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The Social Innovation Perspective in the Public Sector: Co-creation, Self-organization and Meta-Governance

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Introduction

Innovation is a recurring issue in public administration that has achieved more and more attention as an independent field of interest and investigation during the last years. Its popularity depends also on the fact that it can be considered as a ‘magic concept’ (cf. Pollit and Hupe, 2011). Magic concepts are policy concepts that policy-makers use to frame and justify the need and necessity of specific changes in the public sector. Innovation is a concept that inspires people and policy-makers because it offers the promise of radical change, while at the same time it tries to convince other people that change is inevitable. As such, the desire to innovate the public sector has a long history which is sometimes linked to reform programmes in order to meet budget cutbacks, to meet the introduction of new management and governance ideologies (like New Public Management or Open Government) or to meet the introduction of new information and communication technologies (like e-government) (Bekkers et al., 2013a). In the previous chapters, we described and analysed how innovation practices in the public sector have developed themselves and what relevant drivers and barriers are.

At this moment, the innovation journey on which the public sector in many western countries has embarked sails under a new flag, which is called ‘social innovation’ (Bekkers et al., 2013a, 2013b). For instance, President Obama has established a Social Innovation Fund. This fund is a policy programme of the Corporation for National and Community

Service, which combines public and private resources to grow promising community-based solutions that have evidence of results in any of three priority areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures and youth development. The idea behind this fund is derived from a speech that Obama gave on June 30 2009: 'Solutions to America's challenges are being developed every day at the grass roots – and government shouldn't be supplanting those efforts, it should be supporting those efforts'.¹ The British Prime Minister Cameron incorporated social innovation in his view on the so-called Big Society or 'Small Government'. In this manifest, dated 2010, he tries to reframe the role of government, thereby embracing the idea of social or community entrepreneurship. The idea is to give local communities more power and to encourage people to play an active role in these communities. The assumption is that these communities set up cooperations, charities, mutual and other social enterprises to deal with the local and concrete needs that citizens encounter.² Last but not the least, the European Commission has also embraced social innovation as a relevant reform agenda. Social innovation is 'about new ideas that work to address unmet needs. We simply describe it as innovations that are both social in their ends and in their means'.³ As such social innovation is the new magic concept that policy-makers use to justify a set of reforms which fundamentally touches upon the traditional role of government in society. Hence, it is important to get a more profound understanding about the nature of social innovation in the public sector.

Why have policy-makers within the government of the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Commission embraced the idea of social innovation? The magic of the social innovation concept is based on the fact that it tries to meet two goals (Bekkers et al., 2013a). The first goal of social innovation is to overcome vital challenges with which modern western societies are nowadays confronted. An example is the increased life expectancy of citizens, which leads to an increased demand for specific services and new ways of organizing health care, pensions and housing. Another example is the deprivation of specific areas in cities and in the countryside, which leads to new social, economic and cultural inequalities that might influence the access that children have to education (Mulgan, 2009). Social innovation can be therefore seen as a story, a seductive tale that policy-makers, politicians, social entrepreneurs, citizens and consultants tell about how to tackle specific social and political challenges. In doing so, concepts like social innovation provide a common language (Edelman, 1967, 1976). The second goal of social innovation is more general and related to the

(diminishing) role of the government. This is related to the financial and budgetary crisis in the public sector. As a result of this austerity, a discussion has been started regarding the role that government organizations play in the provision of all kinds of services and (semi-) public goods. For instance, is it possible or desirable to have a public library without having a professional librarian present? Or, is it possible and desirable that the inhabitants of neighbourhood, together with relatives, take care of the sick and elderly people by providing them with warm meals, companionship and other forms of social support. As a result, social innovation often functions as catalyst to discuss and explore new coordination and governance and public service arrangements.

What we see is that in the slipstream of social innovation, the idea of self-organization and self-organizing communities are put forward as an alternative for traditional government-based public services (Edelenbos and Meerkerk, 2011; Nederhand et al., 2014). Typical for these self-organizing initiatives is that citizens are seen as initiators of co-creators of new public services (Voorberg et al., 2013). However, at the same time this does not imply that the role of government is obsolete. It requires not only another way of government action and steering but also other competences that civil servants or administrators have to develop in order to facilitate and support the emerging of these self-organizing communities. Very often these self-organizing communities are been perceived as the flagships of social innovation. Therefore, we explicitly pay attention to the emergence and development towards self-organizing communities as it appears to become important in different public spheres and sectors like (sustainable) energy, housing, health care and social services. From our view, this is an interesting perspective because the emergence of these self-organizing communities in the slipstream of social innovation implies that the traditional roles of governmental actors facing and responding to social innovation are changing. We will argue that social innovation doesn't take place in an institutional void and implies that roles of actors and rules of the game need to change as well. This also influences the way in which government can stimulate or foster social innovation practices which are based on self-organization. Hence, the goal of this chapter is to conceptualize the role that self-organization plays in social innovation and to explore in which kind of governance arrangements self-organization can take place.

