

# ADAPTATION OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM TO GLOBAL RISKS

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## ABSTRACT

*Since the beginning of 2008-2009, the paradigm of sustainability of public administration has been increasingly investigated in order to study competitive models, values, anti-crisis management in the sphere of politics. The purpose of the academic paper lies in conceptualizing approaches and concepts of adaptation of the public administration system to global risks. The results demonstrate the evolution of New Public Management through the active implementation of new interdisciplinary approaches. The principles of New Public Management are complemented by a paradigm of adaptation and flexibility in order to ensure the sustainability of the public administration system. The new concept of public administration is interdisciplinary in nature; it integrates approaches to management borrowed from the theory of organization, anti-crisis management, Joined-up Government and Network Governance, New Public Management, Digital Government and Administration. The existing conceptual model of adaptation of the public administration system to global risks provides the integration of Resilience and adaptation paradigm in public administration. However, the philosophy of public administration in different countries proves the existence of obstacles to adaptation opportunities due to poor interagency links at different levels of government, low responsibility and accountability. The results of the present research can be used as a paradigm in public crisis management in the context of global risks and challenges.*

**Keywords:** Public Administration System; Joined-up Government and Network Governance; New Public Management; Digital Government and Administration

## INTRODUCTION

The growing pressure of global risks on the public administration system requires the development of flexible and adaptive policy approaches. Climate changes (Den Uyl & Russel, 2018), the pandemic (de Amorim & de Andrade, 2020), and the growing impact of migration flows on the economy are major challenges for decentralized, fragmented and privatized governments. Decentralization increases the level of risk in terms of understanding the responsibility of public administration entities for solving the problem of adaptation to global challenges (Den Uyl & Russel, 2018). The level of uncertainty, complexity of economic systems and disconfidence is growing globally (de Amorim & de Andrade, 2020) due to various external shocks. Therefore, the issue of ensuring the stability, adaptability, flexibility of public administration is extremely relevant.

Since the beginning of 2008-2009, the paradigm of sustainability of public administration has been increasingly studied in order to explore competitive models, values, anti-crisis management in the field of politics (Swart et al., 2014; Duit, 2016). “New Public Management” (NPM) as a philosophy of public administration in different countries proves the availability of adaptive capabilities for its integration due to financial, institutional and technical capacity (Eakin et al., 2011). Changing the values of the societies through global challenges and problems has changed the practice of public administration towards innovative, experimental one through public expectations and variability of the external environment (Bourgon, 2009; Hofisi & Shava, 2017; Zhang et al., 2018). The issue of ensuring political balance in changing turbulent conditions is especially relevant. Balancing the role of government in managing changes and challenges is becoming an important issue for discussion. This paper hypothesizes the concepts and approaches of adaptation of the public administration system to global risks and challenges.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Various concepts and practices of public administration are considered in the scientific literature in the context of adaptation to global risks. The basic risks are as follows: climate change, which increases the pressure on decentralized public administration and leads to an increase in the level of responsibility, understanding of the need for risk recognition and crisis management (Termeer et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2018; Den Uyl & Russel, 2018). Termeer et al. (2017) propose five key public administration reforms based on an integrated approach, namely: “developing a shared policy vision; adopting multi-level planning; integrating legislation; networking organisations; and establishing cooperative funding”. Researchers lay emphasis on the particular benefits of such reforms in integrating the concepts of Joined-up Government and Network Governance for disaster risk management (DRM) and climate change adaptation (CCA). Den Uyl & Russel (2018) identify decentralization and privatization as the main trends in public administration, which leads to the fragmentation of the institutional environment at the local level and the reduction of responsibility for global risk management.

In response to global challenges in the scientific environment, the concept of sustainability and adaptability of public administration has been formed (Duit, 2016; de Amorim & de Andrade, 2020), as well as “adaptation policy” in order to overcome the consequences of global changes (Eakin et al., 2011). “The concept of resilience has gained currency as a motive under which governments have sought to improve their responses to crises... adaptation is a fundamental characteristic of resilience” (Stark, 2014). In this context, an interdisciplinary approach can be used to ensure resilience through adaptation. Stability can be observed in those

systems that adapt, providing a stable balance. Limited resources are among the most important determinants of adaptation (Grothmann & Patt, 2005). Bourgon (2009) notes that “the search for new directions in research and the practice of public administration should relate to the search for a new balance in the role of government”.

