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NPM and beyond – leadership, culture, and demography

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we ask what happens to NPM and post-NPM reform elements when they encounter the realities of the Norwegian civil service. The empirical data used in the analysis are taken mainly from surveys of civil servants in the Norwegian ministries conducted in 1996 and 2006. Main research questions are if the administrative culture has changed over the past decade towards a greater NPM emphasis; to what degree NPM-related reforms have been put into practice; what have been the most significant reform elements; and how to explain the variation in the use of different administrative reform tools? How important is leadership relative to other structural factors and to demographic and cultural features? A general finding is that cultural features make a significant difference, but having a leadership position and task structure also have explanatory power. Generally we face a combination of robustness and amenability to administrative policy reforms.

Introduction.

The reform wave known as New Public Management seems to have peaked in several of the trail-blazing countries. This applies not only to the main administrative policy pursued by governments but also to the recommendations of international organizations like the OECD, the IMF, the World Bank, and the EU (Christensen and Læg Reid 2007). It illustrates how as contexts, constraints, and conditions change, and especially when the effects of a recent reform wave become evident, ideas about reforms are also amended.

A reform wave does not normally completely replace an established administrative policy or traditional features of the political-administrative system. Thus, the main features of “the old public administration” were preserved even after NPM began in some Anglo-American countries in the early 1980s. By the same token, post-NPM reforms – which partly revived some neo-Weberian features - have been blended with some NPM features. This means that analyzing reforms entails examining an increasingly complex “archeology” of reforms, where the balance between reform elements from different generations of reforms and the main structural and cultural features changes gradually from one period to another (Light 1998, Pierson 2004, Streeck and Thelen 2005). The reason for this is that basic path dependencies and historical traditions do not change overnight but are adapted gradually to new situations (see Krasner 1988).

The NPM reforms started earliest in Australia and New Zealand, but the USA, the UK, and Canada also began implementing similar reforms relatively early on, from the mid 1980s (Boston et al. 1996, Campbell and Halligan 1992). What characterized the reforms in these countries, compared to many other Western and non-Western countries, was not only the differences in sequence, but also that reform was profound and comprehensive -- i.e. they were seen by some as radical (Wright 1994). Comparative studies of reforms in different countries reveal that divergences in the sequence and depth of reforms are a product of a combination of environmental features, cultural factors, and instrumental-structural factors (Christensen and Læg Reid 2001a, Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). The front-runners in the NPM movement seem to have experienced greater environmental pressure for reform and to have had a more accommodating culture and more leeway for instrumental reform action on the part of political and administrative leaders. Nevertheless, by the late 1990s NPM was already beginning to stall or be modified in some of these countries (Christensen, Lie and Læg Reid 2007).

In this paper we will focus on the Norwegian case. Norway can be classed as a reluctant reformer, mainly because of a lack of environmental pressure for reform (including a sound economic situation), a non-compatible cultural tradition, and political turbulence caused by a series of minority governments, which has made it difficult to implement NPM reforms (Christensen and Læg Reid 2001b, Olsen and Peters 1996). The reform path pursued was as follows: the first reform programs began in the late 1980s and were characterized by a cautious adoption of certain NPM features, but they consisted more of NPM rhetoric than action. From the mid-1990s the reform strategy changed from talk to action, and Norway embarked on a gradual reform path involving some structural devolution of state-owned companies and agencies and the implementation of a version of a performance-management system called Management by Objectives and Rules (MBOR). At the same time it stayed away from much of the privatization and market measures that had characterized reform elsewhere and adopted competitive tendering only to a limited extent. In other words, Norway has taken NPM on board in a modified and reluctant way (Christensen and Læg Reid 1998b, 2002). The management tools

of the NPM movement have been adapted to a greater extent than the market tools, and privatization has not been a main strategy. This is also the case with some of the biggest later reforms such as the quality reform of universities and the hospital reform. The period 2001–2005 brought a minority Centre-Conservative government to power that was keener on NPM reforms than previous administrations (Christensen and Læg Reid 2006b). In 2005, however, a Red-Green government took over, which tried to modify some of the reform measures of the former cabinet. In particular it showed less enthusiasm for market-oriented reforms and increased structural devolution. The biggest ongoing reform efforts include some post-NPM measures like merging sectors and institutions in the work and welfare administrations (Christensen, Fimreite and Læg Reid 2006).

This sequence of initial reluctance to reform, followed by a period of radical NPM measures in the period 2001-2005 and more recently some modifying post-NPM measures forms the background to this paper. As a late-comer to radical reforms Norway could potentially have pursued two different development paths during the last decade: either retaining some NPM features longer than the reform pioneers, who, having embarked on NPM earlier, are now engaged in modifying and re-balancing NPM; or using its position as a late and moderate reformer to adopt post-NPM measures more easily without going further down the NPM path. If NPM reforms are less entrenched it may be easier to try out post-NPM reforms, particular those elements that are similar to some basic features of the “old public administration.”

Based on a transformative theoretical approach our main research questions are the following:

- a) Has the administrative culture changed over the past decade towards a greater emphasis on efficiency, business management identification, and less rule-orientation, in line with the NPM movement, or are these features losing their appeal, indicating a trend in the direction of post-NPM reforms?
- b) Are NPM-related reforms being put into practice more, in such a way that they are regarded by civil servants as relevant or important?
- c) What have been the most significant reform elements and families of reform and which the less important ones, and what changes have we seen over the past ten years when it comes to reform components in the central civil service?
- d) How can we explain the variation in the use of different administrative reform tools? How important is leadership relative to other structural factors and to demographic and cultural features?

We ask what happens to NPM and post-NPM reform elements when they encounter the realities of the Norwegian civil service and its political-administrative culture and traditions. The empirical data used in the analysis are taken mainly from two surveys of civil servants in the Norwegian ministries conducted in 1996 and 2006 and also partly from similar surveys done in 1976 and 1986.

We will first describe the variety of administrative reforms in different countries and some trends. Second, we will outline a transformative theoretical approach and apply it to the reforms in general and the survey data in particular. Then we will turn to the Norwegian data base and look at stability and change in administrative culture and in administrative reforms. Finally we will analyse the variation in reform tools based on variables derived from the transformative approach. We will sum up the paper by drawing some general conclusions.

Variety and development features.

The larger picture of variety and divergence in administrative reforms shows that countries that adopted NPM early had more accommodating cultures. A good example is the USA, where values like individualism, inequality, rationality, market orientation, and efficiency were highly compatible with the main ideas behind NPM (Christensen and Peters 1999, Hood 1996). The opposite has been the case in the countries characterized as “reluctant reformers,” like the Scandinavian countries and some Continental European countries like Germany and France, where, for example, *Rechtsstaat* values are important and attention to efficiency less pronounced (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004, Pollitt, van Thiel and Homburg 2007).

There were a number of major factors primarily responsible for the emergence of post-NPM reforms in the trail-blazing NPM countries like Australia, Canada, New Zealand and UK in the late 1990s (Gregory 2006, Halligan 2007). First, political executives over the whole political spectrum were reluctant to accept the undermining of their own political control and capacity that NPM had brought about. Structural devolution meant that state-owned companies and agencies had, as a result of changes in the law and in structural arrangements, received more autonomy, thus undermining the instrumental levers of control and depriving political leaders of information and influence while still often assigning them the political blame (Christensen and Lægread 2001b). At the same time, the principle of “single-purpose organizations” had brought about increased differentiation of units, roles, and tasks, leading to fragmentation and increased pressure on coordination capacity at the top.

