Department of Political Sciences

Master's degree in International Relations
Major in Security

Chair of Comparative History of Political Systems

The depoliticization of western liberal democracies in the 1990s: the case of Italy and the Christian – Democracy during the Tangentopoli crisis.

Giovanni Orsina
SUPERVISOR

Rosario Forlenza
CO-SUPERVISOR

Mateo Delattre
CANDIDATE
ID No. 646842

Academic Year 2022/2023

To Rome and all the friendships I have made there.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Professor Giovanni Orsina for his mentoring over the year and a half it took to write this master thesis, as well as Enrico Ciappi and Professor Rosario Forlenza for their availability and their advice.

I would also like to thank Professor Stefano Ceccanti from La Sapienza University and Professor Giovanni Navarria from the Cardiff University for sharing their perspectives and personal experiences with me; as well as Francesco from the Italo Calvino library of the Italian Cultural Institute in Paris for his reading recommendations and the interest he expressed in my work.

At last, I would like to thank my parents and grandparents for their unconditional support.

"Not only does democracy make each man forget his ancestors, it hides his descendants from him, and divides him from his contemporaries; it continually turns him back into himself, and threatens, at last, to enclose him entirely in the solitude of his own heart." (Tocqueville 1838)

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1838.

Table of contents

Introduction

"*I'm very much afraid that the Mani Pulite's ethical cleansing will be as serious a consequence for Italy as ethnic cleansing was for the former Yugoslavia. And that's not a play on words. Mani Pulite has killed off the political class in an unprecedented way."* It is in those words that the French political philosopher Paul Virilio described in his view what was happening on the other side of the alps in an article from the newspaper *Liberation* dated from the 30th of March 1994 (Virilio 1994). But Virilio was not the only one of the few fully grasping outside of Italy the political revolution that has been going on for two years at that time and its global consequences to come. An analyst from the American investment bank Morgan Stanley wrote the following in his report on Italy intended for international institutional investors: "*Italy is undergoing a double political and economic revolution, as profound as Russia's perestroika. But the Italian situation is far more promising*" (Il Corriere Della Sera 1993). Those quotes highlight the global interest and dimension of what first appeared as a domestic political crisis that lasted from 1992 to 1994. That is, the "Tangentopoli" ("Bribesville") crisis.

Tangentopoli started with the arrest of a relatively unknown socialist politician at the time, Mario Chiesa, caught in the act of bribery the 17th of February 1992. It ended with the election of a new type of politician, Silvio Berlusconi, the 28th of March 1994. During those two years, most Italian political leaders became the victims of a large campaign of delegitimization that led to more than 5 000 arrest warrants against them and the complete disappearance of the so-called "governing parties" which is to say the five political parties that constituted and defeated governments since 1947.

This crisis is fundamentally linked with the international context and cannot be fully understood without it. It was in part triggered by it and in part changed it afterwards. It is in line with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 but most importantly with the disappearance of the presence of the communist constitutive perceived threat globally. This perceived threat of communism froze the western liberal democracies political systems for half a century into alliances of reasons preventing them from accessing power. That was the "raison d'être" of the Italian Christian – Democracy, the leading political force in the country during those decades.

It equally changed the global ways politics were made from the 1990s on in those very same western liberal democracies. Those two years put light on the transition between the XXth and the XXIst centuries. A transition from the domination of ideologies such as communism or fascism to the celebration of free market economy and human rights. In short, transition from the masses centered ideals to the rule of the individual.

On January 23, 1996, President of the United States Bill Clinton famously declared that "*the era of big governments is over*" in his State of the Union address. He described in those words the political changes taking place globally in the 1990s: the belief that the world was from now on a positive sum game in which there would be no winners nor looser. That would go through the benefits of economic interdependence bringing democracy all over the globe and the moral and ethical conducts placing human rights as the ultimate value for XXIst century societies.

Tangentopoli is the late political expression of a more global history trend. It is the story of a tripod that began acting as the compass of political modernity: the link between the individual, the economy, and moral. Each of those words matter and is connected. Tom Wolfe described the 1970s as the "Me" decade. The decade of the "Third Great Awakening" (Wolfe 1976). The "Third Great Awakening" analyzed by Tom Wolfe has to be understood in reference to the First Great Awakening that took place in the 1740s in America and undermined the religious establishment in the colonies, consequently challenging British colonial authority and potentially paving the way for the American Revolution (Miller and Heimer 1967). The Second Great Awakening is credited to have created the atmosphere of Christian asceticism in the West during the nineteenth century and helped make it possible to build communities in the face of great hardship such as the Great Depression (O'Dea 1957).

By the "Third Great Awakening" Tom Wolfe meant the time in history that followed the Second World War, when the western societies began for the first time to enjoy massive flows of money and thriving under the economical energy of former war industries transformed into the engine of global civil development (the United States financing the reconstruction of Europe through the disruptive Marshall Plan). That feeling of omnipotence of each and every one (not only the aristocrats anymore) and pushed by monumental industries and economy, rested on the belief that individual freedoms won. That fascism was defeated, and communism constrained. Only one ideology remained: the ideology of the self economically sufficient man, free to determine its own destiny in discontinuity with that of its ancestors and contemporaries. Tom Wolfe writes: "*Whatever the Third Great Awakening amounts to, for better or for worse, will have to do with this unprecedented post-World War II American development: the luxury, enjoyed by so many millions of middling folk, of dwelling upon the self"* (Wolfe 1976, p. 48). The monumental economy that lost its initial purpose, the individual enjoying the leftovers of the former, and the general acknowledgment of one 'self-existence and self-centered objectives

as being the new moral to follow, is at the core of the Tangentopoli crisis and the global political trend of the 1990s.

> "*Tocqueville's idea of modern man lost "in the solitude of his own heart" has been brought forward into our time in such terminology as alienation (Marx), anomie (Durkheim), the mass man (Ortega and Gasset), and the lonely crowd (Riesman). The picture is always of a creature uprooted by industrialism, packed together in cities with people he doesn't know, helpless against massive economic and political shifts—in short, a creature like Charlie Chaplin in Modern Times, a helpless, bewildered, and dispirited slave to the machinery. This victim of modern times has always been a most appealing figure to intellectuals, artists, and architects. The poor devil so obviously needs us to be his Engineers of the Soul, to use a term popular in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. We will pygmalionize this sad lump of clay into a homo novus, a New Man, with a new philosophy, a new aesthetics, not to mention new Bauhaus housing and furniture.*

Here Tom Wolfe put light on the total aspect of that "great awakening" that englobe the society and individuals in their entirety: from the arts to philosophy, without forgetting politics and the economy. He continues:

> *But once the dreary little bastards started getting money in the 1940s, they did an astonishing thing—they took their money and ran. They did something only aristocrats (and intellectuals and artists) were supposed to do—they discovered and started doting on Me! They've created the greatest age of individualism in American history! All rules are broken! The prophets are out of business! Where the Third Great Awakening will lead—who can presume to say? One only knows that the great religious waves have a momentum all their own. Neither arguments nor policies nor acts of the legislature have been any match for them in the past. And this one has the mightiest, holiest roll of all, the beat that goes ... Me ... Me ... . Me ... Me . . ."* (Wolfe 1976, p. 48).

We argue that Italy was among the first countries in the world, and western liberal democracies, to experience the political equivalent of the "Third Great Awakening" towards modern days politics, the XXIst century politics inspired and ruled by the "Me".

But this was omitting something Roberto Cartucci and Carlo Tullio Altan recalled in their book *La coscienza civile degli italiani. Valori e disvalori. L'Italia di tangentopoli e la crisi del sistema partitico*, published in 1997. They write: "*In the Italy of the 1980s, the triumph of economic success and the hedonism of the consumer society was celebrated, even if in a sickening tone: a superficial and fallacious veneer, in that it tended to exclude from the picture the non-material aspects of a country's wealth, such as the efficiency of its institutions and, even more so, its moral and cultural dimension*" (Cartocci and Tullio Altan 1997).

The essence of the Tangentopoli era stems from a fundamental notion: that by 1992, the political system was perceived as ineffective and tainted by corruption, reflecting a minimal level of accurate representation of the diverse layers of Italian society and of their aspirations. The society needs to get rid of all of obstacles preventing its ultimate development. It is time to liberate the full potential of the already emancipated – economically but also in terms of morals - society. In order to do so, one needs to call into power people that are the best at what they do, direct members of the civil society and not professional politicians. The time when politics provided society with a positive plan for a better future and as being part of history is over (Gauchet and Doyle 2015). "*The era of big governments is over*" said Bill Clinton completing his previous sentence: "*We know big government does not have all the answers. We know there's not a program for every problem. We have worked to give the American people a smaller, less bureaucratic government in Washington. And we have to give the American people one that lives within its means*"(Clinton 1996).

This master thesis will focus on the case of the Christian – Democracy in the face of the political and societal changes during the Tangentopoli period, 1992 – 1994 and the years leading to it in order to try and explain the transition towards modern day politics.

The first chapter entitled "The Collapse" (I) deals with the First Italian Republic's difficulties facing corruption and organize crime (a), the economic transition of the 1980s (b) towards the reign of the global market economy and the rise of populist forms of political expression (c) always making sure to include the role and views of the Christian – Democrats, leading the country, towards those phenomenon and changes.

The second chapter, entitled "The Coping" (II), constrains itself to what happened between 1992 and 1994 in Italy from the point of view of the three most influential Demo –

Christians of the time: Giulio Andreotti (a), Mino Martinazzoli (b) and Mario Segni (c). Each of them offered different perspectives and visions of what modern politics should or should not be and displayed interesting reflections on the internal debate of political leaders facing the new political void opening in front of them.

Giulio Andreotti, one of the most prominent figures of the Italian Christian-democracy in the post 1945 years, faced the end of his era during the Tangentopoli crisis. He demonstrated being one step behind the social and global political changes of the times. His fall is more than symbolic, it is the end of an era of politics and how it was made. On the contrary, Mino Martinazzoli and Mario Segni both understood better the magnitude of the crisis and what was at stake. The two of them consequently offered two exit strategies to that crisis: while Martinazzoli became a strong proponent for a return to the historical and ideological roots of the Christian – Democracy, Mario Segni seceded and advocated a more modern, representative democracy whose primary means of expression was the referendums. Each of those subsections include a short biography introducing the protagonist before analyzing their actions during the crisis.

About the sources and methodology

The inspiration of this study finds its roots in Francis Fukuyama's most important work, *The End of History and the Last Man*, published in 1992 (Fukuyama 1992). Fukuyama argues that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the conclusion of the Cold War in 1991 signify a triumph of the Western liberal democratic model, which subsequently asserted its dominance on a global scale over all of the other political alternatives offered during the XXth century (fascism, communism for instance). It would be "the end of history" because there would be no longer a need for politics to build a narrative on which societies could organize themselves and tend towards.

Drawing from a diverse array of primary sources, including an interview with Stefano Ceccanti, a former senator and current Constitutionalist who started his political career in the early 1990s, this master thesis navigates an internal discourse concerning democracy and politics that permeated Italy and, later, spread to other liberal democracies. The study centers its focus on the trajectory of the primary political entity of the post-1945 era in Italy, the Christian Democracy (DC), to delineate its response to the exigencies of shifting paradigms.

Methodologically, the analysis encompasses speeches, party congress deliberations, both domestic and international press articles, televised broadcasts, radio transmissions, as well as interviews and commentaries authored by political figures and observers, particularly spanning the years 1992 to 1994.

Moreover, the examination is enriched through the juxtaposition of these primary sources with a compendium of published secondary materials, comprising essays, political manuals, biographies, works of political philosophy and theory, and various reports.

In essence, this master's thesis is predominantly qualitative in nature, although it incorporates select quantitative elements, notably electoral outcomes sourced from political history manuals and the archival repository of the Italian Ministry of the Interior, presented as percentages of votes cast vis-à-vis registered voters, thereby augmenting the breadth and depth of the analytical framework.

Chapter One: The Collapse of the Italian First Republic and the Christian Democracy's role in that collapse.

The roots of the First Republic: a short history of Italian politics after 1945.

It is necessary here to bring some contextualization on how the Italian political system functioned before the beginning of the crisis of politics in 1992; what role had the DC in that system and how the system collapsed.

The first thing to know when it comes to the First Italian Republic that preceded the *Tangentopoli* crisis and lasted from 1948 to 1992 is that it was the direct result of the transition from fascism to parliamentary democracy after World War II (Corduwener 2016).

Its party system was organized around the ideological polarization of a communist left, led by the Communist Party, and a conservative right, led by the Christian-Democracy and took deep roots in the global context being influenced by foreign countries, mostly Anglo-American and Soviet. The system was created at a time the European continent was beginning its phase of decentralization, meaning it was no longer the center of the world in comparison to competing USSR and the United States. When it collapsed at the beginning of the 1990s, it was as well in a big part because of the international context, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War (Judt 2010). Deep down the study of the Italian system and its final crisis has an international impact.

There are two phases of democratic transition that are taking place in the early years of the First Italian Republic: the first one established a parliamentary political system and the second established a republican institutional framework (Lepre 2006).

The first phase of the post-war democratic transition that lasted from 1943 to 1945, while the war was still going on and when foreign armies were still fighting in Italy, gave birth to the system of polarized ideologies that lasted for the next 50 years. Italy in the spheres of influences of the United States and of the United Kingdom imitated, in theory, the institutional and political model of the two global powers, transforming itself into a modern democracy (Colarizi 2022b).

A modern parliamentary democracy characterized by the polarization of the debate around two ideological blocs, a conservative one and a more liberal one. In addition to these foreign influences, the system soul was defined by its antifascist DNA. All ant-fascist Italian political movements which fought together against Mussolini's regime had one objective: build a system that would not allow again the mistakes of the past. In other words, establish a parliamentary democracy where sovereignty, which is defined as the absolute and infinite power of writing and applying the laws, lies in parliament (Bodin 1576).

The second phase of that democratic transition lasted from 1945, official end of World War II, to 1948, adoption of the new Italian constitution and first elections of the new Republic's parliament. During those three years, the question of the formation of the new Italian State was debated and resolved through the referendum of the 2nd of June 1946 rejecting the Monarchy that allowed the fascists to rule the country since 1922 and consecrating the establishment of a Republic. The new Italian constitution was then adopted on the first of January 1948 marking the official end of the transition period from fascism to democracy (Lepre 2006).

However, in terms of political history, the end of the transition phase could be adjusted to one year prior of what it is commonly said. The end of the government of national unity and the beginning of a competition between the Christian Democracy (DC), the Socialist (PSI) and the Communist Party (PCI) happens as soon as spring 1947 when the international alliance between the western democracies and the Soviet Union collapsed after the fascism threat was annihilated. "*The face-to-face opposition between the United States and the Soviet Union which signified the beginning of the Cold war had implications all around Europe, east and west, breaking antifascists coalitions born everywhere to fight nazi-fascism as one*" (Colarizi 2022b). Highlighting once again here the close links and parallel developments of the post-war Italian system with the global context.

Two transitions are moving together with the processes of democratization in the early years of the Italian first republic: An institutional one from authoritarian fascism to parliamentary democracy in two phases 1943-1945 and 1945-1948. A political one from parliamentarism to partitocracy, from 1947 on and ending in 1992 (Salvadori 1996). They are intrinsically linked.

Despite the fact that Italy had developed after World War I a system of mass party democracy that could be considered as being a modern system, with the universal male suffrage and the

system of proportional representation, the debate and establishment of the constitution of 1948 highlights the will of the country to break with the inter-war period and with the ills of its democracy that led to the rise of fascism (Vivarelli 1991). Some explanations of preceding failures of democracy are pointing to fundamental Italian issues such as the question of a unified State, the results of the First World War, or class tensions in an era of mass politics (Knox 2007; Bosworth 1998).

The new post-war constitutions in Italy, as well as in France and West-Germany, are the main consequences of the failures of inter-war democracies. These constitutional initiatives outlined the desire to create new, improved models of democracy and provide these nations with a shared framework for discussing democracy (Corduwener 2016).

Looking back at the two transitions: the institutional and the political one. While the institutional transition's spirit Italy went through in the early post-war years is shared by France and West-Germany, the Italian political transition is quite unique. Whereas France and Italy shared the presence of an important communist "constitutive other", France did not have a Christian democratic political force as the opposition pole. On the contrary, West-Germany's party system did revolve around an important Christian-democrat party, it however differed from its Italian counterpart as the Italian Christian-democrats ruled uninterrupted from 1946 on, making the Italian DC much more powerful within State institutions. The role played by political parties, more specifically by the Christian-Democracy, in Italy sets the Italian "*partitocrazia*" apart from other liberal democracies of the second part of the XXth century.

Institutionally first, the Italian system functioned as a hybrid system at the crossroads of both French and Germany systems (Bull and Newell 2005). France has always been a highly centralized state, with a powerful government in Paris being seen as essential. Contrarily, West Germany is a federal state where many political discussions also took place at the state level since federalism was considered as a tool to ensure the success of the Bonn democracy (Corduwener 2016). Italy's constitution foresaw decentralization but the laws implementing it only were made in the 1970s and the debate is still going on today (Gold 2003).

Politically second, different readings of the past created two political divide which lasted for the whole duration of the First republic. On the one hand, the division that existed between the prominent parties - the PSI, the PCI, and the DC. On the other hand, the divide pushed forward

by those who opposed the idea of a growing party-controlled State. All the major parties adopted a somewhat didactic approach to educating citizens about civic matters and believed that the task of incorporating the masses into the state was a unique responsibility of political parties (Orsina 2013). However, Italian political parties had failed to do so (Piretti 1997). Their control was challenged right from the beginning, and the initial characterization of parties as a homogeneous and elitist "*partitocrazia*" emerged already during the war (Capozzi 2009). Yet, the division between those supporting the parties and those opposing them was concealed for a short period of time behind the division between the parties themselves, the Christian-Democracy and the communist Left. Those tensions mostly revolved around economic policies and international alliances (Ventresca 2003).

The focus on the Christian-Democracy makes therefore sense as we seek to comprehend the evolution of the democratic political discussion in postwar Western Europe, more specifically its trends at the beginning of the 1990s.

The Italian Christian-Democracy was something not comparable to the other European Christian-Democracy. The Italian DC was born as a party of unity for all Catholics, conservative and social branches. Because the left was shadowed by the presence of a strong communist party, the left existence became the *raison d'être* of the Christian Democracy, its "constitutive other" (Ceccanti 2023). The Italian DC was a tactical alliance of many anti-communists' political formations. As long as the PCI would be there and perceived as a threat, the DC would be there to neutralize it. On the contrary, the German Christian Democratic Party, was born as a center-right political alternative to the SPD, the social-democratic party. The German DC evolved ideologically on its very own path while the nature of the Italian DC linked it to the survival of the PCI.

The interpretation that the foundation of the Christian-Democracy was based on the existence of the communists which were perceived as the main threat to the new Italian democracy since fascism must be balanced with the fact that, overtime, a strong sense of belonging was established between the DC politicians and their electors (Ceccanti 2023). This is shown by the consistency of votes for the DC over half a century and by the fact about 13% of them remained attached to the Christian-democratic political philosophy, close to the original of Sturzo, by voting for Mino Martinazzoli's *Partito Popolare* at the general elections of 1994 as we will see later on.

Still, antifascism was at the core of Italian parties' identities after 1945. This has relevance in both interpretations, that in fact do not contradict each other. This conception of democracy centered around the protection provided by the alliance of antifascists parties and one of them, the DC, being the keystone of the system did not constitute a sustainable policy on the long term.

Alcide De Gasperi, father of the modern DC in the early years of the First Republic, stated that "*the parties to which we refer here are totalitarian complexities [...] Their party is a philosophical system, a creed, a teaching of a doctrine, [...] a surrogate of religion and it assumes the doctrinal functions of a Church*" (De Gasperi 1979) referring to the Italian communists. During the first DC party congress in 1946 it was stated that the communist notion of "progressive democracy" was "fake" (D.C 1968) and a cover to establish a dictatorship in favor of the proletariat. Helped by the party electoral victory in the 1946 elections for the constituent assembly, the belief that the DC was the sole genuinely democratic Italian mass party became prevalent. This, in turn, fueled the conception inside the party that it was responsible for the development of the Italian democracy (Galli 2007).

Here lies the paradox that slowly undermined Italian First Republic democracy until it collapsed in 1992. There was an untold agreement between the Italian PCI and DC. That agreement was on the role of the parties as catalysts and shapers of political opinion and came from their historical antifascists roots. However, they kept debating solutions to a perceived crisis of Italian democracy (Corduwener 2016) that then led to the actual crisis in the early 1990s.

According to Pepijn Corduwener in his book *The Problem of Democracy in Postwar Europe; Political Actors and the Formation of the Postwar Model of Democracy in France, West Germany and Italy* published in 2016, there are four peculiar dimensions to this Italian debate that undermined its democracy and *in fine*, the rule of the Christian-Democracy and the existence of the First Republic.

- First, even though the parties evolved and attempted to reform themselves over the decades looking especially at the PCI under Berlinger's leadership, they still never accepted each other's as completely democratic. The DC combined its two previous coalitions, the centrist one and the centre-left in the so-called "*pentapartito*" that

condemned officially the Communists to eternal opposition. This wall to power was established in the name of the Christian-democratic "duty" to develop and protect the Italian democracy most notably from Soviet interference through the PCI as mentioned before. For the PCI, on the contrary, the Christian-Democrats were held responsible for the problems of the Italian democracy. Berlinguer stated that "*the country no longer supports this leaded blanket of power and this Christian democrat bullying, this is exactly what is limiting the liberal functioning of democratic institutions, and which threatens to suffocate them*"(Berlinguer 1985).

- Second, although there was shared disagreement regarding democratic legitimacy. "*There was much stronger and broader political resistance against the consensus among the main political actors than in France and West Germany*" (Corduwener 2016, p. 299). The pivotal moment towards Tangentopoli was when the two political adversaries had to collaborate during the 1980s and the "historic compromise" that was made necessary by events of political violence – the "years of lead" - that was then unseen elsewhere in western Europe. The aftermath of that necessary collaboration was that the hated symbol of the *partitocrazia*, which had brought Italian democracy all its problems and had resulted in a system dominated by political parties detached from civil society, had won (Grilli di Cortona 2007). There was no interest from the leading DC to fulfil its original post-war duties towards democracy and no credible opposition anymore. That is what the third political force in the country in the 1980s, the extreme right *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI), argued. The entrance of the PCI in government had created an "*elephant size majority. (...) Choosing PCI nowadays equals choosing DC, and vice versa* "(Movimento Sociale Italiano 1979). Similar concerns were expressed in the more progressive aisle of parliament for instance through the voice of the leader of the Radical Party, Marco Panella who stated that "*the country and the people are tired, they do not understand anymore. The parties close themselves ever more in themselves*" (Panella 1982).

- Thirdly, the dissatisfaction towards the Italian democracy and system was not only expressed by the public opinion beginning to be considered as one, but by the political parties themselves (Paggi 1998). The necessary collaboration of the "historic compromise" during the difficult years of violence that were the 1970s constituted a crisis of democracy. For the opposition parties on the left, Communists first, the

continuity of the Christian Democratic power was to blame. "*The system of power of the DC has permeated the structures of the state until the point of identifying with it. In this sense, it is justified to talk about a Christian democratic regime*" (Capanna 1975) stated Mario Capanna, an extra-parliamentary left activist. The Christian Democrat, Aldo Moro, had noted in 1973 already that "*the problem of our democracy is the impossibility of alternative*", and that this was confirmed "*despite the historic compromise*" (Moro 1973). A decade later, the DC's party secretary Ciriaco De Mita, recognized that the "*the lack of this possibility [of government alternation] has generated the crisis, which, in absence of adequate politics, got worse*" (De Mita 1982).

- Fourthly, the theme of constitutional revision entered the Italian debate as a direct consequence of those crises. In comparison with France and West Germany that reached relative consensus on their constitutional question, Italy developed in the early 1980s new arguments on the value of a constitution and of institutional principles of democracy (Köppl 2006). This problem was that none of the parties could reach an agreement that would have led to a resolution of the crisis. The Socialists, who were very aware of the problem were pushing maybe more than the DC or the PCI the debate on constitutional reform. Craxi considered that "*the system has had no answer to the two correlated demands of more efficiency and more democracy [...]. Democracy should therefore be renovated, and this is the most urgent objective*" (Craxi 1978). Craxi found the growing contrast between the challenges facing Italian democracy and the resurging vitality of its economy in the 1980s to accentuate the country's democratic crisis. He writes: "*The question of institutional reform has by now become unavoidable', because 'there is the lack of a project which, assuming the values of our 1947 constitution, can renovate our institutions in the light of the necessary changes and past experiences*" (Craxi 1987).The reforms that were pushed forward by the socialists included: the replacement of the bicameral system with a unicameral system, more local autonomy, a reform of the country's bureaucracy, and a direct election of the president. The Christian Democracy while agreeing on the necessity of institutional reform, opposed the decentralization of power. Ciriaco De Mita denounced the reform of the bicameral system: "*The utility of unicameralism in respect to bicameralism seems indisputable, [but] in reality the question implies delicate problems of the political order and of democratic guarantees*"(De Mita 1982). In opposition to this view, the PCI asserted that when addressing the reform of Italy's democracy, the primary focus

should be on reforming the state. They emphasized that their party advocated not only for superficial adjustments but for deep and meaningful bureaucratic reforms. In the end, no institutional reform was realized, and the issues of the Italian democracy and party system were postponed to 1992 and are even still debated today. Constitutionalist Stefano Ceccanti argues that in the early 1990s electoral reforms were conducted independently from structural constitutional reform which led to a new party system, the Second Republic, even more dissociated from the Constitution still supposed to organize it (Ceccanti 2023). The historian Pietro Scoppola has, him, called this institutional crisis the “paradox of institutional reform” (Scoppola 1991). This paradox sees the reform which poses a threat to the parties with the most to lose, facing continuous opposition. Paradoxically, this resistance not only intensified the need for reform but also fortified the parties' determination to resist it.

In summary, several key points emerge: (1) Political parties during the First Republic never mutually recognized each other's democratic legitimacy to govern the nation; (2) While there existed a collective awareness of the fundamental positions held by political parties within the system, none were willing to acknowledge their own shortcomings. Essentially, the parties avoided addressing what was widely perceived as one of the most critical issues in Italian democracy by those beyond the immediate scope of parliamentary activities: their own status within the Italian democratic structure (Koff and Koff 2000). This consensus (3) extended both within and outside the parliamentary arena, precipitating a constitutional and institutional crisis (4) that, compounded by the political turmoil of the 1990s, prompted attempts at resolution with varied degrees of success.

In fact, despite consistently emphasizing the pressing need for institutional reform and expressing concerns about the growing divide between politics and society, the prominent political parties often reaffirmed their dedication to the prevailing principles of party democracy. The most obvious example of that phenomenon is the Communist Party that claimed its commitment to the expansion of democratic involvement of citizens and therefore to the expansion of political participations on the condition that ‘*the main organs of participation are and remain the political parties. That parties are and should remain the spinal cord of Italian democracy*”(P.C.I 1991). An idea that was shared to a different extent when it

came to the ideological goal but with the same idea when it came to the political means by the Christian Democracy.

