

CHAPTER I

# Public organisations and the study of contemporary politics

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## INTRODUCTION

This edited volume combines three key ambitions. It examines three interconnected themes in political science: the nuts and bolts of (local) government, the complex and evolving relationship between politics and administration, and continuity and change in (local) government. This introductory chapter discusses these themes and outlines how this volume theoretically and empirically contributes to the discourse on each of them. In doing so, this volume also honours the contribution of Professor Dag Ingvar Jacobsen to these fields of political science studies.

This chapter is organised as follows: the first section discusses the nuts and bolts of (local) government and outlines the organisational dimension of politics, the second section examines the complex and co-evolving relationship between politics and administration, and the third section discusses continuity and change in (local) government, the final section outlines the contribution and structure of the volume.

## THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF (LOCAL) GOVERNMENT

Taking the Weberian model of bureaucracy as a point of departure, it is typically assumed that public bureaucracies possess capacities to shape government staff through mechanisms such as socialisation (behavioural internalisation through established bureaucratic cultures), discipline (behavioural adaptation through incentive systems), and control (behavioural adaptation through hierarchical control and supervision) (Page, 1992; Weber, 1983). These mechanisms ensure that public bureaucracies perform their tasks relatively independently from outside influences but within the boundaries set by the legal authority and (political) leadership they serve (Weber, 1947/2007). Causal emphasis is thus placed on the organisational structures of the bureaucracy and how they contribute to mobilising bias. The Weberian bureaucracy model provides a picture of organisations as creators of the “organisational man” (Simon, 1997) and as a stabilising element in politics more broadly (Olsen, 2010). According to this model, bureaucracies develop their own nuts and bolts quite independently of the societies to which they belong. The model implies that civil servants may act on roles that are shaped by the organisation in which they are employed. Key to the nuts and bolts of bureaucracy is how the bureaucracy itself is organised and institutionalised, as well as how it is embedded in a wider political order. Organisational dynamics and decision-making behaviour are thus primarily assumed to be defined by the “in-house” organisational structures of the government in question (Radin, 2012: 17).

The organisation of bureaucracy creates elements of robustness to bureaucratic processes, and concepts such as “historical inefficiency” and “path dependence” suggest that the match between environments, organisational structures, and decision-making behaviour is not automatic and precise (Olsen, 2010). An organisational approach suggests that the supply of organisational capacity has certain implications for how organisations and incumbents act. This approach starts from the assumption that organisational structures mobilise biases in public policy processes because organisations supply cognitive and normative shortcuts and categories that simplify and guide decision-makers’ search for problems, solutions, and consequences (Ellis, 2011; Schattschneider, 1975; Simon, 1997). There may be several reasons why international civil servants enact certain behavioural logics. The literature suggests two main mechanisms: *adaptation* through organisational rule-following and *internalisation* through “in-house” socialisation processes. Therefore, we suggest an analytical distinction between actor-level behavioural internalisation of roles and behavioural perceptions on the one hand and actor-level behavioural and role adaptation through control and discipline on the other (Checkel, 2007; Trondal et al., 2008).

However, Lipsky (1980: 19) famously claimed that the nuts and bolts of public bureaucracies are ultimately determined by actors’ conspicuous desire to maximise their own autonomy. By contrast, an institutional approach to politics argues that public governance is organisationally contingent. An institutional approach posits that the rules and routines established in a bureaucracy regulate, constitute, and bias the decision-making behaviour and role perceptions these evoke in civil servants, ultimately advancing bureaucratic autonomy (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004: 3). Thus, a theory of organisation also provides a theory of politics (Waldo, 1952). Civil servants live with a constant overload of potential and inconsistent information that may be focused on during decision situations. Institutional routines guide the decision-making behaviour of civil servants due to computational limitations and the need for selective search. Organisations create collective order out of cognitive disorder by establishing local rationalities among organisational members (March & Shapira, 1992). Organisations are systematic devices for simplifying, classifying, routinising, directing, and sequencing information towards particular problems, solutions, and decision situations (Cohen et al., 1972; Schattschneider, 1975: 58). Organisations “are collections of structures, rules and standard operating procedures that have a partly autonomous role in political life”, guiding incumbents to systematically emphasise certain aspects of organisational realities (March & Olsen, 2006: 4).