Another factor was related to the question of efficiency. Overall, the NPM pioneers do not seem to have done better economically than the more reluctant countries. In addition to these macro-economic features, there has been a discussion among scholars about the alleged increase in efficiency of service delivery. Many studies done by economists conclude that there is potential increase in efficiency of 15–20% when public service delivery is subjected to NPM reforms like contracts, competitive tendering, and privatization (Domberger and Jensen 1997, Domberger and Rimmer 1994, Hodge 1999). Some political scientists, on the other hand, think the results are more mixed concerning efficiency effects (Boyne et al. 2003). Of importance for some of the studies done are variations between tasks and policy areas and also the kind of costs involved in the equation. There is a tendency in some of the studies to use a “lean” definition of services -- i.e. to “forget” costs that are now seen as non-commercial and that have to be covered in other ways. These could be regional policy considerations in the postal service (serving the periphery, which is less profitable), costs related to students with special needs in schools (their rights as stated in law), and costs related to emergency functions, long-term chronic diseases or health education in hospitals.

The cost question has also been related to different kinds of side-effects of NPM. These could, for example, be increased pension costs as a result of sacking public employees to make services more efficient, as happened in the communications sectors in many countries. There have also been concerns about increased social inequality as a result of NPM, as seen in New Zealand (Stephens 1996). Out-sourcing is, for example, a double-edged sword. Making savings often means depressing wages and creating less favorable working conditions (United Nations 2005).

The third obvious reason for the post-NPM reforms is the classic question of increased insecurity. Since 9/11 in the USA, fear of terrorism has been a driving force for increased control

and coordination in many countries. This began with the Bush administration resuming control of airport security control, followed by a major reorganization of homeland security, both military and civilian (Hammond 2004, Kettl 2004). Similar measures have been adopted in Australia and the UK. Added to this are the centralizing and coordinative efforts made internationally and nationally as a result of the threats posed by tsunamis and pandemics like SARS and bird flu (Christensen and Painter 2004). The emerging post-NPM reforms, such as “whole-of-government” in Australia and “joined-up government” in the UK, are concerned with increasing central control and capacity and have introduced a number of measures designed to enhance coordination between levels, sectors, and institutions (Christensen and Lægreid 2006a, Halligan 2007, Richards and Smith 2006).

Comparative reform studies focusing on leadership show quite clearly that leadership is crucial in a number of ways. Pushing through reform measures is an important job for political and administrative leaders, a task that demands attention and resources. And modern reforms like NPM often affect top leaders in substantial ways, leading to new actions. But reforms are not only about hierarchical structural leadership, but are also related to how the cultural part of leadership works. What kind of cultural norms and values do they further, and what effects do they have on the norms and values of civil servants? Cultural leadership is also about being culturally sensitive towards reforms.

A transformative approach

According to a transformative approach, reform efforts – reform processes and reform effects – can be understood in terms of a combination of environmental factors, structural-instrumental factors, and cultural traditions and features (Christensen and Lægreid 2001a). First, *environmental pressure* on a country, a political-administrative system or single public institutions can be of two types: either *technical* or *institutional* (Meyer and Rowan 1977). The technical environment consists of actors and organizations that the reformer is relatively dependent on for resources and legitimacy, and reforms may have coercive elements, such as when EU directives mandate reforms in the communications sectors of individual states, a government decides to implement mandatory reforms in the ministries or subordinate agencies, or a ministry of research and education urges reform in universities. The institutional environment has more to do with taken-for-grantedness and ideological and normative pressure. In certain time periods certain reforms or reform elements are seen as particular appropriate, and they spread and are imitated rather quickly from international organizations to countries, among countries, or between different types of public organizations, producing similar structures, planning systems, procedures, service systems, etc (Czarniawska and Sevón 1996, Sahlin-Anderson 2001). According to the theory, these similarities in reform elements, labeled *isomorphy*, can be seen as a spreading of myths, symbols, fads or fashions to help secure legitimacy, and these myths will primarily work as “window-dressing” and not have instrumental effects.

This environmental perspective can be used to explain some of the variety in NPM- style reforms. Australia, and in particular New Zealand, had economic problems in the late 1970s and early 1980s related to international trade, and NPM was seen as an adequate answer to some of these problems. Deterministic pressure of this kind was also related to the role of international organizations, such as the OECD, in which some of the main Anglo-American countries play a central role and are thus able to exert “ideological” pressure on various member countries for

reform (Self 2000). It was taken for granted that some NPM features, like devolution, less ambiguous roles, market principles, contracting, privatization, consumer orientation, etc., would increase government efficiency, particularly in service provision.

Another main explanation for why NPM reforms have been adopted and implemented in a variety of ways is a *structural-instrumental* one (Egeberg 2003, Hood 1996, Olsen 1992). Some Continental European countries have strong constitutional constraints that impede reforms, while this is much less the case in, for example, Anglo-Saxon countries. The latter countries also have “elective dictatorship,” meaning that their party and parliamentary systems tend to yield strong, one-party governments, which makes it much easier to implement reforms, often of an entrepreneurial type, than in the Scandinavian and many Continental European countries, where there are longer traditions of coalition governments, often in minority positions (Gregory 2001).

A third group of explanations focuses on *cultural factors*. Cultural traditions and path-dependency are very often important for filtering reform efforts (Krasner 1988, Selznick 1957). Different countries and different political-administrative institutions within them have developed along different paths determined by the context in which they were established and their historical roots. This has led them to evolve a distinct culture through a gradual adaptation to external and internal pressure. When reforms come along, the question of compatibility between a country’s cultural traditions and the content of a given set of reforms will be crucial. Reforms that are culturally deviant will easily be bounced back or changed, while culturally compatible reforms will quickly be implemented.

The transformative approach offers several ways of explaining the post-NPM measures taken (Christensen and Lægveid 2006a). The increasing environmental threat, whether international or national, is driving efforts to restructure central political-administrative apparatuses in the direction of more centralization and control of state-owned companies and agencies and to bring about more cross-sectoral coordination. Myths in the environment connected to these threats also contribute to modifying or undermining NPM features. Cultural factors are also more evident in post-NPM reforms. These include efforts to create a more “holistic” culture, where the development of a common culture and collaborative cultures is being emphasized as a counterweight to NPM-inspired fragmentation and “egoistic” and narrow-minded administrative units. This can be seen in Australia, for example, where efforts are being made to further what is labeled “value-based management” (Shergold 2004).

Taking a transformative approach as a point of departure, we will in the empirical analyses of the Norwegian case apply three sets of organizational or institutional features to analyze the variation in the importance of different administrative reform tools. We start by discussing the importance of *structural features*, such as position and tasks. Our general assumption is that civil servants in leadership positions will generally see administrative reform tools as more important in their own field of work than people without leadership responsibilities. Reform efforts are primarily attended to by people in leadership positions, are primarily meant to attend to or responsible for handling reform efforts. Added to this we would expect people with staff functions as their main task to generally see administrative reform tools as more important than people with other main tasks. Their job is very much a “meta-job,” attending to the organization and development of the institution. Conversely, we would expect civil servants working on more operational issues, such as single cases and preparing laws and regulations, to have a more remote relationship to various administrative reform tools, because they see reforms as less relevant to their daily work.

