



Do the Brazilian innovations in public management constitute a new model?☆

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Abstract

Recent studies point to alternate models of public management with the purpose of surpassing the assumptions of the New Public Management. The current theoretical debate centers on the prevalent view that government is not following a specific management model of well-organized principles and guidelines. Instead, the literature converges on the perception that the contemporary public administration functions with tendencies closer to innovative management principles and tools. Given the recent structural changes in Brazil, is the government functioning under any model or is it converging with any trends? This paper systematically explores the improvements in management raised from the winning initiatives of the Federal Award of Public Management Innovation, from 2007 to 2014. Research indicates nearly all principles and tools described were incorporated, in varying degrees, in the winning innovations in the federal government. Most initiatives (98%) fall into the trend. The prevailing innovations are based on information technology and networking strategies as to provide better quality and more efficient public services.

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Keywords: Innovation; Public administration; Digital era; Networks; Brazil

Introduction

The main objective of this paper is to analyze the innovations in public management by the Brazilian federal government as compared to the current changes in the paradigms of public management. In other words, to what extent do the initiatives by the Brazilian federal government fit in the discussion of contemporary management models?

A myriad of new management models have recently sprung up to defy the premises of the New Public Management (NPM). Although there is no consensus among nations on the effective adoption of these models, the vision on the role of the State

and the performance of the public administration in providing services is different from the vision and roles prescribed by management since the 1970s.

The current context assumes that the public sector is a major player in economic and social development; in the creation of socially inclusive institutional arrangements; for technological advances, the quality and transparency in public management as well as recognizes the end-users recovery as relevant actors in the policymaking process.

This role of government leadership is closely related to an innovation process in management that is increasingly gaining a strategic dimension in the public sector. Innovation in the public sector may be related to improvements in organizational processes, implementation of new products, procedures, services, policies or systems (Damanpour, Walker, & Avellaneda, 2009).

Given the structural changes in recent years and the need to expand the innovation processes in organizations, where does the management model of the Brazilian government fit in? This paper, proposes a systematic analysis of the advances in management from the award-winning initiatives of the Federal Award of Public Management Innovation (FAPMI) between 2007 and

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2014, in order to identify the characteristics that help place the Brazilian public administration within the current paradigms of public management.

First, a discussion of the assumptions of the current management models from the perspective of surpassing the NPM hegemony is carried out by a bibliographic study in order to place this paper in the contemporary debate of public management. The articles' search was accomplished based on the following journals of Public administration between 2010 and 2014:

- (i) Top Brazilian journals recognized by CAPES (Revista de Administração Pública, Revista de Administração Contemporânea e Revista de Administração da USP).
- (ii) Top international journals with a high ranking in the Thomson Scientific ISI (Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory; Public Administration; International Public Management Journal; Governance and Public Administration Review).

In addition, classic books and articles on public administration and management subjects are cited as references. Based on this literature, the theoretical discussion focuses on the results of the reform movements in recent decades, on the proposals for new paradigms after NPM, as well as on the trends of current management governance. Thus the empirical analysis of this paper is framed within a theoretical and analytical framework that is both robust and contemporary.

The analysis of management models and trends enabled the incorporation of a set of five tools and principles used by public organizations worldwide. This paper offers a descriptive analysis of 80 award winning initiatives in the eight year period studied. The reports sorted by theoretical analysis and published at the time of the awards are the source of information used in this paper.

Besides the introduction, the article includes three other sections. First, we debate the models and paradigms of contemporary public management. Second, an analysis of innovative initiatives within the tools and principles of public administration is outlined. Third, some final remarks are made.

Paradigms of public management: models or trends?

The twentieth century was marked by intense socio-political and economic changes that undoubtedly led to a reflection and reorganization of the role of the State and public administration. The welfare state construction, in its different formats, required a complexification process of the State apparatus in order to meet demands not only social, but also in areas of infrastructure and economy, since the middle of this century. In developed nations, the main concerns involved impartiality and equal access to public services.

In OECD countries during the 1970s, the basis for the legitimacy of the public service and the representative model began to be questioned. The responsiveness of the elected officials and their political priorities became the subject of debate (Manning, Shepherd, Bum, & Laudares, 2009). In Latin America, the main concern continued to be the prevalence of paternalism behaviors,

which undermine the public administration capacity to provide quality services. In both scenarios, the dominant discourse of changes was characterized by bureaucratic rationality, hierarchical planning and cost-benefit analysis (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

Among other factors, the support for the reforms in the public sector is related to macroeconomic and ideological changes and technological advances. In the late 1970s, a combination of those factors began to influence the managerialist movement. The financial crisis affecting the capitalist economies of the world shifts the attention to the need to reduce the degree of state intervention in the economy and in society, seen as the main reason for the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the public administration (Carneiro & Menicucci, 2011). Secchi (2009) lists several triggers for the modernization of the state apparatus: the increased competition among countries for private investment and skilled labor, the availability of new organizational methods and technology, the rise of pluralistic values, and the increased complexity, dynamics and diversity of our societies.

In the 1980s, a broad reform movement with strong political, ideological and economic components starts to change the role of the State. Thatcher in Britain and Reagan in the United States, lead the way in transitioning the role of government from interventionist and dirigisme to promoters of regulation (Carneiro & Menicucci, 2011). In this context, the NPM starts to emerge. The strong normative character of the NPM model advocates for the incorporation private sector techniques of efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness in the structuring and management of public administration. Under the intense sponsorship of multilateral organizations, during the 80s and 90s, NPM quickly spread across many developed and emerging countries.

The NPM consists of a broad reform movement in public administration in order to get better performances by establishing a set of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of the organizations in the public sector.

Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) argue that the NPM, also called the government reinvention movement in the United States (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992), consists of a two-tier phenomenon. At the top tier, NPM is a theory or doctrine in which public services are improved via the immigration of concepts, techniques and values from the private sector. The lower level includes a specific set of concepts and practices: emphasis on performance through the review of measured indicators; preference of leaner and specialized organization instead of large multifunctional organizations; widespread introduction of typical mechanisms of free enterprise, such as, competitive tendering, performance pay and the treatment of end-users of services as clients.

The reform initiative focus on the search for efficiency and cost reduction and during the managerial movement is complemented by objectives such as prioritizing the quality of services provided; giving the citizen choices of service providers through competition among agencies; accountability and transparency (Carneiro & Menicucci, 2011).

After three decades of the managerial movement, a consensus exists about the perception that the NPM consisted of a myriad of concepts and initiatives and similar principles in theory, in

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