Public Management Reforms at the Municipal Level: a Multi-case Study in Barcelona, Boston and Turin

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Abstract

This paper is based on a policy-making study that sought to compare 15 cases of innovation in public management policies (PMPs) and in the design of programmatic organizations (DPOs) in three analytical units: Barcelona, Boston and Turin. The research adopted an inductive methodological approach and had descriptive and explanatory aims. The description of cases was guided by the five conventional variables of policy-making studies: contents (what), actors (who), phases (when), institutions (where) and styles (how), the 4W1H framework. This framework was also used in the explanatory phase of the research, resting on the empirical findings in the field to arrive at the formulation of hypotheses about the relationship between the five variables. This research generates two hypotheses 1) the content of a policy can influence the phase in which conflicts are more intense: 2) the policymaking style can influence the phase in which conflicts are more intense.

1 Introduction

In the last three decades different types of values have been prompting changes in how practitioners and scholars actuate in the public administration field. This wave of changes is certainly the most significant qualitative shift in practices and discourses observed in the public administration since the bureaucratic model crystallized in the public organizations of Western democracies.

National and local levels of government have been involved in a progressive and cumulative process of public management reforms. These reforms are backed by a general desire/necessity to turn the bureaucratic Weberian model into new organization and relational models, namely the New Public Management (NPM), the Entrepreneurial Government (EG) and the Public Governance (PG).

The doctrines behind these reforms are policy orientation to the citizens' needs, concern with performance of public service delivery, the introduction of private management tools and practices into the public administration, the involvement of stakeholders in public decision-making, the partnership of the public sector with private and non-profit organizations in policy implementation, the transparency and the accountability of public officials' actions to their constituencies.

The justifications behind these doctrines are alternately related to values of efficiency, equity and responsiveness (Hood & Jackson 1991).

The transitions in models of management and relationship have taken place in the different national and sub-national contexts with different rhythms, intensity, and timing. There are several theoretical interpretations of the causes of the public management reforms under way. We can summarize the triggers of these processes in demand-side and supply-side factors.

On the demand side the most cited causes of reforms are the fiscal crisis of government (Aucoin 1990, Hood 1995, Pollitt & Bouckaert 2002a), the intensification of qualitative and quantitative demands of public services (Inglehart 1991), the growing territorial competitiveness for private investments, skilled workforce, and knowledge (Subirats & Quintana 2005). The traditional bureaucratic model has been deemed inadequate to the cope with the cited challenges, because of its presumed inefficiency, slowness, self-referentiality and detachment from the citizens' needs (Barzelay 1992, Osborne & Gaebler

1992, Hood 1995, Pollitt & Bouckaert 2002a). The combination of these "threats" have been making governmental authorities strive to tighten belts, improve quality and effectiveness, and change their relationship with the general public.

On the supply side, the public management reforms are validated by the availability of new technological and organizational solutions (Nalbandian 2005), the dissemination of neo-liberal values in the way the state and the public sector are organized (Guerrero Orozco 1999, Battistelli 2002), the material and symbolic incentives for politicians and consultants in presenting new solutions to old problems (March & Olsen 1983, Christensen & Lægreid 2003) and the consolidation of multi-actors platforms of scholars and practitioners for sharing benchmarks of new public management practices. In the old continent, the Europeanization process (Olsen 2002, Radaelli 2005) has been provoking relevant impacts on the public service delivery, stimulating the adoption of organizational models and overhauling public management policies at the national, regional and municipal levels of government.

Using Kingdon's metaphor, the problem stream converged with the policy stream and the political stream, and public management reforms boosted since the 80s.

Following Barzelay's framework (2000, 2001), the public management reforms are carried out through changes in public management policies (PMPs) and changes in the design of programmatic organizations (DPOs).

PMPs are guidelines to public management action transversally affecting all areas of public service delivery. Changes in PMPs affect practices in the areas of human resources (HR) management, financial management, performance management, information and communication technology (ICT), public marketing, and procurement (Barzelay 2001)[i]. DPOs directly touch issues of public service delivery like organization design, privatization in its various senses (vending of public assets, outsourcing), interorganizational policy implementation (franchising, joint ventures, strategic partnering), the participation of non-state actors in decision-making, along with marketization of public services (Barzelay 2000).

Putting it differently, a public management reform is an abstract construct to an array of interrelated innovations in the operations of public organizations.

