

Åge Johnsen
Department of Public Administration and Leadership, Oslo Metropolitan University
aage.johnsen@oslomet.no

Iveta Reinholde
Department of Political Science, University of Latvia
iveta.reinholde@lu.lv

It is increasingly the case that the inhabitants of many European countries are moving to urban areas and cities. In this context, some cities are facing a range of challenges due to rapid growth, while other cities are facing challenges of population decline, and many others are struggling in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2007–2009. Examples of problems European cities are facing are international conflicts, migration, climate change, local pollution, congestion, lack of appropriate housing, unemployment, inequality and insecurity. Public administration needs to pay attention to urban governance processes in dealing with these types of challenges. By ‘governance’, we are broadly referring to knowledge of organisational solutions, mechanisms and outcomes, both from a hierarchical top-down and a bottom-up perspective, as well as from a participative, network perspective. This type of knowledge is important in order to understand processes that are shaping urban areas and the city, but also to stimulate positive development and thereby prevent conflict.

We believe urban governance can be beneficially understood as policy processes. Hupe and Hill (2006, p. 13), referring to Paul A. Sabatier, describe the elements of a policy process. A *policy process* is ‘an extremely complex set’ consisting of many actors, a time span of a decade or more, many different programmes involving many layers of government, a variety of policy debates often regarding technical issues in different forums, with high stakes for the actors involved, often resulting in political behaviour and power in the policy processes.

This introduction discusses seven articles that exemplify urban governance as involving complex sets of diverse actors, interests, time spans, programmes, layers of government, debates, technologies and power. These articles originate from an international symposium on urban governance in Europe, which took place in Oslo in 2016. The five articles in this special issue involve two main themes: integration and regional development. Two more articles, to be published in SJPA 22(2), address co-creation and participation.

Željko Poljak (2018) explores the usefulness of the policy image concept in an urban government context whereas this concept has only been applied to the national context before. The article uses the migration crisis in the City of Zagreb in Croatia in 2015 as a case. The crisis was due to mass migration from the Middle East and North Africa towards Northern Europe, which affected many European countries at that time. The policy image concept seeks to explain policy stability and change. A dominant policy image is expected to keep a policy stable. When there are alternative images, they can drastically change certain policies. The study found only one dominant policy image associated with the migration crisis in Zagreb and that image was concerned with the humanitarian

* **Åge Johnsen** is Professor of Public Policy at the Department of Public Administration and Leadership, Oslo Metropolitan University. His research interests are public management reforms, strategic planning, performance management, and evaluation and performance audit in the public sector.

Iveta Reinholde is Associate Professor and Head of Department at the Department of Political Science, University of Latvia. Her research interests are public administration, public policy, and state politics and policy.

approach to the crisis. The dominant policy image of human rights for migrants, instead of images of threats of terrorism or integration policies, probably kept governance stable in Zagreb during the migration crisis. Policy images may therefore be important in urban governance as well as in national governance.

Anton Steen and Maiken Røed (2018) analyse what happened in urban government in efforts to settle refugees in Norwegian municipalities in the period 2012–2014. This article is interesting because it illustrates how urban policies involve multiple layers of government, actors with diverse interests, and debates in which technologies (implementation tools) are most effective (Howlett 2009). In Norway the central government is responsible for the overall policies and choice of implementation tools for the settlement and integration of asylum-seekers and refugees in society, however, it is voluntary for the municipalities to settle the refugees in their jurisdiction. This study found that economic incentives directed towards local authorities' behaviour were more effective for settling refugees than using information tools such as appeals and persuasion. Agency, central and local government relations, and the policy mix of hard and soft implementation tools are important issues in urban governance in many countries and contexts.

The inclusion of minority groups in the population in the local and national society is a persistent issue in urban as well as national governance. Aleksandra Kjakste and Sigita Struberga (2018) study the inclusion and representation of the Russian-speaking population in local government policy-making in the municipality of Riga in Latvia. Minority groups in Latvia are a legacy, partly of Riga being a cosmopolitan city for a long time and especially the communist Soviet occupation of the Baltic states 1940–1991. However, in Riga as well as some other places, the Russian-speaking population represents the majority population. Despite improvements in formal inclusion and legislation, factual inclusion of the Russian-speaking population remains low, for several reasons. The municipalities, for example, communicate with the Russian-speaking population mainly as users of their services, not as co-producers. Moreover, the Russian-speaking population seems to lack a culture of trust in government. Both these tendencies indicate that real inclusion may take decades to develop.

