

Book Reviews

Patrizia Pederzoli, *La Corte costituzionale*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008, pb €24.00, pp. 284, ISBN 978-88-15-12691-7.

As a constitutional lawyer I consider the Il Mulino series, “Le istituzioni politiche in Italia” (Italian political institutions), edited by Maurizio Cotta and Carlo Guarnieri, to be one of the most important contributions to the knowledge of Italy’s constitutional arrangements available. It is, I believe, political science at its best. Appearing after *Il Parlamento* (De Micheli and Verzichelli, 2004) and *Il Presidente della Repubblica* (Tebaldi, 2005), the third volume in the series, Patrizia Pederzoli’s *La corte costituzionale*, is just as interesting and possibly even more relevant because it is the first and the most detailed contribution on the subject ever published in Italy. A true must both for students of political science and for students of constitutional law. And again, like the two earlier books, this one shows its author’s remarkable knowledge of the most relevant *legal* literature on the Constitutional Court (which cannot be said of many other essays which deal with political institutions from a political science perspective).

Pederzoli’s work is divided into five chapters. The first describes the origins of the court, which was certainly one of the most outstanding novelties of the 1948 Constitution (nowadays one of the oldest among Europe’s written constitutions: only those of Austria, Ireland and Iceland are older). The second is devoted to the delay in implementing the constitutional provisions establishing the Court (whose first judgement would be handed down only in 1956 – setting up of the Court having been delayed, for eight long years, by the Cold War). The third and particularly stimulating chapter examines how law and convention interact in the way members of the Court are chosen, and what the outcome has been in practice. It draws a careful sketch of all 94 of the justices who staffed the Court in its first fifty years, from 1956 to 2007 (the number had grown to 97 by June 2010, but the most recent appointments have not diminished the validity of Pederzoli’s picture). It describes the internal rules of conduct and management of the court (including the convention according to which the oldest member is always elected chair). Chapter four considers a relatively recent but widespread development affecting many if not most

constitutional courts around the world: the tendency of each court to engage in a sort of 'dialogue' with other courts, both within and without its own jurisdiction. Finally, in chapter five, the author tests her primary approach by seeking to determine the extent to which the Italian Constitutional Court fits the model of a non-majoritarian (if not anti-majoritarian) body acting as a constitutional safeguard designed to protect minorities by moderating and mitigating the actions of elected governments insufficiently mindful of the constraints of the Constitution. Here Pederzoli provides an interesting table, listing all the decisions from 1956 to 2007, which shows all those which pronounced a law unconstitutional, as well as those which can be regarded as equivalent to a defeat for the Government. In particular she tries to find out if there is evidence of any significant difference between what used to occur when Italy's political system was strictly based upon proportional representation and what has happened since the political system became increasingly majoritarian at the start of the 1990s.

This collection of data is truly precious. Setting aside the first 15 to 20 years (when the Court had to deal with the backlog of pre-republican laws), contrary to what one might have imagined, the percentage of rulings that a law is unconstitutional has for the most part been rather limited having been above 15 percent only in 1981, 1986, 1991, 1993 and 1995, otherwise ranging from this proportion to around 10 percent or less. In particular, in the majoritarian decade from 1998 to 2007, evenly split between left and right (with four years featuring cabinets led by the left, four years featuring cabinets led by the right and two years in which cabinets were led by left and right for one semester each), the average proportion of decisions resulting in parliamentary legislation being found unconstitutional has been around 9 percent, the lowest being 8 percent (in 2003) and the highest 10.97 percent in 1997. This could mean that, leaving aside particularly controversial issues (whose impact on public opinion was particularly great), in spite of the majoritarian transformation of Italian political institutions, a more stable political leadership has been able to obtain the green light from the Court in most instances. As Dahl had envisaged as far back as 1957 (in his "Decision-making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy-Maker", in the *Journal of Public Law*, 6, 279-295) sooner or later supreme courts' decisions tend to reflect electoral outcomes. All this is even more strikingly evident if one takes into account further and more finely tuned evidence also offered by Pederzoli in an additional table which lists the disputes between the Government and the Regions (which were particularly numerous after the 2001 reform of Title V of the Italian Constitution). As the author puts it, the Italian case shows that it is the weakness of the political system that makes the Court strong, not the opposite: the independent variable is indeed the political system.

To return to the composition of the Court, Pederzoli shows that the two thirds of its members selected by Parliament and by the President has traditionally reflected the balance of representation existing within Parliament: it was like that until 1993 and it has remained like that since then. And there have been instances when the selection of a member has taken months and months until a sufficiently large majority has assembled around a single name: everything suggests that Italian party leaders consider 'their' justices a precious resource worth fighting for, while being aware of a need to preserve the right balance so that the party entitled to a member does choose its preferred candidate, but without there being a process of confrontation.

