

Organizing for Homeland Security: The Case of Norway

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Preface¹

This paper is written as a part of the research project «Regulation Control and Auditing», funded by the Norwegian Research Council. It is to a great extent based on the report «Eit sårbart samfunn. Ein studie av omorganiseringa av den sentrale tryggleiks- og beredskapsforvaltninga i Norge i perioden 1999–2000» (A Vulnerable Society. A study of the reorganization of the central administration for inland security in the period 1999–2000), by Synnøve Serigstad (Bergen: Rokkan Centre, report 16, 2003). An earlier version of the paper was presented at the 20th EGOS Conference in Ljubljana, July 1–3 2004, Sub-theme 16: «Risk and Regulation: Relationships, Dynamics and Rationales within and between Organizations». We thank the participants for their comments.

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Summary

This paper examines the reorganization process in the Norwegian central administration for homeland security. As a central theme it explores why the proposal to radically reorganize the administration by replacing a network model with a hierarchical model resulted in a much more modest change to a hybrid agency model. Our theoretical approach is a broad political-institutional perspective, focusing on instrumental design, bargaining processes, institutional contexts and adaptation to external shock. The descriptive part of the paper traces the reorganization process, starting with the initiative taken by the Ministry of Justice in 1999 to establish a public commission and ending with the final parliamentary resolution in 2002. A striking feature of the process was negative coordination, indicating that the wish to coordinate was greater than the willingness to be coordinated. To understand why this was so we look at bureaucratic politics and bargaining between different interests and also at institutional identities and strong cultures and traditions within different governmental bodies.

Sammendrag

I dette notatet undersøkes reorganiseringen av samfunnsikkerhetsforvaltningen i norsk sentralforvaltning. Et sentralt spørsmål er hvorfor forslaget fra Sårbarhetsutvalget om en radikal reorganisering gjennom å erstatte en nettverksmodell med oppretting av et departement for samfunnsikkerhet resulterte i langt mer moderate endringer i retning av en hybrid direktoratsmodell. Vår teoretiske tilnærming er et bredt politisk-institusjonelt perspektiv som fokuserer på instrumentell design, forhandlingsprosesser, betydningen av institusjonell kontekst og tilpasning til ytre sjokk. Den deskriptive delen av paperet følger reorganiseringprosessen fra initiativet ble tatt i Justisdepartementet i 1999, via Sårbarhetsutvalget og stortingsmeldingen om samfunnsikkerhet til stortingsbehandlingen i 2002. Et slående trekk ved prosessen var negativ samordning, som indikerer at ønske om å samordne var større enn viljen til å bli samordnet. For å forstå dette utfallet studeres forhandlingsprosesser mellom ulike myndigheter og institusjonelle identiteter, sterke kulturer og tradisjoner i ulike forvaltningsområder som justis og forsvar.

Introduction

How to balance coordination, specialization, autonomy and control is an enduring problem both in organizational theory and in administrative practice. The trade-offs between different forms of coordination and specialization, as well as between political control and agency autonomy, are often unstable and vary over time according to the popularity of different administrative doctrines and also between countries and policy areas. In recent years the New Public Management movement has affected the intensity, scope and content of administrative reforms in different countries, and a broad and comprehensive program of regulatory reform has been launched internationally (OECD 2002, Christensen and Læg Reid 2004). There is, however, an intense debate in the literature about whether these processes are leading to a convergence of administrative systems between different countries or whether national strategies, administrative cultures, institutional traditions and sector- or function-specific features have remained diverse and divergent (Pollitt 2001).

Against this background we have witnessed a fundamental review of supervisory agencies. In 2003, the Norwegian government formulated a new regulatory policy focusing on autonomization, strengthening and relocation of supervisory bodies, clarification of the regulatory role and improvement of horizontal coordination (St.meld. no 17 (2002–2003), OECD 2003). As part of this process and parallel to it a reorganization took place in the Norwegian homeland security administration. The government launched the reorganization process in 1999 by appointing a public commission to assess the vulnerability of Norwegian society. The commission submitted a report to the Ministry of Justice in 2000 (NOU 2000:24) that listed a wide range of challenges facing the Norwegian homeland security administration and made several comprehensive suggestions for change and improvements. A central issue for the commission was organizational arrangements; hence one of its main proposals was to improve vertical and horizontal coordination in the security administration by establishing a new special ministry for homeland security. These recommendations were, however, not approved by the government in the White Paper presented to parliament in 2002. Instead, and somewhat surprisingly, the process resulted in only minor changes in the security administration. In this paper we ask why this happened. A main research question addresses why the proposal for a radical reorganization of the administration, replacing a network model with a hierarchical model, resulted in a more modest change to a hybrid agency model.

We start by outlining the problems of specialization, coordination, autonomy and control and identify three organizational models: the hierarchical model, the network model and the agency model. We then describe our theoretical approach, which is a broad political-institutional perspective focusing on instrumental design, bargaining processes, institutional contexts and adaptation to external shock. Before proceeding to the case study we give a brief introduction to the Norwegian context. The descriptive part of the paper traces the process of reorganizing homeland security – from the establishment of the public commission to the final parliamentary resolution. The focus

is mainly on the proposals concerning horizontal coordination of the central security administration, and the aim is to describe and explain the course of the process and its results. This is done by addressing the relationships, dynamics and rationales within and between institutions in the field.

The paper is based on a comprehensive case study of the reorganization process (Serigstad 2003) using public documents from the government and the parliament, internal files from the archives of the Ministry of Justice concerning the ministerial handling of the case and from the National Archives regarding the work of the public commission, and interviews with members of the commission, central officials in the ministries of justice and government administration and members of the parliamentary standing committees of justice and defence, 17 persons altogether. In particular, the use of internal files and interviews guarantees the validity and reliability of the data.

The problem of specialization and coordination

Organizations involved in homeland security must by definition be «high reliability organizations» in which there is zero tolerance for mistakes (LaPort 1996, Frederickson and LaPorte 2002, Kettle 2004c). At the same time, coordination is a basic challenge and always a central issue in the work of the homeland security bodies (Peters 2004). The experience of accidents and crises, like the big railroad and shipping accidents in Norway in 2000 and 2001, the September 11 terrorist attacks in the USA in 2001 and the floods in Europe in 2002, have shown that inadequate organization and failure to coordinate, both at lower operative levels and higher administrative levels, is a recurring problem and several studies and reports have corroborated this finding (NOU 2000:24, Statskonsult 2003, Kettl et al. 2004b, Wise 2002a). In the fields of safety and security the work and responsibility tend to be spread between several sectors and levels and involving a large number of actors. Moreover, there is no comprehensive policy or focus.

