POST- BUREAUCRACY AND POST-BUREAUCRATIC CULTURE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract:*Post- bureaucratic culture refers to informal inter-personal relationships by reducing chain of command and formal relationships by means of paying attention to the subordinate's decisions and preferences thereby keeping spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship. This pattern, foresees public administrators as acting strategically by taking initiative, reflecting an understanding which is trying to remove the distance between itself and environment and appreciating flexibility, open systems and more effective use of social capital. Dynamic use of information and shining out of information-based power relationships are basic factors of this philosophy. This paper, aims to examine the concepts of post-bureaucracy and post- bureaucratic culture that rises in today's world in which the inflexibilities overcame and new organization models occurred in public administration.*

Keywords: Public Management, Post-Bureaucracy, Bureaucratic Culture, Post-Bureaucratic Culture, Transformation.

Introduction

Reforms occurring in public management in the last years have focused on public's management dimension and tried to make the management more effective, productive and economic. These desired three features have forced a deep change to public sector and the focus has especially been on the role of the market for a good management. A great part of the applied managerial reforms in this sense consists of reforms done in order to break strict hierarchical structure in public management.

Developments in the management have affected the bureaucratic understanding; bureaucracy has taken a less centralized and hierarchical form than the past. So, Weberian bureaucracy understanding and bureaucratic organization model that was a result of it lost their currency as a result of main principles related to application of private sector type structure presented by new management paradigm. Because, bureaucratic culture presented by traditional management understanding has required individuals to become accustomed to open guidance by top management. This resulted in workers' becoming unable to produce and have an idea, non-progressive and passive objects.

The traditional management understanding didn't put enough stress on human relations and developmental and logical aspects of organizational culture. Besides, organizations did not develop employee autonomy and team work and did not give much importance change and risk taking, results such as productivity and effectiveness.   Instead of these, public organizations adopted a bureaucratic culture due to importance given to rules, procedures and stability (Parker and Bradley, 2004: 201).

Rice (2004: 153) claims that he can determine if there is a negative bureaucratic culture or representation of an effective public service in management understanding of cultural diagnoses. In this sense, it can be said that the level of centralization of bureaucracy and state policies change according to countries' political, economic and cultural structures. However, today it is seen that the power used from the center is less than the past in most of the countries, and localization tendencies are rising.

On the other hand, traditional public management understanding has experienced main changes in many aspects, and these changes have represented themselves with different perceptions changing from person to person, country to country. While there are many factors that required the change, we

can name two of them as follows: first is increasing focus on public manager's administration role and the need for application of managerial tools similar to private sector. The second is the state's and the society's increasing dependency to reach public services. Now, the state has quitted being an autonomous actor in applying its policies and become dependent on private and/or third sectors to reach its aims (Peters and Pierre, 2007: 4).

This dependency of the state and the public comes forward as an element that will develop efficiency and validity of the management. In this way, it becomes possible for public managers to be experts in the fields of deal and management via using tools such as contracts instead of direct use of authority. What is more, participatory methods such as getting staff members' opinions in making decisions and giving them the right to take initiatives enable the increase in efficiency.

So, by the reforms related to New Public Management, it has been aimed that public organizations become highly flexible and react quickly in the changing environment. The stress done on aims, efficiency and productivity is explained in the terms of competitive values. On the other hand, dominancy of the post-bureaucratic statements in addition to changing social and economic structure has revived the expectations that public organizations will increasingly become post-bureaucratic. Thus, public organizations are claimed to have developmental, rational and group culture perspectives after leaving the effects of bureaucratic culture (Parker and Bradley, 2004: 201).

Post-Bureaucracy

The post-bureaucracy term which has different meanings and names in the literature such as virtual organizations, network organizations and network type organizations has come to the agenda when bureaucratic principles and values became insufficient in terms of organizations and it generally explains some organizational changes occurred as an alternative of or reaction to bureaucratic principles (Ateş, 2008: 84). In some of the sources in the literature, while this general use of post-bureaucracy is given as name (e.g. and especially Heckscher and Donnelon, 1994), other authors prefer terms such as virtual organization (Davidow and Malone, 1992), network type organization (Scott Morton, 1991) or the organization's web form (Powell, 1990). Since there is no doubt that post-bureaucracy term includes many different applications, what is mentioned here is more than the terminology. However, the common diagnosis that the organizations go under important changes in their structure and management principles shows that the post-bureaucracy term states a wide tendency (Grey and Garsten, 2001: 230).

Post-bureaucratic organizations show a feature of removing the distance between themselves and their environment in order to keep the opportunities of change and control at hand (Maravelias and Hansson, 2005: 2). In this sense, post-bureaucracy changes forms of independence and power. While autonomy of a person working at an organization with dominance of bureaucratic understanding shows itself as a limited self-decision making adequacy, autonomy of a person working at a post-bureaucratic organization is determined by conditions ruling over in the environment. Consequently, those who work at post-bureaucratic organizations can be said to be independent of a chain of command (Maravelias and Hansson, 2005: 7).

