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THESIS

SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF ITALIAN NATIONALISM

by

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March 2016

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SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF ITALIAN NATIONALISM

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ABSTRACT

Italy boasts the fourth-largest military establishment within the European Union and the sixth-largest in NATO, so Italian national security efforts and collective contributions have trans-European and even global significance. Italy has historically been an avid supporter of European integration, but nationalist movements promoting euroscepticism or isolationism threaten to alter both the Italian and the European security landscape. Three major political parties in Italy—the Northern League, the Five Star Movement, and Forza Italia—present nationalist positions of differing magnitude that could threaten Italy’s pro-European Union position. It is consistent with U.S. and Alliance interests, therefore, to examine the most important factors fueling nationalist movements and to assess the security implications of these movements’ policies. This thesis surveys the main nationalist movements in contemporary Italy and identifies seven factors that promote Italian nationalism or euroscepticism: a tumultuous history and political environment, the north–south divide, the Italian national character, a struggling national economy, Italian-Russian relations, EU and NATO enlargement, and the ongoing immigration crisis. This thesis also examines Italy’s role in the major Euro-Atlantic security institutions and assesses how nationalist movements may affect the country’s international security role.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CFI	Connected Forces Initiative
CSCE	Conference on Security Cooperation in Europe
D3	Demilitarization, Dismantling, and Disposal of Military Equipment
DC	Christian Democracy / Democrazia Cristiana
DDPR	Deterrence and Defense Posture Review
EAF	European Alliance for Freedom
EC	European communities
ECB	European Central Bank
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defense Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EGF	European Gendarmerie Force
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
ESM	European Stability Mechanism
EU	European Union
FI	Forza Italia
GNI	Gross National Income
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
LN	Northern League / Lega Nord
M5S	Five Star Movement / Movimento Cinque Stelle
MNB	multinational brigade
MRAP	Mine Resistant Ambush Vehicle
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAF	Operation Allied Force
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
OMN	Operation Mare Nostrum
OOD	Operation Odyssey Dawn

OSCE	Office for Security Cooperation in Europe
PCI	Italian Communist Party / Partito Comunista Italiano
PD	Democratic Party / Partito Democratico
PdL	People of Freedom / Popolo della Libertà
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PIT	personal income tax
PSI	Italian Socialist Party / Partito Socialista Italiano
SC	Civic Choice / Scelta Civica
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UK	United Kingdom
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VAT	value-added tax
WEU	Western European Union

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I. INTRODUCTION

Italianità—the identity and essence of being Italian—is usually easily recognized but much harder to describe. Italians often stand out for their passionate and flamboyant style, yet there are many more layers underlying the national character. Regional divides within the nation are distinct, moreover, and most Italians tend to identify more strongly with local or regional identities than with the nation. Since the end of World War II, Italy—along with much of the rest of Europe—has also decisively moved toward greater Europeanism. Regionalist, nationalist, and eurosceptical movements within Italy, drawing support from a number of sources, nevertheless threaten to reverse trends toward Europeanism. Heated debate thus revolves around the tradeoffs between regionalism, nationalism, and Europeanism.

In the minds of many Italians, the desire for further European integration has been replaced by eurocriticism or even euroscepticism. In 2013, the Istituto Affari Internazionali published a paper entitled “Eurocriticism: The Eurozone Crisis and Anti-Establishment Groups in Southern Europe” that painted a bleak outlook for pro-European public sentiment.¹ The reputation of the European Union (EU) suffered during the global financial crisis that began in 2008 and popular skepticism has grown across southern Europe in recent years. The Eurobarometer estimated that in 2007 only 28% of Italians distrusted the EU, but by the end of 2013 that number had risen to 61%.² On a broader scale, a Pew Research poll indicated that only 45% of Europeans in the EU had a favorable view of the EU in 2013—down from 60% in 2012.³ According to Roberto Weber, a polling expert from the IXE institute, “rising discontent with the EU is a clear byproduct of the economic crisis...but...when push comes to shove, a majority of Italians

¹ Thanos Dokos, Eleonora Poli, Chiara Rosselli, Eduard Soler i Lecha and Nathalie Tocci, *Eurocriticism: The Eurozone Crisis and Anti-Establishment Groups in Southern Europe*, Istituto Affari Internazionali, IAI Working Papers 13, December 2013, <http://www.iai.it/en/publicazioni/eurocriticism>.

² European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 67* (Spring 2007), 97–98, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_arch_en.htm.

³ Pew Research Center Global Attitudes Project, *The New Sick Man of Europe: the European Union*, May 2013, 13, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/05/13/the-new-sick-man-of-europe-the-european-union>.

would be sceptical of radical departures from traditional EU-oriented policy-making.”⁴ Increasing support for radical anti-euro and anti-EU platforms, however, contradicts such an assertion and suggests that surging nationalism and regionalism (notably in northern Italy) may push Italians to take extreme measures.

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question to be answered is: What security implications stem from competing forms of Italian nationalism? This thesis investigates the security implications of Italian nationalism, especially within the context of the principal Euro-Atlantic security institutions—NATO and the EU. Four sub-questions are considered in order to answer this question. First, what are the main nationalist movements in Italy today? Second, what factors are promoting euroscepticism and Italian nationalism? Third, what is Italy’s role in the major Euro-Atlantic defense and security institutions, especially NATO and the EU? Lastly, how could nationalist movements in Italy affect the country’s role in these institutions and in international security?

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Italy has historically been one of the strongest supporters of European integration. From a security perspective, Italy maintains one of the largest European militaries and plays a key role in the EU, NATO, and other international organizations. Thus, Italian security efforts—both national and collective contributions—have trans-European and even global effects.

Nationalist movements promoting euroscepticism could alter the European security landscape. Euroscepticism has gained prominence in Italy in recent years, and the future of Italy’s traditional pro-EU position is uncertain. Multiple movements promote nationalism or Euroscepticism, and security ramifications vary for each. It is consistent with U.S. and Alliance interests, therefore, to examine the most influential nationalist movements and to assess the security implications of their policies.

⁴ Roberto Weber quoted in Alvise Armellini, “Anti-Euro Talk Spreads in Italy,” *EUobserver*, April 24, 2014, <https://euobserver.com/eu-elections/123906>.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESIS

This thesis addresses the issues raised in the four research sub-questions by identifying the major movements promoting nationalism or euroscepticism, exploring the range of underlying causal factors, examining Italy's security positions, and offering an assessment of the security implications stemming from nationalism or Euroscepticism. Three major Italian political parties have expressed significant opposition to the current level of integration with EU members: the *Lega Nord*, or Northern League (LN); the *Movimento Cinque Stelle*, or Five Star Movement (M5S); and Forza Italia (FI). The Northern League is fueled by strong sentiments of both regionalism and nationalism; the League is perhaps best known for its concept of a northern Italian region that is supposedly superior to Italy's southern regions. This mythical region, which the League has named Padania, lacks both a clear definition and historical substance. Nonetheless, there are distinct similarities among northern regions when contrasted with southern regions, so the merits of the Padania concept will be further examined. The Five Star Movement and Forza Italia appeal more to economic priorities than to nationalist agendas. These parties, especially the Five Star Movement, may nonetheless evoke nationalist leanings as avid proponents of euroscepticism.

Several underlying factors are conducive to nationalist or eurosceptical views in Italy. The struggling national economy receives the most press, yet other applicable factors cannot be ignored. This thesis proposes that six other factors also contribute to nationalist or eurosceptical views in Italy: a tumultuous history and political environment, the north-south divide, the Italian national character, Italian-Russian relations, EU and NATO enlargement, and the ongoing immigration crisis.

After establishing Italy's role in the major Euro-Atlantic defense and security institutions (NATO and the EU), this thesis examines the possible security implications of nationalism and euroscepticism. The security implications that stem from the competing forms of nationalism are evident in some areas and more subtle in others. The immigration crisis is at the forefront of many voters' minds, and each political party has a different view on how to address the crisis. The far-right and perhaps xenophobic Northern League advocates the most extreme anti-immigration policy; others take a less

extreme approach which still differs significantly from the status quo. Within the context of the main Euro-Atlantic security institutions, simple membership differs from committed support. Even if eurosceptical parties desire to retain national membership in these Euro-Atlantic institutions, ideological leanings will nonetheless influence the level of contribution and support to security efforts under their auspices.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly literature on individuals' attitudes regarding the tradeoff between nationalism and Europeanism has taken four general approaches: instrumental or utilitarian, cognitive mobilization, political cues, and cultural and identity factors.⁵ Instrumental or utilitarian approaches offer an economy-driven explanation, whereas the other three approaches are non-economic.⁶ According to the instrumental or utilitarian perspective, citizens evaluate the economic benefits and costs of European integration for themselves and their associated social groups (which includes the state). Public opinion under this approach is thus regarded as a rational calculation based upon the perceived economic advantages or disadvantages. Cognitive mobilization, first advanced by Ronald Inglehart in 1970, posits that growth in education levels and the availability of information has brought about an increased awareness that causes citizens of European countries to look increasingly toward multinational political and economic cooperation in Europe.⁷ Other authors have argued that explanations revolve around national politics, which filters public opinion and can make Europeanism a more or less attractive alternative.⁸ Cultural and identity explanations, arguing that some groups are more likely than others to identify as European while still others demonstrate overriding national or local identities, have also become popular in the last two decades.⁹

⁵ Fabio Serricchio, "Italian Citizens and Europe: Explaining the Growth of Euroscepticism," *Bulletin of Italian Politics* 4, no. 1 (2012): 123, http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_239888_en.pdf.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 124.

⁸ Ibid., 126.

⁹ Ibid., 123.

Literature on the nationalism-Europeanism tradeoff specific to Italy is limited, although Fabio Serricchio's 2012 study draws noteworthy conclusions for each of the four perspectives described previously. First, Italians still view European integration as a net benefit for both individuals and the nation.¹⁰ Second, higher education levels among Italians generally correspond with stronger Europeanism.¹¹ Third, euroscepticism in Italy is highly dependent upon political stability¹² and governing parties.¹³ Fourth, European integration may threaten not only strong national and local identities but also the European identity, which Italians tend to ascribe to Western Europeans but are more hesitant to extend to the new EU members in Eastern Europe.¹⁴

Although some scholars describe the ECSC and the follow-on European Communities as short-term failures, most agree that the communities paved the way for long-term success. William Diebold's *The Schuman Plan: A Study in Economic Cooperation, 1950–1959* found no evidence of a measurable economic impact by the ECSC.¹⁵ Ernst Haas' *The Uniting of Europe* (1958) was one of many works predicting that integration through the ECSC would produce spillover benefits elsewhere; Haas apologized in the 1968 reissue of his book that the carryover benefits had failed to materialize as predicted.¹⁶ Integration did, however, help iron out European issues that needed to be addressed sooner or later and promote lasting peace between longtime rivals France and Germany.¹⁷ John Gillingham writes that “the birth of Europe resulted from a

¹⁰ Serricchio, “Italian Citizens and Europe,” 131.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Serricchio's argument is based upon a relative stabilization of national politics leading up to 2012, but this thesis argues that national political dynamics have since been destabilized.

¹³ Serricchio, “Italian Citizens and Europe,” 131.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ William Diebold quoted in John Gillingham, *Coal, Steel and the Rebirth of Europe, 1945–1955: the Germans and French from Ruhr Conflict to Economic Community* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ix, <https://goo.gl/h5I4du>.

¹⁶ Ernst Haas quoted in Gillingham, *Coal, Steel and the Rebirth of Europe*, ix.

¹⁷ Germany was divided into the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) from 1949 to 1990; only West Germany joined NATO and the European Communities during this period.

natural process but was not a painless act...France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg did not mesh together effortlessly and automatically...they had to be heavily lubricated, sometimes reshaped and occasionally even forced together in order to get Europe to run.”¹⁸ Tony Judt argued in 1996 that the post-war conditions necessitated the formation of the EU predecessors but that further integration between EU members was no longer necessary.¹⁹

Both Italian center-right and center-left political parties nonetheless displayed fervent Europeanism during the infancy years of the EU.²⁰ Since the turn of the century, center-left parties have generally exhibited continuing pro-European sentiment as the center-right has gradually abandoned or qualified such sentiments.²¹ The current Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi of the center-left Democratic Party, has followed that trend by displaying strong support for both the EU and NATO. Some expert observers, however, have argued that the future of Italy within the EU hinges upon Renzi’s success as Prime Minister.²² According to Tony Barber of the *Financial Times*, “The main problem is...that practically half the political spectrum—from Silvio Berlusconi’s Forza Italia party to Matteo Salvini’s Northern League and the Five-Star Movement—is represented by forces that espouse eurosceptic or anti-euro policies.”²³ Renzi’s Democratic Party received only 25 percent of the popular vote in the 2013 parliamentary elections, meaning that the Democratic Party is outnumbered two-to-one by those moving away from Europeanism.

¹⁸ Gillingham, *Coal, Steel and the Rebirth of Europe*, 297.

¹⁹ Tony Judt, *A Grand Illusion? An Essay on Europe* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), 118.

²⁰ Nicolò Conti and Elisabetta De Giorgi, “L’Euroscetticismo a Parole: Lega Nord e Rifondazione Comunista, tra Retorica e Comportamento Istituzionale,” [Euroscpticism in Words: The Northern League and the Communist Refoundation, between Rhetoric and Institutional Behavior,] *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* 41, no. 2 (2011): 266, <http://www.sisp.it/files/papers/2010/nicolo-conti-e-elisabetta-de-giorgi-749.pdf>.

²¹ Conti and De Giorgi, “L’Euroscetticismo a Parole,” [Euroscpticism in Words,] 266.

²² Tony Barber, “Renzi Is the Last Hope for the Italian Elite,” *Financial Times*, January 1, 2015, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/21f3bf46-86cd-11e4-9c2d-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3QEuqsPS7>.

²³ Ibid.

The three political parties noted by Barber have demonstrated varying degrees of opposition to the current level of integration in the EU. The Northern League is currently Italy's oldest and most controversial major political party.²⁴ The rise of the Northern League during the 1990s is well-documented. Controversial secessionist views captured headlines, and with the headlines came a substantial amount of literature. The majority of the scholarly literature focuses on this time period; two such books contribute greatly to this thesis: *Nationalism in Italian Politics: The Stories of the Northern League, 1980–2000* by Damian Tambini and *The Lega Nord and the Northern Question in Italian Politics* by Anna Cento Bull and Mark Gilbert.²⁵ Limited scholarly literature exists after the 1990s, perhaps because the League polled less strongly in the 2000s and has been less boisterous in its recent calls for secession. The ongoing Mediterranean immigration crisis, among other factors, has reinvigorated interest in the party, but the scholarly literature has yet to catch up to this recent phenomenon.

The nationalist or Eurosceptic positions of the Five Star Movement and Forza Italia are less documented by scholarly sources. This is due in part to the evolving landscape of Italian politics. Created in 2009, M5S was given little heed until it took 26 percent of the vote in its first general election in 2013.²⁶ Forza Italia, meanwhile, has changed names twice in the past decade as the byproduct of party mergers and dissolutions. FI first merged with the *Alleanza Nazionale* (National Alliance) and others to form *Il Popolo della Libertà* (People of Freedom) in 2009; this new party dissolved in 2013 and the Berlusconi-led faction re-adopted the name of Forza Italia. The party has retained a platform mostly consistent with center-right positions under the leadership of Silvio Berlusconi although the shifts preclude the retention of specific policy positions from the pre-2013 iterations in the current version of FI policy.

²⁴ The largest Italian political parties during the Cold War – Democrazia Cristiana and the Partito Comunista Italiano – were dissolved in the early 1990s.

²⁵ Damian Tambini, *Nationalism in Italian Politics: The Stories of the Northern League, 1980–2000* (London: Routledge, 2001), <http://www.tandfebooks.com/isbn/9780203164556>; Anna Cento Bull and Mark Gilbert, *The Lega Nord and the Northern Question in Italian Politics* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

²⁶ Gianfranco Pasquino and Marco Valbruzzi, “Post-Electoral Politics in Italy: Institutional Problems and Political Perspectives,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 18, no. 4 (2013), 469, 473.

E. THESIS OVERVIEW

The thesis contains four follow-on chapters: Italian nationalist movements, factors promoting nationalism or euroscepticism in Italy, Italy's role in Euro-Atlantic security and defense, and a conclusion assessing the security implications of nationalist movements in Italy. Chapter II establishes the historical context of Italian nationalism and clarifies, in order from most radical to least radical, the nationalist or eurosceptical positions of the Northern League, the Five Star Movement, and Forza Italia. The Northern League campaigns on the economic and cultural supremacy of Padania and is overtly hostile toward Rome and Brussels alike. The Five Star Movement is sceptical of the EU but publicly advocates only withdrawal from the euro zone vice complete withdrawal from the EU. Some party members, including party leader Beppe Grillo, also advocate exiting NATO.²⁷ Forza Italia is even less overtly eurosceptical but is opportunist when it perceives that euroscepticism will benefit its interests.

Chapter III examines seven key factors that promote nationalism and/or euroscepticism in Italy: a tumultuous history and political environment, regional divides, the Italian national character, a struggling economy in the aftermath of the euro zone crisis, Russian relations, enlargement of the Euro-Atlantic security institutions, and the ongoing immigration crisis. Chapter IV focuses on Italy's role in NATO and the EU, analyzing contributions to both Euro-Atlantic security institutions. An examination of how the EU and NATO support or undermine Italian national interests is then provided.

Finally, Chapter V assesses the security implications stemming from nationalism and euroscepticism and offers recommendations to address some of these issues. Regarding NATO and the EU, this thesis concludes that nationalist movements largely remain committed to NATO but also tend to alter Italy's behavior within the Alliance as well as the Alliance's prioritization of issues. Nationalist movements are much more critical of the EU, and a complete exit from the EU is unlikely yet also quite possible. Even if Italy remains in EU, these movements affect Italy's level of support for the EU.

²⁷ James Politi, "Five Star Movement Comes of Age: Party with an Eccentric Past Seeks to Reinvent Itself as Serious Alternative to Renzi," *Financial Times*, December 30, 2015, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/45c62a88-99d9-11e5-9228-87e603d47bdc.html#axzz3xu3kvCno>.

II. CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

Studies carried out by social psychologists, according to Fabio Serricchio, “suggest that attachment to the nation and to Europe are not contradictory.”²⁸ Other scholars disagree. Tony Judt asserted that “it is not psychologically realistic to posit...a local and supranational duality of communities around which allegiances may form.”²⁹ In 2000, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, then the President of the Italian Republic, declared, “There is no contradiction at all between the love of one’s city or region, the love for the motherland and the love for Europe. I love my city, Livorno, Tuscany, Italy and Europe at the same time and in the same way.”³⁰ Ciampi first acknowledged the strong “love” of city or region by Italian citizens, and he essentially implored his fellow citizens to extend such love to the “motherland” as well as Europe. Ciampi’s statement, however, was also reflective of the Italian national preference for theatrics over reality.³¹ If Tuscany went to war with Liguria or European armies invaded Italy, would he truly be neutral? When conflict arises, regional or national affiliations will likely take precedence not only for Ciampi but also for the majority of Italians.

Studies also suggest that many Italians do not share Ciampi’s European identity. Eurobarometer surveys indicate that Italians feel less European than most other EU citizens and that sentiments of Europeanism in Italy have grown weaker since the inception of the EU in 1993.³² Serricchio asserts that Italians have historically been “the most pro-European of the continent’s citizens” but “seem to have changed their attitudes

²⁸ Serricchio, “Italian Citizens and Europe,” 127.

²⁹ Judt, *Grand Illusion*, 118.

³⁰ Statement by President Ciampi on December 31, 2000, quoted in Alessandra Buonfino, “Politics, Discourse and Immigration as a Security Concern in the EU: a Tale of Two Nations, Italy and Britain,” (European Consortium for Political Research Presentation Paper, Cambridge University, 2004), 12, <http://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/4c3886d5-0415-4c92-a5ba-d89f3cde4a9a.pdf>.

³¹ Luigi Barzini, *The Italians: A Full-Length Portrait Featuring Their Manners and Morals*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 89.

³² European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 83* (Spring 2013), http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb83/eb83_en.htm; Serricchio, “Italian Citizens and Europe,” 116.

towards the supranational system of institutions.”³³ In the Spring 2015 Eurobarometer, only 53% of Italians identified themselves as EU citizens—well below the EU average of 67%.³⁴ Only Greece, Bulgaria, and Cyprus displayed less European identity, and all three were within a few percentage points of Italy.³⁵

Barber asserted in April 2015 that Italy is one of several EU countries where “populist political tide is on the retreat.”³⁶ Barber adds that “Renzi...looks like a man tackling Italy’s constitutional and economic challenges with an energy and sincerity untypical of the establishment.”³⁷ All three noted Eurosceptic parties, however, retain significant support among Italian voters. In the tumultuous Italian political environment, moreover, change appears to be the only constant. Radical departures from current Italian policy positions will thus remain a real possibility for the foreseeable future regardless of the current ebb or flow of populist sentiment.

The most radical platform belongs to the Northern League (LN). The League has gained the most support since the 2013 election (relative to the other Italian parties) thanks to its strong anti-immigration stance in the context of the European immigration crisis. As a result, the LN has jumped from a near-afterthought in Italian politics to polling neck-and-neck with Berlusconi’s Forza Italia for right-wing supremacy. The League’s creation of Padania is a reinterpretation of the Po River Valley that romanticizes the qualities of Northern Italy and simultaneously disparages those of the South. The party, believing the South is a drain on the resources of the industrious and prosperous North, advocates reinforcement of the North–South divide through greater northern autonomy or even secession.

The Five Star Movement and Forza Italia platforms take a more passive approach to nationalism than does the LN. An ardent eurocritical approach implies that national

³³ Serricchio, “Italian Citizens and Europe,” 115.

³⁴ European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 83.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Tony Barber, “The Populist Surge Has Peaked but it Will Leave a Bitter Legacy,” *Financial Times*, April 28, 2015, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/7bbd83c0-ece1-11e4-b82f-00144feab7de.html>.

³⁷ Ibid.

alternatives present a superior solution, although neither party actively promotes a strong nationalist agenda. The Five Star Movement burst on the scene in 2013, claiming 26% of the vote in that year's parliamentary elections. The movement created deadlock in attempts to make majority decisions by refusing to align with either the right or left and thus introduced chaos into the Italian political system not seen since the *Mani Pulite*—clean hands—scandal of the early 1990s. Continued support for M5S indicates that it is more than just a passing fad; rather, it has become a fixture in Italian politics. Compared to M5S, Forza Italia is a more mainstream center-right party. It has largely been led by Berlusconi since he entered politics in 1994, although the party has been anything but stable since its inception. Center-right parties have split, reconsolidated, and changed names in the process multiple times since 1994; such volatility further increases the possibility that the party will stray from traditional positions and become increasingly eurosceptic.

A. HISTORY OF ITALIAN NATIONALISM AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

European unity and Italian nationalism trace their roots back to the nineteenth century. Napoleon Bonaparte envisioned Europe “united under a single national sovereign.”³⁸ Napoleon's campaigns, however, would ignite the spark of nationalism within European populations and thus achieve the opposite effect in the long term.³⁹ The 1814–15 Congress of Vienna officially divided Italy into independent states, some of which were subject to foreign rule. Northern Italy (minus Piedmont) was divided between Austrian rule and independent Habsburg duchies, the Kingdom of Piedmont remained under the House of Savoy and gained the Republic of Genoa, the Papal states were restored to the Pope, and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (that is, Naples and Sicily) came under French and later Spanish Bourbon rule.⁴⁰

³⁸ Anthony Padgen, *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 2002), 17.

³⁹ Robert Gildea, *Barricades and Borders: Europe, 1800–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 53.

⁴⁰ Filippo Sabetti, “The Making of Italy as an Experiment in Constitutional Choice.” *Publius* 12, no. 3 (1982): 69, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3329789>.

The *Risorgimento*, or resurgence, that began in the early 1800s eventually culminated in the complete unification of Italian lands under the crown of Piedmont in 1870.⁴¹ Camillo di Cavour—the forceful unifier of the Italian Peninsula—had initially only envisioned exploiting Italian national sentiment to promote the territorial expansion of Piedmont.⁴² Martin Wight writes that Cavour “wanted simply to make Italy independent of Austrian control, and as late as 1856 he dismissed the idea of Italian unity as sheer nonsense. Italian unification as it was actually achieved in 1859–60 was a triumph of opportunism.”⁴³ Robert Gildea confirms that “there is nothing to suggest that in the spring of 1860 Cavour envisaged uniting the whole peninsula of Italy, but once...[Giuseppe] Garibaldi had seized the initiative...Cavour was forced to act.”⁴⁴

Italy was highly bipolar during the 50-year process of unification—Northern kingdoms were the first to join Piedmont after Cavour’s defeat of Austria while Giuseppe Garibaldi simultaneously brought in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in the south. Garibaldi’s unification of southern Italy from Sicily to Naples was a movement of the common people opposed to the traditional monarchy.⁴⁵ Gildea adds that “as Garibaldi’s success grew, so did the threat to the Piedmontese monarchy.”⁴⁶

Unification was not a peaceful process, and in the end the south would draw the short end of the stick. After Garibaldi was forced into retreat by counter-attacking Bourbons, Piedmont successfully coerced the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies into annexation.⁴⁷ The Papal state of Rome was stuck between the two poles during the 1860s; it was left powerless to resist after the French garrison departed in 1870 and, with

⁴¹ In general 1861 is regarded as the year of Italian unification, although unification was not fully complete until Rome joined Italy in 1870.

⁴² Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, ed. Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter (London: Leicester University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991), 155.

⁴³ Wight, *International Theory*, 155.

⁴⁴ Gildea, *Barricades and Borders*, 194.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 194–95.

the exception of the Holy See, joined Italy shortly thereafter to complete unification. Wight goes as far as to say that the process of Italian unification was “indistinguishable from war”:

Garibaldi’s invasion of Sicily in 1860 with an army of volunteers, Cavour’s manufacture of a “spontaneous” incident in the Papal States, and the subsequent Piedmontese invasion and annexation of the Papal and Neapolitan dominions, were perhaps the supreme example of offensive intervention in time of peace, and were indistinguishable from war in all but diplomatic forms.⁴⁸

Cavour’s methods, however, were generally condoned across Europe because liberal ideas supported Italian unification.⁴⁹

Italy bolstered its claim to great power status by joining the Triple Alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany in 1882. Alliance members promised to come to each other’s aid if any member was attacked by a great power, de facto solidifying Italy’s place in the realm of great European powers. Because of this treaty Austria-Hungary may have assumed that it would have the support of both Germany and Italy at the outset of World War I in 1914, but Italy withdrew its support and the Triple Alliance came to an abrupt end. Publicly Italy declared that Austria-Hungary was the aggressor and therefore Italy was not obligated to intervene under a Triple Alliance agreement that was solely defensive. A better explanation for Italy’s defection, however, was that it had territorial ambitions of its own. Italy coveted redemption of *terra irridenta*—unredeemed territories—surrounding Italy which had significant populations of ethnic Italians or Italian-speakers.⁵⁰ Priority areas to the north and east were under Austro-Hungarian control at the time, so Italy was unlikely to gain the desired possessions by sticking with the Triple Alliance. Italy negotiated privately for territory with each side, although the Triple Entente—Britain, France, and Russia—would clearly offer more of the desired territory. The London Pact, finally signed in April 1915, promised Italy most of the

⁴⁸ Martin Wight, *Power Politics*, ed. Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad (London: Leicester University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1978), 198.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Glenda Sluga. *The Problem of Trieste and the Italo-Yugoslav Border: Difference, Identity, and Sovereignty in Twentieth-Century Europe*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), 16.

desired Austro-Hungarian territory in exchange for joining the Allies.⁵¹ Italy annexed the promised areas following the Allied victory; three of those areas remain part of the Italian state today: South Tyrol, Trentino, and eastern portions of Friuli which include Trieste.

