

The historical-cultural background of public administration values: the case of Slovenia

Zgodovinsko-kulturno ozadje vrednot v javni upravi: primer Slovenija

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Abstract

The article analyses key aspects of historical-cultural bases of public administration values in Slovenia, a state founded after the disintegration of former Yugoslavia. Special attention is dedicated to the analysis of the transformation of old values which occurred during the period of post-socialist transition, when a *value vacuum* emerged due to an almost-overnight deposition of the old communist regime and its value system, while new modern values had not yet been accepted. Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman's *Public Administration Values Inventory* was used as a tool for determining the presence of modern public values in Slovenia's public administration. We found only a partial presence of these values in the normative sphere and a further gap between it and practice. We argue that this is due to the overemphasis on the harmonisation of legislation with European Union standards, while much needed changes in culture, education, civil society etc. have been lagging behind.

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Keywords: culture, public administration, administrative ethics, organisational values, values inventory

Povzetek

V članku se analizirajo ključni aspekti zgodovinsko-kulturnih ozadij vrednot v javni upravi v Sloveniji kot državi, ki je nastala po razpadu bivše Jugoslavije. Posebna pozornost je namenjena raziskovanju transformacije starih vrednot, ki se je dogajala v obdobju post-socialistične tranzicije, v katerem se je pojavil vrednostni vakuum zaradi hitre dekonstrukcije starega komunističnega režima skupaj z njegovim sistemom vrednot, nove moderne vrednote pa še niso bile splošno sprejete. Kot raziskovalno orodje za določanje prisotnosti modernih javnih vrednot v naši javni upravi se uporablja Beck Jørgensen in Bozemanov t. i. Inventar vrednot javne uprave. Odkriva se delna prisotnost le-teh v normativni sferi in predcejšnji razkol med njo in vsakdanjo prakso. Razlago tega pojava članek išče v pretiranem poudarku na harmonizaciji naše zakonodaje z pravnimi predpisi EU ob hkratnem zanemarjanju prepotrebnih sprememb v kulturi, izobraževanju, civilni družbi ipd.

Ključne besede: kultura, javna uprava, administrativna etika, organizacijske vrednote, inventar vrednot

Introduction

Our starting point is that there is no such thing as a state of affairs without a value context. Thus, *public values* must always be understood in a historical, cultural, political, institutional, philosophical, ideological, etc. context. On other hand, *value*, in its essence, is valid in a certain *inter-subjective context*. Values are valid *only in relation to human beings*

and not *per se*. According to Nietzsche (in his *Thus Spake Zarathustra*) "man assigned values to things in order to preserve himself - he alone created the meaning of things, a *human meaning!* Therefore, he calls himself "man", that is, the *valuator*" (Nietzsche 1917, p. 61). Following this mode of thought, we try to understand and explain values in this article as: a) basic *beliefs* of people who conduct their judgement and behaviour in different circumstances; b) basic *positive principles* of living of individuals and groups; c) people's *attitude* towards something that has higher importance to them comparing to something else – *tendencies to prefer* certain states of affair over others; d) something we *aim for* (i.e. *aspiration*), and which we also carry out in everyday public and/or business life. There are two different categories of values - either *ideals* (objectives, maxims, possibilities etc.) or *norms* (moral, technical, political, religious, scientific, artistic, etc.) (Jelovac 2000). Finally, values are those types of human ideals or norms that satisfy a peculiar set of human needs, especially the need for *social integration* by collective approval of some types of behaviour and disapproval of other types. Hence, all values *depend on the human being* since a world without human beings is neither good nor evil. "Values are core ideas about how people should live and the ends they should seek. They are shared by a majority of people within a community or society. They are simply expressed generalities, often no more than single words such as peace and honesty. As they are very broad they do not give guidance on how particular things should be evaluated" (Fisher and Lovell 2006, p. 152).

