

BUREAUCRACY VERSUS NEW ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: *The article presents the characteristics of the mode of bureaucratic administration by arguing the features of the classic bureaucracy described by the German sociologist Max Weber, who constructs an ideal type of bureaucracy by bringing together the abstract form of various administrative powers manifested throughout the historical evolution. Other elements of bureaucracy are also mentioned, particularly the negative consequences and criticisms of bureaucracy, as outlined in concrete, eventually distinct elements of the new administrative management which opens a new paradigm that stresses results that emphasize the satisfaction of the citizen consumer, consumer, of public services, the balanced relationship between charged sites and outputs. The new orientation is due to the unprecedented changes in people's lives and organizations under the impact of information age, globalization and, generally, of the progress in all areas.*

Keywords: bureaucracy, ideal type of bureaucracy, oligarchy, the new administrative management, institutions

General characteristics of bureaucracy

Currently, daily or even in public discourse and particularly in the political (discourse), the term of bureaucracy is used associating to it pejorative negative connotations. When an institution is characterized as bureaucratic it is reported that it has a complicated structure with many hierarchical levels, acting according to inflexible rules, using many forms, folders, which require consultation of various superiors to express agreement towards a problem. From the perspective of

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individuals, clients of contemporary bureaucracies, these contribute to slowly solving of their problems, or the delay of their resolution, which requires time consuming, especially physical and nervous energy.

However bureaucracy as a way of managing large resources is not an invention of modern societies or even of modern times. It said it appeared during the great empires of antiquity (Mihăilescu, 2003, p.190) that were faced with the need to manage diverse and rich resources that have developed the first centralized organization to manage existing resources. These systems have reappeared from the same reasons, the European absolutist states, being then taken over by modern nation states.

The term bureaucracy is defined as “a way of organization, meant for widespread administration of resources through a specialized body of persons, usually placed in a hierarchical structure and having the powers, responsibilities and procedures strictly defined” (Mihăilescu, 1993, p.71).

The ideal type of bureaucracy in Max Weber's conception

The German sociologist Max Weber is among the first thinker who opens an analytical approach, to the sociological account in explaining bureaucratic phenomenon. He understands the bureaucracy as a streamlined administrative apparatus. Based on extensive historical analysis (of ancient Egypt, Romanian monarchy, the Byzantine Empire, China, the Catholic Church in the thirteenth century), Weber argues that the kind of bureaucratic power appears together with the cash economy. A key role in his theory of bureaucracy is the analysis of the three types of authority: charismatic, traditional and rational-legal (Merton, 1940). The last type of authority, legitimized by acceptance of authority based on rationality and on a basis of impersonal and universal rules precludes the other two, which are irrational in nature and non-logical, justifying it through faith in the sacredness of customs, traditions and beliefs (traditional authority) or by faith in the heroic character, original sacred leader (charismatic authority). Legal authority, specific to modern Western society can not exercise administrative functions than using one type bureaucratic apparatus. In Weber's opinion, the expansion of bureaucracy is unavoidable in modern, bureaucratic authority, is the only way to adapt the administrative requirements of organizations in a large extent. Analysis of existing bureaucracies in different historical epochs, Weber defines an *ideal type* bureaucracy joining in abstract form and characteristics of various administrative powers that include:

- A system of prescriptions accepted by all members of society, requirements or rules established by agreement or law enforcement based on efficacy or rational values;
- The body of law consists of a set of abstract rules and impersonal universal - authority derived from law and the regulations made under the laws;

- To formulate in writing the rules and laws, the management of organizations is made on the basis of written documents governing the conduct of all officials;
- Hierarchical organization of the positions and degrees of authority, high hierarchical levels are those which oversee the lower hierarchical levels;
- The impersonal nature of duties, and official positions and degrees of authority, in the sense that for the office-workers the bureaucratic system requires the segregation of public business life from private life, public money being strictly separated from the officials' private financial resources, the place of work being also physically separated from the family life;
- The specialization, which consists of allocating each function to an expert, well-defined sphere of competence;
- The holding of positions based on competence, derived from the ownership of rules and bureaucratic proceedings, better established, more or less comprehensive, that can be learned;
- The members' bureaucracies have no means of production or administration. In Weber's view, the development of worker bureaucracy separates the means of production. If the traditional communities, farmers and artisans were the owners of the tools used, the officials do not have the ownership of logistics or the offices they use.

