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After the Critique of New Public Management

A Discourse Analysis of Problematizations Within
Public Administration in Sweden

Master Thesis in Welfare Policies and Management, 30 credits

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Abstract

There has been a large critique towards NPM in Swedish media during the past couple of years. This study analyzes what the problems and solutions associated with NPM are represented to be. The material is collected from three areas: The Swedish Government, elderly care and social services in Stockholm City and the Swedish academic community working with public administration. The overall conclusion from this study is that problematizations of NPM-associated policy are focused on different aspects of insufficient quality in public authorities activities, especially related to the aspects of control and administration. Solutions to NPM-related problems are similar to the professional model of public administration, where accountability of satisfactory quality cannot be assessed through performance indicators or standardized procedures but through trust in the professionalism of public officials.

Key words: New Public Management (NPM), Professionalism, Public Administration, Welfare Policy, Discourse Analysis, Political Science, Sweden

Number of words: 20 000

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1. Introduction

In 2013 the notion '*New Public Management*' reached popular knowledge in Sweden through a series of articles written by journalist Maciej Zaremba. Zaremba wrote very engaging about a patient, Mr. B, who was mistreated to the point of death within the Swedish public healthcare system. The conclusion reached by Zaremba was that the cause of mistreatment was that Mr. B's illnesses were unprofitable. How could this patient be considered unprofitable, and what is even a profitable patient? The villain in Zaremba's story was the chase for efficiency and fulfillment of performance indicators that permeate the medical care of one of the world's most comprehensive welfare states. After Zaremba's articles, a harsh criticism towards New Public Management (NPM) came from many different actors in the Swedish debate. Many were upset by the systematic wrongdoing towards patients such as Mr. B. For example, more than nine thousand doctors signed a petition to "reinstall" the authority of the professionalism of doctors, and letting go of demands for easily measurable results in health care (Läkarupproret, 2013-06-18).

Though many might argue that the Swedish welfare state does well in regard to efficiency, quality and legal certainty in execution in an international comparison, the critique related to the broad concept of NPM keeps occurring in Swedish media and politics. Critics towards NPM have been skeptical towards that the Swedish governing of welfare has changed from enjoying traditional budget allocations to gradually demanding more efficiency and budget-cuts. Others were critical towards that it had become common to measure performance through entities such as number of patients doctors sees during a day, minutes spent by home-care personnel on providing care to the elderly and hours attended by an unemployed looking for a job. This disapproval of NPM was echoed by the left parties in the Swedish parliament, who soon thereafter won the election in 2014.

I wonder what have come after the widespread critique of NPM - how are problems within the discourse surrounding NPM formulated, and even more interesting, how are solutions of problems related to NPM presented? The literature regarding the transformation of welfare states going from a public sector financed by set budget allocations to being decided with performance control mechanisms and market-like competition is extensive e.g. Gingrich (2011), Pollitt & Bouckaert (2011), Chandler (2004), Hall (2011). So is the literature regarding performance control and the audit society Ahlbäck Öberg (2010) & Powell (1997). But studies focusing on the criticism towards NPM are difficult to find, as far as I have seen, there has been very little research done on what the discourse looks like *after* the large amount of critique of NPM during

the first half of 2010's. Since there has been a small amount of research on what have come after the Swedish critique of NPM, my ambition for this thesis is that it will contribute to the field and fill a gap in the body of literature on public administration. My research questions are based in a curiosity of what comes after the critique of NPM. One way to investigate this is to make a discourse analysis of statements that have been critical towards NPM-related policy, as well as proposed solutions to perceived problems with NPM. In this study I will investigate if this critique can be seen in the discourse around public administration in three different arenas, namely within the Swedish academic community and on two political arenas; the Swedish Government and in one Swedish municipality, Stockholm City. On a municipal level I have selected to analyze problematizations regarding the organization of elderly care and social services.

1.1. Research Questions

My research questions are:

- ***What is the problem of New Public Management represented to be?***
How is the critique towards New Public Management formulated within academia and politics in Sweden?
- ***What is the solution to problems with New Public Management represented to be?***
Is there an alternative idea of public administration presented within the material, and what does it look like?

1.2. Limitations and Motivations

I will not attempt to answer if the discussion of stepping away from NPM has resulted in any change in practice since that is a different area of research that has to do with implementation of policy rather than policy formulation. In other words, I want to make an elaborate analytical discussion regarding the most prominent features within the presented problematizations in my three tracks of material, rather than discussing the perceived problems themselves. My interest lays in the potential changes in discourse, which, of course, could lead to changes in practice. This potential for change in practice is why discourse is important to study, if the critique towards NPM in Sweden has changed the political discourse, it is arguably important for political scientists to study in order to understand current administration of Sweden as a welfare state. Understanding as well as describing the critique of NPM is an important part of the motivation for my research, though I have to point out that I have no expectation of reaching results that are generalizable for the development of the entire Swedish public administration or welfare administration in general. Rather I expect to be able to make conclusions regarding the discourse on public administration in relation to NPM in the material I have chosen to investigate.

I have chosen two levels of government for my analysis since both are important arenas for policy makers and opinion leaders. I have chosen to investigate politicians on a cabinet level of government's critique towards NPM since the highest level of Swedish government has a lot of influence on the governing of public administration. I have chosen to analyze how problems within elderly care and social services are formulated on a municipal level since municipalities have almost complete power over how these two areas are organized. Elderly care and social services are also chosen since they are both present in the media discourse on problems with public administration. I will also make a discourse analysis of what is presented as 'problems' and 'solutions' by academia to get a wider image of the discourse as a whole. Hence my discourse analysis will be made on three tracks of material, what politicians say on a cabinet and municipal level and what is said by academics in this field of research.

Though NPM is a very fuzzy notion, I have in this thesis taken the liberty to define what is and what isn't NPM-related policy, referring to seven aspects of NPM presented by Christopher Hood, which are elaborated in my Theory chapter. I believe that it is important to point out that the discourse which is critical towards NPM is a discourse in it self. Material from this NPM-critical discourse can be found in the Governmental Track as well as in the Academic Track. I have selected material that is openly critical towards NPM in these two tracks since my aim is to study problematizations of NPM. In the Municipal

Track I have selected material that is representative for the type of material that can be found as basis for decision in the Stockholm City Council. This material is selected since it represents the type of problematizations that are brought forward in elderly care and social services.

Though I separate the material into these three tracks I do not consider them isolated from each other in terms of how they influence or inspire each other - it is even to be expected that what politicians on a governmental level says about NPM would influence the thoughts and actions of politicians on a municipal level, and vice versa. The same type of give-and-take could be expected between members of academia and politicians on different levels. This is the reason why I do not aim to compare the presented problematizations within the three tracks of material with each other, rather I aim to understand and analyze what the discourse looks like as a whole.

Another point that I want to bring forward that there are of course many more possibilities available to analyze the discourse regarding NPM than through the approach and the material that I have selected. For example, one could have included material from the various Landsting (County Councils) in Sweden that deals with health care in a larger scale. Academic material could have been selected from published articles or publications released from the period rather than analyzing the statements made in the NPM-seminars that I have chosen. Other types of qualitative approaches could have replaced the discursive approach that I apply. Hence this study's representativeness for what the discourse on problems and solutions related to NPM is limited to this study.

Sweden is described as a country which has gone relatively far into NPM when adopting public administration reforms during the 1990's as well as being a schoolbook example of a Social Democratic Welfare State. This, somewhat intuitively contradictory complexity, makes Sweden a unique case with its universal welfare and high levels of decommodification on one hand, and extensive spread of performance control, competition in the public sector, privatization of public institutions on the other. Consequently, a case study of the NPM-discourse including the concrete political issues of elderly care and social services would contribute to the body of literature on public administration reforms, modern welfare states as well as being of public interest.

2. Methodology

2.1. The Construction of Policy Problems

Drawing from the ideas of governmentality, Bacchi challenges the belief that governments react to a problem, and instead put forward the belief that they are in fact involved with creating the idea of the 'problem'. Bacchi starts from the position that problems are not given, but should be described as social constructions or 'problematizations' - a focus which gives the researcher the opportunity to take a step back and analyze the role which problematizations play in governing. A pedagogical example can be made from Bacchi's research on affirmative action - Bacchi concluded that the notion 'affirmative action' was not a fixed term, but could have a variety of meanings which affected what developed into terms of social change (Bacchi, 2010:2). From this point of view it is important for social scientists to analyze how policy problems are created since different conceptualizations results in different solutions and effects of the constructed problem. In order to identify how different policies are conceptualized, Bacchi is convinced that it is possible to pick a specific policy and examine how it represents a 'problem', and then examine the different forms of change that are advocated. This way a researcher can backtrack policy, and understand how a reform is defended (ibid). Bacchi means that researchers focus should lie on how 'problems' are represented which leads to her conclusion that we are governed through problematizations rather than through policies (Bacchi, 2010:4). According to Bacchi, the assumption that the aspiration of policy is to solve problems remains a grounding premise in most approaches to policy analysis. The public policy process is normally used to describe the process in which the development of government programs where the policy is supposed to be a solution to a problem. In this process, policy-makers are the ones who are supposed to come up with solutions to the 'problem' to in the end implement a suitable 'solution'. Whereas this description of a policy process imply that there is a problem that is in need of a solution, Bacchi means that this presumed problem isn't always explicitly spelled out by the government, but is many times implicitly included in the whole notion of policy. In fact, policies, which by their nature make changes, imply that something needs to change (Bacchi, introduction, 2009). I have discarded other competing ideas and theories regarding policy making, for example, some argue that policy is created in a chaotic and somewhat random process where agenda-setting is important as well as timing for policy opportunities (see Kingdon, 2003, 'garbage can model' for policy process analysis). Another way of viewing the policy process is the policy diffusion perspective, where states adopt policy because of impact and/or influence by other states (see policy diffusion through learning and coercion in Sabatier,

2014 chap. 9 & Gilardi, 2012) whereas other mean that policy many times is spreading because of the influence of international organizations (see Barnett & Finnemore, 2004). Conclusively regarding these competing ideas is that they are focused on the where and when of policy-making, whereas I am interested in the problematizations implied in the policy process. Bacchi is not the only post-structuralist who has focused on problematizations. In order to analyze government policy, post-structuralist Herbet Gottweis presents some theoretical strategies of *poststructuralist policy analysis*. According to Gottweis, one fundamental problem with strict instrumental policy analysis is that it overlooks that *the definition of a problem is in itself a form of power exercise*. Gottweis means that which kinds of problems are put on the agenda is due to the involved actors ideological outlook and normative starting point. When an issue gets on top of the agenda, it is actually an expression of power since all other imaginable representations of the 'problem' are put aside (Gottweis, 2003 p. 247 - 266). The core in this kind of analysis is that problems never occur independent from power and ideology. This outlook for policy analysis is similar to the theoretical tool developed by Bacchi, where she looks for 'silences' (deriving from Foucault's exclusion mechanisms). Whereas Bacchi aims to study problematizations by 'reading off' the implied problem and what is seen as in need of 'fixing in the policy proposal, Gottweis's point is that through tracking who defines a problem, we can find out who has agenda-setting power.

The main objective here is not to draw general conclusive laws but to better understand distinctive features of situations and events that constitute the discussion on elderly care. By using in-depth qualitative methods, such as interviews, I want to understand and interpret variation in identifications of notions and policy. As Wolf mentions in his article about mixed-method strategies (referring to a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods) there are a number of caveats to be taken into account when combining methods, which is true for combining two qualitative approaches as well. The application of methods needs to fulfill the respective quality standards, securing and digesting primary sources such as texts (for discourse analysis) and interviews (in regard to gaining a thicker understanding of the arguments). This, as Wolf puts it, place a heavy burden onto the researchers shoulders who is to manage both methods rather well. Furthermore, the researcher needs to be prepared to take interrelations and 'lack' of coherence into account when putting together outcomes and not favor of or against certain results (Wolf, 2010:147). The second caveat mentioned by Wolf does not concern each of the methods employed themselves, but the combination/nexus between them. The goal here is "to search for useful points of connection" (Morgan, 2007, p. 71 cited in Wolf (2010)). How can I combine the two so as to take advantage of the benefits from both approaches and correct their respective weaknesses? Since both methods are qualitative methods, they are easily put together. My research has started off with a discourse analysis of available texts, in order to help me identify key actors and arguments. Then I have used this information to design my interviews and understand who to interview in order to understand potential similarities and/or inconsistencies in actors arguments.

