

**‘Securing’ class power through the politics of fear:
Post- fascism, institutional nationalism and securitization in Italy**

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Abstract

The post-Cold War consensus between the Left and Right, and the neoliberalisation facilitated therein, has been marked by anti-democratic tendencies and the suppression of class-based politics. Consequential feelings of insecurity have been key to political mobilization in the form of far-right populist movements targeting state elites, *vertically*, and immigrants, *horizontally*. It is my contention that Left and Right politicians similarly answer to these insecurities with exclusionary *horizontal* securitization discourses. The latter process represents an institutional nationalism that effectively works to obscure the *vertical* sources of popular anger, while serving to further neoliberalisation and its insecurity-producing tendencies. Focusing on the case of Italy, I trace the hegemonic framing of security, which has come to symbolize democracy in the country's so-called "Second Republic". I argue, moreover, that democratic-liberal "consensus" between the far-right, Right, and Left, along with internal securitization, has made post-totalitarian fascism a reality.

Introduction

“The eagle of fascism soars,” reads a headline in the May 2009’s *New Statesman*, just one of many mainstream articles to evoke the f- word in relation to Berlusconi’s rule in present-day Italy. The writer ponders the historically-understood connotations of “fascism” and calls Berlusconi himself “a totalitarian and anti-democratic phenomenon”. Italy’s richest man, the Premier is described here as a public-opinion puppeteer, whose control over media and the country’s strongest political party erodes “bit by bit, the separation of powers so crucial to any democracy” (Jacques 2009).

Others have stirred up the specter in relation to those parties making up the centre-Right coalition in Berlusconi’s three administrative turns since the government crisis of the early nineties and the rightward voter swing that followed it: The anti-immigrant Lega Nord and the nationalist—yet no longer expressedly fascist— Alleanza Nazionale. Some journalists, for instance, responded in shock last spring when a member of the latter drew supporters giving the fascist salute and chanting “Duce! Duce!” at his inauguration as Mayor of Rome (Hooper 2008). Others called attention to his promise to expel 20,000 illegal

immigrants and destroy 85 Romanian-gypsy camps around the capital. Catching even more media interest following the centre-Right's return to office was the mandatory fingerprinting of Roma, an action identified by Holocaust survivors and the Catholic Church as evoking memories of fascism. The same climactic week, during which Berlusconi depicted criminal immigrants as "an army of evil", saw popular raids on settlements outside of Naples, or "ethnic cleansing", as one Molotov-cocktail thrower described it, the *Telegraph* reported. In response to the 'vigilante' action, the Italian Interior Minister, a member of Lega Nord, explained matter-of-factly that "[the] People do what the political class cannot" (Moore 2008).

Western media has largely contextualized these striking discourses and developments as peculiar to Italy, as is clearly implied in the first article's awkward dubbing of "Berlusconism, or however we might describe it" (Jacques 2009). Indeed, as Kalb (forthcoming) notes, they tend to chalk up the rising populist far right in their own countries to causes external to the West, "fringe" extremists and immigration, while depicting that of Eastern (and likewise Southern) European countries as endemic cultural idiosyncrasies. However, while outcomes are context-specific in ways that the present research attempts to partly uncover, nationalist-populist identification and mobilization processes occurring in Italy are demonstrably growing throughout the continent and beyond. They are, moreover, deeply linked to collective insecurities in the wake of neoliberalisation (Gingrich and Banks 2006) and are mirrored by what I will call institutional-nationalism (Tilly, Tarrow, and McAdam 2001).

Any contemporary naming of "fascism" must take into account widespread trends occurring in the wake of neoliberalisation, that is, the aftermath the post-political consensus between the Liberal Left and Right (Mouffe 2005) and the sovereignty of capital facilitated therein. In Section 1.1, I will show that the consequential hindrances to collective

organization and other barriers to democratic participation, are deeply connected to rising feelings of insecurity. While popular classes face the dual crisis of labor and popular sovereignty (Kalb forthcoming), state elites who have been proponents of neoliberal transformations, have meanwhile distanced themselves from their respective national populations in terms of their own cosmopolitan and transnational identification, their ongoing consolidation of wealth, and even their self-enclavement into privately secured spaces. Popular anger and discontent (Kalb forthcoming; Comaroff and Comaroff 2002) has, as I see it, been reflected by two coinciding and interrelated mobilization processes, both of which threaten the foundational ideals of liberal states.

On one hand are extreme right movements organized into political parties, by now mainstream contenders in Western and Eastern European politics, even at the executive level. These populist movements mobilize on the basis of cultural identification typically expressed in nationalist, localist, or religious terms against “vertical” or “horizontal” (Friedman 2003) threats: vertically, cosmopolitanizing elites, whose support for cosmopolitan norms was a theoretical undergird of the neo-liberal project; and horizontally, Roma and immigrants, also a threat to cultural identity and economic welfare. They are marked by discourses of culture talk (Stolke 1995), reflecting a “new racism” that does not refer to biological superiority but instead to the need for “diverse” cultures to remain separate and bounded.

The second process is a state-led nationalist mobilization process that directs mobilization “horizontally” at immigrants and other-culture threats within the state. In line with that of the far right, securitization discourse depends on identification with a culturally bounded, homogeneous national body vis-à-vis the other-culture outsider (Bigo 2001). In effect, politicians of the Liberal Left and Right, themselves “vertical” targets of rising populist mobilization, have campaigned as law-and-order hardliners eager to protect citizens from the immigrant or minority threat. The horizontally-directed discourse reflects more than a

borrowing of scripts (Tilly, Tarrow and McAdam 2004) from the far right but is also linked to the post-Cold War military invention of “homeland security” and its explicitly switching of target from Soviet “communism”, a primarily external enemy, to “immigration”, effectively placing the latter under the same threat-management heading as terrorism and organized crime (Wacquant 1999). These security discourses enable “illiberal” (Bigo 2001) measures of repression that not only criminalize the transnational flow of labor (Sassen 1998) but restrict the rights of citizens themselves.

As such, internal security is not only temporally linked to the neoliberal project but is better understood as complementary to it, as sociologists and anthropologists have aptly shown the neo-liberal replacement of the social and economic state with the penal state (Wacquant 1999, Comaroff and Comaroff 2002). Evoking a sense of popular-cum-state sovereignty in discourse, the consequential practices of securitization only re-enforce the neo-liberal transfer to rule by experts and elites (Harvey 2007) and other detriments to democracy. In other words. Horizontal internal-securitization, then, answers the anti- democratic tendencies of neoliberalism, a source of popular discontent and anxieties, with more anti-democratic and intensified social control mechanisms. Ultimately, it obscures the real vertical causes of neo-liberal insecurity by framing it in terms of horizontal threats.

