

Religion and Politics in Italy: The Role of Christian Democracy in Post-War Democratisation

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<https://doi.org/10.22151/politikon.33.4>

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Abstract

Entering the controversial debate on the effects of religion on democratisation, this research enquires into the role of the Italian Christian Democratic party (Democrazia Cristiana, or DC) in post-war democratisation in Italy. Through a largely discursive analysis of the historical rise of the party, the article adopts a case-study approach to test the “inclusion-moderation hypothesis”. This hypothesis is applied to the two distinct historical phases of the DC's activity: the “inclusion” phase (from 1945 to 1958) and the “moderation” phase (from 1958 onwards). The findings suggest that the DC contributed to post-war democratisation by drawing broad consensus from both the Catholic laity and the Church, in the first phase, and moderating its religiously exclusive goals and the views of the Church in the second phase—leading to even wider support from the electorate.

Keywords

Democratisation, religion, Christian Democracy, inclusion, moderation, dialogue

Introduction

The inclusion of religious parties in politics has raised serious debates about the effects of religion on the quality of democracy. Religious parties may pursue goals, especially religiously exclusive goals, which do not work very well with liberal democracy. This is because religiously exclusive policies may stem from old religious tenets and norms that concern themselves with the conduct of the individual and, thus, with their freedom. An interesting question, however, is whether religious parties *can* exist in, or even contribute to, a democratic system. The aim of this research is to examine what role the Italian Christian Democratic party, *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC), played in the post-war politics of democratisation in Italy. The paper's argument is that the DC contributed to democratisation in Italy, first, by *including* religious discourse and actors in the process while complying with the rules of democracy, and second, by *moderating* its political goals and persuading the Church into accepting democratic values as well.

The first three sections of the paper deal with the relevant literature on democratisation and the relationship between religion and democracy, the theoretical framework adopted to approach the case-study (in this case, the “inclusion-moderation hypothesis”), and *how* the theory is applied to the study of the Italian Christian Democratic party. Then, the first part of the analysis focuses on the rise of the DC and the implications of the political “inclusion” of religion for democratisation between 1945 and the late 1950s. The second part of the analysis focuses instead on the second historical phase of the DC, the “opening to the left”, and the way the DC moderated its political goals and the Church's views from the late '50s onwards. The next section then discusses any potential critiques to the argument, giving way to the “conclusion and possibility for further research” section. In this paper, “moderation” is meant as the party's adoption of less religiously exclusive goals. Democracy, instead, refers to “liberal democracy”: a system that promotes (1) equal rights and (2) individual freedom, and is marked by (3) separation of powers, (4) rule of law, and (5) free, fair, and competitive elections.

Literature Review

Any analysis of the relationship between religion and democracy must begin with a review of some of the existing literature on democratisation, along with its strengths and weaknesses. The contribution of Fareed Zakaria (2007) to this subject revolves around the role of economics, more specifically of capitalism, in fostering democracy. In Zakaria's view, capitalism causes a new class to rise that will demand political representation in return for taxation (Zakaria 2007: 73-75). However, although capitalism might make democracy more sustainable, Zakaria's approach does not explain what triggers democratisation or makes it more successful (Geddes 2009: 320). In studying all cases of democratisation since 1972, Jay Ulfelder (2009) finds that 32 out of 43 cases involved some form of popular rebellion. This certainly proves revolutions to be a frequent pathway to democracy, but does not explain its inherent causes. Larry Diamond (1999) emphasises the “democracy-building” function of civil society, but himself admits that

civil society alone is not a sufficient condition for democracy. As for the author's perspective, in another article I have argued that the compatibility or incompatibility of prevailing ideas within society and liberal democratic principles (such as the rule of law and equal rights) help explain the presence or absence of democracy in a certain country (Capati 2017).

It is in this kaleidoscope of views on the causes of democratisation that the study of religion has gained more prominence. Scholars of religion and democracy agree that a government's activity should never be hindered by non-elected religious authority (Stepan 2012: 57). One question that is worth addressing, however, is whether religious values and actors can enter politics, through the creation of religious parties, without undermining the principles and rules of democracy. The "incompatibility thesis" has come to comprise various arguments sharing the idea that any interference of religion with the political process threatens the functioning of democracy. Samuel Huntington (1996) admitted that Christianity played an important role in "making" Western civilisation. Yet, in his view, it seems that the contribution of Christianity lies in its detachment from political affairs and in the concept of "separation of church and state" present in Western culture, and absent in all other cultures and religions. Christians are told to "give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's". "In Islam", Huntington said, "God is Caesar; in China and Japan, Caesar is God; in Orthodoxy, God is Caesar's junior partner." (Huntington 1996: 70). Following this line of thought, Steve Bruce (as cited in Beckford and Demerath 2007: 222) argues that "religion taken seriously is incompatible with democracy". That is because the division of the world into "godly" and "ungodly" people is incompatible with the idea that all men and women are equal (Beckford and Demerath 2007: 222).

