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Research Article

Images of Coordination: How Implementing Organizations Perceive Coordination Arrangements

Abstract: *A crucial challenge for the coordination of horizontal policy programs—those designed to tackle crosscutting issues—is how to motivate government organizations to contribute to such programs. Hence, it is crucial to study how practitioners in implementing organizations view and appreciate the coordination of such programs. Assisted by Q-methodology, this inductive study reveals three significantly different "images": central frame setting, networking via boundary spanners, and coordination beyond window dressing. Most surprisingly, different images show up among respondents within the same organizations and horizontal programs. The authors find that the images reflect elements of the literature: the resistance to hierarchical central control, the need for local differentiation and increased incentives, and a collaboration-oriented culture. Most importantly, practitioners of implementing organizations perceive top-down mechanisms as ineffective to achieve coordination and ask for adaptive arrangements, involvement, and deliberative processes when designing coordination arrangements and during the collaboration.*

Evidence for Practice

- Coordination arrangements for horizontal policy programs that are purely hierarchical are seen as undesirable by practitioners in implementing organizations and can have unintended effects on implementing organizations.
- As top-down mechanisms are insufficient on their own to create collaboration, involving the implementing organizations in the design of the coordination arrangement is important. Implementing organizations prefer that the center of government thinks in tailor-made terms, takes into account varying images of coordination, and invests in the participation of organizations, which in the end have to implement the tasks.
- Some practitioners prefer boundaries with room to maneuver at the organizational level, others believe in collective action, and some are disheartened by earlier government-wide approaches and want to see real action before they are willing to commit. Therefore, choosing a hybrid coordination approach, combining cultural and instrumental aspects such as incentives, and sequencing different coordination approaches appear to be good strategies.
- This study supports the call for adaptive and reflexive coordination arrangements, in which coordinators keep an eye on both the macro-dynamics of the coordination arrangement over time and the alignment of individual organizations that need to implement the horizontal policy programs.

Coordinating the actions of public organizations across policy sectors has always been an important task (Peters 2015, 2018). However, as society is increasingly faced with complex, crosscutting policy challenges such as climate change and poverty reduction, calls from politicians and society for better coordination of government policies have become much stronger (Candel and Biesbroek 2016). Such policy challenges cannot be tackled by one public organization or one policy sector alone, but rather need coordinated actions from different organizations in multiple policy sectors. To that end, governments often look for government-wide or whole-of-government approaches. Horizontal policy programs (HPPs) are at the core of whole-of-government approaches. Such programs go beyond single organizations, policy sectors, and expertise and try to "join at the top" (policy coordination) and "join up at the base" (policy implementation) (Christensen and Lægreid 2007, 1060).

Obstacles that prevent implementing organizations from contributing to HPPs are numerous. Organizations sometimes fear a loss of power, autonomy, or control over budget (Perri 6 et al. 1999, 66; Peters 2018; Pollitt 2003; Tosun and Lang 2017). Moreover, the government apparatus in most countries has strong sectoral "silos" and many (semi)autonomous agencies, with an emphasis on accountability for organization-specific objectives

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and targets (Bouckaert, Peters, and Verhoest 2010; Christensen and Lægreid 2008; George, Walker, and Monster 2019). As the results of HPPs often are not immediately visible in organization-specific indicators, "minding the own shop" is the first priority (Perri 6 et al. 1999, 66). In other words, implementing organizations tend to focus on the sectoral programs they are primarily responsible for, rather than on horizontal policies for which they share responsibility with other organizations (Balle Hansen, Steen and de Jong, 2013; Carrigan 2018; Peters 2018, 1). So, a central challenge is *how to motivate single government organizations to invest in efforts to implement HPPs*, as such programs often compete for resources with their own organizational and sector-specific priorities (Carey and Crammond 2015; Karré, van der Steen, and van Twist 2013).

Indeed, research shows that the performance of such HPPs to date is largely failing (see the review by Candel 2017). At best, implementation is variable across targeted sectors, and there might be symbolic political gains (Candel 2017; Candel and Biesbroek 2016; Tosun and Lang 2017). The vast expanding body of literature on coordination initiatives (for a review, see Trein, Meyer, and Maggetti 2019) studies the arrangements used to coordinate HPPs (see, e.g., Carey and Crammond 2015). Coordination—defined as the voluntary or forced alignment of tasks and efforts of organizations—across policy sectors is not easy (Bouckaert, Peters, and Verhoest 2010; Putansu 2015; Verkuil and Fountain 2014). Although many studies point to the difficulty of getting implementing organizations to contribute to such programs, researchers very rarely delve into the way the coordination arrangements are viewed and appreciated by the involved practitioners within the implementing organizations (exceptions are Perri 6 et al. 1999; Qvist 2016). We argue that to understand why whole-of-government coordination often fails, it is necessary to examine how the practitioners who are involved in implementing organizations view the coordination arrangements of HPPs that they need to act on (for a similar point, see Hustedt and Danken 2017).

To that purpose, we inductively assess in this article the discourses of practitioners in implementing organizations with respect to the coordination arrangements of HPPs. We report a Q-methodological study of three HPPs involving 29 respondents in 10 organizations from different sectors. In doing so, the article offers three key contributions, in addition to the application of Q-methodology to this scientific problem. First, we show that multiple viewpoints (what we call "coordination images") on both the current and the desired coordination exist among respondents. Three significantly different images of coordination emerge from the analysis: central frame setting, networking via boundary spanners, and beyond window dressing. Second, this variation in images is noticeable, not only among the three HPPs but also *within* each HPP and organization. The finding that coordination arrangements are perceived and appreciated differently within the same HPP and organization is remarkable and may offer an additional explanation for the failure of HPPs. Third, when linking the empirical images back to theoretical-analytical frameworks in the literature, we also find, besides some differences, resemblances to recent literature, such as the need for a well-balanced mix of central coordination and local autonomy, allowing flexibility as well as fostering ownership through well-chosen structures, instruments, and a collaborative culture (see, e.g., Carey and Crammond 2015, 1025).

This article addresses three related research questions:

- **RQ1:** Which images do practitioners responsible for implementing horizontal policy programs have for current and desired approaches to coordination?
- **RQ2:** How can we interpret these inductively found images when referring to theoretical perspectives on coordination in the literature?
- **RQ3:** How can we make sense of any variation in coordination images?

