

## THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF IMPACT OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF PUBLIC SECTOR IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERNIZATION REFORMS

### Abstract

The authors describe the period of 1980–1990, which was very important for both evolution of organizational culture and for genesis of new public management reforms. The article states that application of new public management reforms and business principles in public sector organizations became a real bridge that stimulated application of modern technologies and transformations of organizational culture of public sector.

**Keywords:** *bureaucracy, culture, modernization, technologies, reforms.*

### Аннотация

Авторы рассматривают период 1980–1990 годов, который был очень важным как для организационной эволюции культуры, так и для генезиса новых реформ в области государственного управления. В статье говорится, что применение новых реформ в области государственного управления и принципов ведения бизнеса в организациях государственного сектора стало своего рода мостом, содействующим применению современных технологий и преобразованию организационной культуры государственного сектора.

**Ключевые слова:** *бюрократизм, культура, модернизация, технология, реформа.*

### Аңдатпа

Авторлар ұйымдық мәдениеттің дамуы мен мемлекеттік бақсару саласында жаңа реформалар генезисі үшін өте маңызды болған 1980–1990 жылдары аралығын қарастырады. Мақалада мемлекеттік басқару саласында жаңа реформаларды және мемлекеттік сектор ұйымдарында бизнесті жүргізу принциптерін қолдану қазіргі технологияларды пайдалануға және мемлекеттік сектордың ұйымдық мәдениетін өзгертуге көмектесетін өзіндік көпірге айналды.

**Тірек сөздер:** *бюрократизм, мәдениет, жаңғырту, технология, реформа.*

### Introduction

The organizational culture of public sector as various attitudes, values, rituals, myths, symbols, ideologies of public servants is undoubtedly important for many external and internal aspects of public administration system. It's important especially for aspects such as motivation of public servants [29], unity of institution members and ethical climate [7], leadership [1], organizational control system and staff loyalty [6], preparation of public organizations to changes, adaptation of innovations, regulation of interests and conflict management [32], satisfaction of citizens with public services, efficiency of public strategies, programme implementation, competitiveness of institutions (in the context of neo-liberal reforms), image of public organizations, or inter-institutional communication quality, decision-making, and many other factors might be distinguished [36][5]. Furthermore, the current postmodern states and the institutions, implementing their public policy, inevitably face the growing need of technological modernization for both external and internal factors. The concept of electronic government, where the citizens are given the possibility to receive the most of public services online, from issue of certificates to paying taxes, takes root in society. Seeking to ensure transparency, public institutions organize public procurement in electronic environment, thus, using social networks for public relationships, for improvement of communication with society. The progress of modern technologies results in close interconnection of institutions, non-governmental organizations, private structures, and

ordinary citizens [30]. It should be noted that these technological changes become relevant, while examining the organizational culture of public sector. According to H. G. Rainey [31], continuous changes in technological dimension, computers, information and communication technologies can become not only the unused possibilities, but also the challenges to public institutions and public servants. Public institutions could be understood as not only the cultures, which use the technologies, but also as the cultures, the identity, image, relationship with environment, services of which are dependent on functionality of technologies. Hence, it means the limits, arising from characteristics of modern technologies [19]. What is more, the issue of how organizational culture of public sector as an important factor for adaptation of innovations can determine the efficiency of implementation of initiatives of electronic government has been little researched [38].

Therefore, the problem in this article is raised as a question of how did modern technologies affect organizational culture of public sector? Authors' aim is to define the key dimensions of organizations, where adaptation of modern technologies and their impact on organizational culture of public sector was the most significant. This problem has been analyzed by the researchers as Rus and Ruso [33], Welch and Feeney [38], Gil-Garcia, et. al., [13], Nograšek, Vintar [26], Nica [25], Kanungo, Jain [16], Lucica [21], Dunleavy, et. al [10]. The used methods are theoretical – literature analysis and synthesis.