Public administration uses various theories of related disciplines that explain the transformational changes of the system. Organization theory is used to conceptualize public administration strategies in a changing environment (Termeer et al., 2017). New technologies are a tool for solving problems in public administration within the concepts of e-government and Network Governance (Hofisi & Shava, 2017). A market approach and market models are proposed to ensure the efficiency of public services (Kelly, 2005). Scenario methods are used in local government practice towards managing adaptation and sound decision making (Rickards et al., 2014). The theory of psychology and behavioral economics is used to develop models of proactive adaptation and explanation of risk-based behavior (Grothmann & Patt, 2005). The methodology of crisis management is actively integrated into the concept of public administration (Zhang et al., 2018). Mitigation and adaptation strategies based on the economic theory of endogenous risks are used in public policies to ease the consequences of global risks (Kane & Shogren, 2000).

Given the active transformation of public administration models through the integration of various theories and concepts of economics, sociology, psychology, behavioral economics, it is advisable to systematize the paradigm of adaptation as a key one in the management of global risks and changes.

## METHODOLOGY

The present research is based on the concepts of Joined-up government and network governance (Termeer, et al., 2017), new public management (Eakin, et al., 2011), digital government and administration (Brown, 2005; Jing & Wenting, 2014), decentralization and privatization (Den Uyl & Russel, 2018), anti-crisis management (Boin & Hart, 2003; Boin & Lodge, 2016), resilience and adaptation paradigm in public administration (Duit, 2016; de Amorim & de Andrade, 2020). Systemic, comprehensive and market approaches are integrated in the academic paper in order to form the paradigm of adaptation and sustainability of the public administration system in the context of global risks.

Taking into consideration the purpose of the research, the methodology is qualitative; it provides the use of the method of content analysis of scientific literature for 2000-2020 in order to identify the main concepts that are integrated into the public administration system in the context of transformational changes. Databases of ScienceDirect, Science, Elsevier, Oxford, Wiley have been used to analyze publications by the following key words, namely: adaptation in public administration, sustainability of public administration system, public management of global risks, models of public administration, transformation of public administration.

## RESULTS

Since the early 2000s, the New Public Management paradigm has been the discussed in the scientific literature from the viewpoint of the end of the era and the formation of electronic public administration. This transforms the concept of new public management through innovative practices, decentralized adapted models, responsible strategies that lead to the

sustainability of systems. “New Public Management emerged under the Thatcher and Reagan Governments in the United Kingdom and the United States respectively as part of a broader neoliberal focus on policy and public administration taken place all over the world” (Eakin et al., 2011).

Technologies provide risk management based on data analytics in order to develop actions for eliminating or reducing risks. Thus, the combination of the concept of digital government and administration, network governance and anti-crisis management ensures the measurement of global risks, their distribution among public administration entities for sharing responsibilities, control of resources and interaction at different levels of government, transparency and accountability. As a result, innovative practice is formed on the basis of experiments and the application of interdisciplinary methods by public authorities.

Institutionalized bureaucratic structures of public administration have a proven ability to absorb environmental turbulence without succumbing to radical reforms. However, in the context of a crisis, institutionalized structures can often be strained, requiring more extreme forms of adaptation. This pressure is particularly pronounced in the context of crises and global risks due to the urgency of solving problems and the uncertainty of the environment. Uncertainty requires circumspect rules, constructions and specific forms of procedure from public authorities. However, the rapid dynamics of the crisis need to be addressed through flexible responses to crisis phenomena. Achieving a balance between structure and adaptive behavior in this sense is a classic challenge for organizational theory and a fundamental challenge for a crisis manager in public administration.

Thus, anti-crisis management can be considered within the framework of organizational paradox, because on the one hand, responding to emergencies requires careful organization and planning, but on the other hand, it is spontaneous. Emergency managers have to innovate, adapt and improvise, forasmuch as public management plans rarely match the circumstances. Scholars on crisis management and conflict management have examined the ability of public institutions to maintain this balance. Evaluations of cooperation within the professionalized emergency management model, for example, recognize the flexibility of public authorities as an important policy component. The ways of network management are also discussed in the scientific literature in order to bridge the gap between hierarchical and general models of crisis management, providing flexibility through command structures. Such methodology provides the ability of civil servants to form adaptive structures based on a project approach to the creation of public administration teams. Development of interpersonal skills, the proper combination of hierarchy and cooperation within the network management, the introduction of appropriate organizational procedures complements the management methods within the New Public Management. The system of public administration becomes flexible and adaptive; it provides the formation of stability as a key characteristic of ensuring stable equilibrium and balance.

