

## Examining Reinventing Government from Opponents' Point of View

Samereh Shojaei, Alireza Shirvani and Akbar Etebarian

Department of Management, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran

**Abstract:** Today, considering bureaucracy as a positive phenomenon is unthinkable but 100 years ago it was not like that. Bureaucracy reminds us of rational and effective organizational method; a method substituting power by authoritarian regimes. Bureaucracy introduced logic in government which is similar to production line into factories. But in the late 1980s and early 1990s, some new reforms were common in public sector. Scholars talked of revitalization or re-engineering of the public sector or more specifically reinventing government. However, although this term was new but the majority of concepts and processes were not so and dated back to some older traditions of Public sector reforms: “reinventing is a new act in the former cycle of reforms”. Osborne and Gaebler argued all tools which are employed to improve the performance of the private sector can be used in public sector, too. Although, this approach has been considered by many scholars and statesmen all over the world but it has experienced its own criticism. To this goal, it has been tried to deal with some critics on the reinventing government movement from different writer’s point of view.

**Key words:** Reinventing government, bureaucracy, customer oriented, justice, effective

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### INTRODUCTION

In most countries, government and governmental agencies are words which remind people of terms like bureaucracy, lack of responsibility, slowness and inertia. There are some organizations which need to be servant to people but consider themselves as masters and lords wrongly. A question raises here, How to make such organizations not to think so? How some organizations would be considered accountable while they misuses people’s property and openly spend money on necessarily? How to eradicate organization and people attitude in government and instead of this wrong idea a new and right perception is to be made? The solution is reinventing government movement which started by Osborne and Gaebler and is an effort to change the operation of government from introspective approach to output-oriented approach by emphasizing the need of users. They believe that the reinventing government school of thought must be a model for present and future (Tat-Kei, 2002) and state that problem are not people who work in government but the problem is the system that people research in it.

### DEFINITIONS OF REINVENTING GOVERNMENT

The phrase reinventing government means a change in the political system or restructuring system in order to

make it more efficient. For others, this phrase is meant as minimizing government or accepting the privatization. But reinventing government has wider meaning. Scholars spoke about reinventing government from different points of view. For example, Fox argue that reinventing government is postmodern concept and terms such as better working and reducing costs are symbols of postmodernism. Frederickson also state that reinventing government is an old concept but in a new form. He believes that most issues which are discussed in the new public management are now implemented as a part of reinventing government. He says that the common aspects of two movements are the need of change (Murphy *et al.*, 2002). Osborne and Plastrik in their book called “banishing bureaucracy”, introduces reinventing as a replace to bureaucratic organizations and behaviors with entrepreneurial organizations and behaviors. Reinventing government equipped politicians with tools in order to be accountable to people symbolically regarding people mistrust towards the government. But reinventing government is something more than a symbolic affair. Real changes occur in the structure and performance of the government. Organizations are subject to change and employees are affected in different ways. Rules and regulations are reformed and sometimes are eradicated. Some administrative changes are being implemented. Reinventing heritage is associated with the results of the administrative reforms (Kellough, 1998).

## **HISTORY OF GOVERNMENT REINVENTING**

Reinventing government is known as one of the reforms the government. In general, efforts to reform the government is as old as the state itself. For example, the Pendleton act which came into force in the 19th century was perhaps one of the most important reforms of the government was rooted in the good government movement. Forms continued in different periods. In the early 1990s, the so-called are not part of the vocabulary America. Although, reinventing government have been a hot topic in the 1990s but its roots returns to management science and other efforts to improve government performance. So, Holingez recreating the government numerous books emerged that emphasized the need for a change in philosophy, management and business. During the 1980s, the researchers believed that many businesses are in need of fundamental change. Although, early 1989 were the business elite, the 1990s was the growth of government. In the early 1990s, the literature related to renewal business entered in public sector. Many researchers describe how the practice of government. The most important book published by Osborn and Ted Gabler work in this area as “reinventing government: how the public sector is changing entrepreneurial spirit” in the 1992’s. The researchers in this book spoken of the smaller government, flatter, more entrepreneurial and more responsive. And also, the reinventing government movement is rooted in previous efforts to improve and re-bureaucracy. Only in the 20th century, several attempts to reform the ways in which some of them are:

