RETHINKING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION BEYOND TRANSPARENCY. THE ROLE OF TRAINING AND EDUCATION

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Abstract. *Public institutions should serve the public interest as result of dialogue and respect for people moving towards a better responsiveness in front of citizens as partners in the work of government. Enhancing transparency to ensure access of citizens to government information is regarded as an essential value for ensuring democratic participation and informed decision-making as to favor trust of citizens in government and increase government accountability. Public sector reforms as attempts at constructing organizations as legitimate in front of the citizens lead to change supported by programs of training and education leading public employees to learn and absorb values and behaviors coherent with a new public service. Training and education help to hybridize the administrative and organizational culture of public institutions overcoming legalistic and bureaucratic logics by exerting influence on ethics and behaviors of public employees to sustain reform oriented to enhance transparency and openness as values for driving change.*

Keywords: *training and education; transparency; public management reform; managing change; public administration.*

Introduction. Understanding public sector organizations

Public sector organizations seem to differ with regard to private sector organizations because have to serve the national community rather than generating profit for government (Parker & Gould, 1999). Some distinctive characteristics of public organizations in comparison with private sector organizations are identified (Rainey, 1996): a broader scope, ambiguous, more complex and conflicting goals, many external sources of formal authority and influence, greater public scrutiny and oversight, more red tape and elaborate bureaucratic structures, high levels of public service motivation, low stress on monetary incentives and less managerial decision-making autonomy. Differences and similarities between public and private organizations emerge with contradictory aspects and anomalies. Thereby, only more bureaucracy, a stronger desire to promote public welfare and lower organizational commitment tend to significantly characterize public management with regard to private management (Boyne, 2002). Public managers seem not to differ from business managers on perceptions about organizational formalization despite the assertion that government agencies have more red tape and rules than private organizations have (Rainey & Bozeman, 2009). Public and private management seem to differ 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 and threats for survival; politics and power set public management. Governments manage trust given by citizens. Goals are decided in virtue of a political process through which decisions are taken.

The value of public services reflects the political preferences emerging in the democratic election process. Public management relies on general and special administrative law in a manner not comparable with private sector. In public organizations the traditional style of paternal, standardized and collectivized human resource management tends to be prevalent. Public organizations are more involved in staff training and development, participation and consultation than private organizations. Public organizations tend to offer equal opportunities and promote employees welfare. Differences between private and public sector with regard to human resource management, organizational policies and

practices seem rely on the persistence of a public service ethos among public employees (Boyne, Jenkins & Poole, 1999). Some characteristics are necessary to build effective government organizations (Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999): supportive behaviors from external stakeholders attentive to agency mission; agency autonomy in definition and implementation of its mission; high attractive mission and valence; a strong organizational culture mission-oriented, effectively linked to mission accomplishment; coherent leadership behaviors in terms of stability, commitment to mission, effective goal setting, administrative and political coping. New technologies and development of human resources relate to agency effectiveness improving professionalism and motivation of their members. Professionalism tends to enhance performances of the agency by increasing its autonomy. Effective government agencies tend to have high levels of public service motivation as a general motivation to serve the interests of a community of people, mission motivation in terms of contributing to general and valuable public service (mission motivation, task motivation).

In front of the citizens distrusted of democratic institutions public institutions have to promote transparency as open organizations by investments in human capital by training and education of public employees to support reforms that increase transparency leading to change of administrative culture, practices and behaviors. Administrative reform does not automatically lead to change. Education and training help to develop change leading employees to learn values coherently with new public service.

The aim of this paper is to explain that reforms oriented to promote and enhance transparency leading to change require training and education of public servants coherently with behaviors, values and ethics of a new public service.

The study is based on archival data relying on a literature review to sustain the discussion with regard to: overcoming promises of efficiency and effectiveness by New public management (Npm) doctrines and ideas moving towards a responsive public administration coherently with embracing a new public service; understanding the relationship between reform and change; developing training and education of public employees as strategic source to implement reform for driving change to sustain the enhancing of transparency leading government to restore trust with citizens.

