REDISCOVERING THE OFFICE AS VOCATION WITHIN CHANGING PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract. Rediscovering the office as a vocation should drive public management reform leading to organizational change within public administration and institutions moving towards a better responsiveness. Promoting and sustaining training and education tends to emerge as a necessary stage to drive public employees to rediscover the office as a vocation for serving citizens and communities. Public organizations have to rediscover the importance of public interest as result of dialogue and respect for people sustaining the motivation of public employees for managing change and promoting collaborative relationships with citizens. Training and education contribute to hybridize the administrative and organizational culture of public institutions exerting influence on ethics and behaviors of public employees for driving change.

Keywords: office as vocation; organizational change; public organizations; training and education.

Introduction

Public sector organizations serve the interest of national community and differ from private sector organizations mainly with regard to objectives and setting (Lane, 2009): governments accomplish social objectives delivering services in the interest of a national community, whereas private enterprises do business to make money by maximization of profit for their owners; private management is oriented towards the market that shapes the success of enterprises determining opportunities for profitability.

Differences between private and public sector with regard to human resource management, organizational policies and practices rely on the persistence of a public service ethos among public employees (Boyne, Jenkins & Poole, 1999).

Public sector management reform driving strategic and organizational change within the public administration is leading public organizations to pay attention to the human side of public management and to rediscover the meaning and the role of public office as a vocation for developing effective and cultural changes driving behaviors and acts of public employees. Public organizations sustaining efforts and paying attention to the respect of citizens should value the bureaucracy as forms of organization preserving ethic values, impartiality, equity and justice in governing the relationship between public bodies, citizens, businesses and no profit organizations (du Gay, 1996; du Gay, 2005).

Effective government agencies tend to have high attractive mission and valence, high levels of public service motivation as a general motivation to serve the interests of a community of people in terms of contribution to general and valuable public service. The perceived linkage of the mission to public service values can contribute to enhancing mission valence and mission motivation. Different factors contribute to enhance public service motivation (PSM) (Kim & Vandenabeele, 2010; Perry & Wise, 1990; Rainey, 1982; Wright, 2007): high mission valence or attractiveness; strong organizational culture; effective leadership behaviors in terms of commitment to mission, effective goal setting and administrative and political coping (Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999).

Creating public value relies on public manager sharing responsibility with other officials and citizens to decide what is valuable to produce with public resources by interacting with people to determine and organize ends and means of service delivery and production (Moore, 1995). Public institutions have to respect the people and serve the public interest as result of shared leadership moving towards a better responsiveness and effective collaboration with citizens as partners in the work of government sharing ideas and knowledge with public officials (Vigoda, 2002a; Vigoda, 2002b). The public interest is better advanced by public servants committed to attend to law, community values, professional standards and citizen interests, to make a meaningful contribution to society by helping citizens to meet their shared interests (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2003; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). Public organizations building collaborative relationships with citizens involved in government activities tend to encourage shared responsibilities and understanding of public values (Bourgon, 2007).

Rediscovering bureaucracy as an organizational and necessary pattern to ensure equity, justice, and correctness of administrative action is leading to rediscover the office as a vocation. The ethical attributes of a good bureaucrat in terms of strict adherence to procedure, acceptance, and commitment to the purposes of the office tend to be considered as a positive moral achievement (du Gay, 1996; du Gay, 2005; Olsen, 2005).

The aim of this paper is to explain that the issue of public sector reform is to rediscover the office as vocation by investing in training and education as drivers for managing and addressing strategic and organizational change within public organizations that follow the public interest by providing services and information to citizens working for the community within society. Investing in education and training helps the dynamics of functioning and governance within public administration and contributes to better enhance the building of civic awareness and tradition (Crozier, 1988), reinforcing the orientation of public employees to engage in a meaningful public service as related to work satisfaction too (Rainey, 1982).

Rediscovering the office as vocation helps address and drive public management reform leading to organizational change within public administration and institutions. Promoting and sustaining training and education tends to emerge as a necessary stage to drive employees to rediscover public offices as a vocation in the service of citizens and communities. Training and education initiatives and activities should contribute to hybridize the administrative and organizational culture of public institutions and

organizations overcoming legalistic and bureaucratic logics by exerting influence on ethics and behaviors of public employees for driving change.

Public organizations tend to sustain the value of human capital by promoting training and professional education of public employees in order to support public sector reform for driving organizational and cultural change. Education and training lead employees to learn values coherently with new public service and interest as a mission of public organizations. The study is based on archival data relying on a literature review to sustain the discussion with regard to rediscovering the office as vocation within public organizations; understanding change within public organizations rediscovering responsiveness and public interest beyond promises of New public management (Npm); developing training and education of public employees as strategic source in order to sustain motivation of public employees for leading government to restore trust with citizens.