The impossibility to reform is at the core of the issue of the First Italian Republic. Bettino Craxi referred to "the sick Italy of today" in the 1980s while noticing that across the European continent there was no other "*institutional system as incapable in adapting and innovating itself in the face of social change*"(Craxi 1978b). The DC agreed with this analysis. Arnaldo Forlani, one of the most important figures of the party, noticed that "*a serious fracture has opened between the people and the institutions and the political parties. A serious commitment is required commensurate with the extent and gravity of this situation*"(Forlani 1982).

In other words, the complete collapse of the party system established since 1948 can be conceived as the ultimate result of mostly one problem. "*The basic problem which was posed for the political forces of the republic was and is the task in which both the liberal system and the fascist regime failed: admit, or better, integrate the masses in the state [...] either the political system addresses this fundamental issue or, otherwise, or the appearance of this unsolved question becomes ever more visible*" (Farneti 1979) writes the political scientist Paolo Farneti already in 1979.

That problem is what therefore makes the study of the *Tangentopoli* years (1992 – 1994) interesting in an international relations perspective. The Italian Republic system was the first among liberal democracies to face in such a total manner the issue of the definition of democracy at a time when the Cold War framework ended; and political representation at a time when the politics of the "*antipolitical*" (Orsina 2018) and claiming more direct representation and system efficiency, rather than long term political solution plans, became mainstream. It grasps the shift from the XXst to the XXIst century, from the century of mass ideologies to the century of the "civil society" and its absolute rights. May those rights be economical for the market or human rights for the individuals.

Political corruption and organized crime.

Discussion of the widespread corruption in Italy during the First Republic.

Corruption is not specifically an Italian problem. The non-governmental agency Transparency International release each year since 1995 the corruption perception index which ranks 180 countries on a scale going from 180 (very clean) to 0 (highly corrupt) and based "*by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys*"(Transparency International 2022). Italy is ranked in 2022 the 41 less corrupted state over 180.

Partitocracy and political corruption appeared linked with each other since the beginning of the First Italian Republic (Mammarella 1992) but until the end of the 1950s corruption remained constrained. It manifested itself on the limits of the Republic and when it came to the mainly agricultural and provincial aspects of the Italian society. It was maintained within the framework of local clientelism policymaking, far from the excesses experienced in the 1970s when it became institutionalized and almost necessary for the functioning of the system (Mammarella 1992).

Housing speculations, especially in Rome, to the advantages of the real estate companies and the main influential roman families such as the Vaselli or the Gerini, in addition to the involvement of the Holy See in the business, raised the first national corruption scandals. Revealed by the accusation of the "Espresso" or "Mondo", they involved demo-christian roman mayors such as Rebecchini or Cioccetti. Some examples of these early manifestation of corruption that were not as developed as later on is the story of the "Banker of God": Gian Battista Giuffrè. Guiffrè was a banker who organized in 1958 a massive chain letter with the money of his clients. He borrowed money and returned it to its customers within a very short period of time, never exceeding one year, at 100% interest. In this system, therefore, it's the bank's customers who are theoretically the usurers, even though the manager was a swindler. The money was never invested in financial capital, like Giuffrè claimed, and the loan weren't guaranteed by the Church, but went straight into his own pockets and of some accomplices while he used the interest rate paid by the later client to reimburse the one of the former client. The investigations in missing 40 billions of lira putted lights on the complicity of figures of the Church in Italy such as the president of Azione Cattolica, Luigi Gedda, and of the then Treasury

minister Giulio Andreotti along with other heavyweights of the DC. Other cases of personal corruption marked the early years of the First Republic such as the example of the minister Trabucchi, accused of releasing importation licenses too easily and who was defended by the DC in Parliament before being abandoned by it when came the indictment of the Constitutional Court.

During the years of the "center-left" coalition that lasted from 1963 to 1976, the corruption evolved and institutionalized itself. It went along with a higher concurrence between political parties where politicians increasingly used recently acquired power and institutional positions to feed and foster the electoral success of that or that leader. It was also linked with the growing economy and the interests and evolutions that came along it. Evolutions included wealth spread and old traditional values abandonment, such as the patriarchal or confessional aspects of Italian society. The transformation occurred towards a more materialistic and secular society. This shift paved the way for a more aggressive form of capitalism with less ethical considerations (Mammarella 1992). Italian capitalism grew vociferously without moment of transition between the post 1945 Italian societal order centered around its agricultural aspects and the then domination of the economical market. And this rapid development would have prevented the establishment of rules of the economical game while other and older industrial cultures like the Anglo-Saxon ones had created such as forms of auto-control or codes of behavior that included harsh punishment and fixed limits to financial corruption.

Political corruption grew in parallel to the development of financial corruption. Soon it came to the point of violating institutional norms to compete those very same institutions. Conducted by groups and individuals who operated in private or from within the State and that often acted in the most complete illegality, mixing political and economic objectives in order to reach personal ambitions and career expectations. Overall, it led to the intertwining of the correct development of the democratic process. One of those declared objectives culminated during the 1960s and 1970s with the expression of a form of "State Terrorism" meant to fight communism in the name of "occidental values". To many observers, including Mammarella, the SIFAR scandal is one of many examples supporting the institutionalization and systematization of political corruption in Italy leading to the 1992 crisis. At the head of SIFAR, the Italian intelligence agency from 1956 to 1962, was Giovanni De Lorenzo. During that time, he implemented a plan for massive profiling of Italians. Over 157,000 files were reportedly compiled, including for the purpose of blackmail, on politicians, unionists, entrepreneurs,

intellectuals, religious figures, and military personnel. Simultaneously, he established the "Solo plan" aimed at having the army take control of the state. The project envisaged the deportation of the most determined opponents to a secret base in Sardinia. When the scandal of profiling and coup plots erupted in 1967, SIFAR had been dissolved for two years. It had been transformed into the Defense Information Service (SID), a simple name change (Bozonnet 2006) . Then later, in 1970, a neo-fascist coup attempt - the Borghese coup, named after the treacherous officer leading it - failed on the night of December 7-8, and then the head of SID, General Vito Miceli, had to resign after a series of accusations, including the creation of an obscure coup-oriented military structure, "*The Rose of the Winds*". According to Mammarella still, "*it seemed to suggest that a section of the political class was willing to abide by the democratic method as long as it allowed them to perpetuate their power, but when it was endangered, they would be ready to resort to exceptional solutions*" (Mammarella 1992, p. 143).

The early 1970s remained in Italian history as the years of the "big looting" during which the political class assaulted the national mutuals with requests of funds that disappeared and with low interest rates for major new industrial projects especially conducted in the southern part sof the country and especially dedicated to the chemical industry, weakest spot of the Italian economy for years. Entrepreneurial figures like Eugenio Cefis who used public funds bought millions of actions in Montedison – a major company in industrial chemicals until 2002 – only to the become its President (Mammarella 1992); or Nino Rovelli and Raffaele Ursini who created expensive facilities with public funds such as a factory to produce protein from "fermentation" of hydrocarbons in Calabria but that never opened leaving plenty of people in the region on their working expectations and that for many years. Mammarella writes "*They are the typical representatives of a breed of adventuring managers who find room for their initiatives in the complicity of the lavishly financed parties*" (Mammarella 1992, p.144).

In the mid 1970s, one of the biggest corruption scandal bursts: The Lockheed scandal. The American aeronautics company paid Italian officials to supply the Italian air force with planes. The Lockheed bribes implicated several ministers and from all the political affiliations. Five Christian Democrats and two Social Democrats ministers were challenged, but for only three of them the investigations were granted proceeding approval by the Chamber of Deputies. Meanwhile the President of the Republic, Giovanni Leone, was forced to resign before the official end of his term at the Quirinale Palace.

The corruption affairs and scandals continued to splatter the First Italian Republic during the 70s and the 80s. Of course, the biggest of all corruption scandal we have not mentioned yet is the one of the P2 Masonic lodge.

In 1981, the existence of the elite club Loggia P2 was revealed when a list of 953 of its members was discovered during the casual home search of the indicted banker for corruption, Licio Gelli, and who was one of its most preeminent member and leader. The revelation of the existence of such a secret club and the large scope of its members putted lights on the number of connections between the economical-financial sector and the political elite. P2 was a place of business and of protection of licit and illicit affairs conducted by a relatively big amount of establishment members, even from the judicial spheres. The obsession of morality slowly growing in the country was fueled constantly by news of Loggia P2 and recurrent corruption scandals. It gave way to many conspiracy theories. Gelli appeared capable of manipulating bankers and politicians, domestic and foreign secret services, judges and journalists. Soon he became known as the "Burattinaio", the "Buttermaker", and was attributed the role of the "grande vecchio", the "grand old man" at the roots of every corruption scandal that were known and guessed within the Italian society for years. Affairs in which terrorism, international finance speculations and political maneuver were mixed. In the end, the P2 story only is interesting because of what it says about the overall climate of a "deep state" existing in Italy and the general mistrust that was expressed against the State, its institutions, and the ruling elite (Scoppola 1991).

The judicial system, backed by the national press, made a large use of those scandals, and were very quickly referred to as "*pretori d'assalto*" which could be translated by "campaigning magistrate". And that, already as early as the 1970s – see the RAI tv show entitled "*Pretori d'assalto*" on the topic broadcasted the 21 February 1978 (Monicelli 1978). The saying is expressing the idea according to which the civil obligations prevail on the political one: the "campaigning magistrate" are its expression and their activity revolved against the political class conceived as such. Their mission was defined as working against inertia, corruption, and power abuses (Mammarella 1992). According to Mammarella: the public opinion to these inquiries and new strategic approaches from the magistrates were weak at first and expressed itself discontinuously through votes. Votes and elections which in fact did not subsequentially variated from the usual results vis à vis the issues of political morality. In fact, the introduction of element of political morality in the public debate "*contributed to feed the security and*

arrogance of the ones detaining power" says Mammarella page 147 of his book *La Prima Reppubblica dalla Fondazione al declino* published in 1992.

The public opinion's first consequential reactions against the partitocracy and its inherent corruption began to appear with the progressive deterioration of public service and public administration, especially the health system (Grilli di Cortona 2007). The health system which was more and more under the monopolistic management of the political personal, drastically so after a reform concerning it in 1979. Facing obvious disorganization and the inherent corruption of the public services, the growing manifestation of parts of most citizens, which felt discriminated and denied by the doings of the partitocracy, revived the old requests of placing the right people at the right postings. A call for technocracy, for experts in power rather than political actors or activists.

From indifference to large distrust reactions, the public opinion began positioning itself against the political class and everyone who was part of it. In short, there was a growing request for radical changes in the way the political system worked and had a hand over every service provided nationally.

Fully aware of those growing concerns within the Italian civil society, the Communist Party and its leader Enrico Berlinguer began campaigning for the "moral question" as a political program in itself.

Below are displayed on *Fig. 1* the election results for the Chamber of Deputies from 1948 to 1992 and the Communist's high score in 1976 when the "moral question" was officially introduced in the political campaign and came to complete a strategy of normalization, of distinctiveness of the PCI from the Soviet Union to the eyes of the Italians. That process was driven by the charisma of Enrico Berlinguer and completed it. Constitutionalist Stefano Ceccanti analyses: "*In reality, the PCI exploited the moral issue, particularly after it encountered a crisis and departed from the national solidarity of the post-Lead Years era. It was a tactic to establish a sense of shape and identity for itself, especially since it had shed its communist identity. This approach offered a simplistic vision aimed at delineating a distinctiveness for the party*" (Ceccanti 2023)

Table 3.1 Election to the Chamber of Deputies during the First Republic, 1948–1992

	1948		1953		1958		1963		1968		1972		1976		1979		1983		1987		1992	
Party	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats
PDUP	–		–		–		–		4.5	23	1.9	0	1.5	6	2.3	6	1.5	7	1.7	8	–	
PRC	–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		5.6	35
PR	–		–		–		–		–		–		1.1	4	3.5	18	2.2	11	2.6	13	–	
Greens	–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		2.5	13	2.8	16
PCI	31.0	131	22.6	143	22.7	140	25.3	166	26.9	177	27.1	179	34.4	227	30.4	201	29.9	198	26.6	177	16.1	107
PSI/PSU	31.0	52	12.7	75	14.2	84	13.8	87	14.5	91	9.6	61	9.6	57	9.8	62	11.4	73	14.3	94	13.6	92
PSDI	7.1	33	4.5	19	4.5	22	6.1	33	–		5.1	29	3.4	15	3.8	20	4.1	23	3	17	2.7	16
PRI	2.5	10	1.6	5	1.4	6	1.4	6	2.0	9	2.8	15	3.1	14	3.0	16	5.1	29	3.7	21	4.4	27
DC	48.5	306	40.1	263	42.3	273	38.3	260	39.1	266	38.7	266	38.7	263	38.3	262	38.3	225	34.3	234	29.7	206
PLI	3.8	15	3.0	13	3.5	17	7.0	39	5.8	31	3.9	20	1.3	5	1.9	9	2.9	16	2.1	11	2.8	17
LN	–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		8.7	55
PNM	2.8	13	6.8	40	4.8	25	1.7	8	1.3	6	–		–		–		–		–		–	
MS	2.0	6	5.9	29	4.8	24	5.1	27	4.5	24	8.7	56	6.1	35	5.3	30	6.8	42	5.9	35	5.4	34
Others	2.3	8	2.9	3	1.7	5	1.3	4	1.4	3	2.1	5	0.7	4	1.7	6	3.2	6	3.3	6	8.2	25

Source: Raffaella Nanetti and Robert Leonardi (2013) *Politics in Europe*, pp. 362–363.

Fig. 1 – Election to the Chamber of Deputies during the First Republic, 1948 – 1992.

This strategy allowed the PCI to obtain its best elections results between 1948 and 1992 at the general eletions of 1976: 34% and 227 seats against 38% and 263 seats for the Christian Democracy (Nanetti and Leonardi 2013). It is important to also replace these results in the context of the "democratic alliance" proposal made by Berlinguer in 1973 to the DC and welcomed at the time by Aldo Moro. This alliance was taking its full part, in addition to the "moral question", to the distinctiveness strategy of the PCI. It was inspired by the Chilean Allende alliance composed of the Chilean DC with the left wing "Popular Unity" coalition that did not last long because of General Pinochet coup the same year. The "moral question" and the "democratic alliance" were themselves also completed by the launch of the "Eurocommunism" campaign of Berlinguer and aimed at building a European alternative to communism with Spanish and French communists parties that would, in theory, be more democratic than their Soviet counterpart (Stehle 1978).

The introduction of the "moral question" in the 1970s is however especially interesting for us because of what it meant for the DC. To be a bit more precise, Berlinguer understood that the only way for the communist opposition to rise was to attack the DC and its allies not on their programs or policies but on their behavior and habits. More than that, "the moral question" was also a way to look for a new communist identity as the ideology in itself began to enter in crisis after the bloodsheds in Hungary in 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1968. The Euromissiles crisis that began in the late 1970s and that is coincidental with the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 by the Soviet Union then starts a decade of arm race that eventually led to the collapse of the

Soviet Union and contributed to the decision of the Italian communists to go for the "*questione morale*".

In 1979 the deployment of the SS-20 Soviet missiles on the European continent at the same time the Soviet Union began its invasion of Afghanistan that constituted the first soviet military operation on foreign soil, divided the Italian left and the PCI. The Communist Party stated it would vote against the deployment of the countering American missiles Pershing II on the Italian territory, but its opposition was ambiguous. Voting against was necessary to avoid a definitive break with the Soviet Union and appease the pro-USSR members of the party. But that vote couldn't result in an anti-Atlantic opposition, as that would have damaged any possibility of participating in a government with the DC. Berlinguer was well aware that the PCI's stance on the Euromissiles represented a kind of test: the party's behavior in parliament could be seen as another small step toward the Westernization of the party and distancing from Moscow, or as confirmation of ties with the Soviet Union and the party's inability to garner the credibility and maturity needed to enter the government. Opposition to NATO had to be moderate and ambiguous to avoid internal rupture but couldn't be unequivocal to preserve the identity and support of the electorate.

The moral question went from being a foreign policy tool to redesignate the Italian communists position towards a more domestic focus as the tensions of the Cold War were increasing and making the Italian communist position difficult to hold. Positioning the debate on the national focus through the idea of morality in politics was more consensual for PCI's electorate and electoral goals – taking part in a government coalition.

Here is what Enrico Berlinguer said about the moral question in Italian politics during an interview granted to Eugenio Scalfari form *La Reppubblica* the 27th of July 1981:

"You have said several times that the moral issue is at the heart of the Italian issue today. Why?

The moral issue does not end in the fact that, since there are thieves, corrupt, attackers in high places of politics and administration, they must be tracked down, they must be denounced, and they must be put in jail. The moral question, in today's Italy, is at one with the occupation of the state by governmental parties and their currents, it is at one with gang warfare, it is at one with their conception of politics and their methods of government, which must simply be

abandoned and overcome. That is why I say that the moral issue is the center of the Italian problem." (Scalfari 1981)

The "moral question" was therefore extremely linked with the very existence of political parties. That perception was increased by a political game from the communists, at their own risks, and by the general trend of mediatization of judicial investigations that would be major during the "Mani Pulite" – Clean Hands- operation at the beginning of the 1990s.

Together with political corruption, the biggest threat that was directed towards the system and its institutions came from the large diffusion of criminality in the country over the decades preceding the 1990s. It constituted a direct competition to the State, when not an assault against it. Next to a high increase in common criminality such as crimes against property, kidnapping of people, extorsion phenomenon, manifested itself the mafia criminality far more threatening for the State's institutions. Are dealt with here two phenomenon that have different origins despite being linked and feeding each other. They request two different approach and response.

Common criminality takes roots in the country's rise of wealth, of a quick and non-predicted development that comes without directions nor strategy and that has no equilibrium between its purely economic aspects and its social political aspects. The public action meant to direct and prevent social side effects of this massive economic growth known as the "Italian economic miracle" that lasted from 1958 to 1963 came missing. The Society was abandoned to itself and the public structures dedicated to either prevention or repression have all been the victims of a loss of efficiency due to carelessness and incompetence of most of the administrators "*due to the permissive atmosphere created by the '68 movement, which did not find a counterbalancing response from either the State or society*" (Mammarella 1992, p.148).

The weakness and the dispersion of the police apparel, according to Mammarella on page 149, "*have profited to the proliferation of crimes and have swelled its ranks*." Resulted from this, beyond a increase in crimes, a climate of intense violence in the country that extended to social exchanges in addition to criminal episodes. The formation of the Red Brigades as an armed terrorist group ideologically linked with Communism in an aspect of it. Giuseppe Mammarella writes in 1992 the following, also on page 149: "*The greatest risk is that interpersonal relationships, traditionally based on tolerance and compromise typical of the Catholic and*

agrarian tradition of Italian society, might be deeply altered, and that the method of force might replace that of mediation." (Mammarella 1992, p. 149).

The difference however between common and mafian criminality is that the former is much more controllable on the micro approach with efficient policies when the latter is more dangerous because directly directed towards the State and its institutions. In fact, the State and the Mafia compete on the ground of sovereignty over a determined land.

The origins of the Mafia are old, and its roots can be directly understood because of an economic and cultural reality linked to the specificity of the island of Sicily and its history. During the post-1945 years, the Mafia transformed itself alongside the economic growth of the country. It stopped being an extension of an agrarian society that remained until then characterized by its underdevelopment and its patriarchal aspect. It experienced a period of urbanization and internationalization in addition to the fact it became an essential component of the local political scene with the advantages of the extensive autonomy granted to the Sicilian region by the Italian Constitution. This system and its evolutions have been described by Pino Arlacchi known for his work on the mafia and organized crime (Arlacchi 1983). During a fist phase, in the 1950s, the formation of a strong political party apparatus in Sicily and the development of statism intervention created a crisis within the mafia and its traditional mediation function within the agrarian Sicilian society. In those years and until the end of the 1960s, it recentered its activities from the countryside to the urban centers that were developing such as Palermo or Catania and specialized itself in the services sector like distribution or real estate. At that time, it mostly remained under the control of the political power, limiting itself while providing votes and services (Arlacchi 1983).

In the following decade, in parallel to a diminished State presence, the mafia diverted its functions and started becoming an entrepreneurial entity. The balance of power with the political class, which before was an exchange of votes with public contracts, changed. The mafia strengthened its local power and influence and started conditionalizing the political establishment to which it was first subordinated by granting it money in addition to votes. With the 1980s and the business of drug trafficking, the mafia reached its climax of financial power while making a lot of benefits (Arlacchi 2018). At this point, it is already able to move millions of dollars – the market money - freely, has a global and protective financial network and benefits from self-made alliances either with politicians or other criminal organizations, at home and

abroad. To the criminal activities were combined the entrepreneurial ones. Mafia successfully inserted itself in all the layer of the local economy. With its money and with its violence, it tooks over increasingly large slices of that economy, invested capital, procured tasks, distributed incomes and salaries. In specific sectors such as tourism, retail, public construction work, it replaced legal businesses and created it centers of economic power (Arlacchi 2018). It acted on the regional political level with always more security while developing its network and right of way all around Italy to the point that at the end of the 1980s, forced to act, the public authorities led by judges Paolo Borsellino and Giovanni Falcone organized a "Maxi trial". It lasted between February 1986 and December 1987 in a bunker courthouse built specially for the occasion in Sicily to bring it down. 475 mafiosi faced the court during that trial and 338 of which were sentenced to jail. *Cosa Nostra*, the Sicilian mafia, answered this declaration of war against its interests by murdering judges Borsellino and Falcone in 1992.

In the process of repressing mafian activities were created extraordinary tools such as the superpowers of justice via the "repenti laws" (Ceccanti 2023) or police with the strengthening of the *Guardia di Finanza* as well as mobilized the secret services. In short, from sporadic and inefficient common police operations, the Italian State declared war on organized crime around the country. The conflict remains open to this day as the solution to organized crime cannot limit itself to repressive measures. The Mafia issues is economic, social, and cultural and the omission from the State in the past makes the operation long and complex (Arlacchi 1983).

To the meridional policies escaped an important extent. Because they gave priority to the economic development, the interventionist measures the State undertook since the beginning of the 1950s have neglected the social and cultural issues of an outdated agrarian society, especially in Sicily. New economic centers were created, and some were strengthened. While a first phase of post-war industrialization was completed two economic systems developed side by side: the legal one and the criminal one, eventually competing against each other. The risk at the end of the 1980s was that the two systems could confound with each other, legitimizing each other. "*The powerless and infiltrated party-dominated State might acknowledge the occurred process and give its approval with yet another, albeit symbolic, amnesty*." Writes Mammarella in 1992 before concluding: "*Until now, the signal has not come, and it is doubtful that the current political class will be able to find within itself the courage and moral strength necessary to give it clearly and unequivocally*" (Mammarella 1992, p. 153)

One power that had to courage to stand more and more against corruption and violence was the judicial power as we have seen with the judges Borsellino and Falcone. The judicial system saw its tools and its duties constantly increase until 1992 which constitute a climax in that trend (Ceccanti 2023).

From 1981 on, a state of war was declared between the politicians – especially from the Christian Democracy – and the judges that were becoming "political opponents in disguise" (Sangiorgi 2005). The judicial year of 1981 was inaugurated at The High Council of the Judiciary "*Consiglio superiore della magistrature*", or CSM, with a debate on "the independence of the judicial power" as an answer by the judges about the accusations more and more pushed forwards by the political class of biased investigations. The tensions reached their peak in 1990 when after a message delivered to the Parliament about the institutional role of the CSM and its need for reform was followed by an unprecedented strike of the judges and defined by President Francesco Cossiga as the "*ultimate indicative of the further breakdown of our country's institutions*"(Cossiga 1991).

So far, the tensions between judicial and political powers were constrained in a purely institutional framework and nourished by numerous amounts of debates in Parliament and in the CSM often browsed by a few scandals. The situation began to tilt from 1992 and on as more than 50 000 politicians nationwide and at every level were convicted in a numerous series of affairs after the Clean Hands operations (Colarizi 2022a). The reason of such a rocket switch was the general sickness and tiredness of the Italian public opinions of those scandals and institutional jousting.

Enrico Berlinguer, leader of the PCI and figure of the introduction of the "*questione morale*" in the Italian political debate helped to bring these feelings of tiredness and sickeness for the DC and the issues of corruption when he talked about *"a profound degeneration of the institutional mechanisms and the state, caused by the Christian democrat system of power, which has constituted a mutual infiltration between DC and the State [...]. The particular gravity and extension of the corruption of public life has its origin here"* (Berlinguer 1980)

The Italian Communist Party (PCI) attacks on Christian-democrats morality were defined as "*oriented to play its cards on other arguments (than actual politics), those that generically go by the name of 'moral issue'*" by the Christian-democrat treasury minister Pier Luigi Romita

during the debates of the 6th of November 1984 (Colarizi 2022a, p.60). Other arguments, political ones, such as in this case the fight against tax evasion and the strengthening of fiscal loyalty were left aside by a new kind of strategy employed by the party of Enrico Berlinguer. The PCi abandoned politics as it was focusing only on the "*moral question*" as a potential political come back. It was the beginning of the politics of anti-politics or that of a pre-populistic argument of political demagogy. In truth, focusing on the perceived depraved behaviors of the political majority in parliament instead of pushing forward a positive agenda was a strategy to hide internal communists' divisions (Colarizi 2021).

The judicial reviews of the time that followed the Communists political attacks on the Christian-Democrats revealed an "*inherent complexity in the relationship between moral and legal issues, highlighting the limited effectiveness of solely relying on repressive measures to address moral concerns*" according to the jurist Livio Pepino (Pepino 1987). In other words, judicial argument came in support of political strategy but were not sufficient in dealing with such rooted behaviors. There was a clear need for political reflection and reform on morality in politics. Aldo Moro called for it at the Christian-Democratic Party Congress in 1968 already (Colarizi 2021). This insight sheds light on the dual attacks that the Christian Democracy then faced, ultimately leading to the emergence of *Tangentopoli* crisis and subsequent judicial investigations. Given its central role and the intense scrutiny it faced, the Christian Democracy played a pivotal part in the collapse of the first Italian republic.

Analysis of the involvement of the Christian Democracy and its members in corruption and clientelism practices

The arts and movies are an interesting way to grasp the changes in a society and its challenges. The cinema of director Elio Petri is recognized as one of the best depictions of political corruption in 1970s'Italy. His movie *Indagine su un Cittadino al di Sopra di Ogni Sospetto* from 1970 obtained the 1971 Oscar for best foreign movie as well as the jury's price at the Cannes festival. In this first movie revolving around power and its criminal aspects, Petri highlights the Machiavellian aspects of Italian politics of the time. There is a specific scene where the antihero of the movie "Il Dottore", the new head of the political office of the Roman Police and unsuspected murdered, goes to the archive room and asks for all the affairs incriminating the DC and its members before facing a room full of files being digitalized showing the already numerous criminal accusations and suspicions the ruling party faced. Later,

in 1976, Elio Petri directed a movie specifically dedicated to the DC and its decay called *Todo modo*. *Todo modo* is inspired from the homonym novel of Leonardo Sciascia. It is a portrait of the leaders of the Christian-Democracy depicted as religious men in a spiritual retreat and all attacked by a disease, allegory of the plague. The movie in fact deals with the question of morality in politics and with its perceived absence of it within the DC leadership. The movie was perceived as a clear and accurate condemnation of the party and its members to the point it was described as an act of "*brilliant rebelliousness*" by its review in the newspaper *L'Unità* the 5th of May 1976.

