GREEN INSIDE ACTIVISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

POLITICAL AGENCY AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

ERIK HYSING & JAN OLSSON

Green Inside Activism for Sustainable Development

Erik Hysing · Jan Olsson

Green Inside Activism for Sustainable Development

Political Agency and Institutional Change

palgrave
macmillan

Erik Hysing
School of Humanities, Education
  and Social Sciences
Örebro University
Örebro, Sweden

Jan Olsson
School of Humanities, Education and
  Social Sciences
Örebro University
Örebro, Sweden

Cover illustration: © Ted Horowitz/Getty Images

Printed on acid-free paper

Acknowledgements

This book deals with the daily work of activist-oriented public officials trying to change public policies and institutions in a more sustainable direction. We denote these officials green inside activists; that is, public officials committed to environmental agendas and acting from a formal position within public organizations to induce policy and institutional change. To increase our understanding of this phenomenon, we contribute to micro-level theorizing within new institutionalism, theorizing on how green inside activists can expand their political agency and exploit institutional ambiguities for the sake of green institutional change. Their green political activism is characterized by both social adaptive behavior and combative action on the light and dark side of political agency.

This book expands and elaborates on our previous work, both individually written and co-authored texts, which we referee to throughout the book. This book is co-authored, although Erik is main responsible for Chaps. 3 and 7, and Jan for Chaps. 2, 4–6. Chapters 2 and 4 expand and elaborate on Chaps. 2 and 4, respectively, in a book published in 2016, authored by Jan Olsson: *Subversion in Institutional Change and Continuity—A Neglected Mechanism*, Palgrave Macmillan.

Two conference papers of relevance to this book were presented at the *International Conference on Public Policy* in Milan, Italy, on July

Contents

Green Inside Activism and Institutional Change

INTRODUCTION: THE CHALLENGES OF GREEN CHANGE

Environmental problems are among the most serious, complex, and difficult political challenges in societies all over the world. Knowledge about those problems and their potential solutions is limited and value-laden, and is regularly contested. How they are framed varies according to the perspectives and knowledge of the actors involved, making it impossible to develop 'optimal' and definitive solutions based on scientific evidence. Instead, only more or less acceptable and provisional knowledge, ideas, and solutions are possible (Rittel and Webber 1973, p. 155). In addition, actor preferences and priorities are often ambiguous as environmental policy and politics involve multiple and frequently conflicting values and goals (Voss et al. 2007). Environmental problems are intimately interrelated with fundamental economic and social dimensions. Essentially, the challenge of green change is about conflicting values in terms of allocation of benefits and burdens, making it a highly political process that generates winners and losers in different respects.

Furthermore, complex environmental problems often transcend established political and administrative boundaries. Governing capacity is dispersed and fragmented, involving a greater number and diversity of actors. As a result, networking with business and civil society is believed necessary to increase the quality and effectiveness of green public policy by incorporating additional resources, alternative forms of knowledge, and different perspectives; forestalling gaps in implementation; and

producing a more legitimate and responsive government (Bäckstrand et al. 2010). Given the cross-sectoral character of many environmental problems, responsibility also needs to be shared across sectors, integrating environmental issues and objectives within other policy sectors such as transport, agriculture, and trade so that public policies and practices may be re-appraised (or at least re-formulated). Many environmental problems extend across national borders and thus challenge the capacity, autonomy, and reach of even the most powerful nation-states. As a consequence, environmental governance needs to take place on multiple levels of nested institutions, including both global environmental governance and local environmental initiatives and actions.

Sustainable development is 'the dominant global discourse of ecological concern' (Dryzek 2013, p. 147), which, rather than portraying environmental protection as a sole objective in constant competition with economic growth, instead frames environmental problems and governance as a search for a proper balance between environmental protection, economic growth, and social justice across time and space. It has immensely influenced the way people talk and think about environmental issues (Hajer 1995), and it has been integrated into political rhetoric and policymaking all over the world. Since the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro (the so-called Earth Summit), a majority of states have subscribed to the concept of sustainable development (at least rhetorically) and many advanced liberal democracies have adopted sustainable development as a core policy goal at the center of environmental policy (Lafferty and Meadowcroft 2000). It has also expanded far beyond the realm of government into the world of international institutions, business, and civil society (Bäckstrand 2006).

However, under the surface of this catch-all rhetoric, sustainable development is an essentially contested concept, beset by fundamental disagreement over its meaning and importance as well as the scale of necessary reforms (Jordan 2008, p. 18; Banerjee 2003; Thiele 2016, Ch. 1). Following Gallies' (1956) characterization of an essentially contested concept, sustainable development is generally supported as valuable; it has a multi-dimensional character and an internal complexity; it is open to unpredictable changes and new interpretations; actors are aware of the contested character of the concept and are prepared to argue and compete for their own interpretations. Sustainable development is, in this perspective, about the creation of meaning through contested

interpretations in different social and political contexts. Considering the contested nature of sustainable development, it is hard to use it in a coherent, instrumental way to change society in a green direction. Rather, it is a visionary, political concept that needs to be interpreted and applied in relation to certain problems and issues within specific contexts.

The problems of continued unsustainability are not only a failure of social habits and the operation of markets (Stern 2007), but also a governance failure and governance challenge. First of all, sustainable development does not simply happen through market mechanisms and social self-governance; society needs to be *governed* into sustainability (Adger and Jordan 2009) by 'reforming practices of sociopolitical governance to encourage shifts toward a more environmentally sustainable and equitable pattern of development' (Meadowcroft 2009, p. 323). Such efforts of environmental governance concern not only the formulation and implementation of public policy, but also 'the design and logic of political *institutions*, since they determine much of the actual *policies* for sustainable development' (Lundqvist 2004, p. 3; italics in original). Second, many of today's environmental problems have been attributed to failures of traditional state governance, which have provoked increasing interest in governance reforms and commitments to new modes of governance such as market-based policy instruments and governance networks. As a consequence, it has almost become a truism within both policy and academic debate that we need to look beyond the state to find effective and legitimate governance arrangements for collective action capable of handling the complex, dynamic, and diverse challenge of sustainable development. This view extends across radical and moderate environmentalists as well as across the rights–left ideological political divide.

More recently, however, the importance of state action in environmental governance has received increasing recognition and spurred calls for a reinvention and re-theorization of the state as an important object of study (Barry and Eckersley 2005; Bäckstrand and Kronsell 2015; Duit 2014; Eckersley 2004; Meadowcroft 2009). It is now widely held that the state remains important and that the 'governance turn' in political science indicates that the role of the state has transformed rather than declined (Bell and Hindmoor 2009; Lundqvist 2001; Pierre and Peters 2000). However, bringing the state back in again is not enough (cf. Skocpol 1985); we also need to open the black box of the state. Even in studies that do not disregard the state, it is often treated as a passive and anonymous set of structures or as a single, unitary actor

(Jacobsson et al. 2015, p. 1). To understand the limitations and prospects of environmental governance, we need not only to take due consideration of the state but also to scrutinize what happens within the state apparatus. Thus, we need better insights about the people populating it, in particular public officials of great relevance to green institutional change.

Public Officials as Political Agents

Public officials are largely neglected in studies of environmental governance despite the fact that many of them have the potential to be important actors in policy processes. Regardless of preferred modes of governance, be they traditional state governance, market mechanisms, or civic engagement, public officials are at the center of the efforts to address the green challenge. Public officials do not only interpret, implement, and supervise public policy; they are also involved in framing issues, producing knowledge, setting agendas, and formulating policy. They can work strategically to meta-govern networks (Sørensen and Torfing 2007), to facilitate deliberation in processes of citizen participation and interaction (Forester 1999; Laws and Forester 2015), and to oversee and interpret regulatory frameworks on which markets rely. Rather than being hierarchically subordinated to elected politicians, their relationships with them are more often characterized by reciprocal influence, interdependency, and overlapping functions (Svara 2006). Furthermore, the importance of public officials has increased as environmental policy and politics have shifted toward more complex challenges of sustainable development. In many ways, this complexity conditions politicians to rely on the public administration and its officials for governance efforts (cf. Jacobsson et al. 2015, pp. 39–41). Public officials taking on such responsibility is absolutely necessary for the political system to be able to handle serious environmental problems, but it also presents challenges to the democratic system; raising important questions about the power of non-elected officials and how it affects democratic legitimacy.

To understand the agency of public officials, we need to perceive them not as 'neutral instruments' in the hands of politicians, but rather as creative 'political agents' in their own right. However, this political agency needs to be approached from an *institutional perspective* (Peters 2011; Lowndes and Roberts 2013; Olsson 2016). Green policymaking

is, on the one hand, embedded in institutionalized governance grown out of earlier political decisions and practices, giving it some amount of continuity and predictability, and on the other hand, fragmented by contending interests and values, driven by different logics of action for determining appropriate behaviors as well as for seeking new opportunities. Thus, institutions influence the behavior of actors by affecting the conditions under which they make decisions and act, but institutions are also to some extent formed by actors. We need to further acknowledge the power and capacity of agency and agents in environmental governance (Barry 1999, p. 107; Lundqvist 2004, p. 15; Partzsch 2017).

Taking departure in the role of public officials in a broad sense also means that we open up possibilities for an everyday perspective, which stresses the importance of praxis-based political action for greening policies and institutions. To put it straight, national public policies on sustainable development or international agreements on climate change are no more than good intentions and ambitions unless political action takes place on the ground. Research on implementation problems and street-level action (Lipsky 1980; Hill and Hupe 2014; Hupe et al. 2015; Laws and Forester 2015) as well as recent studies on institutional change (Mahoney and Thelen 2010; Lowndes and Roberts 2013) convincingly show that there is a long path from proud declarations to actual processes of change. Usually, very much happens on the way, and needs to happen, if good intentions are to turn out well in practice, and conversely, stalemate at the top does not have to infect other levels and arenas of decision-making. As Rebecca Abers and Margaret Keck argue, institutions develop and persist to a large extent through *practical authority*, conceptualized as 'the kind of power-in-practice generated when particular actors (individuals or organizations) develop capabilities and win recognition within a particular policy area, enabling them to influence the behavior of other actors' (Abers and Keck 2013, p. 2). This capacity to influence behavior can be gained not only through formal attributions of state power but also by garnering social respect, acquiring new technical skills, and taking advantage of private resources (Abers and Keck 2013, p. 7). Public officials are often central in this type of praxis-based political processes, and they acquire influence in many different ways. In this book, we will focus on how public officials can act as 'activists' within governments and public organizations, using both open authoritative measures and secret subversive actions.

GREEN INSIDE ACTIVISM

Inside activism is a theoretical concept that captures institutional political agency of public officials being personally committed to civil society networks and organizations and ready to support their agendas by acting within public organizations to induce policy and institutional change. Inside activism is thus an institutional phenomenon, and its 'carrying' actors we call inside activists. An inside activist is 'an individual who is engaged in civil society networks and organizations, who holds a formal position within public administration, and who acts strategically from inside public administration to change government policy and action in line with a personal value commitment' (Olsson and Hysing 2012, p. 258).

Inside activists can in a general sense be committed to different values, such as gender equality, green values, civil rights, and so forth. *Green* inside activists are committed to environmental values and sustainable development in a broad sense, which means that we are not dealing with a homogeneous group of actors. They can be more or less radical and eager to promote change and can thus be sympathetic to different types of green discourses (sustainable development, deep ecology, ecological modernization, and so forth). Inside activists can have various positions within public organizations and can employ different strategies and efforts to change or secure institutional rules, norms, and practices of public organizations. The phenomenon of green inside activism has been shown to be empirically valid and important for explaining green change in individual policy and planning processes (Olsson 2009; Olsson and Hysing 2012), but public officials showing inside activists characteristics have also been identified more generally. In a survey study of local environmental officials in Sweden, 81 of 701 respondents, operating within 67 of the 290 local governments in Sweden, expressed attitudes and behaviors corresponding to inside activists (Hysing and Olsson 2011).

The idea of inside activism is not a new one. The phenomenon has been captured in various contexts and policy fields around the world. For example, the gender equality activists identified and theorized by Banaszak (2010) and Yeatman (1990) in the USA and Australia, respectively, are clear examples of inside activism. So are the institutional activists identified within Brazilian water policy by Abers and Keck (2009) and the government guerillas of Nevada wetland conservation (O'Leary 2014). Important empirical and theoretical contributions have been

made within the social movement literature (Banaszak 2010; Pettinicchio 2012), in policy and planning studies (Kingdon 1984/1995; Krumholz and Forester 1990), and in public administration research (O'Leary 2010, 2014), which will be further discussed in Chap. 3. While acknowledging that we owe previous contributions for important insights, we argue that the concept of inside activism brings some novelty by the way it combines insights from previous actor concepts and how it elaborates on three traditional dichotomies that limit our understanding of political agency and institutional change.

