A General Theory of Religious-democratic Change Extracted from the Case of Italy: on the consequences of instituting friendliness toward religion

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This paper examines the dynamic, recursive relationship between democratizing regimes and religion in states who host a predominant, society-wide religion which is perceived to be hostile to democracy. I argue that a favorable opening of the state to religion can convince religious elites and individuals who would be otherwise ambivalent to democracy as a regime type to either embrace democracy or help endow it with legitimacy. However, such a friendly incorporation of religious actors and ideas into young democratic institutions also has important forward, and usually unexpected, effects on the direction of the moral and religious identity of that country. Drawing from original research on the historical Catholic case of pre-1966 Italian democratization, I propose a formal model to understand this relationship by theorizing about the strength of individual religious identities to order individual political preferences in response to institutional change. In doing so, the paper attempts to move beyond recent work focused on the specific relationship of Islam and democracy to hypothesize about change between religion and democracy in general and to specify the conditions under which that change is more probable.

*all translations in the text, unless otherwise noted, are by author

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Over the past ten years scholars and policy-makers have debated over the compatibility of “Islam” and “democracy.” The parameters of this debate have more often than not stuck to the idiosyncrasies of Islamic nations. Some argue that Islamic countries can never fully democratize because of fundamental religious incompatibilities between Islam and democracy;¹ others claim that it is the specific nature of many Islamic nations’ (oil) economies which encourage authoritarianism over democracy;² others, still, argue that many Islamic countries have rich democracy-friendly pasts and futures.³ This debate is hard to resolve, and a general theory about the relationship of Islam to democracy difficult to develop, because there are too few Islamic democracies to disentangle the various effects of Islam, oil and culture on the absence of democracy.

One way to break this impasse is to look beyond Islamic countries. Similar arguments were used to describe the incompatibility of Roman Catholic Christianity⁴ and democracy before the mid-1960s, yet many Catholic countries eventually became democratic. Some of these countries democratized only after state authorities gave the Catholic Church a prominent institutional perch within the new regime. This paper analyzes the effects of such a process in the case of Italy and uses the experience to propose a general theory about the dynamic interplay between predominant society-wide religions which are considered to be hostile to democracy and new democratic regimes. I argue that, all else being equal, a favorable opening of the state to religion can convince religious elites and individuals who would be otherwise ambivalent about democracy as a regime type to either embrace democracy or at least help endow it with legitimacy. However, I also argue that such a friendly incorporation of religious actors and ideas into
young democratic institutions has important forward, and usually unexpected, effects on the direction of the moral and religious identity of that country. The dynamics at work in this model, therefore, can be characterized by a recursive or dialectical process of change between religion and democracy.

In what follows, I briefly situate the argument in the current discussion on religion and democracy. Then, working inductively from the Italian case, I present a theory on the dialectical dynamics affecting democracy and religion which are set into motion when the democratic process is opened to religious elites who are considered to be hostile towards democracy. The argument is then developed by analyzing the effects of subsequent electoral competition on 1) the political goals and strategies of religious elites and 2) the salience of religious identity in the electoral calculus of the median voter. The next section of the paper examines whether this theory fits the sequence of facts in the model-generating case by tracing the process of democratization over two separate periods in Italy. Finally, I conclude with some considerations on the risks of institutional rapprochements between religion and democracy.

Theoretical background

The analytic timeframe of this paper is that of the transition of a regime to democracy, reaching from the moment of democratic transition through to the beginning of its consolidation. While certain economic, political and historical factors may predispose a country toward regime failure,\(^5\) or help ensure its survival,\(^6\) they do not determine the timing of the transition moment itself or its inevitability. Without downplaying the significant impact of macro-structural conditions, I am interested here in the strategic decisions that are made during specific moments of transition which make
democracy a viable long-term option, *ceteris paribus*. In their analysis of democratic transitions, O’Donnell and Schmitter\(^7\) do this by focusing on the types of arrangements democracy-promoting elites should pursue with hard-line military or authoritarian figures of the old regime to insure the greatest success of democratization. In the present analysis, I focus on the types of arrangements democratizers might seek when they face a predominant, society-wide religion\(^8\) which has a monopoly on the national spiritual realm and whose elites, faithful, and doctrine are considered to be unfriendly with respect to democracy.

I adopt a procedural definition of democracy following Dahl\(^9\) and Huntington.\(^10\) By their criteria, democracy requires the periodic election to office of representative leaders coupled with the presence of institutional rights which guarantee those elections to be free, fair and responsive. In order to gauge whether a regime has successfully transitioned to democracy, Linz and Stepan\(^11\) focus on the new government’s ability to command legitimacy as a regime. When a majority of citizens agree to solve their crises within the norms of the democratic formula and attempt to affect policy change through elections rather than regime change, democracy, as Linz and Stepan\(^12\) put it, has been consolidated as, “the only game in town.” For free and fair elections to take place on a continual basis citizens must, therefore, recognize the legitimacy of the electoral process to establish political authority, and they must be willing to play the part of the loyal opposition.\(^13\)

In order to be able to do these things in the first place, Linz and Stepan\(^14\) recognize that a democratic transition presupposes an effective state. Society-wide religions, however, can compete with the binding authority, legitimacy and autonomy of
the state. When a religion’s leaders mobilize their faithful to refuse to pay taxes; go to war; register births, deaths, and marriages; or be educated by the regime, religion usurps the power of the state and undermines the possibility that a democratic regime might win legitimacy without it. It is for this reason that Huntington\textsuperscript{15} and others understand Islamic democracy as an oxymoron. Islamic doctrine, they claim, fuses religion and state and, in its ideal, leaves ultimate political authority in the hands of unelected religious officials. Because of Islamic doctrinal incompatibilities with liberal democracy, secular leaders in countries where Islam is predominant cannot expect their citizens to support them in the democratic process. These leaders cannot believe that certain Islamic factions will ever be a loyal opposition to elected, non-religious governments, and secular leaders therefore fear the possibility that their subjects will use democratic elections to vote in a confessional Islamic state, defined as a theocratic-authoritarian government. As such, Islamic countries are doomed to either have religious authorities control the state or the state control and repress religion.

