European Civil Society | 16

Matthias Freise | Friedrich Paulsen | Andrea Walter (eds.)

Civil Society and Innovative Public Administration

Nomos

European Civil Society

edited by

Taco Brandsen
Gemma Donnelly-Cox
Matthias Freise
Michael Meyer
Filip Wijkström
Annette Zimmer

Volume 16

Matthias Freise | Friedrich Paulsen |
Andrea Walter (eds.)

Civil Society and Innovative Public Administration

Nomos

The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union‘s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7-PEOPLE-2010-IRSES) under grant agreement PIRSES-GA-2010-269250 (PACT - Innovative public administration: social cohesion through local public transport).

PEOPLE

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the Internet at http://dnb.d-nb.de

ISBN 978-3-8487-0244-2 (Print)
978-3-8452-4608-6 (ePDF)

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-3-8487-0244-2 (Print)
978-3-8452-4608-6 (ePDF)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Freise, Matthias/Paulsen, Friedrich/Walter, Andrea (eds.)
Civil Society and Innovative Public Administration
Matthias Freise/Friedrich Paulsen/Andrea Walter
399 p.
Includes bibliographic references and index.

ISBN 978-3-8487-0244-2 (Print)
978-3-8452-4608-6 (ePDF)

1. Edition 2015
© Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, Germany 2015. Printed and bound in Germany.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, re-cording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers. Under § 54 of the German Copyright Law where copies are made for other than private use a fee is payable to “Verwertungsgesellschaft Wort”, Munich.

No responsibility for loss caused to any individual or organization acting on or refraining from action as a result of the material in this publication can be accepted by Nomos or the editors.

Preface

Lars Skov Henriksen, Steven Rathgeb Smith, Annette Zimmer

The volume "Civil Society and Innovative Public Administration" constitutes the outcome of a co-operative and highly aspirational endeavor. Yong researchers from different parts of Europe had the opportunity to research the nexus between civil society, innovation and public administration. Hosted by the BMW Centre for German and European Studies at Georgetown University, PhD-students, young professionals and young scientists analyzed whether, how and to what extent civil society contributes to the ongoing reform of the public sector. With the focus on a broad spectrum of topics and countries, in this volume "innovation" serves as a key concept and hence as a clue for overcoming challenges to traditional public service delivery.

Indeed, throughout the world, governments are grappling with significant challenges to public service provision. In many countries, fiscal crisis has meant drastically lower funding for public sector programs. In order to come to grips with reduced resources, governments have increasingly turned to both the market and nonprofit-sector for innovative approaches. However, it is not yet clear whether "innovation" will become synonymous with the best solution for the majority of citizens. It might be possible that in particular social innovation will emerge as an umbrella term to refer to a wide variety of developments at the local level that strive to combine more citizen participation and responsive public sector governance. However, "innovation" might also just provide us with a nice nametag, utilized by governments to hide policies of austerity that translate into less public service for increasingly fewer citizens. For sure, "innovation" already today stands for a blurring of boundaries of the different sectors, the market, the state and civil society or the nonprofit sector. Innovative organizational responses to current social challenges often translate into social enterprises that can be nonprofit or for-profit organizations providing services that rely on a mix of finances, market revenues included. Thus social enterprises might be nonprofit organizations that operate a restaurant staffed by disadvantaged people who also receive training as part of their employment. A for-profit firm might start a local child care agency staffed by community members and even parent volunteers. A nonprofit might also partner with a local for-profit firm to support a new local service. Many advocates for social enterprises argue that these organizations should adhere to democratic principles in their governance and operations, viewing social enterprises as a vehicle for more democratic governance in public service provision.

Innovation in public administration also can involve a new relationship between citizens and the government through co-production of public services whereupon “professionals and citizens making better use of each other’s assets, resources and contributions to achieve better outcomes and/or improved efficiency” (Bovaird and Loeffler, 2013). The underlying assumption of co-production initiatives is the desire to create more citizen control of the public services than has been the case in most public bureaucracies. A widely cited example of co-production is participatory budgeting which entails the direct engagement of citizens in the budgeting process of local government. And again, participatory budgeting might empower local citizens to take responsibility for local affairs, but it also can be used in a clever way to legitimize local budget cuts through citizen participation.

Yet, co-production is also reflected in many different innovations in public administration in Europe and elsewhere. Joint planning of municipal services or citizen engagement in the evaluation of public services are also good illustrations. Greater involvement of volunteers in the planning and implementation of services such as the management of local parks also reflect the current trend towards co-production in public service provision. Many types of social enterprises, especially agencies reliant upon client or volunteers to produce the service such as workforce training and development are also examples of co-production.

