

Public Administration in the Post-modern Era

Amos Avny

PhD, Omnidev International Consultants Yehud, Israel

ABSTRACT

Public affairs at the Post-modern Era suffer mainly from two major problems:

A continues shortage of investment funds and b. a persisting struggle upon the main social services' quality. The author relates to these issues by offering better ways and more sophisticated methods for combining Private funds with public demanding customers. In general, the Author suggests to divide all public activities into two categories; Category 1 – includes all Defense, Security, Law and Social services - the Software Group 1. Category 2 – includes all types of public works, Infrastructures, constructions communication lines etc. – the Hardware group 2. Principally, most expenses of Group 1 would be financed by regular budgets and funds. Group 2 costs and expenses would be financed by investment Banks and commercial funds. This schematic partition may provide a serious leverage for further development. In addition, some novel ways for improving collaboration between the public and the private sectors is offered. For improving the quality of the social services, the author suggests to expand the use of vertical modes of operation (projects), rather than the use of the popular horizontal ones (traditional organizational set-ups). A short discussion on project management is therefore included. Additionally, the author discusses the issue of bureaucracy in Public Administration. After reviewing Max Weber's 6 major principles of the Theory of Bureaucracy, some critics and renovations are suggested. At the end the author offers some operational advices with the hope to see future Public Administration more people-friendly and a more human-oriented enterprise.

*Corresponding author

Amos Avny, PhD, Omnidev International Consultants Yehud, Israel. Tel: 972-3536-4220, 055-8826848; Email: amosav@smile.net.il

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“What I did, I did after very full deliberation, and under a heavy and solemn sense of responsibility. I can only trust in God that I have made no mistake.” (Abraham Lincoln) [1].

Introduction

Many face the year of 2023 with wonders and doubts. They do not know whether to hope for prosperity or, maybe something bad is waiting to come. We recently, named this situation as “a **Convolutd Reality**” [2]. Others are ready, at present, to offer some helpful guidelines for the future. In this essay we intend focusing on Public Administration while examining if and what type of change this field should pass on. No question, government work in 2022 made some progress in the field of E-Government. These improvements are embraced mainly by the middle aged and prosperous customers. However, the question remains whether these changes help or assist older and less sophisticated people. We have the feelings that the advanced technology distances governmental services from many citizens. The fact is that more and more citizens feel unsatisfied from the services. Additionally, the atmosphere on the streets, on the roads and sometime also at the government's facilities is unpleasant and even, sometime intimidating. At the same time, it seems that government executing ability is falling apart and rarely can deliver what it has promised. These are the main reasons for initiating this exploration. We do

it with the same sense of Calling that moved Lincoln in the above Proclamation. And we hope that with the results derived in this work, and with some improvements and updated changes, progress will come to Public Administration also.

The Issue

Public Administration, as an academic field exists over one hundred years. This period, mostly, was dedicated to lay the foundations and set the rules for an advanced public service. Relevant rules and regulations, which were aimed to guide and direct the administrative bureaucracy, also, were imposed since then. However, over time, ideas and instructions that were enacted with good and positive intention, slowly but surely lost much of their relevancy. The transformation toward the Post-modern era of the 21st Century took also its toll. We choose five major issues for demonstrating the severity of the situation. They all affect and influence the low efficiency and limited functionality of Public Administration at present. They are detailed below.

1. A permanent and continual shortage of Public Budgets;
2. An insufficient use of collaboration between the Public and the Private Sectors;
3. An out-of-date and less-efficient functionality of many public services;
4. A rigid and obsolete approach to the Administrative Bureaucracy;
5. A growing demand for enacting a public support for social and communal services.

We use these five main issues, as a basis for demonstrating the need to promote and **Updating Public Administration system**, and assisting it to comply with the new era's perceptions and principles.

It is important to note that the first four changes, mentioned above, emerged mainly due to the fact that Reagan's Capitalism, in its extreme version, is losing its appeal. This version is shortly described as follows: "**Reaganomics or Reaganism**, refers to the neoliberal economic policy, named after **US President Ronald Reagan**, in the 1980s and also known as **supply-side economics or Free-market economics**. The pillars of this policy included increasing defense spending, balancing the federal budget and slowing the growth of government spending, reducing the federal income tax and capital gains tax, and tightening the money supply in order to reduce inflation" (Wikipedia). For more about the political-economic complex see **Amos Avny's essay: "Stakeholders vs. Stockowners – The Dilemma of Future,"** [3].

