

Electoral Profile: ITALY

Elections to the Chamber of Deputies::

- (1) 21 April 1996
- (2) 27 March 1994
- (3) 5 April 1992
- (4) 14 June 1987
- (5) 26 June 1983

Italy has a bicameral parliament: the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. Present Italian constitution was promulgated in 1948. In the period in which five consecutive elections to the Chamber of Deputies which this electoral profile covers, there was a major change in electoral law which became effective in 1993.

Old Electoral System

Before 1993, Italy practiced a pure PR system with d'Hondt method of seat allocation. Deputies were elected by proportional representation using the Imperiali system, which is a version of the d'Hondt with an initial divisor of two rather than one. If all the seats in the Chamber had not been allocated at the constituency level, surplus votes are collected into a national pool where a second distribution takes place using the largest remainder method.

The Senate was comprised of 315 members, six nominated for life for by the President of the Republic and former Presidents of the Republic. There are 238 single-member constituencies. Any candidate who wins more than 65% of the vote in his constituency was automatically elected. If none of the candidates won, the votes cast in those districts where no candidates was elected were grouped at the regional level where the seats were distributed between the parties by the d'Hondt method.

New Electoral System

Electoral reform in Italy of 1993 was prompted by two major developments in the early 1990's. First, Italian political order was challenged by the electoral successes of the leagues in northern Italy. Second, the magistrates' investigations into political corruption in Milan extended to national politics, resulting a political crisis. Pressure for electoral reform mounted from both political parties and voters. In 1993, the Italian parliament passed new laws governing elections to both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The new law is a hybrid of PR and plurality systems. One-quarter of each house is elected by PR system and the remaining three quarters by plurality system in single-member districts.

For the Senate, there are 232 plurality seats and 83 PR seats. The twenty regions form multi-member districts. In each constituency three-quarters of the deputies are chosen from single-member districts and one-quarter by PR from the multi-member districts. After plurality seats are allocated, a

reduction is made to the votes of each party equivalent to the number of votes won by that party's successful candidates in the single-member districts in that constituency. Then, PR seats allocated based on the remaining votes using the d'Hondt method. But, there is a threshold of 4% of national valid vote to participate in this PR allocation.

For the elections to the Chamber, 475 deputies are elected by plurality and 155 by PR. There are larger 26 constituencies which are divided into 474 single-member districts, with an exception of one single-seat constituency in Valle d'Aosta. The voter casts separate ballots, one for a candidate in his/her single-member district and one for a party list in his/her constituency on the PR system.

Electoral Magnitude

Under the old System

Electoral magnitude of the lower house (the Chamber) elections range from 1 to 35. There were 630 seats in the Chamber and 30 districts, which produce an average magnitude of 20. But effective magnitude could slightly differ from the average magnitude since there was one adjustment district.¹

Under the new System

Electoral magnitude of the lower house ranges from 1 to 2.² There is only one constituency of Valle d'Aosta which is without PR seats. Therefore effective number of districts will be:

- 475 single-member districts + 26 PR constituencies = 501

Average magnitude is $630/501 = 1.26$. Since there is no adjustment seats, adjustment district, or thresholds, effective magnitude under the new system is the same as the average magnitude: 1.26.

Advantage Ratio of Parties

The 1993 electoral reform is a watershed in Italian electoral politics. The reform, which was generated by the political crisis of the early 1990's, marked an end to the existence of governing parties. Starting in the 1994 elections, all major parties and much of their seats had to enter alliances. Power configuration of the party system was drastically changed.

Old system

Under the old electoral system, major parties were:

(1) Christian Democrat Party

¹. Seats and Votes Page-136, Table 12.1

² Each district in larger constituencies has a single plurality seat and a district is a part of the larger constituency which is itself a PR district.

(2) Communist Party (Democratic Party of the Left)

(3) Socialist Party

There are about 40 other small parties whose percentage of votes range from 0 to 6.

