Online appendix to:

The legislative representation of public opinion policy priorities in Italy

Francesco Visconti

*Department of Social, Political and Cognitive Sciences, Università degli Studi di Siena*

Email: francesco.visconti@unisi.it

**Coding procedure**

This article uses a new classification based on the TESEO keywords provided by the database of the Senato della Repubblica. <http://www.senato.it/3235?testo_generico=745>. TESEO is a classification system for the organization of parliamentary acts used in both Italian chambers. It consists of 3668 index terms (year 2001, edition 3.1), organized in a system of hierarchical relationships. To each bill (and therefore law), a number of keywords are assigned expressing its policy content, both in relation to its title and to each article into which it is divided. For each bill, I took TESEO keywords associated with the title and coded them according to the 21 categories of the Italian CAP. Fundamental to the success of the CAP within the field of policy agenda studies has been the development of panel datasets tracing attention across time and issues (John 2006). It consists of a classification of 19 (20 in Italy) major (and around 240 minor) topics of data including party manifestos, media coverage, bill introductions, laws, parliamentary hearings, budgets, etc. Minor changes to such topics have been made by Borghetto and Carammia (2010) to specifically fit the Italian political context (e.g., immigration constitutes a major topic, while in the US, it is considered as a minor topic of Labour).

Table 1. Matching between Eurobarometer issues and Italian CAP policy micro-topics.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **EuroBarometer Issues** | **Legislative CAPICs** |
| Crime | 1200-1299 |
| Economic situation | 100, 101, 104, 105, 108, 109, 110 |
| Taxation | 107, 2009 |
| Terrorism | 1615, 1927, 209 |
| Housing | 1400-1499 |
| Immigration | 900-999 |
| Healthcare system | 300-399 |
| Educational system | 600-699 |
| Pensions | 503, 1300, 1302-1304 |
| Unemployment | 103, 502 |

I decided to discard index terms related to articles because, after a cursory analysis, they looked inconsistent through time. Moreover, the division of Italian legislation into articles is not subject to clear and formal rules, but it is rather chaotic and seemingly random. Therefore, to have a more coherent and consistent dataset, I decided to keep only keywords associated with the title. In some instances, the keywords are too ambiguous to be clearly associated with a specific policy item, and those cases have been manually recoded according to the title of the law. Therefore, in some cases the same keyword took up different codes in relation to the context it applies to (for instance, if the keyword “employee” is related to a bill on healthcare, it will be coded as personnel working in the healthcare system, while if associated to a bill dealing with police, it will be coded as personnel working for the police). Finally, I kept track of geographic references contained within the TESEOs for future analysis[[1]](#footnote-1). The process was undertaken for seven legislatures in Italian politics, covering the period 1987 - 2013 (from the 10th to the end of the 16th legislatures).

### **The reliability of legislative agendas**

To test reliability, a comparison with legislative data from the Italian-Law Making Archive (ILMA) is performed. Only considering approved bills, the table reports percentage differences between the share of issue attention given to approved laws in the ILMA database and that computed using the data presented in this article. In all cases, apart from foreign affairs, the differences remain particularly low, with the average maximum reached by government operations (3.76), a particularly salient issue. Therefore, the results seem to be comforting in terms of drawing relevant insights.

