



FEDERAL UNIVERSITY
OF CEARÁ

CONTEXTUS

REVISTA CONTEMPORÂNEA DE ECONOMIA E GESTÃO

Contextus – Contemporary Journal of Economics and Management

ISSN 1678-2089
ISSNe 2178-9258

www.periodicos.ufc.br/contextus

Public entrepreneurship in the light of the theories of practice

Empreendedorismo público à luz das teorias da prática

Emprendimiento público a la luz de las teorías de la práctica

<https://doi.org/10.19094/contextus.2022.72212>

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is understanding the entrepreneurial action in the light of the theories of practice. The article establishes a dialogue through the theoretical-conceptual articulations between the notion of entrepreneurial action, present in the studies of public entrepreneurship and the movement of studies on the theories of practice. The data utilized was essentially secondary, based on the scientific production referring to the object of study, which was analyzed through a narrative review. It could be observed that the link between the theories of practice and entrepreneurship in the public sector consists in the entrepreneurial action. This can be observed due to the fact that the entrepreneurial action allows considering public entrepreneurship as a practice.

Keywords: public entrepreneurship; practice; narrative review; entrepreneurial action; alternative construction.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste estudo é compreender a ação empreendedora no empreendedorismo público à luz das teorias da prática. É realizado um diálogo com as articulações teórico-conceituais entre a noção de ação empreendedora presente nos estudos de empreendedorismo público com o movimento dos estudos das teorias da prática. Foram utilizados essencialmente dados secundários, tendo como base a produção científica referente ao objeto estudado, os quais foram analisados por meio de uma revisão narrativa. Pôde-se observar que o elo entre as teorias da prática e o empreendedorismo no setor público, consiste na ação empreendedora. Isso é possível devido ao fato de que a ação empreendedora permite considerar o empreendedorismo público como uma prática.

Palavras-chave: empreendedorismo público; prática; revisão narrativa; ação empreendedora; construção alternativa.

RESUMEN

El propósito de este estudio es comprender la acción emprendedora en el emprendimiento público a la luz de las teorías de la práctica. Se realiza un diálogo con las articulaciones teórico-conceptuales entre la noción de acción emprendedora presente en los estudios del emprendimiento público con el movimiento de los estudios de las teorías de la práctica. Se utilizaron datos esencialmente secundarios, basados en la producción científica referente al objeto de estudio, analizados a través de una revisión narrativa. Se pudo observar que el vínculo entre las teorías de la práctica y el emprendimiento en el sector público consiste en la acción emprendedora. Esto es posible debido a que la acción emprendedora permite considerar el emprendimiento público como una práctica.

Palabras clave: emprendimiento público; práctica; revisión narrativa; acción emprendedora; construcción alternativa.

Article Information

Uploaded on 06/10/2021

Final version on 13/01/2022

Accepted on 13/01/2022

Published online on 05/04/2022

Interinstitutional Scientific Committee

Editor-in-chief: Diego de Queiroz Machado

Evaluation by the double blind review system (SEER / OJS - version 3)



How to cite this article:

Silva, C. A., Araújo, E. T. T., Anjo, J. E. S., Brito, V. G. P., & Andrade, D. M. (2022). Public entrepreneurship in the light of the theories of practice. *Contextus – Contemporary Journal of Economics and Management*, 20(7), 88-98. <https://doi.org/10.19094/contextus.2022.72212>

1 INTRODUCTION

The discussion on entrepreneurship has expanded more and more in national studies, especially within the management sciences. Generally, its concept is strongly attached to the “business concept” (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Several approaches are adopted as analysis parameters, especially those targeting economic and behavioral aspects. It should be noted that, in the Brazilian context, from the 1990's onwards, there was a strengthening of entrepreneurship in the public sector, becoming a required element to guarantee the quality of the provided public services. Therefore, for this study, the performed reflections set their emphasis on entrepreneurship according to practice applied to the public sector.

The notion of public entrepreneurship was especially oriented by the “Government Reinvention” movement from the 1990's, associated with the *New Public Management* (NPM) principles. As highlighted by Martins et al. (2007), NPM consisted of a model of public management which starts from the understanding that the public organizations could be managed as private organizations are, with the goal of making the public sector more efficient and modern.