It is under such considerations, and namely in section 1.3, that the fascist moment of naming will come into play. Considering that internal public-order controls have become institutionalized through popular identification with nationalism and exclusionary culture talk, reversing the Enlightenment promise of universal citizenship, I will argue in accordance with Gaspar Miklos Tamas (2000, 2001, 2006), that global capitalism has made possible *post-totalitarian fascism* that has by now become a reality in Italy. The last section of the chapter, 1.4, discusses Tilly, Tarrow, and McAdam’s interactive approach to discourse on which I base my critical discourse analysis.

In Chapter Two, I will track the “performance” of securitization discourse at the level of state politics between three election years to understand the symbolic horizontal and vertical polarization in Italy. The theoretical understandings presented in Chapter One, are not exactly replicated in Italy, but for certain reasons have effected an extreme vertical polarization in the material sense, coinciding with extreme horizontally-directed security discourses.

Chapter One

1.1 Neoliberal insecurity: The dual crisis of popular sovereignty and of labor

Janine Brodie (2008) has written that

after over two decades of restructuring to meet the globalizing international political economy, there is widespread sense of rupture and disorientation. Most of the organizing signposts of the postwar period have lost their intent and meaning—among them, state sovereignty, liberal-democratic citizenship rights... and collective political identities and alliances (2008 42).

The symbolic draining of such “signposts” under neo-liberal re-structuration is linked to popular feelings and expressions of insecurity, discontent, and anger. Stemming from what Kalb calls “the dual crisis of popular sovereignty and labor” (Kalb forthcoming), insecurity has come to play a significant role in generating belonging feelings since of the neo-liberal turn (Gingrich and Banks 2005). In this section I trace the development of the “dual crisis”, which is intimately related to collective identification and mobilization processes to be discussed in the following sections.

The project (theoretical and practical) of neoliberal globalization was facilitated by a convergence between political and economic liberals (Kalb 2001) whose joint agenda was based on cosmopolitan human rights norms on one hand, and privatization, high-stakes speculation, cuts to social spending, and labor market flexibilization, on the other. The convergence of the post-Cold War Liberal left and right has had severe effects on democracy, so much so that Mouffe (2005) calls it a “post-political” consensus. In Žižek’s terms, “the consensual form of politics in our time is a bi-polar system that offers the appearance of a choice when essentially there is none, since today poles converge on a single economic stance—the ‘tight fiscal policy’” (2001: 51). Moreover the contradictions of neoliberal theory in practice, such as the anti-democratic privileging of experts and elites (Harvey 2001) and the suppression of judicial and legislative processes in the name of competition, has further denigrated the promise of accountability: “Citizens at the millennium are constrained by a very narrow conception of democracy which basically means voting in and out sets of elites with similar biases toward market provision and private ownership and profit” (Brodie 2008: 114).

Popular classes also face the (sometimes violent) repression of collective organization into trade unions or political parties (Harvey 2003) as another necessity of putting neoliberalisation in practice. Since the Third-Way Left, in its abandonment of class struggle, has turned away from “vulgar”-interest politics towards “innate”-identity politics (Jung 2009), the post-political consensus offers little in terms of addressing popular insecurity and discontent stem from the resource struggles, downward mobility, and unemployment widely experienced since the neo-liberal turn (Gingrich and Banks 2006). Popular anger and insecurity erupting in the wake of capital sovereignty is most palpably felt in and around cities, “the zones of ethnification, the privatization of the state, of warfare and banditry” (Gingrich and Banks 2006: 79). Such looks only to intensify as “worker-citizens in

contemporary transnationalizing states will continue to feel the heat of the one billion new workers that have been added to the capitalist system since 1989, as well as the two billion that might well be added in the next two decades” (Kalb, forthcoming).

Meanwhile, organized as “a class for itself” (Friedman 2003) or more specifically, the transnational capitalist class (Kalb 2001), state elites demonstrate solidarity with their transnational counterparts instead of their respective state populations. In the absence of class-based mobilization at the popular level, nationalist movements have erupted, directed both “vertically” against elite outsiders and “horizontally” against migrants and minorities. Jonathan Friedman’s “double polarization” describes these forms of mobilizations in relation to the increase of violent conflict and chaos *within* state boundaries during the Post-Cold War period. Considering the link “horizontal” and “vertical” movements, I argue that another “nationalist”¹ form of mobilization, one that is *state-led* and “horizontally” directed, serves as a response to popular insecurities under neoliberalism. In what follows, I discuss the literature explaining double polarization in relation to far right populist movements (1.2) and then apply the framework in my discussion of internal securitization (1.3) in an effort to illustrate the under-theorized interrelatedness between the two. I note here that these general trends are neither automatic retorts to structural changes nor are they results of purely top-down identity construction, interpretations that imply little or no possibility for choice in political identification. Identification and mobilization rather occurs through interactive negotiations between (overlapping) environmental, cognitive and relational mechanisms (Tilly, Tarrow and McAdam 2001) which I will discuss in terms of framing and symbolic meaning in Chapter Two.

¹ “Nationalist” here refers not to the nation-state per se, but to the community identity, which can be localist, regionalist, religious, nativist etc.

1.2 Answering insecurity I: horizontal and vertical mobilization of the populist Right

Hanz George Betz has noted that populisms exploit the idea of “the power of the people...during times of political and economic crisis” (quoted in Zlaslove 2001: 55). The populist or far Right has by now become a real contender in mainstream electoral politics throughout Eastern and Western Europe. In relation to the discussion of the previous section, Zizek (2000) notes that the

populist Right moves to occupy the terrain evacuated by the Left, as the only ‘serious’ political force that still employs anti-capitalist rhetoric—if thickly coated with a nationalist/racist/religious veneer.. While multicultural tolerance becomes the motto of the new and privileged ‘symbolic’ classes, the far Right seeks to mobilize whatever remains of the mainstream working class in our Western societies. (2000: 37-38).

