

# The networked bureaucracy: reinventing formalization in the context of collaborative governance

Miranda Kanon

To cite this article: Miranda Kanon (27 Dec 2023): The networked bureaucracy: reinventing formalization in the context of collaborative governance, Public Management Review, DOI: [10.1080/14719037.2023.2298230](https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2023.2298230)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2023.2298230>



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 27 Dec 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1220



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# The networked bureaucracy: reinventing formalization in the context of collaborative governance

Miranda Kanon<sup>a,b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>School of Business, University of Skövde, Skövde, Sweden; <sup>b</sup>School of Business, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden

## ABSTRACT

Based on a critical appraisal of current literature on Collaborative Governance, this article addresses the predominant way of dissociating public networks and bureaucracy as opposing forms of organizations. Drawing upon data collected from three governance networks in Sweden, the study displays how the studied actors seek to establish hierarchical relations, formal interaction channels, and designated offices to enable and facilitate collaborative governance networks in response to what is perceived as irrational and ad-hoc organizing. The analysis outlines how and why governance networks need not inevitably be transcending bureaucracy, but constitute a distinct and deliberate declaration of just that: *The Networked Bureaucracy*.

**ARTICLE HISTORY** Received 23 September 2022; Accepted 15 December 2023

**KEYWORDS** Collaborative governance; public networks; bureaucracy; wicked problems; grand challenges

## Introduction

In the context of the ‘grand challenges’ or ‘wicked problems’ of our time, the arguments for novel, comprehensive responses that cut across the established lines of sectoral boundaries and organizational responsibilities have been substantive (Ansell, Sørensen, and Torfing 2021; Ferraro, Etzion, and Gehman 2015). Ever since the 1970s, mounting criticism has been raised against the inability of public organizations to solve complex societal problems (Guarneros-Meza and Martin 2016; Rittel and Webber 1973), and in response, governments are increasingly inclined to mandate (or strongly stimulate) governance networks to spur collaborative solutions to complex problems (Krogh 2020; Osborne 2006; Segato and Raab 2018). This development is based on the view that the traditional policy process and the associated bureaucratic measures generate poor or narrow solutions to problems that should reflect a diversity of relevant knowledge views. In the literature on collaborative governance, such network settings are generally contrasted with bureaucratic authority. Bureaucracy is either conceptualized as the dysfunctional predecessor to collaborative governance (Ansell, Sørensen, and Torfing 2021; van der Voet and Steijn 2021) or as co-existing with such

**CONTACT** Miranda Kanon  [miranda.kanon@his.se](mailto:miranda.kanon@his.se)

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

‘novel’ organizational forms (Geddes 2012; Krogh 2020). Both scenarios build on the assumption that bureaucratic structures and procedures inhibit the network from developing its necessary flexibility and knowledge flow (Ewens and van der Voet 2019; Ferreira et al. 2023; Willem and Lucidarme 2014). Studies conclude that public network actors should ensure that they do not ‘fall into’ traditional bureaucratic structures (Willem and Lucidarme 2014) but rather ‘break through’ bureaucratic barriers (Crosby, Hart, and Torfing 2017) to achieve public purposes and escape collaborative inertia. However, although much of the literature examining collaborative governance rests on the postulate of bureaucracy’s inability to address complex societal challenges, bureaucracy is rarely – if ever – the main attraction in these studies. Rather than something empirically investigated, the assumption that bureaucracy inhibits flexibility is rather a built-in and taken-for-granted notion that this literature implicitly or explicitly rests upon. Bureaucracy is rarely introduced as a full and legitimate counterpart to network settings but is commonly brought into the discussion simply to exemplify the failures of public organizations to demonstrate the qualities claimed to embody collaborative governance (Crosby, Hart, and Torfing 2017; Læg Reid and Rykkja 2022; Waardenburg et al. 2020).

In the present article, I argue that this neglect, or misrepresentation, of bureaucracy espouses a limited understanding of the meaning and value of bureaucracy which, in turn, runs the risk of introducing blind spots and attention biases (cf. Wegrich 2019) in our understanding of collaborative practices. By treating bureaucracy as yet another ‘governance style’ research not only bypasses the social and cultural processes by which the structure and functioning of public organizations stem from and contribute to but also runs the risk of overlooking that such procedures form a pervasive factor of organizational life. Arguably, any assumptions of the decline-, or dysfunctional ramifications, of the paradigmatic form of modern organizations should advise us to examine the foundation on which such forms rest (Monteiro and Adler 2022; Styhre 2007). The aim of the study is to illustrate *how* and explain *why* collaborative governance networks need not inevitably be ‘transcending bureaucracy’ (Ansell, Sørensen, and Torfing 2021) or be operating ‘in the shadow of hierarchy’ (Sørensen and Torfing 2009), but constitute a distinct and deliberate declaration of *the networked bureaucracy*. The article serves as a reminder of the normative foundation and inherent adaptive capacity of the bureaucratic order and encourages a discussion of what is at stake when bureaucracy is not considered a distinct aspect of contemporary public organizing.

The remaining parts of the article are organized as follows. First, the study initiates by examining the relationship between the practices of collaborative governance and meta-governance strategies, followed by a scholarly critique of the predominant ways in which bureaucracy is portrayed in extant research. Second, I introduce a theoretical framework that establishes bureaucracy as a flexible organizational paradigm capable of manifesting a diversity of contextual variations of its organizational model. This perspective challenges the notion of bureaucracy as an inherently rigid and inflexible organizational form and emphasizes why bureaucracy continues to serve as a central social institution in contemporary society. Third, the empirical study is based on a qualitative case study of efforts by regional and municipal levels of government in Sweden to establish governance networks. The studied networks represent explicit attempts to formalize the processes and arenas of collaborative governance in the policy area of social sustainability and public health. The study displays how the

studied actors employ and reinvent fundamental bureaucratic features to achieve organizational manageability and make processes of collaborative governance more predictable, consistent and accountable. By illustrating how bureaucracy can be recognized and analysed in the context of collaborative governance, the subsequent discussion and conclusion lay the groundwork for future studies on how bureaucracy may change in appearance across reformed organizational settings.

### **Situating collaborative governance in the bureaucratic order**

Collaborative governance is defined as the processes and structures where actors from different sectors, public agencies, or levels of government engage in policy decision-making and implementation to achieve public purposes (Lee and Esteve 2022). The declared rationale behind such network formation is the interpretation that many of today's most pressing societal challenges are complex, 'grand', or 'wicked' (Torfing and Ansell 2017). Problems of climate change, organized crime, involuntary migration and segregation, employment issues, and public health are seen to cut across the established boundaries of policy domains, organizations, and jurisdictions while posing severe organizing challenges to contemporary public organizations (Candel and Biesbroek 2016). The general premise of collaborative governance is that the synthesis of differences in expertise, resources, and perspectives between organizations may result in a 'collaborative advantage' (Vangen, Hayes, and Cornforth 2015) or 'collaborative innovation' (Torfing 2019) to resolve problems that could not be achieved by any organization acting alone (Doberstein 2016). Advocates of collaborative governance suggest that, under the right conditions, it can increase effectiveness and efficiency, improve legitimacy and public value creation (Osborne 2006; Sørensen and Torfing 2009). Meanwhile, more critical scholars have warned against the often fuzzy and opaque accountabilities of governance networks (Bache et al. 2015; Hansen, Triantafillou, and Christensen 2022). As a result, the rising research attention focuses on reconciling the relations between representative governing bodies and collaborative governance networks via the concept of 'meta-governance' (Gjaltema et al. 2020). Meta-governance refers to how the state governs stakeholders of collaborative governance and strategically directs the involved actors towards its own policy agenda (Sørensen and Torfing 2009). This includes the type of interventions that elected politicians and public managers use, ranging from 'hands-on' to 'hands-off' strategies, to influence the formation and management of collaborative governance. These include 'authority instruments' (ranging from strict legal frameworks, mandates, and task descriptions to broader overall visions and political priorities), 'informational instruments' (ranging from one-way dissemination of knowledge to interactive learning and dialogue), and 'economic instruments' (the development of financial steering frameworks) (Gjaltema, Biesbroek, and Termeer 2020; Hooge, Waslander, and Theisens 2022).

