The results of the Italian 2013 elections have been astonishing for several reasons. The striking rise of the Five Star Movement (M5S), which won roughly 25 percent of the votes (see Chiaramonte, this volume), sounds like a (temporary?) defeat for Italian bipolarism. This largely unexpected outcome, combined with the features of the electoral law, raised doubts about the stability of the Italian political system and had significant consequences for the government formation process. In the Senate, in fact, no coalition controlled a full majority of seats, and, in this scenario, reaching an agreement between rival parties to form a cabinet was clearly a challenging task.

A first attempt to do so was made by the leader of the Democratic Party (PD), Pier Luigi Bersani, who tried to find support for a minority cabinet led by the PD and the center-left coalition. Bersani bargained with all other parties, and in particular with the M5S, but after several days of negotiations, he gave up. On 24 April, the just re-elected head of state, Giorgio Napolitano (see Clementi, this volume), then nominated Enrico Letta, the deputy PD leader, as formateur. After a few days, Letta was able to form a majority government together with the People of Freedom (PdL) and Civic Choice (SC) parties. The stalemate that occurred after the February election and the extremely difficult process of government formation are confirmed by the fact that it took
61 days to form the Letta I Cabinet, a number that increases to 128 days if we include the days that had passed since the previous government’s resignation. This crisis has been one of the longest in the history of Italian politics (see table 1). Indeed, never before had Italy spent so many days without a government.3

The difficulties of the Letta I Cabinet did not, however, vanish after its formation. As we will see, it had to face several struggles that took place within the same parties that supported the cabinet throughout its duration. These conflicts ultimately led on 11 December to a relevant change in the majority supporting the government. After the fission of PdL, which produced the birth of two parties, Forza Italia, still led by Silvio Berlusconi, and the New Center-Right (NCD), led by the deputy prime minister, Angelino Alfano, Forza Italia decided to move to the opposition. Following Woldendorp et al.,4 we define a government as any administration that is formed after an election and that continues in the absence of the following: (1) a change of prime minister; (2) a resignation during the inter-election period, followed by the reformation of the government with the same prime minister and party composition; (3) a change in the party composition of the cabinet. Accordingly, the confidence vote of 11 December clearly marks the end of the first Letta cabinet and the start of a new government. Overall, the Letta I Cabinet lasted only 227 days, well below the average duration of Italian cabinets during the Second Republic (see table 2). Thus, it was characterized not only by a long delay in cabinet formation but also by a relatively short life.

In this chapter, we will follow an analytical narrative approach5 in order to understand the events that led to the first Letta cabinet. In particular, we will apply a well-known spatial theory to explore the reasons behind the formation and the (in)stability of the PD-PdL-SC coalition. We will argue that, at least from a spatial approach, we could

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**TABLE 1 Length (in days) of the Coalition-Bargaining Process in Italy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Letta I</th>
<th>Overall Italian Republic</th>
<th>First Republic</th>
<th>Second Republic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since the day of the election</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since the previous government’s resignation</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The Italian Legislative Speech Dataset (ILSD), http://www.socpol.unimi.it/docenti/curini/iLSD.htm.*
have anticipated the high level of instability of the Letta I Cabinet. Its formation seems in this respect to have been the by-product of mainly two factors: the (strategic) immobilism of the M5S and the activism of President Napolitano, who was willing to promote a large coalition in light of the economic crisis. Finally, we will briefly discuss whether the Letta II Cabinet, which began on 11 December, can be expected to be more stable than its predecessor.

### The Political Space after the 2013 General Elections: A Clash over the Economy and Democracy

In the process of government formation, as in any other branch of politics, there are two main things to be considered: numbers and preferences. The numbers, here the seats won by each party, contribute to an assessment of the relative strength of the actors in the coalition-bargaining process. The preferences, that is, the policy positions of political actors, are crucial in order to define the horizons of the negotiation. As is well-established in the literature on coalition governments, both party size and policy motives help to predict the outcome of government formation. Accordingly, to understand the complexity of the negotiation process in the aftermath of the 2013 elections, we should first begin by mapping the ideological space of the Italian party system.