There may be several explanations for this, the most obvious being that homeland security work is by nature a fragmented, complex and disjointed area (Kettl 2004c)². Homeland security covers everything from preparation for a terrorist attack, emergency measures in the event of natural disasters or of infections and pandemics, dealing with major accidents in industry and transportation or power outages and accommodating floods of refugees to product control, ICT, telecommunications, ABC weapons, intelligence and surveillance and potentially involves almost all areas of the public sector. In addition, the unpredictable nature of the field obviously makes retrospective learning much easier than learning in advance. Changes, implementation and improvement are reactive in character, which, in turn, causes considerable diffusion of responsibility between ministries, agencies and other public and private bodies. The field

² See also the report on «Advancing the management of homeland security. Managing intergovernmental relations for homeland security» (National Academy of Public Administration 2004).

of homeland security represent intergovernmental complexities and dilemmas along both vertical and horizontal axes (Wise and Nader 2002). Comprehensive policies or plans for organizational arrangements in the field are not easy to discern.

However, the problem of fragmentation is not confined to homeland security alone. Several studies show that fragmentation and problems of coordination exist in many different sectors and governments (Peters 1998, Pierre 2000, Wright and Hayward 2000, Christensen and Læg Reid 2002). The problem of coordination can thus be regarded as something of a «philosophers' stone» in the study of the public sector (Jennings and Crane 1994, Peters 2004). The modern political arena is complex and fragmented, and a growing number of cases and problems do not fit into the traditionally functional structure of polities. In organizational theory such problems are classified as «wicked problems» (Harmon and Mayer 1986). Wicked problems are problems that are not easily defined or compartmentalized into neat technical solutions for which traditional bureaucratic policymaking and implementation is suited.³ They are all linked in complex ways and therefore cut across departmental responsibilities. Coordination between these is further complicated by the vertical nature of policymaking. As a rule, modern polities are organized according to Gulick's principle of *purpose* (1937), which makes them vertical in nature and characterized by strong functional sectors and weak coordinating mechanisms (Kettl 2003, Richards and Smith 2002). This implies that vertical coordination *within* the specific sectors may be good. When it comes to horizontal coordination, however, these systems face considerable problems (Christensen and Læg Reid 2002).

At its core, coordination implies building effective routines to produce effective, efficient solutions to complex, recurring problems. In the case of homeland security the traditional problems of organizational coordination are multiplied enormously and the stakes associated with success or failure vastly raised (Kettl 2004c:66). The central question becomes how to build effective responses to problems that are never routine and to which systems, therefore, have no standard responses (Kettl 2003).

This study distinguishes between three different approaches to coordination. The first is a top-down, focused approach based on the *hierarchical model* and presumes that the organization of homeland security must begin at the top and be directed downwards, implying strong political control. The idea of top-down coordination is derived from the notion that the organizations to be coordinated have already been identified or can be readily identified by headquarters coordinators, that the relationship of these organizations to each other is well understood, that agreement has been reached about what objectives will be accomplished by altering certain of these inter-organizational relationships, and that the authority and means to alter these relationships in order to achieve certain goals exist. In other words, it assumes that having a hierarchy will facilitate implementation. The problem in the context of homeland security, however, is that most of these assumptions are unfounded, and the problems of coordination do not lend themselves well to hierarchical direction (Wise 2002b:141).

³ The opposite of «wicked problems» are «tame problems,» which fit naturally into the functional sectors of governments (O'Toole 1997).

For complex, unstructured and rapidly changing problems a *network approach* may be more suitable (Wise 2002b, Kettl 2003). This approach builds upon the idea of coordination as a contingent problem. What it is, how it works and how best to implement it depend on the nature of the issue, the nature of the organization and the nature of its employees (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967, Simon 1976). The adoption of standard, rational, hierarchical designs and practices is likely to be particularly unsuitable for organizations expected to operate in complex, unstable environments. Unstable environments require rapid decisions and changes and thus create a need for greater decentralization of authority and less emphasis on formal structure, since it takes too long for information to travel up and down a strict hierarchy. The key is to create systems that are versatile and flexible. In this approach the focus is not on strong central control but on better ways of collecting and processing information – from the bottom up and from the outside in (Kettl 1993). For this purpose, both formally defined networks and feedback loops have a role to play; of equal importance, however, are personal and informal networks (Kettl 2003).

A third model can be labelled the *agency model* (Pollitt and Talbot 2004, Pollitt et al. 2004). The agency model is somewhere in between the hierarchical model and the network model. On the one hand it is less centralized than the hierarchical model: agencies that are functionally disaggregated and have some autonomy from the ministry play a key role in the field of homeland security. On the other hand the model is not as fragmented as the network model where responsibility for homeland security is an integrated part of every body, sector or policy area. In the agency model a stronger supervisory and regulatory role for semi-independent agencies is supplemented by the principle of integrated responsibility in each public body. Agencies operate on the principle of professional knowledge and should be free from instruction by the cabinet or individual ministers. Regulating homeland security should be the agency's sole task and this should be carried out according to the principles of horizontal coordination—i.e., responsibility for security matters is spread across institutional boundaries and between sectors and policy areas.

Institutional research suggests that when organizational technology is poorly understood, when goals are ambiguous, or when the environment creates uncertainty, organizations are often modelled on other organizations (Wise 2002b). Particularly for new organizations, leaders will seek to overcome the liability of newness by imitating established practices within the field (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). In the field of public policy this often entails some hierarchical design (Wise 2002b).

Summing up, the organization of homeland security constitutes a double balancing act because it requires coordination between ministries and agencies and between substantive policy areas and the security field. A substantial democratic dilemma is how regulatory agencies can have enough autonomy to function efficiently but not so much that they become politically uncontrollable. Another dilemma is how responsibility for security matters can be integrated into substantive policy areas without being neglected or relegated to a low-priority issue.

Theoretical approach

We adopt a broad institutional approach to the study of public sector organization and operation (March and Olsen 1989, Brunsson and Olsen 1993). Since we believe that changes and reforms are both encouraged and discouraged by institutions we are interested in the interplay between institutional and historical links, conscious and planned reform initiatives and adjustment to external social forces (Olsen 1992, Christensen and Læg Reid 2001). Three assumptions underlie this approach. First, that the logic of appropriateness is a dominant logic of action. Second, that goal formulation is often an endogenous process. Third, that history is not efficient (March and Olsen 1989). Both the historical-institutional context of national styles of governance and the regulatory styles of individual institutions, based on specific identities, histories and dynamics, will be studied (Olsen 1997). The challenge is to describe and provide a better understanding of the dynamic balance between the institutional spheres of professional expertise, autonomous agencies and representative democratic bodies in the field of regulatory reform.

More specifically we will distinguish between four perspectives (Olsen 1989): a rational-instrumental perspective based on deliberate choice by political leaders; a bureaucratic politics or bargaining perspective; an institutional perspective based on historical traditions and institution-specific norms and values; and an environmental-deterministic model, where reorganization can be seen as an adaptation to external shocks.

