

Electoral Connections: The Effects of the Personal Vote on Political Patronage, Bureaucracy and Legislation in Postwar Italy¹

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between the legislature and the public administration in postwar Italy (understood as the period from about 1948 through 1994). Italian public administration is normally characterized as badly designed and inefficient, and government performance is usually classed as poor. I argue by contrast that bureaucratic inefficiency, excessive legislation, and widespread bureaucratic corruption were features of Italian public administration that were deliberately designed by legislators, and intended to enhance the reelection prospects for incumbents by providing them opportunities for extensive constituency service. The underlying incentives stemmed from the candidates' search for the personal vote, essential for retaining public office. Differences in the laws regulating the financing of political campaigns explains why excessive bureaucratization in the Italian context also resulted in extensive political corruption.

‘For a country as prosperous as Italy’, reports a standard textbook on postwar Italian politics, ‘the resulting quality of public services — education, health, social security, justice, transport — is exceptionally low’.¹ Not surprisingly, public dissatisfaction with the national bureaucracy and with political performance more generally has traditionally run high in Italy, much higher than in other western European countries.² Why has postwar Italian public administration and government performed so badly?

This paper argues that Italian public administration performed comparatively poorly during the postwar era as a result of the deliberate behavior of parliamentary officials, who were concerned to enhance their own reelection prospects. ‘Bad government’ provided reasons for members of parliament to offer voters compensatory constituency services. It also enhanced the partisan political loyalty of civil servants, who were typically appointed on a patronage basis, by providing them extensive opportunities to engage in bureaucratic corruption. While the overall system that emerged was not itself planned, the interactions and behaviors that underpinned it were strategic and self-serving.

This interpretation is an application and extension of a model of bad government originally elaborated with the United States in mind.³ It stands

in stark contrast to at least two other interpretations of government performance that have been forwarded specifically to understand the Italian case, and that rest on more general theoretical foundations:

1. The political culture argument, stemming from Edward Banfield⁴ and later endorsed by Robert Putnam,⁵ according to which poor institutional performance is an outgrowth of a weak civic culture and a low level of social capital (and ultimately of bad history);
2. The principal-agent literature, according to which bad public administration is a technical defect accountable to poor institutional design and/or inadequate political monitoring, which can be remedied by greater and better control by politicians of bureaucratic agents; in this formulation, politicians are assumed to want to control their agents in order to obtain substantive policy goals in the interests of the electorate.

Below, I evaluate these alternate perspectives against the evidence and show that they are less useful for interpreting important aspects of postwar Italian public administration than the rival electoral model elaborated here.

In the course of the presentation, I offer a unified interpretation for the

following unusual and in some cases ostensibly unrelated features of postwar Italian political institutions and behavior:

1. Why so many jobs in the public bureaucracy were filled on the basis of partisan rather than meritocratic criteria;
2. Why so much legislation was directed at narrow sectional interests;
3. Why there were so many more laws adopted than in comparable countries;
4. Why laws were comparatively detailed and lengthy;
5. Why a disproportionate number of civil servants were from the South of the country;
6. Why there was no ex post monitoring of bureaucrats;
7. Why political and bureaucratic corruption were so prevalent.

In this paper, I draw on a formal model but I do not provide a formal analysis. Much of the relevant modeling would be either derivative or obvious. The main goal of the present study is to make conceptual headway. My aims are to offer a coherent interpretation of the postwar Italian political order that I believe has not been previously articulated, at least not

systematically, and to unpack some analytic distinctions that have not been precisely articulated — for instance, between patronage and pork barrel politics. The arguments presented below offer a novel understanding of postwar Italian institutional performance. Because they are theoretically and comparatively grounded, they may well prove useful for rethinking aspects of ‘bad government’ that we encounter elsewhere.

Students of the Italian legislature have recognized for nearly half a century that Italian legislation was excessively detailed while simultaneously allowing bureaucrats excessive discretion.⁶ Students of local politics have commented for almost as many years that politics, especially southern politics, was largely organized around the distribution of patronage.⁷ In this paper, I marry these two observations to each other, and to contemporary theories of legislative behavior.

Two final notes before proceeding. The analysis I offer is pitched in the past tense, because it characterizes the years following World War II until approximately 1993–94, when the Italian postwar party system collapsed and the electoral system was substantially altered. Many aspects of Italian government have fundamentally changed since then.

Second, there are no systematic data available for most aspects of gov-

ernment performance with which I am concerned here. As a result, I draw mainly on case studies for empirical evidence. This forecloses hypothesis testing of a conventional sort. However, since most of the ‘facts’ underlying the present analysis are probably uncontroversial among social scientists knowledgeable about Italy, this is less of a problem than if the interpretation required reference to less well known or more controversial phenomena. I am interested in offering a new interpretation of ostensibly disparate, country-specific ‘facts’, and fitting them into a theoretically-grounded comparative framework.

The rest of this piece proceeds in six steps. First, I present a verbal summary of an electoral model of bad government. Second, I contrast this model with alternative interpretations of the origins of bad government. Third, I use the electoral model to gain purchase over important characteristics of the Italian bureaucracy and its relations with the legislature. Using a classification devised by V.O. Key to study local machine politics in the United States, I detail how civil service regulations were regularly evaded in postwar Italy in order to construct a public bureaucracy in which appointments were based on partisan patronage rather than professional expertise. Fourth, I analyze the excessive legislation characteristic of postwar Italy. Fifth, I

distinguish political from bureaucratic corruption, and discuss why Italy experienced such comparatively high levels of both. A final section discusses implications of the analysis.

1 How to Model Bad Government

I begin with a well-known model of voters, bureaucrats and legislators, due to Morris Fiorina and Roger Noll.⁸ Rather than reproduce the model here, I report some of its essential features.⁹

In this model, there are three actors: voters, legislators, and administrative agents. The electorate is divided into single-member electoral districts, and voters seek to maximize utility. Legislators seek to maximize the probability of reelection, and bureaucrats seek to maximize the size of their agencies.

The utility of voters can be affected in various ways. Legislators enact programs, which have effects on voters. Second, legislation may redistribute income. Third, policy implementation may involve citizens in unpleasant interactions with the public administration, especially as public programs become complex.

Legislators in turn engage in two types of activities. Collectively, they pass bills. Individually, they also provide quasi-monopolistic ‘facilitation’ services to constituents from their electoral districts. These services involve assigning staff members to help citizens deal with the bureaucracy, with which voters increasingly come into contact as government services expand. At the same time, the bureaucracy itself can help (or hinder) legislators in their facilitation activities, by providing information easily (or reluctantly) to citizens, and by playing its part in justifying the allocation of distributive (‘pork barrel’) policies to the district.

Although each actor is driven by rational and entirely understandable self-interest, the aggregate results are far from innocuous. Fiorina and Noll summarize them this way:

One consequence of the preceding argument is that legislators and bureaucrats have an incentive to produce government services in an excessively bureaucratized manner. To do so raises the demand for facilitation services. The electoral process does not check this tendency because voters face a prisoner’s dilemma in choosing among candidates. If voters disapprove of excessive bureaucratization, electing a legislator who attacks bureaucratic

inefficiency will be unlikely to alter the outcome of a majority-rule legislature, but will produce a less effective facilitator.

As the public bureaucracy grows larger, the importance of the performance of facilitation will grow, and a legislator who is a good facilitator will be increasingly likely to be reelected.¹⁰

The model predicts an all-too-familiar world in which the pursuit of individual self-interest leads to a socially suboptimal outcome. Legislators come increasingly to devote resources to helping citizens negotiate a bloated bureaucracy that the legislature itself has created, while at the same time attention to matters of general and national (rather than district-specific) public policy evaporates.

