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Hazel E. Heughan (1919-1993)

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ESSAYS IN MEMORY OF HAZEL E. HEUGHAN

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Editorial Board
İsmail E. Erünsal, Chistopher Ferrard,
Hamza Kandur, A. Oğuz İcimsoy,
Niyazi Çiçek

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Factors Leading to the Creation of Unnecessary Records in Turkish Public Administration

Türk Kamu Yönetiminde Gereksiz Belge Üretimine Sebep Olan Faktörler

Niyazi ÇİÇEK[*]

Abstract

The creation of an overwhelming number of records, known as paperwork, in public administration is a matter about which there have been many complaints over the years. Piles of office documents not only reduce efficiency in daily activities, but also compel the records managers to deal with unnecessary records. Even if the use of electronic records increases, the problem may still persist for information users at all levels, since undisciplined recorded information, with its many copies, makes access, use, preservation and elimination of records difficult. In this article, the various factors that lead to the creation of unnecessary records in public administration have been examined. Initially, the managerial style and process, which constitute the principal dynamics both in executing the functions and in creating records, are considered. Considering the causes of undesirable paperwork, numerous factors, such as the procedures leading to the creation of unnecessary records, formality, centralism and management techniques are examined in the final sections of the article.

Keywords: Records Management – Records Creation, Archives, Paperwork

Öz

Kurumlarda kırtasiyecilik olarak bilinen aşırı belge üretimi, önceden beri yakınılan bir konudur. Gereksiz belge yığınlarına sebep olan bu durum, günlük işlemlerde verimliliği düşürüp iş süreçlerini uzattığı gibi evrak yöneticilerini de gereğinden fazla dokümanla uğraşmak zorunda bırakmaktadır. Bürolarda elektronik evrak kullanımı artsa dahi disiplin altına alınmayan ve birçok kopyası bulunan dokümanlar, erişim, kullanım, muhafaza ve tasfiye gibi birçok konuda zorluk çıkaracağından, her düzeydeki bilgi kullanıcısı için problem olmaya devam edecektir. Bu makalede kamu yönetiminde gereksiz belge üretiminin kaynakları olan çeşitli faktörler değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırmada önce hem fonksiyonların yürütülmesi, hem de belgelerin üretilmesinde temel dinamikleri oluşturan idari usul ve işlem ele alınmıştır. Daha sonra kırtasiyeciliğin kaynakları da göz önünde bulundurularak, gereksiz belge üretimine sebep olan güncellenmeyen mevzuat, biçimsellik, merkeziyetçilik ve yönetim teknikleri gibi çeşitli faktörler incelenmiştir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Evrak Yönetimi - Belge Üretimi, Arşivcilik, Kırtasiyecilik

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Introduction

Not only public officials and managers, but also archivists are intimidated by the creation of unnecessary records in organizations. Working with fewer papers undoubtedly facilitates the work done by office workers and enables the archivists to manage certain practises pertaining to records management more efficiently. Although it is quite hard to associate the reasons that lead to the creation of unnecessary records with a single source, it is possible to state that they may stem from the interpretation of paperwork in offices. Strict practices of paperwork carried out in public administrations, studied at earlier dates by various researchers[1], will not be examined in detail in this paper. This article, based on a method of documentary analysis and monitoring, illustrates the factors leading to the creation of excessive numbers of unnecessary records in public administration.

A document and its production process are closely related to records management, the basic element of which is recorded information; such records are concerned with workflow management, administrative law and many similar fields. It is for this reason that the subject of document creation has attracted the interest of workflow analysts, who have made certain contributions in various other research studies, as well as that of experts employed in the field of records management. In these studies, both the significance of records management in bringing document creation under control[2] and the management of correspondence have been heavily emphasized.[3]

This article aims to provide records managers with some clues in handling the document creation process, which can only be achieved by clearly understanding the dynamics that bring about the reasons for the creation of documents.

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1 Some of these studies are as follows: Cemal Mıhcıoğlu, "Kırtasiyecilikle Savaş", *Amme İdaresi Bülteni (AİB)*, 3 (1965), p. 8; Cahit Emre, "Türkiye'de Bürokratik İşlemlerin Basitleştirilmesi ya da Yazçizciliğin Azaltılması: Genel Bir Değerlendirme", *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 46/3-4 (1991), pp. 209-276; Metin Kazancı, "Kırtasiyecilik ve Kamu Yönetimi", *Amme İdaresi Dergisi (AİD)*, 36/2 (2003), pp. 1-15.

