

THE INNOVATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES BY QUALITY STRATEGIC APPROACH

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Abstract

Our basic assumption is that integrating the Quality strategy in the general strategy of the organization is a complex process, in which the management has to take into account the organizational consequences.

From this point of view, the strategic approach of Quality is formulated according to a macro-vision about the organization and consists in the ability of orchestrating simultaneous transformations of each system in the organization.

According to our theory, which will be demonstrated inside this paper, integrating the strategy of Quality in the general strategy of the organization is materialized in a complex transformation, oriented along four dimensions.

1. The Constitutive Context of Quality Strategic Approach

Under the pressure of the citizens whose exigencies are becoming more and more sophisticated; of the new management approaches that imply, for example, the abandonment of the Management by Objective and the endorsement of the Management by Results; of domestic political forces and due to constraints from the global social-political forces, the need for reform and innovation in the public sector is more and more obvious.

In the bureaucratic hierarchy, activities take place according to general rules and norms. The main objective of the structures and the managerial control instruments is ensuring the conformity with the prior rules and norms. In such a system, the improvement of the efficiency and the effectiveness of the processes involve endorsement of several legislative alterations.

In this new context quality approach in public sector is not only a technical measurement and implementation issue. It is also a political problem where changes in quality are connected to government activity and, in the end, to society activity. Quality is a generic concept that applies to the relationship between a public service and the citizenry, and to the relationship between the state and civil society. The fundamental concern is the improvement of the quality of life in society, including within that broad concept of quality of citizen/state relations. The achievement of quality in this sense is likely to re-establish the public's trust not only in the particular public services concerned but also more broadly in the state and system of governance (C., Politt and G., Bouckaert, 1995, pp.12-15).

An issue of fundamental importance to the quality approach is the level of involvement of stakeholders, particularly service users and citizens, during the entire cycle of service. The move to an outward looking public sector organization which opens the 'black box' and also looks at output and outcome levels can only be guaranteed in a sustainable way if citizens are involved in a participatory approach at all stages. In other words, achievement means giving up old paradigms and accepting some innovative approaches in which services beneficiaries/users are, at the same time, co-participants in the innovation of the public service they benefit from.

Moreover, the new managerial approaches related to quality strategic approach impose closer attention paid to results. Focusing on results expresses the need for the creation of a strategic vision of the expected outcome, vision which exceeds the orders of the organization and takes into consideration, on the one hand, making the best out of the positive influences of external factors, and on the other hand, reducing (eliminating) the threats coming from latter.

Consequently, the innovation of public services according to these coordinates becomes possible only when a *meta-organization* is envisaged, formed out of the organization of public services, beneficiaries/users of public services interested in outputs and other categories of stakeholders interested especially in results.

The meta-organization, as a flexible network-type structure, is built in such a way that it contains both the organization that provides the service and the actors that

surround it. The latter are either customers/users of the service or representatives of the community's interests.

In figure 1 the meta-organization is represented for a particular case of a social service. The actors involved are users/customers of the provided public service, representatives of the community's interests observing the exigencies necessary to the provision of the service and other categories of stakeholders, as well.

I think that the presence of International/European Bodies in the structure of a meta-organization is a gain because the former can be used as "bases of best practice", useful for improving the performances of the provided service.

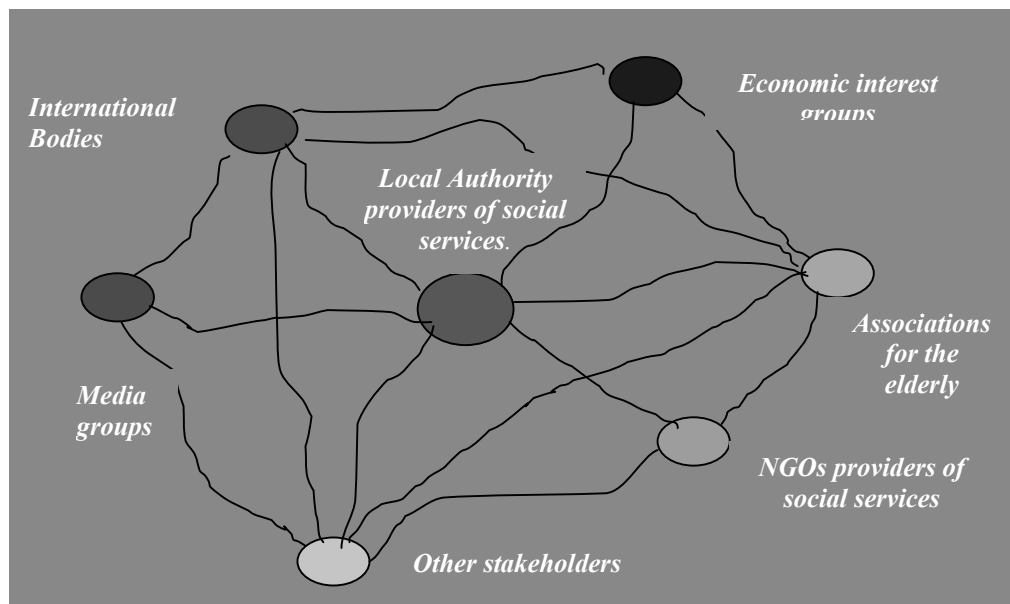


Figure1: The Model of Metaorganization- The case of the public service for social protection at local level (Adapted after L.G.Popescu, (2005), Politici Publice, Ed.Economica, Bucharest, p.135)

