

# HIGH LIGHTS WORKSHOP GOVERNANCE - UNIVERSITEIT UTRECHT

## ADMINISTRATIVE BUREAUCRACY - CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

- Government is changing. However, very slowly
  - A new balance between demanding forces: vertical control versus horizontal cooperation (networks)
  - Max Weber's signature still dominates government
    - A Weberian style of governance and organization
    - Assuming that political and moral considerations assimilate into law and regulations, that execution of these laws and regulations is therefore moral in itself, and that public servants, public leaders are in that way 'dismissed' from a moral responsibility.
1. The administrative bureaucracy is an amoral system in which public servants are obedient to politics, policy and law
    - Sure, many public servants are socially engaged. But looking closer, in many cases this engagement is an abstract and general social motivation to work for government, rather than it is a specific personal ambition or decisiveness to actually improve government and society from an individual, moral perspective
  2. With the Weberian style of governance comes a strong focus on political primacy. Many public servants really feel that their core duty is to keep the responsible minister out of the wind. A focus on politics rather than the public interest. With that comes a minimalistic, risk avoiding approach to operations
  3. Within this context public leadership has a strong internal focus on administrative quality, stability and legitimacy. There's little room for 'saviours of society', because saviours might take adventurous and risky paths. In general, socially engaged externally oriented leadership is not developed very strongly. Public leadership is technocratic most of the times

## GOVERNANCE AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

- Governance principles have been adopted by central government over the years
- Governance, and the instrumental management repertoire that comes with it, fits the governmental context very well. In fact, this repertoire has become the management standard
- A strong internal orientation, based on procedural quality, stability and risk avoidance
- The concepts of 'governance' - this classic and in my opinion out-dated management repertoire - increase the moral insensitiveness of government
- The FIRA parliamentary enquiry learns how relevant and urgent this is
- We need:
  - value based public leaders that know how to balance between politics and society
  - a collective moral consciousness and an explicit set of values from which to operate
  - to rethink legitimacy and approach legitimacy in a more holistic way (holistic approach of society needs a holistic approach of the rule of law, constitution and legitimacy)