Every day, modern governments formulate and execute policies with consequences for society (Hupe & Edwards, 2012). This volume theoretically and

empirically illustrates that political orders and public problem-solving require *independent* administrative resources and capacities. One necessary, albeit insufficient factor in building political order for the collective pursuit of a common good is the establishment of a permanent and independent government apparatus that serves a common interest (Trondal & Peters, 2013). The rise of political order through institutional capacity-building and bureaucratic “autonomisation” is seen as a key ingredient of state formation (Bartolini, 2005). With the gradually increased role of bureaucracies, the literature has been occupied in studying the extent to which and under what conditions such institutions can formulate their own policies and transcend a mere neutral and passive role. The craft of political order, according to this volume, is to a large extent *brought about* by the autonomy of its bureaucratic arm, that is, by the ability of bureaucracies and their staff to act relatively independently of mandates and decision premises from exogenous actors.

Government ministries and agencies are vital components of the executive branch of government that play fundamental roles in the democratic governing of modern societies (Orren & Skowronek, 2017; Vibert, 2007). Contemporary public administration is conventionally portrayed as being based on a series of dichotomies: politics versus administration, coordination versus fragmentation, integration versus disintegration, trust versus distrust, etc. (Egeberg & Trondal, 2018; Ebinger et al., 2018; Olsen, 2017; Orton & Weick, 1990; Trein et al., 2020). As an alternative, this volume conceptualises and empirically demonstrates how government bodies at different levels of governance are driven by pragmatism characterised by the co-existence of multiple decision-making premises (Ansell & Trondal, 2018). Public governance is thus seen as a positive-sum process in which officials evoke multiple decision-making premises. To account for the composite aspect of government, this volume illustrates how institutional and organisational factors structure elements in the policymaking process and how these elements are powerful tools available to deliberate design. Moreover, the volume also suggests that hybrid structures, such as networks and collaborative arrangements, are established to master unruly public problems. Therefore, this volume also responds to the appeal from Gary King (2014: 165) that ‘the social sciences are undergoing a dramatic transformation from studying problems to solving them’. Tackling future policy challenges, including improving implementation and law enforcement, calls for knowledge about the possibilities for organisational design.

## COMPLEX AND EVOLVING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

### HORIZONTAL FEATURES

Organisations tend to accumulate conflicting organisational principles through horizontal and vertical specialisation. When examining formal organisations horizontally, one of the several important principles suggested by Luther Gulick (1937) is to organise according to the major purpose served – such as research, health, food safety, etc. This principle of organisation tends to activate patterns of cooperation and conflicts among incumbents along sectoral divisions (Egeberg, 2006). Coordination and contact patterns tend to be channelled within sectoral portfolios rather than between them. Arguably, organising according to the major purpose served is likely to bias decision-making dynamics inwards – i.e., towards the bureaucratic organisation where preferences, contact patterns, roles, and loyalties are directed towards sectoral portfolios, divisions, and units. This mode of horizontal specialisation results in less than adequate horizontal coordination *across* departmental units and better coordination within units (Ansell, 2004: 237). In short, different forms of horizontal specialisation are likely to foster different forms of horizontal governing processes.

The horizontal dimension of governing is often triggered in situations of crisis, partly because urgency requires the establishment of auxiliary capacities of a horizontal nature. Such situations, which confront governments and public organisations with *situational and transitional challenges* to react in timely and coordinated ways, often lead organisations towards horizontal solutions because established vertical structures are either absent, poorly developed, or have been deemed failures. Moreover, long-term turbulence challenges conventional wisdom on the condition for *long-term* robust governance in situations where events, demands, and support interact and change in highly variable, inconsistent, unexpected, or unpredictable ways. Turbulence creates novel dilemmas for public organisations and is likely to push government agencies to make difficult trade-offs, pulling them in contradictory, even paradoxical, directions. To mitigate such situations, processes of horizontal reconfiguration and pooling of knowledge, resources, and capacities may become attractive options for public actors. One potential organisational choice includes designing horizontal platforms for collaborative governance that distinguish them from existing governmental structures by their strong emphasis on the inclusion of various actors from both the public and private sectors (cf. Zyzak & Jacobsen, 2020). Platforms for collaborative governance are temporary, interstitial, or secondary structures that supply additional problem-solving capacity when addressing global or local challenges (cf. Jacobsen, 2016). Moreover, such horizontal structural arrangements represent

not only flexible platform arrangements in governance, but also useful design tools available to decision makers (Egeberg & Trondal, 2018).