In the rational-instrumental perspective potential conflicts about such things as means and goals are not questioned, since power and authority relationships are taken for granted, having been defined by the hierarchy. A rational-instrumental perspective encompasses elements of both social control and rational calculation (Dahl and Linblom 1953). It assumes first, that the organizational form to be used is consciously chosen by central political-administrative actors, implying that there is only one centre of power and authority concentrated at the top of the organization. Second, it assumes unambiguous goals and tight coupling between goals and means, implying that the participants can predict the effects of different organizational forms. In practice, however, these preconditions for an active administrative policy are often absent (Christensen, Læg Reid and Wise 2002), so we have to use additional perspectives to understand what is going on.

The bureaucratic politics or bargaining perspective might be seen as a modification of the rational-instrumental perspective, in the sense that the first assumption does not necessarily apply. A political-administrative system like the Norwegian one is based on the principle of ministerial responsibility, so there are strong sectoral ministries with their own power bases. Moreover, the rational-instrumental perspective neglects a central aspect of political-administrative life, namely conflicts of interest and hence negotiations between actors. In a bargaining perspective the focus is on interests, resources and coalitions (Olsen 1989, Roness 1997), and opinions, interests and goals are explained in terms of organizational affiliation. Different actors will use their intellectual and material resources to fight for their interests and positions, and the

outcome will reflect the participant's resources and power. Organizational structure and change will first and foremost reflect the interests and resources of the dominant coalition and will be the result of negotiations and tugs of war.

While the two previous perspectives regard change as a conscious choice, alternative perspectives question this and downplay the importance of rationality. One such perspective is the institutional perspective, which points to the fact that organizations develop their own values and distinctive characters and become *institutions*, implying that they develop an intrinsic value and character above and beyond their purely technical and formal characteristics (Selznick 1957). Over time a unique culture, a way of perceiving the world and a way of doing things develop, engendering a common normative framework and a kind of received wisdom (Scott 1995). These values and norms give the institution a distinctive character, which determines how change and reform are conducted. By implication, change will be discreet and gradual, and big changes that are not compatible with institutional values and beliefs will be very difficult to implement (March and Olsen 1995). The process will be characterized by robustness.

A fourth way of understanding a reorganization is as an adaptation to external shock. What happens has a more temporal logic than a consequential or strategic logic or a logic of appropriateness (Cohen, March and Olsen 1972). The reorganization process is subject to randomness and interpretation of unforeseen situations and accidents. Krasner (1988) has compared these to what evolutionary theory calls *punctuated equilibriums*, which are long periods of time that are broken by short, rapid speciation. Similarly an institution can be stable and in relative balance until a historical break, for example a crisis or an external shock, occurs. An external shock can cause a rejection of old norms and values and recognition of a need to change (March and Olsen 1995).

A main lesson from these approaches is that there is no single-factor explanation for the reorganization of homeland security. Context matters, task-specific factors are important and there is a blending of external pressure, path dependencies and choice. Explanatory factors can be structural instrumental features, historical-institutional context, pressure from external shocks, or deliberate political choice by political and administrative executives (Christensen and Lægreid 2003).

Our ambition is to explore the extent to which current regulatory reforms represent a transformation, resulting from the ways in which they are interpreted, adjusted, translated and refined by the interaction between national administrative policy, external pressure, and national administrative history, reform tradition and culture (Czarniawska and Sevón 1996, Christensen and Lægreid 2001, Jacobsson, Lægreid and Pedersen 2003a). A transformative approach will form the basis for empirical studies of the complex interplay between different internal and external factors. Our assumption is that regulatory adaptation will vary between sectors and over time, depending on the administrative tradition, constitutional and organizational frameworks, tasks and contexts (Pollitt 2003a). We will investigate whether we are facing a dual process of robustness and flexibility (Olsen 2004, Jacobsson, Lægreid and Pedersen 2004).

The Norwegian context: the network model and weak coordination

In Norway civil security is traditionally based upon the *principle of responsibility* built on similarity and proximity. This means that public sector organizations responsible for a sector or a policy area are also responsible for the safety, security and preparedness of that sector. In other words there is a striving for as much organizational similarity and proximity as possible in times of peace, crisis and war, and crises are to be handled at the lowest bureaucratic level possible. Thus a mainstay in the field of civil security is the idea of internal self-regulation in the various public bodies and policy areas. Until the Ministry of Justice took over the main responsibility for coordinating Norwegian civil security in 1994, there was no superior body in this field. However, even then, the overall responsibility assigned to the ministry was rather weak, both formally and in practice.

In accordance with the principle of responsibility all ministries must be prepared and able to take charge of coordinating operations. This organizational model is close to the network model, which assigns responsibility for security to the sector ministries and individual bodies. The idea is that flexibility and adaptability in the field of security can be secured by making it an integral part of the various substantive policy fields. The reverse side of the coin, however, is that if everybody holds responsibility, nobody does. Accordingly, the central civil security field is quite complex and fragmented, entailing a risk of over-division of responsibility in security matters and ignorance of these aspects in the various policy areas.⁴ The fragmented nature of this field has been called to attention in official documents ever since the 1960s. All of them have stressed the importance of a functional and well-coordinated homeland civil security system and have pointed out the potential risks that a fragmented and poorly harmonised system represents. However, only small steps have been taken to improve coordination in the field.⁵ This is an old and well-known problem that is not unique to this sector, but it seems to be escalating as complexity and fragmentation increase and loss of political control becomes a problem in many societies (Peters 1998, Pierre 2000, Wright and Hayward 2000).

A possible explanation for this is that political systems organized in accordance with the principle of ministerial rule, like Norway, often seem to be marked by strong and specialized line ministries and weaker superior ministries (Christensen and Lægrend 2002).⁶ In practice superior ministries with cross-sectoral responsibility have experienced considerable problems with horizontal coordination between the

⁴ This complexity is further transmitted to other levels of the state, such as local government.

⁵ This seems to be a general feature of the field. Even after September 11, states and local government in the USA seemed to go on with business as usual in homeland security affairs, implying gaps in coordination, lack of money and institutional inertia (Kettl 2004a).

⁶ Generally the Ministry of Justice is regarded as a specialized ministry, but in the field of homeland security it also has superior coordinating responsibility.

specialized ministries, many of which represent concentrations of resources and are quite autonomous and isolated. Since most officials spend their careers in one ministry only, both kinds of ministries have developed their own particular cultures and worldviews. Despite the fact that civil servants are loyal to the government, their primary loyalty is to the ministry in which they are employed and they are influenced by that ministry's particular culture. Thus, ministerial identity is strong and civil servants are like key players on different teams (Lægreid and Olsen 1983). This makes it difficult for ministries and agencies to work together (Richards and Smith 2002, Peters 2004).