Second, we would expect *administrative culture* and context to make a difference. Administrative reform tools have to pass a compatibility test to be adopted by ministries (Brunsson and Olsen 1993). People working in an administrative culture more in line with the content of the reform tools will be more supportive of and positively disposed to the reforms than those with a more traditional culture. A main feature of modern administrative reforms is their primary focus on efficiency and their tendency to draw inspiration from private-sector management. Our general expectation, then, is that civil servants with a strong identification with renewal values in general and efficiency values in particular will be more accepting of modern reform initiatives than those who are more skeptical or indifferent to renewal and to efficiency. Added to this we would also expect civil servants who identify with the role of business manager to be more exposed to the new administrative reforms than employees without such identification. It is also interesting to see the relative importance of cultural norms and values compared to formal structural position, because one may expect some interaction effects here.

Third, we need to be sensitive to the variety of *demographic variables*. We treat them as a separate category because they can be seen as having both structural and cultural features (Christensen and Læg Reid 1998a). Leaders can, for example, decide to recruit and/or sack people on the basis of their educational background, and as such demography may be structurally related. But demography may also be seen as a cultural feature. In that respect demographic traits may be seen as external features that employees bring with them into the ministries. These can be early socialization represented by gender and age, later socialization determined by education and profession, and late socialization related to work experience, career plans and professional development (Læg Reid and Olsen 1978). Our general expectation is that modern administrative reform tools will be more important for civil servants whose demographic profile is different to the dominant one in the bureaucracy in which they work. Since many of the reform tools are imported from the private sector we would also expect people with work experience in the private sector to attach more significance to the new reforms. Thus we would expect women, young civil servants, people trained in social science, and people with a short tenure whose career has been in the private sector to have been more exposed to modern administrative reforms than older men trained in law, with a long tenure and a career within the public sector.

Data sources

Our method of studying reforms is based on three main elements (Christensen and Læg Reid 1999). First, we focus on the response of individual civil servants. Reforms are more than what leaders say and more than formal decisions. Reforms are a long and often winding road that ultimately depends on how individual executives at the local level think and respond to them (Brower and Abolafia 1997).

Second, we choose an extensive method to cover a lot of ground. We constructed a large survey for all civil servants from executive officers to top civil servants in Norwegian ministries conducted in 2006 (1848 respondents). In addition to this survey, we also use data from a similar survey of the ministries containing some of the same questions conducted in 1996 (1425 respondents).¹ The response rate in 2006 was 67 percent compared to 72 percent in 1996. This longitudinal approach makes it possible for us to examine developments over the past 10 years.

¹ For some of the cultural features we have data from similar surveys done in 1986 and 1976.

Third, we take a broad empirical approach to the NPM reforms and possible post-NPM reforms, starting with the reaction to different reform elements and measurements. We then look at how they are clustered and focus on the variety in the use of different families of reform. We asked the executives the following question: “In connection with the governmental modernization and renewal program a number of new reforms and measures have been launched. How much significance do the following reforms/measures/tools have in your own field of work?” We then listed 26 different reform elements that had been introduced in the civil service since the modernization and renewal programs began in 1987. For each of these reform measures, we asked the civil servants to state whether it was relevant and to rank its significance from 1 (*very high significance*) to 5 (*very low significance*).

In addition we also used questions to trace the profile and changes in administrative culture. First, we asked civil servants how much significance they attached to different matters when executing their daily tasks. In 2006 we listed ten different considerations (renewal, efficiency, professional values, political loyalty, loyalty to superior manager, transparency, signals for users and clients, signals from civil service unions, and *Rechtstaat* values) and asked them to rank each of them on a scale from 1 (*very important*) to 5 (*not important at all*). Second, we asked if there were clear rules or a well established practice for executing their own work tasks and to rank these on a scale from 1 (*very clear rules*) to 5 (*a very large amount of discretion*). Third, we listed some occupational roles (such as judge, negotiator, business manager, and researcher) and asked in each case whether they had something in common with the civil servant’s current position and role.

We will now first describe the profile and changes in administrative culture; second, present the administrative reform tools as perceived by the civil servants in 2006 and show how they have changed over the past decade; and third, analyze how we might explain the variation in the repertoire of tools, according to structural, demographic, and cultural features.

Cultural features: Role consideration and identification.

One way to examine the dynamics between NPM and post-NPM reform elements is to look at the role considerations and identification of civil servants. We will first describe some of these as cultural variables and look at how they have developed, and then use the data from the 2006 survey as independent variables to compare their explanatory power relative to structural and demographic variables. The NPM movement has a strong focus on efficiency values, identification with business managers, and moving away from a rule-oriented culture. In line with the time-frame in which the NPM movement emerged, reached its peak, and then began to give way to post-NPM trends we would thus expect adherence to these values to have increased from the 1970s and the 1980s to the mid-1990s and to have decreased again by 2006. By the same token we would expect the administrative culture in Norway, which showed a reluctance to reform and was able to resist the new reform trends, to exhibit a considerable degree of stability and robustness with respect to these values, with more traditional cultural role elements dominating.

Our data make it possible to examine the administrative culture in three different ways by focusing on how the roles of civil servants have changed relative to reform trends. First, we look at how much weight they attach to various considerations in their daily work; second, how they identify with different occupational roles; and third, how much their daily work is constrained by rules and regulations.

Role orientation. First, we describe the relative importance of various considerations for civil servants in their daily work -- i.e. we examine how different elements and decision premises are balanced in their role enactment. Table 1 shows clearly that importance is attached primarily to three types of classical bureaucratic elements: political loyalty, expressed through political signals; administrative hierarchical concerns, shown through loyalty towards the nearest superior leader; and also knowledge-based and professional considerations, and considerations connected to *Rechtstaat* values. The relative importance of these main considerations has remained high and stable over the last decade, and the same situation was observable 20 years ago for those considerations we have data for. This might suggest, as Olsen (2006) argues, that it is time to rediscover bureaucracy in a era dominated by NPM reform rhetoric. Such role orientation is considerably more important than concerns connected to NPM, like cost-efficiency/productivity and renewal/reform. An interesting observation is that signals from user groups, clients and particular affected parties, transparency, information to the public, and attending to public opinion increased in importance from 1996 to 2006, indicating neo-Weberian elements of citizen participation, legitimization, and transparency of the Nordic reform trajectory (Pollitt 2007).

There are different ways to interpret the results in Table 1. In an analysis of the considerations in 1996, including the agencies, we distinguished between loyalist, modernist, and professionalist orientations (Christensen and Lægneid 1998a: 62-64). The loyalist profile consists of signals from the political leadership, attending to information and transparency, and attending to public opinion. In 2006, this profile seemed to be the one that had been strengthened the most, particularly concerning the last two elements. The modernist profile consisted of measures such as cost-efficiency/productivity, renewal and reform, and attending to clients/users/affected parties. This profile also seems to have become stronger in 2006, partly because of the service element, but not as much as the loyalist one. As in 1996 and 1986, the professionalism profile had the highest score in 2006.

