

# A Research on the Effects of the New Public Administration Approach on Local Administrations

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## Abstract

The traditional public administration understanding that lasted until the 1980s gave its place to a solid, hierarchical and bureaucratic, market-based, decentralized public administration understanding that is more flexible after a paradigm shift in management. The international developments that are taking place today, along with the reforms in the political, economic, social and cultural fields, also necessitate changing in public administration. In our study, the impact of the reforms on local administrations with the new public administration understanding in Turkey will be examined. This effect is versatile and evaluated from a different point of view considering anti-bureaucratic structure, participation in governance, openness and accountability, reforms taking place in the axis of strategic planning and localization and change process.

**Keywords:** New Public Administration Approach, Localization, Local Administrations, Reform, Globalization

## 1. Introduction

The world is experiencing a rapid change thanks to technological development and the transition to information society with globalization. Organizational structures have started their own modernization processes in various dimensions in order to adapt to this rapid change. Localization can be considered as a development aimed at solving problems caused by globalization, to provide flexibility and diversity against socio-economic monotony and central organization. (Al, 2008). On the other hand, the new public administration approach has adopted the idea of preserving and developing local values as well as universal values. This situation has increased the importance of local people, local administrations and cities. This approach, which is called as the new concept of public administration, advocates that the traditional public administration approach can not respond to changing needs of the day, and expresses that it is quite old as a management approach and adds a different perspective and value to the public administration. As a result of this large-scale change, the wishes and expectations of the society have also changed and increased. States could not resist to this change anymore, and local administrations have increased their importance due to the developments and have started to spread central administration authorizations and responsibilities depending on the aforementioned processes.

The new public approach and the economic-political base approach have increased the importance of urbanization within process. The high urbanization speed in developing countries, the diversity of services and other facilities offered by the cities of the developed countries have led to greater emphasis on social, political and economic aspects of the cities. Today, the strengthening of local administrations and the reconstruction according to this aim are considered as one of the indispensable elements in providing quality service as well as in socio-economic development. With the globalizing change; the strong national state and centralized management concept of the old times gradually gave its place to a structure in which localization has become the foreground. During this transformation, new roles of center and local are being discussed and rebuilt considering the unique conditions of the countries.

The new management paradigm is called as the New Public Administration in the literature. The factors that reveal the new concept of public administration are gathered under three topics as political-ideological, economic and social factors. These can be listed as political factors, economic factors and social factors. Political factors are developments that take place within the framework of the new management concept, that predict a lot of changes in the field from the methods of service delivery to privatization, leading to the questioning of the role of the state. Economic factors are developments in public sector services, international trade, budget deficits, economic crises, private sector methods and techniques in the welfare state. Social factors consist of the factors such as the problems caused by the change of the population structure, human rights, democracy, increasing education level and individuals seeking their right and their changing expectations; and consequently, public administrations becoming unresponsive and reducing trust in public institutions. (Bilgic, 2003: 28-32).

In the course of this radical change, it can be said that international competition has concentrated on the cities. Many events are carried out in cities and important decisions are taken there having global and international importance. Many cities have begun to have a more image and recognition than the county they are in. The subsequent point increased the significance of the city administration and ensured the expansion of metropolitan administrative structures. Specific legal arrangements have been made for the management of special countries in their countries such as London, Toronto, Tokio and Mumbai.

## **2. New Public Administration Approach and Basic Principles**

The new public administration approach has been criticized by some scientists since the beginning. Some scientists have characterized the new approach as a product of young (Özgür, 2003:184) academics raised in a turbulent political and social era, while others were expecting a superb child, likening a “crippled” or “mongol” born baby, or as a “mountain breeding a mouse” (Wamsley, 1976: 386).

Some scientists argue that predominantly economy-based thought may not always be valid for social-administrative problems in the new public administration due to the peculiarities of public administration and public services. According to this approach, public services have more restrictive characteristics than private goods and services. This is due to the more complex consumer-supplier relations in the public sector. Also, it is not a right approach to see people as “customers”. Because, “customer” concept requires the existence of the possibility of initiating, maintaining or finishing the business relationship. However, “citizenship” involves the obligation to consume its permanent obligations and certain public services. (Hughes, 1998: 12; Eren, 2001).