This feature of the system seems to be reinforced by the nature of the parliamentary state. Ministerial organization represents vertical subject-area specialization and a hierarchical system of authority, and western parliamentary polities based on the principle of ministerial responsibility are in reality highly focused on single ministries as hierarchical units, at the expense of the government and the executive as a whole. It is the minister who has to answer to parliament, thus ensuring that political authority is vested in the ministries. A study of political and administrative leaders in the Norwegian governmental apparatus revealed that this vertical focus entails a lot of institutional conflict between the ministries. The ministers are judged on the basis of the success of their ministries, and even though the Norwegian cabinet spends a great deal more time meeting than other western cabinets, there is a long tradition of ministerial autonomy (Christensen and Lægreid 2002). This vertical structure and mode of thinking represents a great challenge when it comes to coordination and cross-ministerial cooperation. Eriksen (2003) claims that coordination problems are *especially* extensive in the Norwegian system because governmental responsibility is divided between 17 ministries and 19 ministers without any central unit responsible for horizontal coordination.

This fragmentation and lack of central coordination may also explain why reform and change in Norway have been characterised by a step-by-step, ministry-specific and sector-initiated approach (Olsen 1996, Lægreid and Roness 2003). This is also very characteristic for change in the field of civil security, in spite of the fact that the Ministry of Justice has overall responsibility for coordination. The ministry seems to have experienced extensive problems obtaining approval from other ministries for necessary change and re-ordering. The fact that the civil security field has traditionally not enjoyed a very high priority and has to a considerable extent been overshadowed by military defence underlines this.

Added to this, the period we examined was characterized by a weak and shifting minority government with a narrow parliamentary basis. The process started when the Bondevik I government was in power. This was a minority centre government consisting of the Christian People's Party, the Centre Party and the Liberals. In 2000 it was replaced by a minority Labour government (the Stoltenberg government), and in 2001 the Bondevik II government came to power as a minority coalition of the Conservative Party, the Christian People's Party and the Liberals.

The reorganization of homeland security

The initiative: an increased focus on civil security

In Norway, as in the rest of the western world, the conditions for homeland security have changed dramatically over the last 15 years, especially in the wake of the end of the Cold War. In spite of this, the civil security field has not been subjected to comprehensive review or examination, and it has been difficult to implement measures to improve and modernize the field. In addition the field has been dominated by the military, and the defence sector has exerted a strong influence on the terms for homeland security policy. Especially since the end of the Cold War this has been an irritant to the civil security administration, which would like to focus attention on peacetime events and on the challenges associated with the vulnerability of modern society. The need to adapt the field to the new situation was underlined in long-term policy documents of the 1990s. However, little has been done, especially at the level of the central administration. An exception to this was the 1999 internal strategic committee in the Ministry of Justice. The committee questioned the ministry's responsibility for civil security and contemplated transferring it to the Ministry of Defence or the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration. The Department for Rescue and Emergency Planning, which is responsible for civil security in the Ministry of Justice, did not agree with this idea, however, and wanted to keep this area of responsibility in the Ministry of Justice and to strengthen its position.

This wish was reinforced by the fact that the Ministry of Defence at the time was establishing a public commission to examine military defence and security policy. Fearing that this would perpetuate the dominance of the military, the Rescue and Emergency Planning Department stressed that homeland security should be focused not only on military defence but also on civil security and the vulnerability of modern society. Specifically it recommended that relations between the civil and military security systems should be addressed, especially with regard to differences in resources, status and overall attention. The minister of justice agreed to establish a public commission to assess the country's vulnerability and focus attention on the importance of a well-functioning civil security system. He was very concerned that the commission should make a real difference and help to bring the field of civil homeland security and readiness to public attention. To this end, the former Norwegian prime minister, Kåre Willoch, was asked to head the commission. He accepted and played an active part from the very beginning. His most important contribution in this early phase was to direct the focus towards organizational change in addition to the ministry's main goal of enhancing the public status of civil security vis-à-vis military security.

The commission's report: radical change towards a hierarchical top-down model

The commission, which was named the *Vulnerability Commission*, was composed of representatives from various institutions in the civil security field and from the political parties. In the early stages the commission concentrated its work on exploring the ground and obtaining a general view of the field. It was decided that the commission should focus its work on a handful of areas considered to be of special importance. These were: information and communications technology, telecommunications, power, the water supply, pandemics, massive influxes of refugees, ABC weapons and intelligence and surveillance. However, as its work proceeded the commission realized that there were weaknesses in almost all areas of civil security.

With this in mind the commission began to examine whether this might have something to do with the overall organizational arrangements in the field. Closer scrutiny revealed that the field was highly fragmented, lacked an overall organizational principle and was organized in an ad hoc manner that was to a considerable extent determined by accidents and crises. This caused both diffusion and disclaiming of responsibility. In addition it became obvious that the Ministry of Justice had considerable problems in exercising its coordination function. The ministry had, for example, experienced extensive difficulties in trying to implement internal self-regulation in other ministries. Civil security and planning was not one of the Ministry of Justice's core tasks and was performed by a small department with few resources established in 1996. It was a considerable challenge to the department to devote sustained attention to the field, especially in peaceful times like the late 1990s, and it seemed obvious that civil security had been systematically neglected as an everyday priority in the ministries.

In the light of this, the head of the commission proposed a radical solution, namely to establish a special horizontally coordinating ministry for homeland security. It was clear to him that what was needed was a stronger central concentration of responsibility, competence and resources in order to give put civil security on a firm political foundation. This could best be achieved through a new ministry with a responsible and dedicated minister and with the resources to devote all his work to civil security.

This was quite a radical suggestion and it was greeted with surprise and scepticism by the other members of the commission. Since it would obviously involve major changes in the central administration it went against the identities and historical experience of several of the institutions represented and it constituted a radical break with traditional organizational principles and ways of thinking. To the surprise of the members of the commission and outsiders, the leader of the commission managed to convince the sceptics, and gradually all of them embraced the suggestion. There seem to be two particularly important explanations for this. One is that the committee was very much inspired by the homeland security organizational arrangements found in Germany and the USA., where the organization of security and preparedness is characterized by

strong central control and coordination.⁷ The second explanation is that the head of the commission, Kåre Willoch, has great personal charisma and authority and by virtue of his former position as prime minister and leader of the Norwegian Conservative Party holds considerable powers of conviction and insight. All the commission members interviewed for this study reported that it could be quite a challenge to defy or gainsay him. He seems to have managed to establish a common spirit and sense of shared mission in the commission, thus bringing about an astonishing degree of agreement between the representatives of very different institutions.

