

# Hierarchies, Markets and Networks

## A Public Administration View on SDI

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# Outline

1. Context
2. Coordination in the public sector
  - Meaning of coordination
  - Coordination problem
  - Coordination mechanisms
  - Coordination instruments
  - Organizational coordination
3. Conclusions



## Rajabifard & Williamson, 2002

*“Spatial Data Infrastructure is fundamentally a concept about facilitation and coordination of the exchange and sharing of spatial data between stakeholders from different jurisdictional levels in the spatial data community”*



## Craglia & Johnston, 2004

*“Coordination is probably the most important component because without it all the other ones would either not happen or do so in a very fragmented and inconsistent way”*



## Context

Need for coordination is becoming more and more recognized in SDI literature

Insight into coordination process still rather limited

Public management literature on coordination offers a valuable perspective



# Context

Focus on coordination mechanisms and instruments

*Bouckaert, G., Peters, B.G. and Verhoest, K. (forthcoming). The coordination of public sector organizations: shifting patterns of public management. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.*



# Meaning of coordination

*“Coordination implies the bringing into a relationship of otherwise disparate activities or events”*

In the context of public administration:

*“ ... the alignment of tasks and efforts of organisations within the public sector”*



## Related concepts

Cooperation,  
Collaboration,  
Coordination functions or entities,  
....

→ Particular instruments within coordination strategies



# Coordination problem

Failure to align public programmes

One of the oldest problems for the public sector

Fragmentation as the main cause



# Consequences

1. Duplications
2. Contradictions
3. Gaps
4. Lost opportunities



# Coordination mechanisms

What is the best way in which coordination can be achieved?

Three alternative approaches to coordination

- Hierarchy
- Market
- Network



# Hierarchy

Authority and power as fundamental processes and resources

Relations based on rules & routines

Low degree of flexibility &  
medium degree of commitment



# Market

Competition and exchange among actors as coordinating factors

Relationships mediated by price mechanisms

High degree of flexibility &  
low degree of commitment



# Network

Coordination through cooperation and solidarity

Loyalty, reciprocity and trust

Medium degree of flexibility & high degree of commitment



# Typology

Three approaches contribute to the understanding of coordination

In reality coordination initiatives will involve more than one of these approaches

Useful framework to analyse coordination efforts in the public sector



# Coordination instruments

Activities to achieve coordination

Specific coordination instruments refer to specific coordination mechanisms

Management and structural instruments



# Hybrid instruments

Coordination instruments combine aspects of different mechanisms

Several coordination instruments may be used in different ways

## *Strategic management*

- Top-down & unilateral → Hierarchy
- Bottom-up & interactive → Network



# Instruments & mechanisms

Restructuring task and competences

→ Hierarchy

Creation of regulated markets

→ Market

Entities of collective decision making

→ Network



# Organizational coordination

H-M-N typology also useful in intra-organizational context

- Coordination between divisions
- Employee/Employer relations
- Make-or-buy decisions



# Research Objective

Develop a framework to describe and analyze SDI coordination initiatives

*“What mechanisms and instruments could be used to enhance the coordination between different administrations and levels of governments?”*



# Research questions

*What is the meaning of the three coordination mechanisms in the context of SDI?*

*Which instruments could be used to enhance the coordination in the context of SDI?*

*How could these coordination instruments be linked to more general coordination mechanisms?*



## Need for interdisciplinarity

*Barriers to coordination* are legal, economic, organisational, technical,...

*Coordination instruments* could also be legal, economic, organisational, technical,....



# More information

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