Original Article

Testing Italian democracy

Marc Lazar[a,b]
[a]Sciences Po, Paris and Luiss University-Guido Carli, Rome.
E-mails: marc.lazar@sciences-po.fr; mlazar@luiss.it
[b]Luiss University-Guido Carli.

Abstract The terms 'crisis' and 'anomaly' are usually used by international and Italian Political Science, Sociology and History to qualify the state of democracy in Italian Republic for the past as for the present. In this contribution, the author does a study of these notions of 'crisis' and 'anomaly', then studies the Political Science and Historical literature about the deep change of political system and political parties since the 1990s. Finally, the article gives a general analytical framework for the present Italian politics. Instead of considering Italy as an anomaly, the idea is to think the political mutations of this country as a kind of 'laboratory' of a general change of European democracies.
Comparative European Politics advance online publication, 18 February 2013; doi:10.1057/cep.2012.40

Keywords: crisis; anomaly; political parties; audience democracy

The Italian democracy has been put to the test in two ways. On the one hand, it is experiencing important changes that affect its foundations, its institutions, its ruling class, its parties, as well as the way of behaving, communicating and acting in politics. On the other hand, these same changes constitute a real challenge for analysts. It is this double task that attracts our attention. Since the 1990s, the state of Italian democracy has raised numerous questions, stimulating the curiosity of the international media, causing heated debates, providing material for seminars and conferences, and engendering academic and journalistic publications by Italians and foreigners alike. From a quantitative perspective, this literature is impressive and it is not our intention to carry out here an exhaustive assessment. Overall, it runs along two main paths, namely, the crisis and the Italian anomaly, interwoven into each other and thus forming an actual paradigm, which should be taken into consideration when envisaging to explore the current Italian situation. Certainly, their formulations vary according to the authors – journalists, researchers from different disciplines, such as political science, history, anthropology, communication science, economics and

so on – and the nature of their output – essays, journal articles and scientific volumes. Indeed, it would be interesting to analyze in detail the reciprocal exchanges carried out by different authors – such as journalists referring to theories advanced by scholars, and scholars using, at times, journalists' surveys as evidence – as well as the continuous flow of data and the transfer of concepts, which are in turn defined to various degrees of clarity. We should also question the fact that the proclamation of the Italian democracy's state of crisis by implicated political actors and, at times, by observers may amount to more than an intrinsic analysis of the political reality. There might be other objectives, understood and explicitly formulated to various extents, including a particular representation of the opponent, or of the enemy; a contribution to the moral mobilization against those accused of causing or taking advantage of the crisis; a description – in dark tones – of the old system; and the opposing appreciations of the new emerging one (Berlusconi's governments are castigated by his opponents in terms of 'regime', which, in Italian, is a clear and stigmatizing allusion to fascism, while its supporters exalt its achievements).

We initially want to dwell on these notions of crisis and anomaly, which are so widespread and have been commonly employed for a long time in relation to Italy, with the aim of challenging their relevance, as they appear to be simplistic and unambiguous. In the second part, we try to understand how political science and history have tackled the new phase that began in the 1990s. Finally, we propose an analytical framework for the Italian democratic present, with the goal to capture the complexity of the ongoing changes in order to escape from explanations that we believe being too partial, if not biased, and yet are dominant. At the end, we ponder over the future of Italian democracy, but also over what the present tells us about the ongoing dynamics of other European countries. In our opinion, rather than being an exception, Italy is at the same time an indicator of a more general democratic malaise and of the multiple attempts of invention of a new democratic order that are emerging all over the European Union. The actual specifics of Italy cannot hide the fact that similar (but not identical) phenomena affect, in their own ways, other European democracies.

On the Crisis and the Italian Anomaly

For nearly 20 years, one thing appeared to be evident, to the point that it became commonplace: Italy is in crisis. The crisis was deemed to be unique in its features (most of which were engendered by the political upsurge of Silvio Berlusconi), its duration and intensity. Indeed, it had no equivalent elsewhere. On the one hand, Italy cannot be compared with the former communist European countries as they were dictatorships, while, on the other, no other

large country in the former Western Europe has experienced such an upheaval in the same period or in the present. The uniqueness of Italy's crisis would testify not only to the country's peculiarity, but also to its profoundly abnormal, almost pathological, side. The fact that Italy is considered the current 'sick man of Europe', joining the club of many other countries that have been labeled as such since the Russians coined the phrase in the nineteenth century to designate the Ottoman Empire, is no fortuity. The media use and abuse this bombshell expression, which is also employed by researchers (Mammone and Veltri, 2010). Continuing with the commonly used medical vocabulary, the practitioners of politics and society, and not of bodies or minds, first compile a long list of symptoms (on which we will dwell later), then offer two types of diagnostics. The first one emphasizes the fortuitous and accidental character of this uncommon crisis. In reverse, the second one unearths causalities with much deeper, mid-term roots – a few decades, for example, or longer even, since the Italian unification, or, why not, even beyond. In other words, the crisis would be either a conjuncture or, conversely, structural. The anomaly would be either original or customary. This oscillation is in itself problematic because it shows that the categories of 'crisis' and 'anomaly' are vague and those who use them show a certain intellectual laziness or a great spirit of conformity.

Crisis? In politics a crisis, or even crises, is matched with the accidental, the unusual, the unexpected, the novelty. The term usually refers to a very confused situation, marked by major malfunctions. The rules and the norms of the political game are no longer abided by; traditional players fail to fulfill their roles; the governments' margins for maneuver, in terms of choices, decision making and promulgation of potential reforms, is restricted; the institutions operate purposelessly; the leaders' legitimacy is exhausted and is criticized by the governed; the device of agreements that had been explicitly or tacitly reached between the various components of the political spectrum, organized to various extents, and the entities representing the society by and large, and that had contributed to the relative stability of the political order, is broken; the desire for change is no longer relayed through the usual channels and mediation procedures; the relationship between different social groups changes entirely and rapidly; the representations of, and the reliance on, political and societal organization as grand narratives contributing to the collective living lose their power of seduction and conviction, and citizens no longer embrace them; instead of being relatively well defined as they fulfill specific functions, the different sectors of society tend to overlap and their skills mix; the dynamics of political and ideological radicalization are triggered, usually by forces that want to subvert the existing order; extremists generally make headway, and collective mobilizations follow. The crisis can unfold within the existing political system and eventually find mediations that allow its resolution, such

as the recourse to polls, a change of government or majority, the redefinition of common values and so on. Or, conversely, crises can destabilize the entire political system. In the latter case, they are harsh and tough (and sometimes violent) to various degrees. Not least because the 'crisis entrepreneurs' – namely political actors, but also other actors coming from different realms such as the media, the judiciary, academia, the financial world, religious institutions – claim to represent the civil society's general interests and criticize the political representatives while being tempted to replace them. Hence, they express loud and clear the state of crisis by exposing and amplifying all the troubles that attest to it, by dramatizing the situation, by denouncing those responsible and their responsibilities. In doing so, many of them hope to have some form of return on investment, as they present themselves as the only ones able to resolve the crisis, of which they are active agents and propagators (Ferrero, 1989; Lagroye, *et al*, 2006; Dobry, 2009).

