



WICKED PROBLEMS AND THE CHALLENGE
OF TRANSBOUNDARY COORDINATION: THE
CASE OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND
CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN NORWAY

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The COCOPS project (Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future) seeks to comparatively and quantitatively assess the impact of New Public Management-style reforms in European countries, drawing on a team of European public administration scholars from 11 universities in 10 countries. It will analyse the impact of reforms in public management and public services that address citizens' service needs and social cohesion in Europe. Evaluating the extent and consequences of NPM's alleged fragmenting tendencies and the resulting need for coordination is a key part of assessing these impacts. It is funded under the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme as a Small or Medium-Scale Focused Research Project (2011-2014).

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Abstract

This paper addresses organization for internal security, which is a typical 'wicked problem'. The focus is on the organization for emergency preparedness and crisis management related to the terrorist attack in Norway in 2011. The main attention is on the coordination role of the Ministry of Justice. A special focus is on the constraints for external horizontal coordination for an overarching ministry in a governmental apparatus with strong line ministries. What coordination problems were identified? Did the crisis lead to institutional changes, and if so, what characterized the change process and the outcome(s)? The analysis is based on a structural-instrumental perspective and a cultural-institutional perspective. The database is in-depth qualitative document analysis and interviews. The analysis reveals that there is a strong consensus when it comes to diagnosing the problems, which are broadly identified as fragmentation, pulverization of accountability and weak coordination arrangements. At the same time, the suggested solutions are beset with ambiguity and conflicts, and there is a mismatch between problems and available solutions. The organizational changes have been cautious and incremental, in spite of the serious external shock. We have observed a reluctant and gradual upgrading of the MJ as an overarching coordinating ministry without challenging the fundamental principles of ministerial and constitutional responsibility.

Keywords

Wicked problems, internal security, coordination, emergency preparedness, crisis management

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1. Introduction

On 22 July 2011, Norway was struck by a terror attack of unprecedented magnitude. A bomb explosion in the Central Government Complex destroyed several central ministries, and a the same terrorist shot a large number of young people from the Labor Party's youth organization attending a camp on the island of Utøya. In total, 77 people died, and many were seriously injured. The attack was a terrible shock in a country seen as a peaceful and open democracy, which had never experienced anything like this before (Rykkja, Fimreite and Læg Reid, 2011). It struck at the very core of the country's democratic institutions, thus putting the government and Cabinet under particular pressure to react appropriately.

The policy area of internal security and safety can be characterized as a typical 'wicked problem' (Harmon and Mayer, 1986; Head, 2008) transcending political-administrative levels, ministerial areas and public organizations. It is a highly complex field involving unpredictable and in some cases unknown cause-and-effect relationships. Added to this, crises are increasingly trans-boundary, transcending the borders of administrative levels, ministerial areas and organizations (Ansell, Boin and Keller, 2010; Boin, 2008). These factors represent important challenges for crisis prevention and management.

Earlier research has highlighted that coordination is crucial to secure necessary emergency preparedness and potent crisis management (Fimreite, Lango, Læg Reid & Rykkja, 2011; Kettl, 2003). Within the field, coordination is both a major challenge, and at the same time seen as the answer (Brattberg, 2012). Structurally, Norway is characterized by weak horizontal coordination in crisis management and internal security at the central government level, and the terrorist attack certainly revealed significant coordination problems between the different public authorities involved (Lango, Læg Reid & Rykkja, 2011). How a major terrorist attack is handled in such a fragmented organizational context is an important research question (Christensen, Læg Reid and Rykkja 2012).

The report issued by the government inquiry commission – the 22 July Commission (hereafter, the Commission) – a year after the attacks (NOU, 2012) seriously criticized several aspects of the country's state of preparedness for emergencies and of its crisis management. A lack of coordination was a central issue. This paper takes a closer look at how the Commission analyzed and assessed the situation, and discusses what the Commission

identified as the lessons learned and future recommendations. What main coordination problems did the Commission identify? Did the events lead to institutional changes, and if so, what characterized the change process and the outcome(s)?

We are particular interested in coordination at the central government level. Therefore, our paper focuses on the preparedness of the Ministry of Justice (MJ) and its role in handling the crisis of 22 July. The Ministry is responsible for overall coordination and is expected to act as a driving force in internal security and crisis management. Starting from institutional and organizational theory, our main assumption is that both formal organization and cultural traits are crucial to understanding how public administrations prepare for emergencies and crisis management and how they respond when faced with such emergencies.

Developments within the policy field of internal security can be analyzed in the context of changes within public administration in general. Coordination is a keyword here, too, especially in the wake of the New Public Management (NPM)-based reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, which encouraged decentralization and structural devolution. More recently, however, the structures introduced by NPM have increasingly been supplemented by arrangements that emphasize the need for more coordination across sectors and levels. Labeled 'post-NPM', these arrangements have led to hybrid structures, i.e. structures that combine different organizational principles (Bogdanor, 2005; Bouckaert, Peters and Verhoest, 2010; Christensen and Lægreid, 2007). In addition, a greater awareness of the threat posed by natural disasters, pandemics and terrorism has politicized this policy field (Ansell et al., 2010). Both developments make the field of internal security an increasingly relevant research topic.

