Public administrators in interactive democracy

a multi-paradigmatic approach

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Public Administrators in Interactive Democracy: A Multi-Paradigmatic Approach

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Abstract

Currently, we see a mushrooming of interactive forms of democracy that bring local politicians into dialogue and collaboration with relevant and affected citizens. While there is some research into how interactive democracy affects citizens and politicians, we know little about what interactive democracy implies for public administrators. This article presents the results of a case study of role perceptions and coping strategies among public administrators who assist a new type of interactive political committees in two Nordic municipalities. Guided by a multi-paradigmatic conceptual framework of roles and coping strategies for public administrators in interactive governance, the case study shows that individual public administrators identify with different administrative roles and that political and administrative leadership sentiments condition their choice of coping strategies. Moreover, the study indicates that the coping strategy that public administrators use could have dire consequences for the interplay between interactive democracy and local representative government.

Introduction

Over the last two decades there has been a mushrooming of interactive forms of democracy that bring local politicians into close dialogue and collaboration with relevant and affected citizens between elections (Hendriks 2015; Karsen and Hendriks 2017; Koppenjan, Kars, and Voort 2009; Newton and Geissel 2012; Sørensen and Torfing 2018; Sweeting and Hambleton 2017). The term 'interactive democracy', which was first introduced by Pierre Rosanvallon (2011), captures the current trend towards a democracy where politicians and citizens develop policies together. There are several studies of how public administrators collaborate with citizens (Agger and Sørensen 2018; Emerson and Nabatchi 2015; Fung 2006; Nabatchi and Leighninger 2015), and studies of what interactive democracy implies for local politicians. However, there are hardly any studies of how it affects the role of public administrators when politicians and citizens discuss and develop policies together. Therefore, we know little about how interactive democracy affects public administration. In a first effort to gain insights into the role of public administrators in interactive democracy, this article presents the results of a case study of how public administrators aim to assist a new type of interactive political committees in two Nordic municipalities. The case study is guided by a multi-

paradigmatic conceptual framework that sketches out three partially conflicting generic roles for public administrators in interactive democracy - - the Policy Advisor, the Policy Manager and the Policy Facilitator. Moreover, the framework identifies a number of intra- and inter-paradigmatic role dilemmas, and coping strategies available to public administrators in response to these dilemmas. The findings suggests that individual public administrators tend to cope with role dilemmas by prioritizing one role or role aspect over others, and that a systematic prioritization of the role as Policy Facilitator over the roles as Policy Advisor and Policy Manager could potentially hamper the integration of interactive democracy into the larger set up of representative government.

Towards interactive democracy

Democratic theorists have for decades debated representative democracy and direct democracy as a matter of either/or. Currently, however, the focus of attention is turning towards the question of how to connect and integrate the two (Clarke, Jennings, Moss, and Stoker 2018; Herrting and Kugelberg 2018; Neblo, Esterling, and Lazer 2018; Rosanvallon 2011; Torfing, Peters, Pierre, and Sørensen 2012; Sørensen and Torfing,, 2019; Urbinati 2011). What is up for debate is to what extent interactive dialogue and collaboration between citizens and politicians around issues related to policy-making can strengthen democracy in the current climate of democratic disenchantment and declining trust in government (Clarke et al. 2018; Edelman 2016; Pew Research Center 2014). Drawing on these debates, we define 'interactive democracy' as *a form of representative democracy where elected politicians make authoritative political decisions after having engaged in close dialogue with relevant and affected citizens*. The emerging interest in interactive democracy is not only theoretical, however. After the turn of the century, interactive forms of democracy have seen the light of the day all over the Western world (Agger and Sørensen 2014; Alonso, Keane, and Merkel, 2011.; Fung and Warren 2011; Hambleton 2014; Hendriks 2015; Herrting and Kugelberg 2018; Koppenjan et al. 2009; Newton and Geissel 2012; Sørensen and Waldorff 2014). In some cases, politicians venture out of government offices and representative assemblies and committees to engage in open-ended discussions regarding how to innovate policy with citizens. In other cases, politicians venture out into society to discuss specific issues with citizens and stakeholders (Edelenbos, 2005; Ercan, 2014; Lees-Marshment, 2015; Sørensen & Waldorff, 2014; Sweeting & Hambleton, 2017). In still other cases, they invite citizens into formal political arenas and committees (Agger and Sørensen 2014; Hendriks 2015; Sørensen and Torfing 2018). The latter form of interactive democracy is particularly relevant for the purpose of this article because it brings citizens into the processes where politicians and public administrators interact to make public policy.

A multi-public paradigmatic approach to public administration

Precisely how public administrators approach this emerging reality depends, among other things, on how they understand their role in policy-making, which is again conditioned by the paradigmatic perception of public administration in the context in which they operate (Torfing et al. 2012). Just as perceptions of democracy change, so do public administration paradigms. Stephen Osborne (2010) identifies a gradual paradigmatic shift over the last 35 years from Old Public Administration (OPA), through New Public Management (NPM) to New Public Governance (NPG). OPA is rooted in the concept of public governance as a Weberian or Wilsonian operation in which a politically neutral, meritocratic bureaucracy implements decisions made by elected politicians. Public administrators are skilled professionals with the task of securing legal and technically and scientifically correct public governance (Weber 1946; Wilson 1887). Citizens are passive subjects. In the early 80s, the OPA-paradigm was accused of being ineffective and inflexible and NPM was introduced as a viable strategy for enhancing the effectiveness and flexibility of public governance by restructuring the public sector along the lines of a private business firm (Downs 1967; Hood 1991). The NPM paradigm views public administrators as strategic managers assigned to realize political goals defined by elected politicians and to secure high rates of citizen satisfaction through a tight and efficient output-oriented regulation of governance processes and the orchestration of competitive service provision between public and private agencies. Public administrators are controllers with a commitment to get public employees to deliver more for less. Citizens are customers (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011).

