

Sessione 9

Titolo: Innovating in adverse conditions: The Public Administration between efficiency and resilience

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Abstract

The COVID-19 emergency has placed again under the spotlight a fundamental topic: the improvement of the public administration performance. The extraordinary economy crises, the growth of inequalities and social needs, the huge flow of investments to be allocated and the role of digital technologies lead to a change of pace in the organization of the Public Administration – in Italy as elsewhere.

Despite common discourses on the inaction and lethargy of the public sector, in recent decades public administrations have undergone significant transformations, changing their operating methods, staff, guiding principles and missions. In fact, since the postwar period, there have been a number of attempts to reform the Public Administration, from various points of view: institutional decentralization, revisions of the regulatory framework, new contracts and incentives, administrative streamlining, etc. – even though it is commonly recognized that problems persist and that some important initiatives have had unintended consequences. In such changes, approaches related to New Public Management have been placed side by side with practices of democratization and participation, so much so that most of the innovations in the Public Administration (e.g. in the field of welfare) can be read both from a market retrenchment perspective and from a social innovation perspective, focusing on their redistributive and/or supportive function to reciprocity networks. This session aims to discuss, through theoretical and empirical studies, the organizational change in Public Administration, both in ordinary and emergency situations.

The session will focus on contributions that have investigated models and strategies of change, their reproducibility and the characteristics of policy instruments, as well as the impact generated on the organization itself. Contributions focused on different branches of the Public Administration are welcome, at the local level as well as at the central level (welfare, school and university, services to citizens, etc.) and on different analytical dimensions: governance, staff management, organizational cultures, relations with stakeholders.