Fascism fueled by avid nationalism took previous irredentist thought to a new level. Fascists during the 1920s and 1930s would seek further annexation of “unredeemed” territories and colonial *spazio vitale*—vital space—to Italy under the premise that Italy’s spiritual and cultural superiority should be recognized by others.⁵² In a 1921 speech, Mussolini proclaimed, “Fascism was born...out of a profound, perennial need of this our Aryan and Mediterranean race.”⁵³ Mussolini explicitly rejected any belief that the “Aryan” or “Mediterranean” race was biologically superior.⁵⁴ Rather, he asserted the superiority of Italian spiritual and cultural foundations while arguing that the spiritual and cultural composition of a population determines its social hierarchy.⁵⁵ Thus, *Italianità* could and should be assumed by others. The *spazio vitale* concept of Italian fascists was similar to Nazi *Lebensraum* in that both encouraged aggressive territorial expansion to meet the spatial needs of a supposedly superior society; the key difference, however, was that *spazio vitale* mandated cultural assimilation vice genocide.

As an ideological consequence, Fascist Italy made land claims on Dalmatia and justified an Italian sphere of influence in the Balkans based upon Italy’s spiritual and cultural influence.⁵⁶ The fascists also demonstrated imperialist ambitions, fighting to gain *spazio vitale* in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa.⁵⁷ Mussolini’s deliberate defiance of the League of Nations during the 1935–1936 invasion of Ethiopia significantly

⁵¹ “The Pact of London, 1915,” <http://ww1italy.weebly.com/primary-source-document.html>.

⁵² Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Psychology Press, 1991): 56–84, https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Nature_of_Fascism.html?id=544bouZiztIC; Sluga, *Italo-Yugoslav Border*, 52.

⁵³ Mark Neocleous, *Fascism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 35.

⁵⁴ Sluga, *Italo-Yugoslav Border*, 52.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 52–53.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

compromised international order and undermined the credibility of the League of Nations.⁵⁸ Nazi Germany's support for the invasion also served to align the two nations against other European powers.⁵⁹ When Germany's defeat of France appeared imminent in 1940, the expansion-minded Italy seized part of France and joined the Axis powers in World War II. Barzini describes the atmosphere imposed by the Mussolini regime and the outcome it would eventually produce:

The regime had created an imaginary Spartan country, in which all men had to make believe they were heroic soldiers, all women Roman matrons, all children Balilla (the Genoa street urchin who started a revolt against the Austrian garrison in 1746 by throwing one stone). This was done by means of slogans, flags, stirring speeches from balconies, military music, mass meetings, parades, dashing uniforms, medals, hoaxes, and constant distortions of reality. The Italians woke up too late from their artificial dream...governed as in the past by contemptuous foreigners in a country of smoking ruins and decaying corpses.⁶⁰

Italy ousted Mussolini in 1943 and restored diplomatic relations with the Allies by joining the war effort against Germany, but a relationship of full trust could not be restored so quickly. Italy ambitiously pursued European integration through inclusion in cooperative Western organizations following the disastrous war, yet the Allies understandably questioned Italy's reliability as a partner. Italy had switched sides during both World Wars. Leopoldo Nuti adds that "France and Britain...would not soon forget the 'stab in the back' of 1940."⁶¹ Nuti describes the impact of World War II on post-war Italian diplomacy as follows:

The armistice between Italy and the Allied powers...is of fundamental importance to any understanding of postwar Italian politics...The 1943 disaster left Italy a weakened power, totally isolated in a hostile and resentful environment. This, for a country that since its inception had

⁵⁸ David Hamilton Shinn, Thomas P. Ofcansky, and Chris Prouty, *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 392.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Luigi Barzini, *The Europeans* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), 172.

⁶¹ Leopoldo Nuti, "The Richest and Farthest Master Is Always Best: US-Italian Relations in Historical Perspective," in *The Atlantic Alliance Under Stress: US-European Relations after Iraq*, ed. David M. Andrews (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 178.

suffered from a severe inferiority complex...and that had made the pursuit of parity the hallmark of its foreign policy, was the worst of all possible worlds. The ramshackle Italian state...was constantly striving to reassert itself as a normal member of the international community.⁶²

Italy nonetheless overcame the lingering distrust to achieve inclusion in the founding membership of NATO in 1949. From there, Italy and five other West European countries—Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany—would integrate further through the formation of the ECSC, the Messina Conference of 1955, and the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community (EEC)—the predecessor to the EU—in 1957.⁶³ The founding members of the ECSC and EEC became known as the “inner six” because of their commitment to supranational European integration. Seven others (the “outer seven”)—Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom—were unwilling to commit to supranational European integration at the time and instead formed the less-integrated European Free Trade Association (EFTA).⁶⁴ Ironically, five of the outer seven countries would eventually join the European Communities (EC) or EU.

Italy’s avid support for European integration in the decades following World War II was driven not only by a desire to regain the trust of fellow NATO and EC members but also partly as a deliberate counter to Eastern influence. As the Cold War escalated in the years following World War II, Soviet Communism influenced Italy from afar, while a border with Yugoslavia and the West’s largest Communist party in Italy brought Eastern

⁶² Nuti, “The Richest and Farthest Master, 178.

⁶³ “The European Communities,” Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l’Europe, last modified September 11, 2012, http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_european_communities-en-3940ef1d-7c10-4d0f-97fc-0cf1e86a32d4.html; “The Messina Conference,” Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l’Europe, last modified September 12, 2012, http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_messina_conference-en-b985ab83-ceb9-495a-a408-865563de790c.html; *Act of 30 November 1957 approving the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community and its Annexes and Additional Protocols and Convention, signed at Rome on 25 March 1957, and at Brussels on 17 April 1957*, Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l’Europe, accessed March 5, 2015, http://www.cvce.eu/obj/act_ratifying_the_eec_treaty_in_luxembourg_30_november_1957-en-25f65dd3-2f68-43f3-903d-279d39f1de9d.html.

⁶⁴ “The European Communities.”

influence much closer to home.⁶⁵ (Yugoslavia's Communist regime was not directly aligned with that of the Soviet Union and thus had a unique influence.) Italy routinely reaffirmed and demonstrated its commitment to NATO to compensate for the Eastern influences but also generally refrained from taking autonomous action on issues that could affect the East-West conflict.⁶⁶ Osvaldo Croci adds that Italy "traded some sovereignty for security by de facto relinquishing...diplomacy and force to the Atlantic alliance."⁶⁷ Serricchio is careful to caveat "the stereotype of Italians as Euroenthusiasts" by noting that it was "established in...[a] context...where European membership was seen as a choice that reinforced Italy's pro-Atlantic, anti-Soviet position."⁶⁸

The 1992 Maastricht Treaty established EU political and economic components, and participating members transitioned to a common currency in 1999. Italy supported EU development with great enthusiasm, believing that a better Italy and a better Europe would be achieved through enhanced cooperation. In September 1999, Romano Prodi, who served as Prime Minister in 1996–1998 and 2006–2008, summarized his vision:

The destiny of Italy is now finally fully integrated within a project of a more united Europe, closer to its citizens and more prestigious in the world. Europe will be able to do a lot to help Italy...but Europe also needs a strong contribution from Italy. Without Italy, in fact, there is no Europe. There must be a contribution of trust and full participation in the European idea.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Silvio Pons, "Stalin, Togliatti, and the Origins of the Cold War in Europe," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, no. 2 (2001): 3–4, <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~hpcws/3.2pons.pdf>; Palash Ghosh, "Green, White and Lots of Red: How Italy Got the West's Biggest Communist Party," *International Business Times*, July 26, 2013, <http://www.ibtimes.com/green-white-lots-red-how-italy-got-vests-biggest-communist-party-1360089>.

⁶⁶ Osvaldo Croci, "Italian Security Policy after the Cold War," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 8, no. 2 (2003): 266.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Serricchio, "Italian Citizens and Europe," 127.

⁶⁹ Buonfino, "Politics, Discourse and Immigration," 12.

B. THE NORTHERN LEAGUE

The populist Northern League has long maintained highly controversial positions promoting nationalist and regionalist agendas.⁷⁰ According to Anna Cento Bull and Mark Gilbert, “The North—Italy’s productive heartland—has become alarmed and angry about the inadequacy of the Italian state...The Lega Nord exists because there is a Northern Question.”⁷¹ After the Northern League was founded in 1991 as a consolidation of several regional parties, it quickly gained international notoriety for its pronounced anti-southern views. The League is Italy’s oldest standing political party and played a large part in bringing down the Italian First Republic during the *Mani Pulite* scandal. Cento Bull and Gilbert assert that the League “has managed to affirm itself as a permanent political force within the tangled Italian party system.”⁷² As a populist party pitting the people against the elites, the league has identified three supposed enemies of northern Italians: southern Italians, the EU, and immigrants—especially Islamic immigrants.⁷³

The full party name is the *Lega Nord per l’Indipendenza della Padania*—the Northern League for the Independence of Padania. The party campaigns for greater autonomy for Italy’s northern regions, which the party collectively refers to as Padania. League propaganda and speeches, as described by Tambini, have contrasted “a supposedly modern, developed, efficient, transparent, hardworking, and democratic North and a Byzantine, inefficient, occult, lazy, corrupt South.”⁷⁴ More extreme party members have advocated outright secession to achieve independence from the economic burden of the south, although that position has neither been unanimously accepted among members nor officially established as party doctrine. The secessionist position, however, became highly popular within the league when it started promoting the formation of a

⁷⁰ Duncan McDonnell, “A Weekend in Padania: Regionalist Populism and the Lega Nord,” *Politics* 26, no. 2 (2006), 126, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9256.2006.00259.x.

⁷¹ Cento Bull and Gilbert, *Northern Question*, 7.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷³ McDonnell, “A weekend in Padania,” 126–129.

⁷⁴ Damian Tambini, *Nationalism in Italian Politics*, 102.

new state known as Padania in 1996.⁷⁵ The League's intellectuals offered strong cases that Padanian nationhood was a natural fit for the northern regions which shared ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and geographic similarities.⁷⁶ Cento Bull and Gilbert add, "Instead...of promoting a Catalan or Scottish style solution to the dilemma posed by northern demands for greater autonomy from the central Italian state, the Lega had opted for the Czechoslovakian solution"—that is, a complete split by one state into two.⁷⁷

The term Padania was coined in the 1970s as a socioeconomic grouping of the regions of the Po Valley. Beyond the Po Valley, northern terrain is diverse. The Northern League, needing a term to describe its sphere of influence, adopted the name Padania to describe its theoretical new state during the 1990s. The League's reinvention of Padania attempted to inspire artificial notions of common history and culture that simply had no basis in fact. Cento Bull and Gilbert note additional "folkloristic aspects of the Lega's political style: flags, mass rallies, [and] the use of regional dialects."⁷⁸

The exact boundaries of Padania are debatable, and conflicting definitions have been advanced. A strictly geographic definition—shown in Figure 1—would exclude large portions of most northern regions. The Northern League's sphere of influence, however, spans from the Central Apennine Mountains of central Italy to the international borders in the north. The League's 1996 Declaration of Independence and Sovereignty of Padania addressed 11 regions: the Aosta Valley, Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Lombardy, Le Marche, Piedmont, Tuscany, Trentino-South Tyrol, Umbria, and Veneto.⁷⁹ This declaration contains perhaps the most inclusive definition; other sources often exclude the three fringe regions of Marche, Tuscany, and Umbria. Figures 2, 3, and 4 demonstrate possible interpretations of Padania as a land consisting of 8, 9, or 11 regions. One certainty, however, is that Padania does not extend as far south as Rome;

⁷⁵ Cento Bull and Gilbert, *Northern Question*, 5.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 6.

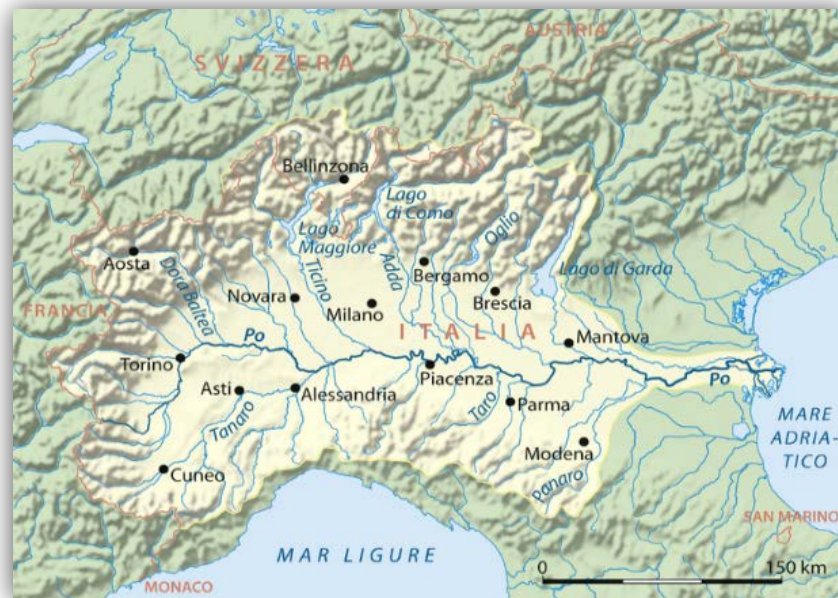
⁷⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ "Declaration of Independence and Sovereignty of Padania," Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza di Padania, last modified September 15, 1996, <http://digilander.libero.it/vimercatepadana/english%20pg1.htm>.

Cento Bull and Gilbert note that the League has “identified ‘Rome’...as the root of the Italian malaise.”⁸⁰ Figure 5 summarizes the interpretations of Padania: 8 northern regions are definitely part of the Lega Nord’s Padania, 3 central regions are debatable, and the regions further south are definitely not Padanian. The League also ironically states that it has established representatives in Abruzzo, Lazio (the capital of which is Rome), and Sardinia—even though these three regions are not included in the League’s statute and would generally be subject to the League’s anti-South rhetoric.

Figure 1. Geographical Padania—The Area of the Po River Valley



Source: Wikipedia, s.v. “Po Valley,” accessed June 4, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Po_Valley.

⁸⁰ Cento Bull and Gilbert, *Northern Question*, 5.

Figure 2. Padania Interpretation of 8 Regions (Marche, Tuscany, Umbria Excluded)



Generated with Tableau Software

Figure 3. Padania Interpretation of 10 Regions (Umbria excluded)



Generated with Tableau Software

Figure 4. Padania of 11 Regions from the Northern League Declaration



Generated with Tableau Software

Figure 5. Summary of Regions that Are, May Be, or Are Not in Padania



Generated with Tableau Software

To say that the Northern League promotes euroscepticism would be putting it mildly. Roberto Maroni announced in January 2012—six months prior to becoming the party’s new leader—that the party represents a new Europeanism rather than euroscepticism.⁸¹ In either case, the League is firmly opposed to Italy having any affiliation with the EU or the euro zone.⁸² The party initially favored Italy’s entry into the European Monetary Union, but by 2005 the party had clearly changed course.⁸³ In an interview in 2005, Italy’s Minister for Reform and Northern League member Roberto Calderoli announced in the League’s newspaper, *La Padania*, the “crusade against the Euro and the European superstate” and added that Europe has “taken away the people’s identity, currency, and sovereignty, but not their common sense.”⁸⁴

Since taking over in December 2013, party leader Matteo Salvini has refrained from emphasizing secessionism to the extent that Umberto Bossi, the party’s founder and leader from 1989 to 2012, did. Instead, Salvini takes a more Europe-oriented approach—albeit while still looking to exit the EU—than Bossi.⁸⁵ Addressing the League in 2013, Salvini revived calls for secession from the Italian state yet largely conveyed anti-EU messages.⁸⁶ Salvini stated in 2014 that “the Europe of today cannot be reformed...there’s nothing to be reformed in Brussels. It’s run by a group of people who hate the Italian

⁸¹ Roberto Maroni, “Per una Lega Unita ed una Padania Libera ed Indipendente,” [For a United League and a Free, Independent Padania,] (speech, meeting of the Northern League, Varese, Italy, January 18, 2012), <http://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/343749/per-una-lega-unita-ed-una-padania-libera-ed-indipendente>.

⁸² McDonnell, “A Weekend in Padania,” 126–132; Rachel Sanderson and James Politi, “Italy’s New Political Star: Northern League Leader Matteo Salvini,” *Financial Times*, December 2, 2014, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/6221b64a-79f8-11e4-9b34-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3Ywx6seQL>.

⁸³ McDonnell, “A weekend in Padania,” 129.

⁸⁴ *La Padania*, June 18, 2005, 6, quoted in McDonnell, “A Weekend in Padania,” 129.

⁸⁵ Tony Pierucci, “A League of His Own: Italy’s Northern League Under Salvini,” *International Policy Digest*, January 24, 2015, <http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2015/01/24/league-italys-northern-league-salvini/>.

⁸⁶ Nick Squires, “Independence for Northern Italy and an End to Euro, Says Northern League Leader,” *The Telegraph*, December 16, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/10520482/Independence-for-northern-Italy-and-an-end-to-euro-says-Northern-League-leader.html>.

people and economy in particular.”⁸⁷ Salvini urges people to remember when Italy still used the Lira and adds that, as quoted by Agence France-Presse, the high inflation rate showed that “people were working and consuming.”⁸⁸

The Economist asserts that the new party leader has sought to “focus the League almost exclusively on causes dear to the European far right.”⁸⁹ Salvini also quickly crafted a relationship with Marine Le Pen and her French far-right National Front.⁹⁰ Shortly thereafter, the two officially formed a eurosceptic alliance—the European Alliance for Freedom (EAF)—and together took over six percent of the vote in 2014 European parliament elections.⁹¹ Tony Pierucci concludes that the threat posed by the Northern League under the domestically-focused Bossi was mostly confined to Italy, but that Salvini will “remain a controversial political figure...in European politics in general.”⁹²

Ironically, the League’s stringent anti-EU position may contradict the rhetoric that first propelled the league to international notoriety. The Northern League began as one of the more euroenthusiastic political parties in Italy, following the long-standing Italian tradition of positive sentiments toward European integration.⁹³ The concept of Padania as a nation came about, in part, due to the critical importance of “Padanian” trade with EU

⁸⁷ Matteo Salvini quoted in James Mackenzie, “Italy’s Northern League Calls for EU to Be ‘Demolished,’” *Reuters*, December 2, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/10/us-italy-politics-salvini-idUSKBN0JO22G20141210>.

⁸⁸ Agence France-Presse, “Two Italian Parties Call for Exit from Eurozone,” *Japan Times*, December 11, 2014, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/12/11/world/politics-diplomacy-world/two-italian-parties-call-exit-eurozone/#.VUUq0flVikp>.

⁸⁹ “Salve Salvini: The Northern League could Overtake Forza Italia as Italy’s right-wing party,” *The Economist*, November 27, 2014, <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21635030-northern-league-could-overtake-forza-italia-italys-right-wing-party-salve-salvini>.

⁹⁰ Pierucci, “A League of His Own.”

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Susi Meret, “The Danish People’s Party, the Italian Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party in a Comparative Perspective: Party Ideology and Electoral Support,” (PhD dissertation, Aalborg University, 2010), 177. http://vbn.aau.dk/ws/files/20049801/spirit_phd_series_25.pdf.

member states.⁹⁴ The League, anticipating that the incumbent Italian government would not meet the Maastricht criteria by 1998, calculated that the powerful northern business elites might turn against the incumbent government—especially if the Northern League platform was designed to receive them.⁹⁵ In this way, secessionist rhetoric perhaps peaked between 1996 and 1998 as an indirect result of a pro-EU approach.⁹⁶

The League, much like other far right parties in Europe, advocates a hard or even xenophobic stance against immigration.⁹⁷ The party has been at the forefront of the anti-immigration rhetoric that has spread across Italy and Europe alike in recent years. During its infancy stages, the League was even opposed to migration of southern Italians to the north, since southerners were still culturally different—perhaps even “foreign” in northern eyes—and were seen (perhaps unfairly) as representing an economic burden.⁹⁸ During the course of the 1990s, the northern view of southerners as immigrants faded as attention shifted to the impact of Islamic immigrants.⁹⁹ The 2002 Bossi-Fini Act—sponsored by right-wing parties with strong influence from Northern League—significantly tightened immigration controls. The bill’s authors sought to criminalize illegal immigration; the measure was removed from the bill to appease the majority, but it paved the way for illegal immigration to officially be criminalized in 2009.¹⁰⁰ In 2006 the League introduced another bill that would require aspiring citizens to pass language, culture, history, and institutional exams to gain citizenship.¹⁰¹ The League argues such measures would ensure that aspiring citizens will smoothly transition to life in Italy, although opponents note that such measures exemplify the party’s longstanding

⁹⁴ Cento Bull and Gilbert, *Northern Question*, 6.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Pierucci, “A League of His Own.”

⁹⁸ Meret, “Italian Northern League,” 165.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 171.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 172; “Immigration Policies in Italy,” *Struggles in Italy*, last accessed June 1, 2015, <https://strugglesinitaly.wordpress.com/equality/en-immigration-policies-in-italy/>.

¹⁰¹ Meret, “Italian Northern League,” 173.

opposition to a multicultural Italy.¹⁰² The League has not been able to push the stringent citizenship legislation through parliament to date—in part due to the traditionally inclusive stance of Catholicism—but such legislation remains a very real possibility in an environment of growing concern regarding immigration.¹⁰³

Islamic immigrants in particular have received great scrutiny from the League. League parliamentarian Federico Bricolo declared in 2006 that Italy must “close the doors to those coming from the Muslim countries;...with these [people] we must use the iron fist.”¹⁰⁴ Amidst unrest in Denmark that same year stemming from cartoons of Mohammed, the League proclaimed that it was the first to warn fellow Europeans of the dangers of Islam.¹⁰⁵ In the same breath, the League implied that politicians must now listen to what had previously fallen on deaf ears.¹⁰⁶ The *Charlie Hebdo* attack in France in January 2015 perhaps served to validate the League’s position in many European voters’ minds; the League has not changed its position since the attack, yet has seen its popularity increase recently thanks in part to its pronounced anti-immigration views.

After Bossi was replaced in 2012, Gianfranco Pasquino and Marco Valbruzzi asserted that the Northern League was on the decline.¹⁰⁷ The League’s popularity peaked at 10.1% of the popular vote in the 1996 general elections, and the party mustered only 4.1% of the vote in the 2013 general elections. Resurgence is always a possibility in the tumultuous Italian political environment, however, and the Northern League is again gaining steam. Many potential Forza Italia voters desire a more vigorous approach such as that of the Northern League, and regional election results in November 2014 led *The Economist* to assert that “the Northern League could overtake Forza Italia as Italy’s right-

¹⁰² Meret, “Italian Northern League,” 173.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 175.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Pasquino and Valbruzzi, “Post-Electoral Politics in Italy,” 470.

wing party.”¹⁰⁸ The April 2015 Termometro Politico opinion poll estimated that the Lega Nord would receive 15 percent of the national vote, the highest among right-wing parties and a dramatic uptick from the 2013 election.¹⁰⁹

C. THE FIVE STAR MOVEMENT

Renzi’s stiffest political competitor may be the anti-euro zone (and somewhat anti-NATO) Five Star Movement, which burst on the scene in the 2013 parliamentary election to claim 26 percent of the vote – the same as Renzi’s Democratic Party (PD).¹¹⁰ Barber notes, however, that the M5S is “slipping in opinion polls because...Grillo seems a protester obsessed with the purity of his party’s principles rather than getting something done.”¹¹¹ Eric Turner agrees with Barber that “support [for Grillo’s movement] may be on the decline,” but he also adds that M5S “is still a very salient political force.”¹¹² *The Economist* noted that the movement “performed miserably in [2014] regional elections.”¹¹³ Protest movements such as M5S draw significant support from citizens who would not ordinarily vote, however, so high abstention rates during the election leave a large amount of likely support for M5S unaccounted for.¹¹⁴ In November 2015 the Datamedia Ricerche opinion poll estimated that M5S would receive 27 percent of the national vote, confirming that the movement remains a strong contender to overtake Renzi and the PD.¹¹⁵ James Politi of the *Financial Times* further asserts that the M5S is

¹⁰⁸ “Salve Salvini.”

¹⁰⁹ “Le Intenzioni di Voto: I Partiti,” [Voting Intentions: The Parties,] *Datamedia Ricerche*, November 26, 2015, <http://www.data24news.it/sondaggi-nel-mondo/politici/190663-sondaggio-datamedia-ricerche-continua-la-flessione-del-pd-76597/>.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ “Le Intenzioni di Voto.” [Voting Intentions.]

¹¹² Eric Turner, “The 5 Star Movement and its Discontents: A Tale of Blogging, Comedy, Electoral Success and Tensions,” *Interface* 5, no. 2 (2013), 208, <http://www.interfacejournal.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Interface-5-2-Turner.pdf>.

¹¹³ “Italy’s Five Star Movement: Falling Star,” *The Economist*, December 9, 2014, <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21635792-beppe-grillo-says-he-tired-and-his-movement-tired-his-autocratic-leadership-falling-star>.

¹¹⁴ “Italy’s Five Star Movement: Falling Star.”

¹¹⁵ “Le Intenzioni di Voto.” [Voting Intentions.]

taking calculated measures to transform its image from “one of Europe’s most eccentric—even clownish—political parties” into one that is ready “to govern the country.”¹¹⁶

The Movement lacks a strong nationalist flair like that of the Northern League or an affiliation with either the left or right, making Five Star positions somewhat less pronounced. Grillo insists that the official stances of the populist movement accurately represent the people; online referendums such as the vote to ally with the UK Independence Party (UKIP) exemplify how the party incorporates the voice of the people.¹¹⁷ The party has made clear, however, its opposition to the euro. Grillo, who doubles as a comedian and a politician, launched a tour in 2014 entitled “Te la do io l’Europa”—“Here you are, this is Europe.”¹¹⁸ Grillo’s message, according to the party’s official website, vehemently condemns participation in the euro zone:

A monster is haunting Europe. It is called the euro. Those who have met it often ended in misery. Whole states have become debtors of a bank, the ECB [European Central Bank]. If you do not pay, instead of the mafia, the Troika—so much worse—comes. Political Europe has turned into a financial nightmare. Unknown officials are managing our lives, from the mortgage to the cormorant hunting.¹¹⁹

Grillo has also made clear his disdain for NATO. In June 2015, Grillo scoffed at the proposal to support a coalition effort in Iraq with Italian Tornado aircraft and implied that NATO interventions constitute acts of war, adding that “Italy must review its role in NATO.”¹²⁰ In his vision for Italy in 2042, Grillo expressed his disdain more bluntly in painting a utopian picture of Italy free from NATO and the euro:

¹¹⁶ Politi, “Five Star Movement Comes of Age.”

¹¹⁷ Naomi O’Leary, Immigration Dispute Shows Fault Lines in Italy’s 5-Star,” *Reuters*, October 11, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/11/us-italy-grillo-idUSBRE99A0EK20131011>.

¹¹⁸ Beppe Grillo, “Aprile 2014: Te la Do Io l’Europa,” [Here You Are, This Is Europe,] Movimento Cinque Stelle, http://www.beppegrillo.it/te_la_do_io_l_europa.html.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ “Grillo: L’Italia Deve Uscire dalla NATO,” [Grillo: Italy Must Exit NATO,] *Julie News*, October 6, 2015, http://www.julienews.it/notizia/politica/grillo-litalia-deve-uscire-dalla-nato/356305_politica_1.html.

We have become a self-sufficient nation; no one believed us! No one believed that we could go with perfect and natural alternative energies; now we have! We have wonderful public schools...[and] freedom of information...There is no one left behind; the poor do not know who they are...We exited NATO...[Italy] left these wars disguised as peacekeeping missions. We left the euro...and the lira is strong. The lira...has become a safe haven for the Swiss; the public debt has been halved.¹²¹

Grillo's contempt for NATO is not shared by all party members, however. Luigi Di Maio, who some speculate is being groomed to become Grillo's successor, stated in November 2015 that withdrawal from NATO is not being considered.¹²²

Naomi O'Leary asserts that the issue of immigration in particular "threatens to divide the party."¹²³ Two Five Star senators proposed reforms to decriminalize illegal immigration in 2013 as the immigration crisis gained visibility, but the independent initiative enraged Grillo because it did not represent a party line.¹²⁴ In response, Grillo wrote, "This amendment is an invitation to migrants from Africa and the Middle East to head for Italy....How many immigrants can we accommodate if one Italian in eight does not have money?....[The senators'] position...wasn't part of the program voted for by 8.5 million."¹²⁵ The Movement thus leans toward the right regarding illegal immigration, but is neither as extreme nor as vocal as the Northern League.