Post-bureaucracy foresees public managers to behave in a more entrepreneur and strategic way, and this situation leads managers to take initiatives via decreasing intense rules and regulations that they face. The catch-phrase for such a reform can be: "fewer rules, but more accountability." A completely new agenda can be created in public management (Vinelli, 1999: 30).

"Post-bureaucracy" is a term basically used for two aims. First is to identify current organization and management types in which unclear ideas of bureaucracy cannot easily take place. Words that explain these reforms are: project, mission, team, virtuality, web, partnership, information, experience, horizontal (flat/transversal), flexibility, harmony, reinforcement, enterprise etc. Second is that main changes occur not only in organizations and managements but also in the era we live and we are possibly at the end of a period. The two uses of the term do not need to be related to each other. The claims of the second group are more emotional and take attention in the studies of organizations and management which explain spreading diagnosis about the world. Like all other terms of "post-" and "late" (post-modernism, post-Fordism, late-capitalism, late-modernism, post-colony, post-industrialism, post-feminism and so on), post-bureaucracy also depends on a very useful periodization at this point (Hopfl, 2006: 8-9).

The main futures of the post-bureaucracy include providing decreasing of hierarchy, stress on flexibility instead of dependence to rules, much use of external resources in providing products and services, creating more pervious borders between the organization and its environment by preferring temporary working and guidance instead of permanent and/or single field expertise. A worker in a post-bureaucratic organization does not have a chance of life-long employment with a pre-determined hierarchical promotion route and retirement plan (Grey and Garsten, 2001: 230).

On the other hand, unnecessary use of the resources, disorder and patronage problems, that are the situations showing that the productivity of bureaucratic paradigm has come to an end, come forward as main factors that bring the end of this understanding. Post-bureaucratic paradigm puts stress on transferring the

values to the customers instead of the cost control and struggle for efficiency. This terminological development represents the development of new theories in business management and depends on decreasing importance of scale economies and increasing relation between flexibility and value transfer.

One of the texts in which post-bureaucracy has a key role is Heckscher's (1994) try to form a post-bureaucratic ideal type as a direct reaction to Weber's bureaucratic ideal type. From his point of view, organizations are characterized as organizations that can form common points rather than strong dependency to rules and depend on affecting of these common points structures at least partially independent from official hierarchy. Forming such a common point requires a trustworthy environment that depends on autonomy of organizational actors from each other and led by a common mission in the content of shared values. To reach this, openness in reaching the information and a consensus on main principles that enables to realize the mission are required (Grey and Garsten, 2001: 236).

Information in post-bureaucratic organizations that are usually characterized by the stress on flexibility and participative management style and dialog to create common idea features instead of dependency on rules shouldn't be seen as a personal belonging in an expert's or employee's mind, but at the same time it should be accepted as a thing shared and that takes the shapes of accumulated experience and learning in organization's culture, systems and applications. In such organizations, information production highly depends on common idea production process led by common missions and shared values as much as recognition of a strong commitment between organizational actors and shareholders outside. In this organizational environment, many reformist strategy tools designed in a traditional way in order to

solve personal problems and take realistic decisions can be claimed to fall behind of those tools that organizations need to support applied strategy work and information production. Post-bureaucratic organizations, in multiple situations, need tools that will support organizational learning in multiple situations and improve the dialogue and trust in collection processes via processes in which information is produced within the organization and decisions are made (Moisander and Stenfors, 2009: 229).

Post-Bureaucratic Culture

Culture is not only a thing that is inside people but also a secret power that directs many behaviors both inside and outside the organization. In every social situation, individuals work consciously or unconsciously like a leader and they not only behave like a part of existing culture but also generally start forming new cultural elements. This interaction among creating culture, reviving and reinforcement creates a dependency between culture and leadership (Schein, 2009: 3).

In this context, bureaucratic culture symbolizes an understanding in which managers protect their employees that do not make a mistake (Sinha et al, 2010:48) and there is only one true way to do the work (Leidner et al., 2006: 32). While specialization, centralization and formalization come forward as main axis in the organizations in which bureaucratic culture is dominant, integration, decentralization, participative management understanding, a structure in which qualitative and quantitative control methods are used together represents itself.

Post-bureaucratic culture symbolizes an understanding that organizes itself as it gives importance to subordinates' decisions, choices and free thoughts by sustaining the soul of reformist and entrepreneurship and it depends on natural

and direct cooperation among people rather than chain of command and official cooperation (Maravelias and Hansson, 2005: 12). According to this philosophy, organizations should be close to "customers" and secret/unclear hierarchies should be replaced by flat transverse functional teams (Grey and Garsten, 2001: 237). In post-bureaucratic culture, information is a common success of workers in an organization. For example, in an organization's organizational strategy, workers are assigned to work together and in a creative and reformist way to achieve job performance in continuously changing markets (Moisander and Stenfors, 2009: 237).