The key challenge of meta-governors is described as the delicate exercise of balancing between governing networks too little or too much (Sørensen and Torfing 2009). On the one hand, research concludes that loosely governed networks face obstacles due to their frail way of depending on individual enthusiasts and the varying grades of commitment among the involved actors (Eriksson et al. 2020). Hence, several studies suggest that a range of 'institutional design features' appear as pervasive to safeguard collaborative dynamics. These include political ownership, resource allocation and

monitoring, and well-defined rules and procedures supervised or facilitated by managers (Cristofoli, Markovic, and Meneguzzo 2014; Doberstein 2016; Læg Reid and Rykkja 2022; Markovic 2017; Turrini et al. 2010). On the other hand, strict mandates are seen to affect networks' functioning negatively because they introduce high degrees of formalization (Krogh 2020) which increases the risk of collaborative inertia (Ansell, Sørensen, and Torfing 2021; Segato and Raab 2018). Nonetheless, studies on the role of meta-governance conclude that governance networks are inevitably embedded in a hierarchical structure (Gjaltema et al. 2019; Krogh 2020) and affected by processes of formalization, both key derivative characteristics of the bureaucratic order. Thus, it is noteworthy that the very institution set in motion to generate what appears to be critical design features alongside key challenges in collaborative governance continues to be largely unexplored as a durable and distinctive object of investigation (Cristofoli et al. 2014; Markovic 2017). Instead, bureaucracy is merely treated as equivalent to inflexibility, rigid controls and high levels of red tape (Ewens and van der Voet 2019; Ferreira et al. 2023; Willem and Lucidarme 2014). In fact, several studies take an assertive stance in magnifying this perception, portraying collaborative governance as the 'promising supplement' (Hansen, Triantafyllou, and Christensen 2022, 1) or 'evolution away' from bureaucratic procedures (Ansell, Sørensen, and Torfing 2021; Lee and Esteve 2022) even set in a putative 'post-bureaucracy' (van der Voet and Steijn 2021, 1275).

The lack of empirical studies that investigate the role of bureaucracy in collaborative governance suggests that current research simply assumes that, by definition, bureaucracy cannot adapt or evolve. This assumption is decisively contradictory to the claims of prominent writers in organization theory (e.g. Perrow 1979; Styhre 2007; Thompson and Alvesson 2005). Organizational scholars defend bureaucracy not only on the grounds of instrumental rationality and efficiency (Weber [1922] 1978) or the grounds of its values of impartial conduct (du Gay 2005) but also by its adaptive capacity to address precisely contingent demands (Kallinikos 2004). Hence, when studies feed into simplistic post-bureaucratic 'discourse endings' (Courpasson and Reed 2004) or confuse bureaucracy with excessive formalization they not only risk repeating management myths. They also run the risk of overlooking the inherent capacities of the very organizational model that, to this day, has been utilized as the primary tool for realizing many of humanity's most significant undertakings. Research risks neglecting the very device that may be best equipped to carry out the relations to pursue a presumed 'collaborative advantage' (Vangen, Hayes, and Cornforth 2015). Namely, that our ability to meet the challenges that confront us today, be it pandemics, climate change, hybrid warfare, organized crime, or issues of migration and segregation, may be contingent upon our ability to further refine bureaucracy. Excessive formalization or strict hierarchical steering may be a problem, but it is not the same thing as bureaucracy. Obvious as it may be, calling unnecessary formalization unnecessary is simply a truism.

Critical to this discussion is not an exercise in semantic distinctions to convey how bureaucracy appears under different names when scholars discuss important design features of governance networks. Rather, the value of bureaucracy as a distinct analytical construct lies in the inescapable connection between bureaucratic elements as organizational instruments and the *raison d'être* of bureaucracy as a central social institution in contemporary society. Whereas (Weber [1922] 1978) emphasized the technical superiority and the procedural rationality of bureaucracy, his studies

primarily focused on expressions of social values in the modern age. Bureaucracy, then, emerges as the embodiment of modern society's enduring commitment to a form of governing where rationality serves as a means to an end and not the outcome itself; To unleash formal organizing from personal and social considerations and establish an organizational order premised on impartial conduct and meritocracy (du Gay 2005; Kallinikos 2011). When we consider collaborative governance not as overshadowed by but as emerging within the framework of a rational-legal political order, rule-bound formalization and hierarchical relations, it allows us to not only discuss the effects of bureaucracy on the internal characteristics of governance networks. It also reveals how reformed organizational structures can be deliberately developed and facilitated within that framework. Most importantly, it provides us with the analytical leverage to explain *why* certain bureaucratic features prevail as pervasive organizational elements alongside the possible consequences of their absence.

In the following sections, I investigate the social and normative foundation of the bureaucratic order and propose the view of bureaucracy as a flexible, even uniquely mobile, organizational paradigm. This view suggests that research should pay more careful attention to *how* and *why* formalized work processes may (or may not) emerge as enabling and decisive mechanisms in collaborative governance while avoiding reified and simplified claims of bureaucratic behaviour. Increased flexibility, flatter hierarchies, or networked relations in this sense does not represent a break with the bureaucratic order, but its ability to change in its empirical representation – ‘manifested today in different form than yesterday’ (Freidson 2001, 51).

### **Bureaucracy: the flexible organizational paradigm**

As part of Max Weber's, [1922] 1978 research agenda to explore rationality, bureaucracy and capitalism were described as the two great rationalizing forces constituting essential agents and expressions of the modern age. Bureaucracy shifted the former principle of social organization to ‘function’ while removing a fundamental obstacle to social change and adaptation; tradition and stratification derived from non-negotiable social characteristics (Kallinikos 2011). By detailing the legally and culturally certified specification through which individuals join, abandon or interact with organizations, Weber explained how the rationalization of work is most evidentially manifested via the non-inclusive terms by which humans undertake organizational action (Kallinikos 2004). This relation unleashes formal organizing from personal and social considerations while constructing an organizational form premised on universalism and meritocracy (du Gay 2005). The term bureaucracy thus implies an organizational form grounded in a normative framework and belief in a legitimate, rational-legal political order to ensure reliability, impartiality and uniform provisioning of public services (Weber [1922] 1978).

The following sections present a theoretical framework that establishes how the individual-organization relationship of the bureaucratic order forms the primary relation and constitutive framework for deciding the limits of the bureaucratic organization. In turn, a hierarchy of offices and processes of formalization are described as important, but secondary and derivative, characteristics of bureaucracy that exhibit a graded intensity (Kallinikos 2004). In other words, bureaucratic features are here not regarded as a set of fixed, immutable structures but are treated as the outcome of a rule-governed process premised on the non-inclusive involvement of individuals in

bureaucratic organizations (du Gay 2005). The bureaucratic organization can inhibit more or less of its variables (hierarchies and formalization) which, in turn, allows us to distinguish between contextual variations of the bureaucratic form. By focusing on the derivative characteristics of bureaucracy, the framework explains how processes of bureaucratization may enable organizations to address contingent demands by reshuffling and reassembling the roles and role patterns by which it consists. The process of bureaucratization is delineated in three interdependent analytical dimensions that promote bureaucracy as a flexible organizational paradigm; (1) *The non-inclusive involvement of individuals qua role agents*, (2) *A hierarchy of offices*, and (3) *Formalization via documented rules and procedures*.

