Digital Public Administration for Innovation and Sustainable Development

Digital transformation in the public sector is an essential necessity and a strategic imperative for public organizations around the world due to the growing speed with which the intensive use of digital technologies, the digitalization of service and work processes are changing every aspect of society and life as a whole (Nachit et al., 2021). Digital transformation leads to a radical change in approaches to the organization of government with the use of digital technologies and algorithms. Both external and internal pressures have forced public administrations (PA) to re-think many of the existing administrative tasks and procedures as well as organizational processes and routines (Plesner, Justesen & Glerup, 2018). Digital transformation reconfigures public sector organizations in fundamental, although uneven, ways and changes the daily work-life of public servants (Buffat, 2015). Some of the changes concern internal processes such as setting up new planning and coordination structures while others concern the politics of technology and related politico-administrative relationships as well as external relationships with citizens and private sector actors (Mergel et al., 2019; Ashaye & Irani, 2019). Digital technologies create opportunities for a completely different type of interaction between participants – in online communication. The basis for this nature of interaction is platform (Soto-Acosta, 2020; Scott et al. 2016). However, despite the high expectations, digital transformation in the public sector is a topic that is still in its infancy as there is limited evidence on the ways governments and public organizations approach digital transformation. For these reasons the public sector constitutes a specific context for digitalization: the specificities of public administrations should be further examined in order to contextualize digital transformation and its implications for work. The aim is to examine what we can learn from organization studies of digital technologies and changes in public organizations and to develop a research agenda that allows us to produce systematic knowledge about how work practices in the public sector change with digitalization (Alvarenga et al., 2020). While the changes caused by political reforms on public service have been on both the public and the academic agenda (Vial, 2019), the reforms' recurrent focus on the digitalization of work has curiously not gained much scholarly attention. There is very little systematic evidence on: i) how technologies and processes have been designed and implemented in PA; ii) the way technology is used to change work practices; iii) what have been the positive/negative lessons for PA and – more in general - public sector innovation. Digital transformation is currently seen as the key driver of change in governments when the goals are to increase transparency, accountability, and efficiency, given that e-government can facilitate integrated policies and public services to promote sustainable and inclusive growth, social development, and environmental protection (Castro & Lopes, 2021).

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Digitalization and sustainable digital transformation in public administrations
- Digital transformation, technology and Smart working
- Digital technologies' adoption and diffusion
- E-Government
- Relationship between work, technology and change
- Relationship between digitization and formal bureaucratic structures, accountability, and professionals
- Digitization and Sustainability
- Theories, model and tools to study digital technologies-related innovations

- Digital technologies and stakeholders engagement, transparency and accountability
- Public value creation
- Performance management
- South working and near working VS new normal
- Sustainable development
- Digital Government Strategies and Reforms
- Digital Public Services
- Digitalization and re-engineering of services and processes

The track welcomes papers (work in progress or finished research, experience-in-the-field reports, case reports) from scholars with diverse backgrounds eager to contribute to the development of an inter-disciplinary research agenda on these broader questions and developments in Public Administration systems globally.

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