

XII Annual Conference of the International Research Society for Public Management

Call for Papers

Government at Arms' Length: the Pendulum Shift Panel

Convenors:

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Introduction:

The introduction of NPM to the public sector led to numerous changes, including the creation of bodies at arms' length. Nowadays there is a plethora of such bodies, known as executive agencies, public corporations, statutory bodies, non-departmental bodies, quangos, and so on.

In some countries these bodies are very new, but in other countries they are in fact a continuation (or proliferation) of an existing type of executive organisation. Moreover, there are serious indications that although governments adopted the trend to create such bodies, they have moulded and adapted the arms' length model to such an extent that doubts can be raised whether executive bodies in different countries are indeed the same.

Recently there even appears to be a shift in the creation of arms' length bodies. The political debate has taken a turn to consider such bodies more like a problem than a solution. A restoration of coordination, a possible return of arms' length bodies to the core of government, new mechanisms to control and regulate executive bodies; these are all signs that point to a change in the pendulum swing.

This panel will examine all these topics (arrival of new bodies, comparison between countries, creation of new problems and mechanisms, pendulum shift) in order to be able to ascertain to which degree the pendulum has indeed changed. Both theoretical and empirical papers are welcomed.

Literature:

Allix, M., & S. van Thiel. (2005). Mapping the field of quasi-autonomous organizations in France and Italy.

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Christensen, T. & P. Laegreid. (2003). *New Public Management: the transformation of ideas and practices*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Greve, C., Flinders, M.V., & Thiel S. van. (1999). Quangos: what's in a name? Defining quasi-autonomous bodies from a comparative perspective. *Governance*, 12, 1, 129-146.

Halligan, J. (2004). The Quasi-Autonomous Agency in an Ambiguous Environment: the Centrelink Case. *Public Administration and Development*, 24(2), 2004, pp. 147-56.

Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. (2004, 2nd edition). *Public management reform: a comparative analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pollitt, C, S. van Thiel & V. Homburg. (eds.). (2007). *New Public Management In Europe: Adaptation And Alternatives*. Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan.

Smullen, A. (2007). *Translating agency reform: rhetoric and culture in comparative perspective*. Rotterdam (dissertation).

If you would like to obtain further details about this panel or submit an abstract, please

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