured products became a thing of the past.

In the 1970s, further problems befell the Italian economy, compounding the negative impact of the oil embargoes of 1973 and 1979 launched by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) cartel countries against the industrialized economies. The increase in the prices of raw materials, particularly oil, seriously damaged Italy's balance of trade by raising the prices of imports and making Italian exports more expensive. Meanwhile, public corporations were engaging in financial speculation, empire building, currying favor with the major political parties, and allowing political considerations to influence their hiring and personnel policies. As a result, the public sector was running large deficits, keeping sick industries alive, and creating grave problems for the Italian economy. Italy's larger corporations, burdened with onerous health insurance and pension costs imposed by the unions as part of the wage package, were especially affected by this situation.

As large industries found it increasingly difficult to compete with the country's smaller producers and from more efficient European and international businesses, Italy underwent a second "economic miracle" with the rise of new production facilities outside of the country's traditional northwestern industrial triangle. New, smaller companies, making the shift from economies of scale realized within the firm (the traditionally organized vertical industries such as Fiat, Pirelli, and Olivetti are examples) to those realized outside the firm (industrial districts), began to gain market shares in the production of consumer goods such as appliances, textiles, clothing, furniture, leather goods, and musical instruments. These industrial districts surfaced in nontraditional industrial areas stretching from the Veneto and Friuli in the north to Umbria and Latium in the center, and, later, even into some of the southern regions such as Abruzzi, Puglia, Campania, and Basilicata. After the rise of small and medium enterprises and industrial districts, the traditional economic duality between the north (industrialized) and the south (agricultural) began to break down. The transformation of the country's industrial base was followed by a sustained restructuring of social classes and the diffusion of personal wealth. The class structure became much more open with the rise of new economic elites and extensive social mobilization.

In contrast to the first economic miracle of the 1950s, the second economic miracle of the late 1970s and 1980s was based largely on female labor. In part, this shift stemmed from the social services such as day care centers and full-time school programs being provided by the regional governments. It also stemmed from the rising levels of

consumption, which were met by women entering the workforce in large numbers. Women also began to participate in political movements demanding equality of the sexes before the law, equal pay, and the freedom to choose on issues involving abortion and divorce. As a consequence, more women became lawyers, engineers, architects, and doctors and entered politics to advance the cause of women's rights.

From the changing conditions of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the early 1990s, new problems have emerged. One problem is unemployment, especially among young people seeking their first jobs. Facing high wage and social security costs and restricted in their ability to discharge surplus labor, many Italian employers have been reluctant to hire new personnel for what traditionally have been full-time jobs. Over the last decade, new kinds of labor contracts, the increasing use of part-time labor, and the appearance of private employment agencies have become the norm. As a result, Italy's unemployment rate went down significantly. Indeed, in 2007 unemployment fell to 5.9 percent as a result of the new employment schemes, but rose to 6.7 percent in 2008 and reaching 11.1 percent in 2012 in response to the economic and financial crisis.

According to 2012 figures, 61.2 percent of the population between the ages of twenty and sixty-four was employed. Moreover, the differences between men and women were significant. The male employment rate (72.6 percent) has always been close to the European average, but what makes Italy different from the rest of the European Union has been the employment rate for females (49.9 percent), the fourth-lowest level in all of the European Union after Greece, Ireland, and Malta.[14]

A second problem has been the proliferation of a "submerged economy," consisting of a multitude of small employers scattered in the new industrialized areas in southern, central, and northern Italy. The submerged or "informal" economy often pays workers substandard wages, fails to pay social security and payroll taxes for its employees, and keeps economic operations a well-guarded secret from the prying eyes of the tax authorities. But it also has become a tool for injecting flexibility into economic activity by providing employers with the possibility of hiring employees on a part-time basis or seasonal schedule, creating apprenticeship programs, linking wages to output, and hiring immigrants for jobs not acceptable to native Italians. These new forms of employment have become an important factor in raising employment levels in Italy (although not often captured in official statistics) and enticing new workers to join the labor force.

