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Styles of Reform: Differences in quango creation between policy sectors in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

National governments follow country-specific reform trajectories, which imply uniform preferences for specific types of quasi-autonomous organisations (quangos). However, at micro level there is little uniformity; similar tasks are charged to different types of quangos. This contradiction could be explained by the existence of styles of quango creation at the level of policy sectors. Do such styles exist? Using the literature on policy styles and administrative culture, four styles of quango creation are deduced: traditional, bureaucratic, professional and managerial. The analysis shows that the majority of Dutch policy sectors indeed have a dominant style of quango-creation. The bureaucratic style is found in ten out of eighteen sectors. Replication of this study may help to improve the explanation of quango creation in western countries.

Introduction

Western governments have followed country-specific trajectories when it comes to administrative reform (see e.g. Kickert, 1997; Feigenbaum, Henig and Hamnett, 1999; OECD 2002; Christensen and Laegreid 2003; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). For example, the United Kingdom chose a clear marketisation strategy in the early 1980s by privatising large parts of the public sector (national industries, railroads, housing). The Netherlands on the other hand focussed more on hiving off departmental units but keeping them within the public domain ('autonomisation'). And in Italy the reforms came rather late, at the end of the 1990s, as part of the devolution of power to regional levels (Allix and Van Thiel 2005).

A trajectory is more than a trend; it is an intentional strategy (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004), favouring particular forms of reform over others. Here we will look into the creation of quasi-autonomous organisations (quangos) as part of the administrative reforms that most western

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countries undertook from the early 1980s on. While quangos are not new to western states, their number increased rapidly as a result of public sector reforms. They were seen as efficient executive bodies; because they operate at arms' length of the government, they can operate more business-like and will be less affected by political interference or scrutiny (cf. Pollitt and Talbot 2004).

This article is not so much concerned with *why* quangos were established (motives, see Van Thiel 2004b) but more with *how* that is done (patterns). For if countries indeed have reform trajectories it is implied that they will favour a particular type of quango. However, when you take a closer look there is little uniformity in quango creation. Firstly, there is not one type but an extensive range of organisations in charge of public tasks but operating at arms' length of the government (Greve, Flinders and Van Thiel 1999; Pollitt and Talbot 2004). Each country has its own specific types, but always more than one. There appear to be three categories: executive agencies, public bodies, and state corporations (cf. Greve et al. 1999). Executive agencies are for instance the Next Steps Agencies in the UK, *agenzie* in Italy, and *agentschappen* in the Netherlands and Flanders. In the public body category of quangos the French have public establishments; New Zealand established Crown Entities; in the UK we find non-departmental bodies (NDPB); and in the Netherlands so-called independent administrative bodies (ZBO) are in place. And state or state-owned corporations are found in most countries as well, like the broadcasting companies, airports, railroads and other transport companies in the Nordic countries. Here I will refer to all these organisations as quangos, but the reader should note that there are many differences (cf. Wettenhall 2004). These differences refer to for instance the degree of remaining ministerial accountability, the statutory position of organisations and their way of financing (Greve et al. 1999).

Secondly, although in most western countries similar tasks (like regulation, payment of benefits, licensing, etc.) have been charged to quangos, there are no clear or systematic patterns in which type of quango is charged with which task (Van Thiel 2004a). For example, market regulation may in one country be charged to a public body, in another to a contract agency and in a third country to a departmental unit (cf. Pollitt et al. 2004, on four different functions in four countries). Similarly, in one country the same task will be carried out by different types of quango in different policy sectors (e.g. licensing in agriculture, infrastructure and housing) and/or at different government levels. Finally, quangos may change shape over time, for example executive agencies can be privatised and public bodies re-nationalised (quango-drift; Greve et al. 1999). This need not however affect their task.

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So, while the concept of trajectories implies a certain degree of uniformity – at least at country level – and quangos are often in charge of similar tasks across countries and policy sectors, there is still a lot of variation to be explained. In this article I will investigate whether such an explanation might be found at the sectoral level. According to Freeman (1985: 482), policymaking in western societies shows more and more sectoral tendencies. The leading question in this article is therefore: are there any sectoral patterns in the decisions to create quasi-autonomous organisations? A sectoral style of reform can help explain why similar tasks in different sectors are given to quangos of different types (i.e. variation at micro level). And dominant styles at sectoral level can lead to dominant patterns at national level (i.e. uniformity at macro level). The existence of sectoral styles could thus improve our understanding of quango proliferation.

This search for patterns in quango establishment has not been random. Based on the literature on policy styles and administrative culture, I have deduced four styles of quango creation. These four styles will be tested for the Dutch situation. Replication of this study is needed to determine whether the results also hold for other countries (cf. Freeman 1985; Howlett 1991).

Policy style and administrative culture

'Style of quango creation' is based on two concepts: policy style and administrative culture. In this section I will describe both concepts and how they relate to quango creation. In the next section four styles of quango creation will be deduced and operationalised.

Policy style refers to the routines of policymakers in their choices and policy decisions (Richardson, Gustafson and Jordan 1982: 12–13). It regards both policy-making and implementation. Policymakers use certain 'styles' of working to handle the overwhelming amount of issues or problems on the political agenda (e.g. only re-active responses or an interventionist style). And secondly, policy styles reflect the preferred way of dealing with other actors in the policy-making and implementation process (e.g. finding consensus with interested parties, or top-down decision-making). Policy styles determine how policies come about, for example in the choice of policy targets, means, policy instruments (regulation, distribution, etc.) and mode of implementation (Freeman 1985; Howlett 1991). The aforementioned trajectories of reform can be seen as an example of national policy styles.