To be able to interpret and connect the observed coordination images and their implications to the wider literature, we start by reviewing different theoretical-analytical perspectives on coordination in the following section. The reviewed frameworks are *not* used to lead data gathering or analysis; they are only used in the interpretation of the research findings, which we discuss in the Results section of this article. The subsequent section explains the empirical approach using Q-methodology and the data. Next, our analysis presents three different images of coordination (RQ1) and discusses the extent to which they mirror elements of the literature on coordination (RQ2). Finally, we discuss the variation in the coordination images (RQ3) and the implications of these findings for research and practice.

Theory: Literature on Coordination of HPPs

This article provides an assessment of how practitioners in implementing organizations perceive coordination arrangements. The literature on coordination is abundant. In this section, we explain the existing frameworks, definitions, and typologies mentioned in the literature. The frameworks are used to interpret the research findings, enabling us to link the observed coordination images to relevant literature.

As governments increasingly focus on the coordination of policies across sectoral and organizational boundaries,

the academic literature expands accordingly, using different labels, such as policy coordination (Bouckaert, Peters, and Verhoest 2010; Cejudo and Michel 2017; Egeberg and Trondal 2016; Lægreid et al. 2014; Peters 2018); policy integration, referring to the design and implementation of cross-sectoral policy strategy (Candel and Biesbroek 2016; Cejudo and Michel 2017; Metcalfe 1994; Tosun and Lang 2017); and cross-agency or intragovernmental collaboration (O'Flynn 2008; Wilkins, Phillimore, and Gilchrist 2017). The academic literature also refers to more practitioner-based concepts such as joined-up government (Bogdanor 2005; Carey, Mcloughlin, and Crammond 2015b; Karré, van der Steen, and van Twist 2013) and whole-of-government (Carayannopoulos 2017; Christensen and Lægreid 2007; Trein, Meyer, and Maggetti 2019). Just like whole-of-government strategies, joined-up government initiatives aim to align activities across organizational boundaries toward particular goals of public policy without removing the boundaries themselves (Carey, Crammond, and Riley 2015a; Pollitt 2003).

A considerable part of the literature is mainly descriptive or focuses on factors for success and failure (see, e.g., Askim et al. 2011; Ross et al. 2011), or it uses classifications with rather limited theoretical-analytical leverage (e.g., lists of coordination instruments, see Pollitt 2003). Indeed, Trein (2017) calls for improvement of the theoretical capacity for comparative analyses of the coordination of crosscutting issues. Nevertheless, there are some theoretical-analytical frameworks that are used more frequently in recent scholarship on coordination. The first and one of the oldest frameworks is the scale of increasing coordination developed by Metcalfe (1994), which is still used in recent research by Candel (2017) and Cejudo and Michel (2017). Metcalfe (1994, 284) shows that policy coordination can be seen as a scale, ranging from *independent decision-making by organizations,* in which coordination is absent, to the highest level of coordination ("the unified policy-making system"). The highest level of coordination refers to the government jointly defining an integrated policy to tackle an issue across sectors, as in an HPP. Therefore, implementing an HPP successfully necessitates a lot of coordination capacity.

A second framework is the tight versus loose coupling framework (e.g., Meyer 2002; Molenveld 2016; Trein 2017). This framework stipulates that organizations involved in a horizontal program do not necessarily behave as they would in a tightly coupled system, in which one action leads automatically to another expected action. According to Orton and Weick (1990, 204–5), in tightly coupled systems, organizations do not act independently, while organizations in loosely coupled systems remain to some extent independent and able to react to spontaneous changes. This adds to the framework of Metcalfe (1994): even an HPP at the highest level of policy coordination (i.e., the unified policy-making system) can, in its implementation, still bring about a loosely coupled system, in which the ambiguity of decision-making processes leads organizations to take independent action, which may not be in line with the HPP.

The third framework is the well-known typology of "hierarchy, market, and network" as basic coordination mechanisms (Alexander 1995; Meuleman 2008; O'Toole 1997; Peters 2018; Verhoest, Bouckaert, and Peters 2007). This framework shows that when considering coordination instruments, there are three mechanisms, with each strengths and weaknesses, to choose from. The *hierarchy mechanism* asserts that rules, procedures, and a coercive top-down strategy lead to alignment. The *market mechanism* argues that financial incentives, competition, and the "invisible hand" stimulate alignment. Finally, *the network mechanism* claims that consensus, trust, and mutual dependence contribute to coordination (Bouckaert, Peters, and Verhoest 2010). Although these typologies have considerable analytical leverage (see, e.g., Bardach 2017; Lægreid et al. 2014; Meuleman 2008; Sarapuu and Lember 2015; Tenbensel 2018), they are hard to operationalize and overlook the analytical distinction between coordination through structures and instruments, culture, and values and symbolic actions (see Bouckaert, Peters, and Verhoest 2010).

Developed by Christensen and Lægreid in a much-cited 2007 article (1,020 Google scholar citations and 334 Web of Science citations as of October 2019) and subsequently expanded (Christensen et al. 2016a; Christensen, Lægreid, and Rykkja 2016b), the fourth framework integrates the core ideas of the aforementioned three frameworks, but it explicitly acknowledges that coordination can happen through *instrumental* as well as *institutional* interventions (Bouckaert, Peters, and Verhoest 2010; Candel and Biesbroek 2016; Carey, Mcloughlin, and Crammond 2015b; Klijn and Koppenjan 2016; Tosun and Lang 2017; Trein, Meyer, and Maggetti 2019). In doing so, it defines four theoretical perspectives on coordination that are anchored in institutional theories (Christensen et al. 2007; Scott 2003). Moreover, the framework is specifically geared toward whole-of-government coordination. It has been applied extensively in recent (comparative) studies on coordination arrangements (e.g., Cappo and Verity 2014; Carayannopoulos 2017; Carey and Crammond 2015; Carey, Mcloughlin, and Crammond 2015b; Castelnovo and Sorrentino 2018; Indset and Stokke 2015; Karré, van der Steen, and van Twist 2013; Nordbeck and Steurer 2016).

The *instrumental* perspective builds on Simon's bounded rationality and follows the logic of consequence, arguing that political and administrative leaders use structural and procedural instruments to channel attention and decision-making behavior (Carey, Mcloughlin, and Crammond 2015b; Christensen et al. 2016a; Indset and Stokke 2015; Klijn and Koppenjan 2016; Lægreid and Rykkja 2015). This instrumental perspective is divided into a *hierarchical-instrumental* and a *negotiation-instrumental* type (Christensen et al. 2007; March and Olsen 1983). Within the *hierarchical-instrumental* perspective, whole-of-government leaders take control or reassert the center of government to coordinate organizations involved in implementing HPPs in a top-down manner (Christensen and Lægreid 2007). This perspective emphasizes the rational behavior or "self-serving behavior" (Schillemans 2008) of the implementing organizations, which needs to be controlled. Central political capacity is strengthened by installing "overarching authority that oversees, steers and coordinates the problem as a whole" (Candel and Biesbroek 2016, 223), as well as the introduction of stronger accountability regimes, or by organizational mergers and restructuring, breaking through departmental silos (Cappo and Verity 2014).

