Measuring the accountability of collaborative innovation

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ABSTRACT

The public sector is increasingly expected to be innovative. As the demands for innovation grow, new forms of governance emerge. Traditional forms of bureaucratic, representative government are moderated by New Public Management reforms and a variety of collaborative forms of governance that, among other things, aim to enhance the innovative capacity of the public sector. As forms of governance change so does the models of accountability by which decision makers are held to account. The efforts to develop a model for measuring the accountability of collaborative innovation processes are, however, in its early stages, and the article review the first attempts to develop a collaborative approach to accountability and set up a research agenda for further work in this field.

Keywords: Collaboration, accountability, innovation, governance, NPM.

Introduction

Innovation is no longer exclusively perceived as a matter for private firms seeking to develop new sales techniques, production processes and products. Policy makers are increasingly demanding that the public sector, not only encourages and supports private sector innovation, but also produces innovative public policies and services, and does so in new ways. Hence, Western governments are expected to increase their capacity to produce innovative governance. However, at the same time, governments face a series of other demands specific to the public sector, the call for accountability being one of them.

This article analyses the relationship between public innovation and accountability, and aims to uncover the tensions between these two ambitions seen in the light of different models of accountability. It shows how transformations in the way societies are governed and the tasks they set for themselves trigger the development of new models of accountability. A specific focus is placed on how a call for a more innovative public sector has gradually entered the scene as a core ambition for public governance and public sector reforms and how the emerging forms of collaborative governance trigger the search for new accountability models that suggest ways to hold those involved in collaborative innovation processes to account.

The article is structured in the following way: First, it defines the concept of accountability, and draws an outline of the traditional model for holding public authorities to account. Then follow an analysis of the accountability model that the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm introduced in the 1980s and 1990s. This analysis is succeeded by a discussion of the innovative potential of some of the collaborative forms of governance that go under the name of New Public Governance (NPG). It concludes with an analysis of a new strand of theory, that aims to develop standards for

holding those involved in collaborative governance processes to account, and a first attempt is made to develop a model for measuring the accountability of collaborative innovation processes.

The concept of accountability

The idea that public authorities should be held to account for their actions is a core feature of modern political thought. But what does it mean to be held to account, and according to what standards are different public actors held to account? The concept of accountability is used in different ways and with various meanings by social science theorists as well as by public authorities and others involved in public governance (Behn, 2001: 3-5). Mark Bovens (2006: 9) offers an uncontroversial definition of the concept of accountability when he states that it signifies "the relationship between an actor and a forum in which the actor has an obligation to explain and justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgment, and the actor may face consequences."

Much in the same vein Robert Behn (2001) defines accountability as a relationship between an *accountability holdee* and an *accountability holder* that grants the latter the information and sanctioning powers needed to evaluate and subsequently punish or reward the former on the basis of a mutually accepted set of standards (Behn, 2001: 2-6). Such relationships can be informal or they can be formalized. In modern political systems public authorities are as a rule held to account by highly formalized accountability standards. A codification of such standards can undoubtedly help to specify and stabilize the rules and norms that regulate the interaction between public authorities and those who hold them to account. However, as pointed out by organization sociologists (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 1987), neo-institutionalists (March and Olsen, 1989) and governance researchers (Esmark, 2007; Torfing et al., 2012), informal accountability standards continue to play an important role in holding public authorities to account. As such, an analysis of the level of accountability in public governance processes calls for a study of the formal and informal standards that apply when different public authorities step into the role as accountability holdees that are sanctioned by informed accountability holders.

As we shall see, there are many accountability standards and accountability loops between accountability holders and accountability holdees at work when public authorities are held to account. This high level of complexity within a given accountability model is raised further by the fact that new accountability models emerge and live side by side with the old. Hence, it should be underlined that the three models of accountability presented below are ideal types which aim to highlight certain features of a highly complex reality in which different accountability models coexist and supplement each other. The main purpose of this exercise is to point out that the notion of how accountability is obtained is in constant flux in light of changes in governance ambitions and the ways in which we seek to govern at a given point in time.

The traditional accountability model

The traditional accountability model is spelled out in the theories of representative government that have inspired the institutional set up of modern liberal democracies (Montesquieu, 1750; Mill, 1861; Wilson, 1908; Weber, 1971 [1922]). An implicit norm in these theories is to illuminate the connection between the legitimacy of a political system and its stability. A tool for ensuring legitimacy is a system for holding decision makers to account. The traditional model of accountability, depicted in figure 1, consists of four institutionalized accountability loops between an accountability holder and an accountability holdee.