An “antidote to the dissolution of former bonds of social solidarity under the impact of neoliberalism” (Harvey 2007: 121), the populist Right directs popular feelings of insecurity and discontent towards *vertical* and *horizontal* (Friedman 2003) enemies. Vertically speaking, cosmopolitanizing elites, the privileged few who enjoy citizenship and other promises of neo-liberal globalization, become the targets of disempowered citizens expressing a “desperate claim to community, identity, and legitimacy” (Kalb 2005: 10). While salaries at the top of the ever-stratified scale exponentially grow, scandals related to corruption fuel conspiracy-talk and an overall deepening “rift between elites and ‘the people’” (Friedman 2003). The rift is, in some cases, also deepened by the liberal Left and Right’s unyielding support for European Union integration, to which the populist Right offers the only mainstream resistance (MacDonald 2008).

Populists employ fundamentalist notions of culture, or what Stolcke (1995) has termed “culture talk”, exacerbating existential fears in relation to “bounded and distinct” identity vis-à-vis cosmopolitanizing elites. Culture talk is also a main element of the populist Right’s naming of *horizontal* enemies, other-culture outsiders, particularly immigrants and Roma in

Europe, within the state. As Tamas (2001) explains, “The growing de-politicization of the concept of a nation (the shift to a cultural definition) leads to the acceptance of discrimination as ‘natural’” (2001: 11), and as such, the far Right can “legitimately” mobilize this “new racism”, one based not on widely discredited notions of biological superiority but on diversity—and thus the need for separation—of delimited “cultures. He goes on to illustrate, in part, the effective “ethnification and racialization” of class conflict: “There is no greater enemy of the immigrant—‘guest worker’ or ‘asylum seeker’ than the obsolescent *lumpenproletariat*, publicly represented by the hard-core right-wing extremist soccer hooligan” (Tamas 2001:10).

Meanwhile, elites, “worried that the people have no respect for them and that their lack of interest is directly observable at the polls” (Friedman 2003), claim that support for the populist Right proves that the people lack democratic credibility, legitimizing the further enactment of neo-liberal measures that consolidate their class interests and hinder popular sovereignty, adding fuel to the “dual crisis” fire.

1.3 Answering Insecurity II: Institutional securitization as “horizontal” mobilization

So far the dual crisis of popular sovereignty and class consciousness, and the vertical/horizontal identification and mobilization related to it, have mainly been contextualized in terms of the rise of the populist far right movements discussed in the previous section. It is my contention, however, that expressions of culture talk are not limited to far right activists and their followers, but are put into motion regularly by Liberal elites themselves through what has been called securitization discourse. In this section, I describe what can be considered an *institutional nationalist* movement which employs culture talk, *horizontally* directed at immigrants.

In the early nineties, the term “securitization” was dubbed by “critical” scholars in the international relations field as a response to exceptional measures and states of emergency enacted through the naming of a wide range of new threats to national security. Before that time, national security had been “the field where states threaten each other” according to Ole Wæver (quoted in Huysman 2006:5) but the end of the Cold War had led to a broader vision for students and practitioners of security, one that encompassed cultural, economic, and environmental threats. Following Wæver’s understanding that the fundamental characteristic of the national security tradition is “the articulation of existential threats that are framed in the language of war and that legitimate the introduction of exceptional policies” (quoted in Huysman 2006:5), critics narrowly defined securitization as a speech act which, with consent of the relevant constituency, takes any issue out of the realm of “normal” politics. Normal here refers to processes of debate and deliberation. Such critiques have normative implications, as for instance, they fail to consider the ever-limiting promise of democracy under neoliberalism, which renders “normal” politics questionable from the start. They also do not call into the question the reasons for or repercussions of security becoming “*the* political vernacular of our times” nor for immigration becoming *the* dominant object of hegemonic securitization discourses, instead of just one of many possible issues.

Regarding these latter points, Bigo’s (2001) description of the major turn in post-Cold War military threat management from “external” to “internal” security is essential, and, moreover, it mirrors Friedman’s account of the shift from “conflicts between states to substate conflicts” (2003: 14). Though founded upon the ideal of peace, liberal modernity has been marked by war and the regular increase in military capacity (Reid 2006). As such the “peace dividend” looming in the late stages of the Cold War represented a considerable predicament, or what has been called a crisis, for the military institutions of the state. Military threat managers, their private associates and security students switched the focus from external

threats, primarily Soviet “Communism”, to internal ones, mainly “immigration”. The discursive invention of “homeland security” enabled a practical blurring between the traditionally separate spheres of war-preparation and crime-fighting and thus the respective roles of military and police (Bigo et al. 2007): “The collaboration between police organizations and to include the surveillance of people crossing borders within the scope of policing against crime” (Bigo 2001: 77)— ultimately changing the task of the “military from combat to policing” (Bigo et al 2007: 5). Thus even before September 11, 2001, intelligence experts were calling attention to the potential dangers of “failed state” diasporas, and police increasingly expressed concern about criminal immigrants and the delinquent youth of foreign parents. Made particularly evident since the “War on Terror”, the external-internal convergence has also been alluded to in relation to the EU-police advocacy for resource allocation towards domestic security for fighting “transnational crime” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2002), as well the Maastricht and Shengen provisions that effectively redefine immigration as a national matter of security, placing it under the same category as terrorism and organized crime (Wacquant 1999: 219).

Normative critics continue to distinguish between the framing of state and societal security; in regards to the latter, threats are construed as an existential threat to a social identity, with the lack of time and threat of death requiring the use of “[a]ny means necessary... in order to prevent the enemy’s project from succeeding, including the destruction of that enemy” (Jutila 2006). Yet as national security has come “home”, the state and nation are evoked interchangeably in securitization discourse (MacDonald 2006), reflecting military doctrines of the nineties that “revived metaphors about the body of the nation-state” (Bigo et al 2007: 6). Consequently, liberal left/right politicians express the existential need to protect a culturally homogenous nation against a “horizontal” danger, thereby employing culture talk as utilized by the far right through anti-immigrant

securitization discourse. So, state elites, themselves a target of vertical mobilization, answer the crises discussed earlier by evoking “[t]he symbolic order of the state” which “maintains that sovereignty, law and order, and a unitary body are necessary for homogeneity and peace” (2001: 67).

