

THE PHENOMENON OF THE HIERARCHY PRINCIPLE IN THE MILITARY: ANALYSIS FROM TRADITIONAL BUREAUCRACY MODEL TO META-GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

While analyzing the principle of hierarchy the military is usually given as an example, where everything is standardized, clear control mechanisms are provided and clear subordination prevails. However, at the same time, it is usually described as "remnant". What is more, it is as an example of organizational management that is inflexible and does not adapt to changes. However, if the traditional model of bureaucracy is no longer fashionable, why does the phenomenon of the principle of hierarchy persist in modern concepts of management?

Purpose – is to analyze theoretical context of hierarchy principle from Meta-governance, traditional bureaucratic model and Neo-Weberianism theories and to discuss the manifestation of this principle in the military as a case study.

Design/methodology/approach. In order to achieve the set goal, the systematic analysis of scientific literature was done. The origin and concept of hierarchy principle is analyzed in the framework of traditional bureaucracy model and Neo-Weberian theory, including the analysis of Meta-governance concept through its main aspects. The case study method was chosen in discussion about hierarchy principle in military, which allows to thoroughly analyze the situation in the real context, to describe and explain the phenomenon under study.

Finding. Although management is becoming more liberal, the principle of hierarchy still remains at its core. Though the management of modern organizations is based on the principle of networking, hierarchy helps to ensure proper implementation of procedures and rules. The management of processes in military are more characterized by Neo-Weberian theoretical assumptions than Meta-governance. For this specific bureaucratic organization, moving away from the original idea can even be dangerous. The principle of hierarchy is even desirable in the modern context and ensures stability.

Research limitations/implications. The principle of hierarchy was analyzed only in the context of three theories - Meta-governance, traditional bureaucracy model and Neo-Weberianism.

Practical implications. This paper applies a systematic literature review method trying to find an answer what is the importance of the principle of hierarchy in the context of the concept of Meta-governance and how the principle of hierarchy has changed in the transformation from the traditional model of bureaucracy to Neo-Weberianism. The practical relevance of the article is substantiated by analyzing the phenomenon of the principle in the military.

Keywords: Hierarchy, Bureaucracy, Neo-Weberianism, Meta-governance, Military.

Research type: case study.

Introduction

Analyzing the scientific literature gives the impression that talking about bureaucracy and hierarchy is simply out of fashion. It is even decried as choking the military and corroding the deep competence and independence (Adams, 2017). In recent scientific literature which is analyzing military management tends to use the words „modern“ and „leadership“. However, the fragmentation caused by the recent prevailing concepts of management has forced everyone to remember the good old consolidating methods, that allow for stability and reliability.

Traditional model of management is usually described as rational, hierarchical, centralized, formalized, reliable and safe with stable career opportunities (Guogis and Rakšnys, 2014). Management through the principle of hierarchy derives from Max Weber traditional model of bureaucracy. In our days traditional bureaucracy theory is being replaced by a Neo-Weberianism model, a new theory that responds to current events. Although this theory differs from the classical model it is still hierarchical (Boeckaert, 2004).

Today management encompasses so many different elements and is such a broad concept so it is presented in the scientific literature as Meta-governance. Meta-governance has attracted attention in recent years (Gjaltema et al., 2019). This concept is presented as 21 century doctrine of public administration (Raipa, 2016). In the literature it is called as government governance - the higher degree of governance through which it is formed, facilitates the application of rules and procedures (Christiansson, 2018) and is inseparable from changes of the state and its governance (Rakšnys et al., 2018). Usually, Meta-governance is presented through three aspects - hierarchy, networking and market. According to this theory, governance might be based on hierarchy principle, which means regulation, management and provision of public services in a classical way, it might take the form of the distribution of market forces and resources through supply and demand and the most important – it might involve a wide range or network of public and private stakeholders (Petersen, 2010).

This article analyzes the phenomenon of the principle of hierarchy from its appearance in the traditional Weber bureaucracy model to the latest trends in management - the concept of Meta-governance. The Neo-Weberianism model is also presented, where the transformation of the traditional model is revealed. The article concludes with a case study analyzing hierarchy principle phenomenon in the military.

