

RFAS

Revue française des affaires sociales

Call for multidisciplinary papers on:

**“Fundig and operating the non-profit sector:
marketisation and its impacts”**

For the fourth 2023 issue of RFAS

The brief will be coordinated by **Simon Cottin-Marx** (EMA, LATTS), **Camille Hamidi** (Lyon 2, Triangle) and **Arnaud Trenta** (CNAM – Lise).

Papers on all disciplines related to the non-profit sector will be considered. However, this call for contributions is more specifically aimed at researchers in sociology and political science, as well as in law, economics, history and anthropology.

Contributions concerning the social sector in a wider sense would be particularly appreciated (social emergencies, housing, personal care, health, as well as the social and solidarity economy and inclusion), whether focused on France or abroad.

Analyses focused on monographs are welcome, as are more comparative and possibly quantitative works.

Proposals should be submitted before 16 January 2023

for a work session on 16 March 2023.

We expect proposals of one to two pages that mention the area(s) of focus to which the article is connected, present the scope, method and outlines of the concept that will be proposed and cite several bibliographic references that make it possible to identify the author’s stance.

Final articles must be submitted before 11 May 2023.

From a historical and multi-scalar perspective, this issue of RFAS analyses the connections between non-profits and public authorities (Cottin-Marx et al., 2017; Hamidi, Trenta, 2020) and aims to question the “public marketisation” of the non-profit sector, such as transformations in its relationship with public authority and the effects of the process of marketisation on the structure of the non-profit world. The brief will concentrate, in particular, on non-profits in social policy, both in France and around the world (Archambault, 2017).

BOX 1 – Scope of the non-profit sector

Non-profits are groups of people who have been brought together around a common activity or project with a goal other than to share profits. These are organisations ruled by private law and regulated by the Waldeck-Rousseau law of 1 July 1901 on contracts for non-profits¹, 17 years after the recognition of trade unions. Non-profits currently employ 2.2 million employees and, as in many Western countries (Archambault, 2017), they are vital cogs in various activity areas in the health, social and medico-social sectors, as they are involved in assistance, support, care and home help, social intervention and organisation, as well as sports, housing, tourism, education, defending causes and culture (Tchernonog, Prouteau, 2019; Cottin-Marx, 2019).

Today, non-profits play a major role in implementing public action in France. It is largely for this reason that they are supported by public funding. Of course, this was not always the case. Relationships with public authorities have undergone several changes over recent history.

During the French Third Republic and the post-war period, we saw a movement of “publicising the private” (Hély, Moulévrier, 2013) with the development of the social State and, especially with the influence of solidarity-based thinking (Audier, 2010), the State took on initiatives that had previously been the domain of the private sphere (personal, family, religion, community). This was the case, for example, for disability, which had been managed by the families concerned before becoming a public issue and, as a result, receiving public funding (Robelet et al., 2009). This trend is not limited to a single social issue and, in particular, has contributed to structuring and professionalising new activity sectors, such as the health and social sector (Brodiez-Dolino, 2013; Bec, 2014; Gaboriaux, 2021; Heiniger, 2021).

Laws on decentralisation were then beneficial for the non-profit sector from the 1980s. In fact, the laws of 7 January and 22 July 1983 transferred several blocks of competencies from the State to local authorities in a range of areas, such as town planning and housing, professional training, social action and health, transport, education, culture and environment, etc. In order to implement these new general interest projects and public services, local authorities have largely relied on non-profits and contributed to the increase in number of salaried employees in these organisations (Hély, 2009).

Lastly, since the 2000s and with the rise in the New Public Management approach, we have supported the development of a “market bureaucracy” (Considine, 1996) and a buyer-supplier

¹ [Online]: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/LEGITEXT000006069570/>.

connection between the public authority, the non-profit sector and the private, for-profit sector, where competition for access to public funding is seen as a core element in the effectiveness of non-profits. This also included the development of a “contract culture” (Cunningham, 2001) that is distinctive because of the lack of long-term commitment, but very detailed work specifications and tasks, with demands with regard to performance, compliance with standards, etc. (Cunningham, James, 2009).