This construction represents a potential *solution based on co-operation* between all the actors of the meta-organization, aimed at creating innovatory public services.

Cooperative solutions are required, not only in the form of co-operation between governments but also through co-operation between governments (centrally, regionally, locally), civil society association and other stakeholders such as media and business (C., Pollitt, G., Bouckaert, E., Löffler, 2006, p.8).

As a first conclusion, the configuration of the constitutive context of public services innovation through the strategic approach to quality implies the need for a new strategic and innovative thinking in the relationship between the central administration and the local and regional administrative organizations, between administrations and citizens belonging to local and regional communities, between administrations and different groups of stakeholders.

Secondly, there is an urgent demand to make the central and local administration structures more efficient (for them to become compatible with the flexible structure of the meta-organization) and to limit the decision-making capacity of the administrations by involving citizens and interest groups representative for the community in the decision-making process.

Pragmatically, the achievement of such a structure implies overcoming a variety of challenges. On the one hand, are the members of the community aware of the importance of their 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, the lack of a *quality culture* with all the actors of the meta-organization (respectively the quality culture of the members of the community) 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 community culture. Only when community members become aware of the benefits of the innovation of public services through quality and are willing to commit themselves in different forms, the meta-organization will be substantial.

In conclusion, achieving the quality strategy in public services as seen by this paper is impossible without an informed and active community truly involved in the innovation of public services. Mutually, the members of the community cannot reach the level of quality culture that implies commitment and attendance if the responsible agents at the central, regional or local level do not focus their efforts towards both stimulating the members of the community to commit themselves to innovating public services and revealing the advantages of “*listening to the customer’s voice*” rather than “*listening to the hierarchy voice*” (L.G. Popescu 2002, p.56).

In these circumstances the traditional, purely legal relationship between consumer and provider is replaced by a creative cooperation and collaboration between the actors of the meta-organization. Moreover, inside the meta-organization, the contradictions between the concepts “consumer” and “provider” and the cooperation and creative dialogue relationships between actors should be revealed.

In figure 2, one can see the result of this deep change determined by the principles on which the new type of relationship develops; from the traditional type where the consumer was “stopped at the gate of the organization” to the new one, where he becomes *co-participant* throughout the quality cycle: *co-design, co-decision, co-produce and co-evaluation* (C., Pollitt, G., Bouckaert, E., Löffler, 2006, p.7).