In this setting, the proposal was rethinking the sluggish and static context of the public organizations, using practices and concepts present within private organizations (Valadares & Emmendoerfer, 2015). In short, with the public administration reform, this sector was attributed with characteristics from the private administration, in an attempt to make it more flexible and based on good management focused on objectives (Silva et al., 2016).

Paiva (2004) highlights that the entrepreneur is one who performs one's activities in conjunction with other individuals. That is, the actions are developed in a collaborative manner by managers who have common goals. Thus, according to what Emmendoerfer (2019) states, having initiative, generating ideas and innovations, taking calculated risks, acting with leadership and commitment are some of the entrepreneurial behaviors which every person potentially possesses, which can somehow be stimulated and developed, according to what interests rulers and/or public managers.

Another important concept in this discussion is that of entrepreneurial action. Since the early postulations by Schumpeter (1949), the perception about the entrepreneurial action has gone through meaningful transformations, which, expanding its scope, intend to understand not only the creation of new businesses but also how the entrepreneurial act happens (Zica et al., 2016). Therefore, it is about an innovative activity which can generate proven results, as well as meeting the market's supply and demand. Notably, the entrepreneur's attitude is oriented toward the innovation process, however, the entrepreneurial action presents itself as a priority in one's activities (Lenzi et al., 2010).

Accordingly, it can be stated that the entrepreneur can act both in the creation of new businesses and in the

innovation of preexisting ones. As such, entrepreneurship is usually seen as a process which generates individual, organizational and social value, being regarded as highly important for the society as a whole (Silva et al., 2016). In this sense, it is observed that the entrepreneurial action employed in the public sector can be used in the recognition of opportunities, when dealing with the potential of new resources, as elements that emerged from the improvement or conception of an existing enterprise or one that will be established.

On the other hand, functionalist approaches to entrepreneurship and within a research space, which is mostly marked by functionalist theories and instrumental assumptions, other perspectives emerge as promising for the study of entrepreneurship (Marins & Davel, 2019). These new approaches are associated with the discussions regarding the need to examine theoretical alternatives to the functionalist currents which are based on the economic and behavioral theories, that is, the more traditional theories in entrepreneurship (De Clercq & Vonorov, 2009). Still, even in an incipient manner, the practice perspective emerges and seeks to contribute with a better understanding of the entrepreneurial activity in the relation between individuals and context (Watson, 2013), as well as in the integration of diverse questions (Marins & Davel, 2019).

Thereby, the theories of practice start being presented in literature (Borges et al. 2016; Borges, 2017) as an alternative to the conventional theories in the discussions around entrepreneurship. As such, Borges et al. (2016) state that the existing links between the perspectives of this phenomenon, as well as the conceptualization of entrepreneurial action, allow entrepreneurship to be considered as a practice. In this perspective, understanding entrepreneurship through the practices allows a better understanding of the true activities developed by entrepreneurs, among which are considered the actions which possess the foundation on achievements and understandings (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017).

However, in this study the emphasis is not so much on the discussions about the conceptual question, but only on the act of reflecting on public entrepreneurship as a practice, as well as the manners through which the entrepreneurial actions are highlighted as an important resource for this approach. Therefore, this article is developed from the following question: how may the theories of practice contribute to the understanding of the entrepreneurial action in the public service? In order to answer this question, the goal for this study is understanding the entrepreneurial action in public entrepreneurship through the lens of the theories of practice.

To achieve it, support was sought in a theoretical framework which still counts with few studies on public entrepreneurship, as well as the bond between the entrepreneurial action and the theories of practice. Thus, this study aims to propose discussions and reflections on the theories of practice geared towards entrepreneurship in the public sector, as well as contributing to a field which is

still underexplored, especially in the sphere of organizational studies. The researches referring to entrepreneurship highlight the importance of entrepreneurial action in order to understand entrepreneurship itself (Julien, 2010), so, the entrepreneurial action itself is understood as a study object which is relevant enough for public entrepreneurship.

This article is, then, a theoretical reflection, collectively elaborated, whose limits were delimited by the authors of this proposal. In methodological terms, it was composed essentially of secondary data, basing it on scientific production referring to the object being studied, which was analyzed through a narrative review. The analysis can be conceived as a manner of interactive methodology between the subjectivity of the ones involved in the study and the objectivity of the review being performed. In this sense, beyond the discussion which is presented, the main contribution of this study consists of the presentation of a theoretical scheme, which demonstrates the relation between the public entrepreneurship and the practices.