Figure 1: The traditional accountability model
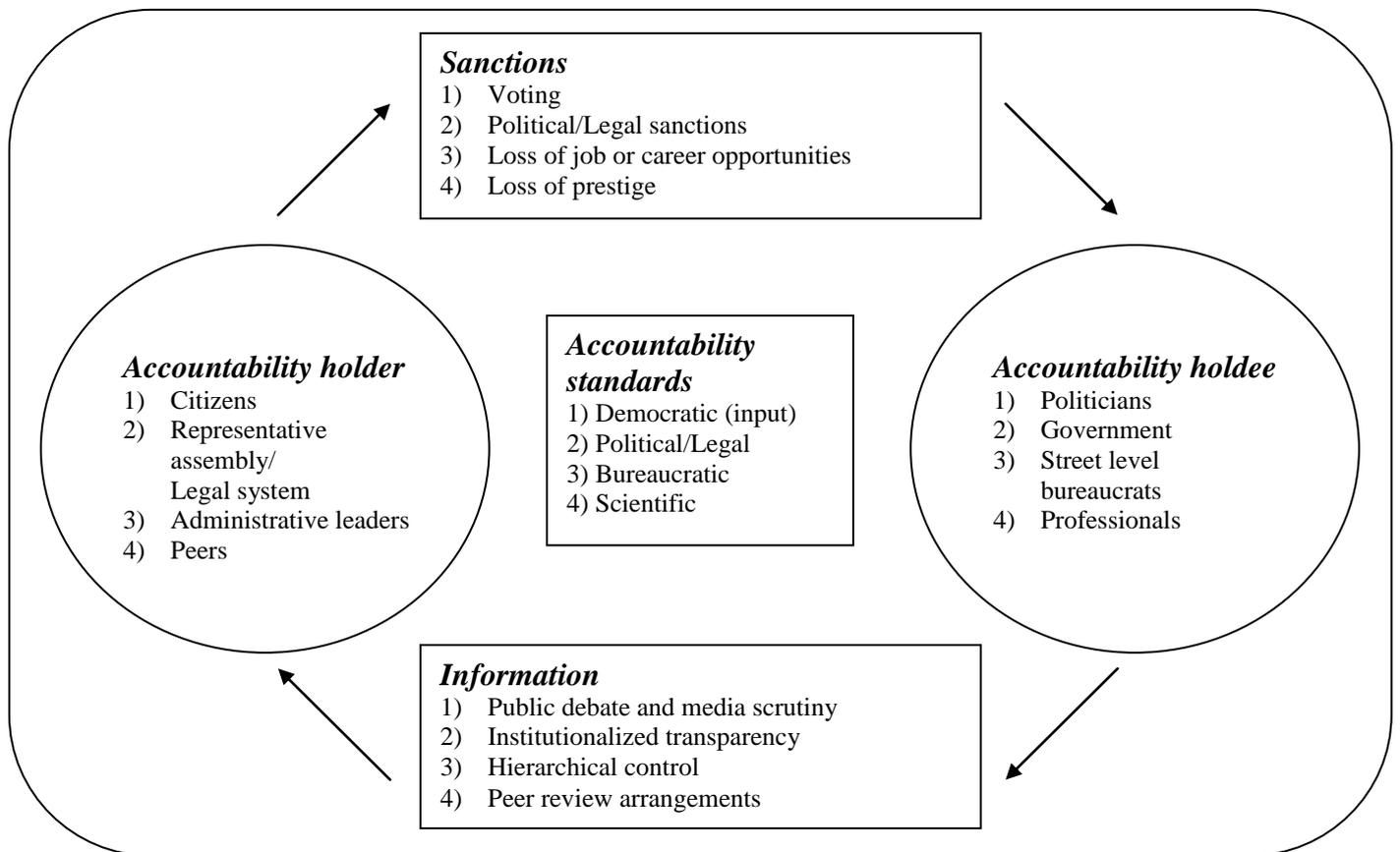
Loop 1 evolves around democratic accountability standards, loop 2 around political and legal accountability standards, loop 3 around bureaucratic accountability standards, and loop 4 around scientific standards. Each of these standards installs a linkage between an accountability holder and accountability holdee. Accountability loop 1 places voters in the role as accountability holders and politicians in the role as accountability holdees. Voters grant politicians a mandate to make decisions on their behalf in exchange for information about what the politicians have done so far and promise to do next, and politicians who fail to satisfy their voters are sanctioned on Election Day. The criteria by which voters hold politicians to account are defined by a set of *input side oriented*

democratic standards sketching out what politicians are mandated to do, what responsibilities and obligations they have, and what kind of information and sanctioning powers should be available to the citizens. Although these standards are generally in line with those advocated by the model of representative democracy, they vary somewhat from one national and cultural context to the next as numerous comparative studies of democratic regimes have pointed out (Almond and Verba, 1963; Lijphart, 1977).

When first elected, politicians move into the second accountability loop, as they take on the role of accountability holders who share the task of holding the government to account with the legal system. The role of the representative assembly of politicians is to ensure that the government implements political programs, while the legislature checks that the government governs in accordance with the law. The degree to which a representative assembly and legal system is able to hold a government to account depends on the level of transparency and publicity in the governance process, as well as on the informal and formal measures, that they can take to punish a government which misbehaves. There are two related accountability standards involved when governments are held to account. The representative assembly holds a government to account with reference to a set of generally accepted *political standards* defining what governments can do and not do in given situations. The judicial system on its side holds governments to account with reference to *legal standards* codified in legal documents and above all in the constitution.