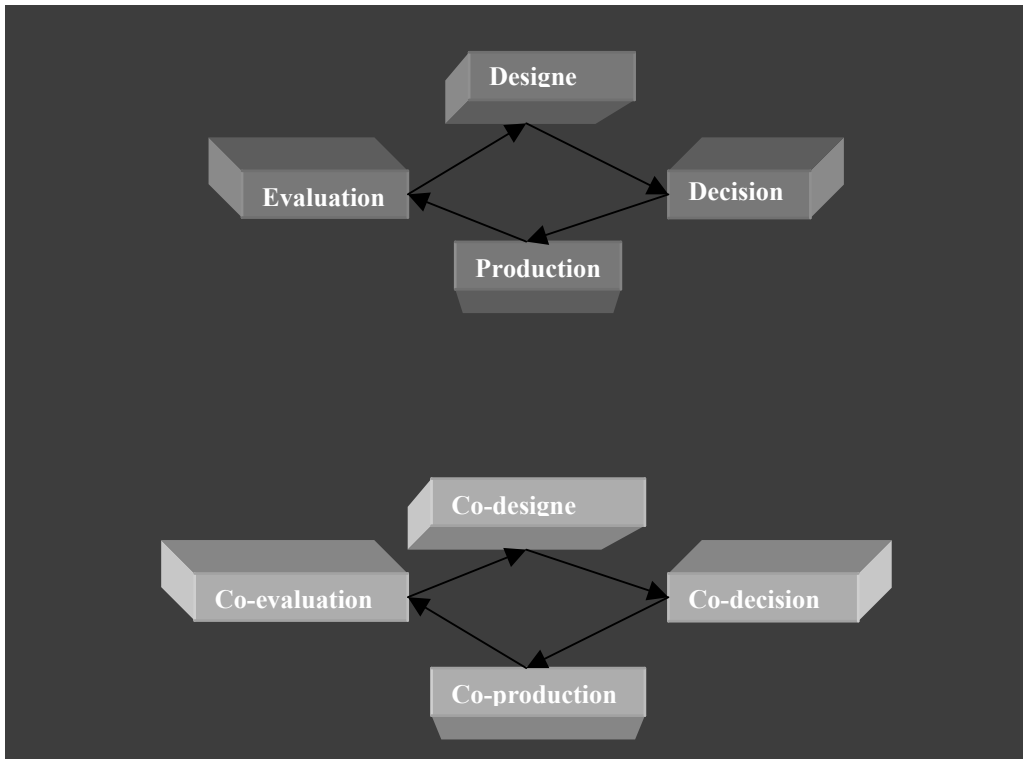


Figure 2: The shift to co-design, co-decision, co-production and co-evaluation
 Source: C., Pollitt, G., Bouckaert, E.,Loffler, (2006), Making Quality Sustainable: Co-Design, Co-Decide, Co-Produce, and Co-Evaluate, Report of The 4QC Conference, Tampere, p. 7.

2. Quality Strategic Approach

From the meta-organizational point of view, the Strategic Approach to Quality is formulated based on a macro-vision of itself and it is *the ability to simultaneously conduct changes of the consisting systems*.

According to our theory, which we will try to demonstrate here, the Strategic Approach to Quality materializes in a complex change oriented towards four dimensions: *re-defining the potential meta/organization, re-structuring the meta-organization, re-vitalizing the portfolio of the meta- organization and reinventing the mentalities (see fig.3)*.

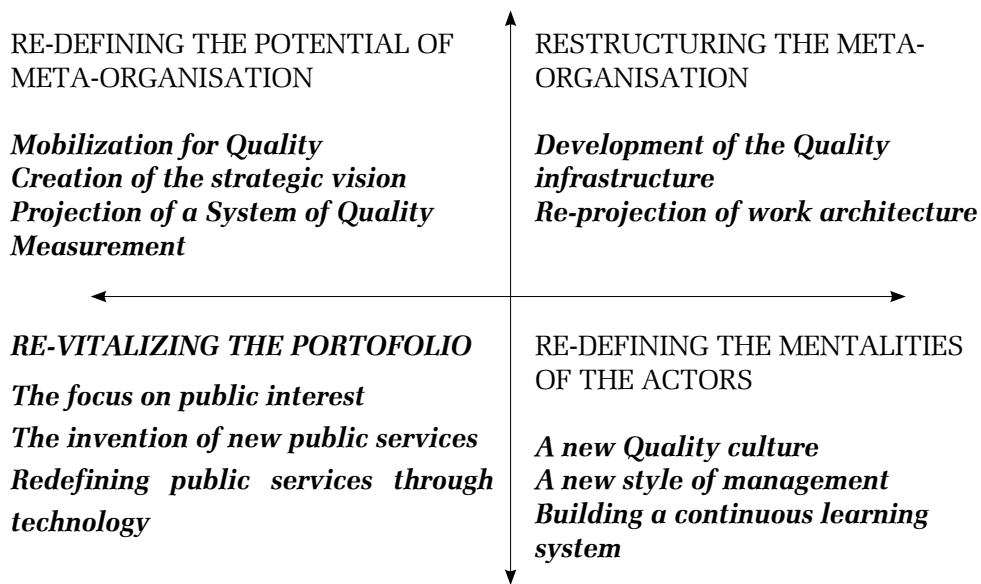


Figure 3: The stages of Quality strategic approach in public services
Source: Adapted after L.G. Popescu, (2002), Management Performant si Calitatea Totala, Ed Dual Tech, p.86.

2.1. Re-defining the potential of the meta-organization

This dimension implies giving up old patterns and restricting thinking concepts, and accepting new patterns and visions of what the provided public service is and what it could become. The contents of this transformation include: achievement of mobilization for Quality, creation of a strategic vision focused on Quality and projection of a measurement system for Quality.

In the centre of this transformation there is the development of the energies necessary to the innovation of the service, in other words the mobilization of intelligence and motivation both at the level of the external actors and the internal ones in order to innovate the public service.

2.1.1. Mobilization for Quality

Analyses and studies conducted in several organizations in the Romanian public sector have led us to the conclusion that the difficulties occurred during the application of the Quality strategic approach are mainly results of the maintenance of the traditional system where the relationships are essentially bureaucratic and hierarchical. The political leaders determine what service has to be provided, on what terms and to whom, and bureaucrats and professionals subsequently organize and deliver that service. The role of the citizens is mainly passive. In such a system, completely inadequate for the present-day needs, activities take part without paying attention to the effects on the community / society as a whole.

