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REDESIGN OF THE PROCESSES IN THE BULGARIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION – THEORETICAL ASPECT

ABSTRACT

Bulgarian society today is faced with the inefficiency that characterizes modern public administration, a topic that concerns quite a few specialized scientists as well as ordinary citizens. This article highlights the urgent need to revise the procedures by extending and simplifying them. The method for reducing problematic administrative procedures is presented, as well as the attempt to increase their efficiency through bibliographic analysis of relevant concepts, with the aim of their redesign and simplification. Simplification of procedures is a quality tool that supports administrative reform in a decisive way. It is addressed to the citizens, but mostly to the employees of the public administration, for whom the dysfunction and lack of common sense in the work of the modern Bulgarian state become a daily routine.

INTRODUCTION

The systematic study of the administrative procedures in the public administration in Bulgaria in order to simplify them is an attempt to cope with the challenges of adapting the public bureaucracy to modern requirements. These requirements are influenced by changes in the organizational paradigm and the way the economy operates. The optimization of the administrative processes in the Bulgarian public administration becomes imperative due to the current economic crisis caused by geopolitical factors, as well as by the complex political situation in Bulgaria, which has led to changes in the overall culture of state structures such as bureaucracy.

The period of homogeneity, stability and lack of change has passed irrevocably and the public administration in our country must adapt by changing its organizational structures and getting rid of the dependence it has on political power in the context of a patronage system.

The aim is to create a new conceptual model in the context of which to facilitate efforts to simplify administrative procedures. This model will maintain interoperability between administrative entities and contribute to simplification of procedures. This will contribute to achieving positive results in serving citizens-customers, and also in communication between public administration entities. These results extend to the process approach in the light of a customer-centric approach rather thana political power-citizen client relationship. They will support the optimisation of processes in terms of measurable quality of public administration

services based on indicators. They will allow the customisation of procedures according to citizens' needs through specialised information and telecommunications technology tools.

Simplification of administrative procedures is not a static situation, but a dynamic effort that continues constantly, because the organization of public entities-bearers is composed of people-employees and is permeated by procedures that meet the ever-changing needs. In order to be effective in simplifying administrative procedures, it is necessary to apply the following principles:

- Simplification is a dynamic and continuous process supported by political leadership;

- National coverage;

- Use tools to measure results;

- Includes the concept of consultation between both public entities and between citizens and the public;

- It includes the concept of standardization, whether embodied in legislation or in the regulatory design of flows and procedures in the public entity.

The simplification of administrative procedures includes five successive phases:

- Programming

- Consultation

- Implementation of the design;

- Monitoring

- Grade

The most important challenge for an organization is to eliminate tasks that do not add value, and to use technology to automate the existing operation of the services offered by that organization, then those work procedures can be changed. The business process re-engineering is accepted as a tool for redesign and reorganization.

The purpose of this article is to examine the conception for redesign of the processes in the Bulgarian public administration in a theoretical aspect, to highlight the possible categories for its implementation.

PROCESS RE-DESIGN, CONCEPT AND METHODOLOGY

The concept of reengineering was introduced in quite detailed fashion by Hammer in the early 1990s. According to Hammer and Ciampi: Reengineering is a fundamental review and radical redesign of business processes to achieve significant improvements in critical business success factors such as cost, quality, service and speed. Under the term fundamental revision, it is understood that the organisation decides to completely eliminate the applied procedure it follows and its intention to adopt the new one. Radical redesign refers to the fundamental change of all processes. Reengineering is about inventing a new business process, not improving or modifying an existing one. Finally, dramatic improvements refer to significant improvements in a company's product rather than marginal improvements that could be made with better management of existing processes.

Hammer & Champy's (1993) methodology is summarized as follows:

- Introduction to Business Reengineering:

- Process initiation starts from the highest hierarchy.

- The vision is presented to employees.

- Identify business processes.

- Recording and documenting their processes, interactions and performance so they can be compared later

- Choice of business processes.

- Selection of processes that provide added value to the manufactured product and provide great opportunities for improvement (highly bureaucratic, high cost, efficient, frequent complaints, etc.)

- Understanding of selected business processes.

- Current process performance versus post-reengineering performance.

- Redesign of selected business processes.

- Look for alternative options and ways of thinking.

- Implementation of the revised processes.

- Implementation of a business process reengineering program.

- Trial period of implementation of changes.

- Staff training on the new applications.

- For Hammer & Champy (1993), radical business redesign efforts must be carefully planned to minimize factors.

