MAKING POLICIES WORK: THE CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IMPOSE

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Abstract: Generally, the culture is the means the members of a particular group use as to communicate between them and other societal groups. For the communication process, common behaviors, habits, practices, values and beliefs are revealed. The literature in the area enhance the idea that the organizations having an adaptive culture have a remarkable development in what concerns the public policies they are involved in, in comparison to the institutions that do not share the similar type of culture. Starting with the definition of organizational culture and policy process, an interesting scenario can be designed. The policy process is future oriented, while the culture of a meta-organization (a bulk of different organizations involved in the development of public policies) is driven by past experiences.

It is for this reason of understanding all the involved implications, that we consider useful analyzing each stage of the policy process, taking into account the apparent contradiction.

Key words*: policy process, adaptive organizational culture, meta-organization.*

1. The concept of public policy: interpretations and perspectives

Public policies represent an actuality subject of the Romanian administration's reality. Public policy represents the „defined manifestations and orientations of the state authorities, as public powers, central or local, for essential fields or activities taking place either at the national level, or at territorial-administrative levels"; in other words, „political decision in favour of a certain desired stat, including the options in favour of certain means considered adequate for reaching the objectives designed"(Popescu, L.G., 2005).

In broad sense, public policy is that path of action adopted by a representative of a public authority in order to solve a problem that reflects the interest of a community or of a particular segment of society (R. A. Buchholz, Anderson, Bullock, Brady, 2004)
Stricto sensu, public policy represents a path of action in agreement with a public interest, a process in which society (by means of its elected representatives) makes decisions regarding the assignment of resources, in order to reach a goal.

Public policy is a path of action that is not confused with the intentions or statements of intention regarding the achievement of a goal or with the political process (through which is understood the process of organizing the individual effort in order to achieve a collective goal, or to achieve an objective that individuals or groups of interests find difficult to achieve by their own resources).

The public policy research field represents a border field between several "classical" disciplines, such as political science, social psychology, legal or economic sciences. The study of public policies represents the most recent direction of political science. In what concerns the research techniques and methods, they are borrowed from different social disciplines and adapted to the instrument needs for each separate study.

Until the 1960's, political science was not especially interested in the study of what is happening within the government and in the study of government mechanisms. The specialty studies were focused extensively on the electoral process, on the study of the political organizations, on the analysis of the framework concepts in political science etc. After the 1960's, interest grows for what is happening within the government; the concern for increasing the efficiency of decision in matters of assignment of public funds intensifies and, hence, the interest for studying the modalities in which the political-administrative decisions are made. Since the 1980's, the discussions intensify in terms of government reform, emphasizing the need for increasing performance in public funds management, for improving the relationship between the State and the Citizen, between the Government and Civil Society.

The field of public policies (research and analysis in the field) may be defined as being concerned with the study of the political-administrative decisions regarding the assignment of the different forms of resources (human, material, financial, know-how, symbolic).
Public policies represent actions performed by the government (central or local) as answer to the issues raised by the society/ local community.
By means of the public policy is targeted the behavioural change of individuals, organizations and institutions.

Analyzing the definition above, a series of elements are derived, which give substance to the concept of public policy (Thoenig, Jean-Claude, 1992.
First of all, a public policy is formed by an ensemble of concrete measures, which give substance to the public policy. The constitutive route of a public policy is marked by different decisions.
Hence, a second element is given by the fact that a public policy is defined by these decisions (forms of assigning resources), whose nature is more or less authoritarian, but in which coercion is always present.

Thirdly, a public policy is circumscribed "in a general action framework", which allows us to distinguish between a public policy and simple isolated measures. In this action frame, a public policy has established objectives and goals, depending on values, norms and interests. This would be the fourth element.

And the last, the fifth, is given by the fact that a public policy has an audience, meaning individuals and groups whose situation is affected by the decisions made in the public policy in question.
Research field of public policy is a border area between several disciplines "classic" as political science, sociology, social psychology, legal and economic sciences.The study of public policy is the most recent political science.In terms of techniques and research methods, they are borrowed from various disciplines of social and instruments tailored for each study separately.

Up by the '60 political science was not particularly interested in studying what goes on in government and governance mechanisms study.Specialized studies were focused extensively on the election process, the study of political organizations, political science analysis framework concepts etc. After 60 years growing interest to find out what happens inside the government, is increasing concern for efficiency in allocation decisions of public funds and hence the interest in studying ways in which political decisions are administrative. Of the '80 starts to talk more and more in terms of governance reform, siding emphasize the need for increased performance in managing public funds, to improve the relationship between state and citizen, between Government and Civil Society.