A third, related socioeconomic problem is posed by the growing gap between the relatively prosperous, traditionally employed workers, protected until very recently by indexation against economic vicissitudes, and the new workers in the flexible employment economy, where employment is based not on a traditional, full-time labor contract, but on the ability of the country's economy to produce jobs on a competitive basis. Italy has also witnessed the emergence of an extensive new class of entrepreneurs in industrial, service, and agricultural activities that have made self-employed workers the fastest-growing sector of the economy. At the same time, the country has continued to import labor from the non-EU eastern European countries and those to the south in northern and sub-Saharan Africa.

All of these changes would appear to call for the traditional remedy of higher levels of government intervention and spending. But it has become painfully and urgently evident in Italy that government spending had already reached excessively high levels, especially

for social welfare programs and pensions that do not have the flexibility or capacity to meet the new social and economic challenges that vary greatly from one part of the country to another. By contrast, the regional and local authorities have increasingly taken on the role of providing incentives for industry and the creation of new businesses, because at the regional and local levels policies can be better earmarked for the local economy.[15]

By 1984 unsustainably high levels of government spending had brought the Italian national debt to 77.4 percent of Italy's GDP; by 1993 it had grown to 119.4 percent of GDP and by 1996 to 122 percent of GDP. From 1996 to 1998 the Prodi government, under Minister of the Treasury Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, engaged in a sustained privatization program that used the proceeds from the sale of state assets to draw down the debt. By 2000 the debt was reduced to 111 percent of GDP, and it fell to 106 percent in 2003. Data for 2004 reveal that the debt remained stable, a consequence of the indiscriminate tax cuts implemented by the Berlusconi government without cutting an equal amount of government spending. The debt began to decline once again under the guidance of Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa, Prodi's minister of the economy in 2006, but the economic crisis of 2008–2009 and the subsequent decline in tax revenues forced the debt-to-GDP ratio back up under the new 2008 Berlusconi government. By 2012 the debt had risen to 127 percent of GDP.

Budget deficits were also rising, reaching 12.3 percent of GDP by 1985. Strenuous economizing measures by post-1985 Italian governments (especially the post-1992 governments) managed to reduce the annual budget deficit to 9.5 percent of GDP in 1992 and 7.1 percent of GDP in 1996.[16] By 1997 the level of the annual budget deficit had dropped to 2.7 percent, and by 2001 it had been reduced to 1.4 percent through the series of spending cuts and tax increases introduced by the Prodi, D'Alema, and Amato center-left governments. Conversely, under the second center-right Berlusconi government, the annual deficit ran over the 3 percent maximum established by the EU Stability and Growth Pact in both 2003 and 2004 and increased in 2005 and 2006 to 4.1 percent deficit levels, despite the sale of successive tranches of ENI and Enel (the state electric power industry) stocks.

The introduction of the euro had a positive effect on the interest payments the country had to make on the money it borrowed to finance its debt. Before entering the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), Italy had interest rates that were close to 10 percent, but after introduction of the euro, rates fell to 2.0 to 2.5 percent, and the interest that the country had to pay on government securities was cut by a half to two-thirds of past levels. The Prodi government was able to bring the annual deficit for 2007 down to 1.9 percent, and under the stewardship of the minister for the economy, the government's target was a zero annual deficit by 2010. These plans were rudely interrupted by the subsequent political crisis that forced Prodi to resign and new elections. But even more significant was the world financial crisis that hit Italy hard in 2008 and 2009. Italy's GDP declined by 5.0 percent in 2009, but it did not enter into the group of countries such as Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain that had already run the risk of default. That prospect loomed on the horizon in November 2011and created the basis for the change in government with the resignation of Berlusconi and the appointment of Mario Monti. As a result of the change Italy avoided the collapse of its banks or of its real estate market but the deficit

climbed to 3.8 percent of GDP in 2011 but declined to 3.0 percent in 2012 and below that in 2013 as the result of the austerity program introduced by the Monti government.