To the conception of this study, we performed a literary review on the two thematic axes addressed in our discussions, in order to enable understanding how they relate. The structure of this article is divided into five sections. Initially, the introduction is presented. In the second section, the theories of practice are presented. Later, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial action in the public sector are exposed. In the fourth section, we present reflections on the contributions of the theories of practice with entrepreneurship in the public sector. In the fifth section, the final considerations are presented. And, finally, the references.

2 THEORIES OF PRACTICE

The epistemology of practices emerge from the thoughts provoked by Martin Heidegger, Karl Marx, Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, Bruno Latour and Michel Foucault, among others (Reckwitz, 2002; Gherardi, 2006). From these influences, there is the notion of practice. Due to these influences, there is the notion of practice stemming from the ideas of how the individuals realize everyday life (praxis); of the activities constituting everyday life imbricated simultaneously in the actions (practice). From these actions, the traditional dualism between subject and object is questioned by the understanding of the relation between the subject and the object in the practices (Nicolini et al., 2003).

As such, the theories of practice are presented as an approach which opposes the classic social theories. Yet, each of these authors who inspired the epistemology of practices conceptualize the action and the activities their own way, as well as argue diversely about what is beyond the actions/activities which constitute the practices (Schatzki, 2017).

The theories of practice are understood by a group of studies which are opposed to the traditional managerial

studies, which consider the actions and the processes for organizing ideas through rationalist and functionalist perspectives. This way, they focus on the organizational everyday life phenomena, breaking away from the dualisms and dichotomies commonly used in functionalist studies (Reckwitz, 2002; Bispo, 2013; Nicolini, 2013).

The conceptualization of practices and what constitutes them is a group of voices under the label of “studies based on the practice”, which is highly polyphonic (Gherardi, 2009). Postill (2010, p.11) states that there is no coherence nor unification around this theory; however, he defines it as a “a set of works on corporeality. The difficulty in defining what is understood as “practice” is due to not only the polysemy present in the word, but also to several epistemic stances of different researchers (Gherardi, 2009).

The Practice-Based Studies (PBS) or the theories of practice are understood by cultural theories, which consider the practice as a starting point for the analysis of the actions created by the relations between the things around social phenomena (Reckwitz, 2002). It is a movement for promoting the advancement of said studies, which gain traction in the beginning of this century (Gherardi, 2009), when this movement focuses on theorizing said practices and, given that there is not one sole social theory of practice and there is the possibility of distinct words for each practice (Gherardi, 2006; Nicolini, 2013). This movement is organized as the “practice turn”, a return to the concept of practice for a deep analysis of the social context (Schatzki, 2001; Nicolini, 2013).

Considering the plurality of connotations, the term “practice” is used meaning any human action, which leads to a way of carrying out a given practice. As such, “practice” is understood as an action performed daily, through a group of interconnected elements, instead of a unique moment. By “practices”, its semantic understanding goes through processes, in which the concept is transformed and developed within this field, with its heterogeneous theoretical body, even though the belief on societal everyday phenomena persists (Schatzki, 2001).

Reckwitz (2002), conceptualizes the practices as a kind of routinized behavior, composed of several interconnected elements, such as: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, “things” and its use, previous knowledge in understanding how something is done, states of emotion and of motivational knowledge. Therefore, the practice is conceived from the relations between these elements in a given context, mainly involving the actors’ subjectivity. As explained by Gherardi (2009, p. 117), “when practices are observed ‘from the outside’, investigation concentrates on its regularity, on the standard which organizes the activities, and in the more or less shared knowledge, which allows its repetition”.

Practices are sustained by unending performances by those involved (Schatzki, 1996), which can be considered activities with routinized ways of understanding, knowing-how, and wishing, whose ways appear, develop and change as time goes by (Warde, 2005). These are also

conceived as a group of activities organized around a socially shared practice view, therefore the agents and the activities are constituted through practice (Schatzki, 2001). The theory of social practice bases itself on the individual as an effective actor, as much as on the societal structures.