Values and their systems are not eternal. Value systems are modified by changing the *spirit of time, social structures and dynamics*. Universal and particular aspects of values are flagrantly at odds with each other especially during historic periods of crisis. We presupposed that at least two symptoms indicate that antagonism: (1) members of the elite cease to live in accordance with their own moral rules; therefore, *immorality*,

cynicism and *hypocrisy* become widespread; (2) strong opposition emerges and members of this new *group-in-fusion* (in Sartre's terms) begin to criticize the dominant group and the existing social system from the standpoint of *universal human values*; at the same time, a new morality is emerging which *comprises traits of the universal morality and the new moral requests of the fused group* (see Sartre 1976, pp. 382-404).

In order to address our research question whether public values in post-socialist states are congruent with the values and moral principles of developed Western nations, Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman's *Public Administration Values Inventory* (2007) will be used as a methodological research tool for identifying public value concepts and for determining the presence, hierarchy, causality, and proximity of public values in the normative sphere as well as the reality. This will be done on the case study of Slovenian public administration. Our investigations into the aforementioned historical development and cultural processes will thus be strictly limited to the case of Slovenia.² At the same time, it will be

² To our knowledge, no studies of the historical basis of public administration values in Slovenia have been carried until now. Studies which were partly concerned with public values have been conducted within other research areas such as administration science, organisational culture, organisational climate, quality management etc. There is a dearth of empirical research on public administration values; cross-cultural research of public values still less common. The exception to this is the recent empirical work by van der Wal, Pevkur and Vrangbaek (2008) on public sector value congruence among old and new EU member-states (Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia) and Vrangbaek (2009) on public sector values in Denmark. Recent empirical studies comparing public and private sector values include van der Wal, de Graaf, and Lasthuizen (2008), van der Wal and Huberts (2008), and de Graaf and van der Wal (2008). The former two quantitative studies reached the conclusion that value paradigms of contemporary managers in government and business are "*internally consistent and relatively traditional*" (van der

focused on public values because we agree with Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman's starting point that "there is no more important topic in public administration and policy than public values" (Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007, p. 355).

Transformation of the public administration values in Slovenia

The discussion on the foundations of the public administration value system in Slovenia certainly requires positioning within a historical perspective. We can only speak of public administration in Slovenia in the full meaning of the term from June 25th 1991 onwards, since only then did Slovenia become a sovereign state. In fact, the same date marked the embryo of the process which led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, a process which, spanning across almost two decades, gradually gave birth to six other independent states beside Slovenia. However, this does not preclude us from discussing public administration on the territory of modern-day Slovenia at an earlier period. It is deeply rooted in the past, i.e. the time when Southern Slavs arrived in these parts of Europe during the 6th century AD. They founded an independent state under the rule of an elected prince, chosen by the assembly of free men. This state was called Carantania. Its head was an elected prince whose inauguration act held a special symbolic meaning. The ceremony went on as follows: first the throne was occupied by one of the free men. The prince approaches on foot. When he is near, the freeman asks: 'Who

Wal & Huberts, 2008, p. 279) and rejected the notion of so-called *value intermixing*. The third study by de Graaf and van der Wal (2008) of so-called "sector switchers" found (using a qualitative methodology) that values differed in the two sectors, but that these perceived differences did not depend on whether the participant previously worked in the other sector.

goes there?’ The prince replies: ‘It is the prince.’ The freeman asks: ‘By what right are you coming?’ The prince replies: ‘Based on the right that I am elected by free men.’ The freeman then withdraws from the throne so that the prince may claim it. At the same time he slaps the prince on the face to warn and remind him of who has chosen him and whom he must serve. The prince then vows to rule justly, draws his sword and wields it in all four directions of the world, to symbolize his readiness to defend the freedom of his country. This selection ritual of a Caranthanian prince was kept until the 15th century and inspired Thomas Jefferson, one of America's Founding Fathers. He often took it as a historical example of how a ruler is directly chosen by the people for the people.

During the 8th century, Slovenians embraced Christianity, which had, according to some sources, been introduced and disseminated by Irish missionaries. From approximately AD 820 to 1806, territories of present-day Slovenia belonged to the Holy Roman Empire. At the end of the 13th century, the Habsburg dynasty took over the domains, still within the framework of the Holy Roman Empire. The territories became the Habsburgs’ property which they ruled in a typically feudal manner. A short discontinuity in this rule occurred from 1809 to 1813 when Napoleon established the Illyrian Provinces. They were formed according to the French model of a newly-formed and arising civic society after the French Revolution of 1789. Thereafter, feudalism was entirely suspended for a short time in Slovenian provinces of Kranjska, Koroska, Istria, Goriska and Trieste. The Provinces had a governor assigned by Napoleon himself. Although each province had a centralized administration, it was nevertheless divided into municipalities, which were the embryos of local government in the modern sense. Official languages were French and Slovenian. In 1912, *Code civil* was put into place.

