Local participation and the Five Star Movement's (M5S) results in the 2013 and 2018 General Elections

Political distress or economic distress?

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17 July 2018

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Introduction

Approach

Data

- Meetup.com
- Election results

Analysis

Concluding remarks

Introduction

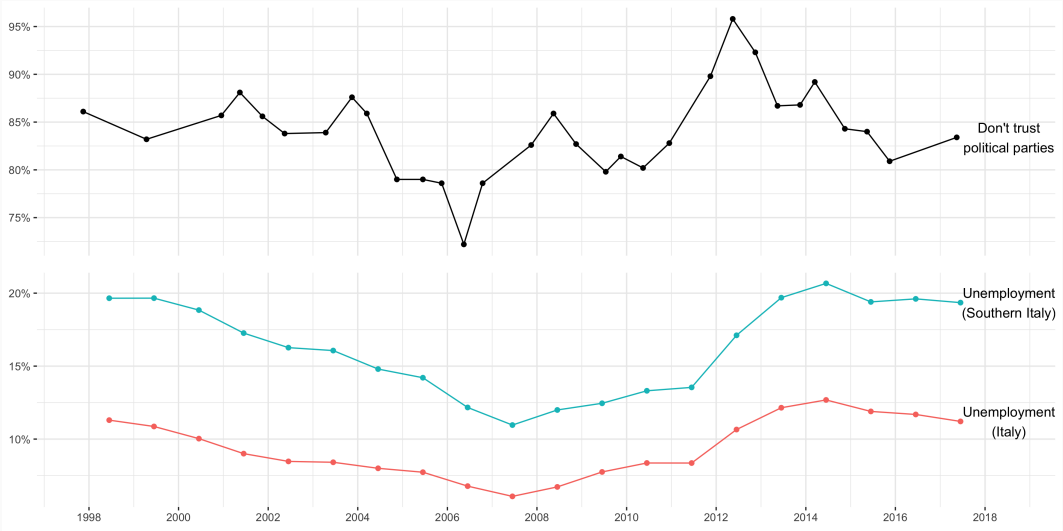
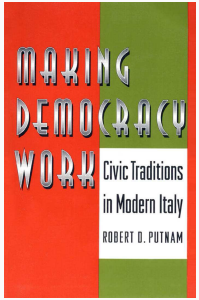


Figure: Unemployment rate and trust towards political parties in Italy (Eurobarometer and Istat)


MAKING
DEMOCRACY
WORK
Civic Traditions
in Modern Italy
ROBERT D. PUTNAM

1993

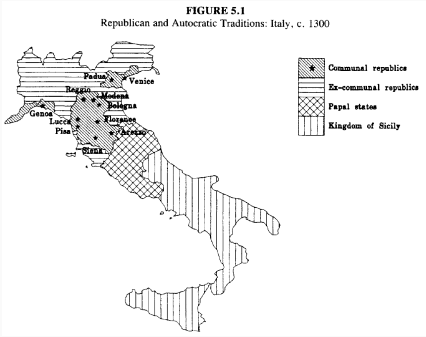


FIGURE 5.1
Republican and Autocratic Traditions: Italy, c. 1300
Communal republics
Ex-communal republics
Papal states
Kingdom of Sicily
Padua
Venice
Reggio
Modena
Bologna
Genoa
Lucca
Pisa
Florence
Arezzo
Siena

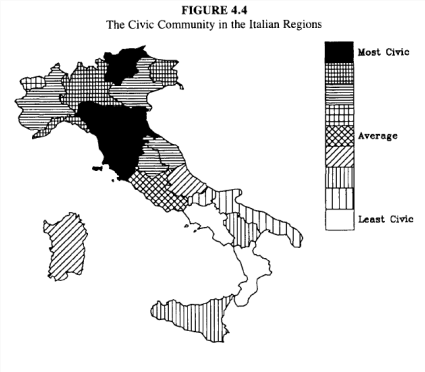


FIGURE 4.4
The Civic Community in the Italian Regions
Most Civic
Average
Least Civic