At the turn of the century, growing demands for public services, as well as a surge of unsolved wicked policy problems, triggered the surge of the NPG paradigm that envisaged public management as a strategic effort to mobilize relevant and affected societal actors in public problem-solving and value creation (Torfing and Triantafillou 2013; Warren 2009). The NPG paradigm discards the perception of citizens as clients and customers and recasts them as co-governors. A key task for public administrators becomes that of mobilizing citizens through the orchestration of co-production of public services and co-creation of policy-making and governance with public authorities (Torfing, Sørensen and Røiseland, 2019; Voorberg, Bekkers, and Tummers 2015). Governance paradigms are persistent and old paradigmatic role perceptions do not disappear but tend to pile up on top of each other. Therefore, current studies of public administration in Western liberal democracies must take departure in a multi-paradigmatic understanding of what it implies to be a public administrator. This understanding sets out an ambiguous and multifaceted frame of expectations and points of identification for public administrators that structure their efforts to do their job. The role as public administrator is not only ambiguous and multifaceted because it involves the performance of different paradigmatic roles. There are also intra-paradigmatic role dilemmas at play (Hood 1991; Olsen and March

1989; Torfing and Triantafillou 2013). Therefore, a conceptual framework for studying the role of public administrators in interactive democracy should take into account both inter- and intra-paradigmatic tensions between different role expectations and role perceptions and the coping strategies that public administrators employ in such a context. Table 1 summarizes the role and expertise assigned to public administrators in OPA, NPM and NPG and the internal role dilemmas that logic deduction and public administration research suggest could come into play for public administrators when they seek to perform these roles in a context of interactive democracy. We will later address the question of the potential tensions between the different roles.

	Role	Expertise	Job value	Dilemma in relation to interactive democracy
OPA **Old Public Administration**	**Policy Advisor**	State-of-the-art policy knowledge and knowhow	Legal and scientifically correct policy decisions	Provide information and policy advice without undermining political deliberation
NPM **New Public Management**	**Policy Manager**	Organizational and planning skills	Efficient and effective goal attainment	Secure efficiency without harming effective goal attainment
NPG **New Public Governance**	**Policy Facilitator**	Capacity to orchestrate collaborative innovation	Collaboration, creative disruption and experimentation	Promote collaboration without hampering innovation

Table 1. Paradigmatic roles for public administrators in interactive democracy

The OPA paradigm defines public administrators as *Policy Advisors* who possess the state-of-the-art policy knowledge needed to consider and choose between relevant policy alternatives (Polsby 1984). Policy Advisors aim to assure that policy-makers make legally and scientifically correct decisions by providing them with knowledge and knowhow. Their intra-paradigmatic role dilemma is that, while a lot of information and advice creates a solid foundation for political decision-making, it also tends to limit the space for policy-making (Maasen and Weingart 2006; Svara 2001). Applied to a context of interactive democracy, the role of public administrators is to provide not only politicians but also citizens with the insights they need to engage in a qualified political debate about the character of a specific policy problem and the viability and attractiveness of different policy solutions. The dilemma for Policy Advisors is how to channel professional

information, knowledge and policy advice into the process without undermining the political debate between politicians and citizens, and to decide what politicians and citizens do not need to know without reducing their ability to make well-informed decisions.This decision calls for a strong sense of relevance and purpose.

The NPM paradigm views public administrators as *Policy Managers who are on a mission to* assure that intended policy goals are met with as little cost as possible (Radnor and Walley 2008). Policy Managers possess the administrative skills needed to design, plan and monitor a policy process with the purpose of making it as efficient and effective as possible (Ferlie, Fitzgerald, and Pettigrew 1996; Hood 1991; Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). They predesign all stages in the process, set up milestones and pay keen attention to timely production of deliverables. Their main intra-paradigmatic role dilemma is that process efficiency sometimes reduces effectiveness in terms of goal attainment (Kanter and Summers 1994). In a context of interactive democracy, the task for Policy Managers is to ensure that politicians and citizens fulfil their assignment and produce the required policy output. Their dilemma is that it is highly time-consuming to involve citizens. Moreover, there is a persistent danger of mission gliding i.e. that the policy output will deviate not only from the formal assignment but also from leading politicians' more or less implicit policy goals and political sentiments among influential politicians. Therefore, Policy Managers need to possess a considerable degree of political astuteness to, proactively, promote alignment of given and emerging policy goals.

In NPG, public administrators are *Policy Facilitators* with expertise in managing collaborative innovation processes (Ansell and Gash 2008, 2012). They know how to get interdependent actors to work together despite the fact that they have different interests, world-views, experiences and perspectives, and the aim is to catalyze collaborative processes that lead to new innovative policy solutions (Bekkers, Edelenbos, and Steijn 2011; Torfing et al. 2012). They do so by adjusting the collaborative innovation process in light of how the relationship among participants evolves. It is a key dilemma for Policy Facilitators that the promotion of collaboration and the stimulation of innovation calls for different facilitation strategies. While the creation of mutual trust and understanding is paramount for promoting collaboration, innovation thrives on disruption and contestation of well-established positions and world-views (Page, Thomas, and Kern 2016). In interactive democracy, Policy Facilitators aim to stimulate mutual trust and shared understanding between politicians and citizens, while simultaneously getting them to innovate through the staging of situations that force politicians and citizens out of their comfort zone (Ansell and Gash 2012). In doing so, they risk creating tensions, uncertainties and conflicts that could undermine the trust between them and their willingness to

collaborate. Conflict mediation stand out as an important skill for Policy Facilitators in their efforts to promote collaborative policy innovation.

