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Under what conditions are ministers able to "let go" in Westminster-style political systems? Evidence from Ontario, Canada

autonomy; electricity generation; governance; New Public Management; Ontario, Canada; public pharmaceutical insurance; Westminster system

One of the key elements of both the New Public Management and the emerging Public Governance approach is that ministers have to resist the urge to manage. They have to let go and allow their managers to manage and allow deliberative processes involving stakeholders to take their course, even if the outcome in specific cases might prove unpopular. This article seeks to understand the conditions under which governments in a Westminster system are willing to let go and support autonomous decision-making by public sector agencies, even when the results are unpopular with the public. Evidence is drawn from the Canadian province of Ontario in two different policy areas.

I. Introduction

One of the key elements of both the New Public Management and the emerging Public Governance approach is that ministers have to resist the urge to manage. They have to focus their efforts on setting strategic policy directions and the resource constraints for their ministries, monitoring the negotiation of the deliberative processes that will bring stakeholders into the operation of governance, and perform key leadership tasks such as establishing and monitoring the operations of the accountability structure as well as the ethical and normative principles the ministry operates within. Beyond that they have to let go and allow their managers to manage and allow deliberative processes involving stakeholders to take their course, even if the outcome in specific cases might prove unpopular (Kane 2007). Such advice can be difficult to follow, especially for politicians in a Westminster-style polity where any grants of autonomy are usually only as strong as a given government's willingness to abide by them (Cohn 2001).

This paper seeks to better understand the conditions under which governments in a Westminster system are willing to let go and support autonomous decision-making by public sector agencies, even when the results are unpopular with the public. The hypothesis for the paper is institutional in nature. Given that elections in the Westminster system are run with a first-past-the-post system in single member constituencies, the geographic concentration of discontent magnifies it exponentially. We can expect ministers to intervene when an arms-length process reaches a decision that creates public discontent in specific electoral constituencies the government feels it must hold.

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In the next section of the paper there will be a brief review of the revolution that has occurred in public administration over the last forty years, looking at what has proven to be "new" in the "New Public Management" and why "public" governance is more than an indication that the governance being studied is occurring in the public sector. In section III. the paper turns to review two cases in the Canadian province of Ontario that have occurred in two different policy areas: The siting of electricity generating plants and decision-making regarding which pharmaceuticals should be paid for by the province's drug insurance plan. Section IV. presents a brief conclusion and recommendations.

II. The New Public Management and Public Governance: Compatible and conflicting revolutions in public administration

Over the last forty years a revolution has occurred in public management (Kettl 1996). For the purpose of this paper it will be treated as two revolutions. In some ways these two revolutions are complimentary and in others they conflict with one another. The first of these revolutions was what has come to be called the "New Public Management." At its core the New Public Management can be seen as a call to disentangle roles so as to either reduce conflicts of interest or at least make them more apparent. Political leaders should be strategic decision-makers and no more. They should see themselves more as Chairmen or Chairwomen of organisations rather than as Chief Executive Officers (CEO). That role of CEO belongs to their top public sector managers. Meanwhile within the public organisation, there should be further divisions between those who plan and fund services and those who provide them. Wherever possible the relationships between those performing different roles should be governed by "market-type-mechanisms", at a minimum contracts which state expectations and rewards for meeting them, and wherever possible, competition for the right to perform the role (Cohn 1997). Scholars have rightly claimed that the aim of this has been to enhance efficiency (Hood 1991; Aucoin 1995; Borins 1995; Box 1999; Kane 2007; Hood/Dixon 2013). As Terry observed (1999), there has also been general agreement that the New Public Management, as a cure for inefficiency, took its inspiration from a variety of theories within the rubric of rational choice. However, the New Public Management has not lived up to its full potential due to contradictions embedded in it. One such contradiction often cited is the conflict between agency and transaction costs. As subunits of the state are granted freedom to abandon standardised procedures and centralised administrative agencies are minimised to create flexibility, transaction costs rise (Bordgona 2008; Terry 1999).