However, nowadays the paradigm of flexibility and adaptability of the public administration system in the context of global risks remains insufficiently effective. Crisis management is criticized for lack of flexibility in the responses of civil servants, especially in extreme conditions and changes in the environment. For instance, an analysis of the management of Hurricane Katrina has led to calls for more adaptive control at the Department of Homeland Security. In the UK, Flood Research 2007 highlights the challenges of government operational agencies' interactions. In New Zealand, the Christchurch earthquake in 2011 led to criticism of the need to adapt the strategic decision-making apparatus to unforeseen situations. In Australia,

the Black Saturday fires of 2009 are a prime example of the need to transform disaster management policies that could not cope with the rapid pace of fires. The economic and natural crises of the last ten years (from New Orleans to Fukushima, fires in Australia, pandemics and the financial solvency crisis of 2020) confirm the need for proper policy. After all, such policy possesses the resources to respond quickly to global challenges, especially in developed democracies and economies, which, despite strong institutional capacity and access to financial resources, do not necessarily guarantee adaptation to crisis management.

In countries with a high level of global risks (high intensity, probability, threats), it is necessary to implement an integrated model of public administration for the effective use of limited resources at all levels of government. However, the integration of such a model requires a solution to two main challenges. Firstly, public authorities are already facing increased workloads and significant resource constraints. Secondly, the systems of governance in advanced countries, and even more in developing countries, are not designed to deal with complex policy/planning issues and require complex solutions at all levels of government (national, state and local). As a matter of fact, the political system of a country often overlaps functions; and disputes over jurisdiction and lack of trust between different levels of government and there are additional obstacles to rapid response and adaptation within them. The solution to problems outlined is possible with the use of inter-organizational communication networks based on the concept of digital government and administration.

For instance, joint fire planning teams have been set up in New South Wales; a multi-level system of adaptation to climate change on the Great Barrier Reef has been established in Australia; in North Australia, a network of knowledge management in the field of marine resources' management in North Australia has been formed; in the estuary in the Hawkesbury region (Australia), instant support for multi-level decision-making processes has been provided; polycentric and adaptive management systems are integrated into Australian drought management policy. Disaster risk management (DRM) and climate change adaptation (CCA) concepts are actively used in order to increase the stability of the public administration system. DRM, as a rule, is identified with a comprehensive risk management policy based on strategies, tactics, plans and innovative practices designed to limit the consequences of such events, as fires and floods. CCA focuses on the ability not only to withstand the consequences, but also to return to the initial state of stability of the political system, and, in many cases, to ensure a higher level of stability. CCA is understood as "the process of adapting to the actual or expected climate and its effects in order to mitigate harm or seize opportunities". Therefore, CCA and DRM have much in common, focusing on governance structures towards reducing the impact and increasing the stability of the public administration system. At the state level, existing DRM management agencies are being reformed in advanced countries in order to increase the focus on responses to risks and dangers. For instance, changes to the Fire and Emergency Management Agency (FESA) in Western Australia serve as an example, as well as the creation of new coordinating bodies, such as the Queensland Reconstruction and Emergency Management Authority Victoria. Effective holistic responses and actions of the public administration system require joint efforts and integration of different approaches that will be able to overcome structural obstacles of the government hierarchy, as well as the problems of interdepartmental mistrust and duplication of functions.