Summing up, each of the three paradigms assigns its particular role to public administrators in interactive democracy, and each of these roles involves intra-paradigmatic role dilemmas. However, public administrators who operate in a multi-paradigmatic context also face role dilemmas related to the presence of three different roles, each with their knowledge basis and value system (Hood 1991). The Policy Advisor's ambition of securing legality and scientifically correct policy-making may sometimes clash with the Policy Manager's efforts to enhance efficient and effective goal attainment, or with the Policy Facilitator's promotion of collaborative policy innovation. The Policy Manager's efforts to meet milestones and produce deliverables may on occasion clash with the Policy Advisor's focus on legality control and adaptation to state-of the-art scientific standards and the Policy Facilitators' ongoing adjustment of the interactive policy-making process in light of situated dynamics between the stakeholders involved. Finally, the Policy Facilitator may find that the Policy Advisor's focus on legality and best practice hampers an experimental and innovative search for next practice and that the Policy Manager's relentless promotion of efficiency limits their ability to build trust and mutual understanding between politicians and citizens. Figure 1 highlights the main features of a multi-paradigmatic conceptual framework for studying the role of public administrators in interactive democracy in terms of three roles, intra-role dilemmas in each of these roles, and dilemmas that may occur between roles.
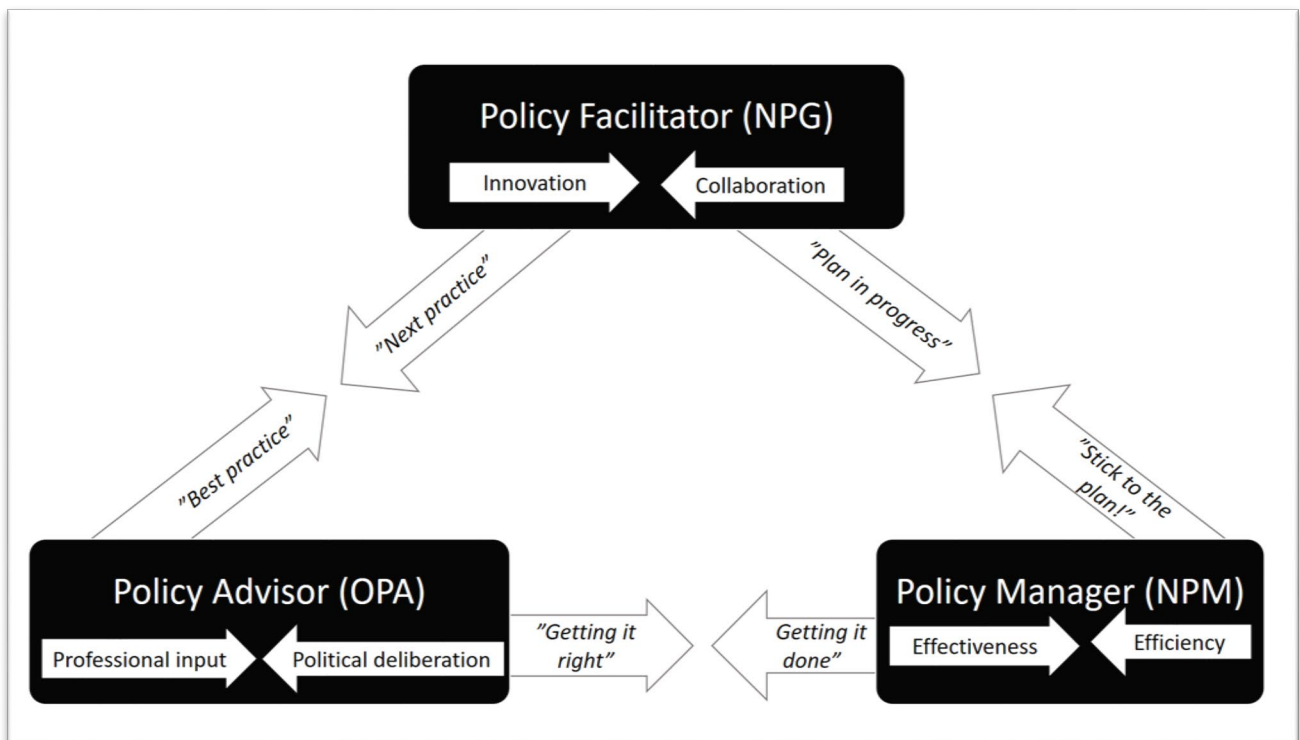
Figure 1: A multi-paradigmatic conceptual framework for studying public administration in interactive democracy

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 lays out the paradigmatic expectation structure in representative democracies exposed to OPA, NPM and NPG.. The framework allows us to propose the following research questions for empirical analysis: 1) How do public administrators in interactive democracy employ the role as Policy Advisor, Policy Manager and Policy Facilitator, 2) What intra- and inter-paradigmatic dilemmas do they encounter, and 3) How do they cope with these dilemmas?

In relation to question 3, different strands of implementation theory, organizational studies and policy analysis suggest that individual public administrators will develop and employ different coping strategies when they face conflicting inter- and intra-paradigmatic role demands (Ayres et al, 2017; Lewis & Smith, 2014; Lipsky 2010; Winter 2012).

Coping strategies may be categorized as proactive or reactive in regard to the way they deal with role pressure or tensions (Boyne & Walker, 2004; Goerdel, 2005). Proactive coping strategies aim to conquer the stage by strategically responding upfront to the heightened complexity caused by role tensions. Reactive coping strategies on the other hand, involve avoiding direct confrontation with such pressures or tensions (Lewis & Smith, 2014, Lipsky 2010). Britt suggest that coping strategies may also differ in regard to handling complexity by either reducing it or embracing it (Britt, 1991, Lindblom 1959).

Administrators may also employ coping strategies either 'front-stage' or 'back-stage'. 'Front stage' describes activities that take place in formal decision arenas, according to what counts as legitimate practices in such arenas. 'Back stage' refers to what goes on behind the formal decision arenas where administrators navigate out of sight and by standards that would be deemed illegitimate in the front stage arena (Ayres et al, 2017, Pressmann and Wildavsky, 1973). While back stage processes may appear illegitimate and best avoided, their ability to manage tensions make them vital to robust policy-making (Domahidy & Gilsinan, 1992).

By combining the notion of proactive versus reactive coping strategies with the distinction between front- and backstage areas we tentatively propose that individual public administrators confronted with intra- and inter-paradigmatic role dilemmas can use *four different* coping strategies. Find them described in table 2.