Second, as the state does less it becomes difficult for it to insist on its right to lead. Once the principle is firmly established that the different roles of government can be disaggregated into policy-making, implementation, delivery and monitoring/auditing, it is reasonable to ask if the state need to perform all of them? In short this is the call for a state that puts more of its attention into "steering not rowing" (Osborne/Gabler 1992).

Once the decision is made to more deeply engage society in the work of the state, a further and perhaps deeper transformation occurs. As more and more of the work of the state is done out-

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side of its organisation, the state loses touch with both the core knowledge of the activity, how to effectively carry out the tasks and the needs of society that the tasks fulfill. Second, as the state becomes more and more reliant on stakeholders to do its work, the stakeholders will demand a greater say in policy-making and the strategies for implementation and delivery. Therefore, there is both a need and a demand for wider dialogue over how to serve the public and what the public needs. As a result, governance takes on more of a network appearance with potentially very permeable boundaries rather than a hierarchical bureaucracy with sharply defined edges. Researchers have described this new approach as "governance" (Rhodes 1996 and 2007). As with the New Public Management, the story about governance needs careful consideration. As Hsying (2009) shows, it is possible for a state to both widen dialogue, engaging in governance, while also simultaneously strengthening its control over both the internal state actors and also the private parties it is engaging with. Therefore, for Hysing, government and governance are not different categories regarding the approaches that different states take to organising themselves, acting on and engaging with society. Instead he theorises a continuum with government at one pole and governance at the other.

Whether fully implemented, or not, both the New Public Management and the shift to governance require elected authorities to accept that their role in the public policy process has changed and become a more limited one. The contractual relationships of the New Public Management require ministers to grant operational autonomy first to their senior managers and then to those they enter into contracts with on behalf of the state, restricting the minister's authority to the establishment of policy and strategic indicators of success (Cohn 1997). Meanwhile governance networks not only limit hierarchy, they also flatten it. Rather than acting on society, the state in a world of governance networks instead acts as a sort of conveying authority relying on procedural tools to steer dialogue and debate among actors (Howlett 2000). "The new style of hands-off management involves setting the framework in which networks work but keeping an arms-length relationship" (Rhodes 2000, p. 356). To the extent governments have withdrawn from implementation, delivery and monitoring of activities, they need network participants. Should they withdraw, the ability of the state to serve the public will decline. Having decided to retreat to the formulation of strategic policy and determining overall resource allocation, and also having decided to place reliance on others to actually implement these decisions, deliver services and often even monitor them, the minister has to be content with "more control over less" (Rhodes 2000, p. 349).

Therefore, it becomes a salient question to ask whether ministers can let go to the extent required and under what circumstances they will find it difficult to let go? "Rapid rates of change, endemic social conflicts and short-term political, especially party political, can undermine negotiations and the search for an agreed course of action" (Rhodes 2000, p. 355). In short, ministers are human. When officials or a network of actors who usually operate in an autonomous manner end up pursuing a course that seriously threatens the electoral success of the government, it should not be surprising if the minister directs his or her officials to intervene and either attempt to steer matters to a new course or to actually curtail the autonomy of the officials or networks.

The public policy literature points to a number of ways in which "politics" can intervene in policy decision-making. An issue might be a strategic priority of the government. The Compara-