Data on party policy preferences can be obtained from what parties do, using roll-call data, or from what others think and know about them, that is, through surveys both of the public and of experts. Alternatively, policy positions based on politicians’ assertions can be measured through content analysis of party documents. The Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP), which analyzes the policy platforms proposed by parties, coalitions, and electoral cartels before an election, represents the main example of this latter approach.

We also decided to employ a content analysis method. However, since we are dealing with a bargaining process that takes place in the parliamentary arena at the beginning of a new legislature, we applied
Andrea Ceron and Luigi Curini

this method to analyze the debates on the investiture vote.\textsuperscript{10} This measure is the most suitable one to track the position of parliamentary party groups along different policy dimensions.\textsuperscript{11}

After being nominated by the head of state, Italian cabinets need to pass a formal investiture vote in both chambers. During the investiture debates, the prime minister releases an official speech providing details on the government’s goals relating to a variety of policy issues that encompass the whole political agenda. Several MPs reply to the issues raised by the prime minister’s speech, expressing the ideological views of their parties and declaring their support for—or opposition to—the cabinet.

In this respect, we gathered and manually codified the speeches released by the MPs of each party in April 2013 and December 2013, during the debates on the two confidence votes held in the Chamber of Deputies. We decided to focus only on the discussion in the lower house, given that both debates took place there first.\textsuperscript{12} Overall, 43 texts were analyzed.

The legislative speeches were codified following the method employed by the already mentioned CMP. To gather more detail, we divided each legislative speech into a number of quasi-sentences, which are our coding units, and classified each quasi-sentence, assigning it to a pre-established category included in our classification scheme. Then, for each party, we measured the percentage of quasi-sentences falling in each category. The original 56 categories scheme of the CMP data set has been extended to 68 in order to take into account the Italian political context.\textsuperscript{13} Extra categories were included to capture, for example, positive and negative references related to the Catholic Church, as well as the relation between political institutions and the judiciary.\textsuperscript{14}

Following the existing literature,\textsuperscript{15} we identified \textit{a priori} eight policy dimensions covering the most relevant issues within the Italian political system: economic policy, foreign policy, social policy, environmental policy, democracy, justice, institutions, and decentralization. Forty-nine out of the 68 categories included in our classification scheme have been used to discriminate among the opposite polarities of each dimension. For example, with respect to the economic dimension, the categories “planned economy” and “nationalization” help to identify the polarity favoring more involvement of the state in the economy, while the categories “economic orthodoxy” and “free enterprise” establish a pro-market position. The remaining 19 categories are excluded, either because they are too general (e.g., “technology and infrastructure”) or because they are better understood as valence\textsuperscript{16} rather than positional issues (e.g., “political corruption” or “political competency”).\textsuperscript{17}
For our purposes, let $F_{iyx}$ be the proportion of references that party $i$ makes during the investiture vote $y$ to the categories associated with the policy dimension $x$. By default, $F_{iyx} = F^+_{iyx} + F^−_{iyx}$, where $F^+$ shows the percentage of references to the categories associated with the positive polarity of policy dimension $x$. Conversely, $F^−$ is the sum of the frequency of the negative polarity. To define the nature of the policy space in each investiture vote, we take the average of the saliency scores assigned to each dimension by each party, weighted by the share of legislative seats controlled by each party. We then select for each investiture debate the two dimensions with the highest saliency scores, according to this formula. We focus on a bidimensional policy space coherently with the literature that identifies such space as an appropriate solution to model party competition in Italy, especially within the legislative arena. Finally, the policy scores of the political actors along the dimension $x$ are estimated—analogously to the method employed by the CMP group to estimate the left-right positions of parties—as the difference between $F^+_{iyx}$ and $F^−_{iyx}$.