Approach

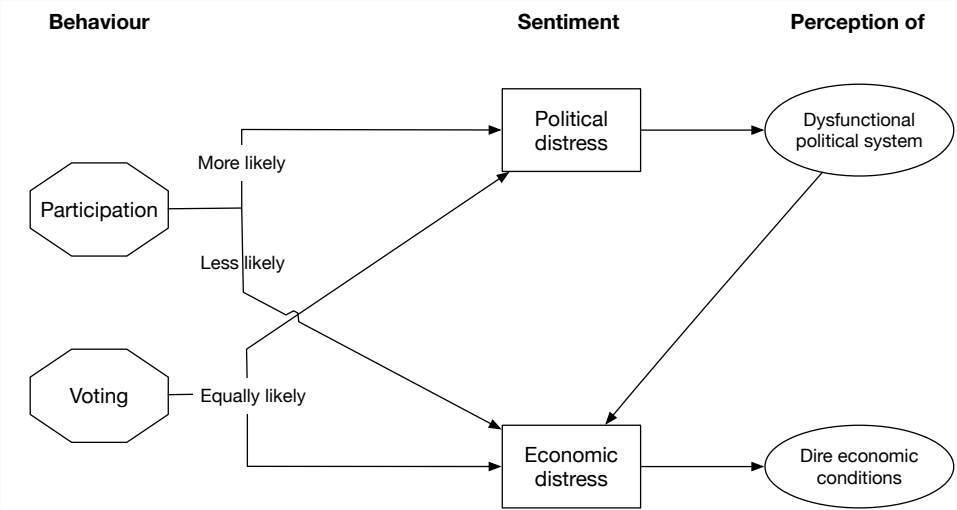
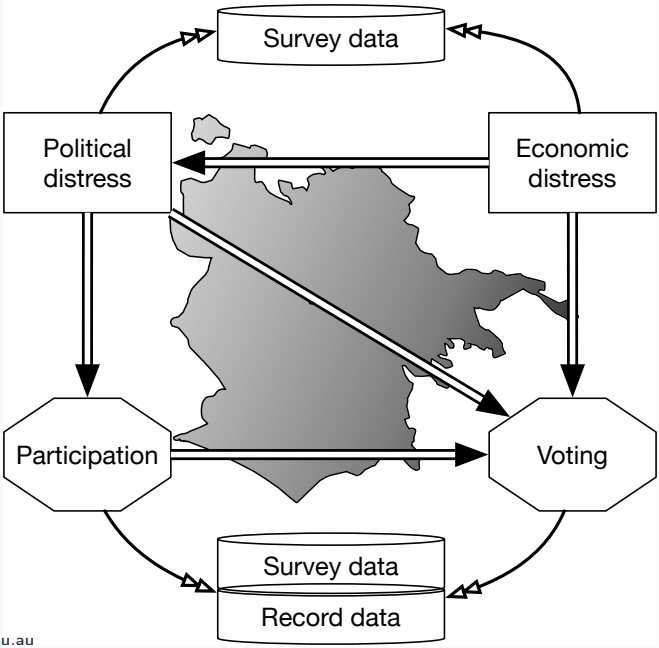


Figure: Motivation relating individual behaviours, sentiments and perceptions


Survey data
Political distress
Economic distress
Participation
Voting
Survey data
Record data

