

THE DETERMINANTS OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Maria Viorica BEDRULE-GRIGORUTA¹

“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University

Abstract

The researchers and practitioners have distinguished in the recent years, the need to create public administration processes and activities that are governed by transparency, consistency and fluidity, being open organizational changes and challenges. The paper presents the results of research carried out with the managers of public organizations between January-July 2016 which aimed to investigate their perceptions about the determinants of change within public administration. The findings highlight a number of characteristics of public organizations and their managers, as well as determinants of organizational changes necessary in future periods to channel resources and efforts towards achieving higher performance.

Keywords: Performance Management, Public Administration, Change Management

JEL classification: H70, H830, M10

1. Introduction

The matter of change management is very complex in any type of organization. It may refer to different aspects, may concern groups or individuals, may be planned or unplanned, associated or not with the innovation process.

When discussing about public administration, we refer, even more, to multiple aspects of activity, which recommend partial or total reforms of the system itself or of its subsystems. Although reforms materialize sometimes based on some researches grounded on empirical evaluations, most often they target changes due to public policies which are used in public organizations and generate efficient ways of work or orientation towards “best practices”.

¹ *Professor Ph.D., “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iasi, Romania, maria.bedrulegrigoruta@uaic.ro*

According to many researchers (Bareil and Gagnon, 2005), (Huy, 2001), (Meyer and Stensaker, 2006), the management of organizational change represents a display of actions and cumulative processes, coordinated by managers and which leads to the transformation of an existing state: either is something that changes that state, or is the change itself, meaning the new state that rises. Referring to the change in an organization, most of the authors underline that it represents carrying out of management actions located between two states: the initial state and the final one, the last one being visibly better.

Organizational change amends the ordinary way the organization operates, and how it reacts depends on the organizational culture, most of the time being a choice based on the human values or performance criteria. According to some authors (Nica and Iftimescu, 2004) organizational change “aims essential changes of the organization, as a whole, which is the opposite to small changes involving insignificant modifications of the organizational structure, of the working program or of the people from different work positions. The change corresponds to a new orientation, fundamental and radical, on how the organization will perform its activity“.

Managers conceive and implement planned changes, through a set of activities and processes that are designed to determine a different manifestation of the behavior of individuals, groups or organizational structure. We believe that such a context drives “the moment when determinants of change management distinguish, both from internal environment and from the external one.“

2. Literature Review

Studying the exercise of public organization change management was noted as a complex problem for researchers. Management is dominated by empiricism, organizations being often driven by hunches and experience, seniority and political influences, without taking into account future outcome defined and then watched in developing organizational processes.

Topics relating to *change management* were treated with direct reference to the definition of the types of change, resistance to change and manifest reasons and methods that can be used to explain it. A distinct contribution can be identified regarding change management; (Kotter, 1996) described in 8 steps, from emergency change to its integration, as a distinct stage, final in the framework of the organizational processes.

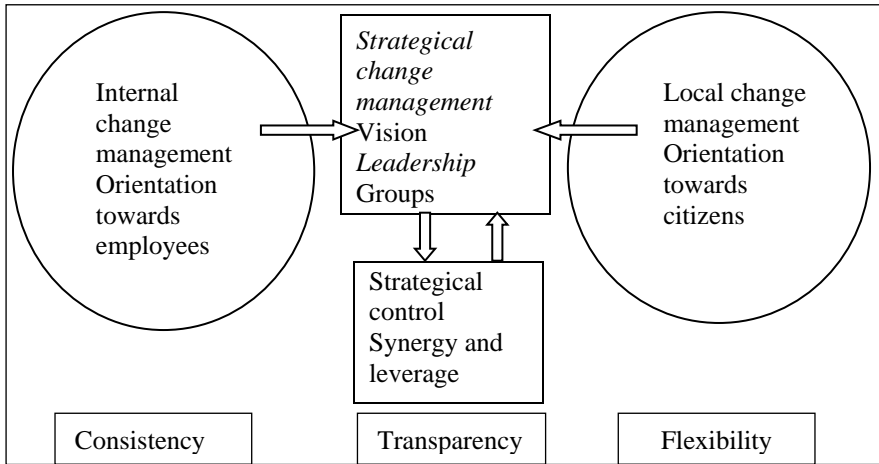
Some researchers have distinguished between what represents “the change” itself, inevitably produced and the kind of change that brings the “survival” or “growth” of an organization (business).