This produces ‘bad government’ in at least two distinct but interconnected ways. First, legislators have an interest in generating excessive bureaucracy rather than reining in expansionary ambitions on the part of agencies; second, voters act to reward rather than punish this behavior. As a result, not only do elected officials do the wrong thing — at least judging by the interests of the public — but the numbers of those doing the wrong thing grows over time. In fact, legislators who whether deliberately or inadvertently neglect ombudsman services are less likely to be reelected than those

who devote resources to such activities. Dissatisfied voters, because they are divided among electoral districts, are unable to rise up and ‘throw the rascals out’. Although collectively they may disapprove of the extent to which resources are devoted to bureaucratization, constituents in each district have an interest in retaining an experienced and able representative to deal effectively with the bureaucracy. This gives rise to an incumbency advantage, undermining the accountability that democratic electoral competition should guarantee.¹¹

This model was devised to understand characteristics of the American political system that were evident in the 1970s, including the incumbency advantage apparently enjoyed by the Democrats, the proliferation of government services and bureaucratic interventions, and the increasing provision of direct services to constituents by congressional staff in helping the former manage interactions with the federal bureaucracy.¹²

Fiorina and Noll believe that their model is mainly applicable to settings whose electoral systems are characterized by single-member districts, because claiming credit for the provision of facilitation services depends on the near-monopoly control of such services that single member representation ensures.¹³ In fact, however, the search for the ‘personal vote’ is characteristic

of *all* democratic political systems in which voters designate individual candidates — including open list PR and the single non-transferable vote (SNTV) — so long as legislators are able to devise ways to claim individual credit for the facilitation services that they provide.¹⁴ As a related comparative study reports, where these institutional modifications to a PR system exist, they generate outcomes not unlike those observed in the United States; that is, individual legislators have incentives for credit-claiming, which results in policy packages suitable for enhancing the scope of that activity.¹⁵

In Italy, the designation of individual candidates by voters was provided by the system of preference voting that obtained after World War II until the 1994 parliamentary elections. Excessive bureaucratization was exhibited largely through excessive legislation, both in the sense of legislation that was unusually verbose and in the sense of the promulgation of too many, often contradictory, and badly written laws. The provision of services by politicians to individual constituents was provided by the system of political patronage that legislators constructed, where patronage consisted of concrete individual benefits (jobs, especially in the public administration) and help in negotiating the complex legal regulations affecting daily life. The response of many voters to such a system was to offer their votes in exchange for

patronage and constituency services.¹⁶ The ability of individual politicians to claim credit for such services was orchestrated and coordinated by the factional organizations that characterized the ruling party, Italian Christian Democracy (DC).¹⁷

2 Alternative Interpretations of Bad Government

Students of Italian politics have not failed to observe that many aspects of that country's postwar political regime and administration may appropriately be characterized as bad government.¹⁸ But these have not typically been interpreted as deliberately serving the electoral advantages of incumbent politicians. Instead, two alternatives have tended to dominate the literature: a cultural/historical interpretation and an institutional design interpretation.

The most well known version of a cultural/historical approach is that associated with Banfield¹⁹ and later with Putnam²⁰. The latter argued that the differential levels of government performance found across the Italian regions could be traced to the varying degrees of 'social capital; available, and ultimately to different histories. According to this view, if Italian government performs badly, it is because citizens have inadequate trust, and society a

low level of social capital.

This interpretation has been criticized on both theoretical and empirical grounds.²¹ Theoretically, Putnam's argument has two major weaknesses: first, he offers little to account for the persistence of traits that he argues characterize different Italian regions for about seven hundred years; and second, social capital may be endogenous to institutional performance rather than a cause of it. Empirically, Putnam's study has been criticized on a number of grounds, among which omitted variable bias — the areas of Italy with the best institutional performance are those with Communist local governments, a variable that does a better job accounting for institutional performance than social capital measures,²² a fact to which I shall return in the analysis to follow.

A second approach to understanding bad government draws on a principal-agent framework. This view contends that legislators seek to achieve policy goals, but that bureaucrats, given their greater access to specialized policy information, may not faithfully execute the goals of their principals. The perspective extends and builds on Max Weber's original insight that the specialized expertise of bureaucrats pits them against the democratic ethos of the elected politician.

According to this view, the problems of postwar Italian government lie largely with poor institutional design and bad legislation. Giorgio Freddi, for instance, has argued that Italian public administration performs badly because of its excessively hierarchical nature and that performance would be improved were it redesigned to operate more along the lines of private industry.²³ More recently, Alberto Vannucci²⁴ as well as Donatella della Porta and Alberto Vannucci²⁵ have contended that political corruption in Italy stemmed in part from the poorly designed administrative structures found there, and that reform of the public administration is critical to limiting bureaucratic discretion, of which corruption is but an extreme form.

An notable limitation of this approach is that it fails to explain why legislators enacted such badly designed pieces of legislation in the first place and why, once poor design was evident, they failed to correct it. In a principal-agent approach, if the behavior of bureaucrats fails to conform to the interests of their ultimate principal — the electorate — politicians can redesign institutions. Bureaucratic slippage is endemic, but the job of the elected official is that of tinkering with the design of institutions so as to limit this slippage. While it may never be possible to eradicate it entirely, and the interests of bureaucrats and politicians therefore require constant realignment, in a

modern democratic setting persistent, massive bureaucratic indifference to the expressed desires of a majority of the electorate is largely inexplicable within a principal-agent framework. Instead, the strengths of this approach lie with its attention to the subtle ways in which legislators use ‘structure and process’ to shape bureaucratic behavior and outputs, even without directly intervening in or overseeing the daily operations of agencies.²⁶ Such an approach has little to say about chronically ‘bad’ bureaucracy; bureaucracy, that is, that conspicuously fails to conform to the legislative intentions of elected officials or that chronically and persistently undermines the public interest.

The social capital and principal agent approaches have in common a view that politicians are driven primarily by policy goals. But, drawing on the classic study by David Mayhew,²⁷ a vast literature explores the consequences of conceptualizing the goals of legislators in more narrowly electoral terms. Below, I explore the consequences of conceptualizing the goals of politicians as electoral first and foremost for our understanding of postwar Italian design of public administration and certain characteristics of law-making.

3 Bad Government in Italy

The essential features of the alternative electoral model are:

- that voters designate individual candidates;
- that excessive bureaucratization occur, rendering it difficult for ordinary citizens to negotiate the national government;
- that legislators provide specific benefits to constituents in their districts;
- that these benefits include help negotiating the excessively complex national bureaucracy itself;
- that the provision of these facilitation services improve with legislative experience;
- that voters be able to trace the provision of such services directly to the individual politician who secured them.

In principle, none of these characteristics obtain in a strict party list system of proportional representation combined with parliamentary government. In such settings, the locus of political representation comes from nationally

organized parties rather than geographically specified electoral districts that are represented by individual politicians. In fact, however, all of these features, characteristically associated with single-member districts, may obtain with apparently minor institutional modifications of PR and parliamentary government.

In a closed party list system of proportional representation, in which electors vote solely for a political party, and the party itself exercises control over which candidates are seated in parliament, voters are not able to reward and punish individual candidates for public office. Hence, legislators have few incentives to cultivate a personal following. However, many party list systems provide some way for electors to designate those specific individuals whom they wish to represent them in the legislature.²⁸ In Italy, until 1994, in addition to specifying a party, voters were allowed to choose up to three (or in larger districts four) individual candidates from off the party list by giving them their preference votes.²⁹ Voters were not required to use their preference votes, and usually did not. But they enjoyed the option of using all or some. In the 1970s, for instance, about a third of all possible preference votes were cast.³⁰

Because the allocation of parliamentary seats to individual candidates depended strictly on the number of preference votes each collected, the system of preference voting gave individual legislators incentives to claim credit for specific allocations to their districts, and to otherwise construct an individual political identity. Such allocations served to advertise the legislator's abilities, thereby protecting and enlarging his pool of preference votes. The preference vote system thus introduced a strong element of personalism into a political system in which parties and party lists otherwise dominated. Not surprisingly, preference voting was heavily southern, rooted precisely in those parts of the country marked by endemic unemployment, lower levels of economic development, and lower levels of education. Survey data from 1962 show that 72 percent of southerners used at least one preference vote whereas only 40 percent of northerners did, and these figures are characteristic of enduring differences between Northern and Southern electoral behavior throughout the postwar era.³¹

But how could politicians, once elected, actually provide specific services to their districts, and how could they get credit from voters for having done so? Two mechanisms were available for the provision of specific services: 1) pork barrel legislation and 2) political patronage. I discuss each in turn,

analyzing the latter both as the provision of employment and as the provision of facilitation services to negotiate the bureaucracy itself.

First, legislators could take advantage of the Italian parliament's unusually strong committee system to elaborate district-specific allocative legislation. The committee system, and the resulting proliferation of precisely targeted allocative legislation, have been carefully studied.³² Italy's committee system has been classed as the democratic world's strongest next to that of the United States.³³ One of its unique characteristics, which encouraged pork barrel allocations, was the assignment by the house chair of legislation to committee for final passage. When this happened, legislation was referred to committee and decided there, without ever returning to the full floor for a final vote. This dampened partisan political conflict. Given the highly polarized nature of Italy's party system,³⁴ legislation that came to the full floor was typically enmeshed in ideological controversy. Conversely, legislation that remained in committee, out of public view, was normally passed by large majorities — typically on the order of 90 per cent — which acted as if the legislation was politically uncontroversial.³⁵ Most legislation, as a result, was passed by committee, allowing legislators to target policies to the district that elected them.³⁶³⁷

A second characteristic of Italian parliamentary rules that encouraged specific pork barrel allocations was that individual legislators had untrammelled authority to introduce private member's bills into parliament. While most of these failed to secure passage, a somewhat surprisingly proportion did pass, mainly those emanating from DC members of Parliament.³⁸ And most of these were never debated on the full floor, but passed in committee.³⁹

These two factors — the strong committee system and the ability of individual MPs to write bills — interacted to engender the proliferation of what Alberto Predieri and later Giuseppe Di Palma classed as sectional and microsectional legislation (known in Italian as *leggine*). Such legislation, which is usually defined as 'small, highly clientelistic bills passed in committee',⁴⁰ is normally labeled pork barrel legislation in the US. In Italy, such legislation was typically introduced by the government, referred to committee, and successfully enacted there.⁴¹ As a result, most legislation in the postwar era was directed at geographically-specific areas. The weight of geographic representation even in a country whose electoral system was characterized by PR was underpinned by the careful allocation of cabinet positions across electoral districts: that is, Italian cabinet positions were largely distributed proportionately to the per cent of those elected per district out of the total

elected.⁴² Such a quota system strengthened the links between individual politicians and the districts that elected them, reinforcing the former's interest in providing constituency services to their localities.