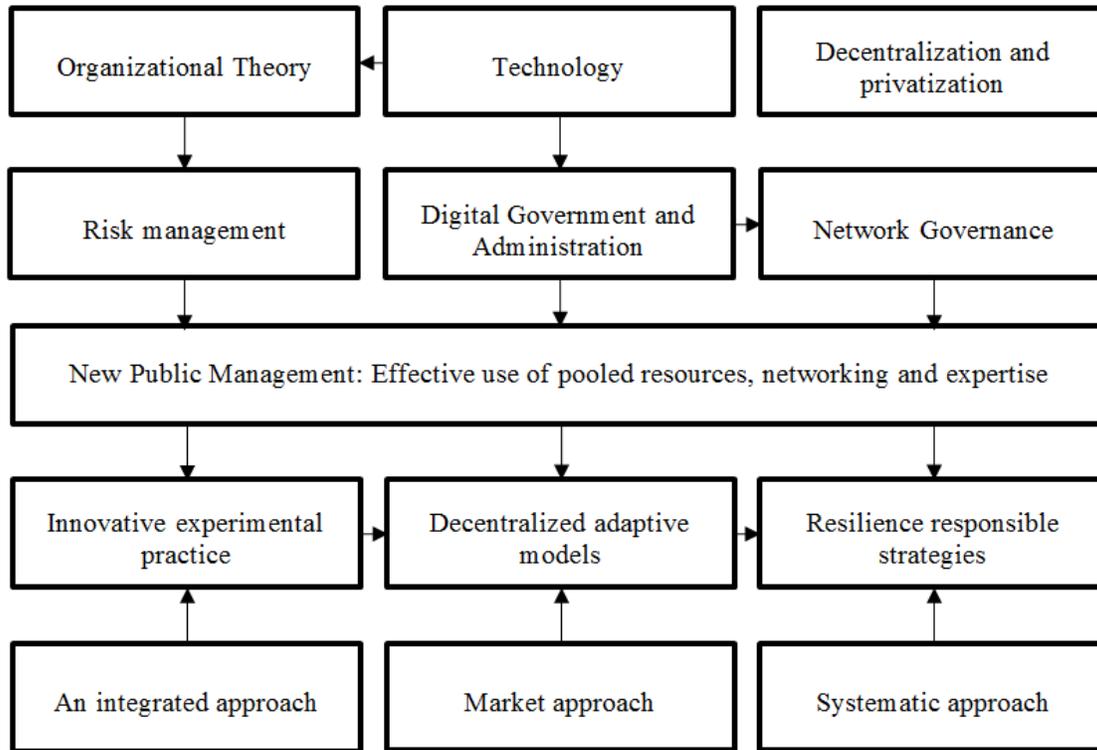


FIGURE 1

### CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF ADAPTATION OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM TO GLOBAL RISKS

The implementation of policy reforms in Norway and Mexico serves as an example of integrating the adaptation paradigm into New Public Management; consequently, it improves the adaptive capacity of local governments. However, this practice shows negative consequences in Norway. The practice is based on clear norms and standards, which has been necessary in both countries. Nonetheless, changes in policy and administration have not improved the ability to address complex, cross-sectoral challenges with increasing climate change risks. In Norway, new public management was characterized by a reduction in the level of adaptation to responding to climate risks. In Mexico, natural disaster tendencies suggest that new institutional arrangements have had no effect on reducing the risk of floods. In both countries, new public management reforms have led to problems of accountability and participation of various interested parties in the adaptation process. Both cases exemplify the problems of institutional suitability, where institutional reforms have restructured risk mitigation control and participation in ways that do not correspond to the spatial and temporal scale of the threat. Coordination between scales and sectors is critical due to numerous social, environmental, political and economic factors that contribute to social vulnerability in certain places. In the case of Mexico, the combination of decentralized resource planning with local governments and the quasi-private sector has caused flood risk management interventions to very limited, very local problems, namely: reserve runoff

or a section of river that requires dredging. Thus, global risks cannot be addressed at the local decentralized level. Changing responsibilities does not ensure cost-effectiveness.

## DISCUSSION

The central problem in developing an effective model of public administration system based on the paradigm of adaptation and sustainability lies in interdepartmental communication, the speed of government response to change, dissemination and processing of knowledge (training). An important objective of new public management is to ensure the legitimacy and accountability, responsibility and competence of decision-makers in the context of adaptation to global risks (Adger et al., 2005). Examples of natural resources' management in the face of climate change illustrate that flexible institutions, allowing decision-makers to review and reformulate policies as new information becomes available, tend to be more effective in times of uncertainty. Institutions affect the technical and financial capacity of implementing organizations, influencing their ability to plan and carry out adaptation actions. An institutional organization is able to structure access to power and resources, which facilitates or limits adaptation for certain groups of participants.

Thus, rules, norms and methods of decision-making affect how the public administration system organizes its resources and knowledge in order to protect against the negative consequences of global risks. Although adaptive capacity or adaptability is not equivalent to the concept of resilience, it is a fundamental feature of a stable system. Adaptive capacity is the ability of specific subjects (or system components) to influence institutional structures and the stability of the system of which they are a part. Examples of the integration of public administration systems that ensure interagency communication, adaptation to change and stability of the system give evidence of unsuccessful attempts by civil servants to respond to global risks. Thus, polycentric, multilevel public governance structures can be more conducive to stability formation. The present research proves the ability of the public administration system to learn through a negative experience of adaptation. In the proposed theory of Kumler and Lemos (2008), it has been revealed that public water management reforms in the Paraíba do Sul River in Brazil have created polycentric and more democratic decision-making centers, as well as improved opportunities for training, providing more flexible and adaptive management under severe drought conditions.

## CONCLUSION

In the present research, a new concept of public administration has been formed; it is interdisciplinary in nature and integrates approaches to management borrowed from the theory of organization, anti-crisis management, joined-up government and network governance, new public management, digital government and administration. The conceptual model of adaptation of public administration system to global risks has been formed and resilience and adaptation paradigm in public administration has been developed. The principles of new public management complement the paradigm of adaptation and flexibility in order to ensure the sustainability of the public administration system. However, the philosophy of public management in different countries proves that there are obstacles to adaptation opportunities due to poor interdepartmental links at different levels of government, low responsibility and accountability. New public management is evolving due to the active introduction of new

interdisciplinary approaches. The outcomes of this research can be utilized as a model in public crisis management in the context of global challenges and risks.

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