Table (1)

Old System (Percentage of Votes)			
	1983	1987	1992
Christian Democrats	32.9	34.3	29.7
Communist Party	29.9	26.6	16.1
Socialist Party	11.5	14.3	13.6
Republican Party	5.1	3.7	4.4
Social Democrats	4.1	3	2.7
Social Movement MIS	6.8	5.9	5.4
Northern League/Lombard League			8.7
Liberal Party	2.9	2.1	2.9
Greens		2.5	2.8
Others	6.8	7.6	13.7

Table (2)

Old System (Percentage of Seats)			
	1983	1987	1992
Christian Democrats	35.7	36.9	32.7
Communist Party	30.5	27.9	17
Socialist Party	11.6	14.8	14.6
Republican Party	4.6	3.3	4.3
Social Democrats	3.7	2.7	2.5
Social Movement MIS	6.7	5.5	5.4
Northern League/Lombard League			8.7
Liberal Party	2.5	1.7	2.7
Greens		2	2.5
Others	4.7	5.2	9.6

Advantage Ratios under the Old System

Table (3)

Old System (Advantage Ratio)			
	1983	1987	1992
Christian Democrats	1.09	1.08	1.1
Communist Party	1.02	1.04	1.06
Socialist Party	1.01	1.03	1.07
Republican Party	0.9	0.9	0.98
Social Democrats	0.9	0.9	0.93
Social Movement MIS	0.99	0.93	1
Northern League/Lombard League			1
Liberal Party	0.86	0.81	0.93
Greens		0.8	0.89
Others	0.7	0.7	0.7

New System

Under the new system, number of political parties proliferated in both 1994 and 1996 election. Traditionally strong parties, Christian Democrats, Communist Party and Socialist Party lost much of their seats to the new parties. The new system was introduced with a intention of creating a polarizing effect, which will generate a bipolar system with stronger parties. Nevertheless, it has so far resulted in party-system fragmentation because the system is relatively too young to generate a decisively polarizing effect. Under the old system, there were two poles led by Christians

Democrats and Communists. For the time being, the new party system has evolved into a somewhat tri-polar one, with three weak poles: the Lega, Christian Democrats and the Democratic Party of the Left (Communist Party).

Advantage Ratio under the New System

There is a limitation of data regarding the single-member districts. Data is not available for the single-member districts which comprise three-quarters of seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Therefore, only the data for PR seats which accounts for one quarter of the Chamber are used in calculating advantage ratio under the new system, assuming that voters will vote approximately the same if all the Chamber seats are elected using PR. Advantage ratio for the 1994 and 1996 elections are calculated separately because some parties changed names or shifted to different alliances. Also, new parties emerged.

Table (4)

Percentage of Votes for PR Seats(New System) 1994				
	% Votes	Seats	% Seats	Advantage Ratio
Communist Party (Democratic Party of the Left)	20.6	37	23.87	1.16
Communist Refoundation	6	12	7.74	1.29
Greens	2.7	0	0	0
Socialist Party	2.2	0	0	0
The Network	1.9	0	0	0
Democratic Alliance	1.2	0	0	0
Italian Popular Party	11	29	18.7	1.7
Segni Pact	4.7	13	8.38	1.78
Christian Democratic Center (Forza Italia & Alliance)	21	32	20.64	0.98
MSI - National Alliance	13.5	22	14.19	1.05
Northern League	8.4	10	6.45	0.77
Reformers	3.5	0	0	0
Others	4.2	0	0	0

Table (5)

Percentage of Votes for PR Seats(New System) 1996				
	% Votes	Seats	% Seats	Advantage Ratio
Communist Party (Democratic Party of the Left) & Allies	21	26	16.77	0.8
Prodi List (Popular Party & Others)	6.8	4	2.58	0.38
Italian Renewal (Dini List-Italian Renewal, Segni Pact & Others)	4.3	8	5.16	1.2
Forza Italia	20.6	37	23.87	1.16
National Alliance	15.7	28	18.06	1.15
Christian Democratic Center/United Christian Democrats	5.8	12	7.74	1.33
Panella-Sgarbi List	1.9	0	0	0
Communist Refoundation	8.7	20	12.9	1.48

Northern League	10.1	20	12.9	1.28
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**List of Coordinates Used in the “Advantage Ratio Vs. Percent Votes
Scatter-Plots”**

A = Christian Democrats

B = Communist Party (Democratic Party of the Left)