It was relatively easy to come to terms about a special ministry for homeland security and about most of the ministry's responsibilities and subordinate agencies. The commission suggested the ministry be responsible for national assessing national threats and vulnerability, for the preparation of plans, goals and standards, for coordination of emergency measures in the event of terrorism or sabotage, and for the coordination of rescue services, fire departments, civil defence, crisis management and information services. This entailed transferring several administrative bodies to the ministry, such as, for example, the Directorate for Civil Emergency Planning, the Main Rescue Headquarters, the Directorate for Fire and Electricity Safety, the Radiation Protection Authority, the Safety Department in the Petroleum Directorate and the Department of Working Environment and Safety in the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration. The commission also unanimously recommended establishing a coordinating body for the so-called secret services in the ministry of homeland security and to put the National Security Authority under the ministry.

In addition, the commission stressed the importance of autonomous regulatory and controlling bodies. According to the commission regulatory bodies responsible for monitoring safety and security in various parts of the public sector, like the Railway Inspectorate, should not be organized under the same ministry as that holding governmental responsibility – which often includes responsibility for commercial aspects, efficacy and ownership. The commission suggested merging regulatory bodies responsible for safety and security and organizing them under the special ministry of homeland security in order to secure their autonomy and achieve a coordinated regulatory policy in civil security.

There was, however, one issue that was not so easily agreed upon, and that was the organizational placement of the police. Willoch was convinced that the police should be placed under the ministry of homeland security, since they play an important role in civil security and safety. This was a radical suggestion, since it would have entailed organizing the police and the National Security Authority under the same roof. Traditionally putting these two parts of the so-called secret services together has been avoided for fear of the potential misuse of power inherent in such a relationship. Accordingly, the other members of the commission considered the proposal carefully before agreeing. Eventually, however, all but the Liberal Party representative consented.

⁷ Of course in the USA central control became even stronger with the establishment of the Department for Homeland Security in 2003.

An important reason for this, besides the fact that creating a comprehensive security ministry is not in tune with traditional Liberal policy, was that the Liberal Party representative was in close contact with the party leader (the former minister of justice who had initiated the establishment of the Vulnerability Commission), who did not approve either of reorganizing the police or of the idea of a special ministry of homeland security. In establishing the commission the Ministry of Justice had not expected to introduce major organizational changes, nor was organizational change a part of the commission's brief until Willoch brought his onto the agenda. This was, however, the only dissent and the Vulnerability Commission finished its work in June 2000.

In its final report the commission recommended strengthening the vertical and horizontal coordination of the civil security field by establishing a special ministry of homeland security with wide-ranging responsibilities. A central issue for the commission was the highly fragmented nature of the civil security field and the lack of clarity in the assignment of responsibilities. The commission believed that the division of responsibility and subject areas between ministries, agencies and other regulatory bodies had caused considerable weaknesses in civil security, which was duplicated at the local level. In addition the commission established that the Ministry of Justice's coordinating responsibility was vaguely defined, had a low priority and was to a considerable extent ignored by the other ministries. In light of this the commission recommended radical organizational changes, namely, replacing the integrated network model with a top-down hierarchical model.

The government report: towards an agency model

Before the commission's proposals were followed up in a parliamentary White Paper, the report was sent to the involved parties for comment in a round of public hearings. Ninety-six different bodies submitted their comments. Only a few supported the idea of establishing a special ministry of homeland security, although no one disagreed with the commission's description of the field as highly fragmented or with the problems of coordination and responsibility it identified.

In its statement during the hearings the Ministry of Defence supported the commission's description of the field as fragmented and poorly coordinated but expressed the fear that a new ministry of homeland security would bring about a conflict between specialized ministries and the homeland security ministry, because the latter would have to work closely with the security and planning departments in the other ministries. In addition there would be a real danger that the homeland security ministry would lag behind the specialized ministries in technical expertise. To establish a new ministry would, according to the Ministry of Defence, not bring about any improvement, because individual ministers would still be constitutionally responsible for security and safety within their area. A minister of homeland security would not have such responsibility and would therefore not have the authority to make and implement decisions. As an alternative to a ministry of homeland security, the Ministry of Defence

suggested revising and broadening the existing guidelines for the Ministry of Justice's coordinating responsibilities. In addition, the Ministry of Defence obviously disliked the idea of moving the National Security Authority from the Ministry of Defence to a new ministry of homeland security. At the time the Ministry of Defence was working on reorganizing the National Security Authority, which was an integrated staff in the Defence Command, to an agency under the Ministry of Defence, and it strongly opposed the proposed solution on the grounds that it would involve a loss of control over the Security Authority. It is interesting to note that neither this initiative nor the ministry's general views on the proposed ministry of homeland security concurred with the view of the ministry's representative in the Vulnerability Commission.⁸ However, the representative brought his views into line with those of the ministry after the committee had delivered its report.

The Ministry of Labour and Government Administration, which also played an important role in the reorganization process, supported the commission's description of civil security as a fragmented and low priority field. Although the ministry underlined that coordination and harmonization were very important for the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration, it did not support the idea of establishing a special ministry of homeland security, because of the considerable changes this would imply.

In contrast to the other ministries, the Ministry of Justice did not agree with the commission's description of the field and did not understand why the commission thought it was fragmented and poorly coordinated. On the contrary, the ministry expressed the opinion that the civil security field *had* to be fragmented because of the principle of responsibility. While conceding that flexibility was essential, the Ministry of Justice did not believe this could be achieved by centralizing responsibility. Thus, it defended the existing network model.

After the involved parties had been given the opportunity to comment on the commission's suggestions in the hearings, a parliamentary White Paper was prepared by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration. The Ministry of Defence had by this time decided to prepare a new, long-term military plan one year earlier than expected and this hastened the Ministry of Justice's work on the White Paper. It feared that if the Ministry of Defence presented a long-term document without the Ministry of Justice doing the same, it would place the Ministry of Justice at a disadvantage, particularly since the parliament had for a long time been signalling that the homeland security planning documents of the two ministries should be submitted simultaneously. In addition, the ministry feared that the commission's report would lose its current interest and military principles would be allowed to go on dominating the field.

Despite the fact that the Ministry of Justice holds the main responsibility for civil security, responsibility for the follow-up to the committee's organizational suggestions was delegated to the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration. The reason for this was that the government wanted to include the field in a wider political agenda of governmental simplification and coordination as a part of the Labour government's

⁸ The representative was the head of the National Security Authority.

comprehensive program of modernization of the public sector, of which the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration was in charge. A central goal in the Labour Government's modernization program was to improve governmental coordination by establishing a ministry of internal affairs, where homeland security would play a major role in a broad directorate for safety and security.

The follow-up was organized in a working group with representatives from various involved ministries and agencies. The work proved to be very difficult and involved a considerable amount of dissension. However, the group *did* manage to agree that the focus in future should be on the agency model, i.e. on how to organize the agencies. However, the ministries differed over whether agencies and other bodies should be merged, given more autonomous positions, or on whether the focus should be on clarification of the roles of governmental bodies. While all agreed that change was necessary, each representative opposed any change that affected his or her own particular ministry or area of responsibility.