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tive Manifestos Project, which has attempted to compare the electoral promises of parties to what they do once in power has provided evidence that ruling parties generally implement their platforms, perhaps not in their entirety but certainly on key issues and they provide governments which follows the main directions of their promises (Budge/Offerbert 1990; Hofferbert/Budge 1992) and this appears to hold true for Canada (Flynn 2011). Over the long-term these over-arching trends (as opposed to policy on any one issue), tend to be very close to the views of the median voter (Budge/McDonald 2007), again this also appears to hold true for Canada (Soroka/Wlezien 2004). However, at least for Canada, the impact that a change in ruling-party has on policy might be limited though still meaningful (Bodet 2013 b), implying other factors are also at work. Policy decisions might be shaped by or deflected by powerful interests, especially when there is a broad and stable consensus among actors in a given policy network or sub-system. In such cases resistance to substantial change is expected until either the issue migrates out of the subsystem to the wider, less easy to control, arena of general political debate or the coalition of forces that dominates the subsystem fractures and is replaced by a new balance of power (True et al. 2007; Sabatier/Weible 2007). An issue, through luck or planning by interests, might so powerfully force its way into the public's mind that there is a call for action no government can easily ignore and which opens a "policy window" (Kingdon 1995). Finally, it must also be remembered that in Westminster-style polities elections are both general campaigns and also individual contests in a large number of single-member districts. In these contests there are no second chances as the winner need only gain a plurality of the votes not a majority (Bodet 2013 a). Consequently, governments must always keep in mind what will swing votes in the so-called "marginal" or "battleground" constituencies, those constituencies which might switch to the opposition come election time.

It should be stressed that this article is not considering situations where a minister decides to curtail the freedom of action enjoyed by an official or network of actors that has either acted beyond their mandate or in an unethical or illegal manner. In such a situation the minister is only exercising proper oversight in their role as the protector of the public interest. It should also be noted that up until now two words have been used relatively interchangeably, "autonomy" and "arms-length." Though similar they are different. Autonomy means there significant institutional safeguards to prevent interference from the government. Arms-length means an official or network usually enjoys independence to go about their assigned tasks but there are no significant procedural barriers to prevent interference from the government. The only guarantee of independence is the cost-benefit trade-off facing the minister. What are the costs that an intervention will bring in terms of declining trust among stakeholders, future effectiveness, and efficiency versus the benefits available in terms of political support gained, or at least not lost? Based on the above discussion of what influences policy, there appears to be four reasons why a minister might decide that the political benefits in over-riding an autonomous or arms-length process out-weigh the costs:

- It has produced a decision starkly at odds with the strategic direction of the government.
- Powerful interests impacted by the decision are displeased.
- The decision has become a flashpoint within the general political debate and has moved an issue previously dormant onto the immediate policy agenda.

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- The decision has been negatively received in an electoral constituency (or constituencies) that the government feels it must hold to remain in power.

Finally it should be noted that Cohn (2001) has argued that in a Westminster-style polity there really is no such thing as a fully autonomous official or organisation when governments enjoy a majority in the legislature, as they usually do in this system. This is because the executive and legislative power under these circumstances is fused, and as a result, there is no check within the system should a decision be made to revoke, amend, or simply ignore the legislation granting autonomy to an official or network of actors. Arms-length freedom of action is the maximum autonomy any official enjoys in a Westminster-style polity. This stands in sharp contrast to divided government systems where legislative change requires separate approvals of the executive and legislature and also with consensual parliamentary systems. In these countries, characterised by frequent minority governments produced by proportional electoral systems, governments usually must gain support from minority parties to amend statutes. It also stands in sharp contrast to countries with strong traditions of administrative law where the division between politics and administration is both legally defined and also expected by the public to be honoured. Given this, these questions of whether ministers can let go and under what circumstances are all the more salient for those interested in the public management of Westminster-style polities.

III. Two cases from Ontario, Canada: Power plants and pharmaceutical drugs

Ontario is Canada's largest province by population, roughly one-third of total population and also Canada's economic engine, contributing 40 percent of the national economy. It is a Westminster-style polity in which the political executive, headed by a Premier is responsible to the legislature and formal authority is vested in a vice-regal representative of the Monarch (the Lieutenant Governor). Elections are held in single-member districts on a plurality basis. Majority governments are the norm. Minority governments have ruled the province for only six of the last 40 years. Public servants are hired primarily on merit and are accountable to the legislature through their minister. They may not speak publicly or to the legislature without the minister's consent. So as to ensure impartiality all advice they provide the minister and cabinet is usually considered confidential.