COPING STRATEGIES	Front stage	Back stage
Proactive	**Domination:** When actors give priority to one particular role or role fragment while ignoring others	**Adaption:** When actors create informal arenas that allow them to enhance their capacity to combine different roles and role fragments through training and experimentation
Reactive	**Resignation**: When actors openly cope with role dilemmas by accepting that some role tasks remain undone	**Decoupling:** When actors revert to performing some roles or role fragments under cover

Table 2: Conceptual framework for studying coping strategies

In a multi-paradigmatic context, adaption appears as the most feasible coping strategy for public administrators because it accepts the ambiguous and multi-facetted expectation structure and aims to, creatively, combine different role fragments pragmatically in light of what fits a concrete situation. However, leadership sentiments, individual role identification and field of expertise may influence choice of coping strategy. For example, actors who identify with and possess skills needed to perform a role that the political and administrative leaders perceive to be of key importance in relation to assisting interactive democracy could be tempted to choose domination as coping strategy. In contrast, actors who identify with and have the skills needed to perform a role that leaders perceive as less relevant in interactive democracy, may be inclined to choose a reactive coping strategy i.e. resignation or decoupling.

Case selection and method

In order to gain empirical insights into the role perceptions, dilemmas, and coping strategies of public administrators who assist interactive democracy, we have carried out a case study of interactive democracy in two Nordic municipalities, Gentofte and Svelvik. Nordic municipalities are suited for this purpose because they have a multi-paradigmatic approach to public administration with a solid historic foundation not only in OPA and NPM, as would count for many other Western democracies, but also in NGP (Greve, Rykkja, and Lægreid 2016; Klausen 1998; Torfing and Triantafillou 2016). As a heritage from OPA, municipal

administrations are bureaucratic organizations with public administrators hired with reference to their educational background and professional merits. NPM reforms have promoted an administrative culture with intense focus on process efficiency and effective goal attainment, and the NGP paradigm has found fertile ground in a long tradition for citizen involvement.

The two municipalities in question are extreme cases of interactive democracy in the sense that they have carried out a similar reform of the political committee system that brings citizens into the formal political process at City Hall (Seawright and Gerring 2008). Hence, both municipalities have introduced a new type of Political Task Committee (PTC) where citizens and politicians develop policy proposals together with assistance from public administrators. The motivation in both municipaliteis was a feeling among politicians that they were rubber-stamping policies formulated by the administration and that they lacked dialogue with citizens. Gentofte municipality in Denmark introduced PTCs in 2015 and Svelvik in Norway followed suit in 2016, after having visited Gentofte. The Municipal Council (MC) commissions a number of PTCs to produce a policy proposal that sets out solutions to a specified policy problem. Each PTC is composed of five politicians and ten citizens that the MC selects with a keen focus on engaging politicians from different parties and citizens with different relevant non-political backgrounds. Each PTC gets a different timeframe that is adjusted to their task (Røiseland, Windsvold, Torfing, and Sørensen 2017; Torfing and Sørensen 2016). Gentofte started out with eight PTCs. To exemplify, the MC commissioned one PTC to develop a youth policy, another to suggest ways to employ refugees, and a third to propose a strategy for promoting public health. Svelvik started out with three PTCs, one looking at how to strengthen leisure life, one considering how to implement new welfare technologies, and one looking for ways to brand the local community in ways that attract new residents. We include both municipalities in the case study because it allows us to show that the involved administrators experience similar role dilemmas regardless of huge differences between the municipalities. Gentofte is a rich suburb with a strong and stable political majority, while Svelvik is a rural and relatively poor town with an unstable political majority that often shifts.

We collected data in Gentofte from 2015 to 2017 and in Svelvik from 2016 to 2018. The data consists of policy documents, observations, interviews and a survey. The documents consist of mission statements for the PTCes formulated by the MCs, minutes from meetings and policy briefs and other written documents produced by the PTCs. The document analysis helped clarify the purpose of the reform, the Committee assignments, the criteria used to select participants, the timeframes and the reported content of different meetings. In addition, we observed 1–2 meetings in two PTCs in each municipality to get first hand insights into the role and function of participating public administrators. We also conducted semi-structured

interviews with15 public administrators (eight in Gentofte and seven in Svelvik) to get them to talk about their tasks and concerns related to assisting the new committees. Then we coded the documents, interviews and observation in NVIVO looking for statements that we consider to be expressions of the different role perceptions, role dilemmas and coping strategies outlined in Figure 1 and table 1 and 2. Find the questions asked in the interviews presented in box 1.

- **What are your main tasks in relation to the PTCs?**
- **To what extent do these tasks deviate from or resonate with your perception of what it means to be a public administrator?**
- **What tasks do you perceive to be particularly important in relation to the PTCs?**
- **What are the most pressing challenges for public administrators who assist the PTCs?**
- **How do you, your colleagues and the administration deal with these challenges?**
- **What administrative competencies are particularly important for assisting the PTCs?**