In criticising the incompatibility thesis, Alfred Stepan (2012: 57) argues that, after the "government autonomy" condition is met, religious groups must be able to support political movements as long as their actions do not violate the liberties of other citizens or go against the laws of democracy. Religious parties have indeed often existed in Western democratic countries, and virtually none of these countries now have a rigid separation between church and state. In addition, Stepan's findings suggest that "secularism" has no direct link to democracy (Stepan 2012: 58–59). From a philosophical perspective, William Zartman (2001) concurs that there is, and should be, no incompatibility between religion and democracy, because there is none between religion and politics. The two spheres are hardly separable, since the person-to-God relationship has implications for the person-to-person relationship that should motivate the individual's participation in the political order, albeit without determining the nature of that order (Zartman 2001: 231). In this research, I try to add validity to this (Stepan and Zartman's) side of the argument, by analysing the role of the Italian Christian Democratic party in post-war Italian democratisation.

Theoretical Framework

Stepan's (2012) and Zartman's (2001) arguments find particular strength in the inclusion-moderation hypothesis, which is based on the idea that inviting extremists to participate in the political process is likely to moderate political discourse. In part, this is because, over the long run, a party will have to moderate to win over enough support to survive (Dickson 2014: 114–15). The inclusion-moderation hypothesis derives much of its rationale from Huntington's (1991) "participation-moderation trade-off" and the "median voter model". In the participation-moderation trade-off, political groups tend to moderate by accepting democratic rules and by focusing on running competitive political parties (Godwin 2011: 6). Duncan Black's (as cited in Godwin 2011: 6) "median-voter model" represents the preferences of voters as a spectrum. The reason why parties capture a larger number of votes when they moderate is because voter preferences are concentrated at the centre of the spectrum (Godwin 2011: 6). In his model, Anthony Downs (1957) also views political preferences in a spectrum, but he argues that there may be multiple "peaks" of preferences concentration, which do not necessarily have to be near the centre of the spectrum. This may often happen in a society with little ideological consensus and a multi-party system.

Several other authors go further and provide various causal mechanisms behind the inclusion-moderation process. Carrie Rosefsky Wickham (2004) and Nancy Bermeo (as cited in Godwin 2011: 8) argue that moderation stems from the learning process involved in participation. Theodore J. Lowi (as cited in Godwin 2011, 8) thinks that radical groups become more moderate when they try to defend their political positions, by determining which of their beliefs are defensible and by discarding radical views. Frances F. Piven and Richard A. Cloward (1977) argue that inclusion forces parties to be held accountable for government efficacy. Therefore, they stop opposing the democratic regime and try to achieve results. Finally, Adam Przeworski (as cited in Godwin 2011: 8) argues that moderation stems from the idea that, in order to better achieve a group's goals, that group has to participate fully in the political process.

The validity of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis is not only confined in the analysis of Islam and democracy, where it is often used. In this research, the discussion of the role of the DC in post-war Italian democratisation serves as a test of the inclusion-moderation process. As shown below, the inclusion of Catholic groups and values after World War II led to wide support from Catholics for democratisation—by means of supporting a Christian Democratic party—and, later, to the moderation of political goals within the DC. Hence, the party's rise and hold to power can be divided precisely into two historical phases: the "inclusion" phase and the "moderation" phase.

Methodology

This research adopts a case-study approach to the issue of religion and democracy, adding evidence against the incompatibility thesis. The question being asked is what role religion played, if any at all, in

post-war democratisation in Italy. The function of the research is to test, not to formulate, a hypothesis through a case study. This is done through a discursive analysis of the role of the Italian Christian Democratic party in post-war democratisation. Therefore, the only quantitative measurement used while describing the increasing support of the electorate for the party involves the number of votes obtained in the 1948 elections. The hypothesis tested is the inclusion-moderation hypothesis, which is directly applied to the two historical phases characterising the rise and hold on power of the Christian Democratic party: the “inclusion” phase (from 1945 to the late 1950s) and the “moderation” phase (from the late ‘50s onwards).

