

Contemporary public management: a new global paradigm?

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Abstract. This paper takes another look at the much-canvassed idea of a 'new global paradigm' emerging in contemporary public management. It argues that, linguistic usage apart, the 'globality' and monoparadigmatic character of contemporary public management change seems to be exaggerated. Three interrelated objections are advanced against the claim of an emerging new global paradigm. First, it is argued that contemporary reform ideas, particularly those advanced by Osborne and Gaebler, are culturally plural rather than homogeneous. Second, it is argued that there are substantial biases towards exaggerating international similarity in public management reforms, but that the similarity weakens when we go beyond semantic packaging to examine the specific content of reform initiatives. Third, it is claimed that there are also built-in biases for overstressing the continuity of contemporary public management reforms, but that in fact there are major obstacles to the emergence of a stable new paradigm in public management. One is the underlying mutual repulsions of the multiple reform paradigms today, and the other is the frequency of self-disequilibrating processes in public management reform associated with the production of unintended side-effects and reverse effects.

The claim of a new global paradigm in public management

It has become commonplace to assert that an unstoppable new 'global' model is developing in contemporary public management. The claim is made explicitly by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, in their 1992 best-seller *Reinventing Government*. They say that the world-wide ascendancy of a new 'global paradigm' in public administration is historically as inevitable as the rise of 'progressive' public management ideas in the USA in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Osborne and Gaebler 1992: 325 and 328). Those progressive era ideas embraced a faith in institutionalized

science and public service professionalism, allied with general process rules to limit malfeasance and insulate public management from political control of case decisions over entitlements, contracts and the like (cf. Hood 1994).

Osborne and Gaebler are the most famous exponents of this view. But they are not the only ones. Peter Aucoin (1990: 134) strikes the same note, arguing that there is an 'internationalization' of public management: 'What has been taking place in almost every government in developed political systems . . . is a new emphasis on the organizational designs for public management . . . This internationalization of public management parallels the internationalization of public and private sector economies.' And in similar vein, Michael Barzelay (1992: 116ff.) writes of a 'postbureaucratic paradigm' replacing an earlier 'bureaucratic paradigm' that was appropriate for most of the twentieth century but is now outdated (*ibid.*: 133).

Some observers and commentators link a general shift in public management style to developments in technology, particularly in 'informatization' (that is, the linking of computers and telecommunications to produce new information networks). Christine Bellamy and John Taylor (1994: 26) see 'New Public Management' changes as just a part of a broader 'attempt to deliver the transformational properties of informatization'. The 1993 US National Performance Review (Gore 1993: 6) makes similar claims: 'Throughout the developed world, the needs of information-age societies were colliding with the limits of industrial-era government. Regardless of party, regardless of ideology, . . . governments were responding.' And Patrick Dunleavy (1994) even argues that the production of many public services may be set to be globalized through giant corporations who have specialized in making a particular product part of their 'core competencies', along the lines of McDonald's or Coca-Cola, interacting with 'decentralized nets of implementing agencies' (*ibid.*: 56). This development, too, seems to imply a steady move towards a uniform rather than a diverse model.

It is easy to be carried away by grand claims of historical inevitability and global convergence on some new epoch-making paradigm, especially when they come from such eminent writers. But the argument here is that such claims should be treated with some scepticism. Certainly, there does seem to have been a movement away from the doctrines of progressive era public administration in several OECD states. And undoubtedly, the same managerial catch-words have such a wide currency that one can speak of a new global vocabulary. The question of 'when is a paradigm not a paradigm' is potentially one of those angels-on-the-head-of-a-pin issues. But if that term means anything more than common linguistic usage, it is less certain that the move is truly universal, and the idea of a new 'global paradigm' seems to exaggerate the underlying uniformity and coherence of current developments, for three reasons.

First, establishing the partial retreat of traditional approaches to public administration does not necessarily demonstrate that any single new style of public administration will 'inevitably' be adopted worldwide to replace the progressive-era style, or even that the old style will everywhere disappear. Instead of the claim by Osborne and Gaebler and others to have identified a 'new paradigm' in public administration with some underlying coherence, it can be argued that the many contemporary reformers and would-be reformers of public management share few fundamental premises, and

where they do, they seem to be united more by what they are against than by what they are for. There is no single alternative to the progressive-era public administration model.

