

SOME QUOTATIONS ABOUT MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

The article deals with some approaches to New Public Management concept typical for the contemporary European public administration execution. Simultaneously its author stresses the significance of the quality management in the state administration and local government.

Key words

management of public administration, New Public Management, quality management, public services, public servants, managers choices.

Principal tasks of the contemporary European public administration are often characterized by different theoreticians as those:

- *the vital necessity to improve the management of public administration as the whole,*
- *the transformations which have to be implemented in the public sector,*
- *improvement of the information technologies implemented in the public administration in general and its utilization in the growing number of PA authorities and offices.*

The mentioned facts represent some most typical features of the so called New Public Management. They could be characterized as the continuation and further development of the Public Management concept which started to be used in the European Communities member states since the 1950s. (see: “*New Public Management in Europe: Public Servants in Transition*“, London - Macmillan Press 1996, p. 53). As **Christopher Hard** stressed in the end of 1980s the New Public Management refers to a doctrine that has emerged over the past fifteen years and is considered “one of the most striking international trends in the public administration“ (**Hard Christopher: “A Public Management for all Seasons ?”**, Public Administration,69 (UK), p.3)

The reasons of N.P.M. principles implementation another scholar **Lucy Gaster** explains by stressing the dissatisfaction of a growing number of public services consumers in the 1960s and 1970s predominantly with the quality of services providing. She said: “Low quality services, generating and perpetuating low expectations, have too often been the experience – of both users and producers of these services. Dissatisfaction, frustration, but not much action was the result“ (see.**Gaster Lucy: “Quality in Public Services: Managers’Choice”**, Open University Press Buckingham- Philadelphia 1995, p.1).

David Farnham and Sylvia Horton are underlining in this context dynamic organizational contingencies facing public officials since the 1980s. These contingencies have resulted, inter alia, in:

- *more commercially and financially focused missions and goals, driven by politicians and top manager ,*
- *more emphasis on the public as “customers”, “clients” and “consumers“ of public services,*

- *growing involvement of public managers with internal markets, pseudo- markets and quality issues,*
- *the opening – up of public organization to competition, C.C.T., contracting and market testing,*
- *a modified root culture which is shifting from an administrative to a managerialist one and is focused on target – setting, performance management systems and performance indicators* (see: “*New Public Management in Europ: Public Servants in Transition*”, London. Macmillan Press Ltd. 1996 , p. 47).

The mentioned authors indicated that one of the most important topical problems typical for the development of the European public administration as the whole is represented indisputably by the *role of quality of the public administration execution as well as the whole public sector activities execution and its measurement.*

Discussing in the theoretical way it is possible to come to the conclusion that there is a general concensus in the contemporary European public administration which one of its the most significant features is:

- *needs to develop more responsible and better quality of its execution for the benefit of all citizens in general.*

Lucy Gaster and some other British and U.S.authors underline “that there are several stages in total quality management. These are variously described as: awareness, assessment or diagnosis, planning and preparation, implementation including education and training and the development of commitment and understanding within the organization, a stage of continuous or intensive improvement (over a period of two to three years) and a final stage of review, leading to a renewal of the process of continuous improvement.” (see: **Gaster Lucy: “Quality in Public Services: Managers Choices“**, Open University Services Buckingham-Philadelphia 1995, p. 75).

Some theoreticians also stress that the public administration execution in the European continent rises the understandable significant question which could be defined like: „*Why there is such a great focus on quality*” ?

A required answer to the mentioned basic question is inevitably connected, in my view, especially with **some specific features of the European public administration contemporary development.** They are predominantly:

- *a shift from rules to responsiveness,*
- „ „ *hierarchy to partnership*
and
- „ „ *audit to evaluation.*

There were published many positions of theoreticians concerning the quality in public administration definition during the last two decades reflecting – in details – a bit different approaches to this problem solution. **Lucy Gaster**, for example, explains in this connection that “no single, or simple definitions of quality exist.... Sometimes the difficulty is that the definition is too broad, so that it becomes meaningless, it cannot be put straight practice. Other go for detail which, while possibly appropriate to a particular service, is difficult to generalize to all public services.” Nevertheless, as she says “**a definition of quality with practical utility for a wide range of public services could be developed**”.