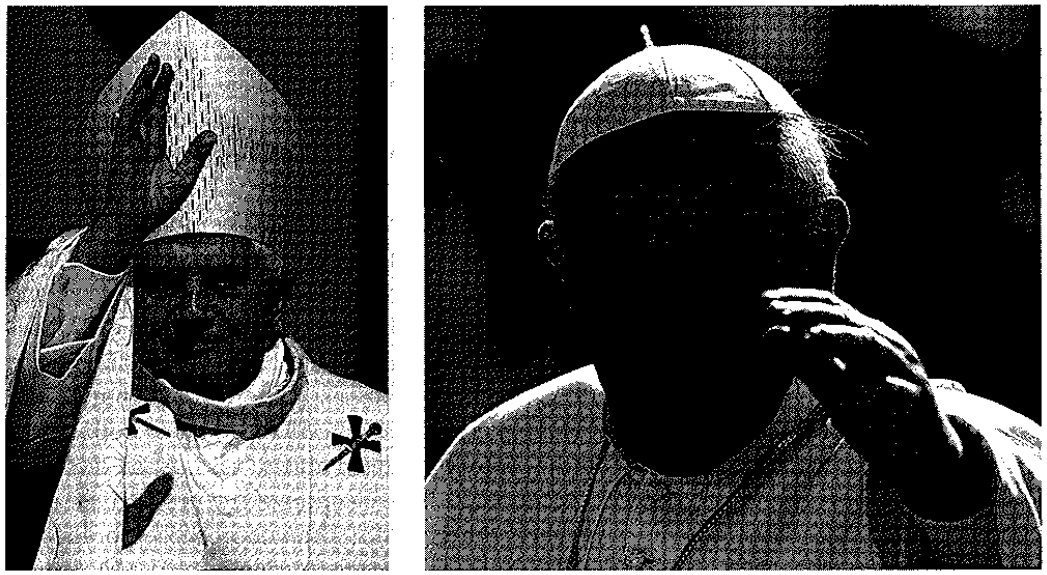
Religion

The Catholic Church has traditionally played a major role in Italian politics. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the Papal States, the temporal domain of the pope, resisted numerous attempts by the Germanic Holy Roman Empire to unite Italy. In the nineteenth century, the pope opposed Piedmont's bid to unify the Italian peninsula, and in fact the final event of the Risorgimento was the forcible seizure of Rome by Italian troops in 1870. From 1870 to 1913, the church hierarchy advised religious Italians to abstain from voting in Italian national elections. The Gentiloni Agreement of 1913, under which Italian Catholics began to give large-scale electoral support to candidates for parliament, brought this boycott of the Italian state to an end. In 1919 a Christian Democratic party—the Popular Party led by Don Luigi Sturzo—entered Italian national elections and openly campaigned for the support of religious voters. After Mussolini came to power, the Popular Party was disbanded, and in 1929 the church signed the Lateran agreements with the Fascist state, signaling a complete reconciliation between church and state. One of these agreements, the Concordat of 1929, recognized the sovereignty of the pope over Vatican City, guaranteed religious education in Italian public schools, and declared Catholicism to be the official religion of the Italian state. The Catholic Church also was granted far-reaching privileges related to the holding of property and jurisdiction over marriage and divorce, among other things.

After the defeat of fascism, the church was able to strike another favorable bargain with the new Italian republic. The Lateran agreements of 1929 were actually incorporated into the new constitution. Article 7 provided that the agreements could be modified only by mutual consent of both parties or by a constitutional amendment. The Communist delegates to the Constituent Assembly actually voted for Article 7 in 1947, possibly in an effort to conciliate their Christian Democratic coalition partners and avert the impending expulsion of the Communist Party from the Italian cabinet in light of Pope Pius XII's effective policy against that party.

