

DIMENSIONS OF SMART ADMINISTRATION

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Public administration, intelligent administration, smart administration, smart method, smart-city

ABSTRACT

Smart public administration (hereinafter: smart administration) is understood primarily as the application of modern technologies that increase its effectiveness. However, not only modern techniques and innovative communication solutions define this concept. They should be considered in a broader sense because smart administration has many dimensions. The article presents just such an approach and discusses five dimensions of smart administration (technological, political, legal, subjective and structural).

I. INTRODUCTION

The term *Smart* is an ambiguous concept that co-defines the modern times and like the following concepts: *resources* (e.g., human, material), *capital* (intellectual, social, human, financial), *procedure* (administrative, organizational), *standardization*, typifies them. The abovementioned polysemy is already clear and visible at the moment of the etymological analysis of the term. According to

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the definition contained in the English-Polish dictionary,¹ the term *smart* means among others: elegant, smart, clever, intelligent, clean, tidy,² and it also occurs in the functional sense defining feelings of defeat or insults as well as burning and pinching. With a view to determining the public administration defined from the perspective of the sociological approach presented by Professor Jan Boć,³ the article uses the attributive meaning of the term.

Smart administration is closely linked to public governance, which, being its background, facilitates its implementation. 'Governance is the process whereby societies or organizations make important decisions, determine whom they involve and how they render account'.⁴ O. E. Hughes points out that the concept of public management 'emphasizes results, a focus on clients, outputs and outcomes; it would use management by objectives and performance measurement, the use of markets and market-type mechanisms in place of centralized command-and-control-style regulation, competition and choice, and devolution with a better matching of authority, responsibility and accountability'.⁵ According to E. Löffler, 'there are also other governance mechanisms that remain significant in the public, private and voluntary sectors. In particular, these include: hierarchies, markets, communities. This means that public governance not only involves cooperation but also competition and conflict management. The key governance issues are not simply how to develop and maintain networks, but which governance mechanism are appropriate in which context.'⁶

Public governance seen as a political concept is based on the basic dualism of the government and the society, treating the former as subordinate to the requirements of the latter.⁷ It is in its essence a theory of politics that is less

¹ Available at <<https://oxford.pwn.pl/szukaj/smart.html>> accessed 01 August 2018; <<https://www.diki.pl/slownik-angielskiego?q=smarts>> accessed 01 August 2018

² The word 'smart' is also translated as 'shifty', yet such a moniker should not apply to the public administration in its model (ideal) construction, due to its negative connotations

³ Public administration is the fulfilment of collective and individual needs of the citizens resulting from living in the society, taken up by the state and performed by its dependent organs and the organs of the local government. Jan Boć, 'Pojęcie administracji' in Boć (ed), *Prawo administracyjne* (Kolonia Limited 2007) 15

⁴ O E Hughes, 'An Era of Change' in O E Hughes, *Public Management and Administration: An Introduction* (Palgrave Macmillan 2003) 5

⁵ E Löffler, 'Public Governance in a Network Society' in T Bovaird and E Löffler (eds), *Public Management and Governance* (Routledge 2009) 222

⁶ S Dawson and C Dargie, 'New Public Management: An Assessment and Evaluation with Special Reference to Health' (1999) 1 *Public Management Review*

⁷ H. Izdebski, 'Approaches to Public Administration in the Past and in the Present Time' in H Izdebski (ed), *Introduction to Public Administration and Administrative Law* (Liber 2006) 11-34

focused on the efficiency of the functioning of the institutions of public life, but much more on the nature of the relation government-society.⁸

In the field of public governance, there are five distinct directions: administrative governance (implementation of strategy and provision of public goods), public policy governance (reliance of the position of public governance on the resources being under control of different entities), contract governance (institutional conditioning of contractual relationship), network governance (the management of network that are self-organizing interdependent and in a way independent from the government)⁹ or as socio-political governance (abolition of the monopoly of the government in a political process and the increase of participation of social actors: political, social and administrative).¹⁰

II. ASPECTS OF SMART ADMINISTRATION

The first association regarding *smart administration* is connected with the use of IT technology by the public administration in its operation. The technological aspect is the most common and best described in the literature, especially in relation to cities (the so-called smart-city, smart-cities).