The *negotiation-instrumental* perspective on coordination considers administration to be a heterogeneous amalgamation of entities with different interests and functions, which necessitates that central

political or administrative leaders balance central control with local autonomy (Carey, Crammond, and Riley 2015a). Like the hierarchical version, this perspective is focused on "coordination by design," but it emphasizes pragmatic and smart collaboration, such as one-stop shops and network governance rather than formalized collaboration (Klijn and Koppenjan 2016). Coordination instruments are perceived as positive, as long as they have "negotiative features" (Christensen and Lægreid 2007, 1061) and lead to shared goal setting and monitoring and an agreed mandate for coordination by those with political or operational authority (Karré et al. 2012; Verkuil and Fountain 2014). This perspective advocates "tailor-made governance approaches that thrive on sectoral ownership" (Nordbeck and Steurer 2016, 749).

Coordination, in the *institutional perspective*, is less preoccupied with rationally designed structural instruments, focusing on incremental change of values and norms (Christensen and Lægreid 2007; Indset and Stokke 2015). The institutional perspective is divided into two types: *cultural* and *myth*, both based on the logic of appropriateness. The *cultural-institutional perspective* focuses on how each culture is enshrined over time, with a set of informal values and norms that exert influence on behavior in a path-dependent way (Christensen et al. 2016a; Krasner 1988; Selznick 1957). Cultural change is possible through major crises acting as critical junctures or through more gradual processes such as layering (Streeck and Thelen 2005). Coordination in this perspective is all about creating a common whole-of-government identity and a collaborative "culture where collective outcomes and means of working are prioritized over individual goals" (Carayannopoulos 2017, 260). This culture can be achieved by setting common ethical standards and cultural values and, more generally, by "a supportive, trusting culture conducive to problem solving, where staff are free to find 'work-arounds' to problems" (Carey and Crammond 2015, 1024; see also Castelnovo and Sorrentino 2018; Christensen and Lægreid 2007).

In the *myth-institutional perspective*, coordination is seen as public officials introducing reform ideas, concepts, and symbols to enhance their legitimacy (Brunsson 2002; Carey, Buick, and Malbon 2017; Christensen and Lægreid 2007). Horizontal programs mainly act as rhetorical devices (and sometimes "window dressing"), installed by whole-of-government leaders who want to portrait themselves as "big thinkers" (Christensen and Lægreid 2007, 1062), without necessarily effecting real change (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Rather, HPPs are seen as a socially desirable super standard that spreads through isomorphistic processes (DiMaggio and Powell 1991).

This section has shown that the coordination literature uses different theoretical-analytical frameworks. We will use these frameworks to interpret the found images in the Results section. Relatively more use will be made of the Christensen and Lægreid's framework and its four theoretical perspectives, as it is more encompassing and theoretically grounded compared with the other frameworks and actually builds on them.

Method, Data, and Empirical Material

We use an inductive approach to elicit practitioners' views on coordination arrangements. Q-methodology (Stephenson 1935) provides such a method to study people's points of view (Brewer, Selden, and Facer 2000; van Exel and de Graaf 2005), and it is used in this article to elicit different images that implementing organizations have of the coordination of HPPs. Q-methodology has proven useful for public administration research in a growing number of studies (see Brewer, Selden, and Facer 2000; Dryzek and Berejikian 1993; Sullivan and Williams 2012; van Eijk and Steen 2013; van Exel, de Graaf, and Brouwer 2008). In this methodology, respondents are asked to rank statements, which are gathered through open interviews, in relation to other statements. Through a factor analysis, different groups of respondents are identified, each sharing a specific viewpoint or "discourse." In Q-methodology, factor analysis thus identifies patterns across respondents (Dryzek and Berejikian 1993, 50).

Step 1: The Q-Sample, Based on Exploratory Interviews

Q-methodology starts by defining the *concourse*, or the breadth of the debate about a specific topic (e.g., the coordination of HPPs). Next, the researcher designs statements that represent opinions from relevant actors (van Exel and de Graaf 2005, 4). We used 25 open, exploratory interviews with coordinators (both administrative and political) and implementers of HPPs discussing their experiences with the coordination of HPPs (including the three HPPs under study). The interviews (conducted between July 2012 and April 2014) were transcribed and coded using NVivo 10. In all, 615 quotations were extracted (original quotes are in Dutch).

The first author made a first clustering of the statements by means of the coordination tensions identified by Perri 6 et al. (1999): authority, legitimacy, capacity, priority, inertia, bargaining, jeopardy, perversity, and difficulty. The other authors helped reduce the number of statements by screening and selecting the final set of statements (see table 1). To do so systematically, a discourse analysis matrix was used (see Dryzek and Berejikian 1993), consisting of two dimensions: substance elements and types of arguments. The first dimension is based on Perri 6 et al. (1999, 66), who describe the tensions of organizations during the implementation of HPPs. The second dimension is based on the types of arguments that people use (based on Dryzek and Berejikian 1993; van Eijk and Steen 2013):

1. Designative arguments: arguments brought as facts, which are *in general* the case, as experienced by the practitioners themselves
2. Evaluative arguments: arguments brought as value judgments, keywords often stress a certain value: responsibility, participation, expertise, cultural, political
3. Advocative arguments: arguments about something that should be advocated for

Most interview statements were either evaluative or advocative. Therefore, for each of the nine rows, one designative, two evaluative, and two advocative arguments were selected. Unclear statements were either reframed or omitted, resulting in a Q-sample of 45 statements. These statements were then (from February 2015 until May 2015) ranked by the respondents of implementing organizations, into a compulsory quasi-normal distribution. Appendix S1 shows the normal distribution grid in which the respondents sorted the statements.