It is also interesting to note that while until the early 1990s nearly all justices elected to the Court had previously been politicians (although with considerable legal expertise as the law requires), since 1991 all have been lawyers (mostly university professors and a few barristers). On the other side no less than 18 out of 94 (one out of five) have previously been former members of the Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura (High Council of the Judiciary): the sign if not the proof of the existence of a 'career' for high-profile lawyers, willing to support the long-term strategy of the party to which they feel closest.

A final remark which could prompt more research: Pederzoli shows that over fifty percent of the justices come from three Regions only: Campania (with 28 percent), Sicily (with 13 percent), and Lazio (with 11 percent). Less than 14 percent have come from all the northern regions together. Maybe the claim of those who suggest that the Court should better represent the nation as a whole is not so ill-founded after all!

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Luigi Curini and Paolo Martelli, *I partiti nella Prima Repubblica. Maggioranze e governi dalla Costituente a Tangentopoli*, Rome: Carocci, 2009, pb €19.50, pp. 232, ISBN 978-88-43-05116-8.

This is an exceptionally interesting work. The authors identify the volume as belonging to an approach developed since the 1980s known as 'analytical narrative' which combines the narrative detail typical of historians with the analytical methods and models of the social sciences. It is, thus, very strongly grounded in empirical, data-based research, with a clearly explained, sophisticated theoretical and methodological infrastructure. Specifically, analysis is rooted in a model of political space understood in terms of ideological proximity/distance between political parties, and the assumption of rational instrumental behaviour by policy-

seeking party strategists. The data base is derived from parliamentary discourses during government investiture debates which, of course, notoriously took place slightly more than once a year in the period covered. These debates are clearly more relevant to the central issue of government formation than the more occasional electoral programmes the spatial analysis of which was pioneered by Ian Budge and his colleagues.

The specific aim of the work is to identify a coalition theory able concisely to explain a range of behaviours and to do this by adopting a multi-dimensional, rather than uni-dimensional understanding of political space. The data, based on the coding of investiture speeches by leading parliamentary representatives of the parties, enables predictive deductions to be made re: the stability of the fifty governments that were formed in the period under consideration; the relevance (or otherwise) of individual parties to government formation in specific periods; and, thus, the shifts in alliance patterns that marked the development (and perhaps one might even suggest, 'evolution') of the party system (which was stable, but not static) during the First Republic.

The presumption of multidimensional space brings with it the probability of cycling, that is the likelihood that no coalition formula will be stable since there will always be viable alternatives. Basing themselves on the work of Michael Laver and Norman Schofield, and in particular their notions of the "cycle set" and the possible existence of a "core" party, Curini and Martelli claim to have established that in fact it is sufficient to consider only the two most salient dimensions (of the eight they identified) in any one period, since the explanatory power of their model is, even on this basis, very considerable. Political space is thus considered to be bi-dimensional, with the economic left-right scale always featuring as one of the major axes whilst the second major axis varies: foreign policy, between 1948 and 1963; progress versus tradition in 1946 and again for the period from 1968 to 1994 - excepting during the ninth parliament (1983-87) when the second axis was constituted by the issue of democracy. Party positions within these sequential bi-dimensional political spaces are then established according to standard coding practices, and those positions normalised to allow diachronic comparison across legislatures.

Having established their model in the first chapter, the remaining five chapters (there is also a brief conclusion) examine successive phases of Italian political history, that is, how and why the successive coalition formulae took place, as well as specific processes of government formation within those phases, since not every government formed in any distinct phase comprised all the parties defining that formula. These chapters thus consider in sequence the shift from the Committee-for-National-Liberation (CLN) governments to the centrist ones; from the centrist formula to the centre-left; the governments of national solidarity; those of the *pentapartito*; and finally the disintegration of the party system in the early 1990s. The

wealth of findings in these chapters is considerable and makes the volume required reading for anyone wishing to narrate or discuss party politics during the First Republic.

A major finding and major contribution to our understanding of the First Republic and of the value of research such as this, is that the Christian Democrat Party (DC) is identified as a core party only in certain periods, whereas prior analysis, based on less temporally precise electoral programme data, had seen the DC as a core party throughout the First Republic. This discovery opens a way for tying understanding of changing coalition patterns – from the CLN via the ‘exclusion crisis’ to centrism, to the centre-left and so on – to changing issue saliency (i.e. change in the identity of the second dimension) and/or changing party spatial configurations in which the dominant issues remain the same. For example, in the period 1944 to 1947, the cycle set was defined by the DC, the Communists (PCI) and the Liberals (PLI). There was no core party. However, the PCI’s acceptance of the Lateran Pact in the Constitution in early 1947 made it possible for the DC to assert itself as a core party, which it did in May 1947. The DC retained this status only until the 1953 election, however, when a new cycle set was established based on itself, the Socialists and the Monarchists. And so on. A further consequence of this temporally more finely detailed analysis is that space is opened up for strategic innovation via the transformation of the terms of debate by party strategists which William Riker defined as “heresthetics”. This is important for enabling a significant assertion of agency in a field open to the risk of determinism by over-reified political parties and their programmes (and identities). Thus the DC used the 1960 Tambroni riots to establish the non-coalitionability of the Italian Social Movement notwithstanding its policy proximity, re-establishing the DC’s identity as a core party, hence able to determine coalition formulae and to dominate policy-making. The introduction of heresthetics into the analysis is thus also a major qualification of, and addition to, an analysis based primarily on party-programmatic positions.