After the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Austria again re-established its rule

over present-day Slovenia and re-instituted its old administration, this time without feudal nobility assemblies. Former nobility assemblies were gradually transformed into *provincial parliaments* during the 19th century, forming a *provincial government* headed by a provincial leader, although still greatly dependent on the central authority in Vienna and on the Emperor himself. During this period the nobility lost their privileges to administrative positions, although they still obtained them more easily than others could. A new civil service 'caste' emerged that could earn aristocratic titles for their merits toward the monarchy. These *civil servants* would in their mindset and behaviour *always remain the Emperor's officers*. In appearance they looked like the Emperor, i.e. they wore high-rolled moustaches like Franz Joseph. During the Habsburg rule, the State was profoundly centralized, which had its effects on the position, role and ways of its administration. The civil servants' basic qualities were: *submissiveness, loyalty and subjugation* to the Emperor as a supreme authority. These values were strongly imprinted into the culture of civil administration and thereby into the culture of the Slovenian people.

Slovenian provinces remained within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy until its final breakdown as a result of the defeat in the First World War in November 1918. Slovenians entered, as a constitutive nation, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (Kingdom SHS), established on the Uniting Day of Southern Slavs, December 1st 1918. Eleven years later, the state changed its name to Kingdom of Yugoslavia, a name to be kept until the end of the state. All of this led to certain changes in the state administration. The constitutional monarchy remained almost the same, with the small difference that its centre of authority had moved from Vienna to Belgrade. A major problem arose over a longer period, i.e. *fundamental and far-reaching changes in culture*. Some high government officials abandoned their positions in public administration

and moved to other countries such as Austria, while being replaced by new staff who spoke a similar yet different language (Serbian belongs to the same group of Southern Slavic languages), wrote in a different alphabet (Cyrillic as opposed to Latin), had different customs and believed in a different Christian faith (Orthodox rather than Roman Catholic). They emerged as 'newcomers' who come from a different cultural circle. Therefore, Slovenians became foreigners in their own land. Local civil servants did not quite understand the directives coming from the central government because they were alien to them. The directives stemmed from a different value system and a foreign tradition. Then the first major confusion in public administration occurred. In order to advance their careers, local civil servants had to have powerful patrons in Belgrade. As Serbia had already built up a strong civil service structure, it had no need for new staff and therefore it allowed no one into its circle but those with strong political protection. Consequently, local clerks became obedient servants to the ruling political elite and champions of their policies, while regular people named them '*servants of policy*' in defiance. As the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was over three times smaller than the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it meant the number of potential clerk positions was much lower in proportion. Furthermore, while in the Empire Austrians and Hungarians were outnumbered by other nations, in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia Serbs were an absolute majority. In such a blend of new circumstances, a radical shift occurred in the civil servants' thought pattern and public administration in general. We could easily say that fixed bureaucratic habits remained in place, preserving the qualities of submission, loyalty and subjugation as the most cherished values, however this time they were combined with some new ingredients from the Balkans, namely *carelessness* and a *relaxed, laid-back manner*. Such a specific phenomenon, created as a crossbreed of Central European and Southern European culture circles in the realm of present day Slovenia at the dawn of the 20th century, quickly

added to the degrading of civil servants' integrity and discrediting of public administration in the newly-established state of three constitutive nations. The Slovenian people do not trust this *mixed type of clerk* anymore; in fact they view him as a harmful parasite which is, above all, corrupted. The clerk in the former regime was deemed a necessary burden, and in the end, he was useful because he had achieved something by obeying the law, the strict rules and procedures; in other words, he acted within the framework of a *legal state (Rechtstaat)* and enabled it to exist in the everyday life of its citizens. In time people grew accustomed to this type of clerk and the civil service. The new clerk had to find his way in the new confusing circumstances, had to improvise and 'creatively' apply the rules in practice. Such a clerk who operates on the edge of the law quickly loses his dignity as well as respect from the people.