Second, the idea of a new global paradigm ignores the very different and typically 'path dependent' local political agendas to which contemporary public management changes are responding. Where the same thing is happening, it is often for quite different reasons, reflecting different underlying political agendas. And when we go below the superficial level of common global management 'seminarspeak', very different concrete things seem to have been happening in public service changes. It is tempting to suggest that whatever is global is not a 'paradigm' in a meaningful sense, and that what is a paradigm is not 'global'.

Third, the notion that a stable new structure is emerging worldwide seems to overplay the elements of continuity in contemporary public management change and to downplay the typically self-disequilibrating capacity of public management doctrines as a result of the unintended effects they produce – that is, their tendency to turn into 'fatal remedies', leading to the introduction of quite different doctrines as a corrective. It seems most unlikely that contemporary public management ideas can be exempt from this normal fate.

Coherent new paradigm – or Babel of Tongues?

Speaking of a global shift from one paradigm to another implies both that there is a single old paradigm and a single exit route from it. Both of these implied premisses are contestable, though, as noted earlier, much depends on what is counted as a 'paradigm'. If that elusive word is taken to mean a coherent ABC of public service organization or a collection of management doctrines that fit together without contradiction, the idea of a clear-cut move from one paradigm to another seems of doubtful plausibility.

I have argued elsewhere (Hood 1995) that traditional public administration systems vary in ways that are likely to make substantial differences to the motive and opportunity to adopt 'new public management' measures. Countries with a 'big government' profile in spending and staffing are likely to provide more *motive* for politicians to attempt money-saving administrative reform measures than small government states, while countries where the public administration system is capable of being changed from a single point are likely to produce more *opportunity* to adopt such measures. Accordingly, it is the big-government states with an 'Archimedean lever' for regulation of their public services which are likely to display the most dramatic shifts towards 'new public management' profiles, because the necessary conjunction of motive and opportunity will be strongest there. Indeed, any 'old global paradigm' that embraces the juridified German public service style with its tradition of semi-independent public authorities and a Parliament dominated by public servants, the British 'Whitehall village' portrayed by Heelo and Wildavsky (1974) and the American 'government of strangers' must be a very broad affair (cf. Silberman 1993).

Even if there really is a global 'old paradigm' corresponding to the American progressive-era recipe, there is still room for doubt as to whether that structure is giving way to a single 'new paradigm', because conventional public administration attracts a range of very different critiques and contradictory recipes for improvement. Indeed, Osborne and Gaebler's own set of alternatives to progressive public administration is a collection of remedies which are more notable for their diversity, and even their internal contradictions, than for any single coherent underlying theme. In fact, much of the broad appeal of Osborne and Gaebler's collection may lie precisely in the way that they combine a set of elements that are fundamentally incompatible rather than readily combinable threads of a coherent 'paradigm' (cf. Goodsell 1993: 86). The ability to convey different messages to different audiences simultaneously has often been said to be a key to persuasive power.

With Patrick Dunleavy (Dunleavy and Hood 1994), I have argued that critiques of 'New Public Management' (NPM) can be arranged in ways that correspond with each of the four polar types defined by the coordinates of the grid-group cultural theory (cf. Douglas 1982; Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky 1990), and in that sense culturally different variants of NPM can be identified. Osborne and Gaebler's collection of reinventions seems to link to most of those polar types, suggesting that there may be three or more different paradigms rather than a single one.

Osborne and Gaebler's much-quoted emphasis on 'steering', a public service ethos and strong leadership from the top is a reflection of an 'hierarchist' worldview applied to public management. Hierarchism in the cultural theory frame means a set of attitudes and beliefs in a ladder of authority, orderly structures and the primacy of organized expertise. The progressive-era faith in scientists and expert professionals is one expression of that worldview. Its contemporary variant is a managerial view of the world which stresses the difference that visionary leadership can make, the need to modernize public services through state-of-the-art informatization, and an emphasis on broad strategic vision to counter what are otherwise seen as the besetting sins of the policy process, such as inconsistency, 'tunnel vision' and 'random agenda selection' (terms used by Breyer 1993).