The introduction and passage of pork barrel allocations was not wholly adequate for individual credit claiming. Of course, individual legislators could report to interested constituents that they had successfully introduced and then steered through parliament the legislation that stood behind the construction of a new road, the installation of a power plant, or the introduction of indoor running water. Indeed, the government helped its deputies do just that, by firing off a ministerial telegram to the district announcing each new public works project — and identifying the individual legislator responsible.⁴³ But since legislation had to be passed collectively, credit naturally had to be shared. Incentives thus existed for additional activities that would allow individual MPs to claim credit in order to enhance their prospects for obtaining preference votes, thereby securing reelection.

The principal mechanism that legislators developed over the postwar period to provide specific services to their districts was Italy's system of patronage appointments to the public administration. This technique was used especially in the South, where the absence of traditional collective and class

identities made the ‘individualistic mobilization’ of voters, as Alessandro Pizzorno labeled it, especially viable.⁴⁴ It entailed local political machines that individual legislators and their factions controlled making appointments to the public administration on the basis of partisan and factional loyalties, circumventing civil service regulations. Since some aspects of this system are not commonly known, I detail them.

3.1 Patronage Appointments: Jobs as Constituency Service

The provision of jobs in an economy in which employment opportunities were inadequate was a direct service to a constituent and his (extended) family. Moreover, if done properly — especially if done through the personal *raccomandazione* of the patron — the allocation could effectively bind the constituent to the patron. The *raccomandazione* allowed the patron to successfully claim credit for having provided the job. Thus, in Italy public service was allocated to those who ‘have relatively few other options for employment but the state’⁴⁵ This was a perfect mechanism for the individuation of credit claiming by legislators, precisely because job provision was a service that was genuinely welcomed and deeply valued in an economy marked by deep and persistent pockets of underdevelopment.

Jobs can be provided as a collective good, by manipulating the macro-economy to generate employment, for instance, or by enacting social legislation that expands public sector employment. The incentives emanating from Italy's electoral system militated against the provision of employment as a collective good, however, and for the provision of it as a series of individual benefits instead. Jobs can be provided as an individual benefit if each allocation is perceived by the recipient as a personal allocation, almost a kind of favor.

The DC did not begin its postwar rule destined to become a party of mass political patronage. But after the party's electoral decline in the 1953 parliamentary elections, when its share of the vote slipped from the 48.5 percent it had won in 1948 to 40.1 percent, the DC as a whole was under pressure to improve its electoral showing. Individual legislators had incentives for the party to do so in ways that were compatible with their own needs to retain preference votes; that is, to individuate their services.⁴⁶ The massive system of political patronage that the leaders of the DC constructed after 1953 was their aggregate answer to the problem of providing constituency service and claiming individual credit — to enlarging the party's aggregate vote share while protecting the incumbency advantage of individual legislators.

Here is a one description of the uses of political patronage by a local DC party boss in a Southern Italian town in the 1950s:

¿From 1954 to 1959 he [Rota, the local party boss] was ... town councillor in charge of public works and urban planning ...

A second crucial resource was also available to Rota for political patronage. At the beginning of the fifties three of four tobacco factories of the town were bought by a state-controlled agency. The party boss ... knew most of the directors of the factories and it was therefore easy for him to influence the placement policy of the industry; he claims that between 1954 and 1959 he placed more than 600 workers in these factories.

Rota could finally have recourse to a third fundamental resource, namely his Rome party connections. ... He claims, for instance, that he obtained the funds for a new elementary school directly from Mr. Emilio Columbo [a DC national leader]. In general, his connections allowed him to intervene in all sorts of informal arrangements whereby local people could obtain through his mediation the intervention of powerful political figures in Rome for the solution of their personal problems.

The party boss used these resources to buy votes. ... [H]e was a politician who had to build electoral backing in an increasingly competitive political setting.⁴⁷

Rota's strategy resulted in his successful mayoral victory in 1959 and, because such practices were replicated by other local party bosses throughout hundreds of localities in the South, in the transformation of the DC into a party of mass patronage, as it was commonly called. Especially useful for supplying patronage was the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno, a central government parastatal agency established with the ostensible goal of helping develop the South's lagging economy. The government systematically allowed national resources to be carved up into benefits that could be individuated, there by enhancing the reelection opportunities of its legislators.

The systematic use of patronage throughout much of the Italian South beginning in the 1950s and continuing thereafter paid off politically for many decades. In the elections of 1963, when the DC's share of the national vote slipped to 38 percent, losses were concentrated in the North while in the South the DC won 42 percent, for instance.⁴⁸ And while political patronage was certainly not adequate for maintaining the DC's hold on national power into the 1970s — that it admitted the Italian Socialist Party into government

in 1963 attests to this — it continued to offer an important source of votes, especially in the South.

Note that the Rota example, above, exhibits an interplay of all possible types of district-specific constituency service: collective pork barrel allocations (in this case, a school), individual allocations of public sector jobs, and, finally, help negotiating the national bureaucracy. But note as well that the systems of political patronage that developed in postwar Italy were overtly partisan, unlike the constituency services described by Fiorina as characteristic of the US, for instance.⁴⁹ Typically, Italian patronage services were offered exclusively to known or potential party loyalists, and they functioned explicitly as one side of an exchange of public resources for votes. Usually when patronage was distributed, it was identified not as a government resource (which it is) but as a party resource.

There were also differences in the types of benefits allocated through patronage and through US constituency service. *Patronage may be conceptualized as the individuization and personalization of pork barrel allocations.* Whereas the typical pork barrel allocation involves the distribution of a collective benefit — building a factory, for instance, that will offer employment, or the construction of a road, a school, or a harbor — targeted to a specific

electoral district, political patronage involves the distribution of the same benefit but in an individuated fashion. Instead of a factory that enlarges employment opportunities, patronage offers a job to a specific individual; instead of a road improving transportation, it offers rides to the polls to party members; instead of a school, it offers a party member's teenage child entry to a specific educational establishment; instead of a harbor whose ships all firms can use for moving their goods elsewhere, it gives only some firms authorization to export goods. One observer reports:

Andreotti [a nationally important DC politician] is said to organize summer camps for children of his constituency with secret funds from the Defense Ministry budget, while Sullo [another DC politician] has used his position as Minister of Public Works to put thousands of his *followers* to work on government projects.⁵⁰

In a patronage system, pork barrel allocations, which although targeted at specific electoral constituencies nonetheless involve public goods, are transformed into private goods, aimed at specific, named clientele.⁵¹

3.2 Methods of Evasion of Civil Service Regulations

How can government jobs be distributed using partisan rather than meritocratic criteria in a modern democratic country? In principle, Italian public administration, like its counterpart in other liberal democracies, is a neutral, impartial, and non-partisan body entrusted with executing parliamentary instructions.⁵² Civil service regulations guide the appointment process for positions in the public administration. In practice, however, as the above examples suggest, postwar Italian public administration and the state sector more generally served as vast reservoirs of political patronage, meaning that appointments were frequently made deliberately for partisan advantage rather than on professional and merit bases. In particular, the expansion of the parastatal sector — an agglomeration of public industry and non-ministerial state offices, including the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno — which occurred in the postwar era was aimed specifically and deliberately at expanding the bases for the DC's (and later the Socialist Party's) political patronage.

In his study of patronage appointments in US cities early in the twentieth century, V.O. Key enumerated five 'methods of evasion of civil service laws' that can equally well be used to classify the ways in which civil service

regulations were violated in postwar Italy.⁵³ Key's list was as follows:

1. limiting the scope of merit laws;
2. appointing the 'right guys' to civil service commissions;
3. budgetary sabotage;
4. manipulating the selection process, including fixing examination results;
5. manipulating the movement and promotion of personnel.

While I have not identified any instances in which the Italian parliament deliberately reduced the budget of public agencies that proved resistant to patronage appointments (perhaps because I have not been able to identify any such politically troublesome agencies), the other four methods are applicable to and indeed appear exhaustive of the postwar Italian situation. The specific ways in which civil service laws were routinely violated in Italy were as follows:

1. Limiting the scope of merit laws

- by open use of a spoils system within the parastatal and parallel administrative structures, where civil service procedures were not required and appointments were made directly by the government;
- within ordinary ministerial departments by legally bypassing the normal appointment procedures;
- within ordinary ministerial departments, by attaching non-civil servants who were selected on the basis of purely partisan criteria;

2. Appointing the ‘right guys’

- by effectively appointing people to nominally elected positions, for instance in the local or national administrative councils responsible for overseeing public agencies;

3. Manipulating the selection process

- within ordinary ministerial departments by fixing examination results;

4. Manipulating the movement and promotion of personnel

- within ordinary ministerial departments by promoting persons on the basis of political, not professional, merits.