C = Socialist Party

D = Republican Party

E = Social Democrats

F = Social Movement MIS

G = Northern League/Lombard League

H = Liberal Party

I = Greens

J = Others for the small parties under the old system

K = Communist Refoundation

L = The Network

M = Democratic Alliance

N = Italian Popular Party

O = Segni Pact

P = Christian Democratic Center (Forza Italia & Alliance)

Q = Reformers

R = Communist Party (Democratic Party of the Left) & Allies (1996 Election)

S = Prodi List (Popular Party & Others) (1996)

T = Italian Renewal (Dini List-Italian Renewal, Segni Pact & Others) (1996)

U = Forza Italia (1996)

V = National Alliance (1996)

W = Christian Democratic Center/United Christian Democrats (1996)

X = Panella-Sgarbi List (1996)

Y = MIS-National Alliance

Z = Others (1994)

Proportionality Profiles

Two separate proportionality-profile scatter-plots are graphed because the PR methods used under the old and new systems are different. Under the old system, Imperiali method (a version of d'Hondt) with the divisor 2 was used to translate votes into seats. The remaining seats are pooled at the national level where a second distribution took place using the largest remainder method. Under the new system, a quarter of Chamber Seats are allocated by PR method until all seats are distributed, without a second round of distribution. In addition, this profile uses only the data for the PR seats and votes due to unavailability of the data for plurality votes which account for three quarters of the Chamber seats. It is assumed that voters will vote the same way if all the seats are voted for using the PR method. Therefore, advantage ratios calculated for the elections under the new system are approximate while advantage ratio calculated for the old system are accurate.

From the advantage-ratio Vs. percent votes scatter-plot for the old system, it can be inferred that the proportionality-profile of the old system is a “early rise one.” The average profile curve crosses the ideal PR line ($A=1$) approximately at the point of 7%. In other words, the break-even point for the old system is approximately 7%.

Proportionality-profile for the elections (1994 and 1996) under the new system is “a wide scattered one.” It seems that the relationship between seats and votes becomes rather random. There could be some such reasons which T & S point out as unpredictable elements in the system, malapportionment, or unsuitable measures of definitions.³ One most possible reason could be the unavailability of data for all plurality votes. In addition, Italy began to see in the early 1990's the rise of regionally-based parties. The best example is the Northern League. This aspect must have a considerable effect on the advantage ratio.

Effective Number of Parties

Effective number of parties are calculated using the Herfindahl-Hirschman Concentration Index. The results indicate that the effective number of parties has risen over time in the period this profile covers.

Effective Number of Parties in 1983 Elections Based on Votes (Table 1)

$$\begin{aligned} HH &= (0.329)^2 + (0.299)^2 + (0.115)^2 + (0.051)^2 + (0.041)^2 + (0.068)^2 + (0.029)^2 + (0.068)^2 \\ &= 0.1082 + 0.0894 + 0.0132 + 0.0026 + 0.0016 + 0.0046 + 0.0008 + 0.0046 \\ &= 0.225 \end{aligned}$$

³ T & S, Page 74.

$$N = 1/HH = 1/0.225 = \mathbf{4.44}$$

Effective Number of Parties in 1983 Elections Based on Seats (Table 2)

$$\begin{aligned} HH &= (0.357)^2 + (0.305)^2 + (0.116)^2 + (0.046)^2 + (0.037)^2 + (0.067)^2 + (0.025)^2 + (0.047)^2 \\ &= 0.1274 + 0.093 + 0.0134 + 0.0021 + 0.0013 + 0.0044 + 0.0006 + 0.0022 \\ &= 0.2444 \end{aligned}$$

$$N = 1/0.2444 = \mathbf{4.1}$$

Effective Number of Parties in 1987 Elections Based on Votes (Table 1)

$$\begin{aligned} HH &= (0.343)^2 + (0.266)^2 + (0.143)^2 + (0.037)^2 + (0.03)^2 + (0.059)^2 + (0.021)^2 + (0.025)^2 + \\ &\quad (0.076)^2 \\ &= 0.1176 + 0.0707 + 0.0204 + 0.0013 + 0.009 + 0.0034 + 0.0004 + 0.0006 + 0.0057 \\ &= 0.229 \end{aligned}$$

$$N = 1/0.229 = \mathbf{4.36}$$

Effective Number of Parties in 1987 Elections Based on Seats (Table 2)