Step 2: The P-Sample: An Embedded Design

"Representative" in Q-methodology relates to the representativeness of the Q-sample for the whole debate on

Table 1 Discourse Analysis Matrix and Factor Scores

Dimension, Based on Perri 6 et al. (1999)	Type of Argument	Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Authority	Designative	A political champion who boosts the process is often lacking.	–3	–1	–4
	Evaluative	The center of government allocates too much coordination responsibility to the top of the organization.	0	–1	–3
		Coordination of HPPs is sometimes regarded as a decrease of organizational autonomy and responsibility.	3*	–2*	0*
	Advocative	At the moment, there is little administrative steering; this could be extended.	–4 *	–2	–2
		Programmatic approaches, with mandates, are underdeveloped.	0	1*	–2
Legitimacy	Designative	The network within the Flemish government needs to work better.	–1	3*	–2
	Evaluative	People with strategic functions sometimes have a function in the networks while it deals with operational issues, and vice versa.	2*	0	–2
		Participation in the decision process is quite limited.	1*	–4*	2*
	Advocative	HPPs are decidedly too top-down. Let people themselves set it up, to increase ownership of the HPP.	–1	0	–4*
		Coercion is never good. If you can achieve it voluntarily, that is the best way to do it.	1	1	0
Capacity	Designative	HPPs almost always depend on individuals who believe that the HPP is important and requires his or her action.	–1	–3*	–1
	Evaluative	Criticism of the "general HPP policy" is that HPPs require more than structures.	4 *	0	0
		For the coordination of HPPs, the right experts at the center of government are often missing.	–1	–1	–3
	Advocative	It is hard to focus our efforts on many different areas simultaneously.	4	0*	5
		Flemish civil servants are no experts in horizontal working. We need to improve that.	1	0	1
Priority	Designative	If the Flemish government sees something as an important objective, it does not matter who the champion is.	–4	–4	3*
	Evaluative	The Flemish government does not shirk HPPs: it lacks the culture to do so.	0	–1	2
		In terms of content, these issues are often so political that everyone is waiting on legislation before acting on them.	–1	–2	–1
	Advocative	You must execute HPPs loyally, even if it is horizontal policy and not your own policy.	1	0	0
		It is better to keep such HPPs limited and set priorities with very clear roles.	5*	2	1
Inertia	Designative	The belated political decisions are sometimes frustrating: you want to deploy and support your staff, but you do not always have the final information.	0*	3	3
	Evaluative	Sometimes ideas grow bottom-up, but the center of government often discards them. The street-level bureaucrats get the impression that they have no voice in these decisions.	0	–5*	–1
		Organizations often face issues of jurisdiction, such as the budget and who performs the evaluation.	2	0	0
	Advocative	For "siloization," there is only one remedy: more mobility among CEOs.	–5*	–3	–1
		An informal network is also needed in order to get to a result.	2	2	4
Bargaining	Designative	In the coordination of HPPs, there are always organizations who invest resources and others who gain resources.	–1	–1	0
	Evaluative	Sometimes there is distrust: what is this HPP going to cause? But other times, it offers new benefits.	3	2	4
		In some coordination cases, each CEO defends his or her own interests.	1	0	1
	Advocative	One minister who is behind it is good, but that is not enough! All actors must reach consensus.	2	0	0
		We ensure that we are involved in the decision process, because we want to be!	1	2	1
Jeopardy	Designative	The success of HPPs depends on the extent to which everyone is willing to share his or her own information.	1	3	1
	Evaluative	Final reports about HPPs are always disappointing, that is window dressing. Behind the numbers, there is actually not much substance.	–2	–3	3*
		There is no manageable document system to monitor the effects of HPPs.	0	–1	–1
	Advocative	We must stop the navel gazing, as it makes cooperation very difficult.	0	4*	0
		People should express their problems in the formal bodies, that makes it more workable.	–2 *	1	1
Perversity	Designative	There is little shared "corporate identity," people feel too distant from the Flemish government.	–3*	1	2
	Evaluative	With so many different entities at the table, coordination cannot function. Some people talk for the whole policy domain, others for their entity and others for their task.	–2*	1	2
		The implementation of the coordination is often much too formal and technical.	3*	1*	–3*
	Advocative	We must develop a "collaborative culture."	2	4	2
		We lack formal coordinating structures to govern the operational level.	–3	–1*	–5

Table 1 (Continued)

Dimension, Based on Perri 6 et al. (1999)	Type of Argument	Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Difficulty	Designative	Much information lingers on the top level.	–1	2*	–2
	Evaluative	You often face cultural differences and unwillingness to collaborate.	0	5*	0
		HPPs increase tensions between the horizontal and the line departments.	–2	–2	–1
	Advocative	Sometimes there is no "one-on-one" between the minister and the policy domain.	0	–2*	1
		Because of compartmentalization, we must work on the basis of trust. Let us see how we can restore this trust.	–2	1	–1

* Significance at $p < .01$

Table 2 Respondent Selection

Organization	Ministry	Size	Autonomy	Number of Interviews per Policy Issue			Total Number of Interviews
				Austerity	Administrative Simplification	Integrated Youth Care	
1	Environment	Large	Low	1	1	Not involved	2
2		Small	Low	1	1	Not involved	2
3		Large	Low	1	1	Not involved	2
4		Large	High	1	1	Not involved	2
5		Small	High	1	1	Not involved	2
6	Welfare	Small	Low	1	1	2	4
7		Small	Low	1	1	1	3
8		Small	High	1	1	2	4
9		Large	High	1	1	2	4
10		Large	Low	1	1	2	4

a certain topic, not to the P-sample (i.e., the participants). Although it is nonrepresentative, the P-set is not random either. To explore and explain practitioners' images of coordination of HPPs, we used the empirical setting of the Flemish government. The administrative apparatus of this regional government, in the northern part of Belgium, exhibits three structural features that hamper policy coordination (Verhoest, Demuzere and Rommel 2012). First, the minister-president has no formal authority to instruct other ministers or to hold them accountable for the contribution of their administrative services to policy objectives. Second, a major administrative reform in 2006 increased organizational proliferation and reduced coordination capacity. The three horizontal departments (finance and budget, public governance, and general government policy) lost their regulatory competence to directly instruct line departments and agencies (Molenveld and Verhoest 2014). Also, the line departments lost their supervisory power over the agencies, leading to competition for tasks and conflictual relationships (Molenveld and Verhoest 2014). In sum, the Flemish government is a rather extreme case of organizational fragmentation, in which central coordinators have limited power to coordinate HPPs because of a weak center of government, strong departmentalism, and agencification. However, this context does not preclude central coordinators from at least attempting to coordinate certain policy programs in a top-down way, leaving little room for local autonomy. Being a departure from the traditionally hierarchical control mode in the Flemish government, the 2006 agencification reforms have sparked an ongoing struggle between proponents of more central coordination capacity and defenders of organizational autonomy (Molenveld and Verhoest 2014).

A cascaded strategy was applied to select respondents, to maximize variation in case selection while ensuring comparability among subgroups. We first selected three HPPs, defined as programs that require the actions of multiple implementing organizations (both departments and agencies) at *one* level of government. As implementing organizations also have an internal life (Perri 6 et al. 1999; Molenveld 2016) that might impact the coordination image held by its employees, organizations with varying organizational features (size and autonomy) were selected next.

