

XXXVI Convegno SISP, Genova, 14-16 Settembre 2023

Section 6 - Political Science and Public Policies, Panel: 6.2 - Policy advice between technical capacities and political conflict: a cross policy study of Italy, Chair: Andrea Pritoni (UniTo)

«DOES GOVERNMENT MATTER?»

THE POLICY ADVISORY SYSTEM IN ITALY DURING THE CONTE II (2019-2021) AND DRAGHI (2021-2022) GOVERNMENTS.

Sabrina Bandera, SNA, Rome

Rosa Di Gioia, INDIRE, Florence

Maria Tullia Galanti, University of Milan

Andrea Lippi, University of Florence & SNA

THE STARTING POINT: CHANGE IN NAPOLEONIC PAS

- Napoleonic PAS is currently undergoing an evolution towards more plural and extended approaches that include a wider range of advice sources, mixing formal and informal roles, but still addressed by politicisation.
- We still don't know if those change are due to the contingencies (e.g. crisis) or to other types of variables ("political" variables, such as the collapse of the party system, the (in)stability of governments) and the "type" of the government "partisan" vs "technical"
- Is any presumed change of the Napoleonic policy advisory system only the effect of policy windows or also of a slow consolidation towards a more hybrid approach?
- **HP: in a politicisation context, the type of executive determines the resulting fluid arrangement, namely the type of government (political vs. technical) affects the selection of advisory personnel appointed and thus the overall features of the advisory system.**

THE CASE OF ITALY

Internal advice in the Italian government has gradually embarked on a path of transformation towards more fluid behaviours, extended to audiences of experts coming from differentiated backgrounds, developed through both formal and informal relationships. Cabinets are still very important, but not the exclusive *domini*; at the same time, legal knowledge is no longer the only discipline, there are signs of a process of pluralisation and politicisation is still up.

Drivers of change in the PAS: new entrants in the party system; new internal and external advisors; europeanisation and growing demand for technical expertise; persisting politicisation in the appointments.



Research questions:

1. Is the Italian internal to government advisory system consolidating by developing maintaining a broad circle of advisors with different organisational positions?
2. Is the pluralisation of the previous arrangement centred on cabinets confirmed?
3. How can we account for continuities and dissimilarities between the Conte II and the Draghi datasets?
4. Are these changes due to some long-term political phenomena or to a temporary contingency?
5. Do the different type of government (political vs technical) matter for the distribution of ordinary advisors and the overall composition of the internal to government advisory system?

EVIDENCE AT THE MACRO AND AT THE MICRO LEVELS

RESEARCH STRATEGY

Comparison of the Napoleonic “internal to government” policy advisory system in Italy (2019 – 2022) through two dissimilar cases: a political government (Conte II) and a technical government (Draghi) leading to the research question: whether and how government matters

UNITS OF ANALYSIS

DATASET No. 1

Inductive mapping of 500 records of assignments of advisors in the Conte II Government (2019-2021)

DATASET Np.2

Inductive mapping of 276 records of assignments of advisors in the Draghi Government (2021-2022)

Source: Scuola Nazionale dell'Amministrazione of the Presidency of the Council: 2nd phase of the action research, (2023) (1st phase 2020-2021).

Data from the mapping have been assembled in a dataset that gathers three types of positions through document analysis (Register of transparency and CVs): individual advisors, members of committees, top civil servants, the heads the CNEL and the 20 GRIs), the Heads of the 2 Courts (the Court of Auditors and the Council of State), and the State Attorney.

THREE TYPES OF ADVISORS

1. **Individual advice:** individual advisors directly appointed by the minister
2. **Cabinet advice:** Ministerial Cabinetiers (the Head of the Cabinet, the Chief of the Legislative office, the Technical Secretariat, the Diplomatic Advisor and the Public Relations/Press office);
3. **Bureaucratic and institutional advice** (officials, head of departments and of institutional advisory bodies (CNEL); the head of the magistracy (State Council, the Court of Auditors, and the General Attorney).

