

Party mergers and vote shifts in Italy 2008

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Abstract

Using data from exit polls and two different methods of ecological inference, I demonstrate how Italian voters shifted between 2006 and 2008. In brief, newly formed parties (Pdl, PD) were successful in retaining former voters; parties which looked as if they would be penalized by the electoral system (Sinistra Arcobaleno, UDC) were deserted by voters. The relative success of the Lega Nord and Italia dei Valori results from strong performance in retaining their own voters and marginal transfers of votes from their coalition partners.

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Introduction

The Italian general election of 2008 was important for three reasons. First, it was the second election held under a new electoral system approved in late 2005. Second, it was held after two years of significant change in the party system, with multiple cases of party fission and fusion and of shifting electoral alliances. Third - and perhaps because of party fusion - the election led to the collapse in the vote for the radical left, and their failure to gain parliamentary representation, as well as relative success for two parties - the Lega Nord and Italia dei Valori - which are now amongst the oldest continuously existing political parties in Italy, despite being only eighteen and ten years old respectively.

Given this conjunction of events, it is desirable to know how voters changed their vote from 2006 to 2008. In particular, we would like to know whether voters remained loyal in cases of party fusion - that is, whether in 2008 they voted for parties composed of parties for which they had voted in 2006 - and whether, if voters did not remain loyal, whether they shifted away from parties penalized by the electoral system, to parties rewarded by the electoral system, either within or across blocks. Since this is a question about individual behaviour, it would ideally be possible to answer the question using individual level data. Unfortunately, there is no complete and publicly available data on vote choice in 2008 and 2006: what data is available is partial and is subject to considerable mis-reporting of previous vote choice.

In this paper, I therefore use two different methods of ecological inference to infer vote shifts at the individual level from the available aggregate data. The use of such methods remains problematic, despite the existence of several putative solutions to the problem of ecological inference (King 1997). The estimates presented here are therefore not only a test of the several political parties, but also of the degree of overlap between different methods of ecological inference.

The electoral and party systems

The elections for both the *Camera dei Deputati* (Chamber of Deputies) and the *Senato* (Senate) were held on the 13th and 14th April 2008. They were held under law no. 260 of the 21st December 2005, adopted by the Berlusconi government shortly before the elections of 2006. The law is a bonus-adjusted proportional system which differs importantly between the two chambers of the Parliament. In the *Camera dei Deputati*, a bonus of 340 of total 630 seats is awarded to the largest coalition or party. The remaining seats are distributed proportionally between coalitions which have reached the threshold of 10% and non-coalition lists which have reached the threshold of 4%. Within coalitions, seats are distributed proportionally between lists which have reached the threshold of 2%, plus one "largest loser" list. In the Senate, constitutional objections to a similar nation-wide bonus meant that a series of regional bonuses apply. For each region, the largest coalition or party takes 55% of the seats in that region; the remaining seats are distributed proportionally between coalitions which have reached the regional threshold of 20% and non-coalition lists which have reached the threshold of 8%. Within coalitions, seats are distributed proportionally, with no legal threshold.¹ In 2006, the electoral system caused parties to aggregate, as might have been predicted *either* by the high thresholds at regional level, *or* by the race to build a coalition capable of winning a bare plurality of votes. The effect was almost total bipolarism, with two competing electoral cartels of left and right capturing 99.5% of the vote. These cartels were, however, large and unwieldy. The left-wing electoral cartel was composed of thirteen different electoral lists in the Camera, and sixteen in the Senate.² The right-wing electoral cartel was composed of twelve electoral lists in the Camera, and seventeen different electoral lists in the Senate.³

Although the electoral reform induced aggregation at the level of the electoral coalition, a number of parties were also engaged in mergers or closer strategic alliances the roots of

which preceded the electoral reform.

