

PUBLIC INNOVATION IN POST-TRANSITION COUNTRIES: experiences from Brazil and Romania

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1 – Introduction

There are two transformative accomplishments in the public administration theory and practice. The first was the bureaucratic reform, which occurred around the early 20th century, focusing on the rationalization of the processes, organization of hierarchies, and the imposition of impersonal relations and meritocracy (Bresser-Pereira, 2017; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). The second was the New Public Management (NPM) movement, which the earliest adopters countries likely Sweden, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and UK (Hood, 1995) embraced some of its assumptions in the 1980s, while the latest adopters – likely some of Latin American (Bresser-Pereira, 2017) and East European countries (Văduva, 2016) – continue their processes of reform after the 1990s.

The NPM reforms influenced the emergence of innovation as a central issue in the public sector. This connection is a reason for the concept of innovation regards as an appendix of the broad economic theory of innovation. Under the umbrella of the economic theory, innovation is the insertion of new ideas, new practices, or new proceedings, or the improvement of the existing products or services (Mortensen & Bloch, 2005). When translated to the public context, innovation represents the break of bureaucratic patterns, giving place to the new practices able to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of public policies (Crosby, Hart, & Torfing, 2017).

However, the simple translation of the economic approaches is not enough to perceive all the features enrolled in the innovation applied to the public sector. The governments are worried not only about the efficiency of management or the economic results, but they need to conduct their proposes in an intricated context of politics to deliver public value. According to Bason (2010) and Bryson, Crosby, and Bloomberg (2014), public value is a central concept for understanding public innovation. It is related to the capacity of governments in transforming new ideas in value to society. In other terms, when the society (or at least a part of it) perceives that the new practices are positive and improve, for example, public services, the implementation of democratic relations, or the access of equity opportunities of education, health care or security services.

Although the NPM has become a convergent model between practitioners, there is none consensus among scholars about whether NPM generates public value and a better society (Osborne, Radnor, Kinder, & Vidal, 2015). Some say that NPM is a neoliberal approach (Lorenz, 2012), which tends to downsize the states and prioritizes an individualistic approach for public service (Haque, 2007). Others affirm that NPM is contrary to the ethos of public service since it regards the individualism and the market relations over the citizen engagement and the public interest (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). Beyond the debate of NPM and neoliberal approach, we want to demonstrate two principal arguments. First, the comprehension of innovation under the perspective of public value is useful to conciliate the capacity of the state for promoting, for example, social policies with the budget limitations, especially in consequence of the increase of social demands. Second, the historical aspects of the countries are essential to understanding their unique trajectories in terms of public innovation ability.

Regarding the second argumentation, there is a lack in the current interpretation of public innovation. Contrary a certain tendency to the convergence about the innovation, the lack refers to the difficulty to understand how relational-subjective and material-objective aspects connect

the local and divergent conditions to the global and convergent mainstream of modernizing. Concerning the local conditions, the history of the countries is extremely crucial to understand their peculiar capacity to create and co-create new solutions for public policies.

Thus, we compare two cases, Brazil and Romania, aiming to illustrate the connection between innovation, modernization, and path-dependence. The paper focuses on innovation in public administration, and how public policies changed under the impact of social development, analyzing the contribution of local history on innovation. One of these cases is from Brazil, where after two decades of a non-democratic regime and a hard period of re-democratization, the reform movement started in the 1990th with the 'Plan of State Reform' (Bresser-Pereira, 2015). The other case study is Romania, where, after almost five decades of a closed communist regime, the external pressures of international organizations (such as European Commission, The World Bank, International Monetary Fund) combined with economic development led to modernization and 'Europeanization' (Holzinger & Knill, 2005; Knill & Lehmkuhl, 2002; Olsen, 2002). We think these contexts are fruitful to demonstrate that the initiatives are product elements assembled by the historical and material frames.

The next part of this study presents a brief understanding of the connections between Public Innovation and the theoretical perspectives of Path-dependence and Actor-Network Theory. After this preliminary discussion, we explore two cases of innovation in the public services of education from Brazil and Romania and promote comparative analysis of the cases. In conclusion, we regard some questions which propose an agenda of a program of studies about the trajectories of the countries for better understanding public innovation.