Table 2. Differences between the share of agenda space for the 20 CAP major policy issues of approved laws in the ILMA database and that computed using TESEO of bills.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Legislature** |  |  |
| **Major** | **10** | **11** | **12** | **13** | **14** | **15** | **16** | **Mean** | **St. dev.** |
| Agriculture | 1.23 | 2.33 | 2.45 | 1.07 | 0.16 | 0.00 | 0.40 | 1.09 | 0.009 |
| Banking & Finance | -1.25 | -3.22 | -0.05 | -2.80 | -2.49 | -5.54 | -2.23 | -2.51 | 0.016 |
| Civil Rights & Liberties | 0.13 | 0.01 | -0.81 | -0.19 | -1.47 | 0.55 | 1.09 | -0.10 | 0.008 |
| Cultural Policy | 0.78 | 0.60 | 0.20 | 1.02 | 0.31 | 0.68 | 1.98 | 0.80 | 0.005 |
| Defence | 1.56 | 1.16 | 1.78 | 2.89 | 1.78 | -0.77 | 1.05 | 1.35 | 0.01 |
| Education | 1.06 | 1.11 | 0.61 | 0.85 | 0.68 | 1.99 | 0.67 | 1.00 | 0.004 |
| Energy | 0.59 | 0.51 | 0.41 | 0.54 | 0.72 | 1.44 | 0.02 | 0.60 | 0.004 |
| Environment | 0.83 | 2.01 | 0.48 | 1.62 | 1.87 | 2.59 | 0.40 | 1.40 | 0.008 |
| Foreign Affairs | -7.02 | -4.92 | -10.72 | -5.92 | -1.80 | -4.22 | -8.91 | -6.22 | 0.028 |
| Foreign Trade | 1.91 | 3.62 | 4.01 | 3.28 | 3.61 | 2.33 | 1.93 | 2.96 | 0.008 |
| Government Operations | -2.51 | -6.75 | -1.17 | -7.24 | -1.00 | -4.69 | -2.98 | -3.76 | 0.023 |
| Health | 0.36 | -1.01 | 0.27 | 0.56 | 0.65 | 1.06 | -0.18 | 0.25 | 0.006 |
| Housing Issues | -0.15 | -0.83 | 0.27 | -0.09 | 0.00 | 0.46 | -0.31 | -0.09 | 0.004 |
| Immigration | 1.47 | 0.32 | 0.41 | 0.01 | 0.32 | -1.28 | 0.28 | 0.22 | 0.007 |
| Labour | -0.59 | 0.41 | -0.67 | 0.42 | 0.14 | 1.44 | -0.71 | 0.06 | 0.007 |
| Law & Crime | 2.33 | 2.44 | -1.19 | 1.86 | -1.51 | -0.61 | 0.97 | 0.61 | 0.016 |
| Macroeconomics | -2.32 | 0.72 | 1.92 | 0.43 | -1.32 | -0.94 | 4.80 | 0.47 | 0.022 |
| Public Lands & Waters | 0.59 | 0.14 | -0.13 | 0.19 | 0.06 | -0.43 | -0.31 | 0.01 | 0.003 |
| Science Tech. & Comm. | -1.01 | -0.74 | -0.26 | -0.54 | -0.93 | 0.17 | -0.87 | -0.60 | 0.004 |
| Social Welfare | 0.74 | 0.65 | 0.82 | 0.23 | 0.00 | 4.03 | -0.36 | 0.87 | 0.013 |
| Transportation | 1.00 | 1.42 | 1.37 | 1.47 | 0.22 | 1.69 | 3.06 | 1.46 | 0.007 |

