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Aagaard, Peter

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New ways in public innovation?

By Peter Aagaard

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New ways in public innovation?

The promises and facts of emergent strategic management in public administration

Peter Aagaard, ISG, Roskilde University, Denmark, peteraa@ruc.dk

Abstract:

Public managers experience a growing demand for innovation. One of the promising approaches to provide innovation is emergent strategic patterns. According to the literature the institutional barriers and drivers of emergent strategic patterns are shaped by the two dominant public management models, NPM and governance. NPM sets the barriers and governance the drivers. But based on an empirical case study of the institutional barriers and drivers for emergent strategic patterns in the Danish Crime Prevention Counsel, the article conclude that emergent strategic patterns are in fact enabled by a much more mixed management model.

Key words: Emergent strategy, complexity, new public management, governance

Introduction:

The current credit crisis spurs a whole new and world wide development in public management. When financial resources are scarce, governments need to find new ways of maintaining and improving public services. Not only must governments be more effective, they also need to work smarter. This has created a growing demand for public innovation (Paarlberg and Bielefeld, 2009). Especially the strategic leadership behind public innovation has become increasingly important. Public managers need to know more about how public innovations emerge in a complex, networked environment, and the role of strategic leadership in this process.

A range of researchers have looked for a new approach in order to better grasp the complexity of contemporary public innovation. One of these approaches, which have gained new attention in the public (Stacey and Griffin, 2006, Mintzberg, 1994, Farjoun, 2002, Bums, 2002, Davis et al., 2009, Teisman and Klijn, 2008, Bovaird, 2008: 325, Paarlberg and Bielefeld, 2009). Emergent strategic patterns are created, when a range of actors interact and engage in an open-ended learning process.

The perspective was introduced to organizational science during the late 1980s and early 1990s. It entered the stage on the back of the complexity theory (Byrne, 2005, Thompson, 2004). But until recently the complexity perspective and the implications for strategy did not raise a lot of attention, neither among scholars of public administration nor the public managers (Klijn, 2008: 300). Instead public administration took a well known turn in another direction during the 1980s and 1990s: New public management (NPM) (Lynn, 1998, Christensen and Lægreid, 1999, Hood, 1995, Groot and Budding, 2008).

The claim in this article that the two dominant public administration models NPM and the governance model (Klijn, 2008: 300) shape and sets the institutional drivers and barriers for emergent strategic management in the public sector. The NPM-ideology has been criticized for lacking the ability to prioritize organizational learning as well as the overall public sector innovation. Not only do NPM leads to uniformity of service (Stacey and Griffin, 2006), but it may also be counter-productive in a situation of increased institutional competitiveness among nation states (See Campbell and Pedersen, 2007, Marcussen and Kaspersen, 2007). The governance-model (Rhodes, 1997) share a lot of features with emergent strategy, when it describes the networked, interdependent and self-organizing nature of public administration (See also Klijn, 2008: 305). Mintzberg & Jørgensen (1987) have claimed that emergent strategic patterns are already an important part of public management. Public policy and emergent strategy is simple two ways of saying the same thing. Emergent strategy is what the governors of policy systems do. Mintzberg & Jørgensen is both right and wrong. Policy processes consists to a very large degree of activities like policy-development through compromising and negotiations. This has also been confirmed by new institutional research: Civil servants are actively engage in shaping administrative reforms (Christensen and Lægreid, 1999, Røvik, 2009). But public management is also – and not least in the light of the NPM-movement - a matter of efficiency, performance measurement and rational planning. So in the need for new organizational and institutional learning public administrators *often attempt* to create emergent strategic patterns. But according to critics the conditions may not always be the best.

The claim in this article is that the actual conditions are much more entangled than the two model rivalry scenery wants us to believe. Institutional settings rooted in NPM can also act as drivers, and institutional settings of governance can also act as barriers.

The emergent strategic pattern capability clearly needs to be developed in the public sector, and public administrators and managers need to know more about the institutional

arrangements that form emergent strategy. That's why this article investigates the following question: What are the institutional drivers and barriers for models of emergent strategy in public governance?

To answer this question we must 1. Develop a theoretical framework that can be used to investigate the institutional conditions for emergent strategy in the public sector – and 2. Investigate the institutional barriers and drivers through empirical research. The first part will be done through outlining a theoretical approach to emergent strategy based on institutional theory and previous research on NPM and governance. The second part will be done through a case study of a specific project facilitated by the Danish Crime Prevention Council. The aim of the article is in that sense to provide needed empirical data on the availability of emergent strategy in public organizations (Klijn, 2008: 314).

The complexity perspective and strategy

The emergent strategic pattern approach is rooted in the complexity perspective. The complexity perspective originated in the 1970s with inspiration from the natural science - dynamic system theory (later known as chaos theory), classic system theory and cybernetics. I do not regard the complexity perspective as a theory. Its approach represents a taxonomy instead of a distinct theory. In other words it contributes with a range of analytical tools we can use to do better analysis of public innovation.

The focus here is on complex adaptive systems, defined as larger compounds of self-organized behavior (Bovaird, 2008: 321). Complex adaptive systems are too complex to be described through parsimonious theories, with only a few variables. The perspective investigates open, emergent, dynamic and self-organizing systems, where a range of causalities influences the outcome (Urry, 2005: 237). The perspective emphasises a non-linear, multiple equilibrium ontology (Ofori-Dankwa and Julian, 2001, Capra, 2005, Urry, 2004, Urry, 2005). The non-linearity of complex adaptive systems means that small amounts of change in inputs can have dramatic and unexpected effects on outputs (Thompson, 2004: 412).ⁱ

Though the complexity perspective processes tend to emphasize relations instead of the actors (it is the dance, and not the dancers, that is the key to understand behavior), actors are not irrelevant.