Unfortunately, we see that many of the Capitalists' proclamations remain irrelevant, unfulfilled promises and wishful hopes. As a result, too many citizens feel unsatisfied and unhappy.

Updating P.A and Adjusting It to the Post-modern Era
"Those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything" (George B. Shaw) [4].

A process of change or a drive to adjustment is quite a very complexes and sometimes even painful move. Using **Kurt Lewin's Model of Change** may be very helpful [5]. Although, many forms of Public Administration exist in different States and Nations, we try to refer to a genuine and general version. This version, therefore, is the basis for the present proposal. Although we discuss mainly five essential problems, the results are relevant for many others. Due to the high need for immediate updating while time is running out, we warmly recommend to discuss mainly the principles issues. Other details and enhancements could be treated later. We proceed now to discuss the five points mentioned:

How to Meet the Permanent Shortage of Public Budgets

A mistaken perception assumes that wealthy, industrialized nations have all the budgets they need for financing their public investments and services. The fact that such a situation occurred today in the Scandinavian Nations, which were known for years, for their solid, fair and responsible policy of managing public monies, just indicates how serious and bothering things are. After years of disregarding, long ideological discourses on the causes and the reasons for this unfortunate situation, time come to march forward. The simple and the apparently agreed result show that in the 2020s public affairs need big money. Three main reasons are mostly responsible for this shortage.

1. The first reason for the growing demand for accumulated investments are the data collected along history. This data collected over time, clearly indicates that **technological advancement, medical and health progress, and general and specific science R&D, cost unmeasurable amounts of capital**. Almost everything we do, produce or consume, in both the Public or the Private sector, costs today, much more than fifty years back. And this is not because of the inflation. It is because maintaining our current standard of life is a more capital-based operation. More capital is invested in saving man-power and raw-materials; in achieving

better quality and meeting better customers' demands.

2. The second reason for anticipating an exponential growth of public expenses, is the growing awareness and caring for Climate, Earth and Environment Protection affairs.

More investments are required for fully complying with the rules on Earth and Environment protection. Similarly, global issues, like World over-heating and control of the Ozon layer also are waiting for a proper, but expensive initiative.

3. The third cause for the increase of the demand for Public Budgets, emerges mainly from current developments in International Defense and Security expenses. This growth is mainly derived from the Russian invasion into the Republic of Ukraine and the fast development of nuclear weapon by North Korea and Iran, announced by the UN agencies.

Thus, while trying to meet the unending large accumulated demand for public funds, we offer a different approach to the whole issue. At the same time, we also offer to delete the almost religious old-timer's rejection to directing private funds to the public sector. This disagreement emerges from three simple reasons; first, it is a good and profitable investment, Secondly, it compensates for the public budgets that are infused into private enterprises in bad times, and thirdly, such a simple act can significantly reconstruct and support the national economy. Thus, we have to find novel, inspiring and encouraging ways for **introducing innovative managing methods for causing both, the Public and the Private sectors, to collaborate and cooperate. This is among the most appealing mission of the day.**

For simplifying the discussion, it is suggested to divide all public or governmental activities into two categories / groups. Category / Group One could also be called **Software Group 1**. Includes all Defense, Security, Law and other social services. The second Category, also called **Hardware Group 2**, includes all types of public works, Infrastructures, Constructions, Machinery, and Equipment and Maintenance activities. Principally, most expenses of Software Group 1. Would be financed by regular public budgets and funds. Hardware Group 2 costs and expenses would be financed by investment Banks and commercial funds. Although this type of financing or functional division of governmental missions could be seem bizarre and unacceptable by some orthodox economists or politicians, the real test is by utilizing it. When practical experience will indicate that it is workable all criticism will disappear.

Many methods and techniques are available at the market. Each is appropriate for a given goal. The point is just to make the right decision and to over-come the fear from innovation, cooperation and new, unknown work practices. Many **Big bankers and Global financiers agree that great funds and other financial resources are available and looking for good investments. What really are required are just great visioners and imaginary entrepreneurs.** As was stated by G.B. Shaw -"**the reasonable man adapt himself to the world, the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man**" or woman. (Quotes by George B. Shaw, Wikipedia) [6].