By working together in the common performance of tasks, semi-formal and loosely institutionalised instrumental networks between different actors allow knowledge sharing, joint strategizing, pooling of resources, and policy design in view of specific public problems. Although conceived of as interim and relatively informal structures, these platforms may, over time, acquire a degree of institutionalisation and organisational capacity, particularly where they are based on relatively stable patterns of administrative collaboration (Trondal & Peters, 2013). Connecting different policy sectors, types of actors, functional areas, and fields of expertise, they form the building blocks for robust public governance in turbulent times (Orton & Weick, 1990). In short, understanding the role of these institutional architectures is essential to understanding politics and governance in an increasingly fluid and turbulent world (Ansell & Trondal, 2018). Institutional architectures are also flexible tools available for interventions in the governing of untamed public problems.

### VERTICAL FEATURES

While following a contingency perspective on organisations centred on the notion that different contingencies, including environments, resources, size, etc., favour disparate forms of organising, Jacobsen (2006: 304) contended that the relationship between politics and administration can be regarded as a functional division of labour between politicians (the so-called rulers) as principals and public administrators or civil servants, acting as agents. In relatively stable environments, a considerable degree of interaction between politicians and administrators can be formalised, minimising the requirement for direct interactions and, hence, conflict. In such circumstances, agents tend to follow standard operating rules and procedures that are intrinsically linked with their (hierarchically bound) roles, functions, and identities (March & Olsen, 2006). Given the “expectation of certainty”, environmental concerns are largely ignored, with public organisations and the governance/managerial systems in which they are embedded resembling a closed or inward-oriented system (Thompson, 2008).

Given the prevalence of hierarchical relations and predetermined roles in the context of relatively stable environments, *authority* becomes a salient issue, determining relations among different agents, including between and among politicians as *masters* and administrators as guardians or conservators of existing institutional arrangements and identities (Terry, 2015). As a social phenomenon, authority pertains to “a relation that secures coordinated

behaviour in a group by subordinating the decisions of the individual to the communicated decisions of others” (Simon, 1997: 186). As an instrument or tool for coordinating collective behaviour, hierarchical or vertical structures of authority perform three critical functions within organisations (Simon, 1997: 187–191). First, authority enforces the responsibility of the agent in question to those who wield the authority. In circumstances of disobedience, an elaborate predetermined set of sanctions may be enacted:

The notion of an administrative hierarchy in a democratic state would be unthinkable without the corresponding notion of a mechanism whereby that hierarchy is held to account. The question of responsibility must be a central issue in any discussion of the relation between administrative and legislative bodies, or in any analysis of administrative law. (Simon, 1997: 188)

Second, authority secures expertise in decision-making in light of bureaucratic rationality and administrative effectiveness. Specialisation, vertical as well as horizontal, is thought to ease decision-making and thus increase productivity, particularly in the case of large organisations (cf. March & Simon, 1958/1993). So-called experts are then located in strategic positions along the formal hierarchy of authority, i.e., “in a position where his [or her] decisions will be accepted as decisional premises by the other organisational members” (Simon, 1997: 189). To maximise expertise in terms of decision-making, one needs to move beyond the formal structure of authority, combining the “authority of sanctions” with the “authority of ideas” (Simon, 1997: 189). The latter is particularly pertinent in the context of dynamic and turbulent environments, where organisations need to mobilise repositories of in-house knowledge and experiences while tackling ambiguous and unforeseen or novel circumstances (Ansell et al., 2017; Pinheiro et al., 2022).

Third, authority allows for the coordination of activity within and across organisational boundaries (Simon, 1997: 190–191). In contrast to expertise, which involves the adoption of the best decision or solution in a given situation, coordination is, first and foremost, aimed at the joint adoption of the same decision or, in some circumstances, a set of mutually consistent decisions with the aim of achieving a predetermined shared goal or objective. As a process, coordination can take on a procedural and/or substantive aspect. Procedural coordination (the “how”) “establishes the lines of authority and outlines the sphere of activity and authority of each member of the organisation” (Simon, 1997: 191). In contrast, substantive coordination (the “what”) pertains to the content of the organisation’s activities (for insightful remarks on the challenge of coordination across central and local government organisations, consult Christensen & Lægreid (2008) and Jacobsen (2017)).

## CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN (LOCAL) GOVERNMENT

Public governance is characterised by its hybridity and tensions (Ansell, 2011; Ansell & Trondal, 2018; Emery & Giauque, 2014). One avenue of study has examined how national public administration balances competing steering signals (Olsen, 2010). Another strand of research has focused on the time dimension, that is, on how public administration balances continuity and discontinuity across time (Pierson, 2004; Howlett & Goetz, 2014). Societal transformations evoke concerns about the sustainability and resilience of public administration and public governance (Christensen & Lægread, 2009; Pollitt, 2008). Times of societal rupture and political unrest call upon public organisations to adapt, anticipate, reform and innovate – and at greater speeds. Contemporary public governance faces increased calls for change (e.g. during the recent COVID-19 pandemic), triggering widespread institutional soul-seeking and questioning of the changing role of the state in society and the economy (Pollitt, 2011).

Faced with calls for the transformation of public governance, one body of literature suggested that public sector organisations are indeed innovative and responsive to reform demands, thus profoundly unstable in the long-term (e.g. Ansell & Trondal, 2018). Another strand of literature focused on how government institutions and public governance processes are *profoundly* stable across time, and thus *profoundly* path-dependent with an embedded status quo bias (Pierson, 2004: 42). Whereas architects of administrative reforms claim to transform the nuts and bolts of public governance through design measures (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992), studies suggest that results come neither automatically nor efficiently (March & Olsen 1989). These insights are important since times of administrative reform and turbulence increasingly test the stability of public organisations and the reliability of public service delivery (e.g. Alvesson & Spicer, 2019; Ansell & Trondal, 2018; Olsen, 2017).

Theories of institutional change argue that change dynamics across the public sector can be approached from three distinct analytical lenses (Christensen et al., 2007). First, an instrumental view on adaptation and change argues that government-led reforms occur in a linear fashion, with results emerging from the rational implementation of predetermined plans set in motion by reform designers. In these situations, reform objectives and policy changes are seen as causally connected. A second constructivist perspective contends that reform processes are largely symbolic, underpinned by hegemonic scripts, rituals, and myths that, once adopted, infuse public organisations with positive legitimacy claims, with regard to being “modern”, “responsive” to environmental and/or stakeholders demands, “entrepreneurial”, etc. Finally, a third historically-oriented perspective contends that change is largely an incremental evolutionary process laden with cultural features and local attributes. In this context, it is



argued that the degree of change is a function of the extent to which reform scripts consider the layered set of institutionalised norms, values, and identities of those working with public agencies. In circumstances where there is a clash between reform logics/objectives and institutional imperatives, decoupling is likely to occur (Oliver, 1991), with local actors shielding their organisations from being co-opted by external influences and strategic interests (Selznick, 1966; Thompson, 2008).

Studies from Norway suggest that there are a number of institutional barriers preventing the influence of bureaucratic or administrative thinking among politicians (Jacobsen, 2011). Not only are political newcomers more susceptible to being influenced by seasoned bureaucrats and kept “at arm’s length” from the administration, but it is also the most experienced politicians (i.e., those holding more stable attitudes) who more frequently interact with the administration. In this respect, these so-called “political ‘veterans’ thus function as a buffer for the bureaucratic influence into the rest of the political milieu” (Jacobsen, 2011: 637).

## OUTLINE OF THE VOLUME

Following an introductory chapter by the editors sketching out the broader outlines and ways in which the volume is organised thematically, Morten Egeberg (Chapter 2) focuses on the importance of design-related features in the context of contemporary public policy and administration (PPA). Egeberg refers to the fact that, somewhat surprisingly, scholars across the field have largely focused on issues related to policy design, neglecting the important role played by design features at the meso-level of the organisation. He argues that an organisational design-focused approach to PPA is warranted, as the interesting effects being observed are related to classical political science-dependent variables such as the governance process and the content of public policy rather than societal and environmental (classic policy approach) effects, aspects that are located outside the political-administrative sphere. Having sketched out his argument regarding the relevancy of design in PPA – rather convincingly in our view – Egeberg concludes by stating that the two approaches are complementary and that while addressing practical problem-solving situations, “policy-makers certainly need knowledge on how particular policies might affect the society, economy or environment, but also on how such (desired) policies may actually materialise in a systematic manner.”