I now detail each in turn.

3.2.1 Patronage Appointments in the Parallel Administration

It is standard in Italy to distinguish the ordinary ministerial departments from the parallel administration, a complex and probably unique melange of parastatal bodies, public agencies, and public corporations.⁵⁴ Until chunks of it were privatized in the 1990s, the latter included most the country's banks, the large state industrial sector organized into the country's state-holding corporations, the social security agency, and various administrations (including those regulating forestry, road building, telephone, post and until 1985 the railways) that were autonomous from the ministerial departments although their boards were headed by the appropriate minister. As a result of this heterogeneous and extensive parastatal sector, in 1990 the central ministries employed only about 2 million of Italy's more than 4 million public sector employees.⁵⁵

Some idea of the scope and complexity of the public sector is given by various attempts to census the number of national public agencies (*enti pubblici*) outside the ordinary ministerial departments. In 1947, some 841 were identified; in 1973, more than 3,300. Later in the decade, another study

found nearly 55,000 national public agencies, excluding local government bodies.⁵⁶ The legal status of these various public bodies are highly variable: some fall under ministerial supervision, some are overseen by elected boards, some function as joint-stock societies with private investors involved. This organizational complexity, which necessarily hampered public oversight, was one factor that permitted Italian public administration (starting with the parastatal sector, but gradually spreading to the ministerial departments as well) to be so easily invaded by patronage appointments.

Italy's large parastatal sector is not covered by civil service regulations. Appointments occurred through partisan affiliation, in a process known as 'lottizzazione,' or division of the spoils. Governing parties and party factions divided up appointments, the latter in proportion to the strength exhibited through internal party elections to the DC National Council.⁵⁷ Some public offices — for instance, each of the country's three national television networks as well as the social security administration — were regularly parceled out to a particular political party or DC faction. Eventually even the major opposition party became involved in this process, although always to an extremely limited extent.

3.2.2 Legally Bypassing Civil Service Examinations ('titolarizzazione')

Recruitment procedures to the public administration reflected the standard Italian regulatory pattern of specifying bureaucratic obligations in minute and often excruciating detail. Although recruitment in principle proceeded on the basis of merit examinations, the procedures were so lengthy and cumbersome that those required to make normal appointments averaged three years.⁵⁸ In this situation, ministries were often required to hire on a temporary basis, and they were permitted to do so. In principle, such appointments were valid only for six months. However, temporary appointments could be transformed into permanent ones through legislative initiative. This occurred quite commonly. Between 1956 and 1961, 41 percent of Italian civil servants were hired without having stood merit examinations.⁵⁹ The extent to which civil service examinations were bypassed increased subsequently. Between 1973 and 1990, about 350,000 civil servants were recruited without examinations. Twelve times Parliament passed special laws regularizing initially temporary appointments, often for hundreds of thousands of persons at a time. Over the same period, about 250,000 persons were recruited through normal civil service procedures.⁶⁰ As a result, between 1973 and 1990, nearly

60 percent of Italian civil servants were appointed outside normal procedures.

The essential element underpinning the repeated breaches of procedure were excessively detailed regulations. Because they were inherently unimplementable as written, at least in large measure, they effectively permitted nearly complete discretion.

3.2.3 Attaching Outsiders to the Higher Echelons of the Public Administration

A 1972 piece of legislation permits non-civil servants to be ‘attached’ to the higher echelons of the public administration. This allowed members of the cabinet to appoint, on the basis of partisan criteria, loyal followers to positions of public service.⁶¹

3.2.4 Patronage Appointments to Nominally Elected Positions

In Italy public agencies such as the local health authorities and school boards were typically run by locally-elected boards. In fact, however, in a variant on Key’s ‘right guys’ method, it was common for candidates to be handpicked by political parties and effectively inserted into elected office on a patronage basis.⁶² For this to occur, of course, turnout had to have been relatively low (which, not surprisingly, was usually the case) and the elections largely orchestrated by parties and party factions.

While it is impossible to estimate the number of patronage positions made available in this fashion, it was probably extensive. The local health authorities (*Unità Socio-Sanitarie Locali*, or USL), for instance, were plagued by patronage and poor administration following their establishment in 1978. As one observer summarizes:

By universal consent they [the USL] proved to be profoundly unsatisfactory. They were immediately colonized by the political parties, who filled them with individuals with little managerial competence, expertise, or understanding of cost controls, but a voracious appetite for the exercise of political patronage in purchasing and job-creation.⁶³

3.2.5 Fixing Civil Service Examinations

Even those purportedly appointed on the basis of merit examinations may not be. It was not unknown for civil service examination results to be fixed. It is of course impossible to know how widespread this practice was. It was apparently common for exam results to be tampered with for appointments to the public transportation agency in Milan, which was considered part of the DC's fief.⁶⁴ The practice was presumably more widespread.

Appointment procedures, especially at the local level, took on irregular forms even if examination results were not tampered with. The civil service competitions for appointments to various public bodies were often conducted improperly. In 1993, Italy's leading student of public administration, Sabino Cassese, estimated that virtually 100 percent of competitions for appointments to the local health authorities and 60 percent of those for regional and local administrative positions were contaminated by procedural irregularities.⁶⁵

While practices such as these undoubtedly represent the most severe type of violations of the meritocratic procedures that should characterize bureaucratic appointments, they probably contributed the fewest numbers of bureaucrats of the various classes of behaviors itemized above. By and large, Italy's postwar patronage system probably functioned more on the margins of legality than completely beyond it. The outcome was nonetheless that by the 1980s, the bulk of appointments to the public sector occurred in clear violation of the spirit of civil service regulations even if in nominal conformity to legal requirements.

3.2.6 Patronage Promotions within the Civil Service

Promotion within the ranks of the Italian civil service supposedly occurred almost exclusively on a seniority basis. In fact, however, there was room for discretion since the number of appointments at each level was established by law and there were fewer senior management positions than qualified candidates.⁶⁶ Discretion was often exercised using partisan and factional criteria. In the 1970s, research found, most Italian civil servants ‘did not believe that the most qualified had the possibility of reaching the highest positions in the public administration’.⁶⁷ A survey of highly placed bureaucrats in three departments — the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Artisans, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security — reported that whereas in the Ministry of the Interior, top-level civil servants were highly experienced and quite senior, having moved up the ranks in orderly progression, their counterparts in the Ministry of Labor were considerably younger, less experienced, and often appointed after having held posts in other public agencies.⁶⁸ The author reasons that, in light of the notorious lack of mobility of Italian bureaucrats among various ministries, appointments in the Ministry of Labor were often proceeding on a patronage basis; that is, thanks to external partisan and union experience

and loyalty.⁶⁹ Donatella della Porta and Alberto Vannucci also report that although bureaucratic careers were formally autonomous in Italy, in fact promotion often took place thanks to the ‘political merits’ of the candidate.⁷⁰ The extent of patronage promotions within the civil service was unknown; others have maintained that the ministries themselves, as distinct from the parastatal sector (see above) were largely free of patronage appointments.⁷¹

3.3 The Nationalization of Machine Politics in Postwar Italy

In 1935, Key reported that as of 1929, 40 percent of New York city employees had been appointed without regard for merit procedures; similarly, in 1922, two out of five civil service positions in Cleveland were occupied by ‘temporary’ appointees who had received their jobs without civil service procedures having been invoked. In postwar Italy, by contrast, we observe the nationalization of machine-type politics. Patronage appointments were routine and extensive throughout the national public administration, not only in specific localities.

My argument is that this occurred because members of the Italian national parliament — and not just local politicians and party bosses — developed systems of patronage appointments as a form of constituency service,

in order to enhance their prospects for reelection. While patronage appointments were heavily concentrated in the South, where electoral volatility was higher⁷² and where the DC's factions were more heavily implanted, the system was ultimately national. It was led by national politicians — deputies and ministers — and relied heavily on resources provided by the central government and parliament. As a result, local notables who had controlled their own resources were displaced by prominent members of national governing parties during the 1950s and 1960s.⁷³

The consequences were twofold. First, DC legislators (and to a lesser extent parliamentarians affiliated with the smaller governing parties) enjoyed such a strong incumbency advantage that by the end of their rule in the 1990s, the country was governed by a small gerontocracy. Of 2,016 cabinet positions held by 488 different individuals in the first six postwar legislatures, 1,331 or 66 per cent of them were held by a mere 152 persons, or 31 per cent of the total.⁷⁴ Likewise, among DC deputies, only some 20 to 35 per cent were newly-elected in each of the postwar parliamentary elections (excluding the first, naturally) until the 1994 elections overturned the existing party system.⁷⁵ Second, the efficiency of the public administration was catastrophically compromised. Staffed largely by southerners appointed for

partisan purposes, many of whom lacked the requisite expertise or experience, the postwar Italian civil service was woefully inept. It is no wonder that it took more people to get the job done. Even if politicians had not had an interest in overstaffing simply to enlarge their opportunities for patronage appointments, the sheer incompetence of many appointees would have guaranteed that central government productivity was, as one study found, only 36 percent of that potentially attainable.⁷⁶) Given the electoral incentives facing Italy's governing parties, it is not surprising that local government performance was better where the opposition was in power.⁷⁷ Postwar Italy represented 'bad government' incarnate.