There are many other fascinating arguments within the book. In discussing the DC’s opting for the centre-left coalition formula in 1963, for example, it is suggested that the dominant Dorotei faction leaders perhaps recognised the opportunity thereby to strengthen their clientelistic penetration of the electorate whereas working with the PLI, on the right, made this more difficult. Inevitably some arguments will convince more than others. It is interesting to note with regard to this argument about the opening to the left that writing elsewhere Salvatore Vassallo developed a typology of party government in Italy suggesting that, from 1968, a ‘spoils-sharing’ type dominated, in which ‘programmatic’ content was low. Of course this argument is hugely significant since, arguably, a key aspect of this development was the extent to which Italy came to be governed

outside of Parliament, rather than via it, in a process which was integral to the formation of the partyocracy and which radically undermined the notion of 'parliamentary centrality'. Remarkably, the possibility of governing Italy via the world of local and quasi-government, rather than Parliament, had already been explicitly theorised by Amintore Fanfani at the DC party congress in 1954. One can also wonder at what is not discussed in this slim but densely packed volume – for example the role of De Lorenzo and the Solo Plan in shaping the path of the centre left. But the book could hardly do everything and the event remains fairly obscure, for all its significance.

In conclusion, it remains only to affirm what has already been stated. This is an immensely rich volume, both for its pioneering of an important and innovative research method and for the concrete findings made.

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Gianfranco Pasquino and Fulvio Venturino (eds), *Le primarie comunali in Italia*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009, pb €9.00, pp. 284, ISBN 978-88-15-13091-4.

Sometimes Italy appears to be a strange country. On the one hand, it seems unable to conclude, through reform of the 1948 constitution, the long transition that began in 1992. More or less 20 years after the fall of the so-called First Republic, there is still a high degree of political conflict, and the political debate is often centred on Berlusconi and his personality. On the other hand, Italy seems an interesting political laboratory. The centre-left parties' use of primaries at national and sub-national levels is one reason for this. It is certainly true that primaries are widespread outside the US, where they originated: in Europe, they have been used, for example, in France, Spain and the UK. But nowhere outside the US have they been used as widely as in Italy.

In fact, Italian primaries have some peculiarities and not everything that has gone under the name of 'primaria' has actually been a primary. First of all, Italian primaries are asymmetric, because they have been used only by the centre-left and not by the parties of the centre right. Second, they have been coalition primaries and not party primaries. Finally, they are open primaries, because all citizens can vote, even those who are not members of the parties involved in the contest. In the conclusion to the book, Gianfranco Pasquino recalls another Italian peculiarity, namely the fact that parties referred to the process of direct election of the secretary of the Democratic Party as a 'primary'. In any case, the rapidly accumulating experience of primaries in Italy makes this case particularly worth studying and the book worth reading.

It consists of ten chapters and a conclusion. In the first chapter, Fulvio Venturino presents the most important data concerning the 81 primaries organised by the centre-left Unione coalition between 2004 and 2007. He describes the main characteristics of the primaries; the electoral participation; the degree of competitiveness between the contestants, and the election results achieved by those selected as candidates thanks to them. The data and analysis lead to three normative conclusions: “good” primaries will be possible only if the rules concerning the presentation of candidatures are sufficiently restrictive as to favour a moderate pluralism; the preference of left-wing leaders for presenting a front runner in the competition can undermine the many virtues of primaries; the greater the number of polling stations made available to potential voters, the larger the number of participants there is likely to be.

The remaining chapters discuss the experience of specific primaries, drawing on incisive empirical research based on interviews and exit polls. Silvia Bolgherini and Fortunato Musella focus on the primary held in Aversa; Francesca Gelli on the primary held in Chioggia; Antonella Seddone and Carlo Pala on the primary held in Alghero. Maria Carla Italia, Mara Morini and Lia Orzati describe the case of Genova; Fulvio Venturino the case of La Spezia; Carmina Petrarca the case of Isernia. Finally, Giuseppe Gangemi discusses the experience of Belluno, and four other authors (Bianca Gelli, Terri Manarini, Monica Legittimo and Cosimo Telò) analyse the case of Fasano. These chapters are organised according to a common structure: presentation of the context in which the primary took place; presentation and analysis of data concerning, for example, the main socio-economic characteristics of the electorate, political-party membership, voting intentions, sources of information, results of the primary; a concluding section discussing the lessons to be drawn from the case studied.