Bigo (2001) also points out that securitization reflects the production of “structural unease in a ‘risk society’ framed by neoliberal discourses in which freedom is always associated at its limits with danger and (in)security” (65). As security is claimed to be the “first freedom”, European politicians of all political stripes have announced law-and-order reestablishment processes calling for an *internal-security state* marked by vigilantism, police control, surveillance, and penal punishment. The internal security state resonates with what has been called the neo-liberal rise of the penal state at the expense of the social and economic state (Comaroff and Comaroff 2002), illustrated in, for instance, the substantial rise in prison rates, generally speaking but in disproportionate levels for immigrants (Wacquant 1999), shown to follow neoliberalisation. Internal securitization, then, is not only temporally connected to neoliberalism but should be seen as complementary to it. This is why Sassen (1998) speaks of “the denationalization of territory, juxtaposed with the anti-immigrant re-nationalization of politics” (1998: 219) —the pavers of the lawless path of capital sovereignty criminalize the flow of labor that spatially follows it. And then security is itself a prosperous industry. Private risk assessors, security and surveillance providers, and prison companies supplement the “public” work of military-police in chaotic public spaces, and they provide security for the private spaces, like gated communities and offices, reserved for the transnational classes (Harvey 2001).

As such, any understanding of security construction should also note that it gets articulated through speech acts but also through visual images, and, beyond emergency measures it gets institutionalized into spaces and bureaucratic practices that inform the way

that threats are understood. For MacDonald, the “security lobby”, in pointing its focus within the state, has “made securitization pervasive, to proceed in ways that treat and thereby produce ‘security’– or, more accurately, security rhetoric and activity – as a dominant, emotionally charged element of ... everyday life” (2008). By showing further that it is not only politicians who rely on “securitizing” immigrants, Bigo (2001) effectively describes the institutional adoption of this inwardly-defensive nationalism. Healthcare professionals speak about immigrants carrying foreign diseases as media actors re-sound the alarm in terms of crime and national identity. Academics also evoke the culture danger while economists blame immigrants for straining the welfare system (Bigo 2001). Tamas (2000) explanation reveals the perverted rationality of securitization, especially in relation to the last two examples: Propped up by academia, as in Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations*, “‘Humanitarian wars’ are fought in order to prevent masses of refugees from flowing in and cluttering up the Western welfare systems that are in decomposition anyway.”

While reaffirming popular-cum-state sovereignty in a discourse that is adopted by the press and politicians, and then largely accepted by the public-opinion-sphere, securitization only intensifies the anti-democratic tendencies of neoliberalism. It further transfers responsibility to experts and private actors, blocking judicial and legislative means of accountability. And especially since the War on Terror, the “illiberal” effects of internal-securitization have been widely noted: “The policies of management of fear and unease”, dominated by the ideas of risk and uncertainty, have

raised levels of suspicion; justified declarations of emergency rules and derogation of the rule of law; destabilized the importance of human rights conventions at the international level; justified the development of technologies of mass surveillance at the transnational level and massive exchange of individual data; enabled the merging of military, police, and intelligence services; and encouraged zealous visions of democracy that have been difficult to

distinguish from an ideology of empire, and have generated criminal policies inside and outside the battle field. (Bigo et al 2007)

Indeed the very concept of ‘internal security’ has been a trademark of authoritarian regimes, and it is under consideration of the internal shift of “national security”, that the contemporary question of fascism must be situated.

In the economic crisis of the 1920s, the Italian bourgeoisie was unable to retain its control without allying itself with the fascist movement and resorting to the ‘exceptional’ state of Fascism (Corner 1986: 14). As Gramsci explained it, to maintain class power, the capitalist class was willing to destroy the liberal state that they themselves had built (Joll 1977). In relation to the crisis- ridden present moment, security discourse and practices “secure” transnational capitalist class position, economically and spatially, and culturally, they serves to obscure the origin of insecurity and chaos in its actions and projects vertical anger onto horizontal "outsiders". The far Right, easily dismissed as uncivilized, is the exclusive mainstream challenger to the transnational classes, saving their legitimacy and class interests amidst the dual crisis.

So, the liberal state survives, albeit strained-as-ever through the institutional nationalism that ultimately produces political exclusion and “illiberal” outcomes (Bigo 2007). Short of waiting for another Mussolini, then, or speaking of “Berlusconisation” (Jacques 2009), the time has come to face the actual prospect of post-totalitarian fascism, by now a demonstrable reality in places like Italy.

1.4“Performing” security: analyzing the discursive sources of class power

The previous sections related general trends in terms of institutional changes and shifts in identification occurring since the neoliberal turn, but these theories lack the cultural

specificity to understand populist and securitization discourses in different national and local contexts. As classically stated in Marx's third thesis on Feuerbach, the interrelation between institutional change and self change is as an integral aspect of social transformation (Todd 2004: 2). Tilly, Tarrow, and McAdam (2001) further argue that "it is only when institutional changes are accompanied by changing self perceptions that new institutions begin to create new dynamics of interaction" (cited in Todd 2004: 2). For the present purposes, these theorists of contentious politics offer a useful framework for breaking through disciplinary boundaries to understand the institutionalization of internal nationalism and the collective identification processes accompanying it.

Fundamentally arguing that "social interactions and relations are core aspects of social life", they underline "the necessity of taking strategic interaction, consciousness, and historically accumulated culture into account" (Todd 2004: 6) while treating "social interaction, social ties, communication, and conversation not merely as expressions of structure, rationality, consciousness, or culture but as active sites of creation and change" (2001: 22). As such, theirs is an attempt to understand patterns of identity change with regard to wider social processes and resource distribution, and it still maintains a sensitivity for the individual's experience and moments of intentionality in choice- making.

Following Tilly, Tarrow, and McAdam (2001), I do not take securitization and identification to be mere discursive constructs, but rather I regard discourse as a source for gaining insight into the interrelation between identity, institutional, and interactive aspects of collective mobilization (5). Collective mobilization necessarily depends on making political opportunities known, or for nationalist mobilization via securitization, for making *threats* known, but these are not sufficient for collective engagement, as the latter relies further on two related aspects of contention: scripts and frames. Scripts develop from previous interaction, or out of "known possible interactions that categorize a known set of actors".

Instead of being followed precisely, scripts are, as in conversation, performed in an improvisational manner. Tactics, messages, or styles are modified in relation to implicit rules and old routines reworked in new circumstances. Through framing, threat is attributed through these mutually and cumulatively understood scripts. Whereas collective mobilization studies have largely depicted framing as the expression of ideas and a tool for use by leaders, for Tilly, Tarrow and McAdam (2001), framing is not a distinct variable, but instead refers

to the interactive construction of disputes among challengers, their opponents, elements of the state, third parties and the media. The political context in which a movement is mounted helps to frame its demands; the media and other sources of communication inadvertently frame a movement for its participants as well as for others, and cultural resources constrain and shape the deliberative framing efforts of movement leaders.” (2001 44)

In terms of securitization, the media, Liberal politicians, and institutional and popular actors are not helping to frame the movement itself but they are participants within it, mobilized in the protection of the national or local identity and namers, interactively speaking, of the culturally relevant migrant “threat”. The “threat”, whether economic, existential, or both, is about *not* participating, and, as the hegemonic discourse there is little room to even make that choice.