1. the Democratici di Sinistra - the largest of the successor parties of the former Partito Comunista Italiano - merged with the *Margherita* to form the Partito Democratico (PD) during the period April - October 2007. The roots of this merger date back to the repeated attempts in the late nineties of Romano Prodi to turn the Ulivo - an electoral cartel - into a single party. These attempts failed, but the ascent within the Democratici di Sinistra of those favourable to the plan (such as Walter Veltroni) and the relative decline of those opposed to it (Massimo D'Alema) meant a common list of the DS and the Margherita for the 2004 European Parliament elections, and ultimately the dissolution of the two constituent parties (Baccetti 2001; Donovan 2005).
2. Silvio Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* and the post-fascist *Alleanza Nazionale* merged to form the *Popolo della Libertà* (PDL) in November 2007. Berlusconi had repeatedly called for the formation of the single party of the centre-right during 2005, but his proposal had been complicated by the reticence of the UDC and Lega Nord, at the time both coalition partners.
3. The parties of the radical left - Rifondazione Comunista, Comunisti Italiani, and the Verdi - united to form a single electoral list, the Sinistra Arcobaleno. This merger was the most recent and least convincing. The Comunisti Italiani and the Verdi had presented a joint list in the Senate with the Verdi in the 2006 elections, but the impetus for coalition only came after the merger of the PD, and the consequent absorption of a splinter group of the Democratici di Sinistra which had not agreed to the merger, the Sinistra Democratica.

These three cases of fusion were accompanied by cases of fission. As already noted, a part

of the Democratici di Sinistra under Fabio Mussi rejected the merger with the Margherita, forming the Sinistra Democratica. On the right, a much smaller part of the Alleanza Nazionale, led by Gianfranco Storace, formed La Destra in early November 2007. The Destra, however, failed to make common ground with the other parties of the extreme right, Fiamma Tricolore and Alternativa Sociale di Alessandra Mussolini, who were consequently 'absorbed' by the PdL, with their candidates offered places on PdL electoral lists. Finally, the Rosa nel Pugno, an electoral cartel formed prior to the 2006 elections by the Radicali and the Social Democratic party, dissolved into its component parts. The Radicali were eventually absorbed by the Partito Democratico, which hosted a number of the party's exponents on its lists. The Social Democrats assembled other socialists from friendly and opposing blocks to (re)form the Partito Socialista, which ran as an independent list in 2008.

These cases of fission and fusion were motivated in part by changes in the composition of the electoral cartels. On the left, the extremely heterogeneous electoral coalition formed in 2006 broke, leaving the newly merged Partito Democratico to form an electoral coalition Italia dei Valori, and the radical left in the form of the Sinistra Arcobaleno to compete on its own. On the right, the UDC withdrew from the 2006 electoral coalition to compete on its own, leaving the Popolo della Libertà and the Lega Nord to form a coalition. Figure 1 summarizes these changes.

Expectations regarding vote shifts

Given our knowledge of changes in the electoral and party systems, how might we expect voters to shift between parties, abstracting from all other considerations? Table 1 shows the 8 x 8 possible vote shifts between 2006 and 2008. Parties competing in 2008 are listed across the columns. Parties competing in 2006 are listed down the rows, except that I