However, Islam is not the only case of a predominant religion whose theologies have been invoked to collectively mobilize the religious faithful against democracy. Regardless of the premise of Huntington’s\textsuperscript{16} argument that the important Christian scripture, “Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” (Matthew 22:21), historically split Christian Churches from their states and predisposed Christian nations to democracy, we know that this was not always the case, especially for Catholic countries. In his classic analysis of the growth of capitalist democratic societies, Weber\textsuperscript{17} put particular emphasis on the specific cultural factors of European Protestant societies which set them apart from their Catholic counterparts and made them more likely to form
capitalist democracies and secular governments. The Protestant ethic famously enabled its societies to industrialize more quickly, increase societal levels of wealth and security and dispel any need for irrational faith in a priestly other to mediate between society and the mysterious forces of nature.\(^{18}\) These ideas formed the bases of the secularization thesis and one of the most powerful versions of its iteration, namely, that with the advent of modernity and secular politics, religion would shrink to a sphere of private devotion and gradually wither away there.

Instead of withering away, however, Catholic popes and bishops clung to their authority to anoint the sovereignty of Catholic kings and morally order Catholic nations. When liberal, nationalist republicans removed conservative monarchies and installed democratic regimes throughout the 1800s and early 1900s in Italy, Spain, and France, Catholic sectors within these nations were alienated from politics and worked, often violently, against democratic consolidation. Liberal anti-clericals fought hard to take over traditional Church functions in society. Instead of patiently waiting for the process of modernization to marginalize the Church, these early democratic liberals seized Church property, disbanded Catholic associations, jailed Catholic activists and sometimes burned churches and shot priests.\(^{19}\) Catholic leaders, in turn, denounced liberal democracy as an immoral, chaotic and violent political order and vociferously warned against the danger of separating church from state. Although in the 1960s, Lipset,\(^{20}\) Almond and Verba\(^{21}\) and other prominent political scientists continued to theorize that Catholic societies were less predisposed to democracy than Protestant ones, by the early 1990s much of the Catholic world had democratized or was in the process of doing so, and Huntington\(^{22}\) had written that the third wave of democracy had essentially taken
place among Catholic countries. In light of the current debate on Islam and democracy, this “transition” of Catholicism provides important analytical insight into understanding change between religion and democracy.

By putting Islam and Catholicism in a comparative context, I do not mean to downplay their doctrinal and organizational differences which matter for understanding variability in culture, governance and society. However, the closeness of the reaction by Catholic and Islamic elites to secular, liberal ones justifies a joint analysis of the two religions within appropriate bounds. A few important points:

Islam and Catholicism are both transnational, monotheistic religions whose doctrines of faith aspire to universality. This common universal urge has led Islamic and Catholic leaders to adapt these narratives over time to local practices. As Laitin has written, most of the cache of symbols given by any religion can be instrumentally employed with a variety of political regime types, and over the centuries Muslim and Catholic societies have produced variegated options for organizing religious and political power in specific societal arenas. This shared status as historical, universal religions sets both Catholicism and Islam apart from other universalizing, non-religious political ideologies. While concerned with the hic et nunc, the ultimate goals of both religions are to be found in transcendent, spiritual reality. Their worldly and other-worldly visions do not sit in one-to-one correspondence with any singular political, economic or institutional vision. As long as it is possible to achieve spiritual goals, religious actors are structurally flexible over time.

Historically, however, this universal urge simultaneously led religious leaders to use their moral and spiritual authority in the short run to seek a hegemonic religious
status in society. They did this by collaborating intimately and often corruptly with the monarchical, authoritarian and sultanistic regimes which presided over confessional states in the name of morality and order. Catholic Kings and Muslim Caliphates, in turn, defended the faithful and enjoyed a “divine” legitimacy of their rule that was recognized by most official religious authorities. When the advent of secular nationalism, therefore, challenged this hegemonic moral and political authority, sectors of both Catholic and Muslim elites reacted in an analogously radical and conservative fashion. Whether in response to secular liberal republicans in Europe or secular colonial or post-colonial governments in the Middle East and North Africa, Catholic and Islamist leaders were successful in mobilizing their faithful in familiar patterns of response by restoring politically useful doctrines from their religious traditions of the past to exclude the possibility of democracy.

The first and ultimate fear animating these reactions by intransigent Catholics or Islamic radicals was not democratic institutions themselves, but political marginalization and the loss of social relevance which they perceived to be synonymous with secular democracy. If the emphasis of certain theological ideas which were hostile to democracy followed, rather than preceded, the perception of hostile oppression on the part of the modern, secular state, then an emphasis on theological ideas which are compatible with democracy might follow a favorable perception by religious elites of a modern, democratic state which does not hold hostile, secularizing designs on them. Theology may shape praxis, but praxis often also shapes theology, and the advent of democracy in Islamic regions might have much to do with the outcome of successful negotiations and compromises between religious and democratic leaders. In what follows I use the case
of Italy to build a more general theory for analyzing what the effects of such negotiations might be.

**Framework**

Italy represents an ideal model-generating case study for understanding the causal story of the change between Catholicism and democracy. Italy democratized, for good, before the Catholic Church doctrinally accepted democracy as a legitimate form of political government, at the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s. The Italian case also represents important variation over time. In their first attempt at democracy, the anticlerical liberals steering the Italian state tried to marginalize the power of the Church. Such a strategy helped make Catholic citizens more predisposed to support 22 years of fascism. In their second attempt at democracy, after World War II, the new democratic government pursued an institutionally friendly relationship with the Catholic Church and succeeded in winning over the Catholic faithful to support the democratic regime. This also had important consequences on the goals pursued by the Catholic Church.

The model I propose theoretically clarifies a dialectical process of change, here presented in two stages. In the first stage, the nascent democratic state reaches out to hostile religious elites and these religious elites nominally legitimate the transition to democracy by agreeing to sanction the initial electoral process and encourage their faithful to vote. Through its formal and informal institutional posturing towards religion the democratic state can win over that religion’s legitimizing support by guaranteeing the freedom, security and relevance of the state’s national religious faith. With the question of survival removed, the religion’s leaders and faithful breathe easier and without fundamentally altering religious doctrine, religious leaders shift the sights of their
political goals. Instead of collectively fighting for survival, pragmatic and politically moderate religious elites have a greater incentive to embrace democracy as a legitimate source of non-oppressive political authority, and religious radicals and intransigents have new incentive to try to achieve their radical ends by winning power in the electoral process. Whether their motivation lays in purely spiritual or political goals, my theory predicts that on average a friendly posture on the part of democratic elites backed with institutional guarantees can persuade enough religious elites to nominally sanction the initial electoral process and encourage their faithful to vote.