According to Gherardi (2014), the look through the practices presents a flexible language, which enables observing the aspects of the phenomena in a manner closer to reality. This change of perspective is not a simple view, because the practices are complex when attempting to observe and to represent them by accessing the study field being investigated (Gherardi, 2014; Santos & Alcadipani, 2015). That is why there should be attention on the concept and the approaches to the practice, in order to avoid epistemological disharmony and methodological inconsistencies in the studies.

This hybridization of the interdisciplinary study field corresponds to the new perspectives in analysis and comprehension, in which the social is constituted and reconstituted in the actions imbricated between humans and non-humans (Gherardi, 2001). It allows new ways of observing the actions, in a manner situated in each activity within the interactions established between the elements involved in the practices, which leads to a new understanding of the relation between the individuals with the material present in the social daily routine. New methodological ways are traveled and languages are developed, which characterizes a knowing-in-practice (Gherardi, 2006, 2009).

With this look at practice, there is the possibility of coverage of those aspects investigated in a practice, which goes from the habit and value actions sustained by society, to the ways of sharing said practice and its implicit knowledge, as well as to its recursion (Gherardi, 2014). It corroborates the understanding that the concept of practice is not limited to one action and its routine in a given phenomenon, because irregular activities are included, and there are constant processes of change (Schatzki, 2002). The definitions established in the theories of practice also consider knowledge and meanings in a plural manner and not restricted to a routine behavior to define the concept of practice (Reckwitz, 2002; Gherardi, 2006; Santos & Alcadipani, 2015).

Under the perspective of theories of practice, it is considered that the social life emerges in a continuous manner in the daily actions, and not as independent from the social phenomena which are investigated by this recursive and reflexive relation between the actions (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Nicolini, 2013). The studies indicate towards the direction of an analysis between the structure and agents which mutually consist the phenomena immersed in this collective social context (Reckwitz, 2002; Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Nicolini, 2013), which makes every practice something social (Schatzki, 2003).

Starting from this comprehension, it is noted that the social practices are realized by different actors in different times and spaces (Reckwitz, 2002), with the practices being

inserted in a group of activities and organizations (Schatzki, 2003). For the cultural theories, the practices become a way for the understanding of the social order to be seen as an incorporation of collective symbolic structures of knowledge, in which there is social sharing among the actions which give meaning to the social world (Reckwitz, 2002).

The social aspect is inherent to the practice, therefore, in the social practices, it should not be only considered as structures (mental, discourse) and the interaction among the actors, because the social phenomena are immersed in the world of practice (Schatzki, 2001; Reckwitz, 2002). From these connections established in the field of social practices, the union of several elements, both human (body and mind) and non-human (objects, knowledge), is considered for the constitution of the actions, with said elements being needed for the realization of the practice (Reckwitz, 2002).

Borges et al. (2016) state that initiatives which intend to seize the practice in the organizational context should consider an approach capable of integrating the individual action (micro), the intra-organizational activity (meso), and the extra-organizational context (macro), resulting in meaningful advancement and in the theoretical and scientific development, effectively contributing to the generation of knowledge around a given social and/or organizational phenomenon. Yet, according to them, the link between these levels of analysis runs through the recognition of the role played by those who act in the practice, the effective activities executed by them, and the practices which manifest in both the organizations and the larger social field, constituting an interrelating whole (Whittington, 2006; Borges et al., 2016).

Schatzki (2001) highlights that authors have explored this theory based on perspectives which treat the practices as skills, knowledge and assumptions linked with activities; set of human activities in interaction with non-human elements, such as objects, artifacts, machines, tools, and other instruments in which it can be verified the association between the activity and its use/application; actions executed by agents in a field of practices.

Still, the authors Borges et al. (2016) argue that, even though there are countless possibilities for the application of the theory of practice in organizational studies, there is a need for greater problematization of its relationship with more specific aspects, linked to organizational theory, as well as a better understanding of the particularities of this approach. As such, the theory of practice used in several areas of knowledge enables countless analysis outlines, regarding the comprehension of social phenomena, from different ontological and epistemological lenses (Schatzki, 2001).

Under this perspective, while using the concept of "practice", in this study we are interested in understanding the production / consumption of knowledge and its reproduction circuit, according to the discussion by Gherardi (2009). Therefore, the studies about entrepreneurship in this approach are compatible with the discussions about the

need of exploring theoretical alternatives which are not based on those traditionally employed in research, that is, the economic or behavioral ones. From this notion, we restate the possibility of understanding the entrepreneurial actions through the lens of the theories of practice (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Schatzki, 2001).

