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Some examples of innovations in public services delivery in Italy

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Agenda

- Different kind of innovations
- Innovation ICT- centred or not
- Some example of innovation in public services delivery

- *My objective is not to present you the best innovations in Italy (there are awards and exhibitions for it) or a representative selection of innovations in my country.*
- *My idea is to offer some examples, sometimes close to me/us of some interesting kind of innovation that can help us raising some questions.*

Different kind of services innovation 1

See different classifications in literature (e.g. Hartley, 2005; De Vries et al., 2015).

To simplify in this occasion we can identify the following kind of innovations in public services design and delivery:

- Innovations in service content and concept – or new products/services
- Process Innovations (organizational and technological processes)
- Governance innovation (Inter-Governmental relations and in the service provision system)
- Innovations in actor's roles in the public service delivery system (e.g in relations with users/citizens involving them more)

Different kind of services innovation 2

- Of course, a single initiative of innovation of public services and in the policies of services can inglobate different kind of innovation.
- And there might be unattended results (positive or negative) on services and society

Innovation is not only technological or involving ICTs

- The role of ICTs and technology in public services innovation is significant, but it is not always the core part of innovations, also in services.
 - Of course ICT and technologies can be, and very often are, a significant part of a service innovation, an instrument, a tool, a medium... but the the core is on service content or provision process etc
- *The major part of innovations of public services in Italy inglobate the use of ICTs . Then, they can be considered in e-government/e-governance perspective.*
- *The process of digitalization of the Public Sector system in Italy is still working, not only in order to adapt to the general progress of technology, but also due to the delay accumulated in the past.*

Some examples

(new) Electronic ID - Carta d'identità elettronica

- <https://www.cartaidentita.interno.gov.it/>
- The aim of the national government is to diffuse this instrument among the population* (and to effectively use its potential) like in other EU countries.
- Card and its technology approved by EU
- Project of introduction of the e-ID started in 2017 and it's based on the partnership between different ministries and institutions
- Different uses of e-ID in order to access to different services (also locally)
- Procedure to obtain it involves both Ministries and municipalities
- (process, product, governance innovation with ICTs use)

* On *January 2019: 450 (out of 7,915) local governments missing*

Electronic Health Folder (Fascicolo Sanitario Elettronico-FSE)

- <https://www.fascicolosanitario.gov.it/>
- In Italy Health is a Regional competence so there are around 20 different FSEs (partially different in content). Also different diffusion, rate of adoption and effective use among regions ...
- Nevertheless, this a service based on the creation of a virtual folder (in the cloud) containing all data, documents and reports concerning health of a person (or more). And to share them with your physicians. This instrument offers the opportunity to reserve medical check-ups and to obtain from physicians the document file necessary to buy medicines (*ricetta elettronica*)
- (process and governance innovation with ICTs use and in some regions innovations in actor's roles in the public service delivery system)

Online Tax statement (dichiarazione dei redditi precompilata)

- Possibility to validate (or change and send to national authority) an online tax statement automatically filled by the governmental agency according to data collected from different sources.
- Involvement – data collecting from public administrations system as an employer (wages), businesses as employers, health system DB (collecting health expenses), banks...
- <https://infoprecompilata.agenziaentrate.gov.it/portale/web/guest>

(process innovation thank to ICTs)

- Consequences also on society/economic system: on associations of societal representation, unions and professionals (chartered accountants) that were/are in charge of preparing the statement at least validating it and send to the Agenzia delle Entrate (National agency in charge of collecting taxes and auditing incomes). Now everybody can do by himself.

Apps

- Concerning services to be obtained from municipalities and public entities or firms in charge of services delivery
- Examples: apps to reserve appointments at public services providers (Post service, municipality, health agencies...); to check the live position of a bus/tram/train/airplane, news about traffic in highways, news on lectures timetable at university, or just to have suggestions about initiatives in town or of a specific entity (e.g. theaters)
- Short way to services, closer relationship with users
(innovation of process or new service, some changes in users' role if a feedback is possible)

Re-organization of mail delivery

- Problem: Poste italiane has difficulties with its (former) core business: delivering mail. Less mail, more parcels, many private competitors in parcels delivery.
- The company invested a lot in financial and investment services (bank like) and also insurances
- In many towns mail is distributed every other day, but some personalised services of delivery are possible.
- Created a firm for parcel delivery
- <https://www.poste.it/index.html>

Re-thinking of content of a service

- For instance public transport: in many towns the bus service as been complemented with other services like: shared bicycles and cars, on demand vans and buses, taxies for ladies, and sometimes the service is integrated with parking service (shuttles)...
- In Modena, the former firm in charge of transport services (ACTMO) offered all the services nominated before and had a smart payment system (re-chargeable card with discounts).
- Then, in 2012, there has been a merger between the firms in charge of transport services in Modena, Reggio and Piacenza. The new firm (SETA S.p.A. <http://www.setaweb.it/homepage>) has reduced the number of complementary services (but introduced an app: see previous slides).
- Service innovation can fail!