These religious elites gain significant bargaining leverage over the nature of the nascent democracy. As the guiding heads of a society-wide cultural hegemon outside the control of the state, religious leaders have the power to deny the new democratic state the legitimacy it needs to survive in the long run. In addition, by offering institutional protection to religion, religious leaders receive a significant part to play in directing the moral economy of the new regime. It is probable that the system of democratic rights and laws initially set up in the constitution will not be of the full liberal variant that democratic leaders and intellectuals may have hoped for.

If hostile religious elites have the thicker causal arrows in this first stage, however, in the second stage, that of the beginnings of consolidation, engagement of the religious faithful with the institutions of democracy becomes more important. In this phase, the interaction between government posturing and individuals’ engagement with the electoral process is best understood through a focus on the identities of voters. A key insight of the literature on identity politics is that all individuals, even faithful religious individuals, have multiple and changing identities (including religion, gender, ethnicity,
and class) which can order or nest within one another. These “identity repertoires” are shaped over time by processes of framing. Posner,\textsuperscript{28} Laitin\textsuperscript{29} and others have focused on the capacity of institutions to set the parameters for which identity of one’s identity repertoire is most “profitable” for political mobilization. The activation of latent democracy-supporting cleavages in post-World War II Italy, I argue, could be the result of a change in the framing of the relationship of the state towards religion. Formal and informal institutional changes between state and religious elites changed the possibilities for individuals to be both politically profitable and spiritually secure.

Whether or not these religious elites agree to elections with democratic intentions in mind, religious elites who encourage their faithful to enter the electoral process help expose their followers to non-religious political appeals by other political parties and entrepreneurs. I argue that it is through this mechanism that a change to a friendlier church-state arrangement can lessen the salience of religious identity on an individual’s calculus of political interest, in effect, re-arranging the order of which identity she chooses out of her identity repertoire as the most important in her electoral decisions.

Formally, the change in the salience of religious identity could be thought of as affecting the total probability of the religious content of any individual’s political decisions, calculated as the product of the singular probabilities associated with the multiple identities of that individual’s particular identity set. By this I mean both the weight of an individual’s religious identity or faith on the calculus of her electoral decisions as well as the extent to which she pressures her representatives to pursue legislation and political alliances based on religious versus other concerns.
To illustrate, let us assume the existence of three basic identity cleavages in early 20th century Italy: region, $R$ (north versus south); class, $C$ (workers versus petite bourgeoisie); and religious intensity, $A$ (Catholic versus less Catholic). The general identity set of an Italian, then, was \{R, C, A\}. We can imagine that the total probability of any Italian individual’s political decisions would be the product of each of his or her particular identities, or $R*C*A$. In the pre-fascist democratic period Catholics were likely to vote for conservative liberal parties or anti-system monarchist parties, if they voted at all. Likewise, a petite bourgeoisie was more likely to vote conservative than a worker, and an individual from the south was more likely to vote conservative than an individual from the north.

The mutual hostility between religion and state, however, aggravated the salience of religious identity with respect to class and region, meaning that the effects of religious identity were weightier on the total probability of voting than class or region identities. To capture this element of salience, we can add an exponent to each identity element of an individual’s identity set, thus weighting the total probability of voting according to the salience of each identity. The probability of voting conservative or liberal then becomes: $R^p*C^q*A^r$. If all the exponents ($p$, $q$, $r$) are 1, the probability would just be $R*C*A$. If any exponent is zero, the contribution of that identity would become 1, that is to say, that identity would no longer make any difference on the probability of an individual voting conservative or liberal. However, if the exponent is large and positive, the impact of an identity is magnified. This puts in relief the key mechanism of the theoretical model: Democratic state elites can manipulate $r$, the exponent of $A$, by changing the context of the relationship between church and state, and by reaching out to religious elites and their
faithful. If the religion feels that it is under attack, $r$ can become large and an individual’s religious identity matters a lot for their political actions, but if the religion and state are on good terms, $r$ approaches zero and religious identity matters very little, so $R$ and $C$ alone determine the probability that one’s religious identity will have the determining influence on the order of her political desires.

The potential this shift in framing creates for individuals to vote on the basis of other political interests, hitherto nested within their larger religious identity interests, gives democracy a needed boost of legitimacy by weaving a larger fabric of cross-cutting cleavages made up of individuals who realize they have something to gain together from the electoral process. The potential to be politically successful while retaining their religious identity can temper the hostility of religious individuals towards democracy in the long run. In order to continue to have a public voice in politics, religious authorities, in turn, must learn to respond to the wider range of issue-areas created by any electoral and programmatic shifts in the political goals of their faithful. They can no longer play the “survival” or “protest” card to make successful political appeals. The dynamics of electoral competition thus prizes those religious leaders who are able to make appeals outside of exclusively religious ones or who can frame their religious goals to include other, less-religious voters. This makes it much more difficult for the voices of the most anti-democratic aspects of religious platforms to be projected electorally, namely those which claim that one religion alone has the rights to political and moral authority and who refuse the legitimacy of plural political contestation and opposition.

By marginalizing these voices, elections held under these conditions favor the political secularization necessary for elected authorities to govern independently of
unelected religious authorities. This does not necessarily lead to the religious secularization of society, but by empowering the individual with a vote it does alter the channels by which religious authority exerts itself in society. As the religious faithful begin to politically mobilize on the basis of non-religious identities they gain potential and voice to shift the goals of religious authorities and, eventually, open the possibility for bottom-up transformation of that religion. Even if the state becomes a “confessional democracy,” religious elites must periodically persuade their faithful voters of their political and religious worthiness in order to sustain their privileged institutional position. National levels of religiosity are consequentially set free to reflect the subsequent relationship struck between religious leaders and the religious faithful.

The first stage of this model is an elite-driven transition process wherein religious elites have the stronger hand to shape the religious and institutional nature of democracy through their bargaining leverage. The second stage is a bottom-up consolidation process in which the masses participate in the electoral arena and shape both the religious and political goals of those religious leaders.

Application to the Italian Case

In the sections which follow I examine the sequence of events in the democratization(s) of Italy to provide evidence which clarifies this dialectical model of change and illustrates its causal mechanisms at work.

Liberal Anti-clericals and Hostile Institutions (1846-1922)

The historical roots of the Catholic Church’s reaction to liberal democracy were laid during the papacy of Pope Pius IX (1846-1878). Throughout the conflicts of the nineteenth century, the Church lined up politically with conservative European
monarchists who defended national faith, order and family against liberal republicans who defended secular constitutions, self-governance and “freedom of conscience.”