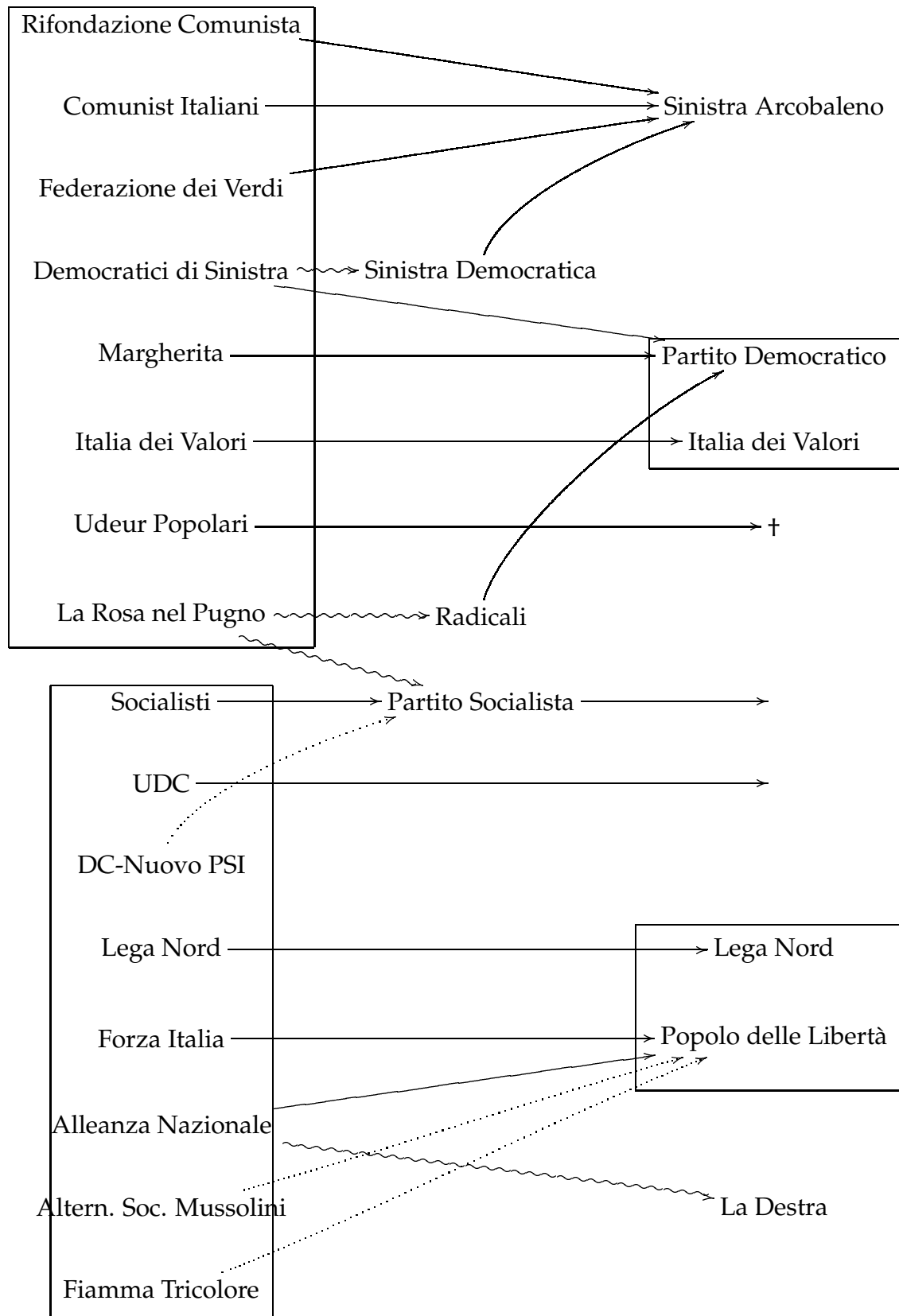


Figure 1: Party system changes, 2006 - 2008

Table 1: Vote transition matrix

	PdL	Lega Nord	PD	Arcobaleno	IdV	UDC	Other	Abstention
'PdL'	p_{11}	p_{12}	p_{13}	p_{14}	p_{15}	p_{16}	p_{17}	p_{18}
Lega Nord	p_{21}	p_{22}	p_{23}	p_{24}	p_{25}	p_{26}	p_{27}	p_{28}
Ulivo	p_{31}	p_{32}	p_{33}	p_{34}	p_{35}	p_{36}	p_{37}	p_{38}
'Arcobaleno'	p_{41}	p_{42}	p_{43}	p_{44}	p_{45}	p_{46}	p_{47}	p_{48}
IdV	p_{51}	p_{52}	p_{53}	p_{54}	p_{55}	p_{56}	p_{57}	p_{58}
UDC	p_{61}	p_{62}	p_{63}	p_{64}	p_{65}	p_{66}	p_{67}	p_{68}
Other	p_{71}	p_{72}	p_{73}	p_{74}	p_{75}	p_{76}	p_{77}	p_{78}
Abstention	p_{81}	p_{82}	p_{83}	p_{84}	p_{85}	p_{86}	p_{87}	p_{88}

have added parties together based on subsequent party fusion, so that those who voted for Alleanza Nazionale and Forza Italia are taken together as notional PdL voters, just as voters for Rif. Comm., Comunisti Italiani, and the Verdi are taken as notional Arcobaleno voters.