$$\begin{aligned} HH &= (0.369)^2 + (0.279)^2 + (0.148)^2 + (0.033)^2 + (0.027)^2 + (0.055)^2 + (0.017)^2 + (0.02)^2 + \\ &\quad (0.052)^2 \\ &= 0.1361 + 0.0778 + 0.0219 + 0.001 + 0.0007 + 0.003 + 0.0002 + 0.0004 + 0.0027 \\ &= 0.2438 \end{aligned}$$

$$N = 1/0.2438 = \mathbf{4.1}$$

Effective Number of Parties in 1992 Elections Based on Votes (Table 1)

$$\begin{aligned} HH &= (0.297)^2 + (0.161)^2 + (0.136)^2 + (0.044)^2 + (0.027)^2 + (0.054)^2 + (0.087)^2 + (0.029)^2 + \\ &\quad (0.028)^2 + (0.137)^2 \\ &= 0.0882 + 0.0259 + 0.0184 + 0.0019 + 0.0007 + 0.0029 + 0.0075 + 0.0008 + 0.0007 + 0.0187 \\ &= 0.166 \end{aligned}$$

$$N = 1/0.166 = \mathbf{6.02}$$

Effective Number of Parties in 1992 Elections Based on Seats (Table 2)

$$\begin{aligned} HH &= (0.327)^2 + (0.17)^2 + (0.146)^2 + (0.043)^2 + (0.025)^2 + (0.054)^2 + (0.087)^2 + (0.027)^2 + \\ &\quad (0.025)^2 + (0.096)^2 \\ &= 0.1069 + 0.0289 + 0.0213 + 0.0018 + 0.0006 + 0.0029 + 0.0075 + 0.0007 + 0.0006 + 0.0092 \\ &= 0.1804 \end{aligned}$$

$$N = 1/0.1804 = \mathbf{5.54}$$

Effective Number of Parties in 1994 Elections Based on Votes (Table 1)

$$\begin{aligned}
HH &= (0.206)^2 + (0.06)^2 + (0.027)^2 + (0.022)^2 + (0.019)^2 + (0.012)^2 + (0.11)^2 + (0.047)^2 + (0.21)^2 \\
&\quad + (0.135)^2 + (0.084)^2 + (0.035)^2 + (0.042)^2 \\
&= 0.0424 + 0.0036 + 0.0007 + 0.0004 + 0.0003 + 0.0001 + 0.0121 + 0.0022 + 0.0441 + 0.0182 \\
&\quad + 0.007 + 0.0012 + 0.0017 \\
&= 0.134 \\
N &= 1/0.134 = \mathbf{7.46}
\end{aligned}$$

Effective Number of Parties in 1994 Elections Based on Seats (Table 2)

$$\begin{aligned}
HH &= (0.2387)^2 + (0.0774)^2 + (0.187)^2 + (0.0838)^2 + (0.2064)^2 + (0.1419)^2 + (0.0645)^2 \\
&= 0.0569 + 0.0059 + 0.0349 + 0.007 + 0.0426 + 0.0201 + 0.0041 \\
&= 0.171 \\
N &= 1/0.171 = \mathbf{5.84}
\end{aligned}$$

Effective Number of Parties in 1996 Elections Based on Votes (Table 1)

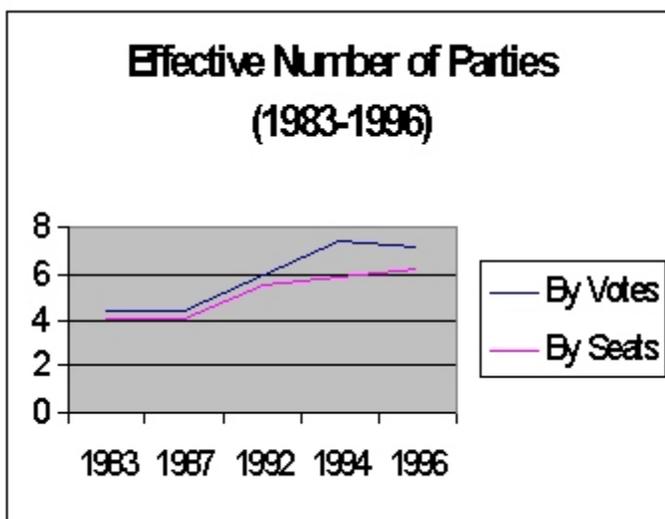
$$\begin{aligned}
HH &= (0.21)^2 + (0.068)^2 + (0.043)^2 + (0.206)^2 + (0.157)^2 + (0.058)^2 + (0.019)^2 + (0.087)^2 + \\
&\quad (0.101)^2 \\
&= 0.0441 + 0.0046 + 0.0018 + 0.0424 + 0.0246 + 0.0033 + 0.0003 + 0.0075 + 0.0102 \\
&= 0.1388 \\
N &= 1/0.1388 = \mathbf{7.2}
\end{aligned}$$