In the final chapter, Pasquino defines primaries as processes for the selection of candidates for elective and governmental, national and local, offices. He outlines the purposes of primaries: fostering the openness of the political elite to society, and responding to a growing demand by ordinary citizens that the political parties provide greater opportunities for political participation. At the same time, if they are well organised, primaries can contribute to four major goals: a heightened mobilisation of party members and, in some cases, of party sympathisers; increased participation in an important aspect of political life, the selection of candidates; a growth in the legitimacy of the decisions of parties and candidates; better communication between parties and society.

Certainly, Pasquino knows very well that primaries are not the panacea for Italy’s many political difficulties. At the same time, he recognises that “primaries are an effective instrument for the (effective)

functioning of a political system and probably have a positive impact on the quality of... democracy" (p. 265).

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Andrea Mammone and Giuseppe A. Veltri (eds.), *Italy Today: The sick Man of Europe*, London and New York: Routledge, 2010, pb £25.99, pp. 260, ISBN 978-0-415-56160-0.

How is the current crisis and decline of contemporary Italy to be explained? Through its interdisciplinary analyses of old and new but unresolved issues affecting politics, the economy and society in Italy, this book seeks to give an answer to this important question. Across various sectors of the country, the past two decades have witnessed a growth in the explosion of latent problems in urgent need of extensive discussion. The book could not, therefore, be more timely.

Unlike the existing books on Italy and its 'shadows', which usually focus either on the political and electoral systems or on the scandals and the transition to the Second Italian Republic (p.5), this edited volume – including contributions from leading experts and young scholars – seeks to offer a comprehensive picture of the Italian situation, looking simultaneously at political life, the economic system, history and society. Moreover, it seeks to analyse both the causes and the effects of the problems that have become typical of Italy and, most importantly, to link the present and the past when offering possible explanations.

Seeking to go beyond the polemics of Italian politics and to avoid explaining Italy's decline by referring to short terms factors (e.g. the widely discussed figure of the Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi) this book focuses on more long-term aspects of the current Italian crisis – aspects which can be attributed to long-standing, unresolved problems such as the North-South divide, the legacy of Fascism and the 'amoral familism' which governs relations between the public and private sectors in the country.

The book is divided into five parts. Part I focuses on politics and society and the democratic malaise of Italy which, according to Carboni in his chapter, is strongly related to the reciprocal mistrust between the mass of people and the elites. It is argued that this situation could change if a more responsible and meritocratic ruling class were to lead the country guided by a long-term political vision. However, the governing performance of the Italian elites leaves much to be desired, as demonstrated by Moury in her chapter, which stresses the inability of the political parties to coordinate intra-coalition bargaining and thus to implement their programmes. Conti sheds further light on the problem by showing that the two large coalitions of centre left and centre right have

been increasingly converging in terms of their policy platforms. But whether this process has produced more purposeful executives, greater party discipline or more effective policy making (p.58) is still open to doubt. Another much debated feature of Italian politics is identified by Roux in the process of federalisation that has been taking place for almost two decades. Though intended to bring a range of positive outcomes for the Italian system, the process instead reflects the typical contradictions of Italian society today (p.69): high hopes but largely unachieved results. This overview of Italian politics and society concludes with Bernini's contribution, which shows the political use made of ethical issues in Italian politics, as well the way in which the Catholic Church has managed to dominate the political agenda when it comes to matters related to morality. This is also related to the difficult relationship between the media and the political system which, according to Hanretty, is characterised by a 'lack of autonomy of the Italian media from politics'.

Part II, on history, consists of two essays, one by Cento Bull the other by Arthurs, looking at the legacy for Italian society of the Fascist heritage. Together the pieces suggest that the inability of the country to renew its political institutions can be explained as the consequence of the political conflict and ideological confrontation of the past.

Part III examines the political culture of "exclusion and xenophobia" (p.171) characterising some Italian political parties (as shown in the chapter by Avanza on the Northern League), but also, according to Sigona, a majority of Italians from all social backgrounds. Garau discusses the role of the Catholic Church in the debate on immigration and national identity.

Part IV deals with various long-standing problems related to southern Italy, such as the current strength of the oldest and most widely-based criminal organisation, namely the 'Ndrangheta (discussed in Parini's chapter) and the persistence of clientelism and organised crime (discussed by Allum).

Finally, in the fifth section of the book, the economic sphere is explored. As shown in the chapter by Iona, Leonida and Sobbrino, one of the main current problems of the Italian economic system is the end of the process of convergence between southern and northern regions, due, it is argued, to the slowing down of industrialisation and to inadequate regional governance. Milio's chapter emphasises the way in which the EU's structural funds represent a missed opportunity for the Italian economy; Simoni considers the problems related to the growth of *concertazione* and the way it has led to segmentation of the Italian labour market; Minetti discusses the inability of small family firms in Italy to cope with globalisation.