Although the Five Star Movement agrees with the Northern League that Italy should exit the euro zone and regain some degree of national autonomy, the agreement between the two parties stops there. The Five Star Movement blames both left and right that Italy is still within the euro zone, and it promises to be the party most intent on changing that. M5S, according to the Agence France-Presse, holds the following view:

¹²¹ Beppe Grillo quoted in Gianni Balduzzi, "Beppe Grillo Immagina l'Italia Grillina del 2042: Fuori da Euro e NATO e Piani Quinquennali," [Beppe Grillo imagines Grillian Italy of 2042: Outside the Euro, NATO, and Five-Year Plans,] *Termometro Politico*, September 21, 2015, http://www.termometropolitico.it/1189583_beppe-grillo-immagina-litalia-grillina-del-2042-fuori-da-euro-e-nato-e-piani-quinquennali.html.

¹²² Politi, "Five Star Movement Comes of Age."

¹²³ O'Leary, "Immigration Dispute Shows Fault Lines."

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

“On one hand the majority is led by...[Renzi’s] Democratic Party which is uninterested in the social butchery provoked by a common currency, and on the other Salvini criticises the euro but does nothing.”¹²⁶

The Five Star Movement has emphasized that leaving the euro zone does not necessarily mean leaving the EU.¹²⁷ A lack of criticism for the EU as a whole, however, must not be interpreted as support for the EU. On the contrary, the movement’s fundamental anti-establishment premise would hinder support for supranational establishments. Within the European Parliament, M5S formed an alliance with the anti-EU UKIP in 2014.¹²⁸ Some party members feared that the alliance with UKIP would harm the way the M5S is perceived—especially because of the perceived xenophobia of UKIP—yet the overwhelming majority of voting M5S members, 78%, opted in favor of the alliance.¹²⁹

D. FORZA ITALIA

Forza Italia has thus far refrained from explicitly advocating withdrawal from the euro zone, although the party has made it clear that its support for the euro is limited. Berlusconi said that the party’s voters are “split exactly down the middle” and described his position as “yes to the euro, but only under certain well-defined conditions.”¹³⁰ Forza Italia, in other words, seeks euro reform rather than absolute withdrawal. Armellini adds that Berlusconi has “courted eurosceptic opinion” with his resistance to German-inspired austerity policies—many of which he approved while in office.¹³¹ On a personal level,

¹²⁶ Agence France-Presse, “Two Italian parties call for exit from Eurozone.”

¹²⁷ “Italians May Vote to Leave Eurozone in 2015 Referendum: Five Star Movement,” *Global Research News*, November 28, 2014, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/italians-may-vote-to-leave-eurozone-in-2015-referendum-five-star-movement/5416733>.

¹²⁸ “Italy’s Five Star Chooses UKIP for Party Alliance,” *Euronews*, June 13, 2014, <http://www.euronews.com/2014/06/13/italy-s-five-starchoosesukipforeuropeanparliamentalliance/>.

¹²⁹ Ibid.; Lorenzo del Savio and Matteo Mameli, “Anti-Representative Democracy: How to Understand the Five Star Movement,” *Open Democracy*, July 4, 2014, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/lorenzo-del-savio-matteo-mameli/antirepresentative-democracy-how-to-understand-fi>.

¹³⁰ Berlusconi quoted in Armellini, “Anti-Euro Talk Spreads in Italy.”

¹³¹ Ibid.

Berlusconi claimed that a plot by EU officials ultimately forced him out of office in 2011.¹³² It is therefore plausible that Berlusconi and at least some members of his party would harbor anti-EU sentiment.

Eleanora Poli and Mark Valentiner conclude that Forza Italia has “placed its campaign on the wave of ‘selective euroscepticism’ in order to attract as many voters as possible” but overall does not align with the anti-euro or anti-EU visions of the Five Star Movement or the Northern League.¹³³ Poli and Valentiner add that Forza Italia “is not eurosceptic *per se*, it is rather opportunistic as its campaign was...based on populist rhetoric in highlighting the need for Italy to pursue its self-interests.”¹³⁴ This judgment is supported by the decision of Forza Italia to align with mainstream pro-European parties in the European Parliament.¹³⁵

¹³² James Mackenzie, “Italy’s Berlusconi Says He Was Forced Out by EU ‘plot,’” *Reuters*, May 14, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/14/us-italy-berlusconi-idUSBREA4D0N720140514>.

¹³³ Eleonora Poli and Mark Valentiner, “From Albertini to Anti-Europeanism: Shades of Euroscepticism in Italy,” *L’Europe en Formation* 373, no. 3 (2014), 9, https://www.academia.edu/9688924/From_Albertini_to_Anti-Europeanism_Shades_of_Euroscepticism_in_Italy.

¹³⁴ Poli and Valentiner. “From Albertini to Anti-Europeanism,” 9–10.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

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III. FACTORS PROMOTING NATIONALISM OR EUROSCEPTICISM IN ITALY

Statistical analysis indicates that an Italian's confidence in national political institutions has a positive correlation (albeit small) with European identity.¹³⁶ A legacy of political failures in Italy, however, has inspired more doubt than confidence. Europeanism in Italy thus faces stiff challenges.

A tumultuous history and political environment foster nationalism or euroscepticism in a variety of ways. Six additional factors are discussed in this chapter. First, the diverse regional history and northern dominance during and after Italy's coerced unification laid the foundation for strong regional divides and persisting loyalties to localities over the national state. Second, a history of unpredictability and inefficiency within the Italian political system has shaped the complex Italian national character into one which generally loathes mainstream politics, distrusts state institutions, and is susceptible to being swayed by radical agendas. Third, the historical distrust of governmental institutions has been exacerbated by the global financial crisis of 2008 and continuing economic stagnation. Fourth, the presence of the West's largest Communist party during the Cold War and the Russia-friendly Berlusconi era have served to further a strong Italy-Russia relationship which in some circumstances undermines Italian support for the key Euro-Atlantic institutions, NATO and the EU. Fifth, the expansion of both the EU and NATO threatens to increase the risks or reduce the national benefits of membership. Lastly, the Northern League has capitalized upon the Mediterranean immigration crisis to further its xenophobic agenda and fuel a new wave of nationalism in Italy.

¹³⁶ Serricchio, "Italian Citizens and Europe," 129.

A. A TUMULTUOUS HISTORY AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Pre-Unification History and Unification

Two thousand years ago, Rome presided over one of the greatest empires and most powerful religions on earth. As Stefan Collignon points out, “at the beginning of Europe, there was Italy. Ancient Rome copied Greek culture, but politically the Roman Empire dominated the Mediterranean universe and set the agenda for future empires.”¹³⁷ The Roman Catholic church maintained great influence over the centuries, although the Italian peninsula would remain divided into city-states and territories until the latter half of the 19th century. Hosts of foreign invaders, including Ostrogoths, Byzantines, Lombards, and Franks, came and went. Strong maritime republics such as Genoa, Pisa, Venice, and Amalfi would emerge along key trade routes, and by the 15th century the Italian peninsula had become a mixture of warring city-states in the north—namely Florence, Milan, and Venice; central Papal states; and the Kingdom of Sicily to the south. Some Italian states remained under foreign rule up until unification, and even after unification the South essentially remained subject to the rule of the North.¹³⁸

The legacy of the Roman Empire, foreign invasions, powerful city-states, and bipolar unification have hardly faded over the years. The historic greatness of Rome reinforces the notion that Italy belongs among the world’s great powers. Skepticism about Italy’s European neighbors is reinforced by the invasions of centuries past while immaculate preservation of the majestic city-states fosters regional pride and rivalry. The striking divide between north and south in contemporary Italy also traces its roots as far back as the twelfth century and would be reinforced by the polarization that occurred during the *Risorgimento*.¹³⁹

Scholarly studies confirm that enduring divides between northern and southern Italy originated in the Middle Ages. Robert Putnam’s *Making Democracy Work*,

¹³⁷ Stefan Collignon, “Italy and the Disintegration of the European Union,” *Social Europe*, February 28, 2013, <http://www.socialeurope.eu/2013/02/italy-and-the-disintegration-of-the-european-union/>.

¹³⁸ Gildea, *Barricades and Borders*, 196.

¹³⁹ Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 162.

published in 1993, concludes that social capital has persistently been unevenly distributed across the Italian regions.¹⁴⁰ Putnam writes, “Nearly a millennium ago, two contrasting and innovative regimes were established in different parts of Italy—a powerful monarchy in the South and a remarkable set of communal republics in the center and north.”¹⁴¹ The resulting regional variances, according to Putnam, “in civic involvement and social solidarity...have decisive consequences for the quality of life, public and private, in Italy’s regions today.”¹⁴² Putnam dates the “start of the Italy’s civic split between North and South” to around 1100 and notes that “the regions characterized by civic involvement in the late twentieth century are almost precisely the same regions...where neighborhood associations and religious confraternities and guilds had contributed to the flourishing communal republics of the twelfth century.”¹⁴³ Over the centuries uneven distribution of social capital has enabled northern Italy to develop more rapidly than southern Italy.¹⁴⁴ Rigorous statistical analysis by Guido de Blasio and Giorgio Nuzzo augment Putnam’s work; de Blasio and Nuzzo conclude that historical inequalities have led to variations between north and south which are evident today across a range of “econometric checks.”¹⁴⁵

Unification also represented modern Italy’s first notable struggle between political ideologies. The authoritarian Cavour had utilized a powerful alliance with Napoleon III of France to unite northern Italy under the House of Savoy. Garibaldi’s unification of southern Italy, on the other hand, was to some extent a movement of the common people opposed to the traditional Bourbon monarchy. Garibaldi had been inspired by Giuseppe Mazzini’s revolutionary vision of an Italian democracy, which Wight sums up: “If one could purify the hearts of the people and teach them of their

¹⁴⁰ Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, 162.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 184.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 184, 16.

¹⁴⁵ Guido de Blasio and Giorgio Nuzzo, “Social Capital and the Italian Regions: An Empirical Investigation,” *Scienze Regionali* 4, no. 1 (2005), 22, http://www.aiel.it/Old/bacheca/MODENA/PAPERS/deblasio_nuzzo.pdf.

sacred national cause, then they would spontaneously arise, and their oppressors, the Austrian and the Italian, would flee, and the nation be free.”¹⁴⁶ After the northerners triumphed, King Victor Emmanuel II became not only the last king of Piedmont but also the first king of united Italy. Even after the national capital moved south from Turin to Florence (1865) and on to Rome (1871), national matters remained disproportionately dominated by Piedmontese interests.¹⁴⁷ The rulers of Piedmont—highly influenced by Prussian *Machtpolitik*, or power politics—saw no alternative to heavy-handed rule for what they regarded as the ungovernable and corrupt South.¹⁴⁸ In this way the polarization of the pre-unification years was further reinforced such that the North–South divide would remain a lasting legacy.

2. Post-Unification History through World War II

Francesco Saverio Nitti, when asked by Luigi Barzini to sum up Italian history from the *Risorgimento* through the Second World War, remarked, “Gli italiani sono stati ubbriacati di bugie per cento cinquanta anni”—“the Italians have been made drunk with lies for one hundred and fifty years.”¹⁴⁹ In Barzini’s interpretation, the lies began with the “grandiose expectations aroused by the Risorgimento, which...was supposed to cure all Italian ills, solve all problems, produce wealth, spread literacy, transform all the people into democratic and well-behaved North Europeans, and open the road to national greatness and prosperity.”¹⁵⁰ According to Barzini, “United Italy turned out not to be exactly what many people had imagined...The final result was a rickety, divided, shabby, impoverished and backward nation, yet one that wasted its miserable resources trying to impersonate one of the world’s great powers.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Wight, *International Theory*, 155.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Alexander Passerin d’Entrèves, “New Reflections on the History of Italy,” *European History Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (1974), 194; Gildea, 196.

¹⁴⁹ Barzini, *Europeans*, 170.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 171.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 171–72.

The influence of *Machtpolitik* upon the House of Savoy's rule during the late 1800s not only reinforced polarization between North and South but also left a permanent scar on Italian politics. *Machtpolitik* introduced incurable ills into a political system which believed that force, not consent, should be the foundation of the state.¹⁵² Alexander Passerin d'Entrèves argues that, as a consequence, "a kind of cheap, second-rate Machiavellianism is still ingrained in the mind of many Italians" and that it is manifested as a tendency to "emphasize the seamy side of political life, as if self-interest were its only determining factor."¹⁵³ According to d'Entrèves, Italians thus maintain a "pessimistic or...cynical view of the state, based on the assumption that politics is a matter of getting the upper hand and that all men, if not potential criminals, are at any rate would-be profiteers or tax-evaders."¹⁵⁴

Perhaps the biggest lie came in the form of Fascist propaganda during the years following World War I.¹⁵⁵ Italy had gained former Austro-Hungarian territories as a World War I victor, yet Fascists aggressively sought further annexation of "unredeemed" territories by Italy and dreamed of a grand Italian empire.¹⁵⁶ Wight describes the 1935–36 conquest of Abyssinia as a "desperate act of self-assertion" seeking to cement Italy's place among the great powers; today that conquest is regarded as an object of shame due to the horrendous atrocities committed and the fact that it was based on aggression.¹⁵⁷ Popular support for Mussolini crumbled after the Allied invasion of Sicily and air raids on Rome left Italy on the brink of defeat in World War II. The Grand Council of Fascism voted to transfer a great deal of power from Mussolini to King Victor Emmanuel III on July 25, 1943; the next day Mussolini was removed from office and imprisoned. The king subsequently appointed General Pietro Badoglio as the new Prime Minister.

¹⁵² D'Entrèves, "New Reflections on the History of Italy," 194–95.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 195.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 172.

¹⁵⁶ Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, 56–84.

¹⁵⁷ Wight, *Power Politics*, 47.

Fascist totalitarianism achieved temporary political stability through grandiose promises during the 1920s and 1930s, but the Mussolini regime ultimately ended in great disappointment. Disenchantment and guilt enduring from the fascist era only served to further undermine long-term stability in Italian politics. A historical detachment of the population from politics, however, has arguably led to less collective guilt among Italians relative to their German counterparts.

3. Post-World War II History

The centrist Christian Democracy (DC) emerged as the dominant party within the Italian Republic following the 1946 referendum that abolished the monarchy. Opposing parties—the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and the Italian Communist Party (PCI)—were excluded from government largely due to U.S. influence. As Italy gradually modernized in the 1950s, however, a growing industrial working class, especially in the northwestern regions, resulted in an increasingly left-leaning population and thus a decline in popular support for the DC. The PSI was allowed to enter government in 1963 as the DC looked to counter surging PCI popularity. The center-left coalition government had great ambitions for reform, but Barzini describes how this plan fell short of enthusiasts' lofty expectations:

They thought it [the plan] was the only way to cure all the Italian ills at once...It would strengthen the decaying state; check rampant corruption; generally enforce law and order; defeat the Mafia, the Camorra, and the emboldened unattached criminals; discourage the class struggle; decrease...ruinous strikes; swell production and exports; slow down inflation; levitate the standard of living; and as a result, encourage domestic and foreign investments...The plan might possibly have produced in some other country all the wonderful effects...expected. In unpredictable Italy it produced the exact contrary. It was estimated that in the end the plan cost as much as a lost war and retarded social and economic progress for at least one generation.¹⁵⁸

What began as a promising step forward again ended as another one of Italian history's great lies.

¹⁵⁸ Barzini, *Europeans*, 162–64.

The PCI continued to gain momentum as the Cold War raged on. The party became the West's largest Communist party during the 1960s and would remain so up until the end of the Cold War. By the mid-1970s it appeared that the PCI would potentially overtake the DC at the center of the Italian government.¹⁵⁹ The DC narrowly won the 1976 election and was prepared to cede power in the parliamentary majority to the PCI.¹⁶⁰ Mark Gilbert claims that the Americans were "adamant that the PCI should not be trusted with executive power," so the ensuing "historic compromise" limited the PCI to providing parliamentary support instead of ministers.¹⁶¹ Gilbert asserts that the historic compromise is "relevant to contemporary Italian politics because it enabled the DC to defeat Red Brigade terrorism and survive the economic crisis of the 1970s without implementing major structural reforms to the country's economy and institutions, reforms that, even then, were badly needed. Italy continues to pay the price for this missed opportunity."¹⁶²

Governments of the Italian Republic throughout the Cold War may have lacked effectiveness but had at least been relatively stable.¹⁶³ The political system was highly polarized by the presence of the extreme right neo-fascists and the extreme left PCI. Gianfranco Pasquino and Marco Valbruzzi assert that "neither the left-wing pole nor the right-wing pole was ever in a position significantly or credibly to challenge the governing parties and their coalitions located around the centre of the political alignment. Hence, alternation in government was neither numerically possible nor politically acceptable. In fact, it never took place."¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Mark Gilbert, "Italy's Forty Years' Crisis," *Survival* 56, no. 5 (2014), 130, doi: 10.1080/00396338.2014.962801.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 131.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Pasquino and Valbruzzi, "Post-Electoral Politics in Italy," 468.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 471.

4. Lasting Effects Evident in the Contemporary Environment

Between 1992 and 1994, the *Mani Pulite* corruption scandal effectively dissolved the prominent longstanding political parties, including the DC and PSI, and ushered in a new phase of politics in the Italian Republic.¹⁶⁵ The turnover helped propel the Northern League from a regional movement to national prominence. Tambini asserts, “The League more than any other party received the votes that were released by the profound crisis of the ruling parties.”¹⁶⁶ Silvio Berlusconi announced his entry into politics a mere two months before the 1994 parliamentary elections—and was subsequently elected Prime Minister. Berlusconi sought to pass self-serving legislation by which he could both avoid personal indictment in the scandal and save his media empire, Fininvest, from the fallout of the crisis.¹⁶⁷ Berlusconi confidentially explained his motivation to run for Prime Minister to *Il Giornale* editor Indro Montanelli during the 1994 campaign: “If I don’t enter politics, I’ll end up in jail and fall into debt.”¹⁶⁸ (*Il Giornale* was and remains a part of the Berlusconi media empire.) Berlusconi won the election with an underwhelming 21% of the popular vote, further indicating how fractured the political system was at the time.¹⁶⁹ Michael Day adds, “That a corrupt, self-serving tycoon with little or no record of interest in politics or public service could buy his way to the prime ministership of one of the world’s biggest democracies was—and is—shocking...This phenomenon—without equal in modern history—bears testament...to...the peculiar social circumstances in which Italy found itself in the early 1990s.”¹⁷⁰

For the first time in the history of the Italian Republic, an alternation of power—between Berlusconi’s center-right Forza Italia and center-left parties—became

¹⁶⁵ Pasquino and Valbruzzi, “Post-Electoral Politics in Italy,” 466.

¹⁶⁶ Tambini, *Nationalism in Italian Politics*, 55.

¹⁶⁷ Michael Day, *Being Berlusconi: The Rise and Fall from Casa Nostra to Bunga Bunga*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 45-46.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁶⁹ Danilo Zolo, “From Historic Compromise to Telecratic Compromise: Notes for a History of Political Communication in Italy between the First and Second Republic,” *Media, Culture & Society* 21, no. 6 (1999): 733, doi: 10.1177/016344399021006002

¹⁷⁰ Day, *Being Berlusconi*, 48.

possible.¹⁷¹ Pasquino and Valbruzzi comment, “Alternation in power started to become a ‘credible expectation’ precisely when polarization (namely, the electoral strength of anti-system parties) began to decrease substantially.”¹⁷² The largest anti-system party, the PCI, had dissolved in 1991 and its successors offered a minimal threat, yet Berlusconi still ran and won on a platform of defeating the communists. Even today voters are still swayed by anti-communist rhetoric. According to Pasquino and Valbruzzi, “The fact there are still millions of Italian voters who give their support to any and all varieties of anticommunism and anti-communist electoral propaganda is a testimony of their ingrained and long-standing perception of a potential systemic threat.”¹⁷³

Stability and effective governance were never truly achieved under the bicameral parliament in the electoral system that emerged during the 1990s.¹⁷⁴ The prominent parties again took on new forms with new names during the 2000s: the center-right Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale became the People of Freedom (PdL) while the center-left Left Democrats and Daisy were transformed into the Democratic Party (PD). According to Pasquino and Valbruzzi, however, the new parties represented “an essentially not very satisfactory attempt to rejuvenate their organizations: old wine in partially new bottles.”¹⁷⁵ The lack of stability was again evidenced in 2013 when PdL transformed into a second iteration of Forza Italia. A substantial number of PdL members, including Berlusconi’s protégé Angelino Alfano and all five PdL ministers, dissented and formed the *Nuovo Centrodestra* party instead of transitioning to Forza Italia.

The emergence of the anti-system Five Star Movement has again disrupted the bicameral and electoral system and has led some to believe that Italy is once again entering a new phase of politics.¹⁷⁶ In the 2008 elections, the PdL and PD combined to

¹⁷¹ Pasquino and Valbruzzi, “Post-Electoral Politics in Italy,” 471.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 467.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 468.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 467.

account for over 70 percent of the popular vote share within the House of Deputies.¹⁷⁷ In 2013, however, the 26 percent vote share of M5S exceeded both parties: PD was reduced to 25 percent and PdL could only muster 21%.¹⁷⁸ The combined 12% of the 2013 vote given to Mario Monti's new centrist party, Civic Choice (SC), and the extreme right Northern League must also be accounted for.¹⁷⁹ The current Italian political environment will probably remain highly unstable for the foreseeable future. Pasquino and Valbruzzi sum up the turmoil that has defined these new political phases:

Neither the party system nor the Constitution and institutions have attained a viable state of consolidation. Both...continue to be part of the problem—the instability and ineffectiveness of all Italian governments...Party leaders have proved unable, and frequently even unwilling, to reform the party system and to revise the Constitution.¹⁸⁰

Gilbert describes the new Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi, as “a kinetic young man...whose self-proclaimed mission is to *rottamare* (junk) the old guard in Italian politics and to revive the country's institutions and economy,” but Gilbert also notes that “a dose of healthy scepticism about Renzi's chances is in order.”¹⁸¹

B. REGIONAL DIVIDES AND THE CONCEPT OF PADANIA

A snapshot of mid-twentieth century Italy would reveal a highly developed industrial triangle of Genoa, Milan, and Turin in the Northwest; less industrialized yet still prosperous regions in the Center and Northeast; and a poor, agrarian South.¹⁸² Booming levels of investment and production emerged in the Northeast in the 1960s that carry over to this day.¹⁸³ Industrial districts began to proliferate southward in the 1980s

¹⁷⁷ Pasquino and Valbruzzi, “Post-Electoral Politics in Italy,” 469.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 467.

¹⁸¹ Gilbert, “Italy's Forty Years' Crisis,” 129–30.

¹⁸² Cento Bull and Gilbert, *Northern Question*, 2.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

and are now commonplace, especially in the southeastern regions of Apulia, Basilicata, and Molise.¹⁸⁴

Considering how the industrial gap between regions has narrowed, is the fabled Padania of the Northern League entirely a myth? Or does the data validate Northern League depictions of an efficient, prosperous, and law-abiding North against an inefficient, poor, and corrupt South?¹⁸⁵ Perceptions persist—and not just within the Northern League—that the South continues to economically lag behind a more prosperous North. Another commonly-held stereotype holds that the South is inundated with corruption and full of Mafiosi and tax evaders.¹⁸⁶ Further analysis of regional GDP, political corruption, mafia influence, and tax evasion definitively supports the view that a more productive and less corrupt North is more fact than myth.

1. Divide #1: Northerners Are Rich and Southerners Are Poor

Examination of GDP and unemployment confirms that the North–South divide persists. Figure 6, produced by the European Commission’s Eurostat, compares Italian regions to their European counterparts. In no other European country is such a stark contrast evident: Northern Italy resembles the richer countries of central Europe and Scandinavia, while Southern Italy mostly mirrors the poorer areas on the peripheries of Europe.¹⁸⁷ GDP within rich and poor nations alike appears to be much more evenly distributed in comparison with Italy; most Italian regions lie in the upper or lower tiers of GDP with very few categorized in the middle tiers.¹⁸⁸ Figure 7 displays 2015 unemployment figures for each region.¹⁸⁹ Unemployment in the South is generally

¹⁸⁴ Cento Bull and Gilbert, *Northern Question*, 2.

¹⁸⁵ Tambini, *Nationalism in Italian Politics*, 102.

¹⁸⁶ Christopher Emsden, “Tax Evasion Eating into Italian GDP,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 6, 2012, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303753904577450572381475782>.

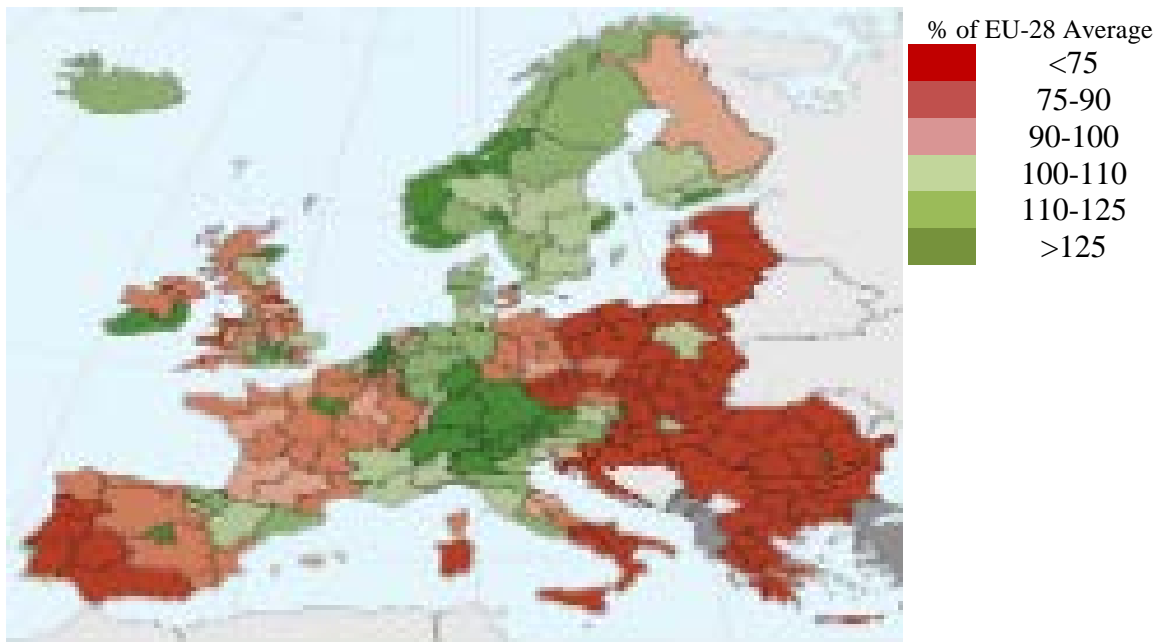
¹⁸⁷ Eurostat, “GDP at Regional Level,” European Commission, last modified March 25, 2015, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/GDP_at_regional_level.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ John Prideaux, “Oh for a New Risorgimento,” *The Economist*, June 9, 2011, <http://www.economist.com/node/18780831>.

double or triple that of the northern regions; without exception every region north of Rome falls below the national unemployment average of 12.2%.¹⁹⁰ Lazio, Molise, and every region southward are without exception above the national average.¹⁹¹ The absence of exceptions strongly supports the judgment that Rome represents a pronounced divide not only geographically but also economically.