The public administration uses the latest technological solutions to carry out the public tasks imposed on it and uses them to satisfy social needs directly in order to streamline and improve the quality of its activities or indirectly to make dealing with a matter easier for the benefit of the entities it operates for.

The technological aspect consists of the following elements:¹¹

- digitization (treated as a process of implementing IT solutions within the public administration units, the purpose of which is to increase efficiency in the information processing and provision of services in an electronic form);

⁸ R. Rhodes according to ‘for some academics, public governance refers to “self-organizing, inter-organizational networks”’ (R Rhodes, *Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability* (Open University Press 1997) 53

⁹ Jan Kooiman, *Modern Governance: New Government — Society Interactions* (SAGE Publications Ltd 1993) 257

¹⁰ cf in that regard <<http://smartgmina.pl/2016/10/08/abc-smart-gminy/>> accessed 15 July 2018

¹¹ Digitisation of the works of art and elements of environmental heritage allows for its broader dissemination and popularisation due to the possibility of sightseeing and viewing them without leaving one’s home.

- digitalization (introducing electronic form, i.e., the digital form of documents and subjects, objects and places, enables creation of digital and information-spatial objects);¹²
- e-office (concerns the introduction of advanced IT technologies that enable the provision of public administration services by electronic means and contribute to improving the operation of public administration entities, optimizing management processes, shortening the distance between the office and its clients, and facilitating access to all data and records kept in the electronic form, what in turn increases the efficiency and effectiveness of offices);¹³
- participation (participation, co-participation in a decision-making process or performance of activities, which have become possible due to the modern information and communication solutions that increase the intensity of communication processes and interaction between people and communities);¹⁴
- meta data (also referred to as ‘data on the data’ or ‘information about information’, which are of key importance in the databases administering; they are related to indexing and cataloguing of all information in electronic form and their archiving as well as dissemination within the network);
- networking (the process of exchanging information, contacts, knowledge, services and resources aiming to increase the potential and effectiveness of a given group and community, and it may also be treated as a tool to solve specific problems because it links the potential of human resources regardless of their spatial dispersion);
- electronic services, including the possibility of settling matters via the Internet.

¹² Basic examples of introducing digital solutions to the functioning of public administration in Poland are found in: Electronic Management of Documentation, the e-PUAP platform, the digital signature, the system of the Electronic Mail Desk. Of note are also the solutions applied in Switzerland: eg, smart-voting bettering the level of public participation, and the SimpA tool used for modelling administrative procedures. Cf in that regard: Robert Chrabąszcz, ‘Doświadczenia administracji w Szwajcarii’ in Stanisław Mazur and Adam Płoszaj (eds), *Zarządzanie wiedzą w organizacjach publicznych: Doświadczenia międzynarodowe* (Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2013) 217–240

¹³ Social networking sites and applications allow for direct communication and creating a network of contacts, creation of societies and communities, active participation in local initiatives and influencing the development of the neighbourhood. The CivilHub — a platform for citizen collaboration is an example of a smart tool allowing for the development of local participation.

¹⁴ The subjective aspect is understood as the recipients of the public administration’s actions (nationals, citizens) and as cadres of public administration.

In practice, these elements facilitate the activities of the public administration and the access of inhabitants and citizens to the services it provides. This in turn increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration as well as the quality of services and tasks performed by the administration. It also contributes to the satisfaction of citizens using its activities.

However, the technological aspect is not the only one and it is not the most important in terms of smart administration.

Digital competences that relate to the subjective aspect¹⁵ (and more broadly to the social aspect) are highly connected with IT technology and modern technical solutions. The degree of usefulness of technologies and information and communication solutions used by the public administration that will be greater, higher and better are the capabilities of their addressees to exploit the opportunities provided through such solutions. The above-mentioned skills are 'referred to as digital competencies, that is, permanent dispositions to use such systems and devices as a computer, Internet, e-learning, smartphone, tablet. The lack of basic digital competencies necessary for efficient functioning in the modern world results in the so-called digital exclusion, meaning deprivation of the opportunity to participate in a significant area of social life and modern civilization.'¹⁶ In order to raise and apply digital competences, the Ministry of Digitization has introduced and made available the Framework Catalogue of Digital Competences.¹⁷

The subjective aspect consists of two basic elements. The first one amounts to the human resources of the public administration treated as its human capital, which constitutes its most important element. The second one consists of individuals forming the community for the benefit of whom the public administration operates.

