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PUBLIC GOVERNANCE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, there is no consensus on a definition of the public governance; however many are the international organizations that endeavoured to specify this concept. The public governance is understood in various ways, generally translating the interests and the objectives of the transmitting organizations (Fabre and al. 2007). The administrative reform is a business of long run. The objective of this article is to locate the notion of the public governance in the public sector between yesterday and today.

Key Words:

Governance, public, Gouvernamentalité,
sector, action.

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INTRODUCTION

If, in the public sphere, one preserved the traditional use of government or management of the public affairs, one had to expect Margaret Thatcher who started again the use of the governance term for the public sphere in the turning of the Eighties. This British conservative government started reforms aiming at the power of the local authorities, which one considered ineffective and expensive and which one undertook of recadrer owing to a double strategy (reinforcement of the centralization of the powers and privatization of certain public services).

The public governance proves to be a project, primarily economic, of reorganization of the field of being able of the authorities and coordination of the decentralized organizations. In this case, the system concerned is on the level of the State; the attributes, the risks to be managed as well as the resources put at disposal are taken into account on the level of the nation. This analysis is inspired by the conceptual framework of Fusel oil (2007) which is founded on the distinction of four fundamental groups of factors as follows: the system of analysis, the attribute (S), dangers, and the temporal reference.

Consequently, the developed countries did not cease trying out reforms¹ and attempts at modernization² with an aim of renewing the image of their public sector. Planning Programming Budgeting System (PPBS) in the United States or the Planning programming budgeting system (RCB) in France is two examples of unfinished modernization programs. When it is the public sector, the concept of governance falls under rather broad problems of effectiveness and efficiency of the public action, and relates to the tangled up relationship between controlling and controlled. Although having a meaning specifies for the economists, the terms “effectiveness” and “efficiency” are often used in an indistinct way. In a more precise way, the effectiveness is the measurement of the relationship between the results reached and the set objectives. As for the concept of efficiency, it is defined as follows: “If two solutions have an identical cost, the criterion of efficiency orders to choose that which makes it possible as well as possible to carry out the pursued goals; if two solutions lead to the same result, it is necessary to choose the least expensive” (Simon, 1947, p. 109). In other words, efficiency it is the effectiveness at the best cost. In addition, the efficiency term requires a significance in the analysis of the rational public

¹The administrative reform is a business of long run.

² In Europe and after about fifteen years of failures, one does not speak any more a reform of the State, one speaks rather about modernization about the public sector.

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decisions which considers that the public choice of an allowance (a distribution enters the agents of the goods available the economy) is done between efficient allowances within the meaning of Pareto, for primary resources and a set of technologies available (Kast and Laped, 2002).

The comprehension of the concept of public governance encourages us to explore successively the definitions of the public governance and the role of the modern State and its field of action which approaches, in its turn, the passage of the government towards the governance, the administrative reform is a business of long run. In Europe and after about fifteen years of failures, one does not speak any more a reform of the State, one speaks rather about modernization about the public sector.

Public governance and principles of the good governance

In this context, let us note that the public sector has several advantages: power of redistribution of wealths and costs of the catastrophe over one long period and to do it on the population, melting its approach on a "principle of solidarity main road"; capacity to diversify risks, the policy of subsidy of the insurance premiums and the obligation of the Law making a compulsory insurance. Nevertheless, the exclusive public assumption of responsibility presents certain disadvantages, in particular the incompetence techniques, the difficulty of adaptation to the changes, the cumbersome procedure of the lawful aspect, the complexity of the procedures, corruption in public networks, etc (Godard and al. 2002, p. 432-439).

Since "the good" governance was essential like pre required to profit from international aid, the "contents" of the concept of governance became more and more clearly (although not inevitably more consensual) and the will of integration of various dimensions of the governance in the strategies of development co-operation increases.

There is thus no consensual definition of the "public governance" applied to the economic analysis, this one remains closely dependent, a priori, with the analytical approach which one chooses to implement; what rather results in having a plurality of definitions located within different conceptual frameworks and which moreover strongly mobilize the external disciplinary fields with the economy.

On the other hand, we underline the fact that the public governance implies a reorganization of the power leading to new forms of public administration where the responsabilisation, the transparency and the obligation of good performances would precede in the public affairs. In this way, the governance is not a related question simply with the government, but also with all those which take part in decision making and are influenced by these decisions.

We conclude that the public governance indicates the participative interaction between the government and the citizens, in order to ensure an effective exploitation of the resources and an increase in the quality of the services offered by the State which implies the improvement of the quality of life of the citizens. Under these conditions, the term of government, based on the centrality of the powers and competences, widens to be included in the governance. This passage towards a new public management is carried out by a new political rationality, which is the *gouvernementality*. All

these changes lead us to consider the role of the modern State and its field of action.

Gouvernementality, a new political rationality

Starting from 1978, Foucault analyzes, in his course at the College de France, the rupture which occurred between the end of 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century and which marks the passage of an art to control inherited the Middle Ages, whose principles take again the virtues traditional morals (wisdom, justice, respect of God) and the ideal of measurement (prudence, reflection), with an art to control whose rationality has as a principle and field of application the operation of the State, the rational "gouvernementality" of the State.

Foucault (1978) advances that "By this word of *gouvernementality*, I want to say three things. By *gouvernementality*, I hear the unit consisted the institutions, the procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations and the tactics which make it possible to exert this quite specific form, although complex, of being able, which has as a main target the population, for major form of knowing the political economy, for essential technical instrument the safety devices. Secondly, by *gouvernementality*, I hear the trend, the tension field which, in all the Occident, did not cease leading, and strong a long time, towards the preeminence of this kind of power which we can call the "government".