Chapter 3, by Hanne Foss Hansen, takes stock of the existing literature on public sector leadership, exploring the conditions facing public leaders and the extent to which existing theories do help them cope with the complexities, ambiguities, and challenges they face on the job. She begins by pointing out

that the wide array of current theoretical approaches emanated from specific historical and national contexts that were influenced by different societal developments and challenges. Public sector leadership, she argues, is carried out in a political (and politicised) context characterised by multiple stakeholders or interest groups and a wide variety of strategic interests, values, and expectations. In recent times, leaders have faced several crises (e.g., the 2008 financial crisis, government reforms, and the COVID-19 pandemic), which have brought to the fore the importance of efficiency and effectiveness alongside stronger accountability requirements. Conventional leadership thinking, Hansen shows, subscribes to the notion that not only is the process controlled from the top but also that both followers and results emerge from organisational design (endogenous) features rather than any other emerging or exogenous variables. Hansen concludes the chapter by arguing that conventional, generic leadership theories have the potential to help leaders cope with specific issues they face but that context-specific theories are needed in the context of rising hybridity and that a mix of approaches will ensure that contextual, situational, and relational elements associated with leading in the public sector are adequately addressed.

In Chapter 4, Dag Olaf Torjesen, Tor Ivar Karlsen, Charlotte Kiland, and Morten Balle Hansen investigate public service motivation among local government administrative managers in Norway and Denmark. Using the analytical lens of Public Service Motivation (PSM), which pertains to “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organisations and that seem to be more prevalent in public government than in private sector organisations” (Perry & Wise, 1990: 368), the study builds on survey data (from 2016 and 2017) from three managerial levels, investigating the following: a) attraction to public policymaking, b) commitment to the public interest, and c) compassion. The findings show that Danish managers are more dependent on and woven into the political system, whereas Norwegian administrative managers rank higher in terms of commitment to the public interest and compassion. In both countries, managers at lower hierarchical levels were found to score higher in compassion. The study not only contributes to the scarce knowledge on the behaviour of local administrative elites from a PSM perspective, but also provides the basis for future research and time-series data on current changes facing local governments across the Nordics.

Charlotte Kiland and Zuzana Murdoch (Chapter 5) contend that although much academic attention has been devoted to leadership inside organisations, important insights can also be derived from investigating the leadership of organisations. In so doing, the main aim is to revisit Selznick’s (1957) conception of the leader-statesman, a somewhat neglected aspect of contempo-

rary leadership studies. Building on documentary evidence and interviews with elite informants (2015–2016) involved with the Norwegian Public Roads Administration, the authors confirm their theoretical propositions derived from micro-institutionalism (agentic role of leaders as salient social agents) regarding three key leadership functions: a) the introduction and development of new mental models, b) the cultivation of external supporting mechanisms that foster legitimacy, and c) defense against organisational extinction or death. Among other aspects, their findings lend support to the notion that leaders exploit strategic inflection points as windows of opportunity to create institutional change by communicating new organisational visions through stories and myths. The study also shows that leaders reinforce the institutional continuity of newly developed practices by developing internal and external supporting mechanisms and by setting up defences against the deinstitutionalisation of new practices. Overall, the study contributes to the understanding of how leaders create and maintain institutions in a new and divergent field while also drawing important lessons in the context of multi-level and collaborative governance arrangements.

In Chapter 6, Lene Pedersen, Lotte Andersen, and Nanna Thomsen integrate insights from public administration and community psychology into the study of local political leadership while investigating the associations between five leadership indicators, PSM, and sense of community responsibility (SOC-R). Their study asks how PSM and SOC-R are associated with (present and potential future) formal positions among Danish local councillors and their behaviour. To address this question, they utilised a nationwide survey (2019) of local councillors based in the country's 98 municipalities. The data showed that PSM is positively associated with having a formal leadership position (mayor or committee chair), while SOC-R is associated with the intention to run for re-election, transformational leadership, and the use of verbal recognition. Neither PSM nor SOC-R was found to be associated with consensus building. These findings suggest that PSM and SOC-R are both relevant for local political leadership but that other factors (e.g., membership of the dominant coalition and perceived influence) should also be taken into consideration. The authors contend that future studies of political leadership should include different motivational factors, pay attention to the interaction between motivation and institutions, and focus on classical factors, such as perceived influence.

