

Italy's lost centre of gravity?

REScEU 2019 Mass Survey

Research and methodology

REScEU “Reconciling Economic and Social Europe: Values, Ideas and Politics” (<http://resceu.eu/>) is a research project funded by the European Research Council (ERC Advanced Grant: 340534) involving the University of Milan and the Research Centre “Luigi Einaudi” based in Turin. The project is directed by prof. Maurizio Ferrera (University of Milan) and aims to study the complex interplay between the European Union and national welfare states and to analyse how the recent crisis has exacerbated the tensions between these two dimensions.

Data presented in this study are the results of a public opinion survey conducted in ten countries: Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Sweden. The fieldwork has been conducted after the 2019 European Parliament elections between June and August 2019 (see Table 1 for each country fielding dates) on a sample of about 1,500 respondents aged between 18 and 70 in each country, for a total of 15149 respondents. The sample has been built through a quota sampling (based on Eurostat data) around gender, age (three categories: 18-34, 35-54, 65+), educational level (based on ISCED 2011 categories recoded into three macro-categories: up to lower secondary degree, upper secondary degree, university degree) and NUTS1 macro-area of residence. The survey was conducted through a CAWI method by IPSOS, who interviewed about 1500 respondents voluntarily registered to the company online panel.



Table 1 Fielding dates for each country.

Country	Start field	End field	Days
IT	28-Jun-2019	05-Jul-2019	7
DE	04-Jul-2019	09-Jul-2019	5
SE	04-Jul-2019	11-Jul-2019	7
FR	05-Jul-2019	11-Jul-2019	6
ES	05-Jul-2019	11-Jul-2019	6
NL	08-Jul-2019	17-Jul-2019	9
PL	08-Jul-2019	15-Jul-2019	7
HU	09-Jul-2019	16-Jul-2019	7
FI	09-Jul-2019	23-Jul-2019	14
GR	09-Jul-2019	02-Aug-2019	24



The magnitude of centrists

Ideological self-placement by country

Question: "In political matters people talk of "the left" and "the right". What is your position? Please use a scale from 0 to 10, where '0' means "left" and '10' means "right". Which number best describes your position?" Answers recoded into four categories: 0-3 Left; 4-6 Centre; 7-10 Right; Not located (Don't know/say).

Country	Left	Centre	Right	Not located	Total	N
Greece	21%	39%	23%	17%	100%	1,502
Germany	22%	52%	14%	13%	100%	1,506
Italy	22%	26%	26%	26%	100%	1,500
Hungary	16%	42%	23%	20%	100%	1,568
Finland	21%	34%	27%	17%	100%	1,506
France	21%	31%	26%	23%	100%	1,511
Netherlands	17%	37%	30%	16%	100%	1,520
Poland	17%	39%	28%	17%	100%	1,522
Spain	38%	34%	16%	12%	100%	1,503
Sweden	23%	32%	35%	10%	100%	1,511
Total	22%	37%	25%	17%	100%	15,149



Who are them?

Age by ideological self-placement

Younger respondents are those who place themselves more at the centre, or don't place at all. Older people are more attached to ideology than their counterparts.

Age	Left	Centre	Right	Not located	Total	N
18-34	23.3%	29.6%	20.9%	26.2%	100%	365
35-54	16.7%	24.5%	27.9%	31.0%	100%	675
55-70	27.7%	25.9%	27.3%	19.1%	100%	460
Total	21.7%	26.2%	25.9%	26.2%	100%	1,500

Education

The better educated tend to place themselves on the left or at the centre. Not located are those with lower education levels.

Education	Left	Centre	Right	Not located	Total	N
Up to lower secondary	15.0%	22.5%	29.4%	33.2%	100%	558
Upper secondary	23.9%	28.2%	25.2%	22.7%	100%	673
Tertiary education	32.9%	30.8%	18.7%	17.5%	100%	269
Total	21.7%	26.2%	25.9%	26.2%	100%	1,500

Subjective economic perception by ideological self-placement

Question: "Which of the descriptions comes closest to how you feel about your household's income nowadays?" Answers: Living comfortably on present income; Coping on present income; Finding it difficult on present income; Finding it very difficult on present income; Don't Know.

	Left	Centre	Right	Not located	Total
Living comfortably on present income	19%	16%	19%	11%	16%
Coping on present income	42%	48%	44%	34%	42%
Finding it difficult on present income	25%	25%	26%	26%	26%
Finding it very difficult on present income	12%	10%	10%	21%	13%
Don't know	2%	1%	1%	8%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	334	397	389	380	1,500

Place in society

Question: "There are people who tend to be towards the top of our society and people who tend to be towards the bottom. Where would you place yourself nowadays/5 years ago/5 years from now on a scale from 1 to 11, where '1' means "at the bottom of our society" and '11' means "at the top of our society"?" Answers: 1 to 11; Don't know.