How to Expand Public-Private Partnerships

At previous section we argue that several ways are opened for cooperation between the Public, the Private and the third – the Non-Government-Organizations (NGO) sector. It seems

Foot Note: Kurt Lewin (1880-1950) Emigrated from Germany to America in 1930. He is reconsidered as the founder of social psychology" (Wikipedia).

that the main obstacle for running one or another mode is the participants fear and their hesitations from the other counterpart. This disturbing atmosphere should be cleared and prepared by the government. All parties involved should be convinced that they would win significantly and, almost nothing to lose from such collaboration. **All the three sectors are designed to deliver, provide and maintain a vast range of services to all citizens, firms and organizations.** It is clear that these services and goods cost money – because they are made of raw material, labor and capital. The first question reminded is how, and by whom the required funds will be collected – taxes, budgets, loans, donations etc. The second question refers to the modes of operation and the implementation of the good intentions. Here also, many ways are at hand – through general public facilities, specific infrastructure projects, personal services, development and promotion funds etc.

We are not coming to take side and to recommend on a preferred way of setting up missions or goals for a given nation. Nor are we going to decide upon the best or the most efficient mix of the tree sectors. Every nation must make its own choices as an indispensable part of its national program.

However, just as a matter of demonstration, let compare a State with a private single individual, the ordinary individuals run their life according to their available resources – wages, salaries, donations, etc. Similarly, they use the services according to their income level. They either buy a house or rent it; they use public services for daily ordinary treatment and private experts in extraordinary cases. In short, ordinary citizens run their life and enjoy them as they are driven by a complex of needs and desires, instantaneous drives and long-term considerations, and as a complicated mix of rational and non-rational motivations. In fact, one can agree that many nations behave similarly. Not always their decisions are logical, not always they are driven by rational concerns and frequently, too much formality and less flexibility lead their executives. But, all these risks should not prevent anybody from introducing progress, flexibility and efficiency into Public Administration.

Public Administration or in other words, bureaucracy, hate to deal with abnormal, surprises and unpredictable occurrences. They were created for handling ordinary, day-to-day and routine activities. However, many developments in real life, in every sector, come suddenly, act powerfully and appear in an unpredictable time and places. Thus, bridging over such a gap in the main course of action is unfortunate, really difficult. Thus, a special development program and a closed familiarization with the auxiliary factors is a must. It is required for installing mission-oriented perceptions into the rigid Public Administration bureaucracy. In previous section we described the idea of dividing all Public Administration' activity into Two major categories. Category 1 named Software and Category 2 named Hardware. These two categories would be financed differently, all in accordance with its mission and the relevant agreed conditions. This schematic separation may also be used for other reasons, such as deciding on the appropriate mode of operation, - a Horizontal or a Vertical course of action.

Whereas a private individual or a firm is allowed to lease or to rent a house, or an automobile, machines or equipment, no good reason can prevent public entity from doing the same thing. All the relevant practice actually supports this renovated initiative. Neither. Neither justification, nor rationality exist for preventing a solid functioning Public Agency from doing the same. This is not only an obsolete and frozen idea but rather an unacceptable fool behavior.

Project Management as a Replacement of Bureaucracy
“Falling down is not a failure. Failure comes when you stay where you have fallen.” (Socrates) [6].

The dispute here refers to a managerial question: what is the preferred mode of operation, a Horizontal or a Vertical course of action? A **Horizontal course of action** sees the **Organizational Chart** as the main basis for executing the mission.

The Vertical course of action embraces Project Management as the way to execute sizeable jobs. The right answer to the opening question is that both methods are good and relevant and the choice depends on the nature of the undertaking. The Horizontal course of action is more effective for executing or implementing regular or routine Jobs. The Vertical course of action is more effective for matching great and complicated defined missions. In sum, every option of the two has its time and benefits. Public Administrators and their directors must be qualified for making the proper choice or decision.