First, inside activism helps us to be sensitive to how and why the public–private dichotomy is blurred in practice. It does so by directing our attention to policy and institutional change emanating from both inside and outside of public administration as well as by making us attentive to the interactivity between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in processes of change and continuity. In understanding these dynamic processes, the concept of inside activism points to the importance of multiple overlapping institutions, inside and outside of the public domain. While public organizations provide important institutional influence over the behavior of public officials, other institutions in their lives, such as semiprofessional networks, social movements, family, and others, are also influential and can even, in certain situations, become dominant inspirations to induce political change efforts that undermine established institutional rules and norms.

Second, inside activism can help us overcome the problematic dichotomy between value-driven politicians and neutral public officials. Thus, inside activism can shine new light on the classical democracy–bureaucracy dilemma within public administration research by elaborating on the discretionary power of environmental public officials as well as its associated legitimacy problems. Institutions *grant* public officials a capacity to act, thus providing both opportunities for and restrictions on action, but individuals and groups of officials can also *take* political actions that may violate the preferences of political and administrative superiors as well as institutional rules and norms. Thus, inside activism highlights difficult normative questions of legitimacy and democracy. Considering the difficult and contested nature of environmental politics and sustainable development, we should not expect 'neutral' expertise as the guiding rule of environmental public officials and inside activists, but rather creative problem-solving based on value-laden, contested knowledge.

Third, inside activism highlights an individual capacity to act and thus explicitly targets the classical problem of 'agency versus structure' in social science (Giddens 1979, 1984). In this sense, the concept of inside activism helps us move beyond the troublesome divide between institutions and agency. We will, in line with John Kingdon (Kingdon 1984/1995) and others, argue that in certain situations and contexts, there are opportunities for policy and institutional change, which can be exploited by individual key actors. Thus, rather than perceiving individuals as intermediaries for other forces (such as external shocks), the inside activism concept focuses on the individuals per se and their creative political agency in different institutional contexts. Inside activism takes political agency seriously and can help us discover the logics and mechanisms behind institutional change and stability.

The concept of green inside activism has thus a great potential to move our thinking beyond unproductive traditional dichotomies and open it up to theoretical elaborations on political agency in processes of green institutional change and continuity.

Purpose and Aims

The purpose of this book is to theorize on the institutional phenomenon of green inside activism and how it can contribute to green change by altering institutional rules, norms, and practices as well as securing institutions perceived as favorable to sustainable development. We will develop theoretical arguments based on empirical insights on environmental officials and green inside activism as well as elaborate on recent theorizing on institutional change within new institutionalism. We will also draw on theoretical insights on agency and key actors within research fields such as policy analysis, public administration, and planning studies. The overall questions of the book are as follows:

- What are the nature and characteristics of green inside activism and what contexts tend to give rise to this type of activism?
- How can inside activism further our theoretical understanding of green institutional change? What mechanisms of power and influence can inside activists exploit to make a difference in processes of change and continuity?
- How and on what grounds can green inside activism be legitimized?

In the rest of this chapter, we will draw on insights from empirical and theoretical research on policy and institutional change to clarify what we mean by green change; why it is difficult; and, despite inertia and obstacles, how green change processes still can be triggered and developed. In the last section, we present the structure of the book in some depth and detail.

Green Institutional Change

What do we mean by green change? First of all, we perceive of it in a broad sense as change toward a sustainable society where economic and social dimensions develop within the ecological limits. Second, in theorizing green change, a distinction needs to be made between *policy change* and *institutional change*. We perceive of public policy as a course of action or inaction (Hill 2013), specifying political goals and means, usually formalized in laws or different types of policy documents. We define institutions more broadly as rules, norms, and practices embedded in historical traditions and legacies, giving some stability and predictability to political and public life. Solid institutions where rules, norms, and practices are in harmony help actors to understand 'how things are usually handled around here' and thus work well as a guide for their actions. Well-established institutions are even taken for granted and tend to produce path-dependent action. These institutions are of fundamental importance for the development and implementation of public policies (Lundqvist 2004). Thus, we perceive of institutional change as something more fundamental than policy change and a prerequisite for green change. For instance, a new green forestry policy may not necessarily lead to institutional change on the ground, due to inertia in informal institutional norms and practices. Local actors such as forest owners and citizens may inhibit green change by collecting coarse woody debris; valuable for biodiversity and therefore deliberately left after harvesting, but running counter to traditional views of a well-tended forest. As a contrast, green change can occur in terms of new practices on the ground, despite weak environmental ambitions in laws and policy documents. Changing texts is usually an easier task than altering institutionalized practices. This is why we should be aware of potential greenwashing of policies but also seriously consider opportunities for green institutional change through everyday actions among public officials and their networks (cf. Page 2012, p. 8).

Obviously, this view of public policies and institutions is detrimental for the traditional models and visions of rational decision-making and governance (Lasswell 1951; Simon 1947). The old debate about the limits of rational policymaking will not be recapitulated here (Simon 1947; Lindblom 1959) but, considering the widespread hopes in much of the sustainable development literature for rational governance and planning toward a more sustainable future (Daniels 2014; Sachs 2015), we need to acknowledge its limitations, in particular for 'wicked problems' of sustainable development. As thoroughly argued by Leslie Paul Thiele, public policy for sustainable development needs to be handled in a complex web of interdependence and the effects of our actions are impossible to anticipate or control due to a number of unintended consequences (Thiele 2011).

Beyond old ideas of rational policymaking, the big family of institutional theory has a large number of traditions and versions that can help us understand institutional change and continuity. Despite considerable variations and contradictions, common to all those versions is that institutions produce some level of a 'stable, valued, recurring pattern of behavior' (Huntington 1968, p. 12). More precisely, this means that institutions are structural features in society with formal status, such as legislation and organizations, but they are also informal like networks and norms. The structural nature of institutions means that they constrain and enable individual behavior in different ways, through rules, norms, practices, and incentives. Thus, institutions give some amount of stability and predictability to human behavior (Peters 2011, pp. 19–20; Lowndes and Roberts 2013, pp. 3–10). The downside of this conservative nature of institutions is that green change agents are structurally disadvantaged in relation to those who favor the status quo. In practice, we can assume 'business as usual activities' to be taken for granted in many situations, while new green solutions are more easily questioned and undermined.

Thus, when consulting institutional theory, it seems easier to find arguments for continuity than for change and transformation, and for structure rather than an individual agency. In the new institutionalism literature, there are a number of ideas and arguments for why existing institutional rules, norms, and practices tend to be stable over time. In sociological institutionalism, stability is assumed to result from habits and taken-for-granted actions (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Powell and DiMaggio 1991), for instance, going to work by car everyday or

perceiving of global tourism as a natural part of a modern lifestyle. Social behavioral patterns of this type are hard to change and thus tend to continue over time. In normative institutionalism, it is argued that institutional stability follows from the logic of appropriate action (March and Olsen 1989, 1995). People within various organizational contexts are assumed to adapt to existing rules, norms, and practices, rather than to question or undermine dominant patterns of behavior. Similar ideas of adaptation and continuity have also been launched by other institutionalists, who argue that we can expect path-dependent behavior driven, for instance, by evaluative feedback and 'increasing returns' (Pierson 2004) or by experience-based induction (Denzau and North 1994). Thus, in the new institutionalism literature, institutional stability has received much attention from different scholars. It can even be argued that stability is a somewhat overdetermined phenomenon, due to a structuralism bias and a long-term neglect of agency within the broad tradition of institutional theory.

However, in searching for more optimistic ideas of green change and transformation, we can also get some insights about vital forces and mechanisms in theories of institutional and policy change. In this literature, there are a number of theoretical ideas, in terms of both dramatic, transformative change and incremental, adaptive processes. Transformative change is most commonly assumed to emanate from external shocks and critical events with abrupt consequences for existing institutions. This has been conceptualized also in terms of punctuated equilibrium, critical juncture, and window of opportunity (Krasner 1984; Kingdon 1984/1995; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Pierre 2009; Mahoney 2000; Thelen 1999).

Dramatic change following from external shocks or critical events may seem attractive to actors who are increasingly dissatisfied with the status quo. However, dramatic change has its pros and cons. On the one hand, a severe environmental crisis like extreme weather, water scarcity, or extensive death of forests can function as a powerful symbol that may trigger fundamental change processes of great advantage for a more sustainable development. On the other hand, critical events can also lead to hasty reactions and conflicts with serious consequences that are difficult or even impossible to handle. Thus, dramatic change processes may be alluring to some groups and interests hoping for a green cultural shift, which can open up opportunities for radical green ideas, but the price can be far too high, leading to unforeseen backlashes and even long-term

decline for environmental concern. Hoping for critical events can also be foolhardy, considering that they can actually mean that we have reached a point of no return, where we have come to a stage with new triggering effects and escalating problems.

Critical events can also emanate from inside governments and public organizations in terms of 'internal shocks' (Olsson 2016, p. 90). For instance, an employee possessing highly sensitive information on environmental destructions may, after some consideration and anxiety, feel that dramatic action is absolutely necessary. To get the greatest possible attention to try to change existing detrimental practices, an obvious strategy is to do some sort of whistle-blowing. We can assume that the more sensitive and secret the 'organizational wrongdoing,' the more 'explosive' the revealing. However, in the whistle-blowing literature, there are a large number of cases that pass with little attention, while a few are really dramatic and get huge attention; the recent case of Edward Snowden is, of course, one of the most spectacular critical events, emanating from inside, but still with unclear long-term consequences (Brown et al. 2014; Olsson 2016).

There are different ideas of gradual change in the literature. Incrementalism is about ordinary policymaking processes characterized by discussions in which goals and measures are considered at the same time and in relation to previous experiences (Lindblom 1959). Institutional change may occur more continuously through endogenous, standard processes of interpretation, learning, and adaptation (March and Olsen 1989). A good example of gradual change in the green governance literature is the hope envisaged by the school of ecological modernization. In this tradition, the modern project is supposed to continue if political and economic institutions can successfully adapt to new environmental and development problems as well as making use of emerging opportunities such as technological innovations (Mol et al. 2009). The central, critical question is, of course, whether or not incremental change has 'real' transformative capacity.

In recent contributions to institutional theory, it has been argued that incremental processes also can lead to transformative change. Vivien Lowndes and Mark Roberts argue that institutional change is stimulated by both endogenous and exogenous forces, that transformative effects can follow from gradual change, and that both change and stability are the products of human agency (Lowndes and Roberts 2013). Jan Olsson argues that gradual processes can result in transformative change in terms

of a 'tipping point.' In a slow and hardly noticeable way, gradual change can undermine some institutional rules and norms until reaching a point of no return, where fundamental disruptions take place (Olsson 2016, p. 88).

This book will, in particular, contribute insights on gradual change efforts with potential transformative effects, by theorizing on the political nature of inside activism. We take political agency seriously by elaborating on how inside activism can combine different micro-mechanisms of action in order to change or preserve institutional rules, norms, and practices to the advantage of green values. This endeavor requires an overview of how the new institutionalism literature has theorized about agency and institutions in relation to institutional change and continuity. This theme will be dealt with in the next chapter, which will also lay the ground for our own theoretical position: a new political institutionalism. But before that, we present the structure and the main arguments of this book.

Structure of the Book

This book is structured in eight chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chap. 2 (New Political Institutionalism) makes a critical assessment of how different versions of new institutionalism understand and conceptualize agency (agents and actions). We argue that they lack a more nuanced understanding of human agency and how it relates to institutions: They tend to focus on single logics of action, to neglect the importance of various micro-mechanisms of action, and to downplay discursive aspects in theorizing change and continuity. We further argue for the need to take political agency seriously, to perceive of institutional change and stability as being stimulated by both endogenous and exogenous forces, and to recognize that transformative effects can follow from gradual change (Lowndes and Roberts 2013). We make a theoretical positioning on how to perceive agency in new institutionalism in a more political sense by acknowledging the relevance of what we call *the logic of combat* elaborated as a complement to the *logic of social adaptation*, which is based on sociological and normative institutionalism. These two logics together capture the two essential dimensions of political life: conflict seeking and adaptive cooperation. Thus, it is an argument of consolidation and of upgrading political discourse in institutional theory.