Elsewhere, however, Osborne and Gaebler's approved recipe for 'reinvention' relates to the conventional individualist cultural worldview, in which the main recipe for improving public management is competition and market-type consumerism. Such remedies link with the doctrines of 'government by the market' (Self 1993) in order to make producers responsive to their consumers. And in yet other places, Osborne and Gaebler tap into egalitarian cultural themes. Egalitarians in cultural theory share with individualists an antipathy to 'leadership' and ordered authority. But they differ from individualists in preferring collective organization to markets and rivalry. In that sense, Osborne and Gaebler's ideas of 'empowering' local collectivities reflect the egalitarian recipe for improving public management (see Goodsell 1993: 86).

Indeed, the modish word 'empowerment', much used by Osborne and Gaebler, illustrates the potential plurality of paradigms with which they are engaged. Like every rhetorical word, it means different things in different cultural contexts. For individualists, empowerment means marketizing reforms designed to enhance consumer

sovereignty in public services at the expense of entrenched producers. But, to egalitarians, empowerment means the very opposite: putting political power – to override markets – in the hands of local collectivities. Since not everyone can be 'empowered' at the same time, who is to be empowered against whom is a key test of cultural bias.

In fact, Osborne and Gaebler's 'new paradigm' looks like another case in public administration where doctrinal 'tendency and counter-tendency are present simultaneously' (Spann 1981: 14). As has happened before in the history of public administration ideas (for example in pre-unification China and nineteenth-century Germany), 'managerial' recipes for better government clash with 'legalist' ones (stressing due-process rather than free-to-manage solutions) and corporate-producer solutions (such as business-style privatization) clash with communitarian ones (coproduction, community self-organization). Many of the critics of contemporary public administration are hostile to conventional bureaucracies, but beyond that what seems to unite them is what they are *against*, not what they are *for*. A 'global paradigm' to be worthy of the name should amount to more than that.

Superficial similarity, underlying differences?

It is easy to see how a bias towards overstressing similarity in contemporary public management changes can arise. Powerful international organizations such as the OECD and the World Bank are by their *raison d'être* committed to a view of international convergence on some single 'best practice' model which it is their institutional role to foster, in helping the 'laggards' to catch up with the vanguard. And within the domestic context, managers, politicians and bureaucrats facing criticism often try to build up bipartisan support for reshaping organizations in their preferred direction by arguing that what they are doing reflects 'international best practice', as has been the case in the UK since the early 1990s and applied to the US 1993 National Performance Review, with its conveniently vague references to changes sweeping through public administration from Sweden to New Zealand. Public management gurus will likewise aim to convey the impression that their favoured path to salvation is spreading everywhere. (Countervailing tendencies to exaggerate distinctiveness by spurious badge-engineering exist too, sometimes alongside the exaggeration of similarity.)

Given such built-in biases towards exaggeration of similarity in public management changes, it is important to weigh such claims carefully. Even though the general direction of change in many countries seems to be away from the model of progressive-era public administration, it does not follow that the old model will disappear everywhere, or that there will be a single route taken away from that model. And contrary to Osborne and Gaebler's claim that there is an 'inevitable' and 'global' movement to a coherent 'new paradigm', it seems more plausible to expect multiple future states rather than a single one, for three reasons.

First, in spite of Osborne and Gaebler's claim that the paradigm change is 'global'

it would appear that the movement away from 'progressive public administration' in the 1980s and early 1990s was in fact far from universal (cf. Hood 1995). For example, the EU bureaucracy showed no discernible movement away from progressive-era principles of lifelong career service and highly legalistic operating procedures over that period (cf. Hay 1989) and indeed the OECD bureaucracy showed no signs of itself adopting the 'New Public Management' principles that it has so earnestly canvassed as the wave of the future to its member states. In the key case of China, some of the important public administration developments of the 1980s – such as the return to a traditional-style grading system and the resumption of examination rather than political patronage for public service recruitment – look more like a partial return to progressivism than a move away from it.