Effective Number of Parties in 1996 Elections Based on Seats (Table 2)

$$\begin{aligned}
HH &= (0.1677)^2 + (0.0258)^2 + (0.0516)^2 + (0.2387)^2 + (0.1806)^2 + (0.0774)^2 + (0.129)^2 + (0.129)^2 \\
&= 0.0281 + 0.0006 + 0.0026 + 0.0569 + 0.0326 + 0.0059 + 0.0166 + 0.0166 \\
&= 0.1599 \\
N &= 1/0.1599 = \mathbf{6.25}
\end{aligned}$$

$N_v - N_s$ (1983) = 0.34 $N_v - N_s$ (1994) = 1.62
 $N_v - N_s$ (1987) = 0.26 $N_v - N_s$ (1996) = 0.95
 $N_v - N_s$ (1992) = 0.48

Under the old electoral system, Italy's effective number of parties is about the same as Israel ($N_v = 4.3$,



	By Votes	By Seats
1983	4.44	4.1
1987	4.36	4.1
1992	6.02	5.54
1994	7.46	5.84
1996	7.2	6.25

$N_s = 3.8$ in 1985)⁴ which is also a PR system with a fragmented party system. T & S points out that the working of the electoral rules tend to reduce the number of parties by almost one half a party on the average, meaning “ $N_v - N_s \approx 0.4$.” (Page - 84). Italian elections under the old system roughly follows this generalization with 0.34 (1983), 0.26 (1987) and 0.48 (1992). Under the new electoral system, the difference between N_v and N_s approaches “1”: in 1994, the difference is 1.62 and in 1996 it was 0.95. As mentioned earlier, this could be due to either the limitation of data on those two elections or the rise of regionally-based parties in the early 1990's.

Issue Dimension

Until the end of the cold war, the most salient issue dimension in Italian electoral system was that of “regime support.” Existence of Italian Communist Party which received almost a third of votes until the late 1980's and its declared revolutionary intentions was a threat to the existing regime. To counter the communists, Christian Democratic party always presented as the “dike” against communist take-over, and the party won most votes on this platform in most elections. The third largest party until the late 1980's was the Socialist Party which won 10-15% of votes. The party broke alliance with the communist party in the 1950's and became a major party in the coalition governments led by the Christian Democrats.

The end of the cold war had considerable effects on the Italian party system. Christian Democratic Party's anti-communist platform became outmoded. Thus, the party changed its slogan to “stability,” “Without us, chaos,” and the like. Nevertheless, these new platforms did not appeal the electorate as much as its anti-communist slogan did in the past. Meanwhile Italian Communist Party decided to change its name to “Democratic Party of the Left” obviously sensing the end of communism.

The issue of regime support took on a new nature in the late 1980's and early 1990's and gave rise to regionally-based Northern League. There was a considerably, socioeconomic gap between the North and South. The gap which closed between 1950 and 1980 began to grow again in the 1980's. The South's employment rate in the 1980's, for example, was three times higher than the North, and it was highly dependent upon public resources. The North was relatively rich and independent of the central government. As a result, the Northern League was formed, offering alternative policies to the voters to challenge long-dominant Christian Democrat-led coalitions. Disenchantment with the dominance of Christian Democrats resulted in calls for electoral reforms in the late 1980's, and many parties adopted electoral reform as a major issue in their campaigns at the time. Out of the Northern League became the major in the anti-establishment camp. The alliance of Christian Democrats and Socialists tried to cling on to their traditional dominance, but in vain.