This line of reasoning also structures the outline of this chapter. First, we address a number of relevant aspects of social innovation in the public sector (Section 2). Second, we address the role that is attached

to citizens as initiator or co-creator of public services in the context of self-organization (Section 3). Third, we also pay attention to the more meta-governance role governments pursue when they are involved in supporting and facilitating self-organizing networks (Section 4). In relation to this meta-governance role, we also address the competences and style of leadership that are necessary to deal with these community-driven initiatives (Section 5). A conclusion will be given at the end of this chapter (Section 6).

The concept of social innovation

Social innovation is perhaps even a fuzzier concept than innovation itself. Moreover, it is in many cases a normative concept (Bekkers et al., 2013b). Furthermore, the literature on social innovation is dominated by 'grey literature', such as policy advisory reports, applied research memoranda and normative 'to-do' lists (Mulgan, 2009; Howaldt and Schwarz, 2010). The fuzziness of the concept also depends on the different intellectual sources which lay behind the concept. Some policy-makers and academics were discontent with the strong emphasis on technology in the innovation and innovation policy literature, given the fact that technology is often considered to be a vital source for innovation, thereby offering new pathways. Hence, some scholars saw empowerment as a vital source of innovation, for instance in urban planning and urban development (Moulaert et al., 2005; Caulier-Grice et al., 2012). The second source of inspiration was the question that was raised in relation to the emergence of so-called wicked problems, like energy scarcity, ageing, climate change, mass urbanization. The complexity of these issues and the necessity to involve multiple stakeholders called for arrangements so that specific expertise and other resources could be brought in (Caulier-Grice et al., 2012; Nicholls and Murdock, 2012). That is why some scholars define social innovation as 'collaborative innovation' that takes places in networks, thereby relying heavily on citizen or end-user involvement (Sørensen and Torfing, 2011; Pestoff, 2012). Third, social innovation has also been embraced as a relevant concept in management and organizational research, where it refers to different aspects, like the role of social capital as a necessary condition of organizations to innovate, the role of social responsibility and social entrepreneurship, the development of new ways of working thereby looking for a new work/life balances as well as the role of transformative leadership (Moulaert et al., 2005). A final source of inspiration are scholars and policy-makers that are focused on the

transformation of complete systems (e.g. the conceptualization, design, production and distribution of products and goods) in order to address social and environmental needs and market failures, which also implies the establishment of new social relations (Nicholls and Murdock, 2012).

Mulgan (2006) defines social innovation as ‘innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly developed and diffused through organizations whose purposes are social’. Bason (2010, p. 96) defines social innovation as innovation for the social and public good, or as new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. Bates (2012, p. XIX) perceives social innovation ‘as the process of addressing the world’s most pressing challenges with novel solutions that are better than current solutions, new to the world and beneficial for society as a whole and not just a single entity’. Cels et al. (2012, p. 4) perceive ‘social innovation as the attempts to transform the way societies address social problems and produce public goods and services’ [...] ‘in order to improve social outcomes and creating public value’. The European Union (2010) looks at social innovation as innovation that is social in its ends and in its means, thereby embracing new ideas that meet social needs by creating new social relationships which often leads to new forms of collaboration. Similarly, we see that social innovation as a concept is also often being linked to social entrepreneurship. For instance, Mair (2010, p. 19)) defines social entrepreneurship as

a process of catering to locally existing basic needs that are not addressed by traditional organizations. Depending on the needs addressed the process usually involves the provision of goods or services and/or the creation of missing institutions or the reshaping of inadequate ones [...] in order to change or modify the social/or economic arrangements that create the situation of failure to satisfy basic needs.

Looking at the literature and taken into mind the previous discussion about the nature of innovation in Chapter 1, we argue that social innovation refers to five elements (Bekkers et al., 2013a).

1. Social innovation particularly stresses the production of outcomes that are need-oriented, in such a way that they meet the needs of society or specific groups in society in a long-lasting way, given a number of challenges with which societies are wrestling,