### ***The non-inclusive involvement of individuals qua role agents***

As defined by Weber ([1922] 1978) bureaucracy is a system of administration conducted by trained professionals according to fixed rules. Ideal type bureaucracy represents the clear distinction between politics and administration and the latter is composed of individuals that are hired and promoted based on their technical competence to fulfil specialized roles. Organizational duties are decoupled from the totality of what makes up a person and are transformed into a role that adheres to procedures described in a context-free, abstract manner so possible to be assumed by any competent member of a collective (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000). The major objective and important consequence of this modulation is to unleash formal organizing from personal and social considerations and tie it to merits provided by education and working experience. By subjecting decision-making to formal rationality via the non-inclusive involvement of individuals, such *mobile*, *selective* and *reversible* relations represent a 'virtual matrix' out of which a variety of organizational forms addressing specific sets of circumstances can emerge (Kallinikos 2004). Unlike individuals, roles can be 'adapted, modified, redesigned, abandoned or reshuffled to address the emerging technical, social and economic demands that the organisation is facing' (23).<sup>1</sup> *Selectivity* refers to the assumption that individuals take on organizational roles, suspend non-role demands and act based on a well-specified and delimited set of criteria (job description, jurisdictions, fields of responsibility). *Mobility* refers to how such an abstract set of functional requirements makes the role transferable across organizational contexts. *Reversibility* implies that jobs can be redesigned, modified or withdrawn.

In contrast to the individual-organizational relationship, both hierarchy and formalization exhibit a graded intensity whose significance emerges and develops within the constitutive framework that modulates how individuals are involved in organizations (Kallinikos 2004). The following two sections thus convey the variable characteristics that allow for distinguishing contextual variation of the bureaucratic form, starting with the mechanisms by which an organization can identify contingencies and process and transmit information to make decisions of redefining or reorganizing its constitutive elements (i.e. organizational roles).

### ***A hierarchy of offices***

The administrative staff of the bureaucratic organization function as subject to authority with respect to their impersonal official obligations, organized in a defined

hierarchy of offices (Weber [1922] 1978). This ‘imperative coordination’ points out that certain groups within organizations have the right to coordinate, control and direct because they have achieved the rationally distributed privilege to do so. It is through this distribution of authority and responsibility that the bureaucratic organization can reorganize and redefine its organizational roles to produce novel responses to the contingencies it confronts (Kallinikos 2004). The hierarchy of offices composes the very premise for detecting and handling contingencies, making decisions in a timely fashion and gathering, processing and transmitting information that can be transformed into courses of organizational action. However, the diversity of such hierarchical relations displayed in modern organizations does not disclose whether we should assume the emergence of an alternative form of organization or the demise of bureaucracy (Freidson 2001; Kallinikos 2004). Rather, the adaptive capacity of the bureaucratic model is evident in the substantial transformations it has undergone over time. The various appearances of hierarchy disclosed today propose, for example, that decentralization in certain domains may pair well with centralization in other domains (Blau, Heydebrand, and Stauffer 1966). Likewise, that the functional equivalence among formal organizational elements, such as the substitutive effects of command and formalization (Mintzberg 1979), should not be mistaken for the passing of bureaucracy. Flattened hierarchies or increasing reliance on teams and IT communication systems continue to be regulated and restricted by an executive authority, centralized resource allocation and target setting (Thompson and Alvesson 2005). Recent studies have shown how bureaucratic features are viable even in so-called self-organizing settings such as social movements (Staggenborg 2022), grassroots initiatives (Florian 2018), and designated terrorist groups (Shapiro 2013). In the digitally mediated community Wikipedia (often mentioned as a paradigmatic example of collaboration lacking central oversight and authority) bureaucratization premised on devised organizational roles has shown to arise as a result of bottom-up efforts to curb power concentration and improve accountability (Rijshouwer, Uitermark, and de Koster 2023).

### **Formalization**

Formalization refers to the process of anchoring organizational practices in written rules and formal procedures to make organizational action more predictable, consistent and accountable (Styhre 2007). This desired rule-bound behaviour is expressed primarily through stipulated job descriptions, duties and jurisdictions (Kallinikos 2004). According to Weber ([1922] 1978) bureaucracy is predicated on knowledge and managed upon written documents. Documentation, in this sense, forms the instrument for materializing the relation between roles, actions, discourses, and environments (Hull 2012). While views on precisely how, or if, documents contribute to organizational order vary, standardized behaviour constitutes the fundamental basis of organizational action and the fundamental element of all non-haphazard human action and communication (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000). However, there is a wide range of variability in formalizing elements across organizational contexts. Gibson et al. (2019) illustrate how formalization can aid or damage team performance depending on specifically what is being formalized. For example, the implementation of rules and procedures for the set-up of teams and projects rather than during interactions. Likewise, Markovic



(2017) concludes that the bureaucratic coordination of common efforts (i.e. contractual definitions of relationships, roles, responsibilities, boundaries and communication channels) has shown to have positive effects on collaborative governance networks. This corresponds to the argument of Adler and Borys (1996) who suggest that formalized bureaucratic workflows can be both enabling and coercive, depending on how they are used. Coercive procedures undermine the commitment of organizational actors and stifle innovation while enabling formalization provides adequate support for work to be carried out.

Based on the theoretical framework presented above, the following empirical analysis focuses on the bureaucratic mechanisms that actors of governance networks perceive as enabling bureaucracy (cf. Adler and Borys 1996) to enable and facilitate governance networks in the policy area of social sustainability. The empirical study displays both the normative foundation and inherent adaptive capacity of the bureaucratic order, specifically by its ability to enable and facilitate networked organizational relations. The networked bureaucracy, then, is the outcome of a rule-governed process based on rational-legal authority to enable and facilitate networked organizational forms.

## Method

### *Research context*

The empirical study is based on a qualitative case study of three similar attempts of regional and municipal level government bodies in Sweden to form governance networks in the policy area of social sustainability and public health. The studied networks consist of elected politicians representing both municipal and regional levels of government, public managers and cross-sector strategists who together perform as meta-governors to enable and facilitate local-level governance networks. In simpler terms, the studied networks can be described as networks designed to manage networks. In Sweden, the local and regional levels of government are responsible for a large proportion of the welfare services and hold extensive self-governance in relation to the national level of government. The policy area of public health and social sustainability is considered to be a joint responsibility and the studied networks seek to focus on issues of social sustainability that are perceived to sit in the inter-organizational domain, meaning that they cannot properly be addressed by a single organization acting alone.

The work of each governance network is regulated by a collaboration agreement in which the local public health work and initiatives for social sustainability are co-financed between the respective municipality and regional level of government. The main purpose of the agreement is to induce collaborative governance efforts for resource utilization and greater impact of interventions to improve the health of citizens and to equalize health disparities in the local context. The type of interventions that the studied networks seek to induce includes a wide array of issues, such as urban planning to reduce crime in particular areas, and increased collaboration among child protective services, the local police, midwives, and/or school educators to enhance the well-being of children and families in need. The initiated governance networks can involve local-level municipal and regional public organizations, other governmental organizations, and non-governmental actors.