For Davenport (1994), process reengineering is a vision of new work strategies, planning of real activities and implementation of change in all its complex technological, human and organizational dimensions.

- A process approach assumes that the end user's perspective is taken.

- Processes are the structures by which an organization does what is needed to create value for its customers.

- Information and communication technologies (ICT), from simple computerization systems to integrated information systems, are critical to the reorganization and modernization of an organization.

Process reengineering for Davenport (1994) is a part, but also a major prerequisite, for changing the shape of a business in its attempt to adopt a new strategy. Davenport's (1994) methodology can be summarized in the following steps and objectives:

- Selection of reengineering procedures.

- Focus on the core processes of the organization.

- Determination of coefficients of variation.

- Selection of an appropriate information technology system to be adopted and implemented.

- Selection of other organizational factors to support redesign.

- Create a vision and purpose.

- Defining the process framework in relation to the mission and overall purpose of the business.

- Identifying the objectives to be achieved.

- Understanding existing processes.

- Measuring the effectiveness and performance of selected processes.

- Carrying out comparative measurements.

- Design a functional "prototype" of the new redesigned process.

- Integrate and implement the redesigned process.

- Implementation of the prototype on a functional basis.

Redesign of public administration (Saxena, 1996) refers to the development of the architectural structure of an organization that links the strategy of a public organization with its administrative processes, in a way that ensures that the organization's strategic goals are ultimately achieved. This means an organizational change program that emphasizes processes rather than functions of the organization so as to significantly improve their performance.

Redesign of public administration involves the overall planning and implementation of administrative procedures, organizational structure and supporting information systems in direct or indirect response to the external environment of the organization in order to achieve its objectives. Possible goals are to radically improve the time, efficiency, quality of services provided and the ultimate satisfaction of users-citizens.

The most important conclusions of the simplification efforts are as follows:

- Simplification is not a one-time static process. The concentration of procedures in need of simplification is a morenecessary process, as technological, social and economic developments have rendered them ineffective.

- It is inextricably linked to the change and reform of all actions that make up the decision-making processes at all administrative levels.

- It requires firm political decisions to limit state intervention and to adopt specific principles of intervention.

Coordination of procedures is a cultural issue rather than a technical one. This is understood to depend largely on the business culture, how receptive it is to business changes. Simplification of administrative procedures requires the active participation of citizens in the administrative

and economic process, maximum self-awareness and appreciation of their role. To achieve a modern and functional public administration in Bulgaria it is necessary:

- Provide a strong leadership center that takes full responsibility for reforms and has the power to lead, arbitrate and receive decisions at the political level;

- Optimised administrative structures and, above all, fewer committees;

- Strengthening leadership with the main functions of a strong centre (strategic planning, communication, reform of public administration with strategic human resources management, strategic budget management, better legislation, e-government, regulatory management of the acquis communautaire and management of information and communication technologies);

The policy of simplifying procedures in recent years has been trapped in legal formalism and focuses on the legal form that can be taken by redesigning procedures. The sustainability of public services in processes that are dysfunctional and incredibly bureaucratic creates a problem in employee efficiency and requires improvement. On the other hand, the individual participants are reluctant to take the initiative for the necessary redesign of their procedures or even for an improvement policy due to the general tendency of inertia and formalism in the Bulgarian public administration. The decision should focus on changing the legislative framework.

There are several modern theoretical approaches to process redesign in public administration. These approaches are aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public services by rethinking and redesigning the processes used to deliver these services. Here are some of the most significant approaches (Mennle, T. 2018):

Lean Six Sigma: This approach combines the principles of Lean management and Six Sigma to eliminate waste and improve quality in processes. Lean Six Sigma is used to identify and eliminate inefficiencies, reduce variability, and improve overall process performance. It is particularly useful in public administration as it helps to reduce costs, increase customer satisfaction and improve service delivery.

Design Thinking: Design thinking is a human-centered approach to problem solving that involves empathy, ideation, prototyping, and testing. It is particularly useful in public administration as it helps to understand the needs of citizens and stakeholders and to create solutions that meet those needs. Design thinking is used in public administration to improve the design of public services, increase citizen engagement and promote innovation.

Agile: Agile is a project management methodology that is based on iterative and incremental development. This involves breaking projects into smaller parts called sprints and continuously testing and improving the product or service. Agile is useful in public administration as it helps to respond to changing needs and requirements, improve collaboration and communication and deliver services faster.