Based on our analysis of the investiture debate in April 2013, the economic dimension (pro-state versus pro-market) arises as the most salient one, while the second-most relevant issue is democracy, which is related to institutional reforms. In the latter case, the dimension contrasts parties supporting stronger government stability against those favoring a larger role for Parliament. This portrait seems in line with the Italian situation. On the one side, the relentless economic crisis and the need to cope with the budgetary restrictions imposed by the European Union stress the relevance of the economic dimension. On the other side, an adjustment in the institutional settings of the Italian political system started to become a central focus at the end of March 2013 when Napolitano appointed a commission of “wisemen” charged with the task of finding ways to implement institutional reforms. The fact that in May the highest Italian judicial court, the Supreme Court of Cassation, requested that the Constitutional Court review the electoral law (the so-called Porcellum) underscores the high level of political attention focused on institutional issues. Based on these two matters, that is, the economy and institutional reforms, we have created the policy space related to April 2013. In figure 1, we summarize the policy positions of Italian parties therein.

On the economic dimension, we find the Left Ecology and Freedom (SEL) party located on the far left (pro-state) position, close to the PD. The M5S is located at the center-left of the spectrum, while the SC and PdL are on the right (in a moderate position). Finally, the Northern League (LN) on the far right retains the most pro-market position.
On the institutional dimension, we observe that the PdL is the party that pushes (more) for the reforms intended to increase government stability (e.g., the semi-presidential reform). The SC and LN seem to be looking for a trade-off between parliamentary representation and government authority, while the other parties tend to sustain more the prerogatives of Parliament. In particular, the M5S advocates a stronger role for Parliament as the arena representing the will of the citizens and as the natural place where policy-making should be conducted. The PD largely supports the prevalence of Parliament as well. Among other things, this position reflects the party’s interest to push the center of gravity of the legislature away from the Council of Ministers (where the PD needs the consent of the PdL to propose any legislation or decree) toward Parliament, where government proposals can be amended (at least in the Chamber) thanks to the support of the PD’s center-left allies.23

**Government Stability? A Spatial Approach**

Starting from the above parties’ ideological location, we can take advantage of a well-known spatial theory of voting, that is, the core party theory, developed originally by Laver and Schofield to describe the patterns of coalition bargaining.24 In this way, we can explain the formation of the Letta I Cabinet by focusing on the strategic relevance
of each party while providing some insights about the stability of the government and the potential for policy change.

Under the idea that parties’ pay-offs are negatively affected by the spatial distance between their ideal points and the policy program presented by the forthcoming government, the core party theory assumes that parties try to influence as much as possible the policy platform of the cabinet. Accordingly, the final outcome discloses the bargaining power of each party, distinguishing between the “dominant” and “peripheral” parties (see more on this below). In addition, since a governing equilibrium exists only if other majorities cannot reverse the policy agreement reached by coalition partners, this theory is also useful to assess the degree of intra-coalitional conflict and the probability of a cabinet to survive and promote a substantial policy change.

Due to its nature, the core party theory typically applies to political environments in which there are no pre-electoral coalitions. An agreement between parties is expected to be reached only after the elections. This perfectly applies to the case here, since the outcome of the 2013 elections did not assign a majority of seats to any of the existing coalitions (at least in the Senate). As a consequence, the bargaining process had to be done ex post.

Laver and Schofield’s model focuses on parliamentary dynamics. In particular, it analyzes any potential policy program to discern whether there are stable equilibria among the infinite number of possible policy agreements that can be proposed. The set of the programs in the policy space that cannot be defeated by a majority vote is called the “winning core.” In a two-dimensional space, such as the one we are analyzing here, a winning core can exist: it corresponds to the ideal point of the largest party if the position in the policy space of that party is such that no other policy program will be preferred by any majority. This happens only when all of the median lines (i.e., lines presenting a majority in both closed half-spaces created by each line) intersect at that party’s ideal point. When this is the case, the largest party can be considered a core party, and the negotiations over government formation will yield a coalition that includes the core party and picks up its ideal point as a policy program.

On the left side of figure 2, in which we have represented a hypothetical Parliament with four parties (A, B, C, and D), we can find exactly the situation just mentioned. Indeed, in this case all the median lines intersect on the ideal point of the largest party in our hypothetical legislature (i.e., party D). This party, as a result, constitutes a core party. This can also be seen when noting that party D lies inside any Pareto set of all possible parliamentary majorities that exclude it. Not surprisingly, therefore, to be a likely candidate for core status, the
largest party in the legislature must present a relatively moderate position in the relevant ideological space of political competition.