However, it is clear that the Italian Republic, chosen by referendum in June 1946 and instituted in 1947–1948, seems to have always been in crisis, even more than it is usually the case in a traditional parliamentary system. To begin with, a series of internal crises unfolded within the political system, including more than chronic government instability, such as a 'crisis of centrism' after 1953, a 'crisis of the center-left' in the late 1960s and in the early 1970s, a 'crisis of national solidarity' in the late 1970s, a 'crisis of pentapartismo' (meaning the coalition of the Christian Democrats, the Socialist Party, the Republican Party, the Liberal Party and Social Democratic Party) in the late 1980s. Then there were also crises that affected the entire political system, and that were exacerbated by the profound changes that shook the Italian society or by the shifts in the system of international relations. Such were the events of the 1970s involving the extreme right and left terrorism, which were ultimately defeated by the action of the State, by the cohesion of the major parties, including the Italian Communist Party (PCI), which was part of the parliamentary majority from 1976 to 1978, and by the mobilization of a section of the public, of the trade unions and of the associations, which contributed to the isolation of fascist bombers and of extreme left activists who were into hiding and had opted for an armed struggle. From the early 1990s, another systemic crisis opened with the collapse of the Berlin Wall, which had a direct impact on the Italian political parties and the party system. Then, in 1992, the operation 'Mani Pulite', conducted by judges in Milan, put much of the political class on the block, including the Christian Democrats (DC) and the Socialists, necessarily resulting in the rise of a new political leadership. Finally, in 1993, changes in the electoral law contributed to the creation of an unprecedented political polarization. All these elements contributed to the collapse of the traditional parties, in the metamorphosis of the opposition groups – such as the PCI and the Italian Social Movement (MSI), which repudiated their old identities – in

the progression of protest parties such as the Lega Nord, and in the creation of a new party, Forza Italia – which came hand in hand with the entry into politics of Silvio Berlusconi. It also lead to the overall reorganization of the political landscape – evident in the creation of large coalitions and regular alternations (1994, victory of the center-right; 1996, victory of the center-left; 2001, victory of the center-right; 2006, victory of the center-left; 2008, victory of the center-right); to the uncertain redefinition of the executive, legislative and judicial powers, but also of the media; to the establishment of new relations between the Presidents of the Council, especially when Silvio Berlusconi held this position, and the Presidents of the Republic; to the rise of the Constitutional Court; then in 2011, after Berlusconi's resignation by President Napolitano the nomination of Professor Monti as President of the Council supported by the main parties and so on.

Political science, history and, more generally, the social sciences have therefore devoted considerable attention to the Italian propensity toward crises, which, however, is not limited to the timeframe of the Republic, as it began almost immediately with the liberal monarchy. Such recurrence of crises is troubling because it creates a kind of ordinariness of the crisis. Paraphrasing Hannah Arendt's terrible banality of evil, it is a banality that, in fact, contradicts the perception and the classic definition of a crisis, which comprises, as recalled above, a surprise factor and numerous unusual elements. In a way, the crisis is an integral part of the Italian political model, and this is not the lesser of its paradoxes. Therefore, the crisis of the 1990s does not surprise for its existence as such, but for the forms that it acquires, which are at the same time a continuation of previous crises but also unprecedented. Because of these two aspects, analysts are torn between considering its invariants and highlighting its irreducible novelties.

Framing it in terms of Italian anomaly poses more problems than it solves, especially as the anomaly's content is rarely specified. On the one hand, if anomaly is intended as a specific path to modernity, a unique historical course, the existence of specific political, economic, social and cultural traits, this almost becomes a truism. All countries have, of course, their own characteristics and sometimes proudly assert them. Adjusting for the different meanings, which depend on whether the term comes from political actors, supporting their own goals, or researchers, we can list the German 'Sonderweg', the 'exception française' (French exception) or the 'American exceptionalism'. On the other hand, framing this phenomenon in terms of anomaly turns Italy into an exotic, strange, mysterious, enigmatic country, and often leads to historical determinism. The country is frozen in an unchanging past and trapped in a form of invariable culture, preventing it from recognizing all the ties that from its unification to this day have linked it to other countries, as well as the reciprocal interactions, and the transfers of culture or political engineering. Finally,

anomaly may also mean that Italy has fallen behind in relation to a non-explicit standard, or in relation to a supreme reference, rarely specified but crystallized in the form of other countries, often idealized. The anomaly is then proclaimed after a comparison that is more often hinted at than veritably carried out through empirical research on other countries, which are presented as perfect models and examples to be followed (Paci and Romanelli, 1994; Isnenghi, 1998). In politics, this is constituted by Great Britain for its liberalism and its sense of community, by the United States for the quality and vitality of their democracy, and finally, since the 1990s, by the French Fifth Republic, which, however, had been almost universally condemned in Italy at instauration (Lanchester and Lippolis, 2009; Pasquino and Ventura, 2010). This way of reasoning has been challenged for his simplistic and normative aspect. Recently, several Anglo–Saxon authors opposed the labeling of Italy as abnormal, which, however, remains widespread in Britain and the United States; it is less the case in France, probably because of the fact that the fractures and repeated political crises that it has experienced over its history make the researchers from that country, who specialize on Italy, more sensitive to what is going on and less confident with the foundations of their own forms of political regimes (Gilbert, 2007; Croci and Lucarelli, 2010; Newell, 2010). In short, one thing is to study Italy's peculiarities; another is to consider that they create an anomaly. This is all the more true as this approach hinders the comparisons that could add nuances to what, at first sight, appears like irreducible differences, and identify the veritable anomalies for a developed and European country. Sergio Fabbrini engaged in this exercise of systemic analysis in 1994, with brio and determination: 'this is a book […] which has the claimed goal to reject the thesis often unofficial and even official of Italian exceptionalism'. At the end, he classifies the Italian First Republic in a sub-category of the consociational democracies, experiencing, since the 1970s, and more acutely in the 1990s, an uncertain transition toward a competitive-style democracy (Fabbrini, 1994, p. 1).