Table 1. Strong or very strong importance attributed to different role considerations among civil servants in Norwegian ministries. 1986, 1996 and 2006. Percent.

Role considerations	1986	1996	2006	Change 1996-2006
Knowledge-based and professional considerations	89	91	95	+4
Appropriate case-work and rule of law	-	90	88	-2
Signals from political leadership	88	89	89	0
Loyalty towards nearest superior leader	-	84	89	+5
Cost-efficiency, productivity	-	59	62	+3
Renewal and reform orientation	-	59	60	+1
Signals from user groups, clients, particularly affected parties	65	58	67	+9
Information to the public, transparency	-	51	64	+13
Attending to public opinion	-	30	42	+12
Signals from public employees' unions	29	17	23	+6
Considerations to independent control- and scrutiny	-	-	-	-

bodies, ombudsmen			52	
Considerations to societal consequences, results and effects	-	-	81	-

Another way to look at the main results is to say that even though the traditional judicial, political, and hierarchical considerations are still the most important in the roles of civil servants, the relative importance of societal groups, representativeness, and transparency was stronger in 2006 than 1996. So, as seen from these comparative data, the traditional considerations of a Weberian type have remained most important through the period of NPM reforms. The “softer” NPM features seem to have increased in importance, but not the “harder” ones. The main picture is one of robustness. Efficiency has not overtaken or replaced the other traditional public administration values. And while efficiency is important, political loyalty, professional values, and *Rechtstaat* values are much more important. Furthermore, the strength of the efficiency value has not decreased over the past 10 years, indicating that there is no strong post-NPM trend reducing the importance of the efficiency value.²

In 2006 we added two questions to the survey to reflect new developments. The first of these was related to deregulation and re-regulation and was intended to reflect the fact that structural devolution is inevitably followed by more attention to the control and scrutiny of independent bodies like the Office of the Auditor General, the different regulatory agencies, and the ombudsmen in different fields (Christensen and Lægveid 2006c). 52% of civil servants see this consideration as important, putting it in an intermediate position. The other new measure is consideration of societal consequences, results and effects, which scores as high as 81%. One main interpretation of this variable is that it shows some post-NPM features, where more holistic and societal considerations have regained importance. Another interpretation, which could be connected to the first one, might be that this measure ties in with the increased focus on outcomes, rather than just output, which is seen by some as an elaboration of NPM, but by others as a typical post-NPM measure (Christensen, Lie and Lægveid 2007).

Role identification. Another way to analyze cultural changes is to delve into the question of professional or occupational roles. Table 2 shows what parallels civil servants draw between their own position and role and various more general professional and occupational roles. The role seen as most similar is the broker and mediator role, and this role also scores higher in 2006 than 1996. Such a role may be interpreted as a reflection of

Table 2. Similarity between own position and different professional roles. 1976, 1986, 1996 and 2006. Percentage.

Professional role	1976	1986	1996	2006	Change 1996-2006
Broker/mediator	53	68	61	66	+5
Researcher	39	40	49	50	+1
Business manager	35	38	39	34	-5
Judge	37	33	35	25	-10

² There is a significant positive correlation between having being in a position of leadership and a renewal orientation (.13) and efficiency orientation (.19) (Pearson’s R)

(N average)	(776)	1176	(1355)	(1593)	
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heterogeneity in the civil service but is probably also related to the increasing coordinative efforts that are going on inspired by post-NPM reforms. It is now back on the level where it was in 1986, before the NPM movement started in Norway. The role seen as second most similar is that of researcher, and this perception has remained stable over the last decade. It probably primarily reflects the increasing importance of the rational calculative or analytical features of the civil service, connected to “meta-tasks” like preparation decisions and drafting of laws and rules, planning, policy development, evaluation, etc. In a long-term perspective there has been an increase in this role identification, partly due to the increase in the civil service over the past 20 years of social scientists in general and political scientists especially.³ It also may reflect the increased focus on evidence-based policy making.

The role of business manager scores significantly lower than that of negotiator and researcher and also scores somewhat lower in 2006 than in 1996; it is now on the same level as 30 years ago. The main picture is a surprisingly stable level of identification with the role of business manager, in spite of the NPM movement. It thus indicates the robustness of administrative culture and the problem of introducing reform ideas and programs into such a culture. Among people in leadership positions the identification with the role of business manager is strong, however.⁴ If anything the 2006 scores indicate an overall weakening of NPM features related to private-sector management.

The role of judge is ranked as the occupational role with the lowest identification among civil servants. It is also the role that has decreased the most over the last decade. That is somewhat surprising, since Norway’s adaptation to EU is said to imply an increasing emphasis on judicial processes in the civil service (Olsen 2007). It is probably connected to the long-term reduction in the number of Norwegian civil servants trained in law.⁵ Overall, the results in Table 2 seem to confirm the picture of stability and robustness in the administrative culture, in spite of the increasing NPM rhetoric in administrative reform programs. What we see is slightly more post-NPM features.

Rules and discretion. The last cultural variable shown is the question of whether the daily work of civil servants is governed by unambiguous rules and established practice or whether discretionary behavior is more typical. One of the main aims of the NPM movement was to change the administrative culture from a rule-based bureaucratic mode towards a more performance- and result-oriented mode with greater discretion for managers and civil servants in general (Christensen and Læg Reid 2001b). With the post-NPM reforms, one expectation might be that increased central control and coordination would engender the reintroduction of stricter rules and less managerial freedom, in contrast to the managerial discretion orientation of NPM.

Table 3. Rules/established practice or discretion in the task enactment of civil servants. 1976, 1986, 1996 and 2006. Percentage.

³ The percentage of social scientists in Norwegian ministries increased from 4% in 1976, to 13% in 1986, 18% in 1996 and 24% in 2006.

⁴ 79% of civil servants in leadership positions report identification with the role of business manager. The corresponding percentage for non-leaders is 22.

⁵ The percentage of lawyers in Norwegian ministries decreased from 38% in 1976, to 27% in 1986, and 22% in 1996 and 2006.

Rules/established practice or discretion	1976	1986	1996	2006	Change 1996-2006
Very unambiguous rules	6	7	8	9	+1
Unambiguous rules	28	24	28	31	+3
Both/and	33	34	34	31	-3
Large degree of discretion/leeway	24	20	22	20	-2
Very large degree of discretion/leeway	9	14	8	9	+1
(N average)	(776)	(1176)	(1464)	(1854)	

Table 3 shows primarily a great deal of stability in this respect. First, there is no significant increase in managerial discretion and leeway nor a reduction in rule-based administration from the 1970s and 1980s to the 1990s, in spite of the NPM movement and its focus on cultural change of this kind. More autonomy seems to be followed by more rules and regulation, and deregulation and re-regulation seem to go in tandem (Christensen and Lægveid 2006c). And leaders are not less rule-oriented than non-leaders. Second, there is no significant change from 1996 to 2006 in the balance between rule-orientation and managerial autonomy, indicating that there has been no major shift in a post-NPM direction, mainly because the NPM movement had such a weak general impact on rule-orientation in the first place in the mid-1990s. The general picture is that civil servants can be divided into three relatively stable groups of fairly equal size: 1/3 rule-oriented, 1/3 having managerial autonomy, and 1/3 in the middle. In a long-term perspective there is a slight trend towards increased rule orientation, in contrast to what would be expected from the NPM movement.