During the 1940s and 1950s political Catholicism was an organized and pervasive force in Italian politics. With Christian Democracy dominant in the Italian political system, the church and its lay organizations enjoyed privileged access to national centers of decision making. Priests and bishops openly took sides in election campaigns, urging the faithful to support candidates sympathetic to the Catholic Church. Catholic Action, a church-sponsored lay organization, set up a network of civic committees to conduct canvassing and propaganda activities in behalf of Christian Democracy. Catholic interest groups representing labor, peasants, teachers, and others were directly affiliated with Christian Democracy, and they enjoyed a *parentela* relationship. Such groups had the right, as "members of the family," to be consulted on appointments to cabinet positions, nominations of candidates for parliament, and policy questions affecting their interests.[17] In short, the Italian Catholic Church was much more prominent on the political scene than its French counterpart.

Since the early 1960s, the political aggressiveness of Italian Catholicism has waned. Under Popes John XXIII (1958–1963) and Paul VI (1963–1978), the church assumed a



Popes Benedict XVI (left) and Francis (right), the renewal of the church is characterized by the transition between the two popes and the new emphasis on the 'church of the poor' by the latter.

Sources: AP Images/Pier Paolo Cito; AP Photo/Riccardo De Luca.

lower profile in Italian politics and displayed less hostility toward leftist parties. The church itself, however, was by no means united. Some bishops continued to maintain a politically active stance and to oppose any alliances with leftist forces. Nevertheless, as the papacy abandoned in the early 1960s its antipathy to the idea of a center-left coalition government, most bishops reluctantly followed suit. Later, even the partial collaboration between Christian Democrats and Communists at the national level during 1976 to 1979 did not call down the anathema of the church.

What underlay the more cautious line followed by the church was the growing secularization of Italian society. In the 1960s and 1970s church attendance declined, and larger numbers of Catholics, especially Catholic intellectuals, displayed independent attitudes in direct conflict with the dictates of the church hierarchy. Some Catholic associations loosened their ties with Christian Democracy. Also, the exodus from Catholic rural strongholds to the big cities, from agricultural occupations to industrial and service jobs, seriously undermined the influence of religious tradition.

Clear evidence of the weakening of religiosity in Italy was the passage of a divorce bill in 1970, despite the strong resistance of Christian Democracy and the Vatican. More striking still was the aftermath of the bill's passage. When militant Catholics pushed the issue to a referendum in an effort to achieve repeal of the divorce law, the result was a clear-cut victory for secularism. A 1974 referendum upheld the divorce law, with only 41 percent of voters casting their ballots for its repeal. Forces favoring divorce carried most of Italy, with the exception of the Catholic northeast and the continental south. Even Sicily, Sardinia, and Latium (the region that includes Rome) voted to retain divorce. The size of the

vote against repeal clearly indicated that repeal lacked the support of a considerable number of Christian Democratic voters. In another referendum held in 1981 to decide whether a rather liberal abortion law should be repealed, 68 percent of Italians who took part in the balloting voted against repeal—a bigger majority than the pro-divorce majority of 1974. It is probably in recognition of its waning strength that the Catholic Church agreed in 1984 to accept a revision of the Concordat.

The church's influence rebounded in Italy during the papacy of John Paul II (1978–2005), and that trend continued under Benedict XVI (2005–2013). John Paul II's long reign (1978–2005) was characterized by widespread popular support for his teaching against war and in support of international development—teaching that helped to redefine popular attitudes toward the church. This support became abundantly clear in the unprecedented public response to the pope's attempted assassination in 1984 and death in 2005. The eight years of Benedict XVI's papacy generated less popular enthusiasm than was the case with John Paul II, but the church has been able to reassert its doctrinal leadership on the future course of religious thought. The election of the first Latin American and former Jesuit pope who has taken the name of Francis in remembrance of St. Francis of Assisi, the advocate of the poor, sent shockwaves through the Vatican establishment. The election of Francis to the papacy inaugurates a new era in the church and reaffirms the church's universal social mission and a lessening of its political role in Italian affairs. The emphasis now is in the universal role of the church and much less in its domestic role and position in Italy.

Education

The Italian educational system has undergone a major transformation since World War II. In the 1950s, 90 percent of the population had not attended school more than five years. Moreover, at the end of fifth grade, as was often the practice in Europe at the time, a child was assigned to either an academic junior high school or a terminal vocational school. Assigning a child to a secondary school on the basis of aptitude at such an early age meant that aptitude was all too frequently determined by family background and social class.