As a matter of fact, there is a consensus among political scientists and historians that the 1990s represent a sharp cleavage in the history of the Italian Republic.

The 1990s: The Challenge of Change

No other political, human and social science focusing on Western Europe was confronted with a similar challenge, which touched upon all the aspects that we have listed of an unprecedented crisis: the deep transformation of the political system and of the parties, new electoral laws (those passed in 1993 and 2005), new voting behaviors, new institutional practices, new political actors, new

attitudes of leaders, new leaderships, a revolution in political communication and so on.

Italian and foreign political sciences focusing on Italy were particularly affected. Indeed, the formidable challenge came from the transition from the study of a democracy considered to be mostly pre-modern, as spelled out by American academic literature, to the examination of a post-modern democracy since the early 1990s (Crouch, 2003).

Four examples illustrate the main issues under scrutiny until the 1990s.

First, the keen study of the dialectics of stability and instability was specific to the First Republic. On the one hand, governments' instability was given by crises within the parliamentarian majority, competition among the majority parties, and among the currents and the internal factions within the parties composing the majority, with consequences in terms of low quality of policy-making. On the other hand, a stable majority was thus realized; it excluded the neo-fascist MSI (despite the case of the Tambroni government in 1960, which benefited from the vote of confidence of the MSI) and the PCI in view of its international links, but this did not prevent occurrences like the National Solidarity governments from 1976 to 1978. There was also stability in the ruling elites, in the individuals (government crises followed one another but it was – almost – always the same people who occupied various ministries) and in the senior management, which could mainly be traced back to fascism (Cassese, 1998; Romanelli, 1995; Melis, 1996; Dormagen, 2008). Stability was the norm for parties and for the entire political system, but this did not prevent large interpretative controversies as, for example, on Giorgio Galli's 'imperfect bipartisanship', on Giovanni Sartori's 'polarized pluralism' and on Paolo Farneti's 'centripetal pluralism' denoting the 1965–1979 period (Galli, 1966; Farneti, 1993; Sartori, 1976a, b). Finally, the stability of voting behavior was remarkable, notwithstanding the increase of the PCI from the 1960s to the end of the next decade and the erosion of the DC. Also remarkable in their stability were the regional political cultures, where votes of collective identity were the norm, showing long-term political continuities (for example, central Italy turned communist after the Second World War, having previously been mostly socialist).

Second, political science has lengthily examined the debate on civic culture, or rather the lack there of in the peninsula. Indeed, this important issue was recently analyzed by Alfio Mastropaolo who appraised the great classics on the subject by Edward Banfield, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, Sidney Tarrow, and Robert Putnam, and showed how Italian intellectuals employed caricatures in their critique of Italy (Banfield, 1958; Almond and Verba, 1963; Tarrow, 1967; Putnam, 1993; Mastropaolo, 2009). The basic idea is that Italy has a parochial culture, in the sense intended by Almond and Verba, and later expressed by Putnam, in terms of a low or unevenly territorially distributed level of 'social capital'. This path has been much explored in order to

demonstrate the extent of the mistrust toward the state and its institutions, the extreme fragmentation of the society, the exacerbated role of the family, the triumphant individualism, the lack of civic sense, the magnitude of the patronage system, the importance of corruption, the lack of a national identity and so on. These assertions have all been subject to criticisms (Sani, 1989; Sciolla, 2004). Although they contain an undeniable element of truth, by dint of being repeated ad nauseam they obscure other realities, and not only minor ones – as, for instance, the development and the consolidation of democracy in Italy. In doing so, the emerging discipline of political science reclaimed themes that were already widespread and that had acquired their nobility through literature – to present two famous examples, let us refer to the writings of Giacomo Leopardi or Carlo Levi – but also through anthropology and history, especially that specializing on the nineteenth century.

The third example derives from another favorite subject of study in political science, namely, the political parties. In fact, although this new discipline tended to emphasize the pre-modernism of the republican democracy, it tackled a theme typically associated with modernity in politics, at least in the democracies of the twentieth century, through the analysis of political organizations, and notably the mass party. The latter is indeed a form of modernization: mass parties organize the politicization of the population, they contribute to the acceptance of the Republic on the ground and to the establishment of democracy, including through the system of mutual controlled aggression between the DC and its allies, and the PCI. They are also used for the creation of political frameworks and stabilization, thanks to the red and white subcultures (a theme brilliantly studied by Italian political scientist, leading to a wealth of excellent research). But these parties, whether mass or cadre, to use the Maurice Duverger's famous distinction, led to the formation of a 'partitocracy'. Such partitocracy has been heavily criticized since the early days of the Republic and even more since the 1970s. The expression refers to the colonization of the institutions by the parties, and their domination of society, economy and culture through the 'lottizzazione' (division into lots), clientelism and corruption. These processes have various explanations, but the main one comes from the DC's long occupation of power and the absence of rotation, let alone alternative. Finally, the mass parties were also seen as part of the continuity of the fascist experience, as Italy shifted from a single mass party, the Partito Nazionale Fascista, to a plurality of democratic parties. This point was raised already in the early years of the Republic by some, including Giuseppe Maranini, and then after having been forgotten more or less voluntarily, it came back to the fore since the 1990s. It was evident in Giuliano Amato's famous statement in 1993, after the April referendum, which, among other things, had resulted in the abolition of the state funding of parties. The then president of the Council announced 'an authentic change of regime, leading

after 70 years to the death of the party-State model, which fascism introduced and the Republic inherited, solely transforming the singular into plural' (Amato, 1993). It was also reflected in the work of historians and political scientists, such as, Silvio Lanaro, Pietro Scoppola, Piero Ignazi and Emilio Gentile (Lanaro, 1992; Scoppola, 1997; Ignazi, 2002; Gentile, 2006). In a way, political science has always vacillated between the temptation to recognize the progress of democracy in the political parties and a strong criticism of the parties themselves, which was nevertheless framed quite traditionally and based on the theses of Moïseï Ostrogorski and Roberto Michels on the confiscation of democracy by political bureaucracies and parties' oligarchies.