Towards a responsive public administration beyond the promises of new public management

In the public sector of every government with developed political systems and highly institutionalized administrations, in 1980s-1990s, New public management (Npm) doctrines emerging as response to inefficiency of the traditional model of managing *res publica* assumed that public organizations should import managerial practice from the private sector and focus on management, on performance appraisal, focus on re-organization of public bureaucracies disaggregated into agencies more flexible and output oriented, on financial efficiency and performance measurement, on separation of politics from management (Aucoin, 1990). Thereby, governments have challenged the basic beliefs of the traditional model of public administration coherently with theories and studies confirming the inefficiency of bureaucratic provision. Npm as a set of doctrines and ideas about what should be done in administration can represent a transformation of the public sector in its relationships with government and society as reaction to the perceived lack of results and customer orientedness of public organizations delivering services or implementing policy.

The change from traditional public administration to new public management tends to modify the way public administration can operate in public service delivery and the scope of governmental activity. Some points are highlighted to sum innovation of new managerial philosophy for public sector reform: greater attention to the achievements of results and the personal responsibility of public officials and servants; overcoming the traditional and classic bureaucratic pattern of organization for a more flexible structure in terms of work organization and personnel management; organizational and personal objectives have to be clearly set and measured through performance indicators; staff and personnel have to be politically committed to the government actually leading the administration rather than being non partisan; government functions are more likely to face markets tests; reducing government functions through privatization (Hughes, 1994). The managerial program comprises seven main points: hands-on

professional management, accountability requires clear responsibility for action; standards and measures of performance that are explicit for clear statement of goals doing more with less in accordance with discipline and parsimony in use of resources, cutting direct costs; emphasis on output controls and competition in the public sectors through a disaggregation of units manageable to gain the efficiency advantages and 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, limits and contradictory effects. For example, public organizations with high degree of publicness as organizational attachment to public sector values (due process, accountability and welfare provision) differ from organization with a low degree of publicness in terms of complex tasks, professional orientation, many external stakeholders, conflicting environmental demands and low managerial autonomy being reluctant to adopt organizational changes coherent with prescriptions of Npm (Antonsen & Jørgensen, 1997). 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 tend to stimulate competition by increasing the chances of unethical behaviours associated with individualistic values because competition mechanisms reverse the traditional hierarchy (based on equity and legality) of the values of public servants (Maesschalck, 2004). Negative aspects of Npm measures concern inequalities, inequities or exposure of public services to self-interested or dishonest behaviours (Pollitt, 1995) encouraging corruption as to weaken accountability suiting personal interest of top officials (Dunleavy & Hood, 994). Npm doctrines have emphasized the performance achievement as the ability to produce results ignoring the development of a new paradigm of democratic accountability as to enhance the trust of the public in government performance. Public managers will be able to respond to accountability question producing results and accomplishing public purposes that citizen value (Behn, 1998). 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). Despite of leading ideas of Npm formality and regulations imposed on bureaucratic structures increased as evaluation and audit compliance oriented. Npm reforms embraced one-size-fits-all organizational forms evidence-free instead of just announced evidence-based learning (Hood & Peters, 2004).

Creating public value relies on public manager sharing responsibility with other official and citizens to decide what is valuable to produce with public resource by interacting with people to determine and organize the ends and means of service delivery and production (Moore, 1995). Public institutions gaining legitimacy and maintaining the organizational reputation as a set of beliefs about capacities, intentions and missions (Krause, Moynihan & Carpenter, 2012) have to serve the public interest as result of dialogue and shared leadership based on respect for people dealing with producing public services positively judged by citizens moving towards a better responsiveness and effective collaboration with citizens as partners in the work of government (Vigoda, 2002a). Improving public-agency performance relies on developing active citizens for improving client satisfaction (Schachter, 1995). Public organizations producing high performance serve the people leading to involvement and participation of citizens sharing ideas and knowledge with public officials (Vigoda, 2002b). Public organizations should ensure that principles of democracy are maintained serving the public interest as result of dialogue about mutual or overlapping interests. Public servants should attend to law, community values, professional standards and citizen interests (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2003). Building a responsive organization seems to be a difficult task because public organizations tend to be based more on efficacy and efficiency than following a responsive action (Burke & Cleary, 1989). The public interest is better advanced by public servants and citizens that are committed to making a meaningful contribution to society. The primary role of the public servant is to help citizens to meet their shared interests rather than steering society (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). Collaborative responsiveness requires administrators to be open to learning and change by interacting with citizens (Bryer, 2006). The role of government is to promote citizenship by fostering public discussion and integration as to articulate the public interest. Accordingly, the role of public administrator is to build collaborative relationship with citizens, encouraging shared responsibilities and understanding of public values, by involving citizens in government activities (Bourgon, 2007).