Service Design: Service design is a user-centered approach to service design that involves understanding the needs and experiences of users and stakeholders. It is used to create services that are easy to use, efficient and effective. Service design is used in public administration to improve the design of public services, increase citizen satisfaction, and reduce costs.

All these modern theoretical approaches to process redesign in public administration are aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of public services. Each approach has its strengths

and weaknesses, and choosing the right approach will depend on the organization's specific needs and challenges. They can find application in the Bulgarian public administration.

MAIN FEATURES OF THE REDESIGN OF THE PROCESSES IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The redesign of public administration consists of four main dimensions (Saxena, 1996):

- Strategy

- Organisational structure

- Information Technology

- Organizational culture

Figure 1: The four main dimensions of public administration redesign: (Saxena, 1996)
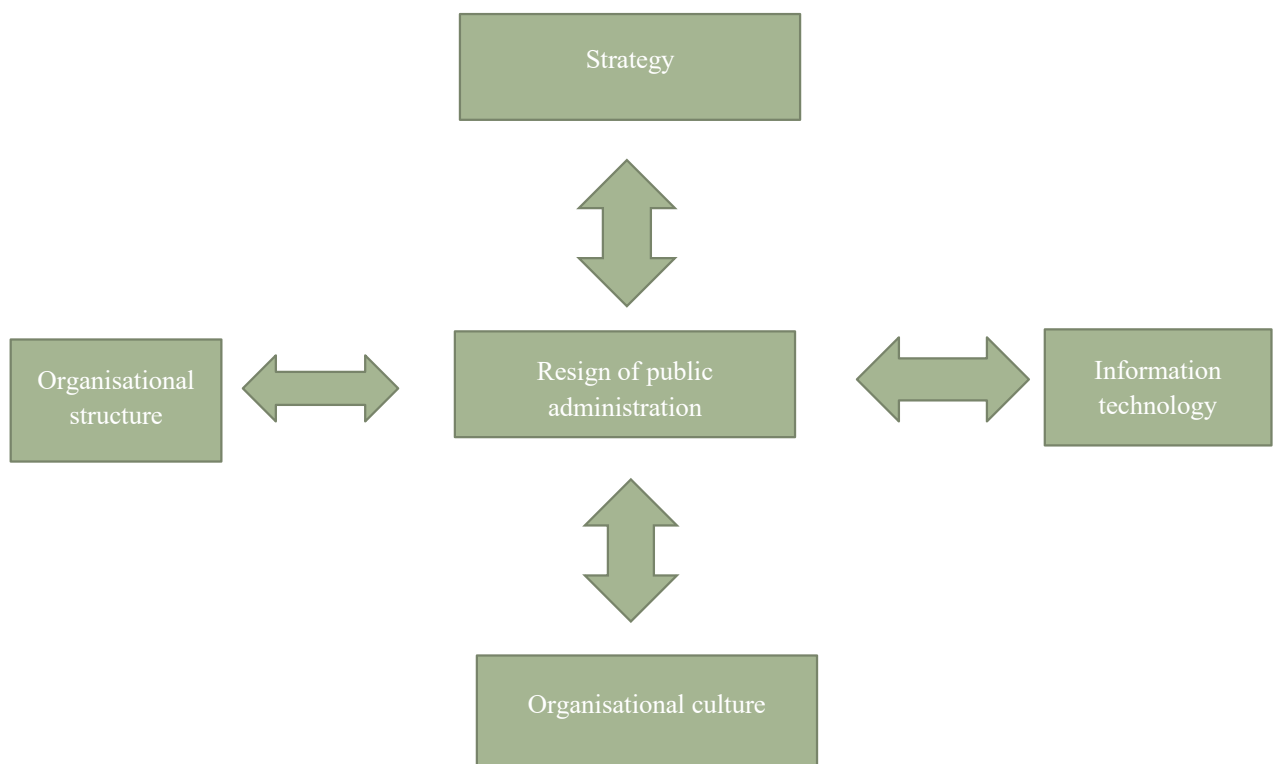
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The redesign of public administration should focus on improving all four dimensions. The automation of state services with a main focus on technology, ignoring other dimensions, is considered the main reason for the failure of its implementation in developed countries in the past.

