

CHANGES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Camelia DRAGOMIR ȘTEFĂNESCU

Spiru Haret University, Romania

Faculty of Management Brașov

stefanescucamelia@ymail.com

Abstract:

The paper analyses the determining role that the management of public administration has in the modern society. It also discusses the concepts, traits, functions and principles of the management of public administration. Finally, assessments are made with regard to the conception and practice of the management of public administration in Romania.

The study has implications in the organizational sector of the public administration institutions and in the process of the specialists' training in the field of the public administration management. The drafting methodology of the study aimed to use the specific methods and instruments of the managerial scientific investigation: the observation, the investigation, the analysis, the synthesis and the model.

Keywords: management of public administration, reform of public administrator, managerial process, local government, public service.

JEL Classification: M₁₄, D₇₃, J₄₅

1. Introduction

In most of the countries in the world, the systems of public administration are severely criticised, being reproached especially their immobility and resistance to change, their incapacity to face the complex and severe issues the contemporary human being faces. Rigidity and obstinacy in sticking to obsolete organizational behaviours generate negative effects, having serious implications on activity performance. The system of public administration continue to keep less elastic finalities, structures, contents, forms and working methods in order to adapt to the new realities whereas the focus must be set on the present and on the future, on training skills according to the new demands of the labour market and training behaviours according to tolerance, loyal competition, respect for the perennial values of the human being, etc.

The managerial theory and practice, numerous pieces of research and the managerial experience underline the fact that in this period public administration needs to be changed. In this context, the management of public administration faces some great challenges. The evolution and image of public administration authorities will greatly depend on their capacity to adapt to this new century.

The objective of a public institution is to be at the service of the public interest. At the level of relation system of the public institution one identifies two major types of relations, namely internal and external, as it can be seen in a schematic presentation in Figure no. 1 (Ștefănescu C., Pânzaru, S., 2009, pp. 91).

RELATIONS	WHO WITH?
1. INTERNAL	Executive Authority Legislative Courts of justice
2. EXTERNAL	NGO's Economic agents Individuals, etc.

Figure no 1. Relations between the structures of the public service

The public administration system is frequently criticized for its lack of flexibility and resistance to change. Organizational flexibility, manifested in the ability to respond to environment challenges, is an essential requirement for the local government institutions to be able to adapt to the economic and social realities of the community they serve and to promptly meet its needs. The clear delimitation of power and influential actions within the public administration, organizational structure, internal information flows and their management, all of them are elements that need to be adapted to the new conditions of operation. It implies new answers, both theoretically and practically, from the science of management in general and of the management of public administration in particular.

2. The new public management

The change in the public administration must be conceived and made as a creation act oriented towards the improvement of the organizational structures and of the flexibility of the

managerial acts, by permanently training the managerial team and the public servants. The preoccupation to change is neither simple nor easy. It implies a huge volume of work, learning the new managerial practices, methods and laws, taking risks in using them in the specific features of every authority, as well as of every process of change.

The new public management is a reform model of the public sector, which refers to the managerial, organizational and structural changes (Flynn, N.,1990, in Androniceanu, A., 2005, pp. 331-332). The traditional model of supplying the public services, administrative planning and decision centralization is replaced with public services management, based on the direct relationship with the market (Figure no. 2):

- The Government must improve the quality of all their services and to be entrepreneurial;
- The Government must appreciate the performances with measurable results;
- The Government must collaborate with the other key actors in order to reach their purposes;
- The Government must anticipate and solve their problems;
- The Government must improve responsibility toward the public interest;
- The Government must give common powers to the citizens and to the public employees.