Finally, political science has studied the tensions and contradictions that took place in the 1960s and the 1970s. These were generally interpreted as the ultimate illustration of the obstruction of the political system, preventing an alternation even as the PCI was surging, and as the divorce between the civil society on the one hand, and parties and politicians on the other, being one of the explanatory factors behind the violence of the 'anni di piombo'. This was, for example, one of the strong themes of the interdisciplinary book of 1978 by Luigi Graziano and Sidney Tarrow, entitled precisely *La crisi italiana* (Graziano and Tarrow, 1978; Farneti, 1978). The authors note the state of crisis and predict even more important developments. Indeed, the crisis takes place but also belies the prophets' predictions as it is not really triggered by the mobilization of civil society, but by magistrates' investigations.

In other words, we can outrageously affirm that political science was accustomed to study the stability, the continuities, the invariants, the political *status quo*, but, as mentioned above, this did not preclude it from taking into account factors of instability, ongoing developments, the few changes that occurred, and the beginning of a rift between political institutions and society. But in the 1990s, it suddenly faced changes, dynamics and mutations that had to be mastered urgently. This implies a paradigm shift in a context of intense politicization, making the task more difficult. In fact, analyses can be exploited by political actors; also, the amplification of a longstanding feature leads many political scientists to propose normative studies. They are competing to offer what they consider to be the best electoral law, the most suitable reform for the institutions, the shapes to be adopted by the parties, the type of political communication to be carried out, the terms and criteria for choosing leaders. They act in this way in order to stabilize or 'normalize' the political system, with the hope – or delusion – to end the crisis, but also to strengthen the party or the camp they are close to.

As the crisis was not ending, many of the experts explained that it turned into a transition that is exhausting because it remains unfinished. This immediately triggers a theoretical tension: if the crisis could be taken as the absolute proof of the Italian democracy's abnormality, the notion of transition changes the

research perspective. It places Italy in the 'transitology' field, seeking to identify similarities and differences. The comparison cannot be made with the countries of Southern Europe in the 1970s or with those of Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as their starting point was that of dictatorships; the necessary and more historical comparison comes with the transitions from one democracy to another, as for instance in the case of the transition from France's Fourth to Fifth Republic in 1958. This comparison, however, quickly shows its heuristics limits even when approached from a motivating analytical model such as Pietro Grilli Di Cortona's (Allum, 1997; Campus, 2006; Grilli di Cortona, 2007).

Countless excellent studies on the crisis and the transition focus on the political parties, the electoral systems and their effects, electoral results, institutional changes, communication policies, political practices, policies and cultures, the relations between the process of Europeanization and the implemented public policies, the relationships between political and social movements, and, maybe a bit too episodically, the interactions between politics and society. We merely indicate the three general frameworks of interpretation that emerge, without drawing an evaluation (Briquet, 1995; Roux, 2003).

The first one emphasizes the irremediable novelty by noting the alternation, the electoral laws, the changes of political parties, the coalitions, the bipolar system – and even the flawed two-party system that seemed to prevail in 2008, finally giving way to an unbalanced and contested bipolar quadrille, composed by the Popolo della Libertà (People of Freedom, PDL) and the Lega Nord on the one hand, the Democratic Party (PD) and Italy of Values on the other – the changes in the role of the Parliament, of President of the Republic and of the Constitutional Court (Fusaro, 2003; Calise, 2006; Marletti, 2010). The second framework of analysis, which was already mentioned above, does not only note the changes but places them in a longer timeframe. This is mostly the work of political scientists interested in history, and historians who, from the late 1980s, carried out wide syntheses of recent history, borrowing heavily from political science for their analyses of politics (Caciagli *et al*, 1994; Mastropaolo, 1996, 2000; Giovagnoli, 1998; Lupo, 2004; Newell, 2004; Dondi, 2007; Ridolfi, 2008a,b; Orsina, 2010; Salvati, 2010; Colarizi and Gervasoni, 2010). They identify the precursors of the crisis in the 1980s, or in the 1970s, or seek to point out the many missed opportunities for the modernization of Italy, or to emphasize its structural weaknesses (Colarizi *et al*, 2004; Crainz, 2009; Gervasoni, 2010; Santomassimo, 2011).

Similarly to the political scientists, sociologists and anthropologists, many of them then recall the 'familialism' and the partitocracy, but also the 'character' of the Italians, including their individualism. Others go back even further upstream to show the early failure of the Risorgimento, the structural weakness of nation-building, the chronic lack of legitimacy and authority of the State, the

lack of a strong bourgeoisie, the notable presence of the Catholic Church, the extreme societal fragmentation, the low level of education that has affected the population for a long time, the parliamentary traditions of *trasformismo*, the permanent and reciprocal de-legitimization of political competitors, which feeds into suspicion on the nature of the winner's success, the latent civil war that characterizes the Italian political life, the intellectuals' propensity toward extremism and radicalization, the strong populist, anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois attitudes. Others strive to unhinge some founding myths of Italian unity and the Republic (Salvadori, 1994, 2011; Galli della Loggia, 1998; Belardelli *et al*, 1999). From this perspective, since the 1990s Italy and Silvio Berlusconi simply exacerbated to the limit Italy's most classic defects. However, according to a minority of authors this confrontation between past and present shows a certain nostalgia for the First Republic, which is depicted as almost entirely virtuous: wasn't it founded on large parties that had erected powerful political cultures and inclusive collective identities, on a parliamentary democracy respectful of deliberation, on a political class made up of giants – at least in comparison with the current one? Had it not, for all its faults, deeply improved Italy's fate, while recently the peninsula has been stagnant for nearly 10 years?

The third interpretative framework insists more on the permanence and invariants. Thus, the two current major parties, the PDL and the PD, have little in common with the PCI and DC but they fulfill the same functions within the political system. Electoral sociology attests to strong continuities: previously, the South voted for the DC, and it now favors the PDL, whereas the PD is a sort of League of the center, with its stronghold located in the old red areas (Ramella, 2005; Almagisti, 2006; Shin and Agnew, 2008; Baccetti and Messina, 2009; Diamanti, 2009; Caciagli, 2010; De Sio, 2011). Political cultures persist. Again, the theory of the Leopard would hold true: change in appearance, but actually continuities endure, exacerbated to the point of caricature of all Italian flaws.

However, something has indeed changed, and that entails a difficulty in analysis. This is the challenge posed by the current situation, namely, to appreciate the nature and complexity of the changes underway, and to refute the unequivocal and biased judgments.