- Commission president that the economy and efficiency (Taft commission) in 1910
- Joint committee on the reorganization in 1921
- President’s committee on administrative management (Brownlow commission) in 1936
- Task force on the reorganization of the government in 1960
- Presidential research about controlling costs (commission Lubricants) in 1982
- National performance review commission (commission Gore) in 1993

These efforts have had follow mixed results. The recommendations made by the working groups were closed but don’t have a long-term effect on the performance of the government. During the presidential campaign, Clinton had promised to provide the federal government with less cost, better work. He believed that: we cannot pay more the government pays more and at the

same time, we also received fewer services. More money is not always the answer of any questions. It is time to create fundamental changes in the government’s work means change of government hierarchical bureaucracy that enable citizens and communities enables entrepreneurs to change the country from top to bottom (Brudney *et al.*, 1999).

After he came to America as president created, “national performance review committee” and chose his President Al Gore to head it. Selecting Al Gore to the official indicated that Clinton’s commitment to the implementation of the reform. He gave the group 6 months to examine the performance of the federal government. When Al Gore will report his work on September 7, 1997 to the people of America stated that it plans to reinvent government. The 6 months effort including >1,200 proposals that its aim was better administration at a lower cost.

## **PRINCIPLES OF REINVENTING GOVERNMENT**

According to some experts, reinventing government movement was the dominant paradigm in the management of the 90. It has some principles which need more flexibility from bureaucracy towards environmental needs, reduction of rules, growth of citizen’s scope of choice, minimizing government, privatization, etc. Osborne and Gaebler introduce principles of reinventing government as follows:

**Catalytic:** Governments should steer not row and monitor services not providing them directly; meaning that policy making functions need to be separated from rendering services functions (Lenkowsky and Perry, 2000). Osborne and Gaebler believe that governments that deal with directing boat of government are more powerful than governments which row.

**Community empowerment:** In order to empower community people should have sense of ownership on services provided to them. Government should not be the owner however, it is not possible to provide each individual with this concept. Meanwhile, non-government organizations can substitute the government. Community empowerment should not impose bureaucratic solutions but encourage local groups to solve their own problems.

**Competition instead of monopoly:** This would be practiced through removing government control and privatizing those activities which can be done by private sector more effectively in comparison with governmental organizations.

**Mission oriented:** Mission oriented means goal determination and allowing employees to find the best solutions to meet goals. Entrepreneurial government is a mission oriented organization which lets its employees follow organizational mission through the most effective way they know (Thompson and Riccucci, 1998).

**Output-oriented:** Traditional public organizations use to pay more attention to inputs. For example, they provided financial needs of school based on number of enrolled children. They paid little attention to outputs. But entrepreneurial government transfer accountability from inputs to outputs and then measure performance of public organizations and as a result specified goals such governments reward organizations which meet goals or go beyond it.

**Customer-oriented:** It would be defined as providing needs of citizens rather than bureaucratic needs. Osborne and Gaebler point out governments should behave in a way to satisfy customer's needs. This would be done by listening to customer's opinions (Kellough, 1998).

**Enterprising (income making instead of cost):** In bureaucratic government thoughts whether in accounting and budgeting system or development and education system managers' thought emphasizes on spending money not making money. There are two sections in a balance sheet: incomes and expenses. In many governments income section has been removed and they emphasize in maximum return of income. But in entrepreneurial government the emphasis is on income making beside spending money.

**Anticipatory (prediction instead of cure):** Entrepreneurial government not only tries to minimize problem but also predicts them. It is necessary to imagine a clear picture of the future for decision makers as results politicized environments can not make governments find short term solutions to solve problems.

**Decentralization:** Collaboration through partnership and group work among governmental organization at different levels and with external group as well. One of the raised issues in reinventing governments is authority which should be transferred to lower levels in organization. Government leaders should design the methodology and move towards determined goals while rendering services should be practiced by lower level management.

**Market-oriented:** Since, bureaucratic governments deal more with implementation are interested in monopoly

and when the government is the only source of specific services creativity, innovation, flexibility and customer-orientation would be weakened. Entrepreneurial governments apply a kind of strategy called market in which customers can experience favorite services.

