

# The widening and deepening of innovation policy



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Borras, Susanna. 2009. The Widening and Deepening of Innovation Policy: What Conditions Provide for Effective Governance, Circle Electronic Working Paper Series.

Review ??“ Riaz K. Tayob Borras provides a very interesting and well thought out analytic framework ??? which can help unravel which specific combinations and forms of political conditions are most related to the effective governance of innovation systems???. The paper looks at recent trends in widening and deepening trends in innovation policy, and develops an analytic toolbox based on some assumptions regarding the political conditions for effective governance of innovation systems. In addition, the approach takes into account mutual dependency of actors and actions through incorporation of the concept of reflexivity, which is a good way of incorporating a ??? dynamic??? variable. The paper moves beyond product and process innovation as focus areas, and includes organisational innovation. Given the wide palette of issues to inquire into (innovation is complex), the framework seems to provide remarkable ways of creating a scope and means of inquiry that does make it ??? manageable???. Since it conceives of innovation in a non-linear and evolutionary perspective, fully recognising the ??? serendipity??? of knowledge creation, the scope of conceptualisation is sufficiently broad to be regarded as a ??? realistic??? take on innovation and its role, despite the assumptions. Borras is also careful to provide an important clarification, ???.

.. governance refers to state-society-economy relations and the role of government in these general terms, innovation policy refers to the set of concrete policy instruments designed and implemented in specific innovation

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areas, and which have effects on the institutional framework directly concerned with the innovation system.

.. the starting point is the relevance of purposeful action towards institutional change, as the means with which to induce improved socio-economic and innovation performance.??? Borrás identifies conditions for effective governance (with analytic criteria), namely: a strategic innovation policy, a positive administrative coordination of innovation policy and mid-level bureaucracy level, a rapid adaptation of the formal institutional framework in the innovation system, a balanced diversity creation and market selection, a clear distribution of roles between public and private actors, policy learning, and public legitimacy and accountability. These are possible independent variables associated with (good/bad) governance which is 1) suitability, 2) coordination, 3) reflexivity. There seems to be a good focus on reflexivity as well as the relationship between the public and private spheres as far as risks are concerned, while incorporating political legitimacy and accountability issues.

As such the conception of innovation governance and the role of the state in it is encompassing of the array of considerations that a State would need to take into account not only in assessing performance of innovation of good innovation governance but also adaptation for such a systems design. By using ??? ideal types??? (of deepening and widening) there is recognition that these are somewhat approximate, but nevertheless capable of locating the observable phenomenon. This gives the model the added value of being able to cope with diversity and heterogeneity, affording context specific analysis but more importantly, a basis for more qualitative cross-country

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comparisons. The final outcomes for assessment of effective governance remains an empirical question, and no presumptions are made in this regard. While the focus in the paper is on political considerations for insights into problematic types of lock-in effects of political processes, and excludes other purely technological and economic processes, there is need to include somehow (even as an external issue) market structure analysis in the fields of innovation chosen by specific governments as these can play important roles.