- like the ageing of the population or unemployment (Mulgan, 2006; European Union, 2010; Mair, 2010; Bates 2012; Cels et al., 2012).
2. In order to develop and implement these need-driven innovations, it is important that end-users as well as other relevant stakeholders participate in the development, implementation, monitoring and adoption of these innovations. That is why social innovation is been seen as the outcome of an open process of co-creation (Bason, 2010; Lee et al., 2012), that very often takes place in 'collaborative innovation networks' (Gloor, 2005; Bommert, 2010; Sørensen and Torfing, 2011). Relevant stakeholders bring in their knowledge, information, experiences and resources so that they can be shared in order to produce innovative outcomes that are relevant to them. However, this doesn't take place instantly. It presupposes trustworthy and risk-taking collaboration situations in which cross-fertilization of new and creative ideas across organizational, sectoral and disciplinary boundaries (Mulgan, 2006; Bommert, 2010; Sørensen and Torfing, 2011; Lee et al., 2012).
 3. Social innovation also stresses that the innovation fundamentally changes the relationships and interaction patterns between stakeholders. In doing so, a process of 'roundaboutness' (Majone, 1998, p. 97) or 'institutional conversion' (Thelen, 2002, p. 224) is being aimed for. The way in which stakeholders relate to each other, how they interact with each other, how they collaborate with each other is radically changed. Social innovation tries to act as a 'game changer', breaking through 'institutional path dependencies'. New interaction patterns and processes have implications for existing institutional arrangements and settings (Edelenbos, 2005). Through social innovation, it is argued that the governance capacity of a society order to deal with new pressing demands and challenges is being enhanced because the game is being changed (European Commission, 2011 p. 33). As a result of social innovation processes, it is argued that need-driven services require the establishment of new collaborative relationships and new institutional arrangements (European Union, 2010; Sørensen and Torfing, 2011; Bates, 2012).
 4. Next to this, the social innovation concept emphasizes that these outcomes are not by definition related to science- and technology-driven innovations. It is important to look beyond technological innovations at behaviour, attitude, interaction patterns and relationships (Howalt and Schwarz, 2010).

5. Social innovation also refers to the allocation and/or re-allocation of public values that are to be achieved, given a number of challenges with which societies are wrestling (Mulgan, 2006; Cels et al., 2012). In the achievement of these values, it is not only important to look at the presumed or achieved consequences of the innovation in terms of effectiveness or efficiency. The public values that are being pursued by social innovation also try to assure that the innovation is an appropriate one, for instance because it adds to the value of democratic citizenship or really addresses – in terms of responsiveness – the needs of citizens.

To sum up this overview, we define social innovation as the creation of long-lasting outcomes that aim to address societal needs by changing fundamentally the relationships, positions and rules between the involved stakeholders, through a process of participation and collaboration (Voorberg et al., 2013). In doing so social innovation can be seen as a game changer because new rules of the game, new relationships and positions are being created. Very often these rules of the game are changing because the traditional role of government as producer of relevant services has been abandoned or is being challenged by alternative governance and service arrangements. Given the importance that social innovation advocates give to the role of collaborative networks to develop and implement these new arrangements in which co-creation with end-users (which can be citizens and companies or societal organizations), we see that in many social innovation practices self-organizations play an important role. Hence, it is important to look into this concept in more detail.

The concept of self-organization

Social innovation is often linked to the notion of self-organization because social innovation is considered to be developed and implemented in collaborative innovation networks. In these networks, new public services, projects and programmes are being developed and implemented, while existing public services, projects and programmes are being reshaped. During the last years, we see that as a result of a retreat of government, these networks in which citizens, companies, societal groups, non-profit-sector organizations as well as government organizations participate (in different ways and in different compositions) have become more and more important. In these networks, which can also be seen as communities, new ways of working and thinking are

being explored that may provide an alternative for the traditional way in which public services, projects and programmes are being produced. For instance, in the Netherlands severe cutbacks in local welfare provision lead to a retreat of government and professional welfare organizations. What we observe is that local networks have emerged that looked for alternative ways to provide these services. Out of these networks, new arrangements may occur that are based upon the active involvement of citizens. Citizens can be defined as co-creators or even initiators of these new arrangements (Voorberg et al., 2013; Nederhand et al., 2014). Next step is to see what self-organization is and what relevant conditions for self-organization are.

Self-organization

Self-organization refers to the spontaneous emergence of order in natural and physical systems (Kauffman, 1993; Wolf and Holvoet, 2005). Self-organization is the internal capacity of elements within systems to adjust and develop (e.g. Cilliers, 1998; Heylighen, 2001). The concept emerged in the natural sciences in order to explain the emergence of ordered structures in rather chaotic physical processes, such as the autonomous formation of galaxies and stars (Prigogine and Stengers, 1984; Bušev, 1994). When applied to the social sciences, two strands can be distinguished. First, a normative strand which refers to self-organization as a normative or ideological concept which embraces the idea that social and economic challenges should be addressed at the level of (local) communities, based on the idea that people are inherently communal rather than individualistic (Etzioni, 1995; Pierre and Peters, 2000). The second, more functional-pragmatic strand looks at self-organization as a governance concept. In the public administration discipline, it broadly refers to the adaptation of behaviour of non-governmental actors and the emergence of collective action without interference from the government. This is also known as self-governance (Pierre and Peters, 2000; Fenger and Bekkers, 2007). Boonstra and Boelens (2011) define self-organization in the context of spatial planning as: initiatives that originate in civil society from autonomous community-based networks of citizens, who are part of the urban system but independent of government procedures. Self-organization can be understood as a collective process of communication, choice and mutual adjustment in behaviour resulting in the emergence of ordered structures that are based on a shared goal among members of a given system (Bušev, 1994; Comfort, 1994,

