Italy: Institutions, Representation, and Political Culture

I. Postwar Constitutional Settlement

II. Institutions
   A. Legislature
   B. Executive
   C. Judicial

III. Political Parties and Representation

IV. Italy’s Divided Political Culture
I. Postwar Constitutional Settlement

- Problems of Prior Systems:
  - Monarchial authority (Kingdom)
  - Excessive centralization (Kingdom and Fascist)
  - Lack of popular sovereignty (Kingdom and Fascist)

- 1946 Polls
  - Establish a Republic
  - Elect a Constituent Assembly

- Constitution of 1948
  - Emphasized Popular Sovereignty and Divided Authority
  - Parliamentary System
  - Proportional Representation
  - Weak Executive
  - Constitutional Court (1956)
  - Regional Governments (1970)
II. Institutions -- Legislature

- Chamber of Deputies (630 Members)
- Senate (315 members)
- Standing Committees
  - *leggine* ("little laws")
- Private Members Bills
- No conference committees
- Secret Voting until 1988
- Party Dominated

*Camera dei Deputati*
II. Institutions – Executive

- President
  - Suspensive Veto
  - Picking Prime Minister

- Prime Minister
  - Multiparty Structure
    (Coalitions)
  - Government Instability
  - PM Relatively Weak

Romano Prodi
PM no more...

Silvio Berlusconi
PM again???
II. Institutions – Courts and Bureaucracy

- Judiciary
  - Constitutional Court
- Referenda
- Bureaucracy
  - Politicized
  - Corruption

An elegant façade, but does it work on the inside?
III. Political Parties

RIGHT --

- *Forza Italia* (‘Go Italy’)
- *Alleanza Nationale* (National Alliance)
- *Unione dei Democratici Cristiani e Democratici di Centro* (Union of Christian and Center Democrats)
- *Lega Nord* (Northern League)

LEFT --

- *Partito Democratico* (Democratic Party – formerly Olive Tree)
- *Rifondazione Communista* (Communist Refoundation)
Northern League Poster:
“"Guess who is last in line for housing, employment and health care?"
IV. Divided Political Culture

- Socio-Economic Cleavages
  - Class
  - Regional (Mezzogiorno)
- Clerical
- Support for Democracy
  - Low social & political trust
  - Low political efficacy
  - High political alienation
  - Patron-client relations