As clearly outlined in this volume, innovations might offer the opportunity for change and improved impact and effectiveness in public services. Yet they also raise issues of legitimacy, concerns of equal access, and significant challenges for the management of local services. Co-production is for sure not appropriate for all public services, especially resource intensive and complex services that require highly skilled professionals. New programs involving volunteers are not cost-free and indeed require significant investment by the public sector in order to support the training and effective management of volunteers. The pressure to raise earned income by social enterprises can not only impose obstacles to volunteer engagement but also might hinder citizens to get access to particular services; in essence, the community mission of a local nonprofit may be altered by the need to respond to market forces. Many co-production and social enterprise programs also encounter classic collective action problems, creating difficulties in mobilizing adequate volunteers or adequate participation in organization governance. More practically, co-production and social enterprise require managers of many public and nonprofit organizations to balance sometimes competing priorities for the benefit of the organizations; this effort often necessitates careful design of the governance of the local social innovations and skilled managers knowledgeable about building positive inter-sectoral relationships. In addition, many social innovations are relatively young, often begun with seed money from the public and/or philanthropic sectors. Many organizations lack extensive capitalization. Thus, the long-term sustainability of many social innovations remains to be determined and will definitely require the development of a diversified revenue base and long-term community and political support.

Given the relative youth of many innovations in the public services, policymakers and practitioners in local organizations could greatly benefit from more systematic social science research on the implementation and sustainability of these social innovations. For this reason, this book, edited by Matthias Freise, Friedrich Paulsen, and Andrea Walter, is especially welcome since it brings together a broad collection of chapters reporting on research on social innovation in a very diverse set of countries in Europe and the US. Collectively, these chapters provide valuable insights for scholars regarding our conceptual understanding of innovation and change in the public services as well as more applied analysis on the lessons for policy and practice of recent innovations. These chapters also provide an incisive window on the ongoing restructuring of the welfare state. Innovation in the public services has been driven in part by a desire by policymakers and citizens for a different welfare state than the traditional state-driven, top-down model that guided welfare state development in the post-World War II era. However, local innovations such as co-production initiatives may create both new forms of citizen engagement and possibly also new forms of inequality without substantially changing the overall trajectory of a country's welfare state. These chapters will help us to better understand the development of social innovations at the local level as well as their capacity for fundamental social change and welfare state reform. Thus, this book should be of broad interest to scholars, policymakers, and the staff and volunteers of local community organization interested in the improvement of the public services and effective remedies for social problems.

References

Bovaird,Tony and Elke Loeffler (2013): All in this together? Can citizens help transform public outcomes through co-production? INLOGOV Blog. Official Blog of the Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham. Online: http://inlogov.com/2013/07/08/coprod uction/

Table of Contents

Nailing Jello to the Wall: Civil Society and Innovative Public Administration 13
Matthias Freise, Friedrich Paulsen, Andrea Walter

I. Theoretical and Methodological Considerations on Innovative Public Administration and its Linkage to Civil Society 39

What is Innovation in Public Administration? Options and Limitations of Creativity 41
Friedrich Paulsen

More than Smoke and Mirrors? Systematizing Public Administration and Democratic Innovations 70
Matthias Freise

Innovative Public Administration and Democratic Legitimacy 96
Janine Tratzki

The Wish for Countability – A Qualitative Approach towards "Measuring" Innovative Public Administration 119
Christina Rentzsch

II. The Relationship between Public Administration and Civil Society at the Local Level – Empirical findings from Europe and the United States 145

Sister Cities in the United States and Germany: An Attempt of a Comparison 147
Kai Pfundheller

Between Unyielding Universalism and a Soft Spot: Perceptions of Hybrid Welfare Services in Denmark 168
Morten Frederiksen

Changing the Rules of the Game: Impact of the Urban Movement on Public Administration Practices 188
Anna Domaradzka

The Village Fund as an Innovative Tool of Strengthening Civic Participation in Rural Areas in Poland 218
Ilona Matysiak

Shaping Partnership with Informal Rules and Common Values: How Civil Society and Public Administration Interact in Participatory Governance. Lessons from Germany and the US 238
Andrea Walter

Early Childhood Education or Care? Local Childcare Expansion in Austria and the Role of Policy Ideas 265
Sonja Blum

Private Initiatives, Governance and Service Delivery at Local Levels – New Developments within the Childcare Services in Zagreb 285
Jelena Matancevic, Gojko Bežovan

Pushing for Innovation – the Role of Citizens in Local Housing and Childcare Policies in Warsaw 302
Anna Domaradzka, Ilona Matysiak

Housing Policy and Homelessness Support in Germany and the US: Continuity or Innovation? 325

Danielle Gluns

Civil Society and Open Government Data: Challenges and Opportunities 353

Thore Fechner, Katharina Obuch

III. Conclusion 377

Civil Society and Innovative Public Administration: Lessons Learned 379

Matthias Freise, Friedrich Paulsen, Andrea Walter

Index 393

About the authors and editors 397

Nailing Jello to the Wall: Civil Society and Innovative Public Administration

Matthias Freise, Friedrich Paulsen, Andrea Walter

In recent decades, public administration was the subject of many reform projects in almost every democratic country in the world. The reasons for this are manifold. However, two discourses have dominated the debate: In new public management discourse, the concern is that public administration needs to be organized in a more efficient and effective way than the classical bureaucratic system. And the discourse in democratic theory centers on how public administration needs a rejuvenating cure that introduces elements of deliberative, participative, and direct democracy to the rather hierarchical organized administrative machinery. In both discourses civil society is discussed as a proper partner for realizing innovations which aim to strengthen the input and output capacities of public administration. The chapter gives an overview about the current debate, introduces civil society and innovation as central points of reference, and aims to bridge the gap between public administration research and democratic theory.