pp. 397–398). Edelenbos and Meerkerk (2011) see self-organization as processes where (organized) citizens and social interest groups spontaneously come to a common action. This may come out of dissatisfaction with the quality of previous/existing government programmes, policy or practice and function as a response to proposed government policy. Out of these spontaneous local interactions new governance structures emerge and are maintained, which are not imposed by one single actor (Meerkerk et al., 2013). They are shaped by a multitude of complex and non-linear interactions between multiple local actors which can be conceptualized as an emergent and co-evolving pattern (Jantsch, 1980; Cilliers, 1998; Goldstein, 1999; Heylighen, 2001).

Citizen engagement and self-organization

Next step is to understand how the participatory role of citizens can be understood in these self-organizing processes. Typical for self-organization is that rather than operating individually and within the restrictions of government-organized participatory processes, citizens often organize themselves in local groups and take the initiative for collective action. In such self-organization, citizens and social interest groups spontaneously engage in forms of collective action independently from, or in reaction to, government-induced steering processes or structures (Edelenbos and Meerkerk, 2011). However, there is an important difference between public participation and self-organization of the community. Public participation is initiated by the government as the formal policy initiator and structured by rules set by this initiator. It is restricted as far as the initiator deems necessary. He also defines the moments and methods of participation. Self-organization springs from emerging networks of citizens and interest groups who aim to develop their own alternatives to a formal policy initiative. Public participation and stakeholder initiatives are not mutually exclusive: public participation processes can end up in self-organization (because actors are disappointed with the limited room for manoeuvre they get or because they are invited to develop their own initiative), and self-organization can be ‘mainstreamed’ in a formal policy process by means of possibilities for participation in the policy arena as arranged by the policy initiator (Edelenbos et al., forthcoming).

Why do citizens organize themselves as groups in order to get involved in public affairs? Nowadays, we can witness a fundamental change in civic engagement regarding public affairs, leading to new

forms of self-organizing communities (Stolle and Hooghe 2005; Bang, 2009; Marien et al., 2010; SCP, 2011). Some, like Putnam (2000), argue that civic engagement is declining; others, like Dalton (2008) and Bang (2009), claim that civic engagement is still present but becomes manifest in different and new forms. For an important part, citizens no longer identify themselves with political and governmental establishment belonging to models of representative democracy. Some of them take the initiative to (seek to) engage in public or political affairs outside traditional representative institutions, in ways more directly connected to their personal life sphere (Stolle and Hooghe, 2005; Bang 2009; Meerkerk et al., 2013).

Today, and this differs from traditional forms of citizen engagement, citizens want to engage in informal and loosely structured organizations with less bureaucracy (Stolle and Hooghe, 2005; Lorentzen and Hustinx 2007) and keep aloof from existing political and governmental structures and procedures, which they consider no longer legitimate and/or effective. We see community self-organization being shaped in new and different structures, like community trusts and community foundations (Daly, 2008; Meerkerk et al., 2013). In these self-organizations, societal actors take initiative and aim to develop ideas and projects on their own, without (much) interference of governmental and political institutions. In this way, bottom-up initiatives of empowered and highly educated citizens emerge today that no longer are fully initiated, conditioned and controlled by government (Marien et al., 2010; Meerkerk et al., 2013). Sectors in which community self-organization is rising are health care, housing and (sustainable) energy.

A co-evolutionary approach

At the same time, it is also important to acknowledge that especially in the public sector pure forms of self-organization are scarce. The dominant position that governments had in the past, the ability to mobilize vital (legal, budgetary and knowledge) resources as well as the necessity that governments are obliged to protect vital interests (like safety issues) implies that their role is not obsolete. Moreover, self-organizing communities are also not isolated and they are also shaped in interaction with existing political and governmental institutions. This leads to important – yet unanswered – questions about effective and legitimate state-society relationships and interactions. However, we still know little about how community self-organizations effectively and legitimately

develop in interaction with existing political and governmental institutions (Stolle and Hooghe, 2005). We therefore need to gain more insights in how state–society interactions take shape. A stimulating institutional context is considered to be important for the blooming of community self-organization (Hurenkamp et al., 2006; Meerkerk et al., 2013); however, what ‘stimulating’ exactly entails is less known. Furthermore, we also have to learn more and more about different styles and new forms of citizenship (see Tonkens, 2006; Lorentzen and Hustinx 2007; Marien et al., 2010).