Data

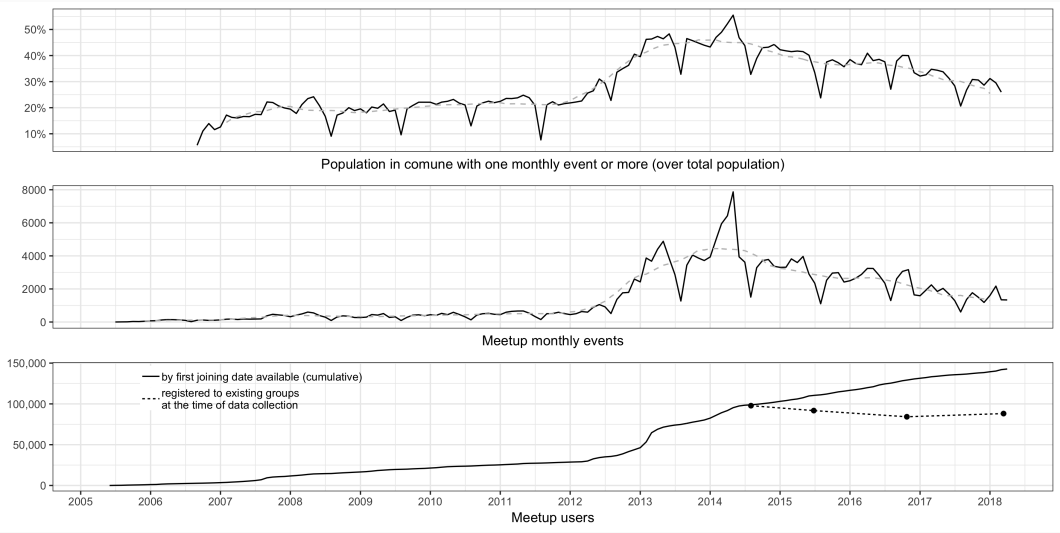


Figure: Distribution of Meetups in the electorate, frequency of events and number of registered users

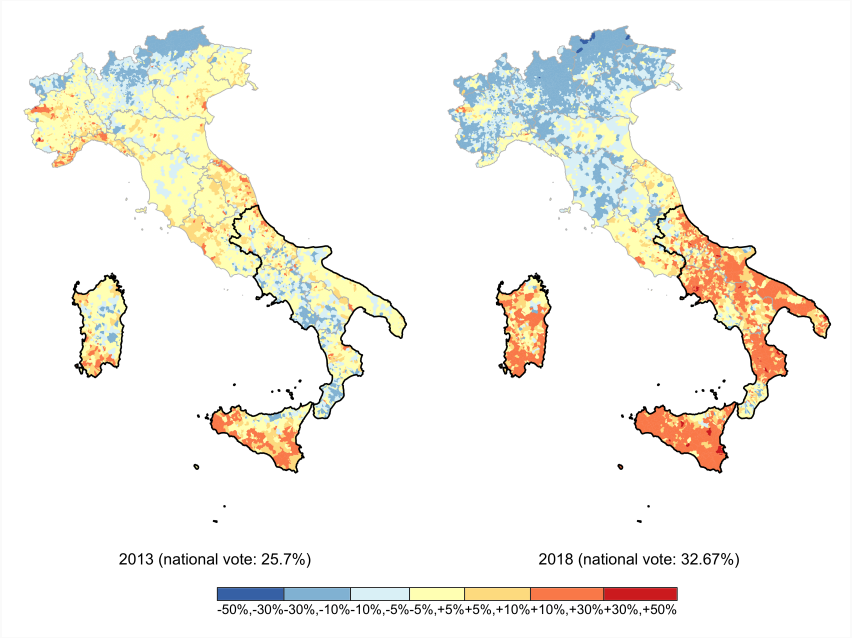


Figure: Votes received by the M5S: difference from the national mean in percentage points

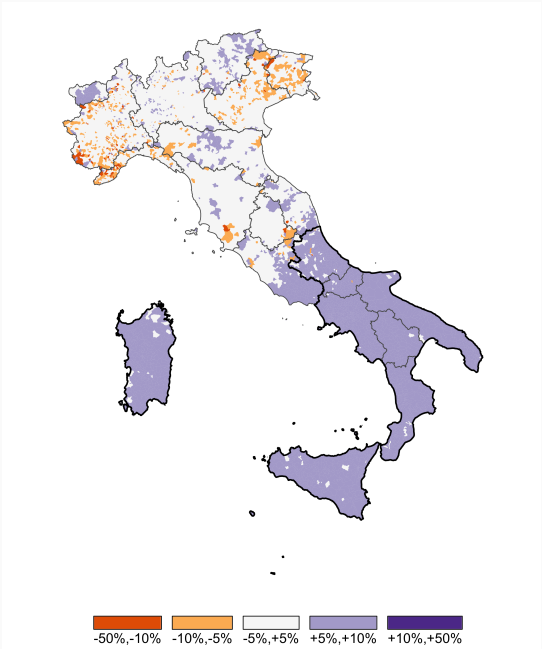


Figure: Votes received by the M5S: percentage difference over previous general election (2018-2013)

