

Review of

Emidio Diodato and Raffaele Marchetti (2023), *Manuale di politica estera italiana*, Bologna, Il Mulino

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Italian foreign policy did not catch much attention among political scientists during the Cold War. Contributions mainly focused on the influence of the international and domestic levels on the choices Italy made and the low profile adopted. The end of the Cold War and a renewed Italian activism sparked new interest. The literature became more and more consistent and diversified. The debate on the issue of continuity and discontinuity associated with changes at the international and domestic levels occupied center stage for a long time, especially in relation to the three traditional pillars of post-World War II Italian foreign policy, that is, the US, the EU, and the UN and multilateralism. Wide attention also developed in relation to the interaction of international and domestic factors, the national role conception, the contribution to peace operations and military alliances, the relationship with formal and informal international organizations, the quest for status, the strategic culture, the foreign policy style, the emergence of a post-ideological foreign policy, the Europeanization, the use of migration policies as a foreign policy tool, the relationship with China and Russia and, more in general, the positioning of Italy in a changing international political system, the impact of populist parties and governments, the inclusion of civil society in forms of hybrid diplomacy, the relationship with areas of interest (among which the Mediterranean or Africa), and the identification of critical junctures, to name but a few areas of interest in the literature. Building on this new wave of literature on Italian foreign policy, *Manuale di politica estera italiana* is a textbook that aims to make sense of the literature while providing a founding text on Italian foreign policy for political scientists and the general debate (p. 11). It also has the ambition of prompting the study of foreign policy in Italian academic programs and in the selection process of Italian diplomats (p. 13).

The book declaredly adopts a Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) approach. The first chapter presents FPA theories, foreign policy determinants, decision-making models, and actors. It also briefly illustrates the evolution of diplomacy. The second chapter enters into the specifics of the Italian case and introduces the actors and processes of Italian foreign policy. It describes the leading institutions and how institutional actors have developed their competencies over time, with a particular focus on the newly acquired roles of the President of the Council, the President of the Republic, and, more recently, the Parliament. It also draws attention to the importance of nongovernmental actors, such as interest groups, civil society actors, and the media. Finally, it analyses political cultures' relevance and evolution over time, focusing on the main political cultures of post-World War II and post-Cold War. The third chapter presents four critical junctures in Italian foreign policy: the unification process, the fascist period, democracy in a bipolar international system, and the post-Cold War phase. According to the authors, each of these junctures is a turning point in Italian foreign policy that redefined how the country interacted within the international system and the conception of the Italian national role. Focusing on the intersection between internal and external, the fourth chapter identifies the conception of national role and national identity as the main independent variables in Italian foreign policy, although not the only ones, and in interaction with international factors. To understand Italian foreign policy and, in particular, changes in the internal-external intersection, the authors introduce the penetrated system, the two-level game, and the external constraint as possible theoretical explanations. While the authors believe that the first two theoretical explanations help explain the post-World War II and Cold War Italian foreign policy choices, they claim that, due to the weakness of Italian institutions (the institutional reality of the state), the external constraint – that is, looking outside for models and accepting intrusions in sovereignty to promote domestic changes that decision-makers on their own are not capable of adopting - has greater explanatory power also in relation to contemporary Italian foreign policy. The fifth chapter identifies the relationship with foreign powers, the relationship with the papacy, the dichotomy between the European and the Mediterranean area,

and the identification of who is Italian (social perimeter) as the primary strategic choices Italy has been traditionally confronted with. It also traces evolutions in the Italian strategic posture from the ambition to become a great power building on uni- or mini-lateralism to the post-World War II ambition to play a role as a regional middle power building on multilateralism. The authors present demography, the lack of energy sources, the economic system, and the cultural heritage as structural resources that affect Italian foreign policy. They identify the diplomatic network, the military and secret services, economic actors, international cooperation actors, and cultural actors as the main tools of Italian foreign policy. The sixth chapter briefly analyses Italian relations with multilateral organizations (the EU and NATO) and specific states (France, Germany, United Kingdom, Holy See, United States, China, and Russia). The volume also provides very useful and practical teaching material as online resources.

The textbook is a welcome contribution to the literature on Italian foreign policy and to the resources available to political scientists who want to teach Italian foreign policy. Combining different goals and talking to different audiences, as the authors of this volume do, is never an easy task, and this volume is no exception. However, the praise that the volume has already received from high-level practitioners and in academic circles suggests that Diodato and Marchetti's ambition may have been justified.