National policy styles can be best observed in comparison to other nations, for within countries different styles may exist, at different

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government levels, in different policy sectors and in different executive organisations (Richardson et al. 1982; Howlett 2003). There is however usually one predominant style, which is then identified as the national policy style, or political culture (Henderson 2004). Despite their predominance, national policy styles can change, for example as a result of regime change or crises (Freeman 1985), or incrementally over time.

Administrative culture is defined as 'a more or less consistent and long-term set of institutionalised patterns of politico-administrative relationships, norms and procedures' (Howlett 2003: 474). These patterns are reflected in the behaviour of administrators (Sharma 2002) and are rooted both in their institutional context and in their psychology. In day-to-day activities, styles are continually reinforced and taught to newcomers (Terpstra and Havinga 2001). Administrative culture is reflected in the set of beliefs of civil servants about how and which things should be done (Capano 2003: 783) and what their own role and functioning should be, within government bureaucracy and for society as a whole (cf. Henderson 2004).

Because of their quasi-permanent nature, administrative cultures have long-lasting influences that not only affect current but also future decisions or actions. While Howlett (2003: 485) claims that administrative reform can occur only when the administrative culture changes accordingly, cultures are assumed to be highly resistant to reform. Therefore, administrative reform – like quango creation – will often be moderated or filtered by the existing administrative culture (cf. Knill 1999; James 2003; Gains 2004). Such path-dependency could explain differences between countries' quango trajectories (cf. Pollitt et al. 2004: 251–66).

It is obvious that the concepts of policy styles and administrative culture have a lot in common. Hall (1993: 291) refers to the intertwinement of policy paradigms and departmental routines; the borders between concepts like frames, culture, paradigms and style are difficult to draw (cf. Capano 2003). The reason why I have used the two aforementioned concepts is that together they touch upon the key elements of the choice of policymakers for quasi-autonomous organisations; which is in essence a political choice (decision) for a particular instrument, or mode of implementation (Van Thiel 2004b).

At the same time, the combination of the two concepts is not without problems. Most importantly, the concepts focus more on the role of civil servants than politicians, while it is in fact the politicians who make the final decision. While this may be true, the role of (top) civil servants in the initiation and shaping of quango establishment is at least very strong and in many cases even decisive (cf. Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004: 202; James 2003: 46). Some types of quango are in fact established without the need for parliament to concur (mostly executive agencies). Moreover, in the

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Dutch case earlier research has already proven that ideological differences do not affect decisions to establish a quango (Van Thiel 2001; 2004b). 'Policymakers' is therefore assumed to refer to bureaucrats and politicians together. This assumption solves the conceptual problem for now, but should be re-examined in future research and for other countries (see also conclusions below).

There are many typologies of policy styles and administrative cultures available (see e.g. Richardson et al. 1982: 13; Van Waarden 1985; Terpstra and Havinga 2001; Henderson 2004).[2] Most of these agree on the two most extreme styles, traditional versus entrepreneurial, but the range in between is very different. Not all authors place their styles on a continuum, by the way. Most authors do seem to agree that there are shifts over time; some styles are more dominant in certain periods than others, or new styles emerge in response to the disadvantages of an existing style. For example, the rise of the entrepreneurial or managerial style is often linked to the rise of the New Public Management (see e.g. Henderson 2004; Sharma 2002).

What determines policy styles and administrative cultures? Among the variables mentioned in the literature we find *inter alia*: size of administration, resources (financial, legal competencies), political pressures, prevailing ideologies, previous experience with similar decisions, language of discourse, type of targets, legal rules, recruitment and training of civil servants, and state perceptions, values and habits of political and bureaucratic decision-makers ('frames'). Unfortunately, the literature is less clear on how these variables determine types of style (Freeman 1985: 475). Only Terpstra and Havinga (2001) offer a clear operationalisation of implementation styles. Therefore, I will use their typology as a basis and adapt it to the topic of quango creation. Variables from the literature on policy styles will be added to cover the decision-making aspects of quango creation.

Four styles of quango creation

Terpstra and Havinga (2001: 102) have identified four ideal-type styles: traditional, bureaucratic, professional and managerial. These will now be explained and applied to the topic of quango creation.

A *traditional* style is characterised by a dominant reference to traditional morality, loyalty to authority structures and a preference to maintain customs (cf. also Van Waarden 1985). Policymakers using this style are highly resistant to change, particularly when such changes would imply a transfer of power away from the government – as is the case in the establishment of quangos. Therefore, I would expect that in policy

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sectors where the traditional style is dominant, the number of quangos is consistently very small. And if they are established, they will more often be a type of quango with a limited amount of autonomy (e.g. a contract agency rather than a public corporation) and/or are kept under strict control. Implementing bureaucrats or executive organisations are given little to no discretion in their daily activities in policy sectors with a traditional style. Also, traditional policymakers will not be the first to experiment with quangos; they will be late adopters of this type of reform. The word 'traditional' does therefore not apply to sectors that have a longstanding tradition of using quangos!

A traditional style of quango creation is most likely to be found in policy sectors in which the government (ministry) is the dominant actor, not allowing for much influence from outsiders (e.g. interest groups). Furthermore, the ministry in question will have a very hierarchical, commanding structure. Typical examples would be a ministry of defence and the foreign office (diplomat service).