Hence, we argue that processes of self-organization – just like innovation as we described in Chapters 1 and 11 – should be seen as a co-evolutionary process (Goldstein, 1999). This implies that governance and self-governance are not exclusive and contrasting developments. Both developments influence each other in a specific local context. As such government is just one of many actors in a self-organizing network of actors (Goldstein, 1999). Next step is to see what factors account for successful self-organizing processes (see Nederhand et al., 2014).

Conditions for self-organization

Several conditions facilitate self-organization (Meerkerk et al., 2012; Nederhand et al., 2014). First, self-organization requires an incentive which has a disruptive nature because it fundamentally puts existing practices under pressure (Bootsma and Lechner, 2002; Meerkerk et al., 2012). Such an incentive can also be understood as a triggering or focusing event (Cobb and Elder, 1972; Birkland, 1998) that put self-organization as an appropriate and alternative approach on the political and societal agenda as something that could be interesting to pursue.

However, in order to deal with this triggering event in a creative and innovative way, actors have to cooperate with each other which requires an open attitude (Meerkerk et al., 2013). But, cooperation is not without risk. Ostrom (1999) stressed that actors need to trust each other, in order to keep their promises and relate to one another on a reciprocal basis. Therefore, the second condition refers to the presence or development of trustworthy relationships. The social capital that is present within specific constellation may stimulate cooperation (Pierre and Peters, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Huygen et al., 2012) also because it refers to a sense of belonging (Huygen et al., 2012). Social capital can be defined as features of a group or community – networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively (Putnam, 1995). Hence, the local and social fabric of a community can therefore

act as an infrastructure for self-organization (Nicholls, 2009; Zwaard and Specht, 2013).

The third condition refers to the necessary exchange and interplay of ideas, information and experiences and the focus on a shared and clear goal that is needed to exchange them. Comfort (1994) showed that actors with recurrent opportunities for interaction were more likely to adjust their behaviour mutually in order to develop a shared goal. However, if the number of actors and the number of interactions among those actors increase too much, then the self-organization process is frustrated because the chance is increased that ever-poorer solutions to shared problems are developed (Kauffman, 1993; Uzzi and Spiro, 2005). Hence, a focus on the development of a shared and clear goal stimulates the quality of the learning process that takes place as well as the ability to make choices (Comfort, 1994; Ostrom, 1999; Bootsma and Lechner, 2002; Huygen et al., 2012).

The fourth condition refers to the geography of the self-organization process, which is the physical and virtual location of the interaction (the locus). If the information that is available in the community is located at different sites and organizations, there is a danger that it will not be brought together (Comfort, 1994). Comfort (1994) argues that in order to take more informed and comprehensive decisions, it is important that a shared and evolving (digital) knowledge base, open communication channels and clear feedback mechanisms are present or emerge. Especially ICT, the Internet and social media networks may help to share knowledge, information, experience and ideas. The connective capacities of these technologies, which facilitate process of (micro) mobilization, can help to create a virtual spot of interaction (Bekkers, 2004).

The fifth condition is the importance of boundary spanning activities of key individuals to make connections internally (within the self-organization) and externally (with the institutional environment in which the self-organization takes place). This linking leadership facilitates and protects the initiation of free flows of ideas, people and resources (Meerkerk et al., 2013), as leaders devote time and energy internally in organization interaction processes, dialogue and co-creation. Moreover, boundary spanning activities also refer to activities that help to protect embryonic self-organizing activities by safeguarding the boundaries between the self-organization and the institutional environment. Also, this relating to the institutional environment is needed to acquire political, administrative and financial support. Often the help and assistance of actors from government institutions are needed to

get innovative ideas and plans from self-organization into practice (subsidy, expert knowledge on procedures and formal rules, etc.). As outlined above, self-organizing communities are benefited by a stimulating and assisting institutional context, and therefore external boundary spanning by community leaders is needed for this (see also Chapters 8 and 10 of this book).

The sixth condition for self-organization is the mutual adaptation of actor roles in order to deal with these new challenges, new positions and new relationships, due to the introduction of new playing rules. This requires that existing practices should be altered (Kaufmann, 1993; Comfort, 1994; Johnson, 2001; Edelenbos and Meerkerk, 2011). It especially requires flexibility in behaviour and procedures in the institutional settings of governments as the active involvement of citizens is new for the government and demands a new role of administrators, civil servants and politicians. It is important that the involved actors have sufficient manoeuvring space and flexibility to adjust their behaviour to the changes in behaviour of the other actors (Comfort, 1994). Moreover, actors should have enough space for autonomous development without external authorities countermanding them (Ostrom, 1999). Furthermore, it is also important that the existing legal framework is able to deal with these changing roles or that new legislation required (Edelenbos and Meerkerk, 2011).