2 One work considering the bringing of created documents under control belongs to Schellenberg, (*Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*, Chicago 1975, pp. 44-51); For Turkish literature see. F. Özdemirci, *Belge Üretiminin Denetlenmesi ve Belge Yönetimi*, İstanbul 1998, pp. 73-89.

3 Hüseyin Odabaş – Fatih Rukancı. "Belge Yönetiminin Bir Unsuru Olarak Yazışma Yönetimi". *Türk Kütüphaneciliği,* 18/4 (2004), pp. 385-404.

Administrative Procedures in Records Creation

The aim of creating a document is to record the procedures carried out during the functions of an organisation. It is in this way that the procedures and those responsible for them can be defined more precisely. It is worth mentioning that a document is a necessary tool to safeguard any rights that may emerge after an activity, particularly when there are binding conditions.[4] When the construction of an administrative process and its phases are committed to paper[5] a tool that conveys ideas more concretely - a document - becomes demonstrable, and this enables one to utilize it as evidence. [6]

The processes and functions that constitute the basic steps in creating a document are carried out according to some rules which are determined by a host of procedures. These rules outline what steps should be taken when reaching an administrative decision. These steps are defined as administrative procedures and processes in public administration. Procedure means organising an activity that is directed towards a specific purpose in a systematic way. Administrative procedure, however, is made up of rules and methods that are to be followed in executing the processes.[7] While demonstrating the ways of executing administrative process activities, administrative procedures help these processes run within the legal framework.

Accordingly, administrative procedures and processes that describe the way an activity is to be carried out also appear in the form of documents. However, if the rules established to secure the proper functioning of an order fail there will come a time when many complaints are made. These rules are widely viewed as part of the bureaucratic process which results in paperwork.[8] Citizens subject to such practices consider bureaucratic processes as completely unnecessary and believe that they should be largely eliminated. Nevertheless, these processes depend on certain necessities and help greatly in the smooth running of a business, in determining the relationship between an employee and his/her senior, and observing all the steps that are taken. Likewise, such rules that appear in

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4 T. Harris, "Called to Account: Contracting and Responsibility" *Australian CPA*, 68/12 (December 1998), p. 40.

5 Sıddık S. Onar, *İdare Hukukunun Umumi Esasları*, vol. I, 3th ed., İstanbul 1966, p. 308.

6 Murat Sezginer, "Usul Kanunlarında İdari İşlemin Dış Görüntüsü", *İdari Usul Kanunu Hazırlığı Uluslararası Sempozyumu Bildirileri (17-18 Ocak 1998, Ankara),* Ankara 1998, p. 201.

7 Lütfi Duran, "İdari Usul İlkeleri ve Kapsadığı Konular", *İdari Usul Kanunu Hazırlığı Uluslararası Sempozyumu Bildirileri (17-18 Ocak 1998, Ankara),* Ankara 1998, p. 27.

8 H. Taylor, "Information Ecology and the Archives of the 1980s", *Archivaria*, 18 (Summer 1984), p. 25.

the bureaucratic/administrative process play a significant role in protecting the public from arbitrary practises.[9] However, it should also be admitted that those bureaucratic processes which are currently in effect have long been ignored and are frequently complained about as they have not been updated or purged of what is considered to be unnecessary. As a result, such processes cause an organisation to run less efficiently negatively influence the creation of documents.

Factors Leading to the Creation of Unnecessary Records

Records creation, the leading function of records management, works to control the documents in an organisation before they are created and strives to prevent the creation of those that are unnecessary. Schellenberg stated that the functions, the work progressions and the record processes are to be simplified so as to limit the creation of documents in organisations.[10] Otherwise creation of overwhelming paperwork is unavoidable. Let aside simplifying these three elements there are even more factors causing creation of unnecessary records in Turkish public administration including old-fashioned management techniques, blind loyalty to rules, and a lack of confidence in claiming responsibility on the part of managers. Apparently, it is essential that we approach the matter more discreetly, given that both the factors that give rise to strict bureaucracy in an organisation and the reasons for the creation of unnecessary records are more or less the same. Therefore, we should also consider different factors as well as those put forward by Schellenberg. These factors involve:

a) Inadequate and old-fashioned legislation, b) formalism, c) lack of confidence in claiming responsibility, d) centralism, e) developments in the organisational functions, and f) failure to improve the administrative power.