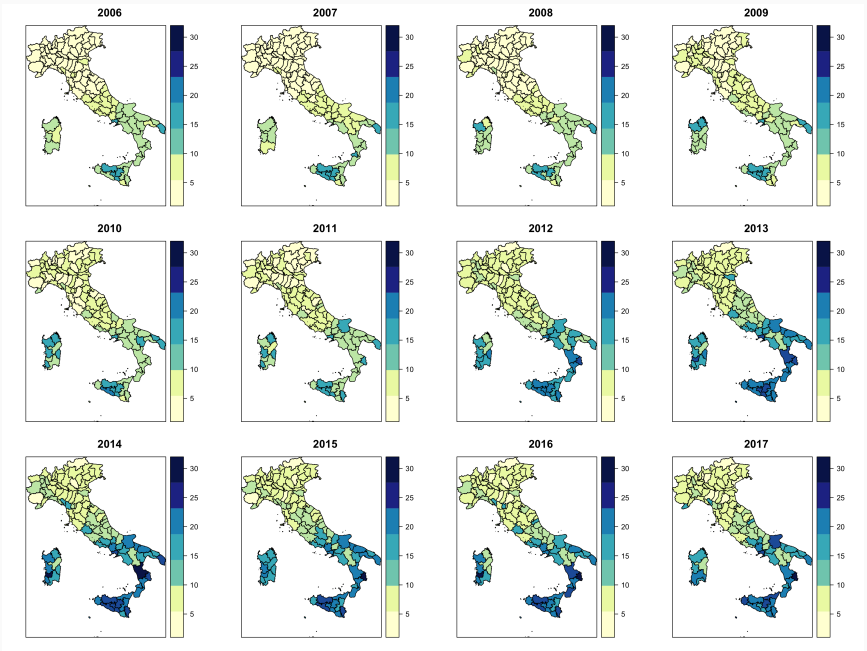


Figure: Unemployment rate by province

Analysis

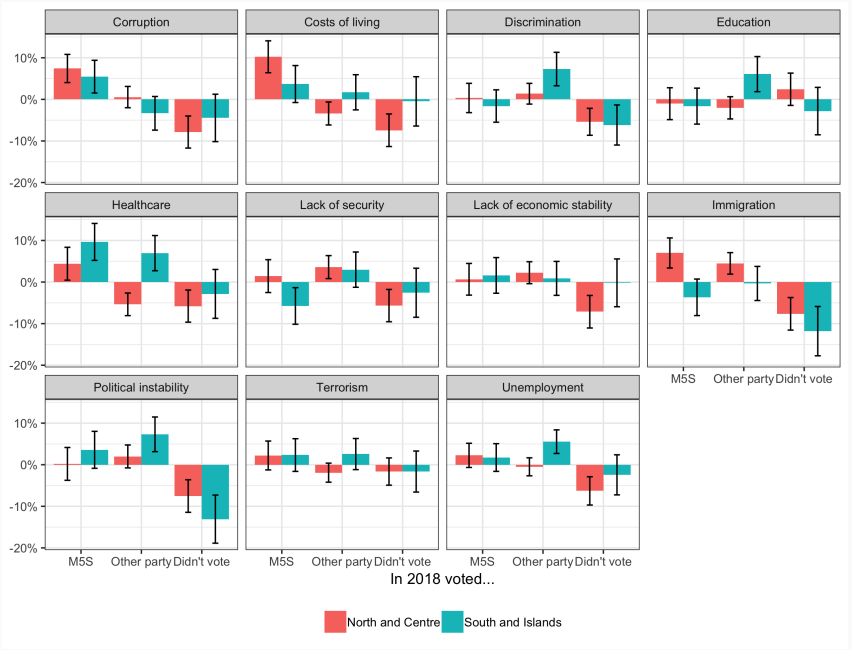


Figure: What are the main issues facing Italy today? (n=989, source: Bertelsmann Foundation)