Our analysis is based on two perspectives from organization theory. The structural-instrumental perspective posits the importance of formal organization, while the cultural-institutional perspective focuses on historical traditions and path-dependency (Christensen, Fimreite & Lægreid, 2007). The analysis is based on an in-depth qualitative document analysis. A main source is the final report from the Commission. The findings are also informed by several self-evaluation reports from involved public authorities, relevant government white papers, and reports from parliamentary debates and hearings as well as from affected agencies and ministries. Another important source is interviews with top civil servants and ministers carried out by the Commission and publicized after the report.

The paper proceeds in four parts. First, we present the central concepts and the two theoretical perspectives. Second, we lay out the central contextual factors, crucial principles and

organizational arrangements. Thirdly, we describe the state of preparedness for emergencies, crisis management and the lessons learned in the wake of the terrorist attack. Fourth, we analyze and explain the process. The paper closes with a concluding section in which the findings and implications are discussed.

2. A Theoretical Framework

Central concepts

A clarification of what we understand by *crisis* and *coordination* is in order. We see *crisis* as ‘a serious threat to the basic structures or the fundamental values and norms of a system which under time pressure and highly uncertain circumstances necessitates making vital decisions’ (Boin et al., 2005:5). Thus a crisis is characterized by uncertainty, ambiguity and unpredictability that make optimization and rational decision-making difficult. Decisions have to be made in complex, disorganized, chaotic and dynamic circumstances. Transboundary crises are crises that transcend the borders of administrative levels, ministerial areas and organizational borders. They typically challenge existing interfaces between organizations and thereby create coordination problems (Fimreite et al., 2011; Kettl, 2003).

Gulick (1937) distinguishes between coordination by formal organization and coordination by ideas, the latter alluding to culture. Structurally we distinguish between an external-internal dimension of coordination and a vertical-horizontal dimension (Table 1). The first dimension distinguishes between coordination within a ministry and coordination between different ministries, the second between vertical coordination between administrative levels and horizontal coordination between organizations on the same level. The vertical dimension of coordination is more hierarchy-based while horizontal coordination is more network-based (Bouckaert et al., 2010).

Table 1. Different dimensions of coordination.

	Vertical coordination	Horizontal coordination
<i>Internal (intra-organizational) coordination</i>	Between political and administrative executives or between top civil servants and lower-level officials	Between departments within a ministry
<i>External (inter-organizational) coordination</i>	Between ministry and subordinate agencies	Between ministries or agencies

If we take the MJ as the unit of analysis, *vertical intra-organizational* coordination means central efforts to coordinate between political and administrative executives and between different levels within the ministry. *Horizontal intra-organizational* coordination is related to

coordination between different departments within the ministry. *Vertical inter-organizational* coordination means coordination between the ministry and subordinate agencies and authorities. *Horizontal inter-organizational coordination* means coordination between ministries, in this case between the MJ, other line ministries and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

In an administrative system with strong line ministries, departmentalization and silo arrangements coordination is often limited to 'negative' coordination (Scharpf, 1994). This means that the actors agree that they should avoid encroaching on each other's programs and policies. This is a kind of 'minimum coordination' implying non-interference to minimize conflicts between administrative domains. Each minister has the right to control policy and administration within his/her policy area. A major challenge is to move from negative towards positive coordination by building integrated and coherent programs, arrangements and services to obtain better overall results to meet joint trans-boundary goals (Bouckaert et al., 2010). The Norwegian system is characterized by strong line ministries. This creates a hierarchical system with weaker horizontal coordination within the field of internal security (Lango et al., 2011). This has, until now, resulted in a lack of transboundary collaboration within the field.

Recently, both vertical and horizontal coordination problems have received renewed attention through the initiation of 'whole-of-government' and 'joined-up government' programs (Christensen and Lægreid, 2006; 2007; Christensen, Fimreite and Lægreid, 2011). The main goal has been to move public-sector organizations back from the disintegration or fragmentation of NPM to more integration and coordination (Christensen and Lægreid, 2007). The fragmentation brought about by NPM led on the one hand to an increasing recognition that many societal problems cannot be compartmentalized along existing sectoral lines and solved within one ministerial area alone and hence to pressure for more horizontal coordination. On the other hand, political executives found themselves in a situation where they lacked the necessary control, influence and information, but were still held accountable. This resulted in new efforts to strengthen central capacity and control, particularly in politically salient sectors (Dahlstrøm, Peters and Pierre, 2011). A third point is that when confronted with an increasingly insecure world threatened by terrorism, financial and environmental concerns, natural disasters and pandemics, national states seek to strengthen central political control and at the same time see an increasing need for contingent coordination and network approaches (Christensen and Painter, 2004; Kettl, 2003; Wise, 2002).

Consequently, challenges within the policy area of internal security put existing forms of government coordination on the agenda. Kettl (2003) launched the concept of *contingent coordination* within crisis management, according to which coordination should be adapted to existing problems. However, the fact that each crisis is likely to be different from the previous one creates a need for flexibility and collaboration, both between different actors within different policy areas and on different administrative levels. This is necessary to utilize existing capacity in an unpredictable and complex situation. In these circumstances vertical coordination has to be supplemented by coordination through networks.

In many cases, a crisis can be traced back to organizational failure or poor risk management. Our theoretical point of departure is that different types of coordination and specialization will have important consequences for actors within public bodies, for the public bodies themselves, and for the policy field affected (Egeberg, 2003). The organizational layout of the internal security and safety field is therefore of crucial importance (Fimreite et al., 2011). Organizational forms affect which issues get attention and which are ignored, how the issues are grouped together and how they are separated. Organizational arrangements will therefore have vital importance for emergency preparedness and crisis management.

