

Abstract

For close to three decades, large segments of humanity have been held hostage to a novel model of governance which claimed to liberate them from an invasive bureaucracy, regulation and “big government”. In particular, it promised a government that “worked better and cost less”. Peaking roughly in the days of the end of the Cold War, it also came with promises of prosperity and peace ... and this with minimal government. A few years down the road, we saw the famed “peace dividend” evaporate in tandem with prosperity, as the Great Recession struck, affecting North America, the Continent of Europe, as well as emerging economies. With escalating conflicts in Africa and West Asia, a new arms race developed with trillions of dollars diverted from needed peaceful pursuits to manufacturing weapons and mounting operations in several parts of the world. Although wars notwithstanding, the global UN community has been able to pursue the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set in the year 2000, and to address the challenges of poverty and malnutrition in several parts of the world, meeting the MDGs has principally been due to efforts in two countries – the giants India and China – which, hardly coincidentally, never really put their faith in the market model of governance (Kim, 2015). Not surprisingly, the issues that the model has failed to address are those requiring governance which looks to the long haul, promoting the general interest. As the latest Papal Encyclical (Pope Francis, 2015) has underscored, climate change is a complex of issues which must be addressed by governments acting in unison, in earnest and good faith.

Remarkably, the model won adherents the world over, in countries big and small, developed and developing and many occupational groups. It influenced politicians, economists and businessmen but also administrators – hence the New Public Management – and, until very recently, was viewed as the way of the future. It won its adepts chiefly by deconstructing concepts which, since the Age of Lights, had underpinned reforms, those especially that shaped the Administrative State and the Public Service Profession. Erosion of the concepts of Public Service Professionalism and Public Administration, as a field of systematic study, opened the gates to nepotism, corruption and mismanagement, dispensing with the barriers that, since the 1870s, the merit system built. The model also served to explain and justify short-sighted opportunism as the “pragmatic” approach to coping with contingencies in the “real world out there”. Greece is a case in point and it is paying the price for playing fast and loose with the institutions of governance. But Greece is hardly alone; critical mass adds value to what this paper argues. The message is none other than the need to restore professionalism in governance and public administration, as the needed coefficient of knowledge, high-level skills and ethos, in the service of the government and society at large.

Unlike New Public Management, which reduced it all to competency, we believe all the above three to be needed but arguably, of the three, ethos to be overarching. There can be little doubt that to “results over process”, the idea in fact, that efficiency and effectiveness are all that count in governance, we owe the escalation of bribery and corruption, embezzlement, mismanagement and maladministration that the world has experienced during the past decades. Since the dawn of the 21st century, this tide has gained momentum from human and drug trafficking and the flourishing arms trade. Should we not rather call this model: The Market Model of Maladministration?

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Introduction

The Fragile States Index (formerly known as the Failed States Index), produced by The Fund for Peace, is a critical tool; valuable in highlighting not only the normal pressures that all States experience, but also in identifying when those pressures are pushing a State towards the brink of failure. The Fund for Peace (F4P) is an independent research and educational organization that works to prevent violent conflict and promote sustainable security and it produces the Failed States Index (FSI), an annual ranking of 177 countries across 12 indicators, that is published by *Foreign Policy* magazine. The Fragile States Index is based on the twelve primary social, economic and political indicators of the Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST) methodology, developed by The Fund for Peace. According to the Fragile States Index of 2015, Greece was evaluated as one of “less stable states” among 177 countries (See Table 1). Greece ranks as the 42nd most stable country on this year’s Fragile States Index, having dropped three spots from 2014, registering a slight worsening of 0.5 points in its overall score since last year. These indicators, where Greece has now displayed the highest degree of fragility, were - and by far - State Legitimacy of the State and Economic Decline and Poverty as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Fragile States Index of Greece, 2015⁴