In the implementation phase of the policy process, the third accountability loop that draws on bureaucratic accountability standards places street level bureaucrats in the role as accountability holdees and administrative leaders as accountability holders. Administrative leaders transform laws into administrative rules and procedures, that determine what the individual street level bureaucrat should do, and check whether and how they abide to these bureaucratic rules and procedures. The administrative leaders obtain information about how street level bureaucrats are acting though the institutionalization of a detailed hierarchical and highly sectorized control system, and failure to deliver is punished with loss of job or carrier opportunities.

A fourth accountability loop places public professionals such as medics, lawyers, teachers and planners in the position as accountability holdees who are held to account by their professional peers. The peers hold the professionals to account with reference to a set of *scientific standards* for what is considered as the qualitatively best practice, and obtain the necessary knowledge about the actions of the accountability holdees though different peer review systems, and sanction those who do not abide by the specified standards. This is done by means of a variety of grading systems that harm their standing and reputation among other members of the profession.

It should be noted that the four accountability loops are analytical abstractions. In real life contexts, accountability holders draw on more than one accountability standard and sometimes all four, in their efforts to hold different public authorities to account. However, in this context it is particularly relevant to note that *the traditional accountability model relies on the existence of stable and highly institutionalized patterns of interaction between accountability holders and accountability holdees organized around pre-given and broadly recognized accountability standards as well as*

clear and stable divisions of labor between actors involved in particular phases in the governance process. As we shall see, the recent efforts to enhance the innovative capacities of the public sectors in many Western democracies have transformed the political systems in a way that makes it increasingly difficult to apply the traditional accountability model.
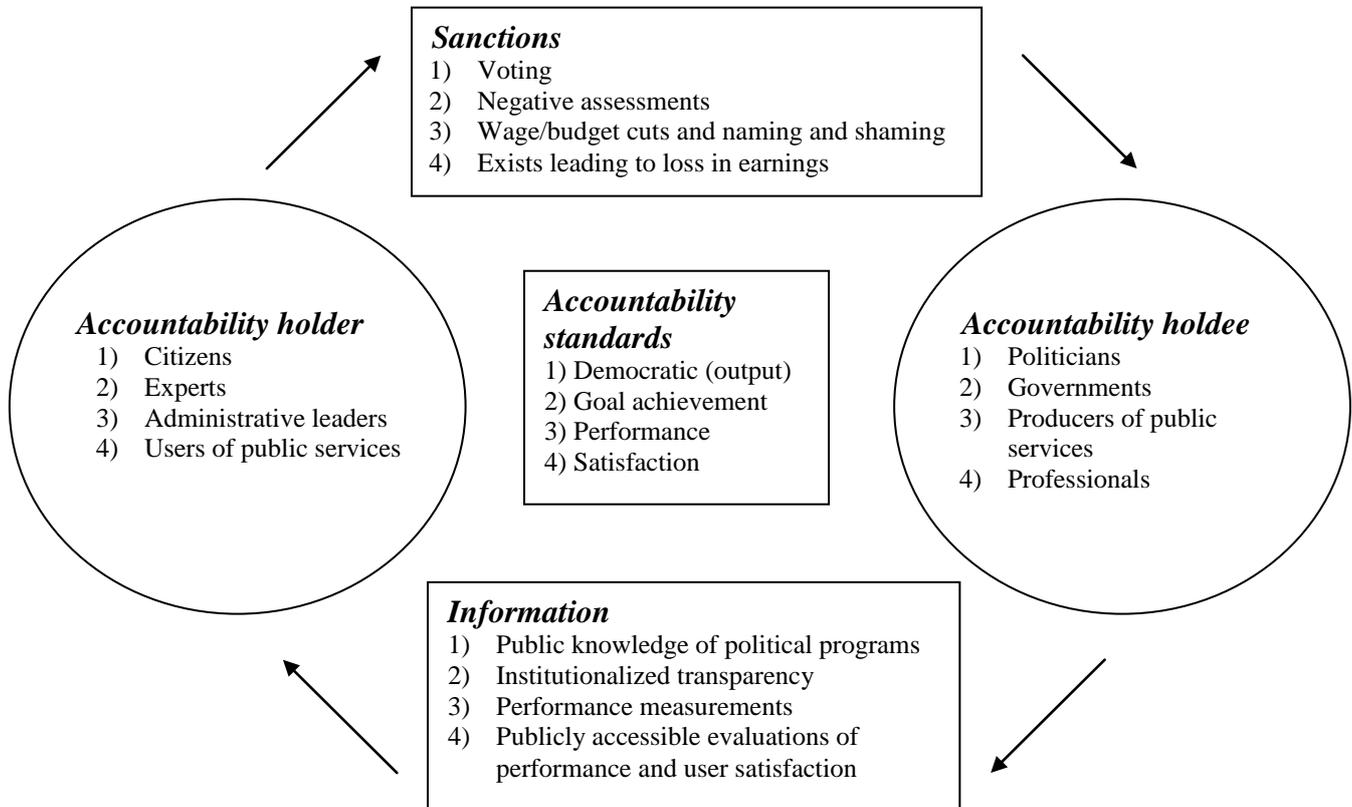
The New Public Management accountability model

