

Appendices

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Appendix 1. Additional information about the data collection

In this study, we analyse the election promises made by the main competitors during the 2022 Italian general election and included in their campaign programs. Eight electoral manifestos are analysed. We decided to look at the manifestos of the single parties, not the coalition ones. In the case of the centre-right alliance, for instance, we considered the three programs published by Brothers of Italy, the League, and Go Italy and not the coalition manifesto. In the case of two pre-electoral alliances (Green and Left, and Action-Italy Alive), we employed the pre-electoral coalition manifesto since the single coalition partners did not present their own programs.

Election promises were selected following existing pledges studies' approach and coding strategies. In particular, to identify every individual promise contained in the text of parties' manifestos we relied on the definition and the guidelines developed by Royed (1996) and employed by most (if not all) single-country and comparative research on pledges (see Naurin, Royed and Thomson 2019). We read the programs and selected all the sentences (or sometimes paragraphs) that proposed 'a commitment to carry out some action or produce some outcome, where an objective estimation can be made as to whether or not the action was indeed taken or the outcome produced' (Royed 1996, 79). A similar definition was proposed by the Comparative Party Pledge Project (see Naurin, Royed, and Thomson 2019; Thomson et al. 2017) where a promise was 'a statement committing a party to one specific action or outcome that can be clearly determined to have occurred or not' (Naurin, Royed, and Thomson 2019, 24). The majority of the promises selected are introduced by expressions such as 'we want to', 'we plan to', 'we need to', and 'we will adopt', or contain terms like 'we will achieve' or 'our goal is'.

Pledge studies usually differentiate between 'soft'/'broad' and 'hard'/'narrow' pledges, depending on the specificity of the commitment (see Naurin, Royed and Thomson 2019). In this study, we consider both types of promises.

Promises that are reiterated more times in the same manifesto are included just once in the final dataset. Promises that are shared by more parties and, thus, are present in different manifestos are all included in the final dataset.

We decided to exclude from our dataset those statements through which a party suggests reforming international or European organisations, or that are more in general related to non-domestic matters. The reasons is twofold. Firstly, our data is collected within the framework of pledge literature. We employed already existing definitions of pledges and the approach employed by similar studies in order to provide a consistent and reliable background as well as a comparative potential to our data.

Since pledge scholars are usually most interested in the extent to which parties fulfil (or not) their election promises when in office, their definition of ‘pledge’ takes into account the ‘testability criterion’: Only the promises whose fulfilment can be objectively evaluated (‘[...] clearly determined to have occurred or not’ if we employ the words of Naurin et al. (2019)) are retained. It is therefore important that we consider as ‘promises’ only those statements that can actually be fulfilled (at least in some way) by the party who made the commitment. Promises to ‘overcome the veto of permanent members in the UN Security Council’ (More Europe) do not fall into this category, since international dynamics and decisions cannot be ascribed nor blamed to national actors. At the same time, these statements are relevant not much as promises that parties make to their voters, but more importantly as claims to show the positioning of the party on international questions to the same extent as other types of discussions in the manifestos. It is also true that voters are more interested in domestic questions (Royed 1996). Since in this study, our aim is to look at which policy issues parties concretely engage themselves in, these statements are excluded.

Examples of statements that are considered pledges:

- *Abolition of gift and inheritance taxes* (Eliminazione delle tasse di successione e donazione): promise included in the Go Italy’s 2022 manifesto. This can be considered as a ‘hard’ pledge since the goal proposed is clear and the criteria to evaluate its fulfilment is evident (are the two taxes abolished or not?).
- *Improve local public transport* (Migliorare il servizio di Trasporto Pubblico Locale): promise included in the League’s manifesto for the 2022 election. This is a commitment more vague than the one presented before since there is no indication of how the party might realise the promise. We can however consider it as a ‘outcome promise’ (i.e. a promise ‘to produce a specific result or effect’ (Naurin, Royed, and Thomson 2019, 32)) and therefore we might look at existing statistics on public transportation to see if it was improved during the mandate as well as check whether some measures aiming at improving the quality of the services and vehicles were promoted.
- *The role of the Third Sector must be enhanced* (Deve essere valorizzato il ruolo del Terzo Settore): promise included in the 2022 manifesto published by the Green and Left alliance. This can be classified as a ‘broad’ promise since it is not clear which actions should be taken in order to ‘enhance’ the role of the Third Sector. The coder can however think about some measures that could be taken with this aim.