A *bureaucratic* style obeys formal rules, is legalistic and hierarchical. Impartiality is an important value for the policymakers with this style (Terpstra and Havinga 2001: 102). They will prefer to have rules about all possible situations and decisions. Therefore, they will have a rather uniform policy for quango creation, choosing the same type of organisation over and over again – probably one with low degrees of freedom to avoid risks. Numbers will be low as decisions will take a long time, because of the need to meet all criteria and requirements. Quango statutes will be complex and long, taking into account a range of accountability requirements for the organisation.

Delegation of authority to organisations outside the government bureaucracy will only be done when there is enough assurance that it will not create problems. The number of quangos will therefore be low. Only in situations in which impartiality and formal rules are not threatened, will quangos be established. This will be the case when (i) impartiality requires outside expertise, like in the case of tribunals and/or when (ii) hierarchical control can still be exercised (quangos with less autonomy). Logically, one would expect such a style to be found in the field of justice departments. Also, it would be dominant in sectors headed by organisations (ministries) in which mainly people with a legal degree work (lawyers, notaries).

A *professional* style aims to give (individual) professionals room to make their own decisions and carry out their work without too much interference from non-professionals (here: politicians). Only peer review by other highly qualified experts is accepted; hierarchy is resisted

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(Terpstra and Havinga 2001: 102). As long as objectives are attained, it does not matter how that is done; formal rules are only guidelines – except professional ethics. The best-known examples of such professional sectors are health care (doctors) and education (teachers). Professionals in these sectors need to be autonomous in order to perform optimally, ergo policymakers need to trust the professionals and their expertise, and allow them discretion. (Note that policymakers in these sectors will often originate from the policy sector themselves.) Quango creation will therefore not only be acceptable but even preferred by policymakers with a professional style. The number of quangos will be high, with many degrees of freedom. Monitoring is also done from a distance (self-regulation).

Finally, the *managerial* style is characterised by an emphasis on efficiency and performance (productivity). Control is exercised through contracts or agreements on certain performance targets, against the lowest costs possible. Managerialism became popular in the public sector from the 1980s on. Quango creation is in part seen as a result of this trend, even though many quangos have been in existence since long before then (Greve et al. 1999). Policymakers with a managerial style will be prone to extensive quango creation, both in numbers and degrees of freedom for the organisations involved. They will establish quangos all the time (continuously).

Policymakers with this style expect quangos to be more efficient at policy implementation than traditional government organisations, regardless of the task in question. There is a strong focus on the financing of quangos; in some cases they are even made financially independent from the government (i.e. they have to charge fees to customers). In return for the increased autonomy, contracts are drawn up committing the quangos to predetermined targets in terms of policy objectives and money. Such contracts may actually reduce the autonomy of the implementing organisations; this is called the paradox of autonomy (Kickert 1998).

A managerial style could be typical for policy sectors with strong connections to the private sector like a ministry of economics, or a strong focus on financial matters like a ministry of finances. However, if policy styles indeed evolve over time, as is argued by several authors (see above), the rise of the New Public Management would predict that most governments nowadays have a managerial style.

Following the application above, each style of quango creation leads to a different pattern of choices by policymakers for particular types and numbers of quangos, charged with specific tasks and operating under certain conditions (in particular supervision and funding). Consequently, styles are reflected in a number of characteristics (see Table 1 for an overview).

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First, the frequency of decisions to establish quangos or charge them with tasks is different for each style. Frequency is expressed both in the absolute number of quangos, but also in the development in the number of organisations over time (consistent, increasing, decreasing, etc.). In a professional and managerial style more quangos are more often established than in a bureaucratic or traditional style.

Second, the type of quango can also be relevant. As mentioned before, there are different types of quangos. Some operate at a larger distance from the government than others. Usually this coincides with a larger degree of (managerial) freedom and/or a decreasing degree of ministerial accountability for quango actions (cf. Greve et al. 1999). Policymakers with a professional or managerial style will grant more autonomy than policymakers with a bureaucratic or traditional style.

Third, policymakers can have different reasons for their choice of quangos. The motives we find most often are: improvement of efficiency, impartial and expert implementation, self-regulation by a sector, and a desire to delegate authority (cf. Van Thiel 2001). Each style will have a dominant preference for a particular motive. For example, efficiency motives will be dominant in a managerial culture while impartiality is most important to policymakers with a bureaucratic style.

Fourth, policymakers can prefer to put certain tasks at arms' length, or not. Most common tasks are: payment or collection of money (benefits, taxes), inspection and regulation, tribunals, registration and licensing, training research and communication (see also Table 3 below). Policymakers with a professional style will create quangos most often for tasks like inspection and training, which require professional skills and autonomy. Traditional policymakers will be very restrictive and only charge non-political tasks like maintenance (of buildings, databases) to quangos. Managerial policymakers will expect quangos to be capable of any task, and be better at it than the traditional government bureaucracy.

Finally, policymakers' style can lead to different choices regarding the conditions under which quangos have to operate. Most importantly, the way in which supervision is organised varies with style (hierarchically, peer review, board of supervisors, etc.). And the way of financing can also be a reflection of style (state budget, market fees). Again, policymakers with a managerial and professional style will grant quangos more autonomy than traditional and bureaucratic policymakers.

Table 1 summarises the characteristics of different patterns of quango creation, belonging to different styles. So, by studying the pattern of quango creation, one could *infer* which policy sector has which style. However, such a way of working implies the risk of self-fulfilment. Therefore we need to also find indicators that *predict* which style a policy sector will have.