The studied networks represent explicit attempts to formalize the processes and arenas of collaborative governance. However, the conceptual vagueness and openness of social sustainability make this horizontal policy a constant object of mediation and questions of what should be performed, how and through whom, are considered critical issues for the studied meta-governors. This also means that the involved stakeholders of collaborative governance are not seen as passive implementors of policy or managerial input but fill an important role in defining their content, appropriate measures and desirable outcomes (cf. Brorström and Norbäck 2020). While previous studies suggest that the derivative features of the bureaucratic organization (formalization and hierarchies) will be evident when meta-governors use ‘hands-on’ authority instruments of, for example, legal requirements (Krogh 2020), the case selection of this empirical study is based on the premise of illustrating how bureaucratic features can be recognized and analysed also in contexts influenced primarily by ‘hands-off’ meta-governance instruments.

Geographically, Sweden represents a case of a long tradition of embracing horizontal policy goals (Svensson 2019) and the case of public health represents one of the first policy areas to adopt the approach of policy integration. That is, policy-making that does not correspond to the institutional responsibilities of individual departments but that seeks to create interdependencies across domains by means of coordination and collaboration (Tosun and Lang 2017). Combined, these contextual factors make public health policy and Swedish local and regional government organizations an interesting study context to illustrate *how* and explain *why* collaborative governance networks need not inevitably be ‘transcending bureaucracy’ (Ansell, Sørensen, and Torfing 2021); or be operating ‘in the shadow of hierarchy’ (Sørensen and Torfing 2009, 236); but constitute a distinct and deliberate declaration of *the networked bureaucracy*. The case selection represents three geographically different networks in Sweden but with similar goals and remits to enable an analysis of similarities across the cases. This research design does not convey answers to the important question of how contextual variations of the bureaucratic form may emerge in the context of collaborative governance. However, it serves to lay the groundwork for future studies by allowing for the purpose of illustrating and further explaining the theoretical arguments made in the present article.

### **Data collection and analysis**

The main data collection was in-depth interviews with network actors, interviews were complemented by documentary analysis and observations of network meetings. Data were collected during 2020/2021 and include (1) Thirty-five interviews (50–90 min duration, recorded and transcribed verbatim) with 12 cross-sector strategists, 11 municipal managers and 12 interviews evenly distributed with politicians on the regional and municipal levels of government. The interviewees were randomly selected from the pool of participants within the studied networks, with a deliberate intention to ensure an even distribution among politicians, managers, and cross-sector strategists. (2) Twenty-three participant observations (>50 h) of network meetings on public health/social sustainability, where cross-sector strategists, managers and politicians interacted. I attended all network meetings held from August 2020 to May 2021. (3) Seven focus groups involving cross-sector strategists (>20 h). The studied cross-sector strategists are employed in a public

organization on the regional governmental level but work in relation to the studied municipal organizations to monitor the policy areas of social sustainability and public health and to promote collaborative governance (cf. Kanon and Andersson 2023). During the focus groups, the respondents discussed and interacted on my descriptions and interpretations of former participant observations. (4) Formal documents such as notes from previous meetings, plans and agreements.

The first stage of data analysis involved reading and re-reading the transcribed material. Initially, the research process was oriented by gaining an understanding of how the studied actors conceptualize their role in the network and how their work becomes part of the decision-making, management and organizing of the public sector. The first phase of data analysis uncovered the descriptions of the studied actors as focused on mechanisms pushing towards bureaucratization. In the second phase of data analysis, descriptions were sorted and searched for similarities that enabled grouping into preliminary second-order themes that described patterns of bureaucratization according to each of the three interdependent analytical dimensions of the theoretical framework presented above. Based on Kallinikos's 2004 elaborations of bureaucracy, the data set was analysed and sorted into themes that described (1) *the non-inclusive involvement of individuals qua role agents* (i.e. statements of how and why efforts of collaborative governance are tied to organizational roles or not) (2) *a hierarchy of offices* (i.e. statements of how and why efforts of collaborative governance are aligned with the vertical hierarchy and institutions of representative democracy), and (3) *formalization via documented rules and procedures* (i.e. statements of how and why efforts of collaborative governance is anchored in formal offices, processes and routines).

## Findings

### **Background: why governance networks?**

Social sustainability affects all other policies and all of our organisational activities! It is connected to issues in the labour market, our education system, health care services, urban planning, safety and security. Still, many public organisations continue to address these issues in isolated silos (Politician A, N1)

The studied networks seek to perform as meta-governors to enable and facilitate local-level collaborative governance networks that can identify, define and address local challenges of social sustainability. The management of areas such as employment issues, segregation, public health and crime prevention are considered to require the involvement of multiple and diverse organizations and the umbrella term social sustainability is considered to encompass the complexity and interrelatedness of such challenges. However, the conceptual vagueness and openness of social sustainability make this horizontal policy a constant object of mediation and questions of what should be performed, how and through whom, are considered critical issues for the studied meta-governors.

Social sustainability is not easy. We need to constantly redefine what it means in different contexts and to accomplish any real, concrete work, we need to find the right working structures to enable priorities, long-term decisions and to follow up on them as well. Otherwise, these kinds of overarching, abstract missions tend to end up on a dusty shelf somewhere, disconnected from what our organisations actually do (Politician A, N1)

The studied networks share the common effort to reduce what is perceived to be high levels of uncertainties in the context of collaborative governance to transform formerly decoupled strategic plans into organizational action. The studied actors describe the former decision-making authority on, or in, the inter-organizational domain as unclear. Effective decision-making is hindered by the functional-structural divide of municipal and regional organizations and the ideal-typical representation of the interface between politicians (as policymakers) and bureaucrats (as agents of implementation) is perceived as especially challenging to uphold when dealing with horizontal policy issues.

Everyone understands that we need to work across the silos of our organisation, but when, where and how? And who pays the bill? What kind of results do we expect? Public organisations cannot simply wait for people who are busy handling their regular work tasks to suddenly start working across boundaries. Do they even have a mandate for that? (Politician G, N1)

The studied network actors describe former efforts of collaborative governance as ad-hoc, personal and irrational. Ad-hoc in the sense that questions raised by different stakeholders as important to address in settings of collaborative governance were rarely actualized because there were no formal structures or processes in place to do so. Instead, any work performed related to issues of social sustainability was considered to be highly incidental, often short-lived projects instigated by idiosyncratic enthusiasts.

When it comes to these cross-cutting societal challenges, you get the feeling that the only ones who are engaged in the work are enthusiasts who are passionate about a particular issue. I mean, there are so many missions, policies, steering documents, from the national – even international level – all the way down to the local level, yet these issues become so dependent on the initiatives of certain people [...] Sure, it may work well with really engaged people, but all of the sudden someone retires or quit their job. We need this work to become sustainable over time (Manager G, N1)

The studied actors give several examples of important work that has been done in the area of social sustainability but that did not become long-term organizational commitments because the work performed was dependent on the work of particular people.

We discussed the issue of young people falling through the cracks of social services and the school for so many years. Suddenly, some of our managers took up this matter and started to organise their work in new ways. Our working methods became quite well known, they even went abroad to lecture about our collaborative working methods. We realized much later that it was the individuals working at that time that made everything happen. That initiative is not running anymore because someone quit their job, or retired, or had a baby - you know how it is (Politician L, N2)

The unclear role boundaries for decision-making in horizontal policy areas, on the one hand, are described as making politicians overly cautious in making decisions in questions that do not relate to their usual areas of responsibility. Other times, managers complain about politicians' intrusion in their day-to-day activities. One of the studied managers describes how the blurred decision-making mandates of horizontal policies create tensions between the administrative and political spheres.