Inadequate and Out-of-Date Legislation

The principals of administrative acts are based on legislation, including the constitution, laws, rules and regulations. For instance, the process followed in requesting a passport, the procedure required to build a hospital, or the procedure to follow while carrying out all of the activities concerning public administration have been determined by legislation.[11] Thus, an administrative act that is carried out in accordance with the legislation will result in the creation of a document governed by the legislation.

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9 Mıhcıoğlu, op. cit., p. 8.

10 Schellenberg, op. cit., p. 44.

11 Fikret Ar, "Bürokratik İşlemlerin Basitleştirilmesi ve İptal Edilen Yetki Kanunu", *AİD,* 26/4 (1993), p. 186.

Legislation, which constitutes the major reason for administrative practises and which forms the basis of the documents created, is also viewed as the main source of paperwork. The innovative decision mechanisms in the administration have not helped to surmount the obstacles concerning the current procedures, and the creation of unnecessary records has continued as the creators of these records feel obliged to adhere firmly to the procedures.

Records creation, a legislative requirement, can be considerably reduced if the rules are thoroughly reconsidered. In order to limit document creation, to eliminate those that are unnecessary and to help the regular creation of those currently used the legislation needs to be reconsidered as well. Limited document creation can only be achieved through updating the relevant procedures.

With regard to the rearrangement of bureaucratic procedures that lead to the creation of unnecessary records, it has been observed that in Turkey, rather than simply making laws,[12] as is done in some countries, the legal struggle against excessive paperwork has been hindered by impotent laws.[13] During the administration of various political parties, it was intended that some of the administrative processes should be reduced in order that major activities could be carried out more rapidly than before. However, the laws that were enacted were not extended to cover all administrative procedures and acts,[14] and they were only put into effect over short periods for certain processes in public administration.

The governing body of an organisation, an administrative authority that makes decisions, is responsible for submitting the necessary proposals to the central legislative body to ensure that new regulations will be created. Despite the fact that some of the aforementioned procedures were successfully introduced, it has been stated in the surveys concerning the amendments to bureaucratic acts in public administration that the managers are not attentive enough about this matter.[15] Such remedial activities should not be abandoned for the sake of short-lived political gains.

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12 "Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995" (44 U.S.C. 3501), National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) US, Retrieved January 13, 2005, from http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/laws/paperwork-reduction/3520.html.

13 Republic of Turkey (Laws) "İdari Usul ve İşlemlerin Yeniden Düzenlenmesiyle İlgili Yetki Kanunu", Law no. 2977, *Resmi Gazete*, 18306 (8.2.1984); "İdari Usul ve İşlemlerin Yeniden Düzenlenmesiyle İlgili Yetki Kanunu", Law no. 3481, *Resmi Gazete*, 19970 (25.10.1988).

14 Emre, op. cit., pp. 211-215.

15 *İdari Reform Danışma Kurulu Raporu: İdarenin Yeniden Düzenlenmesi, İlkeler ve Öneriler*, Ankara 1972, p. 212.

An article that was once considered to be useful in running a legal procedure may no longer be required due to new technical practises. Those which are no longer in use should be eliminated to avoid the creation of unnecessary records.

It is as important that the regulatory acts be well-planned from the very beginning as it is that legislation which is not functional be eliminated. The legislation should not only be simplified and made more understandable to people, it should also be objective and involve firm judgements. The documents that are to be created following a process should be clearly defined to avoid any adaptations which people could misinterpret. Certain institutions, such as The Directorate of the Republican Archives and The Institute of Turkish Standards should be asked to supply a second opinion on the distinctive form of the documents that are likely to be created. In this way, fewer numbers of documents will be created within the qualified standards and control over their creation will be achieved more effectively before they are created.[16]

One more thing that affects an administrative act negatively is that, as yet, there has been no thorough study on the subject of the "administrative process". At present, there are no rules on this subject, and no vital steps have yet been taken to regulate it. Apart from a few private regulations governing certain fields, like "the law concerning the reasoning of legal procedures" and "the law as regards the administrative hearing procedures", the question of what rules to follow in public services has not yet been satisfactorily answered.[17] There is no doubt that this chaotic situation leads to an uncertainty in the execution of an administrative act and affects the creation of documents in a negative manner.