STRATEGY

The strategy, as a dimension of the redesign of the public administration, defines its objectives and direction. It is determined by the creation of a vision and the establishment of objective goals, the implementation of which will lead to its realization. Strategy is the combined ability of a team to see where it is, to understand where it wants to reach, to identify the measures that need to be taken to bridge that gap, and to implement those measures to effect change and

preserve its beneficial effects. The main feature of the vision is its long-termism, since it can not be achieved in a short time. It must be consistent with the strategic objectives of the organization and this is a necessary condition to achieve the desired results.

For a public organization, the vision refers to the ultimate goal that the organization is called to achieve, which is the main reason for its existence and functioning. Its concept should contain two elements: the philosophical guidance and a feasible, general picture of the main purpose of the organization to which all will be devoted. For example, because it is a public organization, its vision should include the concept of social achievement, that is, the interest of society as a whole. Abroader vision can provide high-level services that fully satisfy their consumers at the lowest possible cost and that will be made available at affordable prices to society as a whole.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

In the traditional structure of public administration, senior administration has themost power, that is, it is at the top of the hierarchical pyramid, and employees are at its base. The concept of a client, or a better citizen, does not have a proper alliance. Citizens have no direct involvement in public administration. While it should theoretically be the centre of all its activities, in practice this does not apply. Its participation shall be limited to the following: senior management should know their needs and try to implement policies that promote their interests, while employees should focus on achieving the objectives set by management.

By contrast, the redesign of public administration aims to bring employees closer to the base of the hierarchical pyramid. This will better understand their needs and adapt processes to improve their efficiency, while increasing the overall satisfaction of citizens – external users of services. That is why the redesign is trying to transform the entire organizational structure, as the administration acquires a completely new role. Once she understands the details of employees' internal practices and problems, she should support them by removing obstacles, improving processes, listening carefully to ideas, and constantly supporting attempts to implement new processes.

Another related issue is employee empowerment. In the context of redesign, empowerment is the ability of an individual or group to work at their own way and pace, within agreed space and time and given sources, to achieve a goal established by the management of the organization. The principle of this philosophy is to give employees the right to make decisions in order to make the necessary improvements in procedures and the freedom to work independently, leading to the necessary changes of their own design.

TECHNOLOGY

Digitalization processes are an excellent opportunity to accelerate the development of public administration. The services sector is a labour-intensive sector and therefore this plays an important role in improving its efficiency (Valcheva, K. 2020). Unfortunately, the use of information technology in the Bulgarian public administration lags behind the services in the private sector.

Information technology offers significant assistance in modernising and optimising the work of many public institutions at all levels. Reduce transaction costs between the private and public sectors and streamline key public sector management systems, such as customs, taxation, the national land registry, municipal waste, etc. The fact is that they are the driving force in the redesign of the public administration sector and are an integral part of it due to two variables that positively affect this role:

- Interconnection Most public authorities are highly bureaucratic in their structure, they do not have networks for developed internal communication. It can connect information flows between different public organizations through modern communication networks.

- Accessibility It can provide direct access to organized databases and information sources simultaneously to many organizations. However, often due to the lack of interconnection, different organizations do not have access to the right information, as they may not be connected to the same host. In other words, there is a differentiation both in the volume and in the provision of information in a valid and timely manner to many public organizations, which makes it possible to manage on the basis of data rather than on the basis of the types and content of the available information.

Shared databases can contribute to enabling public administration to meet the needs of citizens by offering new methods of service delivery that will better serve them. A significant increase in the use of e-government capabilities worldwide is characteristic.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational culture is a set of beliefs, values, and expectations shared by members of the organization. They create rules, norms of behavior that regulate the overall behavior of individual groups in the organization. The older the culture, the moreestablished the perceptions are in the organization and themoredifficult it is to transform them. Thus, the organizational culture develops in accordance with the course of the organization and can be seen as thebiggest obstacle to redesign. Deep-rooted and unshakable perceptions of employees can cause huge problems in the whole issue of redesigning organizational processes. This is especially characteristic of the Bulgarian public administration, in which innovations aremoredifficult to penetrate.

The values of the organization, which have been accepted over the years by all employees, can be a major obstacle to change(Veleva, R. , Krusteva, D. 2021). But this is wrong. Some values promote initiative, transparency, accountability and all employees are familiar with the vision, respect, trust and emphasis on the quality of services. While other values that are barriers to change are avoiding risky choices, hesitancy and lack of communication, elementary thinking and increased competition between partners and team members. Redesign aims to change the organizational culture, to make it morereceptive to changes. Employee empowerment is in contrast to the existing mentality of public administration, which is structured according to the bureaucratic model of organization. Therefore, it is characterized by intensive stratification, with senior management having considerable power. Relationships are at the subordinate-superior level, where subordinates have no right to comment or judge the decisions and actions of their superiors.