Conversely, if a core party does not exist, there will be no equilibrium, and we should observe a higher degree of instability. The right side of figure 2 presents this situation: the median lines do not intersect at any one point. Because there is no dominating policy position in the space, any majority coalition that forms around a given point can be upset by another majority coalition whose members all prefer other policies. For example, a majority composed of parties A and D cannot be a stable one, given that party B can always beat any policy package that A and D present by proposing an alternative policy position (a point in the space) preferred by a majority coalition composed, for instance, of parties B and D (because this alternative agreement is spatially closer to them). In this case, it can be shown that, assuming that no policy proposals will be made that will make all members of a majority coalition worse off, any points in the policy space that are Pareto optimal for every majority coalition can be solutions to the bargaining game among parties. This space locus, called the “cycle set,” is delimited in figure 2 by parties A, B, and D. Under these conditions, the theory predicts a point within the cycle set as a likely policy outcome of the legislative bargaining.

The parties that determine the cycle set are also the only ones that can realistically propose an alternative policy point that will appeal to a majority coalition. We can therefore consider them dominant parties in that policy space—that is, parties with the stronger bargaining power due to their ideological position—while those parties located outside the cycle set region can be treated as peripheral actors. As a result, we
can expect that any coalition that forms in such a situation will involve some combinations of parties delimiting the cycle set.\textsuperscript{26} Moreover, we can also assign a probability to the different types of cabinet coalitions involved in the cycle set. Such probability decreases as the spatial distance between dominant parties increases.\textsuperscript{27} The reason for this expectation is rather intuitive. The closer two parties are to each other, the smaller the chance that any possible agreed-upon cabinet program will ever result in policies (too) far away from their respective ideal points. Therefore, if there are two possible coalitions involving party B, we can reasonably conclude that the coalition that will be formed is the one in which the least favorable possible outcome (in terms of cabinet programs) for party B is better than the alternative.\textsuperscript{28} This is true, in particular, if we assume that parties are (at least partly) risk-adverse. In figure 2, for example, we would expect a BD coalition to form rather than a BA or DA coalition. Paul Warwick, among others, has also demonstrated that the durability of a cabinet is strictly linked to its level of ideological heterogeneity.\textsuperscript{29} Therefore, a BD coalition should also be expected to last longer than a BA or DA one.\textsuperscript{30}

The existence or absence of a core party, as well the size of the cycle set, have implications for (the expected degree of) policy change. While a core party can form a stable government that is able to enact its policy program effectively, enhancing cabinet stability and enforcing the policy agreement of the ruling coalition become considerably more difficult when the cycle set is relatively large, given the potential for many alternative outcomes. In addition, the lack of a clear equilibrium can foster intra-coalitional conflicts.

The Letta I Cabinet and the Lack of a Core Party

As already stressed, the center-left coalition in the Chamber of Deputies retains a safe majority thanks to the majority prize, while the PD itself almost enjoys a core party status once we attribute to it the seats of MPs belonging to small parties, such as the Democratic Center (CD), the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), and some regional parties, most of which were elected on the PD lists. In addition, the PD is needed to form any majority, unless all the other parties should coalesce together. As a consequence, the PD can act as (a sort of) “veto player” in the game of government formation since the lower house can ban all the possible equilibriums existing in the Senate that are opposed by the PD. Along this vein, the Senate is the crucial arena in the process of bargaining, and we will focus on it to analyze this process. We therefore apply the
core party theory described above to determine whether there is a steady equilibrium in Parliament formed after the 2013 elections.

In the Senate, there is clearly no core party (see fig. 3) and therefore no stable equilibrium.\textsuperscript{31} The cycle set is very wide, being one of the largest in the history of the Italian Republic. The high level of policy instability can easily explain why it took so long to form a new cabinet. In fact, any policy agreement debated between two potential partners could have been replaced by an alternative coalition. The core party theory also suggests that, as long as they delimit the cycle set, the PD, M5S, and PdL are the dominant parties in this scenario and therefore can be expected to play a prominent role in the coalition-building dynamic, while all the others parties can be treated (substantially) as peripheral actors to this process.