Box 1: Questions asked in interviews

Finally, we conducted a survey among public administrators who assisted the 8 PTCs in Gentofte and received a 100% response rate from 27 administrators. We did not conduct a survey in Svelvik but we asked all the 7 public administrators who had been involved in their 3PTCs similar question in interviews. The survey in Gentofte consisted of closed questions that aimed to identify the respondents' role perceptions. Find questions asked and answers given in the survey in Gentofte in table 3. Unfortunately, we did not ask questions that directly relate to the role as Policy Manager. The fact that many of the public administrators identified relatively strongly with this role did not fully occur to us until we performed the qualitative interviews, so results pertaining to this role solely rely on data from interviews, observations and document studies.
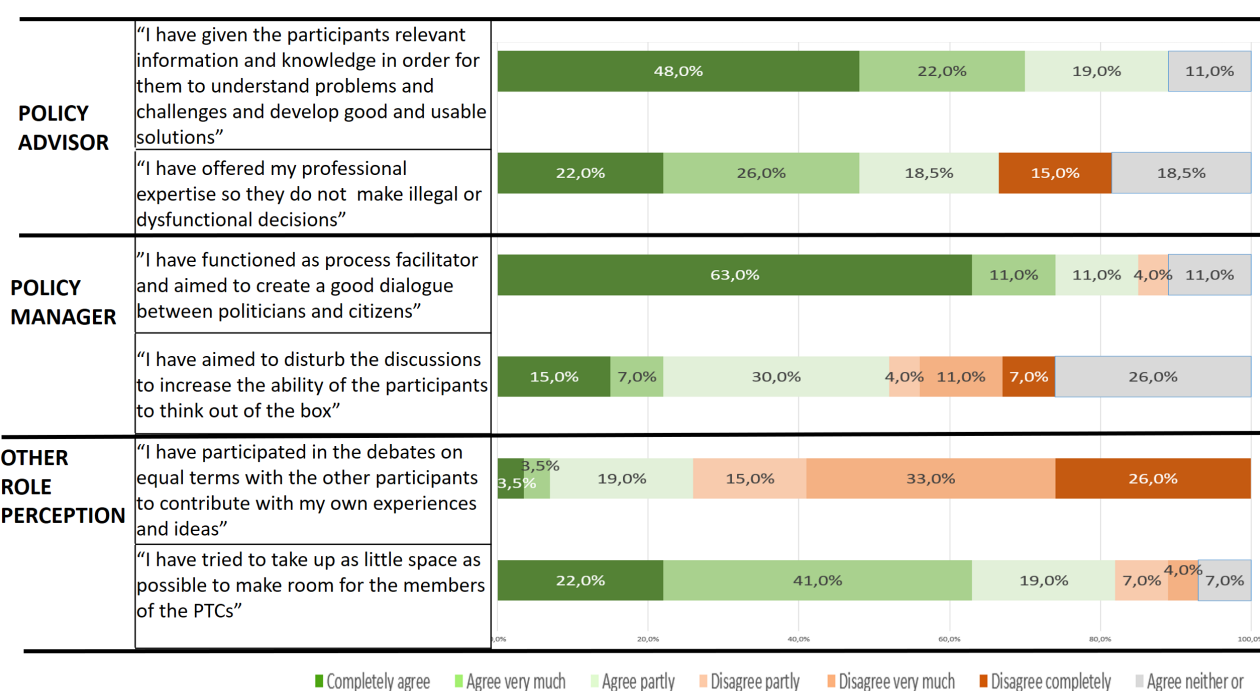
	Statement	Completely agree	Agree very much	Agree partly	Disagree partly	Disagree very much	Disagree completely	Agree neither or
POLICY ADVISOR	"I have given the participants relevant information and knowledge in order for them to understand problems and challenges and develop good and usable solutions"	48,0%	22,0%	19,0%				11,0%
	"I have offered my professional expertise so they do not make illegal or dysfunctional decisions"	22,0%	26,0%	18,5%			15,0%	18,5%
POLICY MANAGER	"I have functioned as process facilitator and aimed to create a good dialogue between politicians and citizens"	63,0%	11,0%	11,0%	4,0%			11,0%
	"I have aimed to disturb the discussions to increase the ability of the participants to think out of the box"	15,0%	7,0%	30,0%	4,0%	11,0%	7,0%	26,0%
OTHER ROLE PERCEPTION	"I have participated in the debates on equal terms with the other participants to contribute with my own experiences and ideas"	3,5%	3,5%	19,0%	15,0%	33,0%	26,0%	
	"I have tried to take up as little space as possible to make room for the members of the PTCs"	22,0%	41,0%	19,0%	7,0%	4,0%		7,0%

Table 3: Survey data illuminating role perceptions

Data analysis

Administrative role perceptions in Gentofte and Svelvik

Let us start by pointing out that in both Gentofte and Svelvik there are Policy Advisors, Policy Managers and Policy Facilitators involved in assisting the PTCs. The individual public administrator tends to view their job through the lens of one or sometimes two of the three role perspectives. This variety of degrees of mono- and multi-paradigmatic role identification does not only come out in the interviews and observation but also in the survey that illuminates variations in how strongly the respondents identify with a particular role. Hence, when we assign a public administrator to one of the three roles it is to indicate that he or she perceive it as their obligation to perform this task. Later on in the analysis, we may appoint the same public administrator another role. In the following, we shall see how the involved public administrators employ the threeroles in a context of interactive democracy.

The role as *Policy Advisor* is appealing to many of the public administrators in Gentofte and Svelvik. In Gentofte, 48% of the administrators fully agree that it is their task to provide relevant information and knowledge to politicians and citizens, while 22 % agree very much and 19% partly agree. 22% fully agree that they have offered their professional expertise directly to members of the PTCs while 26% agree very much and 18,5% partly agree. The interviews and observations in the two municipalities correspond with these numbers. Some Policy Advisors are completely committed to this role while others mainly view policy advice

as one task among many. A leading administrator in Gentofte finds that it is a key task for the administration to 'set the stage for the PTCs by providing a professional content that gives a solid foundation for developing good policy solutions'. A public administrator from Svelvik agrees that it is all about setting the stage in terms of clarifying the regulatory conditions for municipal decision-making: 'It can be performance management signals from the state. Day-care and schools are extensively regulated by higher-level authorities. At each meeting in the committee we inform them about the latest signals that they should know about'. The purpose is to provide the committee members with a realistic understanding of their political autonomy and scope conditions.

Public administrators who identify with the role as ***Policy Manager*** take part in organizing and planning the interactive policy-making process in the PTCs. They view it as one of their key tasks to ascertain that the Committees meet assigned policy goals and targets as defined in the mission statement formulated by the MC. Moreover, they aim to ensure that the process is as efficient and effective as possible and report that they spend many hours preparing meetings. The Policy Managers are generally concerned that the PTCs are costly in terms of time and resources for both politicians and administration compared to before. It is an ever-present effort for the Policy Managers to balance efficiency in terms of hours and resources spent against the quality of the policy output. Policy Managers in both municipalities also find, however, that the time and energy invested contributes to effective goal attainment.