This division into two historical phases is to better reflect the dual process of inclusion-moderation. In this way, it is easier to highlight the democratising role the DC played in (1) including and gaining the support of the wide Catholic electorate in the first phase, and in (2) moderating its initial religiously exclusive goals and the political views of the Church in the second phase (which is in fact the argument of this paper). The first part of the analysis below thus tests whether the inclusion of religion in the democratisation process hampered the process itself in a way or another. It also verifies whether the DC was truly a means by which the Catholic Church re-engaged in Italian politics after years of exclusion, and, therefore, whether the DC can in fact be viewed as an inclusion of religion in the political process. As shown below, the answers to these two questions are “no” and “yes” respectively, meaning that the inclusion of religion played a key role in democratisation. The second part of the analysis tests whether the inclusion of religion later led to the moderation of political goals and discourse. As mentioned later, moderation occurred both within the party and in the ranks of the Catholic Church itself.

The “Inclusion” Phase: The Rise of Christian Democracy

The *Democrazia Cristiana* was formed as a clandestine party during the last years of the Fascist regime, thanks to a network of politically engaged Catholics. Their objective was to create a Christian-inspired party that would play a major role in post-war Italian politics. Some of the founders of the DC had been members of Luigi Sturzo’s Italian Popular Party (PPI), which had been dismantled by the Fascists in the 1920s (Domenico and Hanley 2006: 118-119). Alcide de Gasperi, for instance, had been the PPI’s leader in the last few months of the party’s existence, and became the first leader of the DC in the 1940s. Among the members were also professors Fanfani, La Pira, Moro, and Andreotti. In 1943, having become an important political force, the DC joined an anti-Fascist coalition, the Committee of National Liberation (CLN), together with the Italian Communists (PCI), the Socialists (PSI), and others. In 1944, the CLN became the head of the liberated Italian government and, in 1945, De Gasperi became the new Prime Minister. By 1947, the DC expelled the Communists and Socialists from the alliance and ruled with an absolute majority until 1953. From 1953 on, however, the party needed to form several coalitions to retain majority power (Domenico and Hanley 2006: 119). Nevertheless, Christian Democracy dominated

Italian politics for almost five more decades.

The Christian Democrats achieved an important victory in the first parliamentary elections of 1948. With the approaching elections, the DC made a huge propaganda effort to contrast itself with the strength of the left. This happened thanks to the help of the *Azione Cattolica*, or Catholic Action, (AC)—one of the main Catholic associations—in mobilising the electorate through the *Comitati Civici* (Civic Committees). The victory of the DC was also made possible by rising national support for the party (Radi 2005: 39-40). By 1948, the number of registered members of the DC had more than doubled since 1945. The DC's members amounted to 537,582 in 1945, 607,977 in 1946, 800,378 in 1947, and 1,127,128 in 1948 (Radi 2005: 40). The result of the election was a heavy DC majority in parliament. The party won 48.4% of the votes, 304 out of 574 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (Furlong 2003: 49), and 12.7 million votes out of 28 million overall (Radi 2005: 54). In the senate, the DC obtained 48.1% of the votes (roughly half of the 22 million votes cast in the election) and 131 out of 237 seats (Radi 2005: 54).

The 1948 election signalled a large Christian moderate electorate in post-war Italy and a large consensus for Christian Democracy in general. It also signalled, as discussed later, a shift in the Church's position with respect to the political sphere. Finally, it also signalled the return of religion into Italian politics. Both the Christian electorate and Catholic Action were supporting a self-declared democratic party. Catholic Action's help itself during the 1948 campaign shows the party's initial dependence on the Church's hierarchy and associations.

The DC was theoretically independent but practically dependent on the Catholic Church. The party relied heavily on Catholic Action as to the mobilisation of the electorate, as showed during the 1948 electoral campaigns. Catholic Action back then made a huge effort in mobilising all the parishes, the Catholic Orders and organisations through the Civic Committees (Radi 2005: 42). The Civic Committees were created by the then president of the AC, Luigi Gedda, with the necessary approval of Pope Pious XII, out of a well-founded fear that the DC was too organisationally weak and willing to compromise with leftist forces (Radi 2005: 44). The AC was instituted by Pope Pious X, who envisioned it almost as an extension of the action of the clergy and as an institution heavily dependent on the direction of ecclesiastical authority (Bidegain 1985: 3). The objective of the Vatican in creating Catholic Action was to re-catholicise Italian society (Bidegain 1985: 2) The Committees were efficiently organised in four different bureaus. The first connected all the "*Opere cattoliche*" and provide them with the propaganda material that was destined to the peripheries. The second transported the material from the centre to the dioceses. The third prepared all the propaganda activities that ranged from cinema to manifestos. Finally, the fourth bureau had followed all the propaganda strategies of the political opponents (Radi 2005: 44).