Such relationship has therefore been cooperative and competitive but were in the end disastrous for the majority. The post-communist Massimo D'Alema analyzed them with more precision and preciseness in these words when debating in Parliament the 25th of May 1992: "*the Mafia thrived in the conditions of disintegration, corruption and weakness of the political system, in the intertwining of business, politics, and welfarism that dominates so much of our Mezzogiorno."* In other words, organized crime was a reality the DC had to dealt with especially in the southern parts of the country as well as being at the same time the utmost proof of its growing weaknesses as the ruling entity.

The Christian – Democratic party apparatus did get used to use the State's influence in order to secure materially populations, meaning their votes, and feed clientelism networks. Therefore, it became the norm for Christian democratic governments to subsidize meridional populations in all economic sectors. The DC did so through the feudal empire that was the *Federaconsorzi* (Federations of provincial agricultural consortium) for the agriculture and through the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* for the administration. Construction works were victims of high speculation. All in all, in created a network of public jobs which only functions were to pay off and retain electors as customer base (Pizzorno 1975)

At the local level was developed a specific form of political work division. Many heavyweights of the DC, mostly under secretaries of State, managed personally in their home provinces and regions a patronage system: distribution of jobs, subcontractors, and other types of clientelism tactics. This Christian-democrat "boss system" in the Mezzogiorno was at the origins of most of the Christian democratic ruling elite careers that faced the Tangentopoli accusations years laters. Emilio Colombo, Silvio Gava, Bernardo Mattarella began as undersecretary of state in the De Gasperi governments between 1948 and 1953 (Allum 1973).

The Christian Democracy fully integrated this clientelist system in the functioning of its party apparatus. That system is described by an article written by Percy Allum in 1995 published in the "*Politix. Revue des sciences sociales du politique*" on page 30 and entitled "*Le double visage de la démocratie chrétienne*". The local organization was pyramidal with a multilayer hierarchy. At the top of it: the heads of the diverse demo Christian currents, the "capi correnti". Usually, they were the main DC leaders nationally like Gava in Naples or eminent members of the direction of the Party or the government. Then came the lieutenants, almost always parliamentarians or chiefs in the most important public agencies. Sometimes they were the secretaries of provincial federations or those of the main cities. A Neapolitan journalist described them to Percy Allum in the following manner in 1960: "*In the local sections of the Christian Democracy or in the new national headquarters at Via Marconi, there's a constant coming and going of 'faccendieri' (literally people who are busy, involved in business, with a notably negative connotation) with smiles or sour expressions resembling minor officials. As one of them passes between the small clusters of clients waiting, usually for a day's work or a paid task, with a 'raccomandazione,' a note, or a pass to see a big shot, a name circulates among the group in hushed tones: Giovanni Leone, Monaldi, Jervolino, Colasanto, Gava... This isn't the name of the passing person but the name of the notable figure to whom the official, the 'faccendiere,' the section secretary, is somehow connected. Behind the stern gaze of a secretary lies the memory of a minister, a strong-willed undersecretary*" (Allum 1973, p. 170)

Lower in the pyramidal corrupt integrated system of the DC are the "*grandi elettori*", the electoral college. They were major personalities and activists for the DC that managed their clientelist networks locally. They were mayors, municipal counselors, secretaries of municipal sections but also doctors or lawyers. As a DC militant explains to Percy Allum in his book *Politics and Society in Postwar Naples* published in 1973: "*The recruitments in a local company are made through an agreement between the local secretary of the DC and the head of personnel, who is one of our trusted men. In response to a request for 80 workers, he introduces at least 60 from the DC; the others are eliminated by the factory management according to information from the Carabinieri.*" (Allum 1973, p. 171).

A local DC town counselor describes, still to Percy Allum, the reasons behind such clientelism from the DC and why it worked in the following way: "*On a national level, I have always supported N, S, B (members of Parliament), and they have always received a lot of votes. I*

support them because whenever I intervene, they are always ready to assist citizens and workers in solving their material problems. In short, they genuinely work. Even here, I have always had the support of everyone, especially the ecclesiastical authorities, with whom I always agree"(Allum 1973, p. 171)

Then, the "*Capi Elettori"*, the chief of the electors are even lower on the clientelist pyramidal Party apparatus of the DC. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish them from the *Grandi Elettori* as they happen to be militants who own major network of influence locally as well. May this be territorially, familiarly or professionally. Examples: Owners of construction work companies, businesses associations and such. Allum interviewed a former elected official in a small town at the doors of Naples who stated the following: "*Politically, my family is recognized as being DC: among relatives and extended family, we number around a hundred. Personally, I have always had the support of all these relatives. We form a more or less cohesive group of relatives, including brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. The family has always supported me, and it has always been disciplined. Even in 1960, despite the fact that I was not on the list, my family voted for the candidate I preferred"* (Allum 1973, p. 172).

Logically then, the people the furthest away from the Bosses and notables of the Party are what are called the "*Galoppini*". They are people that are getting paid to deliver several small electoral services like distributing pasta packages or tracts in the name of the DC candidates. With them are the random electors. But all, at some point, became clients of a politician because they received material help or sometimes even just the promise of material help. In a society such as the one of the Mezzogiorno before 1992, that was particularly marked by poverty and unemployment, the possibility for an individual to find a job, especially in the public sector, and integrate that way a clientelist network, could substantially increase the quality of life of his family. That is what a *Capo Elettori* explains still to Allum in the same book that "d*uring my political activities, I try everything to approach people, especially the Communists and the Socialists, and I am interested in everything they need, whether it's a permit, documents, etc. Even if I have to leave my office just to create an obligation toward me and then convince them later to vote for DC. I establish moral bonds, taking advantage of difficult times to assist them."* (Allum 1973).

Clientelist networks are the ground base for the DC bosses' networks, particularly in the South of the country. As the DC had control over the national governments for decades, the local DC

elite had a de facto State control over their territories. Therefore, settles in a superior rule, that the Gava in Naples for instance understood as early as during the 1950s: their influence in Naples strengthened and served their influence in Rome while their influence in Rome secured and increased tenfold their power in Naples (Allum 1995). It is therefore logical that those powerful local elites then became the leader of the most influential currents of the DC such as the Gava that led in the 1960s the powerful current of the *Dorotei* (Caprara 1975). The DC then appeared as a political machine system with as its base clientelism and corruption that remained nevertheless feudal because centered around a network of local influential elite.

Socio-economic Challenges

Examination of the socio-economic issues faced by Italy during the First Republic

The post-industrial era and its economic trends were global. The West was changing and changing fast and all European leaders, being socialists like François Mitterrand in France or Christian democrats like Helmut Kohl in Germany, had to face it. Those European leaders all grew up in the "*industrial era*", in organized societies and were part of mass political parties organized around collective political action. All of them were attached to the respective European welfare systems and both Christian-democrats and socialists led, since the end of World War two, pro-labor policies. Europe as an abstract entity at the time rejected Margaret Thatcher's economical model which was in fact a societal view. The British prime minister understood the mood of the times and pushed forward policies that then led the post-industrial era as she famously declared "There is just simply no alternative" at a conference for British conservative women in May 1980.

When the war ended, in 1945, the democratic debate and the economic side of it mainly revolved around the tensions between social equity and individual liberty. Came along the question whether the State intervention nurtured or harmed democracy (Corduwener 2016). It is only since the 1960s that politicians started to balance the two. The equilibrium first faced challenged ideologically during the 1968'movements and then was undermined materially by the economic downturn in the aftermath of the 1973 petroleum and economic crisis.

The specificity of the Italian crisis in the 1980s resides in the gigantic public debt that Italy piled up over the 1970s and early 1980s. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) writes the following in 1997 about this issue in Italy: "*The financing of public works and services and the development of a generous social security system in the past two decades have resulted in budget deficits that have been large both in absolute terms and in proportion to GDP. In 1980, the public sector deficit amounted to 8.6 percent of Italy's GDP; by 1985, it had increased to 12.6 percent, the highest ratio among the major industrial countries; it has remained appreciably higher since then*"(Santini 1997). The succession of large budget deficits has resulted in the rapid growth of public debt; the burden of these treasury issues has been taken mainly by households and nonfinancial firms increasing dissatisfaction with the economic mistakes made by the political class.

The public debt has increased from 59 percent of GDP in 1980 to 84 percent in 1985, and 123 percent at the end of 1994 still according to the IMF (Santini 1997). State intervention and planning of the economy became outdated as ways to govern economically a country as they were reinforcing this inflationary spiral. Covering the treasury's borrowing requirement with money created by the central bank entails large and probably increasing costs for macroeconomic performance. Monetary growth significantly outpacing an economy's capacity to supply goods and services has repercussions on the balance of payments, on the exchange rate, and above all on prices.

The economic planning of the economy feeding these budget deficits and therefore public debt an inflationary spiral was part of the set of ideologic principles that most European countries had to incorporate at the liberation of the continent in 1945. European constitutions are social constitutions as shown by the preamble of the 1946 French Constitution, or by the fact the Italian constitution starts at article 1 by "Italy is a democratic Republic founded on labour" and is followed at article 38 by "Every citizen unable to work and without the necessary means of subsistence is entitled to welfare support." It is a clear statement in favor of the social duties of the Italian state while the United Kingdom not having a constitutional text per se but a set of changing constitutional principles in laws was freer to implement a market capitalist agenda.

This agenda however defined the 1980s. It was later theorized under the "Washington consensus". This so called "consensus" written down by the economist John Williamson in 1989 gets its direct inspiration from the economist Milton Friedman and the Chicago school of

economics. It states 10 economic commandments that should be followed by economies in debt in order to catch up and modernize themselves. Such principles are: 1/ Fiscal policy discipline, with avoidance of large fiscal deficits relative to GDP; 2/ Redirection of public spending from subsidies ("especially indiscriminate subsidies") toward broad-based provision of key pro-growth investments like infrastructures; 3/Tax reform, broadening the tax base and adopting moderate marginal tax rates; 4/ Interest rates that are market determined; 5/Competitive exchange rates; 6/Trade liberalization: liberalization of imports, with particular emphasis on elimination of quantitative restrictions like licensing; 7/ Liberalization of inward foreign direct investment; 8/ Privatization of state enterprises; 9/ Deregulation: abolition of regulations that impede market entry or restrict competition, except for those justified on safety, environmental and consumer protection grounds, and prudential oversight of financial institutions; 10/ Legal security for property rights (Williamson 2008).This plan despite being originally designed with Latin America's democracies in mind had implications for Italy.

Earlier we mentioned that Massimo D'Alema highlighted the specific situation of corruption with the Italian *Mezzogiornio*, *Mezzogiornio* referring to the southern parts of the country understood to go from Rome downwards, but another Italy was developing: the north.

The north, led by the growing city of Milan, was beginning to thrive on market capitalism. It is important here to focus on the city of Milan for one main reason: Milan often is the starting point of trends that changed Italy as a country (Amendola 2015). It was the case in the 1980s when globalization made its way within the Italian society, it will be the case when the corrupt local official Mario Chiesa will be arrested in 1992 starting the *Tangentopoli* investigations, and it will become the base of Silvio Berlusconi's rise and legacy.

Milan in the 1980s is refusing the political planning of the economy. The city is the at the forefront of the free capital movement and of the high degree of international financial integration that characterizes the economic mood if the 1980s (Orsina 2015). It creates and implement a non-political -meaning non-State planned – alternative to the treasury issues mentioned earlier. That nonpolitical alternative believes in the soundness of intermediaries, the efficiency of markets, and the diversification of financial instruments to facilitate the flow of private savings to the treasury and the integration of the domestic market with those abroad reduce the cost of financing and assist monetary policy in achieving their stability objectives. It looks abroad and connects more with the marketplaces of Frankfort, New York, or London

than with Rome, Naples or Palermo. It opens the North – South / market driven – centralize policy-oriented gap that will later transform politically Italy (Amendola 2015).

Milan is nowadays known to be the economical center of Italy. The skyscrapers, the functioning public transport system, the thriving economy replaced the former purely industrial hub it was since the XIX century. Still today gentrification processes can be observed all around the city. But it all started in the 1980s. During the "Craxi years", which refers to the years from 1983 to 1987, the city of Milan undertook many major changes that are interesting because of what they tell of the socio-economic development of the country at large (Orsina 2015).

The town was governed by the socialist politician Carlo Tognoli, himself leading a coalition that included the communists. Under his leadership, Milan, the display case of modern Italian society, changed era: it moved from the productive capitalism to the financial and speculative capitalism (Colarizi 2022a). Milan became dominated by insuring compagnies, banks and TV Channels, including a certain group called "Mediaset" belonging to the businessman and later Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

With those changes came a zeitgeist: "*Milano da bere*" – Milan to drink. The slogan came from an advertisement for the Milanese alcohol Ramazotti showing images of a typical Milanese day and describing Milan as a city that "*reborn every morning, pulsing like a heart; Milan is positive, optimistic, efficient; Milan is to be lived, dreamed and enjoyed."* The sequence was shown using the accelerated frame technique and closed with the claim "*Milan is to be drink*". It stayed. In short, the 1980s'economical mood – privatizations, economical laissez-faire, market driven societies – entered Italy, and it did so from Milan.

The end of the Bretton woods agreement and the Oil crisis changed the global economic climate, starting in the second half of the 1970s and early 1980s. In France, the Mitterand-nomics, interventionist economic politics, backfired in the early 1980s to the point the country had to devaluate the Franc (Cohen 1998). Western Germany faced the crisis better thanks to corporations and the strength of its extensive welfare state which prevented the country to head towards political instability (Eichengreen 2008). As the "*northern European job crisis was being re-exported to the Mediterranean"* Italy was particularly affected (Judt 2010). The country faced high level of inflation and called for financial support to the International Monetary Fund. In 1975, the worst year of the crisis, the economy contracted by almost four

percent while inflation rates reached seventeen percent (Crainz 2003). The *Financial Times* wrote in 1976: "*the country is not now on the verge of bankruptcy; it is theoretically bankrupt*" (Ginsborg 1990, p. 354).

When the *Tangentopoli* investigations began, the public debt was out of control, the fiscal evasion was generalized, and the welfare state was distributed inequitably. When the inflation and the public debt began to lose their social roles as the society's buffers with the economy, itself becoming market driven, the whole political equilibrium entered in crisis (Colarizi 2022a). To be short, it is the end of the Cold War.

Analysis of the Christian Democracy's response to these challenges and its impact on the political stability

The Christian-democracy always had very close links with the United States, links it deepened during most of the Cold War and therefore was economically influenced by the decision taken in Washington DC and by the mood Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher were introducing the world to.

The introduction of a free market economy in the 1980s was most felt from within the Italian and the German Christian-democrats than form within the French Gaullist political formations for instance. Italy faced the worst economic recession among those three States in the 1970s (Toniolo 2013). Ideologically, the DC saw the economy as a solution to these issues. In 1972, the Party hosted a conference on the question of state intervention in the economy that influenced it over the next decades. The meeting concluded that "a large consensus has been observed regarding the role of the enterprise and the function of the market" in contrast to the "*limited success of the past experiences with planning*" (D.C. 1973).

Nicola Sartor, an Italian economist, analyze the Italian political mismanagement of the economy during the 1980s as "*a lack of political will. Holders of public power tried to solve concrete problems by maintaining high public consensus*" (Sartor 2005). In her book, *Passatopresente* published in 2022, Simona Colarizi highlights the fact that "*no party had had any interest in changing the status quo, and in each party had prevailed the fear of triggering processes to change a part of the general system leading to its final collapse*." (Colarizi 2022a)

The Christian Democracy was an important member of that general *status quo*. Each party had its own strategy when it came to the use of public funds and the avoidance of economic reforms and the Christian democrat's one was explained by Giuliano Amato, minister of Treasure in the De Mita government in those terms during discussions in Parliament the 9th of November 1988: "*Today a good part of political and party action consists of amplifying demands (from the public opinion) that are accepted without changing a comma, because they come from subjects sufficiently numerous to represent an attractive reservoir of votes*." Its socialist colleague, Maurizio Sacconi talked about a "*crisis of the social State which is not yet felt in all its gravity*" still in parliament and in 1986 referring to the breakdown of public hospitals, schools and finances of local and regional governments.

Simona Colarizi uses the terms "*parassitismo di massa*" – mass parasitism - to refer to the free-riding approach the public opinion adopted to a Welfare state in complete breakdown itself. All in all, all enlightened leaders from all political parties reached the same conclusion, she argues; that "*mass parasitism was strictly linked to the crisis of the political parties*"(Colarizi 2022a). The public spending was the main question. It was used at the same time as a crucial element to societal development and as way to prevent to it too because, in short, it was not understood. The political competition in misdistributing national wealth in fact did not help Italian society to move along the global changes mentioned earlier.

Nothing appeared to have changed within the political structures and the Christian Democracy. However, this use and conceptualization of the public spending and its links with the development question triggered new political dynamics in Italy (Diamanti 1996b). Rich and develop regions such as Lombardy became scared that the mismanagement of national resources, they felt they were providing more than the others, in the context of European integration would declass them as the new *Mezzogiorno* of the European Economic Community. All the debates and events leading to the discussions of Maastricht in 1992 and then heading to the common European currency triggered waves of "sovereign" nationalism, and even in this case regionalism.

The *Lega Nord* (the Northern League) saw the day as a political movement the 8th of January 1991 and is the first populist political structure in Italy. Its electorate were former electors of the failing Christian-democracy calling for more rigorous use and management of economical tools. Alfredo Reichlin, a communist MP, summed up these new claims trans partisan claims in

his intervention in Parliament the 28 July 1989: "*there is a need for a redistribution of income and power (...) qualitative revitalization of socio-economic development and renewal of democracy*." Indeed, there was a clear mistake made by the DC in the past when it came to the planning of the economy.

The important figure of Forlani added in the 1972 meeting mentioned before that the DC had opted to "*favour a market economy. For us the market economy means on the one hand recognition of the need of enterprises for autonomy and as place where the creative and innovative capacities of man are organised, and on the other hand that consumers enjoy a freedom of choice. [This] secures the general interest [...] for all of society*" (D.C. 1973). This re – evaluation of the market economy implied a rejection of economic planning in the Christian-democratic discourse and de facto a re-evaluation of individual liberty. In fact, those two concepts merged in the Christian-democratic mind at the Party congress of 1981. The Party declared that "*in comparison with the past, the conception of the role of "public intervention" [changes], economic planning was now no longer intended as a vertical instrument to the productive structures, but as a horizontal instrument in the service of productive structures*". The DC chose for "*the free economic initiative and the market to guarantee the enablement of free individual initiative and an efficient usage of resources*" (D.C. 1981). What happened then was the fact the Party did not follow up on its declarations as the state bureaucracy continued to expand and public debt continued to rise (Ginsborg 2003). However, the DC started integrating the process leading to the expansion of human rights and market rule concepts that characterized western liberal societies, including Italy in the post-tangentopoli years and at large the 1990s. It committed to the concomitancy between individuals, capitalism, liberty, and democracy which suited the renewed dynamism of Italy's economy in the 1980s that, in its way, contributed to the rise of the entrepreneurial politician Silvio Berlusconi that took power in 1994.

To conclude, the economic recession in the 1970s paved the way for the Italian DC to integrate the free-market economy and democracy together in its theoretical framework. The link between democracy and the free market rested on the concept of individual freedom, which was perceived to be at risk due to government intervention and economic regulation during the postwar period (Corduwener 2016). In short, it meant that the Christian-democrats turned away from the main principle that established them as the leading political force in Italy in the 1940s: that State control over the economy is necessary. Conservatives had somewhat downplayed

concerns about state intervention during the 1950s and 1960s, but these apprehensions resurfaced after 1973. Consequently, democracy became more closely associated with individual liberty, and the state was increasingly perceived as a hindrance to democratic progress (Corduwener 2016).

Rise of Anti-establishment Movements

Evaluation of the rise of anti-establishment sentiments and movements during the First Republic

"*Less State, more market*" was already being an omnipresent slogan in the 1980s and especially in Italy, coming out of the "*Milano da bere*" zeitgeist. But it began to be largely used by new political formations that were challenging the traditional party politics. It is the rise of anti-establishement movement provoked by the economic changes and ideological shifts of the 1980s combined with the dramatic situation Italy was in.

The political landscape in Italy began to experience significant upheaval as a series of domestic events as well as international events, such as the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, unfolded shaking the foundations of the established political structures. Among the notable changes that emerged, one stood out as a major symptom: the emergence of a new domestic political movement known as the Lega Nord. This movement holds great significance as it marked a departure from traditional political parties, making it a noteworthy development preceding the *Tangentopoli* crisis.

Led by the self-made politician Umberto Bossi, the Lega Nord was not structured as a conventional political party. It represented the first instance of such a phenomenon in Italy, making it a trailblazer of sorts. The Lega Nord can be seen as the earliest manifestation of a "populist" political expression in the country, capturing the underlying transformative dynamics at play within Italian civil society. The movement advocated for a form of federalism that bordered on secession, promoting anti-welfare attitudes that partially concealed an underlying hostility towards the southern regions. They called for stricter immigration controls, all within a regionalist framework characterized by animosity towards the central state and what they called "the thieving Rome" (Diamanti 1996a).

The rise of new political movements such as the Northern Leagues highlighted the change of general mood in Italy towards anti-establishment sentiments, before 1992 and the "clean hands" operation. There was a sort of convergence of opinions around an "economic pragmatism" between the legists and rational actors such as entrepreneurs. The militants of the Leagues, who defined themselves as pragmatic, opposed the State, political parties, Southerners, and non-communitarian immigrants for concrete reasons derived from their daily experiences. Meanwhile the industrialists and economically successful actors of the country, especially the north, joined them in this acknowledgment of the inefficiency of public structures, the thefts of the traditional parties subjecting them to bribes, the high costs of the unproductive South, and the difficulty of integrating foreign workers (Colarizi 2022b).

The Christian Democracy that was more and more associated with the Roman state institutions and their difficulty to reform and evolve, had previously maintained for decades its grip over power establishing and maintaining financial streams and investments, solidifying its influence through the endorsement and approval of key institutions like the Catholic Church, entrepreneurial organizations, and economic associations (Berselli 2001).

The slow decline of the Christian Democracy and that Party – System that characterized the First republic is due to many factors among which are corruption scandals, the misunderstanding of global economic trends that we mentioned before but also the pure reliance on the international geopolitical context as the main pillar of their politics from the 1970s onwards. The shift began when these issues became more important than the foundations of the Christian democratic system in terms of importance for the Italian people. In short, when the almost feudal influence system described just before could no longer continue to secure political consensus around the Christian Democracy as economic issues, secularism and the North South divide were felt with more insistence.

The Christian Democracy managed to maintain its cohesion and gain support from a significant portion of Italians by relying on its anti-communist discourse, which tapped into the fears of the communists and their perceived propensity for violence. However, significant changes in the political landscape occurred in 1989 when the fall of the Berlin Wall took place. This went along with the emergence of the Lega Nord as a new secessionist and populist political force.

Simultaneously, a successful referendum led by Mario Segni sought to reform the electoral rules and the political system as a whole won. In the face of these developments, the Christian Democracy and therefore the First Republic's party system found itself stripped of its sense of purpose and direction, grappling with a new political reality. (Berselli 2001).

The Christian Democracy represented more than just a political entity; it embodied an idea and served as the political embodiment of a system that valued negotiation and consensus. The Chirstian – Democracy was at the core of the First Republic system. This is why it was often referred to as a state-party, a system-party, or a society-party, reflecting its integral role in the political landscape.

Towards the close of the 1980s, societal transformations were taking place both globally and within Italy. The emergence of radical political movements like the Lega, along with the rise of individual-centered ideologies, led to a shift in the Italian society's perspective. Consequently, there was a diminishing interest in engaging in traditional forms of negotiation and consensus-building.

Indeed, the Christian Democracy played a significant role in the downfall of the first republic due to the numerous corruption scandals, its failure to adapt to evolving global economics, and the growing mistrust surrounding its operations. However, it is crucial to recognize that the collapsing system of the first republic ultimately contributed to the downfall of the Christian Democracy as well. The responsibility for the Tangentopoli crisis and its repercussions cannot be solely attributed to one party or group. Whether they were socialists, communists, moderates, or extremists, both within and outside of parliament, all shared in the responsibility for the crisis and its far-reaching consequences.

To be more precise, the specificity of the Christian-Democracy's role in the rise of the anti-establishment feelings and then political movements such as the Lega Nord was not that it directly created them, but it did allowed them to rise because of its internal weaknesses. They were the direct consequences of what Simona Colarizi name the "trial to the Christian-democrat regime" (Colarizi 2021).

Despite the ongoing political transformations, there was however a lingering attachment to the old political framework among Italians. Many continued to identify themselves as either

communists or Christian Democrats. Even amidst the unfolding Tangentopoli investigations, the Christian Democracy managed to secure 30% of the votes in the April 1992 elections (Leonardi 2017). Still a significant score despite being the lowest in its history.

What the events of 1992 would change is to bring an “emotional factor” (Berselli 2001) to the newly appearing political system. Which is to say, the arrest of Mario Chiesa, a socialist official from the city of Milan and corrupt manager of a retirement home. This arrest, at first a looking as a miscellaneous event, revealed itself to be a major turning point in Italian politics.

How the DC lost consensus in Northern Italy and how it understood and imagined it could deal with the Northern Leagues.

The crisis of the DC has had ideological causes, the blocked system because of the cold war and the structuring presence of the PCI that ended with the disappearance of the Soviet Union; economical with the boom of the 1980s that transformed Europe in its habits and conceptions of democracy as the Milano da bere zeitgeist highlighted for instance; but also political with the rise of new forms of political expressions and parties. All of those came together.

The construction of mass political parties in the post-war years was at the time a necessity. They kept maintaining their organizational structures that were necessary to maintain a strong presence on the whole national territory. Necessary to do politics but also to get the voters to know about the programs and the positions the DC took for instance. But those structures had lost parts of their relevance now that the debate – from the 1970s and the 1980s on – transferred to the televisions sets and from mass political parties towards newly attractive opinions political parties (Lepre 2006).

This post-1945 system was competing with the pre-political culture of the Lega, in which the possibility of the common man transforming himself from ruled to ruler was celebrated and sell to voters, without, for that matter, becoming a "politician." The model was represented by Umberto Bossi we mentioned earlier, the secretary of the Northern League, as he liked to portray himself: typical "*average man*," with the defects and virtues of the average man. The success of the Lega was due to many factors, domestic and international.

In the first place, voting for them appeared to be the only useful one for those who wanted to protest the traditional political parties such as the DC and against attempts to reform them only on the surface, by the same leaders who had led them until then (Lepre 2006).