Explanatory theory: An instrumental and a cultural perspective

An *instrumental organizational perspective* directs our attention towards formal structural arrangements (Christensen, Fimreite & Lægveid, 2007). Here, formal organization is seen as an instrument to achieve certain goals. Rationality is related to the formal organizational structures, and creates both limitations and options for actors. The formal structure of public organizations channel and influence the models of thought and the actual decision-making behavior of civil servants (Egeberg, 2003; Simon, 1957). The underlying behavioral logic is a 'logic of consequence' (March, 1994). Here, 'bounded' rational actors are assumed to be able to predict the consequences of their choices and find the appropriate means to reach their goals (Simon, 1957). Major preconditions for such effects are that leaders score high on rational calculation and political control (Dahl and Lindblom, 1953). This means that they must have relatively clear intentions and goals, choose structures that correspond with these goals and have insight into the potential effects of the structures chosen and also that they have power to implement decisions and plans. A distinction can be made between a hierarchically oriented variant, where the leaders' control and unambiguous analytical-rational calculation is central, and a negotiation-based variant (March and Olsen, 1983). The negotiation-based variant allows for the articulation of a variety of interests, and for

compromise and negotiation between organizations and actors whose goals and interests are partially conflicting.

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. The challenges of coordination vary between organizations depending on whether the structural specialization is based on purpose, process, clientele or geography. If a public administration is, for example, based on the principle of purpose, the main coordinative challenge is to get different sectoral administrations to work together on cross-sectoral problems. If process is the basic principle, getting different professions and experts to join forces is a central challenge. In this paper we analyze how the Commission describes and thinks about the structural challenges of coordination when it analyzes the Norwegian government's reaction to the terrorist act.

In contrast to the instrumental perspective, *a cultural perspective* emphasizes informal norms, values and practices that have developed over time, through a process of institutionalization. Here, central features are the result of a mutual adaptation to internal and external pressure, creating certain 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; Pierson, 2004). Related to core organizing, competence, goal groups and services is a ‘logic of appropriateness’ (March and Olsen, 1989). A relevant question in our case is how much and in what ways the emergency preparedness and crisis management were influenced by such cultural factors.

A high level of mutual trust tends to enhance appropriate behavior and vice versa. In civil service systems characterized by strong vertical sector relations, such as Norway, civil servants know what they are supposed to do and how to act. This creates and maintains trust relations within the different sectors. It may modify structural constraints, but can also constrain trust and coordination across sectors (Christensen et al., 2007).

Yet again, major crises like a terrorist attack, can produce a ‘punctuated equilibrium’ and imply a shock effect that might alter institutionalized beliefs and routines and open the way for more radical change (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1984). Streek and Thelen (2005) diversify such an approach by distinguishing between two dimensions of institutional changes, depending on whether they are incremental or abrupt, and whether the result of change is continuity or discontinuity.

The theoretical perspectives presented here are used in a supplementary manner (Rones, 1997). This furthers an understanding that organizational processes, here within the field of internal security and safety, can be viewed neither one-sidedly as a result of instrumental processes and leader strategies, nor merely as a product of history or adaption to external myth. In this way, processes of policy formation and change are characterized by complex interaction between different factors. We argue that this is vital when one wants to understand the organization and development of risk and crisis management.

3. The Norwegian Context

Ministerial responsibility

Strong sectoral ministries and relatively weak super-ministries responsible for coordination across ministerial areas characterize the central government in Norway (Christensen and Lægreid, 1998). The PMO has traditionally been small with weak coordination power. Individual ministerial responsibility, meaning that the minister bears the ultimate responsibility for actions within the ministry and of subordinate agencies, is a core organizing concept. Specialization by purpose or tasks is a dominant principle, making it difficult to establish coordinative arrangements across ministerial areas. This indicates that ministries operate as separate ‘silos’ with limited ability to apprehend crosscutting policy issues (Bouckaert, Ormond and Peters, 2000). Consequently, vertical dominates over horizontal coordination.

Over the past decade, two features have strengthened vertical coordination. First, management-by-objectives-and-results has mainly addressed how superior authorities can control their subordinate agencies and bodies via different forms of performance-management techniques. Second, structural devolution efforts have given central agencies enhanced autonomy.

Norway is also characterized by a consensus-oriented and collaborative decision-making style. This may modify both vertical and horizontal fragmentation. Corporative arrangements of consulting and participating and compromises are more common than confrontations. Norway is also a high trust society (Rothstein and Stolle, 2003), where generalized trust among citizens, as well as citizens’ trust in government and mutual trust relations between politicians and bureaucrats, and between different public bodies, is generally high. Added to this, Norway is regarded as a safe haven on the periphery of Europe, where until 2011 there had not been any major crises or terrorist attacks (Rykkja et al., 2011). High trust also

characterizes the field of crisis management and internal security (Christensen, Fimreite and Læg Reid, 2011).