With the establishment of the Kingdom SHS, the division of administrative units in the territory of present-day Slovenia changed and divided in two *districts* (Ljubljana and Maribor). In the territory of the entire Kingdom, thirty-three districts were formed. All districts were strictly subjugated to central authority and had, in fact, no relevant self-managing powers. Within the district, there were smaller 'srez' divisions and municipalities. In 1929, new divisions occurred, introducing nine 'banovine' instead of districts. The entire Slovenian territory became '*Dravska Banovina*'. The 'srez' and municipal units remained as lower divisions in the local level until the outbreak of the Second World War in Yugoslavia on April 6th 1941. The war ended in Slovenia as well as the rest of Yugoslavia in May 1945 with the victory of the Bolshevik revolution. As a consequence it brought a *radical cut*, among all other things, in the public administration. The newly-born Yugoslav Federation consisted of six republics and two autonomous provinces, which were divided into districts and municipalities. Each republic had its own

constitution, its parliament and government, creating a veneer of self-management. However, the laws and practice were fully harmonized by the central authorities. Although the new communist regime promoted a self-imposed humanistic attitude, as well as atheism, human being as its ultimate value, social equity and equality, brotherhood and unity of all nations, 'bright future' for each worker, the government apparatus was nevertheless designed after the Soviet model. This meant in reality an *extended arm of repression*. The process of compromising the civil servants that had started in 1918 and continued after 1945 ended in their degradation in the eyes of the public.

The first reason for this was that for the first time in history of public administration, civil servants, especially those in higher positions, had to be active members of the ruling party. It was the same party that had carried out the revolution and seized the monopoly of power over a single-party ruled state, with one ideology and one leader. The consequence was that civil servants *remained totally responsible and dependent on their party, but not to their government or to their citizens whom they should serve*. Therefore, the impression that the people are there for the administration and not the other way around is still maintained in the Slovenian collective consciousness (above all in the minds of the middle-aged and older generations), even though nineteen years have passed since the fall of communism.

The second reason for the compromising of the civil servants in the eyes of the people stems from their *incompetence*, which involved several issues. At the start, the staff had insufficient and inadequate training; many among them lacked the required abilities, skills and experience necessary for working in public service. This happened because of the artificially-induced shortage of staff due to the *radical cut*. Additionally, in public service, as in other spheres of society, careers could be made

mainly by loyalty and merits to the Party. Such clerks were convinced that their job was safe, that they were unmovable from their positions and completely protected due to the jobs they were doing 'in the name of the Party'. Very often some of them were arrogant toward the citizens, scornful, rude, etc. In time they became lazy, because nothing obliged them to work or to advance professionally. They were not worried by complaints from the citizens who used their poor services. They were afraid only of their bosses. Service users would not make complaints about their work because they knew the public administration was *just a transmission* of the Party's rule. Besides, rules were not clear because they had been prepared by insufficiently trained experts. This resulted in laws and regulations being too comprehensive, written unclearly, or imprecise, which made possible different, often quite varied, interpretations. Another difficulty was in contradictions and so-called *loopholes in the law*, which the *nomenclature* often made on purpose as an 'escape route', just in case they were needed. Lesser staff had no idea what this was about so they were kept in fear of making a mistake and risk of enraging their bosses. They applied the laws and regulations mainly by interpreting them against the citizens' best interests.

Value system of public administration in the period of post-socialist transition

If we now analyze the cultural, historical and socio-economic context of the value system which underlies the entire public sector and especially the public administration in Slovenia, we first notice that it has emerged as a result of influences from various cultures, one monotheistic religion and two major ideologies. For several centuries the major part of Slovenia was under the influence of the Central European Cultural Circle (Austria-Hungary), while the coastal part was for some time under the

influence of Romanic culture (Italy). During the 19th century, there was a strong of Pan-Slavic influence, but upon formation of the Kingdom of SHS, liberalism became the dominant ideology of the state. After World War II, the communists took over and proclaimed so called 'self-managerial socialism'. During the entire period the strongest religious influence was that of the Roman Catholic Church, while Protestantism achieved an influence only in a very limited historical period, from the beginning of the Reformation in 1517 until the end of the Council of Trent in 1563, after which the Counter-Reformation took place. The greatest influence of Protestantism on the Slovenian people has been expressed through its prominent role in the constitution of modern Slovenian written language. The heritage of Protestantism was deeply integrated into cultural memory or memories out of which Slovenian nation express its cultural identity (see Kerševan 2006, p. 8).