Keywords: Public Administration, Civil Society, Administrative Innovations, Democratic Innovations, Definitions

The majority of the chapters collected in the anthology at hand are based on research conducted within the confines of “Innovative Public Administration” (PACT), an international research staff exchange project that was funded by the EU’s Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7). Project partners included the Department of Political Science at the University of Münster (Germany), the Department of Sociology and Social Work at Ålborg University (Denmark), and the Public Policy Institute at Georgetown University (District of Columbia, USA). The project’s core idea was to use a comparative and case study based approach to contribute to the debate concerning the advancement of the public sector’s performance. From a transatlantic perspective, each article considers (in various forms) the innovative public administration practices in urban areas where civil society is involved. Best practices are highlighted and opportunities for a successful policy transfer are discussed.

The project was guided by the following three objectives: In a first step, contributors identified the country-specific traditions of public administration in selected countries which are, due to their historical legacies, distinctive with respect to public administration. Subsequently, authors proceeded to analyze the innovative practices of public administration and governance against the background of the different cultural traditions, and the current innovations in public governance, in each national setting, are also addressed in this part. Finally, the project features case study research centered on the workings of innovation in public administration and governance and whether these innovations serve the needs of the people optimally.

Above all, this anthology presents results from the second and third research objective: In the first part, the ways in which the various concepts of innovative public administration are currently discussed in Germany, Denmark, and the US are compared and evaluated. Furthermore, theoretical and methodological considerations of public administration and how these considerations relate to civil society are undertaken. The second part presents case studies about the various urban policy fields that are currently objects of reform in the analyzed countries: child care, homelessness, urban development, and local housing. In each chapter, various instruments of innovative public administrations in the countries under study are portrayed, such as the participatory and deliberative approaches, online-based instruments, and sister cities as a specific form of citizen involvement. All contributions focus on how the existing approaches and instruments can be adapted to other countries with different traditions and path dependencies and discuss the circumstances of a successful implementation. The second part of the book thus serves as a collection of best (and sometimes worst) practices and addresses the policy makers and social scientists who are interested in democratic and administrative innovations in urban settings.

To broaden the second part of the book, additional case studies from Poland, Austria and Croatia have been included. These studies enrich the scope of the edited volume and fit nicely in the overarching idea of the PACT project: they contribute to the debate on how to make public administration more democratic, more efficient, and more effective by opening it up to non-state actors. While Austria shows many parallels to the German discussion (e.g., both countries are strongly shaped by the neo-corporatist tradition of state and civil society cooperation), Poland and Croatia, which are still relatively young democracies, are a fascinating addition to this book, since it experiments extensively with the implementation of various innovations in public administration, particularly on the local level.

1. Public administration, innovations, and civil society

Innovation in public administration is the focus of this anthology, particularly, those that are reorganizing the relationship between public authorities and civil society on the local level. Hence, it is necessary to develop analytical concepts of our central objects of research: What do we understand by public administration, civil society, and the local level? And how do we use the term innovation? Since these terms are currently used in many different discourses and are prime examples for scientific fuzziness, defining these concepts is like nailing jello to the wall. Nevertheless, most of the chapters provide frameworks for these concepts, making a comparison of the innovations in different countries possible.

We start with the concept of *public administration*. According to the UN Economic and Social Council's Committee of Experts on Public Administration (2006: 5), "[P]ublic administration is centrally concerned with the organization of government policies and programmes as well as the behavior of officials (usually non-elected) formally responsible for their conduct." On the local level, two facets of public administration can be distinguished. On the one hand, in all countries under study public administration is serving as an executive body for superordinate levels like the federal or state government, which instructs municipal officers according to a hierarchical logic. Here, public administration is strictly limited by instructions, and the officials are not allowed to deviate from the standards when executing their tasks. For instance, German municipalities are obliged to administer the local alien's registration and passport offices exactly as the federal level instructs, and they are not allowed to deviate from the defaults. Of course, the introduction of innovations in this part of public administration is highly unlikely.

On the other hand, all municipalities under study are authorized to organize aspects of their affairs more or less independently. Although the concept of local self-government varies in each country, cities (with the exception of Poland) are significant insofar as they have a long tradition of local democracy. This usually means that the citizens elect a city council to decide about local affairs, particularly the local budget plan, but also how to produce specific welfare services (e.g., child-care facilities, urban development programs, local traffic, sports, culture, waste management, etc.). In most of our investigated countries, it can be generally stated that aspects of direct democracy complement the representative model of local democracy, even if these aspects are used in very different ways.

However, in all our countries, citizens elect a mayor (and sometimes other administrative staff members) who leads the local administrative machinery according to the city council's decisions. Although the mayor's competences vary from country to country, the central point of reference is the local public administration. In the edited volume at hand we are interested in public administration under local self-government, since the cities here are more than mere auxiliaries to superordinate levels. Instead, these cities are authorized to administer their own affairs and they have the opportunity (if certain conditions are fulfilled) to experiment with administrative structures and procedures. A precondition of innovative public administration on the local level is, therefore, that the municipalities have at least the level of independence that a mayor affords.