The next two articles address the issues of planning in urban governance at different societal levels: in regional development, and between different urban areas in polycentric planning.

Visvaldis Valtenbergs (2018) maps the development of cities in the Baltic Sea Region in the period 2005–2014 and discusses some implications for urban governance. The territories of the Baltic Sea Region are diverse when assessed by indicators such as population change, GDP development, major transportation facilities, educational levels, and people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The financial crisis of 2007–2009 negatively affected the economies of some countries more than others. The economic growth of the cities has, however, been a common theme during the ten years studied, especially in the larger cities and in the cities of Eastern Europe. All capital cities, but especially global level metropolises and European level metropolises, have significantly increased their

integration into the global economy, Valtenbergs argue. The development of the cities, including how they handle economic recession, is highly embedded in contexts of national and regional policies. Valtenbergs identified four issues that are important for the future urban government of the cities and urban areas in the Baltic Sea Region: Discrepancies between the administrative definitions of the cities and their true size, tax competition in fragmented administrative urban government settings, social and economic inequality in the territories within the cities and urban areas, and functional versus administrative models for urban governance. The remaining papers address some of these issues.

Heidi Bergsli and Kjell-Arve Harvold (2018) study planning for polycentricity and used the development of a regional plan for the Oslo metropolitan area as their case. *Polycentricity* is the principle of strategic regional planning in order to concentrate land use and optimize infrastructure. Polycentric planning is especially interesting given the fact that many countries use the region as planning unit in order to reduce problems due to different functional and administrative areas in the urban government. This article studied the Regional Plan for Land Use and Transport in the Norwegian capital region, Oslo and Akershus, which was approved in 2015 and underwent an extensive consultation process. The case study documented that the plan had the potential for improving co-ordination of national, regional and local policies, for example for public transport, housing and land use, but also that there were conflicting interests and that the plan could increase competition between some of the regions. Therefore, despite good intentions in planning, the conflicting interest could hamper the implementation.

The final two papers, to be published in SJPA 22(2), address governance and participation. Dorthe Hedensted Lund (2018) discusses the meaning of the buzzword, co-creation, in urban governance and argues that attention has shifted from valuing inclusion and participation to innovation and performance. She finds that co-creation mainly refers to innovation and value creation taking place as a collaborative process involving different types of actors. These actors may take on roles such as co-implementers, co-designers and co-initiators. Urban governance by co-creation therefore earns its legitimacy more by innovation and output than by representation and input. Urban governance by co-creation can therefore be regarded as part of the alleged transition from traditional public administration to new public management (Hood 1991) and more recently the new public governance paradigm (Osborne 2006).

Kristin Reichborn-Kjennerud and Espen Ophaug (2018) analyse resident participation in an 'era of societal self-organization', and how the local public administration responded to the initiative for participation in the area-based initiative for the Tøyen district in Oslo. This article is interesting because it exemplifies challenges in co-creation. Utilizing the same Sherry R. Arnstein's 'ladder of participation' model from the late 1960s as criterion for assessing participation as Hedensted Lund use in her article for explaining co-creation, Reichborn-Kjennerud and Ophaug claim that despite high expectations of extensive and varied participation roles in ideals of co-creation in urban governance, the traditional public administration practices hold sway, at least in the area-based initiative of developing the

Tøyen district in Oslo. The residents were not allowed to influence decision-making, they argue. The persistent use of traditional public administration with separation of powers between politicians and bureaucrats and extensive planning processes, sometimes without much civic participation and without realizing much intended changes, was not due to resistance in the local public administration. The continued use of traditional public administration despite high expectations of civic participation and co-creation was due precisely for the reasons that traditional public administration was put in place in the first place, namely to avoid partisanship and neglect of stakeholders with little power or small voices in the policy processes.

The seven articles from the symposium highlight the benefits of understanding urban governance as policy processes. Students of urban governance still need to keep in mind knowledge and tools in traditional public administration such as planning, as well as traditional insights from implementation studies for example that implementing plans are challenging (Pressman & Wildavsky 1984), in addition to the developments in new public management and new public governance, such as agency and co-creation.