The origins of the principle and transformation in Neo-Weberianism

The concept of hierarchy is held as universal phenomenon of organization with several steps from top to bottom interlinked with each other (Marume and Chikasha, 2016). This concept is widely used in sociology and in organisational theory studies (Serpa and Ferreira, 2019). Hierarchy was emphasized by all the classical thinkers like M. Weber, H. Fayol, L. Gulick, L. Urwick, J. D. Mooney and Reiley (Marume and Chikasha, 2016). It is a type of formal administration with the characteristics of division of labor, rules and regulation, authority of government, impersonality of social relationships and technical competence (Ajibade and Ibietan, 2016). M. Weber thought that rationalization of society is inevitable and the concept of bureaucracy might help fight with growing personality (Serpa and Ferreira, 2019) in this way reducing the risk of inequality. According to this, the authority and the position of an employee depends on the office held, not the personal attributes and incumbent status (Ajibade and Ibietan, 2016).

According to Ajibade and Ibietan (2016), bureaucracy seeks to coordinate the work in rationally way. It distributes correctly large-scale administrative tasks, assigns it on a hierarchical structure and governs by written rules and established procedures (Ajibade and Ibietan, 2016). Bureaucracy is a type of hierarchical arrangement that exists in every organization and the term “hierarchy” in organisation means division of labor (Ferreira et al., 2004).

However, Weber bureaucracy might be very specific phenomenon. It may differ in various situations, may depend on the representation and application of it (Serpa and Fereirra, 2019). Since Weber minds, it has become increasingly unthinkable that any of the big questions about the relationship between economy and society might possibly be answered without resort to a solid concept of human organization in general (Heugens, 2005). Traditional bureaucracy or Weberian model has certain features as reaffirmation of the role of administrative law suitably modernized in preserving the basic principles pertaining to the citizen-state relationship, including equality before the law, legal security and the availability of specialized legal scrutiny of state actions, preservation of the idea of a public service with a distinctive status, culture, and terms and conditions (Lynn, 2008) and so on.

Bureaucracy currently has an image where negative aspects are often highlighted (Serpa and Fereirra, 2019). In modernizing the public sector around the world at the end of the 20 century, the dominant doctrine offering market models was New public management (NPM). In Western countries, this model has become a tool for finding the best management solutions and alternative innovative organizational forms of management (Raipa, 2014). Due to the shortcomings of the application of traditional public administration, NPM has become popular as a contrast to traditional bureaucratic management. However, over time, the analysis of the consequences of NPM has revealed a lack of coordination, which leads to further autonomy, increasing fragmentation and declining organizational stability (Marcinkevičius and Rauleckas, 2016). The traditional governance model has reappeared in the spotlight.

Public administrations during the last decades of the 20 century have developed from a hierarchical Weberian towards a Neo-Weberian style, which is still hierarchical (Boeckaert, 2004). A number of well-known government theorists have seen and understood the dysfunctions of the NPM related to the hypertrophied evaluation of the achievements of some business management methodological principles and practices in the public sector-specific space and structural change of public organizations (Raipa, 2016). New Weberian model gave an integrative sociological theory of the firm that was superior to existing theories (Heugens, 2005).

The new Weberian style has moved further away from the classical style in Anglo-Saxon states than in continental European states (Meuleman, 2006). It should be emphasized that both the positive effects of NPM postulated on public sector efficiency and the negative consequences varied from country to country. In Western countries, NPM has meant a systematic and long-term transformation of public administration, while in European countries the application of the doctrine has become a real challenge. Historically, post-communist states could not choose NPM. The countries of Eastern and Central Europe, without the possibility of a permanent, systematic, long-term transformation of governance, had to forcefully carry out the necessary transformation of public administration, creating the foundations of a market economy, creating the preconditions for the rule of law and civil society (Raipa, 2014). One of the main challenges for post-communist countries was the sudden attempt to apply modern methods without first establishing a solid foundation for democratic processes and their development based on the traditional hierarchical structure of public administration (Randma-Liiv, 2008). In general, the application of the NPM has only proved successful in countries with a well-functioning environment of democratic administrative tradition.