2.1.1. Operationalization of Policy Problem Analysis

List of questions presented by Bacchi in order to analyze the underlying meaning of a 'problem' in policy:

1. *What's the problem represented to be in a specific policy?*
2. *What perceptions or assumptions underlie this representation of the 'problem'?*
3. *How has this representation of the problem come about?*
4. *What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?*
5. *What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?*
6. *How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?*

Source: (Bacchi, xii, 2009).

Bacchi's list of questions is designed to be applicable on already finished policies. In this case, the Swedish Social Democratic/Environmentalist government has merely said that it wishes to implement changes and that they wish to distance themselves to NPM, but not exactly what those changes are supposed to be. The same goes for my analysis of problematizations made within the academic track of my material, these problematizations are not policy proposals but since they also describes possible solutions, the material can be used in the same way as if it was policy. I believe that it doesn't constitute a large problem for my analysis since the fundamental point of this list of questions is to question the problematizations underlying a policy - not the policy per se. When it comes to my material on a municipal level, those decisions actually constitute policy hence are without question suitable for this type of analysis. In my analysis I will not answer all questions in regards to all of my material. I find support for this by Bacchi, who recommends that the individual researcher adopt her analytical tool to the prerequisites of their specific material (Bacchi, 2009:205).

2.2. Ontological and Epistemological Positions

Ontological positions reflect the researcher's view about the world and epistemological positions has methodological implications. An interpretivist epistemology many times leads to qualitative method. My research will as earlier stated be a qualitative study in form of a discourse analysis. I choose a qualitative approach even though there has been an upsurge of the use of mixed methods in social sciences, usually referring to a mix of qualitative and quantitative method in political science research design (Wolf, 2010:145). I find support for the use of qualitative methods in social science in a text by Vromen, who introduces some of the debates on contemporary use of qualitative methods in political science in Marsh & Stoker's Theory and Methods in Political Science (2010). Vromen argues for the interest of using qualitative methods - which is to gain 'thick' descriptions of a case, rather than aiming for results that can be used as broad generalizations (Vromen in Marsh & Stoker 2010:249-266). In my research I will mix two qualitative methods, a discursive analysis of formulation of problematizations and semi-structural interviews with key actors who are involved in my tracks of analysis.

Furlong & Marsh argues that it would be illogical for an interpretivist to argue for a researchers capacity of independent knowledge of an external world that - according to this point of view - doesn't exist. This leads to a double hermeneutic; the world is interpreted by the actors and their interpretation is interpreted by the observer (ibid). As we can see, ontological and epistemological stances are impossibly entangled when it comes to a interpretivist perspective in social science research, which is this essays foundation.

2.3. Issues of Validity and Reliability

Structuralist and post-structuralist (like Bacchi) depart from the claim that it is through language that we create representations of reality. These representations are not only reflections of reality but language contribute to their construction. In other words, using a discourse analytical approach we access reality through the use of language and investigate how the discourse regarding a social phenomenon contributes to the meaning of the same. According to an interpretivist /anti-foundalist perspective, what we perceive as the 'real world' 'out there', can be changed over time and space, and social constructions such as institutions are dependent of societies interpretation of the same. Since interpretivist answer the ontological question of what is 'being' and what is 'the real world' with that *it is a social construction*, the epistemological question of what we can know about the world is deeply related to this assumption of reality. Meaning, an interpretivist would suggest that no observer can be objective because he or she lives in the social world which is affected by the

social constructions of 'reality'. Hence, 'reality' will always be defined and characterized by the individual researcher (Furhlong & Marsh in Marsh & Stoker 2010:184-211). The concepts of *validity* and *reliability* have gained a different meaning within qualitative research in contrast to quantitative research. Good validity, or credibility, happens when the researcher has identified and measured what he or she intended to measure. High reliability happens when the results from the research ends up the same if done again (Bryman, 2001).

In this study I aim to reach good validity and reliability in my results through being as transparent and up front with the methods and material which I use, so it may be possible for others to trace my sources and my methods. By being precise in explaining how my investigation and analysis is being made I hope to reach some level of intersubjectivity, and thereby making it more possible for other researchers to repeat this study. Discourse analysis has been criticized for having problems with reliability and validity, though more developed analytical tools give better conditions. However, compared to the analysis of ideas which makes use of ideal types, discourse analysis have the advantage that it can be more free and have more possibilities when using analytical tools, though it can affect the intersubjectivity of the study. As before mentioned, I will do my best to keep up the clearness of my methods and usage of analytical tools and material to gain good fluoroscopy and making my analytical reasoning easy to interpret.

2.4. Material

I have chosen to analyze material from three tracks, which I will call the Governmental Track, the Academic Track and the Municipal Track. The *municipal* material concerns elderly care and social services, the *governmental* material regards governing of Sweden on a state level and the *academic* material regards what is argued to be the problems and solutions of NPM in public administration in Sweden. As mentioned earlier, these tracks are not only different since they describe problematizations in different spheres of society, they also constitute slightly different point of departures. Material gathered from government and academic sources were selected because they are critical towards NPM, in contrast to material gathered from the municipal sources which were chosen since it is representative or strategically important.

All of the material is in Swedish and were therefore translated. All translations from Swedish to English were made by me. In the analysis, problematizations expressed in the material are presented and elaborated on in relation to the research questions. I have chosen to summarize and to quote from the texts and interviews to make it possible for the reader to get a perception of the content. There is an instinct value in seeing the actual quotes, but since the texts and interviews are lengthy and contain information that is irrelevant for this study I have decided to select a few quotes that illustrate problematizations that are emphasized in the material.

2.4.1. Governmental Track

On a governmental level I have analyzed statements made by the current government before and after they took office in 2014. I have also analyzed material that concerns the Trust Commission, which was appointed by the government to investigate a trust-based form of governing of the public sector. The material that contains problematizations made by cabinet-members and political representatives is collected from memorandums and opinion pieces published by the party leader (Stefan Löfven) and the then Political Secretary (Carin Jämtin) of the Social Democratic Party at different occasions. I have chosen to analyze material concerning the commissions since the appointment of the commission was a consequence of the critique of NPM presented by the present government. Hence, their work is an effect of the political statements on a government level. Though researchers involved in this commission are independent researchers, I have decided to analyze the problematizations that they bring forward as a part of the Governmental Track since they are appointed by the government and their individual interpretations of the committee directive are highly relevant. The Trust Commission's committee directive is composed by the government hence is a direct message from the government.

2.4.2. Municipal Track

Documents regarding the municipal track stem from two sources: material presented by the Elderly Care Council and the Social Welfare Council. The documents chosen for this analysis are reports and proposals directly put forward by the two councils as basis for decision in the city council. All material is from the period September 2016 - March 2017. I will not analyze all attachments and motivations put forward as basis for decision regarding elderly care and social services, rather I will analyze documents that are *strategically important* or *are critical towards the current way of governing a particular area of local government*. I have also selected documents that are *representative* for the types of documents produced by the two councils. Available documents vary a lot in how much they provide as into explaining or declaring the extent of the problematization they intend to remedy. As such, I have chosen to analyze policy documents from a larger period of time rather than going into depth in a couple of months. I have chosen these two areas of local government since they both deal with issues that impact classical welfare services and also have been mentioned in regards to the critique of NPM. These documents and policy proposals could be classified as agreements between all the representatives of the left-wing parties in Stockholm city's board regarding elderly care and social services, yet compromises must have been done to some degree before these policy proposals were made. In order to clarify some of the positions made by the left majority coalition I have conducted *semi-structured informant interviews* with the presidents of the Elderly Care Council and Social Services Council. I have chosen to combine an analysis of the interviews with an analysis of available policy-documents in order to gain a better understanding of the work in the Stockholm City Council - which touch upon problematizations of New Public Management. Another benefit from conducting these interviews is that I got the opportunity to ask political representatives what they explicitly thought of NPM and problems that they themselves related to NPM within their policy-area. Another benefit from the two interviews was that I were able to get a more nuanced image of how problematizations are made from the Left Party (represented by the president of the Elderly Care Council, Torun Boucher) and the Environmental Party (represented by Åsa Lindhagen, president of the Council for Social Services). These two parties are experienced by the Swedish voters as positioned most to the left as well as most to the center on a left-center political spectrum (SCB, 2016: p.10). Since there is a left coalition constituted by The Social Democrats (Socialdemokraterna), The Environmentalist Party (Miljöpartiet), The Left Party (Vänsterpartiet) and Feminist Initiative (Feministiskt initiativ) variations in how critique towards New Public Management is expressed should be expected on a political level.

The informants functioned as witnesses of how reality is constituted from their perspective. I wanted to gain a deep understanding of how the city's councils problematize their area of local government in relation to NPM. Therefore, there was no intrinsic value in directing exactly the same questions to the different interviewees, even though the questions asked were quite similar and orbit around the respondent's ideas about problems and solutions related to NPM. Questions that were used as a basis for the interviews can be found in *Attachments*.

2.4.3. Academic Track

From December 2014 to March 2015, a series of seminars under the headline *Seminars Regarding New Governance of Welfare* took place at different educational institutions around Sweden. The seminars were organized by the cabinet member and Civil Minister Ardan Shekarabi in order to start a discussion regarding NPM and possible ways of moving past NPM in governing the public sector. The ambition of Shekarabi was to improve governing in the public sector and to accumulate knowledge on NPM in a current Swedish context. Participants at the seminars came from many different areas of society such as researchers in political science and economy as well as representatives from trade unions and employers within the public sector. The seminars were used by the Swedish government as a background to the commission directive on trust in public sector that is analyzed under the governmental-track headline.

I have decided to limit the material to statements made by researchers at these seminars when discussing the academic world's view of problems and solutions in relation to public administration and NPM. This decision was made for two reasons. First, this material is relevant to my research question since researchers are invited to participate to provide their point of view on problems within public administration, specifically focusing on problems that they identify as being related to NPM. This gave me as a researcher a defined limitation to which researchers' statements to analyze. Another reason for why I chose this material to analyze problematizations represented by the Swedish academic community was that many of the seminars were filmed and available for the public to take part of online in retrospect. Also, this is a forum that focuses on problems within governing of public sector and thus relates well to my research interest. Another reason why this material is appropriate is the fact that many different researchers from different parts of the country, as well as academic disciplines, are involved. The issue of selection bias is inevitable here, though I believe this is a small issue since the researchers involved describe problematizations from their perspective, and inarguably take up a large space in the Swedish discourse on public administration and NPM. Hence, in this part of my analysis I will only study problematizations represented in statements made from researchers present at these seminars. There is of course bias in the

selection of researchers which were invited to perform at these seminars, those who are skeptical towards the outspoken criticism of NPM expressed by the government might not have been included, and researchers who's opinions differ in other ways could also have been excluded or been seen as acting outside the scope of the theme. Despite these potential pitfalls, I have decided to trust the integrity of the problematizations and conclusions presented by the researchers involved in these seminars. All seminars except one are available online and in this section I have analyzed problematizations made by researchers giving lectures at Karlstad University, Lund University and Uppsala University.