Another task for Policy Managers is to avoid mission gliding. The Policy Managers who assist PTCs in Gentofte and Svelvik are indeed worried that the process gets out of hand and they are keen to remind PTCs of the task at hand as formulated in the mission statement. Observations of meetings in the PTCs show that Policy Managers do a lot to avoid mission gliding and their attention to this task escalates, as the work draws to a close and deliverables have to be prepared and contents aligned with assignment and overall policy sentiments in the MC.

Moreover, Policy Managers think ahead and plan the process to make it as efficient as possible in terms of invested time and resources. At an opening meeting in a PTC in Gentofte, Policy Managers told the members that they were responsible for preparing their own work plan. In the same breath, however, they presented a proposal for such a plan designed to meet pre-given deadlines. The PTC never discussed this proposal, which became the authoritative guide for the work process. A Policy Manager in Gentofte expresses the same eagerness to plan and control the processes: '*If we are not careful how we book [participants' calendars], it is going to get rough for them if meetings just escalate without any control*'.

Many of the public administrators involved in assisting PTCs are ***Policy Facilitators***. In Gentofte, as many as 63% completely agree that they have acted as facilitators of the dialogue between politicians and citizens, while 11% agree very much and yet another 11% partly agree. The Policy Facilitators we have interviewed explain that their task is to get politicians and citizens engaged in collaborative policy innovation, which is also in most cases the formal assignment of the PTC. Both municipalities have trained a number of public administrators for this task, because they felt that the organization lacked facilitation skills, and Gentofte have even hired new staff with strong facilitation skills.

Policy Facilitators report that they spend a lot of time on ad-hoc process planning. The goal is to nurture collaboration among actors with different interests, ideas, world-views and perspectives on a subject matter, and it is a complex and difficult task. A public administrator from Svelvik explains: 'I spend much of my time facilitating – thinking about methods and considering things that give the members of the PTC a positive process experience and to ensure that we mobilize their competences and resources'. Process Facilitators find that one of the challenges in the PTCs is that politicians and citizens are not used to working together and that there is uncertainty on both sides about what their respective roles are and how they are supposed to engage with each other. They are particularly concerned about making citizens feel welcome in this new political setting. A Policy Facilitator in Gentofte states: 'It is very much about creating a space for the citizens. Making them feel welcome and secure so that they feel like being a part of the policy process'. Observations show that Policy Facilitators use a broad variety of process tools to create a relaxed and trusting atmosphere. Among these tools are group work, personal story-telling exercises, excursions, and artefacts.

Policy facilitation is not only a matter of promoting multi-actor collaboration but also about spurring innovation. A Policy Facilitator in Gentofte explains: 'If you want people to do something other than they normally do… if you want to shake up things and actually make them co-create [new innovative ideas], you have to bring them out of their safe havens'. Other Policy Facilitators in Gentofte and Svelvik talk about the importance of stimulating 'creative disruptions' or 'designing interventions'. To exemplify, we observed a meeting in Svelvik where a Policy Facilitator appointed himself as 'the devil's advocate', to disrupt an all-too-quiet debate. At a meeting in Gentofte, a Policy Facilitator engaged the participants in joint fact-finding that brought surprising and disturbing new knowledge to the table. However, the survey shows that only 15% of the public administrators in Gentofte completely agree that they have aimed to disturb the discussions to increase the ability of the participants to think out of the box, while 7% agree very much and 30% partly agree.

Intra-paradigmatic role-dilemmas and coping strategies

It is now time to look at to what extent public administrators in Gentofte and Svelvik experience the intra-

paradigmatic role dilemmas described in figure 1 andwhich coping strategies they apply in response to these dilemmas. The public administrators who identify with the role as **Policy Advisors** do indeed experience a dilemma between qualifying and promoting political debate in the PTCs. A Policy Advisor in Gentofte explains: 'We have so many habits about the way we present information. We often present it in a way that points to a certain solution and then we have indirectly made the decision already. On the other hand it is no use to just go with a completely open approach and just ask them to talk about whatever they think'. Interestingly, Policy Advisors in the two municipalities tend to cope with this dilemma through resignation in the sense that they take a step back and limit the input they feed into the interactive policy-making process. A number of observations show that the involved public administrators are generally careful to leave it to politicians and citizens to come up with policy ideas and policy proposals. The survey confirms this impression. 22% of the respondents fully agree that they aim to take up as little space as possible in the PTCs in order to encourage dialogue between politicians and citizens, while 41% agree very much and 19% partly agree. Only 3,5% fully agree that they have brought their own experiences and ideas into the debate while 3,5% agree very much and 19% partly agree. The interviews and observations show that they mainly provide policy advice and information when politicians and citizens ask for it.

This choice of resignation as a coping strategy may have to do with the fact that a motivating factor behind the introduction of the PCTs in the two municipalities was a criticism raised by politicians that they were rubber-stamping policies developed by the administration. Resignation produces frustration, however. A public administrator from Svelvik who has assisted a number of PTCs explains: 'I could contribute much more to their work than I do, but I choose not to do so unless they ask me. It is a bit frustrating when I see them taking several rounds discussing something where we could assist them. I think our competences are underrated and not brought sufficiently to use'.

Another public administrator in Svelvik argues that seen from a long-term perspective this coping strategy is unsustainable: 'Eventually, someone will have to shout out if a PTC goes down a trail where you have to say sorry, but there is evidence that this will not work'. A leading public administrator is worried that Policy Advisors who feel resignation in relation to the PTC will end up choosing a decoupling strategy when it comes to implementing policies because they find that they do not align with professional standards.