Many of the chapters also offer recommendations regarding possible policy solutions for the problems of this 'sick man of Europe', and this can be considered a further merit of the book. This seems especially true in

light of the editors' initial suggestions that Italy's decline "can be understood only through systematic analysis of some concrete problems" (p.10) A concluding chapter, summarising all these valuable contributions would have given this comprehensive and ambitious work a feeling of greater coherence. However, we can concur with what can stand in lieu of a conclusion: the diagnosis (and the hope) of the editors that if "the old and new problems have weakened Italian society to react to the new challenges posed by global socioeconomic processes as well as to its own internal conflicts" (p.8), then the society is extremely resilient and resourceful with much potential for "bouncing back from the edge of disaster with renewed force and energy" (p.xvii).

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Giuseppe Cassini, *Gli anni del declino. La politica estera del governo Berlusconi (2001-2006)*, Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2007, pb, €11.00, pp. 144, ISBN 978-88-424-2127-6.

Its title notwithstanding, this is not a book about the foreign policy of the second Berlusconi government. The objective of the author, an Italian career diplomat, is to unmask Berlusconi's "*impostura mediatica*" (media fib) by showing how low Italy has fallen in objective international rankings as well as in the eyes of others in the world (p. 2). Chapter 1 provides a survey of the foreign press' coverage of Italy during the second Berlusconi government. The chapter suggests that Italy has been portrayed negatively exclusively because of the presence of Berlusconi at its helm. Yet, as shown for instance in a special issue of the review *Modern Italy* (3, 2010) devoted to the image of Italy held in selected EU and NATO countries, besides expressing doubts about Berlusconi's fitness to govern Italy (to paraphrase the often quoted expression used by the *Economist*), the foreign press has also and frequently commented negatively about aspects of Italian politics perceived as structural and permanent features of the country and thus not linked to any particular government, e.g. clientelism, corruption, protectionism, low productivity. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the foreign press seems to regard Berlusconi not as an aberration but as the logical expression and embodiment of the Italian polity.

Chapter 2 charts Italy's decline between 2001 and 2006 in various political and economic international rankings compiled by organisations such as the World Economic Forum, the OECD and Freedom House to mention only a few. The problem with this chapter is that it suggests that Italy's decline has been the result of Berlusconi's policies or absence of them. Yet, as any first-year social-science student knows, *post hoc* does not

necessarily mean *propter hoc*. Berlusconi's government, in other words, might be responsible for Italy's relative decline but such a decline might have occurred even if someone else had been at the helm.

Chapter 3 examines the absence of Italian nationals in positions of leadership in major international organisations as well as the absence of Italy from *ad hoc* bodies such as the EU's group of three (UK, France, Germany) dealing with the Iranian nuclear issue. Italy's absence is attributed to the Berlusconi government's lack of interest and/or its partisanship, the latter having led it not to support Italian candidates who were politically identified with the opposition.

Chapter 4 reports informal conversations – it is not clear if they have been conducted by the author or not, nor when – with high civil servants, almost all of them unidentified, from around the world. All of them express deep dissatisfaction with Berlusconi's actions and pronouncements on a variety of issues.

Chapter 5, the longest in the book (38 pages), is about Italian diplomacy during the second Berlusconi government. Here the reader would have expected Cassini to discuss the efforts of the professionals of Italian diplomacy, if not to remedy completely, at least to contain and smooth, the excesses of Berlusconi on the international scene. The role of civil servants after all is precisely that of assuring continuity through the alternation of governments and leaders, even the most idiosyncratic. Italian diplomacy, after all, was quite successful in controlling even Mussolini, at least until he decided to replace its top echelons with party members. The chapter instead shows quite clearly that Italian diplomacy, much like the rest of the Italian civil service, is divided along ideological-political lines. Cassini argues that the high ranks of the Farnesina have not even tried to resist the transfer of responsibility for foreign affairs from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and that the diplomats of the Ufficio del Consigliere Diplomatico at Palazzo Chigi, rather than trying to guide Berlusconi, have been subservient to his whims (p. 70 and 77). In conclusion, according to Cassini, during the five years of the Berlusconi government the 'good guys' of Italian diplomacy – those like him in other words – were reduced to impotence while Berlusconi and his acolytes "dilapidated a great deal of the patrimony of international credibility built in fifty years of diplomatic work" (p. 65).

Chapter 6 makes a parallel – it is unclear why since it does not follow logically from any of the preceding chapters – between Berlusconi and Mussolini; while Chapter 7 suggests what the Prodi government – which had just taken power at the time the book was being written – could do to regain for Italy its proper role in the world.