Figure 6. GDP of Europe by Region (2013)

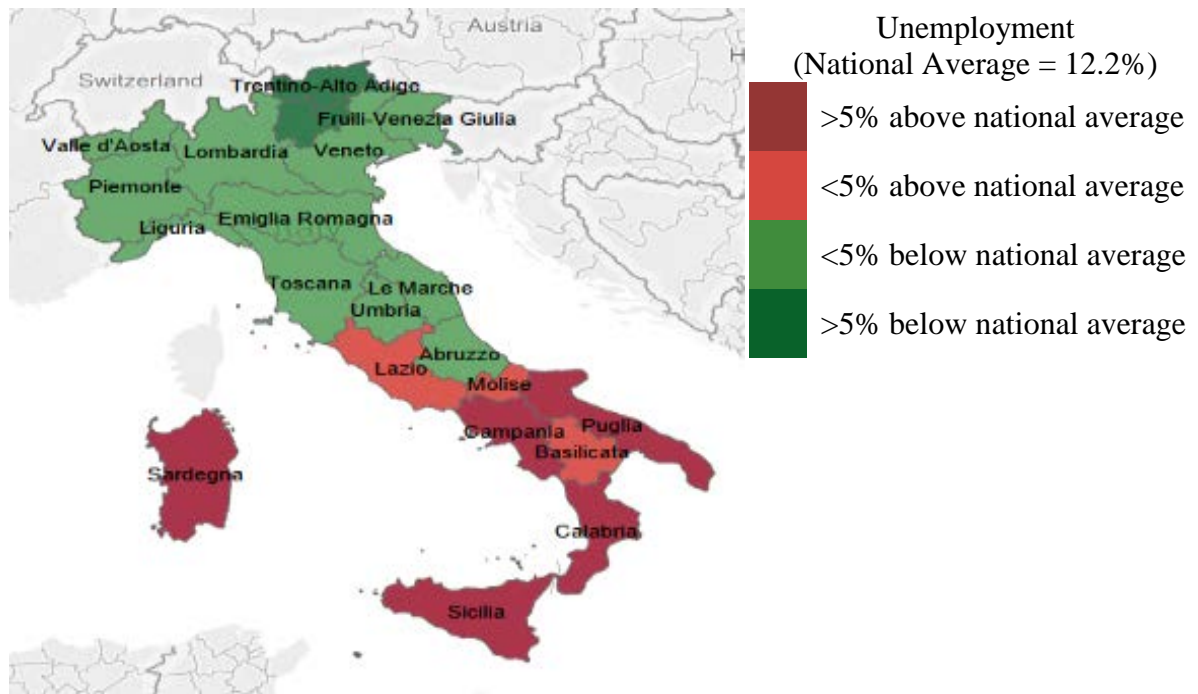


Adapted from Eurostat, "GDP at Regional Level," European Commission, last modified March 25, 2015, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/GDP_at_regional_level.

¹⁹⁰ I.Stat, "Ranking and Thematic Map of Unemployment Rate in Regions," *UrbiStat*, accessed June 4, 2015, http://www.urbistat.it/adminstat/it/it/classifiche/tasso-disoccupazione/regioni/italia/380/1#linknote_1_note.

¹⁹¹ I.Stat, "Unemployment Rate in Regions."

Figure 7. Unemployment across Italy (2015)



Generated using Tableau Software. Adapted from I.Stat, "Ranking and Thematic Map of Unemployment Rate in Regions," *UrbiStat*, accessed June 4, 2015, http://www.urbistat.it/adminstat/it/it/classifiche/tasso-disoccupazione/regioni/italia/380/1#linknote_1_note.

2. Divide #2: Mafia Presence and Corruption Are More Widespread in the South

A stereotype associating mafia influence exclusively with the South would be incorrect. Among northern areas, the regions surrounding the industrial hubs of Milan and Turin are especially plagued by mafia presence.¹⁹² The three most recognizable mafia organizations, however, all hail from the southwest extremes of Italy: the Casa Nostra of Sicily, the Camorra of Campania, and the 'Ndrangheta of Calabria.¹⁹³ A number of studies have confirmed that mafia influence is exponentially higher in

¹⁹² Francesco Calderoni, "Although There Is Little Truth Behind the 'Godfather' Stereotype, Mafia Infiltration Remains a Serious Problem in Italian Politics," *The London School of Economics and Political Science*, last accessed June 2, 2015, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/euoppblog/2012/11/01/mafia-francesco-calderoni/>.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

southern regions.¹⁹⁴ Vittorio Daniele and Ugo Marani summed “extortion and mafia-type association crimes per 10,000 inhabitants” from 2002 through 2005; the results shown in Figure 8 demonstrate striking evidence that mafia influence is uniformly stronger in southern regions.¹⁹⁵ Francesco Calderoni developed a more in-depth mafia index based upon relevant variables determined to be statistically significant. The results, shown in Figure 9, are based on a cross-ranking of 103 Italian provinces (i.e., sub-regions); the lowest ranks indicate the least evidence of mafia influence and vice versa.¹⁹⁶ The two models, largely mirroring each other, show that that Calabria, Campania, and Sicily are affected to a much larger extent than other regions.¹⁹⁷ The models further demonstrate heavy influence in almost every province south of Rome and relatively low influence in “Padanian” regions.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Francesco Calderoni, “Where Is the Mafia in Italy? Measuring the Presence of the Mafia Across Italian Provinces,” *Global Crime* 12, no. 1 (2011): 47–50, doi:10.1080/17440572.2011.548962.

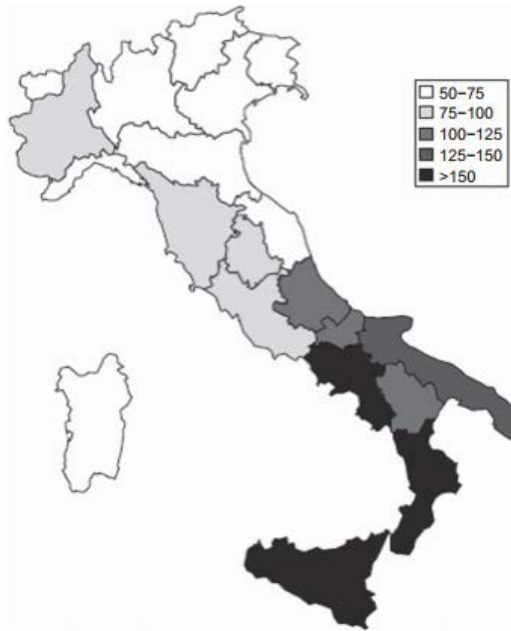
¹⁹⁵ Vittorio Daniele and Ugo Marani, “Organized crime, the quality of local institutions and FDI in Italy: A panel data analysis,” *European Journal of Political Economy* 27, no. 1 (2011): 132–142, quoted in Calderoni, “Where is the mafia in Italy?” 47–49.

¹⁹⁶ Calderoni, “Where is the mafia in Italy?” 63.

¹⁹⁷ Calderoni, “Where is the mafia in Italy?” 49, 63.

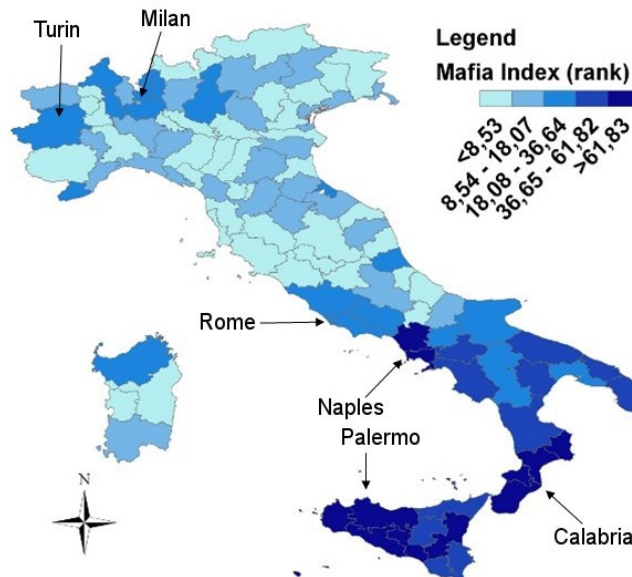
¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Figure 8. Extortion and Mafia-type Association Crimes



Data is per 10,000 inhabitants from 2002-2005. Source: Vittorio Daniele and Ugo Marani, “Organized crime, the quality of local institutions and FDI in Italy: A panel data analysis.” *European Journal of Political Economy* 27, no. 1 (2011): 132–142, quoted in Calderoni, “Where is the mafia in Italy?” 49.

Figure 9. Calderoni’s Mafia Index



Lower rank means fewer indicators of mafia influence. Source: Francesco Calderoni, “Where Is the Mafia in Italy? Measuring the Presence of the Mafia Across Italian Provinces,” *Global Crime* 12, no. 1 (2011): 63, doi:10.1080/17440572.2011.548962.

Corruption is often intertwined with mafia presence. The A3 motorway along the west coast from Campania to the southern tip of Calabria, which began construction in the 1960s and remains a work in progress today, is a prime example that has drawn international ire. Rachel Donadio states, “Nothing embodies the failures of the Italian state more neatly than the highway from Salerno to Reggio Calabria...The highway is also a symbol of what some Northern European countries...fear the most about the euro zone.”¹⁹⁹ The project has remained incomplete even after the expenditure of a substantial amount of EU development funds, and in 2012 Italy was ordered to repay €420 million in grant money following an investigation by the European Commission’s Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)—the largest fraud-related refund in the EU’s history. OLAF head Giovanni Kessler blamed the Italian government for “turning a blind eye to the known corruption” that included “mafia infiltration as a key element.”²⁰⁰ Later that year, the Italian cabinet dissolved the entire government of Reggio—the largest city on record to have its government dissolved—stemming from findings of mafia infiltration.²⁰¹

A study by Miriam Golden and Lucio Picci attempting to quantify corruption in Italy suggests that corruption is also a larger problem in the south than in the north. The study measured the difference between the existing public infrastructure and the funds allocated to construct that infrastructure. Golden and Picci assert that “where the difference between the two is larger, more money is being lost to fraud, embezzlement, waste, and mismanagement—in other words, corruption is greater.”²⁰² The study generated results that were nonetheless surprising: the North possesses more robust infrastructure, but the amount of public capital invested in infrastructure is generally higher

¹⁹⁹ Rachel Donadio, “Corruption Is Seen as a Drain on Italy’s South,” *New York Times*, October 7, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/08/world/europe/in-italy-calabria-is-drained-by-corruption.html?_r=0.

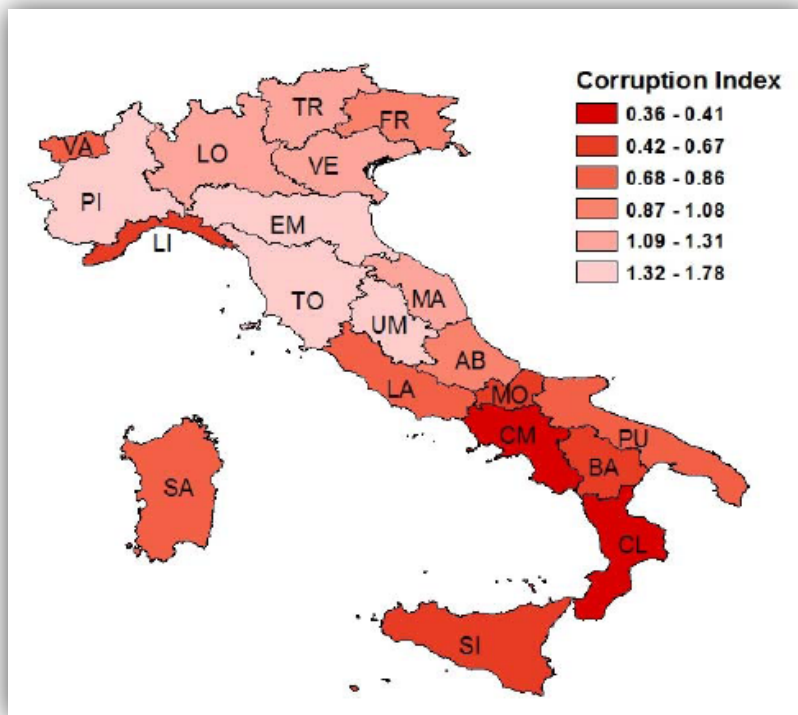
²⁰⁰ Barbie Nadeau, “The Mafia-Built Highway That Could Cost Italy \$471 Million,” *The Daily Beast*, July 7, 2012, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/07/07/the-mafia-built-highway-that-could-cost-italy-471-million.html>.

²⁰¹ Rachel Donadio, “Italy: City Government Is Dissolved Over Possible Mafia Ties,” *New York Times*, October 9, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/10/world/europe/city-government-in-italy-is-dissolved-over-possible-mafia-ties.html>.

²⁰² Miriam A. Golden and Lucio Picci, “Proposal for a New Measure of Corruption, Illustrated with Italian Data,” *Economics & Politics* 17, no. 1 (2005), 37, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0343.2005.00146.x.

in the South. Figure 10 maps the authors' findings, where the lower scores of red areas correlate to lower efficiency and therefore higher corruption.²⁰³ Liguria appears to be an outlier at first glance, but consideration of the area's rocky coastal terrain and thus disproportionately high construction and maintenance costs are a more plausible explanation than corruption.²⁰⁴ The authors conclude, "What happened to all that money? Where is all of Italy's missing infrastructure?"²⁰⁵ According to the authors, their "proposed measure of corruption provides an interpretation for this puzzle."²⁰⁶

Figure 10. Corruption by region from study by Golden and Picci



Lower index score means more corrupt. Source: Miriam A. Golden and Lucio Picci, "Proposal for a New Measure of Corruption, Illustrated with Italian Data," *Economics & Politics* 17, no. 1 (2005), 47, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0343.2005.00146.x.

²⁰³ Golden and Picci, "Proposal for a New Measure of Corruption," 47.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 49.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

3. Divide #3: Tax Evasion Is More Common in the South

Northerners often point to tax evasion as another indicator of corruption in the South. Figure 11 displays a 2013 cover of the Northern League's periodical, *La Padania*. The League's figures show a clear divide between North and South. Green provinces representing low levels of tax evasion only appear in Rome and northwards; red provinces representing the highest levels of tax evasion only appear south of Rome. In the provinces of Campania, Calabria, and Sicily tax evasion reaches nearly 66%. Giorgio Brosio, Alberto Cassone, and Roberto Ricciuti confirmed in 2002 that tax evasion is markedly higher in the South and concluded that "tax evasion is tacitly accepted in the poorest regions" of Italy.²⁰⁷ Figures 12 and 13 illustrate how tax evasion is higher in the South both in terms of personal income tax (PIT) and value added tax (VAT). Figure 14 provides a full summary of the findings of Brosio and his co-authors, demonstrating that the regions with the lowest GDP correlate to the highest tax evasion, and vice versa.²⁰⁸ Other studies identify additional factors such as age, education, or occupation but agree that the North–South divide is evident.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Giorgio Brosio, Alberto Cassone, and Roberto Ricciuti, "Tax Evasion Across Italy: Rational Noncompliance or Inadequate Civic Concern?" *Public Choice* 112, no. 3/4 (2002), 269, ProQuest (56051664).

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 270.

²⁰⁹ Paolo Di Caro and Giuseppe Nicotra, "Knowing the Unknown Across Regions: Spatial Tax Evasion in Italy," last modified December 2013, 2–5, https://www.academia.edu/6323263/Knowing_the_unknown_across_regions_spatial_tax_evasion_in_Italy.

Figure 11. Tax Evasion According to *La Padania*

Adapted from “Diseguitalia,” *La Padania*, December 11, 2013, http://dev.businesspeople.it/Le-prime-pagine/Le-prime-pagine-dei-quotidiani-mercoledì-11-dicembre-2013_56582/la-Padania.

Figure 12. Personal Income Tax Evasion



Generated Using Tableau Software. Adapted from Giorgio Brosio, Alberto Cassone, and Roberto Ricciuti, "Tax Evasion Across Italy: Rational Noncompliance or Inadequate Civic Concern?" *Public Choice* 112, no. 3/4 (2002): 270.

Figure 13. Value Added Tax Evasion



Generated Using Tableau Software. Source: Adapted from Giorgio Brosio, Alberto Cassone, and Roberto Ricciuti, "Tax Evasion Across Italy: Rational Noncompliance or Inadequate Civic Concern?" *Public Choice* 112, no. 3/4 (2002): 270.

Figure 14. Correlation of GDP to Tax Evasion

Regions	Per capita GDP	Rank	PIT Evasion Index	Rank	VAT Evasion Index	Rank
Calabria	19.511	1	0.57	20	0.63	17
Campania	21.599	2	0.53	18	0.65	20
Sicilia	21.905	3	0.54	19	0.56	14
Basilicata	22.810	4	0.50	15.5	0.64	18.5
Puglia	23.408	5	0.50	15.5	0.58	15.5
Sardegna	25.444	6	0.47	13	0.46	11
Molise	25.991	7	0.52	17	0.64	18.5
Abruzzo	30.476	8	0.49	14	0.58	15.5
Umbria	32.916	9	0.41	9	0.54	13
Marche	36.401	10	0.44	12	0.52	12
Toscana	37.603	11	0.39	5.5	0.38	6
Lazio	38.940	12	0.38	3	0.42	10
Piemonte	39.997	13	0.36	1	0.34	2.5
Liguria	40.917	14	0.40	7.5	0.34	2.5
Veneto	42.808	15	0.42	10	0.41	9
Friuli V.G.	43.350	16	0.40	7.5	0.36	5
Lombardia	44.763	17	0.38	3	0.33	1
Trentino A.A.	44.875	18	0.43	11	0.35	4
Emilia R.	44.971	19	0.38	3	0.39	7.5
Valle d'Aosta	46.166	20	0.39	5.5	0.39	7.5

Source: Giorgio Brosio, Alberto Cassone, and Roberto Ricciuti, "Tax Evasion Across Italy: Rational Noncompliance or Inadequate Civic Concern?" *Public Choice* 112, no. 3/4 (2002): 270.

In conclusion, a stark divide between North and South is a key factor contributing to regionalism in Italy. Padania is more than a creation of the Northern League; an examination of wealth, corruption, and tax evasion confirms similarities among northern regions and striking gaps from Rome southward. Regionalism and nationalism are not contradictory but rather the two are combined in the single entity of the Northern League. As regional divides draw voters to the party, the Northern League's strong nationalist and anti-European platforms gain further momentum.

C. THE ITALIAN NATIONAL CHARACTER

1. Baseline of the Italian National Character

Some may say that an Italian national character is a misnomer. There are, after all, more differences than similarities between the average Sicilian farmer and Milanese businessman. Local and regional loyalties are still predominant, and on a broader scale a

stark contrast clearly exists between “northern Italian” and “southern Italian” cultural values. There is no hard dividing line between the North and South, yet somewhere between Bologna and Naples the transition becomes evident. As one proceeds south, rules become recommendations, the chaos seems to ramp up a couple of notches, and stronger dialects emerge. Gaps in income and corruption have been shown to amplify the divide. Division, however, is not the only enduring aspect of the Italian national character.

Alessandro Cavalli argues, “The difficulty in defining a national character and empirically observing its traces can lead us to deny its existence. And yet it is difficult to deny that something like a national character really does exist....One feels that something, besides living in a peninsula located to the south of the Alps and speaking variants of the same language, must in some way unite ‘Italians.’”²¹⁰ Four commonly-cited generalizations provide valuable insight into the elusive Italian national character. First, emphasis is placed on maintaining a *bella figura*, or appearance, over substance; theatrics are preferred over reality.²¹¹ Second, citizens place minimal trust or respect in political and state institutions.²¹² Third, tax evasion, reflecting a lack of state legitimacy, is commonplace.²¹³ Fourth, the Church, the family, and the Mafia are often more influential than state institutions.²¹⁴

Italy’s proud yet tumultuous history also manifests itself within the national character. Cavalli describes national character as the “cumulative impact of a series of formative historical experiences.”²¹⁵ The post-medieval Italian peninsula took significantly longer to consolidate politically than many of its European counterparts, and

²¹⁰ Alessandro Cavalli, “Reflections on Political Culture and the ‘Italian National Character,’” *Daedalus* 130, no. 3 (Summer 2001), 123–24.

²¹¹ Barzini, *Italians*, 89.

²¹² Cavalli, “Italian National Character,” 128.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 133.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 122, 130.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 124.

its eventual unification was only possible under strong coercion of force.²¹⁶ Local and regional loyalties that had existed for over a thousand years in many places would not be soon forgotten; some persist to this day. Historical elements influencing the national character also include, according to Cavalli, “the persistence of...corrupt governments; the lack of a Protestant reformation and the cumbersome presence of the Vatican; the absence of a hegemonic national class and culture; the weakness of the middle class; the absence of a true democratic revolution;...a political system that...never permitted a routine alternation of power between contending political parties.”²¹⁷

As a consequence of these historical experiences, cultural traits such as individualism, familism, particularism, clientelism, fatalism, and institutional skepticism are especially strong.²¹⁸ From this list, familism and institutional skepticism are especially noteworthy. “Amoral familism”—as described by Edward Banfield following a study of a rural town in Basilicata—motivates Italians to act to “maximize the material, short-run advantage of the nuclear family; [and to] assume all others will do the same.”²¹⁹ Cavalli also describes a “conspicuous gap between interpersonal trust...and trust in institutions” that is uniquely Italian.²²⁰ Italy used to be relatively low in both categories; polls indicate that interpersonal trust increased over the latter half of the 20th century and is now nearly on par with other Western nations while institutional trust remains remarkably low to this day.²²¹ D’Entrèves argued that, “to a large number of Italians, the State is primarily a matter of force rather than of consent, of coercion rather than of conviction.”²²² Considering the war-like unification and colossal “lies” that Italy has experienced over the course of its history, most notably during the fascist era, a pessimistic view of institutions would be a logical consequence.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 124–25.

²¹⁷ Cavalli, “Italian National Character,” 124–25

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Edward C. Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958), 85.

²²⁰ Cavalli, “Italian National Character,” 128.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² D’Entrèves, “New Reflections on the History of Italy,” 194

2. The Italian National Character Manifested in Politics

A Eurosceptic attitude is not simply the result of recent events; enduring elements of the Italian national character can often be identified as contributors to the troubled Italian political system and Eurosceptic sentiments. Institutional skepticism clearly goes hand-in-hand with a critical view of NATO and the EU. Cavalli furthermore observes how a predominant cultural presence of amoral familism generates a highly detrimental effect on Italian democracy:

[Amoral familism] does not favor cooperation and solidarity, or participation and association in order to pursue common goals; that is, missing is that social fabric to which the values, practices, and institutions of democracy adhere and by which they are fed. From this perspective, democracy cannot develop without an appropriate “civic spirit”...on the part of the citizens, of which familism is the exact negation.²²³

Serricchio asserts that, “The more one knows about Europe, the more ready one is to support it.”²²⁴ Amoral familism and the lack of civic spirit results in less political knowledge in the Italian case, and low levels of Europeanism are thus a predictable outcome.

In a broader sense, Italians tend to emphasize private truth while accepting public dishonesty. Giorgio Bocca summarized the Italian mindset: “They think the only expedient way to live in public is to lie or to keep silent. They compensate for this by preserving their own private truths...The humble lie by necessity, the powerful by cunning and arrogance.”²²⁵ Barzini adds, “The Italians’ public role is not always entirely play-acting. Most of them are unaware of their double life. They think it natural. They are sincere, or hope that what they pretend to believe in public may be true.”²²⁶ These traits have been manifested accordingly in the political realm. Great hope that resulted in unfulfilled promises has been a common political theme over the years—beginning with the House of Savoy and enduring through Mussolini’s

²²³ Cavalli, “Italian National Character,” 119–20.

²²⁴ Serricchio, “Italian Citizens and Europe,” 129.

²²⁵ Barzini, *Europeans*, 172.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 174.

Fascism, Enrico Berlinguer and the historic compromise, the rise and fall of the PSI, and eventually Berlusconi.

Italy is furthermore a land steeped in tradition; the relatively small peninsula is home to more UNESCO World Heritage Sites than any other country on Earth.²²⁷ Although Italians take pride in many of their traditions, longstanding political instability and inefficiency are not sources of satisfaction. A casual observer might think that the combination of familism, institutional skepticism, and established tradition would promote indifference or even acceptance in regard to political shortcomings. On the contrary, Italians detest the political system which has disappointed time and time again. According to Luigi Barzini, “It is not true...that Italians enjoy and are at their best living precariously in a disorderly country ruled by inept and impotent, or arbitrary and corrupt governments. They never liked it.”²²⁸ Barzini describes the Italian dream that has persisted over the centuries as follows:

For centuries, since the early Middle Ages, they [Italians] have dreamed the same impossible dream of being one day governed with freedom and justice, of being able to dedicate their energies solely to their work and not to the task of avoiding cramping and frustrating laws or defending themselves from dangerous and powerful enemies. They dreamed of living an honorable, transparent life in peace in an honorable, transparent country in which there should be no need to lie.²²⁹

Such a persisting dream and the history of unfulfilled promises push Italians to eschew traditional politics and pursue alternative solutions. Italians are thus more open to radical agendas or anti-system platforms than they might be otherwise.

²²⁷ “Shift Ranking of June 24: Countries with the most UNESCO World Heritage Sites,” *Deutsche Welle*, June 24, 2013, <http://www.dw.com/en/shift-ranking-of-june-24-countries-with-the-most-unesco-world-heritage-sites/a-16902900>.

²²⁸ Barzini, *Europeans*, 158.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

D. THE EURO ZONE CRISIS AND A STAGNANT ECONOMY

1. The Tendency of Financial Crises to Promote Radical Agendas

Financial crises have a well-established history of promoting radical politics. A comprehensive study by Manuel Funke, Moritz Schularick, and Christoph Trebesch of the political fallout from financial crises in Europe over the past 140 years concludes that “policy uncertainty rises strongly after financial crises as government majorities shrink and polarization rises.”²³⁰ Funke and his co-authors add that “voters seem to be particularly attracted to the political rhetoric of the extreme right, which often attributes blame to minorities or foreigners. On average, far-right parties increase their vote share by 30% after a financial crisis.”²³¹

Italy’s experience with Mussolini is noteworthy in this respect. The popularity of Mussolini’s far right fascist alliance surged in the years following World War I thanks in part to a global recession and an Italian banking crisis. Fascists did not gain parliamentary representation until 1921, and even then they controlled only a small handful of seats. The 1919–1920 *Biennio Rosso*, or Two Red Years, of social conflict stemmed from the economic crisis and led to the March on Rome of 1922 that brought Mussolini to power. In 1924 the National Fascist Party was officially voted in with 65 percent of the overall vote, proving the powerful influence that economics can have on radical political sentiment.²³²

The Northern League and the Five Star Movement have also arguably managed to increase their influence by leveraging economic distress.²³³ Funke and his co-authors write that “the 1990 Italian financial crisis was followed by the sudden rise of the...Northern League party. This party increased its vote share from just 1.3% in the

²³⁰ Manuel Funke, Moritz Schularick, and Christoph Trebesch, “Going to Extremes: Politics after Financial Crisis, 1870–2014,” (Working Paper, London Centre for Economic Policy Research, 2015), 1, <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/123202>.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid., 14.

²³³ Ibid., 1, 16, 21.

1987 elections to 8.7% in the post-crisis elections of 1992.”²³⁴ The rapid rise of Grillo’s M5S was also partly facilitated by the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis due to the movement’s radical platform.²³⁵ The tendency for financial crises to promote radical politics further suggests that the LN and the M5S could benefit from persisting economic struggles or future crises.