Actors (individuals and social groups) are seen as self-aware entities, who therefore may act strategically toward some goal within their perception of their environment (Harrison and Singer, 2006: 13). On the other hand - when actors are interdependent, they cannot act alone. So there isn't any determining agency (Urry, 2005: 243). But single actors can have an impact

through path dependent chains of events, or depending on their position in the chain of events.

Paarlberg & Bielefeld (2009) believes that complexity science can contribute to understanding strategic management in public organizations. Through the use of strategic alliances managers can reduce risk for new ventures or patch existing skills and resources in new combinations. In this way the emergent strategic pattern approach describes how leaders can balance stability (exploitation) and instability (exploration) (Paarlberg and Bielefeld, 2009: 251).ⁱⁱ

The perspective bridges the gaps between top-down control and emergent interactions, order and ongoing change, and simple and complex systems to improve our conceptual and practical understanding of strategic management. Strategy is not seen as a one-sided response to a changing environment. Instead agents most constantly adapt to an environment - a "fitness landscape" that consist of "multiple contexts in which public managers must behave and which guide the effects of that behavior" (Teisman and Klijn, 2008: 295). The agent must take actions, which change both the agent as well as the interdependent agents, influenced by the action (Klijn, 2008: 310).

The complexity perspective fundamentally questions traditional decision-making, planning and implementation as well as formal hierarchical leadership in political systems (Stacey, 1995, Stacey, 2007, Mintzberg et al., 2005, Mintzberg, 1994, Bovaird, 2008). The evolving learning process can be described as incremental, combined with rapid radical change, with out any apparent connection with the amount of resources put on strategic planning (Bovaird, 2008: 322). Plans and planning still have a role to play, as a resource that provide alternative courses of action (Cunha and Cunha, 2002). But strategist does not stand above or outside an organizational system, which can be manipulated. Strategists are part of an organizational process, and both shape and get shaped by the process (Bovaird, 2008: 323).

Leadership and strategies emerge as social processes based on reciprocity. Decisions are taken by a lot of different agents on different (or shifting) levels and within broader inter-organizational fields (Paarlberg and Bielefeld, 2009: 250). Politics is emerging from interactions among interdependent but individual agents within evolving institutional formations (Harrison and Singer, 2006: 2). In this process a pattern is created through the (simple) interactivity of multiple agents. The pattern emergence - and is spread out like rings on a water surface - through interactivity - between the involved actors. Strategy can come from all parts of the policy system (topdown, bottom up, from the side, from outside). This means that strategy here is based on synthesis instead of analysis. Leaders are not able to distinct between

formulation and implementation. Leaders implement as they formulate and vice versa. Neither are they able to distinct between strategy and tactics, because no one knows in from the start what the important is (strategy) and what the details are (tactics).

Compared to the common assumption of powerful leaders the impact of leaders is limited, but not irrelevant (See also Thompson, 2004: 416, Byrne, 2005). Though complexity and interdependency makes topdown control and steering of the whole system impossible, leaders can have impact in specific relations. The metaphor of “riding the fitness landscape” (Klijn, 2008: 314) to seek out new opportunities for change - to make policies and coalitions adapt to the landscape - may be very precise description of the challenge managers face.

Opportunities may occur when leaders are able to encourage or discourage participants to interact across organizational borders (Paarlberg and Bielefeld, 2009: 253), to create opportunities for interaction and new learning. It is the motivation and level of knowledge of the single participants that is in focus for the management initiatives. Participants must be highly skilled, information quickly spread, through computer technology or open work spaces or self-selected work groups. The goal is not to produce conformity through adaption, but on the contrary to create new learning opportunities. This can (ideally) be reached through loose coupled rather than tight coupled relations between the participants (Paarlberg and Bielefeld, 2009: 250). The great advantage of this approach compared to traditional planning and formal decision-making is flexibility. The opportunities for different types of learning increase, and secondly, a number of different items or elements can (ideally) be dealt with simultaneously by the policy system.

But the embedded incrementalism of emergent strategy also involves a paradox. Systems on the edge of chaos have both characteristics of stability and change. Stability and change - or regularity and irregularity, according to Stacey are intertwined. So even after large-scale changes organizations (their policies and implementations landscapes) seems relatively unchanged. This can of course be frustrating for the actors who attempt to create change, while other actors would be confirmed in their believe that things more less stay the same (Bovaird, 2008).

Table I: Model of emergent strategic patterns. Adapted from Mintzberg (1994):

Perspective	Strategic action can com from all parts of the system
Form	Descriptive

Focus	realized
Rationality	bounded, limited
Creation	Synthesis instead of analysis
Process	learning

As mentioned in the introduction the complexity perspective share some common ground with the governance model. Both stretch the analytical importance of self-organization and interdependency. But there are some important differences. The focus in the complexity perspective is not on networks as such, but on social processes, and it is not a model of inter-organizational relations. When it comes to strategy, EPS are not simply networked, and the thought of steering the political system is rejected. Political systems cannot be steered, but influenced. In connecting to this it must be emphasized that not all type of activities in the public sector should attempt to apply emergent strategic patterns. Not all public organizations need to enhance learning and innovation. Not all processes in the public sector are complex, non-linear or unpredictable (e.g. daycare or cleaning of streets), and some high risk processes need to be submitted a high degree of control (t. ex. nuclear plants or intensive care on hospitals) (See also Bovaird, 2008: 325). Klijn (2008) conclude that the complexity approach is best suited for “wicked problems”.

Institutional conditions of emergent strategic patterns

Though the creation of emergent strategic patterns in the public sector is not a prearranged and planned top down process, we must still consider it to be an object of causality, multiple causalities that come from many directions. According to Byrne (2005) we must adopt a systematic approach to complexity that makes scientific explanation possible. The scientific knowledge produced in such an analysis depends on the context. It is local in time and place instead of universal. According to this approach we must add path dependency, structure as well as agency to our analysis of complex phenomena (Byrne, 2005). So we must ask questions like: What specific institutional setup comes from path-dependency and previous agent behavior? In what way does this setup enable emerging strategic patterns? And have there been any attempts to change it?