Principles for internal security

Three crucial principles guide the authorities responsible for internal security in Norway (St.meld. nr. 22, 2007–2008): the principle of liability, the principle of decentralization and the principle of conformity (or similarity).¹ The liability and decentralization principle in particular create tensions between different coordination forms. The liability principle implies that every ministry and authority is responsible for internal security and safety within its own sector. This is closely related to the doctrine of individual ministerial responsibility, and emphasizes strong sector ministries and vertical coordination. The decentralization principle, on the other hand, emphasizes that a crisis should be managed at the lowest operational level possible. Here, specialization by geography is an important organizing concept. Herein lies an important (organizational) paradox: The principle of liability implies strong vertical coordination. The decentralization principle, on the other hand, implies strong horizontal coordination across sectors on a low level.

The principle of conformity (or similarity) creates further organizational pressure whereby it stresses that the organizational forms in a crisis situation should be as similar to the daily organizational forms as possible. This can be particularly difficult to maintain in ‘extraordinary’ crises. When a major disaster happens, it becomes crucial to supplement existing formal organizations with improvisation and temporary organizations (Czarniawska, 2009).

Organizing for internal security and safety – a reluctant reformer

The most important developments in Norwegian internal security and safety policy since the Cold War have been a gradual strengthening of the Ministry of Justice’s overall coordination responsibilities and the establishment of new directorates, agencies and more ad hoc organizational arrangements under the ministry (Lango et al., 2011). This includes the establishment of a Government Emergency Management Council and a Government Emergency Support Unit within the MJ. Lango, Læg Reid and Rykkja (2012) emphasize that the principle of ministerial superiority has over the years set distinct limitations on how legislative and organizational proposals are formed, followed up on, and carried through. In

¹ After the terrorist attacks, a fourth central principle was introduced: the principle of collaboration (St. Meld 29, 2011-2013). We discuss this further on page 15.

general, organizational forms established after the Cold War have been strengthened, resulting in a somewhat cautious adaptation to a new situation.

The development reveals important coordination issues. Especially the relationship between the military defense and the civil sector has been strained, characterized by a lack of communication and turf wars (Dyndal, 2010; Læg Reid and Serigstad, 2006; Serigstad, 2003). Over the years there has been an important shift of attention away from military defense towards the civil sector and internal security and safety (Fimreite et al., 2011; NOU, 2006). This has resulted in new organizational arrangements.² A strengthening of coordinating agencies subordinate to MJ, such as the establishment and development of the Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning (DSB), has been a general trend. The MJ's coordinative role, both vertically and horizontally, has been a constant challenge, and the field is characterized as fragmented. However, the principle of liability continues to stand strong. This continues to create important tensions between organizational units, sectors and administrative levels.

Experiences with certain crises have revealed that the responsible authorities are not always well prepared. A particularly relevant example is the handling of the tsunami disaster in South East Asia in 2004. The crisis revealed serious challenges related to coordination and specialization between responsible ministries and led to important reorganization in the central administration (Jaffery and Lango, 2011). Still, it did not result in completely new arrangements, but rather in incremental adjustments to the existing structure. This seems to follow a rather common pattern familiar in Norway, too. Indeed, Norway has in general been labeled a reluctant reformer compared to other countries (Christensen and Læg Reid, 2007).

4. The terrorist attack – coordination challenges

The diagnosis – what happened and why?

Emergency preparedness

The terrorist attack exposed serious shortfalls in the government's emergency preparedness and ability to prevent and handle a terrorist attack. The Commission attributed this to a lack of risk awareness, an inability to learn from previous experiences and exercises, and a lack of implementation capacity, especially related to crisis planning. The Commission's assessment

² One example is the establishment of the National Security Authority (NSM), responsible for protecting vital national security interests. NSM originated from the Defense Command. It is administratively subordinate to the Ministry of Defense, but subordinate to the MJ in civil matters. We discuss tensions related to this further on page 15.

exposed a fragmented policy area, accountability pulverization, fragmentation, and weak coordination. This diagnosis is close to the conclusions of previous research (Fimreite et al., 2011). The existing coordination problems can be illustrated by looking, firstly, at the implementation of a security project in 2004 (the Government Complex Security Project) and, secondly, at the auditing procedures within this policy area.

In 2004, the Government Security Council decided to implement a number of specific measures to secure the Government Complex against potential attacks. One measure was to block certain streets to general traffic. The work was claimed to have high priority. Nonetheless, seven years later, a car bomb was detonated close to the entrance of the main building hosting the PMO and the MJ. The Commission revealed that no professional routines had been established to ensure that the Government Complex Security Project was implemented with the intended speed and quality. Thus, adequate and relevant provisional measures had not been implemented. The Commission attributed this to accountability and responsibility pulverization and a deadlock between different authorities with central responsibilities: the PMO, the Ministry for Government Administration, the MJ, the City of Oslo and the Police Agency (NOU, 2012).

According to the analysis of the Commission, the MJ seemed to have a rather 'laid back' approach to the project. It lacked commitment and seemed little willing to act as a coordinating body and driving force to make sure it was implemented. Our analysis of interviews with centrally placed public servants further reveals that the Ministry was criticized for lack of initiative on a strategic level and insufficient follow-up on the operative level. The top civil servants in the ministry were 'listening, but not dynamic and proactive' (Interview, Secretary General PMO). This lack of initiative and risk awareness made it difficult to get the Minister of Government Administration's attention. She had specific responsibility for security in the Governmental Complex and was also heavily criticized for lack of involvement (NOU, 2012). Instead, the PMO had to play a more active role even though it had no responsibility within the area. The MJ was also criticized for its weak coordination:

In spite of the fact that the Ministry of Justice's responsibility for emergency preparedness has been underlined by several white papers, its role is still ambiguous. An important lesson after July 22 is that the Ministry of Justice has to become more clear and specific and powerful in its coordinating role for emergency preparedness (Interview, Secretary General PMO).

