

Governance for complexity – how to organize for the handling of «wicked issues»?

Per Lægreid • Lise H. Rykkja



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Uni Research Rokkan Centre
Nygårdsgaten 5
5015 Bergen
Phone +47 55 58 97 10
Fax +47 55 58 97 11
E-mail: rokkansenteret@uni.no
<http://rokkan.uni.no/>

Governance for complexity – how to organize for the handling of «wicked issues»?

The case of internal security and the welfare administration in Norway

PER LÆGREID

LISE H. RYKKJA

STEIN ROKKAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

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Abstract

This paper examines the main coordination arrangements for handling «wicked issues» in the area of societal security and welfare administration in Norway and ask whether network arrangements have replaced hierarchy. In both cases reforms have addressed major coordination problems related to both the vertical dimension and the horizontal dimension. Empirically we draw on data collected in four different research projects. Theoretically we apply a structural-instrumental perspective and a cultural perspective. We describe two new organizational arrangements: the lead agency approach and the one-stop-shop and show how they develop as hybrid forms in the tension between the principles of ministerial responsibility and the principle of local self-government. A main finding is that the horizontal inter-organizational coordinating arrangements seem to supplement rather than replace traditional hierarchical coordination producing more complex organizational arrangements.

Foreword

This paper is written as part of the project on «Organizing for internal security and crisis management. Governance Capacity and Legitimacy» (GOVCAP) funded by the SAMRISK II program, Norwegian Research Council. It was presented at the Policy & Politics Conference «The challenges of leadership and collaboration in the 21st Century», Bristol, September 16-17, 2014.

Introduction

Coordination within the public sector is a longstanding topic within the field of public administration and as public administration has become an increasingly multi-actor and multi-level entity, coordination across levels of government and across policy sectors remains salient. A renewed interest in coordination is triggered by recent trends and reforms within the public sector across Europe and fuelled by a commitment to try to resolve difficult and complex policy problems. The emphasis on coordination results from an increased recognition that the existing specialization in the public sector apparatus is not fit to handle the complex challenges society is facing. Governments struggle to handle «wicked problems» that transcend organizational boundaries, administrative levels and ministerial areas (Harmon and Mayer 1986; Head 2008; Hodges 2012; Richards 2001; Rittel and Webber 1973). There is also an increased emphasis on inter-organizational coordination, brought on in part by post-New Public Management (NPM) reform measures, trying to counteract NPM-oriented features characterized by increasing specialization and representing a tendency to seek solutions to complex policy problems across sectors or «silos» (Christensen and Lægreid 2007a). These reform elements have been accompanied by a new orientation towards partnerships and cooperation via networks, often relying on inherently soft measures devised to «nudge different organizations towards moving in the same direction or to overcome the «siloization» (Christensen and Lægreid 2011a; Lægreid et al. 2014). A number of social science researchers have argued that there has been a shift from coordination and steering by hierarchy towards more network arrangements, and that hierarchical governance is being replaced by collaborative arrangements (Rhodes 1997; Kooiman 2003; Sørensen and Torfing 2005), while some (for instance Lynn 2011) question whether this is actually the case.

Either way, the «new» coordination efforts assume numerous shapes and go under various names, such as integrated governance, outcome steering, joined-up government (Bogdanor 2005; Hood 2005), holistic governance (6 et al., 2002), new public governance (Osborne 2010), networked government, partnerships, connected government, cross-cutting policy, horizontal management, collaborative public management (Gregory 2003), collaborative governance (Ansell and Gash 2008) and whole-of-government (OECD 2005; Christensen and Lægreid 2007a). Also, the concept of a «lead agency» has been introduced as an intermediate form between traditional hierarchies and networks (Boin et al. 2013).

In this paper we address the question of whether network arrangements replace hierarchy by examining two relevant cases from Norway: organizing for internal or societal security¹, and for providing welfare services to the citizens. Two main steering doctrines and organizing principles in Norwegian public administration come into play; the ministerial rule and the principle of local self-government. The principle of ministerial rule tends to enhance vertical coordination within the ministerial area but also constrain horizontal

¹ Societal safety is a particular Norwegian concept developed over the last decade, defined as: «The society's ability to maintain critical social functions, to protect the life and health of the citizens and to meet the citizens' basic requirements in a variety of stress situations» (Olsen, Kruke and Hovden 2007). In the following, we use this concept to cover both internal security and crisis management.

coordination across policy areas. The principle of local self-government tends to enable coordination within the municipalities but constrains the coordination between central and local government. Thus, the main coordination challenges within this system seem to be transboundary, on the interface between policy areas (a horizontal challenge) and between central and local government (a central-local challenge). The two cases convey reforms specifically aimed to handle these challenges. Within internal security the main preoccupation was with the problem of horizontal coordination at the central level, while the welfare administration reform addressed both the horizontal and the central-local challenge.

We examine the following main questions: What have been the main coordination arrangements for handling «wicked issues» in the area of societal security and welfare administration in Norway? The reform in the societal security field introduced a lead agency approach to supplement the traditional ministerial hierarchy and co-existing network arrangements. The welfare administration reform introduced a One-Stop Shop model supplementing the principles of ministerial responsibility and local self-government. In both cases, major coordination problems were related to both the vertical dimension (between levels of administration), and the horizontal dimension (between different policy areas, jurisdictions or sectors).

Our specific research questions concern how the recent reforms have addressed existing coordination problems and what the results of the reforms are this far. The reforms introduced two organizational innovations. What characterized the organizational thinking related to the main coordination problems and the introduction of these organizations? How can we understand the institutional change processes and its outcome? What were the main lessons learned? Our theoretical approach draws on organizational and institutional theory, where we distinguish between a structural-instrumental and a cultural perspective (Christensen et al. 2007).

The paper proceeds with a section where we lay out our approach to coordination, discuss the importance of «wicked issues», and present our theoretical approach. Next, we present our data and research design. Thereafter, we elaborate on Norway to give some context to the empirical analysis that follows. Lastly, we present the main components of the reforms and discuss the main findings from the two cases before we draw some conclusions.

Governing for complexity: Core concepts and theoretical approach

Coordination is an endemic concern and a traditional doctrine of public administration (Bouckaert, Peters and Verhoest 2010; Hood 2005; Kavanagh and Richards 2001; Ling 2002). However, it continues to be a «philosopher's stone» (Gulick 1937; Jennings and Krane 1994) in a time characterised by increased government expansion and with more multi-level, multi-organizational and fragmented governmental apparatuses (Bache and Flinders 2004).