Path-dependency and structure can be studied in the form of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive institutions (Scott, 2001). The regulative approach is associated with rules

and laws, the normative with values and norms, and the cultural-cognitive with “shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made.” (Scott, 2001: 57). While change in the regulative dimension is typically covered by tracing the change of formal organizational settings, the change of the normative and cognitive dimension can be traced through the introduction and facilitation of new paradigms, policy programs, frames and public opinions - or in short ideas (Campbell, 2004)ⁱⁱⁱ.

Agency can also be studied as part of the institutional analysis. According to Campbell (2004: 107) it is an important task in institutional analysis to specify the actors behind institutional change. The emerging order in complex policy systems may very well be created actively and with a purpose by strategic actors. So actors (individuals and social groups) are seen as self-aware entities, who are able to act strategically toward some goal within their perception of their environment (Harrison and Singer, 2006: 13). On the other hand there isn't any determining agency. The actors are still interdependent and cannot act alone (See also Urry, 2005: 243). So an analysis of public innovation must also take strategic agency into account. Single actors can influence the emerging order

through path dependent chains of events.

As indicated in the introduction two models of public administration sets the barriers and drivers of ESP: New public management and governance^{iv}. The two models share a range of issues: The role of politicians as well as the public-private distinction is downplayed, both focus (but in different ways) on output control as well new instruments and techniques for steering. Despite the similarities there are, as shown in the next section, so many differences between the two models that they must be separated (Peters and Pierre, 1998: 227-231) - especially because they treat complexity differently. To put it short, NPM tries to reduce complexity, making the world of public administration much simpler through goal- and outcome orientations and clear responsibilities. The governance model “addresses complexity by stepping into the complex system” (Klijn, 2008: 312). The manager or strategist is not raised above the system, but is a part of it.

The institutional barriers of emergent strategic patterns

The NPM spread in the OECD countries during the 1980s (Hood, 1995). NPM was originally seen as explorative behavior or a vehicle for search of new solutions (Christensen and Lægheid, 1999: 172). NPM is not only the dominant public administration ideology. According to Stacey and Griffin it is a “cult of performance” that makes it difficult for alternative, local strategic patterns to emerge (2006: 18). NPM has become the orthodoxy of public administration,

which public managers need to obtain to defend their legitimacy as leaders (Christensen and Lægreid, 1999: 171). So it is here we find the supposed barriers of ESP.

Regulative dimension

The regulative dimension of the barriers can be described in the form of the range of NPM doctrines and reforms that have influenced the public sector in the Western World since the 1980s. NPM is an intra-organizational program (Peters and Pierre, 1998: 227), which aims at transforming the public sector. It introduces governance models consisting of elements like accounting, standardization, privatization, outsourcing, use of contracts and evaluations, quasi-markets through purchaser-provider models and measurement techniques like benchmarking, ranking, performance and measurement tools (Melander, 2008, Greve, 2007). These regulative barriers may be increased due to new demand for information from the public and politicians as well as the increased possibilities for collecting information and surveillance through computer technology-improvements (Melander, 2008).

Normative dimension

NPM denies normative (political or cultural) specificity and claims that it introduces neutral steering technologies. Elected politicians should only set goals and priorities. Instead the political entrepreneurship and increased administrative leadership come into focus (Peters and Pierre, 1998: 227, Hood, 1995: 96). But NPM is not a neutral steering model. It is based on the belief that the public sector are too large, consists of too many rules and too little focus on citizens as customers and taxpayers. What is emphasized is in stead focus on the customer or target groups, customer satisfaction, performance indicators, improved productivity, cost-efficiency, increased focus on explicit goals and output, disaggregation of public organizations into separately corporatized units, more focus on competition, discipline and frugality in resource use, visible hands-on top management, and more transparency and flexibility in public administration (Hood, 1995: 94-96, Greve, 2007, Christensen and Lægreid, 1999: 184, Peters and Pierre, 1998: 231). NPM also attempts to remove the distinction between private and public sector. This distinction is believed to have isolated the state from the rest of society (Peters and Pierre, 1998: 231). When it comes to norms of leadership NPM preach professional management, managerialism and private-sector styles of management practice (Hood, 1995: 96, Stacey and Griffin, 2006). Public managers should adopt this style, because it is believed to enhance the steering capability, in a situation of increased expectations and demands from a long range of different actors (Klaudi Klausen, 2001).

Cultural-cognitive dimension

These normative beliefs are linked to cultural-cognitive orientations of economic accountability, instrumental rationality and rational planning. Accountability of public organizations can only be achieved through cost-control and quantifiable productivity indicators. So organizations must provide evidence for achieved results (Hood, 1995). Influenced by neoclassic economics, rational choice and principal-agent theory actors are believed to maximize self-interest. The notion of rational planning is based upon Newtonian science, on which rational planning assume that change is predictable and governed by timeless laws of linear cause and effect (Paarlberg and Bielefeld, 2009: 238). Strategic planning allows organizations to extend “rationality” throughout their organization.

The institutional drivers of emergent strategic patterns in the public sector

The governance-model (Rhodes, 1997) emerged around the same time as NP, but it did not raise the same attention among public managers as NPM. Despite the differences (the similarities (self-organization, interdependency of actors) between the two are so huge that it is here we find the supposed drivers of ESP.