When Slovenia embarked on its independence on June 25th 1991, which eventually led to a full membership in the European Union in May 2004, it carried this historical heritage which gives it some advantages but also difficulties on the other hand. The newly-formed state completely took over the old administration, not even thoroughly replacing all the chiefs of administration units. A *hybrid* was thus formed where civil servants of the communist regime and socialist economy had to perform the policy of a new democratic state in a capitalist economy. This discrepancy occasionally had grotesque manifestations, and in the late 1990s, it slowed down the modernization and adoption of European standards in the public administration. According to a public hearing of the former chief of Slovenian Intelligence and Security Agency, during his mandate he had an impression that he was under surveillance and that there was a parallel management system in his agency. This means the new state had indeed established its administration according to the EU formula and, on the outside, arranged its rules to correspond to those in the

European environment. But on the inside, it was too weak to break the power of the '*continuity forces*' as they are called in Slovenia. This means that *it had not in fact successfully overcome its heritage*. Such anomalies are still present today, only on a smaller scale. In view of this, one of the former governments decided to make a substantial move in this area. 'Intensive development in the area of quality in Slovene public administration was observed especially from the year 1999, when in the Ministry of Interior, then responsible for public administration, the Quality Committee began its activity, the main purpose of its activity defined as *effective, citizen friendly, recognizable and responsible public administration*' (Žurga 2007, p. 45). The following government adopted the '*Strategy for further development in the Slovenian Public Sector 2003–2005*'. In order to secure its realization, a document was adopted on December 23rd 2003 named "*Quality Policy of Slovenian Public Administration*" (Vlada Republike Slovenije 2003). It started from the *administration users' needs and values* that all civil servants should respect and carry out in practice. It is all about being user-oriented, efficient management, partnership development, new employment in a continuous improvement process by continual education and innovations, social responsibility and orientation to results. It is obvious that Slovenian government in this respect was under the influence of the so-called *New Public Management* in its movement away 'from the traditional focus on procedural integrity to concentrate much more upon efficiency and performance measurement' (Pratchett and Wingfield 1994, p. 34). Brereton and Temple argue 'that this movement away from a concentration on procedural matters and towards greater concern with quality of output is defining aspect of the new public service ethos' (Brereton and Temple 1999, p. 460). These values are a compass that will make orientation in practice possible to all so that public administration may finally start functioning as a 'legal, independent, as politically neutral, impartial, responsible, open and ethical body' (Brereton and

Temple 1999, p. 460). According to such a formulated quality policy, all civil servants should become partners to each individual, business or non-governmental organization, as well as to all other state or international organizations. The goal of these guided and continuous improvements in public administration is to achieve contemporary circumstances *comparable with those in Europe*. A detailed analysis of the cultural (in)compatibility of old and new EU member states, particularly in terms of their economic and organizational cultures, was already conducted elsewhere (see Adam, Jelovac and Rek 2008, pp. 107-134; Jelovac and Rek 2010). Finally, internationally recognized standards should be adopted in order to assess functioning in the public sector. Special care should be given to determine and follow up the accomplishment of publicly proclaimed and measurable goals and work results. In order to raise the *quality of public administration*, the former government established a Ministry for Public Administration in December 2004. From its initiation, the ministry was dedicated to 'incorporating the demands and quality performance standards of Slovene public administration into the legislation and in all the strategic documents, which it prepares and/or cooperates in preparing' (Žurga 2007, p. 45).