Further coordination problems are revealed if we look at the audit and control systems within the field. Both the Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB) and the National Security Authority (NSM) are subordinate agencies under the MJ, responsible for trans-boundary coordination, control and auditing within the field. However, the tension between the liability principle and the need for horizontal coordination is obvious for both.

First, DSB had considerable problems with its hierarchical relationship with the Ministry. Interviews reveal that the director felt that DSB had been more proactive than the Ministry. DSB had taken a number of initiatives that it felt did not get the attention of the Ministry's leadership. The Ministry's Rescue and Emergency Planning Department, the superior authority to DSB, struggled to get access upwards in the Ministry (Interview, Secretary General MJ and Director, DSB). The following quote confirms these vertical tensions:

DSB experiences that the contact with MJ still has clear potential for improvement. Generally it is difficult to get the ministry's attention in matters where it would be natural to have a tighter dialogue between DSB and MJ. It is absolutely necessary that the dialogue with the MJ is strengthened" (DSB letter to the MJ, 25.9 2012).

Second, the whole auditing system within the field seems problematic. DSB is responsible for periodic auditing of the different line ministries' plans for emergency preparedness. It has, however, no strong regulatory instruments and the reports are kept secret. DSB also audits its own parent ministry, the MJ. The audit reports on other line ministries are submitted to the MJ, who is then responsible for handling any issues. According to DSB, it is a major problem that the principle of liability and ministerial responsibility tend to trump attempts to conduct inter-organizational auditing (Interview Director DSB, and current Minister of Justice).

The problems are related to the Ministry's assigned role as a driving force for internal security, which does not seem quite clear. In general, there is a lack of strong steering instruments and enforcements tools within the field. The Ministry can address shortcomings pointed out in the auditing process, and if they are serious enough bring these issues to the Cabinet. However, according to interviews with the Secretary General in the MJ, this has never happened. Generally, the audit reports have been rather cautious, and the Ministry seems reluctant to criticize other ministries (Interview, Secretary General MJ). All this results in an auditing system based on ritual and symbolic action rather than effective enforcement.

The functioning of NSM further adds to the picture of problematic coordination. NSM has a hybrid organizational form. It is administratively subordinate to the Ministry of Defense

(MD), but in civil matters reports to the MJ. Collaboration between the two ministries is strained. According to both the Minister of Justice and the Director of NSM, reporting to two ministers is not a good solution, and there is ambiguity concerning what MJ and MD are supposed to follow up (Interview, Minister of Justice and Director, NSM). The joint arrangement results in tensions concerning allocation of resources, establishment of central goals and priorities, and adequate steering measures. The director of NSM claims that the sector principle is a barrier to coherent security, and that the line ministries are not willing to let the MJ take the lead (Interview Director, NSM).

The MJ is responsible for ensuring that NSM meets the requirements of the Security Act of 1998 on the civil side such as auditing the securing of vital objects. The act itself is, however, a responsibility of the Ministry of Defense. A great number of stakeholders raised concerns when the act was prepared, and it took as long as 13 years to develop clarifying regulations under the Act. Until these regulations were implemented, there was no oversight or auditing that could have identified significant security shortcomings. In its remarks to the Commission, NSM states:

But one did not have a minimum level of specific regulations to control against. In the hearings there was significant opposition to important parts of the regulations. Added to that, there was significant overlap and border difficulties related to sector specific regulations, the tasks of the police and DSB. All this constrained the NSM's audit capacity (Letter to the Ministry, 7.9 2012).

This situation illustrates the problem that trans-boundary coordinating bodies have in the Norwegian central government apparatus. A major conclusion is that the principle of constitutional responsibility is so strong that those involved are reluctant to bring up cross-boundary issues. Vertical coordination prevails, although there also are challenges in the relationship between the ministry and the subordinate agencies.

Crisis management

In addition to the problems related to effective emergency preparedness, the Commission report reveals critical problems concerning crisis management. Importantly, the MJ largely did not operate in accordance with the principle of a 'lead ministry'. The ministry itself was heavily damaged by the bomb explosion, so in practice the Government Emergency Support Unit took over several of the crisis management tasks originally assigned to MJ (Interview, Director MJ). The Support Unit had to identify tasks on its own. According to the MJ's own emergency plans, as a lead ministry it should have established emergency response staff. This

did not happen. Furthermore, the existing 'Civil Emergency Preparedness System' was not implemented. This made it difficult to separate the crisis management tasks from efforts to safeguard the ministry's own operations and staff.

The Commission's investigation further revealed that the Government Emergency Management Council had operational problems. According to the Commission, the Council concentrated on the wrong issues. There was too much focus on the respective ministries' situation and how to get the government apparatus back to work, rather than how they could contribute to handling the unfolding crisis situation. The overall strategic crisis management and coordination problems between central government and the police were not adequately addressed when the situation escalated (Interview, Deputy Secretary General, MD). Practical questions were addressed at the expense of more overarching strategic issues (Interview, Deputy Secretary General, MJ). At the same time, the crisis was seen as so extensive that all ministries were invited to participate in the Council. Thus, the threshold for bringing up issues that were not core tasks of central crisis management was lowered. Also, because the MJ had not established emergency response staff, the Council had to handle tasks beyond its mandate.