The conditions or quality mobilization to become operational are:

- *The development of an open communication system* mainly characterized by the free circulation of formal and informal messages within the meta-organization. Messages are sent in every direction: on the vertical, in both ways and on the horizontal, without any constraints or inhibitions imposed by the chain of command of the hierarchy in the organization;
- *Participation, meaning the degree in which the internal and external actors involve themselves in the cycle of the quality: design, decision, production, and evaluation.*

Applying these tenets requires managerial efforts oriented firstly towards acknowledgement of the importance of the relationship between the actors and secondly, towards the provision of resources and information, support and freedom of initiative necessary to develop this relationship satisfactorily. Contrary, there will be negative effects both on the external actors whose requirements have not been met, and on the internal factors which will be frustrated and de-motivated by the lack of finality in their actions.

In conclusion, orientation towards the external factors is reflected through the managerial availability to satisfy the internal actors' requirements because only when their needs are satisfied they can focus on other actors in the meta-organization and not on their own necessities.

2.1.2. Creation of the strategic vision

Being a reflection of the managerial philosophy of the organizational action mode of public services as a whole, this vision represents both a challenge to exceed the *status quo* and the essence of the most significant meta-organizational aspirations in a new *raison d'être*.

In our opinion, the development of the strategic vision focused on Quality offers the opportunity for the management to commit itself to an aggressive strategic approach, but to maintain enough realism to be a permanent source of concentration and motivation. (L.G. Popescu, 2002 p.89)

The organizations of public services are directly influenced by the innovative ability of the services provided, and the approach which reflects the strategic essence of Quality is a major support not only in the articulation of the strategic intention, but also in motivating through means specific to Quality: involvement of the strategic management, continuous improvement, innovation and reengineering at the level of the meta-organization.

2.1.3. Projection of a System of Quality Measurement

The confirmation of the achievement of the strategic vision of Quality is possible only after the building of a *system of continuous measurement, gathering and reporting of actions referring to the quality of exits and results.*

Focus on Quality in the public sector can be situated at the three levels: *the micro, the meso and the macro level of the society.*

Micro-quality is an internal quality concept that applies to the interrelationships of the top, middle and base of an organization.

Meso-quality is an external concept that applies to the relationships between producer and consumer, or supply and demand, or provider and user.

Macro-quality is a generic system concept that applies to the relationships between a public, service and the citizenry, and to the relationship between the state and civil society (C. Politt and G. Bouckaert, 1995, p.14-15).

The construction of the system must be oriented to measure:

- 1) Meso-quality-, i.e. satisfying users / customers exigencies;
- 2) Macro-quality-, i.e. *gain for society / community*;
- 3) Micro-quality- i.e. interventions in the organization, among which there are:
 - i. the quality of processes, their efficiency and effectiveness;
 - ii. the expectations and satisfaction of the members of the organization.

The system of quality measurement was projected in the stage that contains a series of performance indicators, performance through which one can determine on a value scale up to which level public interests have been satisfied and at what expense. The performance of a public organization is determined according to the way human, material, informational and financial resources are used to achieve the objectives established at the level of service beneficiaries' expectations.

The process of measuring the performance results in the public sector is, most specialists admit, an especially difficult one for several reasons:

- *multitude and diversity of stakeholders* in a public institution: current and potential customers, electors, elected representatives, non-profit organizations, professional groups, unions, public managers, the government etc;
- *differences in evaluation and perception* of performance among stakeholders;
- *non-existence of a competitive environment* where certain services are offered from the position of monopoly some public institutions and administrative authorities have on those services;
- *nature of the public service* offered;
- *complexity of the social-political environment* which generates a series of risks with direct influence on performance achievement; and
- *influence of political values*.

Starting from these reasons, we can consider that the evaluation of the performance in the public sector is based on the political argument that defines the coordinates for the identification of performance criteria.

The steps towards performance measuring are the following:

- Defining the expected results (ER);
- Selecting the performance indicators that measure progress in achieving the results;
- Determining final and intermediary performance targets;
- Developing a plan to measure performance using ER indicators;
- Developing tools to gather data referring to each indicator;
- Continuing to gather data and comparing them to the targets previously determined.

Indicators used in defining the expected results (ER) are characterized by:

- Unit of analysis;
- Existing baseline information;
- Useful benchmarks for comparison;
- Expected perceptions or judgments of progress by stakeholders.

Benchmarking

The concern for knowing and studying leaders (from its own sector or at a national level, from other sectors or states) is an advantage for the organization, through the information acquired about the way of achieving performance and the existing differences between the leaders' practices and performances and the organization itself. Due to its contribution to the identification of improvement possibilities for processes, the benchmarking is a starting point for the innovation of the provided service. The solutions put into practice *by chance* by similar organizations can be transferred to the organization. Generally, there are a lot of transformations that need to be made.

But what matters, as basis of the improvement process is the understanding of *the theory of benchmarking*, even before choosing the solutions. In this sense, W.E. Deming stated: "*to copy the already implemented solutions is lucky. But it is absolutely necessary to understand the theory about what you want to do*" (Deming W.E., 1993).

