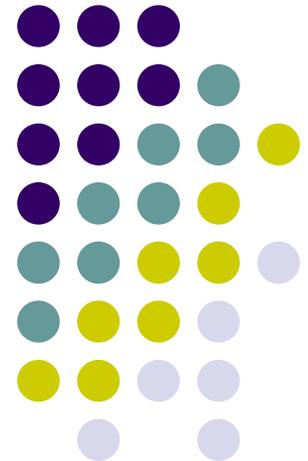
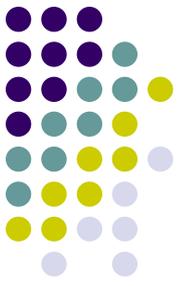


Polimetrics

Core Party Theory:
Lab class 1B



Example



Let's create a dashboard with 4 parties. Party A controls 10 seats; Party B (25 seats); Party C (20 seats); Party D (15 seats)

Let's estimate the median lines and let's look for the core party or the cycle set

Italy after 2013 elections: some facts

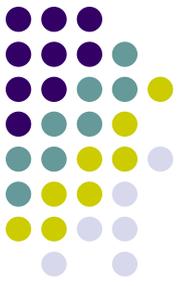


Elections won (?!?) by the Center-Left coalition

However in the Senate **no coalition controlling 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

Italy after 2013 elections: some facts



On 24 April, the just re-elected head of state, Giorgio Napolitano, then nominated **Enrico Letta**, the deputy PD leader, as formateur

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 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

Italy after 2013 elections: some facts



The difficulties of the Letta Cabinet did not, however, vanish after its formation

Overall, the Letta Cabinet lasted **only 227 days**, well below the average duration of Italian cabinets during the Second Republic

Thus, it was characterized not only by a **long delay in cabinet formation** but also by a **relatively short life**

Can we explain such political results using spatial theory of voting?