There is no unique procedure in achieving administrative acts and there is no general procedure governing the entire public administration; for example, there is no specific law as "regards the diminishing of paperwork"[18] which would prevent the creation of unnecessary documents. Undoubtedly, the absence of such a law, which is closely concerned with records management,[19] influences the creation of documents in a negative manner.

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16 *Kamu Yönetiminin İyileştirilmesi ve Yeniden Yapılandırılması Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu*, Ankara 2000, p. 45.

17 Zehra Odyakmaz, "İdari Usulden Beklediklerimiz", *İdari Usul Kanunu Hazırlığı Uluslararası Sempozyumu Bildirileri (17-18 Ocak 1998, Ankara)*, Ankara 1998, p. 2.

18 "Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995", *Ibid.*

19 I. A. Penn. "Information Management Legislation ın the Last Quarter of the Century: A Records Management Disaster", *Records Management Quarterly*, 31/1 (January 1997).

Formalism in Practices and the Strict Understanding of Bureaucracy

It is known that the procedures administered in public organisations may sometimes lead to excessive formalities. This has been an issue about which there have been constant complaints, both by those who practise such procedures and those who are subject to them. Because of this, various governments have pledged to take drastic measures to eliminate unnecessary formalities,[20] trying also to regulate the procedures that cause these difficulties by making "a decree in the force of a law",[21] and even becoming involved in diverse activities that will prompt private companies to do the same.[22] Additionally, comprehensive studies in Turkey concerning the regulation of administrative procedures and acts in public administration were made by TODAİE[23] and the Department of Administrative Development from the Prime Minister's Office, and reports were issued about them.[24] Independent studies carried out by some experts can also be counted among these.[25] In spite of the fact that none of these attempts have yielded any positive results, it is apparent that this subject has been carefully examined both by administrators and scholars for quite a long time. For this reason, it is believed that the appraisal of the available studies could contribute more to these efforts, rather than a reconsideration of the formalism and strict understanding of bureaucracy in public administration.

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20 Mıhcıoğlu, op. cit., p. 8; Government program, which was announced by President Turgut Özal on 19th December 1983 in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, (Turgut Tan, "Kamu Hizmeti, Özelleştirme ve Bürokrasinin Azaltılması Üzerine", *Türk İdare Dergisi*, 378 (Mart 1988), p. 74).

21 Republic of Turkey (Decrees) "Kanun Hükmünde Kararname" (KHK) No.192, *Resmi Gazete*, 18344 (16.03.1984).

22 The government has started a project, which is connected with productivity and bureaucracy, and has announced that it will promote those who sending their own studies. The aim of one of these projects is to simplify transactions, to reduce unnecessary documents and to diminish the amount of time dedicated to transactions. (Kamu Kesiminde Kaynakları Etkin Kullanma ve Maliyetleri Düşürme Projesi, Retrieved March 20, 2006, from http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/docs/igb/TanitimBrosuru.doc.

23 *Kamu Yönetimi Araştırması (KAYA): Genel Rapor: Kamu Yönetimi Araştırma Projesi*, Ankara 1991.

24 *Kamu Yönetiminde Bürokratik İşlemlerin Azaltılması-I: 1984-1989*, Ankara 1989; *Kamu Yönetiminde Bürokratik İşlemlerin Azaltılması-II: 1989-1990*, Ankara 1991; *Kamu Yönetiminde İdareyi Geliştirme Çalışmaları (1991-1995)*, ed. Talat Bayraktar, Ankara 1996; *2001 Hedefleri Doğrultusunda, 21. Yüzyıla Girerken Türkiye'de Kamu Yönetiminin Geliştirilmesi ve Bazı Ülkelerdeki Uygulamalar (Araştırma Raporları II)*, Ankara 1994.

25 Mıhcıoğlu, *Bir Yönetim Deneyi: İdari Danışma Merkezi Kırtasiyecilikle Savaş*, Ankara 1986; For further information see: the sixth chapter, footnote five in Özdemirci's aforementioned work, pp. 137-150; Emre, op. cit., pp. 218-271.