<i>Indicators of the Fragile States Index</i>	<i>Index</i>
Demographic Pressures	3.6
Refugees and IDPs	1.6
Group Grievance	5.0
Human Flight	3.8
Uneven Development	4.2
Poverty and Economic Decline	6.5
Legitimacy of the State	6.5
Public Services	3.9
Human Rights	3.4
Security Apparatus	4.5
Factionalized Elites	3.7
External Intervention	5.9
Total	52.6

Source: Fund for Peace (2015)

The PA Times of Tuesday October 6, 2015 sported the following title: “*Like Greek Economics? Keep Bashing the IRS*”. Most probably, the Journal made reference to governance, not economics. But governance or economics, has Greece become a metaphor for dysfunctional government practices? What else may we conclude? These need to be resisted; they certainly run counter to sound professional principle. We must address this issue and, in so doing, concede that issues of “sound governance” -- spill over national borders encompassing concerns much broader than in the past, because of *globalization*. The tragic refugee crisis afflicting all of Europe and Near East bears witness to this fact (Lyman, 2015: A8). No sooner had some governments of the E.U., presumably under pressure from France and the US, relented in their drive to oust Greece from the Eurozone, some others were endeavouring to rope it in, to deal with a relentless influx of refugees and economic migrants invading the heartland of Europe (Bittner, 2015: A23). The source of this “invasion”, as one might well

⁴ Access available at <http://fsi.fundforpeace.org>

expect, is none other than some countries of North Africa and West Asia which, since 2001, have become the targets of war: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Libya. (Simon and Stevenson, 2015: 2-10; Khedery, 2015: 33-41; Walt, 2015: 42-51; Hanna, 2015: 67-73).

Greece had nothing to do with these wars; did not initiate them or contribute to those conflicts in any way. Nonetheless, it has been left to reap the whirlwind from these wars: a massive refugee crisis, which these wars have generated. By 5 November 2015, 600,000 desperate migrants had crossed the stretch of water that separates the island of Lesbos and Greek soil from the nearby Turkish coast (Lyman, 2015: A8). Most, to be sure, would leave in search for greener pastures, in Germany or Scandinavia. But quite a few remain and all require assistance; first aid upon arrival, food, shelter, medical help and transportation, by land or sea, to their hoped-for destination. It must be said that Greece, though frequently maligned for reasons good or bad, acquitted itself to this task in mostly an adequate manner, refusing to build walls or threatening the migrants with deportation, as several other countries were wont to do (Daley, 2015: A1, A6 & A16).

What lessons may we draw from this ongoing malaise? First and foremost, in our view, to treat it as reminder of the fact that *no country is an island*. This may have long been true. However, with the scars of a troubled twentieth century still visible around us and the forces of globalization randomly shaping our lives, we need to internalize that, in our day and age, neither going it alone, nor “begging our neighbour” in pursuit of our “national interests” can be condoned to advance the long term public good on any level in fact -- national or international.

Another major lesson, from the crises what afflict us, may be formulated as follows: *there's got to be* minimum standards of integrity, of effectiveness, of legality and propriety that UN Member States need to observe in their dealings with each other, as well as domestically to avoid “exporting” their problems and outcomes of their failures. The above-mentioned Index of the Fund for Peace (F4P) speaks volumes on the challenges that confront the global community and individual States in a much-needed effort to fulfil the new SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and to consolidate world peace and cooperation. In our own days, sound governance does not stop at the borders of sovereign nation states. Sovereignty must be respected, as required under Article 2 of the United Nations Charter. However, this idea, which goes back to the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), now more than ever before calls on sovereign states to build, consolidate and earnestly “employ international machinery for the promotion of (peace, as well as) the economic and social advancement of all peoples” as the U.N. Charter enjoins.

