

Institution: University of Reading
Unit of Assessment: Modern Languages
Title of case study: Nation building and national identity in Italy
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Christopher Duggan's research at the University of Reading into Italian history since the French Revolution has tackled a number of themes relating to the development of the Italian nation-state, and has contributed, in ways that are exceptional for an academic historian, to debates about the country's 'national identity'. These debates have become intense with the political and economic crisis that has engulfed the country in recent years. The arguments around Duggan's work have involved leading politicians, journalists and members of the general public, and have taken place in many different media and forums, including television, radio, newspapers, schools, and public meetings.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The research developed out of Professor Duggan's work in the 1980s on the campaign conducted by the fascist regime against the Sicilian mafia. This work challenged a common view that fascism had been successful in tackling organised crime and highlighted the depth of problems faced by the Italian state in establishing its authority.</p> <p>Duggan explored the theme of the relationship between state and society further in his research into the career of Francesco Crispi (1818-1901), carried out between 1990 and 1999. As with the research on the mafia, he found his work raised questions about what Italy chose to remember (or not remember) about its past in ways that impacted on current political debates.</p> <p>The study of Crispi involved extensive archive work in a number of countries. It was the first full-length academic biography of this key political figure in 19th century Europe. It showed how Crispi's long career hinged on his concern to effect 'moral' as well as 'material' cohesion and unity in Italy and underscored the preoccupation of the Italian elites with nation-building. The sense of how fragmented Italy was (culturally and economically, for example), combined with the realisation that unification in 1860 had not commanded widespread support, left the country's leaders acutely conscious of the need to generate a sense of patriotism and commitment to the institutions of the state (such as parliament and the crown). The research examined the various instruments that were deployed in trying to construct a national community in Italy: the development of collective memories, the creation of national icons (e.g. the king, Garibaldi), the army (as well as schools) as a tool for educating the masses, and engagement in an expansionist and aggressive foreign policy. The stress in the research on the pursuit of war as a tool of national integration challenged long-held assumptions about the character of the Italian liberal state.</p> <p>The theme of nation-building in Italy was expanded to the entirety of Italian history from the French revolution to the present in the research Duggan undertook in 2001-6 for his book <i>The Force of Destiny</i> (2007). This work explored how Italy's ruling classes set about trying to create the kind of national community envisaged by patriots in the Risorgimento, and indicated that these efforts at nation building culminated in the fascist experiment of the 1920s and 1930s. The final part of the book looked at the situation in Italy since 1945 and suggested that the nationalising impulses that had driven Italian history since the 19th century had been severely attenuated with a resultant weakening of the nexus between nation and state and between public and private values.</p> <p>Much of Duggan's recent research (2006-12) was conducted within the framework of a multi-disciplinary AHRC-funded project <i>The Cult of the Duce: Mussolini and the Italians, 1918-2005</i> (for which he was Co-I). It looked in detail at how the fascist regime set out to generate a sense of a national community. Using unpublished private diaries and letters, it investigated to what extent and why fascism resonated with ordinary Italians. It suggested that the cult of the charismatic leader, and the deployment of emotionally charged religious categories such as 'faith' and 'sacrifice', were successful in generating the kind of cohesion that had eluded the country in</p>

previous decades.

Duggan joined the University as a Lecturer in 1987 and became a Professor in 2002.

3. References to the research

Fascist voices. An Intimate History of Mussolini's Italy, Random House, London 2012 (Oxford University Press, New York 2013; Laterza, Rome-Bari 2013), pp. xxiii + 501 (awarded the Wolfson History Prize for 2012) Reviews for *Fascist Voices*, taken from

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Fascist-Voices-Intimate-History-Mussolinis/dp/1847921035>:

"An elegantly written study that is the work of a historian at the height of his powers" (*History Today*)

"Magnificent new book, a pathbreaking study that everyone interested in Fascism, or in Italy past and present, should read" (Richard J. Evans *London Review of Books*)

"A fluid and absorbing book" (David Gilmour *Times Literary Supplement*)