3 FROM ENTREPRENEURSHIP TO PUBLIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The first meaning attributed to the word “entrepreneurship” used to have relation with the committed, engaged actions, which break off from people’s natural attitude (Valadares & Emmendoerfer, 2015). However, due to the advancements in society and in capitalism, from the 19th and 20th centuries, entrepreneurship started being resignified as an activity which promotes growth, transforming the figure of the entrepreneur into the representative of the object of maintenance and propagation of economic development (Costa et al., 2011; Valadares & Emmendoerfer, 2015). The concept of entrepreneurship became popular due to the disciplinary area of Business Schools, where it was restricted for several decades and gained a strong expression both in the means of social communication and in the global political discourse (Moreira, 2017).

Since then, the meaning of the term “entrepreneurship” is commonly associated with investments, financial risks and planning, arising from the economic and commercial environment (Sousa et al., 2010). Still, according to what Silveira et al. (2007) present, entrepreneurship can be analyzed as the conception of something new, having its origins in an opportunity.

However, Valadares and Emmendoerfer (2015) highlight that the entrepreneurship approaches and the concepts which characterize and particularize it strengthen and keep the entrepreneur’s status quo, based on performance. In this perspective, effort, courage and dedication can be considered essential characteristics for reaching goals, consequently, they set apart from the original meaning, which is making the person a subject of the actions that one can perform (Valadares & Emmendoerfer, 2015).

In relation to this aspect, it can be observed that a great part of the organizational theories were discussed and developed under the scope of organizations in general, without establishing any distinctions between the public and the private sectors. So, in order to analyze and interpret the practices, and to subsidize the elaboration of new mental models in the field, there are thought currents which have been used as a theoretical-conceptual framework, both explicitly and tacitly, in studies about innovation and entrepreneurship, including in the public sector (Emmendoerfer, 2019).

It is important to remember that the 1970’s and in the 1980’s were marked by the consolidation of the neoliberal logic, once since the mid-1970’s the Welfare State logic was

being questioned regarding its inability for satisfactorily meeting the demands from the State and from society (Morais et al., 2014). Therefore, the neoliberal assumptions met those demands, considering that they involved the individual liberty, free market, the criticism towards state interventionism, as well as the transposition of managerial techniques to the public sector, as if it were a magic formula for solving problems in the public sector (Paula, 2005).

As such, from the 1980’s, this form of government was consolidated thanks to the wave of global reforms, contributing to the production of the discourse about the entrepreneurial government (EG) in the public sector as a consequence of the neoliberal thought. Later, this logic was consolidated with the emergence of the managerial public administration (MPA) model (Hood, 1991; Pollitt, 2000; Morais et al., 2014).

In Brazil, entrepreneurship geared towards the public sector gained notoriety from the 1990’s, especially due to the changes implemented in the political and administrative dimensions (Martins et al., 2007). With the administrative reform, the public sector was affected by the influence of the NPM (New Public Management) guiding principles, starting to to assume more managerial characteristics, that is, those linked to functionalist approaches.

The new public management, therefore, adopted multifunctional characteristics, which help the new role played by the government, which is beyond the bureaucracy, in the attempt of making the public sector more efficient and modern, according to the managerial premises which are part of the functionalist approaches. Because of that, the sector started acquiring more flexible characteristics, while not abandoning the rational-legal bureaucratic apparatus.

In this context, the NPM contributed to the emergence of the Master Plan for the Reform of the State Apparatus, which took on the new public management and managerial reform as a responsibility (Bresser-Pereira, 2000). In said conditions, through the new public management and the managerial reform, the Brazilian Service for Supporting the Micro and Small Business (Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas), significantly contributed to the consolidation of entrepreneurship (Dornelas, 2008).