In Chapter 7, Anne Lise Fimreite and Yngve Flo study the County Governor as a multilevel actor who shapes Norwegian local government reforms. They describe how a Norwegian local government reform was coordinated across government levels from the initiative (Spring 2014) to when a recommendation on reforming the municipal structure was presented (Autumn 2016). The focus was

on the role of the 18 county governors in the process. Norwegian county governors are civil servants with strong positions as mediators and liaison officers between the central and local levels. Their roles are differentiated according to the particular needs and characteristics of their respective counties. During the reform process, the county governors were given a twofold designated role: a) guides for local processes that could lead to mergers between municipalities and b) nominators of which specific municipalities the parliament should decide to merge. No concrete mandate as to how this twofold role should be handled was given, and the county governors interpreted the role differently. Based on rich qualitative material, the chapter presents empirical evidence of their different interpretations. The authors conclude that the ambiguity in the mandate was a factor that made this multilevel reform possible – despite several historically based conditions and presumptions. Ambiguity thus became an important element in the meta-governance of this multilevel reform.

In Chapter 8, Alexander Berzel and Tanja Klenk examine meta-governance in the social investment state, with empirical lessons from Germany. Over the last two decades, the emergence of a new social policy paradigm – the social investment state – has been widely discussed. This paradigm shift in social policy is also interesting from a public administration perspective since the new paradigm is characterised by a strong interest in the operational dimension of welfare state policy. In this respect, local networks with cross-sector coordination are considered crucial to achieving social cohesion. The “rules of the game” for local networks, however, are often defined by higher state levels. Studying the vertical-horizontal intersection of social investment policy is particularly interesting for administrative systems that are characterised by a strong emphasis on vertical lines. Germany is a case in point. The authors examined 48 projects in 16 German states. Analytically, the chapter draws on the meta-governance approach and examines how higher state levels encourage and facilitate local networks. Benefiting from expert interviews and policy document analysis, the chapter shows that German state ministries make frequent use of meta-governance tools and the chapter argues this as being a sign of policy learning to overcome typical problems of network governance, such as weak links, structural holes, or illegitimacy. However, the data also reveal the limitations of the recent policy approach. So far, the meta-governance tools have not been used strategically. Critically reflecting on the role of meta-governance is thus the next step in making the social investment state sustainable.

Chapter 9, by Stefan Gänzle, seeks to understand the extent to which participants from non-EU countries have been integrated (external differentiation) into the (experimentalist) governance architecture defined by the EU’s macro-regional strategies (EU MRSs). Europe’s “macro-regions” cover a territory

spanning 19 EU member and nine partner states. By focusing on common policy challenges and problems in areas susceptible to functional cooperation, such as infrastructure development and environmental protection, the EU MRSs seek to mobilise a range of actors across various jurisdictions and scales. Using experimentalist external governance as an analytical lens and drawing on semi-structured interviews conducted in 2018–19, the chapter maps the scope of the involvement of partner countries and examines predominant external differentiation logics. The analysis shows that foreign policy logic has superseded a functionalist-driven technocratic networking approach between the EU and its neighbouring states. The chapter concludes with the assertion that the EU MRSs primarily function as test beds for strategy formation, in general, and forms of external differentiated integration, in particular, underpinned by trans-governmental relations.

In Chapter 10, Signy Irene Vabo examines the administrative impact of democratic innovations. She argues that politicians depend on their administrative capacity to plan and implement democratic innovations. Democratic innovations are government-initiated participatory processes that involve citizens and local officials in policymaking that concerns problems that affect them. Based on the literature on democratic innovations, public value and new public governance, this chapter shows how not only politicians but also administrators are assumed to want to seek out interaction and dialogue with citizens. However, if administrators' approaches to citizen interaction differ from and/or are in conflict with those of elected representatives, the influence exercised by the administration on public policy can pose a threat to representative democracy. The essay explores the following question: To what extent and under what circumstances are elected representatives and administrators presumed to have diverging or converging needs when it comes to interaction with citizens? Based on a systematic review of the literature, a framework is presented for analysing the potential for participatory innovations to support the role played by elected representatives. The analytical framework is based on a categorisation of various requirements for interaction, alongside considerations of who controls the participatory arenas in question. Empirical examples from Danish and Norwegian local governments demonstrate the use of the framework for analysing a specific democratic innovation.

