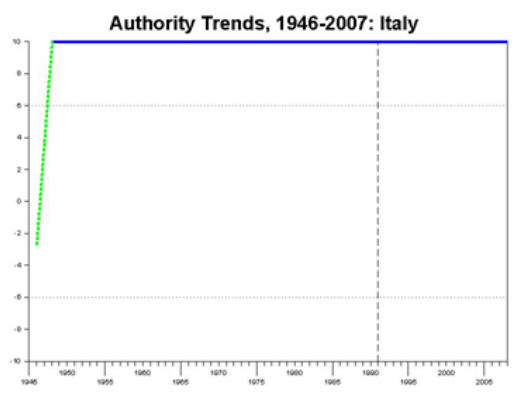


Polity IV Country Report 2007: Italy

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2006</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2007</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td></td> <td>59</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2006	2007	Change	Polity:	10	10	0	Democ:	10	10	0	Autoc:	0	0	0	Durable:		59		Tentative:		No		 <p style="text-align: center;">Authority Trends, 1946-2007: Italy</p>
Score:	2006	2007	Change																						
Polity:	10	10	0																						
Democ:	10	10	0																						
Autoc:	0	0	0																						
Durable:		59																							
Tentative:		No																							
SCODE	ITA	CCODE	325	Date of Report	1 November 2008																				
Polity IV Component Variables																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
3	3	4	7	5	5																				
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																									
End Date		15 September 1943		Begin Date																					
				1 January 1948																					
Polity Fragmentation: No																									
Constitution		1948																							
Executive(s)		Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (); directly elected, 9-10 April 2006																							
Legislature		Bicameral: Chamber of Deputies (630 seats; 475 members directly elected, 155 proportionally elected; most recent elections, 13-14 April 2008) Coalition Silvio Berlusconi (People of Freedom/PdL, Lega Nord/LN, and Movement for Autonomy/MpA): 344 Walter Veltroni Coalition (Democratic Party/PD and Italy of Values/IdV): 246 Union of the Centre (UdC): 36 Other parties: 4 Senate (315 seats; 232 members directly elected, 83 proportionally elected; most recent elections, 13-14 April 2008) Coalition S. Berlusconi: 174 Coalition W. Veltroni: 132 UdC: 3 Other parties: 6																							
Judiciary		Constitutional Court																							

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)

The prime minister of Italy is recruited through a competitive multiparty electoral system. The majority party (or majority coalition) in the Chamber of Deputies selects the chief executive. Members of the Chamber of Deputies are popularly elected.

In April 2005 Prime Minister Berlusconi formed a new government, the sixtieth in as many years. However, like all its predecessors, this government fell to the internal instability that has defined Italian politics since the end of World War II. While Prime Minister Berlusconi's government was the longest serving in the post-WWII era, nonetheless, he failed to achieve his desired goal of being the first Prime Minister in 60 year to head the same government over a full – and uninterrupted – five year term. After losing the April 2006 national elections, Berlusconi resigned in May 2006 and was replaced by Romano Prodi, head of the center-left coalition. While the Prodi government collapsed in February 2007 after losing a parliamentary vote concerning his foreign policy, nonetheless, he was able to cobble together enough support from his nine-party coalition to retain his office. In January 2008 a no confidence vote finally forced Prodi to resign. In the April 2008 national elections the center-right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi – which includes the anti-immigration Northern League and the post-fascist Alleanza Nazionale – swept to victory.

Executive Constraints: Executive Parity or Subordination (7)

In a conscious effort to prevent the rise of another Mussolini-styled dictatorship, the postwar constitution enhanced the powers of the legislative and judicial branches of government at the expense of the executive branch. As a result, political deadlock and government instability has come to define Italian politics over the past fifty years. The prime minister is elected by, and is directly accountable to, the legislature. The coalition-based nature of Italian politics further limits the independence of executive authority. Several constitutional reform packages made their way through the legislature in late 2004 in an effort to set the stage for major changes in powers of the Prime Minister. The proposed new law provided for direct election of the Prime Minister, who would also enjoy greater powers to form and disband the Cabinet. In June 2006 these changes, proposed under the leadership of Prime Minister Berlusconi, were rejected in a national referendum. Sixty-two percent of the voters registered a no vote in this referendum. In addition to strengthening the power of the prime minister, the proposed referendum also provided greater autonomy to Italy's 20 regions. This portion of the bill was supported by the prosperous regions in the north of the country but was unpopular in the poorer southern regions. The judiciary is independent from executive interference.

Political Participation: Institutionalized Open Electoral Competition (10)

Italy has a competitive multiparty democracy that has been plagued by government instability. There have been 61 governments since the end of World War II. Despite this instability, freedom of speech and assembly are constitutionally protected (except for fascist and racist groups) and the civil rights of citizens are generally respected.

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.