This type of organization is *ideal* and there is no actual description of a real bureaucratic organization.

Weber's contribution to the modernization theory of administration can be better understood if compared with earlier models of administration. The most important change proposed by Weber is the replacement of personal administration with an impersonal, rule-based system. The system cancels arbitrary administrative decision, at least ideally. The existence of documents, archiving, documentation and substantiation decision precedent in decisions on law creates uniformity and consistency in administration.

Other directions of research on bureaucracy

If Weber examines bureaucracy highlighting its virtues, considering it as a streamlined administrative apparatus, R. K. Merton (1940) initiates a new research of the phenomenon of bureaucracy namely *the bureaucratic system impact on employees*, their behavior and how ineffectiveness appears in bureaucratic structures.

A first dimension of the bureaucrat personality is caught by Merton in the concept of *trained incapacity*. This dimension refers to the inability of the civil bureaucracy to deal with changes or exceptional circumstances due to a very good preparation and professional disciplines that are beneficial in situations routinely faced long periods of time. It is about a certain gained inflexibility through long exercises, based on standardized patterns of action. This dimension of personality structure of the

bureaucrat is built under the pressure of bureaucracy to discipline, compliance to rules, impartiality and impersonality.

The commitment to bureaucratic rules, “sanctification” procedures is another bureaucrat personality trait derived from the important role that bureaucracy plays in their lives. Bureaucracy is a stable structure itself, providing job security and opportunity for career advancement based on seniority and ability to implement bureaucratic rules that can be learned. Consequently, the bureaucrat can only have a rigid personality, his main goal is compliance and enforcement rules. Thus the application of bureaucratic rules changes meant to achieve the objectives of the institution, for pure.

Another dimension of bureaucrat personality considered by Merton, refers to its relationship with the public. As a consequence of failure, as a result of being trained to act as representative of all prestige and power structures, bureaucracy often comes into conflict with the public. Thus, people should be in *servicing people* become authoritarian and domineering, sometimes arbitrary.

Michel Crozier (1963) examines bureaucracy in terms of *power relation* that is within them. Crozier defines power as the relationship of dependency that is established between members within their organizations or between different groups. When a member's goal depends on the behavior of another, the latter has a degree of control and therefore power. Moreover, Weber himself was worried by the prospect of government by impersonal bureaucrats. Those near the base of the organization are inevitably focused on everyday tasks, considered Weber, without any power over what they do, power being held by those who are at the top. Starting from such a finding, one of his students, Roberto Michels (apud Giddens, 2000, p.321) introduced a phrase that became famous, *the iron law of oligarchy*, that in large organizations is a loss of power, power is transferred to the top. *Oligarchy* represents the power of government to a limited number of people

Also a source of power and control in organizations is represented by areas of *uncertainty* that exists in any organization. The areas of uncertainty refer to those behavioral options that are not regulated or operated by bureaucratic rules and are governed by confusing rules. The control of such areas of uncertainty gives players' freedom of movement, ie power. The actors' in the organization efforts to eliminate areas of uncertainty creates a vicious circle, in the sense that when certain types of players fail to control these areas and use them to increase their power, there are frustrations at the other actors who make efforts to regulate such areas. After establishing these rules, the likelihood of confusion, the conflict between rules is increasing, generating new areas of uncertainty that should be covered by new provisions. In this way the power game of the players, increases the number of bureaucratic rules (Vlăsceanu, 2003, pp. 24-46).