But how does framing relate the opportunity or threat to identity? These theorists explain more specifically that category formation creates of boundary between two political sides, with “them” threatening “us”. For Tilly, Tarrow, and McAdam (2001), subtle shifts in the meaning of identity categories can help to explain major changes in political and social behavior, as in identity shifts and changing understandings of who is included and who is excluded, or, for securitization discourse, whose culture and way of life is under attack and who is the “enemy” outsider. At the same time, change in identity-categories is itself provoked by and responsive to changes in institutional structure and social practice, as in the

military shift from external to internal security and the institutional permeation of inwardly-defensive nationalism.

In identity-category formation an identification symbol is manipulated (Tilly, Tarrow, and McAdam 2001). The symbol can be a certain leader or event, a political category like class, feminist, or national solidarity, or security in general— whatever provides the key meaning linking the shared identity category and the shared differentiation from what it is that is not included in the boundary. Focusing on discourse is useful for understanding symbols and meanings and interactive framing in general, as language has, for cognitive linguists, both symbolic and interactive functions. It allows the expression of thoughts and ideas through symbols which can be subparts of words, words, or strings of words. Symbols are represented in different forms (spoken or written or gestured) and are associated with certain meanings; they are, in other words, form-meaning assemblies (Evens and Green 2006: 6). So, as people perceive the world, and integrate diverse perceptual information into a single, coherent mental representation or concept, they use language forms to express the meaning of that concept. Language is limiting because there are a finite number of words associated with conventional meanings, whereas there are unlimited possibilities in the conceptualization of the outside world. A symbol can be a word or an image that comes to represent a wide variety of meanings, such as belonging to a community and feeling fear or anger towards outsiders.

So, here, within this framework, I again consider the two interrelated processes described in previous sections. As depicted in 1.2, far-right populist mobilization draws, in discourse, identity categories that differentiate a community from threatening outsiders in one of two general ways: vertically, from transnational elites, or horizontally, from other-culture outsiders. We can generally posit that the institutional shift towards neo-liberal globalization or European unification coincided with forms of elite identification that has little symbolic (or

real²) meaning for popular classes and instead has come to be seen as a threat. As class solidarity too, has lost meaning, populist mobilization frames a national identity-category in terms of vertical and horizontal enemies understood to be responsible for economic and cultural-identity insecurities. Yet Friedman (2003) does not explain the symbols used in each identity-category and threat attribution beyond a general pattern of form, vertical or horizontal, and while he provides examples, the contextual symbolic meaning of these categories is not clear.

Then, in relation to the securitization discussion in 1.3, Bigo (2001) has argued that securitization discourses are broadly framed by transnational “professional managers of unease” (2001: 11) in terms of the opaque “immigration” threat so that state politicians can coordinate security measures with other state leaders neutrally. He explains that specific nationalities or cultures may be valued in one country and seen as a threat in others, but we can also say that the broad category “immigration”, as well as “insecurity” or “security”, get fit into contextually relevant scripts and thus categorized more specifically to represent diverse meanings. In other words, securitization discourse strategically deploys a bounded national-cultural form of identification, with a certain associated meaning, framed against the horizontal cause of collective insecurity, however “immigration” is symbolically understood as threat.

The present research, a critical discourse analysis, is concerned with finding the symbolic meaning of securitization discourse at the national-political level in Italy. As Critical Discourse Analysis aims to clarify the unseen connections between social structures, discourse practices, and social practices, I consider the changing relations between global political economy, institutional security practices, and collective feelings of insecurity, as discussed, in analyzing the ways that threat and identity are discursively framed by state

politicians. I trace how the security “script” has developed over the past fifteen years to ultimately make “security” a symbol of democracy in Italy’s so-called “Second Republic”.

My research included the study of prominent newspapers, the Rome-based *La Repubblica* and the Milan-based *Il Giornale*, for three week periods during the election years 1994, 2001, and 2008. For these periods, which begin ten weeks before the general election for Italian premiership, I extracted political discourse of “center-Right” and “center-Left” politicians in which threats were being attributed to an identity-category. I consider how the symbols for threat and national identity change in form and meaning during the periods. I take these to be examples of scripts that show one important way in which politicians, mediated through media, communicate with voters during the election process. Since news sources make political choices regarding which stories and quotations to use, I chose newspapers with expressly Left and Right inclinations, understanding that this is still a limited picture of political interaction. Indeed considering the fact that most Italians get their news from television, the performance of scripts via television could have contributed to fuller understanding of script performance. Still, I was able to make in-depth observations of threat and identity-categories being framed, and to interpret the symbolic meaning that politicians attempt to evoke.

Symbols of security, of course, are not only different in every national context, but their meanings can be understood differently at local as well as individual levels. This is especially important in the context of Italy, a state with a history of different regional identities and a tradition of participation in local parties. Indeed to better understand the symbolic efficacy of the categories and threats provoked in the discourse examples I studied, ethnographic methods in different local contexts would be useful.

Chapter 2

Campaign posters that decorate streets and billboards are a major form of political communication between politicians and the electorate in Italy. One form of this visual “script” in 2008’s national election campaign featured the face of Silvio Berlusconi, his name, and only one other word: SICUREZZA. This single example is a telling one. Berlusconi has made freedom, embodied in his very person, the symbol of Italian democracy since his entrance into politics in 1994. Since it has become clear that *sicurezza*, Italian for security, is the “first freedom”, one that has itself become the hegemonic symbol of democracy.

2.1 The pre-1989 internal-security script in Italy

In Italy, the post-1989 military “shift” from external defense to internal safety was not really a shift at all. Unlike other European countries, Italy has a centralized police system, and the Carabinieri and other factions have traditionally filled both police and military functions. Throughout the postwar period, moreover, Italy was an internal security state under the command of the U.S. military, playing a key role in the ideological Cold War against “Communism”. Armed forces for the southern front of NATO were deployed internally for forty years to manage the Soviet threat, particularly active in northern Italy. Decades of terrorist violence carried out from both “red” and “black” political extremes³ amounted to “the worst epidemic of terrorist violence in the Western world” (Eubank and Weinberg 1997). This meant that throughout the post-War period, Italy was familiar with the internal defense practices of ongoing, armed “civil war”, and securitization discourses

³ For a lengthy analysis of CIA involvement in internal terrorism in Italy during the Cold War, see Willan, 1991.

associated with it, long before other European states would move to internalize national defense and institutionalize defensive nationalism.