Figure 1: The contents of public management reforms

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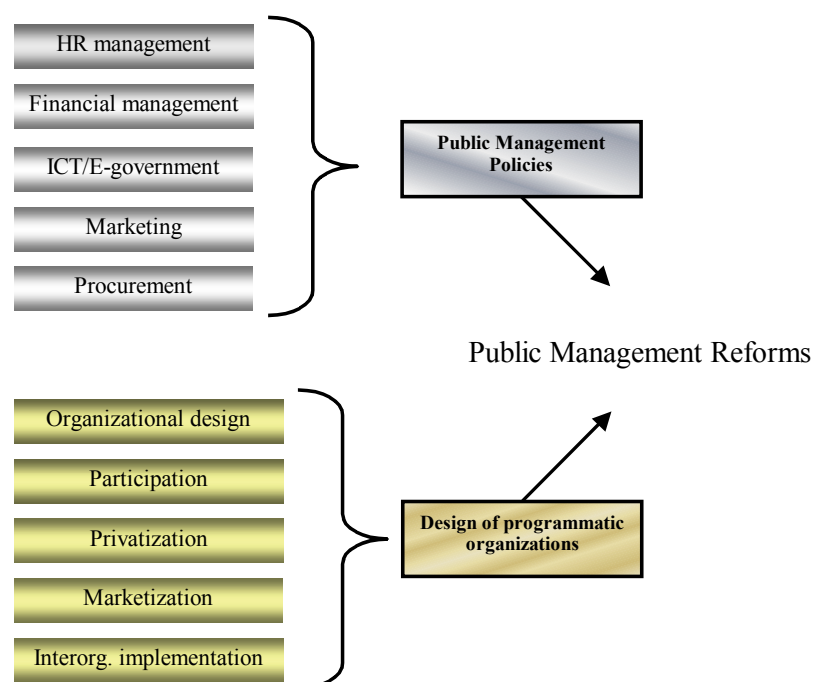
The main goal of this research was to make an analysis of the policymaking process of public management policies (PMPs) and changes in the design of programmatic organizations (DPOs) in three municipal governments: Barcelona (Spain), Boston (United States) and Turin (Italy). The research was not concerned with the results, success and failures of the reforms, but rather with the process of change in this field of public policy. The time frame of analysis is 1992 – 2007.

These three cities have witnessed relevant changes in the management of their municipal governments in the last 15 years. Among the empirical cases of innovations in PMPs and DPOs of the three analytical units (Barcelona, Boston, Turin), we selected 15 cases of innovation to undergo a multi-unit and multi-case research using the analytical toolbox of policymaking studies. The 15 selected cases of innovations are:

- Barcelona: 1) changes in organizational design (1992-1997), 2) implementation of Management Control associated with the Economic and financial information system (1992-1996), 3) innovation in City Marketing (1995-2006), 4) building and implementation of the Norms of Citizen Participation, (2001-2006), 5) building and implementation of the Strategic Plan for Information Systems (2003-2006);
- Boston: 6) changes in organizational design (1994-2007), 7) privatization of the Boston City Hospital (1994-1996), 8) innovations in e-government devices (1995-2007), 9) establishment and implementation of a Strategic Partnering for adult education (1999-2007), 10) implementation of a performance management system (2005-2007);
- Turin: 11) changes in organizational design (1994-1997), 12) innovations in the Website and Intracom (1995-2007), 13) innovations in HR recruitment and selection (1997-2005), 14) establishment and implementation of a Strategic Partnering for urban regeneration (1997-2001), 15) implementation of strategic control associated with a HR evaluation system (1999-2005).

This study had descriptive and explanatory ambitions. For the descriptive part of the research we focused attention on the general aspects involved in the process of policy change, asking questions about:

The content of the changes, the rhetoric elements of the innovations, the actors leading the processes of change, the actors involved in the different phases of the policymaking, the conflicts that have emerged, the strategies used by policymakers to ease the process of change, the processes of evaluation of policy change that have been created, the political, financial and cultural obstacles encountered during the policy changes, and the institutional environment in which the policy changes occurred.

The data-gathering process was based on observational research, semi-structured interviews, documents analysis and bibliographical search.

This extensive description was followed by a more systematic data analysis using the qualitative content analysis proposed by Mayring (2000). In this regard we adopted five descriptive variables, each one of these broken down into analytical categories. The five descriptive variables selected for our study are the classical descriptive variables peculiar to policy-making studies: What (content), Who (actors), When (temporal dimension), Where (spatial dimension), and How (method/strategy/behavior).

The analytical categories chosen were both inductively constructed and deductively drawn from the reference literature in the policymaking studies: *what*: political vs. technical policy content; *who*: policy entrepreneur: politician, bureaucrat, societal actor; *when*: the most

conflictive phase: formulation, implementation, or evaluation; *where*: the institutional context: Barcelona, Boston, Turin; *how*: policy styles for policymaking: imposition *vs.* consensus.

In order to overcome mere descriptions of isolated cases we extracted from the empirical data the basic relationships between the five variables analyzed. We performed simulations with each one of the variables as being independent and dependent from the others. The purpose was to discover which variables have greater explanatory force on the others.