Thus, the potential benefits from using this practice are substantial and come, on the one hand, from the fact that the organization itself is capable of recognizing and adopting world-class standards and, on the other hand from the fact that the experience gained this way allows the organization to reach the predicted results. Eventually, this gathering leads to the development of the functional and managerial capacities necessary to reach superior performance levels.

2.2 Re-structuring the meta-organization

Participation of the actors contained by the meta-organization to the decision-making process regarding restructuring of the organization gives it more legitimacy and increases their satisfaction, as well. The details of restructuring are presented in the following lines.

2.2.1. The development of the infrastructure for Quality

The organization must learn to deal with the current pretences caused by the speed of the Quality driven transformation, where the informational flux is a vital element. To sustain such a perspective is possible through the development of a *strategy of Quality*.

Designing the flexible organizational structures to facilitate the communication and to raise the accountability.

The necessity for the new, flexible structure is essential. To maintain the traditional structures leads, on short term, to failure in solving both the current and strategic problems. Through this perspective we notice some of the most significant *landmarks of the new organizational form*, which reflects the imperatives of the Quality strategy:

- *Decentralization of the structures* – the dynamics of cooperation with all the actors of the meta-organization could lead to changes in structures’;
- *Flattening of the structures* – the communication process is almost paralyzed when it follows the hierarchical path; this wins, however, in efficacy when it follows the succession client – provider, already created by the processes;
- *The structure in inter-disciplinary teams* – this structural characteristic creates the transversal solution and represents the better solution when compared to: 1) the traditional structures becoming obsolete; 2) the large amount of information presently existing; 3) the failure of hierarchies.

Although they comprise employees at all levels, equality exists inside the interdisciplinary teams due to the commonly shared information. Besides, each member of the team is in its centre, and the private objectives are easily integrated, while the motivations grew stronger.

Designing a document related system, for the use of the processes’ formalization. The next step in creating the Quality infrastructure consists in *designing and implementing a specific document-related system*, aimed at supporting the requirements of those actions which may affect the *accomplishment of the Quality conditions*.

The main documents of the system are detailed as follows:

The Quality Manual – it defines the politics and objectives of the Total Quality and establishes the directions for action in achieving those objectives in all sectors of the firm. Policymaking is possible either by extrapolation of past results, or by the perspective of significant changes the firm intends to implement. The Quality Manual should include in a clear, concise and complete manner, the means and methods employed as to satisfy the requirements necessary to implementing the Quality’s policies and objectives.

The Quality Policies refer to:

- o Introducing new services / products;
- o The role of quality assurance;
- o Establishing the control methods and planning the processes;
- o Implementing the systems to quantify the clients, stakeholders and employees’ satisfaction degree.

The procedures of the System of Total Quality Management: these are descriptions of processes that refer to policies and objectives comprised by the Quality Manual, and possible to materialize. The degree of making the procedure more detailed varies according to the complexity of the activities, of the methods employed and the abilities and knowledge of those who must develop the activities in question here.

The Working Procedures / Instructions: Their content describes in detail the modalities through which the activities of the System of Total Quality Management are to be fulfilled and registered. The Working Procedures / Instructions include accepting criteria, definitions, description, working method, responsible persons, materials and necessary documentation.

2.2. Re-projection of work architecture

O. Gelinier considers public organizations where direct quality costs exceed 15-20% of the annual turnover *ghost factories*. (Gelinier, O., 1990 p.112)

Under this name a duality specific to companies of no performance is hiding: on the one hand, *the competitive factory* that produces the economic value, and on the other hand, *the ghost factory that produces non-value at the expense of the competitive factory*.

The implementation of a reduction program for non-quality based on the principle of *zero-faults* (zero faults, breakdowns, delays, stocks and bureaucracy) is the strategic alternative to Quality to eliminate *the ghost factory* and thus, to increase productivity and production capacity.

The decision of implementation of a reduction program for non-quality took into account the ghost sub-activities that existed in different sectors of the company and was firstly directed towards the areas with the biggest loss. Simplification of individual processes through reduction and elimination of *ghost sub-activities contributes to the reduction of the possibilities for errors to occur, and the reduction of errors determines the reduction of the number of repetitive stages in a process, and so on*.

According to the previous statements, the methodology of achieving a new work configuration includes the alternative of *continuous improvement* of the existing process. In case this alternative becomes impossible to achieve or too expensive, the alternative is the implementation of an improved project of the process, through *re-engineering* (M., Hammer, J., Champy, 1996, p.25).

In my opinion, both alternatives are components of *the improvement process* specific to innovation through quality. Reconfiguration of the entire network, which will integrate the objectives and measurement systems in a real production process, is a long-term change for which achievement managerial efforts, costs and resources are involved.