The working group failed to reach an agreement and eventually had to present two different models. The first model emphasized role-clarification and simplicity and suggested establishing one agency for work safety and another for civil security and preparedness. The Ministry of Justice supported this solution, because it wanted to enhance the status of the civil security field and it feared that the civil security focus would become too vague if things like occupational health and safety were included in a directorate for civil security and planning. The other model, which was more in accordance with the government's line, emphasized keeping professional specialists together and suggested establishing a big agency that would include the Directorate of Fire and Electricity Safety, the Radiation Protection Authority, the Directorate of Civil Defence and Emergency Planning, the Norwegian Industrial Safety and Security Organization and the National Security Authority. This agency would also hold responsibility for safety at work. The Ministry of Labour and Government Administration, which was responsible for the Labour Party's modernization program and which emphasized a policy of coordination of related areas in more comprehensive bodies, favoured this model. Owing to its tight deadline the group did not have time to consider the agencies' ministerial affiliation or their specific tasks and purposes. The working group finished its work on October 15 2001. At this point in time it was, however, clear that the Labour government would have to resign, and two days later a new Centre-Right government took over. The solutions were therefore not given any formal consideration.

The change of government introduced a different set of values and goals into the public sector, with corresponding implications for the organization of homeland security. While the Labour Party government had focused on coordination and the merging of administrative bodies into larger units, the new government was more concerned with role-purification and administrative autonomy in so-called single-purpose organizations (Boston et al. 1996). The new government wanted to focus more explicitly on the coordination responsibility of the Ministry of Justice, and in accordance with this, responsibility for the follow-up to the organizational suggestions of the Vulnerability Commission was assigned to the Ministry of Justice. The Bondevik II government wanted to broaden the ministry's responsibility for homeland security, and

accordingly, it was decided to establish a new agency for civil protection under the Ministry of Justice by merging the Directorate of Civil Defence and Emergency Planning and the Directorate of Fire and Electricity Safety. This solution resembled the Ministry of Justice's point of view in the working group under the Labour government.

Another important proposal from the Vulnerability Commission was to organize the National Security Authority under the proposed ministry of homeland security. Although the proposal to create the latter ministry was rejected, this suggestion did gain some currency with the Ministry of Justice, which wanted to establish the National Security Authority as an agency under its own supervision, with the aim of broadening its powers. However, the Ministry of Defence was strongly opposed to this solution, which would have implied a change of affiliation for the National Security Authority from the Ministry of Defence to the Ministry of Justice. This became a highly controversial question and the representatives of both ministries worked hard to defend their interests on the issue in close consultation with their ministers. The Ministry of Defence apparently for some time secretly continued to work on establishing the National Security Authority as a Ministry of Defence agency, in spite of the fact that this was to be considered in the White Paper. Naturally, the Ministry of Justice was not happy about this. However, in order to prevent an open ministerial conflict inside the government and to avoid becoming the losing party, the two ministries reached a compromise by establishing the National Security Authority as an agency with reporting lines to both ministries – to the Ministry of Defence on military matters and to the Ministry of Justice on civilian matters – but administratively subordinated to the Ministry of Defence.⁹

The Vulnerability Commission had also proposed changes in the organization of the various agencies controlling safety and security. The organization of regulatory governmental bodies soon became a particularly important area of commitment for the new coalition government, and an internal working group in the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration was established to examine the question of how to organize regulatory bodies in a satisfactory way (Christensen and Læg Reid 2004, Hommen 2003). Although this examination was part of the government's general program of modernization and to a certain extent separate from civil security issues, the suggestions from the Vulnerability Commission concerning regulatory bodies were also considered in this project. This part of the organizational follow-up was hence kept in the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration even after the change of government. The focus of its work was, however, quite different from the former government's. While the Labour government had focused on merging and simplifying governmental bodies, the new coalition government was more concerned with regulating these bodies' autonomy and clarifying their roles, implying their division into more task-specific units. The internal working group was to present its own report concerning the organization of central regulatory bodies in the autumn of 2002 and a

⁹ Another provision of this compromise stipulated that the coordinating secretariat for the secret services should rotate between the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Ministry.

White Paper on regulatory policy was submitted to parliament in January 2003 (St.meld. no 17 (2002–2003)).

The White Paper on civil security and preparedness was submitted to parliament in April 2002 (St.meld. no 17 2001–2002). It had, however, been delayed several times and the Ministry of Justice was still a long way from its goal of presenting the White Paper together with the long-term military plan, which had been submitted one year earlier. There were two particularly important reasons for these delays. The first was the September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States. Although these did not affect Norway directly, the Norwegian central safety and security system was put to the test. However, this incident did not affect the *content* of the White Paper. The terrorist attacks put the paper in a new light, but the specific content was not changed. On the contrary, the Ministry of Justice regarded the preparatory security work that took place in the wake of the terrorist attacks as confirmation of its view that the field of civil security functioned well and was well organized.

For the progress of the White Paper, the change of government in October 2001 was of far greater importance than the September 11th attacks. The change of government led to uncertainty about whether to continue the work and shed doubt on the specific proposals. After a while it became clear that the new government would carry on with the process, but with a quite different focus to that of its predecessor. While the Labour Government had been working towards a solution that to a certain extent resembled the Vulnerability Commission's proposals regarding hierarchical organization and coordination, the solutions eventually proposed in the White Paper were scaled down, emphasizing integration and the principle of responsibility rather than hierarchical centralization. Thus, the government's proposal to parliament was to abandon the radical solution and instead go some way towards strengthening the coordinating responsibility of the Ministry of Justice by merging the subordinated agencies of Civil Defence and Emergency Planning and the agency of Fire and Electricity Safety and by having the National Security Authority report to the Ministry of Justice while continuing to be administratively subordinate to the Ministry of Defence.

The parliamentary reading: cultural collusion but approval for the government report

Although the Ministry of Justice has overall responsibility for civil security, civil security matters in parliament are dealt with by the Standing Committee on Defence.¹⁰ The White Paper on the Vulnerability Commission's proposals was, however, handled jointly by the Committee on Defence and the Committee on Justice. The latter felt that since the matters addressed by the Vulnerability Commission were strongly civilian in nature, it ought to have a say. In addition the committee feared that if the paper were to be handled by the Committee on Defence only, the military way of thinking would

¹⁰ This is a very explicit example of the military dominance in the field.

dominate. As will be shown, this rather unusual way of handling a White Paper had considerable effects on the reading.