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TABLE 1: *Four styles of quango creation*

	Traditional	**Bureaucratic**	**Professional**	**Managerial**
Motive	Administrative delegation	Impartiality	Expertise	Efficiency
Number	None to few	Few	Many	Many
Type	Limited degree of freedom	Limited degree of freedom	High degree of freedom	Contract may limit freedom
Frequency	Always very low numbers, late in time	Consistently small numbers	Frequent establishment, high numbers	Extreme high numbers, continuously
Task	Maintenance	Tribunals, payments, licensing	Training research etc., inspection	All
Financing	State Budget	State Budget	State Budget and fees	Fees
Supervision	Hierarchical	Hierarchical	Peer review	Board, contract

Ideally, data on the attitudes of civil servants is used to identify styles but such data was not present for the Dutch case.[3] Instead I have used two proxies. First, the dominant educational background of civil servants in a particular ministry can provide information about styles. For example, in a bureaucratic and traditional style a legal background would be dominant (cf. above). In a professional style policymakers would have the same background as the professionals in their sector. And one could argue that a financial or business background could be expected to correspond with a managerial style.

The second proxy concerns an evaluation of top civil servants' attitudes and leadership characteristics by their subordinates, taken from Nelissen, Lako and Boomsma (2000). Their categories of evaluations have been matched with the four styles. A more hierarchical, formal and structuralistic attitude would then fit most to policymakers with a traditional or bureaucratic style. An external focus, i.e. on clients, would be expected from policymakers with a professional or managerial style. Finally, a managerial style is also associated with a more limited dedication of civil servants to the public interest, compared to policymakers with other styles, because of their strong emphasis on efficiency.

Table A in the appendix shows the results of these two proxies. Next I will describe the data and methods used, before turning to the results of the analyses.

Data and method

All data in this study were collected from secondary sources: previous studies, the State Budget, reports from the Netherlands Court of Audit, government websites, and websites or documents of the organisations and ministries under study.

Policy sectors are headed by ministries. However, one ministry can be responsible for more than one policy sector. Therefore, separate analyses were carried out first for all ministries, then for all different policy sectors. Only in cases were differences where found between quango decisions in different sectors within the same ministry, are results reported for the sectors rather than for the ministry as a whole. This was for example in the cases of the ministry of education, sciences and culture; the ministry of agriculture, nature and food quality; the ministry of health care, welfare and sports; the ministry of traffic and waterways; and the ministry of social affairs and employment. As far as the foreign office was concerned, quangos were only found in the field of foreign aid. In total, eighteen policy sectors were discerned (cf. Table Appendix A).[4]

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The Home Office provided data on the educational background of civil servants for all ministries except the Ministry of Defence. As military personnel make up for the majority of officials, a military background is extrapolated as the dominant background. Data on the attitudes of civil servants, as given by their subordinates, was taken from a Dutch survey (Nelissen et al. 2000). These data refer to ministries rather than policy sectors, and could therefore not be specified for all sectors separately.

Based on the information from the aforementioned measurements, a prediction is made on the style of quango creation for each ministry. In view of the lack of more relevant data, these predictions need to be handled with some caution.

To study *quango patterns* in policy sectors, the establishment of 236 quangos was studied; all 34 executive agencies (*agentschappen*) that existed by 2004 and 178 so-called ZBOs. These public bodies have in some cases offices at local level (like chambers of commerce and police authorities); in that case, only one organisation of a cluster was included, because all are based on the same decision.[5] From the third type of quango in the Netherlands (so-called RWTs)[6] only a small number could be included; out of the 2500 bodies almost 2300 concern school boards. The remaining organisations overlap strongly with ZBOs. I have excluded the school boards (outliers) and the overlapping organisations, which left 20 RWTs. (Table 3 will subsequently show how many organisations have been created in which policy sector, under the control of which ministry in 2004). Education, infrastructure, agriculture and health are the policy sectors with the largest numbers of quangos.

Table 2 lists the tasks and motives of establishment of quangos. Many organisations have more than one task; therefore I have focussed on the primary task i.e. the task for which the organisation was established in the first place and that is mentioned in the statutes. Most quangos are charged with the payment and collection of money (28%), for example in the case of taxes, subsidies and benefits, or with inspection and regulation (25%).

The need for *impartial* policy implementation by *experts* refers to the two most important motives given by policymakers in quango statutes. Because these organisations operate at arms' length of the government, it is expected that politicians (including ministers) cannot interfere with daily operations. This is considered desirable, even in the case of highly standardised routines (see 'administrative delegation').

Finally, we turn to the means of control for ministries. The majority of the quangos (61%) are financed entirely from the State Budget (in 2003). About one third (35%) is financed from tariffs and fees,[7] leaving a small number of organisations with a mixed pattern of financing. Apart from

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TABLE 2: *Tasks and motives for the establishment of quangos in The Netherlands 2003 (N = 236)*

Task	**(%)**	**Motive**	**(%)**
Maintenance (buildings, data bases)	8.5	Administrative delegation	20.9
Payment or collection of money	28.0	Impartiality and equity	29.4
Inspection and regulation	25.0	Expertise	25.5
Training, Research and Communication	21.2	Self-regulation	16.6
Registration and licensing	9.7	Efficiency and effectiveness	7.7
Tribunals	4.7		

financial control, ministries can also exert control by monitoring the organisation directly (in 46% of the cases) or through a board of supervisors (24.7%).[8]

Because almost all data is measured at nominal or ordinal level, it was not possible to apply advanced forms of statistical analysis. Therefore, I will use cross tabulations only. In almost all cases both Chi Square and Cramer's V were statistically significant ($p<0.001$), implying that the patterns found are systematic. However, the many empty cells in the cross tables call for some caution when interpreting the findings.