4 Excessive Legislation and Facilitation in the Italian Context

In the accounts of Fiorina, Fiorina and Noll, and Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina,⁷⁸ legislators deliberately construct national programs and bureaucratic units that are difficult for ordinary citizens to negotiate and that are prone to error precisely to then come to their rescue by providing ombudsman facilitation services. This permits credit-claiming on the part of incumbent legislators, giving them an electoral advantage over challengers.

The postwar Italian context provides an interesting variant on this type of excessive bureaucratization. In Italy, we observe excessive legislation, excessive both in the sense of too many laws and excessive in the sense of laws that are unusually verbose and detailed.⁷⁹ And the ‘rescue’ mechanism that was created involved the political patron — typically, a DC party boss with direct ties to the center, usually a member of parliament — whose job was to facilitate the complex and often contradictory legislation that existed. As one noted student of Italian politics observed, ‘the patrons enjoy that status because of a demonstrated capacity to leverage the bureaucracy’.⁸⁰

That postwar Italy exhibits an unusually large number of laws was observed even in the early 1960s, in Predieri’s study of Italian legislation. He found that there had been a clear increase in the number of laws generated by parliament after World War II compared with the period between 1888 and the assumption of power by the fascists. The bulk of the increase was in the number of *leggine* passed, or highly specific legislation directed at particular clienteles. Most of these, as we already know, were introduced by individual parliamentarians and passed in committee. Moreover, Predieri found that individual parliamentarians often introduced multiple bills on the same matter, so that each could claim credit with his locality.⁸¹ He argued that one

reason for the excessive number of laws in Italy lay with the desire by MPs to claim credit. Not surprisingly, there was a massive drop in the number of *leggine* passed following the changes in Italy's electoral system that occurred in the early 1990s. Whereas more than half of Italy's laws had been passed solely in committee in the X Legislature, without ever being voted on by the entire floor, bills passed in committee fell to less than 8 per cent of the total in the XII Legislature and about 13 per cent in the XIII.⁸²

Italian laws are comparatively verbose and detailed.⁸³ Predieri contended that lengthy legislation was a deliberate attempt by the bureaucracy to increase its discretion. Most government legislation was in fact authored by the bureaucracy which, Predieri argued, wrote deliberately obscure laws in order to leave the interpretation of them in its own hands.⁸⁴ Contrary to what one might intuitively expect, excessive detailed legislation was a signal of excessive bureaucratic discretion not greater political control over the bureaucracy.⁸⁵ The excessive number of often overlapping, often intricately detailed laws meant that ordinary citizens were always in danger of violating the law, often without even knowing they were doing so. This compounded the discretion of the bureaucrat in his interaction with citizens.⁸⁶

Allowing the bureaucracy vast discretion had at least three effects: 1) it

increased the likelihood of bureaucratic corruption, giving bureaucrats leeway to collect bribes in order to turn a blind eye to common infractions of the law or to help citizens negotiate the complex and intricate workings of the laws where, for instance, multiple signatures were required on relatively mundane matters; 2) it enhanced the political loyalty of the bureaucrat to the politician who turned a blind eye to the former's infractions; and 3) it made the services of a political patron that much more valuable to ordinary citizens. By deliberately creating a situation characterized by a large amount of bureaucratic slippage, legislators increased their own opportunities for intervention and facilitation.

In this context of excessive legislation — the Italian parallel to the excessive bureaucratization of federal programs identified by Fiorina and Noll — politicians with direct ties to the national government became valuable patrons, especially in areas of the country where ordinary people were less well educated and disposed of few resources with which to contact the national government. By micromanaging local affairs through national legislation, national politicians augmented their opportunities for constituency service. In his study of Neapolitan politics, Percy Allum documents the 'constituency services' provided by local politicians: 'the fixing of local taxes, the awarding

of public contracts, the enforcement of health and security regulations, the granting or withholding of licenses to do certain types of business...⁸⁷

5 Patronage and Corruption

Thus far, I have described a system in which political patronage, in the form of jobs and facilitation, serves as constituency service. The underlying dynamics giving rise to the ‘personal vote’ are the same in the United States and in Italy: electoral systems that give legislators incentives to deliver individuated services to voters.⁸⁸ But a glaring difference between the two systems remains. In the United States, contemporary constituency service does not entail massive and widespread political corruption, at least not to the best of our knowledge. In Italy, however, the postwar individuization of services did, certainly until the collapse of the DC-led regime after 1994.⁸⁹ Why? Under what circumstances does the drive to offer individuated political services slide into corrupt exchanges; exchanges, that is, in which the provision of such services, rather than being effectively unpriced, require the payment of a bribe or kickback?⁹⁰ What distinguishes corruption from constituency service?

The short answer of course is that laws create corruption, especially political corruption.⁹¹ The laws relevant to political corruption — illegal activities especially involving bribery on the part of elected officials — are those surrounding the financing of political parties and political campaigns, precisely because such laws govern important aspects of access to public office in a politically competitive environment.⁹²

Political corruption is generally relatively low in developed wealthy nations. Those instances in which it is exposed typically involve campaign financing, as scandals in the late 1990s in countries such as France and Germany show.⁹³ Cross-nationally, the specific configuration of laws and electoral institutions that lead to more or less political corruption, especially in wealthy democracies, remains an open question,⁹⁴ but in Italy, a 1974 law on the financing of political parties seems to have been an important trigger of political corruption, because it outlawed donations to political campaigns by public firms.

This argument hinges on the distinction between political and bureaucratic corruption, which is worth reviewing before proceeding.⁹⁵ The latter may be defined as illegal activities for personal gain by appointed public officials (bureaucrats), whereas the first may be defined as illegal activities

for personal gain by elected public officials (politicians). Often, bureaucratic corruption is small scale and piecemeal, in which single acts involve relatively trivial amounts of money,⁹⁶ whereas political corruption is large scale, ‘grand’ corruption, involving large sums of monies, but this is not necessarily the case. Bureaucratic corruption occurs when poorly supervised or monitored appointed officials accept or require sums of money from citizens in exchange for performing their jobs in some way. Political corruption, by contrast, involves an actor other than those we have encountered thus far; namely, business. It is businesses that pay the bribes and kickbacks and that in exchange receive the contracts for public works. It is politicians who orchestrate these exchanges, and bureaucrats who serve as the crucial intermediaries in them.⁹⁷ Voters, by and large, are uninvolved in political (as opposed to bureaucratic) corruption.⁹⁸

Bureaucratic corruption was a natural and predictable outgrowth of the excessive legalism and legislation characteristic of the Italian system, and of an administrative system with virtually no ex post monitoring. Indeed, these features were, I have suggested, deliberately designed in order to enhance opportunities for bureaucratic corruption, thereby binding bureaucrats more closely to their political patrons. Political corruption, by contrast, seems

mainly the result of the legal setting, as an informal comparison with the US context indicates. For political corruption to emerge in the search for the personal vote:

1. Businesses must be willing to pay bribes as part of the cost of doing business with the public sector; hence they must be sheltered from international competition (for different reasons, this was true both of the postwar US and Italy);
2. Individual candidates must have incentives to seek financial resources; this incentive stems from the need to amass personal votes (true in both cases);
3. The collective incumbency advantage enjoyed by some candidates must be high enough that they do not fear the usual electoral repercussions of seeking such resources; namely, denunciations in the press, the emergence of a political rival who seizes on the existence of corruption to promise to clean up government, and an electorate which is at once fed up with corruption and able to relinquish the personal and district-level benefits that come with patronage politics (this used to be true in the US but is largely no longer the case);⁹⁹

4. The legal threshold must be set such that the drive to amass campaign finances on the part of individual candidates is likely to expand beyond the borders of legality (not true in the US, where donations are largely unregulated; true after 1974 in Italy, where certain donations were prohibited).

Even in the 1950s, empirical research has found that patronage politics in southern Italy involved elements of overt political corruption.¹⁰⁰ But the early postwar patronage system, although certainly exhibiting instances of illegality and corruption, does not appear to have been constructed around the payment and collection of bribes.¹⁰¹ Instead, the consensus in the literature seems to be that Italy's patronage system only lurched into becoming a fullscale system of corruption, one that ultimately involved staggering sums of money and virtually every public contract, sometime in the 1970s or 1980s.¹⁰² Corroborating this, it is only in the early 1970s that we observe a significant statistical relationship between intraparty electoral competition within the DC — marking the search for individual preference votes — and suspected malfeasance on the part of Christian Democratic members of parliament.¹⁰³ What changed?

