How 'smart' is Public Administration in the Eyes of European Students? - Examining Behaviour Models in the Public Administration

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Keywords

Smart administration, public administration, information society, smart citizen new technologies, electronic communication, participation in public matters, perception of public administration, models of behaviours in public administration

Abstract

Following study focussed on the perception of the public administration by the international students in the context of implementation of the concept of smart administration. New administrative reality requires that public administration should not only adapt to new conditions, but should also introduce complex plans of change, which in consequence should lead to the creation of a new type of smart administration, which adequately answers the needs and expectations of contemporary and future citizens.

Smart administration should be understood as an effective, well managed organisation with reasonably simplified structure and conduct oriented primarily towards serenity, comfort and well-being of the recipient of its service. Important feature is easy, two-way communication, which is a gateway for active participation of citizens in public affairs in both local and nationwide level.

For the purpose of this study, various dispositions expressed towards public administration were classified into the three categories of behaviour models. Models of behaviour in public administration presented in the paper are meritoric-

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despotism behaviour, efficient-democratic behaviour and anarchist-informal behaviour and were created for this study on the basis of approaches already present in the field.

Main objective of the paper is to provide preliminary analysis of how the international students perceive changes in the behaviour models in public administration and what is the role of smart administration in this. This paper is based on the data collected during the interviews, conducted face to face, with four students from different part of Europe and who are following exchange programmes. Questions concerned the experience in contact with public administration, its role, performance and how should it be changed. Research results showed that regarding behaviour changes in public administration, interlocutors speak in favour of a centralised model of public administration rather than decentralised, which is interesting in the context of smart administration, because this mean that there is still a common perception that the base of classic approach to public administration should be maintained even if modified by new concepts.

I. Introduction

1. Challenges in the 'smart' society

Public administration[1] is a social phenomenon, which is known from the very beginning of human civilisation, even if it took various forms in different periods in history.[2] Development of larger and more complex groups of people give rise to new social interactions between members, which needs to be effectively coordinated and organised in day-to-day life, to promote stability and order within the society.[3] As a result, public administration, which is designated to fulfil these roles, appears to be an essential and irreplaceable part of the society.[4] However, what 'administration' means to people can differ substantially among individuals, especially in todays, fast changing society.[5] There is no agreed

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[1]   Term 'administration' will be further explained and defined in later section of this paper

[2]   H Khan, *Principles of Administrative Law: A Comparative Study. Revised and Expanded* (OUP 2012) 9, M Deflem, *Sociology of Law: Visions of a Scholarly Tradition* (CUP 2008) 17

[3]   J Pfiffner, R Presthus, *Public administration* (5th edn, The Ronald Press Company 1967) 3; Khan (n 2) 10-11, *Implementing administrative simplification in OECD countries: Experiences and challenges* (OECD paper) <www.oecd.org/mena/governance/37026688. pdf> accessed 18 July 2019 2

[4]   M Půček, F Ochrana, *Smart Administration: Cohesion Policy* (The Ministry of Regional Development 2009) 6

[5]   Půček, Ochrana (n 4) 6, K Jastrzębska, *Elektroniczna administracja jako narzędzie wdrażania zmian organizacyjnych* (CeDeWu Sp. z o.o. 2018) 47

definition on what constitutes public administration, as we can apply this term to broad, regulated by law activities of state and its organisation. However, it is important that public administration should be realised by people for people, and therefore, it should change according to the changing patterns in the society.[6] We can now observe the ongoing process of change, which is caused and further stimulated by the evolution, alteration and still growing importance of electronic means communication worldwide.[7] Empowered with new technological possibilities people are developing habits, needs and demands, which need to be answered by public administration as soon as possible.[8]

We usually refer to this phenomenon as an information society, however, there can be a certain degree of uneasiness regarding the scope of the application of this term in the society nowadays, especially in the context of the rapidly growing presence of new technologies in day-to-day life of people in the society.[9] Information society can broadly be defined as a society in which activities largely revolve around creation, collecting, use, processing, alteration and distribution of information.[10] Today's society is characterised by access to methods, which allows relatively easy and efficient usage of information in the large scale to limit uncertainty and enhance decision-making process.[11] However, the growing number of users with access to the information, frequency of usage of electronic forms of communication and continuous evolution of related services and business, transform interaction and relation in the society changing its dynamic and structure.[12] Access to information via electronic means of communication became a basic need and its lack can be often considered an unacceptable anomaly. Most activities are expected to be conducted in no time, in the fastest, simplest, yet most efficient way from every possible place in the world, by the smart application of new technologies.[13] Consequently, smart society and smart citizens

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[6]   A Błaś, J Boć, J Jeżewski, *Nauka administracji* (Kolonia Limited 2013) 111