This article looks at two policy areas where officials have been granted unusually broad freedom to act at arms-length from ministers and where the enabling legislation gives non-governmental actors considerable input into public policy. In both cases, it has been explicitly stated by ministers that the purpose of these arrangements was to remove partisan politics from the decision-making process and to ensure fairness and transparency for all participants (Ontario Hansard 2004 b; Radwanski 2011; Ontario Hansard 2013). These areas are the construction of electricity generating plants and determining which pharmaceutical products should be paid for by the provincial drug benefits plan. On taking power in 2003, the Liberal Party government of Dalton McGuinty faced several challenges in delivering on their major campaign promises.

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One of these promises was to reform the electricity system so as to ensure power was environmentally sustainable, affordable and reliable (McGuinty 2003). Over the previous government's term in office electricity generating capacity had not kept pace with demand. This led to an increasing reliance on higher-priced imported electricity and also to system failures. As well, the new government promised to phase out the remaining coal-fired plants in the province. In total, 25,000 megawatts of generating capacity had to be either created, refurbished or replaced through conservation by 2020 (Ontario Hansard 2004 b). A second challenge was the need to reduce the growth of health care costs, which had grown to the point where they threatened the government's abilities to meet other needs. One rapidly growing element within health care was the cost of the Province's drug benefit plan, which pays for the prescription drugs used by senior citizens, low income families and those with severe illnesses such as cancer and HIV-aids (Mackie 2004; Ferguson 2006).

In 2004 the provincial legislature approved Bill 100, The Electricity Restructuring Act. The Act created The Ontario Power Authority (OPA) to forecast demand and acquire generating capacity for the province in cooperation with industry stakeholders. This capacity was to be acquired from the private sector to augment the power produced by government-owned Ontario Power Generation. Once contracted to provide power, the private operators sell their power into the grid via an Independent Electricity System Operator according to the terms of their contracts with both rates and the overall plan for generation developed by OPA supervised by an arms-length regulator, the Ontario Energy Board. In the Act, the minister of energy is only explicitly given authority to name the initial executives of the OPA and its board of directors, as well as to act in its name until the agency is properly established. After that is achieved, the legislation envisions the minister of energy as providing only strategic direction to the agency. OPA is required, in consultation with stakeholders, to develop and maintain a forecast of demand and a resource plan for electricity generation. The minister can direct planning to the extent that she/he can specify the amount of reliance that is to be placed on different fuels, the speed at which coal is to be phased out as a fuel, renewable sources are to be introduced, conservation is to be encouraged and the overall environmental benchmarks that are to be met. After that the minister may approve the plan or ask for it to be taken back for reconsideration before it is sent to the regulator, the Ontario Energy Board, for approval. Similarly, the OPA must produce annual business plans which the minister may also approve or ask to be reconsidered. As well, OPA must produce an annual report and any information or special reports that the minister may request (Ontario 2004). This arms-length approach to supervision of the process of developing new generating capacity and price setting was needed in part because the government had decided it could not afford the capital costs involved in meeting its energy plans. Therefore it had to convince investors they would get a fair deal if they chose to build power plants in Ontario (Ontario Hansard 2004 a).