This is precisely what happened. Since any potential coalition requires the consent of the PD (due to the above-mentioned scenario in the Chamber), the decision made by Napolitano to assign the role of formateur first to the PD’s leader, Bersani, and then to the PD’s deputy party leader, Letta, was logical. In line with the theoretical expectations discussed above, the PD was involved in every effort to form a new cabinet. In the first round of negotiations, Bersani attempted to reach an agreement with the M5S to form, together with the SEL, a “government of change,” or at least a minority cabinet (in the Senate)

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{cycle_set.png}
\caption{The Cycle Set of the Letta I Cabinet (in the Senate)}
\end{figure}
supported externally by the M5S. After Bersani’s failure, due to the refusal of the M5S to accept his strategy, Letta succeeded in forming a “grand coalition” with the PdL as its main partner.

According to the previous discussion, the “government of change” option was not an implausible one. On the contrary, given that the two dominant parties (the M5S and PD) appear to be much closer to each other compared to the third dominant party (the PdL), a PD-M5S coalition could have been expected to be likely, it being more “attractive” in terms of policy pay-off to both parties compared to other alternatives. Despite its strength, the M5S did not seem to have successfully exploited its pivotal position to extract policy and ministerial pay-offs during the bargaining over cabinet formation. This result is only superficially paradoxical, however. Several interviews have proved that the leadership of the M5S has little interest in short-term policy and office-holding rewards. Instead, the party’s primary objective is to increase the M5S vote share in the medium to long term, with the goal of eventually winning office and running the country alone. Accordingly, the “stubbornness” of the M5S, which declined any offer made by Bersani, becomes understandable and should not be viewed as the result of its representatives’ lack of experience or as the unavoidable consequence of its supposed anti-system nature (see Newell, this volume). Nonetheless, this strategy effectively negated the opportunity to form a cabinet that could have been more stable than the alternatives. In this sense, the M5S seems to have taken advantage of its (potential) bargaining power in a rather unusual way: not by acting, but by deciding not to act in order to force the formation of a (perceived) troublesome coalition.

Indeed, the Letta I Cabinet, which was the final outcome of the political bargaining, included as its dominant players two parties (the PD and PdL) that were relatively distant from each other on both dimensions from a spatial point of view. Figure 3 suggests the occurrence of a rather high level of tension between these two parties on the allocation of distributive economic benefits (along the horizontal axis), as well as on which institutional/electoral reforms to implement (along the vertical axis). In fact, the large size of the cycle set indicates a strong degree of intra-coalitional conflict.

This (theoretical) expectation is confirmed when examining the events that characterized the life of the first Letta cabinet. Since April 2013, the PD and PdL repeatedly quarreled over the decision to suppress the house tax (IMU), a proposal advanced by the PdL, and whether to avoid an increase in the consumption or value-added tax (IVA), which was favored by the PD. In addition, the first attempt to restore the pre-2005 mixed-majoritarian electoral system (the so-called Mattarellaum), proposed by a PD MP in May (and initially suggested
by Letta in his investiture speech), was largely ignored by the rest of the party for the sake of preserving the fragile alliance with the PdL, which strongly opposed such a reform.33

Furthermore, different sub-groups within each ruling party were hostile to the cabinet, with the “radical” faction of the PdL (the one most loyal to Berlusconi) being the most aggressive. The most striking example of this occurred between September and October when the PdL ministers resigned and the Letta I Cabinet came close to falling. Although the cabinet survived this crisis, the disagreements between its partners were not resolved: the PD and PdL were still at odds over the appropriate economic solutions to the financial crisis. Their differences became even more apparent with regard to the reform of the judicial system and the 27 November decision to remove Berlusconi from the Senate as a result of his conviction for fiscal fraud (see Piana, this volume). But there were also disagreements within the PD. The supporters of Giuseppe Civati, who ran for the party leadership, were strongly opposed to the cabinet and to the new party leader, Matteo Renzi, who was elected through “open primaries” held on 8 December. In turn, the centrist party SC was divided as well. This liberal group, linked to Mario Monti, often disapproved of Letta’s economic policy. Such disputes continuously highlighted the possibility that an alternative cabinet, which would make some of these parties better off compared to the actual situation, would replace the Letta I Cabinet, and, in a sense, this is what happened in the autumn of 2013.