Traditionally, public sector organizations have adopted an overly narrow, «silo» approach that fails to consider transboundary challenges that cut across traditional responsibilities, such as long-term unemployment and social deprivation (Pollitt 2003). The «siloization» or «pillarization» of the public sector seems to have increased in the NPM era (Gregory 2006; Pollitt 2003). The principle of «single-purpose organizations», with many specialized and non-overlapping roles and functions, has produced fragmentation, self-centred authorities and a lack of cooperation and coordination, hence hampering effectiveness and efficiency (Boston and Eichbaum 2005). This has been followed by a new orientation towards increased integration and coordination through post-NPM initiatives, whole-of-government reforms and the New Public Governance approach (Christensen and Lægreid 2011a, Osborne 2010).

In common usage, coordination has a number of synonyms, such as cooperation, coherence, collaboration and integration. These concepts all have slightly different meanings and connotations, with different implications. Coordination as effective collaboration looks at coordination as an outcome, while coordination as facilitating cooperation points to coordination as a process. From an analytical perspective coordination can be defined as the purposeful alignment of tasks and efforts of units or actors in order to achieve a defined goal (Verhoest and Bouckaert 2005). It denotes the situation when multiple actors work together to accomplish a shared goal. The aim of coordination within the public sector is generally to create greater coherence in policy and to reduce redundancy, lacunae and contradictions within and between policies (Peters 1998). However, it is a complex matter involving not only policy-making but also service delivery, management and the implementation of policies (Bouckaert et al. 2010).

Coordination concerns specific policies and problems, but can also cover the behaviour and culture of the political-administrative system more broadly. Seen from organization theory, organizational specialization triggers coordination challenges almost by default, and different principles of specialization trigger specific coordination challenges (Gulick 1937). Thus, coordination and specialization tend to go in tandem (Bouckaert et al 2010). This has specific consequences for public administration.

As public administration has become an increasingly multi-actor and multi-level entity, coordination across levels of government and across policy sectors remains silent. A renewed interest in coordination in public administration and policy analysis is triggered by recent trends and reforms within the public sector across Europe. In particular, there has been an increased emphasis on inter-organizational coordination, brought on in part by the post-New Public Management (NPM) reform measures, trying to counter-act NPM-oriented features of increasing specialization and the tendency to seek solutions to important policy problems within separate sectors (Christensen and Lægreid 2007a, Lægreid et al. 2014). These reforms have more recently been accompanied by an orientation towards partnerships and cooperation via networks to overcome the «siloization» – introducing softer measures in contrast to more hierarchical tools of command and control associated with «old» public administration (Christensen and Lægreid 2011a, Lægreid et al. 2014). This emphasis on horizontal coordination has at the same time been paralleled by centralization efforts through more hierarchical instruments and emphasis on vertical coordination, typically under the rubric of «reassertion of the center», however (Dahlstrøm, Peters and

Pierre 2011, Christensen et al. 2007, Lægreid, Nordø and Rykkja 2013). The result is often more hybridity (Christensen and Lægreid 2011b). A «lead agency approach» is one example of such a new hierarchical arrangement that is supposed to supplement the traditional ministerial hierarchies by introducing overarching bodies.

«Wicked problems» typically transcend organizational boundaries, administrative levels and ministerial areas and elude obvious or easily defined solutions. They are complex, involving multi-level, multi-actor and multi-sectoral challenges, uncertain and contested knowledge; and they are ambiguous regarding priorities and world views. The more complex, uncertain and ambiguous they are, the more «wicked» they become. Examples include social cohesion, climate change, unemployment, security, crime, homelessness, sustainable healthcare, poverty and immigration. Such multi-dimensional, complex and ambiguous policy problems demand interconnected administrative responses. However, there seems to be a mismatch between the problem structures and the organizational structures. The «wicked problems» challenge existing patterns of organization and management – they do not fit easily into the established organizational context and are constantly being framed and reframed. They transcend organizational boundaries, and the problems they present can only be solved by working across these boundaries (Clark and Steward 2003, O’Flynn, Blackman and Halligan 2014). Apparently, these complex policy problems enhance the need for contingent coordination, collaborative governance and network approaches (Ansell 2011, Kettl 2003).

Governments have sought to solve crosscutting problems through various novel coordination practices, frequently labelled «post-NPM initiatives» (Christensen and Lægreid 2011c; 2012). They have become salient after the expansion of New Public Management (NPM) reforms, which enhanced disaggregation and fragmentation of public services at the expense of integrated and more holistic responses (Talbot 2011; Christensen and Lægreid 2007b). Apparently, the «silozation» or «pillarization» of the public sector, whereby public organizations are mainly concerned with achieving their own specific objectives, reflecting funding and responsibilities that they can directly control, increased in the NPM era (Gregory 2006; Pollitt 2003). The principle of ‘single-purpose organizations’, with many specialized and non-overlapping roles and functions, produced fragmentation, self-centred authorities and a lack of cooperation and coordination, hence hampering effectiveness and efficiency (Boston and Eichbaum 2005, Christensen and Lægreid 2007a; Verhoest and Bouckaert 2005).

These developments can be analyzed through two analytical perspectives from organizational theory. First, a *structural-instrumental perspective* directs our attention towards formal arrangements and coordination by architecture (Christensen et al. 2007; Hood 2005). Decision-making processes in public organizations are here largely seen as the result of hierarchical steering from top political and administrative leaders. Gulick (1937) stressed the dynamic relationship between specialization and coordination. The more specialization in a public organization, the more pressure for increased coordination, or vice versa. Coordination challenges vary depending on whether the structural specialization is based on purpose, process, clientele or geography. Where public administration is based on the principle of purpose, tasks or sector, the main coordinative challenge will be to get different sectoral administrations to work together on cross-sector problems. Under

specialization by geography, coordination between administrative levels is a main challenge.