Post-bureaucratic culture takes culture, time and place relations hand in numerous ways. For example, in order to disconnect time and place lines both in and out work, capacities of e-mails and mobile phones have been increased; an understanding of home-office have been presented; the system of working from 9 to 5 has been changed; the job has been foreseen to be structured as a series of project (probably not following each other) instead of a single place where one goes. In this sense, while industrialized society was characterized as strict distinction between work and private life, post-industrialization society seems to have been witnessing this distinction's blurring (Grey and Garsten, 2001: 238).

The main features of organizations with post-bureaucratic culture are (Ateş, 2008: 92):

a.   It emphasizes a management style moving from bottom to top and provides convincing and trusting by minimizing official communication method that depends on chain of command.

b.   It prevents those managers gain power and advantage by taking the information to their monopoly via providing spreading of the information.

The work is done on the basis of information and experience rather than orders of those hierarchically above.

c.   Managers and workers should be dependent on flexible and general rules in order them to use more initiatives and adapt better to changing environmental conditions.

d.   A post-bureaucratic organization is an organization in which every member takes a responsibility for the success of the whole organization. So, for the solution of a problem or with the aim of making an improvement in a field, team-work and organizational networks that break hierarchical structure are done.

e.   Staff evaluation that bureaucratic culture does according to seniority or official offices has turned into objective performance standards on which the whole staff agree and they contribute to its preparation process in post-bureaucratic culture.

f.   It brings the replacement of recognition of differences and pluralism, democracy, strengthening, trust, interactive communication rather than lack of confidence, one-sided communication, hierarchy, judicial authority and enervating.

g.   One of the most basic features of post-bureaucratic culture is independency of various parts of the job instead of persistence and the organization of the job flow with method of deductions and desistance.

h.   Proliferation of adopting the applications of total quality management, fortification of staff, transfer of authority, coaching and autonomous working groups is also among main futures of post-bureaucratic management.

In accordance with successful results of post-bureaucratic cultured organizations in which humanistic relations are valued and

share of information has primary importance, public sector seems to have been affected by the same change also. When it is thought that public management discipline is being questioned in all over the world and it has gone under some reforms, public bureaucratic culture is seen to be unproductive, unable to produce the results that citizens value, rules and procedures centered. However, even if there is a big effort in public sector in order to provide a disengagement from bureaucratic culture, the placement of post-bureaucratic culture requires some time as adopting of culture depends on specific processes and time.

Conclusion

20th century was a managerial era in which Weberian bureaucratic organization and a structure including a related operation paradigm became dominant in public management organization. Weber's bureaucratic model based on work morality and philosophical basis by clearly identified mission hierarchy and graded organization form, certain and stable mission definitions regulated by laws, management's depending on written documents, career structure, distribution of work based on expertise and differentiation of official activities and private life spaces. Today, developing and changing conditions opened the way for new understandings. Organization models that have newly existed proclaim a new methodology whose organization principles and logical structures are designed according to information age and does not adopt strict rule based and authoritative structure of bureaucracy. By these understandings causing flexible organizations taking their place in work life, fairly new organizational paradigms have come up in the line of post-bureaucratic culture and information.

In short, production and transfer of public services and management of public organizations were realized by

bureaucratic culture until today. However, new understandings such as adapting to changing environmental conditions better, avoid from ungainly organization structure and strict rules that limit entrepreneurship, create workers that take initiatives, determine clear aims and goals, increase openness and accountability, use of alternative service transfer methods all of which are desired both in private and public sector have come forward as wished elements. So, bureaucratic arguments' being unable to fulfill public needs caused post-bureaucratic structure to come up as a tendency that stretched and transformed bureaucratic principles.

Evolution of bureaucratic culture that is adopted by public managers to post-bureaucratic culture is caused by unsuccessful results of bureaucratic culture's principles that are strictly rule based flat hierarchical model and process centered with no participation. Weberian bureaucracy expired in the 21st century. Becoming common of applications such as reconstruction, reforms and privatization in public sector in the last fifty years affirms this situation. Virtual organizations, network type organizations and similar structures that have existed together with globalization and intense use of information technologies in all over the world have become more demandable thanks to their features that stretch and transform bureaucratic principles and values such as speed, quality, low cost and performance development etc. On the other hand, public bureaucracy maintains its current structure that is unproductive and incapable to fulfill citizens' changing needs. As a result, while state bureaucracy is surely a required structure, there is benefit to say in this point that post-bureaucratic structure aims to change minor units rather than general organization structure in major units. In this sense, post-bureaucratic culture's coming up generally as practical needs, the emphasize it does on flexibility, its style that is based on participative management

understanding instead of dependence on rules, its reference to the workers that take responsibility and initiative will enable new developments.

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