Regulative dimension

Governance is an inter-organizational program. It aims at developing the government’s capability to act to form strategic inter-organizational coalitions in the form of networks, partnerships-models, and public-private joint ventures, local participation, bottom up approaches in policy implementation, user driven and collaborative innovation as well as inclusion of voluntary sector in service delivery (Peters and Pierre, 1998: 231). Instead for formal standards and procedures, governance focuses on ‘softer’ instruments of control like benchmarking, bargaining, diplomacy etc. (Kickert et al., 1997: 44, Rhodes, 1997). Governance focus on output-results in the form of generating compliance between coalition partners, but the focus is mainly on the process, or the direction and practices of the steering process (Peters and Pierre, 1998: 231).

Normative dimension

Governance aims at creating a democratic polity (Peters and Pierre, 1998: 231), which transcend the formal chain of parliamentary command. Political decision-making must involve a long range of actors, not only public organizations, but also private enterprise and civil society based advocacy networks. These actors must be connected in horizontal and vertical networks (Sørensen and Torfing, 2005, 2007, Klijn, 2008: 312). Through interaction and loose structural coupling actors should produce a negotiated consensus, which provides the basis for

co-ordination (Rhodes, 2000, Meuleman, 2008). In this way the public-private distinction is downplayed.

Public administrators should use cross-sectored resource mobilization to solve political problems (Peters and Pierre, 1998: 231). Also the administrative silos of the public sector need to be linked horizontally, because policy problems do not respect the administrative borders. Administrative silos will constantly be exposed to overlapping policy problems and spill over effects.

When it comes to leadership the role of politicians should be downplayed and the political entrepreneurship and administrative leadership increased (Peters and Pierre, 1998: 231). But first and foremost it is the self-organizing capability of the network that is highlighted. Strategic action shall mostly be seen as a group process with shifting actors and less seen as a stable capability of a distinct actor. Authority is established through the integration forces (the creation of common beliefs, norms and standards) of the network. Strategic actors deliberately shape cognitive expectations and modify self-understanding of identities (Sørensen and Torfing, 2007: 9, Sørensen and Torfing, 2005: 87, Kickert et al., 1997: 11). Central is the capability of framing, facilitate and negotiate the network-environment (Bogason, 2000: 58). Though, strategy cannot be implemented top down, it is recognized that 'shadows' of hierarchy or government, such as introducing rules for the behavior of partners can play an important role in governance (Marsh, 1998: 189-190, Meuleman, 2008: 67-71).

Cultural-cognitive dimension

These normative beliefs are linked to cultural-cognitive orientations of interdependency, horizontality and uncertainty. Though each involved actor can act strategically, they are also believed to be interdependent and horizontally linked. So no single actor has enough power to dominate the others. There is no determining agency. The relationship between agency and structure is considered to be dialectical (Marsh and Sharman, 2009: 275).

The lack of determining agency combined with the interdependency of several different and shifting actors creates a notion of uncertainty in governance, which must be dealt with through strategic action (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2004).

Summing up: The institutional barriers and drivers of emergent strategic patterns

Both models/movements take the increased complexity of the public sector into account, but with very different consequences. Governance models try to involve a diverse range of participants, individuals and organizations in the strategy process. NPM models try to enforce economic accountability and rational planning. The NPM initiated barriers are considered to be (mostly) internal to the organization and with focus on outcome (in the form of efficiency, customer- or target group satisfaction). The governance initiated drivers are considered to be external to the organization, aimed at creating democratic polity, through coalition building, and with a focus on process and inclusion.

Table II Barriers and drivers

	Barriers	Drivers
Regulative frames	Models of accounting, standardization, privatization, outsourcing, use of contracts and evaluations, quasi-markets through purchaser-provider models and measurement techniques like benchmarking, ranking, performance and measurement tools	The capability to form strategic inter-organizational coalitions Generating compliance between coalition partners Keeping focus on the process
Normative orientations	Lack of involvement of politicians emphasis on the customer or target groups emphasis on performance indicators, productivity, cost-efficiency emphasis on explicit goals and output, competition, discipline and frugality in resource use, visible hands-on top management in the form of private-sector styles of management practice	The ability to reach consensus The capability to mobilize cross-sectorial Enactment of loose structural coupling between actors increased political entrepreneurship and administrative leadership the capability to self-organize the capability of framing, facilitate and negotiate through 'soft' governance techniques deliberately created cognitive expectations and modified self-understanding of identities
Cultural-cognitive beliefs	Orientations like economic accountability, rational planning, and instrumental rationality.	Orientations like horizontality, interdependency,

The empirical case: The Danish Crime prevention Counsel

The Danish Crime prevention Counsel is chosen as a case study, because of its long tradition of cross-sectored corporation. Furthermore, since 2006 the Counsel has attempted to implement

a network- and project-based form of strategy, with clear characteristics of an emergent strategic management model. The purpose has been to strengthen the Councils capability to create innovative projects in the field of crime prevention. The Council has done what can be expected from a modern public service organization, which focuses on public innovation. There is just one major problem: The strategy doesn't seem to work. According to the secretariat leader the process takes too much time. Since 2008 eight projects have been started, but only one has so far reached a result.

The Council is a member-based organization under the Ministry of Justice. Fifty different organizations (ministries, business organizations, NGOs) are members - the "central actors of society" according to the Council, with the "common goal of preventing crime, even though each member has their own incentive to do so" (Strategiplan, 2007: 7). The Council is organized with a plenary session, an executive committee, four sub-committees, and a secretariat. The plenary session meets twice a year. The sub-committees consist of member-organizations, supporting members and experts. They meet and discuss new initiatives and problems in their field. The role of the secretariat is to gather information, facilitate and manage projects, facilitate committee meetings and communicate externally.