Unilateral departures from the rule of law and due process and “going it alone” in disregard of international comity and treaty obligations invite retaliation, disorder and resentment. Expressly disallowed in Article 2 of the Charter (paras. 4 and 7), the threat or use of force and blatant intervention in others’ domestic affairs has, arguably, in our days, signalled a dismal failure of international governance. Though this idea itself was plainly articulated after the Second World War, in the Charter of the UN, it bears re-emphasizing that few of the major challenges confronting us today can be addressed without concerted efforts of all the Member States of the United Nations. *Multilateralism, not unilateralism* and cooperation provide the better way in international governance. In governance on any level, whether in policy making or public administration, we need to make more room for the *World* – our Planet Earth and Humanity – as well as for the *long-term*, than presently is observable.

Notwithstanding much lip service to the Charter in these regards, departures from its principles and a certain disrespect for norms and institutions in the framework of the UN may be said to represent at once the signal failures of international governance during these past decades, as well as salient marks of deficits in politics and leadership, which have afflicted the world since the dawn of the 21st century. Not surprisingly, these failures in international governance have soon been reproduced on the national level as well, bringing countries to disarray and undermining confidence in their political and administrative systems. Proclivity to “short-cuts” and disrespect for norms and institutions, closely tied to a *capacity deficit*, (Dror, 2001) account for the corruption, maladministration, mismanagement and arbitrariness that have become so prevalent in large swaths of the world, chiefly targeting the poor, religious or ethnic minorities and people otherwise subsisting on the margins.

The Market Model: A Signal Failure of Governance

This, at least, is the contention put forward in our paper. It would appear, accordingly, that, since the 1990s and even in our days, the world has been held hostage to a new paradigm that we may call: “*the Market Model of Governance*.” It may be partly an outcome of globalization – a trend, good in itself – but which invaded our space, in ways that we may call distinctly *undemocratic*, impersonal, haphazard and totally bereft of social responsibility (Krugman, 2015: A23). Let us see how this plays out:

Firstly, a cardinal feature of the market model of governance is *hostility to government* and trust in the “*invisible hand*”. The bogey of “big government” has loomed large in public debates since it was enunciated in Reagan’s inaugural speech in January 1981. It did not make a dent on military expenditures, which have since escalated, but targeted primarily the Social Welfare State. In his seminal analysis of poverty in the USA, Professor Chester Newland touched on the story-telling, favoured during the eighties, about a “Welfare Queen” in Chicago. It endured in the US during the closing decades of the century (Newland, 2015a: 111-144).

The triumph of this model in a globalized economy has been tied to the *decline of social responsibility*. In light of this new model, the poor deserve their fate; they have themselves to blame. The well-to-do, accordingly, as well as public authorities are fully justified in looking the other way. *Erosion of “community”*, where this has been pronounced, is often sanitized with words of hero-worship, exultation of success and praise for self-reliance, as well as glorification of markets and individual initiative as being traits most compatible with technological progress and the Brave New World in the making;

Secondly, closely allied to this model of governance was the New Public Management (NPM), which truly swept the world during this critical period. Although now in retreat, it still holds sway among scholars and practitioners, in Western countries especially. Profoundly influential in business and academia, it has not been content to shrink and circumscribe the public space; it also pushed with force for the conversion of government to private sector ways. This rested on the assumption that government and “public”, were by their very nature, inherently inefficient. As also might be expected, belief in the “*ingrained*” superiority of private enterprise produced a wave of *outsourcing* and *privatization*, even in several areas where the public sector performed to widespread

satisfaction. The push to privatize Medicare and Social Security, in the US, as well as fierce resistance to the “Affordable Care Act”, are still fresh on our minds. They remind us of the dogmatism, on top of hidden agendas, which underpin campaigns for privatization; and

Thirdly, related to the above, was a sustained attack on the public service profession and systematic efforts to “deconstruct” the field of public administration. “Service” became “the enemy to be defeated by empowered citizens making choices...” (Frederickson 1996:265). Re-defined as “*public management*”, public administration was reduced to the pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness, as if all other values had suddenly become superfluous, redundant or secondary. Though *equity* and *ethics* occasionally received some grudging recognition, they came as afterthoughts and subject to the quest of efficiency and effectiveness. In turn, these were pursued by means of devolution, downsizing and deregulation, frequently to the detriment of *service* and often with scanty regard for protection of the poor and vulnerable segments of the world’s population. An absent or anaemic and often politicized government administration inevitably led to the exclusion of minorities or people on the margins, who really have no voice. Galloping inequalities in income, power and privilege have been the accompaniments of an *erosion* of governance and public service professionalism (Caiden and Caiden, 2002).