Our first hypothesis is that voting will be more stable than not. As Bellucci (2007, p. 56) notes, "traditional sources of electoral stabilisation (ideology, religion, social class) have long inhibited electoral mobility" in Italy, and there are those who argue that electoral mobility remains low despite the breakdown of the established party system in 1992/3. Thus, we should expect that at least a plurality of voters will continue to support the party or group that they voted for at the previous election:

H1. Diagonal entries in Table 1 will be greater than any entry on the same row or column.

There is, however, no good reason to assume that voters will be uniformly loyal to different parties or groups. In particular, given low levels of information about changes in the party system - and in the Italian context, the complexity of such changes challenges even high-information voters - voters may not *know* that the party they preferred at some previous election, on whatever heuristic or ground (ideological, issue-based, cultural belonging) is now known under a different name. Given the failure of that heuristic, they

may either re-evaluate the political offer, choosing the party which next best satisfies their current heuristic, or adopt a new heuristic which is less information intensive, such as leader evaluation or broad positive feeling. The former is unlikely given, *ex hypothesi*, low levels of information, and adoption of a new heuristic can only be less likely to result in same party choice. Thus (framing the hypothesis the other way round),

H2. Voters will be more loyal to parties that retain the same identity from one election to the next.

We should therefore expect that voters will be more loyal to the UDC and Italia dei Valori. A partial exception may be made for the Partito Democratico, given that the two constituent parties had already formed a joint list for the 2006 elections in one of the two chambers.

If voters are, on some level, aware of party mergers, their attitude towards the resulting party may differ from their attitude to its constituent parts. Consider two types of attitude towards party: an attitude of *belonging*, and an attitude of *reasoned choice* along some dimension. Attitudes of belonging are traditional in studies of Italian voting behaviour, and the *voto di appartenenza* (Parisi & Pasquino 1977) remains a frequently cited link between voters and parties, despite the erosion of traditional vote cues. Here, one belongs to a particular socio- or religio-cultural grouping, and parties are seen as expressions of particular groupings.

Given party merger, the perception of a link between socio or religio-cultural groupings and a given party may be broken. Whether this happens or not will depend on the nature of the merger. If, for example, the merger is between two parties which are seen as expressions of the same grouping, the link will be likely to remain. If, by contrast, the merger is between two parties which are seen as expressions of different groupings, the resulting

party may not succeed in retaining links with both former reference groups, with either one reference group dominating, or both links being lost.

Analogously in the case of the reasoning voter: when parties merge, their position on some dimension may change as a result of compromises necessary to the merger. If voters for some source party are all clustered at the source party's position at time t_0 , moves away from that position will only reduce loyalty if voters are Downsian (although it may win the party votes).

Thus,

H3. Amongst parties that do not retain the same identity from one election to the next, voters will be more loyal to parties the greater the lower the distance between the new party's constituent units.

This consideration has force for all three party mergers, since all three mergers are cross-cut by historical cleavages. To wit: the Partito Democratico is cross-cut by a clerical/secular cleavage (Garelli 2007); the Sinistra Arcobaleno is divided between post-communists and post-materialists; and the PdL is divided, partially, between market liberals and statist, and by moderates and nostalgists (Ignazi 2005). The division between Catholics and secularists in the PD at elite level has already been publicly manifested, with Rosy Bindi representing the Catholic influenced wing of the party in opposition to the inclusion of the ardently secular Radicals in an electoral alliance; it is not impossible that this split should also manifest itself at the level of the voter. The divisions between Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale were numerous: in particular, the latter retains the support of a number of voters who supported it when it was an unreformed anti-system party: a plurality of AN voters in 2001 (48.6%) though fascism a "good" or the "best possible" regime. This revanchism is even more pronounced within the party's elite, with "quadri

that until a very few years ago continued to indulge in the most persistent nostalgia (and perhaps continue to do so)" (Ignazi 2004, pp. 72, 75). The lack of enthusiasm within Alleanza Nazionale for the merger was noted by Forza Italia members, who were prepared to blame the lack of visibility of the party's members - and in particular, its leader, Gianfranco Fini, who was hardly seen campaigning - should they have lost the key region of Lazio. Additionally, voters of the different parties fail to demonstrate reciprocal sympathy: one of the motives behind the adoption of the electoral system in 2005 was the failure of Alleanza Nazionale (Forza Italia) voters to vote for coalition-agreed Forza Italia (Alleanza Nazionale) candidates in the single-member districts (Renwick, et al. 2008).