2.4.4. Table Of Material

Tracks	Motivation for Selection	Material
Governmental track	The governmental material is selected just because it is critical towards NPM - here I want to see how the spelled out criticism looks like.	Official statements made by Stefan Löfven and Carin Jämtin (Social Democrats) as well as the directive for the Trust Commission, online-seminar with the president of the Trust Commission Laura Hartman, interview with the research-leader for the Trust Commission Louise Bringselius.
Municipal Track	The municipal material is selected to be representative of the types of problematizations present in these two areas of Stockholm's local government. The purpose of this is to see if there is any spelled out criticism, as well as implied criticism on aspects associated to NPM and what solutions look like. Since the two councils reaches different "results" when presenting problematizations related to NPM they are in different ways contributing to the conclusions which are what kind of problematizations can be found, what is the problem represented to be in elderly care and social services in Stockholm City. These two sections of local government are also selected because elderly care, for example is very frequently	Policy documents, reports and interviews with presidents of the Elderly Care Council and the Social Services Council.

	mentioned in relation to problems with NPM - style governing.	
Academic Track	The statements made by academics during these seminars are selected for this analysis because of two reasons, that they directly address problematizations regarding NPM in public administration and that the seminars provided a mix of representatives from different research-fields and geographical locations.	Statements made by researchers on NPM and public administration during seminars organized by the Civil minister Ardalan Shekarabi at Karlstad University, Lund University and Uppsala University in 2015.

3. Theory

This section constitutes of two parts, first comes a description of the theoretical framework that my analysis is grounded in, describing the foundations for Bacchi's ideas of problematizations. The second part is a literature review on theories regarding the growth and endurance of NPM as well as a theoretical background on different administrative models. In my analysis I will use the ideal-types for public administration as a conceptual framework in order to clarify problematizations.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

This study's focus is how problems are created in such a way that they motivate a change in governing. Since I am interested in how policy is constructed by descriptions and formulations of problems, the emphasis of my analysis will lay on how politicians and academics present their arguments for change and what this change will be a remedy of. My analysis could be described as having a discursive analytical approach taken from Carol Bacchi's book *What's the problem represented to be* (2009). Since problem formulation is my focus, a theoretical and methodological foundation built on Bacchi's well known theories for analyzing policy problems seems appropriate, rather than other methods for discourse analysis such as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which linguistic focus lies on investigating how societal power relations are established and reinforced through language use. Nor will I turn to the post-Marxist theories of Laclau and Mouffe *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985) tracing historically varied discursive constitutions of class and political identity, etc. Instead, Bacchi's way introduces a form of analysis which emphasizes the importance of understanding how policy works in terms of "problem making" rather than "problem solving" - hence challenging a problem solving, or "evidence based" paradigm which some say is currently dominating policy research. In this context, looking at how NPM is discussed in academia and in the political debate is the same as analyzing what is the actual meaning of NPM, its problems and its solutions. According to some post-structuralists, there is a positivist paradigm within policy research that is problematic since it tends to take on policy-problems as objective facts rather than constructed representations of reality (Marston, 2000).

Furthermore, I will use a theoretical framework built on literature on administrative models as well as Bacchi's theory of problematizations in my discussion regarding representations of problems and solutions. This essay is a

discursive analysis of how problems and solutions are being presented on different levels I believe it is useful to have a somewhat clear definition of certain notions in order to understand which policy proposals and which critique is actually critique towards NPM. Hence, even though it could be seen as problematic to use theoretical models in my analysis, since an theoretical definitions rarely - if ever - correlate with reality, I still argue for its use in terms of clarity in my analysis of presented problems and solutions related to NPM. Another argument for my use of theoretical models is that what people describe as problems and solutions many times correspond with *ideas*, or *ideals* of what is right and wrong which may be rooted in such theoretical models.

3.2. Theory of Problematizations - Post-Structuralism and Governmentality

The discursive theory of Bacchi is in many ways different from other type of discourse analytical approaches. Boréus (2011) describes Bacchi's method as an independent branch on the 'discursive analytical tree' but in ways similar to other 'branches' since many have their roots in Michel Foucault's work regarding the concept of *discourse*. Foucault's approach has its roots in post-structuralist theory which I will shortly explain in this following section, as well as the most important points made by Foucault - from which Bacchi derives her theory/method of de-veiling problematizations.

Post-structuralism and structuralism are closely related since the first is the answer to the perceived 'shortcomings' of the second. *Structuralism* is associated with the linguists Ferdinand Saussure and anthropologist Lévi Strauss who argued that the meaning of a term is partly or wholly defined by a larger set of related terms (Wagenaar, 2011:107-109). For example, the meaning of the term '*liberal market*' derives from its place in a system of related terms such as 'money', 'trade', 'economy', 'capitalism' or even 'freedom'. According to structuralists, words, concepts, terms and actions cannot be understood if one does not take count of its relations to the whole, words has no meaning outside the symbolic system in which it operates. Wagenaar argues that this conceptualization of the word *meaning* is the one piece of the structuralist theory that survived as a key element of discourse analysis in Foucault's concept of 'discursive information'. The second principle presented by the structuralists is that language consists of "differences without positive terms" which means that signs obtain meaning through differences and oppositions established in the linguistic system (Saussure in Wagenaar, 2011:108-109).

Post-structuralist Jaques Derrida pointed out that this system of differences that Saussure claimed generated meaning to words and symbols is not closed but contains a notable amount of "slippage" (Derrida in Wagenaar, 2011:110). This slippage, or changeability of language in regard to the act of meaning making, happens when people establish what someone else means with a word or a sign, the give-and-take, which takes place in the *use* of language. Hence,

there is not only a particular pair of differences, which creates the meaning of a word but it *changes* depending on from whom and where and when the word or sign is presented. Derridas point was that the concept of *contextuality* needs to be built into the theory of meaning making from the beginning. This opens up for a theory of discourse that provides an alternative to hermeneutic meaning, where the specific meaning of a term is actualized in a context in use. This conceptualization of *meaning* offered some new insights in political thought for Foucault, regarding Foucault's take on issues such as public policy, power, governance and the state.

Although Foucault is know as a philosopher and historian, a part of his work suggested ways of applying his theory of discourse analysis onto political topics such as power (*The History of Sexuality, 1976-84*), power of the state and the penal-system (*Discipline and Punishment, Foucault, 1987 printed 2012*). Foucault's discourse analysis accommodates two main steps, the archeological approach and the genealogical (familial) approach (Foucault in Bergström & Boréus, 2012:360-361). The reason why I want to get into this for a little bit is that these two steps are important in order to understand the role of power, language and government which Foucault provides.

The *archeological approach* stand for a way of viewing the history of a word/symbol/signifier in terms of what it has meant in different eras, where Foucault analyzes which kind of exclusion mechanisms have taken place in regard to the subjects position in the discourse. In the archeological approach the past constitutes the point of departure, similar to regular methods for researching history. One helpful example of how one could use the archeological approach put forward by Bergström and Boréus is if one wanted to investigate the discourse of public schooling in Sweden. The starting point of this analysis would be in the mid 19th hundreds when the Swedish government implemented a schooling-law granting the right for all Swedish children to attend school. The subjects position becomes important in an archeological discourse analysis - where it must be asked if it is the statements made from teachers, parents, students, journalists or politicians which should be gathered and understood, in order to comprehend the schooling-discourse of that time.

The *genealogical* approach which in contrary takes its point of departure from the present. Instead of looking for a red-thread through the theme of 'public schooling in Sweden' this approach looks for kinship-lines between different themes. One example could be the currently existing theme of "more discipline in public schools" which (in this fictional example) can be seen discussed in media and highlighted by politicians. This "discipline-theme", could then according to the genealogical approach, be compared with the theme "the agrarian reform" and its (by the upper classes) 'dreaded social consequences' in the early 19th hundreds.¹ Foucault's genealogical approach is usually used in order to investigate the underlying terms and conditions for why a policy happens when it does, and why an issue is problematized at a certain

¹ Something which is described as one of the main reasons to why the schooling law was constructed as it was.

point in time. This investigation of people's creation of policy, problematizations and institutions makes the genealogical approach focus more on the power relations within an issue than the archeological approach.

In an attempt to avoid writing an entire essay about different interpretations of Foucault's various texts, lectures, discussions and interviews I will here give you a short summary of what I can read off the extensive literature on Foucault and the meaning of the term *governmentality*, since it is important in order to understand Bacchi's point of departure. Foucault coined the term governmentality in order to allow him to talk about his philosophy of how ruling takes place. This term was thought by some to be a mash-up or linkage of the two terms governing (French "gouverner") and modes of thought (French "mentalité") (Lemke, 2001:190-207). According to Foucault, this notion was a way to explain that he thought that power and knowledge were complicit in governing society. Governmentality depicts a style of governing in which all aspects of public life and individual conduct are subject to regulation and control, in short - governing is done by control through surveillance, and it could happen in any field where our bodies could be subjected to this governing. To understand governmentality it is important to know that Foucault's definition of governing is quite broad, it does not only include the bureaucratic official decisions made by a government but problems of self control, guidance for families, depicting the soul and management of the household etc. (ibid). This is, what Lemke argues, a sign that Foucault did not at first distinguish between government and power, though its distinction became clearer during Foucault's lectures given about governmentality in 1978-79. Through the term governmentality, Foucault highlighted the governments interest in having a bureaucracy which could control subjects through surveillance in a more resourceful, intense and fine-grained way - meaning, not merely controlling subjects through the growth of the state. As put by Wagenaar:

Governing should not be seen as the expression of a monolith power center or grand ideology, but instead as the accumulation of myriads of micro-practices within local programs - such as schools, prisons, welfare agencies, corporations and disability programs - that sustain, modify and even generate what we perceive as the institutions of the state. (Bevir, 1999:352 and Foucault, 1991:102 in Wagenaar, 2011:125-126).

Or as Lemke puts it:

The term governmentality pinpoints a specific form of representation, government defines a discursive field in which exercising power is "rationalized". This occurs, among other things, by the delineation of concepts, the specification of objects and borders, the provision of arguments and justifications. (Lemke, 2001:191).

As earlier mentioned, the 'What's the problem represented to be' approach draws on a Foucauldian understanding of discourse and power and on forms of governance in terms of governmentality. The concept of problematization is central in a WPR analysis as it refers to the process of governance. The

definition of governmentality simply as a ‘mentality of rule’, can be applied to neoliberalism and market-reforms of public administration, where I as a researcher see these connotations to NPM as a ‘mentality’. For the purpose of this thesis, governmentality will be used to build an understanding of governance and the creation of policy problems. With its post-structuralist foundation, Bacchi’s approach to problematizations places focus on the political dimension of policy-making where problems are constructed. Bacchi (1999) states that:

Every postulated ‘solution’ has built into it a particular representation of what the problem is, and it is these representations, and their implications we need to discuss. (Bacchi, 2009: 21).

3.3. The Growth and Endurance of ‘*New Public Management*’

In order to make a more substantial analysis of how problems and solutions are formulated in my three tracks of material, it will be helpful to have a clear idea of historical paradigms and theories of public administration related to these paradigms. Although this essay does not focus on the where and when of policy-making, I believe it is useful to have an idea of the possible causes of the emergence and endurance of NPM. Though Sweden is regarded to be one of the most comprehensive welfare states in the world (Khulman & Wollman, 2015:13) there has simultaneously been a change from a state centered welfare system to a market-inspired system. This change of paradigm - if you will - has dominated Swedish policy-making during the past decades. Actually, Sweden has been named as one of the most eager participants in NPM reforms since the late 1980’s (Hood, 1995; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004).

