

## **Abstract of paper presented**

This paper conducts a theoretical and empirical analysis of the allocation of the full set of government positions – both cabinet and junior ministers – in the Prodi government that formed after the Italian election of 1996. We first review and elaborate three theoretical approaches to portfolio allocation. The first is driven by office-seeking assumptions, the second by policy-seeking assumptions, and third by the assumption that, once appointed to office, ministers “go native” and essentially articulate departmental, rather than partisan interests. We then estimate the policy positions of 67-70 cabinet and junior ministers appointed to the Prodi cabinet, applying a new technique for computerized content analysis to the collected legislative speeches of each ministers during the 1996-1997 parliamentary session. Having considered the face validity of these results, we then use them to explore to observable implications of the various theoretical approaches.