[7]   Půček, Ochrana (n 4) 9

[8]   M Keta, 'Smart City, Smart Administration And Sustainible Development' (2015) 10 REBE 43–44

[9]   A Pawłowska, *Zasoby informacyjne w administracji publicznej w Polsce, problemy zarządzania* (Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej 2002) 11

[10] J Janowski, *Administracja elektroniczna* (Municipium 2009) 16; T Burczyński, *Elektroniczna wymiana informacji w administracji publicznej* (Presscom Sp. z o.o. 2011) 15; Pawłowska (n 9) 11-12; A Chrisidu, J Korczak, A Pakuła, J Supernat, *Nauka organizacji i zarządzania* (Kolonia Limited 2005) 479

[11] Pawłowska (n 9) 24-26; J Osiński, *Administracja publiczna na progu XXI wieku: Wyzwania i oczekiwania* (Szkoła Główna Handlowa w Warszawie – Oficyna Wydawnicza 2008) 86-87

[12] Pawłowska (n 9) 23

[13] A Dębicka, *Sprawne państwo: Współczesne koncepcje i instrumenty zarządzania publicznego a administracja publiczna* (Wolters Kluwers Business 2008) 234

require the service of smart administration; thus, public administration also needs to change to adapt to new conditions.[14]

The main question that this study wants to answer is how international students perceive changes in the behaviour models in public administration and what is the role of smart administration in it. In this paper, the international students, as parties in contact with public administration, will be taken into consideration and interviews with selected students will be carried out and analysed in order to identify potential perspectives, which might be taken into account during the process of creation or reformation of public administration.

2. The methodology used in the study

This paper has been based on the data collected during interviews, conducted face to face by the interviewer, with four students, who are following the exchange programmes in Nijmegen in Netherlands. They are in a similar age group, between 20 and 25 years old and have similar economic backgrounds, as all of them identify themselves as a part of the middle-income class.[15] Interlocutors are following different study programmes and come from different parts of Europe.[16] Their skills regarding new technologies vary, but all of them are proficient and frequent users of different forms of electronic communication, which they mostly use to build social relations with other people, but also to solve their academical, professional or personal matters.

Dutch universities are known for their high educational standards and based on that, we can assume that the students who choose to go on Erasmus to this country will rather have developed opinions and views about the world nowadays.

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[14]   A Błaś, J Boć, *Stan i kierunki rozwoju nauk administracyjnych* (Kolonia Limited 2014) 85; Dębicka (n 13) 199, 228-229; Pawłowska (n 9) 12; Jastrzębska (n 5) 25-41, *Overcoming Barriers to Administrative Simplification Strategies guidance for policy makers* (OECD 2009) 24

[15]   P Allum, *State and society in Western Europe* (Polity Press 1995) 73–74; Middle class situation can be categorised differently in various countries. They have access to higher education and training required for profession. They can be further divided into lower middle class and upper middle class. Class include members of free professions, owners of small businesses, executives, managers, engineers and manual workers

[16]   Respondents prefer obtaining information from digital sources, rather than traditional material, but this can differ depending on given context. They are accommodated in the same place and during the stay in Netherlands, they develop friendly relation towards each other. Responders were interviewed separately to ensure the objectivity and authenticity of their answers as well as their anonymity and to prevent the exposition of their private opinions to third parties. Students were informed about the purpose of interview and that how they responds will be used in this paper. They were also informed about the possibility to ask additional question, if something would be unclear during the interview, and also it was explained to them that in any time, they can reject answering to a specific question or stop the whole interview, but in the end, nothing mentioned above happened

Similarities in their backgrounds suggest that as young, relatively well educated people, they may share a common vision of conduct in public administration. On the other hand, it can be assumed that because of these features, they may have strong, different and even contrasting opinions on the matter. Conducting interviews with a small group is advantageous in this study because, it allows interlocutors to elaborate their answer to fully express personal opinions and expectations, and as a result, give possibility to collect more detailed data, which help to better understand the way of their reasoning.[17]

Because of the limited scope, this research should be treated as an initial enquiry, which needs to be further verified by deeper researches about the expectation of citizens towards public administration. Interviews on larger, more diverse sample group and classifications of results may allow to more adequately determine the disposition of present and future user of public administration services.

Interview questions consist of two types of questions: first revolving around the background information about the respondents, and second, about their experiences, expectation, opinions and understanding of public administrations and its role in the society.