This book is neither a serious analysis of Italy's foreign policy nor of its decline in the world. It is just a partisan political pamphlet. If this were the whole story, then it could simply be dismissed as just another

insignificant publication. What is disturbing in this case is that it has been written by a civil servant who is supposed to serve elected governments and be *super partes*. This suggests that Italy's major problem might not be Berlusconi, as Cassini tries to suggest, but the absence of a civil service with a sense of national responsibility and sufficient dignity to maintain itself above the fray of partisan politics. Berlusconi's contention that he is the victim of leftist judges would be ridiculous and dismissed as such if it were not for the fact that Italian *magistratura* is divided and organised according to ideological-political factions, which unfortunately makes his assertion not true but certainly plausible. Similar divisions within the diplomatic corps – the author embraces the views of the diplomats adhering to a group called il Cosmopolita (www.ilcosmopolita.it) and adhering to the CGIL (the leftist trade union) – cannot be any less damaging. The pamphlet is also marred by a number of factual mistakes. I will mention only one since it seems to be widespread also among Italian 'peace activists'. The rainbow flag was not created by the Italian peace movement which then proceeded to make of it, as Cassini puts it, "one of the Italian products most copied and exported" (p. 80). The rainbow flag (also known as 'pride flag') was designed in 1978 in San Francisco by Gilbert Baker for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender social movement.

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Phil Edwards, *'More Work, Less Pay'. Rebellion and Repression in Italy, 1972-7*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009, hb £60.00, pp. 232, ISBN 978-07-19-07873-6.

In recent years a second wave of researchers – historians, sociologists, experts on literature and film – have dedicated themselves to Italy's explosive 1960s and 1970s. When taken in conjunction with the first wave of studies on that period, which coincided more or less with the twentieth anniversary of 1968 (in particular the work of Luisa Passerini, Alessandro Portelli, Marcello Flores, Peppino Ortleva, Sidney Tarrow and others) this body of research now provides students and scholars with a rich bibliography about this crucial period of recent Italian history and politics. Phil Edwards' work takes as its subject the various forms of protest which swept large parts of Italy, but in particular Rome, Milan and Turin, in the post-1968 period. Edwards argues that what he calls the "late 1970s wave" should be seen as a "second cycle of contention" and not just an after-effect of 1968. He also argues that the Italian Communist Party (PCI) contributed greatly to the defeat of 1970s direct-action movements and that this defeat had a negative influence on both the PCI itself and on Italy as a whole.

Moreover, Edwards tries to draw out the complicated relationship between the movements of the 1970s and the question of violence (armed or otherwise) arguing that it was defeat which led many to move towards the armed struggle. The sources for this work lie mainly in newspapers and other documents, as well as secondary studies of the period. The archives for the 1970s are not as yet open to scholars in any significant way.

Much of this is interesting and original. Edwards is at his most convincing when mapping out the complicated features of this 'movement' (which was in reality a whole series of movements, ranging from local housing rights activists, to unofficial strikes, to *auto-riduzione*, to cultural protest of various kinds and lifestyle politics. The range of what was going on in that period was indeed impressive and in many ways quite extraordinary, and these forms of direct action often challenged prevailing structures (including those on the left) in intriguing ways. These movements deserve to be studied and understood in themselves, and in relation to other parties and Italy as a whole. Phil Edwards' book helps us in this understanding and in re-locating this period within the post-1968 upheavals which shook schools, universities and other institutions across Italy.

However, I am less convinced about other features of this study. In this review I will deal with three questions/issues which seem to me to deserve further thought, at the very least. The first is the issue of violence. In recent years, many from the '1968' generation have begun to reflect on the violence which emanated from those years. Some of these did not enter the armed struggle, but many others did. I am thinking in particular of Anna Bravo's book, *Ai colpi di cuore* (2008) which has led to a very interesting debate in Italy. It seems to me that this book underestimates the extent to which violence (whether real or threatened) became such an acceptable part of the Italian left in the 1970s. It took an extremely long time for the far left to make a clear break with armed violence, and in part this was because the left groupings (be they the organisations from 1968, or Autonomia itself) practised violence on an almost daily basis, often in confrontation with the state, but also with regard to other left groups, feminists and the PCI. Edwards discusses the use of violence on a number of occasions, but very rarely is it seen in critical terms or as a problem in itself. This agnostic attitude was also very much part of the movement itself. In this sense it would have been useful, I feel, for Edwards to look at the literature relating to the memory and subjectivity of 1968, especially the work of Passerini, Portelli, Bravo and, for example, Guido Viale. The short section on memory in this book doesn't really engage with any studies of memory itself, and sees forgetting in terms of what historians or political scientists have chosen *not* to study.