2. The 2008 Financial Crisis and Continued Economic Stagnation

The global financial crisis that began in 2008 coincided with a drastic increase in euroscepticism across Europe.²³⁶ The percentage of citizens who opposed EU membership for their country, as measured by annual Eurobarometer surveys, rose by 12 percentage points or more between 2007 and 2011 in Greece, Portugal, and Slovenia.²³⁷ In four others—Lithuania, Spain, Cyprus, and Ireland—it rose by at least 7%.²³⁸ Italy, by comparison, was among the 15 member states that experienced a relatively moderate rise in euroscepticism of 6 percentage points or less.²³⁹

Statistical analysis by Fabio Serricchio, Myrto Tsakatika, and Lucia Quaglia indicates that citizens’ perceptions of the national economy had only minimal direct impact upon eurosceptical views in most EU countries.²⁴⁰ The crisis also caused institutional trust, both national and European, to shift significantly; this indirect effect of the crisis correlates very strongly with increases in euroscepticism.²⁴¹ Citizens first looked for national solutions during the banking crises of 2008 and the EU later implemented new institutions during the sovereign debt crisis, including the European

²³⁴ Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch, “Going to Extremes,” 16.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

²³⁶ Fabio Serricchio, Myrto Tsakatika, and Lucia Quaglia, “Euroscepticism and the Global Financial Crisis,” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no. 1 (2013): 57, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-5965.2012.02299.x.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 58–59.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Security Mechanism (ESM) in 2011.²⁴² Institutional trust in Italy was already historically low, so the crisis did not introduce a new source of euroscepticism but rather exacerbated an existing one. The study by Serricchio and his co-authors concludes that the crisis only magnified issues of trust which had been gradually growing since the inception of the EU:

The crisis has not brought economics back in as the most important source of Euroscepticism during the turbulent period of 2007–10. Rather, it has not only confirmed, but indeed exacerbated, the post-1992 trends, according to which national identity and political institutions play an increasingly important role in explaining public Euroscepticism.²⁴³

Seven years after the onset of the crisis, Italy is still viewed as one of the weakest links in the euro zone due to a stagnant economy and an extreme level of indebtedness.²⁴⁴ James Politi of the *Financial Times* asserts that “profound pessimism about the economy has become deeply ingrained in the Italian psyche, after more than a decade of economic stagnation and six years of economic and financial crises.”²⁴⁵ Jacopo Barbati elaborates on how many Italian citizens blame the EU for the nation’s struggles even though the real causative factors are much more complex:

For most Italians, the equation was simple: “In 2001, I was living in a country which had the seventh biggest GDP in the world. Now I live in the same country but we have nearly 40% of young people who are unemployed, with enterprises closing every day, and businessmen committing suicide over their debts. What changed since 2001? A-ha! The euro! We got the Euro!” Nobody is explaining to people, who are indeed really suffering, that the situation is a bit more complex.²⁴⁶

Many analysts believed the Italian economy could rebound in 2014, but EU sanctions on Russia in the wake of the Ukraine crisis dealt a major blow to Italian exports

²⁴² Serricchio, Tsakatika, and Quaglia, “Euroscepticism and the Global Financial Crisis,” 61.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ James Politi, “Italy: Back on its Feet,” *Financial Times*, May 28, 2015, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/7815f214-0453-11e5-95ad-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3tNeNP9sk>.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Jacopo Barbati, “Italy Turns from One of the Most Pro-EU Countries to the Most Eurosceptic,” *Open Democracy*, February 21, 2014, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/euro-elections-you-tell-us/jacopo-barbati/italy-is-quickly-turning-from-one-of-most-pro-eu-countries-to-one->.

and Italy's GDP declined for the third year in a row.²⁴⁷ The Bank of Italy, the European Commission, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) all assert that the Italian economy is picking up—albeit more slowly than other economies across the euro zone.²⁴⁸ Italy's GDP grew slightly in 2015, and both the European Commission and the IMF forecast that Italy's GDP will grow even more in 2016.²⁴⁹ The Italian economy will nonetheless continue to face grave challenges in 2016 and beyond.²⁵⁰ Growth remains significantly lower and unemployment is still much higher than in other major EU countries while instability plagues Italian financial institutions.²⁵¹ Even if the worst of the economic recession has passed, public opinion will remain skeptical about prospects for a durable recovery. Italian Minister of Finance Pier Carlo Padoan remarked in May 2015 that “People have gone through three years of recession that...in economic terms is equivalent to war, and it takes time before you think the good old times can come back again.”²⁵² Reversing perceived causes of economic setbacks such as sanctions against Russia will thus retain popular support for the foreseeable future.

E. RUSSIAN RELATIONS

Italy has become increasingly interconnected with Russia since the end of the Cold War, and the relationship with Moscow continues to moderate pro-West enthusiasm. With certain policies comparable to those of the Soviet Union (USSR), Russia remains in many respects the nemesis of NATO and the EU. Russia seeks to achieve its national interests by undermining NATO and EU cohesion at every opportunity; stronger alignment with Russia generally equates to weakened commitment to the Euro-Atlantic institutions, and vice versa. The Russia relationship can thus have a

²⁴⁷ Politi, “Italy: Back on its Feet.”

²⁴⁸ Ibid.; “Italy Economic Outlook,” *Focus Economics*, November 24, 2015, <http://www.focus-economics.com/countries/italy>.

²⁴⁹ Politi, “Italy: Back on its Feet.”

²⁵⁰ Hans-Jürgen Schlamp, “Italiens wacklige Wirtschaft: Die Angst kehrt zurück,” *Spiegel Online*, January 14, 2016, <http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/italien-bankensektor-wieder-tief-in-der-krise-a-1071976.html>.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Carlo Padoan quoted in Politi, “Italy: Back on its Feet.”

compounding effect: as euroscepticism encourages stronger bilateral relations with Russia, stronger relations with Russia can in turn further undermine Euro-Atlantic commitment.

1. The Italy–Russia Bilateral Relationship

Riccardo Alcaro asserts, “Italy and Russia diverge on virtually everything from geographical location to climate, from size to strategic landscape, from history to cultural heritage and political, economic, and social development. Yet, relations between the two countries have been remarkably strong historically.”²⁵³ Italy and the USSR managed to strengthen a relationship that had been built over the centuries even within the hostile environment of the Cold War.²⁵⁴ The Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) was not only the West’s largest Communist party but also the most influential; Alcaro adds, “Combined with Italy’s geographical location on the edge of the East-West line of demarcation, the PCI’s electoral strength made the country one of the Cold War’s most prominent theatres.”²⁵⁵ In 1969 Italy became one of the first Western countries to implement an energy relationship with the USSR, and Fiat was permitted to commence production of motor vehicles in the USSR one year later.²⁵⁶ In recent years, according to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “bilateral relations [between Italy and Russia] have achieved a high level of excellence deserving of ‘privileged relations’ status.”²⁵⁷ Italy is the

²⁵³ Riccardo Alcaro, “Italy,” in *National Perspectives on Russia: European Foreign Policy in the Making?* ed. Maxine David, Jackie Gower, and Hiski Haukkala, vol. 94 (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013), 67, <https://books.google.com/books?isbn=113504967X>.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 68.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ “Relations between Italy and Russia,” Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, accessed August 27, 2015, http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/politica_estera/aree_geografiche/europa/i_nuovi_rapporti.html.

Note: Trade figures vary by source. In March 2015 Lavrov stated that Italy was Russia’s fourth-largest trade partner while MIT’s Observatory for Economic Complexity lists Italy as Russia’s sixth-largest trade partner.

Russian Federation's third-largest trade partner and seventh-largest supplier.²⁵⁸ Frequent meetings and events provide further evidence of the strong bilateral relationship.²⁵⁹

Italy also emphasizes strong cultural ties to Russia and distinguishes itself from other EU or NATO powers in this area.²⁶⁰ During his tenure as Prime Minister and subsequently, Silvio Berlusconi was especially proud of his close friendship with Vladimir Putin. Berlusconi has made it clear that he will support Putin over EU policy; in October 2015 Berlusconi defied the EU by voicing support for Moscow's actions in both Syria and Ukraine.²⁶¹ Alcaro asserts that "Berlusconi indulged massively in celebrating the benefits of his comradeship with Putin, as if Italy's strong relationship with Russia was a by-product of it. The truth, however, was that Berlusconi found a willing partner in Putin (and vice versa) because Italy and Russia are tied by more enduring factors than the goodwill of individuals."²⁶² In 2004 Berlusconi and Putin formed the Russian-Italian Civil Society Dialogue Forum, which has since produced a number of joint initiatives.²⁶³ The partners designated 2011 the cross-year of language and culture in Italy and Russia; 2013 was likewise declared the Russia-Italy cross-year of tourism. Russian schools at all levels have furthermore committed to teaching the Italian language.²⁶⁴ The vision of both countries' leaders, according to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, is "to maintain and improve the atmosphere of trust, mutual understanding and enhancing cultural ties and contacts between our people."²⁶⁵

²⁵⁸ "Relations between Italy and Russia."

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Debra Johnson and Paul Robinson, *Perspectives on EU-Russia Relations* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2005), 59.

²⁶¹ Alan Friedman, "Silvio Berlusconi and Vladimir Putin: The Odd Couple," *Financial Times*, October 3, 2015, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/2d2a9afe-6829-11e5-97d0-1456a776a4f5.html#axzz3wiOpYGYr>.

²⁶² Alcaro, "Italy," 68.

²⁶³ Sergey Lavrov, "Opening remarks and answers to media questions," (speech, meeting with Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Paolo Gentiloni, Moscow, June 1, 2015), http://archive.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/925B87EEABB21B1943257E59003C650A?OpenDocument.

²⁶⁴ "Relations between Italy and Russia."

²⁶⁵ Lavrov, "Opening remarks and answers to media questions."

Lavrov has further developed the commitment to the Russo-Italian partnership, albeit in a slightly different light. Lavrov notes that Italy and Russia “have achieved major results through economic cooperation...Italian companies have invested heavily in the Russian economy; [Italy and Russia]...are implementing numerous projects of mutual benefit.”²⁶⁶ Lavrov, however, blames the EU for disrupting the Russo-Italian relationship and calls for Russia and Italy to cultivate a closer partnership:

Unfortunately, the evolution of Russian-Italian cooperation has slowed considerably due to the decline of Russian-EU relations over the Ukrainian crisis. A number of important events, including at the top level, have not been held. Bilateral trade fell by 10 per cent compared to 2013 and amounts to \$48.4 billion. There is a downward trend in tourism. I am confident that none of this meets the fundamental interests of our countries...[High-level meetings between Russia and Italy have] reaffirmed mutual interest in preserving the achievements of the bilateral cooperation of the past years....We...appreciate Italy’s desire to help improve the situation in Europe, normalise Russia-EU relations, and Rome’s commitment to a peaceful political solution to the internal Ukrainian crisis.²⁶⁷

Lavrov and other Russians are openly trying to weaken Italy’s ties with the EU; how the Italians will respond remains to be seen.

2. The Italy–Russia Relationship in the Euro-Atlantic Context

Such an important partnership with Russia can serve as a deterrent for Italy to sustain full support of the EU and NATO, especially since further NATO or EU expansion could, the Russians hold, widen the East-West divide and further disrupt a vital economic relationship. The Putin administration has strengthened Russia’s die-hard opposition to the Euro-Atlantic institutions; the Ukraine crisis has further cemented this opposition.²⁶⁸ Many Westerners believed before the crisis that Russia was somewhat open-minded concerning Ukraine’s growing relationship with the EU

²⁶⁶ Sergey Lavrov, “Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s Answer to a Question from the Italian News Agency AGI,” (speech, press conference, March 4, 2015), http://archive.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/D18E9B9F6623664143257DFE004F1A5A?OpenDocument.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Michael Rühle, “NATO Enlargement and Russia: Die-Hard Myths and Real Dilemmas,” (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2014), 1.

and NATO, but the crisis has proven the opposite.²⁶⁹ The EU and NATO aim for Europe-wide cohesion. As Michael Rühle writes, the “continental unification project...does not have an ‘end point’ that could be convincingly defined...or morally justified...Precisely because the two organizations’ respective enlargement processes are not intended as anti-Russian projects, they are open-ended and can hardly be perceived by Russia as anything but a permanent assault on its global and regional power and influence.”²⁷⁰

Russia is not passive in its opposition but is rather taking calculated measures to undermine Euro-Atlantic cohesion.²⁷¹ Mark Leonard and Nicu Popescu conclude, “EU leaders believe that peace and stability are built through interdependence; Russia’s leaders are working to create a situation where the EU needs Russia more than Russia needs the EU, particularly in the energy sector.”²⁷² Within the energy sector, Leonard and Popescu assert that Russia is “picking off individual EU member states and signing long-term deals which undermine the core principles of the EU’s common strategy.”²⁷³ The Italian energy supplier ENI is one of the paramount international partners of Gazprom, Russia’s massive state-controlled energy provider. The agreement between the two energy giants extends to 2035, meaning that Italy will remain dependent on Russia for the long haul.²⁷⁴

Russia has thus reemerged as one of the most divisive issues among the members of the EU.²⁷⁵ Italy is not Russia’s only privileged partner; Germany is Russia’s largest trade partner among EU nations, France argues that it has historically shared a similar

²⁶⁹ Rühle, “NATO Enlargement and Russia,” 1.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 6.

²⁷¹ Mark Leonard and Nicu Popescu, “A Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations,” (policy paper, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2007), 1, http://ecfr.3cdn.net/1ef82b3f011e075853_0fm6bphgw.pdf.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ “Russia,” Eni, accessed August 27, 2015, http://www.eni.com/en_IT/world-eni/pdf/russian-federation-activities.pdf.

²⁷⁵ Leonard and Popescu, “Power Audit,” 1.

view of international relations, and close UK-U.S. relations set the UK apart for an unparalleled ability to liaise between the United States and Russia.²⁷⁶ Leonard and Popescu note that “in the 1990s, EU members found it easy to agree on a common approach to Moscow. They coalesced around a strategy of democratising and westernising a weak and indebted Russia. That strategy is now in tatters.”²⁷⁷ The EU may have failed to change Russia during the Putin era, but Russia has undoubtedly generated a massive impact on the EU.²⁷⁸

In 2010 Pål Jonson grouped each NATO nation into one of three categories regarding its approach to NATO’s core tasks: “collective defenders,” “expeditionaries,” and “Russia firsters.”²⁷⁹ Italy—along with Belgium, France, Germany, Portugal, and Spain—fell into Jonson’s “Russia firster” category, which prioritizes positive relations with Moscow and are thus more concerned that the rest of the Allies with Russian perceptions of NATO actions.²⁸⁰ The study concluded that Italy and Germany have stood out as the most Russia-sensitive; others in the category have exhibited such a mentality to a lesser degree or have simply provided support to the German and Italian positions.²⁸¹

Leonard and Popescu’s 2007 study of policy approaches toward Russia classified each EU member into one of five distinct categories, which are shown in Table 1. The authors do not consider Italy to be in the same tier as Greece or Cyprus in terms of willingness to oppose EU policy and defend Russian interests, but Italy does fall in the second tier along with France, Germany, and Spain: strategic partners of Russia who do occasionally undermine EU policy.²⁸²

²⁷⁶ Johnson and Robinson, *Perspectives on EU-Russia Relations*, 59.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Pål Jonson, “The Debate about Article 5 and its Credibility: What is it all about?” *NATO Defense College Research Paper* 58 (2010), http://atlantkommitten.se/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/rp_58.pdf.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 8.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Leonard and Popescu, “Power Audit,” 2.

Table 1. Summary of EU Nations' Policy Approach toward Russia

Category	Description	Countries
Trojan Horses	Often defend Russia in the EU system Are willing to veto common EU positions	Cyprus, Greece
Strategic Partners	Enjoy a special relationship with Russia which occasionally undermines EU policies	France, Germany Italy, Spain
Friendly Pragmatists	Maintain a close relationship with Russia and tend to put business interests above political goals	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia
Frosty Pragmatists	Focus on business interests but are less afraid than others to speak out against Russian behavior	Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden, UK
New Cold Warriors	Have an overtly hostile relationship Are willing to use the veto to block EU negotiations with Russia	Lithuania, Poland

Adapted from Mark Leonard and Nicu Popescu, "A Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations," (policy paper, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2007), 2, http://ecfr.3cdn.net/1ef82b3f011e075853_0fm6bphgw.pdf.

Alcaro points out, "When developments within the EU or NATO have encroached on what is perceived as a national priority, Italian elites have generally worked toward orientating EU and NATO action according to their special sensitivities."²⁸³ In the case of relations with Russia, however, Italy has at times resisted or ignored developments in major policy areas such as European security, energy security, and human rights and democracy.²⁸⁴ Alcaro concludes that Italy, "in several instances, has seemed to accord preference to its relations with Russia over its commitment to being a diligent implementer of policies set at the EU or NATO level. This interpretation is shared both in European capitals and Moscow, as well as in Washington."²⁸⁵

²⁸³ Alcaro, "Italy," 71.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 73.

In sum, nationalist agendas in Italian politics generally favor closer alignment with Russia. Foreign Minister Lavrov's statement highlighted how a divide between Italy and Russia is not in the national interest of either country. Because full restoration of positive relations with Russia and full support of Euro-Atlantic policy are not simultaneously possible in the current environment, Italy employs a tradeoff between the two. The Russian relationship at times causes Italy to contradict or disregard EU or NATO policy, but the extent and frequency of such opposition hinges upon the priorities of the Italian leadership. The more value that Italy places upon the Russian relationship, the more distant the country may become from its Euro-Atlantic counterparts. As nationalists or eurosceptics push Italy toward greater cooperation with Russia, therefore, Russia will push Italy further toward nationalism and Euroscepticism.

F. EXPANSION OF NATO AND THE EU

For Western Europeans who belonged to the European Communities, the Cold War demonstrated the advantages of a divided Europe: the inner six (Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands) included five of the richest or potentially richest countries in Europe, U.S. defense expenditures guaranteed the security of Western Europe, and the USSR ensured that the less-wealthy eastern bloc would not join European integration.²⁸⁶ Even after the end of the Cold War, therefore, it is unsurprising that in some quarters Western European skepticism about extending "Europe" eastward has endured.

NATO gradually expanded as it extended membership to an increasing number of post-communist states. NATO expansion has never been overtly opposed by Italy, yet Italy has been, at times, in favor of slowing down the eastward push.²⁸⁷ As the EU matured, it also intended to incorporate a greater number of Eastern European countries; Italy thought it best that nations be simultaneously integrated into the EU and NATO.²⁸⁸ In this way, security commonalities could be emphasized and complexities would not be

²⁸⁶ Judt, *Grand Illusion*, 42–43.

²⁸⁷ Croci, "Italian Security Policy after the Cold War," 271.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

caused by membership gaps between the two organizations.²⁸⁹ Also, Italy feared that NATO enlargement might shift the Alliance's focus to the northeast—and away from the volatile southern region.²⁹⁰ To counteract this fear, Italy campaigned for the Alliance to incorporate its eastern neighbor, Slovenia, and later sought to establish a “Mediterranean Dialogue” involving NATO and selected partner countries.²⁹¹

Both left and right governments in Italy have generally supported the possible accession to NATO and the EU of additional Balkan countries and Turkey—with some anticipated dissent from the Northern League stemming from the Islamic culture of Turkey.²⁹² According to some accounts, however, the expansion of NATO and the EU is especially controversial in Italy relative to other member states. Pew Research, when estimating support within member nations in 2009 for six potential EU accessions (Croatia, Georgia, Iceland, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine), concluded that the Italian population showed the lowest level of support in each case.²⁹³ The same 2009 poll also indicated that Italians showed the least support of any NATO country for Ukrainian membership.²⁹⁴ Ironically, the public in only two Partnership for Peace (PfP) countries showed greater opposition than did the Italian public to Ukraine's bid for NATO membership: Russia and Ukraine itself.²⁹⁵ Another poll in 2008 indicated that more Italians would oppose defense of the Baltic states under Article 5 than would support it—even though all three Baltic states had become NATO members in 2004.²⁹⁶

²⁸⁹ Croci, “Italian Security Policy after the Cold War,” 271.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Fabio Fossati, “Italy and European Union Enlargement: A Comparative Analysis of Left and Right Governments,” *Modern Italy* 13, no. 2 (2008): 187, doi 10.1080/13532940801962140.

²⁹³ Pew Research Center Global Attitudes Project, *Two Decades after the Wall's Fall: End of Communism Cheered but now with More Reservations*, November 2, 2009, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2009/11/02/chapter-9-rating-the-eu-and-nato/>.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ David S. Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2014), 35.

Italian opposition to EU enlargement is both economic and cultural. Serricchio asserts that EU enlargement fosters euroscepticism in Italy because expansion “has brought a change in the distribution of Community financial assistance and its probable reduction as well as a perceived threat to cultural identities.”²⁹⁷ On one hand, enlargement has reduced EU expenditures in Italy while Italy’s national contribution has remained relatively constant—a net loss from a purely contribution-returns perspective. The possibility of further EU enlargement to the east threatens to further diminish Italy’s share of EU subsidies. On the other hand, EU expansion exacerbates the threat to the established European and Italian identity. Many Italians already view the European identity as a threat to the national or sub-national one.²⁹⁸ The big issue with expansion, according to Serricchio, is that “Italians consider the citizens of these countries [to the east] as non-European, that is, as being part of the outgroup, therefore as foreigners.”²⁹⁹

It is perhaps unsurprising that the gradual decline in support among Italian citizens for European institutions and the drop in European identity over the last two decades have coincided with gradual expansion of the EU and NATO. Serricchio’s statistical analysis suggests that “Europe is perceived above all as a source of economic benefits” and thus EU expansion has “played a decisive role in the progressive detachment of Italian citizens from that supranational entity to which they had always looked with great enthusiasm.”³⁰⁰ One must ask, concludes Serricchio, “If Europe begins to threaten the cultural heritage and traditions Italians are very proud of, while also promising less in the way of economic assistance, why continue to support it?”³⁰¹

Although Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Commission, announced in 2014 that the EU has no plans to expand in the next five years, the established guidance of the EU still stipulates that any European nation which meets the

²⁹⁷ Serricchio, “Italian Citizens and Europe,” 115.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 125; Sean Carey, “Undivided Loyalties: Is National Identity an Obstacle to European Integration?” *European Union Politics* 3, no. 4 (2002): 387, doi: 10.1177/1465116502003004001.

²⁹⁹ Serricchio, “Italian Citizens and Europe.” 131.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 128, 131.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 132.

required conditions may become eligible for membership.³⁰² The EU has also officially designated five nations as candidates—Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey—and two more as potential candidates—Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo—as of 2015.³⁰³ All seven of these potential accessions fall into the exact category—“easterners” who would further reduce EU expenditures in Italy and threaten established identities—to which Italians are most opposed.

G. ONGOING IMMIGRATION CRISIS

As refugees from Africa and the Middle East flood Europe, migrant flows are met with increasing opposition. Immigration and the associated anti-immigration sentiments are making headlines across Europe, but Italy is among the nations hardest hit by the crisis. Italy is overwhelmed not only in handling the massive number of immigrants who safely reach Italy’s shores but also in providing life-saving assistance to those crossing the Central Mediterranean. Prime Minister Renzi has unveiled a plan to distribute immigrants throughout Italy, but many Italians are fighting with all their might to reduce, confine, or prevent immigration. The xenophobic Northern League is leading the charge, arguing that migrant boats should be turned away from Italian shores.

1. Overview of the Immigration Crisis

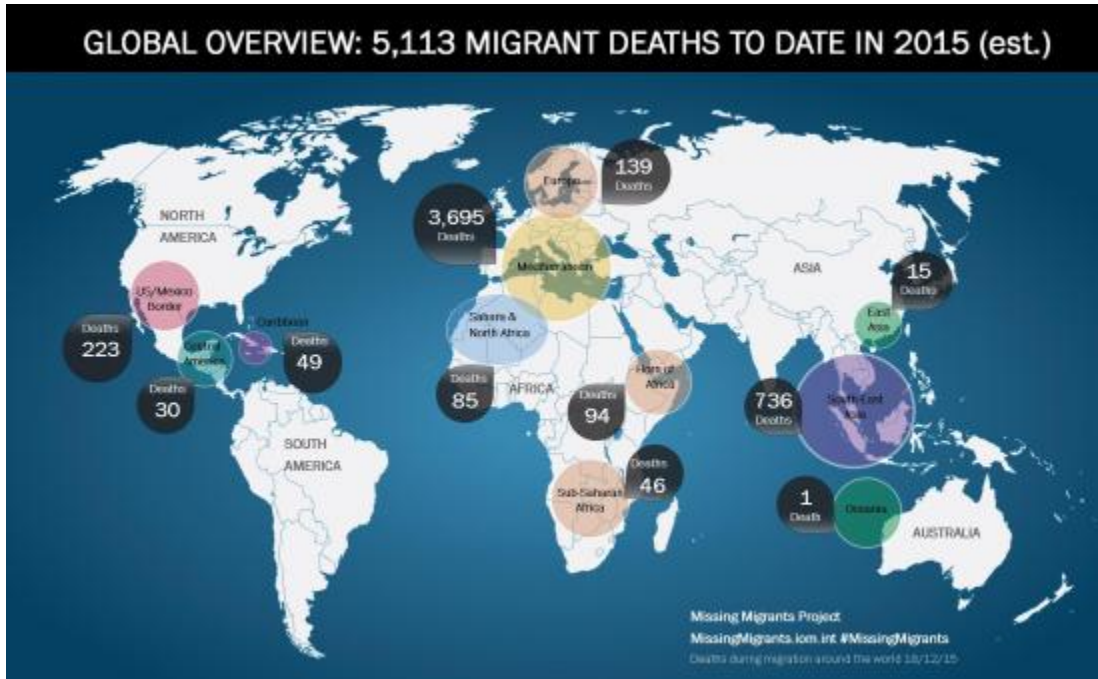
The Central Mediterranean has become the most dangerous migration route in the world. Armed sentries and razor-wire fences are essentially non-existent on Italy’s southern shores, yet more than twice as many people die trying to reach Italy than the rest of the world combined. Figures 15 and 16 from the Missing Migrants project illustrate this point: 5,113 migrants worldwide died crossing borders in 2015; 3,771 occurred

³⁰² Jean-Claude Juncker, “A New Start for Europe: My Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change,” (Political Guidelines for the Next European Commission, Opening Statement in the European Parliament Plenary Session, Strasbourg, Germany, July 15, 2014), <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/jean-claude-juncker---political-guidelines.pdf>.

³⁰³ “European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations,” European Commission, accessed November 28, 2015, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/check-current-status/index_en.htm#pc.

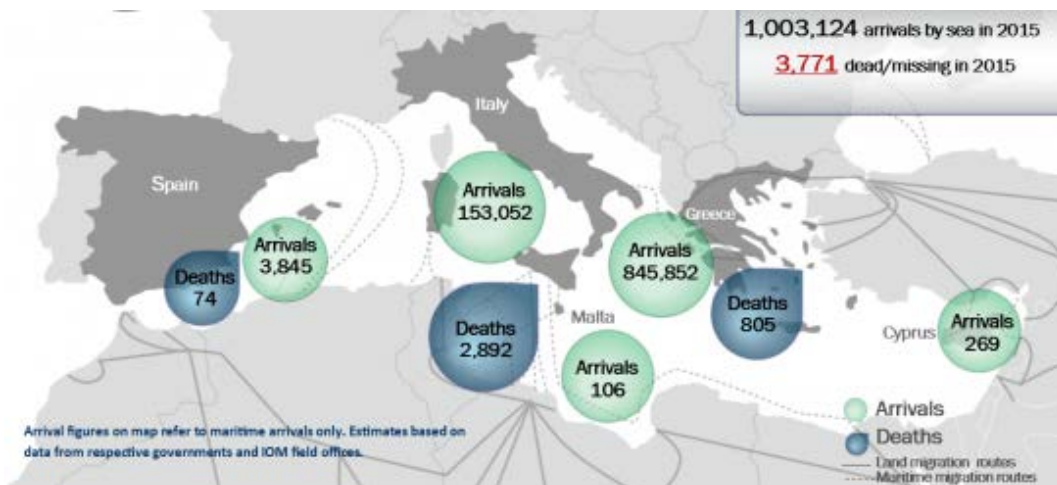
crossing the Mediterranean. Of the 5,113 total deaths, 2,892, or 57%, were attempting to reach Italy.

Figure 15. Global Overview of Migrant Deaths in 2015



Data as of December 18, 2015. Source: “Mediterranean Update,” Missing Migrants Project, last modified December 18, 2015, <http://missingmigrants.iom.int/en/infographics>.

Figure 16. Immigration Arrivals and Deaths across the Mediterranean in 2015



Adapted from “Mediterranean Update,” Missing Migrants Project, last modified December 31, 2015, <http://missingmigrants.iom.int/en/infographics>.