Comparison of the normative sphere with the reality of day-to-day practice in Slovenia

The introduction of new values, norms of conduct as well as the codes of behaviour in public administration would not have its full meaning or effect if it stayed only on paper. Therefore, the Ministry for Public Administration decided to introduce a *continuous system of quality control* to assess the services provided to the citizens. The key purpose of this system is *to measure satisfaction levels* of civil servants as well as citizens by polling all employees in administrative units. This is done

using a scientifically designed anonymous questionnaire. It is interesting to review the cumulative report from 58 administrative units plus five branch offices of the Ljubljana unit dated February 11th 2008. We shall limit our remarks only to the main findings.

Starting from the fact that employees were overburdened, the investigators wanted to know how they would react if they had to work overtime. Over a half of polled civil servants (58.2%) are prepared to finish their tasks after hours to make sure they are done correctly and in time. Considering the role and importance of knowledge for the working results of public servants, three in four (74.7%) believe they have enough knowledge to complete the tasks required in their workplace. From their replies it is obvious they are aware of the importance of continuous training and education. They would prefer to attend seminars on the ongoing changes in the law. Less than one in four wishes to change their work post. Around 70% do not wish to change their work post because they are satisfied; it is suitable for them, they perform their work happily and think that they are able to do it correctly. For those who wish to change their post, the most frequently quoted reason is that they wish to advance because they have fulfilled requirements for higher positions. Other reasons given are that they are not appreciated enough, that work is monotonous, that they are paid inadequately and that they think they know more and can do more than what they are doing now. Related to motivation factors, on a scale from 1 to 5 with an average of 3.92, the polled employees chose the most important factor – *good mutual relationship*, while *career* was least important to them. Marks also show how some values such as *efficiency* and *rewards* are achieved in practice. Less than a half (43.3%) think that they are underpaid for their work. Over a third of the rest think that they would be paid the same no matter how efficient they were. Research on satisfaction included determining the importance attributed to expertise when solving particular cases and

issues. Results show that less than half (41.4%) polled employees think their bosses would always give priority to expertise over subjective circumstances. Relating to the understanding of the administrative unit's goals in the working process, the goal selected as most important (3.84) was to satisfy the customers' needs. Interestingly, the least important was equity. To conclude, we should report how the employees identify individually with their administration unit. Over two thirds (69.2%) are proud to be employed in their administration unit, while 19.4% are not proud. The main reason of being proud is that they are doing their job well and are working for the people and their country. The main reason for those not proud is that their work is not appreciated and they have low wages.

The public administration also has a duty to regularly measure the satisfaction of its customers. This practice was introduced four years ago by the Decree on Amendment of the Decree on Administration Procedures (Slovenian Official State Gazette 2006). The questionnaire to be filled out by citizens at the public administration unit vows to guarantee full anonymity. Service teams must process them for each month until the 10th of the following month and report the results on the Ministry for Public Administration's webpage. On a scale from 1 to 5 the customers express how much their expectations were fulfilled in the administration unit when solving their claims or other issues, in other words how large the gap was between the expected and reality. The object of assessment includes tidiness of the premises, equipment and environment, availability and clarity of information, exemplary speed of solving the issues, provision of services according to promises, solving the claims in one place, readiness of clerks to assist the customer, knowledge of the clerk in service, trust of customers toward the clerks, willingness of clerks to intercede for the customer and clerk's diligence to satisfy the customer's needs. According to available results, average

mark for quality was 3 (good). Discrepancy between expected and actual status in quality services showed that in most administration units *expectations were higher* than what customers actually experienced. The same result occurred with customers' expectations related to the above stated characteristics of civil servants, which are crucial to the assessment of service quality. Considering that in the former government and administration system long waiting in queues at public service desks had become typical, it is now interesting to view data clearly showing that there have been substantial shifts in this area. Namely, 54.1% customers were served immediately upon arrival at the office; over 70% waited up to five minutes, while customers who had waited over 20 minutes were only 1.5% in total. Although this last piece of data may lift our spirits, an overall assessment of 3 (good) is a warning that there is still room for improvement in service quality. 'The key to success of the "anti-bureaucratic" process is in changing the organizational culture – i.e. the opinion of employees in Public Administration" (Virant 2006, p. 32). At this point the breakthrough will be the hardest, especially because the public administration is distinctly conservative toward introduction of changes. 'Civil servants often channel their energy into preserving the existing status, searching for reasons against making changes, rather than taking quick action to introduce the changes' (Virant 2006, p. 32).