This includes citizens and residents, that is, the most important subjects within the external environment of the public administration, who should be characterized by high social capital associated with the trust towards the public administration as well as towards the local communities.

¹⁵ Available at <<http://smartgmina.pl/2016/10/08/abc-smart-gminy/>> accessed 15 July 2018

¹⁶ Ramowy katalog kompetencji cyfrowych (Framework Catalogue of Digital Competences) <https://cppc.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/zal.-13-Ramowy_katalog_kompetencji_cyfrowych.pdf> accessed 17 July 2018

¹⁷ Well-selected human resources included in the human capital of public administration is the cadre of that administration, which also has, apart from digital competences, a highly specialised knowledge in the field of tasks carried out by it, and requisite personal prerequisites (eg, accountability, integrity, calmness, empathy, social sensibility, sense of purpose, objectivism). Apart from that, the cadres should constantly improve their competences.

High digital competences combined with well-composed human resources constituting human capital within the public administration,¹⁸ and combined with social capital of the external environment, jointly form the subjective aspect of the smart administration.

The result of such a combination should be respect for, building and consolidation of the civil society, proper application of the subsidiarity principle, effective participation in decision-making, co-responsibility and cooperation.

Another aspect of the smart administration, that is, the participatory aspect concerns a continuous reciprocal action in the information exchange process between the public administration and the recipients of its activities as well as their cooperation and co-decision making in the common matters. By assumption, participation excludes the passivity of individuals, their egoism and concentration only on their own needs and particular interests.

It also counteracts against alienation and isolation of the individual and works for the benefit of community building and mutual understanding.

Participation allows for proper and effective operation of the public administration thanks to the proper selection of tasks and the order of their execution according to the needs of a specific community (e.g., local, communal, regional, state).

A very important element of the participation is awareness of the shared responsibility of citizens and residents for the projects and decisions taken together with the public administration. Another issue resulting from the participation that positively affects a given community is the increase in social capital and, consequently, the increase of trust towards the public administration as well as a network building of social links that have a positive impact on the implementation of public tasks and meeting the needs of the community.¹⁹

The public administration always operates pursuant to law and within its limits. In its activities, in a democratic state of law, it may not exceed the line drawn and confirmed by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland.²⁰ Thus, a new aspect of smart administration emerges in a natural way, that is, the legal

¹⁸ On the link between social networks and social trust see: Katarzyna Growiec, 'Związek między sieciami społecznymi a zaufaniem społecznym — mechanizm wzajemnego wzmacniania?' (2009) 4 *Psychologia Społeczna* 55–66

¹⁹ The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997, Journals of Laws of 1997, item 483 as amended

²⁰ Precariat is currently one of the most important challenges for the public administration, especially in the social context. Precariat is characterised by the insecurity of tomorrow. That insecurity is multifaceted, but three appear to be most important: economic insecurity, communal insecurity, insecurity as to the social position. That character is very strongly felt by the people who have been forced to take up jobs whose requirements do not fit them (a job in a different place than family is, the need of self-employment, employment on 'zero-hour' terms), or who have to take up several jobs in order to fulfil their most basic needs. Lack of certainty for the tomorrow leads in a long-term frustration, which in its societal capacity is a

aspect. It will not only be dependent on the administration itself, the legislator plays a key role in this respect, as law is one of the factors that shapes the public administration. The law should be smart and prudent – this is obviously a general postulate, as it is not often reflected in reality.

The question arises as to what characteristics should the law that enables the creation and operation of the smart administration consists of? As the answer to this question would exceed the scope of this study, only some of the aspects will be mentioned herein.

Speaking of the smart administration, we mean the public administration friendly to the recipients of its activities (citizens and residents), which manages and administers in such a way that things or situations needed or required by the community are always in the right place and time. The law should allow for such flexibility in the operation of the public administration and should allow or even impose an obligation to anticipate and build strategies or scenarios of possible events wherein the public administration will have to take actions.