Understanding the relationship between reform and change within public administration

The history of re-organization in the public administration is considered to be a history of rhetoric (March & Olsen, 1989). Reforms, as officially formulated, are an indicator of the current political rhetoric (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1989). Reforms can be seen as ways of constructing organizations and regarded as routine processes rather than breaks in organizational life. Public organizations tend to avoid reform because of increasing values that are difficult to achieve for organizations rather than improving performance (Brunsson, 2006; Brunnsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000). Public sector reforms can be seen as a planned process oriented to the formal side of legislative activities. The rhetoric element is conceived as an opportunistic function in accordance with prevailing ideas and fashions (Finstad, 1998). It is possible to distinguish between the legalistic side of reform and desired ends of administrative reform evolving towards the change. Reform lead to change with support of people willing and motivated to assume new values and coherent behaviors. The administrative reform can be considered as a political and aware process of change concerning both the administrative procedures and the role of the actors involved. Administrative reforms lead to change coherently with high degrees of intensity in terms of abandoning the *status quo* logics for a new approach based on different and new values. Thereby, reform characterized by high intensity and wideness in terms of process, activities and operations interested take the risk to be difficulty manageable threatening the stakeholders involved. Reforms concerning less wide activities and areas of intervention but characterized by high intensity serve as clash of administrative routine and stimulus for indirectly changing (Capano, 1992). Changes run on the legs of people through behaviors, values and culture emerging in antithesis with previous paradigms and norms. Reform is driven by formal rules. Change cannot proceed merely by laws but requires new professional skills and behaviors of public employees to ensure coherent processes and available outcome (Dente & Lo Schiavo, 1999). Change occurs as new organizational behaviours experienced by people are introduced and implemented through explicit and tacit tasks (Solari, 2007). Organizational innovation can occur in relation to high capacity to sustain change and exceptionality of change to be introduced and implemented (Pilati, 1987). Building internal and external support, ensuring support and commitment of top management, providing resources, as to make change embedded in the institutional context are necessary characteristics to sustain successful changes within public sector organizations (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006). Reform as a set of laws, regulations and decrees may lead process of change in terms of new behaviors and values adopted by people managing techniques and interpreting laws. 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. The cultural variable is of essential importance in order to understand why administrative reform can vary in nature and follow very different paths (Capano, 2003).

The prevalence of administrative law in governing the conduct and actions of public bodies has had an important influence on administrative reform coherently with *Rechtsstaat* tradition as opposed to *public interest* Anglo-Saxon system. The dominance of the administrative law paradigm influences on the process of change in the implementation of administrative reforms in countries with a legalistic tradition (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000). Public management reforms driven by laws require a strategy of change based on a long-term perspective taking in account the effective difficulties for change; the diffusion of a culture of change through training and education initiatives that have impact on competencies and skills of people for breaking bureaucratic logics relying on respect of formal rules to have at disposal agents for innovations sharing the objectives of change (Borgonovi, 2005). Laws drive public management reform taking the risk of emphasizing values and norms drawn by both bureaucratic paradigm and legalistic approach increasing the distance between formal organization (rhetoric) and reality (Adinolfi, 2004).

Promoting transparency to restore trust with citizens. The role of new technologies

Even if public trust in government or in the public sector seems to become an issue on the political and social agenda only at a certain and not at other moments (Van de Valle, Roosbroek & Bouckaert, 2008) public institutions tend to sustain trust of citizens in government by promoting transparency and increase the opportunities of citizens access to information for building a participatory and shared good

governance. In democratic societies people have the right to access to government information. Transparency as one of the fundamental moral claims is regarded as essential for democratic participation, to sustain trust in government, to prevent corruption, to ensure an informed decision-making and accuracy of government information. Governments by promoting transparency to put pressure on public administration performances tend to increase accountability, produce and share more information allowing citizens to monitor quality of public services and participate in policy processes. Informing citizens helps to improve policies and enhance governmental legitimacy (Meijer & Thaens, 2003).

