

# **Governance: The Kingdom of Ends**

**Dr. Manuel Angel (Coco) Morales**

Governmental reorganization, under any circumstances, is widely known to be one of the more challenging and difficult aspects of governance. I have studied this topic for more than 30 years, and I can share with my readers that a quick inventory of such difficulties are the following: adoption of untested, unwarranted or even unwise premises; inertia; incentive; uncertainty; speculative benefits and immediate costs; technical and measurements problems; political-administrative relationships and extravagant claims that can produce many intended and unintended consequences alike.

Government reorganization must be understood for what it is: a political act plus technical and social exercises. Reformers have to be clear on what can be expected to accomplish by engaging in this kind of venture.

Research clearly points to the transformation of governances and the global public management reorientation (D. Kettl, *The Transformation of Governances* 2007). Such transformation, which appears to be permanent futures of the global landscape (today more than 50 governments are formally pursuing reorganizations), entails multiple challenges for the public administration of the future. These challenges are: coming to terms with privatization, new public management and performance measurements, as well as multiple issues related to concerns such as accountability, shadow bureaucracy and organizational cultures.

In order to achieve common ground and common future, reorganizers have to be aware that this kind of task relates to a covenant with citizens. For quite a long time, I have been teaching that at the foundation of the reorganization complexities and uncertainties, there is a common ground, a common future and a common identity. Political parties (which are important for the democratic environment) often misread this reality. These commonalities move across public and private sectors and are sustained by meeting our collective need for a critical mass of leaders and by the active citizenships in search of what the philosopher Kant called “the kingdom of ends.”

Of course, I do not gloss over the many dilemmas and divisions of the contemporary Puerto Rican society, ranging from ideological and professional aspects to cultural and other dynamics that cannot be denied or suppressed and are likely to endure regardless of status, system in place and governance patterns in practice.

I claim that a crucial conversation regarding our collective values, aspirations and assumptions can be enriched via consideration of civic citizenship. Differences might then be subjected to the kind of social and economic scrutiny that can lead to their mitigation.

Contrary to vulgar understanding, I think that in Puerto Rico we don't dialogue enough. We are experts in criticizing each other, but still have to learn to talk and share with one another in a civic manner. In the end, the civic culture is to be enacted not only by public administrators but by citizens across all sectors.

There are three proximate conditions that must be met for a civic reform and for a government reorganization to be achieved: 1) Actualization

of the guiding principles that will orient this titanic work. 2) Transformation of political-administrative relationships. 3) Investment in institutional culture change and transformation.

The actualization of the guiding principles suggests the need to: share a commitment to greater social equity, a concern for wider participation and a desire to move values and norms to the center of administrative theory and practice; address the obligation of incorporating new knowledge, avoiding the re-cycling of concepts, social constructs, theories and paradigms; emphasize institutional culture and social change from both ends of the institutional-organizational-individual continuum. This requires asking to anyone who proposes something on matters of reform or reorganization to clearly spell the knowledge foundation from which ideas are being taken.

In terms of the transformation of political-administrative relationships, we will quickly have to mature to speak with truth to power while addressing questions or objections. Within these contexts, nobody is beyond the pale of constructive and systematic criticism of errors. Questions have to be asked about the quality of governance and the quality of life of all citizens.

Conformance to requirements, multiple intelligences, imagination, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship (taking ideas to a productive end), and innovation in governance can be enhanced if practitioners and scholars alike are active and alert critics of conventional wisdom. We have to overcome adversarial relationships and the recalcitrant policy environment. Trust is an imperative which (like charity) begins at home. Then, the call is for transformational leadership in which the status quo is unfrozen and a new set of ideas, assumptions, incentives and objectives are established.

Finally, as a professor of applied change, I share with the audience that changing any institutional culture is a major challenge. This is not surprising given the daunting nature of change, the multiple perspectives of what should be done and the need of consistent and committed team of leaders. People tend to see change through different lens and are concerned with the likelihood of resistance and disruption. In addition, they are aware of the collective willingness to embrace reform and the specific benefits that can be derived.

The establishment of a common ground, a common future and a common identity across professions, sectors, organizations and citizens is fundamentally a matter of culture change, requiring new knowledge, new understanding, new commitment and new energy of individuals and organizations in all sectors of our society.

**Dr. Manuel Angel ( Coco ) Morales**

**Contact Freelance at: [cocomorales1@gmail.com](mailto:cocomorales1@gmail.com)**

**Cell phone: 787- 249-6102**