The previous figures also note that 1,003,124 migrants safely arrived in 2015. It is debatable, however, which number is causing the most public outcry: the 3,771 deaths or the 1,003,124 arrivals. Both numbers are increasing daily, leading to mounting dissatisfaction within the Italian populace. Moreover, a growing number of Europeans believe that immigration poses a significant security threat and thus feel more threatened by immigration than they have in years past.³⁰⁴

Italy has the third-highest coastline-to-area ratio in continental Europe, yet nearly all migrants enter via two tiny islands. The islands of Pantelleria and Lampedusa sit only 37 and 70 miles off the coast of Tunisia, respectively. Both islands are roughly twice as close to Tunisia as they are to Sicily.³⁰⁵ From these remote islands, immigrants are ferried to Sicily for follow-on transfer to welcome centers (centri di accoglienza), shown in Figure 17, dispersed throughout mainland Italy to await a temporary visa.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Buonfino, "Politics, Discourse and Immigration," 22.

³⁰⁵ Thomas Zerafa, "When the British planned to make Lampedusa part of the Maltese Islands," *The Times of Malta*, July 17, 2011, <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20110717/life-features/When-the-British-planned-to-make-Lampedusa-part-of-the-Maltese-Islands.375992#.Ule8umVwbbU>.

³⁰⁶ Kate Thomas, "Libya-Italy: by Boat to Lampedusa and a New Life," *IRIN*, June 16, 2011, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/92993/libya-italy-by-boat-to-lampedusa-and-a-new-life>.

Figure 17. Immigrant Welcome Centers throughout Italy



Source: “CIE, CDA, and CARA,” last modified September 30, 2011, <https://strugglesinitaly.wordpress.com/equality/en-immigrants-detention-centers-in-italy/#cdacaracie>.

The Schengen Area, which Italy joined in 1997, allows the free flow of people and goods through open borders between 26 member nations. Once migrants reach Italy, therefore, they have relatively barrier-free access to the other 25 nations within the Schengen Area. In this way Italy becomes a jumping off point for immigrants—both legal and illegal—to the rest of the EU. Most immigrants do not ultimately settle in Italy but instead journey on to other prosperous nations within Europe; in 2014 Germany and

Sweden received significantly more asylum applications than did Italy.³⁰⁷ Cross-Mediterranean immigration is clearly more than an Italian problem, yet convincing the entirety of the EU that it is an EU problem has proven highly challenging.

2. National Response to the Immigration Crisis

Italy has been battling illegal immigration for decades; only recently has immigration from the coasts of Northern Africa garnered so much attention. Immigration was a relatively minor issue during the Cold War years as most Communist regimes discouraged labor migration. Crises in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Kosovo during the 1990s, however, caused floods of refugees to migrate across the Adriatic or the land borders of northeastern Italy. The Northern League was simultaneously gaining momentum during the 1990s across northern Italy with its pro-North rhetoric, yet its xenophobic anti-immigration stance was just as strong. As it gained parliamentary representation, the Northern League ardently fought to clamp down on illegal immigration while receiving heavy criticism that the party's proposed measures undermined human rights.³⁰⁸

A 2013 shipwreck off the coast of Lampedusa, which resulted in the death of at least 360 immigrants, was the first in the series of incidents that has brought immigration across the Mediterranean squarely into the spotlight.³⁰⁹ Italy commenced a dedicated national operation, Operation Mare Nostrum (OMN), in October 2013 in response to the perceived humanitarian emergency.³¹⁰ An average total of five naval and air units, which included frigates, amphibious vessels, patrolers, corvettes, helicopters, and maritime patrol aircraft, were deployed at any given time to support the operation. Roughly 900

³⁰⁷ "Why is EU struggling with migrants and asylum?" *BBC.com*, September 1, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24583286>.

³⁰⁸ "Immigration Policies in Italy," *Struggles in Italy*, accessed March 5, 2015, <https://strugglesinitaly.wordpress.com/equality/en-immigration-policies-in-italy/>.

³⁰⁹ "Lampedusa Boat Tragedy: Migrants 'Raped and Tortured,'" *BBC News*, November 8, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24866338>.

³¹⁰ "Mare Nostrum Operation," *Marina Militare, Ministero della Difesa*, accessed March 15, 2015, <http://www.marina.difesa.it/EN/operations/Pagine/MareNostrum.aspx>.

military personnel participated every day.³¹¹ The Italian Ministry of Defense estimates that the operations rescued 150,810 migrants, seized 5 mother ships, and brought 330 smugglers to justice during the year-long operation.³¹² The impressive efforts were not politically or financially sustainable in the long term, however, and in November 2014 the operation transitioned to an Italian-led EU operation, Operation Triton.

In 2013 the Northern League was in full decline as the party's xenophobic agenda, carried over from Balkans crises of the 1990s and 2000s, was becoming obsolete in the minds of many. The 2013 shipwreck that initiated the public outcry, however, reinvigorated the League's xenophobic agenda.³¹³ Salvini has repeatedly argued that the boatloads of migrants must forcibly be kept off Italian shores rather than allowed to disembark.³¹⁴ After Pope Francis called for forgiveness of "those who close the door on these people who are looking for life," Salvini retorted, "We don't need anyone's forgiveness."³¹⁵ The highly-popular governor of Veneto, Luca Zaia, proclaimed that the overwhelming migrant presence would have a "devastating effect" on local tourism and thus ordered that immigrants be evicted from reception centers or other housing near tourist destinations.³¹⁶ Zaia denies ever eating non-Italian foods such as a kebab or a pineapple and supported a crackdown on restaurants that serve non-Italian food.³¹⁷ Examples of inflammatory league propaganda posters shown in Figure 18 imply that Native Americans live on reservations because they tolerated immigration or that torture is a legitimate defense against illegal immigration. The extreme statements by the League

³¹¹ "Mare Nostrum Operation."

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ "Le Intenzioni di Voto: I Partiti."

³¹⁴ Umberto Bacchi, "Migrant Crisis: Anti-Immigration Leader Salvini Tells Pope Francis 'We Don't Need Your Forgiveness,'" *International Business Times*, June 17, 2015, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/migrant-crisis-anti-immigration-leader-salvini-tells-pope-francis-we-dont-need-your-1506650>.

³¹⁵ Bacchi, "Migrant Crisis."

³¹⁶ Stephanie Kirchgassner, "Clear out African Migrants: Lega Nord Governor Orders Stand-Off with Rome," *The Observer*, June 13, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/13/lega-nord-migrants-rome-stand-off-luca-zaia>.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

are clearly more than a show; they are a full declaration of antagonism against Rome, Brussels, and anyone crossing the Mediterranean to Italy.

Figure 18. Examples of Inflammatory League Propoganda



Sources: “Loro Hanno Subito l’Immigrazione; Ora Vivono nelle Riserve!” [They Submitted to Immigration; Now They Live on Reservations!] Northern League Section of Collegno and Grugliasco, last modified November 13, 2012, <http://leganordcollegno.blogspot.com/2012/11/loro-hanno-subito-limmigrazione-ora.html>; “Immigrati Clandestini: Torturali! E Legittima Difesa,” [Illegal Immigrants: Torture Them! It Is a Legitimate Defense] PeaceLink, August 28, 2009, <http://www.peacelink.it/migranti/a/30095.html>.

The League’s strong nationalist platform has not entirely abandoned its regionalist flair. The League’s core belief since its inception has been that the northerners should not be burdened by the South’s problems. Many League members argue that Mediterranean immigration is another one of the South’s problems that should not burden northerners – most immigrants, after all, enter via Italy’s southern islands. Northerners who adopt this view strive to confine the problem to the South as much as possible. Renzi’s distribution plan is the exact negation of such an agenda and thus adds fuel to the already-raging fire.

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IV. ITALY'S ROLE IN EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY AND DEFENSE

A. ITALY'S ROLE IN NATO

Italy's precarious position between East and West in the Cold War context moderated Italy's willingness to take action that could be perceived as hostile by the Eastern bloc.³¹⁸ The Cold War, however, also strengthened Italy's commitment to NATO. Croci asserts that "NATO might have been the ideal means to counter the Soviet threat...Italy, largely because of its geo-strategic position, could limit itself to paying only lip-service to the Atlantic alliance, which was a reliable dispenser of security through the American nuclear umbrella. National security interests were both defined and guaranteed by membership in the alliance."³¹⁹

As Cold War tensions thawed, Italy increased its presence in the realms of foreign and security policy during the early 1990s.³²⁰ The post-Cold War environment has required Italy to adjust its posture within collective security institutions for three reasons.³²¹ First, the nature of the post-Cold War challenges is more diverse; NATO was an ideal hedge against the Soviets but was less equipped for other emerging problems.³²² Croci notes that these challenges are often typified by "local crises in neighbouring regions that may develop into conflicts and that can cause large and uncontrollable migratory inflows of people; because of its geographical location, Italy is in the front line when it comes to dealing with such emergencies."³²³ Second, dissention and disagreements—especially between Americans and Europeans—are more probable in the multipolar post-Cold War

³¹⁸ Croci, "Italian Security Policy after the Cold War," 266.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid., 268.

environment than they were during the bipolar Cold War years.³²⁴ Thirdly, if a strong policy disagreement between the United States and its European Allies were to preclude consensus within NATO, individual European nations lack the capability—structurally, politically, and militarily—to act alone in large-scale contingencies.³²⁵ Croci sums up Italian security policy in the post-Cold War environment as follows:

Italian security is no longer guaranteed by simple membership in the alliance; Italy has revised its traditional role as a ‘security-consuming’ country and embarked on an effort to become also a ‘security-producing’ country. Thus, since the early 1990s, Italian governments have pursued a number of policies aimed at reinforcing and functionally linking...the United Nations (UN), NATO, and the...EU. Italy’s aim is to shape these organizations in such a way as to enable them, individually or collectively, to meet the new type of threat to which Italy is particularly exposed given its proximity to two turbulent regions: the Balkans and the southern shore of the Mediterranean.³²⁶

Italy has fully supported the new NATO missions involving crisis management and out-of-area crisis deployments.³²⁷ Despite strong reservations against Operation Allied Force (OAF) in the Kosovo conflict, Italy joined with France, Germany, the UK, and the United States to assume clear leadership of the operation within NATO.³²⁸ Italy preferred a different course of action, so the Kosovo intervention exemplifies how Italy’s long-term commitment to the alliance as its security guarantor may trump short-term national sentiments.³²⁹ The “Quint”—foreign ministers of France, Germany, Italy, the UK, and the United States—guided political strategy during OAF.³³⁰ Each country took

³²⁴ Croci, “Italian Security Policy after the Cold War,” 267.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Croci, “Italian Security Policy after the Cold War,” 267.

³²⁸ Jean-Christian Cady, “Establishing the Rule of Law: The U.N. Challenge in Kosovo,” *Focus Stratégique*, no. 34 (June 2012), 14.

³²⁹ Croci, “Italian Security Policy after the Cold War,” 272.

³³⁰ James Sperling and Mark Webber, “NATO: From Kosovo to Kabul,” *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (May 2009), 499.

command of one of the five multinational brigades (MNB) and provided at least half of the troops within that brigade; Italy commanded MNB West.³³¹ Italy also deployed members of the Carabinieri, a specialized domestic military police, to support the NATO-led Kosovo Force multinational specialized unit.³³²

In Afghanistan, Italy demonstrated strong solidarity with the U.S. in joining Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) before NATO officially joined the fight in 2003.³³³ James Sperling and Mark Webber note, “As it turned out, certain NATO allies, particularly Canada, France, Germany, Italy and the UK, made significant contributions to ground combat operations and devoted an impressive share of national naval and air assets.”³³⁴ Italy made separate contributions to NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

Analysis of the total contributions to Kosovo, OEF, and ISAF reveals that Italy pulled its weight by contributing a proportional share of military assets to these operations while many other long-term NATO allies failed to do so.³³⁵ Italy also played a large role in NATO Training Mission—Iraq. Over 50 percent of the deployed personnel were Italian, as the Carabinieri were again called upon to provide specialized assistance.³³⁶

Italy again reaffirmed its strong support for the alliance during Operation Unified Protector in 2011. Libya was arguably the most important of Italy’s colonial ties to Africa, and Italy had maintained strong diplomatic relations with the Gadhafi regime. The Italian economy was furthermore highly dependent on Libyan energy resources. It was challenging for Italy to go to war against such a vital economic partner and thus it staunchly objected to the initial non-NATO command structure; nonetheless it stood firm

³³¹ Cady, *The U.N. Challenge in Kosovo*, 14.

³³² *Ibid.*, 21.

³³³ Sperling and Webber, “NATO: From Kosovo to Kabul,” 501.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 506.

³³⁶ Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act*, 165.

in its commitment to the alliance.³³⁷ Jeffrey H. Michaels further describes how Italy went as far as to make “a veiled threat to withdraw the use of its bases unless the Alliance was put in charge.”³³⁸ Such action would have been a crippling blow to the coalition effort because a large number of air assets were based in Italy during the operation.³³⁹ Under the umbrella of NATO, however, Italy again proved to be strong partner and an indispensable asset. With the Italian Air Force undertaking its biggest mission since World War II, Luca Peruzzi states that “Italian aircraft dropped over 700 PGMs [precision guided munitions] and took several new systems into action for the first time. Italy was something of an unsung hero during 2011’s operations ‘Odyssey Dawn’ (OOD) and ‘Unified Protector.’”³⁴⁰

B. ITALY’S ROLE IN EU SECURITY COOPERATION

Henry Kissinger is reported to have sarcastically remarked during his tenure as the U.S. Secretary of State that “when it comes to foreign and defense policy, Europe does not even have a telephone number.”³⁴¹ The Western European Union (WEU) provided a forum for consultation and cooperation apart from NATO from 1954 through 2011, but it lacked both the robust membership and cooperative will of the EU. Italy fully supported the development of a common foreign and security policy and a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP); Croci notes that “unlike France, which still maintains a vague Gaullist attitude, Italy regards the development of the ESDP clearly and uncompromisingly as complementary and not alternative to the strengthening of

³³⁷ Jeffrey H. Michaels, “A Model Intervention? Reflections on NATO’s Libya ‘Success,’” in *NATO Beyond 9/11: The Transformation of the Atlantic Alliance*, ed. Ellen Hallams, Luca Ratti, and Ben Zyla, (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave–Macmillan, 2013), 203.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Jeremiah Gertler, *Operation Odyssey Dawn (Libya): Background Issues for Congress* (CRS Report No. R41725) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2011), 11, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R41725.pdf>.

³⁴⁰ Luca Peruzzi, “Overlooked Output: Italian Influence in Libya.” *Jane’s International Defense Review* 45, no. 2 (February 2012), 1, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/916815512?accountid=12702>.

³⁴¹ Henry Kissinger quoted in Craig R. Whitney, “Balkan Lessons Spur EU to Form Military Union,” *The Spectator*, June 4, 1999. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/269964238?accountid=12702>.

NATO.”³⁴² Massimo D’Alema, who served as the Italian Prime Minister from 1998–2000, stated in 1999 that his government was “convinced that developing a European defence identity would strengthen inter-Atlantic relations, not least because it would move towards overcoming a division of labour among allies that is obsolete, thereby allowing for more effective management of current crises.”³⁴³

The creation of the ESDP was finally announced in 1999 after the Balkan crises in Bosnia and Kosovo had underscored the need for a common EU security policy. The ESDP, which was renamed the Common Security and Defense Policy by the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, gradually assumed a larger role as the WEU transferred the majority of its security capabilities and functions to the ESDP.³⁴⁴ The Lisbon Treaty’s assumption of the WEU mutual defense clause effectively rendered the WEU obsolete; the next year the WEU announced that it had “accomplished its historical role” and member states agreed to close the organization.³⁴⁵

Italy has been a leader in the operationalization of EU collective security.³⁴⁶ When the state of Albania collapsed in 1997, the Italians spearheaded an effort to act within the EU framework and, after that plan failed, formed a coalition of the willing among EU member states.³⁴⁷ Operation Alba objectives were to restore order, deliver humanitarian aid, reconstruct the state through new elections, and, ultimately, to end the wave of refugees flowing out of Albania and across the Adriatic Sea.³⁴⁸ Alba was the first

³⁴² Croci, “Italian Security Policy after the Cold War,” 273.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Western European Union, *Statement of the Presidency of the Permanent Council of the WEU on behalf of the High Contracting Parties to the Modified Brussels Treaty – Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom*, (Brussels: 2010), http://www.weu.int/Declaration_E.pdf.

³⁴⁵ Western European Union, *Statement of the Presidency*.

³⁴⁶ Croci, “Italian Security Policy after the Cold War,” 273.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 273–74.

Italian-led multinational operation and garnered support from 11 EU member states.³⁴⁹ Italy's initiative demonstrated that, in the words of D'Alema, it was "a country willing and able to take on direct responsibility" in such nearby crises.³⁵⁰ Some argue that Operation Alba represented a step backward from multilateral cooperation, although in the bigger picture it proved the necessity of cooperation at the EU level and a need for the EU to develop the capacity to collectively address such crises.³⁵¹

Alba also highlights how Italian national security issues such as immigration quickly become trans-European issues, especially for those countries within the Schengen Area. Recently, and especially since mid-2015, the ongoing Mediterranean immigration crisis has hammered home this point to even the most remote Schengen members. According to Michele Nones and Stefano Silvestri, "Cooperation at the EU level is essential for checking the risks emanating from both the Mediterranean basin/Middle East and the Balkans, notably illegal activities spanning drug and human trafficking, to which Italy is particularly permeable because of the deep-rooted presence of criminal organisations in its territory."³⁵² Croci adds that Italy historically represents "the closest and most porous...point of access to Europe for economic migrants, people claiming to be political refugees, and Islamic terrorists. Italy's security policy...has concentrated on finding adequate ways and means of meeting this...challenge."³⁵³ The contemporary flow of refugees from the Middle East through southeastern Europe has altered perceptions of the premier access points to Europe, yet Italian security policy remains highly focused on immigration.

³⁴⁹ Riccardo Marchio, "Operation Alba: A European Approach to Peace Support Operations in the Balkans," (strategic research project, U.S. Army War College, 2000), iii, <http://goo.gl/DOzJU9>.

³⁵⁰ Massimo D'Alema, "A new NATO for a new Europe," *The International Spectator* 34, no. 2 (1999): 34, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03932729908456859?journalCode=rspe20#.VP0DQvnF-So>.

³⁵¹ Croci, "Italian Security Policy after the Cold War," 274.

³⁵² Michele Nones and Stefano Silvestri, "European Security and the Role of Italy," (Research Report, Istituto Affari Internazionali, 2009), 1, <http://www.iai.it/pdf/DocIAI/iai0921.pdf>.

³⁵³ Croci, "Italian Security Policy after the Cold War," 268.

The continuation of Operation Mare Nostrum through EU Operation Triton represents Italy's most visible contribution to trans-European security within the EU framework. A statement released in 2014 by the European Commissioner for Home Affairs at the time, Cecilia Malmström, remarked:

So many desperate people are trying to cross the Mediterranean, fleeing conflict and war. The EU and its Member States need to respond and take action to save lives. With the launch of the Triton operation, tailored to the needs and requests defined by the Italian authorities, the EU can show concrete solidarity to Italy, by reinforcing its border surveillance and supporting its humanitarian efforts.³⁵⁴

The statement also recognized the significant accomplishments of OMN thus far and emphasized that EU efforts must supplement, not replace, Italian national efforts:

With its Mare Nostrum operation, Italy has done a formidable job in assisting thousands upon thousands of refugees who have risked their lives by trying to cross the Mediterranean in rickety vessels. It is clear that the Triton operation cannot and will not replace Mare Nostrum...I am confident that Italy will continue to fulfil its European and international obligations and the European Commission stands ready to continue providing European assistance to such initiatives.³⁵⁵

C. THE EFFECT OF EURO-ATLANTIC INSTITUTIONS ON ITALIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS

Many regard NATO as the most successful alliance in history. In 1997 U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright went as far as to say that NATO “brought the former fascist nations, first Italy, then Germany, then Spain, back into the family of European democracies.”³⁵⁶ The EU represents to many the pinnacle of European integration which fueled rampant economic growth among member states in the latter half of the 20th century—a staggering turnaround from the political division and

³⁵⁴ Cecilia Malmström, “Statement by EU Commissioner Cecilia Malmström on operation Triton,” European Commission, accessed March 5, 2015, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-14-302_en.htm.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Madeline Albright, prepared statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, April 23, 1997, quoted in Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, 281-82.

economic stagnation which characterized the first half of the 20th century.³⁵⁷ Anything of value, however, comes at a price. Despite the unparalleled achievements of NATO and the EU, many Italians question to what extent these institutions still support or undermine Italian national interests—and that is the question explored here.

1. How the EU and NATO Support Italian National Interests

NATO and the EU are complementary in supporting Italian national interests. Both institutions offer powerful means to further the Italian worldview, economic benefits, and increased synergies with allies. NATO's core functions of collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security are fundamental to Italian national security.³⁵⁸ Participation in the Alliance's nuclear sharing arrangements is another indispensable benefit for this non-nuclear-weapon state.

a. NATO's Core Tasks: An Indispensable Element

NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept sets forth the three basic missions of NATO: collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security.³⁵⁹ Collective defense was the foremost reason for the establishment of NATO in 1949 and remains the most important function that the alliance performs today. David Yost asserts that “the first priority of the Allies necessarily remains the security of their national territories,” which is the essence of collective defense.³⁶⁰ An armed invasion of Italy is much more difficult to imagine today than it was in 1949, yet NATO's umbrella of collective defense has expanded to address the growing number of issues that have since emerged. Today this umbrella covers, according to Yost, “missile defense, cyber security, space operations, energy security, terrorism, and WMD proliferation”—all of which could pose great

³⁵⁷ Judt, *Grand Illusion*, 33–34.

³⁵⁸ “Strategic Concept,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, November 19, 2010, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, 14.

danger to the Italian state.³⁶¹ NATO's collective defense, therefore, remains vitally important to Italian national interests.

Since the early 1990s, NATO has increasingly emphasized its crisis management and cooperative security aspects.³⁶² NATO's three core tasks are highly interdependent, however, so the notion that one task could be performed without affecting the others is nearly unfathomable.³⁶³ Yost argues that "crisis management operations serve the security interests of the Allies, albeit without the immediacy of preparations for collective defense of Alliance territory in response to direct aggression."³⁶⁴ NATO's primary focus of operations during the 1990s was crisis management in the western Balkans, a region that concerns Italy more than most other NATO allies due to Italy's close proximity and the waves of refugees that have stemmed from the crises.³⁶⁵ Leadership of Operation Alba exemplifies this point: Italy demonstrated the strongest national emphasis on security in the Balkans among EU members at the time, so Italy also stood to benefit from NATO intervention in other Balkan crises more than most other Allies.

b. The Opportunity for a Middle Power to Have a Global Voice

Sven Biscop describes Italy as a "middle power" which holds a unique worldview but also acknowledges that this worldview must be implemented collectively.³⁶⁶ Both NATO and the EU provide opportunities for Italy to promote its worldview beyond the local neighborhood. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Italy's 2014 military expenditure of \$31 billion was the 12th-highest globally and equated to roughly half that of NATO's top European spenders, Britain and

³⁶¹ Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, 17.

³⁶² Todd Sandler and Hirofumi Shimizu. "NATO Burden Sharing 1999–2010: An Altered Alliance." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 10, no. 1 (2014): 59, doi: 10.1111/j.1743-8594.2012.00192.x.

³⁶³ Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, 16.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 125.

³⁶⁶ Sven Biscop, "Peace without Money, War without Americans: Challenges for European Strategy," *International Affairs* 89, no. 5 (2013): 1131, doi: 10.1111/1468-2346.12063.

France.³⁶⁷ Italy's defense spending has moreover dropped sharply over the last decade: 2014 defense expenditures were 30% less than in 2004 and have fallen from NATO's target level—2% of national GDP—to a mere 1.4%.³⁶⁸ Expenditures by all NATO members, however, totaled \$881 billion—half of the global total and 28 times that of Italy alone. Italy has demonstrated a limited capability to act unilaterally within its own neighborhood but overall is best suited in a supporting role for collective operations.

The EU has also emerged since the late 1990s as a global actor in security and defense matters. The EU did not vigorously pursue a global agenda during its early years, instead focusing on the integration of member and potential member states. The German press even coined a word—*Selbstverzweigung*, or “self-dwarfing”—to describe the EU's insistence upon maintaining the focus inward. Shortcomings which limit the EU's global influence—which include hard limits such as capability shortfalls and soft limits such as its lack of political consensus—are well-documented.³⁶⁹ The lack of unity has limited EU policy ambitions to date, as the more powerful EU members have often employed direct national action instead of collective engagement.³⁷⁰ Jolyon Howorth asserts, however, that “like it or not, the European Union...has become an international actor.”³⁷¹

The establishment of a European Commission President and High Representative-Vice President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy by the 2009 Lisbon Treaty was a noteworthy step to finally give Europe a phone number on the international stage.³⁷² The EU's global role has further evolved in recent years through foreign policy initiatives and

³⁶⁷ “SIPRI Military Expenditure Database,” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, accessed January 5, 2016, http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database/milex_database.

³⁶⁸ SIPRI defense spending figures are expressed in constant (2011) US\$; “SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.”

³⁶⁹ Richard Whitman, “The EU: Standing Aside from the Changing Global Balance of Power?” *Politics* 30, no. s1 (2010): 24, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9256.2010.01391.x.

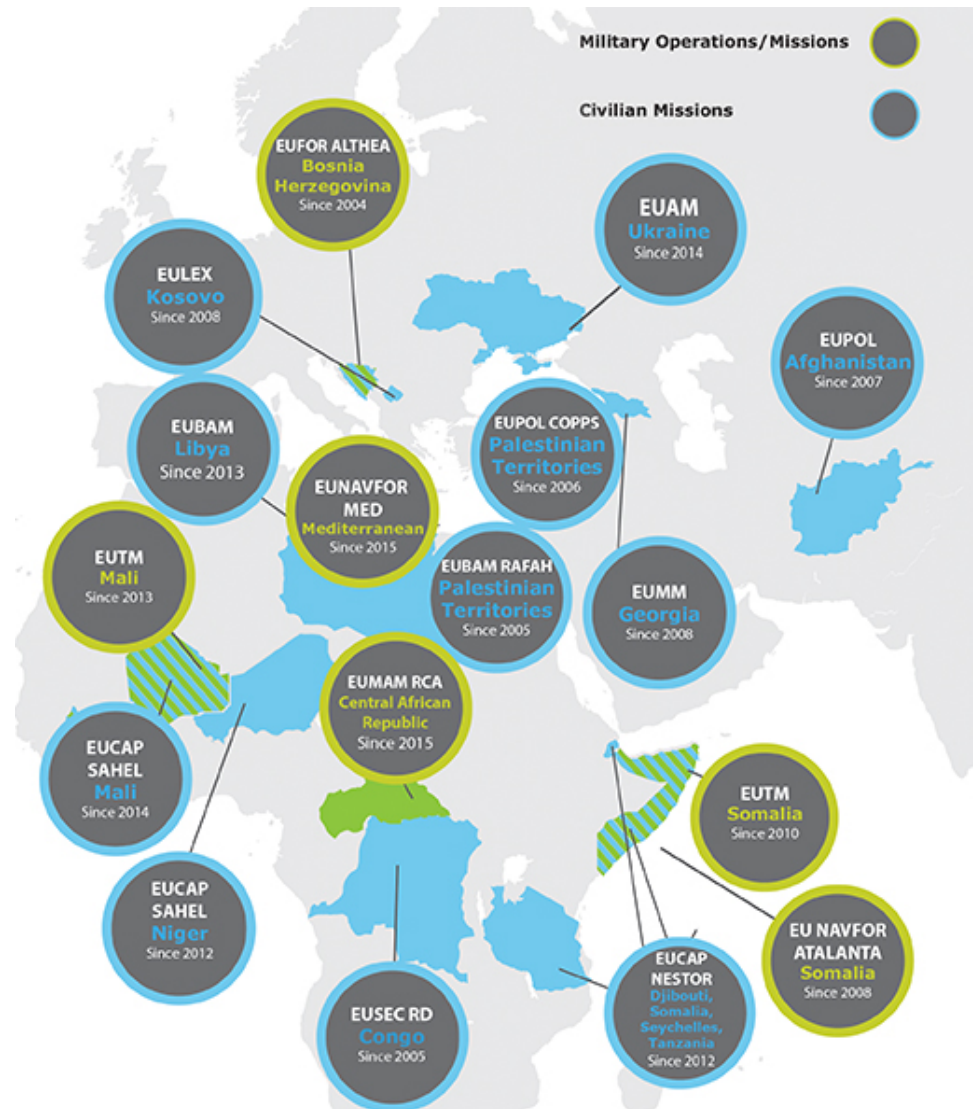
³⁷⁰ Patrick Müller, Zdenek Kudrna, and Gerda Falkner. “EU–global interactions: policy export, import, promotion and protection.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 21, no. 8 (2014), 1114, doi:10.1080/13501763.2014.914237.

