

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN THE GREEK PUBLIC SECTOR: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

In the current climate of perpetual crises (natural, health, geopolitical, energy, financial), public administration is being asked to reinvent itself, first and foremost, to become capable of preventing, planning, and scheduling its operations in order to successfully carry out its multifaceted mission. The capacity to adjust to the unusual situations brought about by crises is the most essential instrument available to governments for effectively addressing these issues. The public sector needs to strengthen its efficiency, accountability, and transparency in order to adapt effectively and continue serving society or even improving the quality of its services. This can only be achieved through organizational culture changes (Boyne & Meier, 2009). Organizational culture is a critical element towards meeting this target, for both private and public entities. Modern public organizations operate in the same fast-paced, complex and volatile environment as private companies, while at the same time, they are generally more bureaucratic and less adaptable due to their size and resources. Due in large part to

the difficulty and complexity of evaluating organizational culture in public organizations, there are comparatively few empirical studies on the subject (Hood, 1991; Rukh & Qadeer, 2018). Furthermore, because there is no widely accepted organizational or professional culture in the public sector (which, according to Brunetto, 2001, is a facilitating factor for change) culture change is more difficult there. Greece has been experiencing a series of crises since 2008, including the financial crisis, the pandemic crisis, the energy crisis, etc., which has made the need for public sector reform even more pressing. This paper utilizes Cameron and Quinn's (2011) Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), which is based on their competing values framework. It presents the empirical results of a questionnaire study that was conducted among Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs public servants. This study examines the organizational culture that was in place, and what was desired five years later. The analysis was done based on demographic characteristics such as age, gender, hierarchical position, work experience, etc. The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs was selected as a result of the extensive reforms currently underway, including the recent establishment of a new organization that changed economic diplomacy by bringing it up to the standards of developed economies in order to effectively promote the nation's and Greek businesses' economic interests, as well as legislation and implementation in the country of "executive state" (Papatolias, 2021). The results showed that the hierarchy culture currently rules the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the market culture following it by a narrow margin. In contrast, the employees wanted the clan culture to predominate in five years, with the market culture following it by a narrow margin. The results are of particular importance for policymakers towards meeting the critical political, economic and social challenges of today and tomorrow, such as sustainability, globalization, digitization, administrative development and geopolitical tensions (Lovell, 1994; Stewart & Kimber, 1996; Rukh & Qadeer, 2018).

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