But the vote for the Lega was not only one of protest, out of disgust at discovering a corruption that only those who were very much into it could imagine as vast and widespread. It was also a vote for shifting geopolitical and economic conditions (Lepre 2006). As the Communists stopped being considered a threat and that the political system started unblocking itself because of the absence of the structuring other the PCI represented, the Northern regions and its elites started reconsidering their votes. As the reasons that had held the power bloc together disappeared, the social and economic forces that had constituted it regained their freedom of movement. There was no longer, as the basis of their alliance with the DC, the common interest of facing the danger posed by a communist party that until 1989 had won the votes of more than a quarter of the electorate (Lepre 2006). In fact, the Bourgeoisie of the Northern regions started to stop seeing any political advantage to ally with their southern counterparts when supporting the DC but saw all its economic disadvantages. That is: Welfarism.

Welfarism that initially was the basis of the prevention of national social tensions and even a mean to procure votes for the dominant bloc now appeared only as an impediment to greater economic development (Lepre 2006).

The Lega also gave voice to the protest of the less influent chunk of voters. They addressed the concern about the threat to jobs that could be brought by immigrants, especially from the southern regions, and the desire to keep resources in the provinces and regions where they were produced (Lepre 2006).

The fact that the new divide shifted from Communists versus anti-communists to the North against the South highlighted the fragility of the Italian society at the end of the 1980s and the outdatedness of mass parties like the DC to face it. Bossi would consider the South above all as a metaphor for the inefficient and welfarist state, replacing ethnic identity with territorial identity: territory was to be the foundation of a new identity (Diamanti 1996b).

This new divide and this new rising identity were felt very strongly from within the DC as the expression through votes made itself clear. The signal of the new Italian society identity crisis is striking during the elections of the 5th and 6th April 1992.

First, during the European elections of 1989 the Lombard Leage (the Lega) gained 1.8 percent of the votes nationwide. But if you consider only northwestern Italy, its success was much more significant as it won 5.6 percent of the local votes (Lepre 2006). Then, the said 1992 elections saw a success of the opinion parties that protested the demo Christian party regime: The Nothern Leage "Lega" which obtained 8.7 percent of the votes, an increase of 8.2 percent since the 1987 elections and was considered the winner of the elections; and the Rete in Palermo led by Leoluca Orlando which made the fight against Mafia its electoral banner (Lepre 2006).

In addition to these external challenges, particularly posed by the Lega, the DC loss needs also to be explained by internal divide these opinion parties were triggering. In the DC, prominent figure Mario Segni had engaged in public disputes who, just before the elections with his party's secretariat argues Aurelio Lepre on page 332 of his *Storia della Prima Repubblica* (Lepre 2006). Meanwhile, those more actively engaged in the government tended to garner comparatively lower levels of support than they had previously achieved. The DC's losses in the South of the country were relatively contained as its score increased by 0.4 percent in Naples and lost onli0.1 percent in Parlemo for instance. But in the Northern regions its losses were much more substantial: 6 percent loss in Turin; 6.6 percent in Genoa; 8.1 percent in Milan and 7.7 percent in Venice (Lepre 2006). In contrast, the Lega affirmed itself as an anti-meridionalist movement as it reached 18.1% of the votes in Milan *de facto* relegating the DC as one.

The rise of the Lega Nord (unification of all the Leagues of the Northern regions) not only threatened national unity, it threatened the DC is its existence because it attacked the party system (Corduwener 2016). The electoral hegemony of the DC which had dominated the post-war era could no longer be taken for granted.

The demo-Christian political class should have been alerted of the rise of the Lega and the loss of consensus in the north of the country by the results of the 1987 general elections.

The 1987 political polls altered the picture only by a few percentage points and, above all, marked a slight progress of the DC and a growth of the Psi, two elements that seem to confirm

the stability of the governing coalition. Even the decline of the PCI, of -3.3 percent, despite constituting a setback was not a meltdown. But despite those national figures, the local situation was much different already. Such small variations gave a false perception of stability to DC governing elites, which did not help them grasp the impending danger and instead reinforced their illusion that they still enjoyed an all-too-good state of *status quo* (Colarizi 2007).

While the DC continued business as usual, the League won one seat in the Chamber of Deputies in Rome with its 0.48%. This victory was raising alarm was the rapid end of the "second economic miracle," which lasted less than three years and whose exhaustion was perceived as early as 1986. In fact, the halt in growth reopens the issue of state accounts, which, despite the favorable phase, the DC have not had the courage to address with the necessary determination, because getting their hands on the public debt means blocking the benefits-for-votes mechanism from which the partocracy derives consensus and its own legitimacy. They therefore left open the way for the League to capitalize on its electorate and lead to the results of the 1992 elections we displayed earlier on.

As much as the Leagues movement is still in 1987 a marginal political entity at the national level, its extraordinary growth in the Tenth Legislature (1987-1992) "*is not surprising*" writes Simona Colarizi p.171 of her history of the Republic from 1943 to 2006, if one considers, precisely, the immobility of the system and the indifference of the Christian Democracy to the emerging political contestation forms in the Northern regions (Colarizi 2007).

To an investigation on local power dating from 1984, the Christian-democrat senator from Padova Antonio Bisaglia theorized his conception of the DC: *doroteism* in its maturity phase (Diamanti 1988). For this high-ranking figure of the party in Veneto, politics' function has always have been about representing and composing with the diverse interests of the various social groups. The task of the politician was to defend those interests to the State institutions. That is why he was convinced on the one hand since the very beginning of his political career that the mass party concept was not adapted to the Italian Society and a wrong model for the DC. On the other hand, he thought the same thing about the "opinion parties" that followed the American model. Models closer to the Northern Leagues. He declared: "*My conviction was, and still is, that a party of cadres* (such as the DC) *will gradually prevail in Italy. We are not yet ready for a party of opinion, which belongs to a different type of culture*". He clarified his conception of the cadre party in these terms: "*It's as if today, in Bassano for example, we*

managed to get the fifty people who count to join the party. Not those who command, but those who are credible within the various categories: craftsmen, shopkeepers, teachers, alpini (alpine hunters). *Trust and support for the party depend on who these people are, how they act, how they gain trust*." (Diamanti 1988).

This party's conception translated into the constitution of a powerful political machine structured around informal networks (Allum 1995). Percy Allum argues that such a conception first was applied in the Italian *Mezzogiorno* by the DC in the 1950s and then extended to its most develop forms in the 1980s to become the ground basis for the practice of power all around Italy in the late 1980s.

The only difference then between the North and the South of the country relied, according to Pallum, on the difference of the DC "lieutenants". The men doing politics on the local level. Antonio Bisaglia was supported in Veneto by individuals who enjoyed strong and extensive influential networks because of their social positions they already had in the local societies. While Antonio Gava's – we mentioned earlier - authority in Campania relied only on the fact he and his followers detained key positions in public institutions, positions that they could only hold thanks to their political careers (Allum 1973). This difference is link with the different organization of society in those two parts of the country. If there is an autonomous civil society from the political power in the North, the South relies mostly on it.

Percy Allum denies the argument that Paul Ginsborg put forward (Ginsborg 1990) according to which the Italian DC created all the faults and failures of the Italian society – *Trasformismo*, clientelism, corruption - leading eventually to its loss of consensus in the northern parts of the country between 1987 and 1992. Allum states that if the DC had an impact on those flaws it accentuated them, as well as what did the other political parties, while it increased its control over State institutions and the public economy.

As long as the Cold War and its effects on domestic Italian politics lasted and that the economy was prospering, this alliance of territorial political machines that constituted the DC was maintained.

The loss of consensus and the fall of the DC power system in Northern Italy to the benefit of the Northern Leagues can only be explained reminding the two main modalities of consensus

obtention by partisan formations in representative democracy: the realization of a political program (ideology); and the distribution of favors and personal services (sponsorship) (Pizzorno 1994). In the first case, the parties should be able to elaborate, propose and deliver a set of clear political objectives. In the second case, it is only necessary for the political class to create and maintain obligation relations with individuals or group of individuals thanks to the discretionary distribution of resources, mostly public.

The power system was ended, summarizes Percy Allum, because of the increase of demo Christian promises that became more and more difficult to keep, particularly so in a period of economic recession, and because of the withdrawal of support of social groups traditionally linked with the DC. Then the international context and the end of the blocked system of the Cold War because of the presence of the communists allowed those withdrawing and frustrations to express themselves. Finally, because the established power system was becoming more and more inefficient, as the inflation of demands for favors diminished the control capabilities of central decision-making processes, and expensive, as the cost of corruption kept increasing to the point it became no longer possible for multiple economic actors to continue. Percy Allum writes: "*The political crisis we are witnessing today is the result of these phenomena, and bears witness to a more general process of unprecedented delegitimization of traditional parties and political classes, of which the collapse of the DC is one of the most striking manifestations*" (Allum 1995).

Chapter Two – Coping with the mutations of politics as politicians of the Christian Democracy: the fight of visions.

The Political Scandal, putting the Tangentopoli crisis back in its global context.

The 17th of February 1992 in Milan is arrested Mario Chiesa, an hospital director and member of the Italian Socialist Party, the PSI. He was arrested in the act of receiving a bribe from a small local entrepreneur. After a few days, the scandal appeared to have disappeared as the local press moved on. In April, after the cooperation of a hand of businessmen, the investigation took another scale: the mobilization around the "Chiesa case" transformed it into a national scandal.

Operation "Clean Hands" (*Mani pulite*) gained in intensity as scandals unfolded in Lombardy and then in other regions of the country, where magistrates grouped together in anti-corruption pools carried out numerous arrests. In just a few months, the main political leaders fell victim to a spectacular process of delegitimization. After two years of serial scandals and almost 5,000 arrest warrants, the traditional governing parties - the five parties that had been making and breaking governments since 1947 - had collapsed. Including the central one of the Christian Democracy.

These scandals, which occurred in Italy between 1992 and 1994, formed a chain unprecedented in terms of the number of politicians implicated, the disruption caused to political competition and the "centrality" of a few investigating magistrates such as the figure of Antonio Di Pietro.

Tangentopoli ("bribes-city"), a neologism for consolidated corrupt practices, was also the name given to this concatenation of scandals when *Mani pulite* was the name given to the series of investigations carried out by a group of magistrates from the Milan public prosecutor's office who became known as the "Clean hands pool". The term "Clean Hands" was soon used to refer to all judicial investigations in Italy concerning offences relating to the financing of political activities (Rayner 2005).

In many countries, the expression "Operation Clean Hands" has become a noun whenever a judicial investigation leads to a number of high-profile indictments and arrests. The phrase is

applied to a host of situations in which leaders in any sector are the victims of a process of delegitimization and find themselves on the verge of dismissal.

Tangentopoli is understood as the series of scandals that, starting with the "Chiesa affair", turned Italian society upside down. Between 1992 and 1994, the state of political forces, positions within major public and private companies, mafia organizations and the influence of public prosecutors fluctuated greatly during a period likened to a revolution by politicians, journalists, magistrates, business leaders, senior civil servants and academics who decreed the end of the First Republic.

Norberto Bobbio who acts as a respected political science and political philosophy thinker in Italy described a scandal in the following manner: "*What constitutes a scandal is the moment when an act or series of acts is made public, which until then had been secret or hidden, and which could not be made public because this act or series of acts could not have taken place if they had been made public*. *We think of the different forms that public corruption can take, such as embezzlement of public funds, malpractice, extortion, illegal interest, and so on (...) That's why such acts must occur in secret, and once made public, they cause the public outrage precisely termed as a "scandal*"." (Bobbio 1980, p. 183) . Close to common sense, this definition has been often used when talking about the Clean Hands operation: scandal would be self-evident, it is an outraged reaction that automatically follows the divulgation of a scandalous fact.

However, the Tangentopoli is more than a scandal in Bobbio's definition. It is not really about the sudden revelation of outrageous facts that have been kept secret since then. Have we have seen in the previous chapter; scandals have been displayed many times during the First Republic and Tangentopoli cannot just be about their ultimate revelations.

Hervé Rayner who specifically studied the Clean Hands operation in Italy from a sociological perspective nuances writing the following: "*It is difficult to identify* (the Clean Hands operation) *because it mixes processes that political scientists tend to study separately, i.e. investigations into corruption, a series of scandals, a kind of moral crusade, a political crisis, a phase of regime transition, or even, to believe the headlines of newspapers but also the titles of books and academic conferences, a "revolution*"." (Rayner 2005, p. 10).

A real “revolution” is never constrained by national borders. It reveals the spirit of an era. The 1990s saw a high number of political scandals rocking political systems all around the globe: in 1992 the Brazilian president Fernando Collor is accused of corruption and impeached; in 1993 and after a long series of politico-financial scandals, the Japanese PLD lost its absolute majority in Parliament for the first time since 1955 while the young new Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa is elected on his promise of reforming the system of political parties fundings. In Spain, the PSOE’s existence is put in jeopardy from 1993 on by a succession of scandals that, in the end, forced the weakened government of Felipe Gonzales to appoint the media famous judge Balthazar Garzon to the position of responsible in the fight against corruption. In Mexico in 1997, three years after the delegitimization of the “Salinas clan”, named after President Carlos Salinas, was convicted for money laundering and collusion with the drug cartels, and corruption scandals, the PRI loses its absolute majority in the chamber of deputies for the first time since 1929.

In the United States, President Bill Clinton is on the verge of being impeached due to the Monica Lewinski scandal, just after he escaped Senate conviction in the Whitewater case. In Germany, the end of the decade is marked by the corruption suspicions raised on former chancellor Helmut Kohl and illegal actions taken about the funding of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU). The CDU which was going from electoral victory to electoral victory on partial local elections quickly feared a “Italian-like scenario”. At the same time in the Russian Federation, President Boris Yeltsin and his closest circles faced an international banking scandal. Accused of corruption, abuse of power and financial malfeasance, the European Commission led by Jacques Santer resigns in 1999.

In other words, the “Tangentopoli” scandal in the early 1990s in Italy goes far beyond the only Italian case. It takes part in a global phenomenon of transition of politics and of the way politics have been made since then.

The book written in 1994 by historian and member of parliament Massimo L. Salvadori entitled *Storia d’Italia e crisi di regime* comes back on the roots of the Tangentopoli crisis looking at Italian national history while attempting to explain the “Italian political anomaly”. According to Salvadori Italy is since its unification prisoner of a vicious circle: each regime is based on a weak legitimacy and is facing disloyal opposition; the dominant political party tends therefore to merge with the State while this phenomenon prevents any legitimate political alternance; all

in all resulting in the tragic overthrow of the said regime (Salvadori 1994, p. 109). The liberal State that rose from the Risorgimento faced the hostility of the Catholics and the socialists before collapsing under the pressure put in it by the fascists. The fascist Mussolini dictatorship ended in a civil war and the First Republic collapsed under the weight of corruption and the rise of anti-establishment feelings and anti-political movements such as the Northern Leagues.

Everyone sees in its adversary the anomaly syndrome and pretends to be the one holding the solutions to a "necessary transition" towards a democracy at is at last completed (Rayner 2005, p. 18). For the Christian – Democrats busy preventing their adversaries from reaching governmental positions, the presence of the strongest communist party of the West was the Italian anomaly. Victims of this exclusion convention, the communists interpreted this ostracism as the proof of the abnormal Italian democracy, blocked by its inability to provide political alternance. For socialists and leaders of small secular political parties, the two "churches" that were the communists and the Christian-democrats were the symptoms of a "socio-cultural backwardness" (Rayner 2005, p. 19). The anomaly theme is supposed to discredit the adversary, "it is at the core of the doxa" writes Rayner.

Daniele Urgano focuses its attention on the anomality of the endemic Italian corruption which would be logical preceding for a scandal to emerge in 1992: "*the crisis of political representation leads directly to the intervention of the judiciary*" (Ungaro 1997, p. 104). Only considering this would be limiting the understanding of the deep dimension of this crisis, in Italy but especially globally. Just looking back at the "Italian anomality" that are corruption and other *malgoverno* factors, would be considering the entirety of the explanations of the Tangentopoli crisis upstream. "*On closer inspection, the "political crisis" was not "already here*", says Hervé Rayner on page 21 of his book, "*in February 1992, the government remained solidly in place, the autorictas of its leaders were indisputable and, as we shall see, their opponents did not believe in the possibility of a change in the situation any more than they did"* (Rayner 2005).

We now are going to focus more on what happened during the *Tangentopoli* years, ie. 1992 to 1994. What we need to understand here is the irruption of sudden changes in political strategies from external but also internal actors, strong enough to bring the whole traditional party system down and implement new ways of doing politics. To do so, we will analyze the strategies of the three main Christian-democrat of the time: Giulio Andreotti, Mino Martinazzoli and Mario

Segni. Each of these three subsections will be introduced by a short biographic text replacing those three figures in the political context of the post-1945 Italian politics.

Giulio Andreotti, the end of Machiavellian party politics.

Biography.

Born in Rome in 1919, Giulio Andreotti hailed from a humble family in Segni, a village southeast of Rome. Following the passing of his father, he received his education under the guidance of the Jesuits. In 1941, he completed his law master's degree, focusing his dissertation on canon law. His career path included journalism for the Catholic graduates' magazine, active involvement in Catholic Action, and joining the clandestine Partito Popolare Italiano (PPI). A meeting with Alcide De Gasperi in the Vatican library led to his close association with the founder of the Italian Christian Democracy (DC), eventually becoming the national youth delegate for the party after Rome's liberation.

At just 27 years old, Andreotti was elected to the Constituent Assembly and has been a member of parliament since 1946. Notably, he held the position of State Secretary to the Prime Minister at the age of 28 and served five terms in Alcide De Gasperi's cabinet from 1947 to 1953. His extensive government service spanned from 1954 to 1993, encompassing key roles such as Minister of Defense eight times, Minister of Foreign Affairs five times, and twice each as Minister of Finance, Budget and Industry, as well as Minister of the Treasury and Interior.

In 1972, he took office as head of government for the first time after leading the DC group in the House. During the 1980s, he chaired several significant entities, including the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, the Italian group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the European People's Party. Andreotti set a record for preference votes in the 1987 elections, securing 329,599 preferences in the Rome constituency. Named senator for life in 1991, he served as the head of his seventh government. He also held prestigious roles such as President of the Centre for Ciceronian Studies, received honorary doctorates from eight universities, and authored best-selling books, placing him among the wealthiest parliamentarians in terms of income in the history of the First Italian Republic. Giulio Andreotti died the 6th of May 2013.

During the Tangentopoli years.

System Andreotti and the failure in the Presidential elections of 1992

At the time Mario Chiesa was arrested, on the 17Th of February 1992, Giulio Andreotti was secretly working his strategy to reach the position of President of the Republic. His clan and himself did not see in Chiesa' arrest the *Tangetopoli* crisis lurking around. Antonio Di Pietro was not yet the hero he would become months later.

Giulio Andreotti was not concerned at the time about judges, the people he did not placed trust in the early 1990s were members of his own party trying to push him out. Forlanian minister Gianni Prandini declared as the elections of a new President of the Republic were taking place early 1992: "*Craxi at Palazzo Chigi, De Mita at the Foreign Office, Forlani at the Quirinal, Gava at the DC secretariat. And Andreotti in retirement.*" (Franco 2010, p. 223).

When he was asked about his presidential ambitions, he would coquet: "*Me in the Quirinal? I'm not thinking about that. Anyway, the post is filled. And then, seven years is too long a period. Stuff to become matt. One is like a prisoner among ceremonialists, cuirassiers, and pastors."* (Franco 2010, p. 224). But he was secretly orchestrating his potential election at the said position. In other words, the usual race to top leadership and State positions was still on within the DC and the earthquake of the *Tangentopoli* investigations far away.

Giulio Andreotti's way of doing politics has a cynical grip to it. It is Machiavellian. The year 1992 saw the elections of a new President and Andreotti was looking up to it as we said. He was reassured by Antonio Forlani, another figure of the DC and at the time its secretary general, that he would not run against him. Despite these, Forlani runed against Andreotti for the Quirinale Palace, the place where the Italian president lives. At that point Andreotti's politics exceled. He sent Claudio Vitalone, a high-ranking Christian – democrat and famous andreottian, in Parliament to solemnly declare "*The Christian Democrat Cossiga will also come and vote for Forlani*." (Franco 2010, p. 224). And it was an all Andreottian way of sabotaging Forlani, since Cossiga was hated by the DC presidential voters for demanding refoms that would kill the demochristian system.

"*Giulio Andreotti hoped to see all the candidates fall one by one, to re-emerge at the end as an almost forced solution. He counted on getting out of desperation the nomination that the DC did not want to offer him*", writes Massimo Franco on page 224 of his biography of Andreotti before quoting Paolo Cirino Pomicino, one of Andreotti's lieutenants: "*And one thing must be clear, if Giulio doesn't make it, we won't let any other Christian Democrat make it."* (Franco 2010, p. 224).

If Giulio Andreotti was the most influential politician of the Christian Democracy and most powerful politician in Italy since the second world war despite the fact he never held party positions such as secretary general or the fact his current, andreottism, never exceeded 18% of the votes in DC party congresses (Rayner 2005, p. 255), dominated for years by doroteism, is because Andreotti was a man of networks and bridges.

He was often considered as the man from Washington, sometimes as the man from the Vatican, and he knew how to use each network of influence to complement the other or to compete with the other when needed. Same for the fundings of his current. When the "Banker of god", Michele Sindona, and the Banca Ambrosiano scandal emerged in 1981 that shook the financing of Vatican affairs, Andreottism, that was implicated in the scandal to obtain some fundings, turned over to the oil magnate Nino Rovelli or towards entrepreneur Franco Nobili, former leader of the Catholic youths (Rayner 2005, p. 257).

Between 1989 and 1992, during the sixth and seventh governments led by Andreotti, its network was fortified. Andreotti simultaneously held the roles of Prime Minister and Minister of State Holdings, while his ally Paolo Cirino Pomicino served as the Minister of the Budget. According to two business analysts, there was a notable growth of the "Andreotti-holding" across public and private business realms, unmatched by any other political faction in these circles (Rayner 2005, p. 258).

The fact is that in 1992, the shifts in calculations and the mobilizations that made up *Tangentopoli* began to prevent the lock-in solutions (parliamentary commission of inquiry, refusal to lift immunity, stalling of instructions to the Rome public prosecutor's office, etc.) that usually offered Andreotti's network members the chance to regain control of the situation. And Giulio Andreotti was fully and at once delegitimized for the first time in his political career.

Andreotti's issues in Sicily, the murder of Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino and the involvement of Cosa Nostra in the Tangentopoli scandals.

The fall of the "Andreotti system" came firstly from Sicily and the mafia, rather than from Milan and the judges that followed it.

Giovanni Falcone was murdered on May 23 of the year 1992. The criminal, Mafia, assassination of the judge - director of criminal affairs at the Ministry of Justice appointed in Sicily by Andreotti just a year before, in February 1991, politically killed Andreotti. His cynical political maneuvers were commonly associated with the mafia crimes. Forty-eight hours later, the Christian democrat Oscar Luigi Scalfaro was elected President of the Republic instead of him.

In order not to lose credibility with their "lieutenants", to whom they had been assuring since 1987 that everything would work out in cassation (Rayner 2005, p. 259), the Corleone had to react to the final sentences handed down at the maxi-trial in Palermo in January 1992. They broke off their alliance with the Andreottians and launched an offensive aimed at their former allies who had failed to keep their promises. Salvatore Lima was assassinated on March 12, 1992, the Salvo cousins - Nino and Ignazio Salvo – were attacked when Ignazio Salvo was killed on September 18, 1992, and Andreotti was defamed and accused of being more involved than he was in Mafia affairs. They got rid of the investigating magistrates who had succeeded in convicting them and tried to force their future political interlocutors to renegotiate a new *modus vivendi* while prevented Andreotti to be able to become President as he would not have kept his promises of keeping the mafiosi out of hail after Falcone's maxi-process (Rayner 2005, p 259).

Later in 1997, Corleone turncoat Giovanni Brusca, involved in orchestrating the attack, claimed that Toto Riina, leader of the Corleone, strongly desired the assault to thwart Andreotti's chance of becoming President of the Republic. When the presidential election failed, Andreotti's absence from the Amato cabinet, resulting from a new incompatibility between government roles and parliamentary positions (perceived by many as retaliation by Forlani), was depicted in the media as Andreotti's "*ultimate defeat*" (Rayner 2005, p. 260).

Meanwhile, the assassination of Salvo Lima deprived Sicily's most powerful political current – Andreottism - from its leader in the middle of an election campaign. Commentators talked about

a "perfect machine" whose members crisscrossed the territory. Cited 149 times in the work of the first parliamentary anti-Mafia commission, implicated in a European Parliament investigation report, Andreotti's "*proconsul*" had never been convicted; for political commentators, he was an "*untouchable*" controlling 300,000 votes (Rayner 2005, p. 261).

After the historic defeat of the DC at the general elections of the 5 and 6 of April 1992, when the party went below 30% of the votes casted for the first time in its history. While Giulio Andreotti opened the way for Mino Martinazzoli to become its new secretary general in replacement of Antonio Forlani, he told the American weekly *Time* and its Rome correspondent John Moody "*If there had been a direct election for the Quirinal, I would have made it. I am not saying that I am better than Scalfaro, but in a direct election I would have won."* (Franco 2010, p. 225).

It shows that at the time "Il Divo" – the divine -, as Andreotti's nickname was, did not abandoned popularity even if the mystified figure he represented was crumbling down brick by brick. For instance, when TV crew led by Piero Chiambretti of Rai 3 illegally trespassed in Andreotti's archive room, his "darkbasement" where he kept all the compressing files on other political figures, Via Borgognona in Rome in 1992. The fact the images taken away by the TV crew were not broadcasted did not matter much: "*The symbolic truth of that little episode was that Andreotti's secrets were not so inaccessible after all. Suddenly, even that last oasis plunged into darkness had been mercilessly illuminated, and in fact demythologized*" writes Massimo Franco (Franco 2010, p. 226).

The Italy of the First Republic was steadily deteriorating through the attacks and delegitimization Andreotti and those who were considered close to him. The political class faced mounting pressure due to legal indictments from Milan's judiciary. At the same time, Mario Segni's referendum movements were beginning to expose the weaknesses within the system, while Umberto Bossi's Lega gained significant electoral ground in the North. Amid these challenges, the new government under Giuliano Amato, formed after Scalfaro's rejection of Craxi following the *Tangentopoli* scandal, tended to attribute blame to Andreotti. This blame wasn't solely directed at him; both the DC and opposition groups were accusing Andreotti's "mole-government" of stagnation and holding it accountable for perceived failures (Franco 2010, p. 226).

However, Andreotti's primary concern remained fixated on the shadow of the Lima scandal (Franco 2010). The Lima scandal being the murder in March 1992 of the DC Member of the European Parliament and former president of Sicily, Salvatore Lima we mentioned earlier.

The mounting allegations of collusion between Lima and the Mafia, persistently raised by Leoluca Orlando and other mafia defectors, heightened this worry. The assassination of Paolo Borsellino, the judge closely associated with Falcone, and his security detail, killed in a street of Palermo by a Mafia bomb blast on July 19, 1992, intensified Andreotti's retreat. Yet, this withdrawal wasn't sufficient. Orlando persistently accused him of being the intermediary linking Cosa Nostra to the political realm in Rome. By late 1992, a New York Times article reignited deep-seated suspicions surrounding Lima, signaling a decline in Andreotti's reputation even in the United States. The tide was turning amid arrests, indictments, and internal conflicts. John Tagliabue writes in this very same *New York Times* article wrote: "*With the shifting power balance in the aftermath of the cold war and the collapse of Communism, the Christian Democratic role has been severely diminished, and some commentators suggest that the Mafia has been quicker to recognize this than party leaders like Mr. Andreotti*." (Tagliabue 1992).