The research question in this explanatory phase was:

What explanatory framework emerges from the analysis of innovations in public management policies and in the design of programmatic organizations carried out in the municipal government of Barcelona, Boston and Turin?

As a policy-making study this research started from some general research questions on empirical phenomenon, then proceeded through a theoretical-empirical research, to reach the generation of theoretical hypotheses.

Research design

The selection of analytical units was circular and we privileged municipalities that had experienced relevant changes in PMPs and/or DPOs in the 1992-2007 time frame. In order to avoid pitfalls in the comparison we prudently chose municipalities that had similar budget size, number of employees, territorial size, and population over 500.000 inhabitants (large cities) and are considered leading international cities, in the sense of their economic, financial, social, political and cultural influence worldwide.

The cities had to be considered examples in service delivery and public administration, and recognized as such by the international scientific community and from associations of city public administrations like the United Cities and Local Governments, the International Association of Educating Cities, the World Association of Major Metropolises (Metropolis) and EUROCITIES.

In addition, the three selected cities share the same institutional status in the vertical division of power[ii], they carry out similar administrative and policy functions, their executive power are directly elected, and they had executive power of similar political alignment in the 1992-2007 time frame (left-wing coalitions)[iii]. One important dissimilarity is that Barcelona and Turin are embedded in the Napoleonic model of local government and Boston in the Anglo-Saxon model (Bobbio 2002).

The first requisite for the selection of the cases of innovation in PMPs and DPOs was importance. In the exploratory research on the municipal government of Barcelona, Boston and Turin we tried to identify the most striking examples of changes in the managerial practices. We performed this task by reading governmental publications, reading research reports articles and books and carrying out exploratory interviews with university professors and key governmental officials. As stated before, in some situations we did not have access to information about innovation in management practices because documents or city officials were not available for interviews. Therefore, the 15 innovative cases analyzed in this research are not necessarily the top 15 examples of innovation in Barcelona, Boston and Turin, but they are definitely among the most important ones for the 1992-2007 time frame.

Another concern was having similar cases across units. This effort was partially frustrated however because the contents of innovations in the three cities were not standard. However we did include three cases (one for each city) of organizational restructuring, three cases of innovations in ICT[iv], and three cases of management control/performance management[v] The other six cases did not find equal counterparts across municipalities.

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Another requisite was that the innovation should have started after 1992 in Barcelona and after 1993 in Boston and Turin, because in these years were landmarks for transitions in the municipal governments in the investigated cities.

The fieldwork lasted 10 months, being three months in Barcelona (March-May 2006), three months in Boston (January - March 2007) and four months in Turin (September 2006, and May-July 2007).

The fieldwork relied mostly on documents analysis, semi-structured interviews, and personal observation. The main sources of governmental documents were bills, websites, regulations of the studied local governments and departments, managerial and financial plans, house organs, governmental publications, and National/Federal enactments and regulations.

The semi-structured interviews were carried out with political and bureaucratic officials from the investigated local governments and with scholars working on issues of public management reforms and local governance in the investigated cities. The interview guides were "customized" to the profile of the interviewee and the specific information needed. The interviewed people totaled 39. The interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the interviewees.

For the most part the interviews were transcribed in the same day after the meetings, in an effort to write down the impressions, the un-expressed signals and the mental connections that came up during the interviews. The transcriptions were not verbatim, but rather focused on sensitizing concepts of the research (Patton 1990) such as participation, actors, interests, innovation, entrepreneurship, legal constraints, organizational structure and political power.

Another important source of data were the data-checking/data-complementing questionnaires used after the interviews. These tools were used specially in the cases when the answers given by interviewees were not complete, when the answers were not convincing and even when the researcher missed the opportunity to probe important questions. The data-checking/data-complementing questionnaires were carried out by e-mail or telephone with the same interviewed person or with a different source to double-check the gathered information. The data-checking/data-complementing questionnaires totaled 23.

This study uses the observational research with the following setting: A) Level of "spectator" of the researcher, concerning the involvement with the subjects in the field; B) Identification of the researcher *vis-à-vis* the subjects; C) Total transparency in presenting the research goals to the subjects. D) Field research lasting no more than four months, depending on the time needed to answer the research questions. The maximum of four months has been fixed because of lack of additional resources and time; E) Wide focus of observation: attempting to analyze the five descriptive variables (4W1H) of the policymaking process.

This study used the qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2000) and the triangulation of data technique (Triviños 1987). The triangulation technique was used to widen the interrelation of the data gathered from the subjects in the field (interviews, questionnaires, personal observation), from the subject's environment (governmental documents, reports) and from the macro-environment of the subject (research reports, academic papers).

The core aspect of qualitative content analysis is its reliance on analytical categories to perform the analysis of data (Mayring 2000). These categories are created/ applied according to the theoretical background peculiar to the research question.

