

## **The Commoditization of Societal Safety**

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### **Abstract**

New public management has led to major institutional changes in the sectors operating critical infrastructures. The previously integrated utility companies have been dismantled and are now run, regulated and organized more like private entities. This paper proposes two concepts that may aid the analysis of these organizational changes and the consequences they may have on societal safety. Commoditization refers to the process where work is sought transformed into atomistic standardized products to be ordered on a market. Modularization refers to the creation of discrete entities coordinated by market mechanisms and standardized interfaces. We argue that commoditization of work and modularization of organizational entities pose challenges to some of the informal characteristics of high-reliability organization's, with recognized importance especially for crisis management. This is illustrated by examples from Norwegian electricity network operators.

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