If indeed there is truth to the assertion that the market model of governance represents a *paradigm shift* from “the traditional model ... to a new model of management” (Hughes, 1998: 242), it must likewise be explained that where New Public Management (NPM) has proved most detrimental is in the realm of *values*. As two pre-eminent leaders in our field have recently reminded us (C. Hood and R. Dixon, 2015), NPM gained ground by promising a government that “*worked better and cost less*”. Thirty years down the road, speaking chiefly of the UK but also of the US, Hood and Dixon had to admit that none of these were true; that the market model of governance and NPM had not produced a government that worked better or cost less; instead what they had yielded was serious *collateral damage*, which it behoves our field and our profession to highlight and, hopefully, remedy.

Collateral Damage and Spin

Of this *collateral damage*, arguably most detrimental is *decline of public trust*, a truly global phenomenon on which a number of scholars world-wide have written extensively (De Vries and Kim, 2014; Newland, 2015b: 39-63). This represents an outcome of Public Relations (P.R.) invading Public Administration, and a steadily widening gap between *reality* and *rhetoric*, between hard fact and fiction, in public life. It happened as a result of leaders in the government and private enterprise leaving no stone unturned in their persistent efforts to “sell” themselves and policies as stunning success stories (Hood and Dixon 2015:12). The term “*spin doctor*”, which was coined by Saul Bellow back in the 1970s, gives the measure of deceit to which some people go in their attempt to influence and shape public opinion. “Ends justify the means,” or as the two arch-gurus of NPM have put it, it is “results over process,” all the way (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993) ... Efficiency and effectiveness, it would appear, must trump all other values.

Exemplars and examples of spin abound around us. Arguably, few stand out as emphatically as the events at the UN Security Council, on the eve of the War on Iraq. It took one of the architects of this deceit, Mr. Tony Blair, twelve years to admit wrongdoing and some

responsibility for actions that had helped “give rise to the Islamic State.” Sadly, however, he added: “it is hard to apologize for removing Saddam Hussein”. Clearly, Mr. Blair was not aware of the fact that such “removal” by force was strictly in violation of the United Nations Charter. (*The New York Times* 2015: A9; A1-A17). What Sir Menzies Campbell, former Liberal Democrat leader described as “a major error of judgment” was, in fact, much worse than that (ibid). Since 2003, many tens of thousands of lives have been lost, trillions of dollars wasted and millions of innocent people forced out of their homes and still, at this very hour, compelled to imperil their lives and those of family members in search of a safe haven.

A little too late, we learn from one of the “spin doctors” of the Iraqi war that the carnage was unnecessary, indeed counter-productive. Meanwhile, three more attacks have followed suit. One of these took place in Libya to oust M. Qaddafi, well-known to have received Mr. Blair’s advisory services, while his son was offered a Masters and PhD degrees, from a famous UK University. The only certain outcomes of this signal misadventure and the “collateral damage” from military interventions of more than fifteen years have been an escalation and rapid spread of graft, corruption, mismanagement and maladministration, often though not exclusively connected with the conduct of war. Sadly, examples abound, as Gerald Caiden’s paper argues (Caiden, 2015). Three forms of trade stand out at once as most corrupt, most perilous but profitable: arms trafficking, drug trafficking and human trafficking. In one way or another, they are all too often tied to violence and to war and mostly target the poor.

In all of such activities and the “spin” that explains them away, it is hard not to detect the detrimental influence of the market model of governance. When public institutions engage in dubious practices, in the hope of quick “results”, secure in the belief that “no one will ever know” they compound the damage done, in terms of lives and property and in taxpayers’ money, by gravely undermining public trust in the institutions on which democracy, governance and social capital rest.