Italy after 2013 elections: the space

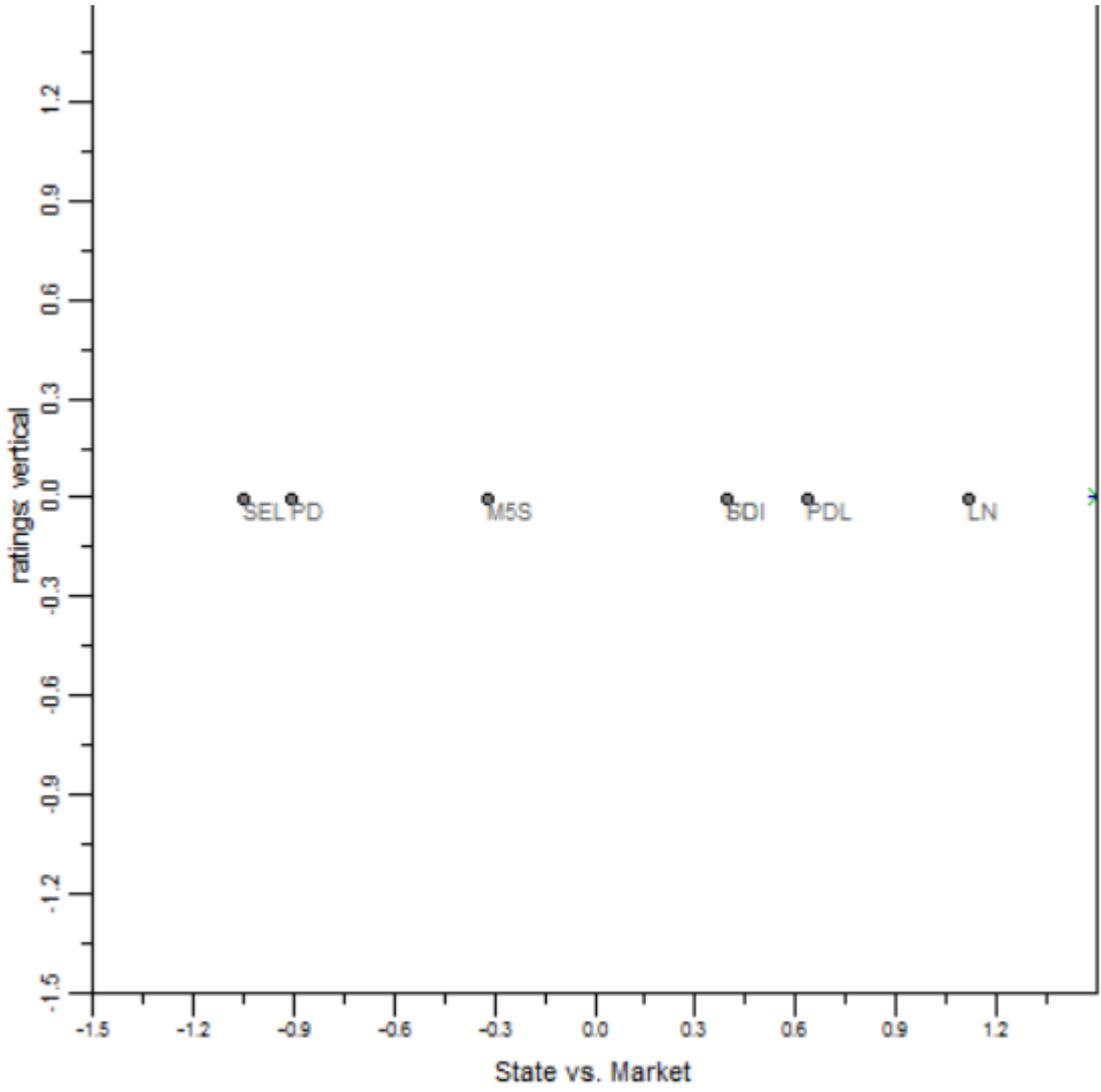


Let's start with the relevant policy space during the Letta cabinet

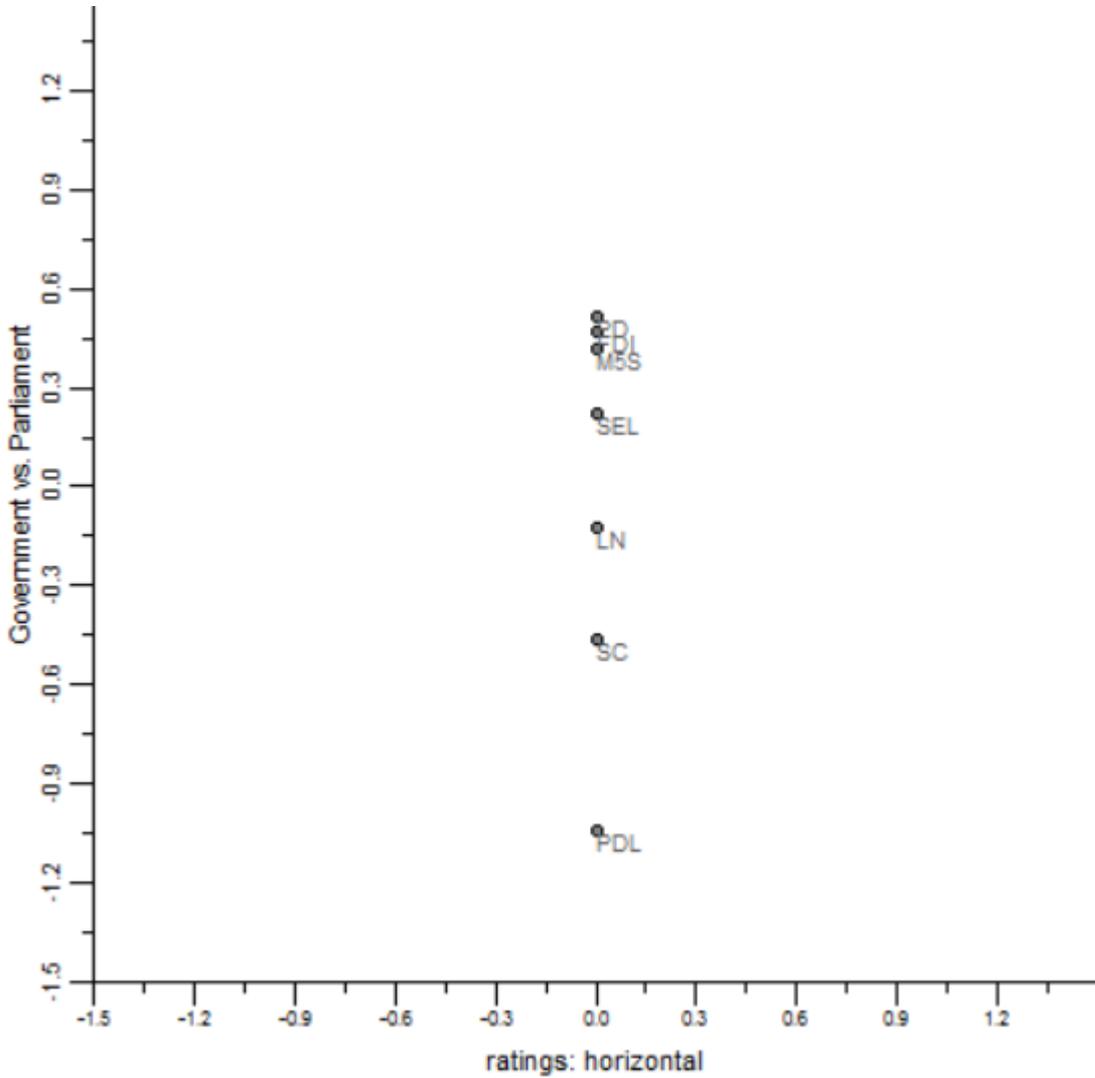
For estimating such space, we will use the analysis of legislative speeches during the investiture debate of Letta