Nothing that this author could find in the Act specifically empowers the minister of energy to order OPA to cancel a contract with a private party to supply generating capacity. Nevertheless, OPA was order to terminate contracts it had entered into with two separate private investors to provide electricity from gas-fired power plants already under construction in the suburban Toronto communities of Oakville and Mississauga. Originally, the government had refused to intervene in the OPA's decision-making. However, both opposition parties in the provincial

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legislature had promised that if they were to win the next election they would cancel the plants. As opposition to the plants in the two communities mounted the government ordered OPA to cancel the Oakville plant a year before the election and then in mid-election campaign, OPA was also ordered to cancel the Mississauga plant. The total cost to get out of the contracts will be at least $ CDN 1 Billion (Adams 2011; Howlett 2011; Radwanski 2011; Ontario Auditor General 2013 a and 2013 b; Morrow 2013). The governing Liberals were reduced to a minority in the election, and as a result, the opposition parties came to hold the balance of power on a variety of legislative committees. Therefore, the accusations that these decisions were made to protect two vulnerable Liberal Members of the Legislative Assembly, as well as an accurate accounting of the costs, could be pursued in a manner not normally possible when there is a majority government. The various inquiries into the events drove the Premier of the time, Dalton McGuinty, from office (Cohn 2013). His successor as head of the Liberal Party and government apologised to the people of the province, acknowledging that the decision to cancel the power plant contracts was "political" in nature and wrong (Ferguson 2013).

It is important to point out that the decision to intervene in the OPA's decision-making and cancel the plants ran directly counter to the government's strategic policy objectives of increasing generating capacity by reliance on private investment and also created displeasure among important and powerful stakeholders in the power industry.

In fact, the need to maintain investor confidence so as to protect the government's strategic aim of increasing power supply through private investment probably helps explain why the compensation delivered to the contract holders was so generous. As well, there was no general province-wide popular concern over the gas plants – that is until they were cancelled at very high cost and in an apparently partisan cause. Of the four proposed causes only one was present. The decision by the OPA had been negatively received in an electoral constituency (or constituencies) that the government felt it must hold to remain in power.

In the run up to the 2003 election, the McGuinty government made a number of promises surrounding health care. They took particular aim at the previous government's record and claimed that it had created a situation where some got access to care others could no longer afford. "The Harris-Eves government believes in better access for those who can afford to pay. We have a plan for better health care – for everyone" (Ontario Liberal Party 2003, p. 2). In 2006 the provincial legislature passed Bill 102 to deal with pressing issues related to the prescription drugs. Among these was the establishment of fair and transparent rules for determining which drugs ought to be added to the provincial formulary and which should be removed. The solution adopted was to get partisan politicians in the guise of the minister of health and long-term care out of the equation and place decision-making in the hands of a professional public servant (The executive officer of the public drug programmes). In fulfilling his/her office, the executive officer must consider advice provided by various advisory bodies comprised of stakeholders, including the Committee to Evaluate Drugs, which provides a cost-benefit analysis for proposed changes to the formulary (Picard 2006; Priest/Howlett 2011; Ontario 2006 and 2010). The grant of authority to the new executive officer was sweeping. To quote the explanatory notes appended to the front of the "Transparent Drug System for Patients Act" [Sic] Bill 102 "Part II [of the Act] makes amendments to the Ontario Drug Benefits Act (ODBA). It includes principles pertaining to the pubic drug system. It creates the position of the executive

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officer of the Ontario public drug programmes and sets out his or her functions and powers. Most of the functions and powers that previously rested with the Minister are transferred to the executive officer" (Ontario 2006, p. ii).

Section 5 of the Act lays out the principles that the executive officer should follow in making decisions as to which drugs ought to be in the formulary including that the plan must "meet the needs of Ontarians, as patients, consumers and taxpayers," should involve consumers in decision-making and operate transparently involving major stakeholders. As well, decisions must be made "on the best clinical and economic evidence available" (Ontario 2006). Once again, the legislation envisions the minister's role to be one of strategic supervision, not decision-making. The executive officer is required, as was the OPA, to keep his/her minister informed by publishing certain annual reports and also by providing the minister with any information or reports the minister may require. Finally, Section 7(5) specifies that the minister may ask for a review of decisions made by the executive officer to add a drug or product to the formulary and also decisions to not add a product, but only when this decision is made in spite of a recommendation to add the product by the advisory bodies appointed to aid the executive officer by providing cost-benefit analyses (Ontario 2006). The legislation is silent as to whether or not the minister may intervene if both the executive officer and the advisory bodies agree a drug should not be funded.