It is hardly a happenstance that military offensives have, since the dawn of our century, been the nurseries of spin and prompted spin doctors to action. The prevalence of wars has served to justify outsized outlays for weapons, which also represent one of the largest sources and causes of corruption around the world, accentuating poverty and the oppression of minorities, since they are oftentimes the victims of gun violence, extortion and abuse (Col, 2015). The toll in human suffering has, since the dawn of this century, been truly immense (Kliksberg, 2015). What may be less transparent are its effects on governance and public life in general. These take a number of forms, both stealthy and overt, including outsized influence of gun lobbies on elections and public policy-making. Abetted by spin doctors, such influence adds a twist to current public narratives, primarily in an attempt to shrink the public space, reducing it, in essence, to national defence, security and surveillance but also casting doubt on the wisdom and propriety of domestic welfare programmes (Friedman 1993). The onslaught on “big government”, attacks on public service, the clamour for “muscular” policies and branding welfare projects as “soft”, as “weak” or “socialist” opened the realm of governance to privatization but also opened the way to maladministration, as discussed in great detail in Gerald Caiden’s writings.

Fuelled by wars, corruption and maladministration have helped deflect attention from pressing priority goals in the economic, social and environmental fields. “*Hannibal ante portas*” always offers “good” excuses for not responding readily to citizens’ demands. It serves to cover corruption in war zones, if calls for an investigation or cuts in arms expenditures can be sold to the public as “untimely”, “unpatriotic” or as otherwise a threat

to national security. However, as said earlier, the syndrome here discussed is widespread – hardly limited to war zones. It helps to be reminded that one of the worst scandals brought to surface by the crisis that still unfolds in Greece, involved the purchase of weapons and submarines, with several millions of dollars diverted surreptitiously to the personal accounts of Mr. Tzochatzopoulos, then Minister of Defence! Quite recently, moreover, Greeks could hardly comprehend why, strapped for funds, the country still went through with the purchase of fighter jets. “Did the country really need them”, was the question frequently asked.

The short answer was: “probably not”. But there are powerful lobbies behind the sale of arms, whose influence straddles borders. Manifestly, there’s more to the arms trade than meets the eye and its ramifications, far-reaching in some countries, touch on every corner of the political landscape. Simply put, sectoral interests and partisan agendas, in all too many countries, have come to dominate the political debate, pre-empting other views on what is to be done even though these might reflect a more balanced majority opinion. Expressed in other terms, it would be true to argue that, growing by the day, is a certain disconnect between the *needs* of people and *priorities* in government, the latter overly influenced by lobbies and pressure groups. The number and the clout of such bodies have increased immensely in recent years (Fukuyama, 2014:526). Their power has grown *pari passu* with income *inequality*, social *exclusion* and their effects on governance, which can hardly be described as salubrious or “democratic”. In a fragmented society, with vast concentrations of wealth at the very top and feeble social structures in the nether parts of the pyramid, it is hard to be sanguine about building social capital and promoting the general interest.

In exploring the phenomena of maladministration, we need to be reminded of certain basic concepts which underpin the ethics of our profession. One is the concept of *service* to the State and the citizens; the other, the ideas of *general will* and of the public good. As public service professionals, we exist to assist the government in promoting the common good and the long-term public interest.

Though, to be sure, democracies reserve to elected governments the right to take decisions on long-term public interest, the employment of professionals in government must mean that we both value science and expertise and, on that very account, extend to public servants the right and obligation to weigh in the debate on policy formation, insisting that their voice be heard. We expect them to introduce a measure of professionalism in public policy-making and administration, pay them to be rational, factual, neutral, impartial and objective; to keep the eyes of government on what is really important and, for that very reason, to be the keepers and guardians of institutional memory.