In Chap. 3 (The Political Nature of Inside Activism), we turn our attention more directly to agency in different respects by reviewing and assessing highly interesting conceptualizations of public officials as creative political agents, such as policy entrepreneurs, administrative guerillas, boundary spanners, and street-level actors. We discern differences and similarities between these concepts and inside activism, and further elaborates on the latter's central characteristics. We conclude that inside activism bears resemblance to other actor concepts that stress creativity and the political nature of agency, but we also argue that inside activism brings some novelty by combining three vital dimensions in a specific way: inside–outside, political–administrative, and actor–structure. It is also more precisely defined than other comparable concepts and thus lends itself to systematic empirical testing.

Chapter 4 (Green Inside Activism in Context) theorizes the contexts that tend to give rise to inside activism. We first base the discussion on how we have previously conceptualized inside activism to get some clues as to what types of contexts are relevant, such as access to various power resources, situations in which important values are at stake, and sympathies and commitment to green movement values. We then discuss whether inside activism can be perceived as an institutional phenomenon whose time has come during the last decades. We argue that this is not the case in the sense of being something completely new, but it seems to be an increasingly important phenomenon following from a number of trends that give more degrees of freedom to public officials like inside activists. After that, we develop a general argument of a more fundamental character, implying that we expect inside activism to be present in various contexts, with the consequence of making public organizations fragmented in a political sense. In the last section, we discuss the institutional complexity and ambiguities of public organizations and how inside activists have to deal with it in a dynamic way.

Chapter 5 (Mechanisms of Institutional Change) develops theoretical arguments about how green inside activists can work for institutional change by using different strategies and mechanisms of both a combative and adaptive character. It starts by addressing the theme of politics and power in public organizations and goes on with a more targeted discussion about public officials and their basic power conditions. We then develop theoretical ideas on micro-mechanisms of change, followed by a discussion about how inside activists can use these mechanisms to produce institutional change by (i) expanding political agency and (ii)

exploiting institutional ambiguities. We argue that the change efforts of green inside activists tend to be dualistic—open, deliberative, and consensus-seeking as well as power-driven, tactical, and subversive—following both the logic of social adaption and the logic of combat. We further argue that power-driven, subversive action is most likely in critical situations where really important values are at stake for those involved and where the outcome is hard to predict. We end this chapter by discussing three dilemmas of influence for green inside activism (radicalism–change; power–deliberation; and openness–secrecy). We elaborate on how inside activists can handle these dilemmas in different situations and through alternative tactics.

Chapter 6 (Green Institutional Change: A Case Study) put more flesh and bones to the discussion by presenting a heuristic case study, showing how green inside activism can work productively in processes of institutional change. This case is about sustainable land-use planning, a planning process with unexpected outcome. We offer a comprehensive explanation to this outcome by using theoretical insights from the previous chapters: How specific change strategies and mechanisms of action are used in combinations and in sequences. A central argument is that combative actions can be useful and effective in policy and planning processes if they are wisely handled in relation to dominant institutions. In that sense, we hold the logic of social adaption to be a more fundamental and 'natural' logic than combative action, at least in relatively institutionalized contexts. Nonetheless, there are always change agents under the surface, and in specific situations combative actions come to use, with potential triggering effects toward institutional change. We elaborate on how inside activism can force change by expanding political agency: collective action (networks and coalitions), combinative efforts, combative and cooperative action in combination, and persistent activism to produce cumulative effects. We further argue that attractive targets for combative action are institutional ambiguities and in particular the most weak spots of institutions, such as specific norms or practices whose time has passed. Those soft spots have relatively few defenders and can thus be the strategic entrance for further change.

In Chap. 7 (Legitimacy and Green Inside Activism), we discuss not only legitimacy problems of green inside activism but also explores how it can be legitimized. The insight that public officials can be powerful actors in the policy process is largely portrayed in the literature as an unfortunate consequence that needs to be avoided. The functioning of

modern states requires discretionary power of public officials, but such power also brings considerable legitimacy problems. We review and discuss various grounds to legitimize inside activism and identify four legitimacy dilemmas that need to be reconciled with fundamental principles of democracy and rule of law: (i) the discretion of public officials and democratic accountability, (ii) the secret and tactical nature of inside activism and procedural values of openness and transparency, (iii) the innovative thinking of inside activists and democratic processes of representation and participation, and (iv) the value commitments of inside activists and a democratic public interest. Finally, we discuss and theorize about three alternative logics for legitimizing inside activism: doing things with democratic support, doing the right thing, and doing the things we can (all) agree on.

In the final chapter (Conclusions, Future Research, and Implications for Practice), we summarize and conclude on the main theme of the book: How and to what extent green institutional change can follow from inside activism. Green inside activism makes important theoretical and conceptual contributions in terms of addressing three divides largely constructed both in social science and within the public realm (public–private, politics–bureaucracy, actors–structures). Green inside activism is a neglected phenomenon of general relevance, in particular, within dynamic policy areas such as environmental policy, subject to important trends of governance, civic engagement, and so on. An important conclusion is that public organizations are institutionally fragmented and thus provide fertile ground for inside activism. Key explanations to how inside activism affect institutional change and stability center around the importance of an expanded political agency and institutional ambiguities. Finally, we conclude that inside activism manifests critical legitimacy problems but also that it in critical situations and contexts might be necessary. By combining three alternative logics, inside activism might be considered legitimate. In the second part of this chapter, we discuss future research needs and implications for practice. Future research needs to map the importance and relevance of inside activism in different contexts (countries as well as policy fields), the dynamics of inside activism over time, the legitimacy, justification, and motivation for inside activism, and address methodological challenges of studying a phenomenon which is often hidden and controversial. Finally, inside activism raises questions of fundamental importance for practice. Here, we discuss some key implications addressed to politicians and managers as well as potential

inside activism. However, we also want to be clear on the fact that this is a theoretical book, not a practitioner's guide to inside activism.

References

Abers, R. N., & Keck, M. E. (2009). Mobilizing the state: The erratic partner in Brazils's participatory water policy. *Politics & Society, 37*(2), 289–314.

Abers, R. N., & Keck, M. E. (2013). *Practical authority. Agency and institutional change in Brazilian water politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Adger, W. N., & Jordan, A. (2009). Sustainability: Exploring the processes and outcomes of governance. In W. N. Adger & A. Jordan (Eds.), *Governing sustainability* (pp. 3–31). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Banaszak, L. A. (2010). *The women's movement inside and outside the state.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Banerjee, S. B. (2003). Who sustains whose development? Sustainable Development and the Reinvention of Nature, *Organization Studies, 24*(1), 143–180.

Barry, J. (1999). *Rethinking green politics. Nature, virtue and progress.* London: Sage.

Barry, J., & Eckersley, R., (Eds.) (2005). *The state and the global ecological crisis.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Baumgartner, F. R., & Jones, B. D. (1993). *Agendas and instability in American politics.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

Bell, S., & Hindmoor, A. (2009). *Rethinking governance. The centrality of the state in modern society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, A. J., Lewis, D. R. Moberly, R., & Vandekerckhove, W., (Eds.) (2014). *International handbook on whistleblowing research.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Bäckstrand, K. (2006). Multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development: Rethinking legitimacy. Accountability and Effectiveness, *European Environment, 16,* 290–306.

Bäckstrand, K., Khan, J., Kronsell, A., & Lövbrand, E. (2010). The promise of new modes of environmental governance. In K. Bäckstrand, J. Khan, A. Kronsell, & E. Lövbrand (Eds.), *Environmental politics and deliberative democracy. Examining the promise of new modes of governance* (pp. 3–27). Chelthenham: Edward Elgar.

Bäckstrand, K., & Kronsell, A., (Eds.) (2015). *Rethinking the green state. Environmental governance towards climate and sustainability transitions.* London: Routledge.

Daniels, T. (2014). *The environmental planning handbook for sustainable communities and regions.* Chicago: American Planning Association, Planners Press.

Denzau, A. T., & North, D. C. (1994). Shared mental models: Ideologies and institutions. *Kyklos: International Review for Social Sciences, 47,* 3–30.

Dryzek, J. S. (2013). *The politics of the earth. Environmental discourses* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Duit, A. (Ed.) (2014). *State and the environment. The comparative study of environmental governance.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Eckersley, R. (2004). *The green state. Rethinking democracy and sovereignty.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Forester, J. (1999). *The deliberative practitioner. Encouraging participatory planning processes.* London: The MIT Press.

Gallie, W. B. (1956). Essentially contested concepts. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 56*(1955–6), 98–167.

Giddens, A. (1979). *Central problems in social theory: Action, structure and contradiction in social analysis.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hajer, M. A. (1995). *The politics of environmental discourse. Ecological modernization and the policy process.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hill, M. (2013). *The public policy process* (6th ed.). Harlow: Pearson.

Hill, M., & Hupe, P. (2014). *Implementing public policy.* London: Sage.

Huntington, S. P. (1968). *Political order in changing societies.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Hupe, P. L., Hill, M., & Buffat, A. (Eds.) (2015). *Understanding street-level bureaucracy.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Hysing, E., & Olsson, J. (2011). Who greens the northern light? Green inside activists in local environmental governing in Sweden, *Environment and planning C: Government and policy, 29*(4), 693–708.

Jacobsson, B., Pierre, J., & Sundström, G. (2015). *Governing the embedded state. The organizational dimension of governance.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jordan, A. (2008). The governance of sustainable development: Taking stock and looking forwards. *Environment and planning C: Government and policy, 26*(1), 17–33.

Kingdon, J. W. (1984/1995). *Agendas, alternatives and public policies.* New York: HarperCollins College Publishers

Krasner, S. (1984). Approaches to the state: Alternative conceptions and historical dynamics. *Comparative Politics, 16*(2), 223–246.

Krumholz, N., & Forester, J. (1990). *Making equity planning work. Leadership in the public sector.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Lafferty, W., & Meadowcroft, J. (2000). Patterns of governmental engagement. In W. Lafferty & J. Meadowcroft (Eds.), *Implementing sustainable development. Strategies and initiatives in high consumption societies* (pp. 337–421). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lasswell, H. D. (1951). The Policy orientation. In D. Lerner & H. D. Lasswell (Eds.), *The policy sciences: Recent developments in scope and methods*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Laws, D., & Forester, J. (2015). *Conflict, improvisation, governance. Street level practices for urban democracy*. New York and London: Routledge.

Lindblom, C. E. (1959). The science of muddling through. *Public Administration Review, 19*(2), 79–88.

Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Lowndes, V., & Roberts, M. (2013). *Why institutions matter: The new institutionalism in political science*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lundqvist, L. J. (2001). Implementation from above: The ecology of power in Sweden's environmental governance. *Governance, 14*(3), 319–337.

Lundqvist, L. J. (2004). *Sweden and ecological governance. Straddling the fence*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Mahoney, J. (2000). Path dependence in historical sociology. *Theory and Society, 29,* 507–548.

Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K., (Eds.) (2010). *Explaining institutional change: Ambiguity, agency and power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1989). *Rediscovering institutions*. New York: Free Press.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1995). *Democratic governance*. New York: Free Press.

Meadowcroft, J. (2009). What about the politics? Sustainable development, transition management, and long term energy transitions. *Policy Sciences, 42*(4), 323–340.

Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology, 83,* 63–340.

Mol, A. P. J., Sonnenfeld, D. A., & Spaargaren, G. (Eds.) (2009). *The ecological modernisation reader. Environmental reform in theory and practice*. London: Routledge.

O'Leary, R. (2010). Guerrilla employees: Should managers nurture, tolerate, or terminate them? *Public Administration Review, 70*(1), 8–19.

O'Leary, R. (2014). *The ethics of dissent: Managing guerrilla government* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Olsson, J., & Hysing, E. (2012). Theorizing inside activism: Understanding policymaking and policy change from below. *Planning Theory & Practice, 13*(2), 73–257.

Olsson, J. (2009). The power of the inside activist: Understanding policy change by empowering the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). *Planning Theory and Practice, 10*(2), 167–187.

Olsson, J. (2016). *Subversion in institutional change and stability. A neglected mechanism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Page, E. (2012). *Policy without politicians: Bureaucratic influence in comparative perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Partzsch, L. (2017). 'Power with' and 'power to' in environmental politics and the transition to sustainability. *Environmental Politics, 26*(2), 193–211.