The entrance of the judges on the scene: the ultimate blow brought by the turncoats against Giulio Andreotti.

In 1992, Francesco Borrelli, Milan Chief Prosecutor, was ordering notices of guarantee to many of Andreotti's clan except Andreotti himself. Bettino Craxi, leader of the PSI would have not been impressed about that, explains Massimo Franco. For Craxi, Tangentopoli was nothing more than "*Andreotti's operation-vendetta against the former Psi secretary and against all those who had prevented him from reaching the Quirinal. The Milanese magistrates would have been puppets in his hands, docile instruments of revenge.*" (Franco 2010, p. 227). Meanwhile in northern Italy, the Lega was distributing banknotes in the streets with Craxi's and Andreotti's faces on it with as the only caption "Banca di taglia", "large banks", instead of "Banca d'Italia". The political delegitimization moving along the judicial investigations were shaking the First Republic with all their might, while Andreotti remained impassive in the face of change, true to his myth. Accusations to which Andreotti only replied: "*they don't blame me for the Punic Wars just because they took place too many centuries ago*" (Franco 2010, p. 227).

Considering that the “Clean hands” magistrates were answering to Giulio Andretti is the logical continuation of a myth that surrounded his political – Machiavellian figure. He was in the system, directing it, for most of the Italian political history since 1945 and yet, he was untouched for a year when the judiciary operations began. It was noticed and inexplicable to many.

In fact, Giulio Andreotti never held party posts, “except in youth groups”, and therefore had not had to handle bribes (Franco 2010, p. 228).

One needs to wait until the 27th of March 1993 for Giulio Andreotti, then leader of the DC, to be indicted by the Palermo public prosecutor's office for complicity with the Mafia. On April 5 of the same year, 1993, he is again indicted by the "Clean Hands" pool of judges for violating the law on party financing.

Because Giulio Andreotti was above the other politicians, because he was the system itself, bribery wasn’t sufficient to bring him down politically. In the face of all the investigations and arrest he did not change his practice of politics nor his vision for the Christian – Democracy. It was business as usual. Massimo Franco writes the following on page 228 of Andreotti’s biography: “*To bury him politically, a story of bribes, however billion-dollar, could not suffice. Andreotti was Andreotti. The fall could only come with ignominy. The ignominy of the charge of mafia association, given to him by Cosa Nostra turncoats, primarily Francesco Marino Mannoia and Tommaso Buscetta*” (Franco 2010).

Francesco Marino Mannoia and Tommaso Buscetta are two former members of Sicilian mafias that are “pentiti”, turncoats, that collaborated with the magistrates in the fight against organized crime in the 1980s. Giovanni Falcone personally interviewed Mannoia and estimated that he was a “*smart and reliable witness*” (Stille 1996, p. 306).

Started after the bombings in Palermo, revelations from the repentant criminals about Salvatore (Salvo) Lima made headlines, enabling investigators to identify the masterminds behind the assassination of the Member of the European Parliament and former mayor of Palermo. Tommaso Buscetta detailed the mafia-political connections he had previously refrained from clarifying.

For the first time, collaborators within the legal system provided a detailed account of Salvo Lima's activities in support of Cosa Nostra, activities allegedly endorsed by Corrado Carnevale and Giulio Andreotti. Isolated, Andreotti had to address these publicized accusations while experiencing further erosion of political support, especially in the southern regions after it did a few years earlier in the North under the competition of the *Lega*. The leader of that phenomenon was Leoluca Orlando, a former member of the Christian Democratic Party who later established his own party in Sicily, La Rete, and who described Andreotti as the 'leader of a losing clan.'

"*The sudden trials faced by the Andreotti supporters stem from the interdependence among the network members: the failure of one link can undo the entire chain when multifaceted mobilizations*," characteristic of the Tangentopoli crisis "*in this case, involving magistrates, financial brigade officials, members of the audit court, ministers, journalists, entrepreneurs, stock market operators, elected officials, informants, act simultaneously against them. This leads to the unraveling of economic, political, and judicial disputes, without necessarily requiring explicit coordination. The leader's loss of power may have served as a signal to several types of actors who, at the same time, felt able to challenge his allies*" writes Hervé Rayner (Rayner 2005, p. 261).

In their testimony, they accused Giulio Andreotti to have come to Sicily to meet mafia leaders alongside Salvatore (Salvo) Lima many times between 1979 and 1980 especially to complain about the murder of Piersanti Mattarella, former DC president of Sicily killed by the mafia, but also to plot the killing of General Carlo Alberto Della Chiesa who would have known too much about the kidnapping and assassination of Aldo Moro in the late 1970s. In response, Stephano Bontate, one of the leaders of Cosa Nostra would have replied to Andreotti the following: "*In Sicily we rule, and if you don't want to completely wipe out the DC you have to do as we say.*" This was the information conveyed by the repentant Mannoia to Giancarlo Caselli, the chief prosecutor of Palermo, who, along with deputy Guido Lo Forte, had traveled to the United States on April 3, 1993, for the purpose of conducting an inquiry (Franco 2010, p. 229).

If all of those elements in the testimony of Buscetta and Mannoia are "*chilling allegations*" as Massimo Franco recalls on page 229 of Andreotti's biography, what is interesting nonetheless is the fact that the magistrates initiated an investigation on them, finally challenging the cloud of mystery that had long surrounded Andreotti, portraying him as untouchable. Il Divo's myth

reached a dead end not on corruption or bribery but on mafia collusion allegations. A dead end on which the Tangentopoli investigations could thrives and the DC to start entering a new chapter of its existence.

On April 5, Andreotti was indicted by the Milan public prosecutor's office in connection with an envelope paid to the PSDI secretary in March 1992. The next day, on the 6th, the report of the Antimafia Commission, the first to highlight collusion between politicians and Mafia members, received approval by a significant majority (Rayner 2005, p. 262). Regardless of the legal judgment, this report held any parliament member with Mafia ties "*politically accountable*". Its adoption and spreading as newspapers published the full version of it, was seen as doubly momentous since Christian Democrat representatives surprisingly contributed to isolating Andreotti. He was considered the leader of Salvo Lima's faction, whose connections with Cosa Nostra had been verified.

When the scandal going on in Milan following the Mario Chiesa case began to implicate members of the Andreotti faction due to Mafia involvement, relations among the Andreotti supporters worsen.

The application for authorization to proceed in Andreotti's indictment arrived at the end of March 1993 in the Senate. But the "*ignominy*" as described by Massimo Franco page 229, was contained mostly in "Doc. IV no. 102-Integration", transmitted by Justice Minister Giuseppe Conso the following April 14, 1993. They were allegations according to which Andreotti was the direct link between the DC, the State and the mafia and they were giving credence to the testimonies of Mannoia and Buscetta as proof before even the opening of the trial. Meanwhile, the DC subscribed, Andreotti was politically isolated and his, what is seemed, never ending popularity among Italians was freefalling.

Several key figures within the Christian Democratic Party faced legal action by the 'Clean Hands' prosecution team. It was the case of Luigi Baruffi, a prominent party organizer, and the Andreotti-aligned president of the DC Lombardy branch. Simultaneously, a leader in Monza was arrested on corruption charges, admitting to channeling significant commissions to the party's local secretary. After the assassination of Paolo Borsellino, demands for the resignation of Chief Prosecutor Pietro Giammanco – an intimate of Mario D'Acquisto, number 2 of the andreottian current in Sicily - escalated, with allegations of obstruction of investigations. In late

1992, Andreotti’s network's vulnerabilities became evident as andreottian industrialists Mauro Leone and Giuseppe Ciarrapico faced fraud charges, coinciding with the resignation of Corrado Carnevale from a high position within the Court of Cassation's penal section (Rayner 2005, p. 261).

Jokes with a hint of ambiguity, elusive silences, or cryptic messages, Machiavellian politics, no longer sufficed in an era fixated on transparency and the voyeurism Tangentopoli was in the process of implementing. Machiavel belonged to the past. Defending Andreotti demanded persuasive legal arguments and a skilled lawyer. That lawyer turned out to be Odoardo Ascari, known for representing the families of carabinieri victims in the Palermo maxi process against the Mafia. His wrote a sixty-six-page defense brief, that served as a rebuttal countering the allegations made by the Palermo judges. Andreotti was never convicted for mafia links nor for the murders the turncoats were accusing him of plotting.

Andreotti and his faction's downfall however continued in early 1993, marked by an increase in informants and scandals. Leonardo Messina, another turncoat, directly accused Andreotti, leading to his interrogation by the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission. Giuseppe Garofano, an ally of Andreotti in the industrial sector and part of Catholic financial circles associated with the Vatican, faced charges from the 'Clean Hands' investigation while Franco Nobili, head of Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (IRI), got implicated in the inquiry concerning Rome's Olympic Stadium refurbishment, adding to the legal troubles of Andreotti's key supporters (Rayner 2005, p. 263).

Andreotti's personal political situation deteriorated drastically. His absence from the new Christian Democratic leadership emerging on March 23 from the National Council of the DC was particularly notable; he wasn't even among the seven ex-officio members. He then publicly announced on March 27 his own indictment by the Palermo prosecutor's office for alleged ties to a mafia-like organizations.

In a difficult position, Andreotti managed to maintain a few supporters. While he however hadn't completely lost his support, unequivocal backing was no longer predominant. Antonio Forlani and Francesco Cossiga adopted the line of the conspiracy theory, and approximately 50 DC senators advocated for a revision of the repentance law after Buscetta and Mannoia testimonies from abroad. Support within the Church remained robust. Andreotti was warmly

welcomed at the episcopal consecration ceremony in the Roman church of Santa Maria della Fiducia. The former General Secretary of the Vatican bank IOR received a standing ovation, expressing gratitude for Andreotti's "*advice*" during the Banco Ambrosiano affair (Rayner 2005, p. 266).

Massimo Franco recalls that privately Andreotti confided: "*I don't think (Giancarlo) Caselli's* – who, at the time of the Andreotti trial, headed Palermo's anti-mafia pool - *was a due act. Whoever is chief prosecutor in Palermo is subject to unimaginable pressures. And he, evidently, being new, wanted to show that he did not cover-up anything. And he doesn't have to cover up anything, but this story is unbelievable. When there is a concrete allegation, one can defend himself, react. But when faced with something as vague as the accusation of being the Mafia's point of reference in Rome, it is impossible*" (Franco 2010, p. 230). However, the endeavor to pull the DC towards his viewpoints proved challenging. Despite his efforts, his influence within the party remained inadequate given the magnitude of the accusations against him (Franco 2010, p. 232).

In Sicily, almost all the key DC and andreottian candidates faced legal action, making it seem unlikely that the faction could engage in electoral activities (Rayner 2005, p. 268). Although Andreotti claimed to have received 50,000 supportive letters, he faced near irrecoverability, evident from various humiliating actions taken against him. His regular column in *L'Europeo* was removed, and he was suspended from his honorary presidency in the National Union of Circles and Associations of Lyric Music. Analysts argued that he no longer belonged in the "*Second Republic*."

Caught off guard by the succession of scandals, Andreotti struggled to react, giving the impression of losing ground as his tactical sense loses its effectiveness (Rayner 2005, p. 264). His supporters within the Anti-Mafia Commission opposed the report prepared by President L. Violante, marking a broader counteroffensive: backed by the *Osservatore Romano*, the presidents of the DC parliamentary group filed a complaint with the Rome prosecutor's office against the informants they pursued for offenses against the Republic, political conspiracy, and defamation.

After his failed attempt to move the trial from Palermo to the Tribunal of Ministers – institution were judges are politicians - Andreotti referred to "*an attempt to destabilize Italy*". Hervé

Rayner writes: "*His line of defense seems out of sync and, above all, inaudible: before the Committee for the Authorization of Investigations, he attacks the "fumus persecutionis" and the prosecutor's methods, points to "a specific action" by Leoluca Orlando and claims, against all evidence, "never to have seen the Salvos*" (Rayner 2005, p. 265).

Andreotti's denials left investigators skeptical. He maintained not knowing the Salvos and insisted on being unaware of Michele Sindona's fraudulent activities until they were revealed by the justice system. He additionally claimed ignorance about the existence of the P2 lodge before the 1981 scandal, despite evidence linking him to the lodge's founder. Showing a steadfast denial, he rejected the accusations outright and held firmly to the belief in a conspiracy (Rayner 2005, p. 267). Prosecutors would also have obtained evidence suggesting that members of his security team were instructed in writing to deny some of his trips to Sicily.

In another significant move, former Justice Minister in Andreotti's government, Claudio Martelli, disavowed any acknowledgment of Andreotti for the anti-Mafia measures implemented during his last government – a key argument of his defense. Martelli went on to say, "*I've always had my suspicions"* (Rayner 2005, p. 265).

On April 27, 1993, the Senate committee lifted his immunity. According to a poll, 70% of Italians believed that the accusations made by the repentant were "*partly founded*" (Rayner 2005, p. 266). The threshold for denunciation significantly decreased, turning previously whispered discussions into public discourse.

In this context, where the dominant interpretative framework, and civil society mobilizations reinforce each other, the prosecution's arguments continued to gain in admissibility (Rayner 2005, p. 265).

Another unmistakable sign of Andreotti's weakened position is the fact that the Andreottians were absent from the Ciampi government that comes into power in late April 1993.The fall was historical, even to those against him, as it hinted at the breakdown of a powerful political force, the Christian Democracy and the political system as it was known since the 1940s.

At the same time the pace of political, judicial, and media attacks against Giulio Andreotti and his closest allies disarmed the network members who, in the past, would activate their protectors

and swiftly maneuver to diffuse any scandal. This time, the widespread and rapid dissemination of revelations, coupled with multi-sectoral opposition mobilizations, meant that their adversaries stayed ahead. It was challenging to counter this new imposition of meaning dominating the media, leaving Andreotti overwhelmed (Rayner 2005). A poll organized on March 30, 1993, by *Cirm* for *Panorama* and used in *La Repubblica* in early April 1993 on the "*culpability of politicians*" reflected a stark devaluation of trust in Andreotti, stripped of his aura of invincibility: when asked, "*Among the following politicians, whom would you confidently condemn?"* 32.5% of respondents singled out Giulio Andreotti (a single name was possible), 29.4% named Bettino Craxi, and 20.9% chose "*all*" as their response (Cirm 1993).

There is at this point a battle for the party's image as caricaturists in major newspapers depict Andreotti as a mafioso, linking *Cosa Nostra*, *Camorra*, and *Ndrangheta* to factions within the DC. The unconditional defense of Andreotti and three of his former ministers accused of mafia collusion divided the party: while the right-wing and the center supported them, it was not the case for Mario Segni and part of the left-wing. Beyond the DC, condemnations prevailed, and some allies of the "*crusade for Giulio*" retreated, fearing the 'boomerang effect' as promised by the media (Rayner 2005, p. 264).

Under the scrutiny of journalists emphasizing the implications of not relinquishing immunity, the Commission's lawmakers and leaders from the DC didn't appear willing to staunchly support him. Depicted as a changed individual, he seemed devoid of power and exhibited a departure from his usual composed self.

While Giulio Andreotti deplored a "*judicial lynching*", a revenge by the mafia and American lobbies, mafia sociologist Pino Arlacchi argued for the credibility of the repentants. The union leaders of CGIL promised to press for the lifting of parliamentary immunity, readers called the editorial offices of newspaper to defend the magistrates, and demonstrations and sit-ins took place in front of the Palermo courthouse (Rayner 2005, p. 266). Andreotti was now brought down by the multisectoral pressures of the Tangentopoli.

The collapse of Andreotti's network stemmed from simultaneous attacks and betrayals across multiple fronts. In a pivotal day, May 13, 1993, prominent figures within Andreotti's circle, Giuseppe Ciarrapico and Claudio Vitalone, found themselves back in prison and facing charges related to corporate resource misuse, respectively. On May 22, Nino Drago, a former regional

secretary of the DC and a longstanding confidant of Andreotti in Catania, was imprisoned on extortion charges. Concurrently, the Rome prosecutor's office moved to lift Andreotti's immunity, suspecting him of violating party financing laws. On May 25, 1993, Andreotti underwent discreet questioning by Roman prosecutors, leading to his indictment for alleged involvement in a homicide. These revelations became national and international headline news by May 27 (Rayner 2005, p. 263).

With the loss of mutual support, Andreotti's group swiftly lost social prominence, which was once their source of power and legitimacy. Disconnected and discredited, the network collapsed due to both the withdrawal of external backing and internal divisions.

As a result of a series of scandals, the breakdown of alliances left the Andreotti supporters exposed. Hervé Rayner explains in his research that the strong and personalized interdependent relationships forming the Andreotti network were beneficial for its members, but the spread and simultaneous nature of the scandals disrupted these groups affiliated with Andreotti, causing them to lose credibility. Each member's downfall led to a chain reaction, weakening the entire network. This collapse exposed its members to loss of legitimacy and, in some instances, societal stigma (Rayner 2005). Unlike previous scandals, the Tangentopoli scandals were characterized by scenes akin to public humiliation, highlighting the crisis of beliefs within these disintegrating power structures.

Mino Martinazzoli, the strategy of "reform from within" and addressing the change of politics from within the existing political system.

Biography

Fermo (Mino) Martinazzoli was a lawyer born in 1931 in Orzinuovi (Brescia). He began his political career as a Christian-democrat Senator in 1972. He served in various roles, including Chairman of the Investigation Authorization Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. After being elected as a Member of Parliament in 1983, he held the position of Minister of Justice from 1983 to 1986. He later became the Chairman of the DC Group and served as the Minister of Defense in the Fifth Andreotti Government. He then took on the role of Minister of Regional Affairs and Institutional Reform in the Sixth Andreotti Cabinet. He was

the last secretary general of the DC between 1992 and 1994 and the first of the *Partito popolare* in 1994. He died in September 2011.

During the Tangentopoli years

The presidential and general elections of 1992 and the comeback of "the professors".

Mino Martinazzoli once stated that he would leave the political career at the age of 60 years old. Journalists however understood that statement in the wrong way. He intended to leave the parliamentarian career (Valle 2021, p. 105). When the deadline occurred, in late 1991, Martinazzoli acknowledged that his wish to depart from the party was widely supported internally. He noted that within the DC, the situation had become deeply entangled, and there was an inability to resolve disputes between different factions within the party (Valle 2021, p. 105).

For the 1992 elections, a somewhat complex scenario took shape. It must be remembered that, in order to compile the lists, the Christian Democratic system displayed a sophisticated and democratically more complex than what was used later in personal parties like Forza Italia of Silvio Berlusconi. It started from the choices of the provincial committees, went through the regional committees to lead to the final choice of the national leadership.

For the 1992 elections then, both the provincial and regional committees excluded Martinazzoli from the lists. What had happened was that the majority, which had won the congress by bringing Forlani to the secretariat, had decided to use strong-arm tactics in the periphery against the minority (Valle 2021, p. 105).

Martinazzoli was asked by Forlani to run for Parliament again in his Brescia constituency, which Martinazzoli refused saying he had done this already in before and was ready for some change in his political career. Martinazzoli pointed out that because of the DC organized party's structure, he could not ignore the behavior of the local base and run for the lower chamber against local decisions, just because Rome decided it like that. In the end, a compromise was found in his return to the Senate that he had left in the mid 1980s.

He explained later in his biographic discussions with Annachiara Valle that that choice costed him because he found himself, later on, when secretary of the Christian Democrats, standing in the Senate instead of the Chamber of Deputies, which is the real heart of Italian politics (Valle 2021, p. 106).

In the last elections of 1987, the League had shown that it was becoming the leading party in the Northern parts of the country. This meant that the constituency in which Martinazzoli was running, the Senate constituency in Brescia, was an at-risk constituency. Martinazzoli described the 1992 election campaign as "*a victorious battle of resistance*" (Valle 2021, p. 106).

The legislative session initiated under difficult circumstances for the DC that was torn apart by the race for the position of President of the Republic. After Christian Democrat group meetings, DC's choice for the presidency, Arnaldo Forlani, faced a decline in votes during the voting process. Forlani then renounced his candidacy, a "*serene gesture*" admired by Mino Martinazzoli for its detachment (Valle 2021, p. 106). This says a lot about Martinazzoli's view on how politics should be made. Martinazzoli was not an adept of machiaveilian politics.

After the presidential elections consecrated Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, to the role of President of the Republic, Martinazzoli expected to see a socialist – Bettino Craxi – be appointed Prime Minister (Valle 2021, p. 106). Scalfaro decided otherwise as the Tangentopoli scandal was beginning to take place and socialist party member, Mario Chiesa was indicted for bribery. Craxi was from the start of the Tangetopoli *persona non grata*.

The Amato government then took office and asked Martinazzoli to join it as the Interior minister. A position he refused for two main reasons: he had already refused it years before and his position within the Senate was putting him away from political controversy for a while (Valle 2021, p. 106). Amato managed to put together a government that was not long in duration as warrant notices were arriving every day, and because it was decided that whoever received them would resign, the government continued to be decimated.

At this point in time, the situation for the Italian political class and particularly for the Christian Democracy was in many ways difficult to hold. On the contrary for Martinazzoli who thought that the moment revealed the leadership and political responsibility the DC demonstrated. The fact the DC governments at the Christian democratic governments of Amato and then Ciampi

allowed Italy not to fall in complete chaos and anarchy but continued to look forward and deliver a political vision.

He declared to the journalist Annachiara Valle the following: "*Azeglio Ciampi, who was governor of the Bank of Italy and would become Prime Minister after Amato, had been entrusted with the Treasury Ministry. With him came the agreement on programmed inflation, the agreement with the social partners, and thus, in some ways, a precondition for our entry into the euro. The foundations were laid for a tighter economic policy, and if in that storm the boat was steered, that certainly happened because of the ability of those who governed. But also because of the ability of the Christian Democrats to withstand the shock.*" (Valle 2021, p. 108).

Despite that and amidst the Clean Hands investigations and media attacks on the DC, the Christian Democrats faced increasing isolation and rejection from potential allies. They often struggled to secure a place on the ballot. Martinazzoli noted that observing Berlusconi's Mediaset television channels revealed the growing dissatisfaction of Italians with politics during that period and in the following years. It also hinted at who was capitalizing on this sentiment: anti systems political figures such as Umberto Bossi or Silvio Berlusconi. Consequently, under these circumstances, Amato's government found itself as a besieged stronghold.

During this time, there was an escalating crisis within the Forlani leadership of the party. Immediately after being rejected for the presidency and resigning as secretary of the DC, Antonio Forlani's departure sparked speculation about Martinazzoli taking over. A faction known as the "Group of Forty" advocated strongly for Martinazzoli, urging a swift national council meeting. However, this meeting was consistently postponed due to ongoing discussions and negotiations.

In early August, the much-anticipated national council was held. Internal divisions reemerged, especially between the "Group of Forty" and the left-leaning DC members, leading to resistance in endorsing Secretary Forlani's report. This discord persisted until Forlani tendered his resignation once more in late September 1992. This prompted the organization of a new national council slated for October 11 and 12. It is at this October congress that Martinazzoli was appointed DC secretary general. When asked about this Congress, Martinazzoli declares that

indeed this election was a "*desperate adventure*" but he did not believe that the Tangentopoli was responsible for the DC's implosion (Valle 2021, p. 111).

The Tangentopoli scandals' urgency however led to a departure from standard procedures, resulting in the appointment of Mino Martinazzoli via co-option rather than a voting process. This rapid shift represents a win for a faction of the left, the "professors," previously sidelined since Ciriaco De Mita's decline (Rayner 2005, p. 346). Their sudden rise in the DC structure was unexpected after the legislative elections where many faced defeats. These "professors" relied on Catholic networks, drawing from their disposition and capital (cultural and expertise) that sets them apart from predecessors whose focus was mainly political, especially the despised Craxi, Andreotti, Forlani strategic alliance known as CAF. They advocated for an ethical approach to politics rooted in Christian principles and "good governance".

Mino Martinazzoli explained that for him the fate of the DC had played out in its leadership's dullness in dealing with the great and global changes that were taking place in the meantime. The collapse of the Berlin Wall was a historical caesura that also affected the fate of the DC. It was the theme that the party had picked up in the '89 congress as well, the idea that there was no immovable engine in change. "*As I predicted then, if we did not courageously take a stance of recommencement and stand still in the midst of the changes that were being determined, we would become an easy target*" he said (Valle 2021, p. 110). Martinazzoli understood that with the end of communism in Europe, with the end of the Cold War and ideological confrontation, the role of the DC, its historical mission, was also to change inevitably.

The idea behind Martinazzoli's election and strategy was that the DC could be more Christian Democrat than before: less about its power and more about its project. The DC no longer had the obligation to govern at any cost, as had happened to it up to that point. This was the idea that led Martinazzoli to ask, later on, for the name of the party to be changed from Christian Democracy to the People's Party. "*I was not ashamed of the acronym, but I wanted it to be clear in what direction we wanted to go*" he says p. 111 of his biographic talks with Annachiara Valle; "*Even De Gasperi, when he took the reverse route, from the People's Party to Christian Democracy, did not do it because he was ashamed of the acronym. He wanted to make it clear that one historical phase was ending and another was beginning. And it was the same for me, this gesture wanted to open another phase of our path*." (Valle 2021, p. 111).

Martinazzoli was quoting the way of interpreting the role of the party that had been Sturzo's and that was becoming relevant again: less government, less power and more project (Valle 2021, p. 111). There was a shift towards becoming a party engaged in active struggles, navigating a path toward revitalization. Mario Segni's efforts in advocating referendums and electoral system reforms aimed at fostering a more bipolar political system would contribute to this transformation (Ceccanti 2023).

However, putting these ideas into action proved far more challenging than merely expressing them.

Moro had once told Martinazzoli that "*we, in the DC, were doomed to govern*" (Valle 2021, p. 111). However, upon realizing it wasn't a lifelong commitment, many within the DC felt a sense of loss and tried to recreate a situation that no longer existed. This occurred amid legal actions impacting influential forces in their history such as Andreottism. Additionally, there was a discrepancy between the Martinazzoli's thoughts and the prevailing sentiment among progressive Catholic minds. According to Martinazzoli, many within the party were convinced that anchoring a political stance on Christian principles was no longer viable or relevant, believing that era had come to an end (Valle 2021, p. 111).

In the two years of Martinazzoli's secretariat, the DC leadership carried out a purge. It was a choice that costed a lot to the party because the party was also made up of genuine, concrete forces, anchored in the territory, even if sometimes questionable explained Martinazzoli (Valle 2021, p. 111). Excluding some individuals and currents meant losing support from a portion of the voters. Omitting someone like De Mita from the DC lists was a significant move, representing an effort from Martinazzoli to completely overhaul the party in the lights of the global and domestic political crisis going on. Additionally, in certain cities like Turin, existing offices were shut down in response to the call for renewal.