You will learn later more details about such method

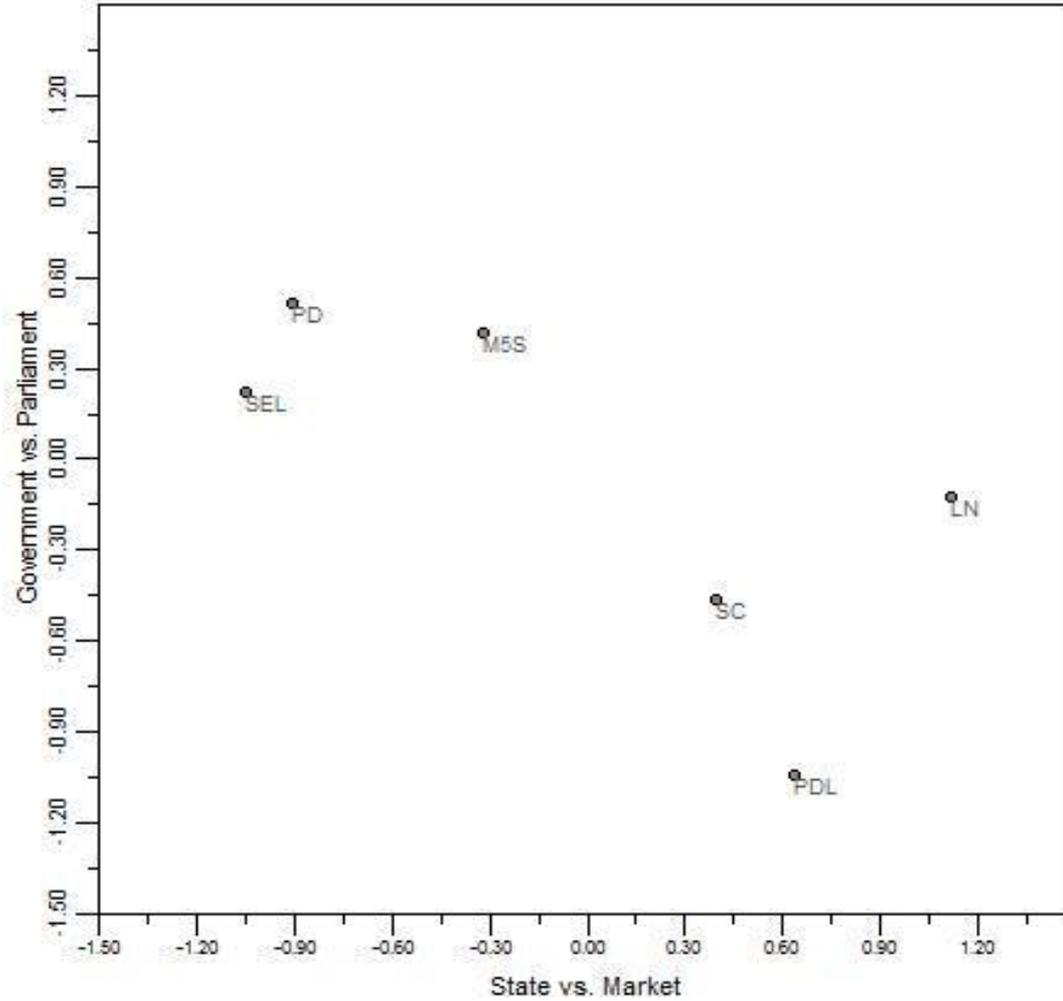
Letta 2013 (Senate: April 2013)