Added to this debate in Italy was the question of the Pope’s own temporal role as the ruling head of the Papal States, the last of several historic Italian city-states to unite formally with the republic of Italy during the Risorgimento. Following twenty years of battles and deliberations, republican Italian troops were finally able to wrest Rome from Papal forces in 1870. Pius IX, however, refused to relinquish any official sovereignty over the Papal States to the Italian state and famously declared himself a “prisoner of Rome.” In this context, Pope Pius IX issued two important decrees which would guide precedent for Catholic thought on democracy until after World War II. In 1864, he wrote the Syllabus Errorum, which included 80 errors that attacked liberalism, modernism and pluralism and reasserted the need for an institutionalized state religion. He infamously stated that it was an error to hold that:

§55. the Church ought to be separated from the State, and the State from the Church.
§77. in the present day, it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion shall be held as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other modes of worship.\footnote{30}

Then, immediately following the seizure of Rome, Pius IX issued a non-expedit informing Catholics that it was a “grave” sin to vote or involve oneself in secular Italian politics and that doing so risked excommunication. In response, Catholic lay leaders drafted a political manifesto of Intransigent Catholics in which they swore unconditional fidelity to the Pope, irreducible opposition to the liberal state, and systematic electoral abstentionism.\footnote{31}
From Leo XIII (1878-1903), who followed Pius IX, through to Pius XII (1938-1958) and the beginning of Catholic democracy in Italy, two somewhat contradictory dynamics reflecting the duality of the Church's political and doctrinal goals characterize the Italian Church's political activity. First, Popes and Italian Bishops continued the struggle against modernism and liberalism. Although the prospect of restoring the whole of the Papal territorial kingdom waned with time and Catholics became more restless to join in the democratic political process, Pius IX's successors continued to employ the non expedit to protest the legitimacy of the liberal regime. As anti-clerical laws continued to be periodically passed, the Church found fodder to renew its belief that the liberal political system of government was intent on marginalizing the Catholic Church and forcing secularization upon Italy. The Catholic hierarchy remained insistent on the need for a negotiated concordat with the Italian state which could guarantee the sovereignty and moral primacy of the Catholic Church in Italian society. Catholic intransigents, therefore, continued their program of abstentionism.

Secondly, however, this string of Popes became simultaneously more sensitive to the evolving political consciousness of their faithful, and the Church innovated ways to organize and channel this. While condemning liberal secularism, Pope Leo XIII emphasized that the Church's domain was foremost a spiritual empire, and Benedict XV (1914-1922) declared that it was not the Church's purpose to decide between conflicting systems of government. Beginning with Pope Leo XIII, Catholic authorities encouraged the creation of an intensely active Catholic civil society outside of normal politics that mobilized the Catholic faithful into participative associations. In 1867 the Society of Catholic Youth was founded, later evolving into Catholic Action, and it would create
Catholic newspapers, Catholic cooperatives, Catholic rural banks and professional societies. In 1891 Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum* called attention to the plight of the working classes, and in 1904 the Church created a federation of Catholic workers’ unions through which many Catholics of working class backgrounds organized their needs. From a doctrinal point of view, it was not clear that the Church so much opposed the principles of democracy as it was opposed politically to the type of liberalism and anti-clericalism embodied by democratic governments of the time.

Inner contradictions, thus, lay under the surface of the Italian Church’s projected unity and its relation to Italian electoral politics. On the one hand, the Church supported, led, and encouraged a dense civil society, outside of party politics, which represented and organized the needs of a growing Catholic working class. A good part of this Catholic base refused to vote in elections because they faced a government that they felt was bent on eroding their spiritual identity and replacing it with secular authority. On the other hand, in its fight against liberal democratic secularism, the Catholic Church found itself tacitly and sometimes openly supporting the political parties of the conservative right who did not represent the political interests of many of the Catholic Church’s faithful base.

The contradictions between those sympathies and the development of modern Catholic social doctrine electorally surfaced for an historic moment in 1919 when Luigi Sturzo attempted to activate the Catholic middle and working classes by forming *il Partito Popolare* (PPI). The Church hierarchy did not openly condemn Sturzo for doing so, nor did it approve of him. The PPI had some early but not overwhelming electoral
success as a party of the opposition, but Sturzo soon fled into exile after Mussolini began to assume political power in 1922.

Fascist Governments and Friendly Institutions (1922-1944)

While Mussolini was wary of the clerical political intentions of the Catholic hierarchy, he also realized that the creation of a strong Italian state which promoted order and authority required the assistance of the Catholic Church. Although in later years he would lose the support of the Vatican, Mussolini was initially able to gain great Catholic support for fascism and even delegate to the Church such state functions as education and certain welfare duties. Reversing the policy norms of earlier liberal governments, Mussolini actively reached out to the Catholic Church and faithful and negotiated a set of institutional agreements with the Vatican on Pope Pius XI’s own terms. This set of agreements, the Lateran Pacts, would later become a key tool that the new democratic government would use to secure the support of the Church for democracy in 1946.

The Lateran Pacts restored a strong institutional role for the Church in Italian society, making the “Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Religion” the “only religion of the State.” This clause, in the opening phrase of the Pacts, made Italy a confessional state by all effects and bound it to protecting the interests of the Church at the expense of other religions. The Pacts also returned to the Church its charge of educating Italian school children, making Catholic religious education in schools compulsory once again; Church Canon law was given the authority to decide on matters of marriage; state-sponsored salaries were given to ecclesiastical institutions; ecclesiastical communities were restored; and most of the Church calendar feast days were recognized as national
holidays.37 In return, the Church agreed to say a blessing to Mussolini in public masses, vet lists of potential bishops to the government, and swear an oath of fidelity to the state.

Following the Lateran Pacts, the majority of Italian Catholics gladly gave their symbolic legitimacy to the fascist regime and the Catholic hierarchy profited from their new legal status to expand their presence in society. The Church regularly beseeched the fascist government for aid in the defense of Catholic moral order38 and sought to combat anti-Catholic influences within the state. Protestants, although few in number, were marginalized and put under surveillance, bound by law to request permits for preaching occasions and to advise the government of religious gatherings.39 The 1935 Buffarini Circolare outlawed any Evangelical practice on Italian soil as “contrary to the social order and harmful to the physical and mental integrity of the race,”40 and most of the leaders of the Evangelical churches were sent to internment camps or exiled abroad.