In France in particular, public funding for the non-profit sector had been growing consistently since the 2010s and has plateaued since 2011, unlike funding from private sources (to the extent that the share of public funding in the total budget of non-profits has become the minority). In 2005, direct public funding represented 51% of the total budget for the non-profit sector. In 2017, this accounted for only 44% of a total budget of €114 billion (Tchernonog, Prouteau, 2019) that comes directly from public authorities. This increase in private funding follows the growing strategy of selling goods and services to users (Le Roy, Puissant, 2019), which are themselves in large part solvent thanks to public money (benefits, tax credits, etc.) (Cottin-Marx, Devetter, 2022), but also thanks to the support of donations and philanthropy (Edwards, 2008; Lefèvre, 2011; Lambelet, 2014; Mosley, Galaskiewicz, 2015).

In addition, it is worth noting that since the start of this decade, funding for non-profits has come less from operating subsidies or calls for projects² and more from calls for tenders (falling under the French Code on Public Tenders (*code des marchés publics*)³) (Tchernonog, Prouteau, 2019). This process of “public marketisation” has a strong influence on non-profit work by causing non-profits to compete with each other and by imposing operating norms and service provision (Cunningham, 2001; Chauvière, 2010; Hardy, 2014), as showcased by the media coverage of the marketing for a helpline aimed at women who are victims of violence that was set up by the Fédération nationale solidarité femmes (HCVA, 2021).

The process of bringing non-profits “to market” (regardless of whether this concerns public or private markets) was initiated by public authorities (Nyssens, 2015; Cottin-Marx, et al. 2017) that made this a condition of its funding. It began earlier in English-speaking countries (Weisbrod, 1998; Salamon, 2010), but France is now involved in this dynamic following several “State modernisation” reforms (Bezes, 2009) and also in the introduction of market-oriented and competitive reasoning in the social and solidarity economy (SSE).

This transformation in the relationship between public authorities and non-profits has resulted in the “marketisation” (Eikenberry, Kluver, 2004) of the non-profit sector. In this brief, we propose qualifying this process of “public marketisation” due to the central role played by public authorities in imposing market-oriented reasoning on the non-profit sector. Public

² The SSE law, announced on 31 July 2014, gives a definition of subsidy. A subsidy funds a project initiated by the non-profit; it does not respond to a need expressed by a public authority; it is not compensation for providing a service; it cannot exceed the cost of implementing a project.

³ “The call for tenders, either open or limited, is the process by which the buyer chooses the offer that makes the most economic sense, without negotiation and on the basis of objective criteria that were made known to the candidates beforehand.” French Code for Public Tenders, Article L2124-2

marketisation encompasses the following three aspects: creating competition between non-profits for public tenders through calls for tenders; the trend for non-profits to push their resources on private markets with varying levels of regulation (privatisation of resources); the diffusion of new management standards and practices.

These new management approaches in the non-profit sector have begun to be the subject of studies, particularly with regard to working conditions and the relationship with users (Alberti, 2019; Miaz, 2019; Cousinié, 2021). However, many of these studies are monographic and sector-specific, so we do not have as much information on approaches as a whole. Furthermore, to date, research has focused much on the hierarchy between the following three elements: the approaches to coming onto the market, the development of their private resources and the import of operating strategies taken from the private sector.

This brief aims to combine these three elements for analysis by examining the political impacts of these changes, both on the internal organisation of non-profits, their governance and relationships between employees and volunteers, on the politicisation of radical non-profits and on the “beneficiaries” of the action. For example, we often implicitly compare the marketisation and privatisation of resources in the context of neoliberal and entrepreneurial approaches, but the use of private resources may also be a lever for politicisation in the context of a State that is believed to be authoritarian or corrupt (Nicourd, 2009; Pereyra, 2013; Tumultes, 2015; Trenta, 2022). Lastly, although these processes and their impacts in terms of professionalisation and increasing managerial approach are real and undeniable, they also face obstacles and limitations that sometimes concern resistance from actors, as well as the interconnection of these processes with other approaches (non-solvent needs, informal activities, clientelism, role of networks, etc.), which can possibly change the shape of non-profits.