The building of analytical categories was circular. After analyzing almost half of the data we realized that some categories were not suitable for our study because not applicable for all cases; categories were discarded or reshaped because they would not potentially produce valuable conclusions/inferences.

In our research the analytical categories chosen were both inductively constructed and deductively drawn from the reference literature in the policymaking studies.

The 4W1H framework and the operational definitions of the analytical categories

The operational definition serves to give sense to analytical categories and to guide the categorization of each case within each variable. As stated before, the analyzed variables were five: where, what, when, who, and how, and they form the 4W1H framework for policy analysis.

- *What* has changed (the content of policy change);
- *Who* triggered changes and who had the chance to influence them;
- *When* and in what points of the policy cycle changes have been shaped;
- *Where* and in what political and institutional context changes have happened;
- *How* decisions in this matter have been taken.

In this study the analytical categories chosen to give sense to the five variables were:

What: Political or technical

For the What variable we made use of the classification by Bozeman & Pandey (2004) between Political vs. Technical content of a policy change. To be classified as a political issue, the innovation/case should present relevant conflict over ends or ordering of ends. In political issues clear winners and losers are identifiable in advance. To be classified as a technical issue, the innovation case should present no or little conflict over ends or ordering of ends, even though there might be conflict about means[vi].

Who: Politicians, bureaucrats or societal actors

For the Who variable we decided to categorize the cases according to the type of actor/individual who spent more energy on making the solutions become policies. We sought the policy entrepreneur. Following the reasoning of Kingdon (1984) and Schneider & Teske (1992) a policy/political entrepreneur is the individual who disrupts a political, economic and organizational equilibrium through an innovation. The entrepreneur is the person who takes advantage of newly discovered possibilities or policy windows to propose and implement policy solutions. The entrepreneur seeks the disruption of an inadequate equilibrium by aiming to reach a value-based superior equilibrium.

We utilized the Political Nexus Triad scheme (Moon & Ingraham 1998) to form the analytical categories: politicians, bureaucrats and civil society. In order to categorize a policy entrepreneur as a politician he/she would have to belong to the municipal executive, municipal legislative, or politically appointed top-management. To be categorized as a bureaucrat, the entrepreneur should be a career civil servant or a politically designated official below the City manager or similar top-managerial function. The societal actors considered in the research were citizens, external consultants, the mass media, epistemic communities, interest groups, labor unions, political parties, providers/suppliers, other levels of government, and partners in the case of collaborative governance[vii].

When: Formulation, implementation or evaluation

For the When variable the judgment for classification was based on the following questions: "In what phase of the policymaking are political energies more required to overcome conflicts? In what phase are the policy ambitions designed or defined or adjusted to

cope with interest? What was the key policy phase?" The three categories were: formation, implementation or evaluation, categories drawn from the analytical schemes complementally built by several policy scholars such as Lasswell (1956), Lindblom (1968), May & Wildavsky (1978) Jones (1984).[viii]

Where: Barcelona, Boston, or Turin.

For the Where variable we decided to classify the cases within three analytical categories: the municipalities in which they were observed. This decision was taken in order to observe whether the different institutional context could work as an explanatory variable[ix]. As analytical units, the public administrations of Barcelona, Boston and Turin have idiosyncratic settings regarding the distribution of power between the Executive and the Administration, balance of power between the Executive and the Legislative, institutional/legal situation (grid of upper levels regulations), organizational culture, access of interest groups to decision making, willingness of citizens to intervene on public affairs, financial autonomy, background of politicians and bureaucrats (education, social class). This list could go on endlessly. The combination of these idiosyncratic features is summarized as an institutional variable. The three public administrations embody the institutional contexts in which the cases of innovation evolved.

How: Imposed or consensual

For the How variable we used a part of the classification criteria established by Richardson, Gustafsson & Jordan (1982) on style of formation and implementation of policies: imposition vs. consensual policymaking. The key question was: How was the innovation built and spread throughout the organization or with partners? Imposed or collectively built? The operational definition in this research was: consensual policymaking is the one that that gives real opportunity for a wide range of peripheral actors influence the policy formulation[x]. Imposed policymaking is the one in which such opportunity is not given to peripheral actors. Richardson, Gustafsson & Jordan (1982, p. 02) named it *inner-circle negotiation*: "involving a very limited range of groups who matter. The meaning of 'wide range of peripheral actors' is the one given by Richardson, Gustafsson & Jordan (1982, p. 02) as "a plethora of consultative committees or to go through long and wide-ranging consultation process".

Results and discussion

The whole description of the 15 recent cases of innovation in PMPs and DPOs of Barcelona, Boston and Turin is available in the research report that generated this article. For objectivity reasons we present in this paper only the results of the explanatory phase of the research.

