Understanding the Relationship between National and Regional/Urban Statistic Offices

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Overview

• National Statistics Systems are heterogeneous
• Therefore it is difficult to provide a general statement about the interrelationship between NSOs and urban/regional offices
• This presentation attempts to build on current research on the role of New Public Management Theory (NPM) in NSOs to see if a framework might be developed.
New Public Management Theory

• NPM came to the fore in the 1980s.
• Builds on Williamson’s transaction cost model.
• NSOs adopted its implications during the 1990s.
• Replaced traditional PPA approach of inputs, processes and output.
What is NPM?

• NPM represents a model of public sector management principally motivated by the individually oriented and output-driven transaction costs theory.

• Also representing elements of principal-agent theory
Main Facets of NPM

• professional management;
• standards and measures of performance;
• output controls;
• disaggregation of units;
• competition;
• private sector styles of management; and
• greater discipline and parsimony in resource use.
The Core of NPM

• It offered a ‘new’ form of governance structure ‘m-form’;
• Efficiency and effectiveness measures achieved through better-quality management;
• It is based on more transparency, competitive forces and improved information sources.
Has NPM Worked?

• Yes
• No
A majority of research in the UK suggests that NPM did not live up to expectation.

Criticised as being at odd with public sector governance principles.

Failure of adequate financial reporting – often quoted as example of failure.
Yes

• Made public sector more cost conscious
• Helped focused public sector on its role(s)
The role of ICT

• Developments in ICT were originally seen as disruptive ‘innovation’ as far as NPM was concerned.
• Role of data/information sharing.
• Seen by NSOs as enabling technology
Types of NSOs

• *Centralised*: a single central statistical authority with a recognisable institutional identity separate from Ministries that are major statistics users;

• *Decentralised*: groups of statistical producers who are separated on a thematic basis and under control of the related policy department.

• *Devolved*: parallel statistical activities based on some form of devolved public administration with authority within part of the nation as in autonomous regions or component countries of a state.
What has this to do with Urban Statistics Offices?