Rediscovering the office as vocation within public organizations

Fredrickson and Hart (1985) refer to the patriotism of benevolence as the love of one's country and non-instrumental of the others, founded on knowledge of and belief in democratic values and important motivation for driving public organizations. Public servants and public administrators have to drive and manage a responsible organization by reconciling bureaucracy, administrative processes, and democracy (Burke & Clark, 1989). Reinventing government implies to rediscover principles of democratic governance, citizenship, and equity (Deleon & Denhardt, 2003). Responsiveness of public administration relies on the quality of human resources system and public servants (Vigoda, 2000) and implies a listening administrator in order to promote democratic accountability and administrative effectiveness driving public servants to engage in reciprocal communication with the public (Stivers, 1994).

Despite negative label concerning the term bureaucracy, maybe it time to rediscover bureaucracy (Olsen, 2005). Bureaucracy tends to appear as evolving, many-sided, diversified and organizational device and necessary instrument to ensure equity, justice, and correctness of administrative action (du Gay, 1996; du Gay, 2005). Public sector organizations need reform even if it is not clear how reform should address change, to what extent and in what direction to drive change. The ethical attributes of the good bureaucrat in terms of strict adherence to procedure, acceptance of sub-and super-ordination and commitment to the purposes of the office should be viewed and considered as a positive moral achievement in their own right, the way through which individuals develop the disposition and ability to conduct themselves according to the ethos of bureaucratic office (du Gay, 1996).

The task of democracy is to preserve the balance between the capacity to sustain the public interest and the democratic accountability of governance (Lynn, 2001). Thereby, transforming public organizations in entrepreneurial and managerial organizations takes the risk of both undermining some principles of public provision as equity and making public organizations as no capable institutions to serve public mission and identity (du Gay, 1996) leading to a disconnection between legal values and practices embedded (Moe & Gilmour, 1995), driving public managers to play an entrepreneurial leadership role tends to conflict with constitutional values concerning

fairness, justice, representation and participation (Terry, 1998). The Npm paradigm seems to require a new paradigm of democratic accountability in order to restore and enhance the trust of people and citizens in government's performance through public managers seeking to produce results that citizens request (Behn, 1998).

Understanding change within public organizations rediscovering responsiveness and public interest

In 1980s-1990s, Npm doctrines have driven cultural and managerial change within public sector organizations emerging as theoretical and managerial response to inefficiency of the traditional model of managing *res publica* leading public organizations to import managerial practices from the private sector, focusing on reorganization of public bureaucracies disaggregated into agencies more flexible and output oriented, on financial efficiency and performance measurement, on separation of politics from management, reducing government functions through privatization (Hughes, 1994): stressing the private sector styles of management practice towards flexibility in hiring and rewards; a stress on greater parsimony and discipline in use of resources doing more with less, by cutting direct cost and resisting to union demands (Hood, 1991).

Thereby, public management reforms driven by Npm ideas have shown difficulties of applying, some limits and contradictory effects. There are some constraints of the management state (Lane, 2009): neglect of meaning, no preservation of intangible values, unresponsiveness to requests and demands of citizens, democratic deficit within institutions. Npm reforms stimulating competition mechanisms increased the chances of unethical behaviors associated with individualistic values reversing equity and legality as traditional values of public servants (Maesschalck, 2004). Npm doctrines contributed to deteriorate the corporate culture, the traditional work ethos and non-functional values, increasing a decline in motivation and work satisfaction, greater workload and stress (Diefenbach, 2009).

Reformers should take account of the value implications of reforms in order to correctly assess the ethical value and value consequences of public sector management reforms (Kernaghan, 2009). The need of achieving efficiency, efficacy, and effectiveness does not comprise all values and principles informing dynamics and life of public organizations. Innovation and traditional values of public service tend to coexist within public management reform. Thereby, public management reforms tend to be also inspired by postmodern values that emphasize the demand for greater social equity as justice as fair treatment, inclusiveness, and equity in compensation, policies to harmonize the differences in the conditions of employment between government and the private sector; the humanization that refers to the employee as an individual manifesting specific needs as growth and development and implies to support programs for training/educational opportunities for sustaining the human resource development as related to lifelong learning for a better quality of life in which learning is a shared goal between the employee and the employer; the democratization and empowerment relate to expand access to power and influence on decision-making by engaging citizens, promoting participative decision-making (Wise, 2002).