When our politicians had decided on this overarching focus of social sustainability we formed three networks. We addressed labour market issues and housing in two of the networks and in the third network, we began to organise work in new ways. We saw positive results as we

moved a unit of social counsellors closer to other departments working in the same geographical, vulnerable areas. It enabled closer collaboration, but it did not take long until our politicians reacted to our initiative. We felt we had worked on their mandate, for us this was an administrative concern, but the politicians perceived it as a decision that should have been theirs to make (Manager C, N3)

The common purpose of the instigated networks is to stipulate a shared understanding of how horizontal policies should be handled in the local context while making processes of collaborative governance predictable, consistent and accountable. The major objective of the bureaucratic measures illustrated in the coming sections is to ensure participation and coordination across organizational boundaries in a non-random way so that the management of complex societal issues expire to be organized via short-lived projects instigated by individual enthusiasts, or the last-minute resort of addressing emergent needs.

What we are trying to do is to reinvent our ways of working and making decisions in quite fundamental ways [...] Both politicians and officials are so used to working in a structure that is well incorporated. With these horizontal issues, we don't understand how to interact and what roles we should fill. We need new guidelines on how decisions should be made (Manager F, N3)

### ***A hierarchy of offices***

The studied networks constitute a formal interaction channel intended to bridge the gap between lateral relations in the otherwise functionally structured municipal organization and local-level regional organizations with the traditional institutions of representative democracy. The purpose is to ensure political ownership and organizational commitment by creating an interactive zone for politicians and managers to meet, where horizontal policy problems related to social sustainability can be discussed, information can be exchanged and decisions can be made. While presented as a network setting, this forum encourages traditional 'memorandum-led' meetings that are routinized with formal voting procedures and officially published meeting minutes.

It was not clear whether decisions should be made in the municipal board or the respective political committees, by the affected managers, by the entire management board or within the collaborative structure. We needed a forum where politicians meet across their committee boundaries to establish assignments for the management board based on data received by the organisation. Based on such assignments, the management board can create new structures for collaboration (Manager C, N3)

Clearer relations in terms of super- and subordination are presumed important to align and incentivize the processes and arenas of collaborative governance. For the studied politicians, increased interaction with the involved organizational actors is important to get a better sense of how they can prioritize strategic choices and resources. Meanwhile, the studied managers see a need for politicians to give clear missions and appointed resources to induce collaborative governance on the organizational level. The managers can, through such mandates, direct work into their organizations and find the right people to engage in collaborative governance networks.

I have to be expected to report to the political committee and the municipal board on how I have promoted and ensured increased collaboration with other actors on certain issues [...]

And if I don't tell my employees that 'you must collaborate with social services, it's your god damned job', well, they will not see it as part of their responsibility (Manager G, N1)

The studied networks represent an increased amount of interactions between managers and politicians but are at the same time described as a means to keep politicians at arm's length in the management of complex societal problems. The studied managers and strategists (even a good part of the politicians themselves) express concerns over the role of politics in reducing the capacity to address issues of social sustainability by focusing on short-term symbolic actions or by suggesting simple, routine solutions to complex problems. Managers want to simultaneously involve politicians in their work to secure resources and long-term commitment while keeping them away from dictating the concrete work. Therefore, the increased interactions between politicians and managers take place in sequential and separate steps. The managers and associated governance networks are responsible for specific phases of defining the content of the strategic policy area (social sustainability), for proposing solutions for a certain defined problem as well as addressing it, but they continue in a routinized fashion to exchange information with politicians at the end of each step. The managers consider their role as allocating resources for collaborative governance, appointing responsibilities and reporting back to politicians, while not affecting the interactions of the initiated governance networks on the organizational level.

We have to find the basic structures for how to induce this kind of work, but our collaboration structures must continue to be organic in themselves and build on the knowledge base and perspectives of those who are appointed to participate, no one else (Manager H, N2)

The initiated governance networks on the organizational level may include temporary network structures to identify local challenges of social sustainability or to propose action in a certain area (strategic networks) or the development of more stable governance networks to provide renewed services via collaborative governance (public service networks). The networks instigated on the organizational level can be the result of both top-down or bottom-up propositions and may include public organizations at the municipal, regional or national levels of government, and/or other public organizations and non-governmental actors. The studied actors find it important to align bottom-up efforts of collaborative governance with the vertical hierarchy not only as a matter of seeking a sustainable mandate for decision-making and resource allocation, but it also has its origin in a strive towards legitimacy by ensuring uniform provisioning of public services. As explained by one of the studied strategists:

It's great when solutions are driven from below, when teachers and social workers find local solutions to deal with school absenteeism, for example, but it is our job to ensure equality in the support that we provide students and families in need. Whether a child is offered support or not cannot depend on a certain committed individual working at a certain school! (Strategist D, N3)

The distribution of authority and responsibility manifested in the ordinary hierarchy of offices is thus utilized to mobilize resources and to gain access to fragmented and local knowledge for detecting and handling complex societal challenges related to social sustainability. It aids in gathering, processing and transmitting information to induce political ownership, decision-making and resource allocation so that the proposed network solutions can be transformed into courses of organizational action.

## Formalization

Whether you are a politician, strategist, manager, or social counsellor, you have to know ‘this is my role in this particular structure’. I may be expected to join a certain network, allocate resources, or report back to our politicians, but that will not magically happen. If there are issues we should address that are not related to our formal structures, I won’t see the effect of those problems until they are right in front of my nose (Manager E, N3)

The studied governance networks seek to formalize working procedures surrounding social sustainability to establish specific processes and routines for when otherwise separate organizational actors should interface. This formalization is anchored in formal voting procedures, missions, agreements and action plans that are monitored via the work of cross-sector strategists and digital tools for strategic planning. The job description of the studied cross-sector strategists states that their job is to coordinate, oversee and monitor the horizontal policies of social sustainability and public health. This includes keeping governance networks running and related to specific organizational functions that are assigned the task of collaborating.

As soon as a new network is created, someone retires or ends their employment and the network disappears [...] We need the strategist to advance these processes four years from now when they are not on top of my mind or other managers’ minds. My employees have to participate in networks as part of their organisational function. When Simon and Anna end their employment, the strategist has to keep the process moving. Simon disappears, but Jacob joins the network instead (Manager E, N1)

Cross-sector strategists regulate invitations and see to it that the relevant actors are appointed and invited to network meetings. Their job includes making sure that network meetings are held in a routinized fashion while following various formal procedures (e.g. written agendas, and meeting minutes). They broker relationships among collaborative actors and aim to regulate that decisions made integrate the contribution of various stakeholders’ perspectives in the collaborative working process. They strive to drive network actors in the same direction in due time and see to it that action plans are written down and reported back to managers and politicians.

Two of the three governance networks use digital tools for strategic planning to visualize and simplify planning and follow-up on governance networks in real time. The third network is planning to do the same. The role of digital technology in this process facilitates interactions across organizational levels in the vertical hierarchy as well as across functional departments by offering checklists for lower-ranked unit managers to work on specific issues, it makes the interactions easier to monitor and facilitates the capacity to enforce accountability. Collaborative governance actors register written details of meetings, agreements, due dates, goals, action plans, summarized dialogues, meeting minutes, feedback and decisions that are reproduced in official databases.