Other than the issue of regime support, a myriad of parties with different persuasions, though small, took on a wide range of issues ranging from Catholic unity to environmental preservation.

⁴ T &S, Page-82, Table- 8.1.

Deviation from Proportionality**1983 Election**

$$\begin{aligned}
D &= (\frac{1}{2}) \sum [S_i - V_i] \\
&= (\frac{1}{2}) ([35.7 - 32.9] + [30.5 - 29.9] + [11.6 - 11.5] + [4.6 - 5.1] + [3.7 - 4.1] + [6.7 - 6.8] \\
&\quad + [2.5 - 2.9] + [4.7 - 6.8]) \\
&= (\frac{1}{2}) (2.8 + 0.6 + 0.1 + 0.5 + 0.4 + 0.1 + 0.4 + 2.1) \\
&= (\frac{1}{2}) (7) = \mathbf{3.5}
\end{aligned}$$

1987 Election

$$\begin{aligned}
D &= (\frac{1}{2}) ([36.9 - 34.3] + [27.9 - 26.6] + [14.8 - 14.3] + [3.3 - 3.7] + [2.7 - 3] + [5.5 - 5.9] \\
&\quad + [1.7 - 2.1] + [2 - 2.5] + [5.2 - 7.6]) \\
D &= (\frac{1}{2}) (2.6 + 1.3 + 0.5 + 0.4 + 0.3 + 0.4 + 0.4 + 0.5 + 2.4) \\
&= (\frac{1}{2}) (8.8) = \mathbf{4.4}
\end{aligned}$$

1992 Election

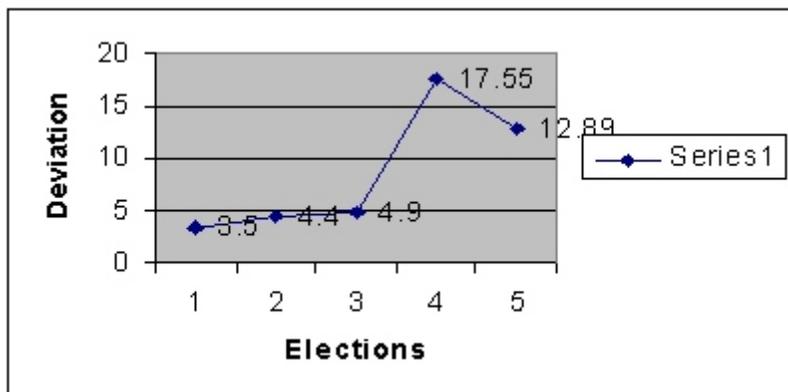
$$\begin{aligned}
D &= (\frac{1}{2}) ([32.7 - 29.7] + [17 - 16.1] + [14.6 - 13.6] + [4.3 - 4.4] + [2.5 - 2.7] + [5.4 - 5.4] \\
&\quad + [8.7 - 8.7] + [2.7 - 2.9] + [2.5 - 2.8] + [9.6 - 13.7]) \\
&= (\frac{1}{2}) (3 + 0.9 + 1 + 0.1 + 0.2 + 0 + 0 + 0.2 + 0.3 + 4.1) \\
&= (\frac{1}{2}) (9.8) = \mathbf{4.9}
\end{aligned}$$

1994 Election

$$\begin{aligned}
D &= (\frac{1}{2}) ([23.87 - 20.6] + [7.74 - 6] + [0 - 2.7] + [0 - 2.2] + [0 - 1.9] + [0 - 1.2] + [18.7 - 11] \\
&\quad + [8.38 - 4.7] + [20.64 - 21] + [14.19 - 13.5] + [6.45 - 8.4] + [0 - 3.5] + [0 - 4.2]) \\
&= (\frac{1}{2}) (3.27 + 1.74 + 2.7 + 2.2 + 1.9 + 1.2 + 7.7 + 3.68 + 0.36 + 0.69 + 1.95 + 3.5 + 4.2) \\
&= (\frac{1}{2}) (35.09) = \mathbf{17.55}
\end{aligned}$$