Finally, considerations resulting from the combination of the electoral system and the new party system may play a role. To the extent that voting is not an expressive act but an instrumental one designed to influence policy in the voter's preferred direction, and to the extent that policy is influenced only by those parties represented in parliament, voters may choose not to vote for parties which will not meet electoral thresholds, but rather vote for the next best viable option. Thus,

H4. Voter loyalty will be lower amongst non-coalition parties which risk failing to meet electoral thresholds

H4a. Past voters for non-coalition parties which risk failing to meet electoral thresholds will move to coalition parties formerly in alliance with the non-coalition party.

During the course of the electoral campaign, leaders of both major coalitions - Walter Veltroni for the Partito Democratico and Italia dei Valori, and Silvio Berlusconi for the Popolo della Libertà and Lega Nord - made repeated calls to voters not to waste their vote (the call for a *voto utile*). A vote would have been 'wasted' in one sense if it was given to a party which failed to reach the threshold for representation in either the Camera or (more

likely) the Senate: given that for much of the campaign both the Sinistra Arcobaleno and the UDC were at risk of failing to meet the Senate thresholds, a vote for either of these two groupings could have been depicted as a wasted vote. Such a vote would also have been 'wasted' in another, further sense, in that it would have not contributed to the attainment of the national or regional bonuses by either of the two coalitions capable of winning those bonuses, and thus would not have contributed to the formation of a governing majority. This principally applies to the Sinistra Arcobaleno and the UDC, both of whom were polling nationally at levels below the 8% threshold for representation in the Senate. (In the end, the vote share of Sinistra Arcobaleno crumbled precipitously to below the 4% threshold for representation in the Senate, and the UDC was able to concentrate its vote in Sicily and Calabria, winning three senators). Thus, we would expect voters of the Sinistra Arcobaleno to defect to either the PD or IdV (but more probably to the PD given squabbles between IdV and the radical left), and voters of the UDC to defect to either the PdL or the Lega Nord (but more probably to the PdL given the UDC's Southern profile). Unfortunately, disloyalty to the Sinistra Arcobaleno is over-predicted by hypotheses H4 and H3. The high rates of voter switching may thus be the result of either dissatisfaction with the single list, a strategic vote, or both.

Findings from exit polling

Following the elections, the same consortium which had provided exit polling for national broadcaster Rai also provided a breakdown of the composition of party support in terms of previous party choice. Breakdowns were provided for four parties - the Lega Nord, il Popolo della Libertà, the Partito Democratico, Italia dei Valori, and the UDC. Since we know the absolute number of votes received for each of these parties, we can multiply the percentage composition by this number to obtain the absolute number of

Table 2: Vote transition matrix, exit poll data

	PdL	Lega Nord	PD	Arcobaleno	IdV	UDC	Other	Abstention
'PdL'	<i>0.78</i>	<i>0.07</i>		...			(0.07)	...
Lega Nord	0.05	<i>0.79</i>		...			(0.12)	...
Ulivo			<i>0.65</i>	...	0.05		(0.24)	...
'Arcobaleno'			0.32	...			(0.58)	...
IdV			0.22	...	<i>0.47</i>		(0.24)	...
UDC	0.12		0.08	...		0.27	(0.49)	...
Other	0.15		0.19	...		0.05	(0.56)	...
Abstention	0.09		0.08	...			(0.77)	...

votes which switched from each origin party to each of the four destination parties, and then divide this by the absolute number of votes of the origin party to get transition rates. These data thus allow us a first estimate of p_{1j} the first to third, fifth, and sixth columns, but not for rates of transition to the Sinistra Arcobaleno, other parties, or to abstention.