Second, even where apparently similar changes have been made, it does not necessarily follow that they were undertaken for the same reasons or will automatically have the same results. After all, progressive-era tenets themselves may have been adopted for different reasons to suit particular domestic political agendas, in which 'efficiency' in a narrow sense was not always paramount. Hans Mueller (1984) has argued that eighteenth-century Prussia and nineteenth-century Britain adopted the same 'old paradigm' measure (meritocratic examination systems for the recruitment of public servants) for diametrically opposed political reasons – to push the landed gentry out of public service in the first case and to retain its grip on the bureaucracy in the second. In the same way, contemporary managerialization of contemporary public services can be undertaken as a tactic of 'conservative change' (to stave off demands for deeper change in the state's role, as, say, in Sweden under the Social Democrats) or for the very opposite reason, as a first step to what is intended to be a radical rollback of the state (as, say, in the UK under Margaret Thatcher). That does not mean that the results will necessarily be what the reformers intend, an issue to be discussed in the next section.

Third, even if there is a tide flowing against progressive-era doctrines in several OECD countries, it is far from clear that the reform measures adopted by different countries amount to the same 'new paradigm'. It is true that the same management buzzwords tend to be very widely diffused, but that on its own is a trivial level of convergence: the key question is whether what is happening underneath is also uniform, and that seems doubtful. For example, while states like New Zealand and the UK have concentrated on 'managerializing' their core public services, Germany has hitherto left the style of its public service largely intact at federal level, at least, and concentrated instead on by-passing it for key functions (like regional economic development) by the creation of private-law companies. The Australian Commonwealth government resisted 'agencification' of its structure, on the grounds that it was dangerous to separate policy from execution, while New Zealand and the UK took exactly the opposite course. France and Spain concentrated on regional devolution as the centrepiece of their public sector reform programmes in the 1980s, while the UK if anything went in the opposite direction. In Japan more rather than less stress seems to have been put into 'legalistic' styles of administration by written documents (for example in business regulation). The US emphasis on deregulation *within* government,

as stressed by the 1993 National Performance Review, has not been strongly followed elsewhere, no doubt because the US separation of powers structure produces a pattern of Congressional micromanagement of the bureaucracy that is not reproduced in other OECD states. To see these very different ways of reforming traditional public administration systems as reflecting a single new 'global paradigm' would seem to require creative interpretation of a high order.

A new stable paradigm or a succession of self-disequilibrating solutions?

The third question mark over the notion of a coherent new paradigm in public management is the issue of whether the agenda for public management reform has been stable enough over the last decade or two to be counted as a single set of ideas and practices. It is often argued that those developments have defied what observers in the past have often seen as the peculiar vulnerability of public management to fad and fashion (cf. Spann 1981) – Japanese management styles yesterday, New Ageist methods of releasing inner energy today (Huczynski 1993), some new, equally superficial and short-lived, panacea tomorrow.

But just as there may be an institutional bias towards exaggerating international convergence in public management, so is there frequently a propensity to overstress continuity over time, particularly in circumstances like those of the UK where the same party has been in office for over a decade. Over the long imperial period, Chinese officials tended to exaggerate the continuity of their public management institutions and practices, and in the same way there may be some built-in biases towards playing up the stability of the contemporary 'New Public Management' agenda.

In the UK case, it is notable how many of the underlying public management themes and agendas have kept changing over the past twenty years. Christopher Pollitt (1993) has pointed to the shift from the 'neo-Taylorist' late-1970s emphasis on cutting public service numbers at any cost to the opposite stress on public service 'quality' emerging from the later 1980s. A related change is the move from the emphasis on 'results' or 'outputs' that were the catchwords of public management reformers in the early 1980s to the stress on 'governance' (apparently a euphemism for 'process') as the hot topic of the mid-1990s, with concerns about sleaze and the proper conduct of public business. Nor are those the only shifts that have taken place. Others include the shift from stress on manager power ('free to manage') of the late 1970s to the late-1980s stress on consumer power ('free to choose' or at least 'free to know') allied with ministerial attacks on the proliferation of managerial 'suits' in the NHS, and the shift from the early-1980s effort to equip ministers to manage through devices such as MINIS to the late-1980s effort to take management away from ministers by creation of executive agencies. It is hard to see what basic public management paradigm these very different successive approaches reflect.

