Teaching Policy Research and Evaluation Skills in Italy:

Mission impossible?

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Is it possible to teach Policy Research and Evaluation (PRE) skills in a country the lacks the "fundamentals"

1. There is no tradition of "social science in government"

2. There are no think thanks; policy research and eval'n organizations tend to be small and weak

3. Public debate is dominated by ideology and petty politics (yes, MUCH worse than in the US)

The answer is:
Yes, it is possible

But the real question is:
Is it worth it?

We need more research on this question

Ignoring the absence of
the three basic ingredients,
in last ten years
there have been
**some attempts to
teach US-style PRE**

1. Master in Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche (in Torino)

Four main foci for the curriculum

- Policy design (agenda setting…)
- Performance management
- Process Analysis
- Impact Analysis

- Traditional teaching style (Difficult to use/find good cases)

- Produced about 150 "policy analysts"

- About half do "public policy" related work (in a very broad sense)

2. Summer School in Causal inference for policy evaluation

- Every year since 2002

- Full-immersion, 10 day-long

- Aimed at junior researchers
  (from gov't and policy/eval organizations)

- High demand (80 applications for 20 positions)

- Over 100 researchers trained

3. Training courses in policy analysis and evaluation for the purpose of **legislative oversight**

- Aimed at staff of the "State" Legislatures

- Real demand for oversight from politicians?

- Capacity-building

Why train new policy analysts if there is little demand for them?

Two motivations/hypotheses

➤ The supply can stimulate its own demand

➤ Being prepared in case of a demand shock

(Hartz reforms in Germany triggered by IAB scandals)

Would a "E-APPAM" (with national Chapters) help in developing PRE in Italy (in Europe)?

It would likely help

One issue to think about

Its focus should be on <u>policy</u> research rather than evaluation

- To avoid endless debates about evaluation theories and paradigm wars

- To focus the attention on evidence-based policy ("what works?", rather than accountability "money spent on time?")

- To open a debate on the standards of evidence ("how to produce credible evidence")

APPAM's mission:

"APPAM is dedicated to improving public policy and management by fostering excellence in research, analysis, and education"

Reproducing the dualism APPAM-AEA?

Worth it?
Fruitful?