2.3 Re-vitalizing the portfolio of the organization

Compared to the present challenges coming from communities, the traditional organizations in the public sector neglect almost completely *the definition* of future evolution, being mainly concerned with the adoption of defensive positions in order to minimize loss. Long-term growth is possible through revitalization of the portfolio, a complex strategic approach focused on the way provided services are defined and dealt with.

2.3.1 The focus on public interest

Revitalizing the portfolio in the context of innovation through quality imposes a new managerial vision on the portfolio, the one of *starting point* in projecting future products / services of the organization.

The focus on public interest, vital to the achievement of the exceptional, is the result of *coincidence* between the distinct components or strengths of the organization

and the satisfaction of the public interest defined by the requests of all the actors' component of the meta-organization. Obviously, this *coincidence* is not accidental.

The essence of this focusing lies in the examination of *the relationships at the level of the meta-organization from the point of view of the public interest*. First of all, this reflects in the identification of the exigency criteria of the actors within the meta-organization (and not in what the management of the organization considers necessary) and, secondly, in the decision regarding the way the offer will satisfy this request efficiently and effectively.

The actors' behavior is influenced by a series of factors which vary from one type of service to another. Knowing and anticipating these variations imposes limitation of the managerial orientations only to those strategic segments where actors' expectations and present and potential abilities of the organization concur.

The segmentation standard taken into account in this transformation was that of *the homogeneity of the expected benefits and the price at which these benefits are obtained*. The factors that express the public interest are bearers of some messages whose significance can be revealed only through direct involvement and attendance of the actors of the meta-organization.

2.3.2 *The invention of new public services*

In my opinion the ways of achieving this exigency are presented in the following lines:

a) Development of the organizational competences. This process becomes a priority in answering to messages sent by the actors of the meta-organization (representatives of the public interest). Basic competences are represented by those abilities, capacities and technologies that define the specificity of the organization. Their identification, development and combination create new opportunities of satisfying the public interest. In these circumstances, the responsibility of the management is different regarding both the development of the basic competences and constructing and maintaining a motivational environment where creativity is encouraged. The focus on the basic competences of the organization facilitates expansion towards other services than the traditional ones.

b) Building alliances / partnerships. Alliances/partnerships are the way to the selective revitalization of the services based on new competences resulted from the combination between the abilities and capacities of the companies that compose the alliance.

The simplest form of alliance is the opportunist alliance. This type of alliance is determined by two factors: technological progress and market globalization. The need imposed by the conditions of the competitiveness, to align to the technological innovation forces organizations to look for alliances with creative partners, offering their position on the market in exchange for access to innovation.

The motivations of the opportunist alliances are very simple: cost reduction, know-how acquisition and risk sharing. Thus, the role of the management of the organization is decisive in building an alliance. In this case, the significant managerial challenge is giving up borders and supporting free knowledge and ability

exchange in the interest of the alliance. Contrary, however attractive the strategic project of the alliance is, it will fail. At the other end from the opportunist alliance, alliances can represent the emergence to a new economic order where businesses are the knots of a network and the managerial ability and efficiency of the network are the clues of the success. The essence of network creation is collaboration based on the complementary principle. The nature of the collaboration within the network is so well defined that the independence and interests of the individual businesses are not affected.

2.3.3 Redefining public services through technology

Using technology to extend or re-define the portfolio of the services provided is the biggest challenge of the revitalization.

Although nowadays the number of the organizations that succeeded in overcoming these challenges is small, in the following decades it will go up because of the technological boom that will influence *the rules of the game*. The technological involvement in the way public services organizations operate starts with the increase of complexity requests for isolated activities and continues with connection and integration of tasks and processes, creation of internal networks and global re-definition of the public services offer. Technological advantages imply: integration of processes through technology, involvement of technology in process reengineering, involvement of technology in network design. The informational technology next to consumers' needs and organizational abilities form the triad of events that when they are combined create opportunities for revitalization. Technology *links* the actors of the meta-organization and its different departments facilitating common progress and improving speed and efficiency in finality achievement.

One of the most important technological applications is its strategic contribution to gathering and developing knowledge and to the acceleration of their dissemination within the meta-organization.

2.4. Re-inventing the mentalities of the actors

At the center of the Quality cycle lays the human aspect (see figure 4). No activity can be carried out effectively if the people involved are not willing to cooperate. In order to do so, they have to be convinced that what they are asked to do is for their own benefit, rather than for another person or group of persons, be it the stakeholders or the customers.