II. Concept of Smart Administration in the Context of Behaviour Models in Public Administration

1. Difficulties in understanding the term smart administration

As stated at the beginning of this article, public administration undergoing a process of change to adjust its structure and conduct to challenges, imposed in information society, which can be determined by the observable fact of intense computerisation, informatisation and digitalisation, as well that its functions, are more and more centred on the actions of people or, one could even say, individual persons.[18] However, there is a relevant question that if we should consider the wide usage of new technologies as a fundamental feature of smart administration? Such a statement may be seen inappropriate, as smart administration should be

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[17] When standardised questionnaire in the form of a survey allows to collect more information from a larger group, the obtained answers tend to be general, repetitive and featureless as respondents answer them thoughtlessly, without care. Interview is more of a discussion in which respondents have lesser opportunity to avoid question. It also allows the interviewer to observe emotional reactions of the interlocutor, thus giving an insight into the method of argumentation and reasoning in order to identify, which influence them

[18] Dębicka (n 13) 228-229; Pawłowska (n 9) 12; Jastrzębska (n 5) 25, *Overcoming Barriers to Administrative Simplification Strategies guidance for policy makers* (OECD 2009) 23

understood as an effective, well managed organisation with a reasonably simplified structure and conduct oriented primarily towards serenity, comfort and well-being of recipient of its service.[19] Important feature is an easy, two-way communication, which is a gateway for active participation of citizens in public affairs at both local and nationwide level. To achieve this, smart administration should constantly improve and change service based electronic forms of communication in order to include more people in society in participating in this type of interactions with public administration. At the same time, a smart administration needs to retain the basic roles and functions from a classic approach to public administration, which revolves around the implementation of public order and stability.[20] Information technologies should be used to effectively realise the objectives in both areas, especially in the context of its growing importance in day-to-day life; therefore, its implementation can be considered as a major feature of smart administration.[21] Public administration needs to both follow the changes in the society and be a part of the process of change, but also need to introduce changes in the society and coordinate them, in order to promote social welfare.[22] It is obvious then that the role of public administration as well as notion of public interest need to be determined by the members of the 'smart' society, who are the final recipients of the smart administration, as an individual or a group administrated during the administrative procedures, which are also based on the electronic forms of communication.[23]

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[19] Pŭček, Ochrana (n 4) 7-8, 9-10, 187; *Implementing administrative simplification in OECD countries: Experiences and challenges* (OECD paper) <www.oecd.org/mena/governance/37026688.pdf> accessed 18 July 2019 2-3, *Implementing e-government in OECD countries: Experiences and challenges* (OECD paper) <www.oecd.org/mena/governance/36853121.pdf> accessed 18 July 2019 7-8, *Overcoming Barriers to Administrative Simplification Strategies guidance for policy makers* (OECD 2009) 6, 8, *From Red Tape to Smart Tape, Administrative Simplification in OECD Countries* (OECD 2003) 8

[20] *From Red Tape to Smart Tape, Administrative Simplification in OECD Countries* (OECD 2003) 8

[21] *Implementing administrative simplification in OECD countries: Experiences and challenges* (OECD paper) <www.oecd.org/mena/governance/37026688.pdf> accessed 18 July 2019 6, 8, *Overcoming Barriers to Administrative Simplification Strategies guidance for policy makers* (OECD 2009) 6, *From Red Tape to Smart Tape, Administrative Simplification in OECD Countries* (OECD 2003) 18

[22] *Implementing e-government in OECD countries: Experiences and challenges* (OECD paper) <www.oecd.org/mena/governance/36853121.pdf> accessed 18 July 2019 2, S Vago, S Barkan, *Law and Society* (11th edn, Routledge 2018) 209; Of course in day-to-day administrative practice we can observe that this is not necessary entirely true in every instance, yet again it is one of direction to which public administration should constantly heading, especial in modern, democratic state, which realised principle of both formal and material justice

[23] Vago, Barkan (n 22) 43; Pawłowska (n 9) 12, 23

Constant implementation of new technologies is followed by the changes in the understanding of the role of public administration and administrative law.[24] As it was mentioned above, the smart administration should answer needs and expectations expressed in the smart society by smart citizens, especially regarding quick, simple and clear access to public services preferably via new technologies if applicable.[25] This of course cannot mean exclusion of people, who do not use them.[26] The fundamental basis of smart administration needs to be a common and safe access to electronic administration, which should be achieved by establishing reliable and constant methods of contacts with public administration, in order to popularise and build trust toward it.[27] Lastly, people, who do not wish or cannot use this form entirely, still should be provided with alternative ways of arranging their issues with public administration.[28]

2. Perception of public administration by people

Generally, people in the society are naturally divided into various groups depending of their socio-economic, political, religious or ethical background as well as age and level of education or in a broader sense by their social environment. Therefore, specifying a common model of smart administration that satisfies all the needs is nearly impossible, as various people express different opinions and expectations towards organisation of public administration, scope of its actions or discretional powers, but also behaviour of public officials or manner how administrative matters should be carried out in view of the administrated person.

