

ROUTLEDGE REVIVALS

# Parties and Democracy in Italy

James L. Newell



## PARTIES AND DEMOCRACY IN ITALY

For my mother and father

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JAMES L. NEWELL

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# Abbreviations

ACLI	Christian Association of Italian Workers ( <i>Associazione Cristiana Lavoratori Italiani</i> )
AD	Democratic Alliance ( <i>Alleanza Democratica</i> )
AN	National Alliance ( <i>Alleanza Nazionale</i> )
ANPI	National Association of Ex-partisans ( <i>Associazione Nazionale Partigiani</i> )
CAF	Craxi-Andreotti-Forlani
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
CCD	Christian Democratic Centre ( <i>Centro Cristiano Democratico</i> )
CDU	Christian Democratic Union ( <i>Cristiani Democratici Uniti</i> )
COREL	Committee for Electoral Reform
CORID	Committee for Democratic Reform
C-S	Social Christians ( <i>Cristiano-sociali</i> )
CU	United Communists ( <i>Comunisti Unitari</i> )
DC	Christian Democratic Party ( <i>Democrazia Cristiana</i> )
DP	Proletarian Democracy ( <i>Democrazia Proletaria</i> )
DS	Left Democrats ( <i>Democratici di Sinistra</i> )
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
ENEL	National Electricity Corporation ( <i>Ente Nazionale per l'Energia Elettrica in Italia</i> )
ENI	National Hydrocarbon Corporation ( <i>Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi</i> )
EU	European Union
FDS	'federation of socialists' ( <i>'federazione dei socialisti'</i> )
Fed. Lib.	Liberal Federation ( <i>Federazione dei Liberali</i> )
FI	Go Italy! ( <i>Forza Italia</i> )
FPTP	'first past the post'
ICI	Council Property Tax ( <i>Imposta Comunale sugli Immobili</i> )
IRI	Institute for Industrial Reconstruction ( <i>Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale</i> )
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MID	Italian Democratic Movement ( <i>Movimento Italiano Democratico</i> )
MSI	Italian Social Movement ( <i>Movimento Sociale Italiano</i> )
MSFT	Social Movement-Tricoloured Flame ( <i>Movimento Sociale-Fiamma Tricolore</i> )

<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
<b>NVP</b>	'non-vote party'
<b>P2</b>	Propaganda Two
<b>PASOK</b>	Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement ( <i>Panellinion Sosialistikon Kinema</i> )
<b>PCI</b>	Italian Communist Party ( <i>Partito Comunista Italiano</i> )
<b>PDUP</b>	Party of Proletarian Unity for Communism ( <i>Partito di Unità Proletaria per il Comunismo</i> )
<b>PDS</b>	Democratic Party of the Left ( <i>Partito Democratico della Sinistra</i> )
<b>Pld</b>	Liberal-Democratic Alliance ( <i>Polo Liberal-Democratico</i> )
<b>PLI</b>	Italian Liberal Party ( <i>Partito Liberale Italiano</i> )
<b>PPI</b>	Italian Popular Party ( <i>Partito Popolare Italiano</i> )
<b>PR</b>	Radical Party ( <i>Partito Radicale</i> )
<b>PRI</b>	Italian Republican Party ( <i>Partito Repubblicano Italiano</i> )
<b>PSDI</b>	Italian Social Democratic Party ( <i>Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano</i> )
<b>PSI</b>	Italian Socialist Party ( <i>Partito Socialista Italiano</i> )
<b>PSIUP</b>	Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity ( <i>Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria</i> )
<b>PVA</b>	Valle d'Aosta List ( <i>Pour la Vallée d'Aoste</i> )
<b>RAI</b>	Italian Radio and Television ( <i>Radiotelevisione Italiana</i> )
<b>RC</b>	Communist Refoundation ( <i>Rifondazione Comunista</i> )
<b>RI</b>	Italian Renewal ( <i>Rinnovamento Italiano</i> )
<b>RS</b>	Socialist Renewal ( <i>Rinascita Socialista</i> )
<b>SD</b>	Social Democrats ( <i>Socialdemocratici</i> )
<b>SI</b>	Italian Socialists ( <i>Socialisti Italiani</i> )
<b>SVP</b>	South Tyrolese People's Party ( <i>Südtirolervolkspartei</i> )
<b>TAR</b>	Regional Administrative Court ( <i>Tribunale Amministrativo Regionale</i> )
<b>UD</b>	Democratic Union ( <i>Unione Democratica</i> )
<b>UdC</b>	Union of the Centre ( <i>Unione di Centro</i> )
<b>UDI</b>	Union of Italian Women ( <i>Unione Donne Italiane</i> )
<b>UDR</b>	Democratic Union for the Republic ( <i>Unione Democratica per la Repubblica</i> )
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Unità rif.</b>	Reformist unity ( <i>Unità riformista</i> )