Redesign is directly related to taking initiatives and making decisions as close as possible to the basis of the hierarchy. Employees are the ones who know best how to do the work for which they are responsible. Therefore, the culture's willingness to embrace change depends largely on the organization's leadership and the establishment of open communication at all levels. If management inspires and creates a system of open communication and mutual respect between employees, a system based on meritocracy and healthy competition, the adoption of change will take place much smoother compared to the cumbersome and bureaucratic working environment.

The problem with redesign is to adopt its vision, objectives, and methodology at all levels of the organization to meet organizational barriers to change. This can be done through continuous

training of employees to the changing needs in their work, as well as through constant awareness of the advantages that change can bring with a view to streamlining processes.

CATEGORIES OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REDESIGN

Due to the inherent difficulties in implementing a public administration redesign, different organisations do not always apply it equally. Thus, depending on the degree of application, the amount of change is divided into three categories

IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROCEDURE

This is thelowest level of redesign execution. This usually involves improving part of the process that falls into one operation, rather than improving the whole process from start to finish. The aim of this type of redesign is to improve individual sub-projects, i.e. activities with added value to the whole process, which includes seeking opportunities to reduce bureaucracy, double work and its processing cycles and simplify actions. For this type of redesign, there are rarely large requirements when using. It can be more easily achieved, with such an effort yielding results of 5-25% in the overall performance of the process. Rarely does it have a noticeable effect on the final ebb. Because it is limited to a sub-project of a process, few people are involved in its implementation, so it will face very little resistance to implementation and therefore a very low risk of failure.

REVISION OF THE PROCEDURE

This formula includes a complete redesign of the process from start to finish. Each process requires amoreintegrated approach as it consists of sub-stages - sub-projects. This means that the process needs to be redesigned to coordinate these sub-stages and reorganize the way they are connected in the value chain. Such a redesign requires an analysis of the process model at thehighest levels of the hierarchy and a decision on possible ways to improve it. Its implementation is a strategic decision and needs the support of the management. In fact, this can lead to a radical improvement in the final process of up to 50% or even more in terms of cost, expected quality and turnover. It also includes significant investments in raw material sources, as the design of new processes is necessary to achieve the objective. In addition, this can be a difficult endeavor, mainly due to the need to work together with more than one functional unit or department, and the risk that the organization takes to achieve the final result is greater.

ORGANIZATIONAL RENEWAL

This category includes thehighest degree of implementation of the redesign of the public administration, its purpose is to change the structure and culture of the organization in order to improve all its processes. It begins with a fundamental internal assessment of the organization that relates to its purpose of existence as well as the goals it is called to achieve. Only then can the organization control how it performs, how it achieves its goals, and how that way can be improved. Organizational restructuring means a complete change in both its objectives and methods. Although this type of redesign is more risky and expensive, its successful application to the organization can lead to the following:

- Radically improve the overall performance of the organization;

- Clarity and transparency in objectives, directions, capabilities and true mission at all levels of the organization;

- High level of satisfaction of the users of the services.

Despite the obvious benefits of redesigning an organization, few dare because of the great risk that this undertaking entails and the high cost that is required. It is also clear that the types of implementation of the two reconstructions (public administration and operational activity) are identical or at least have too many similarities. So the terms are used:

a) Restructuring of the whole organization (change in the organization);

b) Changes to improve each process (changes to the improvement process);

c) Changes at project level (changes at task level).

The extent to which an organization decides to apply redesign methods depends on many factors, such as:

- The amount of investment you are willing to make;

- The means at his disposal to implement the redesign;

- How committed is leadership to the goals it will be called upon to achieve and the risk it will want to take to achieve its goals.

All these factors play an important role, but not the same at all times, so the redesign experience always varies at every single moment. At the moment, it can be concluded that the Bulgarian public administration should strive to review the procedures in view of the maintenance limits set in the budget, and the desire to accumulate more foreign investment in the coming years.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, it can be defined as a redesign of processes in the public administration radical redesign of organizational structures, institutional framework and processes using digital structures. Public administration seeks to redesign its processes using information systems to improve its efficiency, provide betterquality services to society and increase citizens' trust in political institutions. The implementation of such programs modernizes public administration, strengthens the legitimacy of the state and increases the participation of citizens in democratic processes. At the same time, it attracts foreign investment that boosts economic growth.

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