Classification of behaviours in public administration for purpose of this study was created by applying the existing approaches in administrative studies with concepts presented in the paper published by Patricia Ewick and Susan S. Silbey *Common Knowledge and Ideological Critique: The Significance of Knowing That the 'Haves' Come Out Ahead*,[29] which itself is the answer to the paper published by Marc Galanter *Why the 'Haves' Come out Ahead: Speculations*

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24   Błaś, Boć (n 14) 90; Janowski (n 10) 44

25   Dębicka (n 13) 234; Pawłowska (n 9) 12; Keta (n 8) 43-44; Janowski (n 10) 16

26   *Implementing e-government in OECD countries: Experiences and challenges* (OECD paper) <www.oecd.org/mena/governance/36853121.pdf> accessed 18 July 2019 4

27   J Zimmermann, *Aksjologia prawa administracyjnego: Tom I* (Wolters Kluwers 2017) 200-203; Janowski (n 10) 60, *Implementing e-government in OECD countries: Experiences and challenges* (OECD paper) <www.oecd.org/mena/governance/36853121.pdf> accessed 18 July 2019 4

28   Dębicka (n 13) 234

29   P Ewick, S Silbey, 'Common Knowledge and Ideological Critique: The Significance of Knowing That the "Haves" Come out Ahead' (1999) 33 Law Soc. Rev. 1025

on the Limits of Legal Change.[30] In their paper, Ewick and Silbey identify three stories about law, which reflected the visions expressed by different people about the role of law in the society. However, it should be noted, that their study focused mainly on the private legal disputes between parties during the legal proceeding. Civil procedure, which is predominantly private type law, differ from the administrative procedure, which is predominantly public law, as there is a different type of relation between the parties.[31] As a general rule, in private law, we can observe that the involved parties have equal status and their actions are mutual by nature, which contrast the type of relation in public law that by default is based on hierarchy, submission, compliance and servitude with mostly unilateral type of interactions between the parties.[32] The Ewick and Silbey study focuses mainly on how the role of law in general is understood by the population with some emphasis on court litigations. However, we can find the same stories in the context of more specified types of law, such as administrative law.

How people perceive public administration and its representatives is rather equally determined by the social context of the administrated person and the history of his contacts with public administration. Furthermore, we should also notice the difference between the expectation of the administrated person, who is a repeat player and one who is a one-shotter.[33] Repeat player, who for the purpose of topic, can be described as a person frequently interacting with public administration and because of that, he usually also has clarified opinions about its organisation due to the obtained experience, which suppresses the thoughts generally expressed in his given social environment.[34] On the other hand, the one-shotter, for purpose of topic, is the person rarely interacting with public

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[30] M Galanter, 'Why the "haves" come out ahead: Speculations on the limits of legal change' (1974) 9 Law Soc. Rev. 95

[31] W Evan, *Social Structure and Law: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives* (Sage Publications 1990) 124; J Alder, *Constitutional and Administrative Law* (9th edn, Palgrave Macmillan Law Masters 2013) 18–19; R Masterman, *The Separation of Powers in the Contemporary Constitution* (CUP 2011) 4; M Elliott, D Feldman, *The Cambridge Companion to Public Law* (CUP 2015) 153

[32] AV Dicey, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution* (10th edn, MacMillan 1959) 328-329; Khan (n 2) 2; ECS Wade, AW Bradley, *Constitutional and Administrative Law* (11th edn, Longman 1993) 605-607, 617; We need to bear in mind the differences in understanding the public administration and administrative law between civil law and common law traditions. In the continental model, based on French 'droit administratif' and German 'polizeiwissenschaft', public administration is regulated by administrative law, which is clearly distinguished from the other types of law, when common law emphasises concept of rule of law, in which it is generally held, that public administration should be regulated by the same law that regulates the conduct of any other members of the society, even if the law regarding the administration can be similarly distinguished as in civil law system

[33] Galanter (n 30) 97

[34] Social environment understand as various social, cultural or economic factors, including opinions of family, friends, co-workers or neighbours

administration, in contrast to repeat players, who usually formulate their expectations on the basis of general opinions expressed in his given social environment.[35] We need to also notice that in the context of public administration and administrative law, it is nearly impossible to not have contact with some form either of them, especially in a modern country, and therefore, everyone can be considered at least one-shotter.[36] Of course, we need to also bear in mind that the rule presented above is general by nature, and thus, the expectations of administrated people can differ among individuals. During the exchange program, the international students have the opportunity to confront and share their personal, cultural and educational experience, which can differ significantly depending on their countries of origin. This also includes experience with public administration and expectations on how it should be realised. In general, international students can be rather considered as one-shotters in the context of public administration, with the exception to university administration, which can be considered public in case of publicly founded studies. But even in that case, the experience with university administration may not be enough to consider students as repeat players in the context of a broader concept of public administration. At the same time, young people can be generally considered repeat players in the context of new technologies and electronic administration, and therefore potentially, they might be considered more experienced users of smart administration.

