

Book Reviews

Jan Kooiman & Kjell A. Eliassen: *Managing Public Organizations. Lessons from Contemporary European Experience*. 261 pp. £25 (cloth). London, Beverly Hills, Newbury Park & New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Management is back in vogue, numerous books are being published telling managers how to direct their staff successfully. Gurus are being flown in to the capitals (or the cities where the big firms are located) for one-day sessions for the jet-set of managers and managers-to-be. Expressions like 'passion for excellence' and 'culture of the organization' are being discussed by the top brass of these firms.

The public sector is no exception – as Jan-Erik Lane notes in his article, the participatory demands of the 1970s have been replaced by demands for leadership. In the reviewer's country, Denmark, special management courses for public sector directors have become a growth industry. Leadership networks are being established, and public managers are locked up with their private sector counterparts in comfortable surroundings in the rolling Danish landscape in order to have an exchange of ideas and lessons learned.

And Academia? In so far as we are just mirrors of the society (in the organization theory jargon: contingent upon . . .) we cannot remain untouched. The book under review is an analytical reaction and therefore deserves more attention among researchers than do the prescriptions of the gurus of yesterday and today.

The book is a joint, cross-national venture. The scholarly cooperation within the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) has now led to tangible results in that books are being published (many of them by Sage) as a spin-off of one or more ECPR workshops or from research groups proper. This book is one such result – about half of the authors participated in an ECPR workshop in Barcelona in 1985, and the idea of publishing a book originated from that group. The authors represent seven North European countries, a regional delineation that probably makes sense because there are quite strong differences between North and South European traditions of government and administration.

Part one discusses what public management is about. *Hans Bekke* provides us with three perspectives based on the degree of societal competition

Book Reviews

Jan Kooiman & Kjell A. Eliassen: *Managing Public Organizations. Lessons from Contemporary European Experience*. 261 pp. £25 (cloth). London, Beverly Hills, Newbury Park & New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Management is back in vogue, numerous books are being published telling managers how to direct their staff successfully. Gurus are being flown in to the capitals (or the cities where the big firms are located) for one-day sessions for the jet-set of managers and managers-to-be. Expressions like 'passion for excellence' and 'culture of the organization' are being discussed by the top brass of these firms.

The public sector is no exception – as Jan-Erik Lane notes in his article, the participatory demands of the 1970s have been replaced by demands for leadership. In the reviewer's country, Denmark, special management courses for public sector directors have become a growth industry. Leadership networks are being established, and public managers are locked up with their private sector counterparts in comfortable surroundings in the rolling Danish landscape in order to have an exchange of ideas and lessons learned.

And Academia? In so far as we are just mirrors of the society (in the organization theory jargon: contingent upon . . .) we cannot remain untouched. The book under review is an analytical reaction and therefore deserves more attention among researchers than do the prescriptions of the gurus of yesterday and today.

The book is a joint, cross-national venture. The scholarly cooperation within the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) has now led to tangible results in that books are being published (many of them by Sage) as a spin-off of one or more ECPR workshops or from research groups proper. This book is one such result – about half of the authors participated in an ECPR workshop in Barcelona in 1985, and the idea of publishing a book originated from that group. The authors represent seven North European countries, a regional delineation that probably makes sense because there are quite strong differences between North and South European traditions of government and administration.

Part one discusses what public management is about. *Hans Bekke* provides us with three perspectives based on the degree of societal competition

and the political contestability of the issues. The perspectives are (with the reviewer's interpretation in brackets): the (traditional closed organization view of) Single System Management, the Multi (interorganizational) System Management and the Total System Management (Political leadership). Bekke gives Dutch examples of transitions from one of these types to others as the environments of public organizations have changed. *Lewis Gunn* reviews a number of perceptions of the concept of public management, distancing himself from a distinction between politics and administration and (at least partly) supporting the view that management is a generic process, specific neither to the private nor the public sector. Are there other differences between public and private management? *Jan-Erik Låne* finds some differences related to the stability of the environment and the orientation towards the public interest or private interest, but these differences are being reduced. *Les Metcalfe and Sue Richards* argue that public management culture cannot just be an imitation of private business cultures; the roles of public organizations are much more complex, in particular because most of them are dependent on other public organizations. In general, however, public organizations are slow to carry out change: the operational cultures must be changed from procedural conformity to an achievement-oriented one.