In the research we tried to find explanatory frameworks emerging from our descriptive empirical data by using different analytical categories for each of the 4W1H variables. In this effort, we do not use statistic or mathematical models to calculate the correlation of variables. As the number of cases is low (15), we preferred to employ a very simple method: simulating each one of the five variables as a independent variable to the other variables.

Comparing the variables pair-wise, it was possible to count the frequencies and verify whether a strong or weak relationship exists between the two variables. A strong relationship was verified in the cases when the property assigned to one variable was regularly consistent with the property assigned to another variable.

This analytical strategy was the most appropriate to give the empirical data a synthesis, explicating the relationships between key variables that were hidden in the large quantity of empirical data.

In those cases where a relationship between two variables was evident, we proceeded to the formulation of a corresponding hypothesis. Then, we selected the emerging hypotheses in order of importance, taking relevance and the reliability as criteria.

Applying these five variables and the analytical categories to the organization of the descriptive empirical data it is possible to summarize the whole content in a single table:

Table 1: Summarized analysis of cases using the analytical categories

UNIT	CASES	What	How	When	Who
Barcelona (where)	Operational Control 92-96	Technical	Imposed	Implementation	P
	Marketing innovations 95-06	Technical	Consensus	Evaluation	A
	Strategic Plan for Information Systems 03-06	Technical	Consensus	Implementation	P
	Particip. Plan 01-06	Political	Consensus	Formulation	P
	Organiz. Restruct 92-97	Political	Imposed	n.a.	P
Boston (where)	Organiz. Restruct. 94-07	Political	Imposed	Implementation	P
	Privatization 94-96	Political	Consensus	Formulation	P
	E-gov. innovations 95-07	Technical	Imposed	Implementation	A
	PPP 99-07	Technical	Consensus	Implementation	A
	Perform. Measures 05-07	Political	Imposed	Implementation	A
Turin (where)	Organiz. Restruct 94-97	Political	Consensus	Implementation	P
	E-gov – site, intracom 95-07	Technical	Imposed	Implementation	A
	HR selection 97-05	Technical	Consensus	Evaluation	P
	Strategic Control 99-05	Political	Imposed	Implementation	P
	PSP 97-01	Political	Consensus	Implementation	P

The content variable and the policy style variable are distributed fairly equally among the analytical categories. Eight out of the 15 cases were classified as politically weighty policy changes, while the other seven cases were classified as technical issues. Eight out of the 15 cases experienced consensual style of policy formulation, while in the other seven cases the innovation was mutually built by central and peripheral actors.

The categories of the When and the Who variables presented an unequal distribution across the other analytical variables. Our empirical data enable us to claim that the most conflictive policy phase in innovations of PMPs and DPOs is the implementation phase (10 out of 14). The evaluation phase and the formulation phase have two cases each of the most conflicting phase. The only case where it was not possible to affirm the most conflictive phase was the organizational restructuring in Barcelona. As we did not want to force the case toward an artificial classification, we decided to leave this case out of the analysis when the temporal/phase variable was concerned.

Although public management reforms are recurrently regarded as a matter for technicians, in 10 out of the 15 cases politicians were identified as the policy entrepreneurs. The other five cases had bureaucrats as the leading actors in promoting the innovation within and outside the organizational boundaries.

No societal actor was identified as the policy entrepreneur in the 15 cases. The inexistence of societal actors as policy entrepreneurs can depend on one of these two reasons: 1) the case selection unintentionally privileged types of innovation in public management policies and in the design of programmatic organizations where civil society had a smaller role. The four cases in which a societal actor as policy entrepreneur would be more likely to appear were the strategic partnering in Turin (PSP), strategic partnering in Boston (ENB), the

privatization of the BCH and the Plan for Civic Participation in Barcelona. However, also in these four cases, the interviews, reports and documents pointed to internal actors as policy entrepreneurs; 2) public management policies are issues in which the societal actors are not interested or entitled to take the lead, since they deal with management practices internal to the public organizations.

In the simulation of variables as independent variables relating to the other variables we found seven meaningful relationships. Out of these seven relationships two were important and strongly supported by the empirical data. These two relationships are presented ahead:[xi]

a) Policy content as independent variable and phase temporal variable as dependent variable:

What	How	When	Who	Where
Political (8)	(4) 50% Consensus (4) 50% Imposed	(2) 29% Formulation (5) 71% Implementation (-) 00% Evaluation	(7) 87% Politician (1) 13% Bureaucrat (-) 00% Societal	(2) 25% Barcelona (3) 37,5% Boston (3) 37,5 % Turin
Technical (7)	(4) 57% Consensus (3) 43% Imposed	(-) 00% Formulation (5) 71% Implementation (2) 29% Evaluation	(3) 43% Politician (4) 57% Bureaucrat (-) 00% Societal	(3) 42% Barcelona (2) 29% Boston (2) 29% Turin

Interesting relationships was found between the What variable and the When. In the situation of innovation in a politically intense issue we are more likely to find the most determinant/conflictive situations in the first phases of the policymaking process. On the other hand, for technical issues the conflictive point is more likely to be postponed to the middle-end phases of the policymaking. Nonetheless, for both political and technical policy contents the implementation phase was the champion of conflicts.