According to new Weberianism state regulation has to be strengthened (Raipa, 2016). Neo-Weberian theory tries to explain how individuals, affected by their own bounded rationality and the opportunism, are trying to find out the ways to realize personal plans in uncertain and ambiguous situations (Heugens, 2005). In scientific literature Neo-Weberianism is described as transformation from an internal towards an external orientation and from bureaucratic rules to citizen's needs (Lynn, 2008). According to Lynn (2008) Neo-Weberianism seeks to create of a professional culture of quality and service through various consultation mechanisms. In summary, it can be said that the aim of this theory is professionalization of the public service.

Furthermore, recent research shows that hierarchy is alive and well and the primary means by which governments govern (Meuleman, 2006). Hierarchy in the new Weberianism means an instrument of integration and coherence in the organisation, it acts as a channel of communication, it enables to fix responsibility at each level and avoids short circuiting by ensuring strict adherence to procedure, prevents congestion of work at the top level, facilitates decentralization of decision – making and delegation of authority, simplifies procedure for file movement, helps in coordination by securing unity of purpose and promotes discipline and order in the organisation (Marume and Chikasha, 2016). Although bureaucracy is often used in negative sense, the main principles of it are still at the core of networking (Diefenbach and Sillince, 2011). The principle of the hierarchy is still on the top in the face of most attempts to criticize it (Diefenbach and Sillince, 2011).

Neo-Weberianism and its hierarchy become especially important not only in Eastern and Central European countries, but also to better understand the essence of the latest management tendencies, which present either completely different management methods from the usual traditional ones, or combine traditional tools with modern trends. The next chapter of this article will introduce the latest management concept - Meta-governance, described as the management doctrine of this century, which includes three management styles, one of which is hierarchy.

Hierarchy in Meta-governance

A term directly related to the processes of formation of the new doctrine of public administration at the turn of the 20-21 centuries (Raipa, 2016). Conceptually, Meta-governance appeared for the first time in the public administration and political science literatures in the middle of 1990 (Gjaltema, 2019). Meta-governance is understood as an ideology and practice of innovative activities of public sector institutions (Raipa, 2016). According to Eva Sorenson (2006), it is necessary to take stock of the public governance segmentation tools introduced by the new public administration, to critically assess the over-admiration for the possibilities of decentralized management in the context of fragmented public sector activities and what is more Meta-governance is exercised not only by state actors, but also by various networks of public and private actors and by a range of supranational, regional and local levels within the official political system.

The most common terms characterizing public administration in the 21 century are “good”, “multilevel”, “smart” governance and so on and often tend to focus on mezo and macro level reforms, innovative forms of public administration change (Raipa, 2016). Meta-governance is described as a reflexive and responsive process in which many legitimate and inventive actors seek to bring together, facilitate, shape and guide certain forms of governance according to specific rules, procedures and standards that embody the hegemonic concept of “good governance” (Sorensen and Torfing, 2009). Typically, Meta-governance refers to the implementation of formal or informal regulatory frameworks that support the development of

self-regulatory capabilities (Qvist, 2017). Governance is a set of processes that connect government with private and voluntary network and partnership actors and Meta-governance is the governance of this interaction (Christiansson, 2018). The need for Meta-governance increases due to functional differentiation and institutional fragmentation of governance processes (Sorensen, 2006).

The formation of the concept of Meta-governance is driven by the need to make the most effective use of the advantages of hierarchical, market and networking types of social coordination in the context of constant changes in public administration in the 21 century and growing complex problems (Rakšnys et al., 2018). Because goals, interests, and initiatives between different stakeholders are not coordinated separately, it becomes necessary for the state to institutionalize synergies through a variety of policy games - through networking, governance based on hierarchy, public-private partnerships and other management methods (Cour and Andersen, 2016). The scientific literature identifies three main mechanisms for managing this interaction (Petersen, 2010): first governance can take the form of a hierarchy based on the regulation of leadership and management and the delivery of public services in the classical way in a bureaucratic organization; second, governance can take the form of the distribution of market forces and resources through demand-supply relationships; third, networking with the participation of various public and private stakeholders. Three governance styles are given in the table (see Table 1), which are the main styles for Meta-governance conception.