Part two deals with the public manager. On the public-private dimension, *Torodd Strand* tells us that there are differences between managers and their room for manoeuvring and, very importantly, more so when we check out the effect of a bureaucratic organization. Public bureaucratic leaders face strong constraints regarding management aspirations and perceptions of achievements and opportunities. *Marc Buelens and Bob van Hooland* subscribe to an incrementalistic administrative man as the most realistic description of the public manager as a decision-maker and recommend that tools be developed to help him in performing that role instead of developing rationalistic tools. *Gerard Gerding and Reinoud F Sevenhuijsen* discuss the manager as a person between people, 'caught in the middle': in the hierarchy between superiors and subordinates, and on a horizontal level between peers and outside constituents. The middle manager is an 'information broker' in these relationships, and he must be able to develop new skills in the resulting networks. *Hans Ulrik Derlien* discusses the old problem of the separation of politics and administration. He notes an increasing tendency to a personnel interconnection of the two spheres in that ministers and a number of aides are recruited from parliaments and top civil servants become party-politicized in the selection process. Thus, there seems to be a movement towards a breakdown of the bureaucratic career proper and consequently a stronger political control.

Part three concerns the organizational aspects of management. *Morten Egeberg* lists a number of relationships of importance for organizational

design: formal structure, physical structure, informal normative structure, personnel, formal rules and norms, different resources and organizational environment. However, he deliberately chooses a partial model based on structural change, asking for more research on the other basic relationships and he recommends broad participation as an important management tool during organizational change processes. *Hans Weggemans* deals with the development in public personnel management and some Dutch problems: retrenchment, demands for motivation and participation and the absence of strong unions. *Heinrich Reiermann* discusses the growth in information and information systems, particularly in the computer age. He warns against too much focusing on the process of computerization if this leads to neglect of how the information-to-come is to be managed in the future by the organization. *Torben Beck Jørgensen* identifies a number of strategies that may be used by public organizations threatened by cuts, the primary strategy is based on Hirschman's voice option: the more fuss made about a proposed cut, the likelier that the Department of Finance will give up. The public manager should develop a broad and visible demand for the services of the organization to make the need for it felt and hence less vulnerable.

Part four on the future of public management has three contributions. *Carl Böhret* distinguishes between the future of post-industrial society (the one we are refining based on scientific innovation) and the future of post-modern society (the one we may reach, based on a new community with dominance-free institutions, equality and broad self-realization of individuals). The management tools correspondingly will change from cost-benefit analyses, system analyses, planning methods, regulation and control to value discussions, workshops for the future, negotiating, bargaining, job rotating and other measures foreign to bureaucratic organizations. *Ole P Kristensen* gives the reader an analytical table to penetrate the concept of privatization. Three roles may be 'public' or 'private': the arranger, the producer and the financier, and these roles gives us eight combinations of public and private involvement in the provision of services, from market (all private) over contracting out (public-private-public) and transfers or vouchers (private-private-public) to pure public service (all public). The public manager should keep this array of organization possibilities in mind. *Kjell A Eliassen and Jan Kooiman* finally discuss the opportunities for public management. They point to the necessity for public managers to develop a broad set of instruments of control in the organization and to develop their understanding of the culture of the organization and to learn how to cope with values and attitudes.

The editors conclude that three public management strategies could be summarized: to develop new tools within the (existing) framework of hierarchy; to reduce the overall steering ambitions of government; and to

increase the use of alternative steering systems, particularly market and democracy.

