

## SUMMARIES

### **Coping with Permanent Austerity: Welfare State Restructuring in Affluent Democracies**

by Paul Pierson

Throughout the ranks of affluent democracies, social policies are at the center of political discussion and social conflict. In a context of permanent austerity, the contemporary politics of the welfare state takes shape against a backdrop of intense pressures for welfare retrenchment and enduring popularity. Even strong supporters of the welfare state may come to acknowledge the need for adjustment, and even severe critics may need to confront the political realities of continuing popular enthusiasm for social provision. Thus in most of the affluent democracies, the politics of social policy centers on the renegotiation, restructuring, and modernization of the terms of the post-war social contract rather than its dismantling. Furthermore, the politics of welfare state restructuring varies according to the specific world of welfare capitalism (liberal, social democratic and conservative), and according to the specific countries within a same welfare regime. Finally, starting from the perspectives of prominent actors in the reform process, change occurs along three dimensions: re-commodification, cost-containment, and modernization. Each constitutes a potentially important dimension of welfare state restructuring, and particular combinations of the three dimensions take place within each welfare regime in peculiar ways also linked to electoral incentives and institutional stickiness.

### **Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in Italy: the Bosnia case**

by Paolo Bellucci and Pierangelo Isernia

In several occasions during the Bosnia crisis public opinion was explicitly used by Italian politicians to justify their reluctance to be militarily involved. To understand the role public opinion played in

the Italian foreign policy on the Bosnia issue, we first examine the nature of the opinion-policy relationship in the Italian political system. We then discuss the available survey data on the attitudes on Bosnia. Third, we study the main determinants of Italian public support for a military intervention. Our main conclusions are four. First, we found strong and quite steady public support for a more active armed involvement of Italian troops in Bosnia. Second, support is in contrast with the prevalent reading of public opinion among the political élite. Politicians perceived the public as opposed to the actual use of force because of fear of casualties. Third, this gap between the actual and perceived public opinion is a consequence of the fact that for the political élite public opinion is represented by their fellow MPs opinions and by the mass media editorials rather than by the climate of opinion as measured by polls. Fourth, the role of public opinion is changing in Italy, as the Kosovo crisis has recently shown. Public opinion, as expressed by mass surveys, is more and more taken into account by Italian politicians in their calculations.

### **Political Franchising: Forza Italia at the Local Level**

by Caterina Paolucci

This article presents some of the findings of an empirical study on Forza Italia's local administrators. The peculiar genetic model of the party, comprising neo-patrimonialism, charisma, business-firm elements and entrepreneurial style, makes its institutionalisation highly unlikely at the central level. However, an organisational consolidation might take place at the local level, where the distance from the patrimonial centre could enhance a more direct and enduring identification with the party by local élites.

Although such a development may be actively adversed by the leadership, afraid that it could limit its freedom of manoeuvre, there is a likelihood that the need to fill candidate lists for local elections will eventually lead to an opening up of the party, enhancing a more significant involvement of local administrators in party life. Such development would entail a major effort by the party to play an active role in providing local administrators with incentives of a collective as well as a selective kind.

In order to explore the exchange relationship between the party and its local administrators this article concentrates on three arenas of interaction: the recruitment and selection processes, the electoral campaign and the party's everyday working. The results suggest that Forza Italia's institutionalisation is still far to come, since its local administrators have neither become well integrated in the party organisation, nor have they been able to form a cohesive group.

## **Knowledge and the Public Policies of the European Union: Technocracy or Politicization?**

by Claudio M. Radaelli

The role of expertise in European public policy has become the object of a passionate debate. On the one hand, it has been argued that knowledge, in various guises, can foster learning, enlightenment, problem-solving attitudes, and policy change. On the other, the public policy of the European Union (EU) is in the firing line because of its technocratic bias. However, what is meant by technocracy in the case of the EU? How can political scientists be fascinated by the positive input of knowledge, and, at the same time, horrified by technocratic policy-making? The aim in this article is to tackle this puzzle by suggesting a conceptual framework. Concepts such as technocracy, epistemic communities, and bureaucratic politics refer to different modes of the politics of expertise. Empirically, they should be contrasted with the logic of politicization. Case studies discussed in this article suggest that the power of expertise is being counterbalanced by a process of politicization. The conclusion is that the main challenge is neither to preserve an unattainable de-politicized Union nor to assume that politicization will tame technocracy, but to make expertise more accountable in an increasingly politicized environment.

## **The European Vote in Italy**

by Paolo Natale

In this article the author discusses the result of the last European elections in Italy, with a strong emphasis on the increasing political disaffection of the Italian electorate. Since the last decade, in fact, the role played by political attitudes and behaviours in the building of a personal identity is becoming less and less important for the vast majority of the people. The analysis of the last elections highlights four peculiar elements: the growth of parties whose success depends on their leaders (Berlusconi, Prodi, Bonino); the increasing confusion in the political world, that leads voters to have uncertain electoral preferences; the increase of electoral volatility; the increase of the non-voting area (abstentions, 'spoiled papers' and blank papers).

The results of the 1999 election reveal a possible contradiction: while the new electoral system tends to simplify the political-electoral picture in a bi-polar sense, the fundamental tendencies of the electorate seem to be moving in another direction entirely. Never before has the fragmentation of electoral choices been so marked. When the Ital-

ians have to choose a party, and not a coalition, their choices are shown to be much more uneven than in the past. Above all, these fragmented choices are combined with increasing electoral volatility.