Peters, B. G. (2011). *Institutional theory in political science: The "new institutionalism"*. London: Pinter.

Pettinicchio, D. (2012). Institutional activism: Reconsidering the insider/outsider dichotomy. *Sociology Compass, 6*(6), 499–510.

Pierre, J. (2009). Post hoc, ergo propter hoc? Path dependency and punctuated equilibria in European aviation safety regulation. *Critical Policy Studies, 3*(1), 105–120.

Pierre, J., & Peters, B. G. (2000). *Governance, politics and the state*. London: Macmillan.

Pierson, P. (2004). *Politics in time*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Powell, W. W., & DiMaggio, P. J. (Eds.). (1991). *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Rittel, H. W. J., & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy Sciences, 4,* 155–169.

Sabatier, P. A., & Jenkins-Smith, H. C. (Eds.). (1993). *Policy change and learning: An advocacy coalition approach*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Sachs, J. D. (2015). *The age of sustainable development*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Simon, H. (1947). *Administrative behaviour*. London: Macmillan.

Skocpol, T. (1985). Bringing the state back in. In M. Hill (Ed.) (1997) *The policy process. A reader*, 2nd ed. (pp. 126–138). Harvester Wheatsheaf: Prentice Hall.

Stern, N. (2007). *The economics of climate change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Svara, J. H. (2006). Introduction: Politicians and administrators in the political process—A review of themes and issues in the literature. *International Journal of Public Administration, 29*(12), 953–976.

Sørensen, E., & Torfing, J. (Eds.) (2007). *Theories of democratic network governance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Thelen, K. (1999). Historical institutionalism in comparative politics. *Annual Review of Political Science, 2*(1999), 369–404.

Thiele, L. P. (2011). *Indra's net and the midas touch. Living sustainably in a connected world*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Thiele, L. P. (2016). *Sustainability* (2nd ed.). Cambridge/Malden: Polity Press.

Voss, J. P., Newig, J., Kastens, B., Monstadt, J., & Nölting, B. (2007). Steering for sustainable development: A typology of problems and strategies with respect to ambivalence, uncertainty and distributed power. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning, 9*(3), 193–212.

Yeatman, A. (1990). *Bureaucrats, femocrats, technocrats. Essays on the contemporary Australian state*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

New Political Institutionalism

INTRODUCTION

In understanding the phenomenon of green inside activism and its potential contribution to a more sustainable development, we need to elaborate on political agency in relation to institutions. Agency, in general, and *political* agency, in particular, are neglected themes in the institutionalism literature and need to be systematically addressed in order to further our understanding of institutional change (Beckert 1999; Powell and Colyvas 2008; Peters 2011). In the words of Guy Peters: 'there must be a mechanism through which the institutions shapes the behavior of individuals, and there must be mechanisms through which individuals are able to form and reform institutions. Unless that linkage can be made clear, institutions will remain only abstract entities and will have little relationship with political behavior' (Peters 2011, p. 38). Thus, considering the strong emphasis on the structural nature of institutions and the lack of a more nuanced understanding of the micro-mechanisms of human action, institutional theories may very well underestimate the possibility of green change. This is the central theme of this book, and we will contribute by upgrading political agency in relation to institutions, and hopefully opening up new ways of thinking and elaborating on green change.

The neglect of political agency is partly due to hard-driven specialization within different versions of new institutionalism, implying fragmentation and negative consequences for cross-boundary elaboration.

However, in the last decades, interesting efforts have been made to theorize more about the importance of agency and political aspects (Mahoney and Thelen 2010; Lowndes and Roberts 2013; Olsson 2016). This chapter starts with an overview of the history of institutional theorizing, depicted as a development in three major phases: old institutionalism, new institutionalism and a third phase of potential consolidation and convergence. After that, we take a closer look at the dominant versions of new institutionalism: rational choice, normative, sociological, historical, and discursive institutionalism. In this assessment, we focus on the connection between individual agency and institutions and how it may produce institutional change and continuity. In the last section, we develop and argue for an approach labeled new political institutionalism, which will frame and guide our discussions throughout this book.

Three Phases of Institutional Theorizing

It is commonplace to argue in the institutionalism literature that our understanding of institutions and organizations has developed in subsequent phases over the years. The most common distinction is the one between the 'old' and 'new' institutionalism, as two separate phases (Peters 2011, pp. 3–11), but it is also argued that we now have entered a third phase, which gives more room for individual agency and political aspects (Lowndes and Roberts 2013). We will now take a closer look at these three suggested phases.

The phase of 'old' or 'traditional' institutionalism is usually dated to the 'modernism epoch' (1930s–1970s) (Peters 2011 pp. 3–11). This traditional view of institutions is still relevant in empirical research where formal rules and organizations are the objects of study. Old institutionalism has an interest in understanding and explaining political life and its outcomes according to the way it is institutionalized through formal rules and organization. Furthermore, there is often an implicit assumption of a rationalistic, top–down view of governing and thus a risk of overstating the potential of organizational design. Old institutionalism has been criticized for being unreflective when it comes to theory and method; it has a tendency to commonsense thinking, which takes formal facts for granted and neglects the informal side of institutions, like the actual behavior of people within organizations that may reduce their coherence and governing capacity (Lowndes and Roberts 2013, pp. 22–28; Peters 2011, pp. 6–8). Guy Peters summarizes old

institutionalism as a proto-theory with five defining characteristics: *legalism*, which is concerned with law and its central role in governing; *structuralism*, which assumes that structure matters and determines behavior to a large extent; *holism*, in which whole systems of governments are often studied as sui generis, even though comparisons sometimes are made with other countries; *historicism*, which is concerned with how political systems are embedded in their historical development as well as their socioeconomic context; and *normative analysis*, which has a strong normative element with a concern for 'good government,' while at the same time constructing a clear distinction between facts and norms, which implies a clear dichotomy between politics and public administration (Peters 2011, pp. 6–11). Overall, 'old' institutionalism has a number of implicit assumptions of government and public administration, which give it a formalistic and rationalistic character.

The second phase is the birth of what we today call new institutionalism, usually dated from the early 1980s to the late 1990s. New institutionalism can be differentiated from old institutionalism in three respects. First, new institutionalism scholars have expanded their concern to also include informal aspects of institutions, such as norms, ideas, networks and coalitions. Second, new institutionalists do not take political institutions at face value, but rather, they take a critical look at the way institutions actually work in practice. This is based on the insight that the traditional emphasis on formal structures was overstated. Third, new institutionalism rejects the determinism of old institutionalism, but still maintains that institutions, understood in a broader sense, constrain individual behavior, while also acknowledging the agency of actors to be somewhat relevant in relation to change and stability of institutions (Lowndes and Roberts 2013, pp. 28–29). The new institutionalism phase has been characterized by a rapid development of different versions of new institutionalism, which has meant not only creative theorizing but also divergence and fragmentation. Most researchers agree on three well-established versions: sociological, rational choice, and historical institutionalism. Guy Peters argues that normative institutionalism is a version of its own and constitutes the roots of the new institutionalism theorizing in general (Peters 2011), while others include normative institutionalism within the sociological camp (Lowndes and Roberts 2013).

Vivien Lowndes and Mark Roberts suggest that we have entered a third phase of institutional theorizing since the early 2000s, characterized by convergence and consolidation between different versions

of new institutionalism. They argue that there are theoretical debate and convergence on six interrelated themes (Lowndes and Roberts 2013, pp. 41–44). The first one is about the formal and informal character of institutions, and they argue that ideas, beliefs, and values are perceived as more and more important in institutional dynamics. It is thus an upgrading of discursive aspects such as narratives and stories. The second theme is about institutional stability and dynamics, and the argument here is that we can see a convergence in terms of understanding institutions as only 'relatively stable' in need of continuous support to persist. It is increasingly understood that institutional stability and dynamics are affected by the institutional complexity and that both endogenous and exogenous forces contribute to institutional change and continuity. The third theme is about institutions, power, and criticism. Even though institutions constrain and even oppress certain groups of actors, Lowndes and Roberts argue that there is convergence on the idea that there is always room for resistance, which is argued to be present to a larger extent than has traditionally been assumed within new institutionalism. Fourth, they argue that institutions are increasingly seen as messy and differentiated in terms of not working coherently and being increasingly complex and pervaded by different actors and power resources. The fifth theme is about contingency in terms of institutions seen as located within a wider institutional context, and institutional dynamics understood through the mutual constitutive character of agents and institutions. The sixth theme concerns how to 'bring the actor back in' to find a new point of balance on the structure–agency continuum (Lowndes and Roberts 2013, p. 145).

This third phase thesis on the convergence and consolidation of new institutionalism is not entirely convincing as a description when considering the persistent relevance and development of quite different versions of new institutionalism, in particular, rational choice institutionalism in comparison with normative and discursive institutionalism. However, the argument of Lowndes and Roberts can be seen as a constructive theoretical contribution in itself, which can open up new lines of theorizing with potential cross-fertilization between at least some, more similar, versions of new institutionalism. We will explore this further in this chapter.

In summary, the three phases show a clear change in theorizing from assumptions about structuralism to more space for agency; from a strong focus on formal and material aspects (rules and organization) to increasing attention to informal aspects such as relational practices, norms,

and discourses; and from a coherent view of institutions to a more differentiated understanding, acknowledging also contradictory elements within institutions.

Understandings of Agency and Change in Institutional Theory

In the following, the dominant versions of new institutionalism are assessed by focusing in particular on the connection between individual agency and institutions and how it tends to produce institutional change or stability. Two concepts are essential in the following sections: logics of action and micro-mechanisms. *Logic of action* is a specific, dominant pattern of action that is theoretically deduced, for instance, appropriate action or rational choices. *Micro-mechanisms* are defined as praxis-relevant types of action in particular situations, for instance, imitation, rule interpretation, or subversive action.

Rational Choice Institutionalism

In rational choice institutionalism, it is commonplace to conceptualize institutions as 'the rules of the game,' giving an incentive structure for presumably rational actors (North 1990). Rational action in the strict version is theorized as self-interested actors with fixed preferences who seek to maximize expected returns by choosing the best course of action among a number of systematically investigated alternatives. For most rational choice scholars, the preferences of the actors are exogenous to the models and are of limited or no interest to their theorizing. The few researchers who have an interest in preference formation argue that individuals have to adapt to and learn institutional values if they are to be successful (Katznelson and Weingast 2005; North 1990; Ostrom 2005, 2007).

Rational choice institutionalists do not theorize about variations among individuals, even though there is considerable and theoretically relevant variation in human behavior. This is a self-conscious and self-imposed limitation intended to assure that conclusions can be stated in confidence, but for rational choice critics, this is a 'flight from reality' (Green and Shapiro 1994; Shapiro 2005). In attempts to overcome this dogma, rational choice scholars have directed their attentions toward the ways that rational actors are constrained by rules and incentive

structures (North 1990; Ostrom 2007) and how preferences are created in the interaction between individuals and institutions (Katznelson and Weingast 2005). To conceptualize institutions as the 'rules of the game' is relatively common among institutionalist scholars and not only rational choice institutionalists (North 1990; Rothstein 1996; Lowndes and Roberts 2013). This metaphor, though, is misleading and limiting for at least two reasons. First of all, it gives a false impression that all players have the same conditions, which contradicts our praxis-based experience of fundamental differences when it comes to positions, responsibilities, and resources. Second, this metaphor leads our minds to accept the view of a clear distinction between the rules of the game and the game actually played. This in turn indicates that institutional rules will persist over time, which gives us a static view of the game. If the games actually played are unable to change the rules of the game, institutional change must in some sense occur through actions or events external to the game and its rules. Thus, rational choice institutionalists (and others) using the rules of the game metaphor are better equipped to study the game in itself rather than to understand how and why institutional rules and norms change and persist (Peters 2011, Chap. 3). However, the considerable variation in rational choice theorizing indicates a possibility to theorize on the micro-foundations by softening some assumptions, like the idea of a narrow self-interest (Eriksson 2011, Chap. 3; Shepsle 2006). More realistic assumptions could also open up for cross-fertilization between rational choice institutionalism and other versions of new institutionalism. An example of this ambition is the actor-centered institutionalism of Fritz Scharpf, focusing on 'games real actors play' (Scharpf 1997).