2 - Public Innovation, Path-dependence and Actor-Network Theory

Innovation in the public sector involves at least two different branches of interpretation. First, it can be the public policies of innovation, which intend to create appropriate environments for the practices of innovation in the private sector. Under this perspective, there is a wide range of policies of science and technology which beneficiate strategic areas selected on the public agenda. This sort of initiatives is essential for the development of regions and countries. In this scope, for instance, there are the National/Regional Systems of Innovation (Fagerberg & Srholec, 2008; Freeman, 1995; Lundvall, 2010; Vecchiato & Roveda, 2014) and the Triple Helix theory (Etzkowitz, 2003; Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1996). The core of the national systems of innovation illuminates “the institutions and mechanisms supporting technical innovation in the various countries, the similarities and differences across countries and how these came to be, and to permit at least preliminary discussion of how these came to be, and to permit at least preliminary discussion of how the differences matter” (Nelson and Rosenberg, (1993), p. 3). The Triple-Helix theory emphasizes the increasing importance of Academy-Industry-Government interactions for providing development, especially in the regions (Etzkowitz, 2003). This approach does not focus on the public sector organizational and institutional innovations, but how governments can perform science and technology policies of technical changes.

Under the second approach, innovation means the new practices adopted by governments, by mean of which it is possible to improve processes, services, products, and public policies (Fuglsang & Ronning, 2015; Moreira, Tonelli, Mesquita, Silva, & Silva, 2016; Stewart-Weeks & Kastle, 2015).

Whereas the first approach is more susceptible to consider the historical aspects of each country, once it is crucial to comprehend the technological development as a cultural change (See, for example, Isaksen and Trippel (2016), the second approach is more susceptible to adopt the general view of the innovation theory. The broad scope of the theory of innovation focuses on the managerial capacity of transforming radical ideas or incremental improvements in something concrete, measured in terms of economic value, concerning aspects as adoption, diffusion, and evaluation (Christensen, Raynor, & McDonald, 2015; Downs & Mohr, 1979; Kline & Rosenberg, 1986).

In comparison with the classical theory of innovation, public innovation establishes the public value as a measure of its success, beyond the financial metrics. The public value would define the central difference between public and private innovation (Bryson, Crosby, & Bloomberg, 2014; Misuraca & Viscusi, 2015; Stoker, 2006). Despite the fact of the economic and efficiency indicators still represent significant in the context of public administration, most of the practitioners still develop their analysis basing exclusively on the managerial and economical approach, which suggests that there is lack of connections between an authentic analysis of public innovation and the managerial practices inside the governments (Bloch & Bugge, 2013). Bloch and Bugge (2013), for example, demonstrate how frameworks developed for the context of private sector capture public sector innovation.

Considering the different perspectives, the innovation in the governments lacks the contextualization broadly applied by the science and technology critics. Most of the studies present innovation as something decontextualized of the historical, cultural, and material aspects which create the conditions and shape the opportunities for its practice.

In this scenario, the path dependence and the actor-network theory can contribute to understand the innovation in the public sector more substantially and to develop an authentic approach of innovation for the public sector. According to Pierson (2000), Path Dependence is commonly used for describing political processes in comparative analysis. Path Dependence usually explains a wide range of social outcomes or how small contingencies and particular courses of action can produce irreversible consequences (Pierson, 2000: 251). In terms of the historical trajectory of countries, Voicu (2018) affirms that although there is a similar pattern of economic and social development, the countries differ in the cultural sphere. For instance, some countries are more religious, other more equal in terms of gender, other more traditional, and these contexts interfere with economic development (Voicu, 2018).

Following Voicu (2018: 17), aspects as “modernization, history and social institutions combine and shape the cultural norms.” More evidence permit to affirm that the shared values shape the trajectory of technological and economic development. Weber, for example, presents a strong thesis about how the protestant ethic contributed to consolidate the capitalist economic system (Weber, 2013). The cultural and historical dimensions are crucial to comprehend the current state of things. In this context, culture is understood as “a set of norms and skills that are conducive to survival in a given environment, constituting a survival strategy for a society.” (Inglehart, 2018, p.17). While economic development provides resources, culture provides a “tool kit” of repertoires of actions which are combined by individual actors in new ways (Swindler, 1986), leading to innovation.

Basing on that, we consider innovation as a materialization of creativity using strategy and skills learned from experience. This approach is necessarily connected with the culture as a substantial factor to explain the innovation, especially in the public sector. Bason (2010), for

example, establishes people and culture as one of his four key factors to define the capacity or the structure necessary to be an innovative public organization. However, it is not such visible studies which consider the episodes of the past as still relevant for shaping values and structures available in the present.