From the structural-instrumental point of view, the formal-normative structure of public administration influences decision-making processes by channeling attention, shaping frames of references and attitudes among decision-makers acting under the confines of bounded rationality (Simon 1957; March and Simon 1993; Scott 2003). Coordination relates to vertical specialization and attention is towards how authority and patterns of accountability and control emanate from one's position in the formal hierarchy. This is linked to the Weberian conceptualization of bureaucracy, seen as an administrative technology characterized by hierarchy, specialization, and management by rules. Formal organization is seen as an instrument to achieve goals and channels and influences the models of thought and decision-making behavior of civil servants (Egeberg 2012). The underlying behavioral logic is a «logic of consequence» (March and Olsen 1989), implying that leaders score high on rational calculation and political control (Dahl and Lindblom 1953). They have relatively clear intentions and goals, choose structures that correspond with these goals, have insight into the potential effects and the power to implement their decisions. A distinction can be made between a hierarchically variant, where the leaders' control and rational calculation is central, and a negotiation variant allowing for a variety of interests and compromises (March and Olsen 1983). The principle of ministerial responsibility builds on this hierarchical approach. In general it results in strong line ministries with well-built capacities for vertical coordination, but rather weak horizontal coordination (Hood 1976). Such strong vertical coordination may produce coordination deficits and multi-organizational sub-optimization. It can also produce management pathologies, such as departmentalism, tunnel vision and vertical silos. This typically makes horizontal coordination difficult.

Second, a *cultural-institutional perspective* emphasizes informal norms, values and practices that have developed over time, through a process of institutionalization. Central organizational features result from mutual adaptation to internal and external pressure and create cultural identities (Selznick 1957). A crucial argument concerns path-dependency: contexts, norms and values surrounding the establishment of a public organization – the «roots» – will strongly influence the «route», or path, further taken (Krasner 1988). Related to core organizing, competence, goals and services, is also the «logic of appropriateness» (March and Olsen 1989). Here, different administrative traditions represent «filters» producing different outcomes in different contexts (Olsen 1992). A high level of mutual trust tends to enhance appropriate behavior and vice versa. Although change is constrained, major crises can produce a «punctuated equilibrium» implying a shock effect that can alter institutionalized beliefs and routines and open the way for more radical change (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). Streeck and Thelen (2005) diversify this and distinguish between institutional changes depending on whether they are incremental or abrupt, and whether the result is continuity or discontinuity.

The cultural perspective emphasizes the embedding of political-administrative systems in historically evolved, and distinct, informal properties that provide direction for, and give meaning to, organized activities (Selznick 1957). Individual and organizational decision-making are seen as oriented towards confirming roles and identities (March and Olsen

1989, 2006). Such common norms and values and a common culture may facilitate coordination, or constrain it. If the orientation is towards coordination and collaboration with others instead of primarily focusing on the interests of one's own organization, it could yield a stronger collective capacity. Public sector ethos and public values and trust relations are important in such a perspective (Osborne 2010).

The siloization and sectorization associated with NPM-reforms have been sought countered by a reform-discourse emphasizing the importance of partnerships and collaboration across departmental boundaries, which also presuppose changing cultural attitudes (Christensen and Lægreid 2007b, 2011c). Networks apparently bring civil servants from different policy areas together to trump hierarchy and 'silo' management (Hood and Lodge 2006). They may be especially important in tackling «wicked problems», and represent cultural attributes that mark a step away from previous NPM-oriented norms. Societal security and crisis management as well as welfare administration have features that may need network arrangements to help mediate departmental conflicts or interests crosscutting policy areas. However, the prospects for forging coordination through such intermediate institutional arrangements can be expected to vary, and might depend on their degree of cultural compatibility with established identities as well as political-institutional legacies (March and Olsen 1989).

The distinction between the two perspectives is analytical, and we may expect both structural-instrumental and cultural factors to offer relevant insights when we observe how coordination-policies and reforms implicate coordination behavior (Christensen et al. 2007). This implies that the distinction between hierarchical and network-administrative modes of coordination is rather subtle (Christensen, Danielsen, Lægreid and Rykkja 2014). The use of network-administrative structures may hold particular promises for typically wicked policy-problems. In practice, however, networks do not by themselves resolve coordination problems nor does the establishment of network administrative arrangements necessarily imply that hierarchies are no longer operative or that all participants are essentially given an equal voice (Moynihan 2005, O'Leary and Bingham 2009). As Provan and Kenis (2008) argue, there may be dynamics between hierarchy and networks. Often, secondary affiliations such as network arrangements with part-time participants complement primary affiliation linked to the officials' main positions in the hierarchy (Egeberg 2012). While networks are usually understood as somewhat loose, informal, open ended and essentially «flat» modes of governance, networks may also be embedded and operative in the «shadow of hierarchy» (Heretier and Lehmkuhl 2008). Thus, we may observe various *hybrid* coordination arrangements to be operative.

The notion of a lead agency as an intermediate form between traditional hierarchy and networks is mainly drawn from US government arrangements, where a lead agency is responsible for organizing the interagency oversight of the day-to-day conduct of policy related to a particular operation. It typically chairs an interagency working group established to coordinate policy related to this operation and normally determines the agenda, ensures cohesion among the involved agencies, and is responsible for implementing decisions. But it is also associated with a traditional hierarchical approach to coordination as the agency's function is to impose control on others within a network (Boin et al. 2013). This mixed design supports an understanding of public administration as

constituted on a diverse repertoire of coexisting, overlapping, and potentially competing, organizational principles (Olsen 2010). Inspired by these insights, we will pursue the analytical task to establish how the mix of organizational principles plays out across different political-institutional settings, here by comparing the cases of societal security and welfare administration in Norway.

Data and methods

Our analysis builds on data collected in four different research projects partly conducted by us: A project on «Multilevel governance in the tension between functional and territorial specialization», which focused on the policy area of internal security and crisis management (Fimreite et al 2014); the national evaluation of the NAV-reform, more particularly a process evaluation within the evaluation (Christensen, Fimreite and Læg Reid 2007; 2013); a project on «The reforming of the welfare state. Democracy, accountability and management», which addressed accountability relations in welfare administration reforms in a comparative perspective (Byrkjeflot, Christensen and Læg Reid 2014); and a project on «Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future» (COCOPS), more specifically a work package on emerging coordinating arrangements in the public sector (Læg Reid et al. 2014). The analysis combines insights from these projects, drawing on document analysis, literature review, and interviews with centrally placed practitioners in both policy areas. Our paper is not an attempt to give any extensive analysis of the reforms, however. Here, we concentrate our attention on the question of coordination within the public sector.