The details of each service will be different, but each should be able to demonstrate:

- *The characteristics of service quality definition in certain key dimensions.*
- *Understanding of the gap between expectations and experience of a service – the “satisfaction gap“.*
- *The identification of key interests, including those of citizens and direct and indirect consumer , of staff, managers, professionals and politicians “(Gaster Lucy: *Quality in Public Services: Managers’Choice*“, Open University Press,Buckingham-Philadelphia 1995, p. 35).*

The role and the significance of the so called *non- technical quality* is discussed also very often. It is not surprising that answer to such a question is closely connected with the quality of public administration staff. The British authors Heald and Stodel characterized it in 1988 as following ones:

- “ *1. Helpful staff.*
- 2. Knowledgeable staff.*
- 3. Not to be overhead (privacy).*
- 4. Staff have time for You.*
- 5. You can ask questions.”*

(Heald G.,Stodel E.: “*Supplementary Benefit Claimants: expectations and experience of the service provided by DHSS’s local offices*”, London: HMSO, 1988).

Lucy Gaster supplements other quality characteristics important for public services providing from the point of view of staff qualification: She underlined:

- “ – *Listening, giving time, empathizing, thinking through, giving enough information for options to be clear, not “fobbing off”, sensitivity to individual needs, fairness, honesty, treating people equally, being polite, friendly and ensuring a speedy response (Neighbourhood Office staff).*
- *Being open with people, providing full information, looking at alternative possibilities, minimum waiting, sensitive, trustworthy, responsive staff – and speedy response (Housing staff).*
- *Understanding, being knowledgeable, flexibility, equal treatment and “do as You would be done by“, minimum waiting, offering real choice, consumer involvement (Social Services staff)”.*

(Gaster Lucy: “*Defining and measuring quality: does decentralization help?*” – in: “Local Government Policy Making“, Nr. 17 (1990, p. 15)

Everything what was stressed in the theoretical level is connected with the discussion around the so called “*good governance*“. As **key principles of good governance are generally understood:**

- *transparency,*
- *accountability* and
- *openness of the implementation.*

Other significant features of the contemporary European public administration are especially:

- *a growing demand for public services providing without an equivalent increase in resources,*
- *rising expectations among users, as well as their propensity to compare public service with those provided by the private sector,*
- *the general need to demonstrate greater transparency in the use of public resources and to document performance,*
- *public sector managers' search for new tools to achieve better results within current budgets.*

There is **other great discussion among theoreticians of the European public administration concerning the quality standards in the public sector** including the public administration. **Lucy Gaster** underlines its following **possible aims**:

- *Better information to the public.*
- *Empowering the public.*
- *Extension of individual consumer rights.*
- *Improving consistency, speed and overall quality of services.*
- *Winning awards.*
- *Circumventing established employee rights (terms and conditions of service).*
- *Providing information to potential competitors."*

(see. **Gaster Lucy: "Quality in Public Services: Managers' Choices"**, Open University Services, Buckingham – Philadelphia 1995, p. 99)

As the most significant benefits of the quality standards implementation could be considered:

- *better customer service,*
- *greater strategic thinking concerning missions and goals of local and regional development,*
- *sustained levels of performance* (taking into account the growing prices of services provided by the public sector).

I share the opinion that it becomes more and more clear in the majority of European countries that such an approach allows in the individual public administration authorities and offices predominantly more dynamic:

- *experimentations* and
- *adaptation of approved strategic goals to individual local conditions.*

The another typical feature of the contemporary European public administration is represented by the focus on the solution of the urgent environmental problems and questions.