Policy Managers in Gentofte and Svelvik face the internal role dilemma that effective goal attainment can come into conflict with promoting process efficiency. It is time-consuming to get politicians and citizens who are not used to talking to each other to find common ground and the need for time tends to collide with a fixed and tight timeframe. Moreover, a firm political agreement that the introduction of PTCs would not imply more hours spent for politicians and staff means a keen attention among e Policy Managers to promote

process efficiency. It could appear to be an advantage for the Policy Managers that the PTCs' formal mission statements are, in most cases, relatively vague and politically uncontroversial, which means that the PTCs have some leeway when it comes to meeting a specified policy output. Rather, the vagueness of the formal policy goal seems to have created uncertainty among Policy Managers regarding what the MC want the PTCs to deliver. The fact that the participating politicians in both municipalities are reluctant to communicate their political views and opinions in front of the citizens further fuels this uncertainly. Policy Managers in Gentofte and Svelvik tend to cope with this situation through adaptation, with calls for a considerable degree of political astuteness, i.e., an ability to sense what politicians would perceive to be an acceptable outcome, how many administrative resources it is acceptable to employ, and how much delay and mission gliding is acceptable. A Policy Manager in Gentofte explains: 'It is very much about developing political astuteness in terms of an understanding of what politicians want to discuss and what they want to control. I make sure to know how politicians will react with regard to how we manage the decision process, how we arrange the meeting schedule and how we add some structure to this work'. For Policy Managers, political astuteness is essential because they cannot do their job without a sense of direction. As sense of direction is important when it comes to planning and monitoring meetings, preparing agendas, and writing minutes and policy briefs. To be able to get a sense of direction in a context with a vague mission statement and politicians who are reluctant to speak out in front of the citizens the Policy Managers engage in informal dialogue with politicians between meetings and involve them in the planning process.

Policy Facilitators in Gentofte and Svelvik clearly experience a dilemma between creating a safe haven that stimulates collaboration, and bringing the participants out of their comfort zone. Like Policy Advisors, Policy Facilitators tend to respond with resignation in the sense that they prioritize one of their tasks and downgrade the other. They focus on promoting collaboration between politicians and citizens and less so on stimulating innovation because they are worried about creating uncertainties and conflict between participants. While as many as 85% of public administrators in Gentofte report that their aim as facilitator is to promote dialogue between politicians and citizens, only 52 % state that they have actively attempted to create disturbances that make participants in PTCs 'think out of the box'. The interviews and observations made in both municipalities confirm this reluctance to rock the boat. Focus is on promoting trust, collaboration and consensus. The administrative leadership in both municipalities push for a more adaptive coping strategy by initiating training programs for Policy Facilitators to enhance their conflict mediation skills and ability to design creative collaboration processes. In Gentofte, they have also hired Policy Facilitators with such skills. In the less affluent Svelvik, Policy Facilitators pool their competences and skills by working together as much as possible. One of the Policy Facilitators in Svelvik explains: 'All the administrators who are involved in the PTCs have dialogues between meetings to distribute roles, and to plan and decide on how

to organize the meetings'. Over time, this adaptive learning strategy may encourage bolder attempts to prioritize not only collaboration but also policy innovation in PTCs.

Inter-paradigmatic role dilemmas and coping strategies

In addition to intra-paradigmatic dilemmas, the public administrators in Gentofte and Svelvik face a number of inter-paradigmatic role dilemmas.. Not all the inter-paradigmatic role dilemmas listed in figure 1 seems to surface to the same extent, however. Some public administrators do experience a dilemma between the Policy Advisors' urge to get things right and the Policy Managers' focus on getting things done. However, extensive experience with balancing scientific ambitions against political goals and scares time and resources havs over time paved the way for adaptive practices that are today a cornerstone in the way the municipal bureaucracy works, that are easily translated into a context of interactive democracy. What creates tensions in both municipalities are inter-paradigmatic role dilemmas, first, between Policy Advisors and Policy Facilitators, and, second, between Policy Facilitators and Policy Managers. The triggering factor for these tensions appear to be that policy facilitation is a relatively new role for public administrators, wherefore there is limited experience when it comes to balancing this role against other administrative roles. Moreover, the political and administrative leaders in both municipalities strongly emphasize the importance of policy facilitation in relation to the PCTs.. This leadership support encourages those public administrators who identify with the role as Policy Facilitator to employ proactive coping strategies while Policy Advisors and Policy Managers revert to reactive coping strategies.

Let us first look at the tensions between Policy Advisors and Policy Facilitators. While Policy Advisors are eager to give PTCs state-of-the-art policy advice and information, Policy Facilitators are mainly interested in promoting lively and creative debate between politicians and citizens. This difference in ambition comes out as conflicts regarding the content and form of PTC meetings, and role dilemmas for the public administrators involved. How much do PTC members need to know, how are information and advice communicated to them, and who should do it? Policy Advisors who one-sidedly focus on communicating state-of-the-art knowledge and best practice and do so in a scientific and technical language with plenty of detail are clearly fighting a losing battle. Hence, the political and administrative leadership in both municipalities prioritize policy facilitation over policy advice. To illustrate, when we asked a leading public administrator in Gentofte what competences the administration most need to be able to assist the PTCs, the answer was that 'it is actually better with somebody who does not necessarily know anything about the field but who has facilitator skills.' These are not just words. In both municipalities, many of the Policy Advisors who initially participated in the PTCs are no longer involved. A leading administrator in Gentofte explains: 'It is very demanding for some of the administrators [to redefine their role]. To put it simply, we have removed the old guard (from the PTCs)

and replaced them with employees who are good facilitators.' In other words, Policy Facilitators who look to promote creative, engaged and maybe even innovative collaboration have out-maneuvered old-fashioned Policy Advisors with their scientific approach to policy-making. They have chosen domination as coping strategy. While some Policy Advisors respond to this exclusion with resignation, others signal that a decoupling strategy may lie in wait in the sense that exclusion of Policy Advisors may result in resistance in the implementation phase. A Policy Advisor argues: 'I worry about how this will be received down through the organization. (…) In the end, the professionals will have to carry out these recommendations'. Other Policy Advisors note that public administrators often use decoupling strategies. That implies following their professional judgement 'under cover' while simulating obedience. A Policy Advisor from Svelvik states: 'If you do not like what is politically decided then… Well, time goes by and then it will disappear'. Although we do not hear of concrete examples of decoupling, a number of the interviewed public administrators state that there ere is a considerable risk of decoupling if Policy Advisors become too detached from the interactive policy-making processes.