3. Model of behaviour of parties in public administration

Concept of three stories about law, introduced by Ewick an Silbey: 'before the law, with the law and up against the law'[37] can be used in the studies about administration and organisation,[38] and can be adapted to determine the expected model of behaviour of parties in the context of public administration. While discussing the behaviour of the parties in the context of public administration, we need to mention the theoretical background to its organisational model, which lies in the works of authors starting from XVIII and XIX century, followed by the studies of Max Weber, Frederick Taylor, Woodrow Wilson and Luther Gulick, then somehow contested by the concepts of new public management, good

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[35] Same as above

[36] Khan (n 2) 14; In my opinion of this study, Ewick nad Silbey made a mistake in their study, by oversimplification or misunderstanding the role of law in society or its elements. It is possible to be no-shotter, if you are a member of a tribal society, war-torn country or failed state, but still the general rule remains that public administration accompany as from the beginning to the end

[37] Ewick, Silbey (n 29) 1028, 1031, 1034

[38] Including public administration

governance and multi-level partnership.[39] Present-day approaches underline the importance of the opinions of different parties of public administration, one-shotters and repeat players alike. Kurt Lewin, Ronald Lippitt and Ralph White in their study of leadership, discussed the elements of basic management of autocratic and democratic styles,[40] which were next elaborated and expanded by the other authors.[41] All the above typologies can be used to identify the three major models of behaviour of parties in the context of public administration, which could be described as a meritoric-despotism behaviour, efficient-democratic behaviour and anarchist-informal behaviour.

Meritoric-despotism behaviour is reflecting the classical approach to public administration expressed by Max Weber and Woodrow Wilson, which is based on the principle of rationality[42] and professionalism.[43] Officials should be well prepared specialist in the matters regarding the functioning of state, recruited to their position according to the possessed professional knowledge and experience, and they are expected to follow formal hierarchy.[44] However, all the merits are blending with a certain dose of despotism, which appears as inheritable trait of this model.[45] Autocratic style of management can by observed as a decision-making process do not necessarily require opinion, consent or approval of co-workers or other parties.[46] Duty to respect laws, outlines, ordinance and other internal or external regulations should be followed obediently not only by the members of public administration, but in some extent also by the people outside public administration.[47] This vision suits the story 'before the law', in which, according to Ewick nad Silbey, the law is remote from the day-to-day life, yet still is a well-ordered rational and hierarchical system.[48] We can also notice the

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[39] Chrisidu, Korczak, Pakuła, Supernat (n 10) 40, 50; Pfiffner, Presthus (n 3) 4; Evan (n 31) 97; C Harlow, R Rawlings, *Law and administration* (3rd edn, CUP 2009) 52–53, 58–59

[40] Chrisidu, Korczak, Pakuła, Supernat (n 10) 272; M Billig 'Kurt Lewin's Leadership Studies and His Legacy to Social Psychology: Is There Nothing as Practical as a Good Theory?' (2015) 45 J. Theory Soc. Behav 440–441; Pfiffner, Presthus (n 3) 7; Chrisidu, Korczak, Pakuła, Supernat (n 10) 280

[41] James Alan Calvert Brown, Douglas McGregor, Renis Likert, Ross Webber, William James Reddin; Chrisidu, Korczak, Pakuła, Supernat (n 10) 276

[42] According to Weber rational system should not be influenced by moral or religious rules, but only by applying logic

[43] Chrisidu, Korczak, Pakuła, Supernat (n 10) 375; Jastrzębska (n 5) 19; Deflem (n 2) 41; Vago, Barkan (n 23) 41; Pfiffner, Presthus (n 3) 41-43

[44] Chrisidu, Korczak, Pakuła, Supernat (n 10) 57; Jastrzębska (n 5) 19; Pfiffner, Presthus (n 3) 41-42; Deflem (n 2) 43; Harlow, Rawlings (n 39) 52; Allum (n 15) 354-357

[45] Chrisidu, Korczak, Pakuła, Supernat (n 10) 357

[46] ibid 358-360

[47] Jastrzębska (n 5) 19; Deflem (n 2) 43

[48] Ewick, Silbey (n 29) 1028

idealisation of law, and in the context of the topic of this paper, idealisation of public administration.[49] If the system is rational, stable and well-organised, there is no need in participating in the decision-making process or contesting its conduct or outcomes of its actions, as the members of the system know the best solution to a given issue.