From the perspective of research into the non-profit sector, the phase seems conducive to the development of these kinds of analyses. In fact, studies on non-profits have long been rather compartmentalised. In the 1980s and 1990s, they approached the sector primarily from the angle of volunteering and commitment, looking to characterise the profiles of volunteers in terms of demographics and sociology (Héran, 1998; Archambault, 2002) and to reflect on the transformations in commitment with regard to political sociology (Perrineau, 1994; Barthélémy, 2000). In the 2000s, research saw a considerable revival in line with the changes in the sector, while continuing to be quite divided. From the perspective of sociology, researchers proposed tackling the non-profit sector, employees and volunteers from the perspective of work, and not only commitment (Hély, 2009; Simonet, 2010; Ihaddadène, 2018). In political science, after having understood non-profits from the angle of collective mobilisation (Juhem, 1998; Péchu, 2008; Broqua, 2005), authors proposed to look at it from the perspective of politicisation (Hamidi, 2010; Rougier, 2011), then with regard to their contribution to implementing public policies (D’Halluin-Mabillot, 2012; Pette, 2014; Fischer, 2016; Chappe, 2019). From a history-focused perspective, recent initiatives also aim to establish this subject in a field of study and for discussion (*Mouvement Social*, 2021 but see also Andrieu, Le Beguec, Tartakowsky, 2001). In recent years, the creation of spaces for exchange between authors from different disciplines who are interested in this sector of activity

has represented an opportunity that is favourable to opening up works to consider the impacts seen across all of these trends. For example, we consider the thematic network *Sociologie du monde associatif*, created in 2004 in the Association Française de Sociologie (French Association of Sociology), which contributes to structuring the academic field by organising a multi-year seminar, conferences and publications⁴, as well as the launch of the French Institute for Non-Profit Organisations in 2019, which aims to create dialogue between actors in the world of research and the non-profit sector to acknowledge the importance of the latter. This issue is in line with this approach.

With this tension between the private and public, which has existed since the origin of non-profits, although changed in the various contexts reported (place of Community law, decentralisation, New Public Management), how has this modified the political role of non-profits, the forms of politicisation of their members and their effects on public action, especially in the social, medico-social and health sector? This brief aims to characterise the marketisation that affects the non-profit sector and to examine the impacts that lead to their actions, the work they carry out and their political role.

This call proposes four areas of consideration:

- 1/ Analysis of the explanatory factors in the public marketisation process and the role of the actor networks that have promoted this approach;
- 2/ The characterisation of marketisation approaches;
- 3/ The impacts with regard to working conditions, internal operation and the political role of non-profits;
- 4/ Lastly, the limitations to these evolutions.

⁴ See in particular the thematic briefs: “Highs and lows of non-profit work”, coordinated by Matthieu Hély and Maud Simonet for *Les Mondes du Travail*, no. 5, 2008; “Conflict: the unthinkable of the non-profit sector”, coordinated by Yves Lochard, Arnaud Trenta and Nadège Vezinat for *La vie des idées*, 2009 and “Working classes and non-profits: how have connections with policy been redefined?” coordinated by Camille Hamidi and Arnaud Trenta for *Sociétés Contemporaines*, 2021.

1/ Why public marketisation? Who is involved?

First of all, we want to characterise the factors explaining the marketisation approach in the non-profit sector. Articles can question the specific methods for “mimicking State trade” (Hassenteufel, Maillard, 2017) and, more largely, those of the public authorities, from the perspective of the latter. What leads administrations to use market-based reasoning to fund non-profits? What is the result of legal restrictions imposed on public action? What is the exact role of the European Union and Community regulation in these processes?

What are the differences according to the sectors and territorial levels? How are public subsidies allocated? The interaction of scales and perspectives makes it possible to better understand the fabric of public marketisation in the non-profit sector.

We would also like to receive papers that study the role of networks and actors who support the development of these dynamics. In this area, we are expecting papers presenting actors and networks that are focused and concentrate on these evolutions in the non-profit and political spheres. For example, we consider the role of the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, of social networks and the role of “patrons” aligning with corporate social responsibility (CSE) (Offerlé, 2021) or social entrepreneurship. We can also study the evolution in the profile of non-profit managers and employees from this perspective: how can the transformation in the social profile of members of the board of directors, administrative managers and employees contribute to the development of a managerial culture in non-profits and modify the conditions for dialogue with public authorities (with the approaches of institutional isomorphism)?

2/ Characterising the approaches of marketisation

We are looking for articles that make it possible to better understand the different components of public marketisation. In conjunction with the competition between non-profits in public tenders, articles could study the way in which non-profits respond to calls for tenders and the impact this has on their activities. With regard to the development of private funding in the budgets of non-profits, this would also be a matter of examining exactly how this happens and what the impacts are. Overall, public funding has remained consistent for French non-profits, which implies compliance with public standards for implementing contributions. Even when there is a request for participation from users (personal care, early childhood, etc.), a public mechanism of providing money to ensure solvency can intercede through tax credits and subsidies. Some articles may analyse this public framework, which is varying degrees of comprehensive, for access to private funds and by identifying its scope. In addition, the call for donations to non-profits is framed by administrative and fiscal measures that are intended to guarantee the proper use of funds collected from private individuals, companies and foundations. How is the recognition of public/general interest, use of certification bodies (Don en confiance, etc.) and the creation of endowment funds structured with obtaining public funding? What are the impacts on the internal operation of non-profits and their relationships with public authorities and users?