One of the most difficult areas in terms of decision-making on whether to add or not add a drug to the formulary is oncology. New drugs tend to push up costs (Ramjeesingh et al. 2013, p. e21). Decision-making regarding new drugs also often involves difficult calculations as to how much benefit a drug has to provide for patients before it becomes sensible to pay for it. As well, the disease often takes on relatively rare forms meaning it is not a question as to whether to pay for something but how sick, or how much chance for success an individual patient must present before funding can be granted as "exceptional access" under the programmes set aside for rare diseases such as the Special Drug Program and the New Drugs Funding Program for Cancer Care (Ontario 2014). For example, in one recent case a woman was denied funding for an expensive drug, not because the drug was ineffective against this specific cancer but because there was no evidence it was effective when used against a tumor as small as the patient had when her physicians recommended the treatment. In short her doctor may have diagnosed her cancer too early for this woman to be compatible with the patients who were the subjects of the various studies done on the drug. In this particular case the executive officer herself initiated the review, noting the guidelines for the drug were five years old. For her own part, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care stayed out of the matter, in spite of intense questioning from both the opposition and media. She stuck to the position that she had no authority to intervene (Hoch et al. 2012; Priest/Howlett 2011). This is a position that Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care from 2008-2014 stuck to consistently. Most recently, in the fall of 2013, she displayed this attitude when the media and opposition raised stories of a woman trying to gain access to a drug to prolong her life in spite of a brain tumor. In question period she provided this answer to an opposition member advocating for the woman, "This legislature made a determination several years ago to take the politics out of making decisions about what drugs would be covered for what conditions. I respect the will of the legislature on that issue and I am committed to maintaining the integrity of our evidence-based decision-making process when it

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comes to funding cancer drugs. Quite simply, the evidence does not support Avastin for brain cancer. The Committee to Evaluate Drugs will always review new evidence. If there is evidence that supports that this improves outcomes, then the Committee to Evaluate Drugs will do their work" (Ontario Hansard 2013).

To be fair to the Minister, no one claimed Avastin would cure the patient's cancer, but it did promise to extend her life expectancy from weeks to several months. What the minister failed to mention was that three other provinces had drawn a different conclusion and funded the treatment for these patients (Smith 2014). It cannot be denied that Avastin is an expensive drug costing between $ 1,500-$ 2,000 per treatment in 2009 and today approximately $ 4,000 per treatment if paid for at retail prices. In most cases patients require multiple treatments with the drug. Herceptin, the drug at the heart of the first example costs approximately $ 40,000 for a year's treatment and again, in some other Canadian provinces the cost would have been covered for the patient. It also cannot be denied that if all special requests were granted the province's pharmaceutical bill would rise (Ombudsman Ontario 2009, p. 5; Priest/Howlett, 2011; Smith 2014). However, one has to keep in mind the proportions. The entire drug benefit programmecosts roughly $ 4.7 Billion (or about 9 percent of the entire health and long term care budget). Of that cancer drug costs are about $ 450 Million, or ten percent of the total Drug Benefits programme. Admittedly drug costs are rising faster than almost any other part of the health budget. However, the real cost-drivers are mass consumed drugs such as those for high-blood pressure and high-cholesterol (Ontario Drug Benefit Program 2012). Granting a couple of more special requests here or there for rare diseases, so as to calm public opinion, would not have meaningfully impacted on the ministry's budget and would not have come close to the roughly $ 1 Billion spent when OPA was ordered to cancel the Mississauga and Oakville power plant contracts.