Those who do not place themselves on the Left-Right ideological axis are those who perceive themselves as located in the lower levels of society. Compared to the past all interviewed locate themselves in a slightly better position, and expect themselves to improve it in the next five years.

	Average place present	Average change compared to 5 years ago	Expected place 5 years from now	
Left	5.55	-0.38		0.58
Centre	5.58	-0.41		0.46
Right	5.87	-0.24		0.54
Not located	4.95	-0.43		0.54



For whom did the centrists vote for?

Vote in the 2018 Italian general elections by ideological self-placement

Partiti	Left	Centre	Right	Not located	Total
+ Europa	4.7%	0.8%	0.0%	0.6%	1.4%
Partito Democratico	38.6%	16.9%	2.1%	2.5%	14.0%
Liberi e Uguali	9.2%	0.6%	0.2%	0.3%	2.3%
Movimento 5 Stelle	27.0%	33.4%	19.3%	25.8%	26.4%
Fratelli d'Italia	0.0%	2.8%	6.6%	0.3%	2.5%
Lega	2.7%	17.2%	40.9%	8.2%	17.8%
Forza Italia	0.6%	4.5%	11.7%	0.5%	4.5%
Other parties	4.0%	3.0%	2.5%	0.4%	2.6%
Blank/Spoilt	0.3%	3.3%	1.5%	3.4%	2.2%
Did not vote	8.6%	8.6%	9.9%	20.1%	12.0%
Prefer not to say	2.5%	4.7%	2.9%	26.5%	9.5%
Don't know/remember	1.8%	3.9%	2.4%	11.5%	5.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	334	397	389	380	1,500

Vote in the 2019 European Parliament elections by ideological self-placement

Parties	Left	Centre	Right	Not located	Total
+ Europa	5.0%	3.1%	0.9%	0.6%	2.3%
Partito Democratico	45.4%	16.8%	1.7%	2.1%	15.3%
Movimento 5 Stelle	19.3%	25.5%	10.1%	19.4%	18.6%
Fratelli d'Italia	0.0%	2.3%	8.4%	1.3%	3.1%
Lega	3.2%	19.7%	50.7%	12.4%	22.2%
Forza Italia	0.3%	4.2%	8.2%	0.7%	3.5%
La Sinistra	5.2%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
Other	7.0%	3.1%	1.6%	1.6%	3.2%
Spoilt/Blank	0.3%	5.0%	1.2%	2.9%	2.4%
Did not vote	10.3%	11.6%	11.7%	21.8%	14.0%
Prefer not to say	3.3%	4.1%	3.3%	26.0%	9.5%
Don't know/Remember	0.5%	3.5%	2.2%	11.2%	4.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.00%	100.0%	100.0%
N	334	397	389	380	1,500

Attitudes towards the EU

EU integration by ideological self-placement

Question: Some say European integration should be pushed further. Others say it has already gone too far. Please indicate your views using a scale from 1 to 11, where '1' means integration "has already gone too far" and '11' means it "should be pushed further". Answers: 1-11; Don't know.

Positive attitude toward integration among all groups, with linear association going from Left (more integration) to Right.

Average preference for EU integration	
Left	8.45
Centre	7.30
Right	6.09
Not located	6.54

Trust in national government and in the EU by ideological self-placement

Question: "I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. Please indicate your level of trust in the following institutions using a scale from 1 to 11, where '1' means "no trust at all" and '11' means "Complete trust"." Answers: 1 - No trust at all --- 11 - Complete trust; Don't know.

	Mean trust in national government	Mean trust in EU institutions
Left	4.33	6.23
Centre	5.50	5.55
Right	6.75	4.77
Not located	5.35	4.60

Fear for the loss of jobs and social security associated with EU integration

Question: "Some people have fears about the process of European unification. How much are you currently afraid of: The loss of jobs and social security in (COUNTRY)." Answers: Very much afraid; Somewhat afraid; Not much afraid; Very much afraid; Don't know.

	Left	Centre	Right	Not located	Total	N
Very much afraid	25%	31%	38%	37%	33%	486
Somewhat afraid	42%	42%	41%	29%	38%	579
Not much afraid	21%	18%	13%	9%	15%	233
Not afraid at all	9%	6%	4%	5%	6%	89
Don't know	4%	3%	4%	20%	8%	113
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	1,500