Policy Programs. Three HPPs were selected to maximize variation. The first HPP is the "austerity program." From 2009 until 2012, the implementing departments and agencies were responsible for jointly realizing *targeted cuts*. After much debate, this ambition failed and was replaced (from 2012 on) with a hierarchical "cheese-slicing approach": every organization had to cut 6 percent of staff and save 60 million euros collectively. This objective was monitored semiannually. The second HPP is "administrative simplification", a policy plan to reduce red tape through the digitalization of billings, regulatory impact assessments, and so on. Some objectives are mandatory and require concerted action by different interdependent organizations, while other objectives are more voluntary, with organizations being individually responsible. This coordination approach is "mixed", being both hierarchy-like and network-like. The third HPP is "integrated youth care", focusing on more seamless services using voluntary interorganizational networks. This coordination approach can therefore be called "network-like".

Organizations. Ten organizations implementing these HPPs were chosen to study practitioners' images of coordination (see table 2).

We chose organizations that differed in size and autonomy from two policy sectors, environment and health and welfare, to get as much variation as possible (Boon et al. 2019).

Based on the average staff size of a Flemish public organization (350 full-time equivalent [FTE] staff), we selected both larger (> 350 FTE) and smaller organizations (< 350 FTE). Smaller organizations might be inclined to invest "enormous energy and commitment" in crosscutting policies, because successful collaborations legitimize their existence (Lowndes and Skelcher 1998, 327). Yet they experience high "costs" during the collaboration process relative to larger organizations (Carey and Crammond 2015; Provan and Milward 2001, 420).

Autonomy was derived from the formal-legal type of the organization, which influences the leeway that an organization has. Departments and departmental agencies are under the direct authority of their portfolio ministers, relatively close to the center of government, and can be easily instructed to invest in HPPs. In contrast, public law agencies have a separate legal identity, and the authority of their portfolio ministers is limited to a light form of supervision. We thus selected two types of organizations based on the level of formal autonomy (see Verhoest and Wynen 2018):

1. Low: Departments and departmental agencies (6 organizations included)
2. High: Public law agencies (4 organizations included)

All Flemish departments and agencies are involved in the austerity measures and administrative simplification. The same 10 organizations were selected for both HPPs, and an interview was conducted with the practitioner responsible for the implementation of the HPP. The third HPP, integrated youth care, involves only 6 out of these 10 organizations: five are part of the sector health and welfare, while the sixth is part of the education ministry. The first five organizations were selected, with two respondents per organization. One smaller organization had only one individual appointed for integrated youth care (organization 9), so only one interview could be carried out for this HPP in that organization. As all selected practitioners cooperated, the response rate is 100 percent.

In sum, 29 practitioners—directly responsible for implementation of the HPPs—were interviewed, using an interview protocol for Q-method research based on van Exel and de Graaf (2005) (see Appendix S2). The P-sample was a mix of female and male respondents, higher and lower in the organizational hierarchy, with mixed study backgrounds and different functions. The interviewees ranked statements on a scale ranging from −5 (disagree) to 5 (agree). Table 2 summarizes the levels of analysis, the HPPs, and the types and numbers of respondents.

Validity, Reliability, and Generalization. This study includes steps that ensure its design, validity, and reliability. Most importantly, we study practitioners' coordination images inductively, using a well-sampled group of implementing organizations. The selection of three HPPs and 10 organizations, differing in size and autonomy, strengthens the generalizability of the observed images to the debate on whole-of-government coordination. However, the results cannot be translated to population-wide results (Watts and Stenner 2005, 73). Furthermore, while some Q-sort studies use an online tool, this study's face-to-face interviews make the data highly reliable. Because respondents could explain their considerations when ranking statements, the researchers had the opportunity to interpret the factors in a more holistic way. The three images discussed next will be illustrated by relevant interview quotes.

Results

The analysis starts by correlating all the Q-sorts. Using PQ Method 2.35 (Schmolck 2014), we analyzed these using centroid factor analysis and applied a varimax rotation. We used the option of Horst 5.5 with iterative solutions for communalities, instead of Brown's (1980) method, because irregularities were found in Brown's method (Schmolck 2015). The Horst criterion led to three distinct images. Furthermore, on the basis on of the eigenvalues of the unrotated factors (see appendix S3 in the Supporting Information), we accept these three factors. The composite reliability for all the factors is between 0.92 and 0.99, which is more than acceptable (Brown 1980). Finally, their simplicity and distinctness (Webler, Danielson, and Tuler 2009, 32) supports choosing these factors. Respondents who load significantly on the same factor hold a similar image of *current and desired* HPP coordination.

To assess whether a certain Q-sort loads on a particular factor, we use the threshold $2.58 \times (1\sqrt{45}) = 0.38$ ($p < .01$ significance level; Watts and Stenner 2012, 198). To interpret the images, we looked at the whole image, with an emphasis on the distinguishing statements (table 1), which get the highest score of (dis)agreement. Those statements are exclusively and significantly different for one factor compared with the other factors. This exercise results in three distinct coordination images:

1. Coordination by central frame setting
2. Coordination by networking via boundary spanners
3. Coordination beyond window dressing

Table 3 presents the correlations between each respondent and the factors (asterisk indicates on which factor a Q-sort loads). Participants who do not significantly load on any factor (six in total) have viewpoints that cannot be attributed to one of the images. Furthermore, we have four confounded Q-sorts, which load on multiple images. Having a few of these "indistinguishable respondents" is quite common in Q-sort analyses (McKeown and Thomas 2013). We chose to describe the images in the "third person", although we are well aware that the factors present images and not a cluster of interviewees. In the next sections, the three images are presented and interpreted in the light of the theoretical-analytical frameworks outlined earlier in this article.

Image 1—Coordination by Central Frame Setting

The first image, labeled "coordination by central frame setting", explains the largest variance in the Q-sorts, and thus it is most prevalent among the respondents (see table 1 and Appendix S3 in the Supporting Information). Twelve statements are significantly different from the other factors.