By giving into the demands of the Catholic Church, Mussolini calculated he could marginalize the political power of the Church and please a large constituency of Italians who identified themselves in the grand majority as Catholics. The Church would essentially have no reason to protest or intervene in politics and therefore have little reason to incite their faithful to resist the state. When Pius XI declared that, “We have given back God to Italy and Italy to God,” Mussolini retorted that, “We have not revived the temporal power of the Popes, we have buried it and left them with as much territory as would suffice for them to bury its corpse.”41 As the designs of Mussolini to control the Church became clear, Catholic subgroups increasingly resisted fascist leadership, skirmishing, often violently, with Fascist Youth societies and becoming critical centers for the Italian Resistance.
**New Democratic Parties and Friendly Institutions (1944-1966)**

In the last years of the war, political parties began working openly again. The Christian Democrats (DC) formed as a Christian party of the center and steered by lay Catholic leaders like Alcide de Gasperi and Giuseppe Dossetti who were politically rooted in Church doctrines on social justice and who had long advocated Catholic participation in democratic, pluralistic elections. However, the DC entered the political scene as a relatively weak shadow of the massive networks of the Italian Catholic subculture to which the party turned to win its electoral support. This heterogeneous subculture was acutely centralized and took its directives foremost from the Vatican and the Catholic Curia, whose leaders were rooted in the Church’s tradition of intransigence towards liberalism and especially concerned with preserving the confessional aspect of the new Republic.

In 1944, party heads met in Salerno and found themselves at an impasse over what sort of post-war government to form. Palmiro Togliatti, the historic Italian communist leader-in-exile, broke the impasse by declaring that Italian national unity had to come before the revolutionary social reform desired by many. Fearing the chaos of civil war, contemporaneously unfolding in Greece, Togliatti was careful to cull the Catholic vote, as Mussolini had done, and signaled no hostile intention of breaking with the Lateran Pacts. Following the interim elections of 1946, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party (PCI) formed a center-left coalition with the DC, headed by De Gasperi, and with the mandate to write a new constitution. Together with most of the important surviving politicians of the pre-Mussolini period liberals, communists and socialists who had fought the Church for decades voted to write the Lateran Pacts in their
entirety into the new Italian constitution as the price of the religious peace necessary to build a legitimate Italian state.\(^{43}\) When the interim government’s mandate expired a year later, divisions in the left and vigorous campaigning by the Church and the DC gave the DC a majority victory without the communist or socialist parties, handing the DC the lead of an electorally powerful center-right coalition.

Given its recent experience with fascism and the Church’s historical relationship with liberal democracy, it was not obvious that the Catholic Church would fully embrace democracy at the end of the war. The Catholic Church made no new proclamation that democracy had been purified or deemed worthy of full Catholic legitimization. Rather, the Church hierarchy unlocked the identities of their faithful to enter into the democratic process because the democratic state promised the Church a special position which allowed a higher probability of cultural hegemony and because the real secularist threat had shifted to the loom of anti-religious communism. Beginning with his Christmas Radio Messages at the end of the war and then intensifying during the electoral campaigns of 1946-1948, Pius XII launched a veritable crusade to combat the Catholic tradition of electoral abstentionism and admonish Catholics to vote for “Christian” candidates.\(^{44}\) Publicly reversing Pius IX’s exhortations, Pius XII declared that Catholics had a duty to vote and that not doing so represented a mortal sin.\(^{45}\)

Pius XII had little difficulty accepting and encouraging that part of democracy which defended human rights, promoted social and economic justice and protected the Catholic Church from totalizing authoritarian governments.\(^{46}\) At the same time, he made it abundantly clear that the type of democracy that could be successful in both Italy and
the world was a “protected” democracy, one which guaranteed the right and necessity for the Church to intervene in politics.\textsuperscript{47}

Pope Pius XII calculated that the Catholic Church could play the role of global \textit{Defensor Civitatis} and rebuild Christian civilization through an alliance of Catholic politicians and democratic institutions. Pius XII thought that Italy had the numbers of practicing Catholics within the electorate, theoretically bound by Church obedience, to ensure that the Church remained the sole master of truth and morality within Italian democracy. These calculations led him to resist those voices within the hierarchy who, together with General Franco, tried to persuade him to pursue a non-democratic “Spanish solution” and pressure the Italian government to outlaw communist parties and criminalize their leaders.\textsuperscript{48}

While nominally legitimizing democratization in Italy by flipping the Catholic electoral switch, however, the rhetoric of the rest of Pope Pius XII’s papacy can hardly be considered to be supportive of democratic consolidation and focused, instead, on protecting the confessional nature of Italy. Flanked by the Catholic hierarchy, the Pope tried to make the Lateran Pacts the guiding political heart of the new Italian Republic\textsuperscript{49} and attempted to use the Church’s institutional position to that end, through its role in public education, its influence within the DC and its juridical status as confessional religion. Catholic officials continued to make use of fascist-era police ordinances that punished offences against the “religion of state.” Police reports of the time are full of hundreds of accounts of arrests, generally requested by Catholic priests, of socialists, Protestants or irreverent youth who publically criticized the Catholic Church or the figure of the Pope.\textsuperscript{50} Protestant leaders continued to require permits to preach, and the \textit{Buffarini}
Circolare, reaffirmed by the DC minister of Interior, Mario Scelba, remained in effect until 1955.\textsuperscript{51}

The calculations made by the Vatican hierarchy about the potential electoral support for a Catholic agenda were partially right at an aggregate numbers level. The overwhelming majority of Italians were, after all, baptized Catholics and the success of the DC in the first few elections appeared to be much more correlated with the spectacular growth of Catholic Action and other Catholic organizations closely under Vatican control than that of DC party membership.\textsuperscript{52} As Jemolo,\textsuperscript{53} Oppenheim\textsuperscript{54} and other contemporary observers wrote, without the benefit of hindsight, the period seemed to be one of the full Catholic, and not particularly democratic, “restoration” of Italy.

The assessment of these numbers did not grasp that the salience of Italian religious identity would not always take primacy over the other political identities and interests of Catholics. Therefore, while the Church was able to engage a great majority of regularly practicing Catholics from different socio-economical backgrounds to support the DC coalition, paradoxically, as Catholics fully assumed the reigns of political life in Italy this political power also jeopardized the Church’s political and spiritual authority over its faithful. While a nominally Catholic party remained in power and the Church retained its institutionally protected position, intransigent Catholic leaders found it much harder to mobilize Italian Catholics for mono-religious causes or justify the necessity of an authoritarian clergy-lay model of association.