Yamatoma explained the fundamental elements in the emergence of the New Public administration approach and evaluated practical management skills and private sector management practices among these factors in his (2003) study. With the emergence of the new concept of public administration, the new management techniques that cause reform and change in the form and function of the organization of public institutions can be explained by the following concepts ;

- 1)Governance,
- 2)Changing perspective towards bureaucracy,
- 3)Responsibility understanding
- 4)E-State
- 5)Total Quality Management
- 6)Performance Culture.

One of the criticisms of the New Public administration approach is that there are no clear, explicit, limited purposes and stable, precise priorities, in general. For this reason, it is difficult to determine concrete objectives in the public sector and predict their consequences. Thus, the assumptions of the new public administration approach that do not care about the profound difference between the private sector and the public sector is not valid. (Hughes, 1998). On the other hand, it is thought that the new concept of public administration has a logic that turns the state into a tool of service consumption and ignores its roles as determining national targets and investing for the future of society. (Ricucci, 2001). Besides, it has not yet been determined exactly how successful the strategic planning, performance program, quality of service, efficiency, productivity and market system requirements that are emphasized in the new public administration approach for the public sector. And, there is not an exact consensus on the definition of many developed concepts.

In broader terms, the new public administration approach is an act of restructuring an shaping the role of the state on the market and the people, the relationship among the government, the private sector, the bureaucracy and the society; and its purpose is to make the state’s jurisdiction more effective and efficient by drawing it to its basic functions and to improve citizens’ participation and the position against the state and public administration. (Eryilmaz, 2008; Altaban and Duyguluer, 2004).

## **3. Effects of the New Public Administration Approach on Local Administrations in Turkey**

Local administrations are organizations that are equipped with the authority and responsibility to provide various public services in the geographical area that they are entitled to and for which they are granted administrative and financial autonomy. Local administrations use human and financial resources and benefit from necessary equipment and other hardware while fulfilling the services in their areas of responsibility. However, local administrations are not just organizations that provide a number of services; they also present these services according to certain local, social, political priorities. For this reason, not an uniformity among local services in equal cities, naturally, a differentiation and a diversity are observed. This is the result of the local qualities of the region and local administrations that are autonomous institutions.

The difference in local administrations is largely achieved through the decision-making and executive bodies of those elected by the local people. This situation can be analyzed in three dimensions. The first one is the analysis, legal/institutional dimension. This dimension looks at the relationship between the executive body and decision making body from a legal perspective and it is based on the analyzes of power distribution among organs. The second dimension of analysis is political and operates at the same time as the legal one. The third dimension is a dimension that is manifest in the metropolitan councils of the metropolis and has a regional character. (Ozer, 2005).

New public administration approach in local administration; seen as a two dimensional concept, based on market and business administration, and this unified model seems to have created new management rules. According to this, while including market-based reorganizations, privatization, contract, consumer models, free choice possibilities; business administration-based examples are the user influence, target referral and

management for purposes, participation for strategic leadership, efficiency control and service quality management systems. (Hansen,2001).

Local administration reforms under the light of new public administration have started since the 1980s. The core of these reforms are globalization, the increasing importance of democracy, neo-liberalism, developing technology and European Union criteria.

With the new regulations, strengthening local administrations, decreasing the control over the local authorities, involving the citizen in governance more effectively, weakening the traditional centralist structure are aimed.

Turkey remained weak in carrying out the reform of local administration and the European Union played an important role as a leverage at that point.

The first step towards the new public administration approach in Turkey was taken with the Law no. 3030 concerning the Administration of Metropolitan Municipalities in 1984. Metropolitan municipalities have been established and their duties, powers and responsibilities have been specified in detail with this law. In the 90s, reform studies have changed and structural reforms to change the quality of public administration have gained speed. In this period, the New Public Administration understanding which showed its weight to the whole world, transferred to practice through the Local Administrations Draft Law, coming into force in 1998. This new understanding of reducing the authority and responsibilities of the center in favor of the local community has begun to be adopted in the years of 2000. (Emini, 2009).