The New Public Management (NPM) reform movement saw the light of day in the wake of the crisis that hit many Western democracies in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This crisis was, by some social scientists, defined as an ungovernability crisis because the traditional model of governance had proven to be inefficient and unable to govern the complex tasks facing contemporary societies (Marin and Mayntz, 1991; Kooiman, 1993). One of the central goals for the NPM reform program was to enhance the innovative capacity of the public sector (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). The reforms took their departure in a critique of bureaucratic forms of government for being ossified and therefore unable to adapt to new societal demands and needs (Downs, 1967). Downs' critique of the traditional political system for being change resistant inspired the development of *principal-agent* and *Public Choice theory* (Niskanen, 1987) that gave direction to the NPM reforms of the 1980s and 1990s. These reforms set out to enhance not only the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector but also its innovative capacity through the introduction of new forms of public management based on incentives steering, performance assessments and competition (Hood, 1991; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). The need to make the public sector more innovative was particularly highlighted in David Osborne and Ted Gaebler's famous book *Reinventing Government* (1992). The idea driving their work was that the innovative capacity of the public sector can be enhanced by placing politicians in a position where they can focus on policy innovation (steering) and public and private service providers are put under pressure to find new innovative ways of enhancing the efficiency and of public service provision (rowing).

The NPM reforms did not only radically transform the institutional set up of the public sector in countries such as the USA, UK, Australia, New Zeeland, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and Denmark. It also introduced a new model for holding public authorities to account. Figure 2 presents the main features of the new model of accountability advanced by NPM.

The NPM model reformulates the four accountability loops in ways that mix the traditional accountability loops characterizing the institutions of representative democracy with accountability models well known from the private sector i.e. an incentive driven administrative hierarchy and a competition driven service production. This mixed model installs new accountability standards, and leads to a reshuffling and reinterpretation of the roles and functions of the different accountability holders and holdees.

Figure 2: The NPM accountability model

Sanctions
1) Voting
2) Negative assessments
3) Wage/budget cuts and naming and shaming
4) Exists leading to loss in earnings

Accountability holder
1) Citizens
2) Experts
3) Administrative leaders
4) Users of public services

Accountability standards
1) Democratic (output)
2) Goal achievement
3) Performance
4) Satisfaction

Accountability holdee
1) Politicians
2) Governments
3) Producers of public services
4) Professionals

Information
1) Public knowledge of political programs
2) Institutionalized transparency
3) Performance measurements
4) Publicly accessible evaluations of performance and user satisfaction

The first accountability loop between citizens and politicians is still intact. What has changed are the number of governance tasks and the content of the democratic standards by which politicians are held to account. First, the NPM model reduces the number of governance tasks that politicians are involved in, to that of formulating the overall policy objectives and budget frames while leaving other governance tasks to the public managers. This considerably narrows down the part of the governance process for which politicians can be held to account. Second, NPM rephrase the democratic standards by which voters are to hold politicians to account from input-side considerations about whether or not politicians have been mandated to do what they do, to *democratic output-side* concerns about the extent to which politicians have launched policy programs dealing with problems that citizens perceive as important. In light of this rephrasing of the content of the democratic accountability standard, it becomes important for citizens to get information about what actions politicians have taken to solve policy problems that citizens perceive as important. In consequence, the role of the media is increasingly to provide information about the content of policy programs and policy initiatives launched by different politicians.

The second accountability loop, which aims to hold governments to account, is also affected by the growing focus on outcomes. Although the legal system and the

representative assembly is still expected to play a role in holding governments to account, the main focus of attention in the NPM is on *goal achievement*: Are governments able to reach the goals they have set for themselves? This shift in accountability standard from input to outcomes brings new accountability holders on to the scene. Evaluating the extent to which a government has reached its goals and done so within the budgetary limits is a complex matter and arguments for and against can always be contested. Due to the complexity of the matter, the messenger tends to become more important than the argument. Therefore, the media, opposition parties and different interest groups bring all sorts of experts onto the scene as accountability holders in an attempt to hold governments to account for their (dis-)ability to attain their political goals. Governments on their side use other experts to give such accounts.

The accountability standards that are involved when actors within the administrative system hold each other to account have also changed. Thus, the bureaucratic standards focusing on rule-following have been supplemented and to some extent challenged by *performance standards*, and the accountability holdee is no longer only the individual street level bureaucrat; public agencies and private firms involved in public service delivery have become accountability holdees too. In holding street level bureaucrats and service producing agencies to account, administrative leaders are less interested in the extent to which street level bureaucrats and public and private agencies follow specific rules and procedures than in the degree to which they have been able to produce desired outcomes. In accordance with this line of thinking, the NPM reform program offer a variety of ways in which administrative leaders can accommodate those who perform well and punish those who do not.