1996 Election

$$\begin{aligned}
D &= (\frac{1}{2}) ([16.77 - 21] + [2.58 - 6.8] + [5.16 - 4.3] + [23.87 - 20.6] + [18.06 - 15.7] + [7.74 - 5.8] \\
&\quad + [0 - 1.9] + [12.9 - 8.7] + [12.9 - 10.1]) \\
D &= (\frac{1}{2}) (4.23 + 4.22 + 0.86 + 3.27 + 2.36 + 1.94 + 1.9 + 4.2 + 2.8) \\
&= (\frac{1}{2}) (25.78) = \mathbf{12.89}
\end{aligned}$$



Deviation from Proportionality

1983	3.5
1987	4.4
1992	4.9
1994	17.55
1996	12.89

Deviation from Proportionality and Effective Number of Parties

	Deviation from Proportionality	N by Votes	N by Seats
1983	3.5	4.44	4.1
1987	4.4	4.36	4.1
1992	4.9	6.02	5.54
1994	17.55	7.46	5.84
1996	12.89	7.2	6.25

The data indicates that, as T&S discuss, deviation from proportionality varies as the effective number of parties vary. Roughly, deviation from proportionality increases with the effective number of parties, though not in a linear fashion.

General Conclusions

Advantage Ration

Under the old system, advantage ratio of the parties range from 0.7 to 1.09. In most instances, the parties had advantage ratios which approximates the ideal PR ration of 1. The is means that the electoral system with Imperiali method using divisor two and a second of round seat distribution at the national level was effective in creating significant proportionality. After the new system was introduced, the advantage ratios began to vary among parties to a large degree, ranging from 0 to 1.78. Since this profile treats the new system as a total PR disregarding the plurality aspect of the system due to the limitation of the data for plurality votes, the wide differences among the advantage ratios should not have been the effect of the plurality votes. As discussed earlier, one possible reason could be the emergence of regionally-based parties such as the Northern League, Lombard League and the Network from Sicily. These parties have won landslide victories in their regions. Seat distribution by means of an Imperiali method with a divisor 2 really works in favor of the

parties with higher percentage of votes than using the other divisors such as 1 or 3.⁵ The PR aspect of the new system is a pure one without a second round of seat distribution.

Effective Number of Parties

One visible trend in the system is the rise in the effective number of parties. From 4 to 6 under the old system, the number rose to 5 to 7.5 under the new system. The major purpose of introducing the new electoral system is to effect a strong party system with less parties. The aspect of three quarters of plurality seats in the Chamber bears evident of this purpose. Paradoxically, the number of parties even rose immediately after the introduction of the new system. This trend, though it might be ephemeral, goes against Duverger's Law. Intuitively, this can be explained that the system itself relatively too young to bring the desired effect. And, the current trend of the parties entering into three alliances, of which one is much weaker, points out that the system might eventually develop into a bipolar one.

One might try to find explanation for the rise in the number of parties might by analyzing the number of issue dimensions. But, the relationship between the effective number of parties and the number of issue dimensions is a weak one. Despite the Liphart equation of $N = I + 1$, increase or decrease in number of parties can also be caused by other factors other than major issue dimension. In the case of Italy, the only possible issue dimension, which Liphart will label as salient, is that of regime support. Other than this, no other significant issues were at play. Green party which represent of the issue of post-materialism (environmental conservation in this instance) and Catholic parties which stands for religious dimension are highly insignificant in terms of the percentage of vote. These small parties are not counted as effective parties. In Italy, effective number of parties are much higher than the conceivable number of issue dimensions. This demonstrates a fuzzy relationship between the two concepts.

Actually, the cause of the proliferation can be attributed to three factors. First, the appeal of Christian Democrats's anti-communist platform dissipated just as the ideological appeal of the communists. These were the two largest parties and their losses of votes created opportunities for new parties. Second, these votes went to newly-emerged, anti-establishment regional Leagues. Third, the traditional parties themselves disintegrated due in large part to the corruption scandals in the early 1990's. Christian Democratic Party disintegrated into three small parties in the face of the scandals: the Italian People's Party (PPI), Center Christian Democrats (CCD) and the Social Christians (C-S). The Socialist Party did not fare either. The same fate struck the party which split into the new Socialist Party (the new PSI), the Democratic Socialist Federation (FDS) and Socialist Renewal. In sum, the Italian experience points out that the rise in number of parties can be caused by other factors than the number of issue dimensions.

⁵ T & S, Page-31, Illustration.