Organizational history

The Council was founded in 1971. Already in its foundation the Council was put together by members from all part of society. The focus in the first years was on preventing theft and robbery. A central part of the Councils work was technical standards for bicycle locks and safes. Later the more "soft" efforts came. E.g. the attempt to prevent children and young people to get into crime, By this development the purpose was also enhanced from crime prevention to safety creating initiatives. The most profound change in recent years was the restructuring process from 2006 to 2008. There where several sources for this change. The background was huge administrative reforms of the Danish police and municipalities. These reforms where seen as an opportunity to strengthen local crime prevention work. The new leader of the secretariat in 2003 saw some opportunities for creating a more efficient secretariat. This organisational change was planned to occur in 2005, but during a member survey it there appeared to be an interest among the members to look at the organization of the whole Council.

According to the secretariat leader the committees had developed to be rather independent groups of experts with powerful chairmen. Resources and efforts were highly tied to these committees, which made it difficult for the secretariat to coordinate and prioritise across

committee-budgets. At the same time the members expressed a lack of clarity, when it came to the goals and assignments of the individual committee. Also the strategy was taken up to consideration. According to the member survey the Counsel focused too little on coordination and too little on holistic thinking (in the form of cross-sectored initiatives, e.g.). The members wanted the secretariat to develop a formalized working method, which identified and included the relevant members in close dialogue. In general the secretariat should be better at planning, organize, coordinate and manage projects. There should be a higher degree of internal cooperation on crime problems, and the Counsel should formulate a ways of measure and follow up on initiatives. Especially the connections and communication between members and the secretariat should be formalized.

The declared goal of the Counsel is today to be seen – and to see themselves – as the “crime preventing project organization of society” (Strategiplan, 2007). But the more formalised project organization also has a more internal, strategic function. According to the secretariat leader the purpose with formalising the project organization was an attempt to solve a huge problem with balancing interests among the members. But that purpose has not been fulfilled. Fare from. In the last two years eight projects have been started, but only one has so far reached a result in the form a new initiative. Before the restructuring of the Counsel, when projects were tied to the individual committee, the project process went faster. On the hand the secretariat leader says that there is a higher degree of ownership to projects across the Counsel, and one of the member representatives confirms that the secretariat has become better at activating members through the projects.

The declared vision of the Counsel today is to be “the energy source of the integrating effort” of national crime prevention (Strategiplan, 2007: 6-7). Through meetings in the Counsel, public relations The Counsel wants to inspire and motivate to a broad crime preventing development throughout society, and to formulate and implement concrete and local initiatives in corporation with local partners. Both employees of the secretariat and member representatives agree that there is some way to go before this ambition is fulfilled.

Institutional settings of emergent strategic patterns

For reading reasons the regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive dimensions have been mixed, but to gain an overview the distinctions between them can be seen in table IV.

Institutional settings as drivers

The Counsel has created a long range of regulative changes as part of the network- and project strategy: The secretariat has gained more influence on budget and projects. The projects and budgets do not belong to the committees anymore, but are now anchored in the network unit

of the secretariat. The committee structure is changed, so the number of committees has been reduced from five to four. The budget responsibility was handed over to the secretariat, and the chairmen of the committees must now be elected among the members. The secretary of the committee has also got an enforced role as process-facilitators. The Counsel has also enforced knowledge sharing among member representatives and employees. An intranet has been purchased. Furthermore, the network coordinators was made responsible for spreading information to relevant members, as well as interviewing members to get hold of new information. There have also been some examples of new types of committee meetings in the form of study-travels and workshops.

The committee meetings are seen as important forum for enacting the new strategy. This is where the members meet; share experiences and interests are balanced, in the form of creating consensus of goals, target groups and means. Here we also find a significant normative driver: Added value for the individual member. According to the network-coordinators the committee meetings must create added value for the individual member organization. But it also very important normative orientation among the secretariats employees that this development depends on increased endorsement from the members. According to one of the network coordinators success of the new network strategy relies on the endorsement of the members. In the same line the secretariat leader believes that the members must take more ownership to the projects. This normative orientation is based on two cultural-cognitive believes in line with the governance-model: Horizontality and interdependence. Horizontality has clearly has shaped the network strategy. This is partly originated in the Counsels cross-sector tradition. But it is also based on a cultural orientation of the value of including the member-organizations knowledge and experiences. To the extent that it provides experiences and information from local crime prevention work, this belief work as a driver. Interdependence is a cultural-cognitive belief that also clearly shaped the network strategy. It makes it sensible to make different actors from different part of society work together on crime prevention. To that extent that it motives member-organizations and local partners to take part in project, this belief work as a driver.

The work of the Counsel is increasingly evidence-based. In 2008 several member-organisation believed that the Counsel should work more evidence-based. Other members spoke instead of a higher status for information provided by practicians. According to the secretariat leader this was a clear conflict, but the evidence-based work has a much stronger position today. The secretariat leader sees this as an advantage: "We do not feel a dilemma any more," the secretariat leader says as a comment to the conflict between evidence-based and practicians

work. This is supported by one of the network coordinators, who say that evidence-based works can create endorsement behind new initiatives and give access to more resources. In that sense evidence-based work can act as normative driver.

The project organization has been more formalized. The project process must now be based on project descriptions, pre-defined milestones, each project must have a person affiliated with the relevant expertise in crime prevention, and all the project do now have a project manager, provided by the network unit of the secretariat. As part of this process the Counsels employees put of an increased focus on project management as a normative orientation. According to one of the network coordinators the coordinator/project managers provide 'midwifery' to the projects. Another regulative change, based on normative orientation, is and increased focus on target groups. Both committees and projects have got clearer target groups. Both employees and representatives think that the purposes of the committees have become clearer, and that overlapping agendas between the committees have been removed. This orientation – as well as the increased evidence-based work - is supported by a deeper cultural-cognitive belief in rational actions. The rational orientation here may be instrumental, but it can also be a bounded form of rationality. As bounded rationality it do not create a focus on a specific outcomes (clear cause-effect relations), but it makes it possible for the Counsel to act with a higher degree of certainty (in the form of internally based self-assurance) and legitimacy (in the form of externally based trust).