An Analytical Framework

If we go beyond the study of the political system based on the observation of the electoral, institutional and partisan dimensions in favor of a more comprehensive and holistic approach of democracy, Italy forms a magnetic field where competing and conflicting forces continuously clash, a circumstance that

Norbert Elias would call a configuration (Elias, 1991; Lazar, 2006, 2009a,b). There are four forces to be spelled out here.

The first one draws from what Bernard Manin calls 'audience democracy'. Following a highly questionable ideal versus typical distinction, he argues that we now face a third stage of democracy, after the one characterized by parliaments in the nineteenth century and the one characterized by parties in the twentieth century (Manin, 1997). It can be explained by the weakening of the parties, the breakdown of party affiliations, the disintegration of forms of collective identification and major political cultures, and the increased volatility of the electorate. These elements cause a threefold process of personalization, presidentialization and mediatization of public life. The leader's communication, seduction and mobilization skills become critically important. Clearly, Silvio Berlusconi is a perfect example of this democratic transformation in a country where the party system burst. In addition, he attempted to strengthen the executive, to take decisions faster and to short-circuit the standard deliberative procedures in order to meet the public's expectations. By stigmatizing his enemies – judges, 'communists', intellectuals – he deliberately created a wide cleavage in the public debate, and he polarized the entire public realm between his supporters and his opponents. He used entirely new language and marketing methods that had not been employed until then. He imposed his mark on public life without changing the institutions of the Republic, creating a permanent tension between himself and the most eminent representatives of the Republic, as shown by the President's continuous calls for respect for the institutions. In the words of Mauro Calise, Berlusconi forged his own personal party (Calise, 2000). Forza Italia and the PDL depend on him, and those who express dissent are forced to leave – as in the case of Gianfranco Fini in 2010. Even here tensions emerge between his desire to have a docile instrument dedicated to himself, which can be mobilized at will and especially during electoral campaigns, and therefore institutionally weak in order to prevent it from gaining its own autonomy, and the risk that the party disintegrates rapidly after the end of his political career; in the meanwhile, the party's presence on the territory and its initial attempts at creating a structure lead it toward a consolidation of its organization. So far, only Berlusconi could maintain unity within his party and lead the coalition with the Lega Nord – at least until 2011, when this arrangement began to falter. He makes full use of his private television channels, controls the public ones and stands at the heart of a conflict of interests that, undoubtedly, forms an anomaly in terms of democratic theory and practices.

In addition, Berlusconi, his party and his Lega Nord ally occupy a vast space that spans from the center of the political spectrum to the edge of the far right. In recent years, a radicalization to the right has occurred. As the center-left failed to counteract, Berlusconi created a sort of hegemony of values and

references, which he combined notwithstanding the contradictions among them: economic liberalism and protectionism, Europe and the affirmation of national pride, tradition, including references to the importance of the family and the Catholic religion, and modernity, including libertinage and exploitation of women's bodies. In this way, he brought together heterogeneous categories of voters, such as small traders, artisans, entrepreneurs, highly skilled professionals, frightened Southerners, poorly educated voters, practicing Catholics, middle aged and elder housewives. The ongoing disintegration of this social bloc, however, attests to its fragility. If berlusconism constitutes a real system of domination, it is not as perfect and well functioning as most of his opponents claim it is (Ginsborg, 2003; Tranfaglia, 2010; Gibelli, 2011; Ginsborg and Asquer, 2011). It shows an inherent weakness, as it is closely dependent on the personality of its promoter, who proved to be disappointing and failed to keep its countless promises, especially with regard to the country's economy. The result has been his resignation in November 2011. It also clashes with the undeniable limits of a reduced space for political maneuvering, which derives from the fairly widespread de-legitimization of politics and the might of financial capitalism. Anyhow, the inability to halt the weakening of politics leads, almost mechanically, to the growth of other powers – such as media, the judicial, religious authorities, capitalist groups, financial institutions, lobbies, rating agencies and others.

Finally, a privatization of politics is taking place, with a dual meaning. First, since he entered politics, Berlusconi himself is constantly on stage (while denouncing the disclosures and the criticisms on his private life). Second, he claims that his mandate derives not only from his institutional role, but also from his charisma. Having received the anointing of universal suffrage, his private person commands authority too. He frequently uses the populist lure as a resource, which can be seen in terms of a 'syndrome', a 'style' (Peter Wiles) or a response to the difficulties of representation (Wiles, 1969). In fact, this is where the rise of the leader converges with the second element of the ongoing transformations of democracy.

Berlusconi has played and continues to ride this disaffection with politics. In Italy, it is called anti-politics; this expression, however, carries numerous ambiguities, as it fails to specify whether the hostility is directed toward politics as they are currently organized, or all politics. Indeed, the crisis of representation is particularly strong in Italy, as shown by decreasing voter turnout, declining membership in political parties and polls that show the negative perception of parties. The gap between representatives and represented, and the lack of legitimacy of the institutions are particularly widespread in Italy. The public seeks refuge in apathy, shows indifference to public life, or expresses its distrust, rejection or hatred of the political class. Criticism and dissent can be generalist in terms of all is 'rotten and corrupt' which can explain the success of

the comic Beppe Grillo. But they can also feed into a different type of attitude, to which we will return later. One of the reasons of Mario Monti's popularity, despite his hard austerity policy, is coming from the fact he is a professor and not a politician.

However, a third trend is emerging in response, to some extent, to the rise of the democracy of the leader and the public, and to the wave of anti-politics. Coming from the institutions, it attempts to update the liberal and representative democracy, and is illustrated by the growing importance of the Presidency of the Republic. Since the early 1990s and the terms in office of Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, Caro Azeglio Ciampi and Giorgio Napolitano, presidents have exercised their powers actively, and in all areas. Faced with the ambitions of the President of the Council Silvio Berlusconi, who sought to act quickly, if not in haste, to satisfy his personal interests, and who made announcements and took steps to illustrate his slogan *dell'uomo del fare* (the doing man), the Presidents have called for calm, for respect for the constitutional procedures and for the rule of law. They intervened when government crises occurred, and weighed on the development of some laws. In short, the Presidents of the Republic almost set up a sort of checks and balances system. Their popularity and their prestige are significant because they embody the figure of mediation and national unity. In November 2011, the President of Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, succeeded to nominate Mario Monti as President of the Council. This nomination, for one part, is a perfect illustration of the weakness of the major political parties unable to find themselves a solution (even if Mario Monti depends on their support at the Parliament), and, on the other part, a proof of the power of the President of the Republic. In addition, the power of the Constitutional Court became increasingly well established.