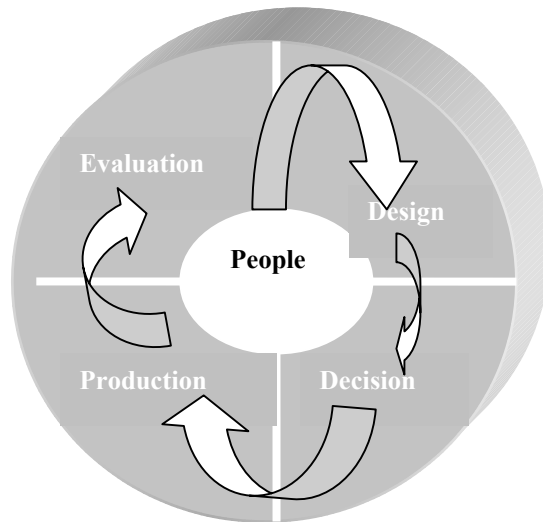


Figure 4.The human aspect of quality approach

Source: Adapted after J. Kelada,(1996), Integrating reengineering with Total Quality, ASQC, Quality Press,p.159.

2.4.1. The new Quality culture

In order to achieve the strategic quality approach, an organization has to change. This change goes far beyond altering a method or modification of a process. It is, at first, a change in culture that is required; all other major changes will then follow from that.

Generally, culture represents the way through which the members of a group communicate, both among themselves and with other groups within the company. In the context of the communication process there are highlighted common behaviors, customs, practices, values and beliefs.

The new quality culture is characterized by the expanding of empowerment within the organization, on the basis of the market-in concept, by which the customer concept is introduced inside the public organization; thus, the public servants become binders of the institution, each of them knowing who he works for and knowing that person's exigencies, things which contribute to the creation and preservation of the customer cult in the entire public organization.

The culture is a vision of the future and a set of mostly unwritten values. It is partly inherited, partly effected by all actors who exercise an influence on and in the organization (J. Kelada, 1996, p.187).

Ideally, actors of the meta-organization all share the same long-term global vision of the organization and of the environment in which they have to live and thrive. Consequently, every action they take will be inspired by and geared to this vision.

Culture is not a static concept or reality; it evolves with time and changes, often gradually but sometimes noticeably and abruptly. Cultural changes result from a constant feedback-whether formal or informal conscious or unconscious - from the results of the culture (J. Kelada, 1996, p.189).

The importance of the new quality culture, articulated around transforming the mentality, consists, especially, of the implications due to it upon putting into practice the changing project. In other words, the success of changing the organizational culture depends on the total involvement of the public management, carefully focused on the institution's clients, but also on the public servants.

A new style of management – The Total Quality Management

TQM is principally based on a managerial philosophy, a way of thinking from which emanates a way of doing that is assumed by all persons in the organization as well by its external partners. This philosophy is customer focused, people centered, partner assisted, and environmentally conscious.

The Total Quality Management is an approach through which the organization makes sure that its processes, products, and services contribute to the achievement of clearly defined results. This managerial approach is mainly characterized by:

- Encouragement of stakeholders' participation;
- Realistic definition of expected changes or results;
- Selection of performance indicators;
- Risk assessment;
- Gathering information about performance;
- Using this information in the decision-making process;
- Relation to performance.

Based on the quality strategic approach, TQM has three dimensions: (1) the human dimension: political and psychological; (2) a logical dimension: rational and systematic; and (3) a technological dimension: mechanical and systematic. In our opinion, the first is the most important (J. Kelada, 1996, p.57).

The human aspect has two objectives: to start and to maintain a quality process in the meta-organization. Indeed, top managers must be convinced that they have to change their ways of doing public business; they have to exercise strong leadership inside the organization with their people and outside with the external actor of meta-organization, both of whom they have to mobilize. They have to “walk their talk”, practice what they preach, be committed and involved. Then, once the strategic quality approach is under way, they have to continuously reinforce it by their attitude and behavior, by rewards and recognition, by participation and teamwork.

The new public managers must not only acquire innovative and creative abilities necessary to define new horizons rapidly, but also facilitate their putting into practice. In this context, the contribution to behavioral re-orientation of organizational actors towards environmental changes is one of the vectors of the new managerial orientations.

The challenges of the current institutional climate are, in my opinion, generated not so much by the lack of knowledge of the rules of the game, but mostly by their continuous changing.

The new managers in the public sector must not only rapidly accumulate innovative and creative capabilities necessary for defining certain new horizons, but also to facilitate their transposing into practice. In this context, the contribution to the behavioral

reorientation of the public servants in accordance with the environmental changes is one of the strategic vectors of the current managerial approach.

In terms of consequences, it is necessary to give up the old paradigms and the total commitment, in spirit and in action, in a changing process defined on the long term, in the sense of the new public management exigencies.

2.4.3. Building a continuous learning system

The learning system represents the most advanced way of renewing the mentalities of the public organization's members.

The promotion of this system implies the undertaking by the public organizations' managers of a double responsibility: (1) acknowledging the employees' individual needs for personal and professional development and (2) creating opportunities for satisfying these needs. The professionalism of public institutions has a rising dynamics, directly proportional to the number of public servants who continuously redefine their roles and responsibilities on the basis of the permanent improvement and adaptation of the public activities.