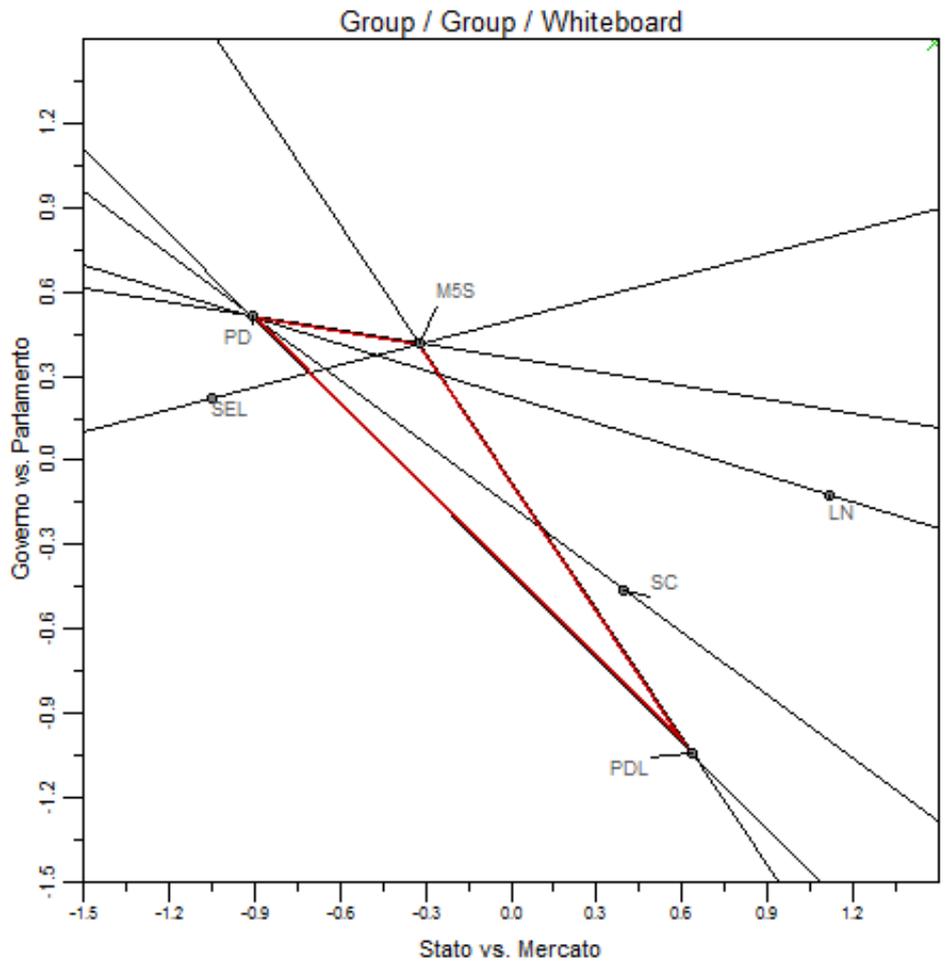
Letta cabinet (Senate: April 2013)



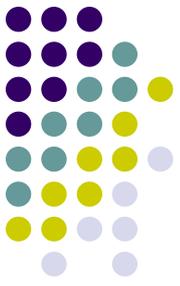
Letta cabinet (Senate: April 2013)



Core Party in action: Letta cabinet

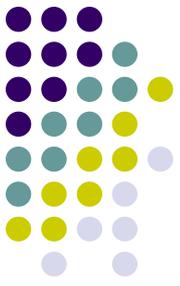


Implications



1. No core-party: **instability** ceteris paribus
2. 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
3. The “government of change” option (i.e., the option pursued by Bersani) was not an implausible one: PD and M5S were actually **spatially close to each other**

Implications



So why the coalition PD-M5S did not materialize?

Why 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?

