

Series preface

Giliberto Capano and Edoardo Ongaro

Change is the main explanatory challenge for social sciences. Stability and persistence are easier to understand and explain than change; at the same time, change is not separated from stability and, from this point of view, any approach to change (in whatever field) should be able to account for both 'constancy and change' (Hernes 1976).

Change is of significance both for explanatory reasons and from a more normative/prescriptive standpoint. To address, lead, control and implement change is the key task of policy-makers who, to adjust or improve reality, constantly strive to cope with reality through designed changes in the institutional structure, in the organizational and processual dimensions of public administration, and in the governance arrangements of policies.

Thus, change is an inescapable focus both for scholars and for policy-makers.

Following up on the above premises, this series is programmatically aimed at publishing books offering new, original and enlightening views on change of politics in action. The series is committed to overcoming borders between scholars in public policy, public administration and management, and political institutions. Change happens at the crossroads where political institutions, policies and public administrations constantly interact with and influence each other.

This broad perspective is quite relevant, and innovative we would say, both from the scientific and the applied point of view.

On the one hand, in fact, the theoretical enlargement proposed by the series can be quite fruitful for increasing the necessary conversation between different theoretical approaches, that very often are based on the same theoretical assumptions although belonging to different sub-disciplines and theoretical schools. Furthermore, this strategy could also be the bearer of positive and cumulative theoretical hybridizations capable of grasping the complexity of the mechanisms behind policy, administrative and institutional change.

On the other hand, the series – with its multi-dimensional and multi-theoretical commitment – will be capable of offering significant information and high-quality practical knowledge for policy-makers.

The series will publish both monographs and edited books.

Four main categories of publications are hosted in the series:

1. *Theory building stream*: Theoretical works explaining societal, political and institutional continuity and change. Books here may be broadly theoretical, thus proposing theories, frameworks, models for explaining continuity and change in the social sciences, with a view on applicability to policy, administration and institutions.
2. *Policy change stream*: Works explaining policy change. Works on policy analysis, providing new theoretical frames and new insights into policy change, rather than descriptions of policies in one or another sector. However, it could be that theoretically driven books, on change in specific policy fields, are also included.
3. *Public management reform stream*: Works explaining administrative change and public management reform. Various areas may be considered; on a purely illustrative basis: public management reforms; local government reforms; the pendulum of centralization/ decentralization in administrative reforms; liberal-democracy and accountability change and reform.
4. *Institutional change stream*: Works explaining institutional change, notably on governance: e.g. changing European governance; constitutional reforms dynamics and outputs; institutional change in federal governance.