Although entrepreneurship applied to the public sector brings with it the realization of managerial and behavioral practices, its main premise has a very different application from the private sector, as it is based on the principle of the common good and the aggregation of value for the whole society (Valadares & Emmendoerfer, 2015). In this sense, Jacobi and Pinho (2006) state that entrepreneurship in the sector exerts a significant influence on the social scenario, which allows the analysis through some aspects, namely: the transformation of the development of public policies that were directed to the growth of public goods and for the citizens’ rights, the democratization of management, the transparency in the development of administration, the increase and the development of public goods and the improvement of public

services provided to the entire population (Jacobi & Pinho, 2006).

Also due to the globalization process, it was extremely important that the public sector was aligned with the changes, through a decentralized form of administration, with specific characteristics of the private sector, in order to have the capacity to solve the citizens' demands (Bernardi & Guimarães, 2008). Therefore, the association of entrepreneurship with the public sector is based on the assumption of favoring the quality of public services which will be provided to society, demanding that governments redefine their role through the commitment and guarantee of improving admission to public services (Osborne & Gaebler, 1994).

The concept of entrepreneurship in the public sector is related to the concept of value for the society, by associating the combination of public resources, in order to investigate social opportunities (Morris & Jones, 1999). In this way, this form of entrepreneurship defines a new proactive role for the government, in leading society towards a better quality of life (Diefenbach, 2011). It should be noted that the public sector differs not only in terms of the purposes of the private sector, but also in the process (Valadares & Emmendoerfer, 2015). In this sense, the performance of public organizations is not only guided by management values, but also by political, social and institutional values.

Public entrepreneurs, therefore, act independently of the organization to which they belong, the environment or productive sector. Thus, it is up to these professionals to identify and coordinate opportunities, as well as to act to meet individual, collective and/or public interest needs (Shane & Venkataraman, 2001). In line with these ideas, Julien (2010) reinforces that in studies focused on entrepreneurship, the so-called entrepreneurial action is relevant, since it allows the assimilation and understanding of this perspective.

3.1 Entrepreneurial Action

Lenzi et al. (2010) emphasize that entrepreneurial action is associated with the way of developing an innovative function that generates valid results and that is in accordance with market offers and demands. With this, the attitudes of the individual entrepreneur are directed towards the aspect of innovation, becoming the action. The debates regarding the studies of entrepreneurial action are focused on situations in which entrepreneurs must take advantage of new opportunities, evaluating them and acting in a timely manner (Mocelin & Azambuja, 2017). In short, based on Lima (2010), it is understood that entrepreneurial action is a viable possibility for the development of organizations, since, associated with managerial actions, it contributes to the branding process, as well as increasing its competitiveness.

Leyden (2016) reinforces that incorporating innovation is essential for the economic development of organizations, and this process can only occur through

entrepreneurial action. In light of the foregoing, we seek to emphasize that entrepreneurial actions carried out at the governmental level consist of the recognition of the execution of the existing public value among managers, when dealing with the association between the scarcity of resources and environmental turmoil (DeGhetto et al., 2018).

According to Silveira (2007), the incorporation of entrepreneurial action in the public sector aims to achieve satisfactory results, in relation to timely recognition by the entrepreneurs, especially through the creation of social networks. Entrepreneurship aimed at the public sector advances with the unfolding of entrepreneurial actions resulting from contacts between social networks (Sousa, 2010), since these networks can even act on cultural and social forces, which seek to increase the capacities and objectives of the organization. According to Berlim et al. (2006), public entrepreneurial action does not aim to obtain profit, so it focuses its efforts on improving social results.

In addition, this format of entrepreneurial action seeks the collective effort of people or organizations, who have certain goals in common and who seek to improve the services offered to society (Zen & Fracasso, 2008) and can favor the solution to the demands of the public sector through the implementation of public policies aimed at economic, social and political emancipation, which have the purpose of social transformation (Silva et al., 2016). Therefore, entrepreneurial action applied in the public sector can be established when it is an action that aims to consider business opportunities, related to the perception of new resources, which will result in the design or improvement of a public enterprise (Sousa et al., 2010).

4 REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THEORIES OF PRACTICE TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

In view of what has been exposed so far, it is observed that through the lens of entrepreneurship, several approaches are used as an analytical tool, the most common being the economic and behavioral aspects that have the largest number of research and publications. However, in the case of entrepreneurship aimed at the public sector, there is a large gap in research on this approach, although it has gained relevance since 1990. This locus of analysis is very little explored and debated, which implies the need for a theoretical discussion focused on the public sector and also for the problematization of aspects linked to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial action in this segment of empirical reality (Borges et al., 2006).