Institutional settings as barriers

The Counsel also faces a range of institutional barriers, some of them in the form of lack of sufficient drivers. Already in 2008 several committee members was worried to spend much time on getting involved with projects (Strategiplan, 2007: 43). This barrier still exists. The committee members are simply too occupied with work in their own organisation. "The effort never gets whole-hearted", as one of the representatives of a member-organisation says. One the reason could be a lack added value. One of the network coordinator believes that the membership of the Counsel to some extent resembles voluntary work. It is something – at least some of the members – is expected to do besides their day job. For these members their may not be a direct connection between their day job and the work of the Counsel, so besides knowledge sharing they are not able to harvest any added value from their membership. The reason could also be the lack of a deeper cultural-cognitive experience of interdependency among the member organizations. The member representatives mostly take part in the Counsel meetings to share information and less to gain collective advantage of political opportunities. The fact is that the secretariat seems more dependent of the member organizations' participation than the members are on the work of the secretariat (or the

Counsel as such). So interdependency is a stronger cultural-cognitive orientation of the secretariat.

The secretariat leader sees the network strategy and the projects strategy as partly opposites. Networking is to focus on inclusion and create democratic legitimacy among the members, while project work is about focusing, narrow down and trimming. She says: "The problem is that since 2008 we have hardly ever reached the point, where we could start a project. It is in the formulation of new projects the balancing of interests take place. [So] we haven't been able to use the tools of project work, because our formulation of projects is open and democratic." This open and democratic balancing of interest is an important normative orientation of the Counsel. It may enforce the knowledge sharing of the Counsel, but at the same time it increases the complexity that must be dealt with strategically. According to the secretariat leader this process takes too much time. The time-consuming difficulties are among other things the creations of commons notions of problems, goals, means, resources, and priorities. "There are so many stakeholders to swear in," as one of the member representatives says. The problem even gets bigger, because some of the members experience an uncertainty on what sort of backing they have from their own organization. Their mandate can be highly ambiguous, and that takes time to sort out, especially in the end of the process of balancing interest. Another problem is that the members seldom show up with clearly defined ideas or problems. When they contribute, they express their needs and share their experiences instead of suggesting concrete ideas for new projects. The process of balancing interests is so time-consuming that it is difficult to time efforts and needs, and the Counsels work runs the risk of being re-active instead of pro-active. The innovations the projects are supposed to develop can simply be obsolete.

Conditions like these make the Counsel exceptional complex in the eyes of the secretariat leader. "Who is in charge here?" she asks rhetorical. A question which points at one of the major normative obstacles of the Counsel: The uncertainty of internal authority: Already in the member survey in 2008, it was evident that many of the members saw the secretariat as the Counsel (Strategiplan, 2007: 24). This was internally articulated as a debate called "Who is the Counsel? Us or you?" Implicit in this debate we find an uncertainty of the secretariats role, and more generally of who takes the development initiatives of the Counsel. According to the secretariat leader it is – and should also be a result of interplay between the members and the secretariat, but she recognizes that the secretariat "probably is the driving force." En member representative thinks that the initiative mainly lies on the shoulders of the secretariat, simply because they are the ones who are employed.

What we find here is barrier rooted in a deeper cultural-cognitive belief in horizontality. When balancing interest through networking is seen as the most important task, no one tries to dominate or to enact a decisive agency, which could speed up the work of the project organization. The result is among other things uncertainty towards the authority structure of the Counsel.

So the complexity of the network organization is not by enforced by a parsimonious orientation of the project organization. On the contrary, the project organization is also influenced by complexity. One of the network coordinators says: "We have been so busy creating eight projects, so we haven't had the energy to do the networking or to coordinate networking and project work. It might have been a good idea just to start a few projects to create some good results, but [...] it has completely paralyzed the network unit to run these projects at once, at such a loose basis". The normative and regulative orientation of evidence-based work adds more to this complexity. According one of the network coordinators the increased focus on written documentation and the goal of increased measurement takes time, especially during the project work. So despite the secretariat leader's experience of 'no dilemma' the cultural-cognitive belief of rational planning and instrumental rationality still acts as a cultural-cognitive barrier. But this barrier has also influenced the project organization in a much broader sense: The new network- and project strategy is a rational plan expected to cause a specific outcome before 2010, among others things in the form of finished projects. Especially the secretariat expected – and still expects that it is possible to extend the rationality of the network strategy throughout the organization mobilizing the members to take initiatives themselves. So the Counsel also has an overall instrumental expectation of success for their network- and project strategy. With the lack of outcome in the form of finished projects this cultural-cognitive orientation produce frustration among members as well as employees. This frustration covers that the initiatives the Counsel take, may take much longer time to be successful, depending on the future enactment of the strategy.

Summing up the case study

Since 2006 the Crime Prevention Counsel has attempted to implement a network- and project based strategy, with clear characteristics of an emergent strategic management model. The purpose has been to strengthen the Counsels capability to create innovative projects. But the strategy doesn't seem to work. According to the secretariat leader the process takes too much time. Since 2008 eight projects have been started, but only one has so far reached a result. Despite all the good intentions, it doesn't work. The Counsel has created a long range of regulative changes as part of the network- and project strategy: The secretariat has gained more influence, the project organization has been more formalized and the work of the

Counsel is increasingly evidence-based. But the barriers still seems too high to over win. Most significantly is the time-consuming balancing of interest among he members, and an exceptional complex organization infused with uncertainty of internal authority.

Discussion

Looking at table IV, the analysis first of all shows that the same institutional building block can act as both driver and barrier in complex situations. Causality takes many paths, making it challenging to describe the ways of learning and innovation, in this case a public organization. But this is not the same as chaos. The analysis also shows that the Counsel have significant features of an emerging order. The order is there though the findings points at a much more mixed - or complex landscape, than the literature on NPM and governance suggests.

