



# Public Management and the Metagovernance of Hierarchies, Networks and Markets: The Feasibility of Designing and Managing Governance Style Combinations (Contributions to Management Science)

By Louis Meuleman

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Public managers can, to a certain extent, choose between various management paradigms which are provided by public and business administration scholars and by politicians as well. How do they find their way in this confusing supermarket of competing ideas? This book explores how public managers in Western bureaucracies deal with the mutually undermining ideas of hierarchical, network and market governance. Do they possess a specific logic of action, a rationale, when they combine and switch between these governance styles? This chapter sets the scene for the book as a whole and presents the research topic and the research question.

### 1.1 Problem setting

Since the Second World War, Western public administration systems have changed drastically. The hierarchical style of governing of the 1950s to the 1970s was partly replaced by market mechanisms, from the 1980s onwards. In the 1990s, a third style of governing, based on networks, further enriched the range of possible steering, coordination and organisation interventions. In the new millennium, public sector organisations seem to apply complex and varying mixtures of all three styles of what we will define as governance in a broad sense. This development has brought about two problems.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

From the reviews:

"Louis Meuleman's doctoral thesis, *Public Management and the Metagovernance of Hierarchies, Networks and Markets. The Feasibility of Designing and Managing Governance Style Combinations* clearly is an effort to comprehensively understand the 'why' and 'how' of governance mixtures from the standpoint of public managers. ... The book is clearly and thoroughly argued and, as a whole, succeeds in answering the research questions formulated at the outset ... . Certainly, this book is a very useful contribution ... for scholars as well as practitioners." (Judith van der Veer, *Acta Politica*, Vol. 44 (4), 2009)

### **From the Back Cover**

What is modern governance? Is it the battle against 'old-fashioned' hierarchy, or is it the restoration of key hierarchical values? Is it optimizing network management, or maximizing the benefits of market thinking in the public-sector? This book argues that it is the combination of all this. The next question is: In practice, how do successful public managers design and manage combinations of hierarchical, network and market governance? In other words: what is their rationale to apply metagovernance?

Five case-studies show that metagovernance is a public management requisite: it amplifies the variation of actions public managers can take, and it prevents the three ideal-typical governance styles from undermining each other. Similar cases of strategic environmental policy-making in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany and the European Commission and one case of community policing in the Netherlands illustrate that successful public-sector managers are dealing with similar metagovernance challenges in different socio-politico-administrative cultures.

"The future will not lie with markets, or hierarchies or networks but with all three and the trick will not be to manage contracts or steer networks but to mix the three systems effectively when they conflict with and undermine one another."

Davis and Rhodes (2000: 25): From hierarchy to contracts and back again: Reforming the Australian public sector.

## **Users Review**

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#### **Alexandra Sauer:**

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