# 1 Introduction: The Revolution in Italian Party Politics

Since 1989 Italian politics have undergone a revolution, and the purpose of this book is to analyse its causes and consequences. Of course, this is not a 'revolution' in the sense of 'mass action, state-breaking and state-making' and the period has indeed seen strong continuities with past political practices. But from this it does not follow that 'events in Italy to date have not been a revolution *in any meaningful sense of the word*' (Ginsborg, 1996: 35, my emphasis). After all, the once leading figures in politics *have* been disgraced and the five traditional parties of government *have* been wiped off the face of the political map. In terms of the numbers, identities and relative sizes of the principal parties, the Italian party system has undergone a transformation – a degree of change so rare that it normally only takes place under extreme conditions such as a break in continuity following the collapse of a regime (Smith, 1989: 354) or else in concomitance with a transformation of the entire constitutional order (such as the one that took place in France in 1958 (Gundle and Parker, 1996: 1)). One might want to debate the *significance* of the changes: it may well be, for instance, that the parties 'remain agents of paralysis and instability rather than unambiguous forces for change' (Bull and Rhodes, 1997: 11) and, indeed, one of my purposes in this book will be precisely to assess what vistas the transformation has, or has not, opened up. However, once it has been conceded that the dramatic nature of the reconfiguration of the party system should not be allowed to hide its limitations (or to hide change and continuity in other areas), the raw datum – the revolution in party politics itself – remains as a brute fact in need of an explanation.

As always, it is a question of balance and of the perspective one chooses to adopt. On the one hand, Italian politics show strong cultural continuities and it seems as fair to say now as it did when Ginsborg made the point, that the political changes have 'not translate[d] into the sort of cultural revolution that had rocked Italy



in 1968–69' (Ginsborg, 1996: 27). The *Tangentopoli* investigations, for instance, while bringing down an entire political class, were witnessed by the bulk of the population via the medium of their television screens and, beyond intellectual circles, failed to induce any widespread reflection on those cultural traits of clientelism, nepotism and tax evasion in which the activities of the *Tangentopoli* defendants were ultimately rooted. In the final analysis, *Tangentopoli* could only punish past practices, not create the conditions for new ones. Furthermore, as Magatti has argued, the heightened individualism of the 1980s in a context of renewed economic growth, increasing secularization and 'deideologization', the decline of Italy's two political subcultures – the Catholic and the Marxist – and the continuing weakness of the state have all served to weaken normative constraints on individual action with the resulting creation of an environment favouring 'the spread of those illicit behaviours which find in corruption, and more generally in clientelism, the two principle ambits of their manifestation' (Magatti, 1996: 1064). This suggests that if the emergence of the Northern League profoundly challenged the then existing power relationships, nevertheless its espousal of hard work and individualism represented far less of a break with the culture of so-called '*Roma ladrona!*' than it cared to admit. This may help to explain why, on 21 January 1998, League deputies voted against lifting the parliamentary immunity of the *Forza Italia* (FI) deputy Cesare Previti, accused of having bribed members of the judiciary on behalf of the heirs of the industrialist, Nino Rovelli, to ensure that a 678 000 million lire court judgment would be decided in their favour, and why, on 25 February, League deputies voted against lifting the parliamentary immunity of Giancarlo Cito accused of having accepted, while mayor of Taranto, an 80 million lire bribe from a portorage and transport company in exchange for a public works contract.<sup>1</sup>

So there are plenty of cultural continuities available to give the lie to the notion that there has been some sort of qualitative break with the entire range of political habits and practices of the past. On the other hand, continuity though there may be, it is also true that politics in the 1990s were very different to what went before. In what does the difference consist? How can the change best be characterized? Succinct answers to these questions were provided by Maurizio Cotta at a recent conference held at the University of Siena.<sup>2</sup> In common with a number of authors (for example, Gundle and Parker, 1996; Ginsborg, 1996) he sees the period of most intense change as being concentrated in the arc of time that runs between the election of 1992 and the election of 1994 and to which the metaphor of a 'political earthquake' is widely applied (see, for example, Gundle and Parker, 1996). The earthquake, Cotta writes, had its epicentre in the 'governing parties' and in the corresponding political class.