There are many possible explanations to this change from a single-payer single-executer system that characterized Sweden during the 1960s-1970s to a business management administration of welfare administration. The theory of *democratic reformism* suggests that politicians have to examine and correct policy after it has been made. This need for reformation builds upon subsequent evaluations of policy, which in the next step have resulted in an expansion of control and measurement (Hermansson, 2002, referred to in Ahlbäck Öberg, 2010, p.507). Another theory describes the transition from state control to market solutions as a part of globalization and the diminished power of the state in a global trend from *government* to *governance*, this has been extensively written about by social scientists such as Pierre and Peters (Pierre & Peters, 2000). Others argue that instead of viewing this change as an unstoppable effect of globalization, *it has been hand made by politicians* who have been eager to create more efficient, diverse and even transparent systems of welfare service provision. Someone who has presented several theories to the emergence and endurance of NPM is Christopher Hood. The first theory is that NPM became ‘*fashion*’, Hood describes NPM as something which had ”many of the

necessary qualities for a period of pop management stardom". Though Hood's presentation of this theory is skeptical, it has something to say about the radical shift in administration systems in the UK etc. However, it fails to explain the endurance of NPM during the decades to come (Hood, 1991a:6). Hood further presents three other explanations for the endurance of NPM as an administrative reform. The second theory put forward by Hood is viewing NPM as a 'cargo cult' phenomenon, described as "the endless rebirth, in spite of repeated failures, of the idea that substantive success ('cargo') can be gained by the practice of particular kinds of (managerial) ritual." (Downs and Larkey (1986), referred to in Hood 1991a:7). Though this theory better accommodates the recurring or enduring features of many aspects of NPM, it fails to explain why this 'cargo cult' appeared when it did. The third theory of NPMs endurance, although it fails to explain why NPM emerged when it did, is to interpret it as an "epoch-making attraction of opposites". The opposites in this case are two approaches to public administration, the German state-led economic development by professional public managers and the Anglo-Saxon tradition of liberal economics. These two historically different public administration systems merged into an alliance that matched self-interest with duty in administration. The final possible explanation put forward by Hood is maybe more promising. This theory suggests that the emergence of NPM is a response to the social conditions in the developed countries since WWII. This theory highlights 1) changes in income level and distribution, laying the conditions for a new "tax-conscious" electoral coalition, 2) the development of technology (post-Fordism), serving to remove the traditional barriers between work in the public and private sector, 3) a shift towards more intensive polling, benefitting political campaigns wanting to target key electoral groups relative to the voice of experience from the bureaucracy and finally 4) a shift to a socially heterogeneous population less tolerant of uniform approaches in public policy (Hood, 1991a:7-8). This fourth explanation has the power to explain what none of the others can do, namely why NPM should have emerged in the particular time and place that it did. Swedish political scientist Shirin Ahlbäck Öberg seems to agree with Hood's fourth theory of changed social conditions and technology. Ahlbäck Öberg writes about the growth of the audit society in Sweden, and argues that the focus on controlling production and increase transparency in the Swedish government apparatus can be seen as a response to the critique of a heavy bureaucracy. In short, the Swedish public sector had grown strong during the post-war period that resulted in that many citizens perceived it as rigid and inflexible. The bureaucracy (or public management/government) was described as a threat to citizens' ability to influence, to transparency and to integrity of citizens. This criticism preceded the introduction of various NPM-reforms and created a fertile soil for market-influenced methods and ideas of governing (Ahrne 1985 in Ahlbäck Öberg, 2010). A somewhat different explanation to the steady growth of the number of audits was the complexity and social importance of policy issues confronting government. This variety of issues increased the intellectual demands on public officials and their employees. Controversial and complicated questions which policy makers are expected to deal with are many times outside the scope of their competence. To meet this demand of informed policy making, public

officials started to increasingly depend on knowledge derived from research, policy analysis, program evaluations, and statistics (Rossi et al 2004:12-14).

In regards to scope and content of state activity, when making differentiation between types of welfare states Sweden continuously ends up classified as Social Democratic. This type of classification was famously made by Esping-Andersen in 1990 where Sweden was classified as a Social Democratic Welfare State with its many universal welfare programs sponsored by taxation and welfare redistribution systems. On the other hand, the literature on the transformation of the welfare state (including Sweden) going from a public sector financed by set budget allocations to being decided with performance control mechanisms and market-like competition is extensive (e.g. Chandler, 2004; Gingrich, 2011; Hall, 2012; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Some even say it has "conquered" as administrative form (Hasselbladh et al 2008 and Røvik, 2008 referred to in Hall 2012:29) and that Sweden was one of the countries, if not the country, most eager to adopt to this new business management way of reforming public administration (Hood, 1995; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). At the same time, states had less resources during this time compared to the decades classified as the post-war era. Hence, during the 1980's and 1990's 'management' came to be the task of attempting to produce positive results with small resources, though it in some cases lead to making the bureaucracy actually - less efficient despite pleas for efficiency (B.G. Peters, 2001:375).

3.4. What is 'New Public Management'?

Talking about the emergence and endurance of New Public Management makes it important to understand what this concept means within the context of this essay. In 1991 Hood formulated the term New Public Management. Hood's definition of New Public Management is neatly put into seven aspects, *management*, *performance standards*, *output controls*, *decentralization*, *competition* and *private-sector management*. Below follows a further explanation of Hood's seven aspects of New Public Management that from now on can be referred to as NPM.

Management, the belief in the importance and strength of privatizing government by engaging in hands-on methods.

Performance standards, promotes clarification of goals/intents, targets, and indicators for progression and success to maintain explicit standards and measures of performance.

Output controls, using performance based assessments when outsourcing activities which traditionally have been done by the government to private actors.

Decentralization, an advocacy for a decentralized system in which managers are not limited to agency restrictions, a shift from a unified management system.

Competition, the promotion of competition in the public arena in order to lower costs and possibly achieve higher quality.

Private-sector management, establishing a workplace in which public employees are aware of the goals the company or agencies are trying to reach. This type of management focuses on a necessity to establish short-term contracts and develop business plans.

Finally, *cost reduction*, focuses on keeping a high efficiency while lowering costs, trying to do more with less (Hood, 1991a:4-5). In conclusion, according to Hood NPM is a notion which could be defined by two subcategories: *marketization of welfare services* and *control and evaluation of welfare production*. In short, NPM is a cluster of ideas gathered from the private sector which has entailed privatization, marketization and more attention to control of costs and transparency.

Although there are many different connotations of this sweeping notion of NPM, I believe that the aspects presented by Hood capture the fundamental characteristics, and it is also the definition of NPM which is most frequently used in the literature and referred to when discussing 'what NPM really is'. Hall, another researcher describing the 'management bureaucracy' defines it as follows:

It is a bureaucracy that makes use of modern business management ideas when engaging the bureaucracy's management, control, planning, supervising, reporting, monitoring and information/documentation (Hall, 2012:23-25).

In a management bureaucracy terms and notions such as *profiling*, *goals*, *strategic planning*, *market-communication*, *communication-platforms*, *process-leader*, *developer*, *elements*, *measurable* and *core-activities* can be found - all of these terms might just as well be found in the world of business management. Hall continues with referring to Hood when describing NPM as having two important aspects: how relationships in-between public administration organizations, companies and customers look like and how public organizations should become more like businesses internally - by developing a clear management, goal-orientation and increased efficiency. These two aspects can also be described as 'marketfication' and 'businessfication' (Hall, 2012:29).

Although NPM had a dramatic impact on public administrations and policy making in the 1990's, some social scientists believe that NPM has hit its prime (OECD cited in de Vries, 2010) and are now describing the emergence of other types of administrative models such as the Digital-Era model (Dunleavy, 2005) and the Neo-Weberian State (NWS) (OECD, 1999 cited in Dunn & Miller, 2007:351).

3.5. Theories of Public Administration

In the middle of the 20th century (the post-war era) the productivity in western economies increased because of large companies applying mass-production technologies -in combination with macro-economic policies of 'counter-cyclical management', so called Keynesian policies. But after twenty-five years of

seemingly trouble-free growth, the welfare states experienced a form of crisis, the institutions of Keynesianism and Fordism was now regarded as a barrier to further growth (Pierson, p.63, 2006).

The role of the state had been characterized by the promotion of 'decommodification' through redistribution based on increasing tax income from both employers and employees. The state was also characterized by its increased role as employer, public employment rose as result of nationalizations, the expansion of welfare institutions and the state's engagement in infrastructure projects. The education system expanded and for the first time, social funds to cover risks such as old age, sickness, and unemployment were introduced (Thullberg & Östberg 1994:5).

Simultaneously, different theoretical approaches, or ideal types of public administration developed in academic fields such as sociology. Different theoretical approaches to public administration have different rules and norm systems which results in different logics when it comes to expected consequences and what measures are deemed appropriate. Here follows some explanation of a number of these theoretical approaches.

There are a few ideal type bureaucratic models presented by Rothstein, and I have chosen to present three which I believe are relevant to this analysis. The models presented in this section are the *legal-bureaucratic model*, the *market model* and the *professional model*. These three theories represent different ideas of how bureaucracies 'should be' and which constitutes the largest challenges and purposes for the implementation process of political decisions.

In 1946 sociologist Max Weber created the most famous ideal type for bureaucratic organizations - *the legal-bureaucratic model*. According to Weber's model, bureaucracies gains legitimacy through very precise laws which are supposed to be implemented by neutral, impartial and professional officials who act through principles of objectivity and everyone's equality before the law (Weber, 1946). This model is closely related to the emergence of the ideals of rule of law, starting in Europe during the 18th century as a reaction to arbitrary jurisdiction which was common before. Hence the model is called the legal-bureaucratic model. The legitimacy in this model is derived from the predictability of the implementation of laws, where citizens could anticipate their rights and penalties. This is something which is to be found in the part of Swedish constitution named Regeringsformen: *Courts of law, administrative authorities and others performing public administrative functions must consider equality before the law and shall observe objectivity and impartiality* (The Constitution chapter 1, 9§ Authors translation)². But the administrative structures of a Weberian bureaucracy presents an internal contradiction, on one hand - the activities of the public administrator is considered to be legalistic and strictly defined by statutes - on the other hand, there is a considerable amount of involvement in politics by administrators (B.G Peters, 2001:139). In the middle of the 2000's a concept called the Neo-Weberian State emerged as a description of two dimensions seen in many western welfare states, first - the state remains

² Swedish original text: *Domstolar samt förvaltningsmyndigheter och andra som fullgör offentliga förvaltningsuppgifter ska i sin verksamhet betrakta allas likhet inför lagen samt iaktta saklighet och opartiskhet. Regeringsformen 1 kap 9§*

a strong steering and regulations presence within society, the state is not seen principally as a burden on economy and society - or a necessary evil, more is that the objective of politicians does not seem to be to minimize state activity. Pollitt puts it like this:

Rather it [the state] is the guarantor and partner of both a strong economy and a civilized, socially cohesive society. It is the initiator or facilitator of a whole range of additional democratic mechanisms, central and local, both representative and direct [...] incidentally, NWS is not, as some commentators have assumed, just the traditional Weberian bureaucracy plus some NPM efficiency tools (Pollitt, C, 2008/2009:14).

Second, the state is not static but gradually modernizing and seeking improved efficiency, hence the assumption that imitating the private sector is the only way to achieve efficiency is wrong, the private sector have no automatic superiority since the public service sector remains distinct ethically and motivationally and can develop its own solutions to challenges (ibid).

The market-oriented model seeks democratic legitimacy through citizens opportunity to 'vote with their feet' i.e. to choose between different public service options as well as being able to choose between public and various forms of private producers. The reasoning behind this is that when citizens are given the possibility to choose between different options they will promote actors which are doing a good job as well as making their voice heard by calling to attention problems with 'bad' actors. NPM is closely related to the market-model of public administration, where bureaucrats/government employees are expected to exercise efficient management for the sake of economic efficiency.

The professional model archives legitimacy in its activities through that the state entrusts decisions to a licensed profession. This model is characterized by decisions being made rather by practitioners such as doctors than traditional bureaucrats with the argument that they hold special knowledge and are considered to possess certain skills and often a special ethics related to their profession. In this model professionals also take on the responsibility for the decisions (Rothstein, 2014:15-28). Another effect is that the relationship between the profession, citizen and the state is often complicated. This is because the state is dependent on the professionals' knowledge and support for the implementation of certain programs, hence this dependency means a limitation of states influence on decisions. Citizens confidence in the professionals knowledge and ability to make 'good' judgments is crucial to which extent it can be used to legitimize welfare programs actual performance (ibid). The most prominent name associated to the professional model is Freidson who wrote a book on specialized knowledge and professionalism in the public sector called Professionalism - the Third Logic. Freidson formalizes professionalism by treating it as an ideal type, different from consumerism and bureaucracy. Friedson pushes the question of a world where workers with professional knowledge and ability provide important services for society by organizing it themselves, without directives from managers or market-influence. One point presented by Friedson is that there is a neo-liberal paradigm which is obscuring the social value of credentialism and monopolies, and that institutions

that sustain professionalism are useful for states and should not be overly controlled or dismissed (Friedson, 2001:180-190).