"A timely read...only Duggan has so far comprehensively ransacked the Italian Nation Diary Archive and the Italian Archive of Popular Writing, and he has done it well" (John Pollard *Literary Review*)

The Force of Destiny. A History of Italy since 1796, Allen Lane, London 2007, pp. xxiii + 653. Italian-language edition: *La forza del destino. Storia d'Italia dal 1796 a oggi*, Laterza, Rome-Bari 2008, pp. xvi + 767; new edition 2011

Creare la nazione. Vita di Francesco Crispi, Laterza, Rome-Bari 2000, pp. xxii + 995 (English-language edition: *Francesco Crispi. From nation to nationalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, pp. 777)

A Concise History of Italy, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1994, pp. xiv + 320 (Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Polish, Japanese etc, translations; updated edition, 2001; 2nd edition 2013)

La mafia durante il fascismo, Rubettino, Cosenza 1986, pp. 272 (new edition, with an essay by G. Savatteri and articles of Leonardo Sciascia, 2007)

The above are available on request.

Co-investigator, AHRC research grant (2006-10), *The Cult of the Duce: Mussolini and the Italians, 1918-2005*. The total value of the grant was £482,508, of which £193,000 was awarded to Reading. In addition to assisting with the overall management of the project, he had responsibility for a two-year post-doctoral research programme and a PhD studentship. The project was a multi-disciplinary collaboration with Royal Holloway, University of London, and the University of Warwick. It involved specialists in cinema, art, photography and literature, as well as cultural, social and political history. It has delivered a broad range of outputs, including workshops, conferences, three documentary films (on the cult of Mussolini, Mussolini's home town of Predappio, and the image of Mussolini since 1945), articles, a collected volume of essays and an exhibition at the Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, London: *Against Mussolini: art and the fall of a dictator* (22/9/10–19/12/10). The research cited has been widely reviewed in the British and Italian press.

4. Details of the impact

Impact case study (REF3b)Impact on political and public debate in Italy

Duggan's work has from the outset been strongly debated, especially in Italy. His first book – *La mafia durante il fascismo* (1986) - on the campaign of the fascist regime against the Sicilian mafia, was the focus of a national debate after being reviewed in the *Corriere della Sera* (10/1/1987 and 26/1/1987) by the writer and politician Leonardo Sciascia. To mark the twentieth anniversary of the national debate it had generated the book was reissued in 2007 with Sciascia's articles and an essay by the writer Gaetano Savatteri. Duggan's study of Francesco Crispi, *Creare la nazione* ('To create the nation'), published first in Italian in 2000, received much media coverage, especially in relation to what were perceived as being Italy's ongoing problems with establishing a stable nation-state. Extensive reviews appeared in e.g. *La Stampa* (14/1/2001), *Avvenire* (14/1/2001), *Il Gazzettino* (21/1/2001), *Corriere della Sera* (30/1/2001), *Sole 24 Ore* (18/2/2001), *La Repubblica* (6/4/2001), The newspaper *Il Giornale*, owned by Silvio Berlusconi's brother, sought (29/7/2001; author's reply 22/9/2001) to suggest that the book demonstrated that only a charismatic leader could unite the country. One of the central themes of the book – the relationship between nation-building and war – aroused strong reactions (e.g. the review by Giuseppe Giarrizzo, *L'Acropoli*, August 2002, which objected furiously to the idea that Crispi had an aggressive foreign policy). For responses to the book – and the issue of nation-building and war in particular - in the UK, see, for instance the long review in the TLS, 2 May 2003 (pp. 3-5).