Table 3 Relation between Respondents and Images

	Policy Issue	Organization	Size	Autonomy	Image 1	Image 2	Image 3	
1.	Austerity	10	Large	Low	0.45	–0.05	0.68	conf.
2.	Austerity	2	Small	Low	0.31	0.09	–0.07	n. sig
3.	Austerity	6	Small	Low	0.34	0.34	–0.23	n. sig
4.	Austerity	7	Small	Low	0.54 *	0.35	0.17	
5.	Austerity	8	Small	High	0.22	–0.32	0.09	n. sig
6.	Austerity	9	Large	High	0.23	–0.14	0.17	n. sig
7.	Austerity	5	Small	High	0.51 *	0.13	0.21	
8.	Austerity	3	Large	Low	0.01	–0.03	0.55 *	
9.	Austerity	1	Large	Low	0.66 *	0.16	0.11	
10.	Austerity	4	Large	High	0.38 *	–0.03	0.07	
11.	Administrative simplification	3	Large	Low	0.23	0.10	0.59*	
12.	Administrative simplification	7	Small	Low	0.59 *	–0.16	0.16	
13.	Administrative simplification	2	Small	Low	0.39 *	0.13	0.11	
14.	Administrative simplification	5	Small	High	0.23	0.36	0.44 *	
15.	Administrative simplification	1	Large	Low	–0.16	0.54 *	0.11	
16.	Administrative simplification	6	Small	Low	0.45 *	–0.05	0.07	
17.	Administrative simplification	8	Small	High	0.45 *	0.19	0.04	
18.	Administrative simplification	4	Large	High	0.20	0.36	0.34	n. sig.
19.	Administrative simplification	9	Large	High	0.08	0.62 *	–0.04	
20.	Administrative simplification	10	Large	Low	0.35	0.57 *	–0.03	
21.	Integrated youth care	6	Small	Low	0.63 *	0.20	0.14	
22.	Integrated youth care	7	Small	Low	0.52 *	0.02	0.35	
23.	Integrated youth care	6	Small	Low	0.23	0.49 *	0.20	
24.	Integrated youth care	10	Large	Low	0.19	0.47 *	0.10	
25.	Integrated youth care	8	Small	High	0.17	0.44	0.61	conf.
26.	Integrated youth care	9	Large	High	0.39 *	0.15	0.10	
27.	Integrated youth care	8	Small	High	0.27	0.54	0.43	conf.
28.	Integrated youth care	10	Large	Low	0.03	0.36	0.11	n. sig
29.	Integrated youth care	9	Large	High	–0.05	0.45	0.58	conf.

* Significance at $p < .01$

These respondents perceive the *current* coordination approach coming from the center of government as too intrusive, formalistic, and technical. To them, the current coordination style of the HPPs erodes the autonomy and responsibility of the implementing organizations, as these HPPs are too encompassing, without clear priorities, and the extensive administrative steering is interfering. Formal coordinating structures that govern the operational level are abound, as there are often more meetings than they can attend on the operational level (r.22): "and these are 'mastodont' meetings, with ten organizations per meeting". Second, they consider it unnecessary to force organizations to contribute to HPPs, because their organizations have a strong sense of belonging to the Flemish government and want to execute the tasks assigned to them.

According to respondents sharing this image, the *desired* coordination approach should focus less on installing structures (e.g., coordination functions, networks, etc.) and encompassing programs. On the contrary, program coordination should value the autonomy and responsibility of the individual organizations and allow for negotiation and participation in decision-making. They prefer a coordination approach that sketches the boundaries of a program with a limited number of priorities and delineation of clear roles, enabling them to oversee what is asked from the organization. Within this framework, however, they like room to maneuver, especially for the CEO. As one respondent (r.16) explained, "Such horizontal programs are often very vague, and start with encompassing plans. Often we don't know where it starts or where it ends, what our task is, what the crosscutting objectives are, etc. Horizontal policy should be clearly delineated: do not start with overshooting in terms of goals, and structures, but start small, from a clear framework." Mobility among CEOs to stimulate a collaborative culture is nice theoretically, according to the respondents, but basically undesirable: CEOs should have clear attachments to the core tasks of their organizations, so that they know how to integrate HPPs. One respondent explained (r.4): "Those ideas [mobility, red.] are hypes, but I do not think they improve horizontality. You need to have a clear attachment to the sector, the networks, institutional partners, and the financial streams. Otherwise, I doubt you will be a good manager, as you cannot get things done." The current top-down coordination approach clashes with this desired image. Respondents from all types of policy programs and organizations share this image. They envision a government that has a long-term vision and sets out a framework in which organizations are given space to develop, which allows for heterogeneity.

Interpreting this image, we see that the respondents underline the notion of coordination by design (negotiation-instrumental perspective) and turn away from harsh, unilateral, and formalized control (the hierarchical-instrumental perspective of Christensen and Lægreid 2007 and Bouckaert, Peters, and Verhoest 2010). This desired change is depicted in figure 1. Instead of harsh control, this factor shows an image that is appreciative of a framework defined by the center of government. However, HPP objectives should be broadly defined, giving latitude to work around problems and room for local autonomy (Carey and Crammond 2015, 1024). This allows the organization to apply the objectives in a tailor-made fashion (Nordbeck and Steurer 2016, 749). Respondents adhering to this viewpoint value the *organizational level*, as evidenced by their rejection of CEO mobility schemes and their perception that HPP coordination can diminish organizational autonomy. This might reflect a call for smart and pragmatic collaboration (Klijn and Koppenjan 2016), instead of a hierarchical-instrumental approach. Table 3 shows that respondents with this viewpoint are present in each of the three HPPs and in organizations of different sizes and levels of autonomy.

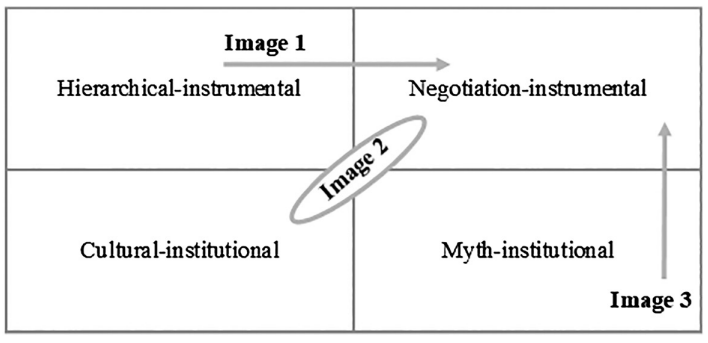

Figure 1 Current and Desired Coordination Approaches

Image 2—Coordination by Networking via Boundary Spanners

The second image, labeled "coordination by networking via boundary spanners", is strongly expressed by five respondents. Thirteen statements are significantly different from the other images. These respondents *currently* experience cultural differences, an unwillingness to collaborate, and too much navel gazing. On a more positive note, they claim that the central government supports bottom-up initiatives and feel that street-level bureaucrats can weigh in on and participate in the decision-making process. For them, it matters a lot who the champion coordinating the process is (characterizing statement [–4]; see table 1). In their view, such a champion is an organization (or person) with substantive knowledge and legitimacy who can boost cooperation and overcome deadlocks (r.23): "It is important who the champion is, one needs a strong champion and the legitimacy to boost the program". Thus, some centralization instigated by a champion with a *negotiative* mind-set and an agreed mandate is positively evaluated.