4. Analysis

In the analysis I have applied the six questions which constitutes the theoretical framework provided by Bacchi's 'What's the problem represented to be'-approach to every piece of material. As mentioned earlier, policy analysis can be done in a multitude of ways but with Bacchi's post-structuralist foundation policy suggestions are assumed to have built in representations of a problem. Therefore, policies have implications that are important to discuss, since there are several competing issues within a policy formulation, which means that some problematizations are left unrecognized (Bacchi, 1999:4). The six questions designed as a methodological tool to scrutinized underlying problematizations are:

1. What is the problem represented to be in a specific policy?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?
3. How has this representation of the problem come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?
6. How/where is this representation of the problem produced, disseminated and defended?

The six questions are created to make policy analysis methodologically clear and coherent while including all the elements of the approach. However, the questions are followed systematically and posed one by one, though they are not all answered.

4.1. Governmental Policy Track

Almost exactly one year before the last election, Stefan Löfven, then opposition leader and party leader of the Social Democrats, wrote a memorandum on public administration, which was published in Swedish media. The headline was: *The professions within the welfare sector must get their freedom and status back*. According to Löfven, there has been a de-professionalization of occupations within the public sector where people working for the government have gone from being independent professionals to simply working as performers, being governed by very detailed instructions.

Many welfare professions declare that their work has been kidnapped by financial compensation models, administration and detailed regulation. Market experiments have been

conducted within parts of the welfare services, which have nothing to do with markets. The theories of New Public Management, which were intended to streamline welfare, have in many places bureaucratized it instead (Stefan Löfven, DN, 2013-11-15).

In this statement, NPM is considered to be a problem since it means a status decline of professions, that employee competences are underused and that the professional ethics are obstructed. The underlying problem, which is presented by Löfven, is that the public sector does not seem to be a very attractive workplace. The goal of the Social Democrats is clearly spelled out here, the ambition to make young people want to become teachers and work within healthcare, education etc. The solution to this representation of the problem is to remove issues related to the concept NPM and replace them with policy in order to improve *quality*. This would be done by introducing national quality laws as well as not "allowing profit-interests to steer government activities" (Stefan Löfven, DN, 2013-11-15). In this opinion memorandum the exact ways of how governing would improve quality is omitted. The issue is however dealt with in an article published in Swedish newspapers, this time by Carin Jämtin, also social democrat and party secretary. She is interviewed by the newspaper Svenska Dagbladet (SvD) a few days before the election, and promises to launch an investigation to "review everything from national quality laws, to which exams should remain in school". Jämtin describes the idea of the investigation like this:

Exactly what it should look like is something that we need to design with the professionals in these areas. There are many thoughts about how they want to control their everyday lives. But it is based on the fact that we stop managing so much. [...]

We know that home care personnel is very stressed because of their management models for the daily work, which are designed so that they don't have time for qualitative activities. Doctors announce that they spend less time on their patients. And teachers are stressed because they feel they don't have time for the most important thing: the children. (Carin Jämtin, SvD, 2014-09-09)

In the statement made by Löfven and Jämtin it is very clear that "New Public Management" is seen as the explanatory factor for a list of problems which include low status of jobs in the welfare sector overworked personnel within healthcare, students who don't live up to educational standards and the fact that people in general may be losing confidence in the welfare state. All of these problems are problems of *quality in performance* in welfare services. Though the commission directive issued in 2016 by the government regarding trust-based governing (which is analyzed in the in the next section) is more nuanced towards the notion NPM, these statements represent a pretty simple problematization - NPM is the "bad guy" and giving back "freedom and status" to employees within welfare professions is the solution. Distributing more power to professionals exactly corresponds to the professional model of welfare administration. Instead of just getting rid of unwanted effects of NPM, it is clear that the Social Democratic leadership wants to renew the way of public administration. On the party's website this sentence can be found: "If we get the

mandate to form a government this fall, we will launch an inquiry for a new governance after New Public Management” (Ny styrning i välfärden, Socialdemokraterna, 2014-09-10).

The criticism of NPM had not, in the spring 2017, resulted in any policy proposals, but it has resulted in the appointment of the Trust Commission (Tillitsdelegationen). The commission was appointed by the Social Democratic/Environmental government in June 2016 with the mission to evaluate the governing of the public sector and to propose new ways of governing.³ One problematization represented in the commission’s directive is the need to balance control of public service activities with confidence in the employees’ experience and knowledge. Though this could be seen as the Swedish government stepping away from the idea that performance and output control is a suitable solution for public management, the commission directive also makes it clear that the government does not wish to abandon performance management entirely. The solution to the problematization of a ’lack of trust’ in the chain of governance is not to change the system entirely, but to learn from “success factors” when developing a more trust-based governance. Below is an extract from the commission’s webpage:

The ambition is to identify good examples through experimental research operations, [and through these operations] identify success factors when developing a more trust-based governance throughout the entire chain of the government, with a focus on municipalities and county councils and on learning supervision and purposeful compensation models. The purpose [of the commission’s investigation] is to contribute to improved conditions for municipalities and county councils and to further develop legal certainty and efficiency in its activities, with the competence of the employees as an obvious starting point and resource. (The Trust Commission’s website, fetched 2017-05-01)

Laura Hartman, an Associate Professor in Economics at Uppsala University, is the president of the Trust Commission. In a public appearance in Uppsala in January 2017 she puts the issue of trust as to: make use of employees’ competences, increase the scope of action for employees as well as creating independently operating units within governmental agencies on different levels. According to Hartman, there has been some sort of NPM regime in Swedish governing, she describes how it came about in the late 1980’s with demands for increased efficiency as well as demands for improving a perceived lack of democracy and transparency within the public sector. Hartman mentions that though it is contested to which extent NPM actually exists in the current public administration - the ”negative side effects of NPM” constitute a problem and the ambition for the commission is to create a better governance structure which is more focused on trust.

There is a need to develop trustworthy governance, based on mutual trust among stakeholders. So it is not just about trust between the immediate manager and the employee but

³ New models for governing will be recommended by the commission if considered appropriate by the delegates involved. The commission will put forward their final report in the summer of 2017.

a much broader ambition. It is about having two administrations within a municipality trusting each other, municipalities and a government agency such as the Social Security Fund have a trusting relationship or politicians and municipalities feeling confidence in each other. (Laura Hartman, January 2016).

In this oral presentation of the Trust Commission Hartman says that control and trust are not opposites to each other, but that its important to combine trust and control in a good way. One example she brings up in relation to this is that it is important to have the possibility to remove "unserious actors" in the public sector (having control) and simultaneously being able to reduce detailed governing signals - "such as meticulously planned schedules for home care within the elderly service" (increasing trust).

Louise Bringselius, Research Leader of the Trust Commission, worked with the basis for the commission's report when I was interviewing her. The intention for this basis for the report was to develop a theory of trust-based governance for the public sector, based on good practical examples from the municipalities and county councils as well as from researchers engaged in the field. This was done through engaging several researchers as well as municipalities and county councils around the country, having them write research reports respectively share information about local projects in relation to trust-based governance. In our interview, Bringselius highlights that her perspective is very much a *criticism of the criticism of NPM*. Bringselius believes that NPM is a very imprecise concept which is thrown around and used as a "simple brush-stroke" to explain many types of problems. The vagueness of NPM as a concept affects the debate negatively according to Bringselius, since it becomes unclear which parts of NPM that are problematic in public sector governance. Instead Bringselius divides NPM into four sub-categories; 1) a sometimes exaggerated culture of control. 2) "economism" - the idea of keeping up with the state's resources through procurement 3) the idea of the private sector as a model for public affairs and 4) a management culture which has a negative view of the human nature - referring to research on inner and outer motivation of public employees done by psychologist Douglas McGregor in the 1960's. The argument for dividing NPM into these four elements is that it becomes clearer what exactly people are critical of, and what kind of problematizations could be made in that specific criticism. Another problematization presented by Bringselius is that the concept of 'increasing trust', similarly to the concept 'New Public Management', can be too simplified:

"Many [researchers and others] have been relieved when I have been critical towards the simple solution of just removing control from the public sector, since some might have been mistreated by doctors or incorrectly treated by teachers in their life. They think: 'trust is great-but what about my rights?' ... I think the Swedes are amazing, we have this legalistic culture in our administration where the citizens want to have rules in place and want them followed, 'trust' is good but only to a certain degree - people are relieved that we are nuanced and don't repeat the mistake that we [researchers] did with NPM and think it is a solution to everything, but make it more complicated". (Louise Bringselius, 2017-03-10).

The main problematization represented in the material analyzed in relation to the Trust Commission is that there is too little trust in relation to a trust-control ratio, and that it should be increased through learning from good, already existing, examples in the Swedish public administration as well as from conclusions made by academics engaged in public administration issues. This is a form of evidence based motivation for how problems with insufficient trust should be issued. Though Hartman says that trust and control are not opposites to each other, they seem to have been presented as opposites in the debate on NPM, which is considered problematic by Hartman as well as Bringselius - the debate on public administration and NPM can be "too black and white", solutions are equally sweeping and uncomplicated as the perception of NPM. Hence, there is a need for more nuance in the discussion, "too much control is as bad as too little" (Bringselius, 2017-03-10). Another problematization regarding the concept of 'NPM' is the vagueness of its meaning - "depending on who you speak to, different people mean different things" (ibid). This vagueness makes it difficult to pinpoint problems within public administration and therefore makes it difficult to come up with solutions. The assumptions, which underlie these representations of problems, are that public administration is complicated, and that the Trust Commission in itself ends up being a representation the issue of how much influence should be given to bureaucrats and to politicians in public administration.

There is silence regarding the idea of balance, balance could be argued to be a relative concept depending on which perspective you take, it is not difficult to imagine that a politician with demands on budget restraints has another set of priorities than a employee working with elderly care within a municipality. It is important to remember that a Social Democratic/Environmentalist government created the Trust Commission, a government that has been critical of privatizations and market-like solutions within welfare. This criticism is of course the starting point for the establishment of the commission in the first place. Hence the independence of researchers and actors representing other parts of the public administration than the government should not be taken out of context - they are all working for the government though they should be considered independent in their personal conclusions, especially since their work will constitute the basis of the commission's report. The effects produced by this representation of the problem is that independent researchers and good examples from lower branches of government can constitute a theory or a model of public administration based on the idea of trust. This idea of trust however, is motivated by, and initiated for, political reasons - such as presenting and formulating a problem and a solution to a perceived decline in confidence in the welfare state.

4.2. Municipal Policy Track

4.2.1. Elderly Care in Stockholm City

In order to analyze problematizations in the Elderly Care in Stockholm City I have chosen to go deeper into one policy document, which I believe is strategically important since the purpose of this document is to pinpoint problems within the elderly care service and how these problems can and should be solved in the near future. The document, *Rapport om utveckling av hemtjänst*, (Dnr 152-643/2016) was presented in March 2016 and decided upon by the City Council in September 2016. The most important overarching objective of the report is presented as:

[...] to increase the individual care-takers influence over the home care services, improve collaboration around the individual's needs and to increase the freedom of action of home care staff in order to meet the individual's needs and desires (Dnr 152-643/2016 p.11).

The main problems represented in this specific policy document can be categorized into problems regarding the day-to-day care and structural problems regarding procurement, scheduling and insufficient means to ensure quality in performance in relation to the procurement process.