Summing up, we have revealed a rather stable and robust administrative culture. The change in administrative culture is much smaller than one would have expected given that administrative reform programs have become more and more NPM-oriented over the past 10 years. Neither is there a clear change towards a post-NPM culture in 2006. We do not see an NPM-oriented culture replacing the old traditional administrative culture. Rather, the NPM features have supplemented the established culture and we see a mixture of old and new cultural features.

NPM and post-NPM reform tools in the civil service

We now turn to the administrative reform elements. First, we describe the scope and importance of the different reform tools and how the profile may have changed over the last 10 years. Second, we analyze the relationship between the reform tools. We identify four families of reform tools and examine to what degree they are alternative or supplementary tools. Third, we analyze and try to explain the variation in the importance of different tools using structural, demographic, and cultural explanatory factors.

Reform elements during the last decade.

Table 4 shows the experience civil servants in Norwegian ministries have had with different elements of New Public Management reforms. The reform elements can be divided into a small number of different groups: elements connected to Management by Objectives and Results (MBOR); organizational elements of structural devolution, including internal and external decentralization; culturally oriented elements; and market-oriented tools.

Table 4. Attribution of strong or very strong importance or relevance to various reform elements by civil servants in Norwegian ministries in 1996 and 2006. Percent.

Type of reform element	1996	2006	Change
Performance steering	45	37	-8
Goal definition and operationalization	44	36	-8
Performance reporting and evaluation	43	33	-10
Yearly operational planning	40	34	-6
Steering system for subordinate agencies	36	41	+5
Development dialogue, leadership training and competence development	35	34	-1
Quality management system	31	30	-1
Delegation of tasks and responsibility to the regional and local level	28	24	-4
Increased flexibility and autonomy in budgeting	26	18	-8
Change in form of affiliation to subordinate institutions	26	30	+4
Rule simplification and deregulation	21	23	+2
Increased flexibility and autonomy in questions of wages and personnel	16	15	-1
Increased user participation	12	16	+4
Contract systems	7	9	+2
Transferring tasks to private companies and non-profit organizations	5	6	+1
Internal markets and internal pricing	3	6	+3
(N average)	(1426)	(1635)	

The results from 1996 show that Norway was a reluctant reformer in two ways. First, none of the reform elements score higher than 45 per cent on having strong importance and relevance, meaning that some main Weberian elements still seemed to be strong. Second, if we compare the different groups of reform elements, the MBOR group scored highest. That tells us that the less radical elements seem to be strongest. MBOR was made mandatory for all government organizations in 1990 and has been mostly welcomed by the administrative leadership. It has not met with much cultural resistance among the ordinary civil servants, even though it has been criticized for being too bureaucratic (Christensen and Lægveid 1998a).

Leadership and competence development and development dialogue, as a cultural feature, also score relatively high, but this cannot be said of another cultural element, user participation, perhaps because this is on a high hierarchical level in the administrative system. The group of elements connected to structural devolution score on average much lower than the MBOR group, reflecting very much a reluctance to take on board radical elements of NPM before 1996. It is also internally differentiated, whereby one difference in particular is interesting, namely that transferring tasks to a lower level is seen as much more acceptable than transferring them to the private sector. The reluctant reformer profile is rounded off by a low score (the lowest score, in fact) for the most radical reform elements --contracts and internal markets/pricing.

When we compare the profile in 2006 with the one in 1996, it is obvious that the Norwegian ministries have not gone further down the NPM path over the past decade. This may seem rather surprising given that the government in power from 2001 to 2005 had a pretty radical neo-liberal reform program. Table 4, however, shows stability in the relationship between the importance and relevance of the different groups of reform elements. But there are also some evident changes, primarily the attribution of a decreasing degree of importance to various MBOR elements. The explanation for this could be twofold: MBOR started out in the early 1990s as a detailed and technical system that demanded a lot of resources, but since then has gradually come to be used in a more general and flexible way (Læg Reid, Roness and Rubecksen 2006a) and may have been blended with new reform elements to become a more integrated part of the daily work. This may have modified the importance of specific MBOR features as experienced by the civil servants, something that we will discuss below. We also see a decrease in the importance attributed to flexibility and autonomy in budgeting, which can be seen as a post-NPM trend implying increased centralization in the allocation of financial resources.

There are some reform elements that have increased in importance during the last decade, but not much. Steering systems for subordinate agencies, which are an MBOR tool for regulating the relationship between ministries and agencies, are, for instance, seen as somewhat more important in 2006. Another is change in the organizational form of subordinate institutions, meaning primarily increased autonomy for state-owned companies and some regulatory agencies. A third is increased user participation, but the relevance of this reform element is still rather weak.

During the last decade some new reform elements have emerged, which we could see as new instruments for the leadership, but also as new fads and fashions (Læg Reid, Roness and Rubecksen 2006b). Some of these elements are typically connected to post-NPM reforms, particularly the cultural ones, while others represent an intensification of NPM. Table 5 shows that reform elements connected to post-NPM generally score higher than reform elements that are outgrowths of NPM reform elements. But there is differentiation within the two groups. Typical culturally-oriented elements of post-NPM like knowledge-based management and ethical guidelines score the highest, and a structural element like team-based management, meaning a more varied set of tasks and cases for civil servants, is also becoming increasingly important in the ministries. But other cultural elements like

value-based management and service charters score lower.⁶ Among the NPM elements, the old principle of “single-purpose organizations” and increased differentiation seems to be rather important, and it is an element that has been discussed quite a lot, particularly whether ownership and regulatory functions should be in the same ministry. But balanced scorecard and benchmarking, other refinements of MBOR, score relatively low.

Table 5. New reform measures as seen by civil servants in ministries in 2006, and their overall ranking among 26 reform elements. Percent.

⁶ Service Charter was introduced as a mandatory tool for governmental organizations from 2001, but it has obviously not been implemented to a great extent in the ministries. In addition to the 11% who report that this tool has great importance in their own field of work, 21% say it has some importance, 21% report little importance, and 48% say that Service Charter is of very little importance and is either not used or not relevant.

New reform elements	Percentage	Overall ranking in 2006
Knowledge-based management	32	7
Ethical guidelines	32	7
More unambiguous distinction between roles, horizontal differentiation, purchaser/provider systems	22	13
Team-based management	22	13
Balanced scorecard	16	15
Increased autonomy of regulatory agencies	16	15
Value-based management	15	18
Benchmarking	12	20
Service charters	11	21

If we compare the significance of the reform elements added during the last decade, it seems that only the two cultural post-NPM elements of knowledge-based management and ethical guidelines are attributed a similar degree of importance as MBOR elements and also the cultural component of leadership and competence development/development dialogue.

Summing up, there is a lot of stability in the relevance attributed to the same reform elements between 1996 and 2006. The Norwegian ministries are not moving more in the direction of stronger NPM features, but instead are slowly adopting some of the cultural elements of the post-NPM reforms. This also shows another main feature of Norway as a reluctant NPM reformer -- namely, that the Norwegian ministries have slowly changed their path without ever reaching the extremes of NPM.