Its essence consists in the implosion of the parties that had dominated the political system for more than forty years and in the (at least temporary) exclusion from the political game of the highest level of the governing class as well as a substantial part of the intermediate level. This collapse of the 'heart' of the political system constitutes the necessary condition for the start of the first significant institutional change since the failure of the majoritarian electoral law of 1953 and for a profound restructuring of the party system as well as certain important political practices. The 'ship-yard' of institutional reform then opens and, propelled by the referendum (of April 1993), a major reform of the electoral system is introduced. A completely new party (*Forza Italia*, FI) bursts into the vacuum left by the governing parties; an old but marginal party (the Italian Social Movement–National Alliance, MSI–AN) manages to join the game by modifying its identity; the principal party of opposition (the Democratic Party of the Left, PDS) succeeds in reversing its decade-long decline; the League's success of the early nineties is consolidated ... . Along with the change in the constellation of the principal party actors, there is a change, too, in the structure of the party system: the traditional tri-polar format hinged on a dominant (and governing) centre pole and on counterposed and excluded oppositions gives way to a bi-polar format of (centre-)left and (centre-)right and the 'governing potential' of all the parties. Certain significant practices also change: opposing and pre-constituted coalitions confront each other at elections, whereas before, coalition building (within margins pre-defined by the tri-polar party system) was strictly confined to the period following elections ... . It is clear, then, that ... the sphere of politics has been overtaken, in certain of its fundamental aspects (institutional rules, actors, modes of behaviour) by significant changes. (Cotta, 1998: 6–7)

A number of points need to be made in connection with this characterization. First, there is the issue of *what* has changed. The object of Cotta's attention in the foregoing extract is what he calls 'the sphere of politics', consisting of institutions and rules governing the management of power, political actors (such as parties) and political behaviour (such as electoral behaviour and that of coalitions). This sphere, Cotta argues, can be conceptually distinguished from 'policy' (substantive political decisions and the processes by which they are arrived at) and 'polity' (the boundaries of the political community) although the three obviously exert reciprocal influence on each other. The focus of this book is on the 'sphere of politics' or on what I prefer to call *party politics*, covering: parties and their members; voters; the behaviour of all three in various arenas; and the institutional rules prescribing their behaviour.

Second, there is the issue of timing. Although the pace of change was undoubtedly at its most rapid, and events at their most dramatic, between 1992 and 1994, the process of historical change is, of course, continuous. This creates a problem when dealing with the sort of multidimensional change we are concerned with, for, except within

broad limits, it makes it difficult to assert with much conviction when the change 'really' began. It means that phenomena that for one analyst are an integral part of the change to be explained are for another, by contrast, among the major *catalysts* of the change. Again, much depends on the perspective one chooses to adopt and, in this case, on the breadth of one's focus. Therefore, while concurring with the view that the period of most *striking* change began in 1992 (corresponding, as it does, to the beginning of the party system's meltdown, 'an event without parallel in a modern democracy' (Gundle and Parker, 1996: 1)) I also think that a case can be made for the view that, from the perspective of the post-Second World War period as a whole, an equally significant shift of gear took place in 1989 when, in the wake of the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Occhetto announced the beginning of the transformation of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) into a non-communist party with a new name – the PDS. With that act, the party finally succeeded, after years of struggle, in beginning to dismantle the principal foundation on which post-war party politics had been erected: the presumed ineligibility of the PCI for government and the consequent *conventio ad excludendum*. With that act, Occhetto irrevocably weakened one of the principal pillars on which Christian Democratic electoral support had traditionally rested and this, in turn, was a necessary condition for the growth and consolidation of support for the Northern League. At the same time, the PCI's transformation was accompanied by an unprecedented level of internal conflict and a major party split. If this led the leaders of the governing parties to believe that they could postpone reform of those 'partitocratic' practices which weakened their own support bases, then such practices were in turn a necessary condition for the referendum of 1991, the success of which encouraged the growing 'referendum movement' to push on towards its 1993 initiative which, through a change in the electoral system, aimed to strike a blow at the heart of the governing class.