A comparative case study design enables us to explore differences and similarities between the cases. Yin (2003) describes how multiple case studies can be used to predict either similar or contrasting results, but for predictable reasons. Our two cases have several similarities. Firstly, they both cover wicked, transboundary issues where there is a mismatch between organization and problem structures. Secondly, they both concern administrative or structural reforms. Thirdly, they are situated within one country, providing a fairly stable administrative, cultural and political environment. On the other hand, there are important differences. The two cases differ in terms of magnitude. While the NAV-reform was one of the largest contemporary administrative reforms in Norway, the societal security reforms are much more incremental, although affected by a big external shock in 2011. The two cases also differ in terms of scope. While the societal security case mainly addresses horizontal coordination at the central level, the welfare administration reform tried to handle both horizontal coordination at the central level and vertical coordination between local and central level. Lastly, the two cases cover distinct policy areas with distinct problems. To explore to what extent this matter is also one of the major motivations behind the comparison.

The Norwegian Context

Norway is a unitary, parliamentary state with 5 million inhabitants spread out over a rather large geographical area. Its multi-party system generally results in minority coalitions, with

the exception of 2005-2013 when there was a centre-left majority coalition. It has a strong democratic tradition and collectivist and egalitarian values are important. Consensus is crucial, the level of internal conflicts is low, and corporatist arrangements are well developed. There are three administrative levels in Norway; a national level (16 ministries and several national agencies), a regional (19 counties) and a local level (429 municipalities). The Ministries are relatively small and work as secretariats for the political staff and manage subordinate agencies. Semi-autonomous central agencies report to their parent ministry and are located outside the ministries. Per capita income and the level of labour market participation is high. The unemployment rate is one of the lowest in Europe. Norway has until recently been spared the experience of major and devastating disasters, but was considerably shaken by the terrorist attacks in Oslo and at Utøya in July 2011 (Christensen, Lægreid and Rykkja 2013).

Coordination is a central discussion in Norwegian public policy and administration (Christensen and Lægreid 2008 Lægreid, Nordø and Rykkja 2013). The country has seen several large reforms over the last few years aiming to deal with problems associated with increasing specialization, institutional fragmentation in the public sector, and «wicked», cross-cutting policy problems. Typical initiatives have been the restructuring of existing agencies or the establishment of new ones, and increasing management by objectives and results. The reforms aim at better coordination both within the horizontal and the vertical dimensions and are generally aimed at strengthening the steering capacity of the state and its administration and to improve effectiveness, efficiency and service delivery. Finding a balance between territorial and sectoral specialization and between coordination by hierarchy and by networks is a constant challenge, and the high ambitions of the reforms are frequently modified over time.

Individual ministerial responsibility is a core principle within the Norwegian system that has important bearings on coordination. The minister has the ultimate responsibility for actions within his or her ministerial portfolio. This creates powerful sector ministries and a strong vertical coordination, but a weaker horizontal coordination between policy areas (Lægreid, Nordø and Rykkja 2013). Coordination by hierarchy therefore generally dominates over network mechanisms (Bouckaert et al., 2010). Typically, specialization by purpose makes it difficult to establish coordinative arrangements across sectors. Sector ministries have been substantially stronger than ministries responsible for sector-crossing activities, with the exception of the Ministry of Finance. This means that ministries largely operate as separate «silos» with limited ability to apprehend crosscutting policy issues.

Another central feature of the Norwegian polity is the principle of *local self-government*. Local authorities are elected democratic institutions with wide competencies and are responsible for providing a broad range of services. A Municipal Act in 1992 attempted to counter the strong sectorization of Norwegian public government and challenge the centralizing forces that allegedly reduced local-government autonomy by opening up for a different (non-sectorized) organization at the local level. Whether or not the reforms succeeded is still debated, however (Christensen et al., chapter 8, 2014). The principle of local government tends to enhance territorial coordination within each municipality. However, it also produces coordination problems across administrative levels and between central and local government. Both the principle of individual ministerial

responsibility and the principle of local self-government have important implications for the structure and function of different policies.

Coordination for handling wicked issues – two cases

Internal security – the lead agency as an organizational innovation

A range of public authorities in different sectors and at different administrative levels, have responsibilities in a crisis.² In Norway, the policy field is frequently described as disunited or fragmented, resulting in major coordination problems, overlaps and grey areas (Fimreite et al. 2014, Lango, Rykkja and Læg Reid 2011). The coordination problems are generally attributed to the main steering principles within the field; a principle of liability, of decentralization, of conformity, and of collaboration, a rather weak coordinating Ministry of Justice and Public Security, influenced by the principles of ministerial rule and local self-government (Lango, Læg Reid and Rykkja 2013; Rykkja and Læg Reid 2014).

Getting the relevant authorities to cooperate and reach optimal coordination, both in actual crises and in policy development has been a challenge for quite some time. This is related to seemingly contradictory coordination needs reflected in the policy area. When crises materialize, different cross-cutting network arrangements are typically employed in order to forge coordination. However, major crises also tend to trigger a demand for leadership and central direction, and a pressure towards clarifying responsibilities and chains of command through more hierarchical structures.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJ) is responsible for implementing the Government's justice, immigration and civilian security policy. Besides initiating, developing and implementing measures through its own channels, the Ministry is to be a driver and coordinator of other sectorial authorities. Over time, it has gradually moved towards a lead coordinative role at the central level, but still struggles to attain necessary authority and coordinating capacity (Lango et al. 2013). The notion of a lead agency has been a central and recurrent issue in the development of the Norwegian policy on central crisis management, and several initiatives to strengthen the Ministry's coordination capacity have been put forward over the last twenty years. The Directorate for Civil Protection was established in 2003 as an overarching capacity responsible for national preparedness plans, for assisting the ministry in its work, and for providing efficient crisis management and communication at all levels in a crisis. It has important control functions towards other agencies and public authorities, but struggles to achieve proper authority vis-à-vis more powerful sector authorities. The National Security Authority, which is responsible for countering major security threats, primarily espionage, sabotage and acts of terrorism is

² «Crisis» can be defined in many different ways. Here, we apply a generic definition: Crisis as a perceived threat to the core values or life-sustaining systems of a society that must be urgently addressed under conditions of deep uncertainty. For a more thorough discussion, see Boin et al. 2005 and 2008.

also a cross-sector authority within the protective security services. The agency reports to the Ministry of Justice in civil matters, but it is administratively placed under the Ministry of Defence, thus creating potential conflicts regarding competency and priorities.

