

Financial assistance did not ease the psychological impact of this sudden change on the people of the ex-capital. The mayor, Emanuele Luserna di Rorà, captured the feelings of many of his constituents when he reacted to the financial settlement by angrily asserting that "Turin is not for sale!" To begin with, the departure of the capital entailed a seemingly catastrophic loss of political status. The relegation of the city to a provincial center on the periphery of the country seemed to make a mockery of the Piedmontese elite's pretensions to being the new Italy's political mentors in the development of national institutions and diplomatic relations with the rest of Europe. At the same time, the transfer ruptured the ancient symbiosis between the city and the monarchy, threatening the powerful identification of the local populace with the royal family. Bitterness over Victor Emanuel II's passive acceptance of the transfer spilled over into public view in February 1865, when the municipal council boycotted the court's annual carnival festivities and crowds in Piazza Reale booed the king. The city's crisis of identity also found cultural expression in a surge of "Piedmontism". This municipal reaction blended a sense of wounded pride, hostility towards an "ungrateful" Italy, regrets about the wisdom of unification, anxiety about the future, and nostalgia for the good old days when, in the words of the Countess Balbo Bertone di Sambuy, "we in our little Piedmont used to be quite happy without these brothers from another bed".

The people of Turin had good reason to react to the loss of the capital as if it were the end of world, since it did seem to threaten not only their collective identity, but also the economic future of the city. Despite the Cavourian reforms of the 1850s, Turin remained a center of consumption, with little productive activity that was not dependent upon the presence of the court and state institutions. While half of the active population was employed in some form of manufacturing, no more than a quarter worked in what we would consider industrial factories. Most were either home workers or employed in small artisanal enterprises that manufactured textiles or processed food products. Turin's elevation to the status of national capital in 1861 only accentuated these characteristics. Between 1858 and 1864, the population soared from 179,635 to 220,000, reflecting the dramatic growth of jobs in the civil service and in those sectors of production that met the needs of a national political and administrative center. During the same years, municipal authorities committed themselves to forty-seven new public works projects to beautify the city and adapt it to its new role as capital of Italy. In September 1864, one-seventh of Turin's active population found employment directly in the public sector, while another 20%,