³⁷¹ Jolyon Howorth, “The EU as a Global Actor: Grand Strategy for a Global Grand Bargain?” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 48, no. 3 (2010), 455, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02060.x.

³⁷² Ibid.

overseas civilian and military missions.³⁷³ The EU's 18 ongoing missions and 17 completed missions, which spread across Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, are shown in Figures 19 and 20.³⁷⁴

Figure 19. Ongoing EU Military Civilian Operations/Missions



Source: "Ongoing Missions and Operations," *European Union External Action Service*, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/>.

³⁷³ Whitman, "The EU," 24.

³⁷⁴ Operations not show ongoing EUBAM Moldova and Ukraine completed EUFOR Libya and EU Support to the African Union's Mission to Sudan/Darfur (AMIS).

Figure 20. Completed EU Military and Civilian Operations and Missions



Source: “Ongoing Missions and Operations,” *European Union External Action Service*, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/>.

c. *Economic Benefits and Increased Synergies with Allies*

The operational impacts of Italy’s financial woes were never more evident than on July 6, 2011, when Italy withdrew the aircraft carrier *Giuseppe Garibaldi* from NATO’s Operation Unified Protector in Libya. Claudia Major, Christian Mölling and Tomas Valasek note, “In doing so, [Italy] wrote military history: a NATO member-state sent home a key unit in the middle of war because the government had run out of money.”³⁷⁵

³⁷⁵ Claudia Major, Christian Mölling and Tomas Valasek, *Smart But Too Cautious: How NATO Can Improve Its Fight Against Austerity* (London: Centre for European Reform, 2012), 1.

Given the economic difficulties of Italy, therefore, the economic benefits of NATO and the EU become all the more important. Perceived economic benefits have driven European integration in the form of the EU and its predecessors for over 60 years, although NATO also delivers cost savings through economies of scale within the military sector and provides security which increases stability and investor confidence.³⁷⁶

Much of the debate regarding Italian support for the EU revolves around participation in the euro zone. Italy believed that its entry into the euro zone in 1998 would promote long-term economic strength by curbing inflation and maintaining a strong currency. While some politicians argue that Italy would be better off if it had remained with or returned to the lira, economists generally argue the contrary. A study of inflation, trade, public debt, and GDP in the decade following entry into the euro zone by economists Paolo Manasse, Tommaso Nannicini, and Alessandro Saia indicates that the euro has largely been a positive factor for the Italian economy.³⁷⁷ According to the authors, “the primary objective behind Italy’s entry in the euro...was to control inflation.”³⁷⁸ Inflation has been curbed under the euro as promised—2.2% annually from 1999 to 2009, down from 3.9% annually from 1992 to 1998—although simulations indicate that inflation might have dropped to similar levels even if Italy had remained with the lira.³⁷⁹ Inflation volatility, however, was conclusively lowered by adoption of the euro.³⁸⁰ Trade between Italy and its euro zone partners is also an estimated 38% higher than it would be if Italy had remained on the lira.³⁸¹ Analysis indicates that this increase is a product of genuine trade creation rather than trade diversion from non-euro

³⁷⁶ Mark Baker, “NATO: Investment Data Show Economic Benefits for New Members,” *Radio Free Europe*, May 10, 2002, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1099664.html>.

³⁷⁷ Paolo Manasse, Tommaso Nannicini, and Alessandro Saia, “Italy and the Euro: Myths and Realities,” *Centre for Economic Policy Research*, May 24, 2014, <http://www.voxeu.org/article/italy-and-euro-myths-and-realities>.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

members.³⁸² Lower interest rates on public debt under the euro furthermore saved the Italian government an estimated 22.5 billion euro between 1999 and 2007. Manasse, Nannicini, and Saia add that eurosceptics may “caricature the euro as an ordeal that northern European countries (e.g., Germany) have conceived to exploit the poorer south,” but examination of the data dismisses such claims.³⁸³ It is perhaps possible that the euro has indeed lowered Italy’s GDP, although a comparison of Italian data to German data should quickly dismiss any notion that northern Europeans are using the euro as a means of exploitation.³⁸⁴

The EU’s Pooling and Sharing and NATO’s Smart Defense initiatives represent further cost savings and partnership synergies possible through multinational commitment. The initiatives offer member states the possibility of greater collective capability at lower cost to member states through increased coordination, planning, and trust. Pooling and Sharing focuses more on capability development by pooling weapons, services, and research while sharing force structures.³⁸⁵ The Alliance’s Smart Defense approach is intended to improve collective efficiency through planned prioritization and cooperation. Prioritization pairs national capability objectives with NATO’s goals whereas cooperation pools members’ capabilities to create military economies of scale and expand interoperability.³⁸⁶

Both initiatives also encourage specialization, whereby (it is hoped) each member will excel in some areas while allowing other allies to excel in others, to form a holistic yet cost-effective collective self-defense.³⁸⁷ Although specialization faces the greatest obstacles to success, it also offers the most promising reward: greater spending efficiency

³⁸² Manasse, Nannicini, and Saia, “Italy and the Euro.”

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Giovanni Faleg and Alessandro Giovannini, “The EU between Pooling & Sharing and Smart Defence: Making a Virtue of Necessity?” (research report, Centre for European Policy Studies, May 19, 2012), http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2065198.

³⁸⁶ Bastian Giegerich, “NATO’s Smart Defence: Who’s buying?” *Survival* 54, no. 3 (2012): 69, doi: 10.1080/00396338.2012.690982.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

by reducing overlap and cutting obsolete capabilities.³⁸⁸ NATO coined the phrase “specialization by default” to describe the uncoordinated cutbacks it already experiences as members trim defense budgets.³⁸⁹ Bastian Giegerich argues that capability development commitments to NATO (and similarly, the EU) can instead achieve “specialisation by design.”³⁹⁰ Through institutional coordination and consultation, Giegerich states, “cuts would still take place, but they would be done in a complementary fashion, with a view to creating a balanced capability within the Alliance as a whole.”³⁹¹

Anders Fogh Rasmussen, then the Secretary General, declared in NATO’s annual report for 2013 that “Smart Defence has begun to deliver concrete savings for NATO Allies.”³⁹² Through June 2014, NATO completed a total of six Smart Defence projects: Helicopter Maintenance in Afghanistan; Demilitarization, Dismantling, and Disposal of Military Equipment (D3); Centres of Excellence as Hubs of Education and Training; Mine Resistant Ambush Vehicle (MRAP) maintenance; Multinational Cooperation on Munitions (Munitions Life-Cycle Management); and Weapons Systems – Managing Spare Parts.³⁹³ Giegerich further argues that the value of supranational initiatives extends beyond euros and cents: “The concept is not primarily about saving money, but rather about creating value in European defence, a challenge that European NATO members have struggled with for years. Value can come in several guises: as costs savings, as capability and inter-operability increases; or even in more intangible forms, such as mutual trust and understanding.”³⁹⁴

³⁸⁸ Giegerich, “NATO’s Smart Defence,” 69.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 72.

³⁹² Anders Fogh Rasmussen, “Secretary General’s Annual Report 2013,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, January 27, 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_106247.htm.

³⁹³ “Multinational Projects,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified June 2014, http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_06/20140602_140602-Media-Backgrounder_Multinational-Projects_en.pdf.

³⁹⁴ Giegerich, “NATO’s smart defence,” 69.

NATO established the Connected Forces Initiative (CFI) in 2011 as a complementary program to Smart Defense which will ensure that the coordinated capabilities are able to operate effectively as one coherent force. Miroslav Mizera and Pavel Macko write, “If Smart Defense is a concept, Connected Forces Initiative is more a process how to make capabilities work and make them work most effectively.”³⁹⁵ Cross-military education, training, and exercises become even more necessary in the face of budget cuts to ensure that smaller force levels can achieve a unified defense. NATO’s CFI will remain the ideal venue to ensure that Italian security requirements in the Euro-Atlantic context can be effectively carried out.

d. Nuclear Deterrence

One could further argue that, because of the Alliance’s nuclear roles, Italy needs NATO as much as NATO needs Italy. NATO’s 1999 Strategic Concept stated that the “the alliance’s conventional forces alone cannot ensure credible deterrence.”³⁹⁶ The 2010 Strategic Concept adds that “the supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance.”³⁹⁷ The Alliance’s 2012 Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR) also confirmed that nuclear weapons remain “a core component of NATO’s overall capabilities for deterrence and defence alongside conventional and missile defence forces.”³⁹⁸ If not for NATO, the non-nuclear-weapon Italian state would neither profit from nuclear deterrence nor be assured of nuclear defense of its territory. (This judgment excludes hypothetical arrangements involving Italy and some combination of the three NATO nuclear powers—Britain,

³⁹⁵ Miroslav Mizera and Pavel Macko, “NATO Forces 2020: Role of Connected Forces Initiative,” *Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs (CENAA)*, accessed September 3, 2015, <http://cenaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/PP-6-2013-NATO-Forces-2020-Role-of-connected-forces-initiative.pdf>.

³⁹⁶ North Atlantic Council, “The Alliance’s Strategic Concept,” April 24, 1999, par. 46, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_27433.htm.

³⁹⁷ North Atlantic Council, “Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization,” November 20, 2010, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm.

³⁹⁸ “Deterrence and Defense Posture Review,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, May 20, 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87597.htm, para. 8.

France, and the United States.) As it is, Italy benefits from a strategic nuclear deterrent through NATO membership. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which posits that an attack on one alliance member constitutes an attack on all, assures any potential aggressor that Italy's defense could include the strategic nuclear weapons of its NATO Allies. Italy has furthermore hosted U.S. "nuclear-capable forces" since the late 1950s at various locations throughout the country. A 1988 statement by NATO's Defense Planning Committee notes that Italy has been one of a limited number of NATO countries to benefit from this program designed to link conventional forces with nuclear forces:

European-based theatre nuclear forces provide an essential linkage between conventional and [U.S.] strategic forces. Seven Alliance members (Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey and the United Kingdom) participate directly in this aspect of the Alliance's nuclear role and share the ensuing political and financial costs by the provision of delivery systems (aircraft, missiles or artillery) for United States nuclear warheads and by the provision of host nation facilities for United States nuclear capable forces.³⁹⁹

While Italy has contributed to the overall Alliance nuclear deterrence posture, NATO has enabled Italy to receive the security benefits of Allied nuclear weapons without the heavy cost or controversy of producing and maintaining them.

2. Arguments Holding that the EU or NATO Undermine Italian National Interests: A Critical Analysis

Costs associated with EU or NATO membership can, in the minds of many Italians, undermine the country's national interests. Nationalists point to the sacrifices of national sovereignty required to support these multinational institutions. Those who believe Italy deserves a spot among the institutions' powerhouses—France, Germany, the UK, and the United States—may point to instances where the powerhouses have marginalized Italy by excluding it from important deliberations. Economists may point to the significant financial costs associated with the EU and NATO. Some scholars have even argued that NATO became less relevant or obsolete following the Cold War; if that was true, devoting resources to an obsolete institution would also be contrary to Italian

³⁹⁹ NATO Defense Planning Committee, *Enhancing Alliance Collective Security: Shared Roles, Risks and Responsibilities in the Alliance*, December 1988, para. 36.

national interests.⁴⁰⁰ Any of the above opponents could also point to unequal burden-sharing within the EU and NATO, an arrangement which—some could argue—is disadvantageous to Italy.

a. Sacrifices of Sovereignty

The member states of NATO and the EU have retained their sovereignty in security and defense matters. Yost notes how NATO members “continue to demonstrate their sovereignty and autonomy by their choices as to what capabilities and resources they contribute to NATO-led operations and activities and by the restrictions or caveats they place on the employment of their forces in operations.”⁴⁰¹ France and Spain have at times chosen to participate in some NATO institutions while abstaining from others, essentially foregoing Alliance unity in the name of sovereignty and French or Spanish national interests.⁴⁰² The EU affords similar exceptions in the name of national sovereignty; several nations have chosen to opt out of the euro, and EU missions are carried out by the willing vice the whole. The structure of the European Commission—one commissioner for each member state—and the voting process of the European Council, where qualified majority decisions require approval of at least 55 percent of member nations representing at least 65 percent of the EU population, furthermore ensure genuine representation for all EU members.⁴⁰³

A high degree of national sovereignty, however, must inevitably be sacrificed if the institutions are to reach their full potential or efficiently execute missions. National caveats regarding the nature of actions that a member state’s troops may engage in pose logistical and administrative nightmares. Yost furthermore asserts that such caveats “create friction among the Allies, owing to perceptions of unfair burden-sharing and

⁴⁰⁰ Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act*, 2.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 19. France has participated in most NATO institutions since 2009, yet continues to abstain from NATO’s Nuclear Planning Group. Spain exercised special status from 1986 to 1997 but has since participated fully.

⁴⁰³ “The Commissioners,” European Commission, accessed January 16, 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019_en; “Qualified Majority,” European Council, accessed January 16, 2016, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/voting-system/qualified-majority/>.

unequal exposure to combat risks, to say nothing of the impact on operational effectiveness.”⁴⁰⁴ States must also commit to sacrifices of sovereignty if NATO or EU specialization programs are to gain traction: Each member’s specialized areas would become increasingly critical to EU and NATO operational success while national militaries would be forced to completely abandon capability in some areas in order to provide excellence in others. Full implementation of Smart Defense and Pooling and Sharing programs would thus increase mutual dependency among member states both politically and militarily to a level which most states simply will not accept at this time.⁴⁰⁵ What happens, for example, if NATO’s mission requires a capability but the member states who specialize in providing that capability wish to abstain? Friction would ensue at a minimum, and in a worst-case scenario non-participation by just a handful of NATO members could bring the NATO mission to a grinding halt. Objections to such sacrifices of Italian sovereignty will thus remain at least partially justifiable for the foreseeable future.

b. Italy’s Exclusion Syndrome

Another Italian frustration with Euro-Atlantic institutions revolves around what Gale Mattox and Arthur Rachwald term the “exclusion syndrome.”⁴⁰⁶ Wight asserted that Europe accepted Italy as a “Great Power” following Italian unification yet a “national inferiority complex” remains because Italy has never proven itself in war.⁴⁰⁷ Italy continues to seek inclusion in the top tier of Euro-Atlantic powers—namely France, Germany, the UK, and the United States—and tends to feel marginalized when it is excluded. The 1994 NATO Contact Group for the former Yugoslavia, from which NATO powers excluded Italy, is an oft-cited example. Italy clearly had a vested interest in the nearby Bosnian conflict and was prepared to provide essential basing and airspace support to NATO efforts, but threatened to

⁴⁰⁴ Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act*, 142.

⁴⁰⁵ Giegerich, “NATO’s Smart Defence,” 73.

⁴⁰⁶ Gale A. Mattox and Arthur R Rachwald. *Enlarging NATO: The National Debates* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 94.

⁴⁰⁷ Wight, *Power Politics*, 20–21.

withdraw support if it was not afforded a place in the decision-making Contact Group.⁴⁰⁸ Although Italy became a de facto member of the Contact Group in August 1996,⁴⁰⁹ the initial exclusion remains a grievance.

Assertive military ambitions and nuclear capability often elevate France, the UK, and the United States to inclusion in the forums of the top world powers. These powers were, of course, permanent members of the UN Security Council before they acquired nuclear weapons. Italy is opposed to French or British hegemony in Europe. Yost points out that making the nuclear-armed France “the guarantor of the European Union’s security would elevate France’s political status to level unacceptable to Germany, Italy, and other EU countries.”⁴¹⁰ Italy and Europe as a whole were also arguably marginalized by the United States in the response to the 9/11 attacks and the follow-on missions in Afghanistan. Yost cites a high-level Italian observer who felt that the European Allies were “considered not as partners, but only as force providers.”⁴¹¹

The most controversial exclusion issues, however, revolve around Germany. Italy generally accepts exclusion from top-tier global forums—as long as Germany is also excluded. The moderate military ambitions, modest levels of defense spending, and non-nuclear status shared by Italy and Germany have led Italians to believe that the two European powers should be nearly inseparable on the Euro-Atlantic and global stages. It would be awkward or even insulting to imagine an international forum in which France was included but the UK was not; Italians view Italy and Germany in the same light. Italy found the proposal of the UN “2+3 solution”—which would implement permanent UNSC seats for Germany and Japan as well as rotational countries representing Africa, Asia, and Latin America—particularly objectionable and

⁴⁰⁸ Mattox and Rachwald. *Enlarging NATO*, 94.

⁴⁰⁹ David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 185.

⁴¹⁰ David S. Yost, “Assurance and U.S. Extended Deterrence in NATO,” *International Affairs* 85, no. 4 (July 2009), 762.

⁴¹¹ Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, 144.

led the “Coffee Club” opposition in response.⁴¹² Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan have issued a joint statement of mutual support for each other’s permanent membership, yet today’s UNSC remains limited to the five top-tier powers accompanied by ten rotational seats largely due to the influence of other second-tier powers such as Italy.⁴¹³

Iranian nuclear negotiations carried out by the EU-3 and later the P5+1 groups are perhaps even more insulting to Italians. Germany is included with the five nuclear powers in negotiations with Iran because of its strong economic relations with Iran, yet by this logic Italy should also be included. Italy and Germany have long been Iran’s top European trade partners; both nations are among Iran’s top five trade partners globally.⁴¹⁴ Italy has expressed a desire to be included in the negotiations not only because Germany is included but also because sanctions on Iran have dealt a serious blow to the Italian economy.⁴¹⁵ Diplomatic sources further indicate that Iran has asked other countries, including Italy, to join the contact group.⁴¹⁶ As Rome and Tehran agree on this issue, the dissatisfaction of Italians due to exclusion becomes quite predictable.

c. Financial Costs

Christopher J. Anderson and M. Shawn Reichert argue that “EU membership is not necessarily a positive sum game where everyone wins; instead, it frequently involves both winners and losers. Regarding public opinion toward the EU...winners are more supportive of the integration project than those who stand to lose from it.”⁴¹⁷ In 2013, Italy contributed €15.75 billion to the EU budget but EU expenditures in Italy only

⁴¹² Croci, “Italian Security Policy after the Cold War,” 270.

⁴¹³ Alessandro Marrone and Federica Di Camillo, “Italy,” in *Strategic Cultures in Europe: Security and Defense Policies across the Continent*, ed. Heiko Biehl, Bastian Giegerich, and Alexandra Jonas, (Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer Fachmedien, 2013), 174.

⁴¹⁴ Giuseppe Acconcia, “Europa-Iran: Negoziati nel Pantano, Italia Più Assente che Mai,” *Gli Stati Generali*, November 25, 2014, http://www.glistatigenerali.com/medio-orientamento-politiche-comunitarie_uncategorized_europa/europa-iran-i-negoziati-sempre-fermi-litalia-piu-assente-che-mai/.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Christopher J. Anderson and M. Shawn Reichert, “Economic Benefits and Support for Membership in the E.U.: A Cross-national Analysis,” *Journal of Public Policy* 15, no. 3 (1995): 233, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4007534>.

totaled €12.55 billion.⁴¹⁸ Italy, in other words, might be called a “loser” or “net payer” because it contributed €3.2 billion, or 25%, more to the EU budget than it received in return. Italy’s excess contributions do promote a better Europe as a whole, which many would argue has countless indirect benefits for Italy. From a nationalist perspective, however, the direct result of EU membership is a net financial loss. The Anderson-Reichert study also indicates that support for the European project is influenced by direct contribution gains or losses most strongly in the six founding nations—one of which is Italy.⁴¹⁹

The EU expansions of 2004, 2007, and 2013 have widened the gap between Italy’s net contributions and benefits, and the possibility of future expansion threatens to further increase this divide. Euroenthusiasts argue that the market expansion and removal of trade barriers of EU enlargement more than compensates for the gap by increasing the overall welfare of the average Italian household.⁴²⁰ This point is difficult to concretely prove, however, and it is thus disputed or dismissed by eurosceptics. The combination of increased scrutiny of the direct cost-benefit relationship over time with the likelihood that future expansion will reduce direct benefits may portend a bleak future for public support for the EU in Italy.⁴²¹

The significant financial costs associated with NATO membership may also undermine Italian support. Italy contributes approximately 8% of NATO’s common funds—which in recent years has amounted to just under \$300 million annually—to cover NATO common budgets for civil operations, military operations, and the NATO

⁴¹⁸ “Italy,” European Union, accessed January 6, 2016, http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/italy/index_en.htm.

⁴¹⁹ Anderson and Reichert, “Economic Benefits and Support for Membership,” 245.

⁴²⁰ Maurizio Grazzini, Alessandro Missale, and Rossella Bardazzi, “Eastern Enlargement of the EU: Economic Costs and Benefits for the EU Present Member States? The Italian Case,” (Research Report, European Commission, December 10, 2001), 4, <http://www.danmarks-statistik.dk/da/TilSalg/ADAM/Dokumentation/oevrige-papirer/~media/53ACBE2FABD54E79B305EB4B25492353.pdf>.

⁴²¹ Anderson and Reichert, “Economic Benefits and Support for Membership,” 247.

Security Investment Program.⁴²² Deployment of national assets in support of NATO, however, is by far the most significant expense, and it must be funded out of national defense budgets.⁴²³ If Italy were to abide by the NATO mandate to commit 2% of national GDP to the national defense budget, it would have to spend nearly \$43 billion—an increase of \$12 billion over the current budget.⁴²⁴ Budget cuts, however, have been the reality of the past few years. The government is also doing everything it can to reduce burdensome tax levels. In the minds of most Italians, therefore, the level of defense expenditure sought by NATO governments (including Italy’s government) is excessive and perhaps even out of the question.

The NATO mission has undergone remarkable changes during the post-Cold War era; most scholars agree that NATO has undergone a significant transformation and remains essential to Euro-Atlantic security. Some, however, posit that NATO is less relevant than it was during the Cold War or even obsolete.⁴²⁵ Others hold that the Alliance is losing cohesion; coalitions of the willing are driving operations while the less willing are losing interest.⁴²⁶ Depending on one’s perspective on NATO, therefore, the aforementioned costs of participation may be all the more difficult to support.

d. Unequal Burden-Sharing

One stereotype within EU and NATO circles is that the richer and more powerful states carry a disproportionately large burden while smaller or poorer states “freeride.”⁴²⁷ The term “freeriding” is perhaps a misnomer; Alexander Lanoszka argues that “the idea that states would trust their core security interests to others contradicts a core axiom in

⁴²² Carl Ek, *NATO Common Funds Burdensharing: Background and Current Issues* (CRS Report No. RL30150) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2012), 9, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL30150.pdf>.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴²⁴ “Italy GDP,” *Trading Economics*, accessed August 27, 2015, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/italy/gdp>; “SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.”

⁴²⁵ Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act*, 2.

⁴²⁶ Sandler and Shimizu, “NATO Burden Sharing 1999–2010, 59.

⁴²⁷ Alexander Lanoszka, “Do Allies Really Free Ride?” *Survival* 57, no. 3 (2015): 133, doi: 10.1080/00396338.2015.1046229.

international-relations scholarship...especially as violations of alliance commitments are widespread.”⁴²⁸ Unequal burden-sharing by smaller countries, however, is also a natural phenomenon, according to a realist perspective on international relations. Lanoszka asserts that “states determine some mixture of alliances and armaments that maximises deterrence at the lowest possible cost.”⁴²⁹ The benefit of increasing armaments for smaller NATO members is minimal, however, if they “cannot significantly alter the military balance, and if the collective defence of NATO ultimately relies on nuclear deterrence.”⁴³⁰

Unequal burden-sharing thus remains a large source of discontent for some Allies. To exacerbate matters, the required unanimous consensus decision-making framework of NATO can afford smaller states a disproportionate amount of influence. Additionally, because both EU and NATO common funding contributions are based upon a member state’s own gross national income (GNI), the relatively rich Italy will inevitably pay a premium for EU membership or aspects of NATO covered under common funding.⁴³¹

Todd Sandler and Hirofumi Shimizu concluded that burden-sharing was relatively proportional from 1975 until 2002, but around 2002 “a pattern of rich allies...shouldering more of the defense burden for the poor allies” emerged and persisted at least through the study’s conclusion in 2010.⁴³² NATO expansion, the fight against terrorism, out-of-area missions, and a growing divide in weapon technology all contribute to this shift.⁴³³ These factors, the authors argue, have produced “a two-tiered alliance with relatively few allies

⁴²⁸ Lanoszka, “Do Allies Really Free Ride,” 134.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 135.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 134.

⁴³¹ GNI includes income from abroad whereas GDP does not, although the difference between GNI and GDP is often negligible. The NATO website states, “Within the principle of common funding, all 28 members contribute according to an agreed cost-share formula, based on Gross National Income, which represents a small percentage of each member’s defence budget.” Source: “Funding NATO,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last updated June 3, 2015, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_67655.htm.

⁴³² Sandler and Shimizu, “NATO Burden Sharing 1999–2010,” 58–59.

⁴³³ Ibid., 59.

both willing and able to embrace NATO's new strategic doctrine."⁴³⁴ The authors worry that the end result of NATO's transformation may be a "less cohesive alliance where many allies have reduced interest in the outputs of NATO" and therefore the perceived defense benefits "no longer drive NATO burden-sharing behavior."⁴³⁵

In 2015 the immigration crisis also ignited heated debate regarding burden-sharing within the EU. The majority of European Union nations have contributed to Triton through technical means, specialized personnel, or both.⁴³⁶ Distribution of the migrants once safe in Europe has been a much more contentious issue. The EU's official website states that "it is clear that no EU country can or should be left alone to address huge migratory pressures."⁴³⁷ Actions speak louder than words, however, and to date there is a perceived lack of action by most EU members. The EU announced grandiose intentions to redistribute up to 160,000 refugees who arrived in Greece and Italy among other EU nations, but as of November 2015 only 116 individuals had actually been redistributed. Greeks and Italians are perhaps justified in questioning the lack of action regarding the redistribution of the other 159,884, or 99.9%. Austria, Germany, and Sweden are among the EU member states that have demonstrated solidarity by accepting a large proportion of refugees.⁴³⁸

European Commissioner for Migration Dimitris Avramopoulos first insisted that the member states must adopt a "balanced but mandatory emergency intra-EU relocation scheme," but months of stalemate forced the Commission to consider voluntary

⁴³⁴ Sandler and Shimizu, "NATO Burden Sharing 1999–2010," 59.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ "Immigrazione: Frontex, Triton non Sostituirà Mare Nostrum," [Immigration: FRONTEX, Triton will not Replace Mare Nostrum,] ANSA, October 16, 2014, http://www.ansa.it/europa/notizie/rubriche/semestre_italiano/2014/10/16/immigrazione-frontex-triton-non-sostituira-m.-nostrum_d9dd6cae-9b06-4b52-9a3c-19f7c69ffc00.html.

⁴³⁷ "Migration: Towards a European Agenda on Migration," *European Commission*, accessed September 1, 2015, http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/migration/index_en.htm.