Online Education Lab - ONELab

DCE UniMoRe

- The Department has some problems: great number of students, number and size of rooms is not adequate, a significant number of students are working and are not able to attend to lectures.
- Project to register (video and audio) all in presence lectures and to offer them to students in a specific online platform (separated from the standard one).
- Use of technology changed a bit lecture style, content and the relationships between students and between students and teacher → the content of service itself and the context of service
- But also some new problems! Presence to lectures reduced a lot!
- <http://www.dce.unimore.it/site/home/didattica/articolo900039874.html>

Progetto VITA (Piacenza)

- <https://www.progetto-vita.eu>
- “Progetto Vita” is the first European project about early defibrillation in order to fight against sudden death because of cardiac arrest.
- The project since the beginning has involved public bodies, private firms, police and voluntary associations
- The goal of Progetto Vita is to reduce the mortality from cardiac arrest by promoting the culture of early defibrillation through the use of semi-automatic defibrillators and the integration of this system with health emergency response 118.
- This project has been copied all around Italy and recently the Italian Parliament adopted a law inspired to this experience and local model.
- (creation of a new service organized in a networked way)

Forum PA and other

- <https://www.forumpa.it/>
- Community, Cantieri Labs, Events and fairs/exhibitions (e.g. Smart Cities Exhibition), webinars

Finally

- I suggest an example of innovation in governance of public services provision which drives to significant changes in public services design and delivery.
- It is based on the cooperation between different public sector institutions and in particular of municipalities, in order to provide services and perform administrative activities.
- First in general, afterwards in Italy

The Inter-Municipal Cooperation – IMC 1

"the fulfilment of a public municipal task by two or more municipalities jointly or by third legal entity, whereby the task fulfilment simultaneously serves at least two municipalities and the participating municipalities participate directly ('performing') or indirectly ('organizing')" (Steiner, 2003).

- Possible solution to be resilient and to jointly provide sustainable and effective public services to socio-economic contest considering the complexity of socio-economic contests and of the enhanced needs after crises and cutbacks policies.
- Answer to the limited and sub-optimal dimension of the administrative area in charge of municipalities and instrument of coordination.

The Inter-Municipal Cooperation – IMC 2

- IMC has been considered in different literatures on public administration, public management, public governance, respectively focusing on different issues of IMC...
- Different classifications of IMC, for instance in terms :
 - ✓ of factors explaining their adoption (e.g. Kim, 2018; Soukopova & Vacekova, 2018)
 - ✓ of their economic effects (e.g. Kim and Warner, 2016);
 - ✓ or the study of IMC through a policy-making perspective (e.g. Bel et al.2018);
 - ✓ or in terms of governance (e.g. Sørensen, 2007; Hulst et al, 2009)
 - ✓

The Inter-Municipal Cooperation – IMC 3

- Another interesting challenge in literature on IMC is - since several years - about *performance* and the *conditions/dimensions for successful IMC* (e.g. Turrini et al, 2010, Voets et al, 2008, Giacomini et al 2018).
- Literature is still evaluating and trying to measure efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of IMC initiatives (e.g. Blaeschke & Haug, 2017; Allers & de Greef, 2017; Giacomini et al., 2018).
- Anyhow, literature prove possibilities of savings, improvements from economy of scale, internalization of transaction costs, quality & effectiveness ... and innovative solutions of joint networked service provision.
- Critical issues in IMC could also concern *transparency, accountability* and also *institutional legitimacy*

Examples

- Do you know any examples of IMC in your country?

IMC for public services in Italy 1

- In Italy, the discussion about IMC started about 30 years ago (1990s).
 - Currently particularly relevant, especially after initiatives aiming to improve efficiency and austerity of Public Sector (e.g. initiatives inspired by the Spending Review).
 - Italian municipalities (7,915):
 - small size in average (69.5% inhabitants \leq 5.000) \rightarrow possible difficulties in efficiently provide effective services.
 - main providers of services and investors in infrastructures at local level \rightarrow many duties
- \rightarrow IMC possible solution to provide better services (effectiveness) and to better use their resources.*

IMC for public services in Italy – Unioni di Comuni (associations of municipalities)

- From 2010, several laws (Law 122/2010; Law 111/2011; Law 148/2011 and the Law 135/2012 Spending review 2) started forcing small municipalities, (less than 5,000 or 3,000 inhabitants) to the joint provision through IMC of some (according to the law from 6 to 10) core tasks/areas of service called "*funzioni*" (functions).
- Law 56/2014 gave great space to the *Unioni di Comuni*: instrument of IMC able to guarantee efficiency and the rational dimension in the organization and delivery of public services. Plus it takes into account the local identity and social capital.

A focus on 'Unioni di Comuni' in Italy

- A new local authority, endowed with legal and political powers similar to those of a municipality. First introduced in 1990, currently are the *main form of IMC in Italy* (the other quite common are agreements).
- The adoption for service delivery is encouraged : *solution to the small dimension* of many Italian municipalities and to the *fragmentation of local governments system*. There are *financial incentives* to their adoption (national and regional level).
- Second level public institutions: their representatives are not directly elected by the population → possible accountability matter
- Relevance of historical tendency/tradition to *cooperate* and use *networked governance* through form of IMC (social capital ..)
- Indeed, in Italy (only) 39.1% of municipalities (3,094 out of 7,915) belong to an Unione di Comuni

A focus on 'Unioni di Comuni' in Emilia-Romagna region

UC in this Region:

- Are very *common* (around 81.57% of municipalities),
- Have quite a long history (first established in 1990s), *heterogeneous* in their features (dimension, economic background, social and administrative issues ...).
- Currently they are 42, quite homogeneously distributed in the region
- In general they have quite a long *tradition*, due to the existence of cooperation between municipalities far before the creation of UC as formal institutions
- The number of public services jointly provided through this IMC instrument is in general high (mean 6,5).

Clusters of UC-IMC in Emilia-Romagna