In later years, two further organizations have been set up to foster better crisis coordination: the Government Emergency Management Council (GEMC) and the Government Emergency Support Unit (GESU). The GEMC is the superior administrative coordinating body in particularly demanding and complex crises – normally when a crisis hits nationally and/or several sectors at the same time, while the GESU is set up to assist the affected administrative capacities in a crisis. Both can be considered as cross-sector or network organizations, the GEMC because it consists of permanent members (Secretary Generals) from six ministries, and the GESU because it serves whichever ministry or public authority that is involved in a crisis. Both organizations can be expanded upon need. The terrorist attacks in 2011 revealed important capacity and coordination problems in both organizations (NOU 2012: 14; Rykkja and Læg Reid 2014).

The development towards upgrading the Ministry of Justice as a driving force and an overarching coordinating and lead ministry has been slow and rather cautious (Lango et al. 2013). After the terrorist attacks in Oslo and at Utøya in 2011, the government introduced a principle of collaboration, which prescribes that all public authorities are responsible for securing collaboration with other authorities and organizations in the crisis management process. However, central documents state that this principle does not challenge the overriding principle of responsibility or liability, whereby each line ministry is responsible for societal security and civil protection within their own portfolio. This leaves a rather unclear situation that appears difficult for subordinate bodies to interpret.

To sum up, coordination across central government is a major challenge within the field of crisis management and preparedness. It is particularly hard to deal with coordination problems in a system where the sectorization is strong. In Norway, this has resulted in a gradual upgrading of the Ministry and related coordination arrangements. Coordination by hierarchy has largely taken priority, although supplemental network structures such as the GEMC and the GESU may be more important than before. The role of the Directorates under the ministry – especially the Directorate for Civil Protection – is still somewhat unresolved, however. Recent policy documents and reports continue to call for more coordination. The supplementary collegial bodies and network organizations such as the GEMC and more permanent agencies such as the Directorate for Civil Protection and the National Security Authority suffer from unclear mandates, ambiguous authority, few resources and weak governance tools. The administrative apparatus in this field is a conglomerate of semi-autonomous and loosely coupled organizations, each with a life of their own. Dominant specialization principles, coordination mechanisms and standard operating procedures constrain the attention and matter for the way the different authorities work in practice.

There has been a significant reorganization and reshuffling activity in the formal arrangements in this policy area over the last 20-30 years. There has been a movement from a military approach towards a civilian all-hazard approach, but the main governance principles have not been challenged. The reorganization can therefore be characterized as cautious and reluctant, even after major crises such as the terrorist attacks in 2011. A focus

on organizational principles reveals a tension between existing lines of specialization by sector and the newer efforts to establish cross-boundary coordination. A lead agency model is applied and used as a supplementary and intermediate form between traditional hierarchy and existing networks. These arrangements are introduced in order to handle the complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity that permeate this policy area, but on their own part also enhance complexity and have to work under considerable uncertainties and ambiguities.

Prioritizing resources for crisis management and emergency preparedness is difficult, and creating optimal organizations for handling such issues is challenging. Major crises are unpredictable and uncertain events. Rising complexity in society, increasing vulnerability, and more transboundary crises enhance these problems. The coordination of resources and relevant authorities with responsibilities in this policy field is therefore a constant challenge. Creating a balance between hierarchy and network arrangements to ensure proper response, commitment and control as well as necessary coordination seems to be the 'holy grail' of the policy area. Whether or not the lead agency approach is a viable hybrid organizational innovation begs for more analysis and research, but seems at the moment to hold potential as a flexible organization-type that can be adapted to different situations and contexts. It is also, in the Norwegian context, heavily constrained by the principle of ministerial responsibility.

Coordinating for social welfare and employment – One-stop-shops as an organizational innovation

The early 2000s saw the establishment of a new welfare administration at central level and the first one-stop-shops for welfare and employment services at the municipal level in Norway. The reform of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organization (NAV) represents one of the largest public-sector reforms in recent Norwegian history. Its aim was to increase work participation and to make the administration more user-friendly, holistic and efficient. These goals were to be achieved by increasing the administration's capacity to address «wicked issues» by cutting across existing policy fields and administrative levels (Christensen et al., 2013).

One of the major challenges for the welfare services before the NAV reform was a fragmented structure of measures combined with an institutional fragmentation. Users with complex problems, so-called multi-service users, were the main targets of the reform. By merging central institutions that were located in different ministries, different agencies and at different administrative levels, the general idea was to better coordinate services to clients or users receiving benefits from multiple schemes. The reform faced important problems in the initiation phase, however. The main issues were 1) to get a merged central government agency based on established agencies with very different cultures, tasks and professions to work, 2) to establish constructive cooperation between the central and local authorities and 3) to create a new coordinated front-line service with user-oriented employment and welfare offices all over the country (Christensen et al. 2007).

The main reform tool was to merge the central agencies of employment and pensions into a new large welfare agency and establishing a partnership arrangement with local government responsible for social services, resulting in joint One-Stop Shops between municipalities and the state in each municipality. The One-Stop Shops represented an effort to ensure horizontal coordination, and were established to coordinate labour, pensions and social services. They were designed to appear as a single entrance to the employment and welfare-administration services and to provide services close to the user, and were to coordinate a range of different state and municipal benefit schemes, including pensions, unemployment benefits, cash benefits, disability, sickness and child benefits, family allowances, maternity leave and occupational rehabilitation. A central motivation was also to create a new profession of generalist case-workers and establish new lines of responsibility crossing the previous separate services.

Coordination in NAV is regulated through a formal partnership between the state and the municipalities. Participation in the partnership and the establishment of a local NAV office is mandatory by law. Legally the front-line service is based on a binding agreement between the central and local authorities laid down in local cooperation agreements. This collaboration is described as a partnership. It was a permanent and formal public-public partnership. The partnership between central and local government was designed to provide coordinated services better adapted to users' needs and to replace the former system of three different offices at local level. A network of local offices constitute a coordinated front-line service with responsibility for employment, sick leave, medical and occupational rehabilitation, disability pensions, financial social assistance, pensions and family benefits. From the municipal side it was mandatory to include financial social services, while other welfare services were voluntary. Most of the municipalities opted to include more (Christensen, Hansen and Aars 2011). The management model was also flexible. There could either be a unified management model or a dual management, including one manager from the municipal side and one from the central government side. Most One-Stop Shops chose the unified model. The main coordination mechanism between levels and sectors was network-based, aided by co-location and formalization.