Contrary to the term "governance", the term "government" generally returns to an institutional approach. Other sovereignties, disciplines... Finally by *gouvernementality*, I believe that it would be necessary to hear the process or, rather, the result of the process by which the State of justice of the Middle Ages, become with 15th and 16th administrative State centuries, was gradually *gouvernementalized* ".

Foucault prolongs the analysis of the *gouvernementality* of the others by an analysis of the government of oneself. A central transformation in the design of the exercise of the power came out. It is not a question any more of conquering and of having, but of producing, of causing, of organizing the population in order to enable him to develop all its properties. Thus, the reference to the political economy causes a major change in the design of the power. This one does not come any more domination by the war and of the capacity of tax levy on the dominated territories; it from now on will rest on the development of the wealths by activities structured by the political authority (Judith, 2002).

Foucault thus stresses the importance of the "technical procedures", of "the instrumentation" as a central activity in "art to control". For Michel Foucault, to under investigation stick instrumentation in the *gouvernementality* is to give means of better understanding the methods by which the public action endeavours to direct the relations between the political company (via the administrative executive) and the civil society (via its managed subjects), but also between the subjects themselves. The modern *gouvernementality* poses for the first time the political problem of the "population", as an object built by management comprehensive policy of the life of the individuals (bio politic). This biopolitique implies however not only one management of the population but a control of the

strategies that the individuals, in their freedom, can have compared to themselves and ones compared to the others.

To consider the public action under the angle of the instrumentation makes it possible to better characterize the styles (modes) of government, as much as for that of the contemporary transformations of the public action (increasing experimentation of new instruments, problems of coordination of the instruments). An instrument of public action can be defined like an at the same time technical and social device which organize specific social relationship between the public power and its recipients according to the representations and of the significances which it is carrying (Lascoumes, 2004).

In this direction, this concept of gouvernementality establishes the bringing together between the sphere public with the private sphere (the market between in addition to) making so that they can interpenetrate, and to incarnate itself much more in the public action than in the private action (Lascoumes, 2004).

In what concerns us, this concept of gouvernementality calls at the same time on the concept of government and the governance. The slip of the gouvernementality starting from the government is related to the evolutions economic, social, societies and environmental.

This concept of gouvernementality concretizes the evolution of the mode to think of government.

It is a form of organized action which seeks to moderate the extent of the power, in view of the sovereignty of the State by the local rationality of the actors concerned, including those pertaining to the private sphere.

The term “governance” starts to take distance while being autonomisant with respect to the concept of “government”. This is why the reference to the concept of gouvernementality of the philosopher Michel Foucault is interesting in this respect since it establishes a link and a distinction.

The lessons which we learn from the concept of gouvernementality recall certainly us that the governance takes account of the centrality of the government as well as other alternate mechanisms, complex, between the various relevant social groups in order to make possible its action. We will thus retain that could explain the official decentralization, the public-public partnerships and the public-private partnerships (from now on PPP) which came out in a context of failure as well of the states as of the markets (for example financial). One speaks under these conditions about the new public administration, known by his translation of the “New public management”.

The field of the action of the modern State

Generally, the governance requires a comprehensive approach of the objectives and methods, one of its most important objectives is the modernization of the public administration and the checking of the existence of the indicators of the quality of life of the citizens like the education and the health which are costs for the State considered as investments with LT. First of all, a distinction is to be made between these three concepts of “sector public”³, “public service”⁴ and “civil service”⁵ (Bartoli,

2005, p. 52). Taking into account the heterogeneity of the entities concerned, we propose in the continuation of our work the adoption of the expression “public organizations” which makes it possible to open the reflection on the whole of the organizations of the public sphere, whatever their statutes and structures and allows, also, to develop a glance on the operation of the units by avoiding confusion with the “macro” approach relating to the role of the very whole administration (IBID, p. 59).

New designs redefining the fields of action of the modern State in the field of education, the research and the financing of the great projects of infrastructures appeared. Among those, let us note the endogenous theories of growth developed by Romer (1986), Lucas (1988) and Barro (1990) who show the beneficial effects of the intervention of the State on the whole of the economy, including the private sector. More specifically, Barro (1990) approaches the concept of positive externalities which mean that part of the public expenditure give rise to economies of scale. It shows that the public investment of infrastructures generates a double effect: a multiplication of the initial expenditure (the multiplier effect) and an increase in capacity (the accelerating effect). Is added to it a positive effect known as external coming from a productivity increased because of multiple factors going of the time-saver related to the improvement of the transport networks to the reductions in the costs caused by more efficient production techniques. In the same way, Musgrave (1959) specifies the fields of action of the Public authorities. It defines the three following functions: the allowance (or the assignment) of the resources, the stabilization of the economy and primary distributions of the incomes and the national wealth.

The public action does not meet the same needs that the private sector and certain authors rejected the idea to even compare the methods of public governance with the methods of the corporate governance. Thereafter, that it is of effectiveness, efficiency, quality or added-value⁶, we consider that the question of the performance in the public sector rests on the need for raising certain ambiguities and to avoid the pure and simple transpositions coming from the private sector (Bartoli, 2005, p. 128).

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⁴ La concept of “public sector” returns to a structural dimension.

⁵ La concept of “public service” returns to a politico-cultural dimension

⁶ The concept of added-value traditionally constitutes a central indicator of creation of wealth, as well in the micro-economic analysis as in the macro-economic theories.

³Modernization is defined by the reduction of the obstacles in progress.

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