An internal evaluation of the Government Emergency Management Council revealed further management and coordination failures (JBD, 2012a). Information from the police to the Council, the MJ and the Cabinet, and eventually to the public, was slow and inadequate. Media reports were frequently more up to date than the information emanating from government. This eventually led to the establishment of a direct line of communication between the Police Directorate and the PMO, circumventing established communication lines.

The medicine – what is to be done?

The Commission stated that the lessons learned after the terrorist attacks in 2011 were related more to deficient leadership interaction, culture and attitudes, than to a lack of resources or to a need for new legislation, organizational changes or important value choices (NOU, 2012: Chapter 14 & 16). Despite its criticism, then, the Commission seemed satisfied with the more incremental adjustments within the field over the past 10 years. Formal organization was largely not seen as a limiting factor (Ibid.: 456), and the Commission's recommendations did not include any major changes to the existing formal organizational structure (Ibid.: 257).

The most important recommendation from the Commission was that the leaders at all levels of the administration should work systematically to strengthen fundamental attitudes and culture related to risk awareness, implementation capacity, interaction, ICT utilization and

result-oriented leadership. Furthermore, it recommended that the Government Security Council and the Emergency Council should have regular meetings, a modernized set of plans should be established, drilled and implemented, and better routines facilitating communication and the flow of information should be developed.

From our analytical perspective, there are two significant problems with this medicine. First, a paradox arises when the Commission on the one hand reveals that the formal organization failed in terms of both prevention and crisis management, and on the other hand states that organizational changes are not essential. The MJ had not assumed a role as a driving force for internal security and efforts to secure both vertical and horizontal coordination in the ministry had failed. Furthermore, the ministry did not operate as a lead ministry in the crisis management phase, and the Government Emergency Council failed. In spite of that, the Commission concluded that the existing formal organizational structure was appropriate. Second, the Commission itself pointed to the problems of fragmentation, coordination, communication, administrative culture and leadership, but failed to link this to the formal organization structure. However, leadership, coordination and communication are core organizational features, and to a great extent constrained by organizational structures. This is also the case with administrative culture, an informal structure that develops within structural arrangements dependent on organizational arrangements. Our conclusion therefore is that the Commission based its analysis on a rather narrow concept of organization (Fimreite et al. 2012).

5. Lessons learned – institutional changes?

After the terrorist attacks the MJ's preparedness and crisis management capacity was heavily debated. Criticism came from several internal evaluations and was supported by the Commission's report. An internal report on the MJ's responsibility recommended a strengthening of its coordinative role and crisis management functions. This was to be done through an internal restructuring, the establishment of the MJ as a permanent lead ministry, a strengthening of the Government Emergency Support Unit, and a tightening up of supervision and control of internal security and crisis management within central government (JBD, 2012b). Signaling a renewed focus on preparedness, the MJ was renamed the Ministry of Justice and Public Security in January 2012. The top two civil servants in the ministry were also replaced.

As we described above, the terrorist attacks put the functioning of the Government Emergency Management Council and the Support Unit to the test. Rearrangements within central crisis management structures followed. The Council was renamed – allegedly to

emphasise its administrative functions (it was previously called the Cabinet Crisis Council). The Support Unit was made permanent and operative twenty-four hours a day, and given more personnel and resources. It was also made responsible for a new Civil Situation Centre (CSC) with designated office facilities and technical equipment; set up to monitor incidents, crises and exercises within the civil sector. Originally, the Support Unit was under the MJ's Department for Rescue and Preparedness. After July 22, it reported directly to the Secretary General within the Ministry, and from 2013 it was placed within a new Department of Crisis Management and Security. The Support Unit also has the role of being a permanent secretariat to the Government Emergency Management Council.

Eleven months after the terrorist attack, shortly before the report from the Commission was ready, the Government presented a white paper on internal security (St. meld nr. 29, 2011-2012). The white paper did not suggest any fundamental changes to the existing organizational model, but proposed initiatives to strengthen the ministry's role as a coordinator and a driving force within the policy area of internal security. One measure was the introduction of a general *principle of cooperation*. This is not a new principle, but has been a core strategy for involving private and civil sector organizations in emergency and crisis management for a long time. The principle was (re-) introduced to enhance trans-boundary coordination, but it is difficult to ascertain what this means in practice. According to the white paper, it does not imply any changes to existing responsibility relations, and the principle of ministerial responsibility has not been altered (Ibid.: 40). The white paper states (St. meld. no 29, 2011-2012:51):

The single agency is still responsible for crisis management within its own portfolio, and the primary line of reporting is still to the superior responsible ministry and from there onwards to the lead ministry (...) The coordination role (of the MJ) does not trump the professional auditing or responsibility that belongs to the respective line ministries and their subordinate agencies.

Thus, there is still a need to clarify the coordination responsibilities of the MJ and also DSB's steering instruments and instruction rights.