These respondents *desire* that HPP implementation is based not only on individual commitment. Instead, HPP coordination should ensure ownership among a broad range of organizations. This image clusters respondents who favor collective action and do not want navel gazing, low participation, or cultural differences to block their work. They seek collaboration, want to share information, and want a smooth working network model in the government. These respondents favor an administration that operates like a large network (collaborative culture) and establishes collaboration among involved organizations early on in the decision-making process. As one respondent explained (r.24): "A lot of it comes down to the intensity, the relation and whether or not you have a connection with one another, … yes, we should stimulate that, and create a culture that embraces collaboration, by allowing our employees to work crosscutting, etc".

This image reflects the *cultural-institutional perspective* on HPPs, which characterizes coordination as a cultural evolution. Creating a common identity is a big issue in this evolution. This is not easy to develop (Christensen and Lægreid 2007). This reflects the opinion of those respondents who seek collaboration, want to create a horizontal culture, and want to overcome cultural differences. They acknowledge that informal rules and cultures are path dependent (Christensen et al. 2016a; Krasner 1988; Selznick 1957) and determine the appropriateness of coordination approaches. A statement on which the respondents strongly agree reflects that new initiatives may encounter hesitation and resistance because they conflict with current customs. Therefore, collaboration must grow incrementally through gradual adjustments and slow (cultural) adaptations (Christensen et al. 2007, 145).

However, the idea that bottom-up initiatives and those from the center of government do not necessarily conflict does not fit

the *cultural-institutional perspective*. The idea of *leaving behind or overcoming* past experiences ("stop with present navel gazing, start sharing information, develop a new modus of horizontal collaboration"—extreme and distinguishing statements) does not fit it either. These statements fit the *negotiation-instrumental* perspective, in which central administrative leaders balance central control with local autonomy (Carey, Crammond, and Riley 2015a). In figure 1, image 2 is depicted as moving toward a cultural-institutional perspective as desired approach while still valuing elements of negotiation in the current coordination approach. This image is prevalent among respondents discussing the HPPs of integrated youth care and administrative simplification and from organizations of different size and levels of autonomy.

Image 3—Coordination beyond Window Dressing

The third image, labeled "coordination beyond window dressing", is strongly expressed by three respondents, and six statements are significantly distinct from the other factors (see table 1). *Currently*, these respondents seem to question the legitimacy of HPPs, in which context they experience strong political leaders and too many formal coordination structures in place (characterizing statements). According to them, the objectives imposed by HPPs merely add tasks without much benefit and force their organizations to focus on many areas at the same time. In contrast to the second image, these individuals experience that horizontal policy evaluation reports reflect just numbers, without much content (i.e., "all talk, no action"—Brunsson 2002). They believe the reports are mainly window dressing: "The perception is that we need to do that for a minister. People deliver a short state-of-affairs to this minister and … oh yes, a few people are engaged in monitoring and a small report [cynical, red.] is being drawn up, that's it. It is window dressing. Is there real change? I doubt that" (r.8). These respondents feel that participation of the affected organizations in the decision-making process remains minimal, and they would like to participate in the design of such horizontal objectives and programs. They require more clarity on how HPP collaboration could benefit them, as they do not believe that their organizations can benefit from contributing to HPPs. They are only willing to cooperate if the HPPs offer them new opportunities, partly because they already feel overburdened with tasks (characterizing statements). One respondent referred to the need to establish constructive deals at the operational level with the coordinating center, and "informal networks as well to get things done" (r.8).

While considering the *current* coordination mainly as "window dressing" and a *myth*, these respondents clearly desire a *negotiation-oriented instrumental* approach to coordination. This perspective mainly highlights the installation of HPPs as a way to increase the legitimacy of the political and administrative apparatus (myth perspective). The respondents regard final reports as merely "window dressing" and encounter political actors who push strongly for certain HPPs. This image presents collaboration and HPPs as distractions that could negatively affect the operations of the respondents' organizations. Respondents do not want to be burdened with objectives coming from HPPs that they perceive as merely symbolic acts by strong political leaders. While Christensen et al. (2007) question whether a myth may spread intentionally, at least these respondents feel that some HPPs function as intentionally created "coordination myths".

Figure 1 depicts how this third image entails the desire to move beyond pure window dressing (myth perspective) to the negotiation-instrumental perspective. The respondents think that the participation in the decision-making process is at the moment too limited. However, the factor mirrors the idea that solely going for bottom-up initiatives to increase the *sectoral ownership* is not the preferred way to enhance coordination (Nordbeck and Steurer 2016, 749). They do think that HPPs should be formulated at the center, by the right champions and experts, as long as there are "negotiative features" and an informal network to work on the HPP (Christensen and Lægreid 2007, 1061). Through involving the implementing organizations in the design of the HPP, the HPP could have an added value for these organizations (Karré et al. 2012; Verkuil and Fountain 2014). Respondents formulating this image are found in all kinds of organizations and in the HPPs of austerity and administrative simplification.

Discussion and Conclusion

While many studies analyze the coordination arrangements of HPPs, researchers rarely delve into the perceptions of implementing organizations (exceptions are Perri 6 et al. 1999; Qvist 2016). Yet doing so might lead to an understanding of the frequently observed failure of whole-of-government initiatives (e.g., Carayannopoulos 2017). Answering the first research question (RQ1) about the images that practitioners who are responsible for implementing HPPs have of current and desired approaches to coordination, we identified three significantly different images. The first image—*coordination by central frame setting*—regards the current coordination approach as too hierarchical and wants limited HPPs and clear boundaries, so that the additional tasks linked to the implementation of the HPP do not overburden daily operations. The respondents who desire *coordination by networking via boundary spanners*, the second image, would like to overcome cultural differences and want a smooth working network in the government in which collaboration and sharing information is the modus operandi. The respondents who want *coordination beyond window dressing* desire an understanding of an HPP and want to see real action before contributing to the HPP objectives.