On the other hand, this combination of hierarchy, network and market may cause variety of conflicts (Meuleman, 2006). The distinctive problems of hierarchy, markets and networks provide an account of three forms of partnership failure (Entwistle et al., 2007). Cooperation and the mobilization of resources beyond hierarchical governance become the basis for a successful government (Bučaitė and Ambotaitė-Mazeliauskienė, 2005). That is why networking is the leading axis in meta-governance concept.

According to Meta-governance, favorable conditions have been created for the rapid development of intersectoral partnerships in various governance contexts. Many conceptual and empirical studies have been conducted by a wide variety of scholars from a range of disciplinary backgrounds, focusing on different aspects of this theory (Gjaltema, 2019). Meta-governance through networking is the most widely studied in the scientific literature. The essential function of networking is the ability to pursue cooperation "voluntarily and in a consensual manner" at the level of non-hierarchical relations (Bučaitė and Ambotaitė-Mazeliauskienė, 2005). Almost simultaneously with the emergence of hybrid forms of organization, the network organization was identified as a new type of organization (Diefenbach and Sillince, 2011). Governments should endeavor to steer partnerships towards the network pole, because movement in this direction should be associated with a diminution of hierarchical and market dysfunctions and an increase in the benefits associated with network forms of co-ordination (Entwistle et al., 2007).

Management through the market can be seen as an outcome of NPM, which was the predominant theory in management research. Meanwhile, hierarchy-based governance goes back, which raises the legitimate question why this one of the axes of Meta-governance has such a great impact on the concept and its relationship not only with the traditional bureaucratic model but also with the new Weberianism doctrine.

Table 1. Main styles for Meta-governance conception

	Hierarchy	Network	Market
<i>Vision</i>	Government rules society	Government is partner in a network society	Government delivers services to society
<i>Strategy</i>	Planning and design style; stimulate compliance to rules and control procedures	Learning style: achieving objectives by societal learning; Chaos style: coping with unpredictability	Learning style: enabling to collectively learning; Power style: getting competitive advantage
<i>Structure</i>	Line organisation, Centralized control systems, Project teams, Stable/fixed	Soft structure, with a minimum level of rules and regulations	Decentralized, semiautonomous units/ agencies/teams; contracts
<i>Values and orientation</i>	Top-down, formal	Reciprocity, informal, mutual benefits; openminded, open to co-creation	Bottom-up, suspicious
<i>Control Price mechanism</i>	Authority	Trust	Price
<i>Degree of flexibility</i>	Low	Medium	High
<i>Leadership style</i>	Command and control	Coaching and supporting	Empowering and delegating
<i>Type of relations</i>	Dependent	Interdependent	Independent
<i>Object of relations</i>	Subjects	Partners	Customers, clients
<i>Commitment among parties</i>	Medium to high	Medium to high	Low
<i>Role of communication</i>	Communication about policy: giving information	Communication for policy: organizing effective dialogue	Communication as policy: incentives, PR campaigns
<i>Competencies of civil servants</i>	Legal, financial, project management, information management	Network moderation, process management, communication management	Economy, marketing, PR
<i>Affinity with problem types</i>	Crises, disasters, problems that can be solved by executing force (of e.g., police)	Complex, unstructured, multi-actor issues	Routine issues, non-sensitive issues
<i>Results</i>	Laws, regulations, control, procedures, accountancy reports, decisions, compliance, output	Outcome, consensus, covenants, voluntary agreements	Output, services, products, contracts, out-sourcing
<i>Objective of management development</i>	Training as an alternative form of control over subordinates	Training helps 'muddling' through	Training helps making more efficient decisions

Source: Meuleman (2006)

The scientific literature recognizes that networking is a special type of social structure that takes over the pluralism of autonomous social agents from the market mechanism, and yet hierarchically coordinates the pursuit of goals (Bučaitė and Ambotaitė-Mazeliauskienė, 2005). More and more researches are talking that networking is based on formal structures and processes (Diefenbach and Sillince, 2011), thus, the separation of networking and hierarchical principles becomes irrelevant because it works like a vicious circle.

Thus, the principle of hierarchy is still prevalent even in the latest concepts of management. And the saying applies here - everything that is good is just a forgotten old thing. It is this idea that best describes the phenomenon of the principle of hierarchy to this day.