Examples of statements that are NOT considered as pledges:

- *We need to set realistic but at the same time ambitious climate targets* (Dobbiamo fissare obiettivi climatici realistici ma ambizioni): statement included in the Democratic Party's 2022 program. Even though this statement is introduced by the expression 'we need to', it cannot be considered a pledge since the party is not promising to 'carry out some action' nor 'produce some outcome' (see Royed's definition). This is rather a statement on general principles that the party should follow.
- *It is necessary to affirm the central, educational and social role [of the family]* (È necessario affermare nuovamente il ruolo centrale, educativo e sociale che essa [la famiglia] continua a ricoprire): statement included in the Brothers of Italy's program. This sentence cannot be considered a promise but rather a statement on general principles and priorities of the party.

As discussed in the manuscript, promises were also differentiated depending on the policy issue they refer to. The advantage of employing CAP categories is that they were developed with the aim of identifying the topic of the policies (in this case, the promise), not the policy instruments planned for its implementation nor the final goal expected, as is the case for the Manifesto Project (Green-Pedersen 2019). Additionally, the Agenda Project provides a very detailed codebook with explanations for every category and sub-category and examples clarifying how to code more complex domains that might, at first glance, seem at the intersection of two or multiple categories. The codebook for Italy is available at <https://www.comparativeagendas.net/italy>. The original 21 categories of the CAP have been recoded into the following 17 policy issues:

- (1) Economic Issues (combining Domestic Macroeconomic Issues; Labour and Employment; Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce; Foreign Trade)
- (2) Civil Rights, Minority Issues, and Civil Liberties
- (3) Social Issues (combining Health; Social Welfare)
- (4) Agriculture
- (5) Education
- (6) Environment
- (7) Energy
- (8) Immigration and Refugee Issues
- (9) Transportation
- (10) Law, Crime, and Family Issues
- (11) Community development, Planning, and Housing Issues

- (12) Defence
- (13) Space, Science, Technology and Communication
- (14) International Affairs and Foreign Aid
- (15) Government Operations
- (16) Public Lands and Water Management
- (17) Cultural Policy Issues

When in doubt, it was also useful to look at the general discussion that was made by the party before and after introducing the promise under investigation. If the party was discussing questions related to the environment, for instance, it was likely that the actual content of the promise was related to the same issue. The following examples clarify how the coding process took place:

- *Enhance the Italian research and scientific cooperation for the development of nuclear fusion reactors* (More Europe). In this case, the promise is related to both ‘research’ and ‘energy’ areas. However, the key aspect is not the Italian research sector, but the need to improve nuclear technology in order to produce energy and, hence, decrease the need to import energy from abroad. This is clear from the explanation provided after the discussion of the promise as well as the section of the manifesto in which it was included (Energy and Environment). The promise was thus classified as related to the energy sector.
- *Formation of new businesses and start-ups to promote youth entrepreneurship* (Green and Left alliance). At first glance, this promise seems to deal with questions related to the national economy and industrial policy. However, if we look at the paragraph in which the promise was spelt out, the Green and Left alliance was discussing the production and cultivation of cannabis. Since the goal is to code the content, the actual policy issue of the promise, this sentence was coded as ‘agriculture’.

Data were collected by the two authors. One of the authors had experience in collecting data on pledges and their fulfilment employing the pledge-testing approach and, therefore, trained and helped the other coder. To guarantee the reliability of the coding process, several precautions were taken. First of all, as stated before, we relied on already existing and established methodologies and definitions. To collect our data, we followed the guidelines and indications contained in the methodological description and codebook of previous studies on pledges. There we found examples and explanations about ‘what a pledge is’ that helped us. Additionally, we kept track of our choices in a very detailed codebook that was filled out through the data collection process. In the dataset, we indicated the text of the promise as it is written in the original programs. This guarantees the

transparency of the data collection as well. Finally, we also run a reliability test on the categorisation of pledges by policy issues. We randomly selected 200 out of the 4220 promises, which were then coded by both researchers. Overall, 93% of agreement was found.

