

Towards the establishment of a culture of innovation in the public sector in Morocco

Abstract:

The public action has been strongly impacted by the use of new technologies. Indeed, the health crisis has reinforced the positioning of digitalization as a tool for innovation within public services. The new public management movement has highlighted this issue through the introduction of technology of information and communication, it has also assimilates the management of public action to that of the private sphere. In this article, we will try to introduce the new public management and its impact on the management of public establishments. On the other hand, we will analyze the concept of digitalization. Finally, we will draw up an inventory of technological innovation within the public sector.

Keywords: Digitalization; New Public Management; innovation; Public Sector; Technology of information and Communication

Introduction:

The global economic trend is certainly not sparing the public sector; for decades, it has been undergoing significant changes aimed at its reform. Indeed, public administration is the driving force behind national development, and it is increasingly confronted with major economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental challenges. Aware of this role, several countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have implemented a series of measures aimed at modernizing management within the public sphere. This reform movement, known as "New Public Management" (NPM), is widely debated. The concept was introduced by Hood in the late 1990s. Inspired by the success of the business model, which became a model for public organizations, NPM stipulates that public services should be managed like businesses (Santo & Verrier, 1993). Public administration is approaching a major turning point; The pursuit of efficiency and performance, along with the adoption of new information and communication technologies, has become a critical challenge. Adapting to this new managerial culture requires considerable effort from all stakeholders to successfully complete this structuring project (Bartoli, A., 2005). In this article, we will first address the concept of new public management, its origins, and its evolution. Subsequently, we will examine a second concept that has garnered significant interest from researchers, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic: digitalization and innovation in the public sector.

1. Arguments Supporting the Emergence of NPM

New Public Management (NPM) has spread rapidly throughout the world. The hypotheses accompanying its emergence vary among authors, and the motivations behind its adoption are not universally agreed upon. The notion of "reinventing the state" marked a major turning point (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993). It contributed to the advent of a new doctrine that advocates importing managerial techniques from the private sector to the public sector (Pollitt, C., 1993; Gibert, P., 2008). From a contextual perspective, the NPM movement appears to be the result of quite different phenomena related to the public finance crisis, the rise of the neoliberal and managerial model, the broadening of the scope of action of political leaders, and the use of turnkey solutions sold by consulting firms (Merrien, F. X., 1999). Viewed from the same perspective, the new public management is based primarily on lessons learned from the negative experiences of the bureaucratic model. According to Hood (1991), a leading figure in this movement, the factors behind its collapse lie in the development of new information technologies, the blurring of boundaries between the private and public sectors, the rise of post-industrialism and post-Fordism, and the evolving demands of public service users, who have become increasingly discerning and identify with the services provided by the private sector. This argument seems sufficient to dismiss management forms that have become obsolete and outdated. Consequently, the success of the NPM movement is due, in particular, to the dissemination of slogans incorporating management concepts that have already proven successful in the private sector. The administration/client dynamic has managed to transform the traditional relationship between the administration and its users within the framework of Weberian organization and reshape the image conveyed (Merrien, F X, 1999). Thus, the use of the term "new" in this expression is variable and not absolute (Chelle, 2012).

1.1. NPM: A Disparate Theoretical Body of Knowledge

Contrary to analyses that identify its origins with the rise of neoliberalism (Guenou, 2009), NPM is characterized by its hybrid nature (Eymeri-Douzans, 2008). New public management has been shaped by contributions from modern economics, systems analysis, and psychosociology (Massenet, 1975). It represents a blend of different schools of thought: neo-institutionalism, public choice theory, and agency theory (Hood, 1991). Each of these theories gradually influences the development of NPM, resulting in a heterogeneous character (Chelle, 2012). Indeed, this doctrine draws on principal-agent theory, contributions from economic theory, organizational sociology, management models derived from private sector experiences, and the new administrative science. The constituent sciences of the discipline are explained by (Hood, 1991), (Massenet, 1975), (Merrien, F X, 1999), and (Gruening, 2001). The latter identified the common characteristics of all reforms related to new public management. He specifically mentions those most frequently cited by researchers in the field, which have a direct impact on the structure and functioning of public organizations, including the use of new information and communication technologies.

Thus, the general concept of new public management aims to support its expected objectives, namely the efficiency of public management and the improvement of services provided. To achieve this, this concept is applied to the management areas of public organizations, by implementing strategic planning, management control, and information and communication technologies. It also involves adopting quality management in the public sector and strengthening the foundations of

participatory management by engaging citizens in the public sector project (Huet, Pompignan, & Batt, 2013).

1.2. New Public Management: A Disparate Body of Work

New Public Management refers to a set of reforms, often using unchanged terminology, implemented by several countries with the aim of modernizing the public sector (Aucoin, 1990). It is thus likened to “a generic doctrinal puzzle,” applicable to all public organizations and bringing about sometimes contradictory reforms (Bezes, 2005). This management movement is perceived as a universal phenomenon (Talbot, 2003). It involves the establishment of new aspects of public service management, specifically the definition of general strategies, the choice of internal management tools and the design of the user/administration relationship, and the introduction of information and communication technologies (Charest, 2012). It has led to cultural changes and increased sensitivity to results, costs, and citizens' expectations (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). One of the distinctive aspects of the New Public Management (NPM) experience is that the nature of the reform is highly significant given the international dynamics. These reforms affect the functioning of the public service and its sectors, leading to specialized and sectoral reforms (Christensen & Lægreid, 2002). NPM has achieved some remarkable accomplishments, notably the cultural revolution it has promoted within the public sphere by challenging old practices and disrupting the habits of politicians and managers, integrating a culture of efficiency and results (Cohen A. G., 2012), and ensuring greater transparency through the use of new information and communication technologies (Gupta, Dasgupta, & Gupta, 2008).