Results

The four styles of quango creation are of course ideal types. In practice it will be hard to find perfect matches. Moreover, combinations of styles will also occur. Therefore, the analysis has focussed on the *dominant* motives, types, way of financing, tasks and so on per policy sector. Dominant in this case refers to the value of each variable that is mentioned most often; to indicate its importance I have provided percentage scores. Table A (appendix) describes for each policy sector the number of quangos, the dominant type and period of establishment ('frequency').

To determine the degree of autonomy of quangos, a distinction was made between public bodies based on public or private law. It is assumed that private law based organisations have more autonomy than public law based ones, which in turn have more autonomy than executive agencies.

As far as the period of establishment is concerned, the number of quangos has increased most drastically since the 1990s. Therefore, four periods were distinguished: before 1990 1990–1994 (early 1990s) 1995–1999 (late 1990s) and from 2000 on. These periods coincide with

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important stages in the public and political debate in the Netherlands on quango proliferation (Van Thiel 2004a).

The tasks and motives for establishment of quangos follow the same division as in Table 2. In some cases there was no real dominant motive or task, which is indicated by 'mixed'. Which task and motive fit with which style was explained already in Table 1, as were the modes of financing: through the state budget (traditional and bureaucratic style), by market fees (managerial style), or a mixture. In practice the latter category, which fits with a professional style, was found only in a very small minority of the cases.

The supervision arrangements were divided into two categories: hierarchical supervision by the minister (ministry), or supervision by a board. Sometimes these boards represent the minister and are appointed by him; in other cases they function more independently and can appoint themselves. In a traditional style the minister carries out the supervision himself in almost all cases (highest percentages). In a bureaucratic style ministerial supervision is less often present but still the most mentioned type of supervision. Boards whose members are appointed by the minister are the dominant mode of supervision in a professional style. And self-appointing boards fit with a managerial style.

Based on the results in Table Appendix A, a style-score is calculated as the sum of the number of characteristics that belong to the same style. Table 3 shows the style scores. In some cases no decision could be reached about the type of style ('mixed'). In eight policy sectors do predicted and actual styles match. In another eight sectors the actual style is more conservative than predicted. One sector is more progressive and one sector remains inconclusive.

Do styles exist?

Traditional style

A traditional style is found in three sectors: foreign aid, defence and food quality. Only in the case of the justice sector was a (partly) traditional style predicted, but the evidence – although very mixed – points more to a bureaucratic style there.

As theorised but not predicted on the basis of data, the ministry of defence displays a traditional style in its decisions to establish quangos, or actually in the lack thereof. The number of quangos is very low and usually involves executive agencies (low managerial freedom), in charge of maintenance tasks. They are still closely linked to the parent department, by means of the financial and supervision arrangements.

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TABLE 3: *Styles per policy sector in the Netherlands, 2003 (N = 236)*

	Pattern of quango creation							**Prediction**
	Type and number	Time	Motive	Task	Finances	Supervision	Total	
Foreign aid	T/P	T	Mixed	P	T	M	T	B
Justice	B/P	M	Mixed	Mixed	T	B	B	B/T
Home Office	B	B/P	B/P	Mixed	B	T/B	B	P
Education Science	B	P	P	P	B/T	B	B/P	P
Culture	P	P	B	T/B	B	P	B/P	P
Finances	B/P	P	B/P	P	M	T	P	B/M
Defence	T	T	T	T	B	T	T	B
Housing etc.	P	P	M	Mixed	M	B	P/M	P/M
Traffic and Air	P	P	M	P	M	B	P	P
Water	P	P	M	P	M	T	P/M	B/P
Economics	P	M	Mixed	P	B	B	Mixed	M
Agriculture	P/M	P	B	B	B	P/M	B/P	P
Nature	B	B	B	Mixed	B	Mixed	B	P
Food quality	B	T	T	P	M	T	T	P
Social Affairs	B/P	P/M	B	B	M	B	B	B
Employment	P	T	P	Mixed	B	B	B/P	B
Health	B	P	B/M	B	P	B	B	P
Welfare and Sport	B/P	P	T	B	B	B	B	P

T: Traditional, B: Bureaucratic, P: Professional, M: Managerial

The predicted bureaucratic style was based on the assumption that most civil servants have a military background, in view of a lack of data on this topic. More exact data might therefore lead to a different prediction.

A traditional style is also found for the sector of food quality. Paradoxically, the ministry of agriculture (of which food quality is one of three sectors) has the largest number of quangos. There are striking differences between the three sectors of this ministry; each has its own style. Because the prediction regards the ministry as a whole, it is not possible to present different predictions that could perhaps provide a better match. Food quality has however only recently become a policy sector, which could explain why the number of quangos in this sector has been established of late. Later on we will investigate the dominance of styles over time; a more conservative trend could help explain the traditional style of this new policy sector.

As far as foreign aid is concerned, the number of quangos is very low. It would appear that most quangos in this sector are private organisations that have been charged with the implementation of a public task (like NGOs). A similar strategy is followed in the highly corporatist sectors of the ministry of agriculture. Perhaps these ministries are not keen on hiving off parts of their own organisations, but have little objections

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to – or even a preference for – using existing organisations. It would be interesting to find out whether the traditional style of policymakers clashes with the private law based organisations' autonomy. On the other hand, traditional policymakers will be more internally oriented, towards their own organisation, which could imply low interference with quangos (cf. Terpstra and Havinga 2001). More research is needed to shed some light on this issue.