Efficient-democratic behaviour represents the concepts of new public management, good governance[50] and multi-level partnership. In this approach, the conduct of public administration is focused on the reception of public administration by outside parties, in a similar manner as in business relations between company and customer or business partners, which are regulated by free market and should be governed by quality and efficiency.[51] While still the public officials represent authority and power, their role is more about coordinating and guiding the various parties in the society through participation and partnership than simply ensuring abiding to the law, especially in the context of international or even global cooperation.[52] Law starts to resemble a complex web[53] of interaction between parties, which could be referred to as game, as in Ewick nad Silbey's story 'with the law'.[54] Law is an instrument, which should be used by people, but the question remains – how people use tools that they are provided with and with what effect. As stated earlier, public administration realises public interest, which is more than a simple sum of private interests. But how many times do we catch ourselves thinking that public interest is our own. In day-to-day life, we usually do not seek a broad benefit of general population, but instead, we are focussed on the well-being of our family, which, even if not noble *per se*, it is not wrong by default, but it is the consequence of our nature. This reasoning, however, can lead to the question about boundaries of cynicism or selfishness in public administration. Can we allow public administration to be a game between different parties, demonstration of skill, power, resourcefulness or cleverness. When different arguments can be made for and against this concept, we need to bear in mind, that

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[49]   Chrisidu, Korczak, Pakuła, Supernat (n 10) 357; Ewick, Silbey (n 29) 1028

[50]   Theory emphasize the importance of subjection of the public administration not only to legal rules, but also various moral and ethical rules, which are derived from fundamental principles present in society, which transcend legal rules, but also give them ideological background

[51]   Dębicka (n 13) 206; Jastrzębska (n 5) 21-23; J McEldowney, *Public Law* (4th edn, Sweet & Maxwell 2016) 423, 442–443; Harlow, Rawlings (n 39) 58-59; E Ferlie, L Ashburner, *The New Public Management in action* (OUP 1996) 9; N Flynn, *Public Sector Management* (5th edn, Sage Publications 2007) 128–129, 202; Pfiffner, Presthus (n 3) 6

[52]   Chrisidu, Korczak, Pakuła, Supernat (n 10) 479; Osiński (n 11) 13, 85-86; E Sørensen, J Torfing, 'Making Governance Networks Effective and Democratic through Metagovernance' (2009) 87 Public Adm. 234; K Ladeur, *Public Governance in the Age of Globalization* (Ashgate 2004) 213, 305–306; Flynn (n 51) 184

[53]   Dębicka (n 13) 240; Jastrzębska (n 5) 23; Ladeur (n 52) 129-133

[54]   Ewick, Silbey (n 29) 1031

we are somehow limited by fundamental legal and democratic[55] principles, which can impose a specific way of conduct on parties in public administrative procedure and adherence to a specified set of moral and ethical rules besides the legal one.

Lastly, anarchist-informal behaviour model was inspired by utopian doctrines of anarchism, and therefore, can be considered as the most controversial of the ones presented, because in some way, it contradicts the reason of existence of public administration or formal law in the first place.[56] In view of the anarchist philosophy, public administration is not required to exist, as it assumes that people are capable of self-governing themselves on the basis of broad social consent, rather than formal legal rules. Even if seemingly such an approach could be deemed as not suitable in the context of public administration or law in general, it can be relevant, when discussing public administration in a social context. Are people seeking formality, legality or compliance with legal rules in public administration, or perhaps, what they are expecting is help, understanding or concern, or their expectation is that public official act informally in order to solve matters in the best possible way. Therefore, both parties are expected to act in accordance to their senses and to a lesser extent to formal rules or even break them, if situation demands it. This approach resembles the Ewick and Silbey's story 'up against the law' about people, who – because of their seemingly helpless situation or lack of resourcefulness – reject law, seeing it as arbitrary and unfair, and in the process, employ schemes or actions, which can directly or indirectly violate the law.[57]

III. Expectation, Opinions and Concerns Expressed by International Students – Discussing the Results

1. General outcome of interviews

At the beginning of interviews, all students were asked general questions about their family and educational background. As mentioned earlier, all of them identified themselves as middle income class. Two of them came to Netherlands from west Europe countries: one had come study literature from the French

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[55]   In the countries that embrace democracy as political regime

[56]   L Dubel, *Historia doktryn politycznych i prawnych do schyłku XX wieku* (LexisNexis 2012) 358–359, A Sylwestrzak, Historia doktryn politycznych i prawnych (Wolters Kluwers 2015) 239. Anarchism is diversified philosophy, which, depending on the version, can include elements of individualism, collectivism, communism, syndicalism. Fundamental authors are Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Mikhail Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin

[57]   Ewick, Silbey (n 29) 1034

region of Île-de-Franc, and the other, to study business communication and came from the German state (land) of North Rhine-Westphalia. Both of them lived in a small, countryside town and studied in larger cities. Another student of economy came from a large city from the Italian region of Lombardy on the south of Europe, and another one, who studied computer programming, came from the medium city in Romanian Timiș County in south-eastern Europe. While their parents and relatives followed different professional paths, none of them had relatives connected to any legal profession or had received legal training. When asked if they are discussed law or public related topics with family or friends, all of them answered that they usually did not, aside from the context of important social issues or events, and rather more in relation to the current political situation in the country. Participants' level of personal knowledge about law and public administration was different and was related more to the type of studies. All of them expressed concerns about insufficient civil education in schools and lack of proper practical approach to this topic. The Italian student also pointed out the fear of teachers in school about talking about political matter and the German student mentioned insufficient unification of educational policy duo to the federal nature of the state. During their studies, all students had classes about legal issues related to their respective areas of professional interests, but in a limited scope.

When asked about the term 'administration', all the students were able to identify the elements of public administration, mentioning in the first place government, but also other institutions, like field public administration or local government. Even if the respondents didn't know the proper names, they were able to classify administrative functions and institutions by type. Only the student of economic studies distinguished private administration from public administration without hesitation, but this relation was also noticed by the students of business communication. All, however, were not sure of the given answers. Most interesting was the reply from the student of literature, who broadly described administration as 'social compromise and alienation', expressing its philosophical essence. All of them also stated that they had contact with public administration only a few times in the past; thus, according to Galanter typology, all the participants can be classified as one-shotters.

2. Meritoric-despotism behaviour in public administration

During the interviews, the respondents commonly described public administration as a bureaucratic and centralised system, which indeed, is still the base model of public administration in the European and non-European countries. Interestingly, when asked if this should be changed in their opinion, their answer was no, with the exception of students from Germany, which, as a federal republic, is decentralised. He stated that of course he sees benefits of the current situation,

but he also thinks that country should be centralised to some degree, in order to increase the efficiency of the system. Efficiency was placed by all students as the main argument for the centralised bureaucratic model. 'We need centralised public administration to provide order in the society and prevent anarchy in the country', said a student from Italy, but similar thoughts were also expressed by the other students. However, all the students also expressed the opinion that public administration should be less formalised, simpler and more flexible when dealing with outside people, but balanced with the need of being efficient at the same time.

All of them also admitted, that they feel forced to use public administration, and if possible, they would rather choose an alternative way of solving their problem. The student of economy stated that he uses it only because he needs to, but will be much more content to use the services of a private company instead. The French student expressed feelings that public administration is autocratic by nature but it should become more and more democratic in the future in order to serve people properly.

3. Efficient-democratic behaviour in public administration

In their answer, all the students expressed the need for changes in public administration, but they also hinted that it still needs to retain its features, as mentioned in the previous sections. The student of economy as well as the Romanian student, both stated that public administration should be privatised and should extensively use services provided by private companies to realise its role in the society. This concept was rejected by the French student, who believed that private sector should be separated from public, because frequent interaction between them could be exploited and corrupted by power groups. Similar fear was expressed by the other students, but in relation with the concept of partnership or other closer forms of cooperation between public administration and private companies. The student of economy responded firmly that cooperation needs to have clear boundaries and customer-business relationship. In the opinion of the Romanian student, cooperation in the first place should provide benefit for people and not private company. More complex answers come with the question about inclusion of other parties into the decision making process in public administration. When all agreed that public administration should consult their decision with recipients and inform and educate people more about their activity, concept about negotiating decisions with recipients met with mixture between surprise and rejection. The student of business communication summarised this matter in the best way, who said, 'idealistically, this could be [a] good and democratic idea, which could be, however, quickly exploit[ed] and paralyse [the] whole system'. Also, the answers for questions about moral and ethics differ between the students.

The student of literature stated, 'that public administration is system, which objective is efficiency, thus do not require human features as human administration is not administration any more'. He stated however, that he would welcome, if public officials would show more compassion and concern, when interact with outside people, but ultimately, it is not what he expected from the system. Other express opinion that public administration not always serves interest of whole society, but usually serves its own interests. The students of business communication noted that this could not be a problem, provided that the realisation of interests of public administration will also benefit the whole society. Similar thought was expressed by the Romanian student.

The student of economy mentioned that if not necessary, he preferred to not be bothered by public administration, but he also stated that public administration should be interested in the problems in the region and actively work to solve them. Administration has its position in the society and a mission to fulfil; therefore, it should not avoid its duty to the rest of the society.