The NAV reform demanded considerable resources, both in terms of budgets and personnel. It involved considerable costs related to the establishment of new ICT solutions, planning and reporting, development of services, training and education, marketing, localities, new staff and compensation for productivity loss throughout the implementation phase. The establishment of a constructive cooperation between the central and local authorities proved difficult. Coordination of the frontline services in user-oriented local NAV offices was implemented through a step-by-step integration between local and central government services in the one-stop-shops. The main challenge was related to the collaboration between state and municipalities rather than between the merged sectors. A result was rather ambiguous accountability relations, since the NAV offices were reporting to municipalities and to central government at the same time. Local political and administrative leadership worried that the state got the upper hand in the partnership, thus limiting local autonomy. At the same time, some studies show that they are rather satisfied with the local one-stop-shops within their own communities (Christensen et al. 2011).

The NAV reform started as a structural integration process in 2005, involving merging and partnership (network), but since 2008 a more hybrid profile has emerged (Christensen and Læg Reid 2012), while the case handling process is now more specialized across levels. The idea of a general NAV profession and strong local NAV offices with a broad scope of activities and services has been left for a specialization and a recentralization to specialized administrative and pension units at the regional level.

Summing up, the NAV reform introduced the partnership arrangement and One-Stop shops, a hybrid arrangement, as a model to solve the tension between the principle of ministerial responsibility and the principle of local self-government. The arrangement was difficult to implement according to the initial plan, however. Countering the ideal of being an agreement between equal partners, the central government soon took the upper hand. Political executives at the local level were rather absent. It turned out difficult to turn the street level bureaucrats into generalists. The result was instead a re-specialization through the establishment of two new units at the regional level. This being said, the partnership succeeded to some extent to integrate social services and labour and employment at the local level. In general it turned out to be easier to enhance horizontal coordination, both at the local and central level, than to strengthen vertical coordination between the municipal and state level.

Discussion

The principle of constitutional ministerial responsibility in Norway results in a sector-based organization. Coordination is largely vertical and hierarchical, typically resulting in rather weak horizontal coordinative arrangements. Horizontal coordination is often based on ad-hoc, temporary or more loosely coupled organizational arrangements such as networks, boards and collegial bodies, largely with limited resources, authority and steering instruments (Læg Reid, Nordø and Rykkja 2013).

Within the area of *internal security*, the terrorist attacks in 2011 revealed a longstanding need for more focused attention, central leadership, authority and coordination. Providing the necessary powers in the form of adequate tools and sanctions to ensure control, follow-up and implementation, and rewards to ensure commitment, were crucial assets. Examining the developments over time shows that the primary structures still stand strong, even though the call for more and better coordination has been loud – especially after the terrorist attacks in 2011. The constitutional responsibility and the principle of ministerial responsibility have not been up for discussion. The government has tried to weaken the silo-effect of the doctrine by building secondary structures through two complementary strategies. First, by establishing collegial network arrangements for cross-boundary information sharing and discussion either permanent or more ad hoc-based. A general problem with such arrangements is that they largely involve part-time participants with a loyalty to their primary position. Furthermore, they often lack a clear mandate, appropriate resources and authority, and potent governance tools. Their meetings are often irregular and infrequent. One example is the Ministries' «Coordination Consulting Group» established in 2009 after the Audit Office criticized the unclear

coordination role of the Ministry of Justice. It has had no meetings after 2012 (Helsetilsynet 2014). Second, there have been attempts to introduce an organizational innovation – the *lead agency approach*. The Ministry of Justice has gradually moved towards becoming a lead ministry responsible for coordination and for being a driving force in the development of emergency preparedness and crisis management. Without challenging the principle of ministerial responsibility, however, there is still ambiguity regarding the Ministry's role. This also goes for the subordinate semi-independent central agencies that are also supposed to have a lead role – in particular the Directorate for Civil Protection and the National Security Authority. They face large obstacles when trying to meddle with other ministerial areas. This seems to reflect that there are no universal solutions, perhaps more critically so within the area of internal security. Crises are difficult to predict and increasingly complex. A certain level of improvisation and organizational flexibility will therefore always be necessary.

The establishment of the *One-Stop Shops* in the welfare sector reallocated and changed the division of labour within the public sector through typical hierarchical means, by merging organizations. It established new, and changed existing lines of control. The arrangement also shared characteristics of a typical network arrangement since some of the features of the local NAV offices were voluntary. The establishment of the one-stop-shops was mainly based on hierarchy, whereas the main goals were consciously designed and controlled from the top (Fimreite and Lægreid 2009). Guidance, control and evaluation, as well as the role of government, was mainly top-down. At the same time, the arrangement was subject to both bureaucratic and political hierarchical control. Isolated, the establishment of the One-Stop Shops can be seen to represent a joining-up at the base. However, the NAV reform also implied joining up at the top, through the establishment of the new Employment and Welfare administration under the Ministry of Labour. It was therefore a comprehensive and structural reform. The new welfare administration system represents a rather radical departure from the original employment and welfare administration in Norway (Christensen et al. 2007). It represents a complicated organizational arrangement and division of responsibility between central and local authorities. Political responsibility for the national insurance service as well as for labour market policy remains with central government while financial social assistance remains under municipal management. However, the coordination between the three services at local level and the One-Stop Shop idea represent challenges for services and government levels that are used to maintain a certain degree of territorial as well as cultural distance. Overall, the horizontal coordination and integration between employment issues and pensions seem to work better than the vertical relationship between central and local government (Christensen, Fimreite and Lægreid 2013).

The two cases portray some important similarities. First, they are both examples of broad government efforts to tackle wicked issues and try to solve central coordination problems in the public sector. Both are examples of cases where the problem structure does not seem to fit the organizational structure. Second, the coordination problems are largely sought tackled through public administration reforms, through reorganisation and structural change. Third, in both cases the solutions are hybrid and complex organizational arrangements. The welfare administration reform tries to solve the tension between the

principle of ministerial responsibility and local self-government with the introduction of the One-Stop Shop. Within the area of internal security, one tries to solve the horizontal coordination problem related to ministerial responsibility by introducing a collaboration principle, several network arrangements and a lead agency approach alongside the existing specialization by purpose and task. Fourth, the impacts of the reforms are uncertain. Finding a close relation between the goals of the reforms and how the organizational arrangements work in practice proves difficult, and the effects of the organizational reforms on performance are ambiguous.