Table 2 shows vote transitions from all origin parties to the five destination parties for which we have information. Entries on the diagonal are italicised; entries with values less than 0.05 have been omitted for clarity of presentation. The last column, 'Other' is merely 1 minus the sum of the entries for the previous columns.

High values in the 'Other' column for row j may either mean that large numbers of voters from party j have voted for the Sinistra Arcobaleno or any of the other parties present in the table; or, it may mean that voters misremembered their vote at the last election, under-reporting votes for j . Conversely, low values of j may indicate over-reporting of votes for j .

Unfortunately, there is much evidence to suggest that Italian voters do either misremember or lie about their previous vote choice, in such a way as to severely damage the reliability of results the presented in the table. Had I presented votes for Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale separately, the table would have shown that Forza Italia voters were over-represented by 109%: improbable given a random sample of 38,000 voters, but more

likely if these sampled voters over-reported voting Forza Italia.⁴ Equally, it seems somewhat implausible to suggest that almost half of the centrist UDC's 2006 support - roughly one and a quarter million voters - dispersed itself between various other parties - including parties of the extreme left and right - totalling twice that, or that they should have abstained at a much higher rate than the general population.

Better answers to the puzzles raised by Table 2 could be given with additional exit poll data, but these answers may only heighten the perception that past vote choice is systematically misreported. One alternative to exit poll data which does not have problems with misreporting⁵ is to attempt ecological inference from aggregate data. This method, of course, brings with it problems of its own; it is to these problems that I now turn.

Findings from ecological inference

Ecological inference is an inference from observed data at the aggregate level to unobserved behaviour at the level of the individual. This inference is problematic because, for any observed aggregate data, there is a finite but exceedingly large set of individual behaviours consistent with this observation. Attempts to identify single or probable individual behaviours which compose the aggregate data thus trade on reducing the set of possible configurations by looking at frequencies (the method of bounds) and/or by employing multiple aggregate-level observations under certain assumptions about the homogeneity of units. One of the latter methods is Goodman's regression (Goodman 1953) which, however, relies on the untenable assumption that "the quantities of interest... are the same over all precincts" (King 1997, p. 26). This assumption is untenable even in the best of cases: it is no less so in the Italian case, where electoral geographies are local and where the political offer differs in different parts of the country. To give one obvious example: if we are interested in the electoral success of the Lega Nord, we cannot assume

that the proportion of voters from parties $j = \{1...n\}$ who vote Lega Nord is the same all over the country, since the Lega Nord does not field candidates all over the country.⁶ Additionally, Goodman's regression often gives nonsensical results: for example, that 142% of Lega Nord voters in 2006 voted for the party in 2008, or that minus 14% of UDC voters voted for the PdL. Ridge regression (Fülle 1994; Brown & Payne 1986) can pull these nonsensical coefficients to within the realm of possible values, but does not address the assumption of unit homogeneity.

In this paper I employ two methods which each claim to address both the problem of out-of-bounds estimates and of unit heterogeneity. First, King (1997) attempts to unify two previously separate methods for estimating individual characteristics: the method of bounds and ecological regression. After using the method of bounds to estimate logically possible values for the quantities of interest in each district, he then uses maximum likelihood methods to estimate the parameters of the truncated bivariate normal distribution (truncated between 0 and 1) which would result in this configuration of logically possible values. This distribution is then used to predict individual level parameters conditional on the observed turnout in the district. There is debate over whether the use of the truncated bivariate normal distribution plus conditioning on observed turnout in fact imposes any less stringent conditions than the assumption of unit homogeneity, even after using the method of bounds (Rivers 1998); the same criticisms apply to the extension of King's model that I use here for estimating cells in tables of dimensions $R \times C$, where $R, C > 2$, which uses a truncated multivariate Dirichlet distribution (of which the bivariate distribution is the special case for two dimensions) (Rosen et al. 2001).