### **SOME CRITICS ON REINVENTING GOVERNMENT**

The term reinventing has been criticized by some experts of public administration. One of these critics on reinventing government is its use of customer metaphor. For example, the national performance review emphasizes on need of a new contract to serving customers. Managers and employees must provide the same services both to customers and taxpayer. Therefore, public organizations should satisfy their customers' needs and keep them satisfied. It is important that identification of customers in public sector is difficult. Maybe customer is a person who makes use of public services directly, maybe is a person who makes use public services indirectly or is a person who works for other public organizations (Kellough, 1998). But Frederickson criticized customer-oriented model due to the use of false metaphor. He states that citizens are not customers of the government but they are the owner of the government that select leaders to be representative of their interests. Customer-Oriented Model consider a limited role for citizens who can only accept services or not. The owners have an active role and decide about the agenda of government (Schachter, 1995).

Like new public management approach, one of the critics regarding reinventing government movement is lack of attention to fairness and equity. Scholars usually warn against risk of endangering values like fairness, equity and justice in trying to increase efficiency. Although, in reinventing government to decrease red tape, bureaucracy and attention has paid to deletion or facilitation of rules and regulations, rules and regulation are elements in line with increasing accountability, equity and fairness and as a result rapid deletion of them will have dangerous consequences.

Another critic is done by Russell and Wisest. They believe that most citizens don't participate in daily governmental affairs (Vito and Kunselman, 2000). Other critics criticized this movement due to its deviation from the tradition of public management. In public management the emphasis is on reinforcing of executive branch and specially the authority of manager of executive branch on implementing public policies. Moe reviewing of national performance review stated that the focus of reinvention on results has its root in misunderstanding of rules. While

former reforms emphasized on managerial responsibilities of president and establishing institutions and tools to reinforcing president.

Thompson and Riccucci consider downsizing as a great threat for effectiveness and efficiency. They believe that if effectiveness and efficiency are in concentration then human resources planners must carefully evaluate the structures of government agencies and their duties in order to be able to specify. The number and type of required personnel in each of these organizations. But in reinventing government downsizing is considered as if it is a simple affair. For this reason, many statesmen hurriedly try in downsizing. Furthermore, reviewing the implementation of downsizing in business organizations shows that this strategy has been so expensive for them. Downsizing does not always lead to costs reduction but on the contrary it damaged productivity because reduction of work force leads to fear and demotivation of other employees (Thompson and Riccucci, 1998).

Another critic about reinventing government is done by Denhardt. He believes that if we move toward rowing rapidly, it is more probable for the boat to be sunk. In other words, the main issue in public management is rendering services instead of rowing or steering and public management must have rendering services responsibilities.

Other critics mentioned to legitimacy formal authority of public organizations, role of rules and differences between public and private sectors. Some critics mention to the political context of public management that is neglected in the model of reinventing. For example, Waldo argue that reforming suggestions make problem in accountability between democratic and entrepreneurial governments. Peter and Savij believe that reforming plans violates social justice and in an environment that reforms makes justice can not be met. Other experts present these problems about entrepreneurial governments:

- Public organizations must serve different target groups. These organizations should consult and sometimes choose among them
- Transforming public needs to public goods is difficult and there is a wide range of public services that they can hardly be referred to as products
- Very often, there is not a clear demand about public goods and services. These goods and services are imposed on citizens and make customers use them forcefully not voluntarily. Sometimes these public services lead to favorable situation and sometimes are innovative, too

- The government has its culture, rules and habits. This legal culture provides little space for rules considering customer-orientation
- A bureaucratic is not employed based on his/her capabilities and usually does not try to obtain such capabilities
- Governments do not think about results. In many cases measuring the performance of government is difficult
- When, there are more than one target group, strategic choice for government is difficult because it can be considered as discrimination (Van Mierlo, 2007)

## CONCLUSION

By introducing the reinventing government movement in the 1980s by Osborne and Gaebler, this movement attracted many scholars and statesmen. Although, this movement applied in many governments and its 10 principles considered as a road map for governmental leaders, it has usually been criticized. Some critics criticized its focus on customer orientation and others such as Frederickson point out to issues like fairness and equity. Reinventing government on its way has encountered with other critics such as government special culture is against customer orientation, government performance measurement is something hard, customer is dependent the government, etc. It seems some mentioned principles by two theorists of reinventing government (Osborne and Gaebler) are in contradiction. For instance, the centralization is not compatible with rationalizing government decisions or empowerment with separation of steering and rowing. Street level bureaucrats are not passive parts in government policies. They often enter government services because they believe that they are worried about organizational goals of their organizations. Finally, implantations of these principles are not as easy as what theorists thought of (Williams, 2000).

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