There are some clear evidence of increased NPM-institutionalizing in the form of emphasized focus on target groups, evidence based work and formal project organizations. But contrary to the literature they do acts just as barriers (such as increased evidence-based work, rational planning), but also as drivers (in the form of increased focus on target groups and added value for the individual member organization). The same goes for the governance-perspective. Some characteristics of governance acts as drivers (such as enforced knowledge sharing and horizontality), but again, contrary to the literature institutional settings associated with governance also acts as barriers (most significantly balancing interest, and again: a focus on horizontality).

The network- and project organization model of the Counsel doesn't work. Most public organizations that only complete one of eight projects in two years have internal problems. There are two interrelated explanations for this: One that points at the importance of institutions and one that point at the importance of leadership.

The importance of institutions

Emphasizing the importance of institutions in an institutional analysis may not be surprising. But in the case of ESP there are good reasons for discussing this. The descriptions of ESP in the literature seem to suggest that ESPs are a rather dynamic phenomenon, rooted in the belief that these patterns cannot be controlled. What is often forgotten is that the dynamic is intertwined with stability, and this stability consists of institutional settings and path-

dependent behavior. Agents are not just free to interact with each other arbitrarily. Though they to some extent may be aware of the institutional conditions they act upon, they may not be able to change them.

The focus of this analysis is mostly on the institutional settings and less on the process of institutional dynamics. So it must be recognized that the strategic changes of the Counsel may have impact in the years to come. Two years may not be enough to create a new working process, which both the secretariat and the member-organizations must learn and adapt to. The identified frustration may be temporary, and the institutional barriers may vanish.

But this may not just be a methodological point. It is possible that the current state of the Counsel signifies the entanglement of stability and change. Despite large-scale planned changes like the introduction of the network- and project-based organization, the Counsel seems to fight with some of the same barriers as was already mentioned in the member survey in 2008. As suggested by Bovaird (2008) this creates frustration among the change agents of the organization, while other actors would be confirmed in their belief that things more or less stay the same. If that is the case the Counsel could very well experience the paradox of emergent strategy: Though things change, the organization seems relatively unchanged.

It is also the institutional settings that can explain why the member organizations do not experience the same degree of interdependency as the secretariat. The members mainly use the Counsel as a forum for knowledge sharing, and not as a forum where they can set a national crime prevention agenda. Interdependency is based on shared norms and cultural-cognitive beliefs. Though, all of the members of the Counsel recognize the importance of crime prevention, they also have “their own incentive to do so”. In that sense the Counsel is too broad to create network-efficiency. Depending on the enactment broad networks isn’t necessarily inefficient, but the Counsel clearly needs the tools to create a higher degree of interdependency among their members. An important element would be to work more concretely on shared goals, and desired outcomes, in the light of the consequences it may have, if the Counsel didn’t take any initiative. Such an orientation comes close to what organizations exposed to competition experience in the form of external pressure.

The importance of leadership

The secretariat have gained the better conditions for exercise more power and take more initiative But the increased influence can only be described in formal – or in this case study

regulative terms. The balancing of interest makes it difficult for the secretariat to take a stronger leading responsibility. The secretariat waits for the members to get involved – and the members are waiting for the secretariat to involve them. The result is a lack of leadership.

The mix of normative and cultural-cognitive beliefs shown in table V makes it difficult for the secretariat and the network unit to take advantage of the new regulative settings. There is simply too much information in the form of stakeholders to take into account and in the form of different standards of performance to deal with, the number of projects as well as uncertainty of authority. So the Counsel lacks capability to deal with complexity, and it needs to find a way of ‘riding the fitness landscape’. The Secretariat must learn to deal with different fitness landscapes in the form of network versus project, of balancing process and outcome - as well as mixing NPM and governance settings.

Contrary to what the secretariat leader may think, the network and the project organization isn’t necessarily opposites, but can instead be seen as preconditions for each other: The network provides a way of searching new possibilities of the fitness landscape - and the projects provides a way of exploiting the new possibilities. But it all depends how the two part of the organization are balanced, or how they are connected. The project organization can provide the tools for speeding up the balancing of interest in the network organization, but only if the members adjust and learn to use the tools.

Though the Counsels network- and project-organization do not work well, it would be wrong and a major strategic fault, if the Counsel decided to give it up, and instead build a more NPM-inspired organization, based on competition among the members or an even greater outcome-focus. That is not the key-learning of this analysis. Instead this analysis points at the mixed character of public innovations models. Looking from the public manager’s point of view NPM and governance must be seen as two drawers of the same tool-box. How to mix them depends to a large degree on the local circumstances.

But NPM and governance also have different characteristics, so a complete arbitrary use in the attempt to create ESP’s should be avoided. Governance models can be useful, when organizations attempt to create ESP’s, but to actually create innovation organizations need to adapt the new possibilities in the form of relevant target groups, plans and criteria for successful change. These can be found in the institutional settings of NPM. To reach any kind of outcome organizations need some sort of shared clarity, in the form of clear roles, clear profiles, clarity of responsibilities. Organizations needs clarity, but they do not necessarily need a lot of it.

Different performance standards, steering paradigms, organisational prescriptions and political expectations are part of the 'fitness landscape' public organizations face today. The tensions between them create some of the dynamics public organizations are exposed to. EPS is not a singular answer to this situation, but it is a part of the answer. Management consultants may feel pushed to sell emergent strategy as an ideal approach for contemporary public administration. But frustration and uncertainty will always be part of emergent strategy, so the ESP-approach simply cannot live up to such idealistic promises. The bad - and perhaps frustrating news is that there are no alternative than constantly adapting to a dynamic fitness landscapes. The good news is that - depending on power relations - it set public managers free from implementing one specific steering model.