Transparency as the availability of information about an organization allows the external actors to monitor the internal workings or performance of that organization. Transparency can be interpreted as an institutional relation and information exchange, referring to workings and performance of that organization (Mejier, 2013). Transparency is seen by policy makers as a panacea for enabling good governance making government official performing better their task and preventing corruption phenomena. Democratic institutions have to behave as transparent organizations maintaining the relationship of confidence with citizens in order to increase and restore trust of citizens (Curtin & Mejier, 2006; Grimmelikhuisen, 2009).

Thereby, transparency as a fundamental value of democratic accountability is manifested over time through administrative reforms and new legislative procedures that not necessarily ensure a growing democratic legitimacy (Lodge, 1994). The rhetoric about transparency is a useful mode for mobilizing people and getting change going. Transparency may produce a counterproductive effect since policy makers strict procedures and avoid innovative solutions not bringing legitimacy when citizens have and perceive no trust in front of the institutions (Curtin & Meijer, 2006).

Transparency is one of the practical measures adopted to curtail corruption as deterrent against corrupt behavior by promoting vigilance of citizens and deterring public officials from attaining private gain in virtue of a bad management of public services. A lack of transparency makes corruption less risky and more attractive. Transparency can reduce political and public corruption by helping politicians and administrators to behave more accountable with public (Kolstad & Wiig, 2009). The perceptions of a not enough access to government seems to drive the demand of citizens for transparency. Thereby, people seeing government as closed institution or frequently contact government tend to demand more transparency (Piotrowski & Van Ryzin, 2005). National culture values may play a significant role in how citizens perceive and appreciate government transparency even if transparency does not improve the opinion of citizens on government in the short term at least (Grimmelikhuijsen & Porumbescu, 2013).

Internet technologies make public organizations as open, responsive institutions willing to serve the interest of citizens (La Porte, Demchak & Jong, 2002). Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have an enabling role in establishing transformational change in the public sector and tend to support public services, government administration, and enhance democratic processes providing a dynamic environment for ongoing learning and action (Dawes, 2008). The advent of new ICTs helps public organizations to transit in a new digital era in which the use of ICTs is a means to achieve better government following at least five directions (Lips, 2012): to provide a clear leadership; to support open and transparent government; to strengthen cross-government business capability; to improve operational ICT management. E-government as the use of information technology to enable and improve the efficiency with which government services are provided to citizens, employees, businesses and agencies, contributes to enhance the perception of responsiveness of public administration, to reinforce process-based trust by improving interaction with citizens (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006). Thereby, e-government is not sufficient to generate trust of citizens in unresponsive government (Parent, Vandebeek & Gemino, 2004). Public organizations are assessed because of delivering the expected value for citizens (Cordella & Bonina, 2012). Public organizations should adopt and develop e-government initiatives in order to serve democratic principles of equity, impartiality and fairness emphasizing a greater responsiveness from public administration to citizens (Cordella, 2007). ICTs lead to a substantive social change in attitudes towards transparency by helping governments to ensure more efficiency and promote transparency and collaboration with public by enabling people to monitor government

activities (Bertot, Jaeger & Grimes, 2011). Citizens expect that e-government should attend to issues of transparency and interactivity to engender trust. Internet technologies help governments to restore public trust and improve transparency by coping with corruption, inefficiency and ineffectiveness of services (Moon, 2002).

The role of training and education for 'forging' responsive public employees

Education and professional socialization can influence levels of public service motivation of employees feeling to contribute to the public goal (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). Human resources practices help to improve and achieve high performances in public sector organizations (Gould-Williams, 2003). Reinventing government relies on investing in human resources and professionalism of public employees by sustaining education and training oriented to improve quality of public services for citizens and society (Crozier, 1988).