Philip Selznick (1943), Merton's student at Columbia University, also addresses the problem of bureaucracy, analysing *the informal structures* that are constituting bureaucracy and their impact on the functioning of organizations. The main assumption, from which Selznick starts, refers to the fact that informal structures within institutions tend to change their goals in accordance with members' own

interests, bureaucratic officials. Other research too (Blau, 1963) highlights the positive role of informal relations within bureaucratic organizations. The conclusions of the surveys conducted in the organizations highlighted *the importance of proper management of informal structures* on the control possibilities in organizations and the importance of human element for effective communication processes. The same study showed *the importance of cohesion in reducing anxiety*, implicit in labor productivity growth. A coherent network of ties of loyalty tends to create in any social group, regardless of hierarchical level, the group was able to develop informal procedures (through individual contacts and discussions) that allow for greater initiative and responsibility than formal groups.

Potential dysfunctional bureaucracy was revealed also by the formulation of paradoxes arising from actual bureaucracies and their operation, such as Parkinson's Law, formulated by Northcote Parkinson in 1958 (apud Toth, 2007, p.74), respectively *The multiplication labor law*, according to which the workload tends to occupy all her time for deployment, ie the number of employees does not depend on the workload. This phenomenon is based, according to Parkinson, on the official preference to multiply subordinates, not rivals, the fact that bureaucrats work for each other (The Law subordinates multiplication)

The real operation of the bureaucracy was sometimes the subject of numerous criticisms and antibureaucratic reactions, critics summarized by the American sociologists Selznick and Merton in four categories (apud Mihăilescu, 2003, p.191):

- 1) *Establishing status that causes resentment and animosity from the public.* Members' bureaucracies are often put in uncomfortable situations for citizens when they fulfill their social roles derived from the social positions they occupy. For example the policeman who interrupted a rally, town hall official who discharges the tenants or fines them, the official who must apply execution on the personal property, etc.
- 2) *The rigidity of the tasks.* The members of bureaucracies must act according to specific rules set, which do not admit exceptions. If the real situation is in line with rules laid down by bureaucracy, it works efficiently. Unforeseen situations, implementation of administrative rules may no longer represent an appropriate response.

Many bureaucrats are aware of the disadvantages of rigid and try to give officials more latitude in accomplishing the tasks. But it was found that increased freedom of action may involve encouraging favoritism and corruption.

- 3) *Division of responsibility.* For uniform application of the provisions and regulations it is often necessary to set up a folder on a different issue and to consult superiors, which may hinder solving problems. For example for unemployment aid or social assistance, etc. to form a company. files to be set up with documentary evidence, which involves spending time, including finance charges, generating complaints from customers, often accompanied by antibureaucratic protests.

This deficiency could be eliminated by decentralization, by assigning responsibility for solving problems of an individual or a department, but if you can generate favoritism and incompetence solving problems.

4) *Attachment bifurcation* occurs where members of bureaucracies operate in two directions. They can be divided between commitment to customers and commitment to bureaucratic rules. Rigid operation of bureaucracies is that the means used to convert them into goals, bureaucracy is not sensitive to specific situations, its only purpose is preparing to correct the problem according to the rules file bureaucratic situation that can cause discontent of citizens. Another situation could lead to a national commitment to addressing its detrimental bureaucratic rules, which would call into doubt the very existence of bureaucratic rules in resource management.

The reaction against the bureaucracy may take various forms: irony, public protest, expansion of informal relationships, avoiding bureaucrats, if possible. When bureaucracy becomes inoperative it needs a radical reform of the bureaucratic system.

In the conditions of postmodern society, when the changes that occur in all areas are growing faster, when there appear increasingly complex technologies with an extraordinary rapidity that they can not cope routinely using behaviors of routines, repeating steps have been taken to abandon the bureaucratic apparatus. New forms of organisation were developed such as *professional bureaucracies* are characterized by decentralization, the flattened hierarchical structures, functional in complex environments but stable in which a highly qualified staff operates with a high degree of flexibility; the *matrix organization*, which involves a combination of functional structures, on departments or services with a structure focused on projects; adhocracy (Toffler, 1974), functional in dynamic and complex operational environments, consisting of a flexible management and problem solving, implying team projects involving with a temporary character, without assuming rigid fixed structure.