#### *Public sector modernization and organizational culture*

Organizational culture in modern management discourse is especially relevant subject. Retrospectively, evolution of organizational culture started in 1980, however, 1940 can be considered as its origin, when human relationships were started to be treated as important factor for efficient functioning of organizations. Therefore, organizational culture became the phenomenon of private sector. Some significant research works appeared in 1980, which led to further research [28]. A significant contribution to research on organizational culture, improvement of its methodology was made by the works of the researchers as Hofstede [14], Deal and Kennedy [9], Schein [35], etc. Organizational culture of public sector is certainly different from the one of private organizations, which are usually dominated by unique characteristics of organizational culture. While examining organizational culture of public sector among different state institutions, certain differences exist which depend on distribution of institutions, whether they are rural, regional, or national institutions, as well as on type of activity of institutions, especially in cases, when partly independent institutions, focusing their activity on very narrow field, function next to local administration [33][5]. Organizational culture of public sector can also be described by expressing its contradictory, dualistic nature. On one hand, it expresses high-level philosophical ideals to serve the public good, public protection, ensuring its interests, on the other hand, a lot of internal rules, requirements of irreproachable behaviour, and control mechanisms, predictability, procedural nature of work cause public distrust and constant constraints on public servants [39]. It is because of the fact that general normative features of organizational culture of public sector are established in the principles of public paradigms, state strategies, laws, code of conducts and ethics. It is especially revealed, while analyzing Weber – Wilson's public administration model, dominated by the factors as professionalism of public servants, rationality, legality, hierarchy, anonymisation of relationships, stability, predictability, subordination to political control, durability of working place, etc.

Making the organizational culture of Weber – Wilson's model more specific, the following significant aspects might be identified:

- 1) Management style is authoritarian, dominated by high level of control;
- 2) Complex communication, management is usually based on "top-down" principle;
- 3) Public servants seek for stability, personal initiatives are limited, they are focused on fulfilment of orders;
- 4) The decision-making processes are repetitive and centralized;
- 5) Resistance to initiate innovation processes;
- 6) Attitudes and beliefs are difficult to be changed [5].

As state institutions respond to changing needs of management, employees, and citizen, the trends of culture stagnation are often noticed [25]. Furthermore, the rewards system in public service is focused on a single individual and not on a team, what is typical to modern management approach [22]. This model failed to fully evaluate the focus on results and efficiency of such aspects of organizational culture as adaptation, change and risk acceptance [3].

Failure to meet the growing needs of society, in response to growing costs of public institutions, institutional ineffectiveness, static, but not flexible organizational cultures, insufficiently motivated public service, and the problems of inefficiency of implementation of Weber – Wilson model, the need to look for public management alternatives and to modernize the public institutions, therefore, the transition to the New public management reforms started in 1980 – 1990, first in Anglo-Saxon countries like the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and New Zealand [3] [24] [34].

Table 1. Changes of Public Administration Paradigms

<b>Weber-Wilson model</b>	<b>New public management</b>
Process, bureaucratic relationships	Results, personal responsibility of public servant, satisfaction of “customer” needs, entrepreneurship
Professionalism, the need of legal education, long-term public service, benefits	Flexibility, contracting, managerial competencies, reduction of benefits
Unclear, duplicate aims and functions, lack of assessment criteria	Clear aims of institutions and staff, specific criteria for activity assessment
Focus on programme implementation processes rather than on whether they reach the desirable results	Specific and systematic assessment of public programs
Bureaucrats are subordinated to politicians	Higher level of public servants are more politically committed to the government
Wide range state functions in the field of public services	State functions are reduced through privatization, concession mechanisms, etc.
Development of public service, increase of functions	Decrease of number of public servants, increasing role of technologies
Values – rationality and legality	Values – creativity and economic efficiency
Centralization, state monopoly in provision and regulation of public services	Decentralization in state regulation and provision of public services with higher level centralization in public service monitoring

*Prepared according to [15, p. 44;34, p. 77-83].*

By comparing these changes, the authors seek to demonstrate that during implementation of systematic changes in public administration, while moving to neoliberalism – based New public management, essential changes took place in organizational culture of public sector. The traditional administrative behaviour, process-focused working culture, dominating rationality, stability, impersonal relationships were started to be replaced with focus on business culture principles, effectiveness, creativity, cost effectiveness, flexibility, and responsibility. However, one of the essential principles, the genesis of which should be related with New public management reforms and which will be the focus of this article, is technological changes and their influence on organizational culture of public sector, namely, application of new public management reforms and business principles became certain link that stimulated implementation and continuous application of modern technologies in public organizations.