Firstly, it is clear when reading the report that the authors consider too little influence is given to care takers and care staff over the daily chores. These are problems which are associated with ideas of not having put enough confidence into the competence of professionals to make good decisions, rather than reforms which are oriented towards more output control or a need to introduce more performance standards. This problem will be remedied through reforming the ordering of home care so that it is done through an agreement between the care-giving facility and the individual care taker, without specifying key service activities in detail, such as meals and personal care, but leaving it to the individuals involved to decide which activities should be carried out at what times. Torun Boucher, president of the Elderly Care Council puts it like this:

Instead of the assistance handlers deciding on the time of helping the individual to shower, get dressed etc we will now give the individual a 'bag of time' instead - then, based on the fact that this person is entitled to 10 hours a week, the home-care staff gets more space to decide themselves. It's about changing the system without making a revolution. (Torun Boucher, 2017-03-16)

Another suggestion made in the report is to 'group' the granted efforts based on wider categories such as personal care and meals, again, without specifying in detail how it should be done, but leaving it to the actors involved. Furthermore, the Elderly Care Council wants to review the current method for

calculating time which care takers are granted in order to secure accuracy and to bring forward guidelines to secure the individual's influence over the care design. The authors repeatedly highlight the importance of home care staff being given the authority, responsibility and freedom to make independent decisions on appropriate action based on the individual's current daily needs and the resulting situation, as is very clearly stated in this quote:

To ensure the individual's influence over the design of policies, the Elderly Care Council believes that common guidelines for implementation of plans should be developed [...] this should be done by following good examples that are expected to emerge in development projects in the different parts of the city. The Elderly Care Council also believes that it is important that home care staff are given the authority, responsibility and freedom to make independent decisions on appropriate action based on the individual's daily current needs and the resulting situation. (Dnr 152-643/2016 p.12)

Secondly, the structural problems within the Elderly Care Service consist in the procurement of home-care services and in scheduling, as previously mentioned. There are two laws involved in the procurement of home-care service from private actors; the law regarding freedom of choice (LOV) and the law regarding public procurements (LOU). These two laws, which purposes are to manage procurement and make sure it is done judicially correct, risk delaying the actual implementation of service because of the possibility for dismissed actors to appeal decisions in court. This means that the city can be left without any contracted part providing the service for a period of time. Another problem with LOU is represented to be that the contracts given under LOU are too long, making it difficult to discard actors who are not living up to standards (Dnr 152-643/2016, p. 14).

Another problem with contractors described in the report is that some businesses do not live up to the quality standards in their performance. The Elderly Care Council proposes that the City increase demands on contractors during the procurement process so that the contractor cannot be approved if there is any doubt that they will be unable to live up to the demands of the city regarding quality in treatment, security and continuity for the individual care taker. One of the methods proposed in the report for contractors to meet higher standards is to use a system of taking references as well as requiring mandatory presence at information meetings before the procurement process starts, as well as other new demands for aspiring contractors (Dnr 152-643/2016 p.14-15). Torun Boucher describes this problematization like this:

We want private businesses to develop things, but then we're down controlling on the level of minutes as to what they should do. Instead, we should put high demands on their home care skills before they get the contract - after they have passed the entry requirement, I would prefer that we [the local government] abstain from a detailed way of control, so that the business can organize their activities themselves to a much greater extent. (Torun Boucher, 2017-03-16)

These problematizations, that contractors fail to live up to quality standards in treatment, security and continuity for the care givers and that there are problems with the procurement process are based on the assumption that the

city cannot trust private contractors to live up to quality standards without more control. Hence, some element associated with NPM is proposed, but directed towards the contractors, the actors, rather than towards the individuals involved in daily care. One large difference between these actor-centered demands and demands commonly affiliated with NPM is that pre-procurement demands on actors (such as businesses) are about improving quality, rather than efficiency. One assumption made by those proposing 'more NPM' is that they not only want increased output control and clear goals/indicators for measurement but also promote decentralization, cost reduction and efficient business plans.

Finally, the Elderly Care Council proposes a development project, focused on three goals which are considered key factors for 'success': having a clear goal for development of the operation, creating a structured working process and finally generating a broad commitment that involves employees. This development project includes changes in reimbursement and reports, technical changes regarding the choice of technology for positioning and login and changes in procurement. The report also suggest that the contractor will no longer receive reimbursements for deflected visits, something which is supposed to stimulate increased contact between the contractor and the care taker and reduce administration in form of control of deflected visits (Dnr 152-643/2016, p.13). Here, the main objective, to increase influence and improve collaboration - reoccurs as a motivation for changes.

These representations of problems seem to have come about through experience. "Several years of experience" is referred to as a source of information about problems (ibid p.14), similarly, experiences seems to be a method of improvement going forward "good examples, experiences and teachings from the work process in development projects in three parts of the city" is referred to as a way to improve the work, (ibid p.9). In this report, the Elderly Care Council does not refer to any investigation, scientific report or research on why it should reorganize some parts of the care for elderly.

Though the report does not show any scientific evidence for its problematizations and solutions, the report has been prepared by the Elderly Care Council, has been referred to for consultation by other actors such as the Municipal Executive Office (Stadsledningskontoret), the Social Welfare Council and the National Pensioners' Organization (PRO). In total 23 actors submitted consultation responses in which mostly the opposition and some private actors have declared themselves critical to the conclusions and policy changes proposed in the report. Other actors who declare themselves generally positive to the suggestions are critical to parts of the proposal, mostly concerning the fact that LOV seems to support the creation of many small home-care service companies (which is seen as a problem) or the removal of compensation for missed appointments (PRO re. Kommunal)(ibid :3-4).

What I can read off from this report, problems with control is not associated to the individual workers, problems concerning lack of control is only mentioned when it comes to the businesses who have won the procurement through LOV. The absence of demands on increased efficiency, freedom of choice from different care-giving businesses (valfrihet) or profitability at all

levels is also notable. Neither are problematizations present regarding individual caregivers or caretakers having too much influence or making bad decisions over the daily activities. Contractors that are considered to provide insufficient care, in relation to the higher quality standards that the Elderly Care Council aims towards, are not being kicked out, rather they will have a harder time to gain new contracts when their current contract ends. Hence, insufficient performance from certain actors is not considered problematic to the extent that it is an acute issue. The reformative, rather than revolutionary approach by the left coalition in Stockholm City to problems with contractors not living up to quality standards is put like this by Torun Boucher:

When we did the home-care service investigation, we tried to solve the problem within the problem, we are still left with the client-executive system, New Public Management or whatever you want to call it, but we try to unravel it, set higher demands before they (private actors) get contracts, and then give them more freedom of action when they are in. (Torun Boucher, 2017-03-16)

The effects produced by this representation of the problem is, as earlier mentioned, that more influence is (supposed to be) given to care takers and care staff in their daily work, that scheduling is going to be facilitated, that the procurement process is going to change in order to exclude insufficiently performing actors, and a step away from LOU and towards LOV. The city has decided to keep the system of procurement and revisions of the procurement process will only affect future actors.

4.2.2. Social Services in Stockholm City

In order to analyze problematizations made by the Social Services Council in Stockholm City I have chosen to analyze two policy document from 2016. I have selected documents, which are representative for the type of material put forward by the Social Services Council to be decided upon in the City Council. I have also interviewed Åsa Lindhagen, president of the Social Services Council in Stockholm to gain a better understanding of problematizations made in relation to NPM within this part of Stockholm's local government.

The first document, *Beskrivning av socialtjänsten i Stockholms stad 2015* (Dnr 3.1.2-141/2016) was presented in June 2016 and distributed to the city councils in Stockholm. The most important overarching objective of the report is formulated like this:

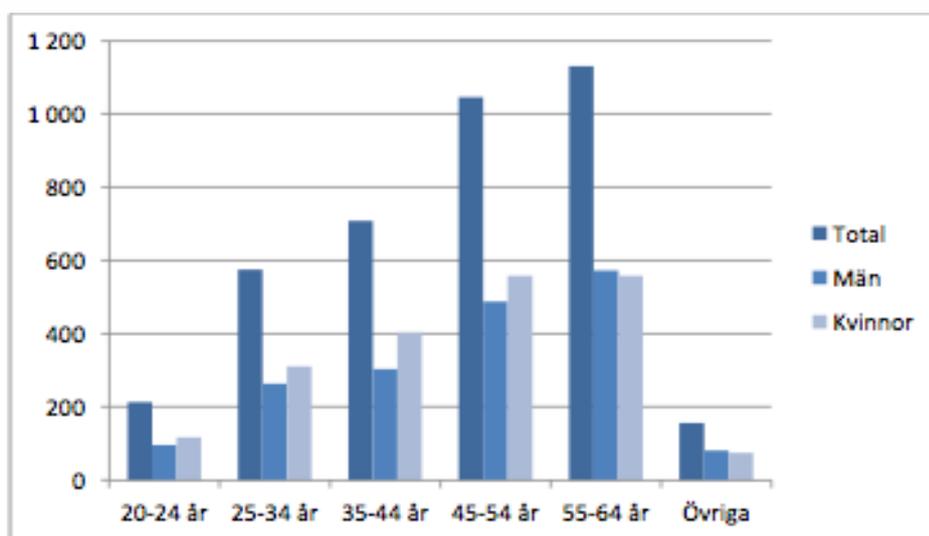
The Social Services Council works for the city's social services to be based on equality, legal certainty and with good quality for the citizens. The citizens should receive equal and equally available efforts no matter where in the city they live. The council has established guidelines for the various areas in the district councils, and supports them through training and

seminars as well as by contributing to the development of a knowledge-based social service. (ibid. p.8).

There is one main problematization represented in this report, which is that services are not automatically knowledge based and that an extensive overview of data about social services is important in order to secure equality, legal certainty, and good quality for the citizens in the social services. The word 'knowledge' in this report could be translated into evidence-based type of knowledge, numerical and statistical evidence on different aspects of the social services. The report is in fact a broad description, which has the ambition to 'map' numerous measurable indicators such as reception of refugees, financial support to families, number of persons receiving debt advice, statistics of violence in close relationships in the city etc. Below I will present one representative example of how the report presents information - or 'knowledge' - about an issue. This example is about persons receiving psychiatric help through the social services:

Number of people in psychiatry in Stockholm City in 2015, sorted by age group and gender:⁴

In the 1994 inventory, the age distribution was the opposite, two thirds were between 18 and 44 years old and one third was between 45 and 64 years old. Each year, target group statistics for social psychiatry is collected through the DUR investigations. During the spring and summer of 2013, a total inventory of the target group was conducted. The social service employees collected information on 3600 people. (Dnr 3.1.2-141/2016, p. 80)



⁴ Translation: Män = Men, Kvinnor = Women, Övriga = Other, År= years of age

The report is focused on how numbers, such as percentage points of men and women in different age groups, are distributed in regard to specific areas, and how these indicators have changed over the years. There is no explanation provided as to how mapping of this type of indicators will result in equality, legal certainty and good quality in the provision of social services – the three goals earlier mentioned in the description of the report. This kind of measurement of explicit indicators, clear goals and standards in order to see progress and success over time, which this report manifests, is the same as presenting *performance standards*. These performance standards are possibly being used when outsourcing activities that have traditionally been done by the government,⁵ hence the Social Service Administration has created *output controls* in order to assess performance. These two aspects of measurement go under the control and measurement category of Hood's NPM model of public administration (the other one being marketization of welfare services). In conclusion, this report focuses on transparency through measuring quantifiable indicators from different aspects of the social services, but lacks information on how these indicators would help different branches of the social services to reach their main goals of equality, legal certainty and good quality. A perception, which underlies this representation of the 'problem', is that training and further education of employees would positively affect the results of social services activities. Hence, there is an assumption that the effects that are measured are important to 'improve' and professionals working within the social services should be educated in order to improve the measurable results. There is little text motivating the use of this statistical summary of the city's social services. It could be that this problematization, a need for knowledge, has come about through demands on legal certainty, equality in service and good quality for all affected. If this is the underlying problem which constitutes the basis for measurement, it is not far fetched to assume that people have experienced problems with legal certainty, equality in service and good quality over all - hence the 'need' to measure these type of indicators. There is no discussion in this document regarding what is measured and which effects the measurement itself has for activities. I can conclude that the visible effects produced by the need-for-knowledge problematization that this report represents is that the report is being made and distributed to the different branches of local government.

The second document that I have chosen to analyze is the budget for year 2016, with outlook for the next two years: *Kommunstyrelsens förslag till budget 2016 för Stockholms stad Inriktning för 2017 och 2018* (Dnr 180-529/2015, p.198-199). I have chosen to analyze the part of the text describing the social services, specifically text regarding conditions for employees within the social services in the city. I have selected this part of the text since it has to do with

⁵ I could find 18 different providers of family counseling listed under Family Counseling on the Stockholm Social Services webpage, of which 16 were private businesses, one was provided by The Church of Sweden (Svenska Kyrkan) and one by Stockholm City. <http://www.stockholm.se/-/Jamfor/?enhetstyp=b9db357c52784b9a9f29a61f34b221fa&slumpfro=512080255> (fetched 2017-04-29)

administrative systems and the organization of social services, which are relevant for this investigation.