Literature contains plenty of articles (Armenakis and Bedian, 1999), (Blum, Manning and Srivastava, 2012), (McNulty and Ferlie, 2004), (Meyer and Stensaker, 2006) that give answers to concerns such as: “the nature of change”, “the extent in which the change can be attached to innovation when it occurs”, “theory associated tools that influence the effective management of change”. Research is also oriented towards contributions related to the effects produced by change and change management on employees and the community. In this sense, resistance to change is present and often a controversial topic.

Applying a share of change in an organization can manifest differently in relation to a lower/higher level of resistance to change. In any of the situations when the resources involved are of different consistency, preparation stages of change are different, and the time for its implementation is also different; clearly managers’ expectations are totally different. But this is influenced by a number of manifestations of intention to change, as public organization’s managers will define: individual or group change.

The problem of choosing one form differs from the situation that is built initially, on a strategic level, formulating into a clear vision of the content change itself and resources that will exploit the process of leadership for change at the individual level and at the level of organizational groups.

Figure 1. Components of change management in public organization



Source: adaptation by Carnall, 2007

From here it is very simple as all practices and management tools to be oriented towards internal management of organizational change, by taking into consideration the expectations of the external environment (local) and orientation towards citizens.

Construction of the change process is followed by tactical implementation of activities described in detail by the content of programs and plans set through collective action, to determine desired results. In fact, through internal management are defined the terms and conditions of employment of individual public servants, but feasible and safe coordination actions are necessary, which would bring them in a cohesion state.

For successful coordination of change, even the simplest public procedure must be transparent and oriented towards establishing clear goals and objectives. The whole change management mechanism remains positioned at the top of the hierarchy, thus determining the responsibilities to be exercised by public officials, and the driving style.

Parallel to the development of this type of activity, it is necessary to create a performance measurement system that will generate the expected results. This way the consistency of change is manifested through both transparency and by flexibility (Figure 1).

3. General Considerations About Change Management

Several authors have stated that between sixteen percent and nineteen percent of the change management initiatives (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Kotter, 2006, Burnes, 2009; Hughes, 2010) ended in failure. Trough highlighted observations, meant to orient change towards performance, mentions related to difficulties determined by managers in relation with their employees, or stakeholders and investments are distinguished. (Table 1).

Table 1. Difficulties in formulating organizational change management initiatives

Changes implemented in organizations and resulted in failure	
Designing a successful project structures change initiative	Continuous and clear communication on the status and change initiative
Commitment made by the top-managers regarding the change	Ensuring appropriate incentives to stakeholder's initiatives in relation to support change
Outlining a clear vision and well defined goals in relation with the results and expectations they have	Determining change rate flexibility
Keeping in mind stakeholders and investors desires	Turn leadership into a successful change agent

We believe that in every situation, the influence exerted by the manager will determine the success of organizational changes. Equally, vision and courage, to use correctly and efficiently the opportunities that come from the external environment, will determine equally successful implementation of change.

Sometimes managers are trying to develop “change in continuity“ without clarifying for the employees what is going to change, to what extent, in what period, etc. Or the change action is presented “attractively”, referring to some ideas, trends or expectations that managers want, without putting some pressure on their subordinates. In both situations equally failure or success can occur; but constantly there is a need of building a common vision based on trust and continuous learning. In this way exerting influence and authority becomes very solid for any project organizational change.

According to others authors (Barnett and Carroll, 1995, Pettigrew, Woodman and Cameron, 2001) organizational change is the new state that is

obtained in order to improve organizational performance. They reveals that most research in the field of change falls within a current research interested more in its content.

Other researchers have created in slightly different contexts , models of change, becoming more consistent, complex and evolved, calling into question either the elementary mechanisms of change or the intention to determine the need to put in implementation other changes (Bechard 1969), (Francesco A.M., Gold B.A. 2005), considering that a change process includes complex steps, developed since setting goals, defining future state , diagnose the present state, define the actions to be undertaken to generate the transition to the new state and developing strategies and action plans to determine the actual introduction of change. But the contribution made by Kotter's model adds the expression of the role of the parties involved in the change process, thus empowering their engagement in achieving planned results and performance. In the same accountability manner lays also the change management model approach by Price Waterhouse, in this case the conferral it is characterized by awareness, dialogue and participation.

Therefore, multiple analyzes can be done to characterize a variety of models and meta - models that can be adapted by any organization managers when they consider an opportune time for change.

We considered of a major importance the situation when the change occurs in a public organization, given the major legal regulations and the specific framework in which it acts, even in view of the inevitable changes generated by a dynamic and often unstable environment.