2. Digitalization of the Public Sector:

The digitalization of processes within public institutions is increasingly seen as a necessity, enabling this sector to improve its performance and modernize its management tools in order to meet the demands of both users and all stakeholders. Indeed, the health crisis marked a significant turning point in the spread of digitalization. This movement, which has grown considerably, requires further examination and clarification of its parameters.

2.2 On Digitalization:

Defining the scope of digitalization is not a task on which authors unanimously agree; indeed, the concept is quite complex, encompassing various dimensions. Starting with the definition by Nwamen (2006), which stipulates that digital transformation is seen in the information system as well as the use of digital or digital techniques and tools, this definition reveals a purely technological dimension based essentially on the use of information and communication technologies, namely: information systems, social networks, big data, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, etc. Westerman, Calm  jane, Bonnet, Ferraris, & McAfee (2011) concur with this definition, explaining that digitalization involves integrating and mobilizing technology within organizations to improve their performance and behavior. This definition also introduces the organizational dimension; digital transformation thus requires a change in operational processes or the creation of new business models (Ross, Beath, & Quaadgras, 2013). Digitalization is also understood from a social perspective, defined as a phenomenon that influences all aspects of human life (Matt, Hess, & Benlian, 2015). This illustrates the well-known classification of digital transformation developed by Reis, Amorim, Melao, & Matos (2018), namely, digital transformation with a technological dimension, a social dimension,

and an organizational dimension. Similarly, Lemoine (2014) explains that transformation is the combination of three components: automation, dematerialization, and intermediation schemes. These elements interact and complement each other to improve performance by triggering a comprehensive process of organizational change.

2.2 Innovation in the Public Sector

The arrival of new technologies has accelerated innovation within the public sector (Djella & Gallouj, 2012), and has also paved the way for the digital transition within these organizations. Innovation should not be limited to a purely technical perspective (Boulesnane, Benaissa, Bouzidi, & Chappoz, 2019) but must incorporate other factors that impact the adoption of these technologies by public organizations. Therefore, to study innovation in the public sector, it is necessary to look back in time to explain the spread of information and communication technologies. Indeed, Djella & Gallouj (2012) distinguish two innovation models: the first based on mainline computing and the second on decentralized computing and networks. The computerization driven by these two approaches presents an opportunity to improve the efficiency and transparency of public services. In reality, ICTs have introduced profound organizational reforms, particularly in functional processes. They have also transformed relationships and exchanges between different stakeholders, both internally and externally. Change management projects must be undertaken in this regard (Boulesnane, Benaissa, Bouzidi, & Chappoz, 2019). The technological aspect, which has enabled the management, processing, and analysis of a significant flow of information in record time, should not be overlooked. Innovation within the public sector stems from a concern for efficiency, which can simultaneously constitute a barrier to innovation (Koch, Cunningham, Schwabsky, & J., 2005). Public innovations can be grouped into process innovations focused on the technological or administrative core of the organization, corresponding to the creation of new organizational forms. This includes the introduction of new management or work methods and techniques, and the creation or introduction of new technologies (Pupion, 2018). The author also discusses product or service innovation related to the creation of new public services or products, governance innovation, and finally conceptual innovation (Pupion, 2018). Innovation within the public sector often faces environmental constraints that necessitate authorization or legitimation for such innovations, organizational constraints linked particularly to an administrative culture that prioritizes procedures, and individual constraints related to the characteristics of civil servants, which certainly influence innovative behaviors (Pupion, 2018).

The effective implementation of digitalization requires significant investment in basic infrastructure and technologies, not to mention the importance of investing in intangible capital. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) encompass communication tools as well as integrated management software packages that facilitate data processing. Big data is also part of the technological innovation revealed within the public sector; it encompasses large datasets characterized primarily by their velocity, variety, and volume (Laney, 2001). Artificial intelligence is based on the use of machines and automated systems to replicate human intelligence (McCarthy, 1955). It thus provides decision-makers with the necessary tools to facilitate decision-making and lighten the most complex tasks.

Conclusion

Morocco has embraced digitalization through several sectoral strategies, such as Maroc Numeric 2013, the Digital Strategy 2020 and 2030, and others. The commitment to digitalization materialized

with the creation of the Moroccan Digital Agency (ADD), established by Royal Decree No. 1-17-27 and published in Official Bulletin No. 6604 on September 14, 2017. Despite the efforts made, the Economic, Social and Environmental Council notes the delays in implementing digital transformation policies, as well as the lack of infrastructure and the legal framework to support digitalization. It also emphasizes the importance of developing a digitalization roadmap.

While the adoption of New Public Management has contributed to modernizing public sector management tools, the situation remains challenging. However, innovation within the public sector is limited by a lack of flexibility, the absence of a regulatory framework, and the complexity of managing organizational change. Indeed, the integration of technologies alone does not pose significant problems; other types of barriers related to human, economic, social, and political transformations must also be addressed (Boulesnane, Benaissa, Bouzidi, & Chappoz, 2019).

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