Table 3. Detailed list of all minor issues considered.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **EB Issues** | **Legislative****minor topics of the Italian CAP** | **English title of minor topics of the Italian CAP** |
| Crime | 1200 | General - Law, Crime |
| Crime | 1201 | Agencies Dealing with Law and Crime (includes Executive Agencies, Police, Fire and Weapons Control) |
| Crime | 1203 | Illegal Drug Production, Trafficking and Control |
| Crime | 1204 | Court Administration |
| Crime | 1205 | Prisons |
| Crime | 1206 | Juvenile Crime and the Juvenile Justice System |
| Crime | 1207 | Child Abuse and Child Pornography |
| Crime | 1208 | Family Issues (includes Family Law and Domestic Abuse) |
| Crime | 1210 | Criminal and Civil Code |
| Crime | 1211 | Riots and Crime Prevention |
| Crime | 1212 | Organized Crime Only and the Mafia |
| Crime | 1213 | White-Collar Crimes Only |
| Crime | 1214 | Assault, Robbery (Misdemeanours)/Anti-social Behaviour |
| Crime | 1227 | Policing and Other Domestic Security Responses to terrorism (e.g., special police) |
| Crime | 1230 | Prostitution, Brothel Policy, and the Smuggling of Humans |
| Crime | 1299 | Other - Law and Crime |
| Economic situation | 100 | General Domestic Macroeconomic Issues |
| Economic situation | 101 | Inflation, Prices and Interest Rates |
| Economic situation | 104 | Monetary Supply, Bank of Italy and the Treasury |
| Economic situation | 105 | National Budget and Debt |
| Economic situation | 108 | Industrial Policy |
| Economic situation | 110 | Price Control and Stabilization |
| Economic situation | 199 | Other - Domestic Macroeconomic Issues |
| Educational system | 600 | General – Education |
| Educational system | 601 | Higher Education |
| Educational system | 602 | Public Elementary and Secondary Education |
| Educational system | 603 | Education of Underprivileged Students |
| Educational system | 604 | Vocational Education |
| Educational system | 606 | Special Education |
| Educational system | 607 | Educational Excellence / Libraries |
| Educational system | 608 | Private Elementary and Secondary Education |
| Educational system | 698 | Education Research and Development |
| Educational system | 699 | Other - Education |
| Healthcare system | 300 | General Health |
| Healthcare system | 301 | Comprehensive Healthcare Reform |
| Healthcare system | 302 | Insurance Reform, Availability and Cost; Healthcare Funding |
| Healthcare system | 320 | Medical Ethical Issues |
| Healthcare system | 321 | Regulation of Drug Industry, Medical Devices and Clinical Labs |
| Healthcare system | 322 | Facility Construction, Regulation, Payments, Ambulance Service, Waiting Lists |
| Healthcare system | 323 | Provider and Insurer Payment and Regulation |
| Healthcare system | 324 | Medical Liability, Fraud and Abuse |
| Healthcare system | 325 | Health Manpower and Training |
| Healthcare system | 331 | Disease Prevention, Treatment and Health Promotion (Includes Specific Diseases Not Mentioned Elsewhere) |
| Healthcare system | 332 | Infants and Children |
| Healthcare system | 333 | Mental Health and Mental Retardation |
| Healthcare system | 334 | Long-Term care, Home Health, the Terminally Ill and Rehabilitation Services |
| Healthcare system | 335 | Prescription Drug Coverage and Costs |
| Healthcare system | 341 | Tobacco Abuse, Treatment and Education |
| Healthcare system | 342 | Alcohol Abuse and Treatment |
| Healthcare system | 343 | Controlled and Illegal Drug Abuse, Treatment and Education |
| Healthcare system | 398 | Health Research and Development |
| Healthcare system | 399 | Other - Health |
| Housing | 1400 | General Community-Development and Housing Issues |
| Housing | 1401 | Housing and Community Development (includes Private Home Ownership) |
| Housing | 1403 | Urban Economic Development and General Urban Issues |
| Housing | 1404 | Rural Housing and Farm Housing Assistance Programmes |
| Housing | 1405 | Rural Economic Development |
| Housing | 1406 | Low and Middle Income Housing Programs and Needs |
| Housing | 1408 | Elderly and Handicapped Housing |
| Housing | 1409 | Housing Assistance for Homeless and Homeless Issues |
| Housing | 1413 | Regulations Concerning the Rental Housing Market |
| Housing | 1499 | Other - Community Development and Housing Issues |
| Immigration | 900 | General Immigration Issues (Includes Combinations of Multiple Subtopics) |
| Immigration | 929 | Labour immigration |
| Immigration | 931 | Refugee and Asylum Issues |
| Immigration | 932 | Citizenship Issues |
| Immigration | 933 | Illegal Immigration and Repatriation |
| Immigration | 940 | Entry of Immigrants and Control |
| Immigration | 941 | Integration of Immigrants (Socially and Culturally) |
| Immigration | 999 | Other - Immigration Issues |
| Pensions | 503 | Employee Benefits (Includes Employee Pension Contributions) |
| Pensions | 1300 | General - Social Welfare |
| Pensions | 1302 | Poverty Assistance for Low-Income Families (Includes Food Assistance Programs) |
| Pensions | 1303 | Elderly Issues and Elderly Assistance Programs (Includes Government Pensions) |
| Pensions | 1304 | Assistance to the Disabled and Handicapped |
| Taxation | 107 | Taxation, Tax policy, VAT and Tax Reform |
| Taxation | 2009 | Tax Administration |
| Terrorism | 209 | Government Restrictions on Anti-Government Activities (Does Not Include Terrorism) |
| Terrorism | 1615 | Civil Defence (Includes General Military and Other National Security Responses to Terrorism (e.g., Homeland Security)) |
| Terrorism | 1927 | International Terrorism and Hijacking (e.g., Acts of Piracy and Terrorist Incidents in Foreign Countries) |
| Unemployment | 103 | Unemployment Rate |
| Unemployment | 502 | Employment Training and Workforce Development |