The authors of the 14 specific chapters of this book were told by the editors not be too chauvinistic in their discussions of national experience in order to avoid the trap of 'this is how we do in X-country', probably followed by the obvious 'and so what?' response from the readers. By and large, they have been successful in the texts, but one can hardly avoid some speculations on whether the resulting generalized discussions are to some degree abstract thoughts based on national experience. This particularly applies to the themes relating to personnel and culture, and the relations to the politicians probably also have some strong national features in a number of countries.

Nonetheless, one cannot but notice an agreement among several authors that public managers are most likely to function well under stable conditions. The question then is whether the future in public management is stable. Most of us probably think not – but with some historic hindsight we may speculate a little more about the graveness of the consequences. If one for example goes through old Danish committee reports on the organization of the bureaucracy, a recurrent theme is that of the changing environment. It seems that every committee has its complaints about the quick pace of the changing society. Two lessons may be learned from that observation. One is that the public organizations will always lag behind a number of changes and that nonetheless, the nation has survived. Another lesson is that as society changes, so do the new cohorts of young public servants hired – and step by step, they quietly infuse new ideas and solutions to problems.

Furthermore, one could argue that the role of some public organizations is to secure some continuity. Private companies may respond to the newest fashion in order to maximize their short-term profit, but short-term and long-term are not the same, and if nothing else, the role of some public organizations is to cure the illness of short-term private profit-hunting.

This, of course, goes for the public core organizations providing the safety nets for welfare states, not the garbage collection of the cities. And that observation prompts another one: it is increasingly becoming a pain in the neck when the 'publicness' of organizations is discussed in certain contributions to political science literature, openly or implied. Some of the contributors to this book have a sound understanding that this is matter of degree. Others, however, fail to make a sufficiently fine-tuned discussion on which factors are of importance. It is important, for example, to realize that there can be differences on a sectoral line: environmental protection and fire-fighting each have important differences relating to the respective tasks as well as to different traditions in the perception of the jobs to be done.

These differences call for understanding. Organization theorists mainly fail to make the distinctions. That ought not to be the case among political scientists. One might translate Lowi's 'policy determines politics' into 'policy determines conditions for management' – without falling into the trap of individualizing each and every case.

Peter Bogason, University of Copenhagen

Juhani Mylly & R. Michael Berry, eds.: *Political Parties in Finland. Essays in History and Politics*. Turku 1987: University of Turku, Political History C: 21, 191 pp.

There are too few books in English on Finnish politics. Although Finland may be a small country and geographically peripheral, its foreign relations as well as its internal affairs are still interesting enough to merit overall coverage in the form of textbooks and standard works available to a wide international audience. Too much sound and systematic work by political scientists and historians remains for ever veiled behind the language barrier.

This volume certainly does not presume to be the book to end all books on the Finnish party system. Like most edited works it suffers from a certain unevenness of style and composition as well as from some reiteration. Moreover, several basic aspects of the system, notably the electorate, are more or less absent in the book. Nevertheless, in a market characterized by chronic shortage this work is a definite asset.

The six contributors to the book are, with one exception, historians. Juhani Mylly depicts the emergence of the Finnish multi-party system in Scandinavian comparison. He also contributes an extensive overview of the Agrarian/Center Party all the way to 1987. Timo Soikkanen attempts the demanding task of providing a general overview of the development of the party system since 1880, including the numerous minor parties which have appeared during this long period. 'Changing Bourgeois Parties in Changing Finnish Society' is the theme of his second contribution. Onni Rantala, the political scientist of the group, concentrates on the major features of the party system since 1960. Social democracy is the subject of the essays of Hannu Soikkanen and Tapani Paavonen. Soikkanen presents the ideological development of the Social Democratic Party prior to World War I, while Paavonen offers an overview of Finnish Social Democracy since 1918. Finally, Jaakko Mäkelä analyzes the radical left and the Communist Party in Finnish politics 1918–1984.