Amid efforts to revive the party, Martinazzoli brought in administrators, from the public but also from the private sectors, to reform the regional federations of the party (Rayner 2005, p. 346). External figures outside the party believed they were fit for nominations in many regions, winning support despite lacking prior elected roles. This trend led to a loss of legitimacy for local leaders. Some mid-generation demo-christian parliament members, like Clemente Mastella and Gerardo Bianco, felt marginalized by this renewal process. Bianco objected to the

influence of lesser-experienced individuals referred to as “small professors” (Rayner 2005, p. 346). These middle-aged politicians, who initially expected to benefit from the downfall of their senior mentors, now faced obstacles due to the rise of younger contenders armed with limited but influential resources.

Understanding that the renewal of the political elite and the DC leadership and current was at the basis of the survival plan Martinazzoli had in mind, he set up an example by refusing to run at the general elections of 1994. Martinazzoli found it unreasonable for a party to have a leader who wasn't a part of the Parliament in a parliamentary system (Valle 2021, p. 112). It was publicly announced to ensure that a congress would follow immediately after the elections in addition to mark the end of Martinazzoli’s leadership tenure.

They initiated a reset of membership cards and introduced a manifesto for signing; failure to sign meant exclusion from the party. Additionally, a complete overhaul of the party leadership reduced its members from forty-eight to fifteen. Furthermore, Antonio Gava, figure of DC clientelism in Naples we mentioned in the previous chapter was replaced by Gabriele De Rosa as the Senate group leader. It was all symbolic.

Looking for a new political center: the birth of the *Partito popolare*

In July 1993, Mino Martinazzoli convened the Constituent Assembly to change the party's name back to the Sturtian one: *Partito popolare*, the People’s Party. He believed in restoring the Christian democratic history and the foundational principles of Italian political Catholicism, embodied by Sturzo's Popular Party and De Gasperi's leadership (Valle 2021, p. 115).

“*Regarding my role as secretary of the DC I happened to say that I was elected almost out of desperation. And it was a well-founded observation. Because of my history, because of the way I was in the party, because of who I was, I certainly did not represent the continuity of a Christian Democrat physiognomy. I was certainly an exceptional choice at an exceptional time,*” analyzes Mino Martinazzoli (Valle 2021, p. 115); “*The reason for changing the party's acronym, as I have already said, was this: to account for, to make visible, the need to return, to some extent, to the origins. I was convinced that we could be Christian Democrats in a different way: less about our power and more about our project, our interpretation of politics*.”

When given the option to modify the party's name while keeping the crusader shield symbol during the Constituent Assembly of the future Ppi, Mino Martinazzoli stated: "*I posed and have posed the question of changing our denomination. I did not do it to follow the futility of a fashion or to cut cleanly through the continuity of a tradition. This image of 'renewing without reneging' explicitly says the spirit of my reflection"* (Malgeri 1998).

The notion that the People's Party emerged solely from the Christian Democrat left while Casini's moderate DC formed the Christian Democratic Center is incorrect according to Martinazzoli (Valle 2021, p. 116). He argued that People's Party wasn't predominantly composed of the Christian Democrat left; rather, it encompassed a broader spectrum of Christian Democracy. It included individuals from across the DC, particularly those significant in shaping the party's history.

In the People's Party, influential figures like Fanfani, Taviani, and Colombo were present. Martinazzoli and the DC leadership at the time didn't view those leaving as a complete rupture or separation, but rather as individuals defecting due to prioritizing political survival over genuine political commitment (Valle 2021, p. 116). These moments highlighted the struggle between the generosity politics requires and personal priorities, in Martinazzoli's opinion.

On page 117 of the biographic work Annachiara Valle realized with Mino Martinazzoli, he describes how some within the Party assumed the end of Catholic political unity was liberation, as if being a Christian Democrat was obligatory. Martinazzoli's experience differed; he argues didn't join the Christian Democrats out of obligation and didn't believe in the dogma of Catholic political unity while he didn't lean toward the idea of political disunity among Catholics either. This perspective affected subsequent periods. The flaw he observed lay in perceiving political pluralism among Catholics as a final point, not a new condition requiring reconsideration of political duty. Some used the "Catholic" label for political identity, which the writer found unwise and not a display of wisdom (Valle 2021, p. 117). He says: "*As far as I know, as far as I have read, as far as I have learned, as far as I have known, I have not the slightest doubt that, within the political dimension, Catholics who were not in politics in the name of Catholic Italy, but who were there as Catholics in Italy, counted. What counted was the idea that it was not a matter of putting up walls and closing drawbridges, but instead of accepting - as Sturzo had taught us - as equals, secularly, the political confrontation.*"

In other words, the primary aim of Martinazzoli was to safeguard the initial Christian democratic experience despite the turbulent political landscape and not to position the Party, DC then after July 1993 People's Party, in the position of "kingmaker" in the perspective of the 1994 general elections majority (Valle 2021, p. 120). For instance, Martinazzoli invited Helmut Kohl, the Christian-democratic German chancellor, to the party Congress of July 1993 highlighting the will to become more like a CDU – German Christian democracy – party's structure: a political alliance and unity of Catholics here to do politics rather than a strategical alliance of power.

Coming back to the original roots of the Christian Democracy as a concept and rebuild the party had to go through embracing the motto "*Renew without reneging*," that Martinazzoli's leadership came up with encapsulating the DC history's essence. They tackled issues like reclaiming the party from decay due to tagentopoli-exposed illegal power structures and rebuilding a hierarchy based on moral relationships rather than mutual convenience embodied by current such as Andreottism (Valle 2021, p. 117).

The question of electoral referendums and the path towards bipolarization.

At the same time those changes were taking place in the internal structure of the DC and Partito Popolare, the "Mattarellum" proposal – named after Sergio Mattarella who was pushing for referendum reforms of the electoral system - was being developed after meetings among several politicians, including Mario Segni and other parliamentarians. Although the law establishing proportionality in general elections which inevitable would push towards a more polarized political system while allowing political alternance faced strong opposition, it emerged after a referendum reflected a certain direction wished for by the Italian people. There was a clear will in the population for more political alternance and more efficiency of the system (Ceccanti 2023).

"*But if today all politics is reduced to the judicial situation, how can we do politics without intervening in the judicial field?*", said Mino Martinazzoli in April 1993 highlighting the changes taking place in the way politics should be done from there on (Rayner 2005, p. 299). For these players disoriented by the blurring of reference points, such a critical phase corresponds to "*a situation where principles come into conflict*", as "*competitors are unable to*

agree on the rules of the game and are less involved in a competition for recognized trophies than in a battle over the definition of the rules of political competition" (George, Jean, and Bailey 1971, p. 206).

Concerns that omitting proportionality might seal the fate of the DC were raised. The rejection of the Pds' suggestion to extend the local voting mechanism nationally was due to complexities and the need for a more refined approach for democratic modernization. Instinctively, the Christian-democrats resisted the double-round system, citing their unsuccessful experiences in local elections, opting instead for a majoritarian approach corrected by a twenty-five percent proportional representation (Valle 2021, p. 121).

The adoption in Parliament of the said amendment marked the start of a turbulent period for creating party lists instead of a period much needed and wanted by Martinazzoli and the new People's Party to reflect on the path the party should take (Valle 2021, p. 121). This phase represented a significant statistical innovation – proportionality - altering the composition of the political leadership noticeably among former Christian – democratic leadership who either accepted or resisted the changes, ultimately leading some to diverge toward different paths.

The failure of the *Partito popolare* at the 1994 general elections and the end of the Christian democratic politics.

Sepaking about the 1994 general elections campaign he led with the Partito popolare, without running himself for election, Martinazzoli recalled: "*I participated assiduously in the campaign, toured Italy, or paid my bill to the bitterness that could take a Christian Democrat leader in the days of Tangentopoli. I did not tally, but there were many pennies that greeted me at the entrance to theaters. But I have the memory of a beautiful campaign. It was not only my feelings or my idea of a real, solid, and courageous battle but also those of friends who were more directly challenged in the different situations.*" (Valle 2021, p. 122).

Martinazzoli believed that it was to him and other former prominent figures of the DC like La Malfa or Giuliano Amato to set an example by not running for re – election (Valle 2021, p. 122). The strategy aimed to revitalize Christian democracy and the political center, historically represented by the DC, in a more polarized left-right political landscape. It sought to renew the

Italian political class as well amidst widespread corruption allegations against the First Republic's entire political sphere.

The Partito popolare, “People’s party”, which allied at the time with Mario Segni around the Pact for Italy, garnered around sixteen percent of the vote at the 1994 general elections. Despite Martinazzoli and the party’s efforts, the election outcome was considered disastrous (Valle 2021, p. 123), especially when compared to the DC's previous results. Martinazzoli waited for the next congress of his newly recognized party in order to resign, which he always intended to do, even before the results of the 1994 elections came in. It was a resignation out of love and not out of spite, he argued (Valle 2021, p. 125). His time, as well as the one of the First Republic came to an end.

Following the dissolution of the Pact for Italy, the People's Party participated in the European elections independently and secured an 11 percent consensus. While this might have seemed like a promising outcome for a fresh start, the anticipated restart didn't materialize.

Martinazzoli expressed his belief that leaders that succeeded him at the head of the People's Party in 1994 may have overlooked the reasons behind the shrinking consensus during electoral reviews. Instead of questioning the cause, they would have chosen to create new parties like the Margherita and the Democratic Party, abandoning the People's Party experience. Therefore, leaving the Italian political landscape deprived from a relevant political center.

In his biographic discussions with Annachiara Valle, on page 125, Martinazzoli recalled a page from a booklet written by a fellow democrat-christian, Gabriele De Rosa: the record of the minutes of his multiple meetings with Don Luigi Sturzo in the days when De Rosa was documenting himself to write his history of the initial People's Party (1919 – 1926). Here is what Martinazzoli says: “*They had arrived to talk about the last phase of pre-fascist democracy, almost on the eve of the March on Rome. De Rosa pressed Sturzo: "If you had agreed with Turati, and then if, if, if, if," he told him. Sturzo a bit fed up replied to him, "Look, when the wind blows impetuously on one side, you can try to resist, but the wind blows where it will. Sometimes it occurred to me to think that the fate of this poor great party* (the DC) *then met a too impetuous headwind*.” (Valle 2021, p. 125). Martinazzoli argues in this extract no one was responsible for the fall of the DC, not Andreotti, nor himself, nor Mario Segni, nor the “Clean

hands" judges, nor Cosa Nostra and its turncoats. He abides, precisely arguing that, by the laws of chaos instead of those of conspiracy.

Mario Segni, the strategy of "radical reform" and creating a new political system.

Biography

Mario Segni, born in May 1939 in Sassari, Sardinia, is the son of Antonio Segni, a key figure in the founding of the Christian Democracy and a former President of the Republic (1962-64). He started his career as a Constitutional Law professor and later entered the Chamber of Deputies in 1976. Segni notably opposed the DC's alliance with the PCI ("*Historical Compromise*") and served on various committees such as Justice and Constitutional Affairs. He held a position as Secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture during the second Craxi government and chaired the Commission responsible for Intelligence Services from 1987 to 1990. In 1990, he took the lead in advocating for referendums on and reforms of the electoral system.

During the Tangentopoli years

Put under the pressure of the Clean Hands investigations, the political system understood it had to reform itself. The reforms debated focused largely on morality and transparency, with efforts to relinquish certain aspects that symbolized authority among parliamentarians (Rayner 2005, p. 363). There were attempts to limit parliamentary careers and demands for financial clarity from party treasurers. The most important of all, the use of referendums was instrumental in changing the electoral and therefore the political system amidst the Tangentopoli crisis.

First attempts to constrain the Tangentopoli crisis within the political sphere.

Hervé Rayner explains page 363 of his sociological study of the Clean Hands operation, that when the Italian legislators faced the call for more direct democracy and more efficient political and electoral system, seemed at first sight to be led by its "juridico-institutional habitus" to spontaneously consider a constitutional amendment as a solution. But argues that this type of habitus should not have been fetishized. "*On the one hand, it's best not to lose sight of the fact*

that this solution is first and foremost a focal point, in the sense that a vast array of players with highly heterogeneous social dispositions are tending to impose it on parliamentarians," here referring to journalists, judges, public opinion in general, "*On the other hand, the electoral reform procedure could certainly restore the latter's confidence in their ability to remain masters of the game*" (Rayner 2005, p. 363). In this respect, electoral reforms are a good indicator of the pressures endured, but also exploited, by elected representatives.

The electoral law for municipal elections, enacted on March 27, 1993, implemented several changes. It brought in a two-round uninominal ballot and expanded the majority voting system to encompass all municipalities with fewer than 15,000 inhabitants. Additionally, it specified that in larger towns, the winning candidate's list would secure 60% of the seats. Furthermore, it reduced the term of office from five to four years, with a limit of two terms.

Parliamentarians tried another attempt to reclaim the debate by establishing on July 23, 1992, a bicameral Commission for Institutional Reforms (Rayner 2005, p. 363). Parliamentary delegations taking part in this attempt consisted of 30 senators and 30 deputies who had to delve into reform projects three times a week, especially regarding electoral matters; according to the DC secretary at the time, "*the problem was that of the re-legitimization of politics*" (Rayner 2005, p. 363).

That attempt to confine the conflict to the parliamentary arena did not withstand the scandals. On March 2, 1993, Ciriaco De Mita resigned from the presidency of the Bicameral after his brother's arrest, who had been indicted for criminal association. Caught off guard, the delegation members seemed unable to organize collectively. Citing the indictment of eight Bicameral members, the representative of La Rete and the Lega Nord resigned. The other groups seemed bound to the results of the popular initiative abrogative referendum pushed for at the same time by Mario Segni on the Senate's election mode and, above all, remained deeply divided on the type of electoral system to promote (Rayner 2005, p. 364).

Scandals have created a constant need for elected officials to reassess their positions, navigating through a highly dynamic political landscape (Rayner 2005, p. 364). According to Rayner, the two main opposition leaders shifted their stances due to the visible weakening of their adversaries in upcoming elections. Left wing politician Achille Occhetto proposed a mixed electoral system, a direction toward which the Christian Democrats and Socialists were slowly

aligning with some reluctance. Umberto Bossi from the Lega Nord, previously a staunch advocate of proportional representation, then supported an "English-style" majority system. On the other hand, leaders of the far-right party MSI vehemently opposed any majority voting system, fearing unprecedented protests and the potential elimination of their political relevance. Parliamentarians who, despite having the authority to halt the referendum process by amending the electoral law, could not reach a consensus on this solution (Rayner 2005, p. 364).

The referendum movement.

As the April 18, 1993, referendum drew near, the overhaul of the electoral law seemed to the elected officials as a “necessary” compromise, a sort of lesser evil. Even the DC parliamentarians went so far as to express their support for a majority-based electoral law (Rayner 2005, p. 364). In short, hesitant shifts in political stance by certain groups attempted to align with the expected victorious side of a referendum, but their timing seemed poorly judged and disconnected (Rayner 2005, p. 364). Once fervent advocates of proportional representation, Christian-democrats embraced a majoritarian approach when their electoral influence was at its peak, losing their identity as the party representing relative majority. Socialists, after wavering, opted for a “German-style” electoral system, proposing a 5% threshold for their party in local elections. These tactical missteps indicate a loss of strategic acumen among political leaders, as the rapid changes and constant shifts in positions debunk their predictions.

Mario Segni's referendum campaign encapsulated the prevalent sentiment, highlighting “*45 years of proportional representation that have given us 51 crises of government, 14 parties, corrupt politics and an ungovernable country. If the Yes side wins, the partitocracy is over. April 18, citizens take back politics. Let's sack the nomenklatura*” (Rayner 2005, p. 364). The campaign advocated for an end to partitocracy and urged citizens to reclaim politics by supporting the “Yes” side in the upcoming referendum on April 18, 1993, aiming to dismantle the existing political elite. Overshadowed by scandal, the campaign hits the headlines just days before the vote, with most commentators focusing on the electoral referendum and urging their readers to vote "Yes" (Rayner 2005, p. 365).

The significant turnout of 77%, along with a resounding “Yes” victory in the electoral referendum (82% of votes), alongside overwhelming support for referendums to end public funding of parties (90%) and to depoliticize banking appointments (89%), were likened by the

press to a “vote for liberation” or an “avalanche burying the old regime”. This landslide victory weakened all the party’s influence, even those which were previously considered strong, as between half and two-thirds of voters from MSI, RC, and La Rete went against their party's recommended voting stance (Rayner 2005, p. 365).

Since the referendum only annulled existing laws, the task of formulating a new electoral law remained pending (Rayner 2005, p. 365). Disagreements over the voting system led opposition parties to push for immediate elections, a move resisted by the Christian Democrats and Socialists, who sought to delay them. Despite shifts in positions by the Socialists, Republicans, and those influenced by referendums, two-thirds of the members in the Constitutional Affairs Commission rejected the PDS's proposal for a two-round voting system. Hervé Rayner explains that amid the complexity of the situation, negotiations resulted in a convoluted law, the consequences of which were hard to anticipate. Deputies overwhelmingly approved Sergio Mattarella's (DC) proposal for a single voting round, featuring single-member constituencies for 75% of seats and multi-member constituencies for the remaining 25%, along with a 4% threshold. Enacted on August 4, 1993, the law generated differing opinions within the DC: its proponent anticipated a significant reduction in the number of parties, whereas the democrat-Christian Gerardo Bianco lamented the “*planned demise*” of the DC (Rayner 2005, p. 365).

The uncertainty surrounding the next general election date after the referendum of July 1993 had become a crucial issue in shaping the new electoral law, with many majority-elected officials viewing it as a matter of their “political survival” (Rayner 2005, p. 365). Although Parliament and the President have the authority over the electoral calendar and the dissolution of the legislature, there was a shared belief among political figures that the legislature should conclude. It was established that elections won't occur before January 1994 due to the necessity of delineating constituency boundaries, a process requiring four months.

A political issue of the first order, the modification of the electoral law would change the political game.

The period between 1992 and 1994 stood distinct from previous parliamentary standstills. Instead of traditional stalemates, this era witnessed interconnected blocks on decision-making due to the influence of scandals, compelling legislators to take unforeseen actions argues Hervé Rayner (Rayner 2005, p. 366). Overwhelmed by the rapidity of these changes, they struggled

to act cohesively, amplifying the existing confusion. Powerful factions swiftly lost command over the political narrative and, subsequently, their electoral support.

The failure of Socialist and Christian Democrat leaders to address the "Chiesa affair" weakened their confidence in their authority and allowed scandals to proliferate. Despite the stakes of party survival, the majority-elected members persisted in their efforts to mitigate the Tangentopoli scandals. These attempts became the central political focus, aiming to contain the conflict within the political sphere but generally proved unsuccessful (Rayner 2005, p. 365). Hervé Rayner writes: "*Between 1992 and 1994, legislators were never united against the magistrates, but were caught in a double bind: they had to limit the interference of journalists and magistrates, but by trying to legislate on these issues, they exposed themselves to hostile interventions from these same groups, and thus tended to increase the porosity of sectoral boundaries"* (Rayner 2005, p. 365). In short, their primary concern was navigating legal proceedings while preserving their political standing.

Mario Segni's referendum however was the contrary of that, it was bringing the debate outside parliament, acknowledging the impossibility to control Tangentopoli within the political sphere.

But its not only the political class that tried its best to reduce Tangentopoli to a matter to be settled in the corridors of parliament or in parliamentary committees. In fact, the judges too reached a point were they were overtaken by the situation. Faced with a flood of prosecution witnesses and apprehensive about the potential political and economic fallout of their actions, the judges from the Milanese pool did propose legislative remedies that ultimately proved ineffective (Rayner 2005, p. 370). On February 11, 1993, Antonio Di Pietro, lead magistrate in the Clean Hands pool sounded the alarm: "*This morning, fifteen people showed up in my office to confess, I can't take it anymore, we have to find a solution. Politicians have to find a solution. I'm not waging war on the system. I'm a judge, I have to pursue specific facts: but at this level, we need a solution. I'm not convinced by my colleague Judge Gherardo Colombo's remission proposal. I think we need electoral reform and reform of the tendering process. The managers of public entities should be technicians and no longer party men*" (Rayner 2005, p. 370).

That is the moment Mario Segni's solution emerged as the exit strategy. Using referendums would avoid judges and the lack of democratic legitimacy that accompanies them, as well as parliamentary commissions and sessions that have become unbearable for the general public.

As a Christian Democrat reformer, Mario Segni seemed to have everything it took to succeed in the critical phase that began in 1992, and his political identity seemed to be modelled on the discourse that had taken hold with the scandals: Haervé Rayner writes: "*he embodied the "moral question", the "new" in the fight against "il Vecchio" (through the referendum movement), the "Second Republic" (advocating a semi-presidential system) and championed the "legal revolution*" (Rayner 2005, p. 370). In summary, Mario Segni, leveraging his position as a professor, garnered support from both sides of the political spectrum, earning recognition as a potential leader for the future Republic. Until late 1993, many prominent figures viewed him as a suitable candidate for leadership in the future, and he actively promoted himself for the role of leader (Rayner 2005, p. 370).

Segni, situated within the right faction of the party but separate from Forlani and Andreotti's leadership, earned recognition as a reform-minded figure following the success he experienced in the 1991 referendum focused on diminishing preferential votes (Rayner 2005, p. 371). Continuing his referendum campaign for a majoritarian voting system and positioning himself against the "partitocracy" and especially the CAF alliance – Craxi, Andreotti, Forlani - he crafted a new political identity and gained support from a faction of the party's left wing, composed of the "professors" and Mino Martinazzoli.

Advised by political scientist Arturo Parisi and backed by the Confindustria president, certain media outlets (from *La Stampa* to *La Repubblica*, including directors from Tg3 to *Samarcanda*, receiving the *Premio Simpatia* in 1992) and Catholic circles (from *Famiglia Cristiana* to ACLI associations), Segni remained isolated within the DC. His resources increasingly came from outside the party, leading to sharper criticisms of the leadership circle (Rayner 2005, p. 371).

The Segni Pact and the political strategy.

More aware of the need to reform radically the system, using new tools such as the referendum that allow a large involvement of the civil society in those political changes, Mario Segni opposed the Martinazzoli's vision and wrote that "*The battleground is that of renewal. Martinazzoli inherits, through no fault of his own, a party whose image is dramatically compromised [...]. He should demonstrate [...] that change is total [...]. But such an action is hindered by his temperament, his history, his relations within the party. Martinazzoli is by*

character inclined to mediation rather than personal opposition" (Segni 1994). That meant coupling the referendum movement with a political structure able to institutionalize it.

Hervé Rayner highlights the increasing relevance of the possibility of Mario Segni leaving the DC over the course of 1992, gaining traction due to the Mani pulite investigations (Rayner 2005, p. 371). Despite being sidelined by opponents controlling the Christian Democrat structure, Segni and his popularity thrived under Tangentopli and the multisectoral attacks it was waging against the partocracy because he relied on support from external sources such as referendums, industrialists, media, and intellectuals. He capitalized on scandals to try and reshape the political landscape in his favor. There's was highlighted shift in support from Confindustria representatives toward Segni during the Milan scandal, influencing his decision to take a more critical stance (Rayner 2005, p. 371). It reached the point he launched an ultimatum in June 1992 on the DC, citing a significant gap between the party's leadership and its members, he positioned himself as a figure of renewal, advocating for reforms and direct democracy to counter an ineffective political class.

The magnitude of the scandals prompted Mario Segni to amplify his focus on the "moral question". Encouraged by his supporters, he founded the association "Popolari per la Riforma" (People for Reform). A significant turning point occurred during the meeting of "Popolari per la Riforma" at the Rome Sports Palace on October 10, 1993. There, Segni vehemently criticized a State "*occupied by parties, power groups, actual gangs*" (Rayner 2005, p. 374), he emphasized the urgent need for a shift toward a bipolarized political landscape. The movement advocated for a "cross-sectional movement", embodying the uniting the "honest". The presence of Christian Democrat representatives willing to join him, along with support from Socialist Minister Claudio Martelli, signaled his growing influence.

His proposal to form electoral lists in competition with the DC during local elections was strongly criticized by Christian Democrat leaders and bishops aiming to preserve the "political unity of Catholics". However, industrialists' businessmen showed great receptiveness to his views, as he addressed 250 prominent entrepreneurs, attributing Tangentopoli to the old parties, describing them as actual political and financial lobbies (Rayner 2005, p. 375).

Mario Segni faced a setback in December during the 1993 municipal election in Fiumicino. His unusual alliance with the PDS/PRI/Greens secured only 21% of the votes despite his prominent

name. The slogan “neither inside nor outside the DC” highlights the uncertainty surrounding him at the time (Rayner 2005, p. 375). However, at the beginning of 1993, the authorization of the electoral referendum that he consistently promoted revitalized his efforts. He called for a comprehensive renovation, “*We must turn this dramatic page of a country mired in a shameful Tangentopoli and turn it with a general change of rules and ruling class*” (Rayner 2005, p. 375). He celebrated the “countdown of the first Republic” and additionally proposed in writing to Mino Martinazzoli the dissolution of the DC to build a “new popular party”. His ally, historian, and former senator Pietro Scoppola urged “democratic Catholics” to support this renewal to prevent it from falling “into the hands of the magistrates” (Rayner 2005, p. 375). Because that is what this initiative was all about: protecting politics (not politicans) and preventing its judicialization.

His tactical choices were conditioned by the turn of the scandals he was propelled into. Segni presented himself as the solution to the delegitimization of the leaders. It was the day after Giulio Andreotti's first indictment on march 27, 1993, that Mario Segni resigned from the DC parliamentary group in those words: “*The dramatic acceleration of the crisis, especially over the last few days, has definitively convinced me that the attempt to reform this party from within is hopeless (...) From now on, the road of the old and the road of the new must separate*” (Rayner 2005, p. 376).

The overwhelming victory of the "Yes" vote in the referendum on the Senate's electoral system was seen as Segni’s personal success (Rayner 2005, p. 376). Many journalists and politicians considered him a top contender to succeed Giuliano Amato as the Prime Minister, but he declined the position of Vice President of the Council offered by the President.

Instead, he decided to establish a “progressive pole” in order to lead the country, aiming to unite DC and PDS voters around joint lists. As the leader of the referendum, he asserted that a predominantly majority vote system, of which he was something of a proponent, would reduce the number of parties to four or five (Rayner 2005, p. 376). However, electoral volatility and the shifts of his counterparts made him hesitant. He advocated for a 75% majority vote initially, then shifted towards an English-style voting system. In the end, he expressed readiness to support the two-round majority system, partly envisioning himself as a future candidate capable of rallying a majority of "liberated" voters disillusioned by the collapse of government parties (Rayner 2005, p. 376).

Publicly aspiring to become “the first Prime Minister of the Second Republic”, he clarified that his “*Patto per l'Italia*”, also known as *Patto Segni* - the Segni Pact - would not be a party but a broad alliance of movements, an alternative to the League but also to the old parties that should vanish, such as the DC. Though relatively isolated in terms of official endorsements, he relied on the 450 clubs of “*Popolari per la Riforma*”, which claimed 50,000 members a few months after their formation (Rayner 2005, p. 376).

The dynamic nature of political dynamics and the support received from groups advocating for “the New” prompted him to seek innovation. Following the initial round of local elections in June 1993, where the limited *Popolari per la Riforma* lists performed better in alliances with the PDS, he positioned himself as an alternative to the rising influence of the “extremes” (specifically targeting the League, MSI, RC, La Rete) and advocated for a shift towards the center.