The Core Party Theory allows us to produce some insights **ALSO** when the implications of the theory do not find a corroboration in the empirical facts! That's the power of a **THEORY!!!!**

Implications

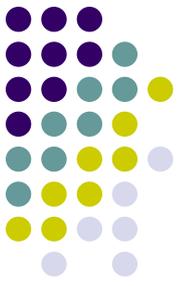


The previous result forces us in fact to go back to our starting assumption (again!) to reconnect the theory with the empirical facts

Suppose that the leadership of the M5S at that time has now **little or no interest in (short-term) policy rewards**

Instead, let's assume that the party's primary objective was (back in 2013!) to increase the M5S vote share in the medium to long term, with the goal of eventually **winning office** and running the country

Implications

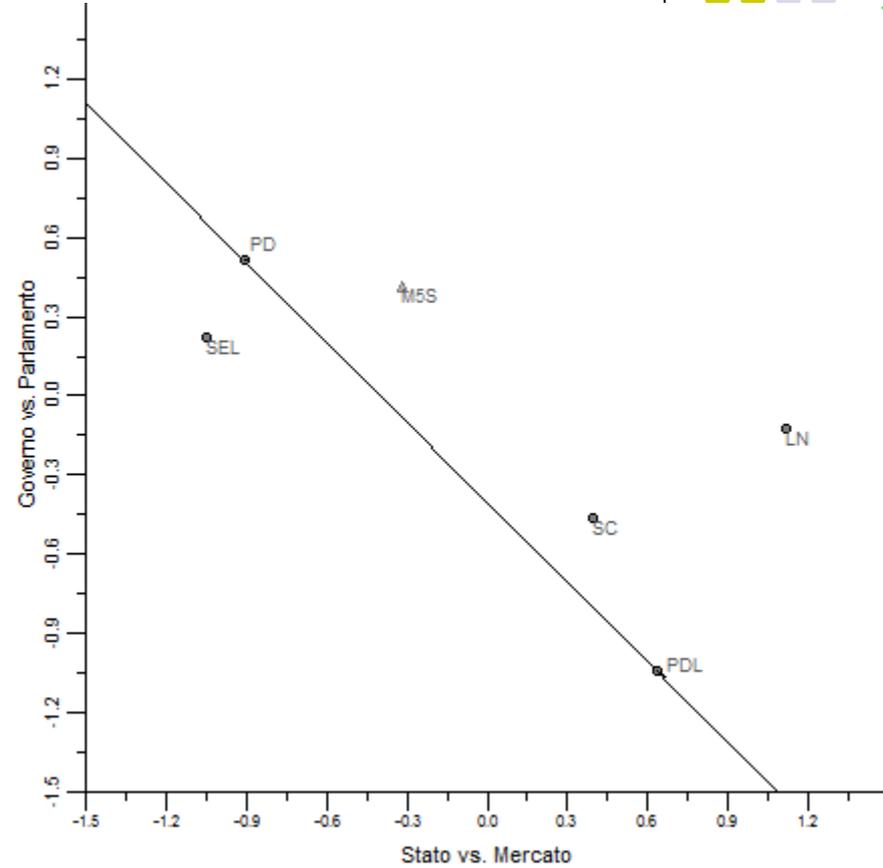
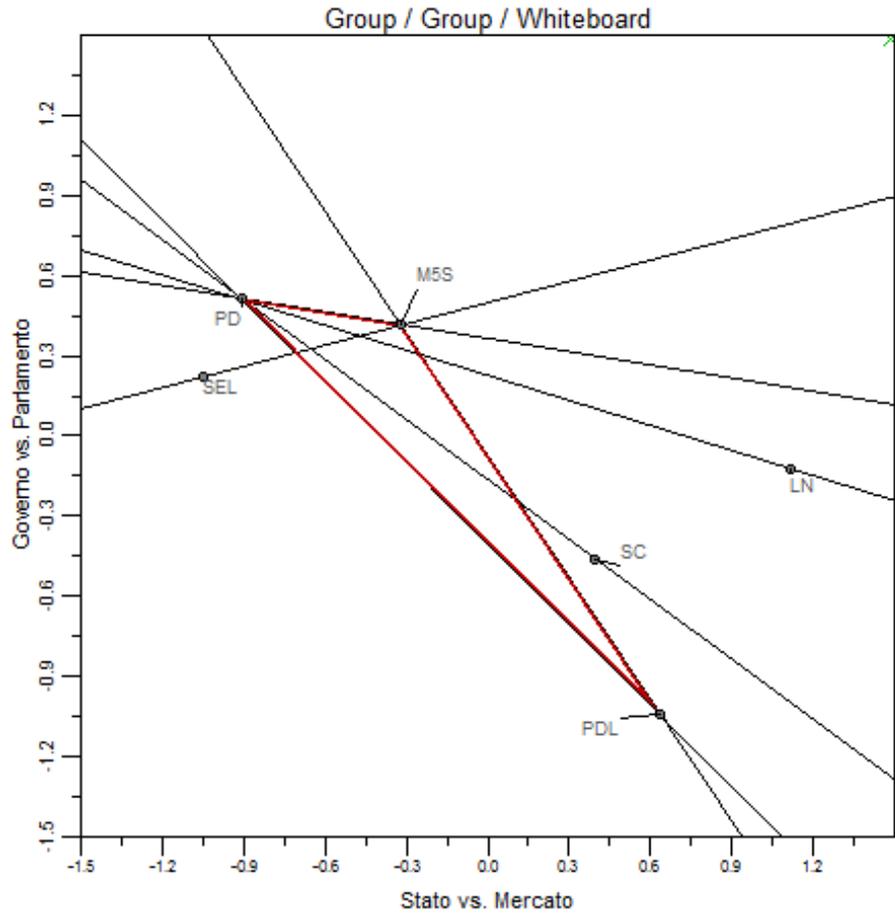