Finally, the parties have also tried to adapt, especially those of the center-left, and singularly the PD, by holding primary elections, which have almost become the rule at all levels of political life. In fact, the primaries build a bridge with the civil society, expand the base of the party or coalition, engender new dynamics of mobilization and finally transform the function of the parties that are stripped of their traditional role of selecting the political personnel.

But the primaries are also a response to the fourth ongoing trend, namely, the uncertain gestation of participatory democracy, which, in contrast to direct democracy, does not aspire to replace the liberal representative democracy, but to complement it. This demand for a more interactive form of democracy is born out of the confrontation with Berlusconi, as well as traditional forms of political organization and representation. Far from being expressed through negative attitudes or individualistic retreats, it is manifested by the emergence of forms association and civic mobilization that have existed for years in the peninsula. They were favored by the emergence of the Internet, blogs and other social networks, although television was largely inaccessible; they also took the

form of street protests, which sometimes turned violent. Indeed, the invention of a new form of politics cannot be confined to a virtual form; at some point, it must become part of the public space, and to do so it uses traditional forms of mobilization such as events and meetings, having failed to solve the question of representation. This part of the population has a complex relationship with politics. Some of the actors are utterly opposed to any sort of recovery – attempted, on the other hand, by Nichi Vendola's Sinistra Ecologia Libertà and parts of the PD – as they criticize out of principle political representation, the parties and, particularly, the timidity of the PD. Others, such as Movimenti 5 Stelle, participate in the elections, recording locally and regionally significant results. And others participate to the primaries of PD, perturbing sometimes the election with the success of some outsiders against the official candidates of the leadership of the PD as it has been the case, for instance, with Matteo Renzi in 2009 in Florence, Nichi Vendola in the Apullia in 2010, Giuliano Pasapia at Milan in 2010 or Mario Doria at Genoa in 2012. Far from being apathetic, these Italians express a longing for participation, the desire to control elected officials, a willingness to be regularly involved in decision making, while, at the same time, their protests may also respond to logics rooted in the defense of some interests and particularism. Certainly they are a minority, and at times they harbor an elitarian spirit, which they voice in the name of participatory democracy, criticizing those who are not actively involved, limit their participation to the vote or, worse, are not interested in politics. They are clearly defined sociologically: as could be observed during the demonstrations of 15 February 2011, they are mostly youth and women, often highly educated, working in the public sector and highly politicized.

Thus, these four main elements, rivaling and opposing one another, form the moving configuration of Italian democracy, of which the outcome is uncertain (Salvati, 2012). Although, for example, the trend toward a democracy of the leader and the public surfaced and was dominant for nearly two decades, it now shows signs of exhaustion, suffering from the Silvio Berlusconi's decline. Oppositely, the desire for participation and initiatives initiated by the President of the Republic seems to be, in the year 2012, on the rise. Mario Monti could embody another kind of leader, far away from the gossip, but competent and serious.

This Italian configuration has specific and pronounced traits that it is essential to remember: a particular kind of capitalism, a unique gap between North and South, the presence of organized crime in some regions, meaning that the state does not control all of the territory, a weak liberal culture, the presence of the Catholic Church, Silvio Berlusconi's conflict of interest, not to mention its particular historical features. The fact remains that what Italy has known since the mid-1990s does not set it apart from other European countries but, paradoxically, draws it closer to them. All the more, Italy works as a

European seismograph of the democratic overall mutations, and no one can confidently say what the outcome will be. This is all the more true as democracies are no longer solely defined within a national framework, although they have not yet succeeded in defining the contours of another entity at the European level, and they are forced to reprocess the relationship between the political realm and the citizens, in short to reconstruct a common existence challenged by rising inequalities – social, generational, of gender, cultural, ethnic, territorial and so on. In many countries of the European Union in fact, and primarily in France, the democratic malaise has several facets: the rise of a leader; his aspiration to control the media, to keep a check on the judicial power and to attack the autonomous regulative authorities; the disaffection with politics; the rise of populisms; the rejection of the ruling elites; the attempts to revive the liberal representative democracy; but also the desire to participate and to control officials, the concern for transparency, the will to rebuild a public ethic, the expectation of a new figure of leader more 'normal', the search for other forms of democracy (Held, 1993; Sartori, 1993; Dahl, 1998; Pharr and Putnam, 2000; Gauchet, 2002; Norris, 2002; Diamond and Morlino, 2005; Rosanvallon, 2006; Bouvier, 2004; Diamanti, 2007; Hermet, 2007; Blondiaux, 2008; Morlino, 2008, 2010; Fabbrini, 2010; Mény, 2010; Schmidt, 2010; Mauro and Zagrebelsky, 2011). The knowledge and the monitoring of the Italian case do not only concern the peninsula, but also contribute to the understanding of all European democratic turbulence. This, in turn, provides an additional argument to contradict the thesis of the Italian anomaly. Starting with the foundation of the Republic of Italy, the country has taken a particular path to invent a democracy, which was paved with tensions and contradictions, but was also far from being archaic or politically backward. Probably, as it had not yet completed its institutions and practices and was not yet fully entrenched, and despite its considerable progress, it was one of the first to be shaken before shocks were recorded elsewhere. Instead of lamenting or, conversely, rejoicing in its state of crisis, or even focusing on finding a hypothetical normalization for Italy, it is more challenging and appropriate to restore the current tensions and uncertainties of democracy in order to redefine and revitalize it in Italy and in Europe.

About the Author

Marc Lazar is a Professor of Political History and Sociology at Sciences Po (Paris), where he is a President of the Advisory Board, and a permanent Visiting Professor at Luiss University-Guido Carli (Rome) where he is a President of the School of Government. His main researches are on Italian Politics and European Left Political Parties (Socialist, Social democratic, Communist and

Far Left). Recently, he published with Marie-Anne Matard Bonucci, *L'Italie des années de plomb. Le terrorisme entre histoire et mémpire*, Paris, 2010.

References

Allum, F. (1997) Da una Repubblica all'altra: transizioni democratiche in Francia e in Italia. *Teoria politica* 13(2): 45–80.

Almagisti, M. (2006) *Qualità della democrazia. Capitale sociale, partiti e culture politiche in Italia*. Rome, Italy: Carocci.