A new *coordination resolution* was launched in 2012 to clarify the Ministry's role and responsibilities. It recognized MJ's lead role in civil national crises and urged that it strengthen its supervision of other Ministries' responsibility for preparedness and crisis management, introduce more management by objectives and results and a stronger regime for training and emergency exercises. The resolution established that the MJ should take the lead

in all national crises unless decided otherwise. The coordination resolution further underlined the ministry's role as a promoter and driving force for internal security and crisis management and emphasised the importance of an enhanced focus on auditing:

The MJ shall be a driving force in relating to emergency preparedness in the ministries. It shall identify areas that need coordination between ministries and cross sector initiatives. Enhanced communication between different professional actors will give better possibilities to reveal and address issues about accountability relations and collaboration on the interface between different authorities.

MJ shall from a cross-sectoral perspective support the ministries in overseeing critical societal functions in different sectors and what they include. Follow-up on superior level shall among other things be conducted through MJ's audit of other ministries.

The role of DSB was also emphasized:

DSB is an important actor in supporting MJ's coordination role, and will among other things exercise coordination tasks on behalf of MJ related to planning frameworks, exercises, auditing, international collaboration and information.

The agency's auditing of the parent ministry of Justice should not be submitted to the parent ministry but to the ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Nevertheless, these changes were not to change the fundamental principles of ministerial responsibility:

Appointing a lead ministry does not imply any changes in constitutional responsibility and all ministries keep their responsibility and decision-making power within their respective task portfolios

Summing up, it is still unclear how the government can clarify MJ's coordination responsibilities. The intention to strengthen horizontal coordination is there, but the chosen instruments seem ambiguous and contested. More measures are expected in the wake of the 22 July Commission report. A new white paper has been announced, but the jury is still out on how to solve the problem of integrating the principle of liability and the principle of collaboration.

6. Instrumental and cultural interpretations

According to an *instrumental perspective*, formal organization and plans matter. Here, crisis management can be seen as a process of deliberate and strategic choices. In the case of the terrorist attacks in Norway, the established command structures and plans were only followed to a limited extent. Improvisation and chance were crucial, and unfortunate and unforeseen situations hindered optimal crisis management. Consequently, the response to the terrorist attack cannot be seen as the result of a coherent, planned and coordinated procedure. This is not atypical for crisis management (Czarniawska, 2009). On the contrary, crisis and risk management typically take place under uncertain and ambiguous conditions (Boin, 2008; Head, 2008). In these situations, the prevalence of rational choices characterized by clear, stable and consistent goals, a fair understanding of available goals and means, and an apparent center of authority and power, is not realistic. Flexible political and administrative coordination based on institutionally fixed rules, routines and roles may be a reasonable alternative to action based on calculated planning (Olsen, 1996). The experience from the Norwegian crisis response thus demonstrates the limitations of planning, corresponding to what Boin (2008) has labeled “the planning syndrome”: Plans may work well for predictable and routine events, but in crisis situations characterized by deep uncertainty and urgency, they often prove inadequate or even useless. They may even give a false sense of security and increase vulnerability. In this case, existing plans for crisis management were not followed – for example, regarding the establishment of central crisis management structures within the ministry. This added to the confusion.

Another problem revealed by the Commission was the paralyzing quest for more information, which is crucial for making sense of events and deciding what to do. This is also a typical challenge in crises (Boin et al., 2005). On the one hand, central actors are reluctant to make crucial decisions unless they have a complete picture of the situation. On the other hand facts tend to be in short supply and are often uncertain and inaccurate. On 22 July, information was quickly outdated and had to go through many levels of authorization before it reached central decision makers, who also had to use other sources. The result was conflicting and confusing information. The terrorist attacks revealed apparent capacity problems, leadership challenges and coordination problems, especially related to communication, but also between different actors and responsible authorities. This supports our claim that internal security is a ‘wicked problem’ transcending organizational and sectoral areas. Serious coordination problems became apparent, vertically between central and local crisis management and between ministries and agencies, and horizontally within and between responsible ministries.

Internal security is also a policy area that has to fight for sufficient attention and resources. It is normally hard to obtain adequate resources to prevent crises, but often easier to get access to resources after a crisis. Budget allocations in the aftermath of the attacks clearly demonstrate this. In the state budget for 2012 there was a significant increase in the budget for internal security and police.

Based on evidence from the Commission and other central documents, we have argued that structural arrangements within the central government apparatus constrain external horizontal and vertical coordination. The primary structures, based on hierarchy and specialization by purpose and tasks, and the principle of ministerial and constitutional responsibility, enable vertical coordination within distinct policy areas but put strong constraints on horizontal coordination across ministerial areas. The constraints on horizontal coordination are enhanced by the existing organizational principles for internal security crisis management. This lack of horizontal coordination is especially critical when we are faced with wicked problems that do not stop at the boundaries of organizations, ministerial areas and administrative levels.

Our analysis has further highlighted that the problems largely are met by applying secondary structures based on collegial bodies, boards, councils, networks, informal areas and collaborative arrangements (see also Magnussen, 2012). Such supplementary arrangements are supposed to work in the shadow of hierarchy, but they also challenge organizational forms. Normally they lack resources, capacity, authority and strong steering instruments. They are often temporary arrangements without a clear mandate. The aim of such arrangements is to handle problems between different organizations. The challenge is to avoid negative coordination and to move towards positive coordination.