A second, linked question relates to the PCI. Edwards blames the Communist Party for a 'failure to engage' with the 1970s movements and

calls this 'a tragic error'. However, this seems to me something of a simplification. In the first place, many of those who took part in strikes, housing occupations, protests of all kinds, were in fact members of the PCI or fellow-travellers of the party. The PCI presented here is a kind of monolithic block, without militants or union activists. Moreover, the PCI was clearly *the* enemy for many who took part in the direct action protests of the 1970s. It would have been very odd indeed if Enrico Berlinguer were to have adopted the ideas of Antonio Negri, or Oreste Scalzone, in 1975. I simply don't see how the PCI of the 1970s could have engaged 'positively' with, for example, Autonomia Operaia. In fact, the two organisations frequently came to blows, or worse. It is also clear – as this book shows – that the movement was deeply fragmented at a whole series of levels. Autonomia was defeated for a whole series of reasons, including that of state repression, but also because of its own errors and arrogance, as well as its amoral attitude to violence. Finally, there is far too little here on feminism, which seems to be included almost as an afterthought, despite the fact that it was arguably the most successful, at least in terms of actually changing the world – Edwards chooses to frame his book in the years 1972-1977, but the book never mentions the 1974 divorce referendum which mobilised millions of Italians nor the extraordinary battles over abortion led by Radical Party activists. This book, in conclusion, asks as many questions as it answers, as any good work of history or politics should.

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Gianni Bonvicini and Alessandro Colombo (eds.), *L'Italia e la politica internazionale*, Bologna: il Mulino, 2009, pb €20.80, pp. 328, ISBN 978-88-15-13164-5.

This edited volume is a yearly publication of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) and the Istituto per gli Studi della Politica Internazionale (ISPI), two of the leading think-tanks concerning Italian foreign policy and international relations in Italy. This yearbook follows the well-established approach in this series of bringing together a vast array of (mainly academic) contributions analysing the main economic and political events that have taken place over the previous year. The topics covered range from economic themes – first and foremost the unfolding of and the response to the global financial crisis – to diplomatic and military crises (such as the tensions between Georgia and Russia), to domestic political developments in third countries (such as the election of Barack Obama in the US).

The volume is divided into four main parts. The first part discusses Italy in the international environment, in particular the crisis of unilateralism and multilateralism, the global financial crisis, the election of Barack Obama, the evolution of Italian foreign policy after the election of the centre-right government led by Silvio Berlusconi, and Italy's Mediterranean policy. The second part, which features another article on the global financial crisis, deals with the international economy. The third part focuses on the European Union, especially its institutional evolution as well as the developments concerning the common foreign and security policy and the common defence policy. The fourth part contains studies of critical security areas, such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. Finally, at the end of the volume, there are two useful chronologies of, respectively, Italian foreign policy and the main international and European events.

As is sometimes the case with edited volumes, it is somewhat difficult to tease out the main common themes emerging from the various essays, which total 17. This is particularly complex in this volume, given the fact that it is a yearbook, hence a substantive introduction is missing and there is no concluding chapter. Nonetheless, as argued by the editors, one of the leitmotifs of many essays seems to be the crisis of multi-polarism and of the main international organisations dealing with economic as well as security matters. Existing international institutions are evolving in parallel with and partly as a consequence of the emergence of new actors.

The volume has both strengths and weaknesses. The editors have brought together an impressive array of contributions from leading experts in their respective fields. However, as noted above, the volume would have benefited from a substantive introduction, highlighting the main themes of the volume and how the various essays fit together.

At times there is some (perhaps unavoidable) overlap between contributions, some of which only incidentally cross reference each other, despite dealing with the same issue or related topics. Some examples are the essays on the global financial crisis and those dealing with the European Union. The volume would be improved by the development of synergies between the various essays.

The essays tend to be rather short and sometimes they are a bit descriptive, in that the space devoted to the analysis is (perhaps necessarily) limited. This might well be a common feature of all yearbooks; however the reader (well, at least this reader) would welcome longer and more detailed essays, especially given the high calibre of the contributors. Their in-depth analysis of the issues discussed would make it very thought-provoking reading. This would require the inclusion of a smaller number of essays and the discussion of fewer topics, though there might well be 'economies of scale' to be had by reducing the number of essays dealing with the same (or related) topics.

All in all, despite some room for improvement, the IAI-ISPI yearbook remains a 'must' for all those interested in Italian foreign policy and foreign policy developments tout court because of its wide coverage, timeliness, and the high quality of the individual contributions.

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Gianpietro Mazzoleni and Anna Sfardini, *Politica Pop: Da "Porta a Porta" a "L'Isola dei Famosi"*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010, pb € 14.00, pp.182, ISBN 978-88-15-13273-4.

Politica Pop examines the conundrum of politics, media, and popular culture in the Italian context since the beginning of the 1990s. It particularly analyses the way in which TV has changed the nature of political processes and how political actors have both adapted to the logic of the visual medium and attempted to manipulate it in order to pursue their own agendas.

The phenomenon of the popularisation of politics—or 'infotainment'—is nothing new and, as already witnessed in the US or the UK over several decades, it has simply expanded the terrain of political competition from the halls of stately palaces to the TV studios of celebrity entertainers and the living rooms of the broader audience. In a field of study like political communication, which is largely dominated by Anglo-Saxon research, the major contribution of the book consists in adding nuance and depth to our understanding of political processes by exploring the unique characteristics of Italian infotainment or, as the authors put it, "the Italian way to pop politics".