For this reason, the look at entrepreneurship from the perspective of practical approaches constitutes a very rich and positive alternative for the area, regarding the new possibilities of approaching a topic that is researched only from the conventional functionalist perspective. Despite having access to diverse epistemological currents (Nicolini et al., 2003), Practice-Based Studies avoid dualisms and

conceive practices as producers of society and organizations (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Schatzki, 2006). Thus, as Marins and Davel (2019) argue, an orientation towards the practice of the entrepreneurial process may generate many possibilities for researching the praxis of social theorizing in the field (Steyaert, 2007). There is a value base that goes beyond instrumental action, whose focus is on expanding, stimulating and developing a more complex vision of the entrepreneurial process (Marins & Davel, 2019).

Therefore, from this point we achieve this article's goal of discussing this theme under the light of the theories of practice, mainly to highlight the importance of understanding the entrepreneurial practices circumscribed in specific contexts (Borges et al., 2016). In the case of the public sector, such analyses become even more relevant and necessary, since actions and activities guide practices that are developed in the midst of a legal framework that is related to it.

Based on these considerations, studies have highlighted the possibility of understanding entrepreneurial activities through the theories of practice (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Schatzki, 2001); however, it is important to emphasize that entrepreneurship must be analyzed with a focus on what the entrepreneur actually does, that is, focusing on one's actions/activities that constitute the practices. Thus, this possibility of analysis enables a better understanding of the creation and reproduction of entrepreneurial practices over time, the context in which they are manifested, and the entrepreneurial agents who build them (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Borges, 2017).

As public entrepreneurship has been researched from both managerial and behavioral perspectives, understanding it through practices approaches enables a better understanding of what entrepreneurs actually do, considering their decisions based on understandings and achievements (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017). In this way, it is considered that the constitution of behavior patterns, ways of understanding, knowing and desiring are elements and qualities of entrepreneurship that are linked to individual, collective and spatial issues (Thompson et al., 2016; Marins & Davel, 2019). Therefore, entrepreneurial action is an activity which is associated with a given way of developing an innovative function, whose results are valid (Lenzi et al., 2010).

Based on the idea that entrepreneurship happens within the scope of everyday practices, tacit knowledge and relationships are relevant to develop organizations and society in a creative and timely way (Certeau, 2013; Johannisson, 2011; Marins & Davel, 2019). However, given the reality of the public sector in the Brazilian context, such actions are performed in situations of extreme scarcity of resources, as well as a very specific organizational environment. In this way, entrepreneurship is related to practice, as actions and activities are implemented based on previously defined objectives and action plan. Therefore, understanding the phenomenon through the practices

validates the differences between social-historical contexts, considers the different positions occupied by individuals in the same social space, as well as the function of the structural constraints that such positions exert on the representational universes of individuals (Peters, 2013).

In order to highlight and graphically represent our discussion about public entrepreneurship from the perspective of practices, we propose the following image:

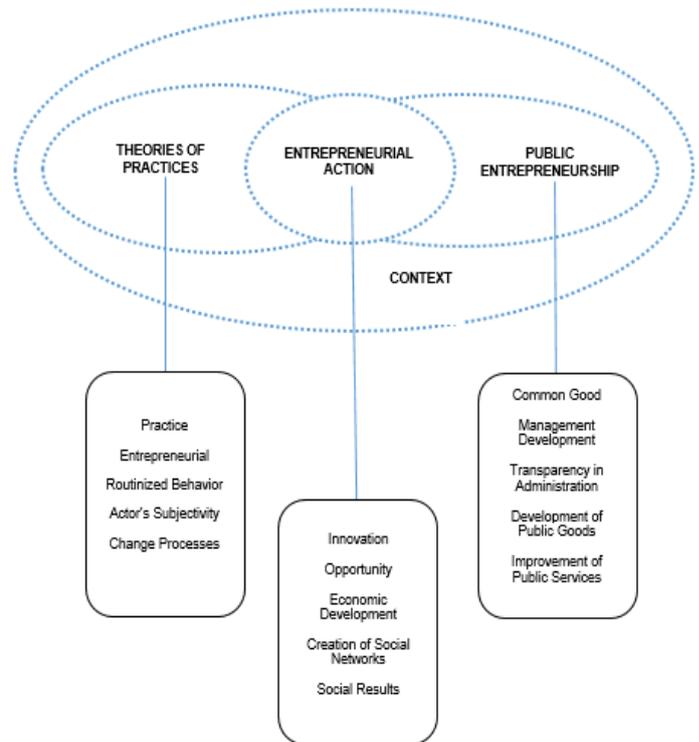


Figure 1. Public entrepreneurship from the perspective of practices.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