Since the creation of a document is a natural consequence of bureaucratic practices, it is imperative that we should briefly consider where the word "bureaucracy" originates from. Etymologically, it is made up of two distinct words, "bureau" and "cratie", and describes the work that is administered by means of those employed in a bureau and the structure that is constituted to carry out social activities.[26] According to this, bureaucracy is a structure that is established by those who collaborate to achieve a common cause; in other words it is a social organisation. Therefore, bureaucracy should initially be regarded as a way of organising things. Organisation, however, is thought to be a structure in which the duties and the responsibilities of those who work in close collaboration with one another are determined.[27]

Although bureaucracy is actually a form of organisation, it is inaccurately used by people to define the unnecessary procedures and formalities in an ordinary process, which is also known as "formalism" or "red tape".[28] Bureaucracy has always been misinterpreted, being seen as consisting of a chain of practises that hinder the processes; this is because the necessity to comply with official procedures and methods, without making any exceptions, results in a waste of certain means of production, such as time and labour, and has consequences, such as not being able to achieve overall goals.[29]

In parallel to this misapprehension, bureaucracy is interpreted as a way of management peculiar to state government, and is thought to exist solely in the public sector.[30] However, it is possible to speak of bureaucracy and bureaucratic structure in every possible place where there is an organisation, whether it is in the public or private sector. It is only because of the differences in the mental attitude which determines how certain practices should be responded to that bureaucracy, on the one hand, has had a pretty bad reputation, and on the other is totally ignored.[31]

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26 Kemal Tosun, "İşletme ve Kamu Yönetiminde Bürokrasi", *Sevk ve İdare Dergisi*, 99 (1976), p. 9.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

28 Red tape: rules and procedures are defined as unnecessary transactions and waste of time in offices. (*Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*, ed. J. Sinclair, London 1992, p. 1208).

29 Tosun, op. cit., p. 10.

30 *Ibid.*

31 As in the public sector, there is also bureaucracy in the private sector. The difference is that which is practised in the public sector is more strictly enforced. As productivity is the main concern in the private sector, applications in this sector tend to be more functional. Made disfunctional by extreme procedures and formalities, bureaucracy has become a non-applicable type of organization for today's modern corporations (Tosun, op. cit., p. 11).

What makes bureaucracy seem intolerable are the processes and the practises that are no longer valid, and the rules that were set without too much thought being given. In this respect, bureaucracy, which appears in organisations as formalism, is referred to as paperwork. This negative structure, also known as "bureaucratism", is believed to have emerged after the interpretation of rules that are devoted to the functions in the organisation in a strict and complex manner.[32] In other words, if the procedures and the rules are treated preferentially in managing an organisation and if it is mandated that, no matter what, they are to be followed strictly, it is inevitable that an administrative system, known as "a strict understanding of bureaucracy", arises.[33]

In order that the understanding of strict bureaucracy is largely eliminated, it is important for managers to take appropriate decisions. For instance, a decision made by the Ministry of Health led to the elimination of an unnecessary step in an administrative act, which enabled citizens to get their tasks done more rapidly and helped employees to avoid this unnecessary act.[34]

> According to one additional article released in the official gazette in 2005, those given outpatient treatment were not required to ask the head-doctor to stamp the duplicate of the document they had received once their examination was completed.

In spite of steps taken to simplify the bureaucratic process, it is evident that there is still passionate devotion to routine procedures and rules in major organisations.

An organisation that relies too much on bureaucratic procedures in its administration prefers rules to flexibility, and thus fails to achieve its priorities.[35] Reliance on such a way of administration leads to the formation of an overwhelming number of papers and hinders regulations from being made that could prevent the creation of unnecessary records.

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32 Emre, op. cit., p. 211.

33 In an inspection conducted in a governorship, it was seen that bureaucratic transactions not only affected the communication between institutions, but also led to the creation of unnecessary documents (Kemal Doğrusöz, *İl ve İlçelerin İdare Kuruluşlarının Dış Yazışma Kanalları Üzerine Bir Araştırma*, Ankara 1969, pp. 4-6).

34 Sağlık Bakanlığı Yazısı, (Correspondence by Health Ministry), B100THG0100012/0314-1, (06.04.2005), Retrieved December 25, 2005, from http://www.edak.org.tr/haber.php?devam=value &sira=367.

35 *Ibid.*

The Failure of Administration to Use its Own Discretion

In the event that legislation does not satisfy the needs during practice, the chief administrator should determine how administrative procedures and acts are to be carried out. In this conventional way of administration, the manager in charge uses his own discretion to have the necessary rearrangements made.[36] This method, performed by making use of oral directions, is generally presented with a written order.