In the months preceding the elections, the AC mobilised 300,000 activists and 20,000 local Committees

(Radi 2005: 45). Moreover, the AC influenced the formation of the party lists. Indeed, the DC drew many of its leading cadres from the AC. Over the years, these came to include Fanfani, Moro, and Andreotti (Hanley 1994: 76). This initiative, of course, was never officially stated to avoid undermining the Lateran Pacts of 1929, which prohibited the AC from participating in politics (Furlong 2003: 46). The party's dependence on the Church, however, goes beyond the AC and involves the broad political, though perhaps illiberal, objectives of the Vatican in the years before the so-called "opening to the left".

Through the DC, the Vatican aimed at asserting greater power over the state, by influencing policies such as contraception, abortion, and divorce (Killinger 2002: 182). In particular, one of the Church's main goals was to guarantee a dominant position for Catholicism in state education. This was made possible by the DC's monopoly of the Education Ministry, among many others, over several years and through the successful insertion of the Lateran Pacts into the post-war constitution (Hanley 1994: 77). Yet, this was not the only way in which the Church influenced the policies of the DC. Catholic Action, on which the party was highly dependent, took its directives especially from the *Catholic Curia*, which had a deep anti-liberal tradition and a different conception of democracy (Driessen 2014: 102). Although Pious XII had openly declared the importance of democracy in defending human rights, his vision for post-war Italy was a democracy that would guarantee the Church's right to shape politics. His view included restrictions on democracy itself, which had to conform to Christian morality and to the Pope's ideas (Driessen 2014: 103). However, the fear of a civil war led the Pope to discard other views, which were much more illiberal than his, within the Church's hierarchy (Driessen 2014: 104). In order to promote its views, the Vatican pressed the DC to lobby for the inclusion of the Lateran Pacts, to emphasise religious policies and to force the Communists out of coalitions (Driessen 2014: 102). All in all, despite the illiberal tendencies within the Church's hierarchy, the Vatican seemed to have accepted the methods and procedures of a democratic political system.

In his 1944 Christmas radio message, Pope Pious XII spoke in favour of democracy openly. On many points, the Pope stressed the importance of correcting and criticising the actions of public authority in a critical way, and that such questioning and distrust can be best achieved through a democratic system. As Pious said on point 19, "the democratic form of government appears to many as a postulate of nature imposed by reason itself" ("Democracy and a Lasting Peace"). Even if the Vatican secretly rejected the implications of liberal democracy, they still put a great effort into supporting the Christian Democratic party. This, as mentioned, is shown by the mobilisation of the electorate during the campaigns and the creation of the Civic Committees, which were both approved by the Pope himself.

The influence of the Church shows that the DC was not only a democratic party that pretended to espouse Christian views, but was a means through which Catholic voters and the Church could affect policies in post-war Italy. The entering of religion into the political sphere always represents a risk. In

this case, however, the participation of religious groups in politics did not lead to violations of the principles of democracy. This seems to reflect Stepan's (2012: 57) view that "no group in civil society—including religious groups—can *a priori* be prohibited from forming a political party". Religious groups must be able to advance their views in civil society and support movements in politics, as long as their actions do not violate the liberties of other citizens, democratic rules, and laws (Stepan 2012: 57).

In line with Stepan's argument, the DC acted perfectly within the laws and rules of democracy. Interestingly, the party had also contributed to the drafting of the new Italian constitution (Furlong 2003: 54). In terms of civil liberties, some of the DC's policies were in fact religious "restrictions" on themes such as abortion, divorce, and the role of women. However, these policies reflected the views of the largest portion of society. It seems that gender inequality was more a product of social values than just a consequence of religion in politics. Nevertheless, the party's illiberal policies were heavily limited when the "opening to the left" occurred. As discussed later, letting such policies into the political sphere in the first place did not seem to threaten democratisation, especially since the party was later going to "soften" them to win more popular support. In any case, this first phase of the DC—characterised by a strong dependence on the Church—already shows that the party contributed to democratisation by involving a wide Catholic electorate in the process and by giving birth to the largest single party without which no government could be formed (Furlong 2003: 48).

