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coupled to service provision, such as more general societal considerations or issues of sector policy. Many of these involved additional expense and have now been removed from the services. They are often defined as non-commercial and as something that involves extra payment (Christensen and Lægheid 2003a; Self 2000). Clearly a narrower and commercial definition of a public service potentially may make it more efficient. Examples of this are when regional considerations in communications policy are weakened by the introduction of competition, or when the interests of weak clients in educational, health, or social services are formally de-emphasized or taken care of in other ways. In this latter respect NPM understandably increases social differences (Podder and Chatterjee 1998; Stephens 2000).

Another broader socioeconomic perspective on efficiency in public service provision concerns the fate of the workforce under NPM. In many countries, particularly Australia and New Zealand, efficiency gains were obtained by reducing the number of people working in public services, particularly in telecommunications and transport (Mascarenhas 1996, 272–314). Where the workforce is rather old or unskilled, these people may well end up in various pension programs, casting doubt on the overall economic gains of NPM.

It is often said that the increased consumer orientation of NPM will eventually lead to both increased quality and more efficiency. The argument is that the consumer knows best how to improve services and that increased consumer participation and influence will enhance service provision (McKevitt 1998, 37–67). There are few studies to show whether increased consumer orientation will lead to smarter policy. One factor undermining this argument is that consumer experience of and hence attitudes to public service provision vary considerably, so increased efficiency for one set of consumers may run counter to the interests of others (Aberbach and Rockman 2000, 145).

Another question is whether consumers really influence public service provision under NPM. While certain strong and coordinated groups of consumers may do so, possibly to the detriment of others, the overall picture is that service providers think primarily about profit. Allowing consumers too much participation or influence takes time and resources and is therefore not efficient (Fountain 2001, 56, 61, 64). In this respect the consumer orientation of NPM may have symbolic overtones. Nevertheless, certain consumer-oriented structural reform efforts look more promising in terms of efficiency than others. One example is the “one-stop shop” or “one-window” programs established first in Australia (Centrelink) (Halligan 2004; Vardon 2000) and later in Western Europe (Hagen and Kubicek 2000). They seem to make a difference for users with a complex problem profile and represent potential administrative efficiency gains, but may also create cultural conflicts and increase organizational complexity.

The other dimension of smarter policy is effectiveness. Does NPM make it easier to formulate, pursue, and fulfill collective public goals? One way to answer this rather complicated question is to ask whether public employees are more conscious of goals, means and results than before. Some studies show this to be the case (Christensen

and Læg Reid 1998). The crucial question, however, is whether this increased consciousness will change the behavior of civil servants.

Another aspect of effectiveness is whether NPM increases political control of decision-making process in the public sector, i.e. whether hierarchical control is easier to enact. Several comparative studies covering many countries seem to show that this is not the case (Christensen and Læg Reid 2001; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). NPM generally weakens central political control, partly as a result of increased structural devolution and partly because of the management elements in the reform. Formal changes give subordinate leaders and institutions increased authority and there is often normative pressure to keep political executives from interfering. The focus has been on frame steering or steering of strategy and basic principles rather than of minor, individual cases, and new formal control systems have replaced old informal ones. Political executives now tend to find themselves losing influence while keeping formal responsibility and thus get the blame, particularly in crisis situations (cf. Brunsson 1989).

NPM entrepreneurs seem to represent an anti-political tendency, whereby public decision making and service provision are deemed to work better if politicians are kept at a distance (Self 2000). Their focus is often on managerial control and effectiveness in single organizations, not on political-democratic control overall. This anti-political tendency seems paradoxical, since NPM reforms in many countries seem to be driven by political executives. How could political executives consciously undermine their own position? One answer to this is that they, on an ideological basis, firmly believe that the working of the political-administrative system is better off with a political hands-off approach, so in their minds this is not anti-political. Another answer is that political executives too easily accept the NPM arguments about this and don't imagine the negative effects on political control. A study of a center government in Norway in the late 1990s shows quite clearly that this cabinet underestimated the undermining of political control resulting from NPM, and was reluctant to accept the implications (Christensen and Læg Reid 2002). Features like this seem in some European countries to result in efforts to bounce back and install more traditional control again, i.e. devolution and deregulation are followed by centralization and reregulation (Pollitt and Talbot 2004); this is also the case in New Zealand now (Gregory 2003).