### **Public opinion datasets on Most Important Problem data**

Table 4. List of all Eurobarometer surveys considered along with their identification code from <http://zacat.gesis.org/webview/>.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year-Month** | **Gesis Code** | **Public Opinion Variables** | **Nr. of Respondents** |
| 2003-11 | ZA3938 | v156-v171 | 1053 |
| 2004-10 | ZA4229 | v219-v234 | 1075 |
| 2005-06 | ZA4411 | v181-v196 | 1055 |
| 2005-10 | ZA4414 | v229-v244 | 1036 |
| 2006-04 | ZA4506 | v3030-v3061 | 1052 |
| 2006-09 | ZA4526 | v174-v189 | 1048 |
| 2007-05 | ZA4530 | v169-v200 | 1060 |
| 2007-10 | ZA4565 | v105-v136 | 1091 |
| 2008-04 | ZA4744 | v111-v142 | 1083 |
| 2008-10 | ZA4819 | v151-v214 | 1105 |
| 2009-06 | ZA4973 | v133-v204 | 1099 |
| 2009-11 | ZA4994 | v127-v194 | 1113 |
| 2010-05 | ZA5234 | v138-v205 | 1099 |
| 2010-11 | ZA5449 | v122-v261 | 1075 |
| 2011-05 | ZA5481 | v142-v281 | 1111 |
| 2011-11 | ZA5567 | qa6a1\_1-qa7b2\_18 | 1114 |
| 2012-05 | ZA5612 | qa7a\_1-qa8b\_17 | 1096 |
| 2012-11 | ZA5685 | qa5a\_1-qa6b\_17 | 1096 |
| 2013-05 | ZA5689 | qa6a\_1-qa7b\_17 | 1081 |
| 2013-11 | ZA5876 | qa4a\_1-qa5b\_17 | 1064 |

Table 5. List of governments and parties with average ideology based on CHES dataset.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Government** | **Government Average Ideology** | **Opposition Average Ideology** | **Parliament Average Ideology** | **ENPP** | **ENPC** | **Government****Coalition** | **Opposition****Parties** |
| Berlusconi II | 7.24 | 3.11 | 4.61 | 5.25 | 2.97 | FI; LN; AN;CCD-CDU; NPSI; PRI | DS; V; RC; M; UDEUR |
| Berlusconi III | 6.59 | 2.72 | 4.66 | 5.25 | 2.97 | FI; LN; AN; UDC;NPSI; PRI | DS; V; RC; M; UDEUR |
| Prodi II | 3.1 | 6.17 | 4.74 | 4.87 | 5.12 | Unione; DS; DL; RC; IDV; PCDI; V; RNP; UDEUR | FI; AN; LN; UDC |
| Berlusconi IV | 7.47 | 5.04 | 5.77 | 3.06 | 1.32 | FI; AN; LN; MPA | PD; UDC; IDV |
| Monti | 5.84 | 6.34 | 5.95 | 3.51 | 2.68 | Technocratic supported by: PDL; PD; UDC; FLI; MPA; API; RI | IDV; LN |
| ENPP = Effective number of parties in parliamentENPC = Effective number of parties in cabinet |

1. For instance, I could provide a map of the regions in relation to which each of the 21 topics are most frequently cited by legislative acts. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)