But what is meant by *local level*? Most of the chapters collected in this book investigate innovative public administration in an urban setting; we consider incorporated municipalities that are shaped by relatively large populations and usually governed by a mayor and a board of councilmen. The countries under study have developed very different concepts of cities and towns. However, we are particularly interested in municipalities that have relatively large administrative organizations, which give cities the opportunity to experiment with the arrangement of public administration. In other words, the chapters focus on municipalities with a minimum amount of organizational slack – a pool of excess organizational resources; this pool is necessary to produce a given level of organizational output. Slack resources provide a cushion that allows organizations to successfully adjust to internal pressures as well as to initiate innovations, also strengthened by the involvement of external actors (Oviatt 1988). Although it is not undisputed, in recent years many contributions have suggested that organizational slack resources are the most important precondition of innovations (e.g. Tiwari 2003). Innovative measures are very difficult to implement in municipalities that are small villages, for instance, because they usually do not have any organizational slack available since all officials are completely occupied by their day to day work.

Furthermore, by focusing on larger municipalities in cities, the changing relationship between civil society and public administration can be studied in more detail because the local level is where most civil society activities take place (Zimmer 2007). There is obviously a reason why the local level is often referred to as a “school of democracy”, a place where people can practice democratic behavior (Putnam 2000). People are directly affected by public administration in their place of residence: Child care facilities, waste management, local public transport systems, urban development, and public housing are just a few examples of policies that affect the everyday life of citizens. Hence, there are many ways citizens can be activated to participate in policy making on the local level as opposed to the national level, as most of the programs aiming to facilitate civil society involvement in public administration are based on the local level.

Another concept being introduced in this book is *innovation*. With reference to Geißel (2013: 8), the PACT project defines innovation as new institutions, practices, and networks that have been implemented (1) consciously and (2) in a goal-oriented manner for (3) improving the functioning and the quality of public administration (4) under involvement of civil society actors, (5) no matter if similar institutions, practices, or networks were introduced in another country or administrative context earlier.

Thereby, we distinguish between *incremental* and *radical innovations* of public administration. Incremental innovations exploit existing administrative structures and procedures; they focus on cost or feature improvements in pre-existing services or processes and aim to improve the capacity of public administration by taking small steps towards the solution of a clearly defined problem. In most cases, the uncertainty concerning the success of the implementation of the innovation is relatively low since they have already been tested in other contexts and the results of the single measures are foreseeable. According to Geißel (2013: 9), these “innovations are often not invented, but reinvented or copied” from one context to another. In contrast, radical innovations are shaped by high uncertainty and are risky. By introducing totally new structures and procedures with unprecedented performance features into public administration, these innovations bring about extensive change and break with established routines and path dependencies. Two examples might illustrate this distinction: an example of an incremental innovation would be a municipality that introduces moderate deliberative codetermination procedures for parents in public child care facilities. And an example of a radical innovation would be a municipality that outsources its kindergartens to a public private partnership or transforms the whole system of urban welfare production.

As already mentioned above, innovations in public administration are discussed in the social sciences from two major perspectives, which usually do not reference each other: democratic and administrative innovations. The major concern of scholars focusing on *democratic* innovations is to enrich democratic decision making by complementing traditional forms of representative democracy with direct, deliberative, or participative procedures (Geißel and Newton 2012). Deliberative and participative approaches in particular are very attractive to civil society, which is shaped on the local level by a multitude of associations (Geißel 2009). Many of the democratic innovations which try to strengthen the deliberative component of decision making are dependent on the aggregative potential of clubs, unions, voluntary associations, and citizen action committees, which structure the debate among their members and play an important role in the process of interest articulation (Fung 2006). Participative democratic innovations are often dependent on civil society organizations, which are responsible for the alternative implementation of public services since this work usually requires a coordinating body (for a discussion of the state of the art in democratic innovations see Matthias Freise's chapter in this anthology). In other words: Democratic innovations are carried out to strengthen the input-legitimacy of democracy by opening public administration to the citizens and civil society organizations for more co-determination in the policy fields which were once organized by a more or less closed bureaucratic structure. Although democratic innovations have been attracting considerable scholarly interest over the past few years, like the new ECPR standing group[1], systematic, comparative research is still lacking (for an exception see the edited volume of Geißel and Joas 2013).

In contrast, researchers focusing on *administrative* innovations are to a lesser extent interested in the democratic value of civil society involvement. Instead they are aiming to enhance the output of public administration by opening old, established bureaucratic routines to co-governance with the citizens' associations that are engaged in the production of public goods. This *might* also contribute to a deepening of democratic procedures on the local level. However, the major concern is a surplus in efficiency, effectiveness, and management capacities of public administration, which are not necessarily related to a higher democratic quality.

---

[1] See the Standing Group's website on: www.democraticinnovations.net/.