For Greener (2002), the Path-dependence is not without problems. The incremental change is well explained, but radical is more difficult to accommodate. In situations of revolutionary change, when the practices are entirely replaced, it is more difficult to account for. Wilsford (1994) explores the large changes in public health care services in diverse countries and proposes the interplay of structure with conjuncture to understand them. Mentioning Machiavelli, Wilsford (1994) remembers that the new order of things is difficult to manage, dubious about accomplishing, and its success is doubtful. Therefore, the notion of conjuncture would be useful to reassemble the elements into new combinations, considering the contingency of circumstances (Wilsford, 1994).

For Greener (2002), even the conjecture argument has implicit a sort of historical determinism, once it presupposes a “number of contingencies happen to come together to allow us to change” (Greener, 2002, p. 615). From these limitations, Greener (2002) proposes the Actor-network theory in order to gain additional insights to understand the change processes, beyond the determinism of structures and contingencies. Actor-network theory (ANT) comprehends the reality as an assemblage of indissociable, hybrid, and heterogenous elements from the material and social life ((Michel Callon, 1986; Bruno Latour, 1999a, 1999b; B. Latour, 2005; John Law, 1999). Under ANT, history performs through processes of translation.

Czarniawska (2009) considers the process of translation so crucial for ANT, that this theory has been comprehended as a sociology of translation. The process of translation is what permits to see, for example, the architecture and the formal agreements as the materialization of many elements of the past. However, Serres and Latour (1995) advert that this process does not run in a line of time. Some metaphors help to understand these ideas. Serres and Latour (1995) consider the automobile. A recent model is a heterogeneous gathering of scientific and technical solutions from different eras. It is possible to date piece by piece: the Carnot cycle is about 200 years old. The wheel goes back to the Neolithic. A newer solution is ten years old. In short, the set is not contemporary except for its assembly, design, and publicity. Any historical event is multitemporal and the processes of translation are what promote the connection between the most diverse elements (Serres & Latour, 1995).

ANT opens new perspectives for understanding the process of shaping reality to explore the movements that the assembly of things acquire forms. Under ANT, there is no ontological distinction between materiality and humanity, once both work together producing influences over all the things we are involved (Callon & Latour, 1981; Latour, 2001; Latour, 2005; Law, 2003). This perspective is consistent and “can provide a set of concepts which add theoretical depth to path-dependency” (Greener, 2002, p. 616).

One perspective is the ANT emphasis on the fact that the trajectory is opened. In other words, there is no possibility to specify the results of the changes, once the actors-network itself acquire performatic and unpredictable trajectories. Greener (2002) explores a Granovetter and McGuire (1998) premise which establishes that when the technology is new, the markets for it does not yet exist, and it opens opportunities for the entrepreneurs acting. In this process, a crucial aspect relates to the need for diminishing the market complexity. For Greener (2002), some simplification is necessary, and would be naïve to comprehend it as rigidities of the market, but

as the irreversibility of the heterogeneous arrangement of the firms, regulating bodies, governments, potential customers, as well as any other element which takes part of the network. Applying this view to the public innovation, it is possible to consider the historical and bureaucratic structures as essential ingredients, but we cannot despise the importance of entrepreneurs agents in creating and co-creating new possibilities and networks of action.

3 – Case Studies

The Brazilian Pathway School Program

The pathway school program is an illustrative case of how the public sector can create the solutions for wicked problems, delivering public value to the citizens, with the collaboration of the society and the private sector. However, to understand the innovative policy, it is necessary to comprehend the antecedents of the federalism in Brazil.

The method of federalism, accordingly with Weiler (2000), has to combine two prerequisites: the search of unity by mean of the respect of autonomy and the legitimate interests of the participant entities. So, considering the sociopolitical context, the federalism acquires the capacity of adapting. In Brazil, there are two critical moments of federalism. The first, from 1889 and 1930, the subnational states could keep a high level of autonomy in administrative, legislative, and political terms. The second, after 1930, the central government concentrates responsibilities and the subnational governments loose part of their autonomy, especially in legislative terms. Consequently, the budgetary and managerial capacity of elaborating and implementing broad spectrum public policies concentrate in the central government, whereas the subnational states and municipalities became subsidiary of the central authority.