109 advisors assigned to both governments (14%): (64.2%) predominantly in the cabinets, the 18.3% delivers bureaucratic-institutional advice and the 13.7% of individual advisors

Type of advice	Conte II Government	Draghi Government
Bureaucratic and Institutional Advice	22,9	10,1
Cabinets advice	33,0	48,9
Individual advice	43,4	39,5
Others	0,5	1,4
Total	100	100
(N)	(553)	5 (276)

THE HYBRID MILIEU OF THE INTERNAL ADVICE

1. Similar distribution
2. Prominence of cabinets in the Draghi's government
3. A more influential role of GRIs in the Draghi's government
4. An influential role by PCM depts in the Conte II government

	Conte II Government	Draghi Government
Cabinets (Offices of Direct collaboration)	22,1	40,6
Ministerial departments	41,4	40,2
PCM's departments	21,5	6,9
PCM's offices	10,5	3,6
Government Research Institutes	3,4	6,2
Other institutions and agencies	1,1	2,5
Total	100,0	100,0
(N)	(553)	(276)

PROFESSIONS

No significant variability between the two governments: the PAS is made of Public Sector

More academics in the Draghi's government than in the Conte II one

More top civil servants in the Conte II Government

Persisting influence by state careers

Professions	Assignments in the Conte II Government	Assignments in the Draghi Government	Assignments in Both Governments
Academics	18,1	22,5	23
Others State's Careers	26,4	25,4	27,5
Private Firms Managers	1,8	3,6	1
Top Civil Servants	26,7	14,1	18,3
Journalists	5,2	9,1	9
Politicians	1,3	3,3	1
Professionals	20,6	22,1	20,2
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(554)	(276)	(109)

BRANCHES OF KNOWLEDGE

1. very similar distribution between the two governments
2. Pluralisation is confirmed: the monopoly of legal background ended
3. More STEMs for Draghi Government
4. Increasing relevance for Political Science in the Draghi's government
5. Peripheral role by humanities

Branches of Knowledge	Conte II Gov.t	Draghi Gov.t
Applied and Technological Sciences	9	6,9
Maths, Physics and Natural Sciences	12	20,7
Medical Sciences	5	3,4
Economics and Statistics	28	27,6
Law	34	29,3
Political science and sociology	1	5,2
Humanities	11	6,9
Totale	100	100,0
(N)	(100)	(58)

MAIN EVIDENCE ON SOCIOGRAPHICAL STATUS

THREE HOMOGENEOUS TRENDS

1. GENDER

women amount to just under 30% in the Conte II government and decrease to 21% in the Draghi government

2. SENIORITY

seniority is a qualifying factor to be recruited as an advisor. Respectively 54.7% for the Conte II government and 48.6% in the Draghi government are in the 44-59 age bracket

3. EDUCATION

highly educated. In fact, 54% of the advisors in the two governments have an MA degree and about 45% have a PhD or a postgraduate qualification obtained through specialisation courses

DISCUSSION

1. Findings falsifies the hypothesis of variability due to politicisation.
2. This continuity in the composition of the two PAS suggests that the type of government only partially influences the format of the PAS. Both governments rely on a diverse pool of advisors drawn from different organisations and backgrounds, both mix different professions and combine bureaucrats with academics, both make use of the input of judges and individual advisors in a kind of patchwork that is functional to the needs of the moment and of that executive, but without being a direct expression of it.
3. Sociographic aspects also confirm that these are very similar populations of advisors with no real discontinuities
4. Governments make up similar advisory system and the type of expertise and organisational placement
5. The variability concerns only a limited number of aspects: relevance of cabinets and of PCM, expertise and
6. The main element in favour of the variability is that the political government (Conte II) appoints more advisors than the technical government (Draghi), but there is a recycling of personnel who pass through different executives simply by changing advisor position and content: We have 109 advisors on 776 who belonged both governments

NEXT STEPS

Further steps (among the many possible ones):

A. widening the analysis to extraordinary times advisors (respectively Covid 19 advisors for the Conte II government and NGEU advisor for the Draghi Government)

B. Dataset on Meloni Government (2022-)

Thank you for your attention!