However, there are numerous examples of public organizations that ignore, willingly or out of a misunderstanding, this unlimited potential offered by each employee. Even more, the current circumstances indicate that, while bureaucracy is expanding its dimensions and complexity, the construction of a learning system becomes impossible. The reason at the foundation of this statement is argued further.

Firstly, those who represent the existing paradigms do not have the availability necessary for understanding the need for change and, implicitly, they are refractory to anything that takes them further from the "old road".

Secondly, every bureaucrat's mission is defined in terms of self-sufficiency and self-commitment; this signifies the absence of the collective contacts, lateral or that cross the organization. The adopting of certain decisions and executive dispositions in this sense would not have the benefic effects taken into account because the majority of the factors involved in the decisional process are the representatives of the old paradigms.

Conclusion

If the presented model can be accomplished, we could consider that this corresponds to the exigency imposed by sector IV of figure 5, stimulating all the interested parties in order to participate to the processes represented in Figure 3 is, in our opinion, the way to move forward from the traditional cycle of quality to co-design, co-decision, co-production and co-evaluation. These two crucial participative steps are only possible if there is a combined external and open orientation with a focus on outputs and outcomes. This results in *co-governing*. (C., Pollitt, G., Bouckaert, E., Löffler, p. 15)

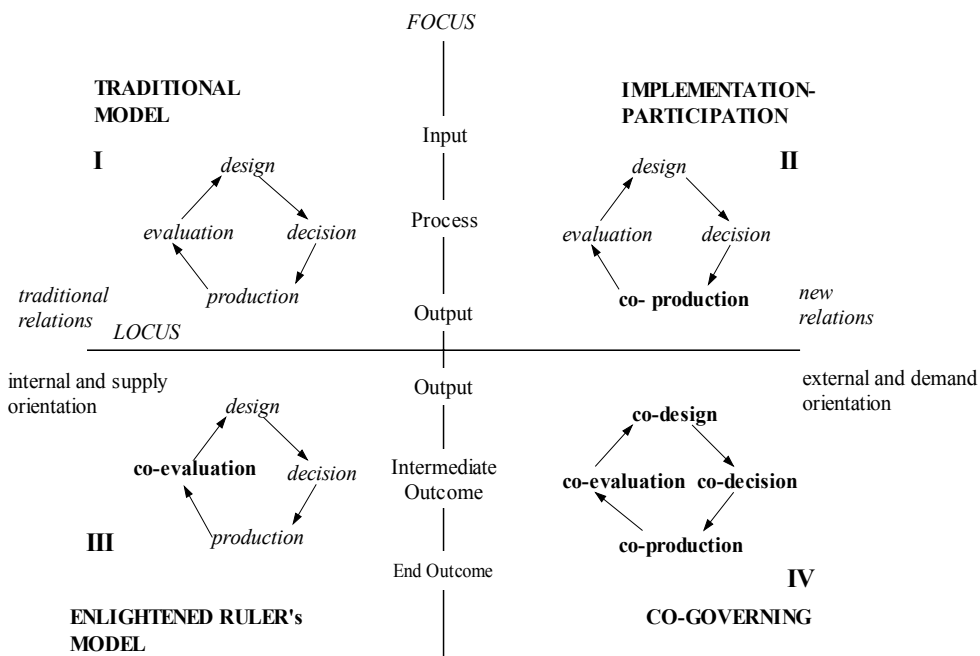


Figure 5 Models for sustainability in the public sector

Source: C., Pollitt, G., Bouckaert, E., Löffler, Making Quality Sustainable: Co-Design, Co-Decide, Co-Produce, and Co-Evaluate, Report of The 4QC Conference, Tampere, 2006, p. 9)

In our opinion, three aspects in the governance of complex public sector networks are especially important. The first aspect is the *context*- defined as the environment. Second is *the complexity* – defined as the number and variety of the system’s elements and the relations between the system elements. The third aspect is *governance*- defined as *directed influencing*.

In a network of many separate actors, with different and often conflicting goals and interests and with diverging power positions, no single dominant actor exists. Such complexity means negotiation and implies a different form of governance than mono-centric, mono-rational, hierarchical top-down control by an omnipotent government. On the other hand, public governance in complex network differs from the polar opposite of hierarchy, total autonomy of actors. Networks are characterized by many dependencies and relationships among the actors.

The distinction between a multi-actor network and completely autonomous actors is not without meaning. It means that actors not entirely independent, and it also means that although actors are not hierarchically sub-or super-ordinate, they are not completely equivalent. Government will always take a different position than other societal public and private actors in a network. Government cannot dominate and unilaterally dictate but nevertheless, it is not entirely equivalent to all other actors. This is not a normative statement but an empirical observation than the role of

government in networks is special and unlike the roles of many other actors. This does not imply a return to top-down control. It does imply that full horizontality and total autonomy of actors is an unrealistic model of a public policy network. The concept of “network governance” lies somewhere in the grey area between both extremes of hierarchy and market.

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