The Pathway School Program inserts in this context of federative relation. The National Fund of Development of Education (NFDE) is an organization linked to the Ministry of Education, and it coordinates the transfer of resources to municipalities for the implementation of Basic Education policies. The cities execute the strategy, but who finances is the federal government through the NFDE.

The Constitution ensures the right of accessing public service of education by the population. NFDE seeks to provide the resources for the municipalities to implement the primary school. So, the formulation of the public policy concentrate on the NFDE, and the implementation is decentralized.

The history began in 2006. There was a hypothesis that a cause of the absence of students in the school was the lack or precarity of transport. To better understand the context of rural school transportation in Brazil, NFDE contracted researchers from the University of Brazilia to answer the following question: how is the general situation of the transport of children to school in rural areas?

In a questionnaire sent to all the Brazilian municipalities, 2,277 answered all the questions. Among the results, the researchers observed that the average age of the fleet was 16 years. The vehicles used were buses (45%); vans (21%); trucks - (17%); minibus (9%); boat (4%); automotive (3%); motorcycle (1%) and others (1%). 76.8% of the vehicles had no seat belt, and 61.5% did not have school identification. After the online questionnaire, the researchers visited a sample of municipalities. They answered questions about distance traveled, average journey time, among other things. Also, the researchers carried out onboard research. They took the bus

and closely followed the daily routine of students who use the school bus. It was possible to obtain additional information on the number of students, the difficulty of accessing the school, the complexity of accessing the service, the time of a journey, and the average age of the users of the service.

Once knowing this scenario, during 2007 and 2008, public managers, researchers, certification bodies, and manufacturers established a broad collaborative dialogue standing for to developing technical specifications that could contribute to the construction of a rural school bus that set up all the requirements and the heterogeneity of Brazilian municipalities.

Many obstacles had to be overcome. First, the NFDE established a continuous dialogue to convince the industry. The civil servants had to learn about the specificities of the sector. For example, who makes the frame is a company, and who makes the engine is another. Most are multinational and do not have the autonomy to produce something new only in Brazil. The industry did not believe in the project when it started. The plan was building a vehicle to reach places where only trucks and vans go through. However, the idea seemed insane. Also, the industry needed to invest in adaptations of its productive park.

Lots of questions arose: Who guarantees that a market for this type of vehicle could start? Would the municipalities join the program? At the same time, it was necessary to break the resistance of the local governments. This situation was a challenge because there was already a local market for transport service. Besides, equipment financing was required to enable the purchase by the municipalities. A critical barrier referred to the buying process. If the NFDE centralize the buying process, how would the municipality join and purchase?

The hiring process by the public sector is regulated by Law 8.666 of 1993. In this Law, had provided an instrument called a Price Register. The company interested in responding to a call (competition or trading floor) offers its price for a particular product or service. The bidder who proposes the lowest price will be declared the winner, and his offer would be registered in the "record of prices." When the Administration needs that product or service, it may request the hiring for the price that is displayed.

Before 2008, price registration was not widely used. It restricted to limited items, with a very uncertain forecast of demand. The first time that the government used the price registration broadly was in 2008 with the first electronic hiring session of Path School Program.

Thus, NFDE invented a new form of public buying, centralizing the definition of technical requisites and the buying process, and decentralizing the purchasing. This new model represented a significant innovation in terms of public policy. The NFDE by itself did not purchase buses, but it makes available appropriate buses for the municipalities.

The technical specifications were elaborated in an extensive collaboration of many actors, like the government (NFDE, municipalities and the Institute of Metrology, Quality, and Technology), Industry, University, and the society.

Once the first version of the rural bus school was made viable, and after the first acquisitions by the municipalities, the researchers returned to the field. The acceptance was very comprehensive. From this point of view, the project progressed to adaptations.

An interesting example is that many drivers fitted a car headlight in the back of the buses. After asking the reason, the managers discovered why: to allow maneuvers at night. For giving back, it is necessary to see what is behind. It could be a tree or a stick. Brazilian traffic laws did not allow this adaptation. However, after this feedback, the Brazilian legislation changed, and the rear light incorporated the next version of the bus.

Regarding innovation types, it is easy to perceive that the pathway school program shaped a new product – the rural school bus; a new public policy based on the collaborative arrangement including diverse actors; a new inter-federative process of buying buses; and a new market for the automotive industry. In 2012, the school path represented 40% of Brazilian public buses production. Currently, the industry itself is proposing technical innovations – suppliers start to compete for offering the most fitted product.