Almond, G. and Verba, S. (1963) *The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Amato, G. (1993) Address to the Camera dei Deputati. In: G. Quagliariello (ed.) *La sconfitta del 'Moderno Principe'. La partitocrazia in Italia dalle origini al crollo della Prima Repubblica*. Roma, Italy: Biblioteca dell'Immagine, 21 April.

Baccetti, C. and Messina, P. (2009) *L'eredità. Le subculture politiche della Toscana e del Veneto*. Novara, Italy: Liviana.

Banfield, E. (1958) *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society?* Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Belardelli, G., Cafagna, L., Galli della Loggia, E. and Sabatucci, G. (1999) *Miti e storia dell'Italia unita*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.

Blondiaux, L. (2008) *Le nouvel esprit de la démocratie. Actualité de la démocratie participative*. Paris, France: La République des idées-Seuil.

Bouvier, A. (2004) Démocratie délibérative, démocratie débattante, démocratie participative. *Revue européenne des sciences sociales* 136: 6–230.

Briquet, J.-L. (1995) La crise politique en Italie. Les analyses de la science politique. *Politix* 30(8): 127–138.

Calise, M. (2006) *La Terza Repubblica. Partiti contro Presidenti*. Roma, Bari, Italy: Laterza.

Campus, D. (2006) *L'antipolitica al governo. De Gaulle, Reagan e Berlusconi*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.

Caciagli, M. (2010) *Fra Arlechino e Pulcinella. La cultura politica degli italiani nell'Età di Berlusconi*. Trapani, Italy: Di Girolamo Editore.

Caciagli, M., Cazzola, F., Morlino, M. and Passigli, S. (eds.) (1994) *L'Italia fra crisi e transizione*. Roma, Bari, Italy: Laterza.

Calise, M. (2000) *Il partito personale*. Roma, Bari, Italy: Laterza.

Cassese, S. (1998) *Lo Stato introvabile. Modernità e arratrezza delle istituzioni italiane*. Roma, Italy: Donzelli.

Colarizi, S., Craveri, P., Pons, S. and Quagliariello, G. (eds.) (2004) *Gli anni Ottanta come storia*. Soveria Mannelli, Italy: Rubbettino.

Colarizi, S. and Gervasoni, M. (2010) *La tela di penelope. Storia della Seconda Repubblica*. Roma, Bari, Italy: Laterza.

Crainz, G. (2009) *Autobiografia di una Repubblica. Le radici dell'Italia attuale*. Roma, Italy: Donzelli.

Croci, O. and Lucarelli, S. (eds.) (2010) Italy in the eyes of others. *Modern Italy* 15(3): 251–257.

Crouch, C. (2003) *Postdemocrazia*. Roma, Bari, Italy: Laterza.

Dahl, R. (1998) *On Democracy*. New-Haven, CT, London: Yale University Press.

De Sio, L. (ed.) (2011) *La politica cambia, I valori restano? Una ricerca sulla cultura politica dei cittadini toscani*. Florence, Italy: Firenze University Press.

Diamond, L. and Morlino, L. (eds.) (2005) *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press.

Diamanti, I. (2007) La democrazia degli interstizi. Società e partiti in Europa dopo la caduta del Muro. *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia* 3: 387–411.
Diamanti, I. (2009) *Mappe dall'Italia politica. Bianco, rosso, verde, azzurro...e tricolore*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Dobry, M. (2009) *Sociologie des crises politiques: la dynamique des mobilisations multisectorielles*. Paris, France: Presses de Sciences Po.
Dondi, M. (2007) *L'Italia repubblicana: dalle originialla crisi degli annisettanta*. Bologna, Italy: Archetipo libri.
Dormagen, J.-Y. (2008) *Logiques du fascisme*. Paris, France: Fayard.
Elias, N. (1991) *Qu'est-ce que la sociologie?* La Tour d'Aigues, France: Editions de l'Aube.
Fabbrini, S. (1994) *Quale democrazia. L'Italia e gli altri*. Roma, Bari, Italy: Laterza.
Fabbrini, S. (2010) *Addomesticare il Principe. Perché i leaders contano e come controllarli*. Venice, Italy: Marsilio.
Farneti, P. (1978) *La democrazia in Italia tra crisi e innovazione*. Torino, Italy: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli.
Farneti, P. (1993) *Il sistema dei partiti in Italia (1946-1979)*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Ferrero, G. (1989) *Les deux révolutions françaises*. Paris, France: Le livre de poche.
Fusaro, C. (2003) *Il presidente della Repubblica*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Galli, G. (1966) *Il bipartitismo imperfetto. Comunisti e democristiani in Italia*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Galli della Loggia, E. (1998) *L'identità italiana*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Gauchet, M. (2002) *La démocratie contre elle-même*. Paris, France: Gallimard.
Gentile, E. (2006) *La Grande Italia: il mite della nazione nel XX secolo*. Roma, Bari, Italy: Laterza.
Gervasoni, M. (2010) *Storia d'Italia degli anni ottanta. Quando eravamo moderni*. Venezia, Italy: Marsilio.
Gibelli, A. (2011) *Berlusconi passato alla storia. L'Italia nell'era della democrazia autoritaria*. Roma, Italy: Donzelli.
Gilbert, M. (2007) Il governo e la politica dell'Italia repubblicana. In: S. Woolf (ed.) *L'Italia repubblicana vista da fuori (1945-2000)*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino, pp. 85–127.
Ginsborg, P. (2003) *Berlusconi. Ambizioni patrimonali in una democrazia mediatica*. Torino, Italy: Einaudi.
Ginsborg, P. and Asquer, E. (eds.) (2011) *Berlusconismo. Analisi di un sistema di potere*. Roma, Bari, Italy: Laterza.
Giovagnoli, A. (ed.) (1998) *Interpretazioni della Repubblica*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Graziano, L. and Tarrow, S. (eds.) (1978) *La crisi italiana*. Torino, Italy: Einaudi.
Grilli di Cortona, P. (2007) *Il cambiamento politico in Italia*. Roma, Italy: Carocci.
Held, D. (ed.) (1993) *Porspects for Democracy, North, South, East, West*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Hermet, G. (2007) *L'hiver de la démocratie ou le nouveau régime*. Paris, France: Armand Colin.
Ignazi, P. (2002) *Il potere dei partiti. La politica in Italia dagli anni Sessanta a oggi*. Roma, Bari, Italy: Laterza.
Isnenghi, M. (1998) *Breve storia dell'Italia unita ad uso dei perplessi*. Milano, Italy: Rizzoli.
Lagroye, J., François, B. and Sawicki, F. (eds.) (2006) *Sociologie politique*. Paris, France: Presses de Sciences Po-Dalloz.
Lanaro, S. (1992) *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana*. Venezia, Italy: Marsilio.
Lanchester, F. and Lippolis, V. (eds.) (2009) *La V Repubblica francese nel dibattito e nella prassi in Italia*. Napoli, Italy: Jovene editore.
Lazar, M. (2006) *L'Italie à la dérive. Le moment Berlusconi*. Paris, France: Perrin.
Lazar, M. (2009a) *L'Italie sur le fil du rasoir*. Paris, France: Perrin.