Another regulation related to local administration reforms is the Law of Local Administrative Unions no. 5355 dated 26.05.2005. The purpose of this law is to regulate the legal status, organization, organs, management duties, authorities and responsibilities of local administrations and the working principles and procedures. The law is one of the most important regulations for ensuring efficiency and productivity in local administrations, overcoming the problems of legislation, eliminating the lack of organization and increasing scale especially in public services. (Kerman et. al., 2012).

The main reasons for the emergence of the new public administration approach have been stated to be based on efficiency and productivity in management and are considered as essential requirements to be prepared for the uncertainties of the future, and to make quick decisions and find appropriate solutions to problems and adapting to changes. Restructuring in public administration requires a transformation and a change in local administrations. It has been stated that the working methods, processes and objectives of local administrations will also be subject to change; therefore, removal of excessive bureaucratic structures, creation of flexible and smaller units that are efficient, and working methods and processes should be questioned in these administrations. In addition to flexible and horizontal organizations, it is stated that emphasizing the importance of the strategic management that predicts the future should be entrepreneurial and competitive being compatible with decentralization. (Lamba, 2014)

Almost all of the general reasons for the examined laws have included the principles of efficiency, productivity and transparency. In legal regulations, principles related to accountability, transparency, balance of authority and responsibility, performance management, strategic management, strategic planning and financial auditing are at the forefront. An emphasis has been made on efficiency, transparency, accountability and participation mentioning the new public administration, as well as the changes in public administration understanding on the general grounds of central administration, local administrative unions and development agencies. It has been determined that decentralization has been tried to be realized by transferring authority and resources to local administrations. In order to achieve discipline and better service at lower cost, which is one of the basic components of the new public administration, it is desired to benefit from the advantages of economies of scale by enlarging scale in local administrations. It is aimed to create entrepreneurial and competitive, bureaucratic, flexible and smaller units with a more horizontal organization with those regulations. (Lamba, 2014). There is a close relationship between localization and democracy. More recognition and preference for citizens are best achieved by local administrations. Local administrations have the possibility to better identify consumer preferences and serve the public better. They are able to provide their participation more easily since they are closer to the people. The signs of localization are seen very clearly in the reforms, and this principle dominates new laws.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In today's world, where globalization has gained great power and access to information is fast, the field of management is experiencing a great change just as in the economic, political, and social life. In this context, the public administration has also been influenced from these changes taking place in the world and changed along with the new tendencies. The 21st century has become a frontier of the concept of the public benefit, a new public administration approach that focuses on concepts such as performance auditing, efficiency and productivity, which are put into practice by management techniques adopted in the private sector instead of the traditional management approach questioned by the public administration.

Both internal and external factors played an important role in this transformation. The main goal of this thinking is to pull the state down to its main tasks as much as possible and to build a market-based public administration. New arrangements shaped by neo-liberal thinkers have given a great importance to the small and the local. The fact that public services are not fast, high quality and effective, and that existing institutions do not operate in accordance with the conditions of the day, the ineffectiveness of wars and crises, globalization and technological backwardness justify new right-wingers.

The local administration reform in the framework of the new public administration in Turkey was initiated by the European Union with the effects of globalization, however, even if there is no adverse effect in practice, the necessary legal background and administrative infrastructure are not fully structured. This is especially evident in the Law no. 6360. These problems manifest themselves primarily in the formation of a fiscal and a unitary state; the financial structure of the duties assigned to the local administrations does not match very well and it is generally tried to be compensated by borrowing. Also, the separatist movements and the geographical division danger taking place in Turkey led to concerns among the public highlighting the unitary structure.

In addition to all these, practices contrary to the constitution in the law must be reviewed and there should be no duality in the law. When we look at all these in general, the regulations established within the framework of the new public administration approach have reached its goal substantially, and the local administrations have gained strength against the central administration. These regulations have been carried out only in the last 15 years, largely. Because, the realization of reforms in the form of revolution can create economic and social problems. This is a process and changes occur in the process flow. Although reforms at the local administration level have been slow in recent years, it is anticipated that the trend of new public administration understanding will continue in the following periods.

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