Accordingly, the “inflexibility” of the M5S, which declined any offer made by Bersani, **becomes now understandable** and should not be simply viewed as the consequence of the supposed anti-system nature of that party

This strategy effectively **negated the opportunity** to form a cabinet that could have been (relatively) more stable than the alternatives

But then...

Letta cabinet (with and without M5S)



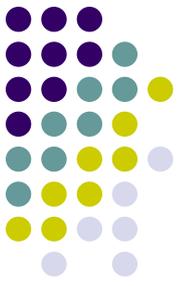
Implications



The M5S seems therefore 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 under the pressure of the economic crisis...

Indeed, the Letta Cabinet 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, i.e., we could have anticipated a strong degree of intra-coalitional conflict...as it happened!

Implications



The (strategic) immobilism of the M5S seems a perfect example of a **positive spatial heresthetic** move: i.e., the ability to craft/modify the policy space to enjoy a strategic advantage that was not there at the very beginning...

Summing up: at least from a spatial approach, we could have anticipated the **high level of instability** of the Letta Cabinet

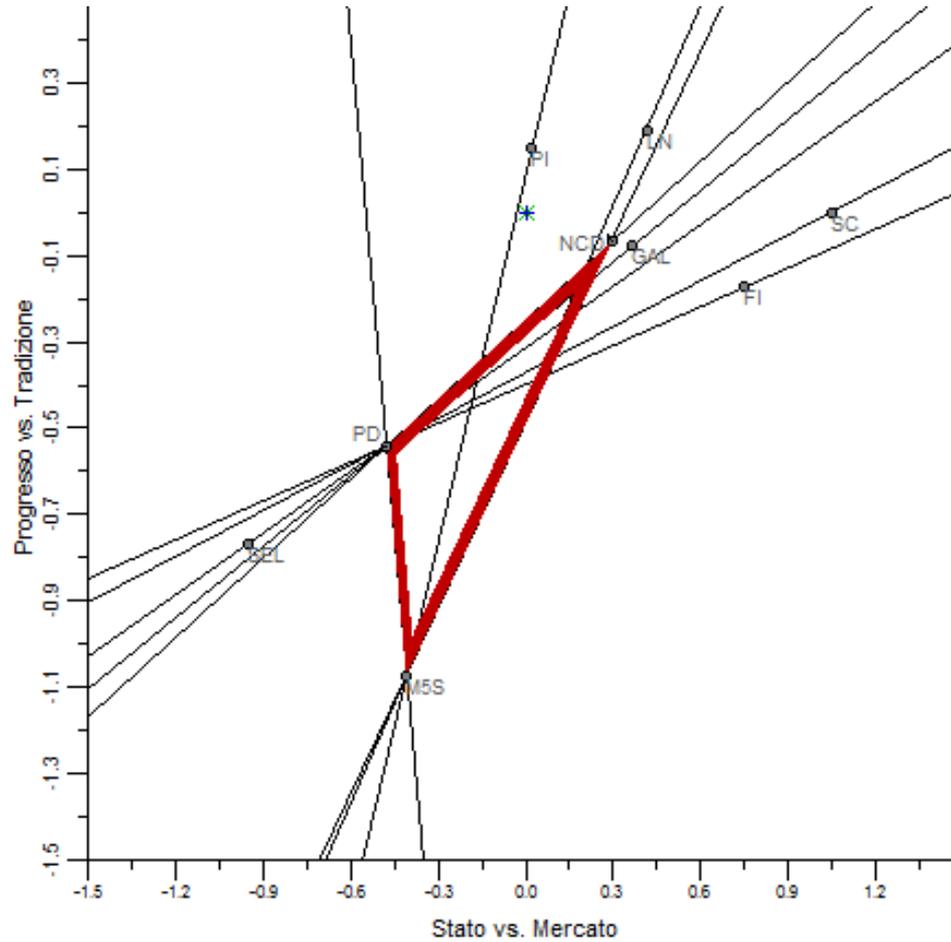
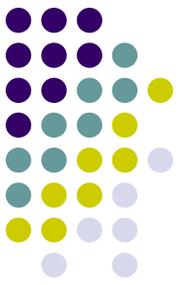
Implications