Indeed, there would seem to be at least two serious obstacles to the emergence of a stable new paradigm in public management. One is the difficulty that mutual repulsion

among different recipes for good public management poses for arriving at a convergent solution. The other is the propensity of polar approaches to public management to turn into 'fatal remedies' producing the opposite of the intended effect.

Problems of arriving at a convergent solution

In principle, the idea of producing a hybrid mixed-salad approach to public management drawing on the strengths of different approaches is an attractive one (even if there might be a problem about seeing a mixed-salad approach as a single paradigm). But achieving any sort of stable 'balance' among approaches which reflect different basic worldviews is likely to be problematic because each approach of that type involves an underlying logic which, if taken to its limits, will tend to destroy all the others. In such circumstances, the appropriate metaphor may be not so much a mixed salad as a set of dogs and cats – a collection of mutually repulsive elements.

That is, if all the emphasis is placed on the individualists' preferred remedy of competition, regulation and system guidance will be hard to operate because no one will be above the fray, peer-group processes will be undermined by free-riding and elements of deliberate unpredictability in the design of organization may be hard to sustain against pressures to create internally cohesive competing units. If, on the other hand, all the emphasis is placed on the egalitarians' favourite remedy of group interaction, regulation and system guidance will be rejected as inappropriate 'top-down' interference, competition will be incompatible with 'groupiness' and the group bonds will likewise work against maintaining unpredictability as a mechanism of control. Again, if the hierarchists' preferred recipe of regulation and system guidance is pursued single-mindedly, competition will be no more than lobbying of the regulators, group interaction will be trumped by authority and control by deliberate unpredictability will be hard to maintain in the face of generalized rules and concentrated authority. Equally, if all the emphasis goes on to the approach which seems closest to the fatalist position, namely controlling public management by making its operation unpredictable (to limit opportunities for bribery and extortion), the elements of cooperation required to organize for competition, group mutuality or regulation are likely to be damped down.

Given the force of mutual repulsion which each of these recipes for good public management exerts against each of the others, it seems inherently difficult for public management controls to settle down into a stable hybrid form, at least for very long. Rather, such systems seem more likely to keep 'hunting around' among the various types, as surprise and disappointment over the capacity of one approach to deliver satisfactory results leads to increasing support for one of the other options. In such circumstances, self-exciting paradigmatic instability seems a more likely outcome than a settled approach.

Fatal remedies

If each cultural worldview involves an approach to public management that has built-in strengths and weaknesses, it follows that those weaknesses (as well as the strengths) will tend to become more glaring the more weight is put on any one approach. Hence

side-effects and even reverse effects from public management changes will be wide-spread, and those unintended outcomes will tend to produce shifting emphases from one public management approach to another.

Side-effects and reverse effects – unintended effects of policy and management measures – are a recurring theme in social science (cf. Hood 1976; Sieber 1981). Much of the debate about 'new public management' has been over the alleged side-effects of measures like contractization and outsourcing. An example is market-testing obligations on public bodies, which are ostensibly designed to reduce costs, but may turn out to cut across other policy goals, such as the desire to involve prisoners in the running and maintenance of prisons as part of vocational training programmes (cf. *Annual Report of HM Chief Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland 1993-4*, Cm 2649 1993-4, London, HMSO: iii).

There are other ways too that public management changes may unintendedly produce results that are very different from those claimed or intended by their champions. In earlier work (Dunleavy and Hood 1994; Hood 1995), I have called attention to two ways in which ambitions to move from a 'public bureaucracy state' to a 'minimal purchasing state' may unintendedly produce outcomes that fit neither of the conventional dichotomies of the state-versus-market debate.

One possible unintended outcome is a 'Headless Chicken State', in which a public sector remains distinct from the private sector in staffing and organization, but there is no orderly structure of rules or conventions within which the component organizations work. The Headless Chicken State is a structure of 'no-one-in-charge management' (Byson and Crosby 1992) in which everything is up for grabs at every stage and there are no clear rules of the road or demarcation of responsibilities.