Third, there is the question of the duration of the period of change. If it begins at the end of 1989 with the announcement of the PCI's change of name, when does it end? Indeed, *has* it come to an end, or is it still ongoing? A variety of considerations conduce to the latter view. To suggest that change has come to an end is to imply a period of stability in the features presumed to have changed. This is true of few, if any, of the components of party politics for the period since the conjunctural crisis of 1992–94. At the level of rules changes, the new electoral law ushered in immediately after the 1993 election has in no sense closed the debate on institutional reform: to the contrary. On the one hand, if the law was expected to produce a coagulation of the parties and to produce a clear winner at elections, then it is now clear that it has done neither of these things. Parties continue to multiply and, if the 1994 election saw the victory of the centre-right, then the latter was

composed not of one coalition but of two, and in any event fell apart after seven months. If the 1996 election saw the victory of the *Ulivo*, then this was very much a 'chance' affair which owed far more to the relative efficiency of the electoral alliances of the centre-left as compared to the centre-right than to any significant shifts of electoral support. The most salient characteristic of 'chance' events is that they are very unlikely to be repeated and not for nothing was a recent book on the 1996 election called *Maggioritario per caso* (D'Alimonte and Bartolini, 1997a). Not surprisingly, then, almost no politician regards the 1993 law as satisfactory and without need of further reform. The period has seen frequent debates on proposals for change and a number of attempts to initiate referenda on the issue. On the other hand, and more radically, the period since 1996 has seen serious efforts being made to revise the whole of Part II of the Constitution. A set of proposals was produced in the autumn of 1997 by the parliamentary commission (the *Bicamerale*) charged with producing them, but they were then blocked by parliament in the late spring of 1998. In addition to all of this, the constellation of parties making up the party system is still in a state of extreme flux.

## Explaining the Revolution

The existing literature on the changes in Italian party politics has been marked by a number of salient characteristics. Foremost among these is the debate between those who see the changes as having been heavily influenced by long-term structural factors, and who therefore incline to the view that the changes themselves come close to being the inevitable outcome of the political system's inherent weaknesses, and, on the other hand, those who argue that the changes were the outcome of specific sequences of events which could quite easily have been very different.<sup>3</sup> A good example of a work belonging to the former category is Massimo Salvadori's *Storia d'Italia e crisi di regime* (1994).

Salvadori's thesis is that the events of the early 1990s represent a regime crisis – the third since Unification – whose roots, like those of 1919–25 and 1943–45, can be traced to a structural feature of the regime – its character as a 'blocked political system' lacking governing alternatives. Like the liberal and fascist regimes which preceded it, the republican regime established after the Second World War was characterized by an opposition which proposed not an alternative government but an alternative political system; not an alternative within, but against, the established institutions. This consequently provoked 'ideological civil war' thus precluding the possibility of peaceful alternation in government of the opposing forces. If in order to prevent the political system tearing itself apart, the governing class

had recourse to a variety of strategies – such as the ‘transformist’ assimilation of some of the forces of opposition (the ‘opening to the left’ of the early 1960s) or a recourse to *consociativismo* – precisely because the competing demands and outlooks of governing and opposition forces *were* irreconcilable, the crisis of the one would lead to the crisis of the other, bringing about a crisis of the regime itself. The crisis of the PCI at the beginning of the 1990s led the Craxian socialists to believe that the prospect was thereby opened up of the Socialist Party (PSI) one day replacing the PCI as the Christian Democrats, (DC’s) main competitor – which in turn, they thought, raised their bargaining power in a *pax spartitoria* with the DC in the present. What they overlooked was that the *pax spartitoria* itself provided fuel for new forces of opposition such as the Northern League (which aimed at the creation of a new regime) that would also be assisted by the crisis of communism. Hence, as indicated by the results of the 1992 election in which *all* the traditional parties suffered more or less dramatic declines, a crisis of the forces of opposition came to coincide with a crisis of the forces of government. And, with the assumptions of the Craxi–Andreotti–Forlani power-sharing arrangement having thus been undermined, a blocked political system gave way to a blockage of the system itself.