⁴³⁸ Angeliki Dimitriadi, "Burden Sharing, Where Art Thou?" *European Council on Foreign Relations*, November 11, 2015, http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_burden_sharing_where_art_thou5003.

options.⁴³⁹ Those who argue most strongly for the quotas—Germany, Italy, and, to a lesser extent, Austria—are those hit hardest by the crisis, so it is logically in the national interests of these nations to seek a European solution.⁴⁴⁰ Prime Minister Renzi has warned that Italy will adopt an unspecified Plan B harmful to Europe if members cannot implement a solution: “If the European Council chooses solidarity, then good. If it doesn’t, we [Italy] have a Plan B ready but that would be a wound inflicted on Europe.”⁴⁴¹

Many EU members less affected than Italy by the crisis, including France, remain opposed to the mandatory burden-sharing proposal, posing a bleak outlook for agreed burden-sharing solutions.⁴⁴² The Czech Republic and Slovakia have made headlines by declaring that they will not support a quota system. Lithuania has likewise stated that it has no intention to participate in a burden-sharing solution. Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico stated, “We strongly reject any quotas...If a mechanism for automatic redistribution of migrants is adopted, then we will wake up one day and have 100,000 people from the Arab world and that is a problem I would not like Slovakia to have.”⁴⁴³ Czech President Milos Zeman expressed similar sentiments: “The Czech Republic should take care of its

⁴³⁹ Dimitris Avramopoulos, “Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos after Home Affairs Council in Luxembourg,” (speech, Home Affairs Council, Luxembourg, June 16, 2015), http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-15-5208_en.htm; Reuters, “Commission ready to drop mandatory quotas for refugees,” *EurActiv.com*, September 17, 2015, <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/justice-home-affairs/commission-ready-drop-mandatory-quotas-refugees-317723>.

⁴⁴⁰ Alberto Nardelli, “How Many Asylum Seekers would Other EU Countries Need to Match Germany?” *Guardian*, August 20, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2015/aug/20/asylum-seekers-eu-comparison-germany-datablog>.

⁴⁴¹ Although Renzi did not provide the specific unilateral measures that would be taken under Plan B, many speculate that these measures could include blanket approval of humanitarian visas and transportation to other countries within the Schengen Area. Source: Matteo Renzi quoted in James Mackenzie, “Italy’s Renzi Warns EU on Refugees as Neighbours Block Border Crossings,” *Reuters*, June 14, 2015, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-europe-migrants-italy-idUKKBN0OU0AN20150614>.

⁴⁴² Lucie Bednarova et al., “Many EU Countries Say ‘No’ to Immigration Quotas,” *EurActiv.com*, June 8, 2015, <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/justice-home-affairs/many-eu-countries-say-no-immigration-quotas-315184>.

⁴⁴³ Robert Fico quoted in Reuters, “Smaller European Countries Defy EU, Reject Migrant Quotas,” *Breitbart*, September 1, 2015, <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2015/09/01/slovaks-czechs-eye-common-central-europe-stance-on-migrants-reject-quotas/>.

borders on its own, it should expel illegal migrants...even using the army, should it be needed.”⁴⁴⁴ Such comments paint a bleak picture both for burden-sharing in the EU and the future of the Schengen Area if the immigration debate cannot be resolved.

Although Renzi’s Plan B warning may sound sinister to some, many believe that Italy must escalate as necessary to achieve sorely-needed relief. The EU’s Dublin regulation establishes that EU entry-point states bear the full responsibility for screening migrants, processing asylum-seekers, and deporting economic migrants, yet both Italy and Greece are struggling mightily to meet this mandate.⁴⁴⁵ While some argue that the flood of immigrants could boost the labor force in the long term in countries with declining populations such as Italy, others worry that a lack of educated or skilled workers among the migrant population will cause the influx of migrants to be a net burden.⁴⁴⁶ For now, however, the migrants are unquestionably taking a heavy toll on the already-pressed Italian economy as Rome struggles to maintain proper security safeguards, process the large number of asylum applicants, and provide basic social welfare to the majority who remain in limbo.

⁴⁴⁴ Milos Zeman quoted in Reuters, “Smaller European Countries Defy EU.”

⁴⁴⁵ The European Commission’s summary of the Dublin Regulation states, “This Regulation establishes the principle that only one Member State is responsible for examining an asylum application. The objective is to avoid asylum seekers from being sent from one country to another, and also to prevent abuse of the system by the submission of several applications for asylum by one person.” Source: “Country Responsible for Asylum Application (Dublin),” European Commission for Migration and Home Affairs, accessed January 15, 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/examination-of-applicants/index_en.htm.

⁴⁴⁶ Holly Ellyatt, “Four Reasons Why Europe’s Migrant Crisis Matters,” *CNBC*, September 14, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/14/four-reasons-why-europes-migrant-crisis-matters.html>.

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V. CONCLUSION: SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS IN ITALY

The influence of nationalist movements in Italy must not be underestimated. Over the past quarter-century, the influence of domestic politics upon foreign policy has increased exponentially both in Italy and elsewhere.⁴⁴⁷ The shedding of Cold War constraints has expanded the spectrum of foreign policy options while accelerating globalization has fostered an increased awareness of international affairs within domestic populations.⁴⁴⁸ Higher levels of European integration also mean that a much larger portion of the domestic population has a direct stake in foreign policy issues.⁴⁴⁹ The implementation and enforcement of international norms through the EU legitimize European intervention in domestic matters and thus further increase the impact of foreign policy upon the population.⁴⁵⁰

A. NATIONALISM MANIFESTED IN BORDER DISPUTES

Border disputes are a natural manifestation of nationalism. During the 19th century and first half of the 20th century, Italian nationalists were, above all, concerned with territorial expansion. With the pursuit of European integration following World War II, Italian nationalism turned toward preserving sovereignty within Italy's established borders. Since the early 1990s, nationalist or eurosceptic movements in Italy have persisted in initiating or exacerbating disputes involving a wide range of borders: the euro zone, the EU, NATO, national borders, Padania, and the Schengen area.

1. The Euro Zone, the EU, and NATO

Nationalism is a strong impediment to the continued pattern of EU and NATO expansion. The EU and its predecessors have gradually grown from the original 6 of the

⁴⁴⁷ Giampiero Giacomello and Bertjan Verbeek, *Italy's Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century: The New Assertiveness of an Aspiring Middle Power*, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 219

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

1950s to include 28 member nations today. NATO has likewise expanded on six separate occasions, growing from 12 members in 1949 to the 28 members today.⁴⁵¹ Membership of either institution, however, is unlikely to grow significantly in the near term as each seeks to stabilize the bonds between existing members. The EU has placed expansion on hold at least until 2019; and although NATO announced in December 2015 that Montenegro will soon join the Alliance, potential candidates will nonetheless continue to face heightened scrutiny.⁴⁵² Strong opposition to enlargement based upon perceptions of the European identity as well as national cost/benefit calculations further reduce the possibility of future expansion. It is possible that the EU's borders will actually contract as nationalist movements across the EU call for national exits from the euro zone, the EU, or both.

The calls of eurosceptics to exit the euro zone and the EU have grown increasingly louder in the past decade. The Northern League, the Five Star Movement, and (potentially) Forza Italia seek withdrawal from the euro zone. Nine other EU countries—Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Sweden, and the United Kingdom—do not participate in the euro zone yet still support EU cooperative security, so it could be argued that the security implications of exiting the euro zone are perhaps minimal. The euro has, however, generated positive effects for the Italian economy: reduced inflation and inflation volatility, new trade, and lower interest rates on public debt.⁴⁵³ A return to the lira could therefore have negative effects upon the economy. The struggling Italian economy is already imposing tight constraints upon defense spending, so exiting the euro could further tighten economic constraints and lead to additional defense cuts. This is not a certainty, however, and those arguing for a euro zone exit may believe the opposite would happen.

⁴⁵¹ NATO expanded to include Greece and Turkey in 1952; Germany in 1955; Spain in 1982; Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland in 1999; Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia in 2004; and Albania and Croatia in 2009.

⁴⁵² Juncker, "New Start for Europe;" "Alliance Invites Montenegro to Start Accession Talks to Become Member of NATO," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, December 2, 2015, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_125370.htm?selectedLocale=en.

⁴⁵³ Manasse, Nannicini, and Saia, "Italy and the Euro."

One must also consider the cascading effects surrounding a euro zone exit. If one member exits the euro zone, will remaining euro zone members become more likely to exit as well? Italy's history of bandwagoning cannot be ignored. It did, after all, enter into both world wars well after onset of the conflict and shifted to the side which seemed likely to win and which offered the most attractive incentives. If Italy did exit the euro zone, would Italy's support drop for the EU as a whole? Would a euro zone exit represent the first step toward a full exit from the EU? If one member left the EU—especially one as significant as Italy—would the possibility increase that other members might leave?

It may therefore be prudent to also examine the security implications of an Italian exit from the EU. The Northern League already seeks an EU exit, and it is possible that in time other parties could become persuaded as well. EU cooperative security operations as well as Pooling and Sharing programs would be dealt a significant blow as Italy possesses the fourth-largest military within the EU and a broad range of capabilities. The Carabinieri are often ideally equipped to execute out-of-area security missions and are an integral component of the European Gendarmerie Force (EGF), a coalition of militarized police forces from across the EU which specializes in crisis management. Only a small number of EU nations—France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Spain—possess the capability to participate in the EGF, and the Carabinieri are arguably the most visible contributor to the EGF.⁴⁵⁴

Italy plays several other distinct roles within the EU that would not be easily replaced. The personable aspect of Italy's foreign policy, epitomized by the Berlusconi era, allows Italy to often act as a bridge between the EU and other nations—especially those nations which project a somewhat hostile foreign policy.⁴⁵⁵ The close personal friendship between Berlusconi and Vladimir Putin is a prime example, although Italy has also built strong relationships with Iran and former African colonies such as Libya.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴ "The European Gendarmerie Force," European Gendarmerie Force, accessed January 31, 2016, <http://www.eurogendfor.org/organisation/what-is-eurogendfor>.

⁴⁵⁵ Giacomello and Verbeek, *Italy's Foreign Policy*, 218.

⁴⁵⁶ It should be noted that judgments differ, within and outside Italy, as to the merits of the agreements reached in the Putin-Berlusconi framework.

Giampiero Giacomello and Bertjan Verbeek assert that, in the decades following the Cold War, Italy has “intensified its attempts to play a mediating role between Europe and North Africa and the Middle East.”⁴⁵⁷ Italy has also emerged as arguably the most prominent advocate for support to the Balkans, demonstrating a stronger national interest than Britain, France, or Germany in Balkan matters and exerting more influence than the remaining EU members.⁴⁵⁸ In sum, if Italy were to exit the EU, the EU would not only lose a longstanding member but also several unique roles filled by Italy would be vacated or diminished.

Although a small faction of eurosceptics such as M5S leader Beppe Grillo advocate an Italian exit from NATO, the probability of Italy actually leaving the Alliance remains very small. The tendency toward theatrics over reality is an engrained aspect of the Italian national character, and the comedian-turned-politician Grillo is a quintessential example.⁴⁵⁹ Luigi Di Maio’s statement that an exit from NATO is not under serious consideration more accurately reflects reality.⁴⁶⁰ Although the Northern League has been critical of NATO’s actions in Afghanistan, Libya, and elsewhere, even it has not gone as far as to suggest an outright exit from NATO.⁴⁶¹ Even if a large number of Italians were discontented with NATO—which does not appear to be the case—a radical break with such an established relationship would be highly unlikely.⁴⁶²

Even if Italy does not exit the EU or NATO, nationalist movements could alter the orientation of these organizations. Todd Sandler and Keith Hartley assert that

⁴⁵⁷ Giacomello and Verbeek, *Italy’s Foreign Policy*, 218.

⁴⁵⁸ “Italy-Balkans Bilateral Relations,” Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, accessed February 19, 2016, http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/politica_estera/aree_geografiche/europa/balcani; Carol Hodge, “Albania, Italy, and Greece: Some Geopolitical Considerations,” in Brad K. Blitz, *War and Change in the Balkans: Nationalism, Conflict and Cooperation*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 227-28, https://books.google.com/books/about/War_and_Change_in_the_Balkans.html?id=Mvjm82mAKfkC.

⁴⁵⁹ Barzini, *Italians*, 89.

⁴⁶⁰ Politi, “Five Star Movement Comes of Age.”

⁴⁶¹ Giacomello and Verbeek, *Italy’s Foreign Policy*, 6.

⁴⁶² Roberto Weber quoted in Armellini, “Anti-Euro Talk Spreads in Italy.”

NATO's efforts "vary in their degree of publicness."⁴⁶³ That is, many of NATO's activities also involve "private, ally-specific outputs...Allies nearest to the site of instability or with economic interests at the site may derive benefits not experienced by others."⁴⁶⁴ Defense of the Baltics, for example, is largely a public good for the Alliance as a whole with few benefits specific to Italy—unless one regards the prevention of war via deterrence as fulfilling a fundamental Italian security interest. NATO activities in the Balkans and the Mediterranean, on the other hand, concern Italy much more immediately and directly. Citizens with a strong European identity are more likely to support public goods that benefit the EU and NATO as a whole, whereas nationalists tend to place more weight on the benefits specific to Italy.

Italy's strong voice for issues in its greater neighborhood—which includes the Balkans, the Mediterranean, and much of North Africa—also greatly affects the focus of the EU and NATO as a whole. Such issues may be of lesser concern to more distant Allies such as Germany, the UK, or the United States. Italian nationalism, therefore, serves to amplify Italy's voice for local issues and may further reorient the Euro-Atlantic institutions' focus toward the greater Italian neighborhood.

Nationalist movements also affect Italy's behavior within the organizations in terms of the country's willingness to support foreign interventions. Grillo's criticism of NATO is not aimed at the collective self-defense aspect; rather, he squarely criticizes foreign intervention by NATO and labels it an "action of war."⁴⁶⁵ The Northern League has demonstrated a similar distaste for foreign intervention. During Operation Allied Force in 1999, the Italian government refused to officially refer to the operation as a war. Northern League Senator Luciano Gasperini argued, however, that NATO's intervention constituted war and moreover appealed to the Italian Constitution, which condemns war as a method of solving international disputes.⁴⁶⁶ The Northern League was again firmly

⁴⁶³ Todd Sandler and Keith Hartley, *The Political Economy of NATO: Past, Present, and into the 21st Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 48.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ "Grillo: L'Italia Deve Uscire dalla NATO." [Grillo: Italy Must Exit NATO.]

⁴⁶⁶ Giacomello and Verbeek, *Italy's Foreign Policy*, 166.

opposed to intervention in Libya in 2011.⁴⁶⁷ Giacomello and Verbeek note how “Umberto Bossi declared that France had lured Italy into a war and warned that bombing was not the recipe for winning a war.”⁴⁶⁸

Nationalism also endangers Italy’s role as a bridge between the Euro-Atlantic institutions and other foreign nations. Italy has overcome barriers in building international relationships thanks in large part to the personable aspect of its foreign policy. Xenophobic, and particularly anti-Muslim, attitudes promoted by the Northern League could undermine this approach to foreign policy and could serve to reconstruct barriers that Italy has previously managed to tear down.

2. Additional Border Disputes: National Borders, Padania, and the Schengen Area

For nearly three decades the Northern League has stood for increased northern autonomy and exclusion of foreigners. A stark divide between Northern Italy and Southern Italy has persisted for centuries and remains to this day; the invention of Padania merely served to codify the divide. The Northern League’s rhetoric of Padanian secession, however, likely peaked during the late nineties. Although the League has not completely abandoned or denounced the secession platform, Salvini’s relative silence on the matter compared to Umberto Bossi suggests that Italy’s borders will remain intact for the foreseeable future. Northerners’ desire for a more secure Padania and animosity for the South will persist nonetheless, and the influence of the Northern League allows such attitudes to be manifested elsewhere.

Much more relevant to the contemporary security context is the Northern League’s far-right stance on immigration. If the Northern League gains additional political power, additional anti-immigration measures would be a likely consequence. Because the Five Star Movement insists that public opinion determine policy, the Movement’s support for such measures is possible yet not certain. The Northern League has moreover shown a willingness to oppose the Catholic Church, which has historically

⁴⁶⁷ Giacomello and Verbeek, *Italy’s Foreign Policy*, 6.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

exerted strong political influence, on the immigration issue.⁴⁶⁹ The Northern League has also at times implied that Southern Italy should bear greater responsibility in securing the southern borders as well as shoulder a greater load in accommodating immigrants entering through those borders.

Nationalism and xenophobia have exacerbated the immigration crisis to the point that many question or even doubt the future of the Schengen Area. Several Schengen member states have at least temporarily returned to national border enforcement. This is not the first time, however, that an influx of immigrants has undermined the Schengen agreement. In 2011, waves of refugees fled Tunisia and Libya, seeking to reach France via Italy.⁴⁷⁰ Italy agreed to facilitate the journey of 20,000 refugees to France; France in turn responded by turning back trains at the Italy-France border and calling for a renegotiation of the Schengen Treaty.⁴⁷¹ The current immigration crisis is likely to have much greater long-term effects on the Schengen Area, and Italian nationalism is no doubt one of many driving factors. Italy's threshold for accepting refugees is significantly lowered by the nationalist influence, yet other Schengen members have responded by closing off outlets for the refugees. The Northern League has repeatedly called for suspension of the Schengen agreement in conjunction with an exit from the EU because the Dublin Regulation forces Italy to process all immigrants entering the EU through Italy.⁴⁷² Even if the majority of these immigrants seek to reach other EU nations through the open borders of the Schengen Area, those other nations ultimately retain the right to close their borders when deemed necessary. The Northern League's disdain for Italy's neighbors which close their borders in times of crisis yet still regulate Italy's immigration policy through the EU is expressed in a statement by Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Mara Bizzotto, who heads the Northern League's European department:

⁴⁶⁹ Bacchi, "Migrant Crisis."

⁴⁷⁰ Giacomello and Verbeek, *Italy's Foreign Policy*, 5.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² "Europe's Response: After Paris, Drawbridges Up?" *Economist*, November 21, 2015, <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21678832-schengen-system-open-borders-was-already-under-pressure-latest-terrorist-attacks-may>.

On one hand, France and the states of Northern Europe...may reintroduce border controls in exceptional cases and leave...border countries like Italy more exposed to waves of refugees. On the other, the Eurocrats of Brussels will have greater interference and control over national policies on immigration...We have already seen what disasters they are capable of. The country under pressure from massive migration flows can no longer even take action independently but has to wait for the European Commission to assess the situation and make a proposal...to the other Member States. Adding insult to injury,...other states can still restore border controls and leave us alone in dealing with humanitarian emergencies. We have seen that the much-vaunted European solidarity exists only on paper because, when it comes to welcoming thousands of refugees and bearing the costs, each [member] goes its own way thinking only of its own interests...We must establish strict, clear rules and responsibilities shared between all Member States to handle any exceptional migration flows; otherwise it is better to definitively renounce the Schengen [agreement] and the freedom of movement.⁴⁷³

Italian nationalism alone cannot doom the Schengen agreement, but it is among a host of factors currently painting a bleak outlook for the future of open borders in Europe.

B. SUGGESTIONS FOR BORDER RESOLUTION

The responses of Italy and its EU partners to the waves of migrants must be multifaceted. The first step is increased vigilance in border enforcement, not just in Italy but along all the vulnerable external borders of the Schengen Area. In order to avoid undermining the open borders within the Schengen Area, all members must assume a role in enforcing the external borders of the Schengen area. There are only two EU members—Ireland and the UK—which are not Schengen members or candidate countries, so in practice the best agency to take responsibility for external border enforcement of the Schengen Area is the EU's FRONTEX.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷³ Mara Bizzotto, "Schengen: Una Riforma che non Cambia un Bel Niente," [Schengen: A Reform that Does not Change Anything,] Lega Nord, (speech, Strasbourg, Germany, June 12, 2013), <http://www.leganord.org/notizie/le-news/10595-bizzotto-schengen-una-riforma-che-non-cambia-un-bel-niente>.

⁴⁷⁴ "Schengen Area," European Commission Department of Migration and Home Affairs, accessed February 20, 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/index_en.htm.

The proposal to establish a robust EU external border control force is not an entirely new idea but rather the expansion of an existing one. The European Commission proposed legislation in December 2015 to increase the EU's role in border enforcement by expanding the FRONTEX agency into a European Border and Coast Guard.⁴⁷⁵ According to the Commission, the European Border and Coast Guard will be a “centre of expertise, a practical support to national border guard authorities, and a guarantor that the system will perform effectively:”

The new European Border and Coast Guard Agency will reinforce Member States' capacities at the external borders through joint operations and rapid border interventions. Its strengthened mandate will include monitoring and supervisory responsibilities, as well as the capacity to intervene in urgent situations either at the request of a Member State or when a Member State is unable or unwilling to act. When such urgent interventions are needed, the new Agency will be able to draw on a pool of resources which are placed at its disposal by the Member States and are available for immediate deployment. The role of the Agency to contribute to search and rescue operations will also be significantly strengthened.⁴⁷⁶

Although the European Border and Coast Guard may be a step in the right direction, it stops short of a full replacement of national border control authorities. As long as border control ultimately remains a national function, however, inconsistencies in enforcement will persist and those nations on the fringes of the EU will be unevenly burdened with border control responsibilities. The alternative—full assumption of border control responsibilities by a collective EU force—would arguably offer a more consistent, equal, and effective method of controlling the EU or Schengen Area borders. Even the most vigilant border enforcement, however, can only go so far to control migratory flows and address humanitarian concerns.

In December 2015 the UN estimated that there were 11 million people displaced within or outside of Syria alone, leading François Heisbourg to assert that “the theoretical potential for further Syrian refugee flows is some ten times greater than the number that

⁴⁷⁵ “European Agenda on Migration: Securing Europe's External Borders,” European Commission, (press release, Strasbourg, Germany, December 15, 2015), http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-6332_en.htm.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

have already sought, or are currently seeking, a safe haven in Europe.”⁴⁷⁷ Conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as in fragile areas throughout Africa and the Middle East suggest that high numbers of refugees will continue to seek asylum in Europe.⁴⁷⁸

Richard Hartshorne posited that de-emphasizing the importance of the boundary is the most effective method to solve border disputes.⁴⁷⁹ The same logic applies to the immigration crisis: If North Africa and the Levant are afflicted with poverty and instability while the Schengen Area enjoys prosperity and stability, massive waves of migrants will continue to flow. The xenophobic approach of the Northern League—to wall off Italy from immigrants—therefore offers only a temporary and ultimately ineffective solution.

To achieve a more lasting solution, the EU must not only aid with border enforcement but moreover heed the advice of Hartshorne. Internally, EU nations must exert greater efforts to assimilate immigrants both culturally and economically in order to avoid the formation of internal divides. If nationalists insist that the ability to speak the national language should be a prerequisite for citizenship, then programs must be implemented during the asylum application process to assist aspiring citizens in learning the language. Externally, enabling the provision of basic human needs such as safety and stability in tumultuous regions within Africa and the Middle East, and thus reducing the massive quality-of-life divide between the EU and these tumultuous regions, would be the only surefire way to limit such overwhelming migratory flows. In Libya, for example, Italy has taken the lead (along with the United States) in efforts to establish a legitimate and effective national government after five years of internal conflict and resulting migrant flows. Achieving stable governance may seem costly and far-fetched in some areas, yet it must retain priority over more temporary solutions.

⁴⁷⁷ François Heisbourg, “The Strategic Implications of the Syrian Refugee Crisis,” *Survival* 57, no. 6 (2015): 9, doi: 10.1080/00396338.2015.1116144.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ Julian V. Minghi, “Boundary Studies in Political Geography,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 53, no. 3 (1963): 414, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2561272>.

C. EFFECTS OF NATIONALISM UPON ITALY'S INTERNATIONAL STANDING

This thesis cannot, and therefore does not attempt to, predict whether nationalist movements will ultimately lead to an increase or decrease in Italy's hard or soft power. The available evidence indicates that such movements could affect Italy's power aspirations in either direction. Some factors point to an increase, yet others suggest the opposite.

Italian nationalism has historically supported a strong military, although this requirement was in large part due to irredentist territorial ambitions which are obsolete today. Contemporary nationalism does, however, place emphasis on defending national borders, and strengthening the military would be a logical consequence. Using Lanoszka's concept that a state's security in the international arena is a combination of national capability and alliances, a shift away from the EU or NATO would require increased national power to maintain the same level of national security.⁴⁸⁰

A strong desire to cement Italy's position as a middle power could also fuel attempts to increase Italy's hard or soft power. Italy has sought middle-power or even minor-great-power status ambitiously since the end of the Cold War, yet this thesis has cited several instances of Italy being marginalized by the great powers, notably the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and the "Quad" (Britain, France, Germany, and the United States).⁴⁸¹ Giacomello and Verbeek assert, however, that the emergence of a multipolar international system and the "rise of regionalism...invite Italy to seek recognition as a 'major middle power' or 'minor great power.'"⁴⁸² A stronger military and increased military ambitions could both serve as tools to cement Italy's status as an established middle power. Giacomello and Verbeek further note that "middle powers are not competing with great powers, but with other (aspiring) middle powers,

⁴⁸⁰ Lanoszka, "Do Allies Really Free Ride," 135.

⁴⁸¹ Giacomello and Verbeek, *Italy's Foreign Policy*, 217.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, 1.

often in the form of ‘preferred peers.’”⁴⁸³ France and Germany are perhaps Italy’s two foremost “preferred peers” due to geographical proximity, historical rivalry, and evidence of competition such as jockeying over permanent seats on the UN Security Council. Efforts to shift the power balance could thus fuel additional competition between Italy and two of its closest counterparts within the leading Euro-Atlantic institutions, NATO and the European Union.

Because status as a middle power tends to be more fluid than great or small power status, reputation is arguably more important to middle powers than to great or small ones.⁴⁸⁴ Membership in the key Euro-Atlantic institutions has greatly increased Italy’s international stature, beginning with the diplomatic reconciliation following World War II and continuing through the global power projection efforts today.⁴⁸⁵ However, perceptions of Italy as self-serving, whimsical, or unstable could damage its reputation internationally. Italy’s history of switching sides during both world wars, recurring internal political upheavals, occasional willingness to prioritize relations with Russia over EU or NATO policy, and troubled economy all serve to reinforce such perceptions. Calculated measures would be required to offset the loss of standing if nationalist movements caused Italy to exit the EU or even NATO, although this thesis cannot forecast the precise character of such measures.

Nationalist or eurosceptic movements draw much of their support from those dissatisfied with the Italian economic situation. Financial crises tend to act as a stimulus for radical politics, and even the mainstream center-right party (Forza Italia) has joined the more radical parties in contemplating an exit from the euro zone. For movements promising an improved national economy, however, increased assertiveness abroad would be difficult to justify. On the contrary, efforts to improve Italy’s economic health could very likely lead to further cuts in defense expenditures. The Northern League in particular, which began as a regional party, has historically emphasized domestic issues

⁴⁸³ Giacomello and Verbeek, *Italy’s Foreign Policy*, 224.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴⁸⁵ Raffaello Matarazzo, “In Search of the North Star,” in Giacomello and Verbeek, *Italy’s Foreign Policy*, 58

more than foreign policy. This was especially true of the Northern League under Bossi but also holds for Salvini. Objections by both the Five Star Movement and the Northern League to foreign interventions further suggest that Italy's nationalist influence ultimately tends to reduce the country's foreign policy initiatives.

D. THE ROAD AHEAD

Looking forward, the next Italian general election will occur no later than May 2018. Public opinion could increase the influence of the Northern League, the Five Star Movement, or Forza Italia before then. Dramatic departures from current policies, however, are unlikely as long as Renzi remains Prime Minister and his Democratic Party controls nearly half of all the seats in both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. Because the Five Star Movement opposes both the Northern League and Forza Italia, moreover, increased support for nationalist agendas is no guarantee that these movements can come together to produce unified action. The 2013 Italian presidential election debacle, in which a new Italian president could not be elected because of the Five Star Movement's refusal to form a coalition with either the left or the right, indicates that radical politics may at times be more likely to produce gridlock than dramatic change.⁴⁸⁶ In either case, gridlock or dramatic change, the impact of nationalist movements will be felt.

More than two years remain between now and the May 2018 election, unless the President calls for an election at an earlier date. Although this may mean that nationalist movements are unlikely to achieve their desired agendas in the near term, it also leaves a lot of time for public support to shift between now and then—especially in the volatile and unpredictable realm of Italian politics. 2018 could be a landmark election for any of the Italian nationalist movements, despite the divergent implications of each party's platform.

⁴⁸⁶ Giorgio Napolitano, then the President of Italy, was asked to serve two more years in that office because of the lack of consensus on a successor.

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