Administrative innovations are usually investigated under the umbrella of public management research, whereas democratic innovations are the focus of empirical democratic theory. The book's contributions bring together both perspectives and examine the impacts of innovations on the quality of democracy and their consequences for the involved partners. Common nominator of the chapters is the reference to the inclusion of civil society in the public administration on the local level in different countries in Europe and America. But how do we operationalize civil society?

In this anthology, we deliberately set aside any attempt to provide a single definition and instead highlight the various elements that are inherent to most of the contemporary definitions of civil society. In the first place, almost all concepts of civil society used in this volume focus on a public sphere that is located between its neighboring spheres: state, market, and family; despite its many intersections with these neighboring spheres, it still holds an intermediary position. A distinction is often made between the narrow and broad sense of civil society. In a narrow sense, civil society includes only groups of entities, such as associations, foundations, unions, churches, or cooperatives, which Jürgen Kocka has defined as the "infrastructure of civil society" (Kocka 2003: 32). In a broad sense, civil society also includes temporary initiatives, movements, networks, and even internet blogs. In this book most of the authors favor the former perspective and use the term *organized civil society*. However, this book is not interested in legal statuses. Instead, contributors are interested in how organized civil society is shaped by a certain amount of permanency and organizational capacity. Voluntary associations and other third sector associations are textbook examples of organized civil society. But most of the authors would also include citizen action committees and mercantile communities without legal status to organized civil society; as long as an organizational structure has been active for a longer period of time, they are usually interested in getting involved in public administration procedures (Zimmer and Freise 2008: 22).

Besides the organizational aspect there is a further constitutive element of civil society: the civicness of its members. It is rather difficult to summarize the different elements that constitute this civicness. Nevertheless, it is generally characterized by non-violence and peaceful forms of protest, self-organization, deliberation and discourse, civility, and the acceptance of diverse values. The debate on social capital, in the sense of Robert Putnam (2000) as a "key component to building and maintaining democracy", is frequently connected to this dimension of civil society. Civil societies are thus, following the literary meaning of the term, civilized societies (Reichardt 2004: 36).

Finally, all concepts of civil society contain a normative and utopian component that is connected to democratic theory and includes images of democracy and societal justice (Cohen and Arato 1994). Since many general concepts of democracy exist, and ideas about humans and justice are all embedded in a complex system of values, there cannot be a coherent concept of civil society. Depending on the position of the authors – whether neo-liberal, conservative, socialist, social democrat, or communitarian –, the role of civil society in the further development of democracy, democratic participation, democratic decision making, and democratic governance will be defined in various ways by highlighting different democratic functions (Keane 1998). Nevertheless, the book's purpose is not to contribute to normative democratic theory but to broaden knowledge of the empirical reality of administrative and democratic innovations that involve civil society organizations. It is up to the reader to evaluate the results against the background of his or her own democratic conviction.

2. Current research on civil society and innovative public administration

To understand the current interpretations of innovation in the public sector and how it relates to civil society, we need to know the legacy of innovation. From its Latin background, innovation stands for renewal and reform. Usually, innovation is loaded normatively, as it often means, automatically, the development, advancement, and improvement of things. Organizations continuously grasp at innovation to gain legitimacy in changing environments: "Governance innovations are novel rules, regulations, and approaches that seek to [...] enhance legitimacy" (Anheier and Korreck 2013: 83). Because "the world is nonetheless alive with a seeming cacophony of approaches – old and new – on how to improve governance, and ultimately, policy outcomes" (Anheier 2013: 11), defining innovation means firstly to elaborate a descriptive-analytical tool. Therefore, research looking for innovation in the public sector needs to provide a definition of innovation that includes its concrete practices and programs (policy level – administrative innovations) or its new structures and institutional designs (politics level – democratic innovations).

For a long time now, the concept of innovation has been stressed in the engineering sciences, business, and economic studies. With his theory of innovation, Austrian Economist Schumpeter (1934) turned it into the widely used phrase it is today. He described innovation as a process of creative destruction. This means that a continuing structural change of economical patterns challenges individual *entrepreneurs* to take over the massive risks involved with investing in new and unknown products and processes when the profits from usual products and processes are decreasing to the point of collapsing. In the beginning of this process, economic pioneers set the stage with the development of core innovations; these innovations are followed solely by subsequent innovations that build on the core innovation. Finally pseudo innovations begin to appear before the push towards a new, authentic innovation becomes possible again by means of the occurring crisis. Innovation is the courageous breaking of new ground; at the same time, it destroys the incrusted structures.

Innovators need to fight against opposition and resistors, particularly when those grown and persisting structures gain access to powerful promoters in government or administration (Sørensen and Torfing 2011: 850). Crises definitely open up the window of opportunity for innovations, as they make the necessity for change a debatable issue in society.

Besides the classical and quite well known Schumpeterian approach, what are further definitions of innovation? In qualitative terms, for Hauschildt, innovation is a new product or process that differs from former products and processes and affect society as a whole (Hauschildt 2004). Another definition is provided by Vahs and Burmester, who thought more about the products and industrial production involved in innovation. They refer to innovation as the intentional enforcement of technical, economic, organizational, or social problem-solving that helps to reach goals in a manner that was formerly unknown (Vahs and Burmester 2005). On the one hand, actors working on fostering and pushing innovation are identified as the active and intervening variable, and on the other are the actors that need to react to the innovation, by either changing their behavior or adopting a different behavior.