Lazar, M. (2009b) Challenge to established democracies: The Italian example. In: E. Kienle (ed.) *Democracy Building and Democracy Erosion: Political Change North and South of the Mediterranean*. London: Saqi Publishers, pp 214–229.
Lupo, S. (2004) *Partito e antipartito. Una storia politica della Prima Repubblica*. Roma, Italy: Donzelli.
Mammone, A. and Veltri, P. (eds.) (2010) *Italy Today: The Sick Man of Europe*. London: Routledge.
Manin, B. (1997) *The Principles of Representative Government*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Marletti, C. (2010) *La Repubblica dei media. L'italia dal poltichese alla politica iperreale*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Mastropaolo, A. (1996) *La Repubblica dei destini incrociati*. Florence, Italy: La Nuova Italia.
Mastropaolo, A. (2000) *Antipolitica. Alle origini della crisi italiana*. Naples, Italy: L'Ancora del Mediterraneo.
Mastropaolo, A. (2009) From the other shore: American political science and the 'Italian case'. *Modern Italy* 14(3): 311–337.
Mauro, E. and Zagrebelsky, G. (2011) *La felicità della democrazia. Un dialogo*. Roma, Bari, Italy: Laterza.
Melis, G. (1996) *Storia dell'amministrazione italiana (1861–1993)*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Mény, Y. (2010) Il malessere democratico. Paradossi ed equivoci dalle democrazie nazionali all'Unione Europea. In: C. Baccetti, S. Bolgherini, R. D'Amico and G. Riccamboni (eds.) *La politica e le radici*. Novara, Italy: Liviana, pp. 328–344.
Morlino, L. (2008) *Democrazie tra consolidamento e crisi. Partiti, gruppi e cittadini nel Sud Europa*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Morlino, L. (2010) *Changes for Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Newell, J.-L. (2004) Interpretative approaches and the study of Italian politics. *Modern Italy* 9(2): 247–261.
Newell, J.-L. (2010) *The Politics of Italy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Norris, P. (2002) *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Orsina, G. (2010) The Republic after Berlusconi: Some reflections on historiography, politics and the political use of history in post-1994 Italy. *Modern Italy* 1: 77–92.
Paci, M. and Romanelli, R. (eds.) (1994) Recenti volumi di storia dell'Italia contemporanea. *Storia e Mercato* 40: 105–125.
Pasquino, G. and Ventura, S. (eds.) (2010) *Una splendida cinquantenne: la Quinta Repubblica*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Pharr, S.J. and Putnam, R.D. (eds.) (2000) *Disaffected Democracies. What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Putnam, R. (1993) *Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Ramella, F. (2005) *Cuore rosso? Viaggio politico nell'Italia di mezzo*. Rome, Italy: Donzelli.
Ridolfi, M. (2008a) *Storia dei partiti politici. L'Italia dal Risorgimento alla Repubblica*. Milano, Italy: Bruno Mondadori.
Ridolfi, M. (2008b) *Storia politica dell'Italia repubblicana*. Milano, Italy: Bruno Mondadori.
Romanelli, R. (ed.) (1995) *Storia dello Stato italiano dall'Unità a oggi*. Roma, Italy: Donzelli.
Rosanvallon, P. (2006) *La contre-démocratie: la politique à l'âge de la defiance*. Paris, France: Seuil.
Roux, C. (2003) Franchir les Alpes. Regards vers la science politique dans les années de la transition. *Pôle Sud* 19: 3–26.

Salvadori, M.L. (1994) *L'Italia e i suoi tre stati. Il cammino di una nazione*. Bari, Roma, Italy: Laterza.
Salvadori, M.L. (2011) *Storia d'italia e crisi di regime*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Sani, G. (1989) La cultura politica. In: L. Morlino (ed.) *Scienza politica*. Torino, Italy: Fondazione G. Agnelli, pp. 96–97.
Salvati, M. (2010) Democrazie e partiti nell'Italia repubblicana. *Ricerche di storia politica* 2(XIII): 197–205.
Salvati, M. (2012) Two Nations? Civil Society, Governance and Politics in Berlusconi's Italy. Working paper pdf. Incontri riformist: 2011 del Marino.
Santomassimo, G. (2011) L'eredità degli anni Ottanta. L'inizio della mutazione. In: P. Ginsborg and E. Asquer (eds.) *Berlusconismo. Analisi di un sistema di potere*. Roma, Bari, Italy: Laterza, pp. 3–14.
Sartori, G. (1976a) European political parties. The case of polarized pluralism. In: J. La Palombara and M. Weiner (eds.) *Political Parties and Political Development*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Sartori, G. (1976b) *Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis*. Vol. 1. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Sartori, G. (1993) *Democrazia: Cosa è*. Milano, Italy: Rizzoli.
Schmidt, V. (2010) *La démocratie en Europe. L'Union européenne et les politiques nationales*. Paris, France: La découverte.
Sciolla, L. (2004) *La sfida dei valori. Rispetto alle regole e rispetto dei diritti in Italia*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Scoppola, P. (1997) *La Repubblica dei partiti. Evoluzione e crisi di un sistema politico 1945–1996*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.
Shin, M.E. and Agnew, J.A. (2008) *Berlusconi's Italy. Mapping Contemporary Italian Politics*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
Tarrow, S. (1967) *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Tarrow, S. (1977) The Italian party system: Between crisis and transition. *American Journal of political Science* 21(2): 193–214.
Tranfaglia, N. (2010) *Populismo autoritario. Autobiografia di una nazione*. Milano, Italy: Dalai Editore.
Wiles, P. (1969) A syndrome, not a doctrine: Some elementary theses on Populism. In: G. Ionescu and E. Gellner (eds.) *Populism*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.