The seventh condition has to deal with the degree in which citizens are willing and able to self-organize. Two aspects seem to be important here (Bekkers et al., 2013a). The first aspect refers to the expectations that end-users have of the possible outcomes of their self-organization, also given the limited number of time they have and the transaction costs that are involved (Berman, 1997; Pestoff, 2012). This can be called the 'responded to' factor in the model by Lowndes and Pratchett (2006); the self-organizing citizens must have the idea that their initiative and plans set things in motion and will lead to change and implementation. This is also known as the performance expectancy (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Citizens are often cynical about the degree in which they think that governments are actually prepared to address the needs and wishes that citizens bring forward (Berman, 1997). If it can be made very explicitly, that self-organization generates outcomes that are really in the interest of citizens, then they are more willing to become active (Alford, 2009). These outcomes do not really have to refer to the self-interest of citizens; they can also refer to intrinsic motivations and rewards that refer to social values that boost people. Moreover, citizens that self-organize, also acquire more attention and approval, which also

stimulates self-organization as being a relevant democratic value (Alford, 2009). Schudson (1998) argues that citizens, who in general have a rather passive attitude, are actually willing to mobilize themselves in order to become active if vital interests are being threatened. Vigoda-Gadot et al. (2008) argue that the image of a sector also influences the willingness to self-organize. This depends on the trust in the governance of the sector as well as on the perceived satisfaction of the possible innovations that might be generated. The second aspect that influences the degree in which citizens are willing and able to participate relates to the effort needed to do so. This is known as the effort expectancy (Venkatesh et al., 2003) and includes the 'can do' and 'enable to' factors (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2006): people must have the abilities, the means and networks to start self-organization. The effort expectancy is dependent on the complexity of the innovation and the outcomes that are being pursued (Nesta, 2008; Bovaird and Löffler, 2011). Again, the growing role of (social) media is relevant in this regard. The omnipresence of modern (mobile) information and communication technology, especially Internet and social media, provide a network-like infrastructure which enhances the easiness to exchange scattered or loosely coupled experiences, ideas and knowledge in terms of (open) access (Bekkers, 2004, 2011; Benkler, 2006)). As a result, new innovation models appear in which participation and open access are embraced as relevant values, like crowd sourcing and open idea banks (Mulgan, 2009).

Especially in situations in which self-organization takes place in the public sector, in which government traditionally have played a dominant role, it is important to look at the role of government in these processes (see Nederhand et al., 2014) as they can not only stimulate and facilitate but also frustrate self-organizing communities. A stimulating governmental institutional context is needed to really bring social innovation and self-organizing communities into practice. We will discuss this further in the next section.

Self-organization and social innovation in the context of meta-governance

During the last decades, we have witnessed that more horizontal, network-oriented forms of steering have emerged in which also other non-state actors participate in the innovation or re-design of services (Rhodes, 1997). As a result, governments can no longer assume to have a monopoly on expertise or resources to govern but must rely on a plurality of interdependent actors drawn from within or beyond

the government (Newman, 2001). Although self-organizing networks might imply the absence of governmental involvement, it can be argued that the role of government is not obsolete. Two positions can be discerned. Both positions influence the strategic role that governments play or could play in social innovation processes (Nederhand et al., 2014).

The first position links self-organization and social innovation to meta-governance (Sørensen, 2006). Meta-governance is 'concerned with how political authorities – as meta-governor – are engaged in promoting and guiding the self-organization of governance systems through rules, organizational knowledge, institutional tactics and other political strategies' (Jessop, 1997, p. 574, 1998; Whitehead, 2003, p. 7). Sørensen (2006) discerns two broad categories of meta-governance: (1) hands off and (2) hands on meta-governance.

Hands-off meta-governance implies that the government only indirectly influences the political, financial and organizational context in which self-organization takes place. To Sørensen (2006), practices of hands-off meta-governance imply primarily practices of framing and storytelling (in terms of 'management by speech'). Governmental actors become ambassadors of community self-organization and 'tell the tale' about this in different social networks. In doing so, a common frame of reference is being created that helps to interlock behaviours in such a way that diffuse worries move to more actionable beliefs. In doing so, a frame helps the involved actors to make sense of the innovation journey they have embarked on in order to deal with a challenge (Weick, 1969; Hajer and Laws, 2006). It stimulates a process of communication that helps to create a common sense of belonging or identity (Comfort, 1994).

Hands-on meta-governance implies direct involvement of government (Sørensen, 2006). This can involve rather 'neutral' ways in which governments only seek to assist and facilitate self-organization-driven forms of social innovation, thereby offering support and assistance, while at the same time they seek to achieve their own objectives. This support can, for instance, imply providing relevant information, providing a meeting place or providing financial support to have a secretariat or setting up a website. In doing so, access to vital resources is being ensured (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Another form of hands-on meta-governance that Sørensen (2006) distinguishes is hands-on participation, which implies that the meta-governor can seek to obtain influence on the outcome of the self-organization process through direct participation.