The final accountability loop has also been made subject to radical reinterpretation. Scientific accountability standards have been exchanged with a *user satisfaction standard* that has pushed the professional peers aside as accountability holders and given this role to the users of public services. In order to be able to hold those professionals who provide public services to account, the users of these services are granted full information about the character and quality of that service and the level of satisfaction among other users as well as the capacity to exit service providers that are not to their liking.

In sum, NPM attempts to enhance the innovative capacity of the public sector leads to the construction of an accountability model that emphasizes demand side accountability over supply side accountability. This mode takes its departure from radically different standards than the traditional accountability model, and brings new accountability holders and accountability holdees into the game. It should be kept in mind, however, that the NPM accountability model, like the traditional model of accountability, is ideal typical in the Weberian meaning of the word. It highlights a set of increasingly used criteria for holding public authorities to account knowing that reality is much more complex. In reality, the accountability standards are mixed in complex ways depending on contextual factors, among other things relating to national political culture or policy area.

The coexistence between the two models produces confusion regarding what is to be given priority i.e. input side or output side democracy, legality or efficiency, scientific quality or user satisfaction. This confusion materializes itself in all sorts of battles for

power between those involved in public governance. Despite these confusions, however, the compatibility between the models is considerable, which has to do with the fact that NPM shares the perception with the traditional model of accountability *that it is possible to identify a set of generic standards by which to hold public authorities to account and to establish a clear and stable division of labor between the actors involved in the four accountability loops*.

From NPM to NPG

Although the NPM reforms have undoubtedly enhanced the public sectors' innovation capacity, the new model for holding decision makers to account have also established serious innovation barriers (Newman, Raine and Skelcher, 2001; Koch and Hauknes, 2005; Rolland, 2005; Halvorson et al., 2005). One important barrier is the sharp institutional divide the NPM model establishes between politics and production e.g. between policy innovation and service innovation. While policy innovation is considered as a matter for politicians (and leading administrative executives) in the initial stages of the governance process, service innovation is viewed as a matter for competing public and private service providing agencies (Hartley, 2005; Sørensen, forthcoming). The purpose of maintaining this moderated version of the parliamentary chain of governance (Christiansen and Togeby, 2006) organized around a rational decision chain where goal definition precedes implementation is, among other things, to be able to hold different public authorities to account for a specific portfolio of governance tasks and responsibilities.

This accountability strategy is problematic seen from an innovation perspective, because it reduces the capacity for policy innovation as well as for service innovation. Studies show that even though the NPM reforms have given *politicians* (and leading administrative executives) more time and space to formulate new innovative political strategies and visions, it has reduced the politicians' access to sharing knowledge and ideas with those who engage directly in the implementation and provision of public governance (Sørensen, 2006). Although reality is more complex than that, the NPM reforms programmatically aim to place politicians at a distance from governance processes and this is likely to reduce the degree of knowledge and inspiration they get from others. This might reduce their capacity to innovate policies. With regard to *those providing public services,* they easily get caught up in a post-bureaucratic system of standardized performance assessments and evaluation procedures that measure and reward them for performing according to 'best practice' rather than searching for new and innovative ways of providing services (Boyne and O'Toole, 2006).

Around the turn of the century, public sector reformers became increasingly aware of the negative side effects that the NPM reforms tend to have in terms of barriers to policy and service innovation. The surging critique of NPM raised by the supporters of what Stephen Osborne (2010) denotes the New Public Governance (NPG) approach has brought collaborative forms of governance into focus as a means to enhance the innovative capacity of the public sector. This new approach views collaboration between different public authorities as well as between all relevant stakeholders as an important means to make public governance more innovative. Some traces of this line of thinking are already present in NPM's advocacy for public-private partnerships and quasi-markets based on relational contracts, the NPG approach takes this perspective

further by advocating for the involvement of a much wider range of public and private stakeholders such as politicians, public administrators, professionals, experts, voluntary associations, private firms and citizens in collaborative governance processes.

Collaboration between plural stakeholders is expected to promote the formation of linkages between those involved in policy innovation and service innovation in ways that spur a well-informed, committed and creative formulation, implementation and dissemination of bold and innovative ideas. The innovation potentials of collaborative governance rely on the assumption that dialogue between actors with different kinds of knowledge, experiences and perspectives disturb routinized patterns of thought and action in ways that make the involved actors open to pursue, develop and adopt new ways of understanding, approaching and performing governance tasks (Sørensen and Torfing, 2011).

The recent efforts to enhance collaborative governance in many Western democracies (see e.g. HM Government, 2009; British Home Office, 2010; City of Oakland, 2009) have found inspiration in the growing interest in interactive governance and collaborative management among social science researchers over the last 15 years (O'Toole, 1997; Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; Milward and Provan, 2001; Vigoda, 2002; Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004; Hartley, 2005; Torfing et al., 2012). These theories suggest that governance networks and other interactive forms of governance have an innovation potential, and that public authorities at different levels do not necessarily have to take the full responsibility for innovating public policies and services. Collaborative forms of governance divide the burden of making the public sector more innovative between public and private actors.