Families of reform

On average, the respondents report that five of the 26 listed reform tools are of great or very great importance in their own field of work. 25 percent are not exposed to a great extent to any reform, 24 percent report one to two reforms, 31 percent report three to nine reforms, and 16 percent think that ten reform initiatives or more are very important in their own field of work. Thus there is a great variety in the extent to which civil servants in the ministries are exposed to administrative reform elements.

A factor analysis reveals that the reform tools can be grouped into four clusters or families of tools (Table 6). The first category consists of steering systems for subordinate agencies, including letter of allocation; increased flexibility in budget matters; formulation and concretization of goals and objectives; evaluation, performance measurement, and new control and reporting systems; performance steering; quality assessment and control systems; and yearly activity and operational planning. All these tools can be labeled performance management systems or *Management-by-objectives-and-resulst* (MBOR), which is the Norwegian term. This is the main component in the Norwegian way of adopting NPM features and it has gradually been developed since 1990. For the rest of the analysis we use an additive index for the use of MBOR tools, ranging from 0 to 4.⁷ 43 percent report that they do not see any of the seven listed

⁷ The index is constructed by counting occurrences of respondents reporting that they use the 7 tools included in category 1 in the factor analyses, all with a factor score of .51 or higher. There are relatively high inter-correlations between the tools in this category, ranging from .42 to .84 (Pearson R).

performance management tools as having great importance in their daily work, 22 percent see one or two tools as being of great importance, and 35 percent report three or more tools.

Table 6. Different families of reform tools. 2006. Factor analyses. Rotated Component Matrix. Principal component analyses. Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization. N=1874

	Component			
	MBOR	Cultural managerial tools	Structural Devolution	Market tools
Change in form of affiliation	.31	.00	.61	19.
Delegation of tasks to lower levels	.21	.03	.76	.08
Privatization	.09	.11	.66	.32
Public-private partnerships	.12	.17	.65	.27
User participation	.14	.36	.62	.19
Deregulation, rule simplification	.12	.34	.67	.00
Pay and personnel flexibility/autonomy	.15	.44	.40	.17
Steering systems for subordinate agencies	.58	.04	.46	.15
Development dialogue, leadership training	.40	.58	.18	.04
Budgeting flexibility/autonomy	.51	.22	.22	.36
Goal formulation and operationalization	.79	.29	.16	.15
Performance reporting, evaluation	.82	.26	.18	.18
Performance steering	.82	.31	.18	.16
Quality management systems	.66	.34	.21	.15
Internal markets, internal pricing	.08	.17	.23	.77
Contract systems	.17	.20	.19	.74
Yearly operational planning	.58	.44	.16	.18
Balanced scorecard	.47	.41	.17	.38
Value-based management	.23	.71	.14	.26
Ethical guidelines	.29	.67	.15	.13
Service charter	.13	.57	.23	.33
Team-based management	.22	.72	.08	.20
Knowledge-based management	.21	.78	.07	.09
Benchmarking	.26	.42	.12	.57
Purchaser/provider systems	.26	.18	.22	.68
More autonomous regulatory agencies	.31	.07	.45	.47

The second category consists of mostly culturally-oriented management development tools, development dialogue, and competence development tools; value-based management; ethical guidelines; service declarations; team-based management; and knowledge-based management. We label this category *cultural managerial tools* and it consists of softer managerial tools focusing more on norms, ethical issues, and leadership. This family of tools represents post-NPM measures that are more occupied with ethical issues and soft normative values related to leadership than to the harder measures of efficiency and performance. For the

rest of the analysis we also use an additive index for cultural managerial tools, ranging from 0 to 6.⁸ 49 percent of the respondents report that they do not see any of the six managerial tools used as important in their own field of work, 30 percent see 1-2 tools as important, and 21 percent cite three or more tools.

The third category consists of change in form of affiliation for subordinate agencies; delegation of tasks and responsibility to the regional and local level; delegation of tasks to private companies or organizations in civil society; public-private-partnerships; increased user participation and user surveys; and deregulation. Structural devolution, privatization, and empowerment of users and consumers are central components in this family of tools. They all focus on change in the external formal structure of public-sector organizations and imply a transfer of responsibility and tasks away from central government. In addition to MBOR, such tools have been central features of the Norwegian way of adopting NPM, especially from the mid-1990s. We label this family of tools *structural devolution*. For the rest of this analysis we also use an additive index for these tools, ranging from 0 to 6.⁹ 50 percent of the respondents report that they do not see any of the six tools as very significant in their own field of work, 36 percent report two tools as being of great importance, and 13 percent report three or more tools.

The last category in the factor analysis contains four tools: internal markets and internal pricing; contract arrangements; benchmarking; and role purification between owner, purchaser and provider. These tools all have to do with marketization and we label them *market tools*. They were for a long time rather absent from the Norwegian version of NPM, especially in the central administration, but received more attraction under the Bondevik II government (2001–2005). For the rest of the analyses we apply an additive index for these tools ranging from 0 to 4.¹⁰ 73 percent do not see any of the four market tools as having great importance in their field of work, 24 report one or two tools, and only three percent three tools or more.

The biggest family of tools is the MBOR measures. 57 percent of the civil servants report that one or more of these tools is important in their own field of work. In contrast only 27 percent cite one or more market-related tool. The cultural-managerial and structural devolution tools are closer to the MBOR tools than to the market tools in importance. These four different families of administrative reform tools are more complementary than alternative or competing. The inter-correlations between the indexes of MBOR tools, cultural-managerial tools, structural devolution, and market tools are all positively significant, ranging from .36 to .56 (Pearson R). The main picture is that if employees are exposed to one family of tools they also tend to be exposed to the other tools.

In this section we have accounted for variations in scope, intensity, and over time in which different tools are seen as having great importance for civil servants in their own fields of work. We have also revealed different families of tools with overlapping relations. . In the next section we will examine variations among the civil servants in the total number of tools seen as important as well as in the importance of the four different families of tools.

⁸ This index is constructed by counting occurrences of respondents reporting that they use the six tools included in category 3, and with a factor score of .57 or higher. The inter-correlations between these tools are all significant on the .01 level and range from .38 to .70.

⁹ The index is constructed by counting the employees reporting that they use the six tools included in category 3, all with a factor score of .62 or higher. The inter-correlations between those tools range from .35 to .60 (Pearson R).

¹⁰ The index is constructed by counting the employees reporting that they use the four tools included in category 4, all with a factor score of .57 or higher. The inter-correlations between those tools range from .46 to .65 (Pearson R).

Variation in reform measures.

This section focuses on how the scores on the different independent variables, i.e. our indicators of structural, cultural, and demographic features, correlate with the importance attributed to different reform tools. We first examine the bivariate relations between each set of independent and dependent variables.

Bivariate analyses

Structural features: Leaders tend to be more exposed to administrative reforms than non-leaders (Table 7), which is natural given that they have a special obligation to deal with reforms and administrative policy. For all four families of reform tools as well as for a number of tools reported as important in their own field of work leaders evaluate reforms as more significant than non-leaders do. But even civil servants who do not occupy leadership positions report that the various reforms tools affect their daily work to a great extent. For example, 66 percent of people in leadership positions report that at least one managerial tool is important compared to 47 percent among non-leaders. The corresponding percentages for market-related reforms are 40 and 24.

