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Cases of reforming in the Public sector: causes and effects

The improvement of the Public sector in Italy, remains a permanent purpose, cause its economic relevance.

Attempts and efforts to improve the Public Administrations have recorded some success but also, and often, difficulties in promoting their own development.

The activities of "A Colorni-Hirschman International Institute" and of the researchers put together by Luca Meldolesi, have always focused on the empowerment methods of Public Administration. Since the publishing of "Spendere meglio è possibile" (1992), they directly deal with Public Administration organization.

This work seeks to explain how it is possible to trigger processes of development and to obtain improvements even in complexity conditions, such as those observed during the implementation of local development interventions.

However, some operative stressing conditions facilitate the achievement of objectives in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the operational structures. This happens also by discovering the organization's pride, by achieving "self-awareness" (i.e. awareness of the contents, strengths, weaknesses, potentials of the organization) and by the strength of collaboration between different functions and roles.

The experiences, lived first-hand by the author, in the cases of two projects management (Great Pompeii Project, which has carried out the restoration of the archaeological site; the operations for Matera European Capital of Culture 2019) can explain how these improvement processes can work more or less.

Therefore, the most important phases of these experiences will be underlined in order to reach indications and lessons on how the organization of Public Administration can react to change of scenarios, objectives and work methods.

The search for possible keys to break through the resistance to change of Administration requires the knowledge and analysis of its reactions, reasons and mechanisms. By this analysis, one may discover that, sometime, tools designed to create synergies among different administrations lead, on the contrary, to the entrenchment of positions and interests.

Often, the solutions are implicit, they just need to be released, as A.O. Hirschman would say.