The most important change was legal. Passage of a law on the financ-

ing of political parties in 1974 prohibited public companies from donating monies to political parties or electoral campaigns.¹⁰⁴ Previously, such donations had been legal, and must have constituted a large portion of campaign finances. By rendering such donations illegal, the law on public financing criminalized existing practices. Even if behavior had not changed at all — although it probably did, as campaigns became more expensive in an era of mass media and declining rank-and-file electoral mobilization — the 1974 law would have introduced substantially more political corruption into the system than previously existed. Indeed, the 1974 law prohibiting donations on the part of state-owned companies to political campaigns has been judged as contributing to an ‘explosion’ of illegal contributions in their place.¹⁰⁵

The existing literature on Italian political corruption largely concurs with the view that ‘notwithstanding the existing law on the financing of party politics, the principal beneficiaries of corruption were the political parties as a whole’.¹⁰⁶ According to this account, Italian political corruption had as its central protagonists national politicians, and as its main goal the financing of political campaigns. This system, I would maintain, ran parallel to the one described here in which votes were exchanged for individual patronage goods. In the parallel illegal system, money was exchanged for public contracts.

The interpretation offered here stresses more than is usual the importance of individual electoral competition in driving both types of exchange. Individual candidates were left to raise their campaign finances on their own. The need to do so arose from the search for personal votes. As the initial patronage mechanism for amassing such votes gradually became inadequate, politicians turned to extracting illegal kickbacks from firms as part of the process of bidding out public works contracts. The change in law regarding party financing affected the extent of corruption by criminalizing and possibly encouraging donations by public companies to politicians.¹⁰⁷

6 Conclusions

Italian commentators have debated the role of the public in possibly colluding in the growth and preservation of the system of patronage and corruption that characterized the postwar era. Some have argued that such a system could not have endured without some measure of consent to it. The Fiorina-Noll model allows us to reinterpret the role of ordinary citizens. Citizens value both the collective benefits they receive from legislation and the individual benefits they collect through facilitation, or what in the Italian context manifests as patronage. Because the latter depends specifically on the retention

of office on the part of the individual legislator, voters (and their extended families) who are recipients of patronage are effectively trapped into voting for the incumbent regardless of how they evaluate his party's performance nationally. Moreover, voters who oppose the system are unable to coordinate their actions effectively with others who are located in other electoral districts, and hence are largely powerless.¹⁰⁸

In this account, the causes of 'bad government' are endogenous to the political system, and not the result of external forces.¹⁰⁹ In context, this interpretation suggests that the Christian Democrats might well have retained power (albeit using illegal means) even in the absence of the US veto on Communist participation in government.¹¹⁰ The ability of the DC to retain a large enough pool of voters to continue to block Communist participation in government stems, according to the view advanced in this study, from its strategic intertwining of individual patronage, pork barrel legislation, excessive bureaucratization, and illegal campaign funds.

I have analyzed these characteristics of postwar Italy as an equilibrium, in which behaviors of various actors reinforced each other and from which none had an incentive to withdraw. But that does not mean that this outcome was deliberately designed as such, or that it was anticipated by the

politicians whose activities created it. Some aspects were inherited (a large public industry, for instance) and made strategic use of, some were initially designed with other aims in mind (keeping the Communists at bay, for instance), and some were deliberately created by groups of legislators acting in concert to enlarge their individual reelection opportunities. Just as in the US, the pursuit of office by individual politicians led to an overall outcome none may have imagined or desired, so in Italy the strategic use of state resources by legislators led to an equilibrium outcome designed by no one but perpetuated by all.

Italian political patronage has long been interpreted as a residue of backwardness and underdevelopment, or as a temporary byproduct arising out of the process of modernization. The framework adopted here offers an alternative reading of patronage politics. I have argued that they constituted the Italian variant of the entirely modern constituency service seen also in the Anglo-American democracies, or more generally in those democratic polities in which legislators have incentives to individuate their political appeal. Certainly there were distinctively Italian characteristics that promoted the construction of patronage politics there rather than the more neutral kinds of constituency services used to entice voters in the United States. Some

of these characteristics were undoubtedly historically derived. The South of the country was vulnerable to the construction of patronage machines precisely because of a history of government that had prevented the emergence of the Catholic and Communist political subcultures seen in the center and northeast of the country, subcultures that provided a buffer against the construction of local patronage machines. In that sense, history contributed to the emergence of patronage politics in postwar Italy. But the underlying incentive that I have argued promoted the widespread adoption of patronage politics and partisan use of the public administration was the entirely modern incentive of retaining ones legislative seat.

Finally, the argument advanced here suggests that voters are unlikely to be able to coordinate their efforts across electoral districts and successfully ‘throw the rascals out’ once an equilibrium based on the incumbency advantages offered by constituency service has fully emerged, especially not when it is tied to large amounts of money deriving from political corruption. How then did the system described here end in the early 1990s? This is not the place to detail the collapse of bad government in Italy, but the answer in short is that such a system ends only if it is disrupted by exogenous factors. For instance, a substantial change in the international economic environ-

ment might change the strategies preferred by important client groups, as some recent studies suggest.¹¹¹ This problem awaits further study.

Notes

¹David Hine, *Governing Italy: The Politics of Bargained Pluralism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 255.

²Leonardo Morlino and Marco Tarchi, 'The Dissatisfied Society: The Roots of Political Change in Italy', *European Journal of Political Research*, 30 (1996), 41–63, p. 47.

³Morris P. Fiorina and Roger Noll, 'Voters, Bureaucrats and Legislators: A Rational Choice Perspective on the Growth of Bureaucracy', *Journal of Public Economics*, 9 (1978), 239–54; Morris P. Fiorina and Roger G. Noll, 'Voters, Legislators and Bureaucracy: Institutional Design in the Public Sector', *American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings*, 68 (1978), 256–60; and Morris P. Fiorina, *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

⁴Edward C. Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press 1958).

⁵Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁶Alberto Predieri, 'La produzione legislativa', in Stefano Somogyi, Luigi Lotti, Alberto Predieri and Giovanni Sartori, *Il Parlamento italiano 1946–1963* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1963), 205–76.

⁷Sidney G. Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); Percy A. Allum, *Politics and Society in Post-war Naples* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973); and Judith Chubb *Patronage, Power and Poverty in Southern Italy: A Tale of Two Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). See also Alan S. Zuckerman, *The Politics of Faction: Christian Democratic Rule in Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

⁸Fiorina and Noll, 'Voters, Bureaucrats and Legislators'.

⁹For a non-technical summary, see Fiorina and Noll, 'Voters, Legislators and Bureaucracy'.

¹⁰Fiorina and Noll, 'Voters, Legislators and Bureaucracy', p. 257.

¹¹This can be conceptualized using a principal-agent framework; see Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini, 'The Size and Scope of Government: Comparative Politics with Rational Politicians', *European Economic Review*, 43

(1999), 699–735.

¹²Empirical characteristics are detailed in Fiorina, *Congress*.

¹³Fiorina and Noll, ‘Voters, Bureaucrats and Legislators’, p. 253.

¹⁴David J. Samuels, ‘Incentives to Cultivate a Party Vote in Candidate-Centric Electoral Systems: Evidence from Brazil’, *Comparative Political Studies*, 32 (1999), 487–518.

¹⁵Bruce Cain, John Ferejohn, and Morris Fiorina, *The Personal Vote: Constituency Service and Electoral Independence* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), ch. 9.

¹⁶For the distinction between votes of exchange (that is, patronage-induced votes), opinion and belonging (or subcultural adhesion), see Arturo Parisi and Gianfranco Pasquino, ‘Relazioni partiti-elettori e tipi di voto’, in Arturo Parisi and Gianfranco Pasquino, eds., *Continuità e mutamento elettorale in Italia. Le elezioni del 20 giugno 1976 e il sistema politico italiano* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1977), 215–49; for a shorter version in English, see Arturo Parisi and Gianfranco Pasquino, ‘Changes in Italian Electoral Behaviour: The Relationships between Parties and Voters’, in Peter Lange and Sidney Tarrow, eds.,

Italy in Transition: Conflict and Consensus (London: Frank Cass, 1980), 6-30.

¹⁷For reasons of space, I do not discuss factionalism in the DC in any detail in what follows. In Italy, shifting internal factions were often the real political actors rather than individual legislators. I treat factions, which were complex aggregations of local and national actors simply as individual legislators in what follows. This analytic simplification is unlikely to affect the analysis. For a related discussion of the importance of factionalism, see Miriam A. Golden and Eric C.C. Chang, 'Competitive Corruption: Factional Conflict and Political Malfeasance in Postwar Italian Christian Democracy', *World Politics*, 53 (2001), 588–622.

¹⁸Such an interpretation is not universal. For an alternative view, see Joseph La Palombara, *Democracy Italian Style* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

¹⁹Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*.

²⁰Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*.

²¹For a taste of the arguments, see Filippo Sabetti, 'Path Dependency and

Civic Culture: Some Lessons from Italy About Interpreting Social Experiments', *Politics and Society*, 24 (1996), 19–44; and Elis Goldberg, 'Thinking About How Democracy Works', *Politics and Society*, 24 (1996), 7–18 as well as the other essays in the same volume.