I need to know what my role is. What is expected of me? How do we follow up on this work? Our work must be included in the overall operating systems we use. I need somewhere to enter assignments, document what is performed, and receive feedback [...] A new employee must be able to derive our work in a pedagogic way. What target documents guide this work? What specific challenges does this municipality face and in what structures do we work? We must make this work completely understandable, even if the issues in themselves are complex (Manager E, N1)

The studied actors conceive of such digital tools as facilitating interactions across organizational levels and functional departments by inducing rule-bound behaviour when otherwise busy organizational actors are reminded about their obligations in the inter-organizational domain and by pushing higher degrees of transparency regarding the work performed in governance networks. Such transparency is considered enabling by providing legitimacy and adequate support for ideas and proposals to be accepted and work to be carried out.

### ***The non-inclusive involvement of individuals qua role agents***

By connecting any initiated collaborative governance network to the ordinary hierarchy of offices and vertical relations of decision-making, the studied governance actors strive to make the formation of, and decision-making related to, collaborative governance formalized and sustainable. This involves relating processes of collaborative governance to specific formal organizational roles so that efforts of collaborative governance are not simply contingent upon the interest of specific individuals.

We need trust between different organisational functions in the networks and between administrators and politicians, not individuals! The more comfortable we become in our different roles in these settings and the more we interact through our roles and responsibilities, the easier it will be for a newcomer to replace the previous network participant [...] It is via our functions as professional actors that we need to come together to find new solutions to complex problems (Manager F, N3)

The studied networks seek to formally adapt and redesign the ‘spheres of obligation’ (duties and interactions) tied to organizational roles to unleash work on issues related to social sustainability from personal considerations and tie it closer to merits provided by education and working experiences. This is done via higher-level missions of politicians and via managers that either direct work top-down to instigate collaborative governance networks or encourage public servants to participate in and initiate, governance networks of bottom-up nature as part of their organizational duties.

The major objective of the bureaucratic measures illustrated in the studied cases is to ensure participation and coordination across organizational boundaries in a non-random way so that the management of complex societal issues expire to be highly incidental and organized via short-lived projects instigated by individual enthusiasts, or the last-minute resort of addressing emergent needs. However, the precise content of network actors’ work, the process or outcome of such lateral relations, is not part of the instigated structures to increase predictability in the studied contexts. The system of formalization put in place brings organizational actors together to deal with interfaces while keeping politicians and managers at what the studied actors deem an appropriate distance during specific phases of defining the content of the strategic policy areas, proposing solutions for the defined problem, as well as addressing it.

## **Discussion**

The studied governance network actors seek to reduce uncertainty and establish organizational manageability in the policy areas of social sustainability and public health. This is done by establishing formalized systems of super- and subordination, formal interaction channels and designated offices with the ‘distinct sphere of



obligation' (Weber [1922] 1978) to enable and facilitate collaborative governance networks. The processes and arenas of collaborative governance are incentivized via the *hierarchy of offices* of public organizations to mobilize legitimacy and resources. This alignment with the vertical hierarchy is considered to compose the very premise for detecting and handling cross-cutting challenges, for gathering, processing and transmitting information and for making decisions (cf. Kallinikos 2004) so that any proposed governance network solutions can be transformed into courses of organizational action. The sought *formalization* is anchored (cf. Styhre 2007) in formal voting procedures, missions, agreements and action plans that are monitored via the work of cross-sector strategists and digital tools for strategic planning. These tools intend to establish specific processes and routines for when otherwise separate organizational actors should interface. They clarify that certain organizational undertakings belong to different phases of identifying, defining and addressing complex societal challenges and that such cross-cutting challenges are discussed in specific forums and are evaluated by specific actors. These formalization efforts serve to establish connections with the vertical hierarchy of offices to induce rule-bound behaviour (Weber [1922] 1978) to facilitate the increased capacity to enforce accountability, by allowing for monitoring, controlling and predicting action (cf. Thompson and Alvesson 2005). This push for higher degrees of transparency is considered enabling (cf. Adler and Borys 1996) because it provides legitimacy and adequate support for ideas and proposals to be accepted, for resource allocation and for work to be carried out. The major objective of the bureaucratic measures illustrated in the studied cases is to ensure participation and coordination across organizational boundaries in a non-random way so that the management of complex societal issues expire to be highly incidental and organized via short-lived projects instigated by individual enthusiasts, or the last-minute resort of addressing emergent needs. In this sense, the studied actors strive to formalize collaborative work by unleashing it from personal and social considerations (cf. Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000) and tie it closer to merits provided by education and working experiences. Organizational roles are altered based on the fundamental assumption of *selectivity* and *reversibility* (Kallinikos 2004), that is, how individuals take on organizational roles and act based on a delimited set of criteria and that jobs can be redesigned and modified. This means processes of collaborative governance are related to organizational roles, instead of being contingent upon the interest of idiosyncratic individuals, and that job descriptions can be modified. In this case, via higher-level missions of politicians and via managers that either direct work top-down to instigate collaborative governance, or encourage public servants to participate in, and initiate, governance networks of bottom-up nature, as part of their organizational responsibilities. In this sense, the studied actors seek to take advantage of the adaptive capacity inherent in the bureaucratic model and reinvent formalization in the context of cross-cutting societal challenges to achieve the very foundation of the bureaucratic model: *The non-inclusive involvement of individuals qua role agents*.

The studied actors seek to build structures to ensure that the bureaucratic organization is predicated on knowledge (cf. Weber [1922] 1978) (as opposed to political or managerial domination, or the work of individual enthusiasts) by enabling any collaborative working process to be divided into a sequential and separated process that serve to preserve the functional specializations and administrative autonomy of public organizations. The system of formalization put in place brings organizational actors together to deal with interfaces (cf. Gibson, Dunlop, and Cordery 2019; Markovic

2017) while keeping politicians and managers at what the studied actors deem an appropriate distance during specific phases of defining the content of the strategic policy areas, proposing solutions for the defined problem, as well as addressing it. However, they continuously and in a routinized fashion exchange information with politicians, via formalized communication channels, at the end of each step. This reinvented formalization is considered crucial for being able to dust off and transform formerly decoupled strategic plans into organizational action while encouraging uniform provisioning of public services driven by organizational actors that adhere to a code of conduct of impersonality (cf. Weber [1922] 1978) as opposed to being driven by individual and idiosyncratic enthusiasts. Hence, bureaucratization is not only visible in these attempts in terms of structural bureaucratic features (hierarchy, formalization, organizational roles) but also by bureaucratic governing precepts (impartiality, uncertainty reduction) and presumed intended outcomes (uniform provisioning of services, rationalization). Indeed, a strive towards bureaucratization does not only result from the pursuit of organizational manageability but a quest for a bureaucratic ethos and the minimization of domination as well.