Professionalism in governance encompasses the principle that knowledge, expertise, science and institutional memory, as well as the rule of law must play a major part in shaping government actions, as well as strategic decisions. When these are left to whims, short-term considerations covering up as “pragmatism”, or narrowly opportunistic and personal pursuits, maladministration follows. Public servants may lay claim to knowledge and to skills. But if they allow themselves to be the passive tools of those in political power, when their professional duty demands that they speak out and speak the truth to power, they will have failed their calling. Bereft of ethical guidelines, knowledge and high-level skills are counterproductive at best. In the worst-case scenario, they lead to egregious actions the like of which we saw in World War II, but also in recent years.

Public Service Professionalism and the Ethics of Saying “No”

The term “professionalism” refers to the institutional circumstances in which the members of occupations, as expert service providers, rather than the consumers or the high-level managers control performance at work, while the term “market” refers to circumstances in which consumers control the work people do, and “bureaucracy” to those in which managers are fully in control. Professionalism prevails when an organized occupation gains the power to determine who is qualified to perform a defined set of tasks, is free to replenish its ranks strictly on the basis of merit, as well as to establish and to control the methods and criteria by which to evaluate performance with transparency and objectivity (Freidson, 2001).

Not only must professionals be willing to say “No” and speak the “*truth to power*”, when the occasion demands it; they must also be prepared to put their job on the line rather than be complicit in a wrongful act. It might indeed be argued that maladministration, corruption and mismanagement have thrived in recent years because too many leaders in politics and business have primed compliance and loyalty – explained away as “pragmatism” -- over professional ethics. Far too many have caved in. All too often, special interests have trumped professional ethos. Though to be sure, the source of this malaise lies mostly with “higher-ups” – executives or politicians’ intent, one way or another, to make their view prevail -- it frequently also stems from peer group pressure and reluctance to resist it.

As public service professionals, we are here to serve the public, as well as “higher-ups” in the government hierarchy. Indeed, it may be argued that we act as custodians of the public or general interest and as servants of the citizens, whether we work as doctors, teachers, administrators or officers of the law. Our duty is to safeguard *continuity* and *consistency* in the service of the State and the provision of service and this, within the bounds of legality and propriety; of what is best for citizens and what they really need. Sadly, Greece, in recent years, has witnessed many cases of personal enrichment at the taxpayers’ expense, and tactics of trade unions which trumped the rights of citizens.

Rampant maladministration, corruption and mismanagement have followed suit. Of these, repeated strikes and “quiet corruption” (Argyriades and Timsit, 2013) are probably most noticeable. Propensity to strike is not entirely new or unknown to other countries, of Southern Europe in particular. The frequency, however, with which they have been used by public service unions to force the hand of governments may have been quite unique, as well as quite indicative of low professional ethos among some of its members. It has been estimated that, since 1979, there have been upwards from 5000 general and sectoral strikes involving, on an average, 96% of the Greek public sector. The damage to the economy has been immense; estimated at tens of billions of dollars (Argyriades 2013: 85). What add to sheer effectiveness in public sector strikes is public sector size – 725,000 strong – and the corresponding clout of public sector unions. The main one ADEDY⁵ rose to prominence in partnership with the political party established by Papandreou, a Harvard-trained Professor in USA and Canada, who made his entry in politics, in Greece during the sixties and led PASOK to victory in 1982. He then proceeded to change some of the basic structures of public administration and the educational system in a mostly partisan fashion (Argyriades, 1996: 63-67). In spite of much lip service to democratic principle and administrative rigour, this laid the public service wide-open to clientelist practices, to patronage appointments and dubious management practices. Large numbers of new entrants, who swelled its ranks as

⁵ The Union of Public Sector Employees

parties competed for votes in the days preceding elections, lacked the requisite knowledge and skills. Moreover, their appointment did not correspond to genuine and proven work requirements (Simitis, 2015: 508).