In the 1960s, with the entry of the Socialist Party into center-left cabinets, educational opportunities were broadened. A unified junior high school was established to replace the earlier two-track system and led to a significant increase in enrollments. By 2001, approximately 96.3 percent of all children between the ages of six and fourteen, the age groups for which education is compulsory, were enrolled in elementary or lower secondary schools, without any significant differentiation in attendance figures between students attending elementary schools (ages six to ten) and lower secondary schools (ages eleven to fourteen) or between students living in the north and the south of the country.

These changes, in turn, led to a great increase in high school enrollment. They also brought about the lowering of standards to accommodate the incoming masses. Moreover, pressure for further democratization led to the adoption in 1970 of an open admissions policy for the universities, which became overcrowded and lost much of their elite status.

The initial results of these reforms were somewhat disappointing, producing unforeseen side effects. The great wave of student unrest that swept over Italian universities in the late 1960s and early 1970s and that brought chronic indiscipline and frequent violence in its wake was a direct outcome of the skyrocketing enrollments and the inability of the

university system to make the necessary adjustments. The depressing working conditions that prevailed for the academic staff, the frustrated expectations of the students, and the protests that were gripping US and French universities combined to foment student unrest. Indeed, many a young terrorist spent his formative years in the chaotic milieu of Italian higher education. In response to the growing problems, the Italian government sought to reorganize the university system by allowing universities to restore a selective admissions policy and granting universities greater autonomy in organizing their curricula.[18] In 2003 the Berlusconi government introduced other reforms of university education by creating short-term (three-year) bachelor's degrees, five-year graduate degrees, and, in selected disciplines, PhD programs. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, higher education in Italy moved from immobilization to rapid and revolutionary reform, although whether these changes will fully respond to the shortcomings of Italian higher education has yet to be assessed. In 2008 the subsequent Berlusconi government was forced to reduce funding for the university system as part of the need to cut overall government spending. The cuts have significantly impacted the funding for research and outreach programs to bring university education to smaller towns and cities. During the last two years the Italian university system has attempted to respond to the competition for students by an increased internationalization of its programs and faculty.

Political Culture

In the six decades since Liberation, Italians have seen their country transformed by a pattern of drastic change—a remolding of the political, social, economic, religious, and educational landscapes. Inevitably, this metamorphosis has had a notable impact on political attitudes and culture.

But any examination of the changes that have taken place since the early 1960s must be prefaced with a look at the most significant attitudes that traditionally characterized Italian political culture. First, Italians tended to rank rather low in social trust—that is, they lacked faith in the motives and actions of their fellow citizens. Yet it was in Italy that the concept of "social capital" was born to explain the differentiation in the institutional performance of regional and local governments. High-performing governments were supported by a diffused level of social trust and the potential for community mobilization in the creation of common goods.[19] Second, Italians had a low degree of political trust—that is, they had little confidence in the efficiency and integrity of national government institutions and officials. They did believe that levels of government closer to the local community are more responsive to particular needs. Third, Italians who live in southern Italy tended to seek protection against a potentially hostile environment by joining informal but hierarchical groupings (cliques and clienteles) in which they could enjoy the protection of a powerful patron. In northern and central Italy clienteles were not as prominent. People relied more on organizations, groups, and associations to access social services or financial resources. Fourth, Italians finally acquired a sense of national identity after two world wars and a period of partisan resistance to the German occupation from 1943 to 1945, but they also maintained their regional and local identities and added a clearly expressed European identity. Fifth, Italians were politically active, voting much more regularly than citizens of other European countries or the United States. The turnout in national, local, and European elections regularly exceeded 70 percent to 75 percent of registered voters. Meanwhile,

Italians were also not afraid to participate in mass demonstrations and marches demanding changes in government economic, domestic, or foreign policies.