There are also some important differences between the two cases. Within the field of internal security the main problem concerns horizontal coordination across different policy sectors. Within the field of social welfare and employment the main challenge has been vertical coordination between levels, i.e. between local authorities and the central state. In both cases, there has been movement towards more and better coordination between levels and sectors, but the processes are rather demanding and time-consuming. The welfare administration reform represents more of a «big bang» reform trying to make major reorganization through one major reform initiative, while the reforms in the area of internal security are rather incremental and cautious. The effects and results of the reforms are rather difficult to measure. There has been a large-scale government initiated evaluation of the NAV reform focusing both on process and effects.³ In contrast, there has not been a similar comprehensive, large scale and systematic science-based evaluation of the organization for societal security and crisis management. Our research here suggests that there is need for more research on the processes and effect of new organizational arrangements, especially in the field of internal security.

The post-NPM approaches we have focused on here, just like NPM itself, do not represent a coherent set of ideas and tools. The terms «joined-up government» or «whole-of-government» can at best be seen as umbrella terms describing a group of responses to the problem of increased fragmentation of the public sector and a wish to increase integration, coordination and capacity, often accompanied by a desire to create additional support for policy implementation and (re-) strengthen political and central control (see Baechler 2011; Christensen and Lægveid 2007a; Ling 2002). Their common feature is the notion that working across organizational boundaries will enable more efficient and/or effective policy development, implementation and service delivery. The coordination initiatives go beyond «negative coordination» (Scharpf 1997) – a minimum form of coordination involving non-interference whereby administrations seek to avoid sharing each other's programs – and move towards «positive coordination», building greater coherence to achieve better overall government performance

Joined-up-government initiatives, such as the NAV reform and the reforms within the field of internal security, have a strong positive symbolic flavour and are generally seen as a good thing, introducing «magic concepts» such as partnerships, collaboration, or lead agencies (Pollitt and Hupe 2011). However, it is also important to point out that the «silo mentalities» that these reform initiatives are supposed to bridge also exist for good reasons

³ Website: <http://rokkan.uni.no/nav/>

(Page 2005). Well-defined vertical and horizontal organizational boundaries should not only be seen as a symptom of obsolescent thinking (Pollitt 2003). Division of labour and specialization are inevitable features of modern organizations, implying that coordinative initiatives will be difficult to implement. Working horizontally is sometimes very important, but also a very time- and resource-consuming activity.

According to an *instrumental perspective*, formal organization and plans matter. Here, *emergency preparedness and crisis management* is seen as a process of deliberate and strategic choices scoring high on social control as well as rational calculation. The organization for internal security cannot, however, be seen as the result of a coherent, planned and pure hierarchical coordinated procedure. There has generally been more agreement about the problem structure than about the organizational structure and despite long existing fragmentation and weak coordination it has been difficult to establish strong new hierarchy- based administrative arrangements that challenge the principle of ministerial responsibility. Coordination problems are instead largely tackled by establishing secondary structures based on collegial bodies, boards, councils, networks, informal areas and collaborative arrangements. These supplementary arrangements challenge existing organizational forms but do not overturn them. They are often temporary, without a clear mandate and aimed at handling problems surfacing between organizations, designed to avoid negative and move towards positive coordination. This implies that negotiations between different interests matter alongside hierarchy and that political conflict over ideas and underlying assumptions of policy issues are important for motivating change (Peters, Pierre and King 2005). The lead organization approach is thus constrained by actors with their own interests and authority.

The structural perspective is also only partly supported when we look at the *welfare administration reform*. The NAV-reform represents a complex mixture of specialization by purpose or tasks and specialization by geography, which makes coordination challenging, especially for managerial executives. The managers also have to combine coordination by hierarchy and by networks which tend to enhance the complexity. The NAV reform was an administrative reform aimed also at strengthening the steering capacity of the welfare administration. In response, a complex multi-level system including a mixed order of hierarchy and network has been set up. The network is represented by the partnership model between the central and local government while the hierarchy extends from the central government – i.e. the Ministry, via the central agency to the regional units and below. An organizational model that implies use of both forms at the same time is challenging.

Our analysis reveals two reform processes that have produced complex solutions that in different ways attend to a balance of different principles of specialization and coordination. The complexity that emerges reflects the fact that hierarchical efforts to control reform processes are constrained by problems of rational calculation (Dahl and Lindblom 1953). Our analysis also shows that expected effects are difficult to fulfil. The overall performance of the new system has not lived up to expectations. In the case of NAV, even though central control has been achieved, the local partnerships and offices are struggling to deliver on the main reform goals (Askim et al., 2009).

Although evaluators frequently state that it is still too early to conclude, the NAV-reform and the case of internal security have produced several potentially transposable lessons. One lesson concerns the importance of *political context*. In Norway, there is a constant tension between central state power and local authority and autonomy. Considering the case of the welfare administration, the One-stop Shops were based on fixed, regulated and binding cooperation between central and local government. Partnerships were incorporated in local agreements between the regional NAV offices and individual municipalities, and they were not voluntary. However, there was a trade-off in the partnership arrangements between the state's need for standardization and the municipalities' need for local adaptation and flexibility. This tension between hierarchical and network arrangements is reflected within both the welfare administration and the internal security policy area.

A *cultural perspective* would predict emergency preparedness and crisis response according to the established institutional culture. Our analysis shows that the organizational solutions seem to be very much in line with the existing historical path of organizing for *emergency preparedness and crisis management*. The institutionalized tradition of separate ministerial responsibility continues to stand strong within the Norwegian polity. This constrains efforts to strengthen horizontal coordination. So far, there have only been minor organizational changes, in line with the previous cautious approach. The organizational innovation of a lead agency or ministry is introduced but constrained by the principle of ministerial responsibility. This supports the view that established arrangements and institutions are infused with values, identities, traditions, culture and established routines and rules (Selznick 1957). These features have a significant influence on emergency preparedness and crisis management. The relevant institutions and the civil servants who work in them do not easily adjust to changing external pressure or to shifting signals from political executives. Thus, path dependent processes and political and institutional conflicts characterize the policy area (Peters, Pierre and King 2005). At the same time, this is a policy area that often does not get attention from politicians unless there is a major crisis. Thus, political conflicts tend to play out within the institutional structures and among civil servants who defend their institutional territory.