Even if the interaction between public and private organizations is leading to a new public service ethos concerning honesty, community service, and competition, consumer choice (Brereton & Temple, 1999), lawfulness, incorruptibility and impartiality tend to emerge as prevailing and specific values within context of public organizations (Van der Wal, De Graaf & Lasthuizen, 2008).

Governments exist for market and society acting to correct problems created by market dynamics and to maintain law, justice, individual rights, social organization, security, and stability, to promote prosperity, to provide direction for communities. Governments tend to protect public values as psychological and social constructs existing independently of production processes for outcomes (Rainey, 2009). «Public values consist of outcomes based on what a government entity is supposed to be doing, and based on what citizens want it to do» (Rainey, 2009, p.70).

Creating public value relies on public manager sharing responsibility with other officials and citizens to decide what is valuable to produce with public resources by interacting with people to determine and organize the ends and means of service delivery and production (Moore, 1995). Public institutions have to respect the people and serve the public interest as result of shared leadership moving towards a better responsiveness and effective collaboration with citizens as partners in the work of government sharing ideas and knowledge with public officials (Vigoda, 2002a; Vigoda, 2002b). The public interest is better advanced by public servants committed to attend to law, community values, professional standards and citizen interests, to make a meaningful contribution to society by helping citizens to meet their shared interests (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2003; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). Public organizations building collaborative relationships with citizens involved in government activities tend to encourage shared responsibilities and understanding of public values (Bourgon, 2007).

The role of training and education as means of promoting change and sustaining motivation to public service

The nature of public service demands a sense of loyalty on the part of public employees. Public employees tend to manifest higher attention to service than private employees. The importance of the organizational mission may increase employee work motivation in the public sector. Public organizations should support the motivational power of public service (Wright, 2007) and create an environment in which employees feel they can contribute both to the public goal and to an organization performing valuable services (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007).

People represent an important resource driving public administration to serve the public interest (Todres, 1994). The competitive advantage of organizations relies on the quality of human resources and capacity to manage human resources (Pfeffer, 1995). Human resources practices permit to improve and achieve high performances in public sector organizations and to communicate to employees the extent to which organizations trust employees (Gould-Williams, 2003). Sustaining successful change within public organizations relies on providing resources in terms of training employees, developing new processes and reorganizing the structure, on employees able to learn new behaviors drawn by new policies or innovation in order to effectively

institutionalize change as embedded in the institutional context (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006).

Reinventing government relies on investing in human resources and professionalism of public employees by sustaining education and training in order to improve quality of public services for citizens and society (Crozier, 1988). Change may proceed through the people educated to values, beliefs, and ideas that effectively serve to restore the relationship of confidence with people as co-producer of public value. Change cannot proceed merely by laws but requires new professional skills and behaviors of public employees to ensure coherent processes and available outcomes (Dente & Lo Schiavo, 1999). Change occurs as new organizational behaviors experienced by people are introduced and implemented through explicit and tacit tasks (Solari, 2007). Education and professional socialization tend to exert influence on levels of public service motivation of employees feeling to contribute to the public goal (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007).

Competences and expertise of personnel help to improve the responsiveness of public administration being positively related to citizen's satisfaction with public services quality. Citizens are likely to perceive public administration as more responsive and sensitive to their demands when believing that public policy is implemented coherently with clear ethical standards. These findings stimulate to better design and improve training systems for public administrators (Vigoda, 2000). Quality of personnel in terms of competences, motivation, and commitment to goals and mission of public organizations constitute a strategic resource in order to develop and sustain a responsive public administration. Training and education as a fundamental dimension of human resource management should help to stimulate processes of innovation to ensure high quality of public services. Reforming public administration and reorganizing structures and processes should be accompanied by the adoption of training strategy in order to support the organizational change processes (Valotti, 2000) by modifying attitudes and behaviors (Bonti, 2000).

Training and education processes should permit to acquire new professional skills and capabilities in order to increase satisfying productivity and performance opening up to new career perspectives for employees and senior officials. Training and education programs should be considered as ordinary initiatives to support the psychological and professional development of individuals and employees. The adoption of training programs should permit to remove obsolescent behaviors consistently with managerial and cultural trends for governing and driving public administration. New public administrators should be trained in principles of public administration that provide the necessary foundation for growing administrative system (Moe & Gilmour, 1995). New public managers should follow a different style in terms of values, orientations, and attitudes, being able to formulate strategic goals and programs, identify citizen needs and actively communicate, including politicians in the management process, advising political decision makers and motivating their staff and employees. Cultural, professional and social values tend to drive strategic and organizational change with a learning process by sustaining civil service personnel aware to actively contribute to increasing both motivations of personnel and effectiveness of public service delivery (Rebora, 1988). Sustaining change relies on competencies, on enforcing motivation and commitment of personnel as a strategic resource for building more and more responsive public organizations (Valotti, 2005).