Hypothesis a)
The content of a policy can shape when the conflicts are more intense. Political issues tend to have their key phases in the early design or the implementation of a policy change. Technically weighty policy changes are more likely to see conflicts in the implementation or evaluation phases. This hypothesis is represented graphically in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Content shaping the pattern of conflicts

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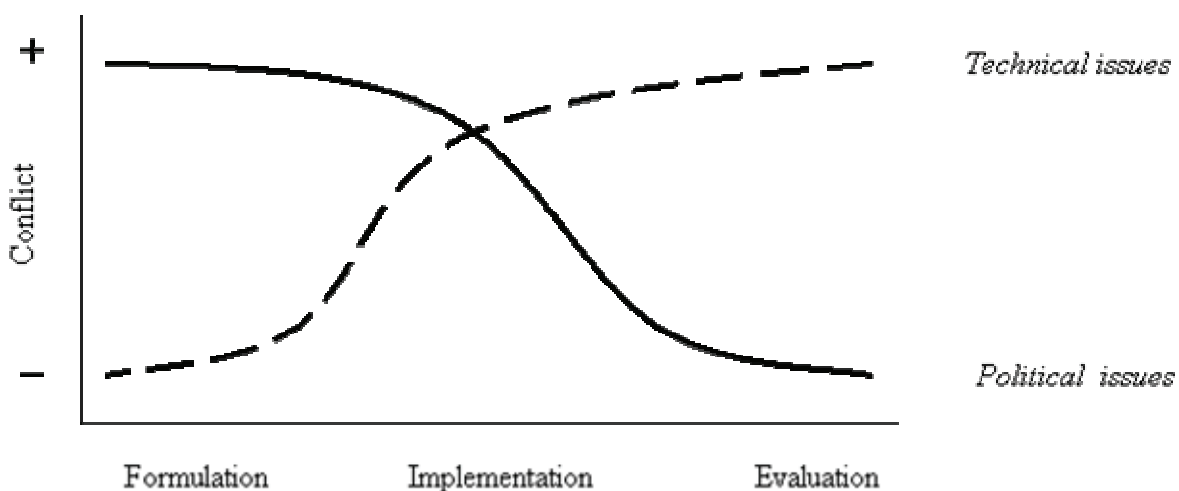
Even though the majority of cases experienced the most conflictive phase in implementation, in the cases when the conflicts were stronger in the formulation phase the issue at hand was politically intense, while in the cases when the evaluation phase was the most conflictive the issue at hand was technical. This might be just a coincidence, giving the low number of cases. However we can find logic for this phenomenon: when a policy change is politically weighty the different stakeholders, potential winners and potential losers, rush to shape the policy before it itself takes shape. The different interested actors might consider that influencing the design, the formulation of solutions and being at the decision table is better than trying to fix it afterwards in the evaluation/correction phase. The opposite logic can be applied to technically weighty policies: few stakeholders are interested, or have the knowledge, or symbolically find a need to shape the policy from the formulation phase. The conflicts however will start when these uninterested actors perceive the consequences or the failures of a technical solution in their work and lives.

b) Policy style as independent variable and phase temporal variable as dependent variable:

How	When	Who	Where	What
Conse nsus (8)	(2) 25% Formulation (4) 50% Implementation (2) 25% Evaluation	(6) 75% Politician (2) 25% Bureaucrat (-) 00% Societal	(3) 37,5% Barcelona (2) 25% Boston (3) 37,5% Turin	(4) 50% Political (4) 50% Technical
Impos ition (7)	(-) 00% Formulation (6) 100% Implementation (-) 00% Evaluation	(4) 57,1% Politician (3) 42,9% Bureaucrat (-) 00% Societal	(2) 28,6% Barcelona (3) 42,8% Boston (2) 28,6%Turin	(4) 57,1% Political (3) 42,9% Technical

One interesting result is visible in this table when associating policy style with the When variable. For all the studied cases, an abrupt style of policymaking ended up with conflicts peaking in the implementation of the policy change. Although the implementation phase seems to be the most conflictive of the policy phases, when the policymakers behave in a more participatory/inclusive style of policy design the conflicts in the implementation phase appear to give way in the early phase of policymaking (formulation, as in the case of the Privatization of the BCH, and the Participation Plan in Barcelona) or to the redesign/adjustment phase (as in the case of the innovations in marketing in Barcelona and the new methods for HR recruitment/selection in Turin).