There is another ever growing consensus in the European countries in stressing the fact that **efficient and effective public administration must balance not only the interests of public administration authorities but also external stakeholders /especially taxpayers (all citizens) and, of course all elected representatives/.**

It is understandable that achieving higher quality standards in the public administration and in the whole public sector has and will have a positive impact on business location and investment decisions. This fact has a very important synergic effect.

Some Remarks concerning Definition and Measuring Quality in Public Administration

The quality in the public administration is considered as the category which is relatively a very complex concept. Striving for the better services for citizens providing more and more European countries tries to implement the New Public Management principles in their PA authorities and offices everyday activities.

It is possible to come to the conclusion that **the Total Quality Management represents de facto the latest development in the evaluation of quality management systems both in the private sector but also in the public sector.**

As the main typical features of TQM the following are generally characterised:

- *achieving maximum of customer expectations and satisfaction,*
- *the orientation to continuous improvement of management instruments,*
- *the client and competitor orientation* and
- *quality self – assessment.*

There are many explanations of the TQM substance. One of the very significant comprehensive one was made by the U.S. Department of Defence underlining that:

“TQM is both a philosophy and a set of guiding principles that represent the foundation of a continuously improving organization.

TQM is the application of quantitative methods and human resources to improve materials and services supplied to an organization ,to improve all the processes within the organization, and to improve the degree to which the needs of the customer are met, now and in the future.

TQM integrates fundamental management techniques, existing improvement efforts and technical tools under a disciplined approach focused on continuous improvement”

(U.S. Department of Defence, (1990), „Total Quality Management Guide”, Vol.1-2, Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., p. 11) .

It is a real fact that **the „ total quality „concept developed in the private sector was definitely transferred to the public sector in North America and Western Europe during the 1980s . TQM started to play since that time the extremely significant role both in the entrepreneurial and in the public sectors.**

As a result of many debates oriented to the contracting-out assessment and implementation, **public services started to be provided by public, private and voluntary organizations** (different mixed forms of public-private ownership) **directly through contractors in the growing number of the European municipalities and regions since that time.**

During the 1990s discussions waged by the European public administration specialists were also more and more oriented to the fact that in many cases quality management systems used for evaluating and ensuring goods quality in the private sector are not quite adequate, unfortunately, for assessing services quality provided by public administration.

This inadequacy- as it was showed on the basis of the concrete examples - stems predominantly from three fundamental differences between services and goods:

- *services are intangible so that the precise manufacturing specification can rarely be set,*
- *services with a high labour content tend to be very heterogeneous,*
- *production and consumption of many services are inseparable.*

X

X

X

The objective assessment of the quality in the public administration is also complicated due to the fact that there is no agreed definition of the quality. Different authors stress that *a strong focus on measurement and monitoring typical for TQM can create a new bureaucracy in the public sector without much improvement in public services which could be considered to be a relative weakness.*

Speaking about the assessment of the quality in the public administration it is necessary to mention that *a relatively new approach implemented in the European public sector, including the public administration is represented by the ISO 9 000 family (ISO 9000 +) working out and their implementation* ISO standards were worked out in the United Kingdom in 1987 as international standards. Moreover, EN 29 000 standards are implementable in the quality of public administration measurement.

The ISO 9000 is primarily important for contractual situations such as contracting-out or competitive tendering, to help public agencies evaluate the quality of the production process or service delivery process of different suppliers and the expected quality level for the duration of the contract. The mentioned standard was revised in 2 000 and it is implemented in the following way:

- **ISO 9001:2000 Quality management systems - Requirements,**
- **ISO 9004:2000 Quality management systems – Guidelines for performance improvement,**
- **ISO 19011 lines on Quality and / or Environmental Management Systems Auditing.**

The application of ISO 9000 and 9001 standards may be especially useful for organizational contexts which lack transparent written rules, structures and processes.

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