The New Public Management

The classical theory of administration and the consistent application of its principles in the work of experienced public organisations knew its period of glory between 1929 and 1970. Since 1970, together with the changes of society, this model begins to show inadequacy, being subjected to serious criticism. Since the 1980s new operating principles of government are beginning to take shape by bringing about a comprehensive public administration reform process known as *managerialism* (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004) or *new public management* (Hood, 1991, pp. 3-19)

The New Public Management has in its central design the idea of flexibility in the use of private management tools to improve performance in public organizations. The main reasons which led to the development of new public management were primarily financial in nature. Amid economic crisis and the crisis of the welfare state, experts have questioned the public system reform which proved ineffective in achieving quality services.

From 1990 the support of the reform was motivated by political reasons. Reasons refer to *deficit of democracy*, the distance created between state and citizen, with direct consequences on the stability of political system and the quality of democracy.

In the process of change there stood reform experiences made in the UK, USA and New Zealand which contributed to developing the concept of new public management through significant innovations in managing public sistemuli the relationship between it and the business sector and NGOs.

International organizations such as OECD have also become interested in increasing quality and efficiency of public management in their own customers (or those Member State governments Observer) The Public Management Committee of the OECD has assumed a role of stimulation public management reform. In a 1990 OECD report stated that the new government approach to change requires a change of *organizational culture* centered on the need for increased efficiency and effectiveness. The report contains the idea that the old management paradigm (the traditional), based on legal and logical process was overtaken by a new paradigm (new public management), which combines modern management principles with economic logic, while maintaining public service values. *The new paradigm emphasizes results, the citizen customer satisfaction, consumers of public services on a balanced relationship between charged input sites and output sites.*

The new public management has more than one application in public organizations to private sector of specific principles. It involves a new language, a new philosophy, a new conception of society, the state's role in society. Characteristic elements of the new public management can be systematized as follows (Lambriu, 2007, pp. 30-31):

- focus on the systems management and the results management;
- the introduction and the use of performance indicators and quality standards for public services;
- the preference for specialized administrative structures, with well-defined purpose, at the expense of large bureaucratic structures, with rigid hierarchies, with multiple purposes;
- the use of contractual models to define the hierarchical relationships of administrative institutions;
- the widespread use of market and market mechanisms for providing public services;
- the disappearance of clear borders between management solutions used in public and private organizations;
- the flexibility in supporting alternatives to direct offers of goods and services from the public sector, giving priority to solutions that value on efficiency in spending public money;
- creating a new competitive environment for organizations;

- new forms of budgetary and financial management to support features such new public management approach presented.

Introducing the new type of management in public institutions is an ongoing process, faced with many difficulties and errors in application which generates critical reactions. But the process is installed, creating a new philosophy, a new theory of management of public organizations, which can only be enhanced as a result of the changes that will occur in social reality, the core values remain effective and satisfying individuals' customer needs.

Conclusions

- Generally the term bureaucracy is associated with negative dimensions of the phenomenon: rigid procedures, hierarchy, forms, folders excess solving citizens' problems slow or delay their resolution, useless time consuming;
- Bureaucracy is contemporary civilization. Top bureaucratic systems have been developed and applied by the great empires of antiquity;
- From the etymology of the word, bureaucracy designates an office by saying a proper way to manage large resources through specialized persons, placed in a hierarchical structure and have very limited powers;
- German sociologist Max Weber conceived as an administrative apparatus streamlined bureaucracy, monetary emerged with power. Historical analysis of existing bureaucracies he builds an ideal type of bureaucracy which is not an actual description of a bureaucracy, but as abstract representation of the features of bureaucracy, as should be;
- Subsequent investigations revealed the limits of bureaucratic management model, highlighting the negative consequences on the personality civil bureaucracies, oligarchic power up and other critics who were synthesized by American authors and Selznik Merton in four main groups of critics;
- The rapid change and unprecedented social products and large organizations have shown that bureaucratic management model is no longer current, the old management paradigm (the traditional), based on legal and logical process was overtaken by a new paradigm (new public management) which combines modern management principles with economic logic, while maintaining public service values.

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