Table 7 also reveals that tasks have an impact on the scope and content of the reforms. The only exception is structural reforms. Civil servants with staff tasks such as personnel, organizational development, budgeting, controlling, accounting, and reporting say that various reform tools are more important in their daily work. When it comes to MBOR, managerial reforms, market reforms, and number of reforms there is a significant difference between people with staff tasks as a main work field and other civil servants. On the opposite side are civil servants working mainly on single cases or preparation of laws and regulations. They are significantly less exposed to the different administrative reforms. There is less difference for people working mainly on coordination issues, but they generally see managerial reforms as more important in their own field of work than other civil servants.

Demographic features. One interesting finding is that age seems to be generally more important than gender when it comes to administrative reforms. Generally, older civil servants attribute more significance to all families of reforms and report a greater number of reforms. This is related to tenure. Civil servants with long tenure see more reforms and especially MBOR and managerial reforms. The only significant effect of gender is that men report that market reforms are more important in their own field of work than women do. When it comes to education the profiles of jurists and social scientists are quite opposite. While the social scientists report high values for MBOR and managerial reforms as well as the number of reforms, the opposite is the case for jurists. The jurists also score low on attributing importance to market reforms. The differences between economists and other professions are less marked, but they are less exposed to cultural-managerial reform tools and structural reforms than non-economists.

When it comes to job experience in private firms, job offers from the private sector or plans to leave to join the private sector there is no strong or clear pattern. Somewhat surprisingly, job experience in private firms does not affect exposure to reform tools in any positive way. On the contrary, people with private firm experience and with plans to join the private sector report fewer reform tools in general and cite MBOR particularly infrequently. Plans to leave to join the private sector are also negatively correlated with managerial reforms. Civil servants with job

offers from the private sector are, however, more exposed to market reform tools than people without such offers.

Table 7. Bivariate correlations between independent and dependent variables. 2006. Pearson's R. N=1874.

	MBOR	Cultural Managerial tools	Structural devolution	Market tools	Number of reforms
<i>Structure:</i>					
Leaders	.17**	.23**	.06*	.13**	.19**
<i>Tasks:</i>					
Coordination	.03	.07**	-.01	.05	.04
Law preparation/single cases	-.14**	-.10**	.00	-.14**	-.13**
Staff-related	.14**	.10**	.00	.09**	.12**
<i>Demography:</i>					
Gender	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.10**	-.04
Age	.09**	.14**	.06*	.06*	.12**
<i>Education:</i>					
Jurist	-.09**	-.06*	.01	-.11**	-.08**
Economist	.02	-.07**	-.06*	.04	-.03
Social scientist	.08**	.08**	.03	.04	.09**
Tenure	.07*	.08**	.02	.01	.07*
Job experience from private firms	-.09**	-.03	-.03	.01	-.07*
Job offers from private sector	-.05	.02	.03	.08**	.00
Exit plans to private sector	-.05*	-.05*	-.03	-.03	-.06*
<i>Culture:</i>					
Renewal-orientation	.18**	.23**	.13**	.20**	.24**
Efficiency-orientation	.17**	.12**	.07**	.17**	.18**
Identification with business manager	.21**	.26**	.12**	.18**	.26**
Rule-oriented	.02	.04	-.03	-.05**	.00

** : Significant at the .01 level; * : Significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Leaders: 0) no, 1) yes; Coordination: 0) no, 1) yes; Law preparation/single cases: 0) no, 1) yes; Staff: 0) no, 1) yes; Gender: 0) man 1) woman; Age: 1) under 24, 2) 25-29, 3) 30-34, 4) 35-39, 5) 40-44, 6) 45-49, 7) 50-59, 8) 60-64, 9) 65 and older; Jurist: 0) no, 1) yes; Economist: 0) no, 1) yes; Social scientist: 0) no, 1) yes; Tenure: 0) less than 5 years; 1) 5 years or more; Job experience private sector: 0) no, 1) yes; Job offers private sector: 0) no, 1) yes; Exit plans private sector: 0) no, 1) yes; Renewal-oriented: 0) no, 1) yes; Efficiency oriented: 0) no, 1) yes; Identification with judge: 0) no, 1) yes; Identification with business manager: 0) no, 1) yes. Rule-oriented: 0) no; 1) yes

Cultural features. There is a strong positive correlation between renewal-orientation and efficiency-orientation and reporting of all families of reform tools as well as the number of tools. Civil servants who report that they pay great attention to renewal or to efficiency in their daily work score high on all kinds of reform tools. The same is the case for civil servants who report that there is a strong overlap between their own position and the role of business manager. If civil servants are embedded in a modernization culture with strong identification with renewal values, efficiency, and the role of business manager they also tend to report that the different families of reforms are very important in their own field of work. Rule-orientation seems to have less impact, but people scoring low on rule-orientation tend to be more exposed than others to market-orientation.

Multivariate analysis

We now turn to the question of the relative explanatory power of the different independent variables for the different reform tools. The multivariable analyses, summed up in Table 9, generally confirm the main pattern revealed in the bivariate analyses.¹¹

First, the independent variables explain a relatively modest part of the variation in the importance of different reform tools in general and most significantly in MBOR tools and managerial tools. When it comes to structural devolution we are only able to explain a very small part of the variation.

Table 9. Summary of regression equations by organizational, demographic and cultural features affecting administrative reforms. Standardized Beta coefficients. Linear regression. N=1848

	MBOR	Managerial tools	Structural devolution	Market tools	Number of reforms
<i>Structure:</i>					
Leaders	.10**	.18**	.02	.06*	.13**
<i>Tasks:</i>					
Coordination	-	.03	-	-	-
Law preparation/single cases	-.11**	-.06	-	-.08**	-.10**
Staff-oriented	.10**	.08**	-	.07**	.08**
<i>Demography:</i>					
Gender	-	-	-	-.06*	-
Age	.04	.09**	.01	.01	.05
<i>Education:</i>					
Jurist	.06	.04	-	-.04	.06
Economist	-	-.10**	-.07**	-	-
Social scientist	.07*	.06	-	-	.06*
Tenure	.00	-.04	-	-	-.01
Job experience from private firms	-.06*	-	-	-	-
Job offers from private sector	-	-	-	.08**	-
Exit plans to private sector	-.04	-.03	-	-	-.05
<i>Culture:</i>					
Renewal-orientation	.09**	.15**	.14**	.13**	.15**
Efficiency-orientation	.16**	.08**	.07**	.10**	.14**
Identification with business manager	.13**	.11**	.09**	.09**	.15**
Rule-oriented	-	-	-	-.04	-
<i>Multiple R</i>	.38	.40	.22	.33	.42
<i>R2</i>	.15	.16	.05	.11	.18
<i>Adjusted R2</i>	.14	.15	.04	.10	.17
<i>F Statistics</i>	16,186	21,409	12,414	12,682	18,829
<i>Significance of F</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Second, the most important explanatory variables are the cultural features. This is the case for all families of reform tools as well as the number of tools. The most important cultural

¹¹ Only variables with significant bivariate correlations are included in the analysis.

features are renewal-orientation, efficiency-orientation, and identification with the role of business manager. Being in a setting in which efficiency is a main value, in which civil servants feel a strong affiliation with the role of business manager, and in which the staff are very keen on renewal and modernization tends to enhance the importance of the various reform tools. This is in line with the compatibility hypothesis, which stresses that reform tools have to pass a compatibility test before they are adopted. This is obviously easiest in an administrative culture dominated by strong efficiency- and renewal-orientation and with role identifications overlapping with the role of business manager, which fits in well with the importance accorded to efficiency by the NPM reform movement.