3/ How is the public marketisation approach in the non-profit sector translated in the social action, health and medico-social sectors in concrete terms? What are the impacts on non-profits?

Our line of questioning is aimed at three levels of impacts. First of all, **the internal operation of non-profits**, from both a political (governance) view and with regard to working conditions for employees and volunteers. Articles may concentrate on the standards of action that this creates, means of organising work, working conditions for employees and the challenges for internal governance (François, 2015; Cottin-Marx, Paradis, 2020). These approaches will lead articles to consider the scale of streamlining processes that are implemented effectively. Articles could, for example, question how the development of public tenders and social outcome contracts (*contrats à impact social*) impacts organisations. How does this contribute to the production of specific administrative services, to the response to calls for tenders and “measuring impact”?

It is also from this approach that the question of evaluating non-profit action could be examined. Non-profits highlight the fact that they evaluate their action, whether by necessity or by choice: which methods are used to carry out this evaluation, with which criteria, for what purposes and directions? Today, there is a real market for evaluation, so articles that document and analyse it would be very welcome.

Secondly, we are looking for articles that consider **the relationships between non-profits and public authorities**, from a perspective of democracy and citizenship (Alexander, Nank, Stivers, 1999; Eme, 2001; Eliasoph, 2011; Pette, 2014; Hamidi, 2017; *Savoir/Agir*, 2018). In particular, they could examine the way in which the process of public marketisation changes the stances taken by non-profits, the division of tasks between advocacy and service provision (Mosley, 2012; Comeau, Turcotte, 2017) and, lastly, the politicisation of actors (volunteers, employees and users).

Some articles could study the use of private contracts and resources as a lever of politicisation and empowerment for non-profits, especially in the context of authoritarian policies.

Lastly, some articles may focus specifically on **the effects of these processes on relationships with users**. How does the demand for performance and efficiency change the target groups and objectives? How does it change the nature of the actions proposed (Marwell, McInerney, 2005; Weerawardena et al., 2010; Baines et al., 2013)? To what extent does it influence the processes for including the recipients of non-profit actions?

4/ What are the limitations of these processes?

The last part of our investigations focuses on public marketisation in the non-profit sector. There may be some limitations caused by a range of actors who resist this approach in the name of radical values, due to an ideal idea of public service or due to a professional identity. We are looking for articles that analyse the strategies implemented and question the impacts of these types of resistance. In addition, non-profits in general are far from being homogenous and it could be interesting, from a more macro perspective, to examine the different reactions to these

changes, depending on the types of non-profit (varying levels of radical, service providers), their size and mode of operation or even the sector in which they operate.

Other limitations to marketisation and privatisation concern the importance of insolvent groups among those who benefit from non-profits, particularly in social and medico-social sectors. For example, with home care, a “two-tier” system has appeared in which wealthier users tend to opt for for-profit companies, while those who are poorer are cared for by non-profit organisations. Articles could therefore investigate the points of tension and negotiation between public and private actors that come up in handling these needs, as well as the structure of different types of solidarity.

Some non-profits, whether an officially declared or de facto association, take action in domains of varying formality and legal status and in which market-oriented streamlining seems to have little effect. This is seen particularly in the fight against poverty and in humanitarian action, both in France and abroad, in which non-profit action reflects moral economies (Fassin, 2009; Siméant-Germanos, 2010; Bracho, 2020) more than solidarity-based tenders. Articles could explain the way in which non-profits may choose to be structured around political, bureaucratic and market-oriented approaches, as well as the impacts on their operation.

Lastly, in other cases, such as the sector of integration through economic activity, non-profits are developing rapidly with the support of substantial public and private funding, by aligning with economic efficiency and streamlining. This is the case for both major groups such as SOS, and also structures that are more targeted towards a specific field of activity. However, thorough study of effectively implemented practices or evaluation tools mobilised to measure the impact of non-profit work on recipients show that this New Management rhetoric can be purely a façade.

Articles that investigate the observable limits of these demonstrated approaches to streamlining, which may concern clientelist and like-minded relationships and dynamics of political discussion, whether in France or abroad, could also be part of this area of focus.

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