The attention to the role of training and education within the public administration is emerging in the early 1990s. A renewal attention on the role and task of training and education within public sector organizations is the signal that the season and the wave of public sector reform were entering a new stage more related to maintaining and consolidating the issues and consequences of managerial logics and principles introduced than sustaining new innovation and need to change. The attention on training and education tends to be different from the past and related to rediscover the capacity to engender and stimulate creativity, accountability and problem solving focusing on the acquisition of skills and capabilities than technical knowledge to learn and to apply (Fontana, 1998). It should be necessary to promote a network of new public management teachers through the exchange of information about programs, their organization and success as the first step for a common understanding about appropriate subject areas (Reichard, 1998).

Sustainable management education relies on involving students, educators, organization and societies willing to participate in interdisciplinary innovative and external communications (Starik, Markus & Clark, 2010) following some principles (Stachowicz-Stanusch, 2011): generation of sustainable value for business and society; effective learning experience for responsible leadership; interacting in a partnership with scientists, business and local government for meeting social and environmental responsibilities and jointly facing these challenges; facilitating the debate and dialogue among government, civil society, business, interest groups and other stakeholders about the issues and questions regarding social responsibility and sustainability. Employee training and development should be part of a long-term learning strategy including reflection about the expansion of organization knowledge systems (Haugh & Talwar, 2010).

Training and education contribute to driving change being oriented to sharing knowledge among participants, focused on the individuals in order to build a collective memory and based on the assessment and evaluation client driven (Quaglino & Rossi, 2007). Reinventing government implies to design a professional path for governing and managing both the education and training programs and methods (Fontana, 1998) leading personnel to assume new tasks learning new values and playing coherent behaviors and roles following the trajectories of change and modernization within public administration (Sinatra & De Martiis, 2004).

Different approaches for designing training and education initiatives tend to emerge (Borgonovi, 2004). *Training as strategy of change for services delivery:* training and education initiatives serve to share competencies, knowledge, skills, and behaviors to implement processes of innovation and improve the quality of service delivery. *Training as origin or stimulus for change* helps to weaken old patterns of behavior within public administrations where resistance to change is dominant and organizational inertia are pervasive of behaviors and mindset. *Training as a response to specific needs and demands:* by introducing new decrees or act, the disengagement and compliant of citizens for the low quality of services lead to the development of new knowledge, renewing competencies and skills of personnel. Changing and increasing professional skills of public servant contribute to redesigning work organization. *Training as a driver for* diffusion of *innovation and creativity sharing* and cultural orientation in order to stimulate and foster the creativity of people.

Conclusions

Public institutions serve the public interest as result of dialogue and respect for people. Changing public organizations should rediscover the importance of public interest. Considering bureaucracy in positive terms by looking at duties and prerogatives of the bureaucrat rediscovering the office as vocation should permit to understand, rethink and redesign processes of public management reform looking at the human side of processes by re-launching values as honesty, competence, fairness, equity and justice that contribute to better govern the relationship among the individuals within communities and between citizens and public institutions.

The issues of public sector management reform concern the forging of a new public employee rediscovering the office as a vocation in the interest and service of citizens and communities. Developing the meaning of the office as vocation relies on sustaining public service motivation of employees for driving change and designing collaborative relationships with citizens. Public organizations should behave as responsive institutions in order engage citizens relying on employees strongly motivated and committed to public service.

Public organizations tend to create public value and build transparent public administration by sustaining education and training of public employees as a strategic source to drive change and improve the relationship between public institutions and citizens. Public management reform leading to change requires investments on human capital in order to improve professional competencies and education of public employees.

Training and education of employees to public values and ethical principles drive cultural and managerial change and contribute to sustaining within employees PSM a specific motivation to public service and individual predisposition to respond to motives related to public institutions and organizations (Kim & Vandenabeele, 2010; Perry & Wise, 1990).

Training and education may exert influence on ethics and behaviors of public servants as agents of change. Training and education initiatives should be focused more and more on principles and values coherently with the new public service rather than on merely management techniques. Training and education programs can be planned and oriented to hybridize the administrative culture by breaking bureaucratic logics for sustaining the cultural change of norms, values, and behaviors.

Further and research should investigate the relationship between recent public management reform and the orientation to address and reinforce the rediscovery of office as a vocation within public administration.

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