2. Cultural Conditioning and Public Policy Process

As a rule, culture stands for the channel the members of a group use to communicate both among themselves, and with other groups within society. The communication process reveals common behavior patterns, customs, practices, values and beliefs.

Dedicated surveys have proven that public organizations that benefit from an adaptive culture experience a remarkable growth from the perspective of the development of the public policies process they take part in, if compared to the institutions that do not enjoy such a culture.

As based on the definition of the organizational culture and the public policies process, it is easy to conceive of an interesting setting. The public policies process is future-oriented, while the meta-organization (a conglomerate of diverse organizations involved in carrying out public policies) culture seems to have its roots in the past.

Therefore and in order to understand all the implications, we deem useful to examine each and every step of a public policies' process, by taking into consideration this apparent opposition.

A comprehensive analysis of the public policies' process will allow devise a sequence of hypotheses.

The first hypothesis: The process of public policies does not solely represent a simple series of action phases. At the same time, it encompasses a set of values and hypotheses, which, though not explicit, are an integral part of the process.

This assumption is confirmed. Moreover, an examination of the comprehensive process offers definite clues as to the optimal process's being carried on within organizations that operate as largely based on democratic principles; they are more flexible than bureaucratic; they use incentive mechanisms able to promote a more open mindset and the commitment towards the company; they have a cooperation-oriented environment that fosters team work; they show interest towards devising innovative solutions and are earnestly considerate towards approaching the citizen.

The policy process is thus perceived as being a highly mechanistic system which necessitates improvements in systemic communications and co ordination (wiring-up and joining-up).

Harold Lasswell, a founding father of public policy as a field of study, believed that democratisation was an ongoing process and that the particular challenge facing modern democracies was how to ensure that policy-making could be informed by a new kind of interaction between knowledge producers and users (Torgerson, 1985)

From a Laswellian perspective policy-making took place in conditions of power inequalities and recognized that knowledge is utterly embedded in power and value contexts and relationships. The task of policy analysis was not to produce 'evidence' to drive policy, but to facilitate the clarification of values and contexts. This involved democratization, rather than simply modernization. Values are at the heart of the Lasswellian theory.

Values are the messy things which have to be extracted to give good objective knowledge of what works. Lasswell argued that, if democratic policy-making were to meet the challenges of the modern world, the relationship between power and knowledge was an absolutely critical

consideration. This meant that policy-making had to be opened up and made more democratic: distortions had to be removed, and assumptions and perceptions had to be tested through deliberation, argument and discussion. (Parsons, W. 2002)

Obviously, this type of organization is relatively sophisticated and developed, if compared to representative average panel of other typical structures for the traditional public organizations.

Another conclusion is that examination of all hypotheses the public policies processes are based should entail a better understanding of its fundamental concepts and values.

The second hypothesis: An organization is definitely not a conglomerate of people and resources. It forms a set of values and hypotheses that generates its own organizational climate and culture. Moreover, an organization's development has a direct impact on its organizational culture.

This premise is also confirmed. No matter how organizations may be structured, they are not some mechanism void of life. The involved people, their personal system of values and beliefs contribute to enlivening the organization. Research undertaken at international scale reflects the organization growing more mature as it accumulates new knowledge and succeeds in solving the complex issues it is facing. Similarly, carriers of culture can become drivers of change or an element towards stability, depending on the values that become explicit through their shown behavior (not the values they publicly declare to support).

The major characteristic of these organizational forms is that they are capable of being made explicit and codified. What counts as evidence is that which can be aggregated and disseminated: added up, joined up and wired up. At one level this means that clear structures and procedures have to be put in place so that institutional modes of 'knowing what works' and 'learning' can be extracted, stored, retrieved and communicated, whilst on the other, that research or academic knowledge
Must be produced and disseminated in accordance with clear specifications of what counts as systematic B knowledge.

The meta-organization, a flexible network-type structure, is built in such a way that it contains both the organization that provides the public policy and a number of actors that rotate around it. They are either beneficiaries of the public policy or representatives of the community interests (Popescu, L.G. 2006).
If the primary values of a public policy process are more or less compatible with those of the meta-organization, then it is very likely for the process to be adopted and the public policy to succeed.
If a conflict occurs between the values the public policy process is based on and the values of a meta-organization, then it is very likely the respective public policy to be a failure.