Once they had achieved electoral power, both DC party elites as well as many of the Catholic faithful became less interested with the need for defending their religious identities politically and more concerned with strategically pursuing other political and
economic interests. The increasing sympathies for left-leaning socialist parties among many Catholics coupled with the public de-legitimization of parties too far to the right moved the pragmatic wing of the DC to contemplate making deals with some of the most explicitly secular parties of the left.  

When the Catholic laity, both leaders and faithful, began to pursue electoral interests outside the directives of the Church, the Pope turned his energies to combat this growing self-assertion. In 1944 the Vatican pressured Catholic communist and socialist formations to disband and join the DC. In 1949, the Pope proclaimed it a sin to vote for communist parties or leaders and excommunicated communists from the Church. In 1952 the Vatican threatened to pull its support away from the DC for an alternative, “more Catholic” party on the right. When the DC performed poorly in the 1953 elections, the Pope criticized the party for putting “too much emphasis on democratic values” and blamed the DC from refraining to deal a deadly blow to the communists through legislative reworking. As late as 1958, the Italian Bishop’s Conference continued to instruct the faithful to vote only for those politicians who opposed coalitions with socialists or communists.

These efforts on the part of the Vatican hierarchy to consolidate a Catholic confessional state inside democratic institutions failed. The center of gravity of Catholic political power had shifted away from those Church elites concerned with exclusively religious aims to the masses of Italian citizens and the lay political leaders representing them. With the Lateran Pacts, these Catholics understood that their spiritual identities were no longer politically in danger and were sophisticated enough from then on to distinguish Church voices on doctrine versus public policy. This made them less likely
to heed Catholic calls for intransigence versus other legitimate opposition parties and more ready to embrace democratic institutions as the arena within which to solve their political problems. The following section examines available statistical evidence to evaluate this claim drawing from electoral and survey data to evaluate how Catholic voters’ political desires changed over time.

Statistical Evidence:

In 1946, the electoral results of the first post-war elections enfranchised whole new classes of voters who had never participated in electoral politics before either because they had abstained from voting or because they did not yet have the right to vote (which was true of women). The Catholic Church campaigned to engage these new voters, with success: In 1919 the regions of Italy with the highest percentage of abstention voters, Veneto (where 58.5% of the registered electorate voted), Sicily (47.9%) and Sardinia (56.6%), were also the regions with some of the highest concentrations of regularly practicing Catholics. In the elections of 1946 and 1948, respectively, these same regions saw their electoral participation rates rocket to an average of 90% of registered voters. Subtracting the numbers of women voters in 1948 and those who were not of voting age in 1919 from the party profiles of 1948, we can roughly calculate how successful the DC was in mobilizing the pre-fascist pool of abstention voters in these regions. On the islands of Sicily and Sardinia, the DC was able to gain new male voters in 1948 from the voting classes of 1919 at a rate of 1.6 to 1 more than the Communist and Socialist parties did, and in Veneto, their gains in this category outmatched the left by 3.6 to 1. Likewise, Italian women, who tended to be even more
practicing Catholic than Italian men, voted 51% for the DC nationally, making up 63% of the party’s electorate.

After the height of the combined Catholic-DC electoral success in 1948, when it became clear that the DC would focus on relatively moderate issues of the center, small but noteworthy percentages of Italian voters peeled off to the right and the left of the party. Even as the Church excommunicated communists, the PCI’s greatest expansion of the 1940s and early 1950s came in the traditionally Catholic zones of the south of Italy:

[Tables 1 about here]

Those Catholics within the DC who were most concerned with the social interests of the working class abandoned the party, as Giuseppe Dossetti notably had in 1951. And in the north, after 1948, the locus of the largest, albeit very modest, growth of the left was in the “white” Catholic zones of the Veneto. Over time, therefore, more and more Catholics from certain identity categories transferred their votes to the left. By 1968, Barnes reported that 70% of regularly practicing Catholics with general union ties identified themselves as left partisans in addition to 56% of semi-practicing Catholics from the north.

While not physically changing their party affiliation, the attitudes of the large, stable lump of regularly practicing Catholics who stayed within the DC profoundly changed in a similar direction, greatly transforming the political relationship of these voters to the Church hierarchy. This change is perhaps most manifest in the sloughing off of many Catholic voters’ political intransigence towards the left. As the political impact of their identity set as industrial and agricultural workers grew in salience, many Italian Catholics were increasingly likely to regard opposition parties of the left, who also
claimed to represent workers, as potentially legitimate ruling parties. The following two tables constructed from DOXA surveys of the time regarding the perception of whether a good Catholic could also be a good socialist begin to register this change in the salience of intransigent religious imperatives on the political desires of Italian voters.

[Tables 2 and 3 about here]

From 1953-1963, the majority of Italian went from answering this in the negative to the positive. This change was driven in large part by the altered perceptions among the rank and file of DC supporters who the Church hierarchy had singularly tried to persuade against voting socialist. By 1961 there were already more DC sympathizers who wanted to see the strengthening of a center-left coalition between the DC and socialists than not and by 1963 some 27% of DC members thought an individual could even be a good Catholic and a “militant” revolutionary communist.

The changing perceptions with regard to this historic Apertura alla Sinistra are also consistent with data on respondents’ attitudes towards the role of religion in politics from the late 1950s and early 1960s and that a majority of Italians approved of a secularized political sphere. Even if they had enthusiastically responded to the Catholic hierarchy’s explicitly religious political project in the electoral mobilization of the late 1940s, by 1958 a majority of the DC electorate was convinced that the Catholic hierarchy and clergy should not interfere with Italian politics:

[Table 4 about here]

What distinguishes DC sympathizers from partisans of other political parties in these surveys, however, is that they continued to be more likely to retain that the clergy still had the right and responsibility to intervene in the private life of Catholics. The great
majority of socialist and communist respondents, on the other hand, thought that the Church had no right to intervene in either the political or private matters of Italians. While church attendance among Italians slid in the 1950s, throughout the 1960s religious practice remains one of the most probable indicators of DC party membership and DC supporters continued to have a very high esteem for the Catholic clergy. Thus, neither religiosity nor “religious affectation” among DC supporters disappears during this time period of study. Following the post-war democratic elections in Italy DC voters secularized politically much more quickly than they secularized religiously. They continued to be politically concerned about national religious and moral questions, but these reasons were increasingly dwarfed by other political concerns.