Some have attributed to the “hopelessness” of political actors in the context of Christian-Democratic hegemony in post-War Italy to that during the liberal hegemony of the pre-War period. Both are seen as effectively ostracizing the “extremes” in Italian politics. In regards to the latter, extreme-right wing terror in response to “Italy’s ‘long May’, quite easily the most radical, interesting and, in the end, violent of Europe’s 68s” (Foot 2003), culminated in an intensification of red and black terror in the eighties. Italians agreed at the time that these were the most significant, and distressing, phenomenon in the post-War history of the country (Drake 1983).

The Italian cultural tradition of ‘revolution’, as Nando Della Chiesa once explained (paraphrased in Drake 1983), has been so strong that the term has been overly diffused and abused. And Karl Mannheim, who argued that no country can ever fully escape its own historical character, has written that the Red and Black revolutionary traditions in Italy each had a distinct “glamorous history” compared to that of Italian liberalism:

The endemic weakness of Italian liberalism has been the essential ideological precondition for that country’s highly volatile, comparatively extremist political and intellectual life, resulting in vigorous socialist, communist, Catholic, and fascist traditions, each offering channels for career advancement in the forms of party jobs, teaching and editorial positions, and networks of literary publications. (cited in Drake 1983)

“Red” and “black” revolutionary traditions has been analyzed in terms of the two waves of political terrorism that swept Italy in the past century, the first one leading to the rise of Fascism. The second is particularly important for the present discussion of internal securitization discourses, institutional nationalism, and, ultimately post-totalitarian fascism.

The contentious politics framework discussed in section 1.4 reminds us not to reduce everything to a static idea of culture, but the historical strength of anti-liberal forces in Italy is a relevant consideration for understanding the post Cold war Liberal consensus in that country. The movement toward a “post-political” liberal consensus between the Left and Right was present before 1989, as the following sections will discuss. In Italy it would, moreover, come to include parties of the extreme right. In a the country with the once-highest Communist party in the Western world, the symbolism of security as the boundary marker between the nation and its enemies, has been a key factor in the repression of class struggle and the rise of post-totalitarian fascism.

2.2 1994: Tracing the symbolic power of “security”

My research began in February 1994, the year following the dissolution of the Democrazia Cristiana and Italy’s so-called “First Republic”. The *Cavaliere*, or *Knight*, as he is commonly referred to in relation to business, sought to save “all good-willed” Italians from the corrupt political classes, which he continuously conflated with “Communists”. The owner of marketing company, television stations, supermarkets, and the AC Milan football club, he was the embodiment of free enterprise and unrestricted accumulation. As such, his vision of freedom as freedom from the state, meant that the Knight would now be the only hope for modernizing a country at risk of neo-communist takeover of government.

Indeed the Communists were the closest they had ever been to coming to power (Ginsborg 2004)—a development that, Berlusconi promised, would keep Italy from rising above its criminally corrupt past, on one hand, and from becoming a full-fledged democracy, on the other. Forza Italia led the continuing “Civil War” for enlightened liberal democracy, the only hope for economic modernity and political moderation against an ominous left-wing

“cartel” marked by “illiberal callus intolerance”⁴. The anti-freedom “last neo-Communist vessel standing”⁵ would doom the country third-world status. He appeared not as a politician but as the personification of the people himself. He evoked the need to end the extremism that had made the “partocrazia” system of government a dysfunctional one. (The proportionality problem, which depended on coalitions, was also supposed to be tackled by a first-past-the-post system referendum passed in 1993.) The criminal elites were thus a “vertical” threat, intent on bureaucratic rule, a palpable symbolism, as Paul Ginsborg would agree: “It could be argued that the Italian state has been in the throes of a legitimation crisis ever since unification in 1860, and that the roots of the widespread distrust of authority, and connivance at illegality of every kind, go back to the Risorgimento” (2004).

Berlusconi spoke for working Italians against the “parasitic bureaucratic class” (Della Porta and Vannucci 2007) of the DC era, and his embrace of the Anglo version of freedom, along with constant references to a new liberal-democratic Italy must be contextualized in the political space he was attempting to fill—both symbolically and actually. The former head of the Partida Socialista Italiano (PSI), the Italian Premier from 1983 to 1987, and the ally of two major DC leaders, Bettino Craxi had

prefigured Blair by crafting a new, strongman social-democratic politics which broke with both the symbols (hammer and sickle) and the material interests (indexed wage-rises) of the industrial working class. Craxi, right down to his corrupt boots, invented Blairism, including the crushing of internal party democracy in the once proud and disputatious Socialist Party”.

Ginsborg 2004

Perry Anderson explains that after being struck by corruption charges, “Craxi had become the most execrated public figure in the land” and forced into exile (2009). Berlusconi, even as he

⁴ “Segni? Pare uno di Beautiful: Ombretta Fumagalli: a Palazzo Chigi Berlusconi Cossiga,” *il Giornale*, January 24, 1994.

⁵ See footnote 5.

reduced their friendship to the sending of a few postcards while “the left had gone to bed with him”⁶, actually had a close relationship with Craxi. The best man at his wedding and godfather of one of his children, Craxi had provided (through the banks of the PSI) the loans for Berlusconi’s business ventures and enacted the laws for saving them, while Berlusconi’s TV stations flouted him and his profits supported him. In 1993, he personally told Berlusconi how to “reach that part of the electorate that is disoriented, confused, but also determined not to be governed by the Communists” (paraphrased by an interviewee, cited in Anderson: 2009).

Another “vertical” and “horizontal” crusader was Umberto Bossi of the populist Lega Nord, a party that had started as a regionalist movement for secession and a tax revolt directed against Roman elites and migrants from the South. As many residents in one valley area of the Trentino region described to anthropologist Stacul⁷, the hard-workers of the North “fed” their economic gains to Roman politicians and Southern residents, who would “eat” (read: waste) them. Though these working class voters were traditionally divided between Communist and Catholics, in 1994 they largely identified, interactively speaking, with local cultures (Stacul 2006), represented by the Lega and other regionalist parties. They also expressed fear of a Communist takeover of government in the 1994 elections. One of my discourse examples relates the horizontal and vertical threat-naming in a particularly vivid way, as it complains that the “racist” Communists were “speculating on the skin of immigrants”⁸, soliciting the latter to receive government funds, while Northerners in need were pushed out of the social centers they controlled.