To conclude with, the meta-organization culture should be harmonized with the public policy it promotes, while this is cutting its way through the Scylla of good intentions and the Charybda of bureaucracy. It is a demanding process that needs to be backed up by a strong culture.

Pragmatically, the achievement of such a structure implies overcoming a varieyt of challenges. On the one hand, are the actors (organizations and members of community) aware

of the importance of commitment? Are they truly motivated to take part in such a structure? On the other hand, how prepared are political representatives and public authorities to accept co-operation with different categories of stakeholders?

First of all, lack of an *organizational culture* with all the actors of the metaorganization is one of the major difficulties to overcome in reaching the success of this construction. The responsibility of both political and public authorities to enable this structure to become functional must be focused on the development of this type of organizational culture. Only when organizations become aware of the benefits of the public and are willing to commit themselves in different forms, the metaorganization will be substantial.

Mutually, the organizations cannot reach the new level of organizational culture that implies commitment and attendance if the responsible agents at the central, regional or local level do not focus their efforts towards stimulating of this new organizational culture.

In these circumstances, as Harold Lasswell reveals, is possible to ensure that policy-making could be informed by a new kind of interaction between knowledge producers and users (Torgerson, 1985). The traditional relationship between consumer and provider is replaced by a creative cooperational and collaborative one between the actors of the metaorganization. Moreover, the contradictions between the concepts of consumer and provider, and the cooperation and creative dialogue relationships between actors within the metaorganization must be revealed.

The different research and surveys have shown that there is a series of hindrances to the development of this process, i.e. the cognitive, the informational, the resources, the behavioral and the cultural barriers. Therefore, the failure of a public policy cannot be solely attributable to one system of cultural values proper to the meta-organization.
Nevertheless, if the said meta-organization has undertaken serious and crucial efforts towards successful attainment of that policy process, most of the above mentioned barriers cease to be insurmountable hindrances. To fulfill this end, the organization must have reached a certain level of maturation.

A third hypothesis: The organization will not change its value system or its culture, unless a significant event takes place that would account for the change.

This assumption has been confirmed by all surveys that deal with the theory of organizational transformation. Many of these surveys believe culture is the one proverbial cloud enough to eclipse all change.

Schon argued that as change is so important a process to understand, the critical question to ask was how can we develop systems which best provide for learning and adaptation? There was, he maintained, not an 'information gap': there was no shortage of evidence, information and data. The deficit was less to do with information than our capacity for public and private learning. Schon focuses on the issue of learning rather than the idea of knowing: on the learning rather than the information or evidence gap and the gap between institutions and problems.

And what followed from this was that we had to understand government and policy-making as a process of learning. For Schon the answer to the question of improving government as a learning system involved radically re-thinking and redesigning the policy processes of increasingly more complex information societies. Sch6n's prediction was that institutions and

professions (and individuals) would come under increasing pressure to change and would have to learn to adapt to a world which was ever more uncertain and unpredictable. In short, he believed that:

We must … become adept at learning. We must become able not only to transform our institutions, in response to changing situations and requirements; we must invent and develop institutions which are 'learning systems', that is to say capable of bringing about their own continuing transformation. (Schon, 1973, p.28)

With countries in transition, whose democratic experience is relatively scarce, meta-organizations built up for the specific purpose to develop and carry out public policies enjoy weak cultures. To be strong a culture needs to foster deep widely spread values, beliefs and attitudes to be shared by all entities that form up the respective metha-organization.

The strength of any culture consists in its actual content and the adequacy of the solutions reached to public policies issues. Any strong culture infers a consensus of all entities involved to be reached on how a public policy draft should be devised, implemented and assessed.

Strong culture does not mean blind acceptance, but consensus on values and attitudes. Building up a given culture takes a long time and presupposes consistent efforts in order to acquire knowledge about it and towards securing it.

Any metaorganizational culture is formed of, as previously mentioned, the cultures of those participanting entities in public policies they interrelate with. A metaorganization culture may become superimposed on the cultures of participating entities in public policies when those entities share a mutual corporative past. Beliefs, aspirations and behaviour are then characteristic and reflect the activities carried on within the respective entity by keeping up with general features that are identical to the metaorganization culture. What's essential is that no major discrepancies or irreconcilable conflicts occur between the basic culture and the cultures of the players.

Huge cultural differences between entities may sometimes impede communication and cooperation among them or with different expert groups who take part in the public policy project. Public policy management favors such cultural diversity kinds, as long as they do not have any effect on the best development of the public policy process.