The most important features of the Italian political culture are both its heterogeneity and its fragmentation. The attitudes just described were not universally shared. Instead, competing subcultures represented competing sets of values and attitudes. These divergent subcultures—elite or mass, northern or southern, liberal or clerical or Marxist—helped to shape Italy's party system and the tendency of Italian voters to think in left–right, clerical–anticlerical, north–south terms. They also accounted for the pre-1992 pattern of stable partisan preferences (voters frequently supported the same parties election after election) and the high degree of hostility that some parties aroused among voters at the other end of the political spectrum.

From 1965 to 1992, this set of attitudes underwent some significant changes. The balance of forces among competing subcultures shifted visibly, with Catholic (clerical) traditions losing popular support and suffering from a weakened organizational network. Partisan hostility diminished a great deal, especially that directed toward the former Communist Party, which gained considerable acceptance as a legitimate political force among Italian political elites. Among the more educated, influential Italians, there seemed to be a pronounced movement toward bridging the cleavages that had divided the subcultures. At the level of mass culture, however, much remained the same. Voters still tended to place themselves along a left–right spectrum, identifying themselves as left, center, or right. And although the Catholic tradition had declined, about 40 percent of Italian voters still supported repeal of the divorce law. As for attitudes toward the political system, they were still pronounced, despite the improved socioeconomic conditions experienced by most Italians. In fact, evaluations of the political system, including the competence of politicians, were more negative in the 1990s than in the 1960s. The widespread political alienation and political distrust would help to explain the frequent direct confrontations between demonstrators—using a variety of provocative strategies—and public authorities. It also would help to explain the tendency of disaffected fringe groups to resort to acts of terrorism. Nevertheless, some scholars came to the conclusion that alienation and distrust did not represent a passionate rejection of the Italian style of democracy, but a sober and realistic recognition of the limited potentialities of any political system and the low level of responsiveness of Italian political elites at crucial stages in Italy's political history.[20]

In general, it seemed in 1990 that although Italian political elites were conducting their quarrels with more moderation and mutual forbearance, the potential for unrest and violent upheaval was still alive and well among noninfluentials. Yet the Italian political system had a record of great resiliency, and there were some very promising elements in the picture to offset the more negative features described here. Voters gave somewhat greater support than in the past to the middle-of-the-road minor parties, and parties on both the left and the right were significantly moderating their political stances and relations with their opponents. In Italy, terrorism was defeated not through draconian measures limiting civil liberties and torture, but through a sustained campaign of isolating the terrorists from the institutionalized social movements and organizations. The same can be said about the Mafia. After the 1992 murder of two judges and the 1993 bombings in Rome, Florence, and Milan, the top Mafia leaders were rounded up and jailed under highly restrictive conditions. On the day after the April 2006 elections, Bernardo Provenzano, the "boss of

bosses" of the Sicilian Mafia, was finally arrested outside of Corleone, his hometown, after more than forty years as a fugitive. Since then, other top leaders of the Mafia in Sicily and the Camorra in Naples have been arrested and brought to trial. These and other successes support the view that when the Italian justice system is allowed to function, it is able to resolve issues of law and order effectively and efficiently.

Secularization was visible in both the Catholic and Marxist camps, because Italian voters appeared to be rejecting extremist tendencies. In short, it was widely suggested that the Italian polity had once again survived the dangers to its democracy, as it had done so often in the past and will continue to do in the future. As Joseph LaPalombara has argued, democracy Italian style might not be pretty, but it has functioned well enough since the end of World War II to transform an authoritarian political culture into a vibrant democratic one in a peaceful and participatory manner.[21]

The corruption scandals of 1992 through 1994 did not undermine the basically optimistic prospectus. Because more than 1,500 political officeholders and business people were swept up in an investigation of corruption and bribery in the awarding of government contracts, a sharp decline in the levels of social and political trust, and of political and administrative competence, was bound to take place. The growing sense of alienation had the effect of discrediting the previous political party system, or "first republic" (*prima repubblica*) as it is referred to now, because the Socialist and Christian Democratic Parties were those most deeply involved in the general pattern of corruption known as "Kickback City." But just like its response to the terrorist campaign, the Italian justice system carried out its function in an exemplary manner, identifying and prosecuting many perpetrators of the corruption regardless of their political and social positions and opening the way to the rise of new political parties and elites.

