P. Aucoin, “New Public Management and New Public Governance: Finding the Balance,” in D. Siegel and K. Rasmussen, eds., *Professionalism and the Public Service: Essays in Honour of Kenneth Kernaghan* (Toronto UTP, 2008)

**Overview**

Aucoin agues that in addition to the rise in NPM, there has emerged a paradigm of “new public governance” – NPG – that has brought forth a new architecture for public admin that, in several respects, challenges NPM

**New Public Governance:**

* As Aucoin envisions is, under NPG, political leaders seek to reassert their democratic right to govern by taking control of the state apparatus. NPG entails:
  + Concentration of power under PM and his/her ‘court’ of select ministers, political aides, and public servants
  + Increased # of political staff, with enhanced roles and influence
  + Increased personal attention by PM to appointment of senior public servants (where he/she has power to appoint)
  + Pressure on public service to provide pro-gov’t spin in gov’t communications
  + Increased expectation that public servants will demonstrate enthusiasm for gov’t agenda beyond traditional requirement of loyal implementation
* Structures serve to concentrate power at the centre

**History of NPM**

* NPM arose in the 1960s and 1970s, truly breaking onto the Canadian federal scene with the Mulroney government in ’84.
* Framework promised to break the classical bureaucratic paradigm in which public servants were assumed to be administrators, rather than managers. Despite its promise, NPM largely failed to gain significant traction in Canada, and the major recommendations for reform coming out of Glassco Commission were never fully initiated.
* However, apparently somehow despite this larger system-level failure, “Everywhere it is now recognized that improved public management requires a necessary degree of management capacity and that management capacity begins with the authority to manage” (Aucoin, 2008).
* Ultimately, NPM seeks to entrench processes of decentralization and empowerment of the public service – placing more responsibility in the hands of individuals who interact with the intricacies of program implementation and delivery on a daily basis.

**History of NPG**

* Simultaneous to the rise and implementation of NPM theory and practice was the evolution of ‘new public governance’ model.
* Under NPG - political leaders “reassert their democratic right to govern by taking control of the state apparatus. The structures of the government everywhere are thus subject to the pressures that serve to concentrate power at the centre” (Aucoin, 2008).
* Presumably, the timeline corresponds relatively closely with the advent of NPM in Canadian public administration, as Savoie notes in *Governing from the Centre* that the first major shift in this centralizing direction came with the Trudeau administration in 1968. With these tendencies towards the centralization of power, Aucoin notes that in several respects the emergence of the NPG architecture *challenges* the central tenets of NPM.

**Striking the balance – empowerment in public administration**

* Empowerment was the major contribution of NPM to contemporary public administration – “NPM sought to empower public service administrators so that they could better manage public money, public service staff, and the delivery of public services”
* Unclear, to me, however that this was ever really implemented

**Takeaway question:**

It is unclear if the NPM and NPG frameworks are even acting on the same parts of the public administration infrastructure. The inference is that they are – but lack of ready application to the public service more broadly raises significant doubts. It appears on its face that it is more likely that these two models are acting on different levels of the public service infrastructure – significantly reducing the interaction of their component parts, and subsequently minimizing the likelihood of interaction effects.