

# Chapter 1

## Be Attentive to Public Employees: They Are the Source of Mentality and Health of Public Administration

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The present complexity cannot be grasped by endless enumeration of objective factors. Each choice reveals what a person is believed to be; each choice shapes people through the effects that it produces/fails to produce. Individual and personal characteristics thus cannot be controlled only by the law, because the latter is enforced by persons. Research should be moved to a higher level where they could be controlled and implemented through values if their basic human properties could be known that operate also within public administration. No area can be taken as final; no single conviction will always give the right answer in a new or different set of circumstances that requires a different approach and a new conviction based on it. A culture of dialogue should be hence established through whistleblowing and other adjustments, using a central perspective on situations from the highest management combined with a horizontal one to provide information. In both perspectives, public employees are the sine qua non for good administration.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The administrative apparatus has spread across all national and transnational societies as a spider web; even in times of economic crises in which the downsizing of a government apparatus is one of the usual austerity measures, there can be paradoxically more administration and regulation, as has already been noted by Vogel (1996) and Majone (1996), while at the same time new state coercions underlie new regulations.<sup>1</sup> Ideas about independent (continental) public agencies or other ideas about a better management of public affairs cannot show the real background of the state of affairs,<sup>2</sup> and this cannot be objectively shown even in the presence of multiple other elements. The expansion of public tasks – with a larger degree of complexity and with the side effects of all previous reforms – automatically also brings about an increase in the importance of good management (that is shown *e.g.* in the notions of good administration, good governance, sound governance, co-governance) in public administration (PA). For Dworkin the representative democracy *is widely thought to be the institutional structure most suited in a complex and diverse society... [but] an actual vote in an election or referendum must be taken to represent an overall preference rather than some component of the preference that a skilful, cross-examination of the individual voter, if time and expense permitted, would reveal* (1978, p. 276). Are public officials those who could efficiently reveal this component of skilful preference due to citizens' lack of time and big expenses, as it has always been assumed? Today's *de facto* practices of officials show that it could be so in the majority of cases, while on the other hand the failures of their decisions in many cases show that officials may be lacking a deeper subjective understanding of their *own* decisions, *i.e.* of themselves. How can Weber's technical knowledge and experiences in the service of public officials<sup>3</sup> be paired with Hayek's statements on false rationalism and the greatest danger to liberty that today apparently comes from public servants?<sup>4</sup>

Much of writing on government is, due to its public power, directed to the hierarchical subordination to the management and to the rule of law, as well as to the control of bureaucracies and officials who implement decisions. But can only a technical, normative, audit or performance review achieve accountability and legitimacy, can administrative systems be held accountable and help societies without regulatory increases (these represented a paradox in the age of New Public Management in which privatisation and deregulation were high on its agenda)? How come that science of PA should be part of the integral theory that includes all aspects of the humans and their surroundings, while people still look at public problems mainly through the regulation, control and accountability? The detection of problems and their solutions are present also *outside* the regulation, but in the legal state the people should ask ourselves whether at the same time the recognised

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