The Letta II Cabinet: Enhanced Stability?

The weakness of the Letta I Cabinet was clearly revealed in October when the government was on the verge of dissolution after the resignation of the PdL ministers. By exploiting the intra-party division within the PdL, however, Letta was able to keep the support of the moderate faction loyal to Alfano. On the other side, to avoid a party fission,34 the whole PdL decided to sustain Letta in a new confidence vote. Notwithstanding this, the implosion of the PdL was only postponed. Between October and December, in fact, the Italian party system was strongly reshaped. In the middle of October, a few MPs who had previously switched from the M5S formed a small new parliamentary group, stating their eventual willingness to support a new cabinet. One month later, on 15 November, the alliance between the SC and the Union of the Center (UdC) ended, with the Catholic faction breaking away to create a new party, the Populars for Italy (PpI). Finally, on 16 November, the PdL split up as well. The faction loyal to Berlusconi transformed
the PdL back into Forza Italia, their leader’s previous party, while the sub-group led by Alfano decided to form the NCD. A few days later, on 26 November, Forza Italia voted against the motion of confidence on the “maxi-amendment” to the budgetary law and left the majority. The breach became irreparable after the vote to remove Berlusconi from the Senate, and later the junior MPs loyal to the former prime minister resigned. Forza Italia then claimed that the “grand coalition” majority that had been sustaining the Letta I Cabinet was no longer in place and asked Napolitano to send Letta back to the chambers to demand a confidence vote on his new government. This occurred on 11 December, a few days after the election of Renzi, who defeated other more left-wing candidates, as the PD’s new party leader. The confidence debate highlighted the new majority supporting the Letta II Cabinet, and the new equilibrium is portrayed in figure 4.

In this new scenario, the main relevant actors are still the PD and the M5S, along with the recently formed NCD. The main policy changes concern (1) the rightist move of the PD on the economic dimension after the election of Renzi; (2) the leftward shift of the SC after the breakaway of the right-wing PPI faction; and (3) the shift of the LN and Forza Italia, which are now more prone to support Parliament instead of the government. Although Forza Italia is no longer playing a relevant role in the parliamentary arena, the disagreement within the

FIGURE 4 The Cycle Set of the Letta II Cabinet (in the Senate)
ruling coalition has not disappeared. On the contrary, the lack of a core party and the wide size of the cycle set (even larger than the previous Letta cabinet) suggest that, once again, the new Letta cabinet will be dealing with a relative high level of instability, as several facts pointed to only a few days after its formation. For example, the decision by the PD, with the agreement of the M5S, to move the debate on electoral reform from the house to the Senate has hurt the NCD, whose leaders immediately threatened to withdraw their support from the cabinet.

Conclusion

The analytical narrative perspective adopted in this chapter contributes to the production of a number of insights into the process that ultimately led to the formation of the first Letta cabinet while suggesting, at the same time, a substantial instability of that cabinet. So why did the PD and PdL form an alliance in the first place? True, such a “marriage of necessity” was the only option left on the table after the strategic choice by the M5S to refuse any alternative. In this respect, however, the re-elected head of state, who favored the formation of a cabinet with a wide majority to deal with Italy’s deep institutional and economic crises, also played a crucial role. The result was a cabinet supported by a wide majority, but still rather unstable, as we have shown. The coalition was initially kept together by Napolitano’s push for a strong agenda, which was probably the main external element acting as “glue” (see Clementi, this volume). However, the cabinet was put under increasing pressure as each month passed, not only by the conflict around the removal of Berlusconi from the Senate, but also by intrinsic significant policy disagreements between the PD and PdL. The core party theory also reveals that, despite the split of the PdL and the changes in the dominant PD faction, the policy disagreements at the cabinet level have not disappeared. On the contrary, they have partially increased. The road ahead for the Letta II Cabinet therefore seems no more comfortable than the previous one.

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The Letta Cabinet(s)

Notes

11. The estimation of parties’ policy positions according to their legislative speeches would generate biased results if the link between the government and the ruling parties influences what they say during the confidence vote. The weak cohesion of Italian coalitions, together with the fact
that we analyze verbal declarations rather than formal behavior, makes the aforementioned risk less relevant in our case. Indeed, ruling parties do not seem to conceal their policy preferences during the investiture debates to avoid an exacerbation of intra-coalition conflicts.