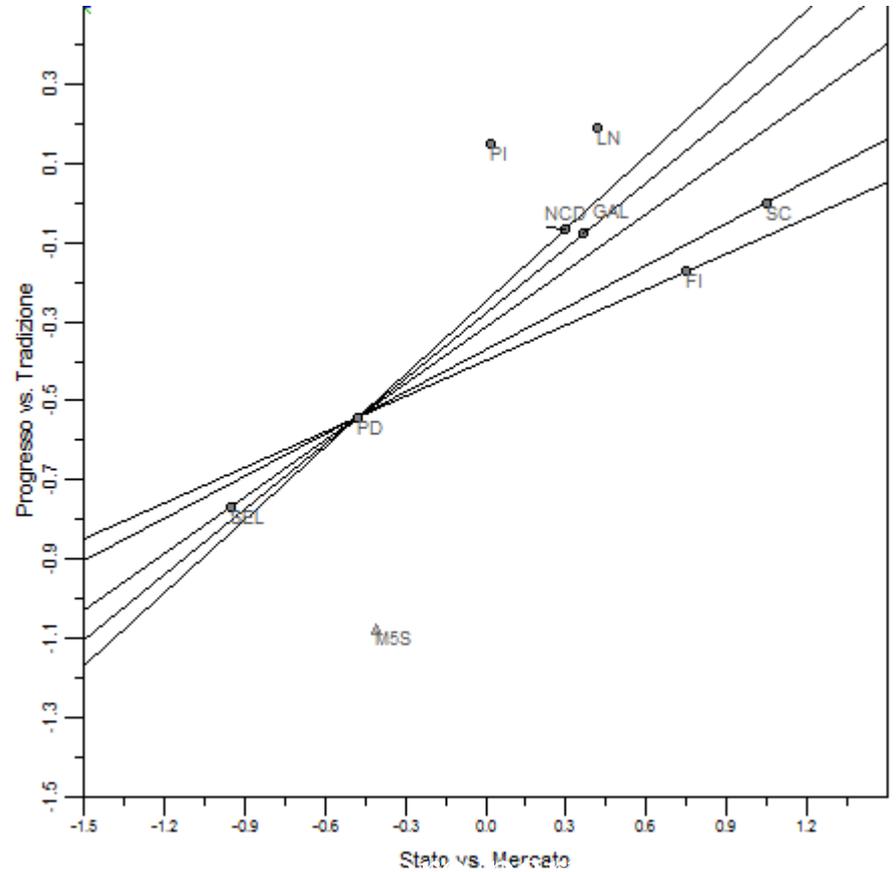
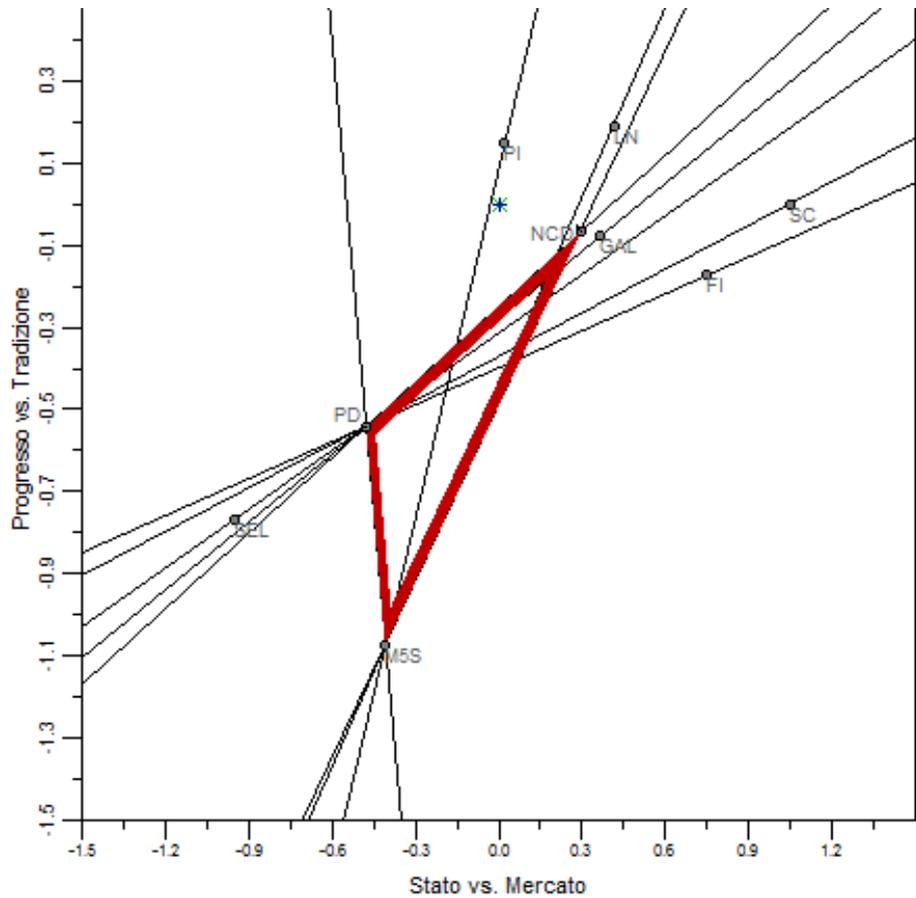
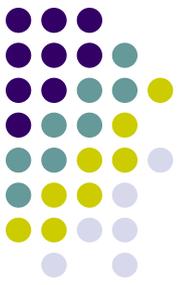
After the demise of Letta, the M5S once again decided to apply a similar strategy also with the new PM, i.e., **Matteo Renzi**...