The dataset is available on the Harvard Dataverse at <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/E65448>. Authors are also available for any additional information or queries about the data and method employed for this study.

References

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Appendix 2. Party manifestos selected for the 2018 electoral campaign

Table A1. List of party manifestos analysed for the 2018 election with the number of corresponding promises.

Party	Acronym	Number of Promises
Democratic Party	PD	356
Five Star Movement	M5S	881
Go Italy	FI	118
League	L	635
Brothers of Italy	FdI	201
	<i>Total</i>	<i>2191</i>

Appendix 3. Percentage of promises by policy issue for the 2018 general election

Table A2. Average percentages of promises made in 2018 by policy issue

	FdI	L	FI	PD	M5S	Average
Economic issues	21.9	16.5	19.5	17.7	14.9	18.1
Social issues	14.4	7.7	11.9	13.2	4.0	10.2
Law and order	11.4	21.1	17.8	5.6	1.4	11.5
Defence	1.0	0.5	0.8	0.6	2.4	1.0
Energy	1.0	2.7	7.6	6.2	7.7	5.0
Environment	3.5	9.4	0.8	3.6	21.4	7.8
Government	10.4	10.5	15.2	14.9	7.6	11.7

Appendix 4. Additional remarks on immigration, education, government, civil rights

Immigration issues do not seem very prominent in the 2022 campaign. While this topic is usually a key sector for right-wing parties and it has often been reported as one of the reasons for the League's electoral success in 2018 (D'Alimonte 2019), Salvini's party had only the second higher percentage (3.0%). The first was found for the Greens-Left alliance (4.1%). Brothers of Italy only focused 1.8% of its policy proposals on the issue, the same percentage as M5S and PD. The program of Go Italy contained only a reference to two 'immigration' goals: The contrast of illegal immigration and the *Blocco degli sbarchi* (stop to migrant arrivals).

All eight parties and election coalitions analysed in this paper focused 8.0% of their campaign promises on education matters. With 10.8%, Brothers of Italy was the party with the highest share, followed by More Europe (9.8%), Action-Italy Alive (8.7%), and the Greens-Left alliance (8.9%). Below the average, we can find the League (6.2%) and Go Italy (7.1%) together with the Five Star Movement (6.1%) and the Democratic Party (7.4%). Though there are some differences in the percentage of election commitments related to education, universities, and public research, they are not so sharp overall: All main Italian parties seem to place particular emphasis on education issues in their 2022 programmatic agenda.

In contrast, the percentage of promises pertaining to government issues varied greatly, depending on the party manifesto. 16.9% of the total amount of More Europe's pledges dealt with these issues, ranging from commitments to improve public administration and bureaucracy to compel with the PNRR to local government matters and reforms to the Public Procurement Code. Government issues got a lot of attention from FI and M5S as well (11.9% and 9.8%, respectively).

Concerning civil and political rights, a strong divide between Right and Left (along with the Centre) emerges. The League and Go Italy proposed very few policies related to this category (1.3% and 1.1%), while More Europe, the Five Star Movement, and the Democratic Party all had percentages above the average (7.3%, 4.9%, and 4.2%, respectively). As a result, centre-left parties seem more likely to draw attention to civil rights and liberties. A separate discussion deserves Giorgia Meloni's party (FdI), which had a commitment rate slightly higher than the one of the main centre-left party (PD), namely around 4.3%. If we look at the content of their manifestos, both parties committed to defending the freedom of expression online and protecting personal data, but while FdI focused more on gender equality, the ban on adoption for same-sex couples and surrogacy, PD pledged to quickly adopt the DDL Zan (a law on homotransphobia) and marriage equality.