Besides these previous types, a third type of meta-governance can be distinguished (Nederhand et al., 2014). Meta-governance can also be perceived as a form of institutional design (Goodin, 1998). In this type of meta-governance, governmental action is focused on the allocation of the positions of relevant actors, the relations between them (stipulating interdependency) and the formulation of relevant rules of the game, thereby creating a level playing field and safeguarding possible 'weak interests' and 'values' to be respected (Fenger and Bekkers, 2007). In doing so, the conditions are created which may foster the necessary exchange, negotiation and cooperation between the involved actors in order to develop common policy practices or public services, while at the same government does not intend to directly influence the outcomes of the social innovation process.

The second theoretical position links self-organization and social innovation – as a form of more hands-on meta-governance – to the traditional role that government has occupied (Jessop, 1998; see Nederhand et al., 2014). In this new role, governmental organizations still use their state power but in a different way than before. Scharpf (1994) addressed this changed steering role as 'networked governance in the shadow of hierarchy'. The idea is that hierarchical coordination mechanisms are embedded in non-hierarchical structures. Direct state intervention is perceived as an explicit or implicit threat that governments can use to induce self-organization. This position can be legitimized by referring to the public mandate that governments have to protect the public interest or to safeguard specific public values which also makes them politically accountable and legally liable in the case of failure (Börzel and Risse, 2010). The threat of hierarchical intervention through imposing binding rules can be seen as a way of incentive steering (see also Whiteheads (2003) notion of the use of fear) to change the allocation of costs and benefits among the involved actors in favour of voluntary cooperation between non-state actors in the provision or rules, collective goods and public services (Scharpf, 1997; Milward and Provan, 2003; Boons, 2008; Börzel and Risse, 2010). Furthermore, the sheer lack of the shadow of hierarchy, in terms of the absence of an external authority, can provide an incentive for non-state actors to engage in self-organization because actors are afraid that this might result in 'the risk of anarchy' (Börzel and Risse, 2010, p. 121).

Hence, we can conclude that social innovation processes in which citizens are seen as initiator or co-creator of new or redesigned public services, projects and programmes thereby relying on the self-organizing qualities of the networks, in which they collaborate, are not self-evident.

A number of vital conditions have to be met, while at the same time it can also put forward that the role of government is not an obsolete one. Moreover, one could even argue that successful social innovation can be seen as the outcome of a process of co-evolution between non-government and government actors. This co-evolutionary perspective means that government actors must redefine their role towards self-organizing communities.

Towards new roles and competences

In the previous section, we argued that government interventions and self-organizing actions in emerging communities co-evolve. Government actors cannot stay aside from self-organizing community activities. They have implications for the way government actors do their job, they bring along changes and innovation to roles and accompanying competences. Processes of self-organization lead to new relationships between governmental institutions and civil society. A form of participatory democracy enters a representative democracy, which could lead to a reorientation of existing democratic institutions and related roles, rules and competences (Edelenbos, 2005).

Edelenbos and Meerkerk (2011) argue that community self-organization leads to changing roles for civil servants, administrators and politicians. Civil servants become less the experts but develop more into professional assistants on demand, when there is need for knowledge and information about procedures, legislation and other resources that are needed for the development and implementation of the plans of the community. Administrators become more and more the ambassadors of community self-organization. This implies that they signal interesting developments in communities and committing attention, importance and meaning from government side. In this way, it paves the way for productive and legitimating relationships among government actors and community members. Moreover, it also has implications for the role of politicians (Skelcher et al., 2011). They can adopt certain community self-organizations and monitor their developments in terms of representation, inclusion and political agenda-setting. In this way, democratic values also become attached to initiations of self-organizing communities.

Overall the changing role of government actors implies that they have to develop a more outside-in orientation and become more operative at the intersection of government and society as boundary spanners (Meerkerk and Edelenbos, 2014). Competences belonging to boundary

spanning and connective leadership become vital for developing a legitimating and productive relationship with community self-organization (Williams, 2002). In short, connective leaders manage the interface between organizations and their environment. Successful connective are strongly linked internally and externally so that they can both gather and transfer information from outside their sub-units. The combination of internal linkages (in their own unit or organization) and external linkages (with other units or other organizations) makes up their perceived competence and determines their boundary status (Tushman and Scanlan, 1981; Levina and Vaast, 2005). In this respect, Williams (2002) distinguishes a variety of personal characteristics of competent connective leaders in governance networks, like empathy, being a good listener and translator to other communities. Connective leaders are open-minded and understand other actors' needs (Ferguson et al., 2005) and are the so-called active listeners (Williams, 2002): open to be influenced by the views of other people. This enables them to search for shared meanings (Levina and Vaast, 2005). In this way, sustainable relationships with actors from different organizational backgrounds are developed and maintained. As competent connective leaders are relationship builders and develop a feeling for the interests and social constructions of other actors in the governance network, it is assumed that they positively influence the level of trust in the actor networks. These competences are necessary to develop effective and legitimate processes of co-creation between government and non-government actors in the realm of community self-organization. Social innovation implies governmental change and new roles and competences for governmental actors. These changes are needed to make social innovation in the public sector meaningful, productive and legitimate. This connective leadership is, however, not only needed from government side. Research (Meerkerk and Edelenbos, 2014) indicates that representatives of social and private organizations are important agents in spanning the boundaries among private, societal and public organizations in the governance network, and in bringing these organizations more closely together in productive and legitimizing relationships. Good connective competences of non-governmental actors are needed as well for social innovations.