Comparison between Slovenian and developed Western countries' public values

When a subsystem of a developed society (such as the public sector) wishes to assess itself, it is wise to compare it with more advanced ones. In this instance we will attempt to compare the system of public sector values in Slovenia to the *inventory of public values* in the developed Western countries which is found in Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman

(2007).

First let us consider things regarding the value category *public sector's contribution to society*. If we start from expectations that public sector must not serve partial interests but should serve society in total, then we should not be pleased with the current state of affairs. In the case of Slovenia, values such as *common good, public interest, social cohesion, altruism* and *human dignity* are either not given sufficient weight or have not been mentioned at all in relevant documents. In practice, a part of the political elite usually tries to transform the public sector into its group's or lobby's extended arm. Only when scandals occur and hit the public sphere via the media, it becomes obvious how much need to be done to improve the mechanisms for the promotion and implementation control of values belonging to this category in everyday life. Special attention must be dedicated to establishing social cohesion because the Slovenian society has been the battlefield of cultural clashes for two centuries, first between liberals and clerics, then between communists and 'enemies of the people' and today between so called 'left' and 'right' political options, with the consequence of an evident chasm between two polarized and mutually opposed subcultures. However, the goal should be to build a society that would not be a battlefield to warring factions, but a world where individuals and groups are connected and united by certain relations, needs, interests etc. The public sector could play a major part in the establishment of such conceived social coherence.

In view of our former empirical investigation where we outlined the values that motivate the public administration in its operation and those that are quoted in relation to the citizens, we now deem necessary to look into the '*constellations*' from the Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman inventory, which include value categories such as (1) inter-organizational aspects of public administration, (2) behaviour of public-sector

employees and (3) relationship between public administration and the citizens. The first category includes the following key values: *robustness, innovation, productivity and self development of employees*. The second category holds *accountability* as a key value. Third category is composed of the following key values: *legality, equity, dialogue, user orientation* (see Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007, pp. 366-369). We can first notice in relation to the above three categories that instruments used by the Slovenian public administration to determine the degree of their fulfilment in day-to-day practice do not take into account some of them in the questionnaire or they are hidden within questions, relating to several values combined together. This means that many of the mentioned values are not treated clearly and distinctly. We are not sure whether this is because they are not given their due significance or because they are so vaguely understood that even the questionnaire creators could not turn them into correctly articulated questions for the respondents. Take for example robustness, which is linked to related values such as *adaptability, stability, reliability and timeliness*. Whether the public administration is organized on the basis of robustness or not, it cannot find this out based on the questionnaire for employees and customers, because the presence of this trait in practice is not investigated. *Timeliness* is partly explored, but in a very narrow meaning, i.e. adequate speed of solving cases and length of time spent waiting at the counter. Further research should extend in the direction of stronger evaluation of robustness as an organizational value, which is essential for the functioning of public administration. If we now look at *innovation*, we can see that this value is linked to *enthusiasm* and *readiness to take risks*. From both questionnaires it is apparent that this value does not play a part in Slovenian public administration, as nobody is asking about it. Citizens are asked whether the clerk is: “tidy, fair, careful, professional and pleasant” (see Quality Barometer of Ministry of Public Administration 2007). As expressed by Virant, the former minister for