Broader definitions of innovations are necessarily linked to the motivations of individual or collective actors, knowledge, and open-mindedness. As Golembiewski and Vigoda-Gadot state, “[A]n ideal type of a good innovative process is characterized by high motivation of individuals, groups, and organizations to acquire new information and to increase sources of knowledge about a relevant problem in order to stabilize turbulent social systems; and such an ideal process also involves openness and practical methods that can help turn a promising idea into an ongoing productive change" (Golembiewski and Vigoda-Gadot 2004: 172). The qualitative dimension of organizing innovations is, thus, much more than technological improvements. Innovation involves accessing new paths of cognition and thinking to interpret existing problems; it leaves behind old – but probably more comfortable – paths and patterns of thought. Besides the actor's behavior and cognitive schemes, innovation is embedded into respective contexts, as the innovator's objectives and intentions are "shaped within the context of his/her/its local theory and socio-economic environment" (Koch and Hauknes 2005: 9).

So it should have become clear that innovation is more than change, as change is an endemic feature of all organizations and societies. To understand innovation from a political science perspective, there must be a qualitative understanding of a specific change and how it relates to new cognitions and concepts of intelligent social entities as well as how it leads to a new behavior within a field of tension between actors and the structural, socio-economic context. In a rapidly changing society such a qualitative change occurs if and only if predetermined paths of development could be abandoned and structural problems could be tackled in a sustainable manner.

A decisive development of the use of the phrase "innovation" since Schumpeter's first definition is that besides individuals more and more organizations are being defined, most importantly, as the adaptors of innovations (an idea that guides their rules and preferences). Organizations are a basic feature of modernity. Actors fostering innovation are doing so in the context of organizations, and organizations always have their specific structures and logics of thought and appropriateness. Consequently, individual actors are interacting with collective actors. The institutional setting of collective actors creates an environment in which, on the one hand, specific actions are enabled, but, on the other, other actions are restricted. In such a context, innovative actors must deal not only with the preconceived notions of the respective organizational culture but also how these notions were initially learned. Innovators try to open up new pathways of possible action by interacting with their environment in an intelligent and sensible way.

The contemporary understanding of innovation is therefore far away from how it was understood in the 1960s and 1970s, namely, as an approach to the comprehensive planning of growth and socio-economic regulation. The trends of modern western societies are social fragmentation, scarce public resources, and increasing competition among cities and regions for remaining talent and capital. As a consequence, the classical and usually government-backed approach of planning toddled into a paradox: Governments – from the local up to supranational level – should enhance innovation. They should be innovative themselves. Unlike the past, when cross-subsidation of public enterprises, called municipal socialism, emerged in early modernity or a growing post-war economy in the 1950s and 1960s that filled the tills of the public sector and opened up the possibility to exploit new domains of administration, regulation, and policies, the public sector up to today is forced to achieve more output with less resources, to give away immediate influence and competences to markets and civil society, and – at the same time – to react to the increasingly differing demands of a more diverse society. Innovation therefore means that actors must learn to be creative; but creativity is to work with mere shadows of ideas, driven by a more or less vague desire than resolute intentions (Straub 1999: 145). Fostering radical innovation, as opposed to incremental innovation, is – bearing in mind the classical Weberian approach of bureaucracy – still shaping administering in public administrations, large organizations like welfare work or trade unions, and even numerous private corporations – the very complex and contradictive task of up-to-date governance.

2.1 How to innovate: Barriers and facilitating factors

As this edited volume focuses on the organizational forms of public administration and civil society, innovation as a process within organizations and as a result of interaction and collaboration among these organizations will be the focus of these investigations. By looking at organizations and their behavior and role in organized and highly industrialized western societies, innovation firstly became a topic of political science through researching policy diffusion (Rogers 1987: 75ff). By focusing on the organization’s capacity to innovate, the questions if, why, and how innovations are adopted, the spotlight was put on the phases of policy implementation and institutionalization of new approaches and led to the definition of inner-organizational structures and choices as important explanatory variables for possible change (Hannan 1986: 73). Without doubt, the organizational environments of public administration and civil society differ massively. Schliesky and Schulz (2010: 27) enumerate the public administration barriers that are hindering the successful diffusion of innovation among the public sector:

- The focus of politicians on short-term success as necessary for political profiling and re-election conflicts with long-term reform agendas, especially if these include uncertainty, the risk of failure – which is an inherent factor of radical innovation –, and the withdraw from well-known and preferred paths of policy-making and administrative procedures (see also Borins 2001).
- The sovereignty to appoint personnel, to decide over a budget, and sharpen demarcations of competences count as the modern insignia of administrative power and make public administration into an entity resistant to change. Picket fence alliances of specific policies – ranging from administrative stuff to politicians and lobbyists – will try to hold the strings in their hands rather than risk losing power. Innovation needs interdisciplinary approaches and projects uncoupled from strict hierarchies and competences, which are usually the features of administrative action.
- An uncoordinated number of projects trying to react to societal challenges conflicts with the administrative culture of formal competences and results in energy-zapping quarrels over competences. In the end, issues that are dealt with by the numerous, parallel handlings are unconvincing when mechanisms of control and coordination are quite new and not sufficiently approved.
- The system of competences and hierarchies is at odds with competition and other incentives for innovators; the outcome of administrative action is usually more of an authoritarian act than a product, and the achieved surpluses of more efficient and effective procedures are not an exploitable benefit for the respective administrative unit, often not even for the people the public service is assigned to (see also Kelman 2005).
- Alternative systems of norms, values, and loyalties need to exist inside administration, and they need to be visibly reliable and calculable for administrative personnel. What is known as change management on a project level is insufficient as the successful proliferation of such systems needs the change of the whole administrative culture, which affect the deep cognitions, beliefs, and mind-sets of social actors.

- A high level of professional qualifications and capacities needs to remain within public administration, as the rights of ultimate decision making, general control, and judicial review are domains of a sovereign government and the rule of law. Due to the networks formed in joined-up governments, legal experts and jurists in administration are often regarded as obstructionists to innovation; but their focus on legality, predictability, equality, and the separation of powers as the core identity of state action cannot simply be substituted by the logic of markets and economy.
- Processes of innovation are often shaped by the highly diverse interests of politicians, administration, private consultants, employee representation, and law firms as well as IT firms. The common denominator of these interests is difficult to find, particularly if principal-agent problems occur.

These barriers, however, need to be tackled by those who conceptualize innovation as a necessary outcome of policy making and institutional design. Looking at policy studies, innovation could be conceptualized as policy learning, which involves increasing the intelligence and valuable experience of individual and collective actors. While early policy studies explained specific policy developments as a consequence of subsequent experiences against the background of societal norms and values (Heclo 1974; Etheredge 1981; Etheredge and Short 1983), policy analysis in the 1990s searched for tools to increase the policy's capacity to improve effectivity and efficiency of output (Schubert and Bandelow 2003).

Concerning the explanation variable (Bandelow 2003: 3), innovation is the output of the actor's behavior, structural patterns, and cognitions; conversely, it also holds the potential to change and widens contextual restrictions. And concerning the latter perspective, an entity's capacity to learn is the dependent variable. If innovation is understood as a learning process, better tools and instruments of policies are required as well as a change of policy orientations and paradigms, making sustainable long-term change possible. Learning in particular is stressed since the corporatist organization of western societies is increasingly characterized by its structural reform blockades and deadlocks (Wolf 2007; Schultze and Zinterer 1999).

With learning as the explanatory variable for deep-core long-term changes, actors are required to accept a high degree of uncertainty in the forecasts concerning the consequences of new decisions in single policies (Erdmann 1993: 3). Situations in which actors accept acting under conditions of uncertainty are rare, but as the existing great paradigms – like the Keynesian story of ongoing growth and redistribution or the bipolarity of international politics – continue to lose explanatory power and appeal, new ideas and paradigms begin to spread from individual actors to collective actors, as problems and lacking explanations no longer affect only one group of society (Bandelow 2003: 19).

So what needs to be taken into account when tackling the paradox of planning innovations? Siebel, Ibert, and Mayer (2001) enumerate a number of principles describing how the two contradictions of planning and innovation could be brought together:

- To foster innovation, it is necessary to accept the fact that planning processes usually start without clear objectives. It is only possible to vaguely direct the guidelines into a direction – on a level of symbols and visions –, and rules of the policy process need to be open, flexible, and correctable. The classical approach of management that focuses on objectives needs to be replaced by the intentional organization of non-committal and non-binding processes and decisions (Siebel et al. 2001: 530).
- To foster innovation, there must be space for creativity. Mulgan and Albury (2003) define innovation as creativity plus exploitation. It needs extra-ordinary modes of planning, uncoupled from the usual planning procedures, hierarchies, and competences. Projects, festivals, open-space discussions, and visionary processes create opportunities; at the same time these opportunities need to be limited (e.g., time and content), otherwise they could collide with the principles of legitimate decision making, the predictability of state action, and the economic use of resources. Instituting deadlines could even produce the kind of stress necessary to overcome structural barriers (Siebel et al. 2001: 534).
- To foster innovation, there must be a strong focus on public relations, as public events and festivals could cause identification, engagement, and enthusiasm. As a consequence of such an emphasis on public relations, the boundaries between the material content of a project and its external communication are more than blurred. Public visibility, marketing, and the quality of the advertisements become decisive factors of the innovations themselves. But these aspects of public relations can also restrict the open and critical discussions of alternatives that are typical for political decision making.

- If single actors hold a wide scope of power, they don't need to collaborate with others to develop their power. Holding too much power makes learning unnecessary and generates a high interest in preserving the status quo. Planning innovation therefore needs the introduction of flat hierarchies and, at the very least, a symbolic equalization of power differences in projects and teams (Siebel et al. 2001: 535).