Any attempt to achieve cultural uniformity without appealing to sound arguments is a source that generates conflict. It is necessary to give up the old paradigms and to assume total commitment, in spirit and deed, as part of a long-term process of change, which means to meet the demands of a complex system management.

Against the background of a strong organizational culture, the team players of a public organization give up their old mentalities exclusively defined as their expectancy for material incentives and rewards, and favor new mentalities where personal expansion is prevalent.

Relationship developed under these conditions is far stronger than associations exclusively based on material reward. Moreover, this type of connecting tends to create true networks within the organization. If this networking is subject to pressures from driving forces, the effect will be the expected one, i.e. will entail change of the organizational culture.

The relevance of the new culture, as articulated around the change of mentality, consists in the implications that arise from implementing the change project. Sequence implementation of those new practices that seem best fit, more useful and with a higher degree of appropriateness, can have outstanding short-term effects. Disjointed efforts cannot sustain long-term performance.

To this end, total commitment is needed in approaching the new public management, which will favor reduction of cultural differences and ultimately the growth of a new culture to substantially contribute to achieving performance expertise, and increased institutional capacity towards the development of new effective public policies.

Facts of life have confirmed the simple truth that there are no matchless successful patterns for organizational cultures as public organizations, like any other kind of organization, are unmatched, in spite of the existence of certain common cultural values within public sector organizations that generally apply and are integrated in different documents, such as: laws, ethical codes. Some public managers mistakenly confine the organizational culture values to these constituents, by missing that their own cultural value system is the one that generates the same general and universal values to be integrated and observed; they are specific to the distinct entity that is a public organization involved in carrying out the public policy process.

Therefore, the values typical for the organizational culture should be stressed, while the culture's reshaping process must coalesce in an ever-permanent balance - the general with the particular issues, and the universal with the specific attributes.

Public managers from many developed countries have successfully balanced this value input, and have coped with securing both continuity and reasonable flexibility of the content of the organizational culture within public organizations. What matters in this process is the appearance of "culture creators", as Schein called them. They are the public leaders, managers and they play a key-role when the organization is facing new issues arising from changes within the internal environment, but mainly from the external one they are active in. The function of these managers is to guide public groups and institutions through the periods when the current train of affairs does not work as it used to because significant changes had occurred in the outer environment of the public institution.

3. Mechanisms for the Creation of an Appropriate Organizational Culture within Romanian Public Organizations

From a cultural point of view, what have significantly markedthe public institutions in Romania are the changes of the environment and climate where such organizations carry on their activity. Facts of life have demonstrated that if an organization is constantly changing its public managers and part of its public staff, such a public institution runs the risk of weakening its organizational culture, and this represents a first step prior to triggering a void of cultural identity that may lead to gradual loss of its cultural identity on an average-term and inflicting the general balance of the public institution itself.

Therefore, as far as the mechanisms of organizational culture in public institutions are concerned, there may appear two types of issues:

- Issues drawing from the public staff adjustment to changes in the social, political, legislative etc. environment. Each stage of solving the new issues that occur as a result of changes in the external environment involve reaching coherence or consensus on the new values determined by the strategy, targets, means of their achievement, performance assessment, motivation, etc. as the public institution manages to develop its own experience, it will start changing the original assumptions up to a point.

- Issues of internal integration where cultural solutions can be drawn are language, behavior, and interpersonal relationship and ideology issues. The nature of the solutions devised reflects the skills of the founders and the current leaders, the previous experience of the public staff, as well as how they experience current events. Consequently, though internal integration issues are generally of a similar nature, the culture they are solved in can vary from one public institution to another. Thus, the rules that determine who and whom can the issue be addressed to, what specific conditions can initiate communication, what criteria are relevant in determining who can and cannot be a member of the group, criteria for authority and status allocation, the rules governing the collegial relationship, the relationship between genders, the openness, warmth or coldness among the members of an organization, the rules for granting rewards and penalties, the attitude towards inexplicable events, can all contain characteristic answers for the history of the larger group represented by the public institution.

Culture change techniques are diverse, from direct correction to subtle seduction. Through introducing the new technologies, a wide range of models can be generally met by managers, and specifically by public managers.

It's only a few aspects that have been delineated to help us understand why is the manager's role so crucial in creating the organizational culture within a public institution and why he must be not only the "designer" of the basics value system, but also the main activist in permanently adapting culture to the new values, in their integration in wider background of the European cultural values

In many democratic countries whose respective public organizations management systems reflect the declared set of cultural values, the organizational culture has become a "barometer" of proficiency In order to draw the best possible appreciation of how learning organizations are build up, we must also refer to the role the 19th century "knowledge" holds and will hold. To demonstrate this fact, we shall draw on the opinions of such authors as Alvin Toffler or Peter Drucker.