Chapter 11, by Kristoffer Kolltveit, examines the role of communication advisers in public bureaucracies that occupy a domain between politics and administration. According to the Weberian ideal, civil servants should be employed based on merit and competence. Unlike politicians, civil servants should carry out their duties anonymously and without passion. Increasingly, over the last few decades, in response to the constant need to respond to the

media and be visible in the press, nonpartisan communications professionals have been employed in ministries across Western democracies. Although hired as civil servants, these actors often work to defend ministers and secure favourable press for both them and the ministry, which has raised concerns about the politicisation of the civil service. The chapter reviews the work of communication professionals in public bureaucracies. Drawing on electronic surveys of communication advisers, ministerial advisers, and civil servants, the chapter argues that communication advisers in Norwegian ministries are not quite civil servants, not quite politicians. Rather, they are a different type of civil servant that functions at the intersection of political leadership and line departments.

Chapter 12, by Christian Lo and Asbjørn Røisland, explores the interaction between political and administrative leadership in Danish and Norwegian local governments. While the two neighbouring countries share a similar governance tradition, which makes them suitable for comparison, there is one important difference regarding the interaction between political and administrative leadership: while Danish mayors are formal leaders of municipal administrations, Norwegian mayors are only leaders of the council. This chapter explores to what extent such formal differences impact the perceptions political and administrative leaders have about the everyday relationship between politics and administration. Empirically, the analysis draws on data from in-depth qualitative interviews with a set of top Danish and Norwegian municipal political and administrative leaders, all of whom have recently implemented institutional changes to their leadership. The chapter illustrates the relationship between political and administrative leadership.

In Chapter 13, Jacob Aars examines local governments' access to central-level decisions in Norway. The aim of this chapter is to discuss some of the channels available to the municipal sector that could grant them access to central government decision-making fora. How can municipalities influence national policy in ways that benefit local government? The chapter discusses several potential access channels: a) the local government interest group, Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), b) political parties, c) the political career path (i.e., Members of Parliament with a background in local government), d) sector links between levels of government, and e) local/regional government represented by the County Governor. The chapter demonstrates that although municipalities have numerous potential access channels, they vary in terms of effectiveness. Aars concludes that the portrayal of municipalities as impotent victims of an over-eagerness by the state needs to be supplemented by studies that provide detailed analyses of how municipalities use their potential access channels.

Chapter 14, by Nils Arne Lindaas and Pål E. Martinussen, investigates whether the share of private kindergartens in Norwegian municipalities results from local political-ideological dynamics or more pragmatic economic considerations. In the last three decades, public sector reforms have typically promoted market competition and privatisation, often under the heading of New Public Management (NPM). This has, among other things, led to the contracting out of public services, particularly at the local level. Using longitudinal data from Norwegian municipalities (2001–2016) and panel data analysis using different estimation techniques (pooled OLS, between effects, fixed effects, and random effects), the findings show that pragmatic considerations outperform political and ideological considerations both across and within municipalities. Municipalities with higher incomes and larger populations were found, on average, to possess smaller shares of private kindergartens. That said, the fixed-effects models were found to have low explanatory power compared with other models, suggesting that changes within the municipalities explain less of the variance in the share of private kindergartens than do changes over time. Overall, the study adds new empirical evidence to a growing body of literature on the weak effects of the local political situation on local privatisation.

In Chapter 15, taking Stein Rokkan's claim that "geography matters to politics as to the formation of political institutions" as a point of departure, Jon P. Knudsen sheds light on governance dynamics and centre-periphery divisions throughout the Nordics. Across the region, geography has come to be identified with issues like nation-building, electoral behaviour, welfare distribution, demographic sparsity, and regional policies. The geographical steering system hinges on the coexistence of a strong state and strong municipalities, leaving little room for the (quasi) federal regionalism forms found elsewhere in Europe. A major finding is that governance actors at different levels seek to bypass each other, with the state seeking support among the municipalities, and regions seeking international fora (such as the EU) to legitimatise their cases. Recent attempts across the Nordic countries to institutionalise regional interests within the context of a second administrative tier have largely failed. Knudsen suggests the development of a novel governance model in the form of contained regionalism. This is underpinned by the notion that strong regional divisions within each of the Nordic countries have become co-opted into steering systems where the state has been sufficiently attentive to regional interests (in the form of national policy schemes) while counting on strong municipalities to take care of the finer-grained elements.