There are also those Policy Advisors who respond to the new demand for policy facilitation by doing what they can to adapt to the new situation. They stop using technical and complex language and train their facilitation skills. A Policy Advisor in Svelvik explains: 'When I present the content, I no longer talk about the rules. I talk about our citizens.' Some have also begun to invite guests or take members out on excursions. At a meeting we observed, a Policy Advisor had developed a fact quiz that communicated a lot of information to committee members in a highly entertaining yet informative manner. Another new practice is to weight the provision of information over proposing solutions. A Policy Advisor in Svelvik states: 'Now we present the challenges to them at an early point in the process, so they get to understand what it is really about. We do not serve them the solution'. These Policy Advisors have simply fused the roles as Policy Advisor and Policy Facilitator by changing the way they talk, by using infotainment tools, and by providing background data rather than policy solutions.

The dilemmas that create tensions between Policy Facilitators and Policy Managers are rooted in their different approach to process planning. Policy Managers view it as essential to stick to a predefined plan with detailed milestones and deadlines in order to secure efficient and effective goal attainment. In contrast, Policy Facilitators perceive planning as an emerging phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, political processes in the PTCs are relatively unpredictable because of the vague mission statements, the unpredictable inputs from the citizens, and the fact that Policy Advisors no longer prepare the policy proposals. While this unpredictability is challenging for Policy Managers, Policy Facilitators take like a duck to water to emerging planning. Policy Facilitators plan from day to day in light of the dynamic interplay among participants in the

PTCs. They also invite members of the PTCs into the planning process. Policy Managers for their part, find it much more challenging to plan the work in PTCs than in the traditional political Standing Committees. In the Standing Committees, they controlled the political process through a fixed meeting schedule for the year and each meeting through agenda setting. In light of the dominant position of the Policy Facilitators, some Policy Managers have adapted to the idea of emerging planning by developing flexible planning tools that accommodate ad-hoc steering. PTC members can add extra meetings and activities, and sometimes citizens take part in planning the meetings. A Policy Manager from Gentofte has begun to use scripts as a means of regulating PTC meetings: 'We make scripts for them. We would never do that in the standing committees. In standing committees, the agenda is the script'. While this Policy Manager adapts to the new situation, others find it difficult to let go of the old ways of planning and organizing meetings: 'We are pedaling back and forth between the traditional, administrative way of working in political committees with agendas, confidentiality and such and the new expectations of innovation... reaching out, doing drawings. I feel like I am stretched out in this dilemma'. They stick to the old way when they can and reluctantly give that up when they have to.

Discussion and conclusion

Interactive democracy is mushrooming but we know little about what this development implies for public administrators and how their involvement affects the interplay between interactive forms of democracy and representative government. The case study in Gentofte and Svelvik showd that the public administrators who assisted a new type of interactive political committees did indeed identify with one or more of the three administrative roles we initially identified in a multi-paradigmatic conceptual framework. Some public administrators identify strongly with one particular role, be it the Policy Advisor, Policy Manager or Policy Facilitator. Others have a multi-paradigmatic role perception in the sense that they draw on fragments from two or all three of these roles. Moreover, the case study confirms that the public administrators under study experience a range of role dilemmas. With regard to intra-paradigmatic dilemmas, the Policy Advisers have a hard time figuring out how to qualify the political deliberations in the PTCs without taking over. The Policy Managers struggle to align policy goals and justify the costs in terms of time spent for politicians and the administration. The Policy Facilitators are reluctant to prioritize the promotion of innovation because they do not want to risk harming the collaborative spirit among the members of the PTCs. With regard to the inter-paradigmatic role dilemmas, they tend to surface most strongly as tensions between the new role as Policy Facilitator on the one side and the roles as Policy Adviser and Policy Manager on the other. While the latter roles are mainstream administrative practices in the municipal bureaucracy, the PTCs appear to be the domain of the Policy Facilitators. These circumstances might explain why public administrators, who identify with the role as Policy Facilitator, tend to use domination as coping strategy in relations to the PTCs. While

the Policy Managers mostly respond to this dominance through adaption, the Policy Advisors revert to widely different coping strategies. Some revert to resignation or decoupling, while others seek to develop more facilitative ways of communicating their insights. The different coping strategies are summarized in table 4.

Coping strategies in Gentofte and Svelvik	Policy Advisors	Policy Managers	Policy Facilitators
Intra-paradigmatic coping strategies	**Resignation**: They refrain from providing information and advice they perceive as important	**Adaption**: they use political astuteness to avoid mission gliding is a context of vague political guidance	**Resignation** - they refrain from promoting innovation to avoid conflict **Adaption**: They train their skills to improve their capacity to promote collaborative innovation
Inter-paradigmatic coping strategies	**Resignation**: They leave the floor to the Policy Facilitators **De-coupling**: They hamper the implementation of outputs from the PCTs **Adaption**: They train their ability to communicate their knowledge in new facilitative ways	**Adaption:** They train their capacity to perform emerging planning	**Domination**: They define the conditions for how public administrators assist the PTCs

Table 4: Coping strategies among public administrators in Gentofte and Svelvik

Then, what could these choices of administrative coping strategies imply for interactive democracy? Before we answer this question we should cautiously note that the case study do not allow for empirical generalizations. Nevertheless, it allows for some speculation that can inspire future empirical studies. In light of the findings, we propose that the degree to which interactive forms of democracy will become an integrated aspect of representative government calls for adaptive coping strategies that do not only promote policy facilitation but also allow space for policy advice and policy management. In a multi-paradigmatic governance context, little will come out of policy decisions that do not take into account state-of-the-art expertise align with political sentiments among influential politicians and fail to consider costs and resources. The outcome could be disappointed citizens with a further decline in trust in politicians and other public authorities. Political and administrative leaders who seek to integrate interactive forms of democracy into the larger set-up of representative government may see prioritizing policy facilitation as the way forward, when it may in fact turn out to be the opposite. This study suggests that a more promising strategy would be to work to promote an adaptive strategy. Otherwise, interactive forms of democracy will most likely become a detached exotic add on to democratic government.

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