The desired law for building the smart administration is one that allows the public administration to respond to social and economic changes taking place in its environment and connected with it – the change in the catalogue of citizens' and residents' needs or the degree of the intensification thereof or change in the quality of services or tasks. Currently, the changes occur much more often and faster, they are more turbulent and more diverse, affect each of us and involve a greater number of diverse social groups than 50 years ago.

Evolutions currently taking place in the public administration environment give rise very often not only to new needs, but become the causes of crisis situations within the society (e.g., economic recession, drought, acts of terrorism), which cannot be remedied quickly and appropriately to prevent their negative effects without systemically and properly laid down law.

A good example in this respect is the phenomenon of precariat, diagnosed in Europe by sociologists already in the 1980s,²¹ which in the absence of appropriate

grave challenge for the public administration from the point of view of, above all, maintenance of public security and order.

²¹ Each and every human during their life performs a lot of various roles, be they professional, personal or societal. Proceduralisation in the performance of the occupation of, eg, an academic, a teacher or an MD often causes the activities of a person to focus on the professional role in a fragmentary aspect, as it allows for day-to-day functioning due to the pecuniary gain for the work performed. It means that other societal roles (parent, neighbour, member of a community, citizen, etc.) are neglected and, as a consequence, may cause further negative effects felt by the community (orphanhood, exclusion, depression, stress, addictions, etc.). It may so happen especially where a procedure burdens an individual, in particular, a worker, with an excessive amount of tasks, paying no heed to the time limits of work and the requirement of performing various roles and societal functions by an individual, said roles and functions being indispensable for public good due to living in a society (parenthood, care over elderly family members). Frustration and dissatisfaction borne out of such a foundation affect the quality of professional activities as well. An example of such a situation may be

actions taken by the public administration may result in social unrest and radical changes to the state regimes directed towards totalitarianism.

Another example includes the issue of excessive proceduralization, which today constitutes an unresolved problem in terms of the proper development and functioning as well as the performance of specific tasks for the benefit of the society, such as: education, science, health care, social assistance.²²

A negative result of 'proceduralization' may appear as an excessive focus of persons that possess extensive specialist knowledge in their fields (MDs, teachers, academia) on filling in documents or handling a large amount of computer programs. It also contributes to an instrumental treatment of an individual. This has a dual meaning in regard to public administration. On one hand, it concerns an attitude towards a person (or an organisational unit) who attempts to take their matter up with an office and is then seen only through the lens of legal provisions, without understanding a broader context of their personal circumstances. On the other hand, its second meaning refers to the cadre of public administration, who, having been put under excessive administrative procedural burden, do not fulfil their basic substantive tasks. Those two meanings are intertwined, as an overburdened administrative official usually treats nationals and citizens, who want to obtain help or have their problem solved by an office, in an instrumental manner. Such a situation does not create smart administration but stands in opposition thereto.

The structural aspect of smart administration is related to the need to construe it as a network, and not as a centralist (governmental administration) or a classically decentralised (local governmental administration) structure.²³ Such an approach necessitates a multi-dimensional nature of the administration's activities (both temporal and spatial) that are aimed at fulfilling the ever-more diverse needs of the general public, and, at the same time, at boosting the quality of those activities. A single public organ, with respect to its territorial competence, currently performs a larger amount of tasks for a greater amount of citizenry, and for that, it requires a larger amount of links to external environment than before, especially given that sudden and unforeseeable emergencies that relate not only

found in a profession of an academic — teaching fellow, where more often than not procedural considerations are dominating, followed by teaching and, third only, by academic knowledge and its improvement.

