

concept

GOVERNANCE OF MAJOR INVESTMENT PROJECTS
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Pre-project Governance - Perspectives on Political Administrative Control and Expert Autonomy

Professor Tom Christensen, University of Oslo

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- **1. MAIN QUESTIONS**
- **How do the QA system in Norway measure up to public sector reforms trends?**
- **How can we understand the different components in the QA system?**
- **What are the major challenges in such a system?**

- **2. REFORM TRENDS AND THE QA SYSTEM**
- **A. 'Old public administration'**
- **Was integrated, homogeneous and based on trust**
- **Criticized for inefficiency, not allowing much participation and having legitimacy problems**
- **First modified in Anglo-American countries in early 1980s through New Public Management**

- **B. Main features of NPM**
- **Focus on efficiency, market-orientation and management ideas**
- **Strong vertical devolution and horizontal specialization, creating fragmentation**
- **More based on mistrust**
- **Strategic frame-steering change role of political executives**

- **C. Post-NPM emerged from late 1990s**
- **Whole-of-government – more focus on central control and increased coordination**
- **Reaction to lack of central capacity for solving cross-sectoral problems**
- **Also reaction to NPM having problems of delivering on increased efficiency**
- **Increasing insecurity also a factor**

- **D. Reform trends and the QA system**
- **NPM components related to:**
- **More focus on technical-economic features**
- **Increased specialization through the use of external experts and not only in-house expertise**
- **Increased transparency in deciding on the MPPs**

- **Post-NPM features:**
- **Mandatory, rule-based and standardized system**
- **Imply increased centralization and coordination**
- **QA1 tries to increase the political control early in the MPP projects**

- **3. PERSPECTIVES ON QA COMPONENTS**
- **A. Economic-rational perspective**
- **A demand for unambiguous apriori goals and rules**
- **External experts reflect scepticism towards (internal) vested interests**
- **Combining insights from public choice and principal agent theories**

- **B. Structural-instrumental theory**
- **Design of separate, and not integrated, QA system**
- **Major structural change from a more 'bottom-up'-oriented MPP system**
- **QA is balancing structural elements of political-administrative control and external expertise**

- **C. Cultural-institutional perspective**
- **QA imply a major change from the traditional cultural path**
- **A change from a 'bottom-up' process with features negotiations and compromise, to**
- **A more centralized process where technical-economic 'objective' features are important**

- **4. MAJOR CHALLENGES OF THE QA-SYSTEM**
- **Increase political control of MPP processes**
- **Keep the legitimacy of the system towards sceptical ministries and agencies**
- **Control the influence of the external experts**
- **Show that the system consistently is an efficient system**