After the implementation of the electoral reform, he actively advocated for the election of the Prime Minister through direct universal suffrage, presenting a bill to that effect. Amidst the ongoing transformations, he found himself constantly readjusting his positions. His supporters were split between those favoring a left-wing approach and those leaning toward a centrist stance, distancing themselves from the PDS. In September 1993, when he resumed discussions with Mino Martinazzoli and the *Partito popolare* to forge a “new center” in the perspectives of the 1994 general elections, his opponents immediately criticized it as a typical move from the “old politics”, highlighting a maneuver that they believed was contrary to his supposed commitment to change.

Despite these accusations, that were coupled with criticism for perceived influence from the Vatican, Mario Segni navigated through political alliances, attempting to shape the new political center with the *Partito Popolare Italiano* (PPI) of Martinazzoli, though the two entities had different visions of what that center should be. One thought it should be to continuation of the Christian democracy initial spirit of the pre-fascists years and the other thought it should be the alternative to the old governing parties and the modern extremes. The “Pact for National Rebirth”, gathering diverse figures such as Giuliano Amato, dissatisfied liberals, and academics. The alliance with the PPI under the Pact for “National Rebirth” encompassed both laypeople and Catholics, emphasizing candidates from civil society.

Mario Segni's wavering decisions of which strategy and which alliance should be made mirrored a blend of his belief that elections are won in the center as well as the complex, unpredictable nature of the political landscape in late 1993 and early 1994. By the end of 1993, he reconsidered his support for the PPI, leaning towards the expectation of a right-wing coalition's victory, involving figures like Berlusconi, the "neocentrist DC", Marco Pannella, or the League, always aiming for the position of Prime Minister (Rayner 2005, p. 378). He signed a pre-electoral pact with Roberto Maroni, secretary of Lega Nord, which was short-lived—terminated after 24 hours due to objections from PPI leaders, and Umberto Bossi opted to form an alliance with Silvio Berlusconi. Berlusconi's official entry into the race disrupted the balance, polarizing the campaign into pro- and anti-Berlusconi factions.

Mario Segni faced setbacks following unsuccessful negotiations with the League and the limited success of his Pact for National Rebirth. Comprised mainly of defectors from various political parties, the initiative struggled to gain traction. Caught between different factions within the Pact—one planning to align with the left-wing coalition and the other eyeing the right-wing coalition—Segni hesitated to make a definitive decision. Within weeks, the momentum behind his candidacy dwindled, and the high expectations surrounding his initiative began to fade (Rayner 2005, p. 378). He appeared increasingly indecisive and resorted to a televised call for candidates, reflecting his internal conflicts.

On February 5, 1994, in a sparsely attended event at Rome's *Palazzo dei Sporti* where he officially announced his candidacy for the head of government and rejected any alliance with Silvio Berlusconi, who had offered a final electoral deal the day before. Berlusconi eventually won at the general elections of 1994 and despite all of what traditional party politicians predicted that can be summarized in those following words of Mino Martinazzoli said about *Forza Italia* (Silvio Berlusconi's party) in October 1993: "*Building and selling a party like you would a bar of soap is a bizarre idea*" (Rayner 2005, p. 381).

The failure of the politico – referendum revolution.

Mario Segni's tumultuous political journey highlights how continual disruptions have a profound impact on political actors, their resources, positions, and identities. These upheavals constantly shift the necessary resources, rendering what was once crucial irrelevant in a short

span (Rayner 2005, p. 378). An example of that is mass party ideology. This rapid change intensifies the uncertainty experienced by elected officials, as their foundations and guiding principles constantly evolve.

Between 1992 and 1994, the influence of political professionals on the political situation was in fact minimal. They lost their monopoly on "*the production of politically active and legitimate forms of perception and expression"* (Anselmi 1992).

The crisis rose from a significant shift in how political competition operated, forcing the governing parties to accept alterations to the rules of the political arena. Lacking a clear understanding of unfolding events, they initiated reforms that aimed to reduce their authority and unity (Rayner 2005, p. 378). This process of moving away from party-centric dynamics unavoidably disrupted a system that had long been established and shaped by political parties.

Many elected representatives experienced these transformations as a kind of expropriation, as new alliances devalue their resources in favor of "technicians" who boast extra-political skills to legitimize their intrusion. As the architects of privatization, these "technicians" and their allies of the moment are depriving political leaders of some of their legitimacy; imposing new criteria of political excellence, they are transforming certain types of expertise into efficient political resources.

Many elected representatives perceived these changes as a form of dispossession. New alliances prioritized individuals with non-political expertise, considered to be "technicians", devaluing the traditional resources of traditional elected officials. These technicians, particularly involved in privatization contributed to diminish the legitimacy of political leaders (Rayner 2005, p. 379). They established different standards for political competence, turning certain forms of expertise such as business or marketing skills into potent political assets.

The entangled network of relationships stemming from the Tangentopoli scandals acted as a societal whirlwind, disrupting strategic sectors and fundamentally altering the political landscape explains Hervé Rayner on page 379 of his sociologic study of Tangentopoli (Rayner 2005, p. 379). This transformation led to a loss of certain inherent qualities within the political sphere, such as the dominance of ruling parties, the significance of Parliament, and electoral stability.

This reshaping did not solely occur through “technicians” but also significantly involved magistrates, journalists, prominent businesses, and financial entities, marking their massive intrusions into these political spheres. It's crucial to understand this shift as a process of de-objectification impacting all stakeholders within these former strategic political sectors, rather than a simplistic conflict between opposing private-public forces. Not to forget that because of decisions taken under external pressure, members of the political class have themselves greatly contributed to their own dispossession. Mario Segni and the referendum movement included. Rayner writes: “*The urgency and indeterminacy of the crisis led them* (political leaders) *to take measures whose effects they could scarcely foresee. In fact, most of the promoters of the new electoral laws will be the main losers at the polls; many political initiatives seem to have backfired. What appeared to be a reasonable concession turned out to be a "suicidal" measure*” (Rayner 2005, p. 379).

At the general elections of 1994, the Partito popolare lost 146 seats that the DC had previously won, and the Segni Pact – its allied new political structure - won 13 seats. Compared to results political parties could obtain in 2023, it is relatively a good score, but it was at the time perceived as the ultimate humiliation and defeat for former Christian-democrats.

Conclusion

On the 28th of March 1994 Silvio Berlusconi is elected Prime Minister of Italy. He organized his conquest of power around a totally new political party named after the slogan shouted in stadiums by supporters of the Italian national soccer team *Forza Italia*, "Let's go Italy". The coalition he led and that was named "Pole of Freedoms" and "Pole of Good Government" gathered 46.09 % of the votes. His election is the direct emerging consequence of the Tangentopoli crisis and marks its end.

The ultimate signification of "berlusconism" that immediately followed the end of the *Tangentopoli* crisis is the advent of a new kind of politics resulting from "*an emulsion of populism and liberalism*" as described by Giovanni Orsina in his book *Il Berlusconismo nella storia d'Italia* published in 2013 (Orsina 2013). The term chosen of an "*emulsion*" highlights the shared weight of the two concepts that are equally significant in the definition of berlusconism. Giovanni Orsina precise:

> "*Berlusconism can be represented as a three-tentacled octopus. The head of our cephalopod is represented by the myth of a good civil society. The tentacles stemming from that head are hypopolitics, the "friendly State" - which, it should be remembered, is also a minimal State - and the identification of the new virtuous elite.*
>
> *Of these four elements, the first two present a high degree of blending between populism and liberalism, the third is more distinctly liberal, and the fourth more distinctly populist.*
>
> *The "sanctification" of the people considered the repository of all virtues, and the corresponding attack on the elites that would have betrayed them are typical populist themes. In our case, however, populism appears emulsified with liberalism because of the particular conception that the Knight (Berlusconi) has of the people (not dissimilar from that which Guglielmo Giannini had): not a homogeneous entity, devoid of internal fractures, cemented by common elements - cultural, historical, ethnic - capable of decisively excluding anyone who does not share them, but rather*

a sum of diverse, pluralistic, changing, permeable, and open individuals outwardly." (Orsina 2013, p. 126)

At last, berlusconism takes its full part in the political expression of the "Third Great Awakening" (Wolfe 1976) described in introduction, as it is characterized by its need and constant desire for immediacy, which is itself at the core of the "Me" politics. That immediacy is defined by Giovanni Orsina as an "utopia" that negatively influenced berlusconism in its evolution (Orsina 2013, p. 134).

"*Immediacy, first and foremost, in the current sense of the term, as the absence of temporal delay: the conviction that Italian society is already perfect here and now, and therefore can, without further delay, be subjected to a liberal program from which positive outcomes will almost instantaneously emerge. But even more so, immediacy in the sense of the absence of mediation: the rejection of politics and a class of professional politicians as creators of a specialized world different from, and alien to, that in which "ordinary men" live daily, a world that is unnecessary and even parasitic; and the trust in the ability of the "people" to manage directly - in a non-mediated manner, precisely - their own destiny*"(Orsina 2013, p. 133)

Berlusconism goes beyond Silvio Berlusconi, it is at the core of political modernity since the 1990s. This 30 years old emulsion between populism and liberalism and embedded in its utopia of immediacy that has being taking place since the 1994 influenced the way politicians conquered power and acted once in office worldwide. Men like Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, Vladimir Putin, Narenda Modi, Emmanuel Macron, Viktor Orban and others all shared the despise of traditional party politics with its rule of internal check and balances. Efficiency and direct accountability with the people are supposedly of the essence of post-tangentopoli politics. It is fair to say that Italy started a trend in the matter. Or that it expressed with more strength than elsewhere the needs and protest taking place around the globe during the 1990s.

Rosario Forlenza and Bjørn Thomassen published a book in 2016 entitled *Italian Modernities: Competing Narratives of Nationhood*, in which that Italy constitutes a laboratory which experimented and launched new political form in the twentieth century. They write in

their abstract to the chapter on "*After Modernity? Nationhood in the Post-Cold War Era*" the following:

> "*France had its political revolution. England had its industrial revolution. Italy had neither. But Italy had history. And from that history repeated attempts were made to articulate a culture-specific pathway to the modern. This happened as a constant negotiation over nationhood, attempting to define the 'soul' of the country. But it also happened as a mission with a wider purpose, identifying an Italian platform for a project of modernity resonating beyond its borders. Italian thinkers of political modernity were trying to blaze the trail for others to come, and often they succeeded in formulating ideas of lasting consequence and importance for modern European history*" (Forlenza and Thomassen 2016, p. 247).

The Tangentopoli crisis plays a role in that process. But because the very essence of democracy's relevance is asked today by competitive nationhood narratives around the globe such as the Russian or Hungarian democratic illiberalism or Chinese totalitarian capitalistic model of dictatorship, the lessons of what we analyzed surpass the question of modern European history. It raises the question of which path to take in the century ahead of us, which one is the most legitimate.

In other words, when those lines are being written, in the early days of 2024, the legitimacy of the belief implemented by the Tangentopoli period and that ruled our world for 30 years is put into question. The world is obviously not a positive sum game for everyone, not anymore. Meanwhile the western model of liberal democracy is maybe in its most fragile state since the last 30 years.

War is back on the European continent since February 2022 and the invasion led by a nuclear superpower, Russia, of a sovereign neighboring country, Ukraine. And that, despite having built the European energy and security agenda on the inclusion of Russia regionally, thinking it would inevitably lead it towards a Scandinavian style liberal democracy (Vedrine 2021). Same wise for the question of Taiwan's independence within the "Comprehensive Security" agenda – that has not only international but domestic dimensions to it - of China's Xi Jinping who, as the west recently realized, is not abiding by the rules of economical reason but is rather an ideologue more interested in making its citizens soldiers than global entrepreneurs.

2024 will be the year of all the possibilities for democracy as almost half of the world population, estimated around 4 billion people worldwide, is heading towards the ballots to cast a vote (Masterson 2023). It will be interesting to see if the Tangentopoli legacy is overruled or confirmed; whether democracies are more efficient and more representative of modern days societies and of their aspirations or whether the type of leadership, made of "*an emulsion of populism and liberalism*" (Orsina 2013), it implemented result in a backlash of democratic values.

Appendix

Annex 1: Election to the Chamber of Deputies during the First Republic, 1948 – 1992.

Table 3.1 Election to the Chamber of Deputies during the First Republic, 1948–1992

	1948		1953		1958		1963		1968		1972		1976		1979		1983		1987		1992	
Party	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats
PDUP	–		–		–		–		4.5	23	1.9	0	1.5	6	2.3	6	1.5	7	1.7	8	–	
PRC	–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		5.6	35
PR	–		–		–		–		–		–		1.1	4	3.5	18	2.2	11	2.6	13	–	
Greens	–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		2.5	13	2.8	16
PCI	31.0	131	22.6	143	22.7	140	25.3	166	26.9	177	27.1	179	34.4	227	30.4	201	29.9	198	26.6	177	16.1	107
PSI/PSU	31.0	52	12.7	75	14.2	84	13.8	87	14.5	91	9.6	61	9.6	57	9.8	62	11.4	73	14.3	94	13.6	92
PSDI	7.1	33	4.5	19	4.5	22	6.1	33	–		5.1	29	3.4	15	3.8	20	4.1	23	3	17	2.7	16
PRI	2.5	10	1.6	5	1.4	6	1.4	6	2.0	9	2.8	15	3.1	14	3.0	16	5.1	29	3.7	21	4.4	27
DC	48.5	306	40.1	263	42.3	273	38.3	260	39.1	266	38.7	266	38.7	263	38.3	262	38.3	225	34.3	234	29.7	206
PLI	3.8	15	3.0	13	3.5	17	7.0	39	5.8	31	3.9	20	1.3	5	1.9	9	2.9	16	2.1	11	2.8	17
LN	–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		–		8.7	55
PNM	2.8	13	6.8	40	4.8	25	1.7	8	1.3	6	–		–		–		–		–		–	
MS	2.0	6	5.9	29	4.8	24	5.1	27	4.5	24	8.7	56	6.1	35	5.3	30	6.8	42	5.9	35	5.4	34
Others	2.3	8	2.9	3	1.7	5	1.3	4	1.4	3	2.1	5	0.7	4	1.7	6	3.2	6	3.3	6	8.2	25

Source: Raffaella Nanetti and Robert Leonardi (2013) *Politics in Europe*, pp. 362–363.

Fig. 1 – Election to the Chamber of Deputies during the First Republic, 1948 – 1992.

Annex 2: Interview of Stefano Ceccanti, Senator, and Constitutionalist.

Interview of Stefano Ceccanti.

Summary:

Stefano Ceccanti is a former *Partito Democratico* (PD) senator between 2008 and 2013 and a former PD member of parliament between 2018 and 2022. He is a Constitutionalist, currently professor in Comparative Public Law and Constitutional law at La Sapienza University (Rome, Italy).

Mr. Ceccanti started his political career in 1993, in the midst of the Tangentopoli crisis. He was a militant among the Social Christians Movement (Movimento dei Cristiano Sociali), a small political formation that developed from the ashes of the Christian Democracy. He strongly believed then in political use of referendums pushed forward by Mario Segni and he abided by the Segni Pact.

Stefano Ceccanti offers here a constitutionalist's point of view on the Tangentopoli crisis and the political transformation in Italy at the turn of the 1990s as well as a testimony of a Christian – democrat that entered politics at that time.

He structures his argument around a series of electoral laws and referendums taking place between 1990 and 1995 and which, according to him, are at the core of the political revolution we are studying and referring to as the Tangentopoli crisis.

- 1990: law on direct election of mayors
- 1991: first referendum on the Chamber of Deputies electoral law
- 1993 second referendum on the Senate electoral law
- 1995: law changing rules for regional elections

Interview:

Mateo Delattre (M.D.): Could you introduce yourself, Mr. Stefano Ceccanti?

Stefano Ceccanti (S. C.): I am Stefano Ceccanti, former president of Fuci (Universitari Cattolici) - an association led for a time by Aldo Moro and Giulio Andreotti - from 1985 to 1987. I began my career as a member of the Lega Democratica, led by Prof. Pietro Scottola, a reference in the study of partitocracy in Italy. Then I was elected senator and member of parliament.

Let me clarify a few points right away: The Italian Christian Democracy (DC) differed significantly from other European Christian Democratic parties, notably the German Christian Democratic Union (CDU), which emerged as a center-right alternative to the Social Democratic Party (SPD).

In contrast, the Italian DC was established as a unifying force for all Catholics, regardless of their political leanings, because the left in Italy was predominantly communist. We aimed to create a broad coalition encompassing Catholics from across the political spectrum, given the abnormality of the left being largely communist. This fundamental difference explains the

nature of the Italian DC, which functioned more like a federation of diverse parties rather than a cohesive entity.

Within the Party, there were left-wing factions constituting about 30-35% of registered members. However, among voters, the percentage of those leaning towards the right exceeded that of registered party members. Additionally, DC voters tended to be more secular compared to party members. Many individuals voted for the DC primarily because it presented itself as the main alternative to the communist left.
The Christian Democracy faced a crisis when the Left underwent its ultimate downfall in 1989, ceasing to be communist. The demise of the Communist Party naturally led to the decline of Christian democracy. This crucial issue was unrelated to Tangentopoli. What truly bound the DC together was the communist nature of the left.

Within the diverse currents energizing the referendum movement led by Mario Segni, a faction originated from the pre-Christian Democracy right, known as "la proposta." They advocated for the transformation of the DC into the future center-right party of the second republic, echoing Segni's vision. Essentially, they aimed to mold Italian Christian Democracy into something akin to the German Christian Democracy.

On the other hand, another current emerged from Catholic associations. Their goal was to establish a bipolar democracy within a party system where the left, although no longer communist, retained significance.

This concept was previously articulated in the December 1988 edition of "Appunti di cultura di politica," where it was proposed that Italy should transition to a democracy of alternation. The vision included the presence of Catholics across all poles of future alternation, emphasizing the need for their participation in shaping the country's political landscape.

We observed the evolution of Catholic university movements in other nations. Frequently, these movements were affiliated with Socialist Parties and the center-left spectrum, as seen with the GEC (Groupement des Etudiants Catholiques) in France, and also members of socialist parties in Spain or Portugal. For example, Antonio Guterres, the current Secretary-General of the United Nations, was involved in such a movement.

The coalition supporting Mario Segni was comprised of two distinct movements, each with diverse origins and visions for political change. The Catholic student movement envisioned the right wing of the former DC organizing into a traditional conservative party, while the left wing would cooperate with socialists and former communists to establish a more conventional social democratic political entity.

M.D. So was anti-communism alone responsible for keeping the Christian – Democracy together and going?

S.C. The Christian - Democracy was possible, and we can only explain it, because of the presence of the Communist Party.

The problem was that the mere existence of a party that called itself communist, whose anthem was the international, imposed political unity, even if there were internal DC differences in terms of the Socialist Party's reading of the communist party and its evolutions of the years.

When the Socialist Party distanced itself from the Soviet Union [which it previously aligned with] after witnessing the events in Hungary in 1956, the DC split into two factions: one advocating for an alliance with the Socialists (left-wing currents) and the other opposing it (right-wing currents). Eventually, the alliance was formed.

A similar scenario unfolded with the Communist Party. As it began evolving, particularly with its acceptance of NATO in 1976, the DC faced division regarding the integration of Communists into the government. Despite its distinctive Italian character, the Communist identity persisted.

The potential for Catholic political unity to fracture existed only when the left ceased to identify as Communist.

M. D. Was the international context the reason why the Left no longer identified as communist?

S. C. The fall of the Berlin Wall dealt a fatal blow to the Communist Party, but even in the early 1980s, the Euro-missile crisis had raised questions. The Communist Party's opposition to the American security plan for Euro-missiles prevented it from claiming the right to govern in Italy.

Paradoxically, Gorbachev's ascension to power in 1985 within the USSR prompted the idea within Italian communism that the communist system could undergo renewal from within. While there was a notion of a third way between communism and social democracy, Gorbachev hadn't yet theorized that Communist Parties should adopt a social-democratic stance.

This ideological stance created a deadlock in the political system. The breakthrough occurred when the Communist Party transformed into the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), signaling an evolution. This change enabled the formation of a new coalition, and it actively participated in the referendum movement following the "Bologna turning point" starting on April 1, 1990. We could easily have arrived at another form of system if the DC had accepted to become a center-right party and not a confederation of governmental political approach. The DC didn't want to reform. Power was taken for granted.

In February 1990, a crucial decision was made to enact a new law on local government, which aimed to introduce direct elections for mayors. The Andreotti government challenged this proposal by raising a vote of confidence in Parliament.

The mayors in Italy resulted from national negotiations and bargaining among all political parties. However, the situation was murky: municipal administrations had short lifespans of about six months, and mayors were elected with minimal votes, raising concerns about their political legitimacy.

The bipartisan movement supporting the direct election of mayors held a parliamentary majority. However, what prompted the Andreotti government and socialist Bettino Craxi to retreat was the realization that it would initiate a bipartite system. Directly electing mayors would have clearly shifted the DC towards the center-right, while on the left, the PDS would have surpassed the Socialist Party in strength. In essence, the existing state of affairs would have crumbled, and the DC would have lost its monopoly over the party system.

M. D. Was there an internal split in the DC?

S. C. Yes, so Forlani, who led the DC at the time, wanted to keep the system as it was. Craxi, too, because the socialists had a lot of mayors, who, by playing the balance between the DC and the PCI, were in any case constituting the third party in terms of influence in the country.

And so, they imposed on parliament a question of confidence on the direct election of mayors. The traditional party system was attempting to self-defend.

There was a very strong reaction among the civil society at the time because public opinion was in favor of a simpler, more efficient system with direct elections. Two main reactions immediately arose: a collection of signatures in support of the law, which began on April 1, 1990, and the Lega's victory in Lombardy at the end of April. The Lega went from 2-3% of the vote to 20% in Lombardy. This signaled a nationwide protest.

The referendum movement, initiated by Mario Segni, was made of a diverse coalition. It included a Catholic but diverse university contingent, the Radical Party, which advocated for an Anglo-Saxon-style democracy promoting alternation rather than deadlock, and the PDS, which had broken the political stalemate and sought confrontation across the political spectrum. These groups collectively gathered the supporting signatures.

The 1991 referendum marked the third and technically reduced component of the initial proposal, which initially contained three parts, two of which were censured by the Constitutional Court.

Bettino Craxi advocated for abstention to limit the participation quorum. Nevertheless, the government coalition portrayed itself as defending against external challenges. Consequently, the Socialists and the majority of the DC abstained from voting, while 65% of voters participated in the referendum, with 95% voting in favor.

This helped bring the DC below 30% in the 1992 elections, the last to be held under proportional representation.

Mario Segni's aim was to achieve a bi-polar system. He wanted to save the DC by transforming it into the leading party of the center-right block.

Under the multiple preference system, the DC functioned with different hierarchical political factions organizing independently. However, the shift to a single preference system dismantled the DC's internal operational structure.

Facing pressure for a second referendum scheduled for April 18, 1993, aimed at reforming the Senate's electoral law into one with a dominant majority component, a law on the direct election of mayors was swiftly passed in March 1993. This move aimed to sidestep another referendum and initiated the bipolarization of local politics.

M. D. Was the referendum used as a new form of political struggle?

S. C. Yes, because before it had only been used on social issues such as divorce or abortion, and now, for the first time, it introduced political questions and had consequences on the functioning of the political system.

M.D. The referendum, a judicial tool used as a political weapon, even though it has flaws such as asking about complicated questions and providing with simple answers?

S. C. Yes, In this scenario, it was a valuable asset because the political system lacked the capability to reform itself. When the system could not independently achieve the reform it needed, the veto powers within were exposed, leading it to a deadlock. Therefore, with an external shock, we were able to instigate reform. It was a welcomed, albeit partial, solution.

Regarding local government, Parliament finalized the referendum by enacting a favorable law endorsing the alterations.

However, at the national level, while a referendum could alter the voting system, it couldn't amend the constitution itself. The challenge arose from the fact that altering the voting system necessitated constitutional amendments, which never materialized.

M. D. Do you think Mario Segni bears some responsibility for the fall of the DC and the 1st Republic?

S. C. The downfall was inevitable regardless of external factors. Once the Communist Party abandoned communism, the DC could only collapse. The referendum movement aimed to partially guide this change by accompanying it. However, it wasn't solely a legal matter, as Tangentopoli emerged after electoral alterations and the Lega's triumph in Lombardy. The system was deteriorating from within.

Under normal circumstances, the system would have exploded due to its fragmentation. However, the alteration in the voting system aimed to rationalize this fragmentation by promoting bipartisanship.

M. D. So what did Tangentopoli change?

S. C. In the end, Tangentopoli had a lesser impact than commonly believed. It emerged after the erosion of the governing party's support base. The judiciary's actions followed the decline of this support.

M.D. A final act?

S.C. Exactly. It wasn't the cause of the regime change.

M.D. You began your career at this time, but do you have any vivid memories of the Tangentopoli?

S.C. I've never attributed the fact that we changed regimes to the Tangentopoli.

M.D. Because what's also interesting about the Tangentopoli crisis is that the population revolted in a certain way against the political class, didn't they?

S.C. Yes, but in a somewhat convoluted manner. Public opinion sought a more straightforward political system. The political establishment, focused on self-preservation, collapsed. Its fall pleased those desiring change, but their satisfaction stemmed from political motives rather than moral outrage. This class held political accountability, not moral culpability.

M.D. So the omnipresent "moral question" from the 1970s onwards didn't have a decisive impact?

S.C. In reality, the PCI exploited the moral issue, particularly after it encountered a crisis and departed from the national solidarity of the post-Lead Years. It was a tactic to establish a sense

of shape and identity for itself, especially since it had shed its communist identity. This approach offered a simplistic vision aimed at delineating a distinctiveness for the party.

M.D. What can you tell me about the role of Giulio Andreotti, Mario Segni and Mino Martinazzoli during the Tangentopoli crisis?

S.C. Giulio Andreotti's role during the crisis was generally seen as negative. However, historically, he played a relatively positive role in 1976 and 1979. He suggested a daring move by including the Communist Party in the majority, considering international balances of power and the Communist Party's electoral power. Aldo Moro urged Andreotti to adopt a more moderate approach in handling this process, which was beneficial as it helped the Communist Party distance itself from the Soviet Union.

In 1990, he wanted the system to continue as it was. Like a blocked system, without getting out of its power.

M.D. Why?

S.C. Because that's the system he was used to govern by.

M.D. Was it a lack of political realism on his part?

S.C. Yes, we can see, for example, that Andreotti had spoken out against German unity. He tried to block the international situation because he was incapable of thinking of another system, one in which he could have found himself in opposition. That was his main limitation.

Mario Segni, on the other hand, struggled to transition the DC into a center-right party within a system of alternation. The DC resisted its decline, and even after the referendum, when Segni sought to forge alliances, he still clung to the notion that the center-right couldn't include the heirs of the fascist MSI. This stance contrasted sharply with Silvio Berlusconi's approach, who formed an alliance with the Lega and the MSI. While Segni could contemplate an alliance with the Lega, he couldn't envision one with the post-fascists.