4. Anarchist-informal behaviour in public administration

In general, all the students perceived administration as a lesser evil, and even if they share many different thoughts, opinions and concerns about the functioning of public administration, none of them expressed any desire to violate, ignore or avoid obligation towards public administration. They preferred to have minimal contacts with public administration, but still see the importance of its existence in the society. Respondents differed in opinions regarding how it should be organised, but all of them confirmed, that public administration have the legitimacy to act and perform its duties. All the students expressed the same thought, which was worded in the best way by the Romanian student, who stated, 'even if formalities seems to be excessive and procedure took long time, it give guaranty that established standards regarding public health, order and safety will be at least in some degree realised'. However, all the participants also stated that public officials cannot blindly follow rules, and if situation demands, they should also be prepared to act according to their reasoning, even against the law, in order to promote welfare or help people. However, their action need to be verified and controlled by both legal institution and people.

5. Analysis of factors that influenced interview answers

During their interviews, when answering questions, the students used argumentation and reasoning, answering in accordance to their beliefs, intuition and common knowledge. However, the respondents rarely used examples from their studies, possibly because they deemed them not relevant to the topic. A

possible explanation for this might be that a major factor, which influenced their opinions, would be their individual personality. However, this statement must be also be modified by observation, that their answers were also inspired by situation in their home countries or towns. Even if not directly asked, during the interview, they made natural references to their country of origin. However, each of them highlighted similar points independently despite ethnic or cultural differences. One possible implication of this was that their reasoning was more determined by the social environment and experiences, rather than their country of origin.

When asked about the need for informalisation of public administration and simplification of procedures, the respondents were cautious about they argumentation, expressing balanced, possibly objective reasoning, seeking both advantages and disadvantages. Interesting was also their common, firm assumption that centralised public administration is required for the society to function properly. One could assume, that young people, especially international, will be more interested in informal and perhaps a little anarchistic behaviour in public administration, even if it could be considered a bit naive. There are several possible explanations for this result. Probably this development was the consequence of sharing common personal traits, originated by education and family background, as well as by access to global knowledge through information technology. Sympathy to centralisation should not be however confused with sympathy to any form of authoritarian leadership. None of them seemed to be content with the idea of a single person in charge of a country, and they criticised the occurrence of this type of tendencies in their countries and worldwide. However, scepticism towards decentralisation of public authority is alarming. This might be a consequence of poor education; thus, the knowledge about public affairs and the functioning of public administration, which was pointed out by the respondents, but perhaps also because of the poor performance of local administration, which can be caused due to bad implementation of legal rules, poor choices of local or central politicians, lack of proper findings or because of lack or insufficient communication between local authorities and citizens. Further and deeper researches should be conducted to fully identify the factors, which are determining this supportive disposition to centralised administration.

During the interviews, all the students mentioned that when abroad, they seldom had the opportunity to contact the foreign public administration, and thus have no base to compare it with home administration. However, even if not discussing public administration directly, they have the opportunity to share common life experiences. They also mentioned that sources of their knowledge are usually internet sources. This could lead to the development of more balanced opinions, in consonance to the obtained information about the differences between countries, and therefore, efforts to determine the common core model of expected

behaviour of administration in international scale in Europe can be successful in future. However, such a statement requires further and more detailed examination.

IV. Conclusions

Conducted interviews allow to highlight the common expectations, expressed by the interviewed students, which was the main objective of the study. Gathered data could be classified and assigned to three distinguished models of behaviour of parties in public administration, and in consequence, provide an insight to the expected model of smart administration. Contrary to the expectations, students still favoured some features of centralised model of public administration; even if more flexible and informal approaches are also desired, these were not mentioned as default aspects of public administration. In my opinion, this outcomes came as result due to the fact that public administration is still culturally associated with most people, with autocratic authority and power structure in the society.

Traditional role of authority – and therefore, also public administration – is to establish peace and order; thus, alternative ways can be seen as elements that disrupt natural hierarchy of matters issued in a state. It is not necessarily undermining the concept of smart administration in favour of classical approaches, but nonetheless put accent of smartness in other aspect of administrative conduct. Smart administration needs to remain a classic public administration, in order to maintain stability in the society, as long as people do not find its classical function as no more required.

Alternative method of conducting public administration can be achieved, provided that people in the society will be more interested in participating in public affairs on a local, national and international level. In the context of public administration, new technologies allow us not only to act faster and more efficiently, but also in a more civic-wise, as social and public initiatives can be now more easily managed, coordinated and financed together with other relevant activities and programmes. Finally, there are still questions that are not easily decided, for example, to what extent can smart administration be based on democratic or decentralised model. Generally, the respondents answered with reserve to this concept. Even if personally they spoke in favour of it, all noticed that in the scale of the whole society, we still need to uphold the old system and put limits to democratisation or decentralisation, as not all people are suited to this model, but also because there always will be individuals who will try to exploit smart administration. So, in consequence, meritoric-despotism model must be applied in the society; balanced, however, with the concepts from efficient-democratic model and in a small extent also by features of anarchist-informal model, in order to promote prosperity and progress in the society.

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