Theories of interactive governance and collaborative management, however, stress that a successful use of collaboration as a driver of public innovation, calls for a strategic creation, institutionalization and management of the interactive arenas in which collaborative policy and service innovation are to take place (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004; Nambisan, 2008; Roberts and Bradley, 1991). Governance theorists denote this form of governance 'metagovernance' and define it as 'the governance of self-governance' (Jessop, 2002; Sørensen and Torfing, 2007, 2009; Meuleman, 2008). This view on governance takes its departure in the assumption that many of today's governance tasks are so complex that no one actor has sufficient knowledge to solve them. They are best solved by involving and granting a considerable autonomy to self-regulating collaborative governance arenas in which affected and relevant stakeholders negotiate shared goals and pool their resources and insights.

The fact that self-regulating collaborative governance arenas enjoy some degree of autonomy does not imply that they cannot be governed, but it demands a specific kind of metagovernance that is exercised through the strategic shaping and regulation of self-regulating governance arenas. Governance theories identify four main types of metagovernance that have a role to play in governing collaborative arenas (Sørensen and Torfing, 2007, 2009): 1) *Institutional design of governance arenas* (composition, procedures and competences); 2) *political, budgetary, legal and discursive framing* (setting the agenda, provision of available resources, establishment of legal conditions, and construction of storylines that makes collaboration meaningful); 3) *facilitation* of collaboration (conflict mediation and provision of administrative assistance); and 4)

participation in collaborative governance (influence without dominating, be the first to invest own resources and show trust).

While the NPM approach establishes a distinction between those who steer and those who row, governance theorists draw a line between those who metagovern and those who self-govern. Despite the undeniable similarities in these distinctions, the two approaches have different understandings of what this distinction entails. While the NPM approach views the relationship between those who steer and those who row as intrinsically hierarchical, governance theorists perceive the relationship between those who metagovern and those who self-govern as interactive. Another difference between the two approaches is that NPM invites fewer actors onto the governance arena than does the governance approach. NPM advocates for the formation of partnerships with private firms and place users of public services in the role as customers on a market of public services. In comparison, governance researchers stress the importance of including all relevant stakeholders as potential co-producers of public governance in the collaboration processes much in the same vein as suggested by recent theories of user driven innovation (Von Hippel, 2005).

The advocacy for an intense and ongoing interaction between stakeholders and levels of governance goes well in hand with a collaborative innovation approach. A systematic reliance on collaborative forms of governance as a means to enhance public innovation does, however, raise serious considerations about how to hold public authorities and other actors involved in policy and service innovation to account for their actions. Collaborative forms of governance are neither compatible with the traditional model nor the NPM model of accountability because these models attest to the existence of a generic set of accountability standards, and a fixed distribution of roles and divisions of responsibilities between the involved actors.

The idea that a given accountability holdee is held to account with reference to a generic set of accountability standards is incompatible with the fact that those who participate in collaborative governance processes are held to account with reference to different accountability standards. Politicians participating in collaborative arenas are held to account with reference to other accountability standards than the public employees or private actors. Accordingly, collaborative governance arenas are held to account with reference to a situated mix of accountability standards. Moreover, the roles as accountability holders and accountability holdees, respectively, tends to change in the course of collaborative governance processes, and the collaborative character of the governance process makes it notoriously difficult to pinpoint who should be held to account for particular decisions. Responsibility is shared.

Can collaborative innovation be accountable?

The question is whether the prize to be paid for enhancing the innovative capacity of the public sector by means of collaborative forms of governance is reduced accountability. In order to answer this question, fruitful insights can be gained from scrutinizing what governance researchers have said about this topic. Although governance theorists have time and again pointed out that there is an accountability problem related to the use of collaborative forms of governance (Kooiman, 1993; Rhodes, 1997: 21; Benz and Papadopoulos, 2006; Pierre and Peters, 2005: 115) a number of researchers have

pointed out that it is in fact possible to hold those involved in collaborative governance processes to account, and suggest ways in which this can be done. Among these researchers we find Mark Bovens, Thomas Schillermans and Paul 'T Hart (2008), Robert D. Behn (2001), Archon Fung (2004), Anders Esmark (2007) and James G. March and Johan P. Olsen (1995).