The person who is to use his own discretion to establish an administrative act can be a manager, a head of a department, a general director, a minister or even a prime minister, depending on how large the organisation is.[37] The way a process is carried out, again, is determined by those who are responsible.

Even a civil servant should have the authority to determine the way that an ordinary process is to be carried out, on condition that this does not require the attention of other officials.[38] However, such freedom is to be given to a civil servant beforehand if they are to be able to undertake the responsibility of removing certain procedures that lead to the creation of unnecessary records.

Administrative acts can be delayed owing to the incompetence of the administration in using its authority; this will naturally result in unnecessary paperwork. If the person in charge avoids taking on responsibility while performing a particular task, and if they become accustomed to waiting for the final decision of their superiors and asking them to document this decision, it is then inevitable that an unnecessary document will be created. The obligation to follow the procedures, the will of the civil servants to follow certain patterns and their incompetence to make decisions on their own initiative will all interrupt the simplification of certain administrative acts, even when it is obvious that unnecessary paperwork can be considerably diminished by the introduction of simple practices.

For instance, a decision made by the Office of the Prime Minister helped to reduce the paperwork in the health service for medical treatment offered to people.[39]

> 1- Those relying on social security or having a green card will not be required to make copies of their identity cards, nor reveal any other official documents during their registration for a visit to a doctor; these used to cause patients to wait in long lines that seemed endless. In addition, some

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36 Ar, op. cit., p. 186.

37 *Ibid.*

38 *Ibid.*

39 Republic of Turkey (Regulations) "Başbakanlık Genelgesi No.2005/4", *Başbakanlık Dış Genelgeler*, Retrieved December 20, 2005, from http://195.140.196.81/genelge/.

> government officials in hospitals have been delegated to supervise the registration process.

Following this notice, it was decided by those concerned that the form designed to demonstrate the confirmation of a document was redundant. In this way, the creation of an unnecessary record was prevented.[40]

> According to the official notice delivered to the Chief Secretary of Social Security Service by the Office of the Prime Minister, it has been ordered that patients need photocopy neither their identity cards nor their visit cards. It has also been stated in this notice that the practice of filling in such forms has officially been abandoned.

As you can see, the decisions that were reached by the administrators using their own initiative may directly influence the bureaucratic process that is commonly known as "red tape". With an official notice, the practice of asking patients to photocopy documents which they should keep available was eliminated, to a large extent, and the creation of another document, which was to be caused by these documents, was prevented.

Reliance on Centralism and Lack of Success in Transferring Authority in Administrations

The gathering of management and authority in one place has been traditional in public administration in Turkey, despite the fact that a few attempts have been made to break this. It is believed that the person who has authority will also have the power to rule. However, a great reliance on centralism may have some drawbacks from an administrative point of view, and these lead to the creation of unnecessary records.

It seems unlikely that it is possible to totally ignore centralism, even if it has some disadvantages. In public administration it is absolutely necessary that there should be central management which is well-organized in systemizing the organs of decision. What is being criticized here is centralism that multiplies the bureaucratic process, causing a waste of time and effort, leading to the creation of unnecessary records and compelling those who have a lower position to ask their superiors for further information for an assigned task to be completed. The accumulation of sources of authority and decision-making in the centre results in an unbalanced distribution of responsibilities, the creation of many unnecessary

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[40] Sağlık Bakanlığı Yazısı (Correspondence by Health Ministry), B100THG0100002/13123, (05-07-2005), Retrieved December 22, 2005, from http://www.saglik.gov.tr/extras/birimler/tedavi/Buran/forum.htm.

records in a process that can be completed with a single document or a signature, and the occurrence of files filled with redundant correspondence.

Management is the art of assigning people to do a job; an administration can fulfil such a function by transferring some of its authority to other employees. Although it is clearly stated in the legislation[41] how the managers employed in public administration can transfer their authority to other people, some managers still hesitate to do so or choose to transfer only their power of signature.[42] Many steps in administrative procedures could be left out; documents in fewer numbers could be created, and the processes could be executed in a considerably shorter period of time if the managers took the affordable risk of transferring some of their authority.[43]

A person who holds necessary information is unable to make decisions on their own because they are not given enough authority. During the administrative process, the information holder prepares the necessary documents; these require the inspection of one who has decision-making authority. Many services offered to the public are sent to the capital to be approved. This unnecessary process is naturally carried out in registered documents, which delays the completion of the work. Therefore, the more the steps between the information-holder and the decision-maker are increased, the longer it takes to conclude a process.[44] This situation will inevitably lead to the creation of more documents. A well-constructed method of management enables the information holder to make decisions in a single document without needing to create more documents.