In addition to helping consolidate democracy, this political secularization of the Catholic democratic faithful of Italy stimulated changes in the religious and political pursuits of Catholicism as a religion. In 1958, John XXIII succeeded Pius XII as Pope, and directed the papacy’s political sights towards the global arena, breaking from his predecessors’ political struggles within Italian politics. While just two years before Cardinal Giuseppe Siri, president of the conference of Italian Bishops, had clearly reinforced Vatican directives against DC coalitions with socialists, in 1960 Cardinal Montini declared that possibilities existed for a Catholic political alliance with the socialist party.

In the same year, John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council. The council elevated ex-DC vice-secretary, Giuseppe Dossetti, and other Catholic thinkers like Jacques Maritain and John Courtney Murray who had theologically and philosophically reemphasized parts of Catholic doctrine as supportive of democracy. When John XXIII
died in 1963, Cardinal Montini was elected Pope Paul VI and presided over the institutionalization of John XXIII’s reforms. The key documents of Vatican II, the declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965) and the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), coupled with John XXIII’s encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963) all emphasized the inviolability of human rights, the importance of freedom of conscience, the need for the freedom of religions in a pluralistic society and the right of all individuals to “participate freely and actively” in the establishment and government of political community. Many Italian bishops fought the drafting of *Dignitatis Humanae*, which specifically endorsed religious freedom, and recognized it as a stamp of their failure to institute a Catholic confessional state. The majority supporting the document judged the pragmatic political concerns of the times, which demanded the congruence of political and religious rights within modern democracies, to be more important than the theological traditions which had established the Church as the exclusive teacher of *Truth*, and therefore often its political enforcer. Theologically, the declaration upholds religious liberty on the overriding imperative of the dignity of the human person, which outstrips any form of moral coercion which might have been politically justified to protect society from moral error, especially in those circumstances where one religion is accorded privileged institutional status.

It is quite possible that democracy would have eventually happened in Italy without the support of the Catholic Church and that international, economic and historical factors would have inevitably determined Italian democratization anyway. As other authors writing on Italian democratization have argued, however, while these macro-conditions might have strengthened the probability of democratic consolidation, they did
so indirectly and could not have pre-determined Italian democracy at the end of the war. The presence of allied forces in Italy certainly provided a safety net and the urgency for a peaceful negotiation during the delicate years of 1945-1947, although they did not necessarily preclude a fully democratic solution. If the Church had campaigned for the monarchist vote in 1946, it might have tipped the scales on the national referendum on the monarchy.\textsuperscript{80} There is little reason to suggest that the allies would not have supported such a government so long as it was anti-communist,\textsuperscript{81} just as the United States continued to support authoritarian governments in Spain, Portugal and Greece well into the 1970s.

This scenario becomes even more likely if the Catholic Church had not found a reason to electorally mobilize in 1946 and opted, instead, for a monarchical or other more authoritarian form of government. The Americans pulled their troops out of Italy in 1947, Italy was a neighbor to the communist state of Yugoslavia, and the north was ideologically very close to the eastern socialist bloc. If the socialists and communists had worked together in 1948, they might have electorally defeated the DC, instituted some sort of Socialist Republic and inched the nation closer to open war between communist and Catholic political forces. As for economic determinism, the Italian post-war economy was at one-third capacity at the end of World War II, and Italy’s real economic boom only began to come into its own ten years later. Intense economic and social modernization certainly helped to accelerate the mobility of the Italian electorate after democratization occurred and speed a process of notable societal secularization throughout the 1960s and 1970s. This improvement in the economic and social standards of living, combined with fear of civil war and institutional parliamentarian arrangements\textsuperscript{82} all played an important role in the later consolidation of Italian
democracy, as the success of democracy bred its own legitimacy. However, without the initial support that the Church helped garner for democratic elections, it is doubtful that Italian democracy would have withstood such odds of surviving in the immediate post-war period.

**Conclusion**

This paper has argued that mutual change in a democratic direction is possible between friendly democracies and hostile religions. It illustrated the causal mechanisms of this dialectic process in the case of Italy and suggests that any predominant, society-wide religion will face similar dynamics. Even if a religion is hostile to democracy, the framework implies that there will always be some latent subset of religious individuals whose identity sets would be poised to gain from the positive impact of electoral democracy on their political interests. If this latent subset of religious individuals is large enough, potential democratizers should focus on convincing them that they can be simultaneously both democratic and religious individuals, instead of succumbing to the fear of an irreducible competition between religion and democracy. In addition to pursuing economic growth and international allies who can also strengthen the survival possibilities of new democratic regimes, democratic states and their elites need to carve out an appropriate institutional space for religious identities in order to fully legitimate their new regimes.

Transnational religions like Islam and Catholicism appear to be around to stay for some time and that means that there will continue to be tensions between religion and state for the allegiance of their faithful, even in successful democracies. While this paper has argued that those tensions can be reasonably worked out under the right conditions,
as the Italian case illustrates, rapprochement also produces costs to both religion and democracy. In making itself friendly to a society-wide religion, the democratic state institutionally orients itself towards that religion’s values system, producing ambiguities and risks as it incorporates them into its system of law, economics, welfare, education and national symbolism. On the one hand, these values may not be especially liberal ones, a potentially heavy price to pay for democrats. On the other hand, while gaining some institutional voice, religion opens the door for its faithful to vote in coalitions on the basis of their political interests, which may be in conflict with religious institutional and doctrinal interests. Thus, while entering elections in the hopes of securing its survival, religious leaders may inadvertently lose the allegiance of their faithful. However, without reaching out to a hostile religion, a young democratic state may never gain sufficient popular legitimacy and democratize fully. Likewise, without dealing with the democratic state, a hostile religion runs the risk of being marginalized away from the state anyway, either forcefully or as a cast-away by-product of successful political and religious secularization.

Once again the case of Italy might be used to illustrate the potential for a relatively happy, long-run equilibrium between society-wide religions and the nations they inhabit. Its messy and inefficient political landscape notwithstanding, Italy remains a stable and relatively successful democracy, a “second-best” that has held to democratically protecting non-Catholic rights and religious freedoms even while the Catholic Church has used its position to maintain a significant public and political voice. While suffering a period of religious secularization throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, the Catholic Church took advantage of the institutional space in which it was
simultaneously free and protected to remobilize its faithful. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, new Italian Catholic movements rejuvenated the Church; some current surveys report nearly 40% of the population going to Mass at least once a week, a significant increase in religious observance over a fifteen-year period. If Italy represents an imperfect yet stable religious-democratic equilibrium, it provides further evidence that all religious politics will not necessarily end up being anti-democratic, nor that all consolidated democracies will necessarily be religiously secular.