Second, Thomsen (2000) allows regional-level quantities of interest to vary provided that district-level quantities within a region do not vary, and provided that there be isomorphism between the within-district variation (that is, variation at the individual level) and the between-district variation.

Table 3: Vote transition matrix, `ecol`

	PdL	Lega Nord	PD	Arcobaleno	IdV	UDC	Other	Abstention
'PdL'	0.69	0.07						0.13
Lega Nord	0.08	0.76						0.06
Ulivo	0.05		0.72					0.11
'Arcobaleno'	0.08		0.44	0.12	0.07		0.06	0.22
IdV	0.17		0.18		0.18			0.33
UDC	0.25	0.11	0.09			0.32		0.16
Other	0.28	0.09	0.13			0.06	0.17	0.23
Abstention	0.21		0.12				0.06	0.47

Table 4: Vote transition matrix, `zelig`

	PdL	Lega Nord	PD	Arcobaleno	IdV	UDC	Other	Abstention
'PdL'	0.79	0.18						
Lega Nord		1.00						
Ulivo			0.93					
'Arcobaleno'	0.31		0.25	0.28	0.05			0.09
IdV					0.85	0.07		
UDC		0.30				0.60		
Other							0.93	
Abstention								0.88

Data and methodology

Comune-level results for the 2006 and 2008 elections to the Camera were automatically downloaded from the Ministry of the Interior website at www.interno.it⁷; communes which were not found in both datasets, and communes from the Val d'Aosta, were removed, leaving 7711 communes from nineteen regions. The data were then recoded into the categories given in Table 1. Estimates were then obtained using the `ecol` package for Stata and the `ei.RxC` package for `Zelig` (Wittenberg et al. 2007; Imai et al. 2007) respectively. Tables 3 and 4 show estimates from these sources respectively. Only vote transitions of greater than 0.05 are reported in the table for the sake of presentation.

Four notes on each estimation technique are in order. First, each estimation method produces certain results that seem implausible given the position of the respective Italian

parties. Italia dei Valori's emphasis on eliminating corruption and conflicts of interest in political life makes it difficult to believe that 17% of its former voters should have voted for a party led by Silvio Berlusconi, as Table 3 suggests. Equally, although both methods show that a non-negligible percentage of radical left voters defected to the PdL, it again seems hard to believe, as Table 4 suggests, that more of these voters would vote for the PdL than for any other party, including the Sinistra Arcobaleno.

Second, results from `Zelig` tend to give higher estimates of voter loyalty. This is particularly so for the smaller parties (Italia dei Valori, the UDC, and all other parties).

Third, results from `Zelig` are, though bounded between 0 and 1, close to the estimates obtained by a straightforward linear regression (results not shown here), a finding has already been noted by Freedman et al. (1998).

Fourth, results from `ecol` are closer to the exit poll results than results from `Zelig`, and results from `ecol` and `Zelig` are further apart than either is from the exit poll data. We can calculate the similarity of the different tables by summing the absolute values of the differences between each entry and dividing by two (in analogous fashion to Pedersen's volatility index: Pedersen (1979)). The difference between the exit poll estimates and the estimates obtained using `Zelig` is 1.65; the difference between the exit poll and `ecol` estimates is 1.01; the difference between the `ecol` and `Zelig` estimates, calculated only on the basis of the first to third and fifth to sixth columns, is 1.88.

Discussion

Perhaps unsurprisingly, our first hypothesis - that voters would be more loyal than not - is proved correct for all but one party: estimates from both `ecol` and `Zelig` suggest that pluralities of Sinistra Arcobaleno voters moved elsewhere (though they disagree on

where); and partial estimates from exit poll data suggest that if a plurality of Sinistra Arcobaleno voters did remain loyal, it cannot have been a very large plurality.

Were voters more loyal to parties that remained the same? The mean unweighted retention rate for parties which stayed the same (the Lega Nord, Italia dei Valori and the UDC) compared to parties which merged (PdL, PD, Sinistra Arcobaleno) is actually *lower* on both ecol and exit poll data. In particular, the PD was extremely successful at retaining those voters who had voted for it in previous elections (even if it was only marginally successful in attracting voters who had not voted for it previously), and the PdL also seems to have had surprisingly few problems in retaining its own voters. The case of the Sinistra Arcobaleno, of course, is different.