### ***Collaborative governance as a declaration of the networked bureaucracy***

According to Kallinikos (2004), the misinterpretation and overrepresentation of the derivative characteristics of bureaucracy (i.e. inflexibility, rigid rules, administrative burden) is marked by ‘an astonishingly naïve functionalism devoid of any historical awareness’ (14). The common way of treating bureaucracy as yet one type of organizational form among others (e.g., Læg Reid and Rykkja 2022; Lee and Esteve 2022; Waardenburg et al. 2020), makes research on collaborative governance not only bypass the social and normative processes by which the structure and functioning of public organizations stem from and contribute to. They also run the risk of overlooking that such procedures form a pervasive factor of organizational life. The cases of governance networks presented in this article illustrate that bureaucratic arrangements need not be contrary to lateral relations per se, but may instead be designed to enable and facilitate them. The conceptual lens of *The networked bureaucracy* signifies how bureaucracy continues to serve as the overarching principle, or institutional framework, in which structures and processes of collaborative governance and meta-governance emerge and connect. The networked bureaucracy, then, represents the outcome of a rule-governed process based on rational-legal authority to enable and facilitate networked organizational forms. When governance networks are viewed, not as overshadowed by, but as an extension of the networked bureaucracy, it reveals how core design and process questions of collaborative governance are tightly coupled with the interrelated analytical dimensions of the bureaucratic order (*the non-inclusive involvement of individuals, a hierarchy of offices, and formalization via documented rules and procedures*). Meta-governance strategies, as situated in the networked bureaucracy, can provide new viewpoints on the repertoire of hands-on and hands-off instruments of meta-governors (Sørensen and Torfing 2009) and how the Weberian distinction between politics and administration (Weber [1922] 1978) is represented and reformed in the context of collaborative governance. It allows us not only to investigate aspects of legitimacy, accountability and democracy in the context of collaborative governance, but also remind us to treat any characteristics related to bureaucratic features as an empirical question. Indeed, by confusing bureaucracy with simply a set list of

structural features, or reified and derivative characteristics of inflexibility, any attempt to understand the development or functioning of collaborative governance networks will remain confined to the attention bias of interpersonal relations and trust as mechanisms for coordination. On the one hand, the networked bureaucracy signals how efforts of collaborative governance are sought within a normative and regulative order that constitutes public organizations, that shapes their operations and against which its practices may be critiqued, held accountable and corrected (Kallinikos 2004). On the other hand, it emphasizes the inherent adaptive capacity of the bureaucratic order, so possible to be manifested through a diversity of contextual variations for addressing the emerging technical, social and economic demands that the organization is facing.

Presumably, needless to say, work practices rarely mirror idealized abstractions. Rather, it is the various patterns of bringing different elements of bureaucracy together to respond to emerging social projects that will give them meaning and purpose (Kallinikos 2004). As enacted by actors, the varying forms, functioning, emergence and growth of bureaucratic features will produce a variety of consequences (Thompson and Alvesson 2005). Different features of bureaucracy may function as a decoupled and rationalized myth, a coercive weapon of domination or an enabling and efficient tool for organizing work (Adler and Borys 1996). Bureaucracy, then, is neither inherently good nor evil, neither enabling nor coercive for collaborative governance, but holds the potential for both. Arguably, if the rational-legal structure maintaining formal organizations is to be revised and the social practices associated with them transformed into the proposals of ‘collaborative innovation’, research must be able to derive the legal and cultural order that will replace it. It must also declare under what forms individuals will partake in collaborative governance networks. To this day, human involvement in public organizations is still non-inclusive (Kallinikos 2004), executive authority is still exercised, and previously separate specializations, now brought together, are still functionally related. Yet we know little about the mechanisms through which bureaucracy changes in appearance across reformed organizational settings.

## Conclusion

Based on a critical appraisal of current literature on collaborative governance and an empirical study of three governance networks in Sweden, this article challenges the predominant notion in extant research of public networks and bureaucracy as opposing forms of organization. The findings of the empirical study display how actors of governance networks employ and reinvent fundamental bureaucratic features to achieve organizational manageability and make processes of collaborative governance more predictable, consistent and accountable. By recognizing the normative foundation and inherent adaptability of the bureaucratic organization, the presented conceptual framework challenges predominant and oversimplified views of bureaucracy as a rigid and inflexible model. It underscores why bureaucracy continues to serve as a central social institution in contemporary society and explains how bureaucracy can be harnessed as an essentially flexible tool in public organizing. By promoting the conceptual lens of *The networked bureaucracy*, the framework serves as a reminder of the normative foundation and inherent adaptive capacity of the bureaucratic order. Furthermore, by illustrating how bureaucracy can be recognized and analysed in the

context of collaborative governance, the paper contributes to the current literature by laying the groundwork for future studies on how bureaucracy may change in appearance across reformed organizational settings. By doing so, it encourages scholars and practitioners alike to reconsider the role and potential of bureaucracy in contemporary governance, providing valuable insights into the development and enhancement of collaborative approaches to societal challenges.

## Note

1. While the extent to which individual and organizational roles can be decoupled remains in question, this premise is still considered to uphold the grounds for modern society and bureaucracy.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Funding

The work was supported by the Jan Wallanders och Tom Hedelius Stiftelse samt Tore Browaldhs Stiftelse [P20-0216].