Salvadori’s ‘structural’ account has been rather influential and seems clearly to have influenced a number of other writers. For example, Alfio Mastropaolo (1994a) also emphasizes the significance of the *modus vivendi* crisis between the DC and the PCI for the changes; McCarthy (1996a), too, is convinced that the events of the early 1990s should be interpreted as a ‘regime crisis’;<sup>4</sup> Bull and Rhodes emphasize the importance of structural crisis when they argue that ‘collapse was the inevitable consequence of the systematic abuse of power’ (1997: 5–6). Of a rather different stamp are the interpretations offered by Gilbert (1995) and Ginsborg (1996).

Gilbert’s focus on the chronology of recent events rather than on longer-term structural causes reflects his view that the ‘Italian revolution’ was not inevitable and that, on the contrary, ‘chance and contingency played a large role’ (Gilbert, 1995: 3). In essence, Gilbert’s argument is that the parties of government made an enormous miscalculation after the end of the Cold War. With the PCI struggling to deal with unprecedented internal dissension in the search for a new identity, the DC and PSI felt that the domestic repercussions of the collapse of the Berlin Wall could only be of benefit to them. Because the Northern League did not have sufficient weight to fill the gap left by the PCI, the governing parties thus felt safe in ignoring the evidence of danger to their positions provided by the electorate’s various manifestations of growing impatience with inefficiency, corruption and the outrages perpetrated by organized crime. After that, with the collapse of their vote in 1992, the explosion of *Tangentopoli*, and the

murder of Falcone and Borsellino, the governing parties were overtaken by events. Nevertheless, they might have remained in power, for plenty of people had been warning them during the 1980s of the reforms that needed to be undertaken. Hence, they *could* have taken stronger action against the *Mafia*; they *could* have read more accurately the significance of the growth of the Northern League; they *could* have resisted more successfully the temptations of corruption. Instead, by the late 1980s, the parties' behaviour had become so extreme that '[w]here once Italian public opinion had been content to grumble at its leaders but vote for them time and time again, in the 1990s, citizens had no patience left' (ibid.: 4).

Ginsborg's approach is rather similar to that of Gilbert for he argues that the crisis of 1992–94 was 'constituted of very disparate elements' (1996: 19), asserting that it is 'not at all helpful' to adopt a view of history according to which the crisis 'was inevitable and merely a matter of time' (ibid.: 20) and rejecting 'mono-causal interpretations of events' (ibid.). His thesis is that the crisis can be explained as the outcome of a series of tensions or conflicts: between national economic mismanagement and the demands of European integration; between everyday political practice and an 'official morality' upholding the rule of law; between 'virtuous minorities' and the less virtuous occupants of other power centres in the 'state archipelago' (ibid.: 26); between Roman government and northern small businessmen; between the *Mafia* and the state. The important point, for Ginsborg, is that these conflicts derived not from historical constants or from Italy's failure as a regime (after all, if anything, the crisis came about because of the conflict between the failures of the system and the *virtues* of the Republic) and that they have to be seen as being as much the consequences of immediate-term specific sequences of events as of longer-term economic and social changes underlying them.

Hopefully, my own position in the debate between the proponents of 'structural accounts' and those who wish to give more weight to agency will become clear as the text unfolds. For now, suffice it to say that it is, of course, true that giving *excessive* weight to agency can be unenlightening since if, for example, 'the downfall of the political class was caused by its failure to take action which would have saved itself, the question is raised as to why it was unable or unwilling to do this' (Bull, 1996a: 133–4). On the other hand, it is not necessarily the case that the problem is solved by citing more general structural characteristics as an answer, since the question 'Why?' can be asked indefinitely. The perspective which seems to me to be the most enlightening is the one which focuses on agency, thus recognizing that individual actors could have chosen to act differently, but also recognizing that none were powerful enough, on their own, to control the actions of others. Therefore, with each actor pursuing strategic

lines of action that were individually rational given the behaviour of others, a kind of collective action problem came to be created whereby the long-run outcome (the collapse of the party system in this case) was bound to be suboptimal in terms of what was collectively rational – at least for the members of the political establishment at that time. Thus, although each actor was a free agent, there was a very real sense in which the final outcome – the collapse of the system – was, as the ‘structuralists’ say, inevitable. From such a perspective, the analyst’s task becomes that of elucidating the lines of action pursued by the relevant actors given their circumstances, with the aim, thereby, of making intelligible both individual action and overall outcome.