Bureaucratic style

Unsurprisingly, most sectors (ten out of eighteen) have a bureaucratic style or at least a mixture of styles with bureaucratic elements. In three sectors this matches the prediction: justice and the sectors of social affairs and employment (the latter two belong to the same ministry). In the latter two sectors the number of quangos is small, but the organisations are usually very big (e.g. social security organisations). In the field of justice the number of quangos is higher, but they are under a stricter regime. Together these characteristics add up to their typical bureaucratic style.

In fact, the bureaucratic style is found more often than was predicted (six predictions). In most cases where the predicted and found styles do not match, it is usually the case that the actual style is more conservative than the predicted style. This is an interesting observation, which should be studied more (see below on conclusions). Only in one sector (finances) is the situation reversed. However, in this sector the predictors are very inconclusive making all predictions unreliable; there are both managerial and bureaucratic elements. This is also the only policy sector in which this particular combination is found. In all other sectors bureaucratic styles are associated either with a traditional or professional style. This could imply that the styles are not dichotomous units but rather intervals on a scale or continuum. I will return to this implication later on. Another implication could be that policymakers gradually move from one style to another over time, with the predicted style taking the lead and the actual style lagging behind. I will investigate the development of styles over time later on.

Finally, almost all policy sectors have at least one bureaucratic aspect in their quango-creation pattern. The dominance of this style can perhaps be attributed to the context in which policymakers prepare and take their decisions to establish quangos, namely government bureaucracies. However, it could also point to a dominant *national* style.

Professional style

The professional style is predicted most often (eleven times, including partial predictions). In six sectors the actual style matches this prediction,

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at least in part: education, culture, housing, traffic, water, and agriculture. Of these, the sectors of housing and water are most 'extreme' as they also have many managerial elements in their styles (see also below). Interestingly enough, in the health care sector a professional style was theorised and predicted but not found in the actual pattern of quango-creation. The Dutch health care is carried out by mostly private law based organisations, and paid from the insurance premiums. However, the ministry displays more bureaucratic than professional style elements; this could point to a potential clash of strict control and autonomy (cf. above). In these and other sectors where a professional style was predicted but not found, the actual style is more conservative; either bureaucratic (five times) or traditional (one time). Again, this would raise the question whether there are trends, or whether the four styles constitute a continuum.

Contrary to the prediction, the ministry of finances is ascribed a professional style. The relative high number of independent regulators (for banks, the exchange and other financial institutions) could explain this finding, but not entirely. A more in-depth study would be necessary to find a more satisfying explanation for this finding.

Managerial style

There are no sectors with a purely managerial style, neither predicted nor found, even though eleven sectors have some elements of this style. There are two sectors for which a partial prediction of this style was made (housing and finances). In the case of the ministry of housing, planning and environment the actual quango-pattern matches the prediction. The fact that this is a 'hard' policy sector – prone to private sector management techniques like outsourcing and partnerships – can explain my findings only partly; there are more such sectors, but with other styles. Only the water sector has a comparable style to housing. The puzzling findings on the financial sector were discussed above.

Given the increased attention in the public domain for managerial reform of which quango creation is one example, the limited presence of this style is striking. Perhaps the next analysis, of styles over time, will reveal more.

Styles over time

In their presentation of typologies of policy style and administrative culture, authors have claimed that styles change over time (Richardson

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et al. 1982; Van Waarden 1985; Terpstra and Havinga 2001; Henderson 2004). In particular, the rise of New Public Management is believed to have led to the rise of a managerial or entrepreneurial style. Can we find evidence to support this claim?

A full analysis of styles per policy sector over time was not feasible with the current data set; the data is censored, as only quangos that existed in 2004 are included. Moreover, due to quango-drift, organisations may change form over time, be merged or split up.[9] Such changes influence variables like the number and type of quango, and other characteristics like their way of financing and supervision. Such information is necessary to be able to draw valid conclusions, but was missing. Therefore, two alternative types of analysis were carried out. First, it was investigated for the five policy sectors with the highest numbers of quangos whether their pattern of quango creation had changed over time. Second, an overall analysis was carried out per time period, for all policy sectors.

The five policy sectors with the highest number of quangos are: agriculture, education and science, justice, road and air traffic, and health care. In these sectors quangos have been established at a fairly constant rate. Only in the educational sector has the number recently dropped. In three sectors the type of quango used most often did not change. The sector of road and air traffic shows a strong and persistent preference for the type of quango with the highest degrees of freedom. The sectors of education and science and health both display a consistent preference for public body type of quangos although in education these are more often private law based than in health care. Only in the sectors of justice and agriculture do we find a change in the preferred type of quango; from public bodies to executive agencies. This change towards a more conservative style is also found when we look at the different motives underlying quango creation. The motive of administrative delegation has become more dominant in recent years, and not only in the sectors of agriculture and justice, but also in for example the economics sector. The results from the overall analysis in Table 4 corroborate this trend.