The changing of boundaries between public and private sectors has forged a new public service ethos consisting of both honesty, community service and competition, consumer choice (Brereton & Temple, 1999). Competences of personnel help to improve the responsiveness of public administration being positively related to citizen's satisfaction with public services. Citizens perceive public administration as more responsive and sensitive to their demands when believe 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). Responsive administrators should be open, able and willing to respond, judicious and uncorrupted. Responsiveness implies a listening administrator as to promote democratic accountability and administrative effectiveness, by helping public servants to engage in reciprocal communication with the public (Strivers, 1994). Quality of personnel in terms of competences, motivation and commitment to goals and mission of public organizations constitute a strategic resource to develop a responsive public administration (Valotti, 2000). New public administrators should be trained in principles of public administration that provide the necessary foundation for growing administrative system (Moe & Gilmour, 1995). Training helps to develop successfully the human side of public management as sustainable approach in virtue of the concepts and instruments supported by an adequate administrative culture enriched by managerial values and attitudes of the official senior levels and public servants. New public managers should have 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. It should be necessary to promote a network of new public management teachers through exchange of information about programs, their organization and success as first step for a common understanding about appropriate subjects areas (Reichard, 1998).

Sustainability of management education relies on involving students, educators, organization and societies willing to participate in interdisciplinary innovative and external communications (Starik, Markus & Clark, 2010). Initiatives enhancing a responsible management education should follow some principles (Stachowictz, 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. Increasing the opportunities for employees training and development program should aliment a culture of sustainability coherently with knowledge enhancing and commitment (Haugh & Talwar, 2010).

Sustaining change driven by reform relies on investments in human capital to improve competencies, motivation and commitment of personnel as strategic resource in order to build an accountable and responsive public administration (Valotti, 2004; Quaglino & Rossi, 2007). Reinventing government implies to design needs and goals, methods and professional paths of education and training programs (Fontana, 1998). Training and education initiatives should lead personnel to assume new tasks

learning new values and playing coherent behaviours and roles (Sinatra & De Martiis, 2004). 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 increase both motivation of personnel and effectiveness of public service delivery and (Rebora, 1988). Professional credentials indicate that public employees are willing to conform to certain expectations remaining grounded in the social processes of their respective professions (Thomas, 1998).

There are different approaches for designing training initiatives and improving professional contents of public employees (Borgonovi, 2004): *training as strategy of change for services delivery:* public administrations that select a clear strategic orientation in terms of services delivery tend to adopt programs of training and education in order to share competencies, knowledge, skills and behaviours to implement processes of innovation and improve the quality of service delivery. *Training as origin or stimulus for change:* training initiatives should be extended in helping to weaken old pattern of behaviour within public administrations where resistance to change is dominant and organizational inertia are pervasive of behaviours and mindset. *Training as response to specific needs and demands:* by introducing new decrees or act, the disenchantement and compliant of citizens for scarce quality of services lead to development of new knowledge, competencies and skills of personnel. Changing and increasing professional skills of public servant contribute to redesign work organization. *Training as driver for* diffusion of *innovation and creativity sharing* and cultural orientation in order to stimulate and foster the creativity of people.

Conclusions

Public organizations that serve the public interest should behave as open institutions in order to restore trust and engage citizens to participate in the decision-making process. Public organizations tend to enhance transparency as public value by sustaining education and training of public employees as strategic source to drive change within administrative culture making government accessible and open to citizens and reconcile public institutions with people. Building an open government could be interpreted as a merely legalistic and mandatory compliance driven by laws or deeply embedded within administrative culture where values of accessibility and openness lead behaviors of public employees and the relationship between public institutions and citizens. Public management reform leading to change demand investments on human capital as to improve professional competencies and education of public employees. Training and education may exert influence on ethics and behaviors of public servants as effective agents of change. Training and education initiatives should be focused more and more on principles and values coherent with the new public service rather than on merely management techniques. Training and education programs can be planned and oriented to employees learning values and principles coherent with new public service in the attempt to hybridize the administrative culture by breaking bureaucratic logics to promote transparency as value sustaining change of practices and behaviors. Training and education programs can be oriented to support the learning of management techniques to deal with technologies and procedures that are necessary for managing transparency as mere compliance.

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