1 Huntington 1996
2 Luciani 1988, Ross 2001
3 Burgat and Dowell 1993, Esposito and Voll 1996, Nasr 2005
4 Like Christianity, Islam, of course, has many different branches of practice, the most famous being Shi’a and Sunni, both of which have been judged by certain experts, such as Huntington, to be inimical to democratic development. Although there is much to be said for the differences among Islamic rites, they are left unexplored within the confines of this paper.
5 Linz 1978
6 Przeworski et al. 2000
7 O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986
8 Which I define as any religion which can claim 75% or more of a national population’s self-reported religious identity. As others have suggested (Dowd forthcoming), pluralistic religious societies may have other, distinct, dynamics at play.
9 Dahl 1971
10 Huntington 1991
11 Linz and Stepan 1996
12 Ibid.
13 Linz 1978, Dahl 1971
14 Linz and Stepan 1996
15 Huntington 1996
16 Ibid.
17 Weber 1978
18 Ibid.
19 Kalyvas 1996, Philpott 2007
20 Lipset 1960
21 Almond and Verba 1963
22 Huntington 1991
23 Laitin 1986
24 Esposito and Voll 1994, Appleby 2000
25 Marty and Appleby 1993
Some of the most notable of this legislation included the *Saccardi* laws of 1850 in the Piedmont which abolished the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts (Kalyvas 1996); the 1865 law requiring civil marriages; the dissolution of monasteries and ecclesiastical bodies (some 25,000 by Helmreich’s (1979) count); and the 1908 law forbidding religious material from being taught in public schools (Jemolo 1960).

The Lateran Pacts included two treaties in one: a bilateral treaty establishing the boundaries of the Vatican City as an internationally sovereign territory, and a concordat regulating the specific role of Catholicism within Italian society.

Requesting, among other things, that they ensure the morality of the beaches and root out the vice of cursing in the military, e.g. Archivi Vaticani Segreti (AVS) : Segr. Stato, 1937, Stati 69, “Disposizioni per sradicare nell’ambiente militare il vizio della bestemmia,” 1938, Stati 106, “Provvedimenti per la moralità delle spiagge.”

Togliatti made the following argument during the constitutional debates, “This is the point from which we must part, at that moment which all questions previously raised by us have always been subordinated, to a fundamental exigency, that of not disturbing the religious peace of our country... We are in need of this religious peace, we can in no way consent that that peace be disturbed. Now, the opposite of the term for “peace” is “war.” (Scoppola 1967: 825).

Such as the young construction worker from Livorno who received 10 months in prison for hissing at an image of Pope Pius XII during a public film (Archivi Centrali del Stato, Min. Int., D.G.P.S., Div. A.G.R., sez. I, Fasc.12, Livorno: 21.11.1948) or the PCI deputy Gina Mare who was sentenced to one year in prison after two DC Deputies accused him of uttering offensive phrases against the Pope (Ibid, Fasc.17, Trapani, 28.3.1954.)
Between 1947 and 1959, Catholic Action’s members steadily grew from 2.1 to 3.4 million. DC party membership, which was much more volatile from year to year, rose from 800,400 in 1947 to 1,127,200 in 1948, fell and then reached its peak membership of 1,146,000 in 1953.

Jemolo 1960
Oppenheim 1948
Parisi 1979
Giovagnoli 1988, Campanini 1976
Campanini 1976
Prandi 1968, Riccardi 1983
Riccardi 1983, Giovagnoli 1988
Galli and Prandi 1970
Ibid.
LaPalombara 1987
Burgalassi 1968

Using DOXA pre-election surveys from 1953 to estimate the 1948 percentages of women and youth voters for any political party in each region.

At an aggregate level, in Sicily and Sardinia the right parties received slightly more votes in 1948 than in 1919. In Veneto, their aggregate votes were cut in half. Subtracting the right’s losses in the Veneto from the numbers of new DC male recruits from the voting classes of 1919, the DC still out-mobilized the left parties in this category at a rate of 2.8 to 1.

Where the left added three more percentage points to its share of votes in the elections of 1953.

A category which represented a small minority, about 1% of those reporting left partisan identification (Barnes 1977).

Representing 16% of the left partisan identification (Barnes 1977).

Who remained 70% regularly practicing Catholic until the end of the 1960s (Barnes 1977).

Fegiz 1966
Barnes 1977
Fegiz 1966

Italian religious secularization accelerated throughout the 1970s and affected the rank and file of the DC, who, along with other Italians, began to marry outside of the Church more, attend mass less or accept Church authority over their private lives (Segatti 1999).

Prandi 1968
Alberigo 2006
Both of whom had been recently chastised by the Vatican, in 1955 and 1956, respectively, for going too far in their advocacy of laicization.

Prandi 1963, Scatena 2003
Musselli 1990, Scatena 2003
Without any such campaigning, two thirds of the south and one third of the north still voted for the continuation of the monarchy.
Churchill had stumped for a more conservative Italian government in the waning years of the war under one of Mussolini’s former commanders, Pietro Badoglio (Pasquino 1986).

Sani and Sartori 1983

Introvigne and Stark 2005, Diotallevi 2002

References


Berkeley: University of California Press.
Table 1:
Communist Party results, as percentage of national vote, 1946 - 1963

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone:</th>
<th>1946</th>
<th>1953</th>
<th>1958</th>
<th>1963</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrial NorthWest</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic NorthEast</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental South</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sicily</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardinia</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Galli and Prandi 1970
Table 2:
Change in national perceptions of compatibility between socialism and Catholicism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year:</th>
<th>1953</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1963</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it possible to be a good socialist and a good Catholic?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 2,492</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fegiz 1966
Table 3:

National perceptions of compatibility between socialism and Catholicism, by political party membership, 1953 and 1963

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party:</th>
<th>Left, socialist parties</th>
<th>Right, conservative parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PCI&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>PSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80 82</td>
<td>95 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11 12</td>
<td>3 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>9 6</td>
<td>2 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 2,492</td>
<td>100 100</td>
<td>100 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>A neo-fascist, anti-system party
<sup>b</sup>The Italian communist party.

Source: Fegiz 1966
Table 4:

National perceptions of political secularization by political parties: Christian Democrats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Clergy has the Duty to express its judgement</th>
<th>Clergy has the Right to express its judgement</th>
<th>The Clergy ought not to express itself</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labor Union Questions</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Politics</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil marriages</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private life of Catholics</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content of films</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to DOXA 1958 question: “Concerning which Political and Cultural problems ought the Catholic clergy occupy itself” (% responding)

Source: Fegiz 1966