The Romanian School Bus Program

The school bus program has a different history in Romania, although it addresses the same social needs, namely to reduce and prevent the school dropout and to increase the quality of education especially in rural areas, where the access to education suffers because of the poor school infrastructures and of the qualification of the teaching staff (Jigău et al., 2012) (Jigău, 2000). The history of the program is intertwined with the one of demographic change in post-communist Romania, as well as with the path to integration to the European Union. Thus, the path followed by the Romanian program is different from the one in Brasilia, while the issues faced and overcome are different too.

The program started in Romania in the late 90s when the first cohorts of students born after 1990 enrolled in primary education. Before 1989 the fertility rate in Romania was above 2.5 due to the pronatalist policies promoted by Ceaușescu's regime in starting in 1967. The post-communist transition came with a drastic drop in fertility rate (Ghețău, 2007), which made redundant part of the existing school infrastructure because the size of student population halved during the first decade of transition. The government decided to close many schools, especially in small villages and to merge them with bigger school units located in the center of the administrative-territorial unit (comună). The school system shrank again after 2007 when Romania joined the EU, and a significant number of Romanians moved abroad, some of them taking their children too. The system was reorganized several times in the past three decades, small schools from rural areas being merged again, international organizations such as the World Bank having an essential role in shaping the education policies in the first years of transition.

School dropout grew in rural areas, mainly among children coming from low-income families and living in remote villages, the transition from one primary school to the gymnasium and from the gymnasium to high school being report as critical moments for dropout (Voicu, 2009). The distance that the students must walk daily to go to school being among the main reasons for dropout.

The government established in the late '90s a school bus program mainly for students living in rural areas. The acquisition of school bases is the task of the Ministry of Education and is subsidized from the central budget. However, local authorities are in charge of running the program and of covering the everyday expenses and maintenance costs. Although the central government is buying regularly new school buses, the fact that the responsibility of the program

is divided between the central government and the local authorities raise some new issues, in the same time opening the door to innovation.

The school bus program faces problems caused by lack of funding; the daily maintenance is covered by the local authorities which do not have enough funding to check regularly the buses, to hire a professional bus driver or to replace the spare parts when needed (Avocatul Poporului, 2013). Moreover, there are not enough buses to cover all the settlements belonging to the same administrative unit, the same bus driving all children to and from the school, while in other cases there is not the official schedule of the school bus or the coordination between bus schedule and school schedule misfit. As an outcome, some students spent very long time daily on the bus or missed some of the classes (Avocatul Poporului, 2013).

The issues caused by the misfit between the actions of the central government and those of local authorities led to the need to find ways to cope with the difficulties. The task division between local and central authorities is rooted in the tendency to the decentralization of public services encouraged by EU regulations. The leading idea is to give room to local authorities to manage their programs according to the local needs and resources. In some cases, local authorities proved to be the weak tie, unable to coordinate resources and needs or just not having funds to invest in the program.

The central government responded to the challenge by taking some actions which open the door for the private sector, local involvement, and parents' initiative. The government gives tax exemption to the public companies running school buses and subsidizes the bus ticket for students commuting to another place for education. This scenario opens the door to local initiative and investments in school buses. Moreover, in some cases, parents organize shifts and drive children to school using their means of transportation. In other cases, public employees of local administration volunteer for operating the school bus in shifts (Avocatul Poporului, 2013).

The school bus program was implemented in Romania under the framework of the national laws and of the EU regulations regarding public spending. Moreover, as an EU member state, Romania is part of the common European market, and the choices in case of public acquisitions have a broad scope, as long as each country can buy from any providers in EU. Thus, in Romania, there was no room for public innovation in tenders' selection and producing new type of buses. The landscape does not raise a big challenge as in the case of Brazil, while the European market provides enough choices which fit the needs of local communities in Romania.

However, the process is not so much framed by existing regulations and pre-determined choices at the local level, and this is the place where innovation occurred. Local communities mobilized in running the program and in overcoming the challenges that arise in its implementation. There are two reasons which led to the significant involvement of local communities in supporting the program. The first one has to do with the target group, children living in the area, and the literature on support for social policies points out that people are very willing to grant relief to measures directed to children (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Taylor-Gooby, 2005). The second reason is connected with European culture, which promotes social solidarity as one of its core values (Lahusen & Grasso, 2018), stimulating citizens to support one another and to work together for producing public goods. In this case, innovation resides in strategies adopted by local communities, which rely on the European cultural background. Social solidarity is, in this case,

a tool belonging to the European cultural tool kit that can be used to solve issues faced by local communities.