Most organizations and government in particular, carry out their work and fulfill their duties by dividing the missions among their departments, offices, sections and agencies. This form of traditional division of missions or jobs works quite well in regular times and for ordinary undertakings. When the given department is familiar with all the relevant people involved, when the size of the population is almost steady and their needs are known with almost little changes. When most occurrences are normal and ordinary, then bureaucracy may function well. But, at the Post-modern Chaotic period, many of the expected events become unexpected surprises, the situation changes and the nature of those who treat it should also be different.

At that time, the following saying describes the situation - **“the unexpected changes are the only sure things to come ahead.”** Thus, for dynamic developments, expected, and more significant changes foreseen or unpredicted, a more flexible, target-focused and aim-oriented instrument, should be embraced and used. For undertaking this mission, **the Project Model is the preferred model for running the case.** This is a well-known instrument that enables **effectively, economically and in due time meeting the firm's goals.** This mode of operation is usually used in the Private Sector and in the Military, for implementing, running and managing large missions and undertakings. In addition, it should be mentioned, that these recommendations rest on the Author's long and vast experience of running different types of public projects in different locations. The Project Model contains six stages or steps, as further detailed.

Step 1: Setting up a Visionary Steering committee this committee is the highest designated forum for discussing and deciding about the said project. It is the upper address for all the external bodies and the board to which the project manager is reported. It contains representative from the interesting agencies and offices but it should not grow over nine (9) members. In short, the **Steering Committee** acts similarly to a firm's **Board of Directors.** Among the first actions to be taken is choosing and nominating **the Project Manager.** Afterward the committee should lead a thorough discussion on the vision and the goals of the project at hand. In this particular case, for example, where we study **Violent and Terror attacks,** attention must be turned to their deep historical roots, which started some thousand years ago, with the Biblical story on Caen assassinating Able. (Genesis, Chap 14). Since **these brutal activities raised today to a very high level, it is reasonable to**

assume that they will stay with us for another long period.

Based on this assumption and its outcomes, a visionary steering committee should draw a vision and operating guiding principles, upon which the work should be done. However, due to wrong public opinion and because of the desire to comply with the Political Correctness opinion, many tend to deny, disregard and ignore these horrendous perils. It seems that sometimes “peace seeking individuals” prefer to disregard potential dangers rather than to make some precautions for overcoming and eliminate those frightening terrorists and killers.

Step 2: Nominating a Competent Able Project Manager

Our experience taught us that a competent reliable Project Manager is the person who eventually determines the quality of the project outcomes. This position is so critical that it justifies making a serious hunt. What is needed is a person who combines a theoretical know-how with a vast practical experience, all encompassed within a balanced nature, which combines both, a brave and a responsible personality. He or she must be at the same time, Target and People-oriented and, if possible, a smart and an unconventional leader.

Step 3: Choosing the First Site and the Consecutive Ones

One of the substantive differences between the Public Administration approach and the private sector attitude on resolving conflicts or installing new infrastructures, relate to the size of the site. In general, **public agency want to expand on the whole state or nation. The private approach prefers to concentrate on a relative, small or partial territory. Providing little to many**, as politicians like and bureaucrats prefer, can help just a little, and does not solve the problem properly. Additionally, no complete solution is being seen. The second approach of the private sector always seeks **a demonstrative success**. They know that such an important objective could be achieved only by graduate advancement. Thus, big projects or national objectives must be divided and executed gradually, step by step. At the beginning, therefore, it is better to start with a relative, small share of the work, and then to proceed gradually. By this mode, at the beginning only part of the population will see the accomplishment, within few years until the whole project will be finished. **A Success-oriented attitude is, the philosophy smart doers and talented entrepreneur, should grip and embrace**. Public Administrators, bureaucrats and civil servants, unfortunately, less understand this language because they were raised to be formal, ‘to work by the book’ and to promote mediocracy.

Step 4: Initiating a Realistic Concrete Work-program

The project manager should start his/her **work with preparing a detailed work-program with a general time table**. Unfortunately, bureaucrats and most civil servants are not used to work according to a given time table. The practical routine in bureaucracy assumes that demands, missions, undertakings compose the regular stream of work that should be accomplished along the year. Keeping up a strict and firm time-table was never a key demand from official clerks. Preparing a detailed work-program, which poses concrete goals and targets, is a must. It is necessary even if frequently, most projects are born in time of emergency or when a serious threat appears suddenly. Although every plan is a subject to changes, improvements and amendments, that may take place with the implementation, the original document should remain the best document enabling evaluation, feed-back and further discussions. It is agreed that better planning should result with better implementation.