12. For a similar rule of thumb, see L. Curini and P. Martelli, I partiti nella prima Repubblica (Roma: Carocci, 2009).

13. Ibid. See also Curini “Government Survival the Italian Way.”

14. This analysis is part of the Italian Legislative Speech Dataset (ILSD) project, which collects policy positions of Italian parties and cabinets from 1946 up to the present by analyzing investiture debates. See Curini and Martelli, I partiti nella prima Repubblica. Data are available at http://www.socpol.unimi.it/docenti/curini/iLSD.


17. For a detailed discussion of the meaning of each policy dimension, see Curini “Government Survival the Italian Way.”


20. The scores are normalized by the salience of each policy dimension to allow a direct comparison of party positions within the same policy space and across time.

21. Note that party positions on the economic dimension measured through content analysis are strongly correlated (0.93) with the estimates of a recent wave of expert surveys. See A. Di Virgilio, D. Giannetti, A. Pedrazzani, and L. Pinto, “Party Competition in the 2013 Italian Elections: Evidence from an Expert Survey,” Government and Opposition/First View (2014): 1–25, doi:10.1017/gov.2014.15. Unfortunately, we do not have an external measure to assess the validity of the issue “democracy.”

22. On 4 December, the Constitutional Court ruled that the electoral law was deemed unconstitutional.

23. This also assigns to the PD a remarkable agenda power. Any amendment passed in the Chamber can eventually be rejected in the Senate (given the different political equilibrium therein), and when this happens, parties have to face a considerable delay in the approval of any bills and decrees. Hence, we can expect that such amendments will be refused only if they
strongly damage the other partners of the ruling coalition. The fact that
the new PD leader, Matteo Renzi, managed to start the debate on the elec-
torial reform in the Chamber instead of in the Senate, as initially proposed
by the PD's Senate leader, Anna Finocchiaro, entirely corresponds with
what was just noted.

24. Laver and Schofield, _Multiparty Government._
26. L. Curini and A. Ceron, “Un’applicazione della teoria delle coalizioni alle
elezioni tedesche del 2005: Alcuni scenari,” _Quaderni di Scienza Politica_
28. D. Austen-Smith, “Refinements of the Heart,” in _Collective Decision-Mak-
ing: Social Choice and Political Economy_ , ed. N. Schofield (Boston: Kluwer,
29. P. V. Warwick, _Government Survival in Parliamentary Democracies_ (Cam-
bridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
30. While moving from a different theoretical perspective, George Tsebelis
reaches a similar conclusion. See G. Tsebelis, _Veto Players: How Political
extensive empirical evidence on the role played by ideological distance
within a coalition to predict the outcome of cabinet bargaining, see Martin
and Stevenson, “Government Formation in Parliamentary Democracies.”
31. The number of seats assigned to each party appearing in figure 3 comes
from a reallocation of seats belonging to minor parties and life senators.
For instance, with respect to the two life senators, we assigned Mario
Monti to the SC and discarded Carlo Azeglio Ciampi from the calculus.
Analogously, we assigned to the PD the seats of minor center-left parties
and to the PdL the seat won by the South. Slightly different allocations of
seats do not alter the results.
32. See, for instance, Wired Italia’s July 2013 interview with the M5S’s ideo-
_Wired Italia_ , http://daily.wired.it/news/politica/2013/07/19/casaleggio-
andremo-governo-soli-342557.html.
33. In November 2013, the PD’s attempt to pass a new electoral law based on
the run-off was stopped by the PdL.
34. A. Ceron, “The Politics of Fission: Analysis of Faction Breakaways among
Italian Parties (1946–2011),” _British Journal of Political Science/FirstView_
35. Note that a different position of either the LN or Forza Italia along the
institutional dimension (e.g., similar to the one displayed during the
investiture debate of the Letta I Cabinet) does not alter our results.
36. See Di Virgilio et al., “Party Competition in the 2013 Italian Elections.”