With Figure 1, it is evident that the causal link between public entrepreneurship and theories of practice occurs mainly through entrepreneurial action, since, according to Borges et al. (2016), the articulations between the procedural perspectives of this phenomenon, as well as the concept of entrepreneurial action, allow considering entrepreneurship as a practice.

However, it should be noted that from the perspective of practice, entrepreneurship is not conceived from a stereotyped or heroic posture, but as everyday activities carried out through sociocultural processes (De Clercq & Vonorov, 2009; Marins & Davel, 2019).

It should also be noted that the dashed lines in Figure 1 indicate that, in all spaces comprised by the theories of practice, by entrepreneurship and by the context itself, they are permeated by factors which make these practices unique and specific in a given scenario. In this sense, both are mutable, that is, they are directly influenced by external factors such as the socio-historical context. Therefore, in this study, as Marins and Davel (2019) argue, entrepreneurship is considered a complex phenomenon that is significantly influenced both by individuals and by social relationships, context, environment and history.

Therefore, understanding entrepreneurship through practices enables a better understanding of what entrepreneurs actually do, considering their decisions based on understandings, feelings and achievements (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Paiva et al., 2018; Marins & Davel, 2019). Entrepreneurship as a practice can be understood as a way of perceiving the existence of irrationalities, feelings and emotions beyond economic results and the vision of entrepreneurship as something intentional and planned (Marins & Davel, 2019). Accordingly, we reinforce that the perspective of practice may contribute significantly to research related to entrepreneurship, in which the social processes that constitute organizations can be considered, especially those present in the public sector.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This work sought to understand the entrepreneurial action in public entrepreneurship in the light of theories of practice. In this perspective, it is believed that this study's objective was achieved through the proposed graphic representation, which emphasized the existing relationships between these themes, which is the main contribution of this theoretical reflection.

As stated earlier, the causal nexus between theories of practice and entrepreneurship in the public sector consists mainly of the entrepreneurial action. In this sense, the articulations between the procedural perspectives of this phenomenon, as well as the concept of entrepreneurial action, allow considering entrepreneurship as a practice (Borges et al., 2016). Therefore, it is assumed that entrepreneurship is conceived even by everyday activities carried out through sociocultural processes (De Clercq & Vonorov, 2009; Marins & Davel, 2019).

Entrepreneurship in the light of practices allows observations to be performed in the micro actions of individuals, that is, under the lens of practices, the emphasis is on what entrepreneurs actually do, considering their decisions anchored in understandings, feelings and achievements (Anderson & Ronteau), 2017; Paiva et al., 2018; Marins & Davel, 2019). As a result, it is argued that the perspective of practice, especially in relation to entrepreneurship in the public sector, contributes significantly by proposing an observation and analysis of actions, which permeate this context and which can often go unnoticed. This is also due to the importance given to the social processes that constitute organizations, especially those present in the public sector.

With this theoretical reflection, it was possible to understand that entrepreneurial action in public entrepreneurship can be studied and analyzed in the light of theories of practice, through a proposal illustrated by the figure presented, in relation to the theme addressed, and which can be used by other researchers. Furthermore, this study represents an alternative construction of entrepreneurial action, which can be applied in several

contexts, whether educational, political, cultural, or social, among others.

As a future research agenda, studies aimed at entrepreneurship in the public sector from the perspective of practice are suggested, since this locus and the focus of analysis are little explored and discussed, which implies the need for a theoretical discussion focused on this question and also for the problematization of aspects linked to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial action. Such as carrying out a case study in order to highlight the theoretical-practical aspects of public entrepreneurship from the perspective of practices. One suggestion is to carry out a case study in order to highlight the theoretical-practical aspects of public entrepreneurship from the perspective of practices.

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ISSNe 2178-9258

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