Normative Institutionalism

James G. March and Johan P. Olsen developed a new form of institutionalism in the 1980s, which constituted a direct challenge of the dominant positions of behavioralism and rational choice within political science (March and Olsen 1984, 1989). As argued by André Lecours, this new institutionalism gave the discipline of political science a 'structuralist turn' (Lecours 2005, p. 8), even though it never managed to undermine its opponents. This new institutionalism was later called normative institutionalism and is often perceived as the antithesis of rationalism (Peters 2011, Chap. 2). March and Olsen understand institutions as 'a relatively

enduring collection of rules and organized practices' perceived as relatively invariant to the turnover of individuals and changing environments (March and Olsen 2006, p. 3). They further argue that there are constitutive rules and practices prescribing appropriate behavior for specific actors in specific situations. This logic of appropriate action is a key concept. It is sociological in nature and is fundamentally different from the economic–rationalistic logic of rational choice.

In normative institutionalism, appropriate action is the basic building block for understanding institutional change and stability. Furthermore, this building block is mostly used as a heuristic device rather than as a theoretical concept for systematic empirical inquiry on the individual level. Even in theorizing about fragmentation and unresolved conflicts, there is a tendency to discuss them in terms of different 'pockets' of appropriate action or 'multiple cultures' within organizations rather than to elaborate on institutionalized agency and different logics or forces of action (Olsen 2010; Peters 2011, Chap. 2). Human action is portrayed to be subsumed under social forces of institutional adaptation; that actions in institutional contexts are not so complex as to make a more varied toolbox of micro-mechanisms necessary.

March and Olsen made their vital theoretical distinction between the logic of consequentialism and the logic of appropriateness in their debate with rational choice scholars (March and Olsen 1984, 1989). Rational choice and new institutionalism have dominated political science for decades and have developed mostly in parallel, which also holds for rational choice institutionalism, even though its name signals something else (Eriksson 2011; Peters 2011; Shepsle 2006). More recently, March and Olsen have argued that the logic of consequentialism and appropriateness is complementary (March and Olsen 2006, p. 9), but at the same time, they have continued to distance themselves from 'micro-rational individuals' (March and Olsen 2006, p. 16). These two logics are fundamentally different in an ontological and epistemological sense. The logic of consequentialism or anticipation is an economic–rationalistic concept with strict assumptions about agents but with limited elaborations on the importance of institutions and contexts, while the appropriate action is sociological and context-sensitive in its nature. In short, we can speak of 'a calculus approach' and 'a cultural approach' (Hay and Wincott 1998), which are difficult to combine, and such combination is seldom done (March and Olsen 2006; Christensen and Røvik 1999). It can be questioned if this is a fruitful way forward for a more elaborated micro-level

theorizing. Normative institutionalism remains a fundamental perspective in new institutionalism, but appropriate action cannot work as the sole micro-foundation for political agency.

Sociological Institutionalism

Sociological institutionalism and normative institutionalism have important similarities, and some scholars even group them together under the label of sociological institutionalism (Hall and Taylor 1996; Lowndes and Roberts 2013), while others keep them apart as two distinct versions of new institutionalism (Peters 2011). While sociological institutionalism is a broad research tradition with great variety and with active scholars foremost within sociology and organization studies (Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Greenwood et al. 2008), normative institutionalism is a more coherent theoretical project of political institutions (March and Olsen 1989, 1995, 2006). Apart from these differences, there are many similarities between the two perspectives. In sociology, institutions and organizations have always been of great concern and are seen as important structures in society that provide stability and meaning to social behavior through cognitive, normative, and regulative mechanisms. Thus, individual behavior is seen as largely socially constructed, which means there is an important element of habits and taken-for-granted action (Jepperson 1991; Scott 1995). Sociological institutionalism has a broad interest in institutions, including intra-organizational and inter-organizational studies, private and public institutions, symbolic and material aspects, and so forth. A central perspective within sociological institutionalism is to view institutional change on the macro-level as resulting from adaptations of organizations to their environments (imitation, diffusion, isomorphism). Ideas are important in these processes, and adaptations do not necessarily mean material change; symbolic changes are also perceived as important for organizations to gain legitimacy. This research tradition has been debated within sociology, and Lynne Zucker, for instance, argues that these processes largely remain a 'black-box' unless they are complemented by a micro-level approach that pays attention to the cognitive processes involved in the creation and transmission of institutions (Zucker 1991, pp. 103–106).

In sociological institutionalism, there is a theme of institutional entrepreneurship that tends to upgrade the role of actors (individuals or organizations) (DiMaggio 1988). Institutional entrepreneurship has been

defined as 'activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones' (Maguire et al. 2004, p. 657). In an overview of this literature, Cynthia Hardy and Steve Maguire argue that there are two different narratives of institutional entrepreneurship, an actor-centric narrative and a process-centric narrative (Hardy and Maguire 2008). The actor-centric narrative tends to paint a picture of rational, problem-solving activities where the (usually successful) institutional entrepreneur possesses some reflexivity or insight (Hardy and Maguire 2008, p. 211). In this narrative, entrepreneurs are perceived to have extraordinary political and social skills that allow them to intervene strategically to realize institutional change by mobilizing resources in creative ways. As a contrast, the process-centric narrative focuses on the process of entrepreneurship as an emergent outcome of various activities among spatially dispersed actors who face considerable difficulty in achieving effective collective action. In this view, the process is seen as impregnated by conflicts, power relations and contested meaning-making, where failure is just as likely as success (Hardy and Maguire 2008, pp. 211–213). Hardy and Maguire end their overview by warning that even though the institutional entrepreneurship theorists respond to the need to move beyond the constraining effects of institutions and to put agency back into the institutional analysis of organizations, 'there is a risk that the pendulum will swing too far in the other direction—celebrating heroic "entrepreneurs" and great "leaders".' (Hardy and Maguire 2008, p. 213). They conclude that sociological institutionalism should keep matters of power and process central to the study of institutional change. This illustrates the 'paradox of embedded agency' within sociological institutionalism, which for a long time has been a source of controversy and debate (Peters 2011, pp. 138–139).

Historical Institutionalism

Historical institutionalism is the most structural version of new institutionalism, with path dependency as a fundamental concept, stressing the legacy of the past as a strong force behind present and future actions. Considering the structural nature of historical institutionalism, the formative stage of institutions is of vital interest. Where do institutions come from and how were they established? Ideas are generally seen as important in the formative stage, and some kind of creative actors are thus

needed who can efficiently represent the 'new' ideas, even though a favorable context also is an important condition (Peters 2011, Chap. 4). A problem here is that historical institutionalism for a long time has lacked theoretical elaboration on actors and their interaction with institutions. Historical institutionalism understands major institutional change as a sudden break of continuity. A long period of institutional stability is punctuated by dramatic external disruptions, which undermine and replace existing institutions with new ones. Thus, the lack of theorizing about actors means that the traditional version of historical institutionalism is a rather simple structural theory of institutions (Peters 2011, Chap. 4).

To handle this basic problem, some historical institutionalists have increasingly borrowed ideas from other versions of new institutionalism, in particular rational choice and sociological institutionalism (Steinmo et al. 1992; Streek and Thelen 2005; Mahoney and Thelen 2010). This can be interpreted as an effort of integration and consolidation (Peters 2011, p. 89; Lowndes and Roberts 2013), but can also be more critically assessed as eclecticism with potentially negative consequences for historical institutionalism as a distinct theoretical perspective (Weyland 2008, p. 312).

To illustrate this argument, the logic of path-dependent action can be interpreted in a number of ways. For instance, Paul Pierson (2000) makes a 'soft' rationalistic account when arguing that path dependency can be understood as a reinforced process, thanks to positive feedback from initial policy choices ('increasing returns'). A similar argument is that decision-makers, facing complex problems in situations of strong uncertainty, must employ some form of induction, which may enable learning from the outcomes of previous choices (Holland et al. 1986; Denzau and North 1994). Furthermore, path-dependent action can be understood within the framework of normative institutionalism if the logic of appropriateness is seen as a mechanism of continuity, which is transmitting rules and normative legacies from the past. Thus, decision-making procedures and patterns of action that seem to work well in a number of respects are likely seen as appropriate and will thus be repeated in the future. Guy Peters even argues that historical institutionalism 'comes close to being just a version of normative institutionalism, given its tacit acceptance of "logics of appropriateness" in shaping behavior' (Peters 2011, p. 88).

To conclude, the logic of path dependency can in practice work through quite different types of logics or mechanisms of action, but this is not theoretically elaborated on and integrated into the framework of historical institutionalism. Thus, it largely remains a structural theory weak on micro-level theorizing. In favor of historical institutionalism, it should also be stressed that it mainly deals with macro-level processes and events over long time spans. Furthermore, as already mentioned, recent contributions have theorized about agents and endogenous processes behind change and continuity (Streek and Thelen 2005; Mahoney and Thelen 2010), offering novel ideas of general relevance to micro-level theorizing within new institutionalism.

DISCURSIVE INSTITUTIONALISM

The 'argumentative turn' in social science has been a great source of inspiration for theorizing about discursive aspects in relation to institutions (Fischer and Forester 1993). Discursive or constructivist institutionalism is a more recent version and is thus relatively controversial and debated, even though it is increasingly accepted as a version in its own right (Peters 2011; Hay 2006). Among the proponents for a discursive institutionalism, there are quite different understandings of discourses and institutions, from poststructuralist positions with no or limited influence of actors (Bacchi and Rönnblom 2014) to constructivist positions, which gives actors a considerable creative capacity to change rules and norms (Hay 2006; Schmidt 2008, 2010). Vivien Schmidt (2008, 2009, 2010), one of the most influential and ambitious scholars of discursive institutionalism, theorizes agents as active, reflexive, and influential, and as political and social, not calculating rationalists. Schmidt is critical toward rational choice institutionalism and recent contributions in historical institutionalism, which increasingly builds on rational choice principles. Her way of conceptualizing agency is very much the antithesis to rational choice. In contrast to rational action, Schmidt argues that ideas and communication are central concepts for explaining institutional change. 'Sentient actors' may change institutions by following a 'logic of communication' in everyday practice. Institutional change is theorized as 'the product of sentient agents engaged in thinking up new ideas about what to do and how to do it and then engaging in discussions in efforts to persuade others that this is indeed what one needs to do and ought to do' (Schmidt 2009, p. 533). One could in fact perceive

this view of institutions as a micro-version of sociological and normative institutionalism, but one that acknowledges considerable discretion by individual actors. Schmidt herself actually admits that the differences between her approach and sociological/normative institutionalism often are 'quite fuzzy' and depend on how the latter approaches theorize action. Her basic criticism is that these approaches tend to theorize about static ideational structures and institutions, macro-patterns consisting of 'action without agents' (Schmidt 2010, p. 13). Schmidt argues that the neglect of ideas, actors, and communication (discourse) within the three dominant versions of new institutionalism (sociological/normative, historical, and rational choice) makes it necessary to develop a new fourth discursive institutionalism (Schmidt 2010). It is easy to agree when she discerns previous shortcomings within new institutionalism, but to take ideas and discourse seriously, it can be argued that we can elaborate on existing versions and thus avoid one more *ism* (Bell 2011; Alasuutari 2015). Two essential problems with discursive/constructivist approaches are their tendency to downplay the structural nature of institutions and to upgrade creative agency to such an extent that it is doubtful whether and in what sense it belongs to the tradition of new institutionalism. A critical question we should ask the constructivist institutionalists is how and to what extent sentient actors are constrained by existing rules, norms, and practices.

Summary and Implications

To conclude, this assessment shows that theorizing on agency and change within the five dominant versions of new institutionalism is underdeveloped in a number of ways. First, they have their own theoretically derived action logics, single logics that are mainly used heuristically. Actors are theorized as acting in a specific role, for instance as either a rational calculating or a socially adaptive actor. This contradicts our commonsense experience of individual action as driven by mixed motives and mechanisms. Second, there are weak ambitions to elaborate on how various logics and mechanisms of action work in combinations in specific situations as well as in sequences. Some contributions in this direction have been made, but indicate that there is a risk of theoretical eclecticism. Thus, there is a difficult challenge to combine theoretical coherence with broad empirical relevance. Third, we see some theorizing about types of actors, such as institutional entrepreneurs, who are perceived as change

agents in institutional dynamics. However, it is far from enough to conceptualize types of actors; we also need theorizing about the micromechanisms of action in dynamic processes of institutional change and continuity. Fourth, political aspects and concepts such as authority, conflict, and power play a minor role in new institutionalism. Instead, concepts of economic rationality and sociological concepts such as identity, norms, and social adaptation have dominated for a long time, and as will be argued below, we need to pay more attention to political agency. Fifth, we see a growing interest for discursive aspects within new institutionalism, to such extent that some propose a discursive version of new institutionalism. Certainly, we need to pay more attention to discursive aspects in theorizing about the importance of political agency and institutional change, but we should not do it by downplaying the phenomenon of institutional inertia. Both discursive aspects and structural conditions are too important to specialize in just one of them. Rather, we need more cross-fertilization between different versions of new institutionalism, even though Lowndes and Roberts (2013) hope for fundamental forces of convergence may be overoptimistic.