First, Bovens, Schillermans and 'T Hart (2008: 232) introduce a new accountability perspective that builds on *learning* as its main standard for assessing the degree to which governance processes are accountable. This learning model, which is highly relevant seen from an innovation perspective, views accountability as a measure of the extent to which public officials at all levels are able to develop the knowledge and competencies they need to deliver what they promise to deliver. In order to be viewed as accountable, public authorities must be in constant dialogue with relevant accountability fora composed of other public authorities and/or external stakeholders. These fora can on the one hand contribute to enhancing the public authorities' competencies and knowledge, and on the other hand hold them to account by demanding competent and convincing explanations. The learning perspective is valuable because it points out that ensuring accountability does not necessarily demand an institutional separation of governance processes into distinct phases with different actors as indicated in the rational decision chain and fixed interpretations of the content of the involved accountability standards. Rather, the learning perspective highlights the need for ongoing dialogue and mutual learning between accountability holdees and accountability holders, and the constant interactive negotiation of what accountability standards are the most relevant in a given situation and how it should be interpreted. This interactive learning perspective indicates that it might be possible to reduce the tension between the innovation and accountability ambition by putting pressure on decision makers to provide competent accounts for their actions in an ongoing dialogue with competent stakeholders.

Second, Robert D. Behn (2001) recommends the introduction of a *360 degree perspective* on public accountability. This perspective discards the view that a given public authority can be sufficiently held to account through the institutionalization of one accountability loop based on one accountability standard and a fixed relationship between an accountability holder and an accountability holdee. In today's complex governance processes, the borderlines between the domains in which different public authorities reign are incessantly transgressed and under redefinition, and the roles as accountability holder and accountability holdee is constantly shifting. Therefore, there is an accelerating need to hold public authorities to account by more than one accountability standard and for a dynamic and situated appointment of role positions. Behn's 360 accountability perspective goes well in hand with collaborative innovation processes as the involved stakeholders draw on different accountability standards, and shift position from being the accountability holder to being accountability holdee at different stages in the governance process.

Third, Archon Fung (2004) has introduced the notion of *accountable autonomy* in order to point out how high ranking public authorities can hold self-governing collaborative arenas consisting of public and private stakeholders to account through interactive delegation and evaluation procedures. In contrast to the standardized performance measurements proposed by NPM, these procedures institutionalize a close and ongoing

dialogue between metagoverning public authorities and various groups of stakeholders engaged in developing and implementing new innovative policies and services. This accountability perspective is important in this context because it suggests how policy innovation and service innovation can become interlinked though accountability models that promote dialogue between those involved in the former and those involved in the latter.

Fourth, Anders Esmark (2007) argues that although governance networks and other collaborative governance arenas often have an important role to play as accountability holders vis-á-vis public authorities, they should also in many situations be seen as accountability holdees. When placed in this role, collaborative governance arenas are accountable to the extent that they can be said to represent somebody or something. According to this *representation perspective* on accountability, collaborative governance arenas are accountable if the participants make such claims and if those claims are accepted by an informed and empowered object of representation. Seen from a collaborative innovation perspective this understanding of accountability is important because it points to ways in which those involved in collaborative innovation processes can be held to account by a plurality of accountability holders that draw on different accountability standards.

Finally, James March and Johan P. Olsen (1995) point to how the complexity and interactive character of contemporary governance processes make it difficult to determine who is accountable for what. This counts for governance processes in general and for collaborative governance arenas in particular. The best way of ensuring accountability is to put pressure, not so much on the individual participants as on the collaborative governance arenas. Seen from this accountability perspective, those participating in collaborative innovation should be held collectively to account for their actions. In doing so they must produce a collective account of the problem definitions that have initiated the collaboration, the applied strategies for dealing with these problems, the activities launched to implement these strategies, and the outcomes that have been produced. This *collective accountability approach* is valuable in this context because it pinpoints the importance of establishing an audience or accountability holder that holding governance arenas involved in collaborative innovation collectively to account.

In combination, the five theoretical contributions provide important insights when developing a model for analyzing the accountability of collaborative innovation. First, the theories point out that a context dependent mix of accountability standards are at work when collaborative governance processes are being held to account. The precise mix of standards depends, among other things, on who are involved in the collaboration process: When politicians and citizens are involved, political and democratic standards are relevant; when public administrators participate bureaucratic and performance related standards are activated; and if professionals and experts participate, scientific standards enter the scene. Secondly, the new accountability theories point out that collaborative governance arenas play an important role both as accountability holder and as accountability holdee. The analytical model for analyzing the accountability of collaborative forms of governance is presented in figure 3.