Step 5: Preparing a Long-term Maintenance Plan

A firm and practical **long-term Maintenance Plan** is among the most needed undertaking that should be demanded from every Project Manager, when completing his/her job. However, this is also among the most neglected or forgotten demands. Generally, **a Maintenance Plan, of all kinds, demonstrates the development level of every project, State or a Nation**. Usually, many means and efforts are invested in building a new project, a highway, a water pipeline or a commercial center. But little funds and insufficient attention is left for thinking on future maintenance needs and requirements. Another point on this issue should be remembered. **Small, regular and in-time maintenance routines, when denied or neglected, may be developed into large damages, which result with growing expenses.**

Step 6: Summing Up the Project and its Future Reflections

Many projects are well prepared even when they last a longer time and consume higher budgets. But in many cases, they are terminated without leaving a summing-up document. Usually, it happened because usually, projects suffer from a substantial delay in the execution. So, every person of the relevant authorities is short in time and tries to run out of this obligation. Such a **summation document is very important since it provides much data required for maintenance, renewal or enhancements**. It is also a helpful document for other, new projects and a learning material for new coming managers. As such, a good useful Summation Document also is an accumulated stock of useful information and a learning material for future undertakings. But, as frequently happens in logical discussions, not always rational thinking and logical concerns lead decision makers.

How to Update the Public Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy has been introduced to Social Sciences in 1899 by **Max Weber**.

“His ideas profoundly influence social theory and research” (Wikipedia).

Max Weber summarizes his **Bureaucratic Theory** in Six Major Principles:

- 1. A formal hierarchical structure** – each level controls the level below it;
- 2. A Rules-based Management** – Manager decide workers execute;
- 3. Functional Specialty organization** – Specialists do the work;
- 4. Up-focused or In-focused Mission** – In accordance with the firm’s goals;
- 5. Impersonal** – The organization treats all stake-holders equally;
- 6. Employment -based on Technical Qualifications** – employees’ promotion is based on technical qualifications and skills. (According to Wikipedia)

This modern Theory of Bureaucracy was offered in order to get rid of the former improper arrangements, where most government jobs and positions were held by kins, family members and other individuals, from the nobility or religious classes.

Although this theory was accepted in time, as a progressive one, it also had some weak points.

- Many rules and regulations were **too tight and rigid**,
- Little attention was given to **informal groups**, links and communication,
- The proposed system produced **too many paper-work** and other formalities,
- The system caused a **delay in decision-making**,
- A Poor reliable definition was given for the **technical qualifications**.

However, Weber's Bureaucratic Theory got many supporters in its time and it properly served all along the 20th Century. With the turn of the Millennium and the beginning of the Post-modern chaotic era this theory gradually became inadequate.

Things changed fast and much while the theory had limped behind. This current situation, which affects many organizations was and is much more severe when referring to Governmental bureaucracy.

Public Administration, which wish to upgrade the service and intends to improve it, must, therefore, concentrate on updating and upgrading its own bureaucracy. For properly do it we have again to portray the main changes post-modernism, caused. The main and may be the most substantial change was **the conceptual move from a well-organized world into a flexible, changing and unstable Universe, where many things are moving in an unstable pace, a fluctuated speed and new surprises may appear here and there.** Organizational theories, which intend to understand these situations and wish to assist, must fit themselves to the running conditions. Another major difference, which is very dominant at present, is the **significant change in the nature, character and behavior of the current generation.** More people, in more places feel emancipated and wish to run more opportunities in growing emotional and materialistic scales and volumes. Here, now and much is what many youngsters expect to accept, from any economic initiative.

Another, a very significant enhancement that advances the work of government and brought it to the 21st Century, was the introduction of the **Digital** language – termed generally – for the use of **E-Government**. This act enabled incorporating in the daily ordinary course of action computer-based procedures and routines. This indeed was a significant step forward since it converted many manual procedures into automatic and autonomic routines. This innovative step released Public Administrators from much manual work and repeatable missions, so that they were available to deepening their involvement in more substantial undertakings. Additionally, while this advancement helps significantly Civil Servants and young educated youngsters, it puts a new burden on elderly, less-educated and unfortunate citizens. For many, estimated as one third of the general population, learning the new digital language was and still is, quite a heavy undertaking.