To recap the situation: It could be said that the Minister was furthering a strategic priority of the government when she decided not to intervene. This strategic priority was effectively and fairly managing health care spending for the greatest benefit. However, as seen above, intervening in these cases probably would not make much difference to this priority. Furthermore, as also noted above, when campaigning in 2003, the Liberals had promised to make accessibility for all a priority. Therefore it seems equally fair to say that the decision by the executive officer ran counter to this strategic priority of the government. The decision not to fund Avastin also would not have been the one favoured by powerful interests, the brand-name pharmaceutical manufacturers, cancer patient lobby-groups and cancer care physicians. Organisations representing these interests endorse the present system. However, they are also advocating for a review of the evaluation criteria. What they want to see is better acknowledgement in the process that average benefits in terms of increased life expectancy often have very large deviations and outliers. In other words, people who will do much better than average on a given treatment (Blackwell 2013). The media storms both cases generated were substantial and the cases allowed opposition parties to paint the Liberal government as "uncaring." However, it is important to note that unlike the power plant case, here the concern was spread across the entire province, rather than being concentrated. This opened a policy window where future change in the evaluation process could be debated but it did not lead to intervention in the specific deci-

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sions. While public opinion was aroused in both cases, in only one was it a latent electoral force because it was geographically concentrated.

IV. The need to take account of politics: In Ontario that means geography

As has been seen, of the potential explanations set out, only one can explain the pattern of events documented here. When public opinion becomes a latent electoral force, ministers are likely to intervene in arms-length decision-making processes. If public opinion cannot be geographically concentrated so as to threaten the governing party's members of the legislative assembly, it will not provoke a minster to intervene in an arms-length decision-making process. In neither the case of the cancelled power plants, nor in the cancer drug example, did the governing statute explicitly give the minister authority to intervene in the decision-making of the arms-length body in question. In spite of not having any specific authority to do so, the Minister of Energy ordered OPA to cancel the power plant projects. Consequently, one has to ask whether the guarantees of autonomy provided to the OPA in the governing statute were sufficient. The answer on the surface appears to be no, they were not. In that the success of both the "new public management" and "public governance" hinge to a certain degree on ministers being willing to let go and restrict their role to that of oversight and strategic decision-making, it would seem that if one wishes to see such approaches to public management and governance succeed in a Westminster polity, care must be taken to properly design governing arrangements for the arms-length official or governance network. When opposition to decision-making by the official or governance network is anticipated to be concentrated geographically, as is the case with siting power-plants, there either has to be a positive prohibition on ministerial meddling written into the statute or the grounds on which the minister is entitled to intervene need to be spelled out in great detail. Otherwise, when opposition can be expected to concentrate geographically, the delegation of authority to arms-length officials or governance networks should not be attempted.

Zusammenfassung

Daniel Cohn; Unter welchen Bedingungen sind Minister in politischen Systemen im Stil von Westminster in der Lage, "loszulassen"? Belege aus Ontario, Kanada

Autonomie; Governance; New Public Management; Öffentliche Arzneimittel-Versicherung; Ontario, Canada; Stromerzeugung; Westminster-System

Eines der wichtigsten Elemente sowohl des New Public Management als auch des gerade entstehenden Public Governance-Ansatzes besteht darin, dass Minister Verlangen widerstehen müssen, Verwaltungstätigkeit auszuüben. Sie müssen loslassen, das Managen der Verwaltungs-

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ebene überlassen und Meinungsbildungsprozesse unter Einbeziehung der Stakeholder stattfinden lassen, auch wenn sich das Ergebnis in Einzelfällen als wenig populär erweist. In diesem Artikel wird versucht die Bedingungen verständlich zu machen, unter denen Regierungen in einem Westminster-System bereit sind, loszulassen und eine autonome Entscheidungsfindung der ausgegliederte Einrichtungen des öffentlichen Sektors zu unterstützen, selbst dann, wenn die Ergebnisse in der Öffentlichkeit unbeliebt sind. Hierzu werden Beispiele aus zwei verschiedenen Politikfeldern in der kanadischen Provinz Ontario herangezogen.

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