A second possible unintended outcome is a 'Gridlocked Contract State' in which there is no distinct public sector presence or style. Public service provision is a matter for private corporations or organizations operating in a business look-alike style. But the structure of service provision is nevertheless 'juridified' into an 'iron rule book' which has a life of its own and is impervious to management or common sense (Teubner 1987). Juridification can come from general rules imposed by insurance companies, rule by law courts through litigation, regulatory pressures from domestic or international authorities, or some mixture of the three.

No public management reformer sets out with the intention of creating such effects. And these two outcomes are less commonly discussed than the conventional alternatives of hierarchical bureaucracy and marketized individual provision. But they are far from remote or exotic possibilities. The Headless Chicken State is commonplace in US public administration and the fragmentation of local public services in the UK in the 1980s/90s, away from the nineteenth-century style of uniform and inclusive elected local authorities towards a set of quangos under appointed leadership, is producing a similar style. The US healthcare system of the 1980s (and large parts of its public utility provision) is an obvious case of the Gridlocked Contract State, and some have seen juridification rather than freedom to manage as the shape of things to come in UK public service provision (cf. Jacob 1991).

Indeed, the possibility that contemporary public sector management changes may

produce not just side-effects but *reverse effects* (achieving the opposite of the desired effect) deserves more discussion than it has hitherto received. Perhaps that discussion has been inhibited by question-begging labelling for the new style (such as 'economic rationalism', as used by Pusey 1991), or by the well-known difficulties of obtaining clear evidence of reverse effects, for example by interview-based studies. But many of the contemporary changes in public management are potentially vulnerable to all the seven 'conversion mechanisms' identified by Sieber (1981) as ways in which social interventions can turn into 'fatal remedies', achieving the very opposite of the effect desired.

Table 1 presents Sieber's conversion mechanisms in summary form, together with an indication of possible ways in which 'New Public Management' measures can succumb to those conversion processes. The argument is *not* that 'New Public Management' is uniquely vulnerable to reverse-effect problems. It is that *any* system of control over public management drawn from one of the polar worldviews identified by cultural theory is likely to produce such outcomes, for two reasons.

First, the more reliance is placed on any one polar approach to control the more serious its blind spots are likely to become, producing reverse effects through 'functional disruption' and 'placation'. For example, over-extending the egalitarian recipe of communitarian peer-group interaction where there is no inherent cultural homogeneity may tend to weaken control, not strengthen it (as with the well-known story of 'maximum feasible participation' in the US Great Society programme of the 1960s (Moynihan 1969)). Moreover, if the public management application of each of the polar cultural types comes to be presented as a general answer to improving public services, it will tend to create the conditions for reverse effects through overcommitment, as it moves from its natural heartlands into more problematic territory.

Second, each polar approach will tend to antagonize those who prefer alternative approaches to public management, creating the conditions for reverse effects through 'exploitation', 'provocation' and 'classification'. For example, hierarchist measures of review and oversight, designed to tighten up control, may in fact weaken it if the result is either to provoke open challenge or covert avoidance. A case in point is Jabbari's (1994: 194) discussion of the application of natural justice requirements to prison boards of visitors' and governors' disciplinary hearings, having the possible effect of driving prison discipline underground, 'such that formal disciplinary procedures become less important than informal and less open methods of control'.

Figure 1 summarizes the argument sketched here. Two of Sieber's reverse-effect mechanisms, namely functional disruption and placation resulting from comfortable blind spot assumptions going unchallenged, seem more likely to be linked with heavy emphasis on any one polar approach to improving public management, fitting with what is known about the effects of 'groupthink' and the sources of military incompetence (cf. Dixon 1976). Three of the other reverse-effect mechanisms in Sieber's set, on the other hand, seem more likely to come into play when the emphasis is placed on a single cultural paradigm of public management but the social context is culturally heterogeneous (exploitation, provocation and classification resulting from processes which cross boundaries of trust and shared beliefs and thereby invite 'bending-back' responses).

