

**ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ УПРАВЛЕНИЕ И ПРАВА
МЕНЬШИНСТВ В ТУРЦИИ (PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND
MINORITY RIGHTS IN TURKEY)**

The issue of diversity has been among top-rated discussions in public administration today. The issue has generally been evaluated in terms of change management, i. e. a strong response to change in the society. This approach is mainly based upon the claim that public administration should be sensitive to societal needs as well as the changing demographic profiles in the society, as radical changes has occurred within the society towards individualisation and multi-ethnic / multi-cultural society under the impulse of rapid globalisation. However, there are a number of other reasons to pay attention to diversity issues in public services including issues of culture, social equity, administrative neutrality, and organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

On the other hand, it is not easy to manage ethnic, cultural and religious diversity within public administration. First, in addition to classical diversity factors such as age, race, culture, religion and ethnicity, new factors such as socio-economic status has emerged. Second, simply hiring a diverse workforce is not enough; diversity tends to create conflicts and tension, and in order for organizations to capitalize on the benefits of a diverse workforce, those conflicts must be actively managed in a culturally sensitive manner.

This paper evaluates diversity issues in Turkish administration, describes problems in this regard and brings suggestions for solution. Major findings include:

Traditional public administration in Turkey tended to emphasize a traditional Weberian model of bureaucracy that is not amenable to innovation and change, rather than emphasizing social equity, innovation,

responsibility, and performance. With the shift from traditional public administration to New Public Management practices, however, being sensitive to diversity issues such as the rights of minorities has come to the fore.

Main areas of tension in Turkish society, and therefore within Turkish public administration include placing members of other religions in public administration posts, particularly top ones and increasing tolerance to other cultures and ethnicities within the society.

There are a number of positive developments in recent years in terms of betterment of diversity issues in Turkish public administration. As a result of democratization steps by AK Parti governments, a number of serious and long-standing problems of minorities has been solved or, at least, are about to solve. New laws have proved improvements in fighting racism and saving rights of minorities. The climate of democratization has brought benefits for minorities as well as other members of the society. Major elements of institutional racism, which can be defined as “practices that directly or indirectly restrict the professional access and mobility of individuals or groups on the basis of race and other kinds of societal difference” has been overcome to a great extent.

However, there are some problems still waiting to be resolved, including employment of minority members in the army and police force and overcoming cultural bias towards minorities in high administrative ranks. The paper brings brief suggestions for solution for these issues.

The paper concludes that, any initiative aiming to solve diversity problems in Turkish public administration should involve both “valuing diversity” and “managing diversity” at the same time. Valuing diversity entails seeing differences as a source of value and, in turn, changing the organizational culture through interactions with those differences. This can be seen as a bottom-up strategy compared to the top-down strategy of managing diversity. Managing diversity emphasizes changing the organizational culture first, through policies and procedures.