The "Moderation" Phase: The "Opening to the Left"

The DC's conservative, religious policies and its dependence on the Catholic Church changed with the "opening to the left". The opening to the left was a shift in the DC's political alliances that began in the late 1950s and was driven by social changes and a "leftist" change within the DC. The so-called "economic miracle" in that period consisted of a rapid industrialisation and urbanisation process in Italy. Millions of Italians moved from the countryside to the cities. As a consequence, workers demanded a greater share of the growth benefits, which led to the creation of labour unions. Leftist parties gained much more consensus, especially on the issues of feminism, environmentalism, and prison reform. However, they were much more cautious on divorce and abortion (Sarti 2009: 82). As Sarti (2009: 82) writes, "the opening to the left was the cautious political response to a country moving painfully toward a new equilibrium". This is because, despite the social changes, the majority of Italians were still culturally conservative with respect to family, traditional gender roles, and the ceremonial aspects of religion (Sarti 2009: 82).

The opening to the left was mainly a response to these changes and to the party's need to capture wider support. The left fringes of the party had never really despised the Socialists and the Social Democrats, as much as they despised the Communists. Indeed, Fanfani had even proposed an alliance with the Socialists before the 1958 elections (Sarti 2009: 83). After achieving wide consensus, the DC realised that

it had to win over an even wider electorate to ensure its dominance in politics. Soon, the party became less interested in pursuing exclusively religious policies and resorted to move to the left. Therefore, the DC decided to form a coalition with the Italian Socialist Party, which for decades had supported democratic institutions. This, of course, signalled a laicisation of the DC with a consequent growing independence from the Vatican and fewer religious policies (Driessen 2014: 108). This shift went against the interests of the Church, at least initially, but the issue was gradually overcome thanks to Moro's dialogue with the Vatican and a change in the Church's views that was taking place in these years.

In practical terms, the opening to the left led to the first centre-left government formed by Fanfani in 1962, which included the DC, the Social Democrats and the republicans. Although the Socialists did not join the coalition, they abstained from voting against it provided that three reforms be realised before the 1963 elections. These included the nationalisation of the electrical industry, the formation of regional governments, and the reformation of secondary school (Ginsborg 2003: 267-68). However, Fanfani was moving too fast for the conservatives within its party and, in the following elections, he lost 4% of the votes (Sarti 2009: 83). By entering a coalition with the left, Fanfani aimed at making the party more independent from the Catholic Church. He tried to do so by centralising power in the hands of the secretary, himself, and promoting progressive cadres to important positions (Driessen 2014: 108). His approach was one of the main reasons why he soon lost consensus. The shift of the party towards more independence from the Church, however, was later achieved by Moro.

In 1963, Moro formed the first centre-left coalition that also included the Socialists (Sarti 2009: 83). For this reason, this year was the most important for the opening to the left. Although Moro's objective was also to make the party more independent from the Church, his approach was based on a dialogue with the high ranks of the Church's hierarchy. Moro tried to argue that, in order to face the social changes of the time and to defend religious morality, it was necessary for the party to move towards the left and achieve greater independence from the Church. This, he argued, would be better for both the Church and society and it would reflect the changing needs of the Italian people. The Church's response, at this point, was positive (Driessen 2014: 109).

The opening to the left was also made easier by the liberalisation of the Church's views in the '60s, especially with the advent of Pope John XXIII. Indeed, the Church was already undergoing internal changes in this period. Some of these changes led to the Second Vatican Council, which was announced by Pope John XXIII in 1959. From 1962 to 1965, 2,500 bishops and representatives from other Christian and non-Christian religions gathered together to discuss three important issues: faith and science, the Church and the modern state, and Christianity and other religions (Ciorra and Higgins 2012). In addition to peace, religious tolerance, and dialogue, the Council also discussed democracy. However, it did so in an indirect way. Through various documents, the Council established a new framework for the practice

of the Church in the political order. Moreover, it underscored the importance of religious freedom and human rights—two prerequisites of democracy (Curran 2003: 27). Vatican II played an important role in the democratisation of many countries between 1974 and 1989, three-quarters of which were Catholic-majority countries (Curran 2003: 30). Certainly, all this made Moro's work much easier. However, his own contribution was to address *in practice* the problem of the party's independence from Catholic institutions and the need to moderate political goals. Here, the moderation of policies contributed especially to the "civil rights" aspect of democracy.