The committees were not impressed by the solutions proposed in the government report, and for quite a while they considered returning it to the Ministry of Justice for improvements. All the political parties, including the parties represented in the government, were disappointed, and criticism was along traditional political lines.¹¹ There was, however, a more important dividing line on the White Paper that was to characterize the rest of the committees' work: the cleavage between the two standing committees. While the Committee on Defence called for more of a military focus, the Committee on Justice stressed the fact that the Vulnerability Commission had been set up to assess the vulnerability and preparedness of society *as a whole*. These committee disputes were in reality stronger than the party cleavages. However, the governing parties managed to save the government's face by talking the Labour Party into keeping the paper. The Labour Party's representative on the Committee on Defence, in particular, thought that an open confrontation with the governing parties would look bad, since the Labour party and the governing parties had compromised on the implementation of the military long-term plan earlier that year.

Still, the Labour Party was disappointed, especially with the government's rejection of the proposal to improve horizontal coordination by establishing a broader agency to secure the field greater attention and higher priority. For this reason the Labour Party considered joining the Progressive Party in dissenting on the central organization of the field. The Progressive Party suggested creating a broad agency for homeland safety and security under the Office of the Prime Minister, and the Labour Party seriously considered supporting this proposal. Dissent by the Progressive Party and the Labour Party – the two biggest non-governing parties in Parliament – would have represented a major defeat for the governing parties. Accordingly, the representative from the Conservative governing party felt he had to intervene. He managed to persuade the leader of the Labour Party that it was not a good idea to transfer the responsibility for homeland security to the Prime Ministers Office. Thus the Labour Party leader instructed the Labour Party representatives to support the government proposals for a new merged agency under the Ministry of Justice.

The proposed solution on the National Security Authority also met with criticism and dissent. The Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party suggested establishing this agency under the Ministry of Justice in accordance with the goal of strengthening this ministry's responsibility for coordination. The Committee on Justice supported this, arguing that it was important to prevent practises from becoming ingrained or letting closed systems develop, particularly in the part of the so-called secret services concerned with national security. The Committee on Justice claimed that the risk of this happening was greater in the defence sector than in the justice sector and that it would therefore be prudent to establish the National Security Authority under the Ministry of Justice. The Committee on Defence strongly opposed this and also took issue with the proposal to

¹¹ The Socialist Left Party, for example, called a debate on the fundamental principles of civil rights and civil liberties, while the right-wing Progressive Party called for more direct control and oversight.

give the Security Authority dual lines of reporting. It favoured instead keeping it under the Ministry of Defence. The solution proposed in the White Paper, however, was a compromise that had already been negotiated between the ministries and respective ministers and the ministries became very defensive when the committees started to question this. Thus, parliament was presented with a 'fait accompli' that it was unable to change.

The Labour Party's compliance with the government parties and the conflict between the two standing committees were two central features of the parliamentary hearing. The explanation for the first would appear to lie more in the close relationship between the Labour party and the Christian People's Party than in the persuasive powers of the Conservative party representative. It seems clear that these two representatives' interests in defending the military sector and securing a military focus were just as strong as their political loyalties. The reason for this is, however, rather unclear. The Labour Party had prepared a substantial part of the White Paper while still in office, and the party had a comprehensive plan for organizational arrangements in the field. Yet when it came to discussing the White Paper under the new government, it abandoned its former approach and joined forces with the governing parties. One important explanation for this might be the troubled relationship between the two standing committees. The ad hoc joint committee led to a considerable amount of sectoral conflict and apparently produced a strong alliance between the representatives of the Labour Party and the Christian People's Party on the Committee on Defence, prompted especially by the demand of the Committee on Justice for a say in this area of jurisdiction. The government was sceptical about this alliance. Nevertheless, it succeeded in getting its proposals accepted in parliament with only minor amendments.

Discussion

The reorganization process reveals some interesting findings. In this section we will start by summarizing the most important empirical results and then discuss how we can interpret the process and its outcome in terms of the various perspectives.

An important main finding is that what started life as a relatively comprehensive reorganization process ended with only minor changes being made to the status quo, and this despite the Vulnerability Commission's recommendations for radical organizational changes. The case illustrates how difficult it is to move responsibility for an agency from one ministry to another. The Ministry of Justice achieved approval for its view on how to organize the field, and so did the Ministry of Defence to a certain extent. Compared with these two actors, the Vulnerability Commission, the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration and the parliament ended up playing rather minor roles. The Ministry of Justice initiated the process because it wanted to upgrade the civil security field and strengthen its role vis-à-vis military security. The process was then taken over by the Vulnerability Commission whose leader proposed changing organizational arrangements in the field according to the principle of hierarchical top-down coordination in the form of a new ministry for homeland security. Ultimately, however, a hierarchical model of this kind turned out to be too radical both for the

ministries involved and for the Bondevik II government, which abandoned the idea of a ministry of homeland security in favour of upgrading and strengthening the agencies in the field – partly through mergers and partly by establishing more semi-autonomous agencies. At the same time, the principle of responsibility based on similarity, proximity and internal self-regulation was to be preserved, indicating that the new model is rather ambiguous and represents something of a hybrid. Thus «business as usual» is a better label for the outcome than radical change. The rejection of the idea of a «super ministry» was not necessarily a bad choice. The experience of other countries, like Australia and Canada, which have experimented with mega-ministries, is that they are difficult to control efficiently and that they represent huge administrative and managerial challenges (Aucoin and Bakvis 1993, Peters 2004).

Second, in contrast to the major dispute on the organizational model there was overall agreement on what the problems in the field of homeland security were – namely, fragmentation, weak coordination and low priority.

Third, it is also fair to say that the reorganization process was to a certain extent reactive, in the sense that quite a few of the initiatives taken represented a reaction to events in the defence sector. For instance, the initiative to establish the Vulnerability Commission was the result of the wish by the Ministry of Defence to establish a public commission to investigate future defence and security policy; moreover, the preparation of the White Paper was hastened by the fact that the Ministry of Defence produced its new long-term planning document one year earlier than expected. In addition, the reading of the White Paper in the parliament was organized in an unorthodox ad hoc manner because the Committee on Justice wanted to prevent the military focus becoming too dominant.

All in all the process revealed the definition of homeland security and what it should constitute as issues of fundamental dispute. Does homeland security belong primarily to the sphere of defence or to that of civil society? Is it just one area among many in the field of general administrative policy and modernization of the public sector or is it a special field with its own particular problems and challenges? This dispute over the basic agenda has important implications for deciding what the relevant problems are, what are good solutions and who are legitimate actors and participants. Thus, the process was not only a decision-making process but also a process of definition, interpretation, developing meaning and a shared understanding and constructing political realities and negotiation over who is in the best position to advance the field of homeland security (Baumgartner and Jones 1993, Rochefort and Cobb 1994, Kettl 2004c).