Figure 3: Model for analyzing the accountability of collaborative governance
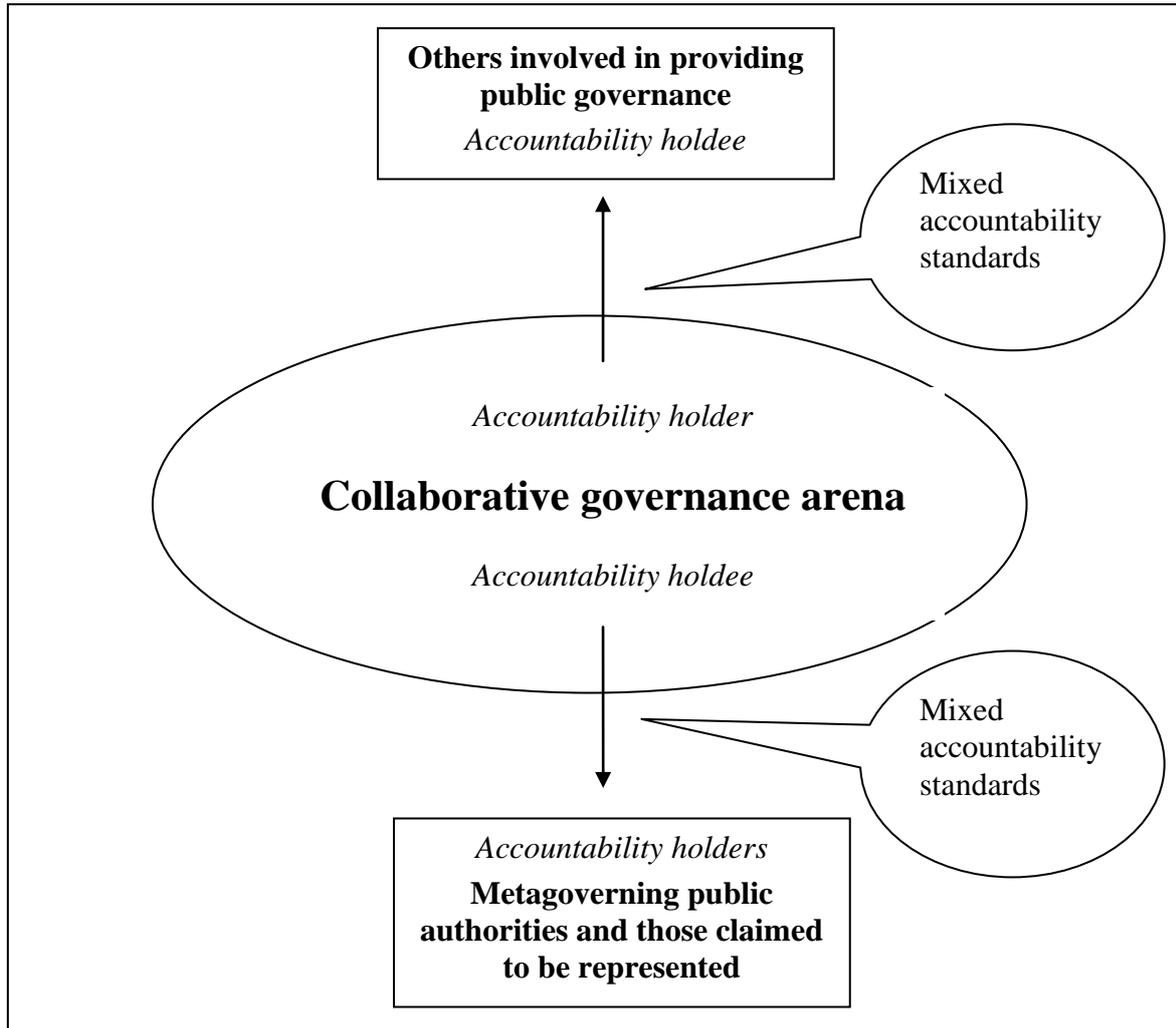
Studies of the accountability of collaborative governance processes might, first, seek to clarify what accountability standards, if any, are activated in concrete governance processes. In addition, it should be clarified how these standards have been established. Secondly, it is relevant to analyze the role that collaborative governance arenas play in holding the many public and private actors who are involved in different aspects and phases in a collaborative governance processes to account in the light of particular accountability mixes. Finally, studies should be made of how collaborative governance arenas are held to account by metagovernors as well as by those actors, collaborative governance arenas claim to represent in light of the mix of accountability standards that these accountability holders view as relevant.

Conclusion
This article set out to analyze how changes in contemporary forms of governance, which among other things aim to enhance the innovativeness of public governance, go

hand in hand with changes in the models for holding decision makers to account. The traditional model of accountability fitted a form of governance that put more weight on ensuring stability than on promoting innovation. The NPM model of accountability was developed to fit forms of governance that aimed to enhance the flexibility and innovative capacity of the public sector. NPG takes one step further in its attempt to enhance the public sector's innovation capacity and insists that although competition- and incentives-based forms of management motivates actors to innovate, it does not enhance the involved actors' capacity to innovate. This calls for extensive collaboration between all relevant and affected stakeholders. The question is, however, whether the price to be paid for a more innovative public sector will be a loss of accountability. The message of this article is that there is an urgent need to develop a model for measuring the accountability of collaborative forms of governance, and to apply this model in empirical studies of collaborative innovation processes. Such a model must deviate considerably from the traditional accountability model as well as the NPM model of accountability, because collaborative innovation processes draw on mixed rather than one fixed accountability standards, shift the position as accountability holders and accountability holdees around in the course of the governance process and share rather than divide responsibilities between the involved actors. A number of new theories of accountability indicate which routes might be taken in designing a new model for measuring the accountability of collaborative innovation processes and to guide those who attempt to enhance the accountability of such processes.

About the author

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