Not surprisingly, in the crisis which since 2009 deeply afflicts the country, the public service complements have been a bone of contention, as well as stumbling block. Repeatedly the *Troika* (i.e. the ECB, EU and IMF) insisted on streamlining, downsizing and reforming the public service which, counting 725,000 staff, is generally considered as being too large for a country of 11 million. Repeatedly, the government promised to act but failed to follow through. First, PASOK, then a conservative government and now a purportedly radical socialist administration have found it well-nigh impossible to get through to the unions. Thus, they have been unable to overcome resistance, which also takes the form of “quiet corruption.” Lip service is lavishly paid to “administrative science”, while unions and their friends quietly undermine the basic management tools that are required in the administration of public personnel, notably job descriptions, evaluation systems and methods of assessing performance and staff needs.

Lack of such requisite tools has been the classic argument, as well as standard excuse advanced by both the unions and some political leaders in fighting back the pressure to proceed with needed reforms. Inadequate systems and methods make any staff reductions appear well-nigh arbitrary but also leave the field wide open to abuse. Streamlining *is* required but there is little logic in either the public service structure or the grade and remuneration systems. Thus, the bulk of a person’s emoluments consist of allowances and benefits. Some are family-related (e.g. number of dependents); others are work-related but open to abuse. Thus, pay for overtime or hardship conditions at work may be secured even though neither may be present. Perhaps the most egregious is an allowance offered for simply “showing up on time”. Obtaining and safeguarding these several dubious benefits has been the “claim to fame” of public service unions. Not surprisingly, in this context, *service* has gone by default. It becomes a form of “self-service”.

At the time of writing this paper, a strike has been announced by public service unions – the first of a series of stoppages. The goal is to resist the public service reforms demanded by the “Troika”. Groups in the governing party have lent support to the strikers and joined their demonstrations, though ostensibly backing the government. In what might be described as the *nec plus ultra* of populism, some members of the government have marched in opposition to measures which two days later they voted into law. It is hard to escape the conclusion that collusion and complicity of union and government leaders has helped perpetuate inaction and paralysis, where pressing action is needed. Complexity of the issues and stubborn resistance to change have served as standard excuses for continued procrastination in the face of demands for reform. Of course, resisting change has not moved Greece one inch towards an end of the crisis. Quite simply, kicking the can has been a way of creating the illusion of progress, though all that is accomplished is marking time. A signal failure of leadership allied to a surfeit of populism have been the definitive traits of the current Greek malaise; a paralysis intended to sustain the vested interests of those ostensibly appointed to serve the people at large.

Reclaiming Public Space and Public Service Professionalism: Concluding Remarks

Why nations fail? The major thesis of Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) is that economic prosperity depends on the inclusiveness and openness of economic and political institutions. Only effectively functioning democratic and pluralistic States, which guarantee the rule of

law, are able to exploit the ideas and talents, which are widely spread among the entire population of a nation. Creative innovation and public service professionalism are necessary for any further development and such efforts should give rise to new coalitions or groups, which compete for power against the ruling elites and their complicit lobbies.

Greece may be a basket case but is hardly isolated. *Collusion* and *complicity* of leaders in the government with powerful pressure groups is far too generalized – too pervasive a phenomenon to be a happenstance or an accident of fortune. Though mostly unavowed and often covered up with sanctimonious talk on democratic pluralism, it represents a trend, as well as a peril for governance too real to leave conscientious public servants and the public at large apathetic. To those concerned with corruption and maladministration, complicity in “sweet deals” or caving in to pressure from powerful interest groups has been too widely observed in recent years to be lightly taken for granted or dismissed as part of life. The identity of the groups varies from case to case. In Greece and other States endowed with a large public sector, the national bureaucracy, once viewed as the steam engine of economic growth, has long forfeited that role to which it had been cast in all the well-known textbooks on *Development Administration*. Instead, it has become a stumbling block, conspiring to safeguard the “acquired rights” of its members, although all too often “rights” are in reality privileges and relics of a past, a period of prosperity, which bears little resemblance to present-day conditions.