Therefore we considered appropriate the adaptation of specific management strategies, oriented towards the type of change that is desired and which is expected by managers to result.

Figure 2. Matrix of change management in public administration

Improving public productivity <i>Processes</i>	Increasing organizational involvement by reviewing organizational values and culture <i>Practices</i>	
1. RE-CONSTRUCTION	2. RE-NEWAL	
Integration Optimization <i>Resources</i>	Organization Change Management	Development Professionalization Accountability <i>Positioning</i>
3. RE-ALIGNMENT	4. RE-DEPLOYMENT	
Control Moral responsibility Constraints of the way of work Cost reduction	Differentiation Distinct niche Reviewing services offer Increasing competences	

Rondeau (2008) considers necessary the construction of a strategy consistent with the type of change, considering both the human factor and involving a number of specific procedures, resulting in actions that will generate the desired effects.

It can be said that in each of the situations suggested in Figure 2 we can deduct the formulation of clear goals, concern for measuring performance in relation to standards and better involvement of employees who are committed to the objectives set by them than those imposed by managers.

4. Research Design

It is always difficult to operationalize a study based on the analysis of processes. Therefore methodological design was developed from theoretical study of articles and studies in the field.

The goal that I set in this research refers to the change management in a public organization, in a state of vulnerability in the current environmental conditions, to be likely oriented towards change.

The objective of the research is to identify managers' perceptions about change management determinants in the public organizations they lead. This approach is described starting from the premise that "public organizations have a much greater need for flexibility in the future, which is

influenced both positively and negatively by change management mechanisms, coordinated by managers.”

The traditional model of government institutions was described at a certain moment, using the term “stiffness”, even if this provided “equity”, in a certain measure, it did not had the ability to make positive changes in their circumstances. Our intention is to know how the managers coordinates changing processes (associated with reforms in the system), developed in stages and shapes, with the final successful formulas “flexibility” and “performance”.

Research carried out is qualitative, inductive - deductive. As research methods and techniques were applied qualitative analysis, exploratory analysis, data and information studies and their systematization, induction and deduction.

Table 2. Identification data of the interviewees

Variable	Investigated field (number of persons)	Gender	Age	Seniority in leading positions
	Health = H (5)	Male (26)	25 – 35 years (4)	< 5 years (4)
	Public finances = PF (5)		36 – 45 years (9)	5 – 10 years (5)
	Social Work = SW (4)			
	Education = E (5)			
	Local Councils = LC (3)	Female (8)	46 – 55 years (12)	11 – 15 years (14)
	Town Halls = TH (4)		Over 56 years (9)	> 15 years (11)
	Community services = CS (3)			
	Social Work Directions = SWD (5)			

The research tool applied was the interview, the investigation was based on 15 questions for the 34 managers from public organizations from education, health, finance, town halls (urban), local councils, decentralized services located in 5 cities in the North-East region of Romania. A series of identification data are presented in Table 2.

5. Conclusions

The top managers contacted between January-July 2016 was announced about the research topic and I communicated face to face with each of them. The initial discussion began with familiarization of the researched subject: change and change management in the institution led.

Interview questions focused on various discussion topics, presented in the logical order of their sequence: nature of change, change manifestation, the attitude of colleagues, employees resistance to change, frequency of changes, efforts and difficulties encountered in the processes of change, communication in the change processes - with the superior authority/employee/stakeholder, report of “present state/new state” of the environment in which the change occurred, changes in the organizational structure/in system performance, improving the performance of individual/collective. Researcher intention was to identify internal and external factors of the processes coordinated by the managers, making synthesis of the positive and negative influences described by interviewees.

All managers surveyed said they have been in many situations of “change”, inevitable under certain conditions. Their working fields made them admit, in a general sense, that in certain moments conducive to change, failed to apply the techniques and procedures specific to management to implement change, due to the fact that “were caught unprepared”, “did not had available enough resources to carry out a subtle change”, “did not understood very well the message of change, formulated by the users of public services they coordinate” or “did not had a direction from the highest authority”. All replies to the questions referred to managers and civil servants.