In line with the concept of bounded rationality the executives in these organizations seem more preoccupied with minimizing decision-making costs than with maximizing goal attainment. The consequence of such behavior favors the status quo and actors search for solutions close to previous ones (Cyert and March 1963). New organizational solutions have to pass a cultural compatibility test, and tend to choose solutions that do not break fundamentally with existing arrangements (Brunsson and Olsen 1993). Previous decisions represent an administrative policy heritage that constrains choices at a later stage. Embedded institutional arrangements, such as the principle of ministerial responsibility, therefore constrain possible future administrative arrangements within the area of internal security. The principle of ministerial responsibility has produced strong line ministries that defend their portfolio from external intruders. At the same time the MJ has had rather little discretion and enforcement authority. This indicates a change process characterized by strong veto players (Mahoney and Thelen 2010). The interpretational leeway concerning the Ministry's role as a coordinator and driving force has only been exploited to a small

extent. The MJ seems to have had a more relaxed approach to the policy field, interpreting its mandate rather narrowly. The result is institutional change characterized by layering, where new, but cautious, organizational arrangements have been added to existing ones.

The *cultural perspective* can also be used to explain the decision-making structure in the process in the *welfare administration* case, at least partially. The process may be seen in terms of competing types of appropriateness among the actors (Christensen, Fimreite and Lægreid 2007). The experts, following a professional identity, saw few reasons for supporting real mergers in the structure. This can be seen as a sort of path-dependency. The Storting (Parliament) claimed that merging the three services into a more holistic structure was the most appropriate solution, simply because it believed that this was the way to solve coordination problems. In addition, the government deemed it appropriate to focus chiefly on the multi-user problem, resulting in its proposal to merge employment and insurance, without daring to touch, for political reasons, local responsibility for the social services. All the main actors were concerned that cultural traditions would hamper the desired effects of the reform, and they hence stressed the need to develop a new common culture, both between the spheres of employment and insurance, in the newly merged employment and welfare administration, and also with regard to the local One-Stop Shops and collaboration with the locally based social services. It turned out, however, to be difficult to create a new holistic generalist street level profession in the welfare administration due to different professional identities and a large task portfolio.

Emphasising the importance of hierarchy and network solutions, our analysis shows that the WoG reforms are characterized by combination, complexity, layering and hybridization (Christensen et al. 2007, Streeck and Thelen 2005). Public sector reforms do not necessarily replace each other. Instead, new reforms are added to old ones. Administrative reforms can be understood as compound, combining different organizational principles and being based on multiple factors working together in a complex mix (Egeberg and Trondal 2009). They are multi-dimensional and represent «mixed» orders, combine competing, inconsistent and contradictory organizational principles and structures that co-exist, and balance interests and values (Olsen 2007). The NAV-reform in Norway represents a mix of traditional Weberian bureaucratic traditions, NPM elements and WoG characteristics. Also the reorganization of the societal security is a complex mix of traditional hierarchy with strong line ministries, collegial network arrangements and intermediate lead agency and ministry models. It is not a question of either hierarchy or networks, but of how the mixtures of these forms of coordination change and how the trade-off between them is altered. This means that we have to go beyond the idea of a single organizational principle to understand how public organizations work and are reformed, and look at them as composite organizations (Ibid.).

Conclusion

The two case studies in this paper illustrate how different instruments can be used to address coordination problems. Reforms aiming to strengthen coordination have been initiated to increase government capacity, to address «wicked problems» in society and to

counter the fragmentation brought about by NPM reforms, but also to solve more immediate problems arising within individual organizations. The new coordination arrangements seek to integrate different parts of the public sector and to foster understanding and joint problem-solving across organizational boundaries. However, the new coordination arrangements have (this far) produced mixed outcomes. Bringing different public sector and societal actors together has not been an easy task.

One lesson concerns the importance of *political context*. Reforms that do not take the institutional context into consideration tend to run into problems (Andrew 2013). In Norway, there is a constant tension between central state power and local authority and autonomy. The One-stop Shops were based on fixed, regulated and binding cooperation between central and local government. Partnerships were incorporated in local agreements between the regional NAV offices and individual municipalities, and they were not voluntary. However, there was a trade-off in the partnership arrangements between the state's need for standardization and the municipalities' need for local adaptation and flexibility. The central agency worked hard for a mandatory arrangement, a unitary management principle and a standardized task portfolio for the local front-line offices. In the end, the local authorities managed to keep at least some of their autonomy through a more flexible solution, allowing for some freedom in terms of management model as well as task portfolio.

Measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of coordination arrangements is difficult. Hard facts are often missing or difficult to find, and most of the information is therefore based on perceived expert assessments. There is also an attribution problem, since it is not easy to isolate the effects of the coordination arrangements from other on-going reforms and changes in public administration. Public sector coordination does not only address efficiency and effectiveness but also wider issues of participation, legitimacy, trust, power and political control. Certain coordination instruments may be efficient in terms of resources used or how quickly results are achieved, but unsatisfactory from the perspective of stakeholder inclusion and legitimacy. It is often difficult for a single arrangement to yield positive results all round, and normally trade-offs have to be made (see also Hood 1991). Insofar that the coordination practices address «wicked problems», these are by definition difficult to resolve, partly because presumed changes in social behaviour are not under the control of public sector institutions. Wicked problems are typically multi-dimensional, poorly bounded, vaguely formulated and not easily broken down. This makes it very difficult to evaluate the success of the corresponding coordination instrument. The new ways of joint working also pose new challenges with regard to accountability, and consequently the legitimacy of decision-making and institutions. As noted in other studies, accountability relationships become increasingly complex and hybrid in situations where the government acquires a more horizontal and multi-level character (Michels and Meijer, 2008).

Generally, the horizontal inter-organizational and collegial coordinating arrangements seem to supplement rather than replace traditional hierarchical coordination producing more complex organizational arrangements. Making 'wicked problems' governable is a big challenge. A stronger emphasis on how to manage networks might be a way forward (Flynn et al. 2013). Instead of replacing hierarchy with networks, partnership and intermediate

organizations pragmatic solutions might fruitful (Ansell 2011), combining formal elements from a structural-instrumental approach and informal elements of organizations based on institutional-cultural approaches.

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