⁶ *Il Giornale*, 1994.

⁷ Anthropologist Stacul conducted research in the Venoi Valley in the Trentino region of Northern Italy, where the newly formed centre-right coalition enjoyed the majority of votes in the 1994, 1996 and 2001 national elections. (2006).

⁸ Virman Cusenza, “Gil, Come Cabbare I Lavatortori: Un assessore verde: il sindacato illude gli extracomunitari e snobba i nostri disoccupati,” *il Giornale*, January 24, 1994.

In the North, Forza Italia formed the “Pole of Good Government” with the Lega Nord, Its leader, Bossi, was seen one party member as the true hero of the revolution and, as the necessary “father of reconstruction”. He too explained that it was with his “gun that all the parties toppled”⁹, and he would join the moderate liberal-democrats as it was only with Berlusconi that Italy would ever make the passage from First to Second Republic. Still, he explained that the Lega was the only real party that would survive in the end, as all others were just “recycled” remnants of old.

Forza Italia formed the “Freedom Pole” of the South with Alleanza Nazionale, a re-imaged version of the neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano that had been ostracized in the anti-fascist First Republic. Fini, expressing now only freedom-loving nationalism “in the most modern Western sense of the word”¹⁰, called upon liberal democrats to accept him as a partner or else be accomplices in what he called a historic crime, the impending Communist takeover and dramatic movement to the left. Berlusconi, while emphasizing the extremity of all things Left, explained that any talk of fascism in relation to Fini was just a Communist “scam”, part of the plot against him and his crusade on behalf of freedom. Fini alluded to the fascism of the Left, juxtaposing its “verbal violence” with the “non-violent revolution”¹¹ of the Centre-Right.

The Partida Democratica di Sinistra proved eager to appear a moderate option for liberal-democracy, and they also used the security framing against Communist. Yet as it abandoned the class struggle on behalf of liberalism, as Craxi had done, the anti-Communist left was still conflated with the criminal cartel: “The PDS is nothing but the old PCI revarnished anew: the same name, same ideas, same controlling and statalist mentality”¹²,” Berlusconi insisted. Moreover, the liberal consensus, despite theoretically taking the material

⁹ *La Repubblica*, 1994.

¹⁰ Federico Guiglia, *Il Giornale* 1994. 15 gen. p.3

¹¹ Federico Guiglia, *Il Giornale*, Jan 28

¹² *La Repubblica*, 1994.

interests out of politics and effectively rendering society classless (Tamas 2001), allowed Fini to refer “to the great families of Italian capitalism, all deployed for battle by the left”.

In the end, the FI inherited the DC’s base of the self-employed, women (and housewives in particular), and pensioners (Amyot 2004), and the FI-LN coalition was overwhelmingly successful in the North. Public sector workers relying on public welfare programs voted mostly for Alleanza Nazionale. Despite its internal incongruity, the centre-Right coalition, even more than the DC had in the past, was able to attract the public-sector without support from a major trade union federation and from the working class (Amyot 2004: 111). With the consensus on Berlusconi’s vision of freedom, the once-strong labor movements of Italy were criminalized and ostracized in a Thatcherite neo-liberal (109) fashion.

2.3 2001: Shifting toward horizontal securitization

With the Center Left in power in 2001, Berlusconi declared that the date of the elections, 13 May, would “be the day that democracy returns.” The communist threat to democracy was still alive, and thus the civil war symbolism continued, yet the danger was not as obvious as it had been in 1994. The Uliva coalition, for the Cavaliere, was “permeated by an antidemocratic culture” and posed a consistent threat “feeding off our flesh” in the hidden manner of a parasite. Indeed after making himself the symbolic people’s hero of the ‘revolution of the judges’ (Della Porta and Vannucci 2007), he had pointed vertical securitization against the red siege of the magistrates, by whom, he explained, he had been slyly “disarmed” through a “well orchestrated political production”¹³. The production of

¹³ This was, of course, occurring well before 2001. 2001. “Il Cavaliere ha un sospetto E' stato il guru di Rutelli.” *La Repubblica*, March 16, 2.

which he spoke, was of course, a corruption charge against him, one of many criminal charges that he would avoid through changes to law and stalling out the statute of limitations¹⁴.

The leaders of the left had covertly “enshrined fascist principle” in legislation that provided them with the power to easily change the Constitution, according to one member of the Lega, while Bossi had himself been accused by a European Parliament member of being a fascist. To this, Lega’s leader replied: “The left weaves plots behind the scenes like they always have... and (in all of Europe) is scared of the domino effect, they are scared to lose Europe. Theirs is a neo-Stalinist plan. They’ve made a pact to create a Soviet Union of Europe, a European super-state.”

In reference to the fascist danger of Lega Nord, EU President Prodi insisted that Italy, like its other European counterparts, was a full-fledged democracy. Indeed as Anderson has argued, the Left continued to claim that Italy, instead of being threatened by Berlusconi’s conflict of interests or his detrimental influence, was “moving away from proportional representation and weak government towards a necessary strengthening of the executive and a right-left alternation in power” (2009). Della Porta and Vannucci (2007) have shown that the ensuing demotion of political corruption as a political priority was intentional and enacted through a bi-partisan agreement which would ultimately work towards de-autonomizing the judiciary (Ginsborg 2004).

At a time in which the majority of Italian voters agreed that if found guilty, Berlusconi should not be allowed to govern (Ginsborg 2004), crime in relation to “public security” was attracting attention towards a horizontal threat. The frequency of the term nearly quadrupled in *La Repubblica* in 2001 (and would incrementally increase yearly thereafter¹⁵) as, even before September 11, securitization discourses coincided with the intensification of internal

¹⁴ About one fifth of all charges are dissolved in this way in Italy (Anderson 2009).

¹⁵ As shown through the search engine on the newspapers’ website.

security¹⁶. One centre-right candidate for mayor spoke of the “defeat of the government on security” and proposed that providing local police with more men, better equipment, and higher wages was the “only way to restore calm to the population.” Naples too, was “hostage to crime” and Gela was threatened by “rampant crime, suffering, threat, and fear.” The centre-left mayor called for more police and Carabinieri, and for civilians to make more frequent use of their services. “On one hand we see the Far West but from the other State is not equipped enough to fight it”.