Table 3. Determinants of change management in public organization

Internal determinants of change management	
Positive influences	Negative influences
Managers efforts from public administration	Negative mindset manifested by some of the civil servants from different positions, in not offering their availability in direct relationship with the citizens
Availability of employees from public services to provide information, on lines/hierarchical levels and readiness in the internal communication process	Vague definition of the details linked to the method of creation for some documents

Optimist attitude of the public officials in relation to the citizen and his own job	Low usage of specialist in management and public administration
Recognition as a priority of continue administration reform, which will streamline the activity of public organization	Insufficient connection of the local public authority' managers(public organizations) to citizen needs
Upper level of the computerization degree increasing the speed of information transmission; database creation and knowledge-based clusters	Difficulties in continuous education and employee training for using software and computer programs to be continuously available for the citizens
External determinants of change management	
Positive influences	Negative influences
Increasing requirements for professional civil servants due to alignment of the system to the European standards	Lack of methodologies, models, at national level of strategies elaboration, plans and development programs, which leads to discrepancies in terms of perception proposed changes
The implementation of efficiency measures of the public organization imposed by standards and European policies	Negative image of the civil servants reflected by the monetarization conducted by the European representatives
The proper legal framework to streamline public organization activities and encourage the adoption of protective measures for civil servants	Failure to crystalize an efficient public management system

A first conclusion that emerges from the analysis of the answers given by the managers focuses on optimizing the relationship between employees and managers. Managers said that it is important for their subordinates to understand the “intention to change”, its purpose and the direct and indirect effects that will be felt.

They should not be found “stuck” in documentation, reporting and urgent requests for data and information from their bosses, which would lead inevitably to the slowing down of the change process.

An important conclusion drawn from the analysis of the answers from the interviewees is that *change must be accompanied by learning actions*,

experiences of the managers of health; education and finance are associated with the development of professional skills and an excellent mobilization of expertise in their work field.

Long reform of public administration, economic crisis and bureaucratic model were not identify among the first determinants of change management in the organizations analyzed.

This allows us to conclude that the premise from which we started this empirical approach is confirmed. In the future, flexibility, transparency, accountability and consistency of the public benefits processes will be embedded by the managers into the mechanisms of change, following the manifestations of citizens' behaviors and expectations.

The research conducted may be subject to greater methodological sophistication, removing undertaken limits, both in terms of using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods and techniques that can provide a range of correlations and interpreting the responses of the interviewees.

6. References

1. Armenakis, A., Bedian, A. (1999) *Organizational change: a review of theory and research in the 1990s*, *Journal of Management*, Vol.25, pp. 293-315.
2. Bareil, C., J. Gagnon. (2005) *Facilitating the Individual Capacity to Change*, *Gestion 2000*, vol. 22, n° 5, p. 177-194.
3. Barnett, W.P. Caroll, G.R (1995) *Modeling Internal Organizational Change*, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol.21, pp.217-236.
4. Beer, M., Nohria, N. (2000) *Cracking the Code of Change* *Harvard Business Review* 78, no.3 (May-June 2000): 133-141.
5. Blum, J., Manning, N., Srivastava, V. (2012) *Public Sector Management Reform: Toward a Problem-Solving Approach* (Vol. 100, pp. 1-9). Washington.
6. Burnes, B., *Managing change* (2009) Prentice Hall, Financial Times.
7. Carnall, C. (2007) *Managing Change in Organizations*, 5^{ed.}, Prentice Hall.
8. Francesco A.M., Gold B.A. (2005) *International organizational behavior: text, cases and exercises*. 2nd edition Upper Saddle river, N.J. Pearson/Prentice Hall.
9. Hughes, M., (2010) *Managing Change: A Critical Perspective*. 2nd edition, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development London.
10. Huy, Q. N. (2001) *Time, Temporal Capability and Planned Change*, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 26, n° 4, p. 601-623.
11. Kotter, J.P. (1996) *Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business Scholl Press.
12. McNulty, T. et E. Ferlie (2004) *Process Transformation: Limitations to Organizational Change within Public Service Organizations* *Organization Studies*, vol. 25, n° 8, p. 1389-1412.
13. Meyer, C. and Stensaker, I. (2006) "Developing capacity for change", *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 6, pp. 217-30.
14. Nica, P., Ifimescu, A., (2004) *Management. Concepts and applications*, Sedcom Libris Publisher, Iasi.

15. Pettigrew, M., A., Woodman, M. R., Cameron, S., K. (2001), *Studying organizational change and development: challenges for future research*, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 4, 897-713.
16. Rondeau, A., (2008) *L'évolution de la pensée en gestion du changement: leçons pour la mise en œuvre de changements complexes*, in *TELESCOPE, Comparative Analysis Review in Public Administration*, Vol 14, no. 3 Automne.