In the transfer of authority, a subject that has been examined by many researchers, confidence plays a key role. People should know that they are trusted and this can be achieved by a transfer of authority. By transferring

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41 This is set out in Article 38 of The Law on the Organization of the Duties and Regulations in the Offices of the Ministries, "If a minister, undersecretary or managers at every level in the Ministries and Institutions feel the need, they can transfer their authority to other officials", (Republic of Turkey (Laws) "Bakanlıkların Kuruluş ve Görev Esasları Hakkında 174 Sayılı Kanun Hükmünde Kararname ile 13/12/1983 gün ve 174 Sayılı Bakanlıkların Kuruluş ve Görev Esasları Hakkında Kanun Hükmünde Kararnamenin Bazı Maddelerinin Kaldırılması ve Bazı Maddelerinin Değiştirilmesi Hakkında 202 Sayılı Kanun Hükmünde Kararnamenin Değiştirilerek Kabulu Hakkında Kanun" Law no: 3046, *Resmi Gazete*, 18540, (9.10 1984)).

42 *İstanbul Valiliği, İmza Yetkileri Yönergesi*, E/1860-5672 (07.08.1997) İstanbul İl Sağlık Müdürlüğü, 2000.

43 Nihat Aytürk, "Yönetimde Yetki Devri ve İmza Yetkileri", *AİD*, 33/1 (Mart 2000), p. 81.

44 Halis Gerdaneri, *İl Genel Yönetimi ve İçişleri Bakanlığı Merkez Örgütünde Yetki Devri*, (İÇ-DÜZEN-YAYINLARI) Ankara 1972, p. 47.

authority to the administrators employed in local management, the work can be completed without any delay.[45]

The result of this is that the main office will not be occupied with unnecessary processes, and the creation of surplus documents will be prevented. For instance, the certificate of permission to open a private hospital is given by the central authority in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. This situation results in an increase in the number of processes to be followed when wishing to attain such a certificate, and thus leads to the creation of unnecessary records. However, the central administration could easily sort this problem out, if they were to authorize civilian administrators in certain cities to carry out all these processes on their own. As a result of this, many processes which require the attention of the central administration would be eliminated, and the creation of unnecessary records would be avoided.

Developments in Organisational Functions

The organisations established to serve a specific purpose are inclined to grow, for more is expected of them in terms of the services they offer. Although such a development is regarded as a signal for positive growth, recent surveys suggest that there will be a rise in the number of processes in parallel with this development, and that this in turn will influence the creation of documents in a negative way.[46]

There is also a common belief that the more an organisation grows, the more rigid rules it will need[47]; this too will undoubtedly cause the creation of unnecessary records. It is vital that reorganisation should take place in an administration as it grows. It seems to be more appropriate for decentralism to be preferred over centralism

The activities carried out in a large organisation which concern different units are counted among the factors that lead to the creation of unnecessary documents.[48] Each unit, however dependent it is on other units in an organisation, should strive to simplify the activities concerning its own area, and look for more efficient ways to create documents in fewer numbers.[49]

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45 *Yetki Devri (İçişleri Bakanlığı Teftiş Kuruluna Sunulan İnceleme Raporu)* ed. Ali Çetinkaya - Mustafa Tekmen. (1999) Retrieved December 16, 2005, from http://www.icisleri.gov.tr/Icisleri/WPX/yetki vegorevdevri.htm.

46 Emre, op. cit., p. 216.

47 *Ibid*.

48 Schellenberg, op. cit., p. 45.

49 *Ibid.*

Incompetence in Adapting New Technology

The adoption of a scientific approach to the management techniques used in organising bureaucratic processes is of great importance, as it is this way that the creation of unnecessary records can be prevented. It is also worth noting that this subject has been taken into consideration often enough. It has been previously mentioned in the article that managers are quite incompetent to make any changes to put right what they consider to be wrong, as they fail to overcome some of the procedures that exist. The absence of people with the right qualifications also negatively affects this situation.[50]

The methods used by the organisations in running their activities are not adequately updated; thus, they lead to a variety of unnecessary formalities and the creation of an overwhelming number of documents. In analysing a process, all the steps to be taken from the beginning to the end are carefully examined and those believed to be redundant are eliminated. Despite the fact that various correctional activities have been carried out by certain units in public administrations, they have as yet yielded no satisfying results.[51] It is possible to mention that many organisations that function in the private sector are far ahead of those in public administration in terms of the improvements that are made in the administrative procedures which are currently available.