How did modern technologies affect organizational culture of public sector?

While analyzing the works of both foreign and Lithuanian researchers, the current scientific literature little attention is paid on changes in technologies and organizational culture. Continuing the historical analysis and highlighting the changes, which started taking place in 1980, the importance of technological evolution and their availability in then society should be noted. According to M. Olson [27], one of the reasons of development of modern technologies is dramatic decrease of prices of computer and communication technologies, which increased their accessibility to most of the citizens. More accessible technologies started changing public life, its needs, behaviour, and thinking. In the context of these changes, citizens' expectations how state institutions should improve the quality of provided public services, solve the relevant issues also increased [13]. It means that as the impact of modern technologies on social systems increased, the societies faced the positions of technological determinism theory, stating that the technological progress determines the social progress [26]. Therefore, while implementing new public management reforms, seeking real rather than declared changes in public management, their adaptation became not only handy, but also a necessary instrument in many areas of public management, therefore, various factors of organizational culture, e.g., daily working practice or rules, which became more dependent on application of modern technologies, were eventually transformed.

Changes of organizations, stimulated by modern technologies, can be described by developing certain logic chain, based on different steps.

- 1) Organizations' decision to introduce modern technology at the highest hierarchical level of an organization;
- 2) Decisions of ordinary members of organization for adaptation of these technologies;
- 3) Innovation assimilation step, development of new behaviour models and relationships in organization, based on technologies;
- 4) Adaptation of existing organizational structure and procedures to new behaviour models and relationships [2].

As the second principle shows, not only decision to introduce certain technological innovations, made by high level managers, is significant, but also implementation of changes at organizational culture level by highlighting the aspects as development of certain values of employees, growth of trust, improvement of communication, analysis of current situation, and development of suitable provisions, regarding application of modern technologies and their benefit, by the means of training and testing the technologies before application [26]. Otherwise, one might face high resistance of employees and, thus, it would be possible to mitigate the resistance to changes and to stimulate application of technologies by distributing the decision-making load among all organization levels [23]. This aspect was strengthened in the context of new public management by the trends of institutional decentralization, where smaller departments and establishments got more freedom to make decisions. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that public institutions are characterized by formal nature, activity, while the behaviour of public servants are formalized, these structures are dominated by various rules and laws, therefore, adaptation of modern technologies is facilitated by management centralization and control [38].

Changes, which are required, while implementing an effective adaptation of modern technologies in public institutions, might be classified by identifying four levels:

- 1) Organizational level;
- 2) Level of human resources;
- 3) Level of assessment of results;
- 4) Funding level [21].

Following this classification, it might be stated that seeking to achieve effective changes in public organizations, systematic access is required. Organizational level is named first, thus, organizational structure should change by taking into account the possibilities, given by technologies. In the context of modern technologies, it is necessary to perform restructurization and reorganization, to decrease the number of various departments and servants, to change the

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methods of activity. At the level of human resources, it is necessary to introduce innovations, related with daily procedures, e.g., complaints, requests to terminate employment, to increase salary, etc. It is also necessary to switch to a more effective communication-based team rather than individual work. At the level of assessment of expected results, it is required to identify various possibilities, provided by modern technologies, for example, assessment of public servants' performance in electronic systems, electronic project monitoring systems, etc. The level of funding is important because of economic justification of modern technologies and their payback (decreased budget costs, lower service provision prices, possibility to decrease the number of employees, etc.) [17].

Of course, there are some scientists, who strongly believe that the role of organizational culture of public sector is significant for application of modern technologies at the initial stage of their adaptation up to the point when their usage becomes routine, therefore, the role of organizational culture becomes lower as performance of tasks becomes more dependent on infrastructure of modern technologies [10]. Nevertheless, it should be accepted that application of modern technologies can ensure and help to foster certain values, necessary to organizational culture of public sector, e.g., transparency, responsibility, accountability, and professionalism [21].

M. Fucheri, et. al., [11] identifies the following elements, significantly affected by adaptation of modern technologies:

1) Coordination and control (e.g., this innovation is noticed in Lithuanian public organizations too, when coming to and going out of working place by public servant is recorded by e-card).