Hypothesis b):
A policymaking process using a non-participatory style is likely to offer greater resistance from peripheral actors in the implementation phase. A policymaking process using consensual policymaking is more likely to mitigate resistances and conflicts in the implementation phase, and postpone or anticipate the conflicts to both the evaluation or formulation phases. The implementation phase, as stated before, is the champion of conflicts regardless of policy-styles. Hypothesis b is graphically represented in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Policy-styles shaping the pattern of conflicts
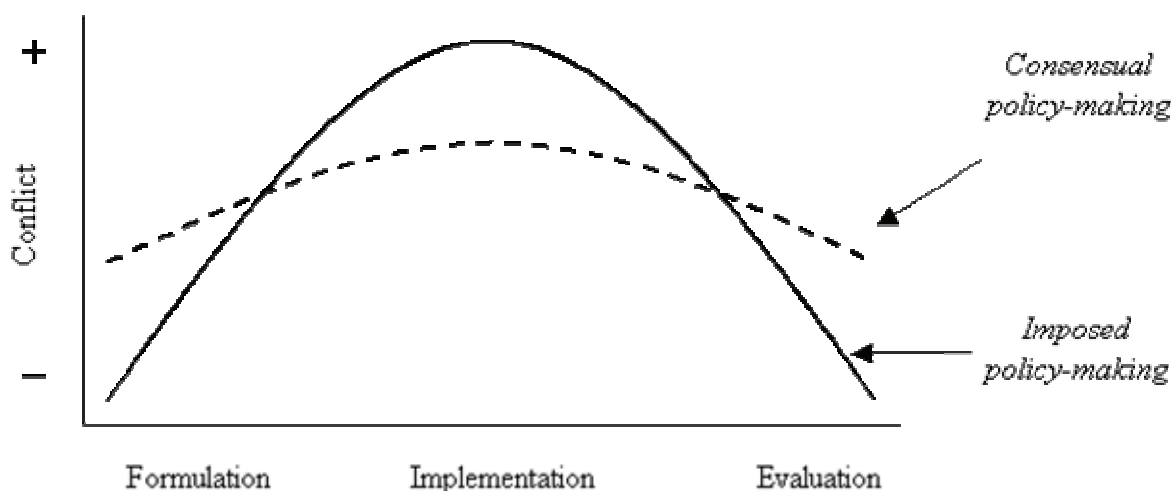
Hypothesis b may be assimilated if we consider that: an imposition style of policymaking disregards the inputs of peripheral actors in the ascending phase of the policymaking, and thus may generate resistance. Especially when talking about changes in public management policies, career civil servants will have to work with the new policies and routines and, because the policy is formed in a non-legitimated process, boycotts can emerge. This was evident in the operational control in Barcelona, the e-government innovations, performance measures and organizational restructuring in Boston, and in the management control in Turin. In all the cases where an imposition style of policymaking was used, implementation was problematic. In four cases in which a consensus building style of policymaking was used (Marketing innovations in Barcelona, Participation Plan in Barcelona, Privatization in Boston, and HR selection in Turin), the conflicts were anticipated or postponed to the formulation and evaluation phases. It is fair to say that the other four cases of consensual also saw the implementation phase as the most determinant. However, imposition policymaking proved to be totally related to implementation, while consensual policymaking was partly related to implementation and partly related to the other phases of policymaking.

Conclusions

This research wanted to make a contribution to the study of policymaking of public management policies and innovations in the design of programmatic organizations. As a hypothesis building research, the hypotheses generated by our empirical data are one of the outcomes of this effort.

Public management reform is a shortcut term for an intertwined and fairly coherent set of policy changes in management practices and public service delivery. Public management reforms are carried out by changes in institutional rules and organizational routines in several dimensions or functions of a public organization.

The New Public Management, Entrepreneurial Government and Public Governance relational models have been regarded as the sources of inspiration for the current global wave of public management reforms. However, these fancy names for managerial and relational models, their doctrines and justifications, are summarized presentations of a complex phenomenon that is only grasped in the research field.

A public management reform is not one policy change. Several policy changes in public management policies and in the design of programmatic organizations will form a *public management reform*. Moreover, a public management reform can receive this label

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when its components, the single policy changes, share fairly coherent justifications and rhetoric. When the policy changes do not share common justifications and rhetoric there are just isolated *innovations in public management*.

One of the caricatures we progressively demystified during the research process is that managerial innovations are not only technical issues. Indubitably changes in public management embody technically weighty aspects, but they engender politically intense battles as well. Certainly these battles are more internal than external, and certainly public attention to innovations in public management policies and design of programmatic organizations is weaker than in constituency issues. As posed by Kettl et. al. (1998, p. 02): "It's the old problem of trying to figure out how you get people interested on a political level about things that have to do with functions that are essentially administrative." But the political struggle is present, these changes generate losers and winners, and the consequences indirectly touch the quality, the production and the "price" of services delivered by the public entity.