This may, however, reflect the last of our hypotheses - that voters would defect from parties which would be penalized by the electoral system. Indeed, in every table, the retention rates for the Sinistra Arcobaleno and the UDC are the lowest entries in the table, suggesting that much of the difficulties these parties faced was a result of their decision to compete separately. Unfortunately, there is no way to tell from the data from the Camera alone whether the spectacular collapse of the radical left is entirely due to this factor, or whether the party's rather lacklustre campaign and the original sin of cross-cleavage merger also contributed to its downfall. Extending this analysis to the Senate might allow a partial answer: if retention rates for the Sinistra Arcobaleno are (even) lower in the Senate, where the thresholds are more demanding, then the difference between the two loyalty rates might be attributable to the impact of thresholds (admittedly under the demanding assumptions that the vote decision in each chamber is independent and that the different composition of the electorate for the Senate does not systematically affect voter loyalty).

The voters 'lost' by the UDC and the Sinistra Arcobaleno do seem to have moved to their

nearest former coalition partner: results from Tables 2 and 3 suggest that UDC voters went to the PdL (though Zelig suggests they moved to the Lega) and that Sinistra Arcobaleno voters went in large numbers to the PD, rather than IdV (even if Zelig suggests they moved to the PdL in greater numbers!).

Finally, the results do little to shed light upon the success of the two junior partners within the respective coalitions, the Lega Nord and Italia dei Valori, neither of whom appear to have benefited from substantively significant transfers of votes from other parties. Italia dei Valori was marginally successful in stealing voters from the Sinistra Arcobaleno, and the Lega did a little better in stealing voters from the PdL. The precise reasons for the relative attractiveness of these parties, however, cannot be given here.

Notes

¹ I ignore further complications such as the minority-protection clauses, single-member districts in Val D'Aosta and Trentino-Alto-Adige, seats elected by Italians living abroad, and *senatori a vita*.

² Those in the Camera were: L'Ulivo, Rifondazione Comunista, La Rosa nel Pugno, Comunisti Italiani, Di Pietro Italia dei Valori, Federazione dei Verdi, UDEUR Popolari, Partito Pensionati, Sudtiroler Volkspartei, I Socialisti, Lista Consumatori, Alleanza Lombarda Autonoma, and the Liga Fronte Veneto.

Those in the Senato were: Democratici di Sinistra, La Margherita, Rifondazione Comunista, Insieme con l'Unione, Di Pietro Italia dei Valori, La Rosa nel Pugno, UDEUR Popolari, Partito Pensionati, I Socialisti, Alleanza Lombarda Autonoma, L'Ulivo, PSDI, Repubblicani Europei, Liga Fronte Veneto, and Democratici Cristiani Uniti.

³ Those in the Camera were: Forza Italia, Alleanza Nazionale, UDC, Lega Nord, Democratici Cristiani-Nuovo PSI, Alternativa Sociale Mussolini, Fiamma Tricolore, No Euro, Pensionati Uniti, Ambienta-Lista, P. Liberale Italiano, SOS Italia. Those in the Senato were: Forza Italia, Alleanza Nazionale, UDC, Lega Nord, Alternativa Sociale Mussolini, Fiamma Tricolore, Democratici Cristiani-Nuovo PSI, Pensionati Uniti, PRI, Ambienta-lista, Nuovo sicilia, No Euro, Patto per la Sicilia, P. Liberale Italiano, Patto Crist. Esteso, Riformatori Liberali, SOS Italia.

⁴ Complicating matters somewhat, it should be noted that the exit poll itself under-represented right-wing voters, meaning that those who did admit to voting for the right probably represented a bedrock of right-wing support.

⁵ On the assumption that voters marked their choices correctly and that those choices were counted correctly

⁶ Nor indeed could we restrict the analysis to the North of Italy, since even there the Lega's support shows strong regional fluctuations.

⁷ The data are available on request from the author.

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