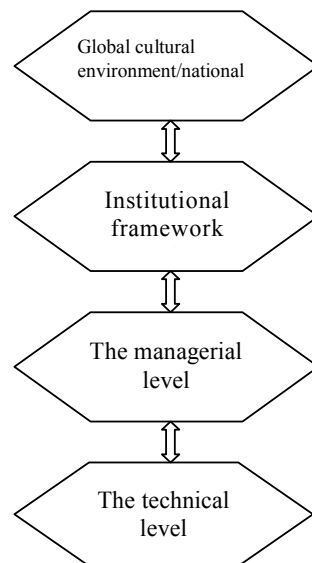


Figure no. 2. The public management reform on 4 levels

Source: apud Flynn, N., 1990, p. 265

In order to change the management of public organizations, there are demanded essential transformations and modifications in the field of motivation, labour quality and proficiencies.

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The performance of the civil servants depends, to a great extent, on the conduct of the manager, on the values and principles promoted by the latter, on the manner in which such values and principles are being instilled in the employees and, obviously, on the capacity of the latter to adopt them.

Within the framework of the research, the questioned subjects have pointed out as relevant for a good manager of the public institution the following qualities:

- competence and professionalism;
- authority;
- visionary ability;
- ability to quickly adapt to changes;
- responsibility for public welfare;
- capacity to listen and convey messages, both within the institution and the community, and outside the sphere thereof;
- correctness and honesty;
- concern for community and employees.

3. European Integration of the Romanian public administration

In the context of the actual reform of the administrative system in our country, the local government needs to be ready to tackle the challenges involved by the alignment to the standards of a modern European administration and to offer the community the levers and instruments enabling it to express and develop in a community context. Seen from this perspective, institutional management has to be able to develop pro-active strategies oriented towards

improving organizational structures, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of government acts, accentuating decision-making and action transparency, increasing responsibility for the public good, in relation with the obligations imposed by the European standards in matter of public administration system.

European integration of the Romanian public administration, conceived as an aspiration to perfection, should identify some features mutual to different European administrations, scientifically established and which shall represent in the end, the nucleus of a European hypothetic model (Alexandru, I., 1999, p. 605). As regards the European administration, its hierarchical structure and its manner of organization and operation, we notice that there are three models that are predominant, presented as follows :

❖ *The English model*, characterized as follows:

- existence of a superior level (permanent secretary);
- organization of activities in accordance with the provisions of a very high statute;
- public servants remunerated with very big salaries;
- actions developed in a narrow area, with flexible structures and bureaucracy.

❖ *The French model*, having the following essential features:

- very high organizational and development level of activities;
- managerial constitutive parts of the public administration based on the provisions of a high level statute;
- more than a fifth of the parliamentarians come from the public servants, the business environment;
- rigid structures, flexible bureaucracy.

❖ *The German model* characterised as follows:

- dominated by legacy, rigidity and administrative planning;
- activates two superior level categories, more precisely:
 - public servants with high statute but with little stability;
 - civil servants with career development activating in a relatively minor but stable

position.

The alignment to the EU standards requires the reduction of bureaucracy in administration and workload for civil servants, which involves the use of effective solutions tailored to the realities of public administration in Romania. A competitive organizational model has to be

focused on the values of transparency, effectiveness, responsibility and commitment to the public good, values which are common to efficient European models of local government.

At the basis of the reform process in the public administration the following objectives must be placed:

- ❖ Precisely defining the relation between the political and the administrative decision;
- ❖ Strengthening the autonomy and decentralising the administrative system by replacing step-by-step the responsibility of the government and of the institutions within the national central administration from economic and social life management to elaborating national development strategies and protecting national interests;
- ❖ Optimising the management in the central administration by developing the market economy and high lightening the representative structures of the civil society.

Adopting European standards of good practice for quality public services requires changes in the organizational structure, the fund of values, attitudes and behaviours of public servants (Ștefănescu, C., 2009, p. 210). The interest to the good of the community and the responsibility towards the citizen are values of a culture developed at institutional level, which should be deemed valid and accepted as the correct model of organizational conduct. Another feature common to performance-oriented organizational cultures takes into account the fact that the fund of values of managers and employees supports their options for practices and behavioural models based on high standards of ethics, the organizational cultural profile reflecting, in essence, values and principles oriented towards a moral conduct and honesty. The transition from the phrase “will do for me as is”, from outdated, conservative and rigid mentalities and practices to an environment of values and attitudes encouraging performance, is a process to be completed as soon as possible by the Romanian public administration system. Civil servants must understand that meeting the requirements and needs of citizens is the essential element of their activity. The performance of civil servants within the local government is highly dependent on the behaviour of the manager, on the values and principles he promotes, on the way these are inculcated in employees and, obviously, on the capacity of the latter to assume.