Forth, the process revealed that cleavages are more cross-institutional than inter-institutional. For example, the disagreement between the justice and defence sectors about how to define safety, security and preparedness and where to place responsibility for them became most pronounced in the parliamentary reading. The lines of conflict went across institutional boundaries, not along them, in the sense that the distance was greater between the positions of the standing committees on justice and defence than those of the parliament and the government. The dominant conflict was not between the bureaucracy and the government or between the government and the parliament but between different policy areas or sectors. In one camp were the ministries, directorates,

executive political leaders and parliamentary standing committees in the policy area of justice, in the other were the corresponding bodies in the field of defence.

The instrumental perspective was probably most relevant in the early phases of the process and gives some insight into the initiative to establish the Vulnerability Commission and the way it operated. The initiative was a deliberate choice by political executives and the commission's work was based on ideals of steering, control and rational analysis. As the process went on, the significance of the rational approach more or less faded away, and the negotiation perspective became more and more relevant. In contrast to what an instrumental model would have predicted, the goals were ambiguous and changing and there was a loose coupling between the different phases of the process, from the initiative through the hearings to the formal decision. Organizational affiliation and sectoral interests are important to understand the different problems and solutions the different actors had and the tug-of-war between different parties. The coupling between the different phases changed as a result of negotiations – bargaining between different actors with different power bases. The negotiation perspective may be used to explain the reactive responses of the justice sector to the initiatives from the defence sectors as well as the responses from the different bodies in the round of hearings, and the dispute between the different actors during the policy-formulation and decision-making phases in parliament.

The institutional perspective has more explanatory power for the last part of the process than for the first, since the use of public commissions based on a problem-solving strategy followed by a round of public hearings is part of an institutionalised Norwegian policy style for reorganization processes. Local rationality and institution-based goals motivated by a wish to defend their own identity and ensure their survival can explain both the founding of the public commission and the institutional defence that characterized the statements from affected parties in the public hearings as well as in the ministerial working groups. The historical-institutional roots of ministries with strong internal cultures and traditions constrained the process. One important characteristic of the reorganization process was the resistance to being coordinated. While almost everyone agreed that coordination was of the utmost importance and that improvements were necessary, ultimately no one wanted this for themselves. The process can thus be said to be characterized by *negative coordination* (Mayntz and Sharpf 1975), where the wish to coordinate was greater than the willingness to be coordinated. It supports the finding from studies of efforts to make policies more coherent that public sector organizations resist coordination (Bardach 1998, Peters 2004).

The joint handling of the case by an ad hoc joint committee of the standing committees of defence and justice can also be seen as a case of cultural collusion between committees with different traditions, cultures and identities. In practice, however, it is difficult to differentiate between actor-specific interests and institutional norms and values.

In contrast to the assumptions underlying the perspective focusing on adaptation to external shocks we are unable to identify any significant effect of the September 11 terrorist attack either on the organizational solutions or on the problems of definition

concerning the reorganization of Norwegian homeland security.¹² This is somewhat surprising given the close relationship between Norway and the USA in security policy generally, through their joint membership of NATO and the Norwegian government's strong and active support of the US government during this crisis. The September 11 attack occurred while the government was in the middle of formulating its White Paper on homeland security, representing an open policy window (Kingdon 1995), but other factors like the change of government and the path dependency of the process as well as the institutional constraints by powerful ministries seemed to have a greater influence on the process than external shocks like September 11. While the crisis in the USA and internationally obviously had strong implications for this policy area it did not affect the question of how to reorganize the Norwegian homeland security administration. Thus, we can say that the organization of homeland security is rather robust, and adaptation to external shocks does not seem to have any significant explanatory power for the case of the reorganization process.

Summing up, this process is an interesting illustration of simultaneous robustness and flexibility, which cannot easily be explained in terms of a single factor. First of all, we have revealed a process of bureaucratic politics strongly tempered by institutional constraints based on path-dependencies, institutional identities and historical inefficiency. In view of this, a quick and easy adaptation either to new political signals from the executive or to external pressure and shocks would be unlikely. The process can best be understood from a transformative perspective, which takes into account actor-specific interests, institutional identities and traditions and instrumental choice by political-administrative leaders. A logic of appropriateness seems to be more dominant than a logic of consequences, for politics is not only about finding the best means to achieve a given goal but also about discovering goals in an endogenous process of developing meaning. In other words, change is not only about efficient adaptation to external shocks or to new policy signals from the executive but also represents a process of historic inefficiency (March and Olsen 1989).

Conclusion

One main lesson from this process is that context matters. In particular, the characteristic features of the tasks in a given policy field are important (Pollitt et al. 2004) and these must be taken into consideration in order to understand the reorganization process. On a daily basis it is difficult to observe both the activities and the outcome of activities in this policy area. In crises the political saliency of the tasks may be high, but in routine situations this is a field with a low level of political conflict. One of the main tasks of homeland security, however, is to plan for crisis and unforeseen circumstances and to be in a position to handle them. We are in a high-risk area, where timeliness and effectiveness, responsiveness and flexibility are important

¹² In contrast the September 11 attack lead to one of the largest governmental reorganizations ever in the USA. In 2003 22 federal agencies with 180.000 employees were merged into the new Department of Homeland Security.

features. In such situations a hierarchical process with clear and stable objectives and top-down instructions might be too rigid and might have to be supplemented by a local security culture and professional ethics and integrity in semi-autonomous agencies (Pollitt 2003b).

There is no one best way of organizing homeland security. Organizational structure plays a significant role but the most critical issues remain unresolved, both theoretically and empirically. We face difficult dilemmas in structural design that there is not an easy or stable solution to. (Hammon, Jen and Maeda 2003, Hammon 2004). Any organizational structure in the public sector is imperfect and involves trade-offs between different tasks, values and goals (Goodin 1996, Seidman 1998, Peters 2004). Different principles for specialization by purpose, process, clients or area has major implication for what is coordinated and what is not. We face the challenge of making responsibility for homeland security part of the everyday business of every public sector organization. At the same time, there is a need for autonomous professional knowledge and expertise, horizontal coordination between policy areas and vertical political control. The trade-offs between these needs differs between different institutions and actors and there is an unstable balance over time.

The reorganization of the Norwegian administration for homeland security can be seen as a combination of robustness and adaptation. Radical reform initiatives were rejected and the final solution was a combination of the traditional responsibility model based on a network approach and an agency model based on strengthened and partly merged semi-autonomous agencies at arms length from the ministry. In some ways, this solution can be seen as an ambiguous compromise, resulting in a hybrid organization unable to solve the coordination challenges in the field of homeland security. At the same time, though, it might also be regarded as representing a reasonable balance between different considerations. Thus, it might be a robust and flexible solution able to handle the unpredictability and unforeseen character of the tasks in this policy area and thus a promising solution to the coordination challenges of the field. In what direction it will develop in practice remains to be seen.

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