## References

- Adler, P. S., and B. Borys. 1996. "Two Types of Bureaucracy: Enabling and Coercive." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 41 (1): 61–89. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393986>.
- Ansell, C., E. Sørensen, and J. Torfing. 2021. "The COVID-19 Pandemic as a Game Changer for Public Administration and Leadership? The Need for Robust Governance Responses to Turbulent Problems." *Public Management Review* 23 (7): 949–960. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2020.1820272>.
- Bache, I., I. Bartle, M. Flinders, and G. Marsden. 2015. "Blame Games and Climate Change: Accountability, Multi-Level Governance and Carbon Management." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 17 (1): 64–88. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-856X.12040>.
- Blau, P. M., W. V. Heydebrand, and R. E. Stauffer. 1966. "The Structure of Small Bureaucracies." *American Sociological Review* 31 (2): 179–191. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2090903>.
- Brorström, S., and M. Norbäck. 2020. "‘Keeping Politicians at Arm’s Length’: How Managers in a Collaborative Organization Deal with the Administration–Politics Interface." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 86 (4): 657–672. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852318822090>.
- Candel, J. J., and R. Biesbroek. 2016. "Toward a Processual Understanding of Policy Integration." *Policy Sciences* 49 (3): 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-016-9248-y>.
- Courpasson, D., and M. Reed. 2004. "Introduction: Bureaucracy in the Age of Enterprise." *Organization* 11 (1): 5–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508404039656>.
- Cristofoli, D., J. Markovic, and M. Meneguzzo. 2014. "Governance, Management and Performance in Public Networks: How to Be Successful in Shared-Governance Networks." *Journal of Management & Governance* 18 (1): 77–93. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10997-012-9237-2>.
- Crosby, B. C., P. Hart, and J. Torfing. 2017. "Public Value Creation Through Collaborative Innovation." *Public Management Review* 19 (5): 655–669. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2016.1192165>.
- Doberstein, C. 2016. "Designing Collaborative Governance Decision-Making in Search of a ‘Collaborative Advantage’." *Public Management Review* 18 (6): 819–841. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2015.1045019>.
- du Gay, P. 2005. "The Values of Bureaucracy: An Introduction." In *The Values of Bureaucracy*, edited by P. du Gay, 1–13. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Eriksson, E., T. Andersson, A. Hellström, C. Gadolin, and S. Lifvergren. 2020. "Collaborative Public Management: Coordinated Value Propositions Among Public Service Organizations." *Public Management Review* 22 (6): 791–812. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2019.1604793>.
- Ewens, H., and J. van der Voet. 2019. "Organizational Complexity and Participatory Innovation: Participatory Budgeting in Local Government." *Public Management Review* 21 (12): 1848–1866. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2019.1577908>.
- Ferraro, F., D. Etzion, and J. Gehman. 2015. "Tackling Grand Challenges Pragmatically: Robust Action Revisited." *Organization Studies* 36 (3): 363–390. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840614563742>.
- Ferreira, C., K. Broughton, K. Broadhurst, and J. Ferreira. 2023. "Collaborative Innovation in a Local Authority – 'Local Economic Development-By-project'?" *Public Management Review* 1–19. Advance Online Publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2023.2185663>.
- Florian, M. 2018. "Unlikely allies: Bureaucracy as a cultural trope in a grassroots volunteer organization." *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 34 (2): 151–161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2018.03.002>.
- Freidson, E. 2001. *Professionalism, the Third Logic: On the Practice of Knowledge*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.
- Geddes, L. 2012. "In Search of Collaborative Public Management: The Prolific and Other Priority Offender Programme." *Public Management Review* 14 (7): 947–966. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2011.650057>.
- Gibson, C. B., P. D. Dunlop, and J. L. Cordery. 2019. "Managing Formalization to Increase Global Team Effectiveness and Meaningfulness of Work in Multinational Organizations." *Journal of International Business Studies* 50 (6): 1021–1052. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-019-00226-8>.
- Gjaltema, J., R. Biesbroek, and K. Termeer. 2020. "From Government to Governance ... to Meta-Governance: A Systematic Literature Review." *Public Management Review* 22 (12): 1760–1780. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2019.1648697>.
- Guarneros-Meza, V., and S. Martin. 2016. "Boundary Spanning in Local Public Service Partnerships: Coaches, Advocates or Enforcers?" *Public Management Review* 18 (2): 238–257. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2014.969761>.
- Hansen, M. P., P. Triantafyllou, and S. H. Christensen. 2022. "Two Logics of Democracy in Collaborative Governance: A Mapping of Clashes and Compromises." *Public Management Review* 1–22. Advance Online Publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2022.2107696>.
- Hasselbladh, H., and J. Kallinikos. 2000. "The Project of Rationalization: A Critique and Reappraisal of Neo-Institutionalism in Organization Studies." *Organization Studies* 21 (4): 697–720. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840600214002>.
- Hooge, E. H., S. Waslander, and H. C. Theisens. 2022. "The Many Shapes and Sizes of Meta-Governance. An Empirical Study of Strategies Applied by a Well-Advanced Meta-Governor: The Case of Dutch Central Government in Education." *Public Management Review* 24 (10): 1591–1609. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2021.1916063>.
- Hull, M. S. 2012. "Documents and bureaucracy." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (1): 251–267. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.104953>.
- Kallinikos, J. 2004. "The Social Foundations of the Bureaucratic Order." *Organization* 11 (1): 13–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508404039657>.
- Kallinikos, J. 2011. "Bureaucracy Under Siege: On Information, Collaboration and Networks." In *Managing Modernity: Beyond Bureaucracy*, edited by S. Clegg, M. Harris, and H. Höpfl, 130–153. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kanon, M., and T. Andersson. 2023. "Working on Connective Professionalism: What Cross-Sector Strategists in Swedish Public Organizations Do to Develop Connectivity in Addressing 'Wicked' Policy Problems." *Journal of Professions and Organization* 10 (1): 50–64. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpo/joac020>.
- Krogh, A. H. 2020. "Facilitating Collaboration in Publicly Mandated Governance Networks." *Public Management Review* 24 (4): 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2020.1862288>.
- Lægred, P., and L. H. Rykkja. 2022. "Accountability and Inter-Organizational Collaboration within the State." *Public Management Review* 24 (5): 683–703. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2021.1963822>.

- Lee, S., and M. Esteve. 2022. "What Drives the Perceived Legitimacy of Collaborative Governance? An Experimental Study." *Public Management Review* 25 (8): 1517–1538. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2022.2026692>.
- Markovic, J. 2017. "Contingencies and Organizing Principles in Public Networks." *Public Management Review* 19 (3): 361–380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2016.1209237>.
- Mintzberg, H. 1979. *The Structuring of Organizations*. Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Monteiro, P., and P. S. Adler. 2022. "Bureaucracy for the 21st Century: Clarifying and Expanding Our View of Bureaucratic Organization." *Academy of Management Annals* 16 (2): 427–475. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2019.0059>.
- Osborne, S. P. 2006. "The New Public Governance?" *Public Management Review* 8 (3): 377–387. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719030600853022>.
- Perrow, C. 1979. *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay*. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.
- Rijshouwer, E., J. Uitermark, and W. de Koster. 2023. "Wikipedia: a self-organizing bureaucracy." *Information, Communication & Society* 26 (7): 1285–1302. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1994633>.
- Rittel, H. W., and M. M. Webber. 1973. "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning." *Policy Sciences* 4 (2): 155–169. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01405730>.
- Segato, F., and J. Raab. 2018. "Mandated Network Formation." *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 32 (2): 191–206. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPSM-01-2018-0018>.
- Shapiro, J. N. 2013. *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert Organizations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sørensen, E., and J. Torfing. 2009. "Making Governance Networks Effective and Democratic Through Metagovernance." *Public Administration* 87 (2): 234–258. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2009.01753.x>.
- Staggenborg, S. 2022. "Bureaucratization and Social Movements." In *Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*, edited by D.A. Snow, D. Porta, B. Klandermans, and D. McAdam, 1–4. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Styhre, A. 2007. *The Innovative Bureaucracy in an Age of Fluidity*. New York, NY: Francis & Taylor.
- Svensson, P. 2019. "Formalized Policy Entrepreneurship as a Governance Tool for Policy Integration." *International Journal of Public Administration* 42 (14): 1212–1221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2019.1590401>.
- Thompson, P., and M. Alvesson. 2005. "Bureaucracy at Work: Misunderstandings and Mixed Blessings." In *The Values of Bureaucracy*, edited by P. du Gay, 89–113. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Torfing, J. 2019. "Collaborative Innovation in the Public Sector: The Argument." *Public Management Review* 21 (1): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2018.1430248>.
- Torfing, J., and C. Ansell. 2017. "Strengthening Political Leadership and Policy Innovation Through the Expansion of Collaborative Forms of Governance." *Public Management Review* 19 (1): 37–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2016.1200662>.
- Tosun, J., and A. Lang. 2017. "Policy Integration: Mapping the Different Concepts." *Policy Studies* 38 (6): 553–570. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2017.1339239>.
- Turrini, A., D. Cristofoli, F. Frosini, and G. Nasi. 2010. "Networking Literature About Determinants of Network Effectiveness." *Public Administration* 88 (2): 528–550. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2009.01791.x>.
- van der Voet, J., and B. Steijn. 2021. "Team Innovation Through Collaboration: How Visionary Leadership Spurs Innovation via Team Cohesion." *Public Management Review* 23 (9): 1275–1294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2020.1743344>.
- Vangen, S., J. P. Hayes, and C. Cornforth. 2015. "Governing Cross-Sector, Inter-Organizational Collaborations." *Public Management Review* 17 (9): 1237–1260. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2014.903658>.
- Waardenburg, M., M. Groenleer, J. de Jong, and B. Keijser. 2020. "Paradoxes of Collaborative Governance: Investigating the Real-Life Dynamics of Multi-Agency Collaborations Using a Quasi-Experimental Action-Research Approach." *Public Management Review* 22 (3): 386–407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2019.1599056>.
- Weber, M. [1922] 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Wegrich, K. 2019. "The Blind Spots of Collaborative Innovation." *Public Management Review* 21 (1): 12–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2018.1433311>.
- Willem, A., and S. Lucidarme. 2014. "Pitfalls and Challenges for Trust and Effectiveness in Collaborative Networks." *Public Management Review* 16 (5): 733–760. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2012.744426>.