²² On public administration in a networked structure see: Agnieszka Chrisidu-Budnik, 'Administracja publiczna w strukturze sieciowej' in Jerzy Supernat (ed), *Między tradycją a przyszłością w nauce prawa administracyjnego: Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana Profesorowi Janowi Bociowi* (Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2007) 69–74

²³ Agnieszka Brzosko-Sermak, 'Polityka lokalna i współpraca transgraniczna miast nadgranicznych — przykład miast bliźniaczych Guben i Gubin' in Piotr Trzepacz, Joanna Więclaw-Michniewska, Agnieszka Brzosko-Sermak and Arkadiusz Kołoś (eds), *Miasto w badaniach geografów* (IGiGP UJ 2015) 71–89

to the organ's venue occur more often. Emergency situations are not only situations where there is cooperation between public authorities whose territorial competence is different, or between them and non-governmental, commercial or academic. Such cooperation is also carried out in order to better the quality of services or due to a possibility of better performance of public tasks. Usually, the network is co-created by cooperating public authorities that border with each other as to the venue and by non-governmental, commercial and academic bodies that function within those venues. Cooperation is also carried out in an international aspect. Joint activities undertaken by cities of Gubin and Guben²⁴ are a sound example that illustrates such a cooperation. Effects of actions undertaken by those cities are found, for example, in a common Gubin-Guben²⁵ sewage purification plant or a common bus line. Public administration authorities of various tiers and non-governmental, commercial and academic capacity also from outside their venues are also included in the projects conducted by those cities.²⁶

Smart administration is also determined by politics, which often has substantive influence over the effectiveness and efficiency of the administration's actions. As to that aspect, there are two classic approaches to that issue within the scope of administrative politics: politics in regard to the administration itself and the politics of the administration.²⁷ Both approaches have a direct influence on the activities of public administration, its nature and the list of available tools and operational approaches with which the administration may act to fulfil its tasks. Politics in regard to the administration is directly aimed at producing certain results in the form of alteration of, for instance, the scope of its tasks, its structure, financing of its activities, or its scope of competences. It may also bring about unintended results that cause changes in its activities and functioning.

Due to the influence of politics over the shape and functioning of public administration, the said influence often being characterized by subjectivism and lack of both particularism and accountability, the instances of smart administration

²⁴ Available at <<http://www.pos.zgora.pl/pl/historia>> accessed 19 July 2018

²⁵ On networks of such links in which public administration participates, cf Dagmara Mazur, 'Współpraca sektora nauki, biznesu i administracji publicznej jako główne wyzwanie współczesnej polityki rozwoju miasta na przykładzie Krakowa' (2015) 1 *Zarządzanie Publiczne* 1–10

²⁶ According to the classic approach, 'with the politics of administration, one has to do in all those situations in which public administration (or, more precisely, administrative organs) actively and creatively participates, and in all those situations where alterations of administration are resolved'. Jan Jeżewski, 'Polityka administracyjna: Zagadnienia podstawowe' in Adam Błaś, Jan Boć and Jan Jeżewski, *Administracja Publiczna* (Kolonia Limited 2004) 315–316; cf also: Michał Kulesza and Dawid Sześciło, *Polityka administracyjna i zarządzanie publiczne* (Wolters Kluwer Polska 2013) 16–19

²⁷ Renata Walczak, *Podstawy zarządzania projektami metody i przykłady* (Difin 2014) 110

in its political aspect are to be primarily sought under the second approach, that is, the politics of administration. Administrative organs are placed in the closest proximity to the citizens and their given matters and they know of the circumstances that occur within their venue, and due to that, they are best suited to assess the appropriate manner in which respective tasks are to be performed, and to foresee potential events. Unfortunately, there are also maladies and no understanding of the concept and the objective of smart administration that occur in that area. For that, great importance is found in the subjective aspect of smart administration, and the appropriate cadre placement within it.

III. THE SMART METHOD AND SMART ADMINISTRATION

Putting public administration within the ontological scope of the ‘smart’ concept makes it inevitable to address the SMART method that has been grounded in the administration and management sciences. The method thus mentioned relates to the setting of objectives while observing certain rules, whose first letters in English correspond to an acronym of its name. It is a tool that supports correct setting of objectives in an organisation, the application of which is to improve chances of fulfilling set objectives.²⁸ The determined objective should be:

- Specific – understandable, unequivocally defined and leaving no room for creative interpretation,
- Measurable – defined in such a manner that it would be capable of being monitored and measured, and to check its degree of completion,
- Achievable – realistic, that is, capable of being achieved, which means that it must correspond to the resources available to the organisation,
- Relevant – it must be an important step ahead and it must also constitute a defined value for the person who would perform it,
- Time-bound – it must be precisely set in time, with a time-limit for its completion.²⁹

One should not confuse smart administration with the SMART method, the latter of which is an expression of, and one of many tools for administration. Smart administration is a wider concept that covers methods, ideas and actions.