Table 1 Sieber's 7 'Conversion Mechanisms' and Public Management Reforms

Mechanism	Causal process	Example
FUNCTIONAL DISRUPTION	The unintentional frustration of a 'system need' in public service organization has the effect of worsening the condition which the reform is intended to improve	Power's (1994) argument that the 'audit explosion' weakens effective regulation by turning responsible (self-regulating) professionals into cheating regulatees
EXPLOITATION	Public management reforms can create opportunities for opponents or opportunists to use in ways that achieve the opposite of the desired effect	Dunleavy's (1991) argument that contracting out and hiving off leads to welfare-reducing over-outsourcing by high public servants for private benefit
GOAL DISPLACEMENT	An instrumental value becomes a terminal value in a way that defeats the basic objective	Nethercot's (1989a: 17 and 1989b) argument that NPM tends to be defeated by middle-level bureaucratization turning reporting requirements from a means to an end
PROVOCATION	Measures intended to increase compliance with authority have the opposite effect because of the antagonism they stir up, producing loss of cooperation	The argument that strict rule enforcement produces principled dissidence and reduces high-trust compliance (Bardach and Kagan 1982; Heleo and Wildavsky 1974)
CLASSIFICATION	Labelling or categorization has reverse effects as intended stigmas are treated as badges of glory or intended prizes are treated as stigmas	Martin's (1993) claim that stress on management produces negative motivation in work groups; standard critiques of performance pay as demotivating
OVER-COMMITMENT	Intervention is self-defeating because it exhausts resources in pursuit of objectives that cannot be achieved	Sieber's (1981: 162) argument that administrative reforms defeat themselves by initial hype that produces later disillusion
PLACATION	Intervention causes situations to deteriorate by compromises that come unstuck or illusions of success which produce complicity	Argument by Dunleavy and Hood (1994) that NPM schemes can worsen policy-making quality by deflecting attention from large-scale substantial problems to endless reorganization

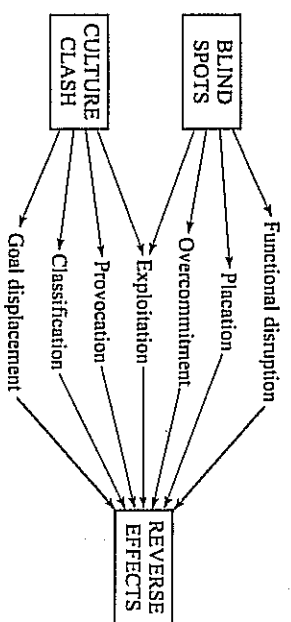


Figure 1 How control systems destroy themselves (Source: Sieber 1981)

Conclusion

Today's prophets of a new 'global paradigm' in public management are not the first to proclaim that history is on their side. Today it seems ironic that Max Weber could have believed that turn-of-the-century Prussia provided a universal model of modern organization on which other societies could be expected to converge as they developed (Douglas 1987: 95-6). Doctrines and ideas which have been confidently consigned to the 'dustbin of history' (in Lenin's famous and equally ironic phrase) have a habit of appearing in a recycled form (Hood and Jackson 1991). This chapter suggests that we should be cautious about claims of an inexorable one-way march of history and critical of habits of *Gleichshaltung*, the deeply-ingrained worship of tidy-looking dichotomies' (Austin 1962: 3).

Though progressive-era doctrines of public administration are currently in retreat in a number of countries, both the past and the future of public management may be more plural and contradictory than the sweeping prognostications of Osborne, Gaebler and Aucoin might lead us to think. A cultural theory analysis suggests that it is far from certain that public administration in the nineties is heading towards a new 'global paradigm', unless 'paradigm' is defined so broadly as to be drained of meaning. If the arguments advanced earlier are correct, 'New Public Management' seems likely to face either or both of two possible fates. One is to embrace incompatible doctrines simultaneously (as Osborne and Gaebler do) rather than a single clear-cut paradigm, papering over the cracks with a rhetoric of 'empowerment' which will mean different things to people with different worldviews or local agendas. The other is to embrace the alternative doctrines sequentially, with the emphasis shifting among different approaches, as awareness develops of unintended side-effects and reverse effects. Indeed, it was suggested earlier that there are signs of both processes occurring in the brief history of NPM.