The principle of hierarchy in military

When analyzing the phenomenon of the principle of hierarchy and in order to provide the clearest example, the first thing that comes to mind is the military. M. Weber used military as bureaucracy prototype (Shields, 2004). This is an exceptional phenomenon, which continues to be one of the most powerful examples of bureaucracy even in modern times (Altunok, 2018). Military is described as notably hierarchical in nature (Kuronen and Huhtinen, 2015). What is more effective bureaucracy promotes military professionalism (Shields, 2004) because it is characterized by a strict hierarchy of decision-making and execution of actions, without which the military would not be able to act in common. It should be marked that Post-communist states inherited well-developed military bureaucracy (Shields, 2004), where traditional bureaucracy model is still popular.

Military is unique organisation (Malick, 2020) and differs from the civilian one (Altunok, 2018). It's operations require a high degree of standardization and predictability, without which there would be chaos. Military management process is highly institutionalised, regulated and measured (Kuronen and Huhtinen, 2015). This uniqueness requires formalization and tight control. And even these compulsions force to create a structure that is ever evolving and always be adaptive (Malick, 2020).

The operation of the army is based on the idea that the individual is a part of the whole, thinking and responsible for his actions, but able to achieve his goals only by acting as a whole. In the military, common goals are more important than personal interest. Such a rational approach is especially necessary when examining the field of state management in general (Guogis and Rakšnys, 2014). According to authors, the civil servant is also treated as a part of the mechanism, and in order to ensure the stable functioning and progress of this mechanism, it is necessary to use various control mechanisms in institutions that limit human creative potential and freedom. For that purpose, hierarchical control is used as a tool, revealing the fact that each technology must be controlled from above, and smaller elements of the control apparatus must unconditionally obey the instructions of higher layers (Guogis and Raksnys, 2014).

„The military must wean itself from the heroin of bureaucracy“ (Adams, 2017, 13). Hierarchy is the fundamental structuring principle of the military, which is a total opposite to today's liberal worldview (Warren, 2015). There are cultures of military education that are torn between conflicting logics (Kuronen and Huhtinen, 2015). However, if we stick to the idea that professional soldiers (professionalization of the public service is the main idea of Neo-Weberianism) are the most important thing for the army, which is characteristic of the „old new bureaucracy“, the fundamental functions of management remain basically unchanged here.

In the military, common goals are more important than personal interest. The challenge of the military is that it is necessary to assemble a society, a community, bound by ties of trust and solidarity and able to act together in the name of the same goals, from a group of almost random, unrelated individuals. However, today's war is hybrid and asymmetric, so military management also changes and have to adapt to the environment. Changes in military technologies make changes in traditional hierarchy as well (Shields, 2004). Thus, military to this day must remain stable and hierarchical, but show professionalism, which does not allow us to forget the traditional management models with elements of the latest concepts.

Conclusions

The principle of hierarchy in management is derived from the traditional model of bureaucracy. M. Weber bureaucracy was seen as an existing hierarchical arrangement within an organization that is rationally designed to coordinate the work of employees in a wide range of administrative tasks, where administrative organization based on a hierarchical structure and governed by written rules and established procedures. Today public administration has developed from Weberian towards a Neo-Weberian style, which is still hierarchical. During the transformation from the traditional model of bureaucracy, the importance of the principle of the hierarchy hasn't changed. In the new Weberianism it means the solid democratic foundation needed for a professional public administration.

Although management is becoming more liberal, the principle of hierarchy still remains at its core. Though the management of modern organizations is based on the principle of networking, hierarchy helps to ensure proper implementation of procedures and rules. Therefore, Meta-management theory, while emphasizing networking the most, is in fact a synthesis of new and classical theories where networking cannot function in any way without the principle of hierarchy.

Of course, the principle of hierarchy is not a necessary element of effective management. In general, the traditional model of bureaucracy performs control functions well, is a reliable and stable management method, but lacks flexibility and resists innovation. The management of military is more characterized by Neo-Weberian theoretical assumptions than Meta-governance. For these specific bureaucratic organizations, moving away from the original idea can even be dangerous. The principle of hierarchy is even desirable in the modern context and ensures stability.

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