Chapter 16, by Carsten Greve, examines partnerships that seek change in local governments. The chapter examines the various ways that local governments enter into partnerships to advance organisational change agendas and

create new public value. Local governments have become more inclined to participate in partnerships in recent years. These partnerships could be with other local, regional, or central governments, as well as with organisations from the private sector. Such partnerships entail new requirements for local governments. For example, local governments need to give up some of their decision-making power to enter into partnership arrangements. The chapter provides empirical examples of partnerships in Denmark and ends with a discussion of strategies available to local government managers as they contemplate future partnerships to address issues such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Chapter 17, Åge Johnsen discusses strategies for change in municipal structural reforms. Using survey data from top and middle managers in six Norwegian municipalities, this chapter explores how two change management strategies, emphasising either the economic results of the change (strategy E) or the organisational process of change (strategy O), affect three dimensions of commitment to change in municipal reforms. Common theories of change management have predominantly been based on studies of private corporations in North America. These theories, therefore, may be unsuitable in a Nordic public sector context. The analysis indicates that the change management strategies were related to some dimensions of commitment to change but sometimes in unexpected ways. In particular, strategy O seemed to have a positive relationship with affective commitment to change but a negative relationship with continuance commitment to change. For strategy E, the relationships were reversed. Strategy O, with its emphasis on stakeholder participation, may complement pragmatism and Nordic work life and public management traditions better than strategy E. The findings also confirm that when the leadership perceives significant resistance to change, it uses a process-oriented more than a results-oriented change management strategy. The chapter contributes to the change management literature by providing empirical analyses of a common theory for change management and how strategies for change are used in politically contested reforms.

Chapter 18, by Tom Christensen and Per Læg Reid, studies representative and responsible bureaucracy via a longitudinal dataset spanning 40 years of Norwegian central government. The chapter regards the demographic profile of civil servants in the Norwegian central government from 1976 to 2016. Based on theories of representative bureaucracy and responsible bureaucracy, the relationship between structural features and demographic features is surveyed. A main finding is that the civil service is not representative of the citizens and that this pattern is stable over time. The study reveals that the major factor for understanding bureaucrats' decisions, actions, and priorities is first and



foremost, their own position or organisational location. However, the data show that there has been a gender revolution and a large increase in the share of social scientists. Social background was found to have a weak effect on how bureaucrats work in practice. This contrasts with the importance of organisational factors. The study illustrates the challenges of representative bureaucracy in central government systems throughout Northern Europe, characterised by the salience of a professional merit-based system in the context of (still) rather homogeneous societies, as is the case in Norway.

Finally, in Chapter 19, Sanna Tuurnas, Tuula Jäppinen, and Elias Pekkola undertake an investigation of the role of institutional design in collaborative innovation processes in the context of Finnish public administration. Using a multiple case study approach, the authors examined five collaborative innovation processes based on the co-design method. Building on the growing literature on collaborative innovation, the analytical framework used in the study centres on the notion of the systemic adaptability of institutional design underpinning collaboration. The authors argue that the adaptability of institutional design, manifested in the form of rules, norms, procedures, and routines, has a great impact on the dynamics of collaborative innovation processes and their outcomes. More specifically, and as a way of identifying key patterns across the cases, the study examines four key elements: a) the aims of collaborative innovation programmes, b) the key stakeholders involved in the process, c) the scope of co-production, and d) the systemic adaptability of institutional design. The findings, mirrored in earlier studies, point out the relatively low level of involvement of politicians in collaborative processes. In addition, the study found that national policies and legal frameworks play a bidirectional role in supporting collaborative innovation. Legal frameworks were not found to act as key change drivers; however, national-level policies were identified as playing a critical role in steering the projects. Overall, the study emphasises the importance of systemic adaptability despite the fact that Finnish public organisations seem to be guided by systemic limitations, hindering the potential for collaborative innovation.

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