4. Modernization of the management public in Romania

Modernization of public administration in Romania cannot be achieved without taking into account the need to improve the information system. Bringing information technology into public administration leads to eliminating bureaucracy and increasing the quality of public services. The

general aimed objective is to modernize public administration by introducing an information system in accordance with the requirements imposed by the information society. Objectives aim to:

- improve the quality of government services supplied to citizens;
- use modern means of communication;
- offer quick access to the database of the public administration.

Public institutions have already automated some operations, aiming to become more open and transparent in dealing with the public. Computerization of public administration is, however, a complex and lengthy process, requiring a phased approach. In recent years, in public administration in Romania the tools of e-government have been introduced in order to help reinforcing institutional capacity, reducing bureaucracy and corruption and increasing the quality of services supplied to citizens.

The e-Government Program includes measures such as:

- Cooperation with the local authorities to develop networks ensuring the functioning of regional networks;
- Cooperation with decentralized and deconcentrated public services for metropolitan communication networking.

The ultimate goal of e-Government is to increase the quality and accessibility of public services, whose beneficiaries are the citizens, the business environment and the public service employees - civil servants. Upgrading institutional communication by introducing information technology has resulted in increased efficiency in public administration activity, in eliminating bureaucracy and increasing the quality of public services.

The purpose of developing information systems within the government are:

- 1) to disclose the importance of developing information systems in order to achieve a modern public administration;
- 2) to present ways of improving data transmission and circuit information;
- 3) to submit to the participants the willingness to continuously improve, within an information society based on transparency and fulfillment of the needs of citizens and local communities.

The information system should be supported for the implementation and simplification of rules and administrative procedures to ensure a broad and non-discriminatory access to public services and reduce tariffs for these services.

5. Conclusions

The management of public administration faces some great challenges. The evolution and image of public administration authorities will greatly depend on their capacity to adapt to this new century.

The public administration system is frequently criticized for its lack of flexibility and resistance to change. Rigidity and obstinacy in sticking to obsolete organizational behaviours generate negative effects, having serious implications on activity performance. The Romanian public administration was not exempted of criticism, even though it undertook successive changes.

The deep structural changes that the Romanian public administration system is presently undergoing involve numerous organizational changes. Organizational change inside the institutions of the local public administration cannot be achieved without major conception changes as regards their management, the fundamental objective of which resides in increasing the quality of the public services and looking after the interests of the citizens.

Flexibility must be the main feature of the present public administration. We consider that the processes of change at institutional level necessary in the light of the reform of the Romanian administrative system would be considerably easier to implement provided there was an organizational values fund to back and accelerate such changes. The results of the research have led us to a series of recommendations. These recommendations are aimed at:

- improving the skills of managers, thereby enhancing the quality of the public services offered to the community;
- redefining the content of the relations between organizational subdivisions situated on different hierarchical levels;
- creating an organizational framework propitious for the implementation of change processes, capable of giving the institution the capacity to devise and develop policies and strategies to support adaptability to change and a greater opening to the exterior environment;
 - enhancing transparency in the management of community affairs;
 - creating a climate of confidence and openness towards citizens;
 - correctly informing citizens about actions regarding the interests of the community;
 - a better external promotion of the image of the institution;
 - improving the learning and continuous training processes intended for the civil servants;
 - adopting efficient models of sustainable development.

In the light of the modifications imposed by the knowledge-based society on the public administration system, the organizational change should lay more emphasis on the improvement of managerial skills as a factor likely to enhance performance in the activities carried out.

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