Toward a New Political Institutionalism

For several decades, new institutionalism has been dominated by theoretical ideas inspired by economics and sociology, with the unfortunate consequence of neglecting fundamental political dimensions and concepts. We will, in this section, develop an argument on how to take political agency seriously in institutional theory by retaking some insights from 'old' institutionalism and combining them with more recent ideas of political institutionalism. This strategy can hopefully take us toward an updated version of political institutionalism: a new political institutionalism.

The 'paradigmatic' 1980 debate between rational choice and normative institutionalism led to a sharp break between 'old' and 'new' institutionalism (or rather a construction of that distinction), which was overstated, according to the institutional pioneer Philip Selznick (1996). Unfortunately, it meant that political aspects such as power, authority, and formal organization were put aside to a large extent. Despite this development, some political scientists have continued to stress the importance of formal political aspects of institutions; they argue that these aspects still make a difference with important distributional

consequences (Goodin 1996; Rhodes 2006; Mahoney and Thelen 2010). For instance, Robert Goodin argues that actors who hold formal positions within organizations have a better capacity to 'work their will upon the world at the expense of others lacking access to such institutionalized power resources' (Goodin 1996, p. 16). He further states that this was an important theme of old institutionalism and is still of central importance to new institutional analysis. In other words, we need to further acknowledge that 'hard' political power can consolidate organizations, for instance, through the authoritative imposing of new regulations and different control measures, and the use of threats and punishments. This also highlights the question of how to perceive formal power in connection with normative institutionalism and its more sociological perspective. A critical issue is the extent to which social adaptation is actually dependent on the shadow of formal power and its ability to control, command, and punish, but we can also assume that unclear values and lack of socialization efforts will likely make the use of formal power more difficult and ineffective.

Acknowledging the continuing relevance of traditional institutionalism does not mean that there is a way back to formalism in terms of old rationalism, top–down governing and a clear dichotomy between politics and administration. We are restrained from that by a number of empirical insights and theoretical developments over the years such as incrementalism, bottom–up implementation, the argumentative turn, and governance. We have learned that actors, including top managers and politicians, are more or less constrained, not only by institutional rules, norms, and practices, but also by forces of power and actions exercised by their subordinates such as protests and subversive actions (Olsson 2016). They need to be able to cooperate and to organize concerted action among actors with partly different ideas and interests. Their autonomy and their power to get things done are restricted and highly contingent on not only formal mandates but also the support of the organization. Old institutionalism was not sensitive to these constraints, and we therefore also need to develop political institutionalism along new lines of ideas.

Considering the increasing complexity of political and democratic governance, we need more than ever to perceive political institutions as arenas containing both logics of social adaptation and power struggles and leave it to empirical study to determine how and to what extent formal organizational structures and positions matter. We should thus

be sensitive to formal power structures and positions and at the same time critically assess their actual relevance and importance in different situations and contexts. In short, we can draw some lessons from traditional institutionalism in upgrading political aspects in institutional theory, but we also need to consider more recent, inspiring contributions in new institutionalism.

To conclude, we assume that formal institutions structure the behavior of individuals, granting them both opportunities for and restrictions on political agency. However, and contrary to old institutionalism, such institutions *condition* the behavior of individuals, but do not *determine* it. Furthermore, politics matter in the sense that institutions are formed and changed over time through processes of political action, driven by adaptive as well as conflictual behaviors among actors inside and outside the institution.

Institutional Political Agency

For political agency to be taken seriously, an important point of departure is to avoid such reductionist micro-theorizing as occurs with rational choice, because we acknowledge a commonly held experience that human thinking and behavior vary to a great extent and are potentially relevant for explaining institutional change and continuity. Such a view is also supported by modern psychological research; people vary to a great extent when it comes to intelligence, values, and behavioral patterns (Holt et al. 2015). We agree with Vivien Lowndes and Mark Roberts, who argue that it is important to bring in 'actors with real human heads and hearts, who engage critically and strategically with institutions rather than simply playing pre-assigned roles' (Lowndes and Roberts 2013, p. 145). Therefore, it is important to explore and elaborate on the multi-dimensional character of agency in the context of public institutions. To do this, we now move on to identify and elaborate on important aspects of political agency.

The political agency is, first of all, about forming, prioritizing, and realizing the authoritative allocation of values ('who gets, what, when, and how') (Lasswell 1950). The policy process is political in nature characterized by goal-oriented action and conflict handling. We perceive of rational decision-making as a sub-category of *goal-oriented action*. We further assume the strict version of rational decision-making to be rather unusual in practice due to demanding requirements such as clearly

specified goals, a number of well-assessed alternative choices, and the ability to anticipate consequences of those alternatives. This is usually too complicated and expensive, which means that few decisions and actions in practice come close to this heuristic ideal. 'Bounded rationality' is generally accepted as a more realistic version of rational decision-making (Simon 1947; Forester 1989). Moreover, the goal-oriented action is varied and comes in different shapes. It can have both the character of intentional, calculated decision-making and a more intuitive character (Klein 2009, 2013; Kahneman and Klein 2009; Thiele 2006). From psychological research, we know that human thinking and acting can be understood by the interplay of 'fast' intuitive thinking and 'slow' calculation, which varies between actors and which is largely context dependent (Kahneman 2011; Simon 1947). Real-life political agency often demands intuitive goal-oriented action due to the complexity of situations, limited time frames, and sudden events. Shooting well from the hip is an important quality for political agency, just like calculated decision-making.

Second, political agency involves various logics of action, and thus, we need to avoid theorizing about single action logics inherent in much institutional theory. People have different motives and desires in the daily life of politics and public organizations, for instance, narrow self-interest (often disguised), obligations and duty, as well as beliefs, values, and ideas about 'good' government actions. Furthermore, people often have mixed motives and inconsistent preferences. Policy preferences may change over time in political and administrative processes, but fundamental values and beliefs tend to be relatively stable and formed to a large extent through socialization during childhood and youth (Hurrelmann 2009; Sears and Brown 2013). We further argue that emotions are largely neglected as driving forces in policy actions, although there are some recent contributions on this (e.g., Durnová 2015). Emotions and desires can, for instance, be a force in terms of passionate commitment to an important issue, anger over an ill-prepared decision, or sentient and engaged actors deliberating over difficult value priorities. In line with this, Donald D. Searing argues convincingly that rational choice models are overly cognitive and tend to obscure and dismiss the wide variety of desires that continuously shape the goals of actors. Desires and emotions influence both the goal formation and the perception of which courses of action will most likely satisfy the goals (Searing 1991, p. 1253). In a similar vein, Mats Alvesson and André Spicer question the one-sided thesis that contemporary organizations rely on the mobilization of cognitive

capacities. It is important to realize, they continue, 'that emotions are key elements in how we relate to and interpret the world, which often informs cognitive processes' (Alvesson and Spicer 2012, p. 1200).

Third, political agency also places emphasis on discursive and communicative aspects that deserve much more attention in new institutionalism theorizing. Important insights on discursive action can be found among discursive institutionalists (Hay 2006; Schmidt 2010), in critical policy analysis (Fischer et al. 2015), and in planning studies (Laws and Forester 2015). Discursive actions are played out in different ways and in different contexts and situations. They may take the form of open deliberation among 'sentient' actors, as theorized by Vivien Schmidt (2010), but can also take place behind the scenes in the form of chit-chat and gossip. Thus, there is nothing inherently 'good' in discursive institutionalism, even though it seems to be a bias toward benevolent aspects and effects in this tradition. Discursive abilities can surely serve in deliberative processes to the benefit of an entire organization or in street-level relations with citizens (Laws and Forester 2015), but they can also undermine the management of an organization by obfuscating facts and constructing subversive stories. Language use and communication are vital forces in the development of cultures and subcultures within and across organizations (Forester 1989; Olsson 2016).

Finally, political agency integrates two contradictory forces or logics of action: social adaptation and combative action. The logic of social adaptation is a synthesis of the main ideas within sociological and normative institutionalism, while the logic of combat is constructed on ideas and arguments developed in more recent theorizing about political institutionalism. We theorize these logics as fundamental forces of any public organization and do not argue that one of these logics is more important than the other. On the contrary, they are both highly relevant, and to understand the life of public organizations, we need to analyze how they interact in different situations.

The two logics manifest themselves through various praxis-based micro-mechanisms, which work in combination and in sequences in interaction with institutional rules, norms, and practices. Adaptive mechanisms are, for instance, to rely on established rules and norms within an organization, to adapt to norms and practices that superiors find appropriate, to imitate 'good' appropriate examples in other departments or organizations, and to interpret norms so as to preserve the status quo.

Combative mechanisms are, for instance, to protest against deviations from essential rules, to resist change efforts of a new management, to argue for an alternative course of action, and to act subversively to undermine or secure institutions. These examples underscore that both logics of action can work for continuity as well as for change. For instance, social adaptation—usually perceived as a stabilizing force—can also come to expression in terms of adopting appropriate practices from another organization, which likely lead to institutional ambiguities and seeds of change in one's own organization. The logic of combat—often associated with change efforts—can also be a force in favor of existing institutions.

There are also mechanisms that are not easily associated with either of the two logics, but come to use in processes of both social adaptation and combat. *Negotiations*, for instance, can have a combative zero-sum character as well as a more cooperative nature through embeddedness in a common normative framework. Similarly, *calculation* is based on facts and experiences, which can be appropriately used to strengthen existing institutional rules and norms, but can also be employed by, for instance, a critical subgroup to challenge the status quo by arguing convincingly for alternative paths. Thus, we assume considerable dynamics on the level of praxis-based micro-mechanisms, which tend to circle around the two dominant logics. Social adaptation in the public realm is a fundamental logic thanks to its open character and widespread use, giving it a natural legitimate flavor. However, the importance of combative action within public organizations is probably seriously underestimated due to its conflictual and sensitive nature, implying that it presumably takes place to a large extent behind closed doors, through secret conversations, and by subversive forms of action. Agency within public organizations is dualistic by nature. We have previously argued that inside activism tends to be:

> dualistic, like Janus, the two-faced Roman god. On the one hand, inside activism is open, deliberative and consensus-seeking, especially in official documents, formal meetings and public presentations ("the Habermasian face"); on the other hand, it is about goal-attainment through tacit, tactical, and power-driven action ("the Foucaultian face") (Olsson and Hysing 2012, p. 8).

On the one hand, we have the 'light' side where actors' behavior is largely shaped by established institutions, captured by the logic of social adaptation. It is also the side often shown publicly in official documents, formal meetings, and public presentations. Any change efforts are carried

out in accordance with established rules, norms, and practices, which often means that it is open, deliberative, and consensus-seeking. On the other hand, we have the 'dark' side where actors' act politically to attain their goals. This side is captured by the logic of combat, which often remains hidden and rather takes place behind the scenes. Change efforts are tacit, tactical, and power-driven. These light and dark dimensions of political agency should not be understood as a dichotomy but rather as a spectrum of different actions. In practice, we expect inside activists to engage in various practices and actions of different shades of light and dark. This will be illustrated empirically in Chaps. 5 and 6.

Conclusions

This chapter presents an overview of the history of institutional theorizing, depicted as a development in three major phases: old institutionalism, new institutionalism, and a third phase characterized by consolidation and convergence as well as continual fragmentation and contrasts. After that, we take a closer look at the dominant versions of new institutionalism (rational choice, normative, sociological, historical, and discursive institutionalism) and assess the connection between individual agency and institutions, and how it may produce institutional change and continuity. It is argued that hard-driven specialization within different versions of new institutionalism has led to fragmentation and limited cross-boundary elaboration. In the last decades, interesting efforts have been made to theorize more on the importance of agency and political aspects (Mahoney and Thelen 2010; Lowndes and Roberts 2013; Olsson 2016), but political agency is still a largely neglected aspect. Building on these efforts, the last section develops and argues for a theoretical approach labeled new political institutionalism, which is framing and guiding our discussions throughout this book.