The fact that there is a headline called "Good preconditions for social work" is interesting since all other parts of the budget are focused on people who receive social services, and not specifically spelled out to care for the employees. Below is an extract from the text under this headline:

Employees' prerequisites for carrying out their work are crucial to the quality of social services. The high level of mobility among social security officers and aid handlers has an impact on quality, continuity and work environment. In order to ensure legal certainty and ensure a good level of competence, the social council and district councils must be given the opportunity to always offer new employees a solid introduction and support employees with short experience in the form of supervision and mentoring. It is also important that employees' influence on the workplace is strengthened and that everyone is involved in the work to create a good working environment. (Dnr 180-529/2015, p. 198)

The problem in this text is represented to be a problem of substandard quality of performance caused by the unattractiveness of social services as a workplace. The city has initiated a plan to improve the work environment for all staff, by examining how administration and documentation can be facilitated as well as by raising salaries in order to attract experienced personnel. The perceptions underlying this representation of the problem are that social workers themselves perceive administration and documentation as a burden and as obstructing their work, and that new employees experience insufficient guidance from more experienced colleagues. A subsequent perception is that both guidance and reduction of administration would improve the working conditions, which could solve the problem of "high mobility" of personnel. Furthermore, the city will work through an appointed coordinator to develop tools for measuring and regulating the workload for employees. Since the main problematization found is a problem of insufficient quality, not efficiency or costs, the problem is represented to be something that cannot be solved by NPM-related reforms (which are concerned with privatization, decentralization or more efficient management). When it comes to developing performance standards it is very much in line with ideas found in Hood's definition of NPM, though the purpose of this development is to improve quality rather than, as earlier mentioned, 'efficiency'.

Åsa Lindhagen, president of the Social Services Council in Stockholm City, can see some problems related to NPM within the social services in Stockholm. One such problem is that there is too much administration for employees in the social services. This problem has three causes according to Lindhagen, anxiety among employees to make mistakes, legal regulations that demand documentation, and the need to control activities through measurable indicators. Lindhagen says that it is difficult to actually figure out where to draw the line between too much and too little control since social work is often dealing with very sensitive subjects such as the wellbeing of children, and that the work of social services is often regulated in detail by law. Lindhagen stresses that regulation is necessary in other undertakings as well, for example when it

comes to ensuring that public resources are managed well and are not embezzled. In other cases, regulation and the use of measurable indicators can be an obstacle. One example given by Lindhagen is when the city measured an indicator called "administration", and saw that the amount of administration within the social services was very high. The political ambition was therefore to reduce the amount of administration, which had the unintended effect of transferring the administrative assignments from administrators to social workers, hence reducing the post "administration" in evaluations. Lindhagen thinks that there should be a review of goals and indicators used in the social services and an evaluation of their effects as well as an ambition to transfer administrative tasks from the desks of social workers back to administrators. Another good example from Umeå, highlighted by Lindhagen, is that Umeå managed to merge the "government side" and the "investigation side" of social work in order to reduce administration, in a way they succeeded in streamlining production.

Another problem, which Lindhagen associates with NPM, is lack of trust. Lindhagen connects trust to the importance of good leadership. She returns to the Social Services in the city Umeå as an example, where the local management told their employees that they were expected to spend less time on investigating cases, trusting them to make good decisions without large amount of documentation. This 'signal' alone reduced the processing time of individual cases with several months according to Lindhagen, and reduced stress for employees.

Social workers have a tendency to over-document cases before reaching a decision because they are afraid of making mistakes - which is especially understandable when it comes to sensitive subjects such as the wellbeing of children. This fear of making mistakes results in over-worked cases, therefore it is important for leaders to send a signal of trust to their employees. (Åsa Lindhagen, 2017-04-07)

Lindhagen explained that she had tried to send out such a signal:

We wrote in the budget for 2014 that we want employees to make their voices heard and raise problems, and this was actually noted by the social workers' unions - so it is important what we in the management do, just like they did in Umeå, where they did not actually change anything except just telling the employees that they should investigate less. It becomes an issue of communication and leadership. (Åsa Lindhagen, 2017-04-07)

Lindhagen defines NPM as the seven aspects put forward by Hood in 1991. The main problematization put forward was how to reach a balance between too much and too little control, and that the solution to this could be to evaluate the indicators used for evaluation of the social services. A problem related to this need of balance of control is the need to have good leadership - giving the employee the signal that they have the management's support as professionals when making decisions as to what extent a social service case should be investigated. The assumptions underlying this representation of the problem is that neither politicians nor employees can be trusted to make perfect decisions which corresponds to both demands on political and legal accountability and

professional expertise. This representation of the problem, the difficulty of reaching a balance of control, has come about through principles that are sometimes in conflict.

4.3. Academic Track

At the seminar at Karlstad University, presentations were held by researchers Johan Quist and Martin Fransson, both lecturers at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Karlstad University, together with Kristina Wetter-Edman, lecturer on design methods for improved service innovation. They seemed to have coordinated their presentations so that they would follow each other, at times referring to each other's points. This section contains problems represented in their analysis. The theme of the seminar was *Service logic in the public sector*.

Johan Quist focused on problems for citizens in the contact with different sections of public administration, such as the Social Security Fund (Försäkringskassan). The three examples of people having problems with the contact with authorities featured in Quist's presentation were all caused by inflexible and rigid systems, which in turn, originated in a too detailed governing of employees and too detailed assignments of government authorities. This problem is represented to be that professionals working within the public sector are extremely confined by detailed governing, and are not given the opportunity to use their professional judgment when making decisions. Quist mentioned that public employees feel increasing demands on administration, an importance of "doing right" regarding to the formal rules rather than "doing the right thing" which corresponds to other values. In conclusion Quist thinks that we have an audit society characterized by a public administration focused on meeting metrics. Another conclusion made by Quist is that there is too little consideration to the citizen perspective in the handling of individual cases. Quist emphasizes that human beings "are whole"⁶ and that this requires better coordination between different branches of governmental authorities.

The perceptions underlying these representations of the problem is that there is not enough confidence in employees' ability to make legally certain decisions. Therefore, Quist can be interpreted as talking of a type of expertise invested in professionals working at authorities which is not coming to use, which is seen as problematic for the citizens as well as for the employees. The idea of professionals carrying a certain amount of certified knowledge and relevant ethics correlates with the professionalism ideal type for public administration. This representation of the problem has come about through discussions with government officials and research made on the idea of a 'tjänsteman' and a 'tjänst' (Public Official and Service). Consequently, problems in public administration which transcend the scope of research on employees and public service is not included in this problematization.

⁶ By saying that people are "whole" Quist means that problems experienced by individuals are not easily separated into categories such as physical and mental health and financial problems, which to some extent makes it illogical for the specific individual that the government have separated these issues into different public authorities within the welfare state.

Martin Fransson brings up another problematization: the problem of standardization of 'production' within welfare, which is a problem of performing valuable activities from the perspective of the citizen. Fransson means that most activities that government authorities provide to citizens are actually worthless. Fransson gives the example of the issuing of passports; the passport itself is not valuable for the citizen but the ability to move across country borders is. The same goes for the citizens' visit to a medical center; it is not the visit in itself that is of value but the medical help. Therefore value cannot be measured through the number of visits to the doctor, which is a common indicator for evaluation of health sector activities; hence, the 'wrong thing' is measured from a citizen perspective. This problem is represented to be a problem of inability to measure value in public administration. Another problem that Fransson brings forward is the problem of bad coordination of government authorities. Fransson believes that a solution to this problem is to create a system where variation in 'cases' is treated with 'variation in solutions', comparing to the Fordist economic production manner in which welfare activities are currently done. In order to solve the problem of bad coordination between different authorities, Fransson says that it would be interesting to see if it would be possible to improve governing signals from the top levels of government to create better coordination.

Katarina Wetter-Edman sees design as a solution to the problems of creating value from governmental authorities. She defines design as conscious construction, a process in which a product, which is adapted to its context, is produced. Wetter-Edman believes that the 'design process' is suitable for complex problems, since design is in fact "the process of solving complex problems". Wetter-Edman also highlights the citizen perspective as an important starting point for such a design process since the citizen is the one creating value together with public administration. She continues by declaring that designed prototypes of public administration need to be tested on a small scale, giving the example of a Danish municipality where designers work with other types of professions, such as anthropologists, to develop new ways for public administration. Wetter-Edman also emphasized that there is not one single solution to complex problems, but that problems of public administration should be solved gradually and across borders within public administration.

At the seminar given at Lund University the theme was *Governing effects of compensation models within welfare*. Two scholars participated at this seminar; Anders Anell, professor of Business Administration from Lund University and Peter Friberg, professor at the Sahlgrenska Academy at the University of Gothenburg and ex. Chairman of the Swedish Medical Association. Both presentations were mostly focused on problems related to NPM within health care and hospitals.

Anders Anell brought up problems associated with the use of indicators when measuring performance in welfare activities. Firstly, the reporting of indicators disrupt the work of professionals (such as doctors) since it entails administration time which is time these professionals could have spent taking care of patients. Secondly, performance indicators are often measuring things that are irrelevant for the actual care, since they rarely measure quality in a

satisfying manner. This compels doctors and other health care personnel to perform according to the standards of a protocol rather than according to their professional judgment. Thirdly, performance indicators are easily manipulated by staff. In order to fulfill requirements, welfare agencies can manipulate the indicators so that the numbers "look better". One example given by Anell was a Swedish hospital trying to circumvent the maximum waiting time limit for patients in the emergency room. This was done through the installation of a second waiting room where patients arrived before the real waiting room. In this way the hospital could channel a smaller number of patients to the real waiting room, hence reducing the official waiting-time before patients received care. Governing through performance indicators give rise to hidden cost according to Anell, and this is related to the issue of inner. vs outer motivation. According to Anell, this type of performance indicators do not function as intended, and cannot be of any real use in systems that determine financial rewards to those who perform 'well'.

No one likes to be governed, since it gives the person being governed a signal that they are not fully trusted. This especially goes for professionals. External pressure can also hurt the inner motivation of professionals and displace norms. There are other ways, using open accounts and systematically working for improvements, for example. These methods for accountability puts less pressure on the fulfillment of performance indicators. (Anell, 2015-01-30)

Another issue, which concerns indicators, is that a rigid following of procedural schemes can be harmful to the patients, especially patients with more than one diagnosis. Anell suggests that it is not in the interest of the patient to fulfill all the different performance indicators included in the different guidelines for different diseases. It would be better for the patient if one doctor had a stronger mandate to decide what types of procedures are most suitable for this specific patient. Anell also points out that the notion "New Public Management" is pointless, since it is a notion that gathers many types of issues. According to Anell, it is more interesting to think about which type of governing that we should have that both meets performance standards, which can be used to hold different actors accountable, and don't challenge the degree of freedom for professions. The problems represented in Anell's presentation is that the demand for feedback reports on the provided care hurts the activities in several ways. At the same time, Anell problematizes the need for accountability. Hence the problem is represented to be a problem of balance between these two demands. At the same time Anell does not believe that accountability can be satisfyingly met through the current performance system. The perceptions made from this representation of the problem is that the type of performance indicators used in the public sector are unsuitable and should either be developed or removed. Anell does not provide us with a clear solution to the balance problem, though it can be interpreted from his statements that the removal of performance indicators in their current form would benefit Swedish healthcare, and that it is the problem of too much governing that is most prominent in welfare administration. The representation of this problem has come about through Anell's research on compensation models and their effect on public administration. One thing that is not mentioned by Anell is the

demand of the public to get specific actions and answers from the people in charge, for example doctors, managers of hospitals or politicians. This demand for control does not only come from the government but could also be seen as coming from the public. The problem of too much control could be thought of differently in that respect. The effects produced by this kind of problematization of governing signals is that they speak to the criticism of detailed governing through performance indicators, hence giving the advocates for a professional-model arguments for their point of view. Anell's presentation gives the effect of presenting a problem without being specific on how the problem could be solved. This could have the effect that other solutions, which are not thoroughly thought through could gain momentum just by echoing the problematizations which are represented.

