


## Chapter 6

# Accountability Practices and Their Importance for the Management of Public Sector Entities: A Literature Review

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### ABSTRACT

*New public management reflects a paradigm and orientation shift regarding the cornerstone of management in the public sector. With this new type of management, emphasis was given to accountability in order to, on the one hand, instill the need to render accounts when talking about the way decisions are taken (responsibility) and the way public resources are used (clarity) and, on the other hand, the citizens having the possibility of getting information which will allow them to make the public officials responsible. Considering the importance of accountability, this chapter was an attempt to carry out a bibliographic review, as a way of getting to know the different approaches to the concept, as well as getting to know the mechanisms that have been created in order to give explanations whether for the performance or accomplishment of a responsibility and if this is inherent to the responsibilities of the public officials.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The designated New Public Management underlying a set of features and instruments derived from business management, which until its introduction in the public sector was exclusively from the private sector. To that extent we can state that there was a paradigm and orientation shift regarding the cornerstone of management in the public sector. A new management endowed with innovative models and mechanisms able to reformulate procedures of the public sector arises. These new models essentially aimed at introducing mechanisms/ instruments which were specific in the private sector in order to make efficiency, effectiveness and saving characteristics of the expected performance of the public sector. Ideas like decentralization, delegation of powers, the importance of performance monitoring and also the implementation of changes which describe the mechanisms of accountability by the public officials, in order to meet the necessities of the citizens, are the key elements of this new management paradigm. All these ideas emerge from the already mentioned changing of paradigm, where the quality of the services provided and the fulfillment of the citizen needs are the priority of this new form of management.

The New Public Management aims at introducing a model capable of providing answers in a more effective way, bringing down the bureaucratic model incapable of providing answers to citizens and in use until then. This means that the public administration apart from knowing its duty in rendering a public service has to do it in a correct, fair and quality way. Therefore, Hood (1991) defined the main characteristics of the New Public Management: the admission of professional managers from the private sector to the public sector, therefore seeking the professionalization of the management and an orientation for the private management techniques; the setting of measures and performance patterns with measurable and clearly defined goals; the concern in controlling the results, emphasizing the need of insisting in the results and not in the processes; the breakdown of working units of the public sector, dividing large structures into smaller working units, using innovative methods for organizing activities; the introduction of factors that promote competitiveness in the public sector, for example by hiring with the aim of reducing the costs and improving the quality of services provided; the emphasis on the styles and practices of management of the private sector, introducing models that make management flexible; and last of all, the emphasis on more rigor and moderation in the usage of resources.

Given this, it is essential that, on the one hand, the procedures and plan of action are well defined in order to avoid misuse of powers and corruption and on the other hand, the information should be true and suitable, regarding decision making so that the citizens are able to understand how and with which goals public resources are used. Focusing our attention in the public administration, it was established that even the

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