Bureaucracy is an unavoidable necessity, organizations and governments cannot function without it. However, it is our roll and duty to find ways for accommodating it professionally, properly and honestly. Some advises on how to do it, are further detailed.

How to Meet the Demand for Better Official Services

For properly ending the discussion it is necessary to record again our proposal for upgrading Public Administration, making it more relevant to the Post-modern era and the more emancipated citizens:

- First, Bureaucracy at large must learn to be more citizens friendly and a more people-oriented service. They have to listen more to people's needs rather than promoting the management's policy. Common citizens know how to deal with government services while under-privileged need more help. **People are not equal, neither in their capacities nor in their needs. However, everybody deserves his / her satisfaction.**
- Secondly, at the chaotic Post-modern world, where many

abnormalities became normal, ways must be found for by-passing P.A. bureaucracies. One of them is promoting and supporting the establishment of **exceptional committees**, which should provide by-passing services to every needed citizen. These committees should be established in every sizable office enabling people to get a personal treatment by human individuals rather than by automated call centers. The idea is very clear, a complaint, an issue or a problem must be resolved within a short time, few weeks if possible.

- Thirdly, Setting-up a **support public office for Digital services** may meet critical needs of many citizens. This service can act independently, or be attached to any other public office. No any single request is important rather than providing the proper information to its demanders.

- Fourthly, at the convoluted reality of today, where cynicism, nihilism and escapism, frequently meet at many street-corners all kinds of violence and terror attacks, basic security and civic order are missing. **Many seek Humanity, Compassion and maybe a more civilized behavior. It is our hope that improved Public Administration will be able to also contribute something to this wishful anticipation. Time is not Money, but rather, a lucky providence for equal opportunities for Joy and Happiness equal opportunities.**

Enhancing Public Support for Social and Communal Services

This is almost the only topic capitalists imported from the Social-Democratic ideology. It promotes partly the idea of the Welfare State nobody, of all different perceptions will allow him/herself to ignore or deny some type of Social Security program. The historical debates upon this topic are almost disappearing. The only point in quest is the height of the personal support and its total share in the national economy. In the 21st Century, at the Post-modern Era, it becomes a general consensus – **Government and State should be responsible for maintaining a sort of minimum level for their fellow citizens' standard of Life.**

This type of Social Security is very important for all the people, but it is much more critical and significant for the under-privileged, the miserable, the disables and the poor. Let us hope that in the future, more and more states will be able to deepening expanding and intensifying those services. This may be the real meaning of increase of the standard of Life.

Conclusion

At the beginning we pose two major issues regarding Public Administration at the current days of the Post-modern Era. These were (1) A shortage of public budgets for all foreseen objectives. And (2) Distancing of public agencies from ordinary citizens and growing dissatisfaction from the available services. Along the essay we struggle with these feelings, legitimate some of them and offer some corrections and improvements. For solving the financing problems, we suggest some of the private sector's practices. Consequently, we suggest to divide public financial requests into two categories or Groups. One group will be financed by traditional public budgets. The second group of investment will be finance by commercial banks and private investment funds. We surely are convinced that by properly marching on this road light will appear in the end of the dark tunnel.

Regarding the P.A. or the people-organization connections, this is a very complicated issue, which required deep thinking and much

Foot Note: Welfare State: -A form of government in which the state protects and promotes the economic and social well-being of the citizens" (Wikipedia) [7].

patience. No question that Public Administration, after moving many of its missions to E-Government procedures, must also change. Bureaucracy at gross and bureaucrats particularly, must become a more people-friendly and a citizens-oriented system. It seems that the coming years will pay more attention to people's wishes desires and aspirations. Those who better will prepare to this change will benefit. The others will miss the train till the next one.

In conclusion we have nothing better to offer to those who have to do the job, but to paraphrase Winston Churchill "Never Give In" speech – "Never yield to force, never yield to the apparently overwhelming might" of your opponents. (Winston Churchill, Wikipedia) [3, 8].

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