2.2 Distinctiveness of public sector innovations

Innovation in the public sector, different from the role of charismatic and great entrepreneurs in the private sector, is seldom the result of single actors. As market rules are far from being fully applicable in the public sector, public sector innovation is also not thoroughly driven by market competition. Public sector innovation is elevated through competition *and* collaboration (Kickert et al. 1997). It needs flat hierarchies and the collaboration of multiple actors – meeting at eye-level – and a governance of participation, empowerment, and deliberation. Actors with highly differing inherent logics should meet to carefully exchange ideas, and perhaps to slightly provoke, but always to inspire each other.

The current enhancement of innovation in the public sector through collaboration is closely connected to theories of network governance (Sørensen and Torfing 2011: 857). Innovation through governance means that public managers are increasingly transformed into the moderators and facilitators of open and flexible exchange and cooperation among the public and private entities that are relevant and/or affected (Nambisan 2008). Sørensen and Torfing redefine Jessop's concept of *metagovernance* – the regulation of self-regulation in a new innovation-based, international, and highly competitive economy (Jessop 2002) – as the new frame within public administration that takes over the part of facilitating network management instead of authoritarian rule. The networks that are capable of enhancing innovation, consequently, need to be open and welcoming to stimulate and activate societal actors (Siebel et al. 2001: 536). According to this interpretation, fewer governments open up the space necessary for creativity. The incorporation of third parties doesn't mean that the doors will be open for lobbyists; rather, it means that the relations and interactions between stakeholders on eye-level will be enabled as well as open and transparent communication and mutual learning (Siebel et al. 2001: 536). The more diverse the social environment is and the more open ties of cooperation are, the more creative local governance could be (Blatter 2006: 116; Florida 2005).

However, in terms of comparative research, searching for *the* one-size-fits-all innovation, which is to be ultimately used as a *best practice*, would be ignorant towards locally grown structures. As studies concerning the international spread of New Public Management (NPM) concluded, among different nation states the NPM (e.g., its content and ideas) showed a high convergence, but concerning the implemented policy tools and/or new practices and techniques, a high degree of divergence remained (Kuhlmann 2009: 45).

Innovations in public administration are often immediately connected to internationally well-known and widely cited models, stressed by international rankings, and open methods of monitoring (e.g., by supranational entities), leading to highlighting forerunners and shaming latecomers. There is a general acceptance of best practices, and using a comparative political science approach to trace these out of the millions of different administrative patterns and policy measures is doubtlessly of high interest and relevance. But whether a successful innovation from one location could easily be used as a blueprint for another, or even as a whole new policy program, should be critically scrutinized. Often enough, a closer look might show how internationally communicated models were adopted by local cultures and if the adoption was only a kind of *label pinning* instead of a far reaching change, simply to gain international legitimacy and avoid local conflicts. In any case, concepts always need to be translated, modified, and used in a selective manner when being transferred to a local environment, because the scope of the implementation of an innovation is highly context-dependent (Røvik 1992). Such caution limits foreseeable impacts, but it also points to the necessity of social research on cultural filters and sensible ways of exchange, adoption, and the problems that arise when best practice models are celebrated too quickly.

In this volume the attempts to find a fundamental definition and ultimately a theory of public sector innovation – whether they build on a more inductive or deductive approach – is determined by the individual researchers and their specific research questions and cases. However, it is quite clear that further case study research is needed to understand how innovation emerges, how it is sustained, and even how successful and meaningful the international exchange of ideas and experiences could be organized in a context-sensitive manner.

The editors of this volume relate this definition alongside the results of the single contributions and stress their implications in the concluding chapter. Last but not least, when dealing with innovations in public administration, the field of innovation must be broadened and interesting models of successful renewal must be formed; social science should, offensively, create the demand for research programs that trace innovations in policy making (administrative innovations) and institutional design (democratic innovations).

3. Structure of the anthology

This volume focuses on democratic and administrative innovations. Before presenting current empirical findings on both phenomenons, theoretical and methodological considerations on the strong linkage between innovative public administration and civil society on the local level will be elaborated.

The first part of the anthology deals with theoretical approaches for explaining the relationship between public administration and civil society. The authors define significant, historical considerations of public administration, and especially the meaning of innovation in the public sector as well as the role of legitimacy for public administration. Finally, methodological considerations of measuring innovation in public administration build the bridge to the empirical and contemporary second part of this volume.

This part is launched by *Friedrich Paulsen*, who investigates the relationship between innovation and the public sector, and its meaning in the absence of a market environment. He gives a state of the art review of innovation in the public sector from the perspective of politics and policies. The author discusses how innovation emerges, the meaning of being "innovative", and how innovation could be fostered. Finally, the chapter seeks to examine whether the one-size fits-all solutions to innovations are more promising than the context-sensible innovations that emerge from local environments with their own cognitions and values.

Matthias Freise asks how to assess the legitimacy of democratic innovations which involve civil society organizations in the processes of policy formulation and policy making in public administration on the local level. Based on the theory of Fritz Scharpf, the chapter develops a typology that combines the dimensions of democracy perception by stakeholders