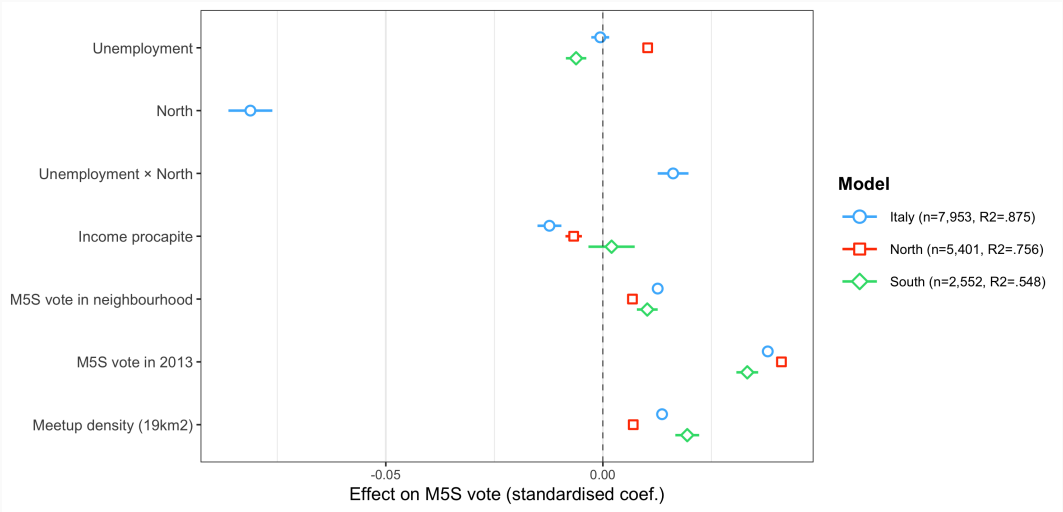


Figure: M5S vote in 2018: Regression coefficients

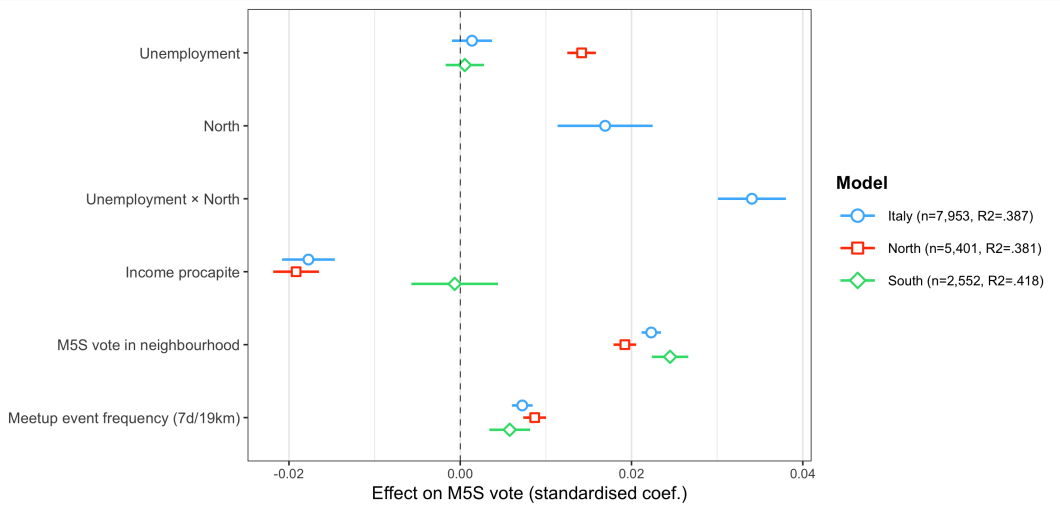


Figure: M5S vote in 2013: Regression coefficients

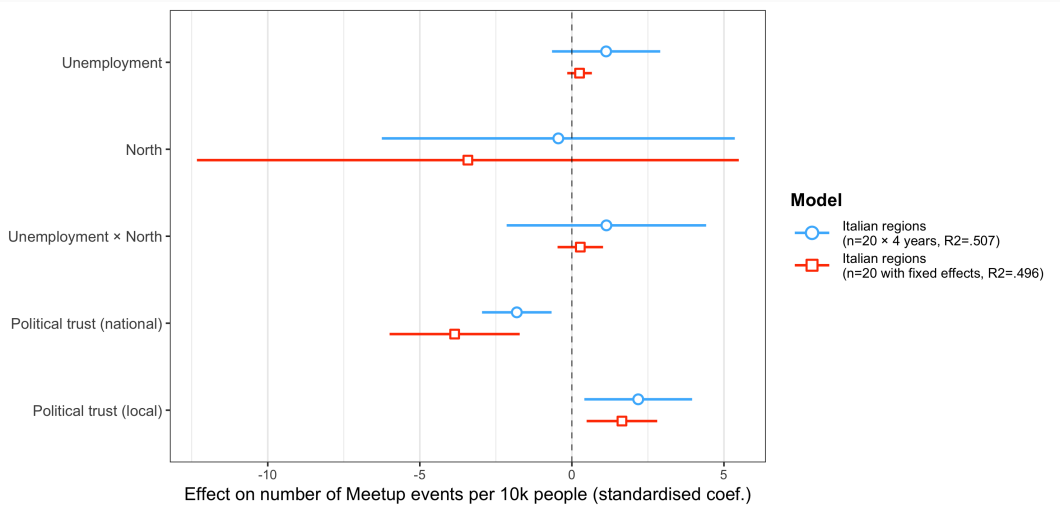


Figure: Meetup events, 2013-2016: Regression coefficients

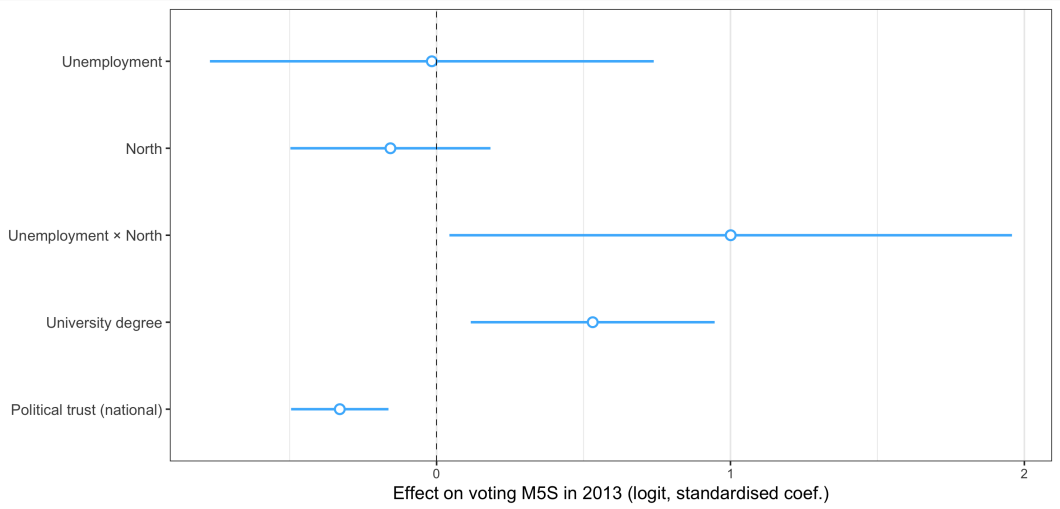


Figure: Voting M5S, Survey 2013: Regression coefficients

Concluding remarks

The M5S political project can be described as a traditional 'protest cycle', in which a *diffusion phase* is followed by an *exhaustion phase*, when (supposedly) people retreat to their regular occupations and routines as the movement enters an *institutionalisation phase* (Tarrow, 2011, *Power in movement*, Chapter 10).

In the most economically depressed area — the South, political distrust towards national institutions (parties and parliament) is consistently a predictor for involvement in meetups and voting for the Five Star Movement while *economic distress is not*.

Local political participation do matter for electoral results: different tests (involving matching) suggest a causality between density and frequency of meetups and electoral support for the M5S.