...however the political and policy scenario **have changed** in the meantime...

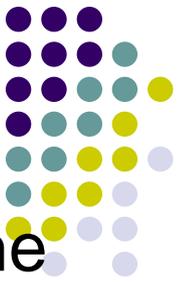
Core Party in action: Renzi cabinet



Renzi cabinet (with and without M5S)

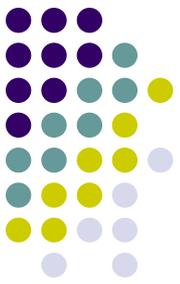


Implications



In the new situation, the (strategic) immobilism of the M5S is an example of a **negative spatial heresthetic** move, i.e., the ability to craft/modify the policy space to give a strategic advantage that was not there at the very beginning to **someone else**...

Implications



Renzi cabinet appeared therefore extremely stable...
...and it was! Until...
...something happened outside the Parliament!



Implications

Do you want to learn more?



L'arte di fare (e disfare) i governi

Numerosi e storicamente instabili, i governi italiani del dopoguerra hanno rappresentato un oggetto di particolare interesse per la scienza politica. Del resto, in un contesto in cui nessun esecutivo è riuscito a coprire un'intera legislatura, fare (e disfare) i governi ha costituito una fra le più frequenti espressioni della competizione partitica.

Scopo di questo volume è fare luce su quali sono stati i fattori principali che hanno contribuito a determinare tempi, modi ed esiti della competizione per il controllo dell'esecutivo, non tanto sottolineando la presunta eccezionalità del caso italiano, quanto ricorrendo all'applicazione sistematica delle teorie elaborate dalla letteratura comparata per lo studio del ciclo di vita dei governi.

La ricerca si basa su dati originali, fra cui l'*Italian Legislative Speech Dataset* (ILSD), che raccoglie il prodotto dell'analisi del contenuto dei dibattiti parlamentari che precedono il voto di fiducia al governo. Lo stile adottato mira a fare del volume un utile strumento di conoscenza della politica in Italia e della sua evoluzione dal dopoguerra a oggi.

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