References

Alasuutari, P. (2015). The discursive side of new institutionalism. *Cultural Sociology, 9*(2), 162–184.

Alvesson, M., & Spicer, A. (2012). A stupidity-based theory of organizations. *Journal of Management Studies, 49*(7), 1194–1220.

Bacchi, C., & Rönnblom, M. (2014). Feminist discursive institutionalism—A poststructural alternative. *NORA—Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research, 22*(3), 170–186.

Beckert, J. (1999). Agency, entrepreneurs, and institutional change. The role of strategic choice and institutionalized practices in organizations. *Organization Studies, 20*(5), 777–799.

Bell, S. (2011). Do we really need a new 'constructivist institutionalism' to explain institutional change? *British Journal of Political Science, 41*(4), 883–906.

Christensen, T., & Røvik, K. A. (1999). The ambiguity of appropriateness. In M. Egeberg & P. Laegraid (Eds.), *Organizing political institutions: Essays for Johan P. Olsen*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.

Denzau, A. T., & North, D. C. (1994). Shared mental models: Ideologies and institutions. *Kyklos: International Review for Social Sciences, 47*, 3–30.

DiMaggio, P. J. (1988). Interest and agency in institutional theory. In L. Zucker (Ed.), *Institutional patterns and culture*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Company.

Durnová, A. (2015). Lost in translation: Expressing emotions in policy deliberation. In F. Fischer, D. Torgerson, A. Durnová, & M. Orsini (Eds.), *Handbook of critical policy studies* (pp. 222–238). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Eriksson, L. (2011). *Rational choice theory: Potential and limits*. New York: Palgrave.

Fischer, F., & Forester, J. (Eds.). (1993). *The argumentative turn in policy analysis and planning*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Fischer, F., Torgerson, D., Durnová, A., & Orsini, M. (Eds.). (2015). *Handbook of critical policy studies*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Forester, J. (1989). *Planning in the face of power*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Goodin, R. E. (1996). Institutions and their design. In R. E. Goodin (Ed.), *The theory of institutional design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Green, D., & Shapiro, I. (1994). *Pathologies of rational choice theory: A critique of applications*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Greenwood, R., Oliver, C., Sahlin, K., & Suddaby, R. (Eds.). (2008). *The Sage handbook of organizational institutionalism*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hall, P. A., & Taylor, R. C. R. (1996). Political science and the three new institutionalisms. *Political Studies, 44*, 952–973.

Hardy, C., & Maguire, S. (2008). Institutional entrepreneurship. In R. C. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin, & R. Suddaby (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organizational institutionalism* (pp. 198–217). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hay, C. (2006). Constructivist institutionalism. In R. A. W. Rhodes, S. A. Binder & B. A. Rockman (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political institutions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hay, C., & Wincott, D. (1998). Structure, agency and historical institutionalism. *Political studies, XLVI*, 951–957.

Holland, J. H., Holyoak, K. J., Nisbett, R. E., & Thagard, P. R. (1986). *Induction: Processes of inference, learning and discovery*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Holt, N., Bremner, A., Sutherland, E., Vliek, M., Passer, M. W., & Smith, R. E. (2015). *Psychology. The science of mind and behaviour* (3rd ed.). London: McGraw Hill.

Hurrelmann, K. (2009). *Social structure and personality development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jepperson, R. L. (1991). Institutions, institutional effects and institutionalization. In W. W. Powell & P. J. Dimaggio (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking fast and slow*. London: Penguin Books.

Kahneman, D., & Klein, G. (2009). Conditions for intuitive expertise: A failure to disagree. *American Psychologist, 64*(6), 515–526.

Katznelson, I., & Weingast, B. (2005). *Preferences and situations: Points of intersection between historical and rational choice institutionalism*. New York: Russel Sage.

Klein, G. (2009). *Streetlights and shadows: Searching for the keys to adaptive decision making*. Denver: Bradford Books.

Klein, G. (2013). *Seeing what others don't: The remarkable ways we gain insights*. New York: Public Affairs.

Lasswell, H. D. (1950). *Politics. Who gets what, when, how*. New York: Peter Smith.

Laws, D., & Forester, J. (2015). *Conflict, improvisation, governance. Street level practices for urban democracy*. New York: Routledge.

Lecours, A. (2005). New institutionalism: Issues and questions. In A. Lecours (Ed.), *New institutionalism. Theory and analysis*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Lowndes, V., & Roberts, M. (2013). *Why institutions matter: The new institutionalism in political science*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Maguire, S., Hardy, C., & Lawrence, T. (2004). Institutional entrepreneurship in emerging fields: HIV/AIDS treatment advocacy in Canada. *Academy of Management Journal, 47*(5), 657–679.

Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (Eds.). (2010). *Explaining institutional change: Ambiguity, agency and power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1984). The new institutionalism: Organizational factors in political life. *American Political Science Review, 78,* 734–749.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1989). *Rediscovering institutions*. New York: Free Press.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1995). *Democratic governance*. New York: Free Press.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (2006). The logic of appropriateness. In M. Rein, M. Moran, & R. E. Goodin (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of public policy* (pp. 689–708). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, institutional change, and economic performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Olsen, J. P. (2010). Change and continuity: An institutional approach to institutions of democratic government. In J. Pierre & P. W. Ingraham (Eds.), *Comparative administrative change and reform: Lessons learned*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Olsson, J. (2016). *Subversion in institutional change and stability. A neglected mechanism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Olsson, J., & Hysing, E. (2012). Theorizing inside activism: Understanding policymaking and policy change from below. *Planning Theory & Practice, 13*(2), 257–273.

Ostrom, E. (2005). *Understanding institutional diversity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ostrom, E. (2007). Challenges and growth: The development of the interdisciplinary fields of institutional analysis. *Journal of Institutional Economics, 3,* 239–264.

Peters, B. G. (2011). *Institutional theory in political science: The "new institutionalism"*. London: Pinter.

Pierson, P. (2000). Increasing returns, path-dependence, and the study of politics. *American Political Science Review, 94,* 251–267.

Powell, W. W., & Colyvas, J. A. (2008). Microfoundations of institutional theory. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin, & R. Suddaby (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organizational institutionalism* (pp. 276–298). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Powell, W. W., & DiMaggio, P. J. (Eds.). (1991). *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Rhodes, R. A. W. (2006). Old institutionalisms. In R. Rhodes, S. Binder, & B. Rockman (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political institutions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rothstein, B. (1996). Political institutions: An overview. In R. E. Goodin & H.-D. Klingemann (Eds.), *A new handbook of political science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scharpf, F. W. (1997). *Games real actors play. Actor-centered institutionalism in policy research*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Schmidt, V. A. (2008). Discursive institutionalism: The explanatory power of ideas. *Annual Review of Political Science, 11*(1), 303–326.

Schmidt, V. A. (2009). Putting political back into the political economy by bringing the state back in yet again. *World Politics, 61*(3), 516–546.

Schmidt, V. A. (2010). Taking ideas and discourse seriously: Explaining change through discursive institutionalism as the fourth "new institutionalism". *European Political Science Review, 2*(1), 1–25.

Scott, W. R. (1995). *Institutions and organizations*. Thousand Oak, CA: Sage.

Searing, D. D. (1991). Roles, rules, and rationality in the new institutionalism. *American Political Science Review, 85*(4), 1239–1260.

Sears, D., & Brown, C. (2013). Childhood and adult political development. In L. Huddy, D. Sears, & J. Levy (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political psychology* (pp. 59–95). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Selznick, P. (1996). Institutionalism 'old' and 'new'. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 41,* 70–270.

Shapiro, I. (2005). *The flight from reality in the human sciences.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Shepsle, K. (2006). Rational choice institutionalism. In R. A. W. Rhodes, S. A. Binder, & B. A. Rockman (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of political institutions.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Simon, H. (1947). *Administrative behaviour.* London: Macmillan.

Steinmo, S., Thelen, K., & Longstreth, F. (1992). *Structuring politics: Historical institutionalism in comparative politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Streek, W., & Thelen, K. (2005). Introduction: Institutional change in advanced political economies. In W. Streek & K. Thelen (Eds.), *Beyond continuity. Institutional change in advanced political economies.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thiele, L. P. (2006). Making intuition matter. In S. F. Schram & B. Caterino (Eds.), *Making political science matter: Debating knowledge, research, and method.* New York: New York University Press.

Weyland, K. (2008). Toward a new theory of institutional change. *World Politics, 60*(2), 281–314.

Zucker, L. G. (1991). Institutionalization and cultural persistence. In W. W. Powell & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

The Political Nature of Inside Activism

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we argued that institutional theory has stressed the structural nature of institutions and downplayed agency in general, and its political aspects in particular. In this chapter, we turn our attention more directly to agency in different respects by reviewing and assessing highly interesting conceptualizations of public officials as political agents in different fields of research: public administration and management, planning and policy, organization theory, social movements, and governance. Some of these concepts are quite well-known and constitute research traditions of their own, like street-level bureaucracy and policy entrepreneurship, while others are associated with a limited number of researchers, such as guerilla government. We offer a relatively broad overview but we do not claim it to be the complete and full summary of key actors in social science. Generally speaking, the conceptual contributions within these fields tend to be better developed on agency than on structure and context, while institutional theory has very much the opposite strengths and weaknesses. Thus, by cross-fertilizing knowledge from these different traditions, there is a great potential to further integrate agency and institutions. As already stressed, a central concern of this book is to further our understanding of the interaction between actors and institutions. In Chap. 2 and this chapter, we thus lay the ground for more elaborate discussions in the remaining chapters.

Based on the review, we discern differences and similarities between these concepts and inside activism, and further elaborate on the latter's central characteristics. We argue that there are various important insights in all the conceptualizations, even though some of them are of particular interest when it comes to theorizing about inside activists as important change agents. We further argue that the novelty of the inside activism concept mainly is in the combined use of insights from some of the previous key actors concepts, in particular policy entrepreneurs, administrative guerilllas, institutional activists, and street-level actors/democrats, but the novelty also is in the strong notion of the political nature of inside activism as well as its relatively precise definition, making it suitable for further elaboration and empirical testing.

Political Agency of Public Officials

Public Administration and Management

The natural starting point for any discussion of the political agency of public officials is the *bureaucrat* as conceptualized in the ideal type of Weber (1947), being the theoretical construction that most latter theorizations about public officials have taken as a point of departure. Although never perceived as an empirical concept, it has had an immense influence, not only on the way researchers have perceived (and largely disregarded) the political role of public officials, but also on the way public officials themselves perceive their role. This discursive impact of 'the bureaucratic ideal' remains today, despite all efforts to discredit and dismiss the Weberian bureaucrat (e.g., Niskanen 1973), but its persistent vigor also needs to be attributed to the recurrent defense and support of it (e.g., du Gay 2000; Goodsell 2004).

So how should we conceptualize the bureaucrat, and how can we understand it in relation to the concept of inside activism? First of all, the bureaucrat is almost the antithesis to the inside activist. A bureaucrat is largely characterized by rule adherence, placed in a strict hierarchical organization with clearly stated rules and regulations, while an inside activist is seeking potential change by acting to bend the rules and alter organizational routines. A bureaucrat is expected to adhere to values such as duty and loyalty and to stay emotionally detached, while the inside activist is theorized as acting on the basis of commitment to personal values. A bureaucrat is perceived as an expert in the service of

elected politicians and the public, while an inside activist uses expertise to promote specific values, which do not have to align well with those of political superiors or public opinion. Second, the bureaucrat is a highly institutionalized actor in terms of rule following and adaptation to the institutional norms and routines of the public administration. While the proponents of bureaucracy presented institutionalization of officials as a key merit of this system, ensuring control of powerful officials, this was also described in critical terms as the ineffective and inhuman side of bureaucracy (Ferguson 1984). When applying the concept in empirical studies, it also became clear that the political nature of public officials was neglected, making researchers blind to key features of the public administration, such as value plurality and value conflicts (Spicer 2014).