A *cultural perspective* would predict a crisis response according to the established institutional culture. Our analysis has shown that the response from the Norwegian government and the MJ seems to be very much in line with the existing historical path of organizing for internal security 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. Thus far, there has been only minor organizational change, in line with the previous cautious approach. The Commission's report points out a number of areas for improvement, but does not propose any major organizational restructuring. This is in line with a cultural perspective that underlines the importance of path dependency and existing political administrative culture and tradition.

Our analysis further indicates that established arrangements and institutions within the area of internal security and crisis management are infused with values, identities, traditions, culture and established routines and rules. 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 adjust to changing external pressure or to shifting signals from political executives in a simple and straightforward manner. Thus, institutional changes within the policy area are characterized by path-dependent processes and political and institutional conflicts (Peters, Pierre and King, 2005). At the same time, this is a policy area that does not easily get attention from politicians unless there is a major crisis. Thus, political conflicts tend to play out within the institutional structures and among central civil servants who to a great extent tend to defend their own 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 is a favoring of the status quo and a search for solutions close to previous ones (Cyert and March, 1963). The organizational solutions have to pass a compatibility test, implying that solutions that do not break fundamentally with existing arrangements tend to be chosen (Brunsson and Olsen, 1993). The effects of previous decisions represent an administrative policy heritage that constrains choices at a later stage. Embedded institutional arrangements, such as the principle of ministerial responsibility, constrain possible future administrative arrangements.

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 that strong veto players characterize the change process (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010). The leeway for interpretation of the ministry's role as a coordinator and a driving force within the field has been exploited only to a little extent. The MJ seems to have taken a more laid-back approach to the policy field, characterized by a rather narrow interpretation of its mandate. The result has largely been institutional change characterized by layering, in which new organizational arrangements have been added to existing ones. Secondary structures like partnerships, boards and collegial arrangements have been added to the bureaucratic arrangements. Whether the changes after July 22 will leave the Ministry with more discretion, more enforcement power and stronger steering instruments, thereby moving away from the previous arrangements, remains to be seen. The potential for institutional drift is greater when there is a gap between rules and enforcement (Ibid.). The terrorist attack on 22 July revealed such a gap.

7. Conclusion

Our analysis reveals that there is a strong consensus when it comes to diagnosing the problems within the policy area of internal security and crisis management in Norway, broadly identified as fragmentation, pulverization of accountability and weak coordination arrangements. At the same time, the suggested solutions are beset with ambiguity and conflicts, and there is a mismatch between problems and available solutions. The organizational changes have typically been cautious and incremental, in spite of the serious external shock. We have observed a reluctant and gradual upgrading of the MJ as an overarching coordinating ministry without challenging the fundamental principles of ministerial and constitutional responsibility.

A main conclusion is that organizing for internal security and crisis management is to a great extent path dependent. Established governance doctrines such as ministerial and constitutional responsibility constrain which organizational solutions are possible, even after a serious terrorist attack that revealed significant failures in the existing organizational arrangements. The solution has thus far been sought in efforts to combine coordination through hierarchy with coordination through network arrangements, collegial bodies and councils and the principle of collaboration. However, the principle of responsibility still dominates. A major challenge is to render the principle of collaboration enough authority to avoid it becoming a non-binding symbolic tool.

Our case illustrates that major reorganizations are difficult, also in situations where significant problems are understood and agreed upon. The relationship between the MJ and other stakeholders seems to be characterized by ‘negative coordination’ (Scharpf, 1994), limited to oversight over areas where other line ministries have no specific responsibility. Follow-up and initiative have been neglected, and the ministry seems equipped with weak steering instruments and ineffective instruction tools. This has made it difficult to overrule strong line ministries. A main challenge is to match place-based problems with functionally organized services, to balance the new internal security mission with existing missions that remain important, and to meet citizens’ expectations in a fragmented system. These challenges demand a new system of contingent coordination that flexibly develops and matches government’s capacity to handle new and unpredictable crises and situations with high impact but low probability (Kettl, 2003). Thus far, coordination by hierarchy has taken priority, although it is increasingly being supplemented by coordination through networks in the shadow of hierarchy.

Nevertheless, the response to the terrorist attack in Norway was characterized by complex interactions between mutually influential factors. The external shock had an obvious and important impact on all actors. Institutional and contextual constraints seem to be a central dimension for understanding the outcome so far. The response was, to a large extent, shaped by established organizational arrangements, doctrines and principles that constrained central leaders' scope for action. Deliberate interference by the political executive was important, but has not resulted in any major changes. Furthermore, the process and outcome cannot be characterized as a result of rational planning alone, but has clear negotiation-based features revealed through elements of conflict and compromise.

However, our case also reveals that organization and reorganization are not a panacea. There is no one best solution or an optimal organizational form that can be applied for all crises, at all times and in all situations. We face difficult dilemmas regarding the structural design for internal security and crisis management. There are no simple or stable solutions. The fundamental structural questions regarding what principle of specialization is the best is still unresolved both empirically and theoretically (Verhoest and Lægreid, 2010). Often organization is about a trade-off between different values and considerations. Reorganization can solve one coordination problem but will probably produce new ones.

The policy area of internal security and crisis management is indeed a wicked problem that transcends the boundaries of organizations, policy areas and administrative levels. It is characterized by complexity, insecurity and ambiguity, and vital decisions have to be taken under severe time pressure. At the same time these are 'high impact but low probability' situations. There is still room for more systematic knowledge about how to organize to handle such challenges.

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