The shift to the left shows that the DC contributed to democratisation by capturing an even wider electorate and moderating its political goals. By winning over more support, the party was able to form governments with a relatively large majority and show the Italian people that democracy was workable. As a response to the social changes that the population was experiencing in the '60s, the shift to the left allowed the party to expand its political objectives beyond its religious goals and toward new ones that reflected the new social and economic circumstances (Sarti 2000: 82). As mentioned, the moderation of policies and the shift to the left was also accompanied by greater independence from the Church. This, however, did not mean that the DC ceased to be a Catholic party. Indeed, the DC was still greatly influenced by Catholic tradition and morality. With the opening to the left, the party also persuaded the Church into further embracing democratic values and recognising the need to respond to the social needs of the time.

Criticism and Response

A solid critique of the main argument concerns the role of the party in democratisation. More specifically, it could be said that the DC did not make a crucial contribution to the process. One could argue that democratisation in Italy would have happened even without the existence of a Christian Democratic party after World War II. Most probably, international pressure and other factors would have caused the country to become democratic anyway. This critique is certainly well-founded. However, this research does not aim to demonstrate that the DC *caused* democratisation in Italy, but rather that it *contributed* to the process. Although democratisation would have occurred anyway, the research has shown that inviting the Catholic majority of the population and the widely shared religious tradition into politics gave the process a greater consensus. In 1948, the DC became the largest party and it did so as a Catholic democratic party. As previously mentioned, no democratically elected government could be formed without the DC (Furlong 2003: 48).

Another critique may also be levelled at the "moderation" aspect of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. The Church had already accepted the rules and laws of democracy and, in the late '50s, it also started to embrace the inherent values of democracy. It follows that the DC did not really contribute to moderating religious actors' views and goals. Partly, this is true. The Church had begun liberalising without the

pressure of the party, as shown by Pope John XXIII's announcement of Vatican II in 1959. However, Moro's DC "accelerated" the ideological change within the Church, at least as far as its relationship with the party and the moderation of the party's policies are concerned. Indeed, moderating its goals was the DC's own initiative and it arose out of the need to win wider support (as suggested by the inclusion-moderation hypothesis). By accepting democratic rules in the first place, the party was also bound, in the long term, to moderate its policies to survive within the democratic system. This is what the inclusion-moderation hypothesis maintains, despite the changes that took place within the Church independently of the party.

Conclusion and Further Research

The research has found that including religion in post-war Italian politics helped democratisation, first, by involving the wide Catholic population and their consensus in the process and, second, by "forcing" the DC and, to some extent, the Catholic Church to moderate and accept democratic *values* (in addition to democratic *rules*). The first part of the analysis focused on the rise of the DC from 1945 to around 1958 and its dependence on the Church during this phase. As the findings suggest, including religion in politics did not hamper democratisation, since the party acted within the rules and laws of democracy. In fact, involving religious ideas in the political process created a greater consensus for the new democratically elected governments. Although the party's initial position on divorce, abortion, and gender equality might be deemed "illiberal", this was more a product of society, culture, and tradition rather than religion *per se*. Nevertheless, these conservative policies were slowly moderated with the "opening to the left".

The second part of the analysis focused on the shift of the DC toward the left. In this second phase, the need of the DC to reflect social changes and capture a wider electorate caused the party to moderate those policies that, to some extent, could be viewed as "restrictive" of civil liberties in the first years of political activity. Although the Church had already accepted the rules of democracy and was undergoing a theological change within itself, the DC helped speed that process up and managed to gain the Church's official support for the moderation of its political goals. Finally, the research has discussed, and responded to, potential criticism.

The paper focused on the ways in which the DC contributed to democratisation, leaving out of the analysis the historical, political reasons behind the Church's will to re-enter politics—by openly supporting a political party—after years of exclusion. In addition to demonstrating that religion worked with democratisation in post-war Italy, further research into the complex factors affecting political theology would add much to the discussion. The research also avoids drawing any conclusions about what the role of religion *should* be in general. A normative analysis of the ideal role of religion within a state would nonetheless be a relevant subject for further research. Finally, following the same historical

approach to test the inclusion-moderation hypothesis through different case studies would better highlight the strengths and the weaknesses of the theory.

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