2) Social coordination method, organizational structure and decision-making processes (e.g., hierarchical, autocratic leadership is replaced with networking, development of dialogue, trust among various stakeholders, e.g., local communities, non-governmental organizations, and private sector structures, with the help of modern technologies).

3) Communication (e.g., internal communication among various departments, public servants and their managers in intranet, and external communication, focused on public information, improvement of image, customer needs and online service provision).

Talking about various technological innovations, very important role is played by electronic scheduling, where citizens can schedule their meetings online in state institutions, to receive various certificates, permissions, payments, etc. [27]. This innovation contributed to organizational culture of public sector, which is focused not only on the process and elimination of the resulting dysfunctions, but also promoted development of result-focused organizational culture and identity, characterized by clear fields of responsibility of public servants and flexibility.

The aspect of equal importance, which was affected by modern technologies in public institutions and their organizational cultures, was the problem of information storage. Until the start of development of modern technologies, creation of information systems, each organization used to face the challenges, related with staff member migration trends and the consequent loss of information that depends on them, preparation of unsuitable, negligently drawn, insufficient documentation or the issues of its accessibility and usage, or even the factors of information asymmetry among different institutions, when public servants did not want to share certain information flows with servants of other institutions for their own benefit or for higher budget from decision makers. Therefore, transfer from paper documentation, typical for Weber's public administration period, to electronic documentation, which is usually stored on the intranet of the institution, has inevitably changed the organizational culture of public sector by optimizing and simplifying daily working activity. However, information storage at the level of local level is one thing, while administration of national level personal data, related with social security, immigration or even national security is characterized various challenges [10]. However, it might be stated that as a result of information bases, internal networks and inter-networks both external and internal environments of institutions became more effective, the procedures became targeted, while essential changes in values became obvious in organizational culture, resulting in increased transparency, professionalism, accountability both in implementation of public programs, projects, and providing individual public services.



It should be discussed in the context of Weber – Wilson's model. Organizations of public sectors are usually understood as the systems, characterized by close organizational cultures, however, together with New public management reforms, integration of communication methods of private sector, and growing popularity of social networks, e.g., facebook or twitter, organizational culture of public sector also becomes inevitably more open [37]. It is determined by availability of technological innovations, increasing public need to communicate in social networks, the trends of partnership with private sector. Even in Lithuania, the main institutions, ministries, implementing the public policy, are visible and actively participate in social networks.

Organizational culture of public sector is also transformed by other communication e-collaboration systems, e.g., videoconferences or online discussion forums. It might be stated that these systems promote public servants to focus more on external factors, on the needs of citizens, to provide public services in more effective and sensitive manner, to constantly receive feedback [20]. Furthermore, modern technologies allow public institutions to organize the work in virtual systems more effectively by focusing on target groups of customers, creating the possibility to differentiate them in accordance with unique characteristics, thus, facilitating the procedure of receiving public services and increasing the speed of their provision [10].

On the other hand, it is essential to understand that seeking to implement the aims of new public management, ambivalent situations could not be avoided – while reducing the number of state institutions and public servants, modifying the structures of organizations and moving to modern technology-based provision of public services, seeking to save additional funds, the situation, when rapid technological changes increased the need of competent, highly qualified professionals for administration of specific technological fields, was faced [18]. It means that replacement of people with technologies has not always led to the expected political outcome.

While speaking of the challenges, continuous and increasingly intensive technological changes, which might cause some problems to state institutions, wishing to adapt to them and to keep pace with innovations, to implement the processes of continuous technological modernization, should also be mentioned. After all, it is evident that these innovations affect traditional activity methods. What is more, activity of public institutions is dependent on many rules and regulations, budget constraints, while continuous, never-ending technological modernization can unbalance the need of security and stability, typical for traditional paradigm, strengthen psychological feeling of lack of security of public servants because of the risk to lose job at any time, and these factors can negatively affect performance indicators [16].

It is important to discuss the general features of modern technologies, which could be interpreted as threats to organizational culture of public sector:

- 1) Depersonalization (through work standardization);
- 2) Disappearing skills of public servants to relate directly with problems, degeneration of senses;
- 3) Decadence of aggressiveness and moral sensitivity in decision making, based on technologies;
- 4) Misleading information, while providing online or telephone services;
- 5) Moving to anonymity dimension;
- 6) Meaning is created and decrypted through language, while operation of technologies is based on standards; therefore, the possibility of errors and wrong decisions increases in situations, which lie outside the defined standards [8].