Therefore, there is no evidence to support the expectation that the managerial style has become more popular, at least not in the Netherlands. On the contrary, the Dutch style of quango creation has become more conservative since the 1990s. Although the rate of establishment has not diminished (cf. Van Thiel 2004a), there is a trend towards the creation of quangos with less degrees of freedom (i.e. executive agencies and public PBs), under direct supervision and financial control by the minister or ministries. Administrative delegation has become the most popular motive, while self-regulation is hardly ever mentioned anymore. This re-assertion of political control (cf. Rhodes 1997) started with the publication of a report by the Netherlands Court of Audit in 1995. Since

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TABLE 4: *Styles of quango creation over time (The Netherlands, 2003)*

	Type and number	Time	Motive	Task	Finances	Supervision	Total
Before 1990	P	P	P	P	P	Mixed	P
Early 1990s	B	B	B	B	Mixed	B	B
Late 1990s	B	B	B	B	Mixed	B	B
After 2000	T	T	T/B	Mixed	T/B	T/B	T/B

T: Traditional, B: Bureaucratic, P: Professional, M: Managerial

then, legislation has been implemented to make decisions to establish quangos less noncommittal and more uniform.

Conclusion

The findings presented in this article show that policy sectors indeed have different styles of quango creation. Although 'pure' styles are not found, dominant styles can be identified for almost all sectors. The existence of these sectoral styles can explain why similar tasks in different sectors are given to different types of quangos (micro variation). Moreover, the dominance of the bureaucratic style in the Netherlands seems to fit with the national trajectory identified in earlier studies (cf. Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004; Pollitt et al. 2004). Finally, the recent turn to a more conservative style can be explained as the result of the political debate on quangos since the mid 1990s; criticism on the lack of ministerial control led to a tightening of financial and supervision arrangements. There is no real drop in the total number of quangos (cf. Van Thiel 2004a) but there is a shift in the preferred type of quango (to less degrees of freedom).

However, there is a strong need for more research, both empirically and theoretically. Empirically, because the findings in this article relate to the Dutch case only and should be replicated in other countries. For example, it would be interesting to see whether in countries with more far-reaching NPM reforms (like the UK) the managerial style has become more popular. Also, comparisons with other corporatist countries could help to determine whether the longstanding use of quangos ('tradition') in the Netherlands has affected my findings.

Theoretically, more research is necessary to elaborate and improve the conceptualisation of the four styles. For example, the findings point to the possibility that the styles are perhaps continuous (i.e. on a continuum) rather than clearly distinguishable and separate units. This goes even beyond the expectation that we would find mixtures of styles. The idea of styles as a continuum would be interesting to investigate for other reasons as well, namely (i) the development of styles over time and (ii) the mismatch between predicted and actual styles. First, if styles do indeed

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change over time, it is not likely that they will do so in fits and starts. A gradual development from one style into another would imply a potential for overlap between styles, like on a continuum. Secondly, in most cases where the predicted and actual styles do not match, the prediction is more advanced than the actual quango pattern. Again this could point to the possibility that ministries change styles over time.

Finally, research is warranted into the predictors of styles, such as the attitudes of policy makers vis à vis quango creation. The lack of evidence on this topic makes most predictions not very reliable or accurate. This could also help solve the issue about whose voice is decisive in the decision to establish quangos: that of bureaucrats or politicians.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank Jolanda Dwarswaard and Clément Jongeneel for their active role in the collection of data used in this article, and the anonymous reviewers who helped to improve the text.
2. Unfortunately, most studies into administrative culture focus on country or government level (Grenstad, 1999), and make no distinction between policy sectors. See for example Grid Group Cultural Theory as developed by Hood (1998) in which societies are characterised in a particular way, leading to specific types of public management. Other studies focus for example on one policy sector or instrument across countries only (e.g. Van Waarden, 1985; Hall, 1993; Knill, 1998), or on how administrative traditions have influenced administrative reforms (see e.g. Capano, 2003 on Italy). Hofstede's (2001:415) discussion of occupational styles comes closer to the idea of sectoral styles, but he admits to have never seen empirical studies into this topic.
3. Useful typologies of civil servants' attitudes that could serve as a measurement of sectoral styles could be taken from work by Denhardt, Downs, Reddin, Marmor & Fellman, and Hersey & Blanchard. The only Dutch study that made use of all these typologies (Nelissen et al. 1996) does however not distinguish between different policy sectors.
4. There are fourteen ministries in the Netherlands. The Cabinet of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Public Administration Reforms have established no quangos (until 2005).
5. When taking all regionally based offices into account as well, the total number of ZBOs in the Netherlands in 2003 was 630.
6. RWT is literally translated as statutory body with a legal task; they are always legal persons. ZBO means independent administrative organ. Not all ZBOs are a legal person.
7. Whether agencies can set these fees themselves or whether the minister needs to approve of them, is determined in the statutes or law by which the agency is set up.
8. As 29.5 per cent of the organisations under study is not an organisation but rather a body or committee with appointed members – usually by the minister – control of these bodies is exerted in other ways, for example through the administrative supporting unit or the appointments.
9. Earlier research (cf. Van Thiel, 2001) showed that the mortality of Dutch quangos is low (6% at the most), but that during their life-course of on average thirty years, about one-fifth is split up or merges with other quangos.