Table III: Institutional settings for ESP in the Danish Crime Prevention Counsel

	Drivers	Barriers
Regulative frames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The secretariat has gained more influence on budget and projects Increased clarity of the committee structure Enforced knowledge sharing Increased formalization of the project organization Increased evidence-based work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of time among the members Increased evidence-based work The numbers of project The network organisation Lack of awareness of changed meeting structure
Normative orientations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added value for the individual member Increased endorsement from the members Increased focus on project management Increased focus on target groups The advantage of evidence-based work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balancing interest openly and democratic Uncertainty of internal authority Lack of added value
Cultural-cognitive beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rationality Horizontality Interdependence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rational planning and instrumental rationality Lack of experienced interdependency among the member organizations. Horizontality

Conclusions

Public managers experience a growing demand for innovation. One of the suggested approaches to provide innovation is ESPs. The two dominant public administration models NPM and the governance model shape and sets the institutional drivers and barriers for ESPs in the public sector. Both models take the increased complexity of the public sector into account, but with very different consequences. Governance models try to address complexity by involving a diverse range of participants in the strategy process. NPM models tries to reduce complex interactive patterns by enforcing economic accountability and rational planning.

The article test these assumptions by doing an institutional analysis, based on Scott, of the Danish Crime Prevention Counsel. The Counsel has attempted to implement a strategy that aims at creating self-organized alliances based on interactivity between interdependent, but individual actors. The purpose has been to strengthen the Counsels capability to create innovative projects. But the strategy doesn't seem to work. The most significant barrier is the time-consuming balancing of interest among the members, and an exceptional complex organization affected with uncertainty about internal authority, because the secretariat attempts to enact horizontal relations towards the members of the Counsel. These are all features of governance models. On the other hand NPM-features like formalization, measurement and outcome-focus provide some sort of needed clarity in the innovative processes of the Counsel. Based on these findings the analysis concludes that the assumptions of governance versus NPM must be changed, when it comes to the shaping of EPS in public management. Instead of a rigid rivalry it is a matter of mixing the two models.

The Counsel seems to be caught in a deadlock, or what has been called the paradox of ESP: Though things change, the organization seems relatively unchanged. To break the dead-lock the Counsel must find a way to deal with the complexity of mixed models. It needs to find a way of 'riding the fitness landscape'.

ESP is not a perfect approach to innovation for public management, but if the pitfalls described here can be avoided, ESP, as one tool among others, can be useful for a range of public organizations.

Future research

More case studies of ESP in the public sector are needed. This article only account for one at the national level in Denmark. But the institutional conditions for ESP can very well be relatively different i other contexts.

It is also obvious that new insight can be found if the Counsel is followed in the nearby future. This would provide a stronger process perspective to the current case study and give a better understanding of capabilities of the network- and project-based organization.

Such a process study would also bring us closer to the role of change agents and their relations the the rest of the organizational members. Institutional analysis should not settle with the structure focused description, but also focus on the importance of agents in the process of public innovation. This would provide a stronger concept of strategic agency and leadership to the model of emergent strategic patterns. As part of this research is should be clarified if the popular concept of institutional entrepreneurship, have any explanatory force, or if the strategic agency can only be understood in relations to other actors. How this responds to the pragmatist-tradition that influence Stacey's strategic model also need to be theoretical sorted out. Stacey resists the thought of complexity theory being used for prescription. There is no specific model for leadership, he claims. But the idea of complexity and leadership has clearly grown into a model, a prescription for how to organize to enhance learning capability. It is true that ESPs cannot be controlled, but neither could the classic bureaucracy or - as history shows NPM-models. System control is a rationalistic belief that cannot be upheld in complex situations. But influence on systems is still possible, also in complex situations.

Emergent strategic patterns lead to system change (in the form of new political reform, new events, new system capabilities, etc.). Change can come from both new environmental conditions as well as from the inside. This means that a future ESP analysis must involve barriers and drivers that are both external and internal to the formal organization. Actor's internal (mental) models may change during the process of negotiating policy, because cognitive adjustment increases behavioral survivability in a complex and risk-full environment.

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ⁱ With non-linearity there is no consistent relationship between causes and effects (Urry 2005: 238). The numbers of cause-effect relations are so huge, that we cannot make any theoretical suggestion about future effects. So classic causation doesn't work here. A cause may have several effects at different time – and effects may come from a long range of causes at different time in history – some more important than others (Harrison p. 12). Basically this makes complex systems unpredictable. Complex adaptive systems can be, at least temporarily, in equilibrium. But it is never lasting. Stability is always emerging – but it will erode again. Adding to this, the system also contains multiple equilibria – multiple islands of order within a sea of increasing disorder (Urry 2000: 248).

ⁱⁱ March argues that actions in organizations are a trade off between the two logics of action: exploitation and exploration *Exploitation* is actions like routine based behaviour, formal rules, routine and efficiency. *Exploration* is actions like experiments, change, innovation and routine breaking behaviour. (See March 1991).

ⁱⁱⁱ This type of analysis comes close to the CRP-approach, where Stacey focus on ideology, constituted by norms and values. Norms are “obligatory restrictions which have emerged as generalizations and become habitual in a history of social interaction” (Stacey 2006: 6). In other words norms take the form of barriers for emerging strategic patterns. Values are “voluntary compulsions to choose one desire, actions,



or norms rather than another.” They are “opening up opportunities for action” (Stacey 2006: 7). When actors tend to comply with a certain political idea or policy program, they create “cult values” (Stacey 2006: 7). In others words values take the form of drivers for emerging strategic patterns. Here we will not make such a sharp distinction between norms and values. Like institutions as such they can both be drivers and barriers for emerging strategic patterns. See also Klijn (2008: 308) for a comparison between complexity and institutional theory.

^{iv} They are not just public administration models. Both models can also be seen as broad far-reaching emergent strategic patterns in themselves, or in short – *movements* that connect politicians and administrators.