Depersonalization in the context of modern technologies is actually twofold because anonymisation of relationships (bureaucratic relationships) was the key feature of Weber Wilson's model. This feature embodied the fact that public servants will act professionally by taking into account the aims of institutions rather than personal ones, however, depersonalized relationships in provision of public services not always gave the possibility to provide public services, especially in case of individual challenges. However, New public management reforms as integration of the best experience of private sector had to humanize public administration by transforming the culture of depersonalized relationships by focusing primarily on customer and

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satisfaction of his needs. Paradoxically, adaptation of modern technologies in public sector, which became more intensive with new public management reforms, gave additional instruments to transform organizational culture by making it more flexible, focused on the needs of citizens. On the other hand, it established depersonalization, typical for Weber-Wilson model. This statement is supported by the factors of sense degeneration, deterioration of moral sensitivity, and growing anonymity.

While analyzing the growing contradictions, it should be mentioned that seeking effective adaptation of modern technologies in public sector, a significant factor was taxpayers, public opinion, when changes were requested, while comparing the quality of public and private services. However, the problems are caused by the fact that the benefit of adaptation of modern technologies was not immediately noticed, and innovation projects required additional funds. Therefore, various obstacles were faced, when political will was necessary in case of lack of public support. On the other hand, according to long-term research, the highest benefit was obtained in budget control, cost reduction, and improvement of communication with public [4].

In summary, it might be stated that by this analysis of theoretical aspects the authors sought to reveal the fact that application of new public management reforms and business principles in public organizations became a real bridge that stimulated application of modern technologies and their impact on organizational culture of public sector. These innovations included changes at internal level of public institutions: coordination and control, change of types of social coordination, communication aspects, changes of organizational culture of public sector by moving from closure, typical for Weber – Wilson's model to development of opener culture, focused on the needs of customer and the outcome. The innovative factors as electronic scheduling, transition to electronic documentation, creation of databases and intranet, which optimized and simplified the activity of public servants, decision making procedure, helped to solve the issues of information asymmetry, to increase trust among institutions, also contributed to aforementioned factors. What is more, various e-collaboration systems provided the possibility for public servants to take into account the needs of citizens, to promote the trends of democratization and participation in public management. In addition, modern technologies promoted fostering the normative elements of organizational culture in public sector, e.g., transparency, responsibility, professionalism, while development of classification systems for provision of public services facilitated the access to public services, increased the speed of their provision, contributed to improvement of image of public institutions.

### **Conclusions**

Significant changes from in the field of modern technologies from 1980 and their spread in the public coincided with the needs of modernization in public sector, New public management reforms that took place during the period of 1980 – 1990, first in Anglo-Saxon countries

Application of New public management reforms and business principles in public sector organizations became a real bridge that stimulated application of modern technologies and transformations of organizational culture of public sector

Adaptation of modern technologies in public organizations significantly affected the aspects as organizational structures, human resources, funding, assessment, as well as coordination and control, decision-making and communication.

Modern technologies have ensured implementation of certain normative organizational culture elements of public sector by distinguishing higher transparency, responsibility, accountability and professionalism, however, they also have resulted in new challenges by highlighting the aspects of depersonalization, increased anonymity and lack of moral sensitivity in decision-making, as well as growing uncertainty in everyday working life, caused by problems, related with the use of technology, lack of training, lack of readiness, and growing possibilities to lose the jobs as servants were started being replaced with technological factors for performing certain functions.

Classic bureaucratic values of stability, focus on process have been replaced with values of business sector, highlighting the focus on economic efficiency, result and flexibility, which fostering was conditioned by modern technology too.

The popularity of social networks contributed to the changes of organizational culture of public sector by emphasizing the transition from the bureaucratic closed ones to open and communicative systems.

Although one of the aims of application of modern technologies was bureaucratization reduction, intensive technological changes not always allowed saving budget funds, since they increased the need of competent, highly qualified professionals for administration of specific technological fields.

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