On the one hand, the conflicts generated by public management policy changes are more circumscribed internally in the municipal administration. On the other hand the conflicts generated by the privatization, marketization, interorganizational implementation of policies and participation of citizens in public decision-making share elements of internal and external conflicts. In these last issues stakeholders like providers, partners, NPOs, neighborhood associations and the citizens themselves cooperate and compete with the public entity.

One of the goals of this research was to generate explanatory frameworks from the analysis of 15 cases of innovations in public management policies and in the design of programmatic organizations carried out in the three municipal administrations.

The two hypotheses emerging from the pair-wise analysis of variables were:

a) The content of a policy can shape when the conflicts will be more intense. Political issues tend to have their key phases in the early design or the implementation of a policy change. Technically weighty policy changes are more likely to encounter conflicts in the implementation or evaluation phases.

b) A policymaking process using imposition is likely to offer greater resistance from peripheral actors in the implementation phase. A policymaking process using consensual policymaking is more likely to mitigate resistances and conflicts in the implementation phase, and postpone or anticipate the conflicts to both the evaluation and formulation phase.

The two generated hypotheses were the strongest (decisively supported by the data) and are the most important propositions of this analysis. The remaining hypotheses are secondary: they were trivial, or lacked enough support from the empirical data.

Again, the relationship between the 4W1H variables is an attempt to organize, summarize and find a direction for the overload of qualitative material gathered in the field. The use of independent and dependent variables pair-wise permitted the identification of fairly strong connections, giving rise to relevant and revealing hypotheses. Further research is needed to test the two emerging hypotheses in other contexts of public management reforms.

We strongly encourage further research using the 4W1H framework in policymaking studies. The 4W1H framework proved being useful for the organization of the empirical material and for the theoretical leap of a descriptive multi-case study.

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[i] In the original contribution by Barzelay (2001, p.14) he enumerates the areas of public management policy: "expenditure planning and financial management, civil service and labor relations, procurement, organization and methods, and audit and evaluation". We have added ICT and public marketing as areas of public management policy using the understanding that they are increasingly areas of interest and change in public organizations.

[ii] Barcelona, Boston and Turin are *de facto* third levels of government, under National/Federal and Regional levels. The Province (Spain and Italy) and County (Massachusetts) are not considered sufficiently autonomous levels of government (John 2001).

[iii] Barcelona: coalition led by the *Partido Socialista de Cataluña* (PSC). Turin: coalition led by the *Democratici di Sinistra* (DS). Boston: the only mayor for the 1993-2007 period is a member of the Democratic Party.

[iv] In the case of Barcelona it was a plan of ICT, and it was not a case of implementation of ICT as in the other two cities.

[v] Analytically, however, the three cases are dissimilar because in Barcelona it was a case of Management control associated with a financial information system, in Boston it was the case of a performance measurement system, and in Turin was a case of management control associated with HR evaluation.

[vi] We are aware that any policy change shares political and technical elements. For analytical purposes however we decided to classify a policy change according to its political and technical weight, with no middle term category. If a policy issue presented only little more political than technical weight it was entirely classified as political, and *vice-versa*. This decision was arbitrary and based on the researcher's judgment and information available about the policy content under analysis.

[vii] The criterion for the classification of who is a politician was: Barcelona: Politicians of the executive and legislative + Director of the Sector of General Services (before 1999) + City Manager (after 1999). Boston:

Mayor + Politicians of legislative + Chief Operating Officer. Turin (before 1998): Politicians of the executive and legislative + General Secretary + Deputy General Secretaries. Turin (after 1998): Politicians of the executive and legislative + City Manager + General Secretary + Deputy General Secretaries.

[viii] The policy cycle is generally presented with several phases: agenda building, formulation, decision-making, implementation, evaluation, and termination. In our analysis we decided to exclude agenda building, decision-making and termination because they were not clearly identifiable phases for the analyzed cases of policy change. The introduction of a management problem in the agenda or the formalization of the decision was circular and overlapping with policy formation and study of alternatives in most of the analyzed cases. Policy termination occurred in only one of the 15 studied cases (Peripheries Special Project, Turin).

[ix] An intrinsic shortcoming of this choice is that the Where variable analytically will never possibly be classified as dependent variable.

[x] In fact, the analysis of policy style in our research focused primarily on the formulation phase of the policy-making process, mainly because the implementation phase is inherently "participative", because bureaucrats / societal actors are, in most cases, required to implement the policy.

[xi] The simulation of all relationships between independent and dependent variables is available in the research report that generated this paper.