The victory of the center-right parties in 1994 made it clear that the electoral stability of partisan preferences was a thing of the past, as most of the parties that had dominated Italian politics since 1945 suffered enormous losses (if they participated in the elections at all), and many of them were denied representation in parliament. Meanwhile, new political parties and elites have come to the fore. A second major renewal of the political class and party system took place in 2013 testifying to the fact that the Italian political culture and expectations vis-à-vis their political leaders continues to evolve. The new cleavages that have emerged in the political system now emphasize the plight of youth in finding employment and the need for a significant renewal of the political class and institutions.

NOTES

1. See Luca Ceccarini, Ilvo Diamanti, and Marc Lazar, "Fine di un ciclo: la destrutturaizone del sistema partitico italiano" in Anna Bosco and Duncan McDonnell (eds.) *Politica in Italia, Edizione 2012* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012), pp. 63–82.
2. See Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (ISTAT), *Censimento 2001* (Rome: ISTAT, 2004). See also "France" and "Italy" in *The Europa World Year Book 1998* (London: Europa Publications, 1998), 1:1334–5, 1825.
3. ISTAT, Italy in Figures, 3 August 2012.
4. See Filippo Sabetti, *The Search for Good Government: Understanding the Paradox of Italian Democracy* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2000), 191–211.

5. For a detailed account of this period, see Charles Delzell, *Mussolini's Enemies: The Italian Anti-Fascist Movement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961).
6. See Norman Kogan, *A Political History of Italy: The Postwar Years* (New York: Praeger, 1983), 104–106, 255–256.
7. For a detailed discussion of the political history of postwar Italy, see Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943–1988* (London: Penguin, 1990). See also Paul Ginsborg, *Italy and Its Discontents: Family, Civil Society, State, 1980–2001* (London: Penguin, 2001).
8. See Robert Leonardi and Douglas Wertman, *Italian Christian Democracy: The Politics of Dominance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).
9. For a discussion of the 1994, 1996, and 2001 elections, see Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, eds., *Italy: Politics and Policy,* vol. 1 (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1996). See also Robert Leonardi and Marcello Fedele, eds., *Italy: Politics and Policy,* vol. 2 (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003).
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12. Francesco Marangoni, "The Premature End of the Fourth Berlusconi Government: An Updating of Indicators of the Government's Legislative Performance and Productivity," *Bulletin of Italian Politics* 3, no. 2 (2011): 357–369.
13. Francesco Marangoni, "Technocrats in Government: The Composition and Legislative Initiatives of the Monti Government Eight Months into its Term in Office," *Bulletin of Italian Politics* 4, no. 1 (2012): 135–149. See also Carlo Fusaro, "La formazione del governo Monti e il ruolo del presidente della Repubblica" in ed. Anna Bosco and Duncan McDonnell, *Politica in Italia, Edizione 2012* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012), 83–100.
14. EUROSTAT Labour force survey. Accessed January 5, 2013.
15. For a discussion of the transfer of economic development policies to the local level, see Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Growth and Territorial Policy* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1988).
16. Elisabetta Bertero, "An International Economic Perspective on the Results of the 2001 Italian Elections," in Leonardi and Fedele, *Italy: Politics and Policy,* 210–218.
17. See Joseph LaPalombara, *Interest Groups in Italian Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964), chap. 9.
18. Giliberto Capano, "Higher Education Policy in Italy (1992–1997)," in Leonardi and Fedele, *Italy: Politics and Policy,* 86–107; Mauro Degli Esposti, "Thirty Years of Higher Education Policy in Italy: Vico's *Ricorsi* and Beyond?" *Bulletin of Italian Politics* 2, no. 2 (2010): 111–122.
19. See Robert D. Putnam, with Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).
20. See Joseph LaPalombara, *Democracy Italian Style* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 152–155, 263–264.
21. Ibid.