²²Margaret Kohn, 'Civic Republicanism versus Social Struggle: A Gramscian Approach to Associationalism in Italy', *Political Power and Social Theory*, 13 (1999), 201–35.

²³Giorgio Freddi, 'La pubblica amministrazione: perché funziona in modo così deludente', in Giuliano Urbani, ed., *Dentro la politica* (Milan: Il Sole 24 Ore Libri, 1992), 215–39.

²⁴Alberto Vannucci, 'Inefficienza amministrative e corruzione', *Rivista Trimestrale di Scienza della Amministrazione*, 44 (1997), 29–56.

²⁵Donatella della Porta and Alberto Vannucci, *Un paese anormale. Come la classe politica ha perso l'occasione di Mani Pulite* (Rome: Laterza, 1999).

²⁶Matthew D. McCubbins, Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast, 'Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control', *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization*, 3 (1987), 243–77; and Matthew D. McCubbins,

Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast, 'Structure and Process, Policy and Policy: Administrative Arrangements and the Political Control of Agencies', *Virginia Law Review*, 75 (1989), 431–82.

²⁷David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

²⁸Richard S. Katz, 'Intraparty Preference Voting', in Bernard Grofman and Arend Lijphart, eds., *Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences* (New York: Agathon Press, 1986), 85–103.

²⁹The number of preference votes was reduced to one in the parliamentary elections of 1992.

³⁰Richard S. Katz and Luciano Bardi, 'Preference Voting and Turnover in Italian Parliamentary Elections', *American Journal of Political Science*, 24 (1980), 97–114.

³¹Reported in Allum, *Politics and Society in Post-war Naples*, p. 147.

³²Predieri, 'La produzione legislativa'; also Giuseppe Di Palma, *Surviving Without Governing: The Italian Parties in Parliament* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

³³Di Palma, *Surviving Without Governing*, p. 189n10.

³⁴Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

³⁵Predieri, 'La produzione legislativa', p. 239, table 6; and Di Palma, *Surviving Without Governing*, p. 55.

³⁶Di Palma, *Surviving Without Governing*, p. 63. A recent critique of this conventional interpretation is Amie Kreppel, 'The Impact of Parties in Government on Legislative Output in Italy', *European Journal of Political Research*, 31 (1997), 327–50, who argues that most laws passed in committee should not be classed as pork barrel but rather 'substantive (albeit often low cost) pieces of legislation' (p. 338). Her interpretation, however, is not based on any new analysis of actual legislative content, and stands in sharp contrast to existing analyses of content.

³⁷The ability to pass legislation in committee is not essential to enacting pork barrel projects, of course. As John Ferejohn describes the otherwise similar US situation:

Incumbents are vested with the power ... to make policy. Where

Congress is concerned, however, this fact may appear at first glance to give the individual member ... no great advantage. After all, a congressman is but one of 435 representatives, each endowed with a single vote. Nonetheless, the institutions of Congress are so structured that the individual congressman can in effect make certain policy decisions by himself with a small (generally like-minded) group. ... It is the committee system that is designed to facilitate the decentralization of decision-making from the whole House or Senate to an individual or small group. Most decisions made in committee survive substantially unaltered during the remainder of the congressional process.

John A. Ferejohn, *Pork Barrel Politics: Rivers and Harbors Legislation, 1947–1968* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), p. 48.

³⁸Di Palma, *Surviving Without Governing*, p. 41.

³⁹For evidence that these were used to advance the reelection prospects of incumbent legislators, see Allum, *Politics and Society in Post-war Naples*, pp. 211ff.

⁴⁰Kreppel, 'The Impact of Parties in Government on Legislative Output in Italy', p. 329.

⁴¹One reason pork barrel allocations appear so extensive in postwar Italy is because, whereas the US committee system encouraged the amendment of existing bills, thereby generating omnibus legislation, in Italy, by contrast, pork barrel allocations were typically made through single pieces of legislation. Hence, the Italian political system has often been classed as generating an unusually high number of bills, most of which concern minute, highly sectional allocations. But whether the extent of pork barrel legislative activity was actually greater in Italy than in other political systems, such as that of the United States, which rolled the pork into massive omnibus pieces of legislation, or whether such an interpretation rests largely on the different accounting rules used (*leggine* versus omnibus legislation) remains an open question.

⁴²See the data analyzed by Mauro Calise and Renato Mannheimer, *Governanti in Italia. Un trentennio repubblicano 1946–1976* (Bologna; Il Mulino, 1982), pp. 47–49.

⁴³Reported in Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, p. 331; see

also Allum, *Politics and Society in Post-war Naples*, p. 186.

⁴⁴Alessandro Pizzorno, 'The Individualistic Mobilization of Europe', in Stephen R. Graubard, ed., *A New Europe?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 265–90. Pizzorno uses the term to refer to the growth of mass market consumer capitalism in postwar Europe, but it is perhaps not entirely inappropriate to include the Americanization (or individualization) of politics as well.

⁴⁵Hine, *Governing Italy*, p. 238; see also Allum, *Politics and Society in Post-war Naples*, p. 160.

⁴⁶Allum, *Politics and Society in Post-war Naples*, p. 165 reports that in Naples, 25,000 preference votes were required to win a seat on the DC list prior to 1953 and more than 40,000 after 1958, attesting to the growing incentive to amass preference votes.

⁴⁷Luigi Graziano, 'Patron-Client Relationships in Southern Italy', in Stefan W. Schmidt, Laura Guasti, Carl H. Landé, and James C. Scott, eds., *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 360–78, p. 370.

⁴⁸Reported in Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, p. 315.

⁴⁹Morris Fiorina, ‘Legislative Choice of Regulatory Forms: Legal Process or Administrative Process?’, *Public Choice*, 39 (1982), 33–66.

⁵⁰Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, p. 321, emphasis added.

⁵¹In a well-known analysis, Martin Shefter, ‘Party and Patronage: Germany, England, and Italy’, *Political Studies*, 7 (1977), 403–51, distinguishes parties that distribute collective benefits from those distributing divisible or particularistic ones. This distinction fails to note that what US observers call ‘pork barrel’ goods – which Shefter views as quintessentially particularistic — are in fact ‘collective’ — that is, they are public goods (indivisible and non-excludable) which are targeted at specific, geographically-defined locales. Classic examples are analyzed by Ferejohn, *Pork Barrel Politics*. The argument made here suggests that a more useful distinction is between closed-list PR parties, which target benefits to nationally-defined, often class-based constituencies, and parties in search of the personal vote, which target benefits — both individual and collective — to specifically designated geographically distinct client groups. For evidence consistent with latter argument, see Gian Maria Milesi-Ferretti and Roberto Perotti, ‘Electoral Systems

and Public Spending', Working Paper 01/22, International Monetary Fund, Washington, D.C.

⁵²Carlo Guarnieri, 'Burocrazie pubbliche e consolidamento democratico: il caso italiano', *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, 18 (1988), 73–104.

⁵³V.O. Key Jr., 'Methods of Evasion of Civil Service Laws', *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, 15 (1935).

⁵⁴Sabino Cassese, *Il sistema amministrativo italiano* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1983).

⁵⁵Aida Giulia Arabia and Valeria Giammusso, 'Profilo statistico della pubblica amministrazione', in Sabino Cassese and Claudio Franchini, eds., *L'amministrazione pubblica italiana. Un profilo* (2nd ed.; Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), 271–87, p. 277, table 3.

⁵⁶Cassese, *Il sistema amministrativo italiano*, p. 17.

⁵⁷Carol Mershon, 'The Costs of Coalition: Coalition Theories and Italian Governments', *American Political Science Review*, 9 (1996), 534–54, p. 541.

⁵⁸Franco Ferraresi, *Burocrazia e politica in Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1980), p. 176.

⁵⁹Ferraresi, *Burocrazia e politica in Italia*, p. 177.

⁶⁰Sabino Cassese, 'Hypotheses on the Italian Administrative System', *West European Politics*, 16 (1993), 316–28, p. 325.

⁶¹Gaetano D'Auria, 'La corruzione e le leggi', in Marco D'Alberti and Renato Finocchi, eds., *Corruzione e sistema istituzionale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), 23–40, pp. 30–31.

⁶²Donatella della Porta and Alberto Vannucci, *Corruzione politica e amministrazione pubblica. Risorse, meccanismi, attori* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), p. 219.

⁶³Hine, *Governing Italy*, p. 249.

⁶⁴della Porta and Vannucci, *Corruzione politica e amministrazione pubblica*, p. 269.

⁶⁵Reported in D'Auria, 'La corruzione e le leggi', p. 32.

⁶⁶Ferraresi, *Burocrazia e politica in Italia*, p. 169.

⁶⁷Ferraresi, *Burocrazia e politica in Italia*, p. 179.

⁶⁸Rosalba Chiarini, 'L'alta burocrazia ministeriale: modelli di recluta-

mento e carriera', *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, 25 (1995), 119–54. In the third department surveyed, the Ministry of Industry, a mixed profile on these characteristics was observed.