His failure to do so paved the way for Berlusconi, who aimed to form an alliance against the left and had no ideological qualms about it. Berlusconi had already started reaching out to Gianfranco Fini by endorsing him as a candidate for mayor of Rome in December 1993, before officially launching Forza Italia in January 1994.

The PDS leadership group made a tragic mistake after the 1993 electoral referendum. It got its ministers out of the Ciampi government. Had the PDS not done so, we would have governed a little longer before reaching the 1994 elections, and we would have ended up with a center-left government with Martinazzoli and the PDS. It would therefore have been possible to pass an electoral law introducing a two-round ballot by forging an alliance between the center and the left. And this alliance would have been competitive, I think, with the right still divided.

After this division, the PDS and in particular Massimo D'Alema, who was at its head, passed a 7-round law, but without anticipating Berlusconi's descent onto the political stage, thinking that in 1994 there would have been the left, the center, the divided right, the Lega in the north and the MSI - National Alliance in the south, which would have taken votes without obtaining a majority. A post-election alliance could have been formed between the center and the left.

Berlusconi's descent into politics destroyed this path and created a center-right that was able to win, at least for the moment.

On this matter, Mino Martinazzoli was entirely mistaken because a significant portion of Christian Democrat voters had shifted their support to the right. The Partito Popolare he established was facing a crisis, and in February 1995, a new law was enacted introducing a majority bonus for the regional elections set for April 1995. This law mirrored the one for mayors: the party securing the highest vote automatically received 55% of the seats.

By introducing a law guaranteeing a majority, there was no longer a rationale for competing from the center. In an assembly structured as the one that was evolving, the centrists' position became less decisive. Consequently, the Partito Popolare divided into two factions. One faction aligned with Berlusconi, while the other joined forces with the left.

The 1995 law led to the dissolution of the Partito Popolare, which had carried the legacy of the DC. The center-right position was now occupied by Berlusconi. Segni's attempt to lead the moderate part of Christian Democracy that would carry the center-right failed.

Meanwhile, the left wing was transformed into the Olive Tree Party, which fielded Romano Prodi in the 1996 elections.

M.D. As an Italian politician with a career in the Second Republic, can you describe your perception of the Christian Democracy and the traditional party system?

S.C. The Christian Democracy had a predominantly center-right electorate but a center-left membership and leadership. Within its ranks, three left-wing currents emerged: one associated with Enrico Mattei, advocating for state involvement in the economy; another tied to the CISL trade union; and an intellectual faction formerly led by Aldo Moro.

In other contexts, these currents might have been absorbed into a social-democratic party. During the DC congress in 1976, a notable change occurred: the secretary general was elected by the congress rather than the closed leadership. This shift highlighted a clear division that foreshadowed the potential dissolution of the first republic. The weakening of the Communist Party's communist identity exacerbated internal divisions within the DC.

M.D. Was the impossibility of changing these electoral rules for the system of the first republic what made Italy different from other European countries?

S.C. The sentiment across the country was that a system where some were destined for the majority while others for the opposition was no longer viable; it was viewed as a negative anomaly. Despite some considering the Italian DC a positive anomaly in the 1970s for its lack of conservatism, it was, in reality, a negative anomaly. The possibility of alternation in government is fundamental because those always in opposition tend to be demagogic without the obligation to confront problems with concrete solutions. Those perpetually in the majority risk becoming a state party, blurring the division between government and the majority political party.

There is an increased risk of corruption for the simple reason that certain branches become disproportionately powerful in relation to their electoral results. The Socialists, for example, who only obtained around 15% of the vote at general elections, had almost all the mayors in the country thanks to inter-party bargaining.

It's akin to a drug, fostering an excess of power within institutions, which is detrimental to democracy. Therefore, the ruling factions of the majority parties believed they could safeguard themselves by clinging to power, rather than contemplating the evolution of the system.

M.D. So what role did Italian civil society play in all this?

S.C. Civil society played a decisive role by mobilizing around the popular referendums. It demonstrated that the referendum movement and those within the system who understood these changes were more representative of society than the party leadership.

M.D. Did all the global economic changes of the 1980s have an impact on this crisis?

S.C. Yes, in the sense that Italy was seen as a negative anomaly. Meaning, an anomaly where there was no clear choice of direction for the country's future, and where the political class was immovable.

M.D. So what I call the Tangentopoli when I study this period for you is a terminological error?

S.C. Yes, I think it's overestimating the judges. People think that the change between the first and second republics was caused by judges, but that's not true. It was the inability of the political class and governments to change that provoked the Tangentopoli crisis.

Then, the mechanism of the party system resulted in internal imbalances because it operated under the assumption that both politics and judges wielded significant influence. Politicians had granted substantial authority to judges, particularly in combating terrorism. The legislation that facilitated the emergence of "pentiti" bestowed considerable power upon judges. However, during the terrorism era, this power dynamic wasn't as evident, since politics still held sway.

As politics weakened due to its failure to establish a new system, a discrepancy emerged between the authority of judges and politicians.

The strength of the judges stemmed from the fact that the business community ceased paying political parties for the corruption they had once tolerated to prevent the establishment of a communist regime in Italy. However, after 1989, the fear of communism dissipated. It was the responsibility of the political class to adapt, but they failed to grasp the necessity for change.

This unresolved process was only partially addressed through pressure from referendums, resulting in changes to the voting system but not the constitution. Consequently, a mismatch persisted wherein the constitution remained unchanged despite the judiciary gaining strength, while political power weakened.

M.D. So Antonio di Pietro and the Milan judges are deluded when they claim to be bringing down the system?

S.C. Yes, it's all an effect of the international context and a system on its last legs. In a way, they've recuperated the change. They took credit for a movement of political self-destruction.

M.D. After the political crisis of the early 1990s, what do you think changed in Italian politics and elsewhere?

S.C. Social change was inevitable. However, the collapse of the Communist structure wasn't followed by the emergence of a cohesive socialist and modern European left. Italian society underwent an unavoidable secularization process, diminishing the Church's influence compared to previous eras, often in a rather abrupt manner. The foundations of the dominant culture shifted significantly. Since then, alternative mechanisms for shaping the political class have yet to be established.

M.D. Do you think the Italian political class today is representative of Italian society?

S.C. Yes, quite well. There's been this disappearance of these two deep-rooted subcultures, the Christian – Democratic one and the communist one, that hasn't yet been replaced by others. So our whole political system today travels in a bit of a blur.

M.D. Would you say that Italy has been a pioneer in the West on the end of traditional party systems as we can see today in France with the election of Emmanuel Macron in 2017?

S.C. Perhaps we haven't experienced a party crisis as profound as in France, where parties are forming around potential presidential candidates. In Italy, we still have numerous parties, perhaps even more so than in France. However, many of these parties ultimately only have local elected representatives, following the traditional logic of political organization.

One area where we've been pioneers is in the mobility of the electorate. We've transitioned from the entirely fixed electorate of the First Republic to experiencing radical shifts. Although we haven't yet resolved the issue of structuring the new major political poles, we're intrigued by the concept of presidential governments, which are technically necessary and have hastened the emergence of anti-political entities like the 5-Star Movement. These movements have capitalized on the challenges faced by one or the other political block.

M.D. In the political movements of the Second Republic, we often see the figure of the charismatic leader like Silvio Berlsuconi, Beppe Grillo and Giorgia Meloni.

S.C. It could never have existed before, because the DC, as a weak confederation of parties, didn't tolerate a leader. Because a fixed leader would have given the party a clear structure and caused it to explode. So, the annual reliance on one of the current leaders as Chairman of the Board, and the fact that the Party Secretary was not to be Chairman of the Board - a feature of confederations - began to lose its force when the electorate became mobile.

For instance, Fratelli d'Italia, led by Giorgia Meloni, is a rather conventional party, with a robust leader, but with an internal structure reminiscent of historical parties. This stands in stark contrast to Forza Italia. In fact, Meloni is Berlusconi's direct successor, and it's foreseeable that Forza Italia will eventually fade away.

For the PD, the challenge was more daunting because it originated from two traditions that were averse to a dominant leader. While the Communist Party had a strong leader, governing wasn't their primary objective. They were opposing the demo-Christian system. Thus, creating a stable, authoritative leadership system proved difficult. Initially, a coexistence was established

between the original party leader, Massimo D'Alema, and the electoral leader, Romano Prodi. However, this arrangement faltered due to the absence of a party designed to secure victories in the center of the political spectrum. The party leader aspired to become head of government, while the head of government aimed to construct a party. Eventually, the PD was formed, introducing the system of open primaries to select uncontested leadership. Nevertheless, challenges in electoral strategy persisted.

M.D. When you were in politics, you campaigned in Tuscany, didn't you?

S.C. I was elected senator for Piedmont in 2008 out of convenience, then I did two campaigns in Tuscany in 2018, when I was elected, and in 2022, when I was defeated.

M.D. How do you run a campaign in the Second Republic, is it different from campaigning in the First Republic?

S.C. In the First Republic, aside from the Communist Party, the pentapartito conducted internal campaigns to secure preferential votes. The electoral campaigns were essentially internal negotiations among factions within the party. Each faction appealed to its own constituency but often ran against other factions within the same party. These campaigns were relatively straightforward since votes weren't typically cast across party lines.

In the post-1992 party system, the electorate's volatility is such that the national dimension predominates the discourse. While the opinion vote was established at the national level, it didn't have much presence at the local level.

M.D. So the only way to win over the electorate in the Second Republic is to use methods much more related to commerce, such as marketing?

S.C. Yes, but it's mainly a question of being able to propose a governing solution at the national level. In the end, the candidates' role is minimal. It's Prodi against Berlusconi.

M.D. In your opinion, is there a need for a return to traditional political parties or a continuation of this movement logic?

S.C. It's very difficult to artificially create political parties. Especially when the electorate has grown accustomed to short-term commitment and no longer accepts long-term loyalty.

M.D. As a constitutionalist, do you see a need for constitutional reform in today's Italy, following the Tangentopoli constitutional crisis?

S.C. Yes, there are two key points to consider:

Firstly, we've altered the voting system, yet constitutional norms are founded on the notion of a weak government, creating a contradiction. The government lacks a guarantee of long-term stability, depending on two separate assemblies. To address this, we've aligned the electoral laws of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies to ensure that the majorities in both chambers are consistent (such as by allowing 18-year-olds to vote in Senate elections). However, technically, it remains possible for the government to be accountable to two different majorities. Secondly, there is still the possibility of a simple no-confidence motion that is not constructive, i.e. that proposes no alternative government solution, as is the case in Federal Germany for instance, while the Italian president of the council (the Prime Minister) still cannot threaten the chamber with an early dissolution to force it into stability.

The Constitution is notable for its failure to defend the winning government over the long term.

M.D. Do you think Giorgia Meloni's desire for a semi-presidential system is justifiable, or is there another possible model?

S.C. I don't think it's necessary.

We could simply refer to the German constitution, which allows a government that loses confidence to request dissolution. Article 68, which proposes dissolution, is more significant than Article 67, which suggests constructive no-confidence. The mere possibility of dissolution fosters parliamentary discipline.

Additionally, we could address the issue of regional autonomy by establishing a chamber to represent the regions, akin to the Bundesrat in Germany.

Because once you create a system of stronger regions, you have to make them accountable on a national level in a second chamber. In the absence of such a guarantee, you're creating a system that won't bring any ultimate stability.

M.D. the problem with Italian politics today is that it's not regulated by any fundamental text, since it acts according to a different logic than the Constitution that's supposed to organize it?

S.C. Yes, our current Constitution was designed for a historical context other than that of the Second Republic. This is the political problem of the Second Republic.

Bibliography

Interview conducted.

Ceccanti, Stefano. 2023. “Interview of Constitutionalist and Italian Senator and Member of Parliament Stefano Ceccanti, Conducted by Mateo Delattre.” Rome.

Primary sources

Anselmi, Gianna. 1992. “Il Grande Equivoco.” *La Repubblica* , January 31.

Berlinguer, Enrico. 1980. *La Proposta Di Alternative per Il Cambiamento*. *P.C.I.*

———. 1985. “La Crisi Della Politica Di Solidarietà.” In *La Crisi Italiana* , edited by Enrico Berlinguer, 126. Roma : L’Unità.

Cirm. 1993. “Poll Realized on March 30th 1993 for Panorama.” *La Repubblica* , April 5.

Clinton, Bill. 1996. “President Clinton’s 1996 State of the Union Address as Delivered.” *The White House* . January 23. https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html.

Cossiga, Francesco. 1991. “Appello Del Presidente Cossiga Contro Lo Sciopero Dei Magistrati.” Italy : Radio Radicale.

Craxi, Bettino. 1978. *L’alternativa Dei Socialisti*. Roma : Edizione Avanti!

———. 1987. *Una Responsabilità Democratica*. Roma : Edizione Avanti! .

D.C. 1968. “24-27 Aprile 1946. Roma. I Congresso Nazionale Della DC. Il Programma Della DC per La Nuova Costituzione.” In *Atti e Documenti Della Democrazia Cristiana 1943-1967*, edited by Andrea Damilano, I:233. Roma: Edizione Cinque Lune.

D.C. 1973. *I Problemi Dell’economia Italiana Superamento Della Crisi e Nuove Prospettive Di Sviluppo Sociale. Convegno Nazionale Di Studi DC. Perugia, 9-12 Dicembre 1972. Vol 3. L’assemblea Generale* . Roma: Edizione Cinque Lune.

———. 1981. *Per La Società Nuova. Un Grande Partito Di Popolo. Assemblea Nazionale DC. Roma 25-30 Novembre 1981*. Roma : N.P.

Diamanti, Ilvo. 1988. “Il Politico Come Impreditore, Il Territorio Come Impresa. Un’ Intervista Inedita Ad Antonio Bisaglia.” In *Strumenti* , 11–26.

Farneti, Paolo. 1979. “Il Sistema Dei Partiti Dalla Costituzione a Oggi.” In *Attualità e Attuazione Della Costituzione*, edited by Giuliano Amato, 9–11. Roma; Bari: Laterza .

Forlani, Arnaldo. 1982. “Dichiarazione d’intenti Politico-Programmatici.” In *D.C., Atti Del 15 Congresso Nazionale*, 818–19. Roma: Edizione Cinque Lune.

Gasperi, Alcide De. 1979. “Il Programma Della Democrazia Cristiana.” In *Scritti Politici Di Alcide de Gasperi* , edited by Alcide De Gasperi, 279. Milano: Feltrinelli.

Il Corriere Della Sera . 1993. “Alle Fine Gli Stranieri Crederanno Nella Vostra Perestrojka ,” March 15.

Mita, Ciriaco De. 1982. “Per La Democrazia Nella Trasformazione.” In *D.C., Atti Del 15 Congresso Nazionale*, 862.

Monicelli, Mino. 1978. “Pretori d’assalto .” Italy: Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7LC-nuL5ro.

Moro, Aldo. 1973. *Per Un’iniziativa Politica Della Democrazia Cristiana* . Agenzia Progetto .

Movimento Sociale Italiano. 1979. “Il Programma Del M.S.I. 1979. Camera, Senato, Europa.” Rome: Fondo movimento sociale italiano .

Panella, Marco. 1982. “L’unica Opposizione.” In *Scritti e Discorsi 1959-1980*, edited by Marco Panella, 302. Milano: Gammalibri.

P.C.I. 1991. *La Proposta Di Alternative per Il Cambiamento*.

Pepino, Livio. 1987. “Giurisdizione e Questione Morale .” *Magistratura è Società* , 230–31.

Santini, Carlo. 1997. “Italy: Public Debt Management and Monetary Control.” In *Coordinating Public Debt and Monetary Management*, edited by Peter Dattels and Hans Blommestein, 285–300. Washington DC : International Monetary Fund. https://www.elibrary.imf.org/display/book/9781557755551/ch008.xml?tabs=fulltext.

Scalfari, Eugenio. 1981. “Dove va Il PCI? Intervista Ad Enrico Berlinguer.” *La Repubblica*, July 28.

Segni, Mario. 1994. *La Rivoluzione Interrotta*. Milano: Rizzoli .

Stehle, Hansjakob. 1978. “The Italian Communists on the Parliamentary Path to Power.” *The World Today* 34 (5). Royal Institute of International Affairs: 175–83. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40395048.

Tagliabue, John. 1992. “Informers in Italy Accusing Ex-Premier of Ties to Mafia.” *The New York Times* , December 31. https://www.nytimes.com/1992/12/31/world/informers-in-italy-accusing-ex-premier-of-ties-to-mafia.html.

Virilio, Paul. 1994. “La Télécratie Menace La Démocratie.” *Libération* , March 30.

Wolfe, Tom. 1976. “Reports on America’s New Great Awakening: The ‘Me’Decade.” *New York Magazine*, August 23.

Secondary sources

Allum, Percy. 1973. *Politics and Society in Post-War Naples*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1995. "Le Double Visage de La Démocratie Chrétienne." In *Incertitudes Italiennes*, edited by Jean Louis Briquet, Christophe Bouillaud, Jean Yves Dormagen, and Isabelle Sommier, Politix, 8:24–44. Paris : Presses de Sciences Po .

Amendola, Giandomenico. 2015. "Le Emozioni e La Città: Dalla Sindrome Di Stendhal All'emotional City Marketing." *Territorio*, no. 73 (June): 7–12. doi:10.3280/TR2015-073001.

Arlacchi, Pino. 1983. *La Mafia Imprenditrice. L'etica Mafiosa e Lo Spirito Del Capitalismo*. Bologna : Il Mulino .

———. 2018. *I Padroni Della Finanza Mondiale. Lo Strapotere Che Ci Minaccia e i Contromovimenti Che Lo Combattono*. Milano: Chiarelettere.

Berselli, Edmondo. 2001. "The Crisis and Transformation of Italian Politics." *Daedalus* 130 (3). The MIT Press: 1–24. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027703.

Bobbio, Norberto. 1980. "La Democrazia e il potere invisibile." *Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana Di Scienza Politica* 10 (2): 181–203. doi:10.1017/S0048840200007930.

Bodin, Jean. 1576. *Les Six Livres de La République*. Paris: Jacques du Puys.

Bosworth, Richard. 1998. *The Italian Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of Mussolini and Fascism.* New York; London : Open University Press .

Bozonnet, Jean-Jacques. 2006. "Un Demi-Siècle de Scandales." *Le Monde* , November. https://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2006/11/21/un-demi-siecle-de-scandales_836806_3214.html.

Bull, Martin, and James Newell. 2005. *Italian Politics. Adjustment under Duress*. Cambridge: Polity Press .

Capanna, Mario. 1975. *Monopoli, DC, Compromesso Storico*. Milano : Mazzotta editore .

Capozzi, Eugenio. 2009. "La Polemica Antipartitocratica." In *Storia Delle Destra Nell'Italia Repubblicana.* , edited by Giovanni Orsina, 184. Soveria Mannelli : Rubbettino .

Caprara, Massimo. 1975. *I Gava*. Milano: Feltrinelli.

Cartocci, Roberto, and Carlo Tullio Altan. 1997. *La Coscienza Civile Degli Italiani. Valori e Disvalori. L'Italia Di Tangentopoli e La Crisi Del Sistema Partitico*. Udine : Gaspari .

Cohen, Elie. 1998. “A Dirigiste End to Dirigisme?” In *The Mitterand Years* , edited by Mairi Maclean, 36–45. Palgrave McMillan.

Colarizi, Simona. 2007. *Storia Politica Della Repubblica. Partiti, Movimenti e Istituzioni. 1943-2006*. Roma; Bari: Laterza .

———. 2021. *Un Paese in Movimento L’Italia Negli Anni Sessanta e Settanta.* Roma; Bari : Laterza

———. 2022a. *Passatopresente : Alle Origini Dell’oggi, 1989-1994*. Roma; Bari: Laterza.

———. 2022b. *Storia Politica Della Repubblica. 1943-2006 Partiti, Movimenti e Istituzioni.* Roma; Bari: Laterza .

Corduwener, Pepijn. 2016. *The Problem of Democracy in Postwar Europe: Political Actors and the Formation of the Postwar Model of Democracy in France, West Germany and Italy*. London: Routledge.

Crainz, Guido. 2003. *Il Paese Mancato. Dal Miracolo Economico Agli Anni Ottanta*. Roma : Donzelli.

Diamanti, Ilvo. 1996a. *La Lega: Geografia, Storia e Sociologia Di Un Nuovo Soggetto Politico.* . Rome : Donzelli.

———. 1996b. *II Male Del Nord: Lega, Localismo, Secessione.* . Rome : Donzelli.

Eichengreen, Barry. 2008. *The European Economy since 1945*. Princeton : Princeton University Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctt7rpfs.

Forlenza, Rosario, and Bjørn Thomassen. 2016. *Italian Modernities. Competing Narratives of Nationhood*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. doi:10.1057/978-1-137-49212-8.

Franco, Massimo. 2010. *Andreotti - La Vita Di Un Uomo Politico, La Storia Di Un’epoca*. Milano: Mondadori .

Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York City: Free Press.

Galli, Giorgio. 2007. *Storia Della DC 1943-1993: Mezzo Secolo Di Democrazia Cristiana*. Roma : Kaos editore .

Gauchet, Marcel, and Natalie J. Doyle. 2015. “Democracy: From One Crisis to Another.” *Social Imaginaries* 1 (1): 163–87. doi:10.5840/si20151111.

George, Bailey Frederick, Copans Jean, and Frederick George Bailey. 1971. *Les Règles Du Jeu Politique : Étude Anthropologique / Par F. G. Bailey,... ; Traduit Par Jean Copans*. Bibliothèque de Sociologie Contemporaine. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Ginsborg, Paul. 1990. *A History of Contemporary Italy: 1943-80*. London : Penguin .

———. 2003. *Italy and Its Discontents: Civil Society, Family, State, 1980-2001*. New York City : Penguin .

Gold, Thomas. 2003. *The Lega Nord and Contemporary Politics in Italy* . Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan.

Grilli di Cortona, Pietro. 2007. *Dalla Prima Alla Seconda Repubblica. Il Cambiamento Politico in Italia*. Roma : Carocci editore .

Judt, Tony. 2010. *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*. New York City : Vintage .

Knox, MacGregor. 2007. *To the Threshold of Power, 1922/33*. Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511619328.

Koff, Sondra, and Stephen Koff. 2000. *Italy From the First to the Second Republic*. London : Routledge.

Köppl, Stefan. 2006. "Italy's Constitutional Odyssey. Failed Attempts at Constitutional Reform in the 1980s and 1990s." In *Politics and Culture in Post-War Italy*, edited by Linda Risso and Monica Boria, 223–36. Newcastle : Cambridge Scholars Press.

Leonardi, Robert. 2017. *Government and Politics of Italy*. London: Red Globe Press.

Lepre, Aurelio. 2006. *Storia Della Prima Repubblica L'Italia Dal 1943 al 2003*. Bologna : Il Mulino.

Malgeri, Francesco. 1998. *Storia Della Democrazia Cristiana*. Roma: Edizioni Cinque Lune.

Mammarella, Giuseppe. 1992. *La Prima Repubblica Dalla Fondazione al Declino*. Roma; Bari: Laterza .

Masterson, Victoria. 2023. "2024 Is a Record Year for Elections. Here's What You Need to Know." *World Economic Forum* . December 15. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/12/2024-elections-around-world/.

Miller, Perry, and Alan Heimer. 1967. *The Great Awakening*. 1st Edition. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrell Company.

Nanetti, Raffaella, and Robert Leonardi. 2013. *Politics in Europe*. Edited by Donald Hancock. Washington DC: CQ Press.

O'Dea, Thomas. 1957. *The Mormons*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Orsina, Giovanni. 2013. *Il Berlusconismo Nella Storia d'Italia.* . Padova: Marsilio .

———. 2015. "Se La Politica è Il Capro Espiatorio." *La Stampa*, May 17. https://www.lastampa.it/opinioni/editoriali/2015/05/17/news/se-la-politica-e-il-capro-espiatorio-1.35262702/.

———. 2018. *La Democrazia Del Narcisismo. Breve Storia Dell'antipolitica*. Venezia: Marsilio.

Paggi, Leonardo. 1998. "Violenza e Democrazia Nella Storia Della Repubblica." *Studi Storici* 39 (4). Fondazione Istituto Gramsci: 949. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20566924.

Piretti, Maria Selena. 1997. "'Continuità e Rottura Alla Nascita Del Sistema Dei Partiti.'" In *Le Idee Costituzionali Della Resistenza*, edited by Claudia Franceschini, Sandro Guerrieri, and Giancarlo Monina, 209. Roma : Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri.

Pizzorno, Alessandro. 1975. "I Ceti Medi Nei Meccanismi Del Consenso." In *Il Caso Italiano* , edited by Fabio Luca Cavazza and Stephen Graubard, 33–52. Milano: Garzanti.

———. 1994. "Le Radici Della Politica Assoluta, e Altri Saggi ." In *Politix. La Biographie. Usages Scientifiques et Sociaux*, edited by Luc Berlivet, Annie Collovald, and Frédéric Sawicki, Vol.7:197–204. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po .

Rayner, Hervé. 2005. *Les Scandales Politiques : L'opération "Mains Propres" En Italie*. Paris : Michel Houdiard Editeur .

Salvadori, Massimo. 1994. *Storia d'Italia e Crisi Di Regime. Alle Radici Della Politica Italiana* . Bologna : Il Mulino .

———. 1996. *Storia d'Italia e Crisi Di Regime: Saggio Sulla Politica Italiana 1861-1996* . Bologna : Il Mulino .

Sangiorgi, Giuseppe. 2005. *Piazza Del Gesù. La Democrazia Cristiana Negli Anni Ottanta: Un Diario Politico.* Milano: Montadori .

Sartor, Nicola. 2005. *La Politica Economica Italiana Negli Anni Ottanta*. Edited by Gennaro Acquaviva. Venezia: Marsilio .

Scoppola, Pietro. 1991. *La Repubblica Dei Partiti*. Bologna : Il Mulino .

Stille, Alexander. 1996. *Excellent Cadavers: The Mafia and the Death of the First Italian Republic*. New York City : Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1838. *Democracy in America*. New York : G. Dearborn &amp Co. https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/9989620273602122.

Toniolo, Gianni. 2013. "An Overview of Italy's Economic Growth." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Italian Economy Since Unification*, 3–36. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199936694.013.0001.

Transparency International. 2022. "Corruption Perception Index." January 28.

Ungaro, Daniele. 1997. *La Transizione Italiana: Analisi e Interpretazioni Sociologiche* . Roma: Armando Editore.

Valle, Annachiara. 2021. *Il Cambiamento Impossibile. Biografia Di Uno Strano Democristiano*. Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino Editore.

Vedrine, Hubert. 2021. *Dictionnaire Amoureux de La Géopolitique*. Paris : Plon .

Ventresca, Robert. 2003. *From Fascism to Democracy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. doi:10.3138/9781442675070.

Vivarelli, Roberto. 1991. *Storia Delle Origini Del Fascismo. L'Italia Dalla Grande Guerra Alla Marcia Su Roma.* Vol. II. Bologna : Il Mulino .

Williamson, John. 2008. "2 A Short History of the Washington Consensus." In *The Washington Consensus Reconsidered*, 14–30. Oxford University PressOxford. doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199534081.003.0002.