Duggan's book, *The Force of Destiny*, was published in Italy in November 2008. It was the subject of an hour-long public debate with the author on state national television (RaiUno) on the evening of 5 December 2008. Hosted by the journalist Gianni Riotta, the studio audience included academics and writers (Sergio Luzzatto, Franco Cardini, Vincenzo Mollica, Karima Moual) as well as members of the public. There were also interventions from politicians such as the Minister of Defence, Ignazio La Russa. The book was discussed in a series of public events from 27-30 January 2009. In Rome it was presented by the former prime minister, Giuliano Amato, and former Minister of Education Tullio De Mauro, and debated with the author by some forty historians. In Turin the public debate was led by the editor of *La Repubblica*, Ezio Mauro and in Milan by the historian and diplomat, Sergio Romano. There were twenty-two newspaper reviews of the book and several articles and interviews (e.g., *La Repubblica*, 25/1/2008, *Corriere della Sera*, 30/1/2009). At the Estoria festival in Gorizia on 24/5/2009 the author discussed the themes of the book in a charged atmosphere with the writer and historian Ernesto Galli della Loggia. Galli Della Loggia claimed subsequently, in an editorial in the *Corriere della Sera* (7/1/2011), that the book was damaging Italy's international standing by presenting a 'caricature' of the country's history. The first edition of the book (6,000 in hardback) sold out in six weeks. A new paperback edition was brought out in 2011 to mark the 150th anniversary of Italian unification. In recognition of the author's contribution to the study of Italian history, the President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, conferred on him the title of Commendatore in 2008. The President and his Diplomatic Adviser, Ambassador Stefano Stefanini, discussed the book personally with Duggan at a meeting in Oxford on 29 June 2011.

Impact on public understanding of Italian history and its present-day relevance

In the UK Duggan's work has engaged with audiences beyond university circles. His *Concise History of Italy*, first published in 1994, has sold 40,000 copies to date and is used extensively in schools. A second and updated edition of this book will be published in the autumn of 2013. *The Force of Destiny* (2007) received widespread coverage in the press. UK sales of the book stood at over 11,000 in September 2013.

Impact case study (REF3b)

Fascist Voices – a history of the fascist regime as seen through the diaries of ordinary people – was published in the UK (Random House) in November 2012. The US edition (OUP) appeared in July 2013; the Italian edition in November 2013. In February 2013 *Fascist Voices* was named Political History Book of the Year at the Political Books Awards in London; in May 2013 it received the Wolfson History Prize for 2012: a BBC History Magazine podcast of Duggan discussing the book is available at:

http://d2j7noxmrt3xhh.cloudfront.net/bbchistory/audio/HistoryExtra_2013_05_16.mp3 . Duggan was invited by the BBC to work with the journalist Misha Glenny on a forthcoming series (starting 14/10/13) for Radio 4 on Italian history ('The Invention of Italy').

Duggan's more recent research on fascism – exploring the role of the cult of the Duce in the process of nationalisation in the inter-war years – has been disseminated through three documentary films (screened in the UK and Italy) and an exhibition at the Estorick Collection in London (22 September – 19 December 2010: 4,850 visitors). A film of this exhibition, with commentary, is available on: www.youtube.com/user/mussoliniexhibition.

Duggan is also frequently asked by national newspapers in the UK and Italy for articles or interviews on aspects of contemporary Italy and how current problems relate to broader historical trends. (e.g. *La Repubblica*, 25/11/2008, *The Independent*, 29/9/2009, *Corriere dell Sera*, 24/10/2009, 31/8/2013 *Daily Telegraph*, 12/11/2011).

Impact on education and educational resources

The documentary films on the cult of the Duce were distributed to many universities and schools in the UK and fifteen overseas countries: 94% of users reported that the films encouraged an increased engagement with the topic among their students. Work is currently being done with the Historical Association and history teachers to see how the research on the cult of Mussolini (which has largely been conducted within a multi-disciplinary AHRC-funded project) can be made available for use in schools. Duggan was asked by a leading educational publisher (Hodder) to revise school textbooks on modern Italy: this advisory and editorial work began in September 2013.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Contact details of individuals below have been provided separately.

Italian publisher of *Francesco Crispi*, *The Force of Destiny* and *Fascist Voices* (to corroborate the impact of Professor Duggan's books in Italy; their sales, media debates etc)

Publishing Director at Penguin Books (To corroborate the impact of *The Force of Destiny*; sales etc)

Production Assistant (History) at Cambridge University Press (To corroborate the impact of *A Concise History of Italy*)

Publisher, The Bodley Head (To corroborate the impact of *Fascist Voices*; sales, awards etc)

Director, Estorick Collection, London (To corroborate information relating to the exhibition, *Against Mussolini*)