



FEE Roundtable on Good governance in the public sector:

**Ethics management and good governance in
the public sector:
competing fads or complementary
approaches?**

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Definitions

- **Ethics** = generally accepted values and norms that guide daily behavior
- **Integrity** = acting in accordance with generally accepted values and norms
 - In the public sector, e.g. : loyalty, objectivity, transparency, etc.
 - Is more than avoiding fraud and corruption
- **Integrity management**= the whole of management instruments that are aimed at stimulating and enforcing integrity within an organization

Ethics management as a fad?

- Rather reaction to other innovations such as
 - Quality management
 - Performance management
 - Establishing autonomous agencies, e.g. for policy implementation
- These innovations create
 - new types of administrative discretion
 - new opportunities and pressures for integrity violations
- Ethics management provides
 - public servants with support in dealing with the new discretion
 - E.g. dilemmatraining sessions
 - Control mechanisms to prevent integrity violations

Two approaches to ethics management

Rules-based

- To avoid unethical behaviour
- Pessimistic view of human nature
- To emphasize external controls
- Typical instruments:
 - Legislation
 - Strict codes of conduct
 - Strict procedures

Values-based

- To stimulate ethical behaviour
- Optimistic view of human nature
- To emphasize internal control
- Typical instruments
 - Workshops, training sessions
 - Ambitious ethics codes
 - Individual coaching

Integrity Management Framework

- Instruments
 - Determining and defining integrity
 - E.g. risk analysis, code of ethics
 - Guiding towards integrity
 - E.g. training, coaching, communication
 - Monitoring integrity
 - E.g. whistle-blowing policies, daily supervision, measuring through surveys
 - Enforcing integrity
 - E.g. informal sanctioning, disciplinary procedures
- Development process
- Structure/organisation
 - Distribution of responsibilities
 - Coordination



Ethics management as an autonomous (sub)discipline

- Ethics management is increasingly considered an autonomous (sub)discipline:
 - Professional and academic networks
 - Identifiable place in organizational chart
- Risk of possible turf wars with other disciplines
 - e.g. HRM, quality management, financial management
- Turf wars can be avoided by distinguishing between:
 - Core instruments
 - Have the strengthening of integrity as their main goal
 - E.g. ethics code, whistle-blowing policies, disciplinary procedures
 - Are the main responsibility of ethics officers
 - Complementary instruments
 - Do not have integrity as their main goal, but are important
 - E.g. staff selection and promotion
 - Require involvement of ethics officers



Conclusion: Ethics management and good governance?

- Ethics management is not a competitor for good governance
- It is an increasingly established (sub)discipline that can deliver an important contribution to good governance