We shall commence with P. Drucker who talks about "knowledge" and "the educated individual" in the chapter "Knowledge" from his book Post-Capitalist Society. Referring to the knowledge economy and output the author said: "Economy shall certainly remain a market economy – and a global one... Market criticism as an organizer of economic activity lasts since Aristotle. But as such an anti-capitalist remarkable personality as Karl Marx showed some hundred years ago, the market along with all its imperfections is nevertheless superior to all other organizing patterns of economic activity – a fact well demonstrated by the last forty years. What makes the market superior is that it organizes economy as based on information". He goes on and underlines the role of knowledge: "there is more and more income resulting from traditional resources: labor, field work and capital (money); the main prosperity producers are now information and knowledge". "How knowledge acts as an economic resource is not fully understood: we do not have enough experience to formulate a theory and further test it. We need a new economic theory able to place knowledge to the core of prosperity output process. This is the only way to explain our present economy. It can only account for innovation. This new theory is the only one that can explain how the Japanese economy works and why it works. This new theory can only explain why newcomers, especially the high technology areas can boost

overnight and sweep away all competitors no matter how deeply rooted they had been – as the Japanese did on the AV consumption market and in the case of the American car market". Drucker also gives explanations in this Chapter about knowledge productivity, and stresses out how the Japanese bestowed an excellent use to the knowledge they either imported or acquired. He also goes on and demonstrates how attempts made by such countries as the United States to fight the Japanese through state governed "consortium" have failed... "Innovation, in other words, the use of applied knowledge to generate new knowledge does not correspond to what American lore would have to state, i.e. "inspiration", and is not something to be achieved by some lonely thinkers in their back house garage. It is the result of a systematic effort with a highly organizing degree. But it also calls for decentralization, as well as diversity, which means the opposite of central and centralized planning".

According to Drucker's vision, the "educated individual" is at the core of any knowledge-based society:"The post-capitalist society deals with the environment where human beings live in, work and learn. It does not tackle with the person. But individuals are the central point of the society we are experiencing now. Knowledge is not something as impersonal as money is. Knowledge does not refer to one book, a database, a software program; all these consist of information. Knowledge is always integrated by a person; it is carried by a person; it is created, enhanced or improved by a person; or used or misused by a person. Therefore, the transition to the knowledge-based society grants the individula person a central place. In doing so, it forwards new challenges, new issues, new unprecedented questions about the representative of the society based on knowledge and relying on the educated person". .. " Post-capitalist society needs the opposite of what deconstructionists, radical feminists or anti-westerners suggest.

The educated person of the future should be trained to live in a global world. This will be a „westernized" world, but also an ever more „tribal" world. Man must become a „citizen of the world" as far as his/her vision, broad-mindedness and information are concerned. He/she will have to feed on local roots and enrich and feed his/her own local „culture" in exchange. Finally, Drucker concludes that: „Capitalism had dominated for more than a century when Karl Marx identified it as such (in 1867) in the fisrt book of his Capital as being a distinct social order. The term „capitalism" was formulated only 40 years later, after Marx died. Therefore any attempt to write down Knowledge today would not only be extremely presumptious, but also ridiculously premature. What can be accomplished instead – and what this book tries to accomplish – is to describe society and its political regime nowadays when transition from capitalism gives way (and naturally, also transition from socialism).

4. Conclusions

Moreover, values are considered a real obstacle that may affect the objectivity of perspective on what works, as to assert Lassewell, relationship between power and knowledge that represents a critical issue for public policy process, because the new features that should be taken into account in the framing of policies in the context of the challenges of the modern world.

These new requirements pursue democratization and opening public policy process, which requires the removal of distortions and testing perceptions and assumptions by debates and discussions. In other words, formulating public policy should turn into a learning public process

Meeting the requirements mentioned above raises a new problem, namely that concerning

the vectors of change (organizations, authorities and officials are able to put pressure for change and adaptation to a world increasingly uncertain and unpredictable).

How could it be determined organizations drop the rigidity and the traditionalism in which seem frozen and accept new organizational models; we must think about how the values and identity could be kept under continuous transformation; we have to think to answer the challenges, how to influence and to manage these changes in order to achieve some degree of success

In short, the vectors of change must be able not only to transform their organizations in response to the changes facing the modern world, but also to create and develop organizations – the real learning systems which are capable of continue transformation.

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