⁶⁹Chiarini, 'L'alta burocrazia ministeriale'.

⁷⁰della Porta and Vannucci, *Corruzione politica e amministrazione pubblica*, p. 277.

⁷¹Hine, *Governing Italy*, p. 230.

⁷²William Ascher and Sidney Tarrow, 'The Stability of Communist Electorates: Evidence from a Longitudinal Analysis of French and Italian Aggregate Data', *American Journal of Political Science*, 19 (1975), 475–99.

⁷³Allum, *Politics and Society in Post-war Naples*, p. 313.

⁷⁴Calise and Mannheimer, *Governanti in Italia*, p. 116.

⁷⁵See the data in Orazio Lanza, 'Gli eletti: il ricambio dei parlamentari', in Gianfranco Pasquino, ed., *L'alternanza inattesa. Le elezioni del 27 marzo 1994 e le loro conseguenze* (Messina: Rubbettino, 1995), p. 214, table 2. Levels of reelection were lower in the Communist and Socialist parties than the DC, whose incumbency advantage was stronger by virtue of its continuous

inclusion in government.

Incumbency advantage is higher in other postwar democracies, including the US and Great Britain. In 1970, for instance, only 16 per cent of British MPs were newly-elected, and in 1972 only 21 per cent of US representatives were newly-elected; see the data in Maurizio Cotta, *Classe politica e parlamento in Italia 1946–1976* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1979), p. 319, table 34. Average values disguise differences in distribution, however. As the data on cabinet portfolios suggest, the Italian parliament can be divided into two groups: ‘a notable nucleus of *untouchables*, ... [and] the large majority of deputies [who] remain in a situation of perennial uncertainty and are subject to high turnover’, Lanza, ‘Gli eletti’, p. 216; italics in the original; my translation.

⁷⁶Reported in Hine, *Governing Italy*, p. 241.

⁷⁷Kohn, ‘Civic Republicanism versus Social Struggle’.

⁷⁸Fiorina, *Congress*; Fiorina and Noll, ‘Voters, Bureaucrats and Legislators’; Fiorina and Noll, ‘Voters, Legislators and Bureaucracy’; and Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina, *The Personal Vote*.

⁷⁹We have seen an example of this already in the regulations governing civil service appointments.

⁸⁰La Palombara, *Democracy Italian Style*, p. 210.

⁸¹Predieri, 'La produzione legislativa', p. 219.

⁸²See the data analyzed in Marco Giuliani and Giliberto Capano, 'I labirinti del legislativo', in Giliberto Capano and Marco Giuliani, eds., *Parlamento e processo legislativo in Italia: continuità e mutamento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001), 13–54, p. 35, table 1.5.

⁸³As is noted by Cassese, 'Hypotheses on the Italian Administrative System'. John Huber and Charles R. Shipan, 'Statutory Delegation to Bureaucrats in Parliamentary Systems', unpublished paper, 2000, find that Italian laws are not especially verbose, but this is because they examine only labor legislation. Legislation on labor issues is unusually short in Italy because, as Cassese argues, the entire policy area is delegated to the collective bargaining arena rather than legislated. (As a result, Italian labor contracts are unusually long.) Had Huber and Shipan examined legislation from a more representative policy area, it would certainly have emerged as relatively verbose.

⁸⁴Predieri, 'La produzione legislativa', p. 216.

⁸⁵This contradicts the interpretation of Huber and Shipan, who argue that bureaucratic discretion is limited by detailed legislation. In fact, the Italian case shows exactly the reverse: that bureaucratic discretion may be augmented by detailed legislation.

⁸⁶La Palombara, *Democracy Italian Style*, p. 208

⁸⁷Allum, *Politics and Society in Post-war Naples*, p. 163.

⁸⁸See John M. Carey and Matthew Soberg Shugart, 'Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas', *Electoral Studies*, 14 (1995), 417–439.

⁸⁹For comparative evidence, see Golden and Chang, 'Competitive Corruption'.

⁹⁰I am indebted to some unpublished notes by Barry Weingast for the distinction between patronage/unpriced and corruption/priced.

⁹¹A legalistic definition of corruption is only one possible one, but probably especially suitable for contexts of developed countries, where norms are essentially similar and tend to coincide with the legal environment. For a

review of possible definitions, see Thomas D. Lancaster and Gabriella R. Montinola, 'Toward a Methodology for the Comparative Study of Political Corruption', *Crime, Law & Social Change*, 27 (1997), 185–206.

⁹²Alessandro Pizzorno, 'Introduzione: La corruzione nel sistema politico', in Donatella della Porta, *Lo scambio occulto. Casi di corruzione politica in Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992), 11–74.

⁹³*The Economist*, 'Is Europe Corrupt?', 29 Jan. 2000, 57–9.

⁹⁴For initial investigations, see Torsten Persson, Guido Tabellini, and Francesco Trebbi, 'Electoral Rules and Corruption', Unpublished paper, Institute for International Economic Studies, Stockholm University, 2000; and Jana Kunicova and Susan Rose-Ackerman, 'Electoral Rules as Constraints on Corruption: The Risks of Closed-List Proportional Representation,' unpublished paper, Yale University, Sept. 2001. Both papers reach conclusions that differ sharply from the analysis presented here.

⁹⁵Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption: A Study in Political Economy* (New York: Academic Press, 1978).

⁹⁶The aggregate economic impact of bureaucratic corruption may be far

from trivial, however.

⁹⁷See the useful discussions in Arvind K. Jain, 'Models of Corruption', in Arvind K. Jain, ed., *Economics of Corruption* (Boston: Kluwer, 1998), 13–34; and Diego Gambetta, 'Corruption as a Practice: An Analytical Map', in Stephen Kotkin and Andras Sajo, eds., *The Political Corruption of Transition: A Handbook* (Budapest: Central European University Press, forthcoming, 2001).

⁹⁸The distinction thus hinges on the identities of the actors involved, not the scale of the economic transactions.

⁹⁹See the pertinent analyses by Joseph D. Reid, Jr. and Michael M. Kurth, 'Public Employees in Political Firms: Part A. The Patronage Era', *Public Choice*, 59 (1988), 253–62; and Joseph D. Reid, Jr. and Michael M. Kurth, 'Public Employees in Political Firms: Part B. Civil Service and Militancy', *Public Choice*, 60 (1989), 41–54.

¹⁰⁰Graziano, 'Patron-Client Relationships in Southern Italy'.

¹⁰¹For instance, there is no mention of political corruption in Allum, *Politics and Society in Post-war Naples*; the topic does not even appear in the index.

¹⁰²David Moss, 'Patronage Revisited: The Dynamics of Information and Reputation', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 1 (1995), 58–93.

¹⁰³Documented in Golden and Chang, 'Competitive Corruption'.

¹⁰⁴For details in English on the 1974 law, see Gian Franco Ciaurro, 'Public Financing of Parties in Italy', in Herbert E. Alexander, ed., *Comparative Political Finance in the 1980s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 153–71.

¹⁰⁵Luciano Bardi and Piero Ignazi, 'The Italian Party System: The Effective Magnitude of an Earthquake', in Piero Ignazi and Colette Ysmal, eds., *The Organization of Political Parties in Southern Europe* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 91–109, p. 98.

¹⁰⁶Vittorio Bufacchi and Simon Burgess, *Italy Since 1989: Events and Interpretations* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 84.

¹⁰⁷An alternative account is that the politicians who engaged in corrupt activities were seeking mainly to enrich themselves personally, and did so by taking advantage of their control over government resources to extract bribes. See Silvia Colazingari and Susan Rose-Ackerman, 'Corruption in a Paternal-

istic Democracy: Lessons from Italy for Latin America', *Political Science Quarterly*, 113 (1998), 447–70. Most empirical studies of Italian political corruption appear to find by contrast that most of the monies raised through kickbacks were for political campaigns, although personal enrichment was not irrelevant.

¹⁰⁸This should be less true in situations where national parties are stronger.

¹⁰⁹See Patrick McCarthy, *The Crisis of the Italian State: From the Origins of the Cold War to the Fall of Berlusconi* (New York: St. Martin's, 1997).

¹¹⁰It is probably useful to distinguish the origins of the system from its persistence. US involvement seems crucial for the early expulsion of the Italian Communist Party from the coalition government formed in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.

¹¹¹Alberto Diaz-Cayeros, Beatriz Magaloni, and Barry Weingast, 'Federalism and Democratization in Mexico', paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., 2000; Alberto Diaz-Cayeros, Beatriz Magaloni, and Barry Weingast, 'Democratization and the Economy in Mexico: Equilibrium (PRI) Hegemony and its Demise', unpublished paper, Stanford University and UCLA, 2000; and Miriam A.

Golden, 'International Sources of the Collapse of Rent-Seeking Regimes: Hypotheses Drawn from the Italian Case', paper presented at the Joint Sessions of the European Consortium for Political Research, Grenoble, France, April 6–11, 2001.