To connect these empirically constructed coordination images and their implications to the wider literature (RQ2), we interpreted them using the literature on whole-of-government coordination. Overall, the observed coordination images echo the trends and debates in the recent literature. First, the way the *hierarchical-instrumental perspective* on coordination was rejected within the first image is in line with scholars who argue that *purely* top-down, hierarchy-like coordination of HPPs to force implementing organizations to collaborate is the mostly highly contested and ineffective approach (Doberstein 2016; Lægreid and Rykkja 2015; Nordbeck and Steurer 2016). Indeed, in the literature, centralized structures and leadership and accountability regimes are given some merit, while being clearly insufficient in themselves, while the need for embeddedness in negotiation-based relations between the center of government and implementing agencies is clearly stressed (Candel and Biesbroek 2016; May, Jochim, and Sapotichne 2011; Tosun and Lang 2017). However, we should emphasize that this study focuses on HPPs in the Flemish government, with the outspoken rejection of the hierarchical-instrumental perspective potentially being

more pronounced by its particular context. In this context, there are still attempts by central actors to coordinate certain policy programs in a rather hierarchical, top-down way. But the 2006 agencification reforms have created a culture at the level of implementing organizations in which organizational autonomy is strongly valued and central coordination is looked on suspiciously as an effort to restrict organizational autonomy. Nevertheless, this tension between the quest for more central coordination capacity by combining hierarchical and network-like instruments and the demand for organizational autonomy is visible in several European countries (see Bouckaert, Peters, and Verhoest 2010; see also Peters 2015).

Second, as is visible in the dominant first image and to some extent in the other images, respondents desire coordination along the lines of the *negotiation-instrumental perspective*. This resonates clearly with the call in the whole-of-government and related literature for balancing central control with local autonomy: room for bottom-up coordination and "rule-bending practices" (Carey and Crammond 2015), for smartly working together, collegial structures, participation of implementing organizations in the design of the HPP and the coordination arrangement, and for the introduction of positive incentives for contributing to HPPs to stimulate organizational ownership (Askim et al. 2009; Carey and Crammond 2015; Christensen et al. 2012; Karré et al. 2012; Nordbeck and Steurer 2016). Instead of a one-size-fits-all hierarchical solution, coordination arrangements need to allow for *local differentiation* (Lægreid et al. 2014; Nordbeck and Steurer 2016).

Third, next to its reference to elements of the negotiation-instrumental perspective, the second image clearly favors a culture in which implementing organizations value collaboration, information sharing, and collective outcomes instead of "navel gazing". This reflects the cultural-institutional perspective on coordination and its wide support in the literature, urging "nurturing institutional practices where holistic thinking becomes a cultural habit, and where there is engagement in dialogue, both within and external to the organization" (Cappo and Verity 2014, 25), as well as strong leadership and mobilizing policy narratives to foster this cultural change (Carayannopoulos 2017; Carey and Crammond 2015; Castelnovo and Sorrentino 2018).

Fourth, as respondents voiced in the third image, coordination arrangements can also be considered myths (Carey, Buick, and Malbon 2017) and a way to increase the legitimacy of a strong political actor or a "big thinker," but often initiated by a certain level of "window dressing."

Fifth, much of the debate in the recent literature questions the usefulness of strict typologies of coordination (such as the hierarchy-market-network and institutional and instrumental perspectives) and focuses instead on how to combine them into hybrid arrangements. Networks in the public sector often need some hierarchy (at specific moments), and vice versa, to implement joint objectives (e.g., Bardach 2017; Meuleman 2008; Tenbensel 2018; Voets, Verhoest, and Molenveld 2015). Successful whole-of-government needs changes at both the instrumental and the institutional level. A supportive architecture is called for that should comprise both hard and soft elements and a balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches (Candel 2017; Carey and Crammond 2015; O'Flynn 2008). To some extent, this study shows some images that mirror such hybridity. The second image, for example, recognizes the value of coordination instruments based on negotiation between central coordinators and implementing organizations but urges institutional values emphasizing cooperation.

How can we make sense of the variation with respect to the coordination images held by practitioners (RQ3)? Our case selection ensured variation in terms of both HPPs and organizational features. A striking finding is that the three images appear, to some extent, in all types of organizations and HPPs studied. So, *within the same HPPs* and even *within the same organizations*, practitioners have different perceptions of coordination. This finding highlights that *individual* practitioners, across but also within organizations, perceive, weigh, and prioritize the coordination in the context of HPPs in *significantly* different ways.

A first implication is that coordination might be perceived totally differently by the "coordinated" than by the "coordinator." Although the scholarly literature offers detailed portraits of coordinators and approaches (Bouckaert, Peters, and Verhoest 2010), it pays little attention to "collaborative or shared" coordination or the perspectives of the "coordinated," and thus it fails to account for the multiple sides of coordination. A second lesson is that the basic organizational features (size, autonomy) and policy characteristics (interdependency, urgency) do not help us make sense of the observed variation. This adds nuance to some statements in the literature on the relevance of these factors (see Carey and Crammond 2015; Lowndes and Skelcher 1998; Provan and Milward 2001). Perhaps other factors—such as *personal* traits (gender, age, career background, or hierarchical level, level of slack to take up additional tasks) might help us understand the variety of images we found. A third implication is that while we did not examine the extent to which the objectives in the HPP were actually achieved, we can reasonably assume that when practitioners involved in implementing a specific HPP adhere to different coordination images, this will make the achievement of the HPPs' goals more challenging. Furthering the search for "suitable" coordination approaches requires studying what substantive actions organizations actually take when implementing the HPP, why and how they take them, and to what extent coordination images matter for their behavior.

So, to synthesize the previous points, we urge the development of stronger middle-range theories on coordination and more research by whole-of-government scholars on the individual viewpoints on coordination to understand how coordination initiatives perform (Hustedt and Danken 2017). It is worthwhile to explicate the conditions that cause variations in images held by practitioners in implementing organizations.

Finally, this study also holds some lessons for practitioners. As top-down mechanisms are insufficient on their own to create collaboration (Carey and Crammond 2015), involving the implementing organizations in the design of the coordination arrangement is important (Ostrom 1986). Some might desire

guidelines or centralization, while others believe in collective action and self-organization, and some are disillusioned by government-wide approaches that are seen as myths. Moreover, choosing a hybrid coordination approach, combining soft and hard aspects (Carey and Crammond 2015; Keast 2011; Tenbensel 2018), or sequencing different coordination approaches (Meuleman 2008; Voets, Verhoest, and Molenveld 2015) might be a good strategy. Most importantly, our study supports the call for *adaptive* and *reflexive* coordination arrangements (Carey and Harris 2016; Meuleman 2008), in which coordinators keep an eye on both macro-dynamics of the coordination arrangement over time and the alignment of micro-level coordination.

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Supporting Information

A supplementary appendix may be found in the online version of this article at http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/puar.13136/full.