Given the changes in roles and competences that are required from public organization when they also embark on this self-organization-driven social innovation journey, the public organizations have to change themselves. Organizational change, however, is in general, but especially in public organizations, not a simple thing (Rainey, 2009;

Kuipers et al., in press). Large-scale planned change in the public sector is often unsuccessful. To make reforms in the public sector successful, large numbers of (semi-) public and private parties need to change their organization and their dominant governance model, which will become a more meta-governing one. Depending on their choices, they will need to manage the change in a way that engages with the level of individual employees within the organization. To put it simply: to achieve the goals of the reform and governance change, the daily routines and behaviour of managers and employees in the organizations need to change.

In order to achieve this change in daily routines and behaviour, we argue that changes in human resource (HR) practices, work design and leadership behaviour are necessary. With respect to HR practices, it is obvious that public employees need to behave differently to civil servants. This will not happen automatically: one does not change in one day from an expert into a professional assistant on demand. One has to gear the elements of the HR resource cycle (Boxall and Purcell, 2011) – recruitment and selection, training and development, performance planning and appraisal, and re-numeration – in order to achieve the intended behaviour. In other words: one has to recruit and select employees who have the needed competences to deal with self-organization of citizens, one has to train them to develop these competences, their performance (do they indeed behave in the intended way) had to be monitored and appraised and – finally – the intended behaviour should be rewarded whereas behaviour of employees which is not functional for self-organization should be discouraged.

Change in HR practices is probably not enough to fully achieve changes in daily routines and behaviour. Self-organization of citizens implies also a different internal organization of public organization themselves. A traditional hierarchical organization does not fit with a situation where it is asked from public organizations to be flexible and adapt to local demands of citizens. A flexible environment asks for a flexible organization (Hammer and Champy, 1993; Steijn, 2004). In this respect, literature about determinants of innovative behaviour of employees shows that a higher degree of job autonomy is related to more innovative behaviour of employees (Doornbos et al., 2005). Transferred to the theme in this chapter, one could say that self-organization of citizens should be accompanied by a certain level of self-management of public employees, in order to make it possible for them to handle specific, local situations.

We already pointed in this chapter to the importance of leadership. We noted above that leaders in public organization need to develop

a more outside-in orientation and become boundary spanners. At the same time, however, during the change process leaders also play an important internal role as leadership is an important determinant of the success of organizational change (Higgs and Rowland, 2011; Kuipers et al., in press). Probably, during the change process a transformational leadership style (Van Wart, 2012) is necessary in order to promote the change. However, after the change is completed – and both self-organization of citizens and self-management of public employees are achieved – a distributed leadership style (Van Wart, 2012) as such a style fits a situation where employees (partly) manage themselves and have to operate flexibly and adaptively (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have tried to sketch a perspective on the next step in public sector innovation. This next step is closely related to transformation with which many western governments are confronted with, due to the budgetary crises that especially hit the public sector as an outcome of the collapse of the financial system in 2008. In this transformation, we see that governments are reflecting on the role that they play in dealing with a number of societal challenges, thereby also looking at other relevant coordinating mechanisms, like market and communities that can be used to allocate public values and corresponding services, programmes and projects. This creates interesting innovation challenges. Challenges that do not only have practical implications – in terms of how to operate, what are relevant roles and how to organize supporting changes – but also challenges that have interesting academic implications, in terms of what do we really know about relevant mechanisms, the drivers and barriers that support social innovation, self-organization and the underlying changes between and within the organizations involved as well about relevant outcomes. In this chapter, we have tried to conceptualize this next step in terms of trying to link social innovation practices that are driven by self-organization, to the new (meta) governance model that governments have to adopt while supporting self-organization and what this implies for relevant roles and competencies. This is just a first sketch of what is relevant. At the same time, this perspective that we sketched implies that further research is needed. This makes the study of innovation in the public sector so interesting. Each time again we see how our need to know co-evolves with the challenges with which societies and their governments are wrestling. It is interesting to be a part of this wrestling process.

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Notes

1. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/sicp/initiatives/social-innovation-fund>
2. The big society *The Times* Apr 14, 2010.
3. http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/social-innovation/index_en.htm