A crucial question when political control is weakened through NPM reforms is: who gains influence? A preliminary answer would be that administrative leaders are delegated more authority (Rhodes and Weller 2001). As long as administrative leaders primarily see their role as controlling on behalf of political leaders and there is mutual trust and a close relationship between these two groups of actors, this does not amount to much weakening of overall political control. If, however, administrative leaders see their role as more formal and strategic and have a confrontational and mistrustful attitude towards the political executive, political control may be weakened and there may be a tendency to try to pass on blame and accountability, particularly in times of crisis (Dunn 1997). Administrative leaders close to ministers are often subject to cross-pressure and attend more to political

signals, while agency leaders, who are further removed from political executives structurally, seem to care less about political considerations (Christensen and Lægneid 2001).

The increased structural devolution and much narrower commercial focus entailed in NPM seem to have profoundly changed the role of executives in state-owned companies (Spicer, Emanuel, and Powell 1996; Zuna 2001), making them more autonomous and less subject to central political control. State business executives, who are often recruited from the private sector, tend to think it is appropriate for politicians to control and steer once a year at the formal business meeting. NPM supporters welcome this change, arguing that it makes public commercial leaders more competent and companies more efficient and thus able to contribute more to the collective purpose. Critics, however, argue that public commercial leaders often develop various rational strategies to avoid control and regulation. Bevan and Hood (2004) labels one such group of actors “reactive gamers,” subordinate leaders who share some main goals with political leaders but also try to avoid control and make failures look like successes. Another group is known as “rational maniacs,” meaning that they do not act in the collective interest and are rational in extremely self-interested and occasionally illegitimate and criminal ways. Rational maniacs are insensitive to many legitimate considerations and relevant contexts. Examples of this were seen when corruption increased in New Zealand after NPM was introduced (Gregory 2001).

Another reform feature of structural devolution is creating more autonomous agencies subordinate to ministries. The largest and earliest effort of this kind was the “Next Steps” reform in UK, establishing over 100 executive agencies subordinate to the ministries, based on principles of structural disaggregation, task-specific organizations, performance contracts, and deregulation/self-regulation (Talbot 2004). This way of organizing was certainly not new, since Sweden has had agencies like this since the seventeenth century, and the USA also for quite a long time. The effects of such a reform seem to have been varied and not dramatic concerning political control (Hogwood 1993; Rhodes 1997). Variation is evident since these agencies have quite different size, functions, and connection to the ministries, and the control not so much undermined since the ministries and Parliament have several potential instruments of control.

Pollitt and Talbot (2004) show, however, in a broad comparative book, that the last decade has brought a NPM-inspired further wave of agencification and autonomization in many countries. This wave has on the one hand increased the autonomy of the agencies, several of them regulatory agencies, and therefore also weakened the control of central political executives, but on the other hand also resulted in more efforts at controlling the agencies with new means, i.e. deregulation has been followed by reregulation. The total result of this development is not easy to sum up, but there seems to be an overall weakening of political control.

The structural devolution and withdrawal of political executives brought about by NPM seem to have increased accountability problems and left a power vacuum. This has influenced the role of elected bodies at various levels, often producing “double-bind” situations for the executive political leadership. If political executives make an

effort not to interfere in the activities of agencies and public companies, they are often criticized for being too passive, especially in conflict situations (Christensen and Læg Reid 2003*b*). If, on the other hand, they yield to pressure to interfere from elected political bodies and the media, they are accused of being too active and of breaking the formal rules of devolution and management reforms. At the same time, parliaments all over the world, often inspired by NPM, are strengthening their formal control of the executive, through various forms of audit organization, open hearings, parliamentary commissions, etc., potentially creating capacity problems for the political executive (Christensen, Læg Reid, and Roness 2002; Pollitt et al. 1999).

Summing up the effects of NPM concerning the first aspect of smarter policy—efficiency—there seem to have been efficiency gains in public service provision. The crucial question, however, is whether the price paid for this is politically acceptable. This will vary from one country to another, depending on how much attention is paid to individual interests versus collective considerations, how much emphasis is put on equality and equity, whether there is a strong *Rechtsstaat* tradition, etc.

The analysis of the second dimension of smarter policy—effectiveness—shows that political executives are losing control through NPM; thus collective, hierarchically defined effectiveness seems to decrease. Nevertheless, the reforms may lead to more effectiveness in individual administrative bodies and public companies that have fewer political considerations and signals to attend to. This can, however, quite easily lead to “local rationality” (Allison 1971)—a typical feature of the NPM transformation from an integrated to a disintegrated and fragmented state.

5. JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT—SHOWING THE LIMITS OF BEING SMART?

The concept of a “joined-up government” (JUG)—sometimes also called “whole of government”—approach involves governments paying more attention to coordination in an attempt to increase and improve it (Pollitt 2003). JUG is used mainly in countries where NPM has found extensive implementation, such as the UK and other Anglo-Saxon countries, and as such must be seen as a program for dealing with some of the problems created by NPM. JUG may be seen as an overall concept for the public sector, but it is most relevant to service-providing functions and is based on the idea that public problems often cut across sectors.

JUG has a horizontal and a vertical dimension. It includes better instruments for communication and contact, political and administrative taskforces, public committees, and intra- or interadministrative program, project, or working groups as well as stronger structural measures, whereby sectors and policy areas are merged or reorganized in other ways. JUG is a rather new label, and as such may be seen as one of many modern slogans and fads, but its thinking and instruments are actually quite

old. Gulick (1937), a representative of the Scientific Administration school that sought to change the structure of the federal bureaucracy in the USA, stresses that there is an inner dynamic between specialization according to purpose, process, clients, and geography, and coordination based on organization or ideas. NPM revives some of these ideas in a more extreme version, leading to horizontal and vertical fragmentation and disintegration and thus creating a need for the increased coordination envisaged by JUG.

The horizontal dimension of JUG may relate to both the efficiency and the effectiveness aspects of smart policy. Efficiency may increase if sectors, policies, programs, and projects are coordinated better, for example by reducing overlap, contradictions, and duplication, thus potentially saving resources. The effectiveness and goal attainment of government may be enhanced by better coordination of policy and program goals, of the interests of different governmental stakeholders, and of the activities of service providers.

Attending more to the vertical dimension of JUG may make political signals to subordinate institutions or levels less ambiguous, thus allowing them to pursue central political aims more effectively, and also lead to more consistent use of the new formal control instruments typical of NPM. Another way in which JUG could modify some of the main ideas of NPM would be to bring subordinate organizations, like agencies and government companies, closer to the political leadership. It could use new laws or less ambiguous directives to make it easier for political leaders to interfere in individual cases, particularly potentially controversial ones. A further possibility would be increased cultural cooperation. However, all these measures would probably bring greater effectiveness than efficiency gains.

There are few studies showing the effects of JUG measures. The best-case scenario would be smarter policies produced by more and easier coordination between sectors, programs, and actors and across political and administrative levels and institutions and the creation of synergies. The worst-case scenario would be the erection of new structural barriers between policies and programs, making the political-administrative system even more bureaucratic, complex, and ambiguous, and decreasing efficiency and effectiveness. Pollitt (2003) points out that new coordinated “silos” can cut across existing sector- or policy-oriented ones, resulting in more problems of complexity and accountability. JUG may also create more myths and symbols, because it is “an idea whose time has come” (Røvik 1996).

In some countries joined-up *government* is coupled to joined-up *governance*, meaning better coordination between the government and society, interest groups or voluntary associations, business organizations, etc. In certain policy areas, like health and social services, some of these groups have for a long time been important in implementing governmental policy. There is now renewed interest in this aspect, as in the UK, where “New Labour” is talking about a more holistic and network-oriented approach to public policy, to be realized, for example, through public-private partnerships (Newman 2001).

A good illustration of the dynamics between NPM and JUG is New Zealand, where worries about the fragmentation of central government increased in the late 1990s. This led to a quest for more joined-up government, which materialized in a public report in 2001 that talked about a “whole of government” perspective (as in Australia). The report discussed “putting public service back together again” (Gregory 2003). The measures proposed were creating interagency “circuit-breaker” teams to solve problems of service delivery, establishing “super networks” better to integrate policy, delivery, and capacity building, and a careful process of structural consolidation.

Summing up, JUG represents a continuation of the age-old government dilemma of specialization versus coordination and will probably eventually lead to renewed demands for specialization. At the same time, it must be seen as a modern reaction to the problems of fragmentation and disintegration produced by NPM reforms. The *raison d'être* for JUG is the realization that policy can only be made smarter if the effects of NPM are counteracted or modified in certain ways. The goals involved are so ambitious and the policy areas so broad and complicated that the prospect of rich rewards also entails a high risk of failure and negative political consequences. In this respect a more pragmatic style of joined-up government is a viable alternative.