A second feature of the literature on the ‘revolution’ to date has been its tendency to focus on the sequences of events and structural changes leading up to, and responsible for, the collapse of the traditional parties of government to the relative neglect of what came after. This has been partly due to the simple fact that in the ‘rush to publish’ (Bull, 1996a: 131) in the wake of the collapse there was, at the time, little ‘after’ to talk about. However, as Cotta (1998: 10) points out, some years have now passed since the fateful elections of 1994, and an initial survey of what has happened in the period since then is now in order. Neither is the period a short one if one bears in mind that the ‘post-fascist’ system which was destined to last for more than 40 years was constructed in the five-year period between 1943 and 1948. It is, of course, true that when a process of change is still continuing – as we have argued appears to be true in Italian party politics – it is difficult to analyse outcomes as these necessarily remain unknown and so can, at best, only be speculated upon (Bull, 1996a: 132). On the other hand, one must be careful not to push this argument too far: beyond a certain point, waiting for change to ‘run its course’ is to risk waiting forever. Moreover, change, even when it is still continuing, can have a number of interim consequences ‘along the way’ and there is no reason why these consequences should not be studied as outcomes on the same terms as whatever ‘final’ outcomes emerge once the process of change is complete (even if one has to acknowledge that the ongoing character of the change may well make the interim outcomes impermanent). Finally, if one is analysing a process of change, an exclusive focus on what comes before is bound to be incomplete: change, by definition, is a simultaneous process both of *destruction* and *reconstruction*. Therefore, its explanation necessarily requires an analysis not only of what destroyed the old but also of how the resulting fragments were, or are being, recomposed to form something new.

That said, this book does not seek explicitly to challenge existing interpretations of the changes in Italian politics; for it would seem to be a reasonable supposition that, though with differing emphases, most if not all such interpretations identify an important part of the truth.

My goal here is a different one, even though it *does* arise from what I see as a lacuna in the existing literature, especially from the point of view of those who are unfamiliar with Italian politics. Thus, if I do not wish to *challenge* existing interpretations, I do want to enhance *understanding* of the changes, and, for this to be the case, it seems to me necessary to attempt to deal with what sometimes seems to be missing from other accounts – namely, fully elaborated descriptions of the *underlying mechanisms and causal links* tying together the various factors brought together in explanatory sequences. It is not that these underlying mechanisms and causal links are not known about. However, it is only when they are made explicit that a full understanding of how we got from the ‘A’ of the traditional post-war party system to the ‘B’ of the current state of party politics becomes, in my view, possible, especially for the so-called ‘non-expert’ in Italian politics.

My point can best be elucidated by means of an example. In the first chapter of his book, *La crisi dello Stato italiano*, Patrick McCarthy (1996a: 11–12) adds his weight to the widely held view that a significant role in the crisis of the early 1990s was ultimately played by the weakness of the state which, in its turn, was heavily influenced by the clientelistic mode of managing power relationships. He points out that, as a systematic practice, clientelism appeared from the mid-1950s when the DC used it as a means of acquiring support and thus of escaping from the dominance of the Church. Given, he continues, that clientelism erodes legitimacy by undermining the state’s capacity to act as a neutral arbiter, and given that there did not exist a potential alternative government able to put a brake on the DC, the process continued and grew. This passage provokes two comments. First, it attempts to explain the weakness of the state in part by pointing to a causal relationship between it and clientelism. An important strand of thought in the philosophy of science stresses that what is meant by ‘explaining’ a phenomenon is describing the underlying structures or mechanisms that link presumed causes to the phenomenon to be explained (Keat and Urry, 1975). Thus, in the present case we need to know *how* and *why* clientelism contributed to the state’s weakness (as well, of course, as having a precise conception of how the two terms are to be understood). Second, McCarthy’s observation about the absence of a brake on the DC being responsible for the continuation and growth of clientelism implies that there was some sort of self-generating mechanism involved in its practice which, in the absence of a brake, would allow it to spread. For a full understanding of the point, therefore, it would be helpful if this mechanism could be elucidated. The task I have set myself in this book, therefore, is that of trying to deepen understanding of how Italian politics got from A to B by paying particular attention to these underlying mechanisms and causal links.