Third, there is also an overall strong effect of leadership, showing that leaders follow up on their formal obligations. Except for structural devolution, civil servants in leadership positions generally have stronger exposure to administrative reform tools than people in non-leadership positions. Thus, it is not only culture that matters; leadership makes a difference as well. Especially when it comes to cultural-managerial reform tools, being in a leadership position seems to mean more than cultural features. This is not surprising, and it confirms a well documented research finding that strong leadership involvement is an important condition for successful administrative reform processes (Naschold 1996, Rouban 1995). The main agents for introducing the NPM reforms into the public administration are supposed to be administrative leaders – entrepreneurs who have formal responsibility for change processes delegated by political executives.

Fourth, tasks make a difference. Working mainly with staff-related tasks tends to enhance the importance of different reform tools, while people dealing with single cases or preparation of laws and regulations as a main task tend to have a more distant relationship to reform initiatives. Thus, the importance of tasks has to be taken into consideration if one wants to understand how administrative reforms are adopted in government organizations (Pollitt et al. 2004). It seems that administrative reforms are primarily a staff-related function, while for people working with more operational issues such as single cases these reforms are more distant from their daily work and they are also more skeptical towards them.

Fifth, there are also variations according to demographic features, but these are weaker than cultural and structural features. The effects of several of the demographic variables are reduced when one controls for the other variables. This is especially the case for being a judge, for tenure, and for plans to join the private sector, which have no significant effects after the multivariate analyses. Moreover, age is reduced to having a significant effect on only one dependent variable. Managerial reform tools are more important for older employees than for younger ones. Social scientists and economists have somewhat different profiles. While social scientists tend to score high on MBOR reforms and also on the number of reform tools reported, economists score low on managerial reforms and also on the family of structural reforms. While job experience in private firms tends to reduce the importance of MBOR reforms, job offers from the private sector tend to increase the use of market-oriented reforms.

Summing up our findings relative to our expectations, we see that they are mainly supported. The importance of modern administrative reform tools in Norwegian ministries is especially high in renewal-oriented administrative cultures scoring high on efficiency values and identification with the role of business manager, among people in leadership positions, and with those involved in staff-related tasks. There is no significantly different pattern for the different families of reform tools. The variation in the adaptation of newer post-NPM tools such as

managerial tools is to a great extent parallel to that in the original NPM tools related to MBOR features.

The main impression, then, is that there is no one-factor explanation for the variation in the importance of different families of administrative tools. Cultural features, such as efficiency orientation and identification with the role of business manager, make a significant difference, but structural features, such as having a leadership position and task structure also have explanatory power.

Conclusion

In this paper we have first shown that the use of different administrative reform tools is widespread within government ministries in Norway. On average employees report that five different reform measures are important in their own field of work. This can be seen as a relatively high number. No tool has, however, become dominant. None of the 26 different reform tools are seen as having strong importance or relevance for a majority of the civil servants, and one-quarter report that none of the reform elements are very important in their own field of work. This indicates that civil servants in Norwegian ministries are pretty reluctant to adopt such reforms. There are, however, significant variations in the importance accorded the different reform elements. Reform measures connected to MBOR generally have high scores while market-related reforms score low.

Second, we have revealed that there are four different families of reform measures: performance-management reforms, cultural-managerial reforms, structural reforms, and market-related reforms. These families of reforms are, however, more supplemental and complementary reforms than alternative and competing reforms. The civil servants' response to the repertoire of reform elements can be characterized as reluctant, differentiated, and clustered.

Third, we have revealed a strong robustness in administrative culture and in administrative reforms. From 1996 to 2006 there was no strong increase in the espousal of renewal and efficiency values; identification with the role of business leader did not become stronger; and there was no general decline in rule-orientation. The general picture is civil servants with multiple identities who have to balance different loyalties and viewpoints. Thus, the administrative culture seems to be resistant to reform ideas enhanced by the NPM movement. The NPM movement does not represent a decisive move away from a rule-based approach. In addition the administrative reforms show a robust pattern from 1996 to 2006. There was no move towards a more comprehensive performance-measurement system, stronger market-orientation or more structural devolution, as seen by the ministerial executives.

Fourth, that said, some reform measures not included in the 1996 study, such as knowledge-based management and ethical guidelines, figure rather strongly in 2006. The same is to some extent the case for introducing a clearer distinction between roles, such as between owner, purchaser, and provider, and also the use of team-based leadership. This means that the repertoire of reform tools has been expanded. Some new tools more connected to post NPM-reform ideas such as ethical guidelines, knowledge-based management, and team-based management have been added to the first generation of reforms, which were more related to performance-management and structural devolution. Privatization and marketization initiatives have, however, not found their way into the daily work of ministerial executives to any strong degree.

The main picture is increased complexity. New reform tools have been added to existing measures. What we see is more supplementary reforms than a process in which post-NPM reforms are replacing NPM reforms. New measures have been added without a substantial reduction in the old ones. We do not see a general trend towards deregulated, and entrepreneurial government, as suggested in the contemporary reform movement, but rather the emergence of reshaped, sometimes new reform tools often appearing in hybrid forms (Læg Reid, Roness and Rubecksen 2007). Traditional Weberian administrative features, post-Weberian reform tools, NPM features, and post-NPM measures are blended in a complex combination. By combining loyalty to reforms with the transformation of them, civil servants can live with the dilemma of simultaneously being the targets of reforms and cooperative participants in reform efforts. We face a combination of robustness and amenability to administrative policy reforms.

Fifth, there is also a significant variation in the importance of different administrative reform tools, but less so for structural reforms than for other tools. Structural devolution seems to be a general trend adapted to the same extent for civil servants with different demographic profiles and in different structural settings and administrative cultures. Use of other tools depends to a larger extent on contextual and structural features, such as administrative culture, leadership position, and main tasks. There is a complex interplay between the different factors. It is civil servants embedded in an efficiency and business management culture, whose main task is staff functions and who are in leadership positions, who give the reforms the highest significance ratings. The pattern of reactions illustrates that the administrative apparatus is not uniform and homogeneous when it comes to adopting administrative reforms. There is no general or common administrative doctrine or management ideal that is applied to the whole of the central government administration.

In the Norwegian reform trajectory the more radical “marketization” or “minimization” strategy is a weak element and it can be better characterized as a reluctant “modernizer” (c.f. Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). The reform process within the civil service has been more one of addition than “demolition” and obviously some NPM elements are preferred over others and there is also more limited use of a number of tools. When the different recipes for reform are imported into the Norwegian context they have to pass a compatibility test: some are rejected, others are translated, and it is not only NPM measures that are on the agenda (Røvik 2002). In addition, the extent to which different parts of the civil service are receptive towards reform elements depends on cultural features, main tasks and whether those concerned are leaders or not.

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