

The Italian Welfare State in A Time of Crisis: A Focus on Italian Health Care Illustrating Differences and Similarities between Italy and the U.S.

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After World War II, many European countries have tried to put into effect their own constitutions and as a result, their own welfare states. They invested and spent a significant amount of their national economic resources to guarantee social rights to all citizens, health care, retirement plans, and education. In order to guarantee the aforementioned rights, politicians decided to take on a huge amount of debt, regardless of the fact that sooner or later it would be difficult to control. On the other side of the world, the U.S. fears socialist programs. However, this did not exempt the U.S. from having one of the largest public debts in the world.

This article not only tries to explore the Italian welfare state by focusing attention on the Italian health care system, but also proposes interesting discussion points from a comparative perspective. On one side, Italy represents a classic socialist country. On the other, the U.S. is very capitalistic. The 2008 economic crisis imposed the need to reflect on the sustainability of the welfare state and its future development.

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