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Appendix
TABLE A. *Characteristics of ministries and their quango creation in the Netherlands, 2003 (N = 236)*

	Style predictors			**Pattern of quango creation**						
	Educational background	**Civil servants evaluation**	**Staff ministry**	**N**	**Motive**	**Type**	**Financing**	**Supervision**	**Task**	**Frequency**
Foreign aid	Economics (31%)	Hierarchical but collective leadership	3267	3 (1%)	Mixed	Private PB (67%)	SB (100%)	Board-S (67%)	TRC (67%)	Late 1990s (100%)
Justice	Legal studies (35%)	Top down leadership	7455	22 (9%)	AD (33%) I (27%) SR (23%)	Public PB (41%)	SB (91%)	Minister (32%)	Mixed	Continuously
Home Office	Social sciences (22%) Legal studies (22%)	Not very formal nor structuralistic	2890	17 (7%)	AD (35%) SR (29%)	Public PB (53%)	SB (65%)	Minister (35%)	Mixed	Late 1990s (47%)
Education & Science	Educational sciences (67%)	Dedicated to public cause, people oriented, external focus (clients) and non-hierarchical leadership	3172	23 (10%)	SR (43%) E (30%)	Public PB (39%)	SB (96%)	Board-M (30%)	TRC (56%)	<1990 (74%)
Culture	Educational sciences (67%)	Dedicated to public cause, people oriented, external focus (clients) and non-hierarchical leadership	3172	18 (8%)	I (72%)	Private PB (61%)	SB (94%)	Board-M (72%)	PC (67%)	<1990 (50%)

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Appendix
TABLE A. *Continued*

	Style predictors			Pattern of quango creation						
	Educational background	**Civil servants evaluation**	**Staff ministry**	**N**	**Motive**	**Type**	**Financing**	**Supervision**	**Task**	**Frequency**
Finances	Economics (42%)	Formal and structuralistic, internal focus, hierarchical but collective leadership	38884	9 (4%)	I (56%) SR (33%)	Private PB (78%)	Fees (56%)	Minister (78%)	PC (56%) IR (44%)	<1990 (56%)
Defence	(Military)	Internal focus, non-hierarchical leadership	3638	3 (1%)	AD (67%)	CA (67%)	SB (67%)	Minister (67%)	M (67%)	Late 1990s (100%)
Housing, Planning & Environment	Economics (23%) Legal studies (17%)	Non-hierarchical leadership	n.a.	15 (6%)	E (47%) I (27%)	Private PB (53%)	Fees (67%)	Minister (40%)	Mixed	<1990 (47%)
Road and Air traffic	Engineering (39%) Legal studies (24%)	Internal focus, hierarchical leadership, limited dedication to the public interest	4268	19 (8%)	E (42%) I (26%)	Private PB (67%)	Fees (84%)	Minister (47%)	IR (47%)	<1990 (42%); late 1990s (37%)
Water	Engineering (39%) Legal studies (24%)	Internal focus, hierarchical leadership, limited dedication to the public interest	4268	18 (8%)	E (72%)	Private PB (78%)	Fees (83%)	Minister (94%)	IR (44%)	Before 1990 (76%)

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Appendix
TABLE A. *Continued*

	Style predictors			Pattern of quango creation						
	Educational background	**Civil servants evaluation**	**Staff ministry**	**N**	**Motive**	**Type**	**Financing**	**Supervision**	**Task**	**Frequency**
Economics	Economics (34%)	Formal and structuralistic, limited dedication to the public interest	33143	17 (7%)	E (35%) AD (29%) I (23%)	Mixed	SB (65%)	Minister (71%)	IR (41%)	Continuously
Agriculture	Agricultural (48%)	External focus (clients), but limited dedication to the public interest, hierarchical leadership	3338	23 (10%)	I (30%) AD (26%)	Private PB (52%)	SB (78%)	Board-S (52%)	PC (35%) RL (26%)	<1990 (74%)
Nature	Agricultural (48%)	External focus (clients), but limited dedication to the public interest, hierarchical leadership	3338	6 (3%)	I (50%)	Public PB (83%)	SB (67%)	Mixed	Mixed	Continuously
Food Quality	Agricultural (48%)	External focus (clients), but limited dedication to the public interest, hierarchical leadership	3338	4 (2%)	AD (67%)	Mixed	Fees (75%)	Minister (75%)	IR (100%)	>2000 (50%)

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Appendix
TABLE A. *Continued*

	Style predictors			Pattern of quango creation						
	Educational background	**Civil servants evaluation**	**Staff ministry**	**N**	**Motive**	**Type**	**Financing**	**Supervision**	**Task**	**Frequency**
Social Affairs	Social sciences (27%)	Internal focus, non-hierarchical leadership, people-oriented rather than structuralistic	13268	6 (3%)	I (50%)	Private PB (83%)	Fees (67%)	Board-M (83%)	PC (83%)	Continuously
Employment	Social sciences (27%)	Internal focus, non-hierarchical leadership, people-oriented rather than structuralistic	13268	5 (2%)	I (60%)	Public PB (40%)	SB (80%)	Minister (60%)	Mixed	>2000 (60%)
Health care	Medical (38%)	External focus (clients) and collective leadership	4123	19 (8%)	I (37%) E (32%)	Public PB (53%)	SB and Fees (each 47%)	Board-M (53%)	PC (32%) RL (26%)	Continuously
Welfare & Sports	Medical (38%)	External focus (clients) and collective leadership	4123	9 (4%)	AD (67%)	Private PB (67%)	SB (89%)	Board-M (89%)	PC (78%)	Continuously

Motives: AD = administrative delegation, I = impartiality, E = expertise, SR = self-regulation, EF = efficiency
Financing: SB = state budget
Types: PB = public bodies, CA = contract agencies
Supervision: board (self appointed S, appointed by minister M), ministerial supervision
Tasks: M = maintenance, PC = payment or collection, IR = inspection and regulation, TRC = training research communication, RL = registration licensing, T = tribunal

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