The Far West image also symbolized crime threat in terms of third-world status, discursively linked to the ongoing war on organized crime and immigration. “It doesn’t matter what you call it” explained one mayor after being questioned about the existence of the real Mafia in his city. “It is not difficult to understand that in the changes in international trafficking in drugs, cigarettes, weapons, illegal immigration, Puglia has taken a geostrategic role. To me it seems comparable with that of Sicily of the seventies.” Fini argued that the local violence in Southern cities represented the need to introduce the crime of illegal immigration, accompanied by “expulsion with forced accompaniment.” No longer an overt racist, he declared that immigrants “without the means to live, end up joining unskilled criminal organizations”. Meanwhile Lega members were deployed against the enemy intruders, organizing protests around the twin concepts of “liberty and expulsion” in the North, while its deputy mayor of Lampedusa explained his presence in the Southern city was “to defend the island from the invasion of clandestini [illegal immigrants].” As the Lega’s security framing had already been marked by a shift in its horizontal focus from Southern to foreign immigrants¹⁷, the 2001 sample offered an arresting example of culture talk: “If you

¹⁶ That same year make headlines globally with the pre-planned police violence against G8 protesters in Genoa and the killing of Carlo Giuliani.

¹⁷ The shift in framing is best described by Kowalscyk and Popkewitz (2005: 425), who link the Lega’s reactive “restorative project” to the institutionalization of the European Union’s cosmopolitan vision of citizenship. The latter has been marked by framing that places the non-EU immigrant where the Southern immigrant once fit, the

want to live in peace, leave Porto Palazzo... The point has come that it is they, the Muslims, who invite our fellow citizens, guilty of being non-Muslim, to leave their neighborhoods,” announced a Lega leader, calling a migrant from Morocco “racist” after the latter complained about xenophobic laws.

2.4 2008: The “first freedom” as the symbol of democracy

In the 2008 election, Berlusconi formally united with Fini in the Party of Freedom, announcing in streetside posters that “The party of the Italians is born.” His idea of freedom remained unrestricted as ever, as one quote from my sample shows: “I say that my party is a monarchy with respect to the leader, who is the undisputed one and only, as well as the founder. For the rest it is an *anarchist* party, on issues of ethics and morality, for example, we leave the freedom of conscience in all situations” (my emphasis). He said that it was because of the left that “Today there is more fear, more poverty, more insecurity,” blaming the economic crisis on an incumbent government seemingly as fractured as it was in 1994. With an image “destroyed throughout the world” it was again the Cavaliere that would make Italy a “developing country”. Though without the Socialist party in its coalition, the centre-Left, led by Veltroni and organized into the Partito Democratico, was still married to the “horrifying” culture of red-judge “guistizismo” and the red forces that kept Italy from being “a free Western and democratic country.” As the leader of a party that was going to finally move Italy toward bipolarism, Berlusconi explained that “the only recipe is a liberal one”. To stop the risk of conquest, the Italians “should vote for the power of freedom, namely the People of Freedom.”

That his vision took “security to be the first freedom” (Bigo et al 2007) was made explicit in his platform’s first promise: “Zero tolerance with Roma, clandestini, criminals,

multicultural model of “unity in diversity” enabling culture talk as much as the historical hierarchal framing of regional integration did racism.

with a policy of no open ports and more severe penalties for repeat offenders” and the pledge to deploy troops in cities. Veltroni, the center- Left candidate, also made security its “first”, arguing that “sicurezza is not of the right or left, it is the right of every citizen”. More specifically, in the same speech, he promised that if he won, “we will hunt the Romanians”¹⁸.

Since the mid-seventies, around two million immigrants had arrived in the traditionally emigration country. Most of them had found work in Italy’s famously significant informal economy, particularly its service sector. Thus many worked serving the rich as cleaners and caretakers, but many others worked in factories. Foot explained in 2002 that “The iron furnaces of the Brescian countryside—once a stronghold of the PCI—are now overwhelmingly worked by North Africans.” Again, the post-political Left’s continuous retreat from class to identity politics in Italy has been a striking case. With the Lega picking up former working-class votes, the “the collapse of the established Left in its former heartlands in the North has been one of the most dramatic trends of the last twenty years, paralleling the virtual disappearance of those big industries that once sustained a communitarian, radical and solidaristic working class” (2002).

It is clear that security framing, has since 1994, been marked by a shift toward horizontal threats, especially immigrants and Roma. Friedman’s framework, though, is not completely applicable in Italy as the multi-billionaire ruler Berlusconi is not a transnational elite. Materially, the vertical has been stretched to an extreme, with the super rich on top and the super-poor (one in four Italians who live in poverty) on the bottom (Anderson 2009)—the missing element of transnationalism could have denied some middle class service jobs that might come with it. To compensate, security discourses have heightened horizontal threat-naming. They depend, moreover, on cultural and economic fears in relation to immigration

¹⁸ *La Repubblica*, 2008.

that in Italy far surpass that of other European countries. That is, according to the public-opinion-sphere (Angus Reid Global Monitor 2007).

Conclusion

Since the victory of Pdl, the alarm-sounding with which this thesis opened, is, as I have aimed to show, not unwarranted. I have attempted here to explain why, in Italy, internal securitization discourses, linked to all the elements that have brought about dispersed references to fascism, have been marked by a shift from vertical to horizontal mobilization, while in the material, the reverse shift has been the trend. The dual crisis meets the economic crisis in Italy in what can, and should, be considered post-totalitarian fascism.

In Chapter One I aimed to show that the insecurities associated with belonging in post-political neoliberalisation erupt out of the ensuing “dual crisis of popular sovereignty and labor” (Kalb forthcoming). I then proposed, in relation to this, a side-by-side comparison of far right in Europe, marked by discourses of culture talk, on one hand, to the institutionalization of internal security, marked by discourses of cultural-nationalism. Considering that the latter increases social control mechanisms as it further intensifies the neo-liberal dual crisis, I argue that a post-totalitarian fascism has become a possibility and, in Italy, a reality.

Chapter Two, then, presents the case of Italy. Certainly not a mirror image of the general theories discussed above, Italy is marked not by transnational classes but extreme vertical polarization, which has been answered increasingly through horizontal security symbolism that targets immigrants and Roma, and Roma immigrants, amidst popular fear. Whatmore, pre-1989 internal securitization, as well as a striking post-political consensus that

includes Left, Right, and extreme-Right, of which the far Left was a consistent target, contributed to the hegemonic rise of “security” as a symbol of Italian democracy.

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