public administration, shifts toward changes will be slow until the philosophy of civil servants is changed; the process will resemble that of “breaking concrete” (Virant 2006, p. 32). By that he means to say that the Slovenian public administration is hardened, deprived of enthusiasm and unready for innovations, risk-taking or changes. Productivity is also a doubtful value. General public opinion is that the public administration is *too large and not very efficient*. Thus, the following option offered in the questionnaire for employees is not surprising: *‘In our administrative unit, the quality of the job done is more important than the volume of solved cases’*. In the development of public administration it is very important to root the following typical values of New Public Management in the minds of civil servants: *productivity, efficiency, parsimony, professional attitude, business-like approach, and just-in-time philosophy*. Even Kickert (1997), who is a harsh critic of New Public Management, managerialism and entrepreneurial government ‘as evident trends, particularly in the American and Anglo-Saxon administrations, calling for more business-like and more market and client-oriented management in the public sector’ feels the need to warn us that it is not his ‘intention to give the impression that business-like values such as effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, and quality and value for money, play a less important role in the public sector. On the contrary, one would expect government to pay extreme attention to these values because it is not spending its own money, but the involuntarily paid taxpayer's money. Parsimony and diligence should be highly esteemed values in the public sector according to Kickert (1997, pp. 749-750). It will be a large undertaking due to the historical heritage of Slovenia in values such as egalitarianism, whose consequences were enshrined in the wage policy of so-called equally large stomachs. As a result, a third of public-sector employees today state that they are paid without regard to efficiency, and most think they should all be equally paid and that productivity should not be a measure of their earnings.

In the end we wish to point out that *responsibility* and *legality* are respected values in the public administration, and that values such as *dialogue* and *orientation to clients* have received quite a lot of attention in the last few years. Generally speaking, public administration is communicating with the public more intensively, especially when introducing new kinds of services based on IT technology. Citizens are better and more regularly informed about the functioning of e-administration, about simpler procedures required to open a business company, register a car, to obtain a personal ID card etc. Of course, all this is done with the goal of making the public administration more oriented toward satisfying the customers' needs.

Conclusion

The discussion above highlighted the extent of the importance of historical framework and cultural basis in not only the shaping of an adequate system of values in public administration, but even more so for its successful implementation in practice. This is particularly transparent in unfavourable sets of socio-political circumstances such as post-socialist transition, which tend to contribute to a low level of political and legal culture. The process of increasing the level of these cultures will require much time and effort. Trpin (2006) believes this process should begin 'at the top of the societal structure and transmit itself through its administrative side throughout the society' (Trpin 2006, p. 1240). Although in this respect the state of affairs is infinitely better in Slovenia than in other parts of former Yugoslavia, where the process of *Europeanization* of public administration has only just begun (see for example Verheijen 2005; Eriksen and Solumsmoen 2005), we nevertheless cannot be altogether satisfied with the level, intensity of

changes and ethical improvements in our country (see Jelovac 2010). The main obstacle to the establishment of a modern public administration is the people who work in it. Bugarič (2006) claims that the 'socialist bureaucrat will not all of a sudden become a modern public servant thanks to "modern", new administrative legislation' (Bugarič 2006, p. 1260). The civil service reform has thus far been based on this incorrect assumption. It is clear that a serious reform cannot rely solely on changes in legal rules and norms, but on an entirely novel approach to education, recruitment and human resource development of civil servants given that '*civil service reform is primarily a reform of civil service personnel*' (Bugarič 2006, p. 1260).

Using Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman's inventory in the present study, it was possible to evaluate the degree of modernisation of Slovenian public administration. It became apparent that modern public values emerged in Slovenia at a time when the Slovenian people were fighting for independence. This process of modernisation coincided with the development of the civil society in late 1980s on the eve of independence. It also became evident that public values came to be and are used to serve as guidance during turbulent transitional times.

One of the reasons for the slow development of public administration values (and public values in general) in post-socialist countries is the *underdevelopment* of the civil society. The relationship between the civil society and the state is undoubtedly the most important question of any modern democratic political system. People are conscious of the birth pangs of any emergent political community and they know it is difficult to change old ideals and habits. It is very clear that time is needed for the releasing of the baggage of the former regime, but it also seems obvious that old mistakes should not be repeated again.

It is clear that public values depend on their bearers, i.e. people who are ready to subordinate their private interests to the public interest. Transition is only one step in that direction. Normative proclaiming of public values is useless if the cultural mindset and conduct of people are not being really changed. In such a case, democracy is a matter of *moral renaissance* of a nation. We obviously need a new renaissance in Slovenia, but in the “global village” also. Thus, democratic forces in Slovenia which are striving for modern public values in our society need support from *value-aware* public servants who know how to manage public services in a more ethically-conscious manner. Appropriate input is also required from strong organisations and individuals belonging to the civil society, educational system, independent media, autonomous researchers and institutes etc.

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