²⁸ Wiesław Maria Grudzewski, *Metody projektowania systemów zarządzania* (Difin 2004) 14; John Stredwick, *Zarządzanie pracownikami w małej firmie* (Helion 2005) 83; Marek Wirkus, *Zarządzanie projektami i procesami* (Difin 2013) 175

²⁹ Conclusions of the session on the topic: the road to the city with sustainable development. Innovative technologies in making the idea of intelligent cities a reality (in:) International Conference: Science, Business and the Environment, ‘The GEO-6 Report for the Pan-European Region’ (Event Report, Warsaw 2016) 17

It is oriented by a list of principles attributable to a modern model of public administration (e.g., integrity, transparency, efficiency, purposefulness, integrated management, cooperation, collaboration, civil society, subsidiarity, etc.). Application of the SMART method is an instance of smart administration's functioning.

IV. CONCLUSION

Viewing smart administration only through the prism of IT technology utilized by it and principally in regard to cities causes an incorrect narrowing of its importance. It is also constituted by other indispensable elements: social capital of the environment of public authorities, cadres of public administration, its structure, the law, current politics, the possibilities of participation and the actual participation in administration. All of them are interlinked and form the public administration, which in turn should be intelligent. Smart administration is a 'state of mind (...), a change of attitude from consumerist and individual needs-oriented to participatory and sustainable in regard to the environment. Which challenges are posed before modern cities? Effective communication between authorities, citizens and businesses in regard to the strategy of development. Education, collaboration of the academia, local communities and businesses – openness to integration of efforts related to managing the city, with the application of current technology'.³⁰

One should only refer to 'smart administration' where it is intelligent.³¹ Then, each reasonable need and expectation of the general public, or those voiced by an individual – even where they would be most difficult to perform – would constitute a challenge for that administration, and not a problem.³² Public administration defined in such a manner is capable to effectively decide on the approaches to performing tasks and selects those that conform to the needs of the general public, for example, 'build a portion of an important road instead of an IT

³⁰ On intelligence within the administration, see J Boć, 'Administracja publiczna jako administracja inteligentna' in Błaś, Boć and Jeżewski (n 27). On intelligent public administration in a smart context see Dorota Sikora-Fernandez, 'Inteligentna administracja publiczna jako element smart cities w Polsce' (2013) 285 *Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu* 93–111

³¹ Małgorzata Gięda, 'Wyzwania i oczekiwania wobec administracji publicznej — wybrane zagadnienia' in Małgorzata Gięda and Renata Raszewska-Skałeczka (eds), *Administracja publiczna wobec wyzwań i oczekiwań społecznych* (E-Wydawnictwo: Prawnicza i Ekonomiczna Biblioteka Cyfrowa, Wydział Prawa, Administracji i Ekonomii Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2015) 46–47

³² Conclusions of the European Economic Congress in Katowice, 18–20 May 2016 <www.portalsamorzadowy.pl/gospodarka-komunalna/eec-2016-smart-cities-to-miasta-madrzezarzadzane,80729.html>

solution'.³³ Smart administration is able to minimize losses and maximize profits due to available resources, foresee future events, build strategies, take correct decisions and make choices on manners in which its tasks are to be performed. Moreover, it is open to the society for which it exists, it makes incentives for that society to act, and co-creates civil society. It also has genuine activities and their positive effects to show, and not only statistics.

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³³ Summary of the European Economic Congress in Katowice, 18-20 maj 2016. <www.portalsamorzadowy.pl/gospodarka-komunalna/eec-2016-smart-cities-to-miastamadrzezadzane,80729.html> accessed 5 June 2018, <<https://www.ppg24.pl/podsumowanie-viii-europejskiego-kongresu-gospodarczego-w-katowicach,1550.html>> accessed 5 June 2018

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