In Greece and other countries, where public service unions have become the stumbling block to public service reform, loss of “*service-orientation*” also leads to loss of trust in the eyes of the general public. Decline in self-esteem and public service pride go *in tandem* with a corresponding decline in public service professionalism. They pave the way instead to “quiet corruption”. Rather than serve the public, incumbents use their posts in search of dubious perks. Thus, teachers charge the parents to coach their sons or daughters on what should have learned during regular school hours.

As H.G. Frederickson noted, some time ago:

“If the dominant ethos or collective attitude in a governmental organization is civically inclined, then the emphasis on service, the greater good, the public good and effective government will be obvious. Conversely, if the government organization is increasingly served by those with private inclinations, who tend towards practices that, in business, are regarded as either acceptable or appropriate, but that in government are considered unethical or corrupt, then corruption will result” (Frederickson, 1997: 179)

The practice of “moonlighting”, exploiting *public space* for personal advantage and private gain, has taken on proportions that all must find disturbing; hardly a reason for complacency. A contributing factor of graft and other forms of malpractice, it has also been a factor compounding the debt crisis and standing in the way of plausible solutions to Greece’s current malaise. However, its effects go far beyond the crisis, beyond the here and now, or even the borders of Greece. They also impact the processes of democratic governance, affecting them adversely in ways that cannot leave any conscientious citizen or public servant indifferent. In our fragmented societies, where pluralism, diversity and heterogeneity offer a salient contrast to patterns that were prevalent only decades ago, it may be hard to avoid some of the egregious practices, complicities and “deals” that mark political life.

To be sure, such dubious practices depart from the pursuit of the long-term general interest. But rather than resign ourselves to such egregious practices and passively take them for granted, becoming more aware of their dysfunctional traits and negative externalities may serve as starting point in an effort to contain them. There is reason to believe that, as the case of Greece has amply demonstrated, collusion and complicities of powerful pressure groups with important government sectors (e.g. the military-industrial complex) exert an outsized influence in defence and foreign affairs; therefore, affect world peace. The issue has been known since Eisenhower's days. Whether the common weal, our national security and the future of our Planet are best served in this way should be debated in earnest.

In one form or another, the issue comes to the fore, indeed took centre stage in connection with discussions on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) conducted at the UN and other global fora. Perhaps, it is no accident that, in his latest encyclical, His Holiness Pope Francis brought into sharp relief the close interconnection between three major challenges, which more than ever before and more than any other are bound to impact the lives of people on this Planet during the coming decades: the threats from *climate change*, the growing *inequalities* within and between nations, the plight of billions living in poverty and *exclusion* and all the above combined with a flourishing arms trade in a world awash with weapons (Pope Francis, 2015; *The New York Times*, 2015).

A world awash with weapons makes our Planet a dangerous place⁶. It is an important source of maladministration and power abuse. The trillions spent on arms and related proxy wars divert required resources and attention from pressing concerns tied to the SDGs, poverty alleviation, climate change and the overarching need to build and reinforce international cooperation through the United Nations. A flourishing arms trade compounds the devastation and misery that daily visit millions in several parts of the world, wherever human trafficking, street gangs, air raids and fighting thrive.

Precisely on this account, Pope Francis emphasized the need to regulate the trade in deadly weapons and curb their mass production. The dangers emanating from their proliferation are clear for all to see but they cannot be addressed through unilateral action. Instead, they call for strategies *inclusive* in their scope and *multi-lateral* efforts concerted and sustained, over a period of years, that truly address root causes of the current deep malaise. This, to be sure, is hardly a task that public administration can relinquish to "spin doctors". Rather, it calls for people and institutions, for public service professionals, committed to the purposes of democratic governance and public administration, under the rule of law.

⁶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/26/world/middleeast/us-foreign-arms-deals-increased-nearly-10-billion-in-2014.html?smprod=nytcore-iphone&smid=nytcore-iphone-share>

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