Problems presented in Peter Friberg's presentation are also connected to the opinion that there is too little space for professionals to perform their job according to their own judgment. Friberg points out that doctors have core values which are established throughout the profession, and that these values are there to help doctors to prioritize. The main problem brought forward by Friberg is that health care is not always based on these established core values - therefore he sees a need to make it clearer what to prioritize and inform doctors of their right to make such priorities. Another point regarding the governing of healthcare is that management and control systems must work to meet the needs of the patient first and foremost, hence a measuring which aims to gather knowledge is requested by Friberg, rather than a measuring which aims to control. Friberg said that it is important to have some degree of financial control, but as earlier mentioned, measurements need to be motivated by the need to gather knowledge on the activities. The problem is represented to be that financial models of measurement are intruding on the freedom which doctors and other highly educated staff at hospitals should have in order to make good medical decisions. The assumptions, which underlie this representation of the problem, is that doctors have the ability to make good decisions because of their internal ethics and knowledge. Friberg emphasizes that doctors have a "good education" and suggest that doctors should be required to take a specialist degree - because it's the professional knowledge of doctors which legitimize the opinion that a person should have great power over decision-making and organization of healthcare. This representation of the problem come have about through the opinions of doctors, since Friberg has worked for the Swedish Medical Association as well as for the Sahlgrenska Academy - he has thus represented and educated doctors. There are no reflections made on the criticism of the hierarchical society that Sweden used to be and is seen as one of the explanatory factors to why NPM gained momentum in the early 1990's. The effect produced by this representation of the problem is that the professional model is elevated as a good system for public administration.

At Uppsala University the theme of a seminar was *State governance for a strengthened role for professional- and public officials* where one scholar, Shirin Ahlbeck Öberg an Associate Professor and University Lecturer at the Department of PoliticalScience at Uppsala University, held a presentation

(2015-02-04). One of the main problematizations brought up by Ahlbeck Öberg is that the administrative burden of professionals working in the public sphere is very high. There is an efficiency paradox, which comes with controlling the productivity of professionals, since the control itself slows down activities. The reason for the administrative burden is that public activities are to a high degree governed from top levels of government, which makes measuring performance central for the ability to attain good work results.

Ahlbeck Öberg's presentation was a description of the de-professionalization of professions, which according to Ahlbeck Öberg, has not been accidental but purposely made through policy changes implemented in the past decades. Ahlbeck Öberg means that there was a very clear criticism of the professions at the end of the 1970's and the beginning of 1980's. Public professions, such as teachers, were experienced as "costly and difficult to manage". According to Ahlbeck Öberg, this criticism was coherent with the general spirit of society - "people were questioning authorities on many arenas in the public life". This criticism led to the waves of reformation that we now call New Public Management, where the method introduced to public administration was measuring of performance through quantifiable indicators in order to evaluate and govern public organizations. A high demand of constant feedback resulted in the fact that control and audit became more important than the actual activities. This is problematic according to Ahlbeck Öberg since control signals that there is little trust for the profession becomes costly in both financial and qualitative respects. Control is financially costly since it means that standardized procedures and new authorities for audit need to be created. The qualitative cost is the de-professionalization of professions according to Ahlbeck Öberg:

They [professionals] feel that their own self regulation is questioned and this makes them act differently since they start to perform activities that are visible through the performance indicators, through which they are evaluated (Ahlbeck Öberg, 2015-02-04).

Ahlbeck Öberg says that the fundamental problem is ideological, there is a rationalistic-perspective on human activities which means that people are seen as driven by external motivations, which is not true when it comes to professionals since they in a large degree are motivated by the confirmation of peers that "they are doing a good job" rather than that they would be punished by managers if they did not perform well. Though this representation of the problem is clearly arguing for a professional model of public administration, Ahlbeck Öberg is not entirely uncritical towards this 'third logic':

The Achilles-heel for those who argue for decreased control for professions is that they are good at seeing the benefits for their own sphere of activities, but not the big picture [public administration as a whole] (Ahlbeck Öberg, 2015-02-04).

The perceptions underling Ahlbäck Öberg's representation of the problem is that there is a rationalistic point of view on human nature which is inefficient when it comes to governing people who are already internally motivated to do a good job. This rationalistic point of view has its origins in assumptions, which

are usually made in the economic sphere, that human beings are rational - meaning that they will do and act so that they are rewarded/not punished. Ahlbäck Öberg means that this idea of human motivation has been criticized for being unable explain why people want to do good things for other people for any other reason than punishment or reward for this behavior. Even though confirmation from peers could be seen as being externally reward, the system of control, which can be seen in Swedish public administration today, has nothing to do with this kind of motivation. The silence in this problematization is of course the means of what such governance would look like. The problem can be thought of differently, if someone with this kind of perspective would analyze performance in the public sector, sine they would say that human beings are motivated by external factors, hence the problem is a problem of measuring the wrong thing. The silence then would be that the quantification of quality is the problem, and that there is a need to develop this indicator for measurement. The effects produced by this representation of the problem is that the policy proposal that would follow the kind of argument that Ahlbeck Öberg presents would have to take both the consequences of too much measuring and the consequences of too much trust in authority into account.

5. Conclusions

What is the problem of New Public Management represented to be?

The main problematizations related to NPM found in this study are problems of *quality*. The problem of quality can be divided into three sub categories 1) *insufficient quality or lack of value of activities in public administration* 2) *problems with measuring quality* and 3) *balance between ideas of trust and ideas of control to secure quality*. These problematizations come from simultaneous demands for accountability and professionalism. These problematizations also come from the idea of having an extensive public sector in contrast to a welfare state with lower levels of decommodification.

1) The problem of *insufficient quality* is represented to be a problem for both *citizens* and the *employees*. For citizens the problem is described as insufficient quality when in contact with government authority. Consequences ranging from problems with issuing of passports to the absence of individually adapted healthcare. The insufficient quality in activities experienced by employees is represented to be a misconception that public officials need external motivation to do a good job in the eyes of colleagues (rather than according to performance indicators), therefore making the public sphere unattractive as a workplace. Insufficient quality is a problematization made by politicians on government and municipal level as well as by researchers in the field of public administration. The problem of value is almost the same as the problem of quality. More precisely the problem of value is that there are too many activities conducted by different parts of the public administration, which are irrelevant to the citizens, but are dictated upon the public officials. An example of this is extensive record keeping and administration.

2) The problem of *measuring quality* in public administration is a problem which is represented to be a difficulty to create performance indicators of *what quality actually is* in combination with *demands of public administration to live up to performance standards*. The reason presented is the need to measure quality, which results from the need to control decentralized government activities as well as meeting a public demand for transparency in government activity. In the political material, privatization of welfare activities is named as one reason why government needs to measure performance in quality. The need for control then plays into the third aspect of problems with quality, the problem of *keeping a balance between trust and control*.

3) The problem of *keeping balance between trust and control to secure quality* is represented to be a problem of too much control and too little trust in

government signals. Here the problem is also represented to be a interesting efficiency paradox, the more the government intends to control the productivity of professionals, the more they slow them down through administration which initially aimed at producing feedback of productivity.

What are the solutions to problems of New Public Management represented to be?

Two types of solutions to problems insufficient quality are seen in this study, 1) *to give more power to professionals employed in the public sector* and 2) *to learn from good examples*. These solutions come from the same assumption that problems of insufficient quality cannot be solved by current ways of governing.

1) In this study the professional model of public administration is without a doubt the most dominant “conceptual” solution to problems caused by policy associated with NPM. The solution of ”reinstalling” the power of the professions is widely mentioned by both academics and politicians as an alternative to the NPM-way of governing public authorities. At the same time, several sources raise a note of caution when it comes to a drastic change of governing. These worries are represented to be a fear of returning to a hierarchical society, and loosing ways for transparency and control. Although most conceptual suggestions of reinstalling professionalism stresses the capacity of public officials to perform well without meticulous governmental control, systems of control are still in place in areas such as elderly care and social services. In conclusion, solutions which are favoring the professional model for public administration might be stepping away from NPM, but mostly recognizing that NPM is flawed when it comes to ensuring sufficient quality. Reform-suggestions presented in this study are clearly derived from the professional logic, but they are almost never proposing a complete paradigm shift from the controlling aspects of NPM to a bureaucracy governed by enlightened professionals.

2) To improve quality through “learning from good examples” are also presented as solutions to NPM-related problems. An example of this is to examine experiments conducted in other places. These types of experiments can be exploring alternative ways for scheduling of care as well as management “giving out signals” of trust. The ambition to improve quality through learning from good examples is also expressed as “gathering knowledge”. This method is expressed through the government appointing a commission to investigate trust based governing, or by academics – studying successful “cases” or “methods” of public administration. This evidence-based ambition to evaluate public administration can be seen in different statements made by academics, but also by Lindhagen who believes that evidence-based solutions are important to ensure legal certainty within the social services. This would mean proposing the use of norms of control *on policy associated to NPM*. In a NPM context, evaluation seeks to improve efficacy, in these cases evaluation seeks to improve

quality and ensure values invested in a legalistic-bureaucracy norm-set. If the motivation of evaluation is to assess the efficiency of current ways, the familiarity to aspects of control included in NPM are recognizable. One example of this is the example given by Lindhagen of Umeå succeeding to merge the "government side" and the "investigation side" of social work in order to reduce administration, which increased efficiency.

Final Conclusions

According to a Foucauldian idea of power through surveillance, the organization of a bureaucracy can control subjects in a fine-grained way, such as through performance indicators. Assumptions that underlie the discourse on problems with NPM can be perceived as alternative, and in that sense making claims of being an alternative truth to the NPM-paradigm. The discourse on public administration is stepping away from NPM in the sense that there is a lot of criticism towards what is perceived as harmful and unnecessary control. Parts of NPM that are more focused on privatizations and market-solutions are to a larger extent left as they are by the academic statements I have analyzed. This corresponds to some extent with the material analyzed on a municipal level. On a government level there is more criticism towards privatizations, which is unsurprising since it is ideologically coherent with ideas of Social Democracy to criticize policy associated with Neo-Liberalism. Looking at the bigger picture, the issues that are problematized are in their essence an eternal issue of accountability, which goes hand in hand with legitimacy, which is one of the corner stones of democratic government. The demands of accountability in public administration are rooted in ideals of equality in treatment and legal security, which are clear Weberian ideals of bureaucracy. But means for accountability also have roots in NPM, where transparency along with maximized efficiency were watchwords for public administration reform. However, it is crucial to point out that in NPM accountability has more to do with the use of public resources than meeting legalistic and democratic norms and values. The issue of accountability can also be found in the professional logic of public administration, although here the procedures of demanding responsibility are less clear, though being described as existing in the area of "doing a good job" in the eyes of colleagues.

The overall conclusion from this study is that problematizations of NPM-associated policy are focused on insufficient quality in public authorities activities especially related to the aspects of control and administration. Solutions presented in this study are similar to the professional model of public administration, where accountability of satisfactory quality cannot be assessed through performance indicators or standardized procedures but through trust in the professionalism of public officials.

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7. Attachments

Interview-form

Questions asked to Torun Boucher president of the Elderly Care Council and Åsa Lindhagen, president of the Social Service Council in Stockholm City.

- Do you think there are problems about how the [elderly care, social services] are managed today / in recent years?
- What are the biggest challenges?
- Are there any structural problems in the [elderly care, social services] ?
- How should they be resolved according to you?
- In what way does your ideas about the management of the [elderly care, social services] differ from what is going on today?

How should [elderly care, social services] be managed politically?

- How should the [elderly care, social services] work if you were to decide?
- What is New Public Management according to you?
- Do you think there is any problem with New Public Management?
- What is the cause of problems with New Public Management?
- How do you solve problems in the [elderly care, social services] related to New Public Management?