New information technology, which is thought to accelerate the dissemination of knowledge, is not to be ignored while examining the reasons for the creation of unnecessary records in organisations; this is a wide subject with many technical aspects.

Since the administrative acts in public administration depend basically on legislation, electronic documents are mostly created within the same procedures. Therefore, the environment where the document is retained is of almost no significance. In other words, if the understanding of strict bureaucracy and formalism is continued in the processes carried out in offices, the result will remain unchanged even if the documents are created in an electronic environment. On this occasion, unnecessary documents will be created electronically. The only difference is that the form of the document has been altered.

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50 *KAYA Raporu*, p. 12.

51 In the issues released by *Amme İdaresi Dergisi* between the years 1970-1975, it is mentioned in the news section, under the subtitle "The Gathering of Experts on Organisation and Methods" (Organizasyon ve Metot Uzmanları Toplantılarında) that many studies were conducted on the subject of the simplification of the procedures and processes in labour programs in cooperation with organization and method experts who were employed in various public administrations.

Despite all this, the efficiency and speed offered by new technology in the production, dissemination and use of knowledge are beyond question. Electronic libraries have entered our lives and we hear of paper-free office environments. However, the available surveys suggest that there has been an increase in the creation of hardcopy documents in parallel to an increase in computer use in organisations. That a rise is witnessed every year in paper consumption, particularly in the amount of paper consumed in offices, is solid evidence for this.[52] Lack of confidence in new technologies is viewed as one of the reasons for this increase in paper consumption.

No matter how much computers are used, the physical creation of documents can not be forsaken. Some of the reasons for this may be as follows: an insufficient use of computer technology, a lack of legislative infrastructure, incomplete standards of electronic data and tools or questions of security.[53] Due to these reasons, the documents in organisations, although they have been created in an electronic environment, are printed on paper. Therefore, all these new technologies, which give unbelievably rapid access to information, have great difficulties in breaking down the thick walls of strict bureaucracy.

Conclusion and Suggestions

It is obvious that most of these factors which lead to the creation of unnecessary records are embedded in one another. It should be understood that rules and regulations, also known as administrative procedures and processes, lie at the heart of administrative practices. However, these regulations have generally been viewed as strict bureaucracy in public administration. Additionally, such an understanding of bureaucracy results in what is known as "red tape", as a result of which unnecessary documents are generated.

The present administration, which is in a position to put administrative acts into effect, has reshaped these acts at its own discretion when the legislation has failed to meet what is needed. Even though intervention of administration is valuable, it causes some unnecessary records to be created at the same time.

Consequently, it has been noticed that these factors are closely related to one another, and that one is caused by the other.

In spite of this gloomy picture, the suggestions that emerge are as follows:

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52 Abigail J. Selen - Richard H. R. Harper, *The Myth of the Paperless Office*, London 2002, pp. 10-11.

53 Odabaş, op. cit., p. 396.

* The awareness of both the decision mechanisms and the employees should be raised to allow them to take on responsibilities when reaching a decision.

* The administrative procedures and processes in realizing the functions should be analyzed succinctly within the mentality of system analysis, and any unnecessary steps should be eliminated with the preparation of maps to guide the employee during this period.

* A non-rigid manner should be assumed in administrative acts, and the understanding of strict bureaucracy should be avoided.

* Decentralized management techniques should be adopted in reaching a decision.

* The administrators should use their discretionary authority in a way that allows those carrying out these processes to reduce unnecessary paperwork.

* An elaborate study should be conducted while creating a new regulation and those operating them should be consulted as well.

* New technologies should be adopted, and the creation of electronic records should be encouraged, while an eye is kept on procedures that concern the management of electronic documents.

* Moreover, programmes concerned with the management of documents, on which more emphasis has been attached with the law of knowledge acquisition, should be put into practice carefully.

As we can see, many studies can be conducted to prevent the creation of unnecessary records in public administration. However, these studies can only be concluded if common action is taken by the managers, office workers, archivists and the records managers. Therefore, all the workers in every organisation should contribute to these activities as much as they can within their power and authority.

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