

Innovation in the public sector

Various studies have been conducted on the meaning and importance of public sector innovation from a conceptual point of view (e.g., Brown and Osborne, 2013). Following these analyzes, innovation in the public sector can be defined as “the introduction of new elements into a public service in the form of new knowledge, new organization and or new management and or new skills, or new process”. They all embody a discontinuity with the past. This definition emphasizes that innovation is not simply about finding a new idea. An innovation should be practiced. According to Zaltman *et al.* (1973), “an innovation is an idea, practice or material artifact perceived as new by the relevant adoption unit”. According to Rogers (2003) “an innovation is an idea, a practice or an object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption”. These definitions emphasize on the perception of the new by an adoption unit.

Alter (2005) completes this definition by stating that «the purpose of the invention is to treat an issue in an abstract way, regardless of its economic and social context. Innovation is the process by which a social body seizes or does not seize the invention (...). Moreover, it is the state of tension between the possibilities that invention represents and the collective choices that are gradually drawn from it. It represents the meaning that men assign to a good. Windrum (2008) proposes the following typology of innovations in the public sector. He distinguishes:

- service innovation achieved by introducing a new service or improving its quality;
- innovation in the delivery of services through new distribution channels to customers;
- administrative or organizational innovation achieved through changes in organizational structures and routines;
- conceptual innovation by the development of new world view that challenge assumptions that underpin existing service products, processes and organizational forms;
- policy innovation and changes to the thought or behavioral intentions associated with a policy belief system;
- systemic innovation through new or improved means of interaction with other organizations or knowledge bases.

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On the basis of a literature review, we complete this typology by distinguishing in public innovations:

- Process innovation focused on the technological or administrative core of the organization with the creation of new organizational forms, the introduction of new methods, new techniques of management or work, and the creation or introduction of new technologies;
- product or service innovation by the creation of new services or public products;
- governance innovation allowing the development of new ways and processes to solve specific societal issues;
- conceptual innovation by the introduction of new concepts, new standards or new paradigms to reframe the nature of specific problems and their possible solutions.

The antecedents or factors and barriers to innovation in the public sector have been the subject of many studies. We can classify them according to four major dimensions:

- An environmental dimension which emphasizes the effect of the external context (for example, politics). The implementation of administrative reforms inspired by the New Public Management has stimulated a great deal of scientific research that has sought to identify and characterize the factors of resistance to innovation in the public sector. The latter is seen as reluctant to innovate by the risk aversion of policy makers (Borins, 2001). In order to emerge, innovations in the public sector must be authorized and legitimized politically (Sørensen, 2013).
- An organizational dimension that includes organizational and cultural characteristics of an organization that facilitate or hinder the introduction of innovations. The public administrative culture, made of risk aversion and rules and procedures, is a brake on innovation (Barzelay, 1992), as is the lack of autonomy of managers.
- A dimension related to the intrinsic characteristics or attributes of an innovation (its complexity, its advantages, its compatibility ...) favoring or hindering its adoption (Leroux and Pupion, 2015)

- An individual dimension that refers to the characteristics of the individuals who innovate. Recent public policies are supposed to encourage innovation in public organizations, but often forget the role of civil servants in the innovation process. In a vision of public management inspired by new public management, the public manager is an entrepreneur who must introduce innovation. The question of who has the initiative of public innovation is important, as is the specific motivation of public managers to initiate or implement innovations. Innovative behaviors defined as behaviors by which employees generate or adopt new ideas and make additional efforts to implement them are understudied (Pupion, 2018).

To explain the introduction and adoption of innovation in the public sector, researchers use alternatively or sometimes jointly different models (Lawaree, Meunier, 2016): the model of public / political entrepreneurship (Bernier & Hafsi, 2007), the Rogers' diffusionist approach (Gray, 1973, Leroux and Pupion, 2018), the theory of translation (Callon & Latour, 1990, Krupicka and Coussi, 2017), the model of the TOE mixing organizational, environmental and technological aspects (Leroux and Pupion, 2015).

This issue includes four articles mainly related to the issues of innovation and governance.

The first article proposed by Mathias BÉJEAN, Frédéric KLETZ and Jean-Claude MOISDON is entitled "**Organizational value creation and information technologies in hospitals: the case of electronic patient records**". It deals with an administrative and technological innovation: the Electronic Patient Record (EPR) introduced in the hospital. They use the theory of management tools that take into account the coupling «tool-organization» as a research object, in order to analyze the interactions between the EPR and the existing hospital organization.

Owen BOUKAMEL and Yves EMERY in their article entitled "**Cultural Barriers to Public Sector Innovation: Swiss Specificities**" raises the issue of the obstacles to public innovation in Switzerland. The study is based on the inductive analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with fifteen public service executives and project

managers, in the cantons of Vaud and Geneva. It highlights the traditional public obstacles which are the risk aversion, the path dependence and the lack of civil servant autonomy. The search for consensus drives to adopt moderate innovation to make it acceptable. The non-personification of innovation's project and consequently the fact that public innovation is not carried by a leader, brake the adoption of innovation.

The third article proposed by Bertrand AUGE and Youssef ERRAMI is entitled "**Decentralization practices and dynamic compromise in public policies: the case of a provincial assembly under the Ancien Régime (17th - 18th centuries)**". It raises the fundamental issue of the articulation between the central power and the local authorities. The assemblies of France's states under the "Ancien Régime" were the laboratory of political compromises, allowing to govern various provinces according to complex dynamics of centralization and decentralization. They correspond to various forms of experimentation in terms of governance. The study is based on a record events related to the "Versailles - Province" dialogue on the tax issue.

The fourth article entitled "**National sports federations and public intervention: a public-private management between synergies and tensions between actors**" is proposed by Bastien VIOLET. It deals with new governance practices through the public / private management model within national sports federations. The main purpose of this research is to study the interactions between actors of the State (the Ministry of Sports) and national sports federations, in the conduct of the sports policy. The aim of this article is to characterize the collective action of federal actors (focusing specifically on elected leaders) and the state (through its technical advisors) on the national sports federation policy. In fact, the question is about synergies and tensions between federal and state actors on the implementation of a national federation sport policy.

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