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed whether and how NPM-related reforms have contributed to more efficiency and effectiveness—smarter policy—in the public sector. First, the one-dimensional focus on efficiency, the tension between efficiency and other legitimate considerations in the public sector, and the internal inconsistency of the reform measures were discussed. Second, it was shown that feasibility related to both efficiency and effectiveness is difficult to obtain overall in large and complex reforms like NPM but more likely in individual institutions engaging in systematic and unambiguous reforms. Concerning desirability, normative conflicts and polarization over the reforms were identified. However, the ideological dominance of NPM supporters has helped to further NPM in many countries. Third, the effects of NPM were analyzed. NPM has not led to smarter policy overall. However, there have been some efficiency gains in public service provision and an increase in effectiveness in certain public organizations, albeit with some problematic and controversial side effects. Overall political control is undermined by NPM, structural and cultural fragmentation and disintegration have increased, as have social costs and inequality, and these are reasons why NPM reforms have been modified in some countries, trying to control more again.

Fourth, efforts to increase coordination in the form of joined-up government may be seen as a reaction to the fragmentation and disintegration in the modern NPM state. Whether JUG's enhanced focus on coordination and collaboration will produce

smarter policy is not easy to judge and has yet to be seen. It may potentially increase efficiency and effectiveness through fewer duplications and more synergies, but it may also increase costs by adding layers of new leaders and coordinating jobs, and make decision-making structures more complex.

It is a parallel literature about smart practice that is of relevance to discussing smart policy. This literature, primarily connected to a seminal book by Bardach (1998), is generally sympathetic towards the principles of NPM, but talks quite a lot about some different features. Bardach (2004) is preoccupied with “inter-agency collaborative capacity” and “craftmanship thinking” as a combination of creativity and public spiritedness. He sees these features as major preconditions for smart practice. And Barzelay (2004) stresses the vertical integrative efforts and hands-on attitudes of political and administrative leaders as supporting successful innovation. These are ideas pretty similar to some of the JUG thoughts, and they are different from the core of NPM concerning devolution and fragmentation.

If we take a broader view of NPM and smart policy, the main trends seem to be that NPM has peaked, after some fifteen to twenty years of dominance, and some of the core Anglo-American NPM countries, like New Zealand, are heading in another direction (Gregory 2003). An indication of this is also that the main reform entrepreneur, the OECD, is not that eager any longer and is talking more about other concepts or recipes for reform (Christensen and Læg Reid 2004; Sahlin-Andersson 2001). Some of the latecomers, like the Scandinavian countries and some continental European countries are still heading in a NPM direction, but in a more reluctant and modified way, attending more to reform symbols than to NPM practice.

The variations between countries concerning the history of NPM and smart policy seem to be explained by combining a rather complex set of perspectives/theories: One set of factors connects to the environment (Olsen 1992). Some of the countries most eagerly pursuing the NPM path experienced strong pressure from both the technical environment, for example through economic crises, and the institutional environment, through critique towards the government for inefficiency and lack of responsiveness (whether true or not). But NPM seems to have had problems delivering better overall efficiency and overall results, something that has led the front runners to hesitate more and partly turn around.

A second set of explanatory factors concerns the cultural-historical constraints and norms (Christensen and Læg Reid 2001). Countries with a strong *Rechtsstaat* tradition, like the Scandinavian countries and Germany, have been far more reluctant to take on board NPM than the Anglo-American countries, many of which put less emphasis on equality and equity. Even though consistent pressure over some time has gradually changed this variety, and made countries more similar in this respect, some of this division is still evident and persistent.

A third important set of factors concerns structural and instrumental factors. Countries with a Westminster type of parliamentary system have always had a much stronger potential for implementing substantial reform than systems with a more heterogeneous parliamentary structure, like the Scandinavian countries or many continental European countries, not to mention fragmented presidential

systems like the USA (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). The neoliberal wave behind NPM also occurred first in these countries. A rather homogeneous administrative system in some of these countries may also further NPM. Combining these three sets of explanatory factors shows quite clearly the variety in the use and implementation of NPM and smart policy. External crises, two-party systems, and reform-compatible culture explain why Anglo-American countries have been the reform entrepreneurs, but also why some of them now are able to turn around or modify the path chosen, when NPM cannot deliver smart practice.

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