4 - Discussion

The Romanian case goes in the opposite direction as the Brazilian one. Brazil is a federation, and the Pathway School Program, conducted by the central authorities proved to be a success story of designing a centralized policy, even considering a decentralized federation. Romania walked in the opposite direction, from a centralized state, under the communist rule, to a polity where innovation occurs at the intersection between local initiative, community involvement and the policies promoted by the central government. Both cases show how change can occur as a response to unmet public need. However, the two paths go in the opposite direction, as the outcome of the historical circumstances.

Table 1 presents a synthesis of the two cases. It is possible to observe that the motivations of the two cases are similar. However, the trajectories follow different paths. ANT permits to explore the distinct stories in terms to follow the actors-network enrolled in each context (Law, 2003; Law & Callon, 1992). For example, an interesting question to respond is how a historically centralized country as Romania develops a context to flourish bottom-up initiatives of public innovation, while a federation theoretically decentralized as Brazil had to concentrate the elaboration of the program. There is no way to answer this question without an immersion in the historical episodes which create distinctive features and conditions in both countries. For example, the year's post 1930th in Brazil need to be considered in the current analysis, because Getulio Vargas promoted a crucial convergence in the federative arrangement, diminishing the power of the subnational states and concentrating power in the central government. All the outspreads in the sociopolitical and economic spheres are directly or indirectly resulting from this past episode.

In Romania, whereas the absence of the totalitarian presence of the State after the fall of communism left a negative impact in the citizen engagement with political questions (Tatar, 2016), however, the case presented a possibility to develop public solutions with the active involvement of the local actors.

Table 1: A Synthetic Comparison Between the Cases

| | Brazilian Pathway School Program | Romanian School Bus Program |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Goal | Provide material means – school transportation – to enable compliance with the Constitution, providing education for all people. | Providing equal access to education, by mean of a government program of school transportation. |
| Challenge | To overcome the difficulties caused by lack of access to educational services in remote areas. | To overcome the difficulties caused by lack of access to educational services in remote areas. |
| Responsible | National Fund of Development of Education –Ministry of Education – Federal Government | Townhall, Ministry of Education, Ministry of European Funds |
| Actors involved | Few actors representants of industry and governments. The society participates passively only in the first phase of research. Decentralized implementation – it depends on the local government. | Responsibility divided between central government, local authorities and local community |
| Historical Context | The historical situation of a peculiar federalism, by which there is a | Demographic changes Restructuring of the school system |

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| | centralization of economic resources in the central or federal government – about 70% of all resources concentrates in the federal government. | Accession to European Union Impact of international organizations on educational policies |
| Material/economic challenges | Heterogeneous local demands due to the large territory, having different administrative and cultural practices, to the geographical landscape – geography, administration of the schools and cities, cultural practices, etc., and the evolution of the buses projects, which search for incorporating all the contingencies. The challenges caused by the landscape in organizing the school bus program required adaptation and innovation. | To reorganize the access of children in a context of reducing the birth rate. To create the support system for running the program: central government invests regularly in buying school buses (including support of European agencies). Local administration, should invest funds in running the program. |
| Results | New product – the rural school bus; a new public policy based on the collaborative arrangement; a new inter-federative process of buying buses; and a new market for the automotive industry. | The project led to the growth of local initiative and to the mobilization of local community. Because Romania is a EU member state and part of the common European market there were and still are many choices available for buying buses. |

It is notable the historical conditions in which innovation occurs. For instance, see the potential of co-production or co-creation of innovation, which permits the participation of the citizens in the elaboration and control of public policies. Both cases happen after periods of centralized control of the state, what theoretically would conduct the society to keep passive in terms of participation if we look from a determinist perspective of path-dependent history. In Brazil, this situation reflects on the centralization all steps of designing and elaboration of the pathway school program by a federal office. The municipalities acceded after, but the program, the legal and economic conditions which would permit the purchase he buses by cities, the new market for scholar buses, and other crucial aspects for the creations of public innovations kept dependent of central offices.

However, a different trajectory occurred in Romania. Despite living a post healthy and closed communist regime, the process of Europeanization, and the form of organization as a unitarian state, the case studied showed that the citizens working together with local authorities and government offices were crucial in the running of the program, especially to available finance supporter. This situation evidenced that the past does not determine in all details the quality of citizen engagement in terms of public innovation, but each case presents its challenges, as different contingencies and necessities to overcome.