Apart from the scholarly merits, the book further contributes to dispelling two widespread views of infotainment. The first is the negativity surrounding the association of politics and entertainment. The idea is that politics is a serious matter and that, if it wants to retain its credibility, it should keep well away from showbiz. Indeed, as the authors point out, there are still people who are horrified (*scandalizzati*) at the mention of '*politica-spettacolo*' (politics-as-spectacle). In this respect the analysis demonstrates that pop politics is not a corrupted form of politics, but rather an ordinary practice in a mediatised society and age. The second contribution consists in challenging commonly held assumptions about infotainment. If the reader were asked to identify what, in his or her opinion, causes the phenomenon, three would be the most likely answers. To put them very crudely, one reply could be 'blame the media': the fierce struggle for viewers' ratings in a highly competitive media market causes a 'dumbing down' and trivialisation of political issues. The second could be 'blame the politicians': in order to win the popularity contest, political

actors turn themselves into celebrities ready to feed the 24/7 media machine with personal details about their private lives. The third could read 'blame the public': both journalists and politicians adapt to the demands of the masses, particularly their insatiable taste for gossip and entertainment. The book shows that each of these answers, albeit containing some elements of truth, is inadequate. Instead, it takes the reader on a systematic analytical journey to show the complex relationships between political actors, journalists, and politically active—in ways that do vary from individual to individual—audiences.

The journey is divided into six chapters. It opens with an introductory discussion of the way politics and popular culture have met through television. It includes examples of the way politicians have famously appropriated the visual medium—among them the appearance of British MP George Galloway on *Celebrity Big Brother*. The second chapter shifts the analytical lens towards the Italian case. It explains how the combination of the TV market structure in the country, typically Italian media consumption habits, and sociological attitudes towards the TV medium have led to a blurring of the boundaries between the public and the private spheres. Chapter three makes the point that the history of the country “has been co-written by both politicians and journalists, parties and media, in a crescendo of relationships and degrees of intensity rarely observable in other mature democracies” (p. 55). It shows the way in which the mutual dependency between media and political actors has evolved over time, shaped by structural changes in the 'rules of the game' beyond the personal relationships between journalists and politicians (when their roles have not merged altogether). For example, the chapter illustrates how the introduction of the first-past-the-post system changed the nature of political campaigning by emphasising the role of single candidates, thereby leading to a 'personalisation' of politics. The 2000 *par condicio* law that outlawed political advertising on TV (to prevent Berlusconi from using his own channels without limits) also led politicians to migrate from the 'defunct political spot' to alternative TV venues, such as talk shows. The Berlusconi phenomenon, from this perspective, is both an outcome and an exemplification of the media logic affecting the way a politician presents himself to his audience, but also of the party logic enveloping the whole media system. Chapter four moves on to describing the formats of political entertainment—or 'politainment'. The term refers both to the presence on TV of the entertaining aspects of politics—the gossip about the couple Sarkozy-Bruni for instance—and the presence of politics within popular culture programmes, such as the participation of politicians in the satirical *Le Iene* (watch, for example, Massimo D'Alema and Giulio Tremonti in one of the programme's iconic 'double interviews' in February 2005: www.youtube.com/watch?v=py8IaxuU70M). Chapter five discusses the

impact of infotainment and politainment on political participation and citizenship. These aspects are empirically explored in chapter six, where viewing ratings and profiles of audiences who regularly watch info/politainment programmes are integrated with evidence from focus groups. The discussion reveals that the idea of a correlation between the consumption of info/politainment programmes and low interest in politics is simplistic, if not wrong. The Italian viewer-citizen (*cittadino-spettatore*), on the contrary, regardless of level of interest in politics, tends to be well-informed, aware of the political 'offer' on TV, and able to discern the programmes that meet his/her interests, values, and needs. Indeed, rather than a possible threat to democracy and civic engagement, the TV political entertainment formats are described as the "new milieu of postmodern political participation" (p.136).

The book is a valuable addition to the understanding of an increasingly important dimension of Italian politics. It is easily and very quickly read, as well as being accessible also to a readership of non-specialists of Italian politics. It contains an appendix with the description of 25 pop-political programmes, their focus, and audience profiles, too. While readers who have not lived in Italy may not be familiar with them, excerpts of the programmes, both past and more current, are easily available on YouTube. The book mentions, for example, the famous TV appearance of D'Alema, then president of the Bicameral Commission for institutional reform, filmed while cooking risotto during the programme *Porta a Porta* in October 1997 (p. 73). Unfortunately the original clip does not seem to be available online, but the appearance did capture the imagination of the public, as can be seen in the 1998 spoof by comedian Sabina Guzzanti (www.youtube.com/watch?v=081CeRDfHaA). This is just another small demonstration of the fact that infotainment is not just about either the trivialisation of politics or the exploitation of the visual medium by politicians to manipulate the audience. Infotainment is creative and constitutes an important forum for comment, reflection, satirical critique, the airing of alternative ideas and, ultimately, political participation.

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