Having said that, co-creation as well as integration holds much promise for urban governance in Europe, as do smart urban governance. Smart urban governance is ‘crafting new forms of human collaboration through the use of ICTs to obtain better outcomes and more open governance processes’ (Meijer & Bolívar 2016, p. 392). Meijer and Bolívar (2016, p. 398) define the smartness of a city as ‘its ability to attract human capital and to mobilize this human capital in collaborations between the various (organized and individual) actors through the use of information and communication technologies’. Despite possible improvements in urban governance from advances in thinking in terms of co-creation, integration and smart urban governance, it is (still) wise to think of urban governance as a complex policy process (Audretsch 2015). The articles in this special issue provide contributions in that respect, and some of the articles also provide useful suggestions for future research on urban governance in Europe and other places.

Acknowledgements

The papers published in this special issue were first presented at ‘The international symposium on Urban Governance in Europe: Preparing for Diversity, Social Sustainability and Migration’ at Oslo Metropolitan University (former Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences) 28th–30th September 2016. Thanks to the Department of Public Administration and Leadership for hosting the symposium, and especially to Harald Koht and Kristin Reichborn-Kjennerud for taking the lead in initiating and organizing the symposium. Thanks also to all the contributors to the symposium and those who later submitted papers for this special issue. We also acknowledge the reviewers for all their constructive comments, and the editors of the journal for supporting this special issue.

References

- Audretsch, David B. (2015) *Everything in Its Place: Entrepreneurship and the Strategic Management of Cities, Regions, and States*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Bergsli, Heidi & Kjell-Arve Harvold (2018) Planning for Polycentricity: The Development of a Regional Plan for the Oslo Metropolitan Area, *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration*, (this issue).
- Hood, Christopher (1991) A public Management for all Seasons?, *Public Administration*, 69(1): 3–19.
- Howlett, Michael (2011) *Designing Public Policies: Principles and Instruments*, Routledge, London.
- Hupe, Peter L. & Michael J. Hill (2006) ‘The Three Action Levels of Governance: Re-Framing the Policy Process Beyond the Stages Model’ in B. Guy Peters & Jon Pierre (eds) *Handbook of Public Policy*: 13–30, Sage, London.
- Kjakste, Aleksandra & Sigita Struberga (2018) National Minorities Inclusion and Representation in Local Government Policy-Making in Latvia: A Case Study of Riga Municipality, *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration*, (this issue).
- Lund, Dorthe Hedensted (2018) Co-Creation in Urban Governance: From Inclusion to Innovation, *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration*, 22(2).
- Meijer, Albert & Manuel Pedro Rodríguez Bolívar (2016) Governing the Smart City: A Review of the Literature on Smart Urban Governance, *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 82(2): 392–408.
- Osborne, Stephen P. (2006) The New Public Governance?, *Public Management Review*, 8(3): 377–387.
- Poljak, Željko (2018) Policy Image in Urban Governance: Migration Crisis and the City of Zagreb, *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration*, (this issue).
- Pressman, Jeffrey L. & Aaron Wildavsky (1984) *Implementation*, 3rd edition, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Reichborn-Kjennerud, Kristin & Espen Ophaug (2018) Resident Participation in an Era of Societal Self-Organization – the Public Administrative Response in Tøyen, *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration*, 22(2).
- Steen, Anton & Maiken Røed (2018) State Governance or Local Agency? Determining Refugee Settlement in Norwegian Municipalities, *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration*, (this issue).
- Valtenbergs, Visvaldis (2018) Development of Cities in the Baltic Sea Region: Some Empirical Observations and Implications for Urban Governance, *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration*, (this issue).

Acknowledgements to the reviewers for the special issue Urban Governance in Europe

We would like to thank the following colleagues for their constructive comments serving as reviewers for this special issue:

Elisa Brey
Marta Domínguez
Rosa de la Fuente
Eva Marin Hlynisdottir
Sissel Hovik
Jan-Erik Johanson
Pekka Kettunen
Harald Koht
Jesús Leal
Irene Lebrusán
Asbjørn Røiseland
Diana Šaparniene
Jurgis Skilters
Daniel Sorando
Inger Marie Stigen
Per Arne Tufte
Pål Veiden