To apply a path dependent approach is useful to understand, for example, how a federative country like Brazil developed a state so reliant on the central power. Although the subnational states receive politic and administrative autonomy at the federal constitution, in practice, they are dependent on the intergovernmental transferences of resources from the central government. In this paper, we showed that the Getulio Vargas first government between (1930 and 1945) represented a critical inflection point of Brazil federalism. This situation reflects in the case study. Beyond the resources to mobilize industries, modify laws, assemble material conditions, the central government offices also have the better careers for professionals, and the quality of the work-people is one crucial aspect for innovation for Bason (2010).

However, as Greener (2002) suggested, the path dependency can receive useful insights from ANT, especially considering the processes of translations. What we usually perceive looking to the historical episodes is a black box, a simplification of happenings. However, when we apply ANT as an analytical lens, we can see, for example, hidden details which could connect the financial decisions of the European agencies with the local mobilization of local actors to run the program of school transportation in remote areas of Romania. We could also perceive how the decisions of diminishing the power of subnational states in Brazil in the Vargas' age could influence the dependency of the central government which Brazil still lives.

The cases are also examples of how to produce or co-produce public value from public innovation, even with restrictions of resources. Considering the fiscal situation and the social obligations already assumed by states, innovation reforms can be a viable alternative (maybe the only one) to keep the social agenda by states. Innovation permits to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector, and can to be mean to involve citizens in the context of the politics.

5 - Conclusion

We have described above two comparative cases of innovation in the public sector to demonstrate that considering the historical contexts is crucial for comprehending the potential of creating and co-creating new solutions to deliver public value to the society. We compared two cases from Brazil and Romania of education services, aiming to illustrate the connection between innovation, modernization, and path-dependence. The paper focused on innovation in public administration and how public policies changed under the impact of historical episodes, analyzing the contribution of local history to innovation.

The new public management reform put together needs like the fiscal balance of governments, the increase of efficiency, the importance of public value, and the centrality of innovation for facing wicked problems. The reform focuses on more efficient allocation of resources and integrating information and communication technology (Zulean, Andreescu, Gheorghiu, Roescu, & Curaj, 2017). However, the innovation in the governments has been studied broadly in terms of improving the quality of practices, with methodologies like design thinking, and practices usually inspired in the economics and administrative science. The proposal here was not to diminish the importance of the current approaches, but bringing up aspects of the history, and how they are essential to understand innovation potential.

Both cases teach us some things. One relates to the potential of co-creating solutions under or not the leadership of a government office. Even considering influences of the past episodes of non-democratic regimes in Brazil (1937-1945 / 1964-1985) and the communism in Romania (1947-1989) over the citizen engagement in public policies, especially in Romania the success of public innovation studied was dependent of the involvement of local citizens. The path-dependent approach alone reveals limited when it does not perceive the chain of happenings which create the contingencies of local engagement in a country where the civil liberty was suspended for 42 years.

In the case of Brazil, the curious situation was around the peculiar federation historically constructed. The case studied does not permit to put aside the federative organization in Brazil. Accordingly to Weiler (2000), federalism has to combine the search of unity by mean of the respect of autonomy and the legitimate interests of the participant entities. However, the subnational states developed an extraordinarily economical and budgetary dependence of the

Union (central government). The negative implication of this situation over the local leadership is notable in the case studied. Although being the case an excellent example of the success of centralized design and coordination, the regional power restricts in adhering the program.

The cases also contribute to the critical reflection of the path dependent approach, and following Greener (2002), offering the ANT as a possible source of insights. If innovation is crucial for promoting the social services, comprehending more the innovations processes is essential to provide to policymakers and practitioners the necessary information to overcome all the barriers. To follow the actors-network as Latour, Law, and Callon propose could permit more comprehension about how to make the translation processes useful to see all the landscapes.

This research was an exploratory comparative analysis of two cases in contexts very distinct, and this was a challenge for performing this study. As an exploratory, the paper does not emerge in all details of the cases. However, we believe that the investigation achieves its proposition of bringing up the importance of past episodes to shape the current public innovations. We expect this contribution can awake new inquiries worried about the role of the history in the potential, capacity, design, implementation, and evaluation of public innovations.

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