As researchers increasingly turned their attention to the implementation phase of public policy during the 1970s–1980s, different types of problems in the policy process were rediscovered. Researchers such as Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) showed that policy implementation influenced policy outcome and thus raised the issue of policy influence of public officials in general and of *street-level bureaucrats* in particular. The street-level bureaucrat is theorized as an official with direct and frequent contact with the citizens and clients, and having individual discretion in policy implementation (Lipsky 1980). Well-known examples are teachers, social workers, and police officers, but also forest managers and environmental inspectors have been discussed in terms of street-level bureaucrats (Sevä and Jagers 2013). As the reality of public administration—prone to insufficient resources—clashes with the client demands and the service ambitions of the officials, the street-level bureaucrat tries to cope by reducing client expectations or by adding resources (e.g., by working unpaid overtime) (Kelly 1994). Regardless of which, the street-level bureaucrat risks burning out early (Lipsky 1980; Hupe et al. 2015). The concept of street-level bureaucracy highlights important features of public administration; most importantly, that public officials even at the lower ranks of the hierarchy have substantial individual discretion and influence on policies and their outcomes (Meyers and Vorsanger 2007). In many ways, the street-level bureaucrat is portrayed as an unwilling change agent, taking action as a reaction to insufficient public resources. Here, the street-level bureaucrat differs in important ways from the inside activist, who is theorized as a more proactive change agent who willingly assumes such a role.

If the street-level perspective on bureaucrats questions the Weberian bureaucracy on empirical grounds—concluding that the ideal model has limited validity—a more normative criticism of bureaucracy was raised within the public choice tradition. Here, the bureaucracy was portrayed as wasteful, ineffective, and self-interested (Niskanen 1973). Inspired by this criticism, the reforms of new public management (NPM) swept over public administrations worldwide during the 1980s–1990s, proclaiming the need to transform public administration in line with market and business ideals—including changes in both organization (e.g., privatization and contracting out) and management (e.g., 'let the manager manage'). To increase cost efficiency, elected politicians were urged to restrict their involvement in the policy process to set overarching goals and monitor results, while keeping their hands off the daily operation of public administration where the *new public manager* should manage. Conceptualizing leading officials as public managers were hoped to infuse some of the entrepreneurial spirits of private business into public administration (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). A public manager was conceptualized as an inspiring leader rather than an administrator, an innovator and entrepreneur rather than an implementer, and an official focused on output rather than on procedures and (democratic) input. This re-conceptualization of the role of public officials has a distinct formal, top-down character, while informal leadership is largely neglected. Furthermore, despite the rejection of traditional bureaucracy, public managers are theorized as empowered primarily through formal hierarchical institutions. It is within these limits that the leadership and management qualities of the public manager should play out. Inside activists are certainly also conditioned by such formal structures, but their actions are not delimited by these structures and they also have other sources of power generated through civil society networks.

The public administration literature also holds conceptualizations of public officials that break more clearly with bureaucratic rules, norms, and practices. Rosemary O'Leary conceptualizes *government guerillas* as 'career public servants who work against the wishes—either implicitly or explicitly communicated—of their superiors' (O'Leary 2010, p. 8). Here, public officials who are dissatisfied with the actions of public organizations or political appointees show their dissent by acting subversively. O'Leary (2010, p. 12) provides a number of examples of such subversive action:

Obey your superiors in public, but disobey them in private; Ghostwrite letters, testimony, and studies for supportive interest groups; Fail to correct superiors' mistakes: let them fall; Neglect policies and directives you disagree with – stall; Fail to implement orders you think are unfair: Hold clandestine meetings to plot a unified staff strategy.

A key insight from this literature is that dissenting public officials (administrative guerillas) can go underground within the public administration, covertly keeping their commitment while seeming to work and think in accordance with institutionalized norms and values. Rather than taking action openly, they act secretly behind the scenes to promote change (Needleman and Needleman 1974, p. 326; O'Leary 2010, p. 8). Another important contribution from the literature on guerilla government is that it evokes fundamental normative questions on ethics and responsibilities of public servants (O'Leary 2010, 2014). Can various subversive actions of administrative guerillas be legitimized, and if so, on what grounds? This is a key question for green inside activism that we discuss in latter chapters.

The rationales for engaging in guerilla activities are diverse: egoistic–altruistic, liberals–conservatives, constructive–destructive. Although we can likely find all these motives among dissenting officials, and probably in various mixes, it is unfortunate to bring value-driven idealists together with self-interested officials who take action when, for instance, being overlooked for a promotion. Inside activism provides a more limited, but also a theoretically more precise, conceptualization of the actor's motives. This does not, however, ease any of the normative questions on ethics and obligations that guerilla government and inside activism have in common.

Planning and Policy Studies

A very different kind of normative criticism against traditional bureaucracy and rational planning was launched within planning theory as early as in the 1960s, in terms of the so-called *advocacy planner* (Davidoff 1965). Here, it was argued that planners should abandon the value neutrality promoted within the rational planning paradigm, which was perceived as an impossible position, and instead take a free and active role in the planning process as inside advocates of marginalized groups in society. The ethical rationale behind this argument is to make policy and

planning processes 'fairer' by counteracting social inequalities and power imbalances between different groups (Campbell and Marshall 1999; Hoffman 1989).

A similar conceptualization is Forester's (1999) *deliberative practitioner* seen as a way to strengthen democracy from the bottom up. The deliberative practitioner should foster a proactive and creative interaction with citizens and social interests to secure broad participation, learning, and viable solutions. The intentions behind both the deliberative practitioner and the advocacy planner as theoretical conceptualizations of public officials are clearly normative–constructive, with a specific vision about what a 'good' official or planner should do. Similarly, the concept of inside activism also recognizes that public officials are committed to promoting what they consider 'higher values' in their professional roles. However, the concept leaves open to empirical research what interests are being represented by the inside activist, and what types of actions are undertaken to influence policy. As will be further elaborated later on, it is important to recognize that officials can have very different normative ideals, being both supportive and detrimental to the democratic ideals promoted by Davidoff and Forester.

In another study, John Forester develops these ideas further in cooperation with David Laws (Laws and Forester 2015). Based on a number of urban case studies, told by the practitioners themselves, Laws and Forester analyze these narratives and argue that local officials can work as 'street-level democrats' in 'unique' situations, where prefabricated solutions will not do. In complex street-level situations, characterized by diversity and conflicts, rules matter, but so do judgment, discretion, and improvisation. Emotions, sensitivity, and ordinary language ('neither anti-intellectual nor anti-academic') are seen as powerful qualities of the street-level practitioners to try to handle and solve problems. Problem-solving and constructive change are thus very much the result of how the process evolves in terms of listening, interacting, and improvising, in a fashion similar to that of jazz musicians (Klemp et al. 2008). These practical improvisations 'create the openings, the new angles that enable new perceptions, and so the (re)development of relationships and practical options on which any real democratization depends' (Laws and Forester 2015, p. 357).

For green inside activism, street-level democratization, in the spirit of Laws and Forester, is highly interesting for understanding the discretion and innovative efforts of individual officials, even though Laws and Forester

focus more on the democratic nature of local solutions and less on the character and degree of change (gradual–dramatic; minor–transformative). However, it is quite obvious that this theorizing about street-level democrats, compared to Lipsky's street-level bureaucrats, is much more optimistic in terms of innovative and democratic change from below. This 'civic entrepreneurialism' deviates in a fundamental sense from the traditional policy entrepreneurship literature by stressing the nature of local social processes for the creation of innovative results.

In policy studies, particularly within theoretical frameworks intended to explain major policy change, the importance of individual actors is recognized, but is not at center stage in these explanations. For example, within the advocacy coalition framework (ACF), major change within a policy field is primarily portrayed as resulting from a contest between coalitions with contrasting policy beliefs, where external shocks are important for giving one or the other of the coalitions the upper hand. Under certain conditions, change may, however, also be facilitated through policy-oriented learning across coalitions. In these situations, the so-called *policy broker* is theorized as a mediator in conflicts, supporting learning processes, and being respected by all parties as a relatively neutral actor (Sabatier 1998, p. 119). It is an open question which type of actor may play this role, but Paul Sabatier (1993, p. 27) recognizes senior civil servants as likely candidates. However, in most ACF applications, the role of policy brokers has been overlooked (Weible et al. 2009, p. 132), and there are a lot of open questions regarding who the policy broker is and how this role is played out, that is, the motivation behind policy brokerage as well as under what institutional circumstances it can be successful (Ingold and Varone 2011). The advocacy coalition framework has been criticized on its lack of a clear conceptualization of the policy broker. To separate 'neutral brokers' from 'political advocates' is problematic as brokers generally have some interest in policy and advocates often have interest in conflict resolution (Hajer 1995, p. 70; see also Fischer 2003). Furthermore, it is often moderates within coalitions who act as mediators (Sabatier and Weible 2007, p. 200). Ingold and Varone (2011) elaborates on the policy broker concept, envisioning them as rational actors who act strategically to promote their own interests through mediation and brokerage. If an actor was to have strong beliefs or value commitments connected to a policy process or output, they would be part of an advocacy coalition. Thus, (material) self-interest is argued to be the (only) logical explanation for why an actor would

invest time and resources in mediation with uncertain success. One likely candidate for such policy brokerage is the *neutral* administrative agency (following the logic of the Weberian bureaucracy). For such an agency, seeking stability across advocacy coalitions within a policy sub-system could be a strategic way to influence policy.

Mediation and brokerage are without doubt key functions in the policy process, but to portray these functions as neutral rather than political risks missing an important strategy for political influence. As exemplified by Ingold and Varone (2011), the strict focus on coalitions driven by beliefs not only risks losing sights of the self-interests of policy actors, but also restricts the potential motivations of policy brokers. Why cannot they also be driven by beliefs? Inside activism recognizes brokerage and mediation between different interests and coalitions as a key strategy for gaining influence. In fact, having one foot in civil society organizations and the other in public administration likely increases the capacity to mediate between contradictory aims and ambitions. In contrast to the policy broker, especially as conceptualized by Ingold and Varone (2011), the inside activist is motivated by a personal value commitment that is held in common with civil society groups. Here, the inside activist is viewed as part of a coalition based on a common belief structure, an aspect the advocacy coalition framework can provide key insights on.

A far more researched individual actor within the policy literature is the *policy entrepreneur*. In trying to understand how policy issues get on the political agenda, Kingdon (1984/1995) describes policy entrepreneurs as playing a key function in coupling policy problems, policy solutions, and political opportunities. When successfully using a temporary and externally generated 'window of opportunity,' these actors are of key importance for policy change. How this policy entrepreneurship function has been of primary interest to researchers, who seek to identify important conditions (Baumgartner and Jones 1993) as well as personal characteristics and strategies (Mackenzie 2004; Mintrom and Norman 2009) connected to it. These entrepreneurs 'distinguish themselves through their desire to significantly change current ways of doing things in their area of interest' (Mintrom and Norman 2009, p. 650) and by 'their willingness to invest their resources—time, energy, reputation, and sometimes money—in the hope of future return' (Kingdon 1984/1995, p. 122). These are individuals who are alert to new opportunities, can 'sell' and 'market' new ideas and are willing to take risks to reach their goals (Brouwer 2015).

While the policy entrepreneurship literature pays much attention to entrepreneurial skills and qualities for promoting change, it is less clear who will actually perform this role or function. According to Kingdon (1984/1995, pp. 179–180), almost every actor in the policy process is a potential entrepreneur; in one case, 'the key entrepreneur might be a cabinet secretary; for another, a senator or member of the House; for others, a lobbyist, academic, Washington lawyer, or career bureaucrat.' Their motives for promoting change can be diverse (Mintrom and Norman 2009), ranging from ideological beliefs to 'love of the game' (Hammond 2013, p. 120), and they can be pushing for any kinds of values or interests, acting as hired guns to promote values and interests that are not necessarily their own. Schneider et al. (1995) believe public entrepreneurs to be 'motivated by a desire for "profits" or personal gain' (p. 6), and that by pursuing this aim they also 'provide important pecuniary externalities to other actors in the system' (p. 10). Here, the inside activist concept differs by clearly specifying that the actor is motivated by a personal commitment to certain values, for instance, sustainable mobility or forest biodiversity.

While Kingdon (1984/1995) had a rather eclectic view of which actors could perform as entrepreneurs, latter research has tried to conceptually distinguish between entrepreneurs holding positions within government and those who try to influence the political system from the outside (e.g., lobbyists, academics, and consultants) (Brouwer 2015; Roberts and King 1991). Researchers have also taken an increasing interest in policy entrepreneurship beyond agenda setting and more directly targeted entrepreneurship within public administration and during implementation, discussing so-called managerial or bureaucratic entrepreneurs (Hammond 2013; Schneider et al. 1995; Petridou 2017).

The literature on policy entrepreneurs focuses on explaining policy change. The actors are perceived as working within given institutional structures and portrayed as 'surfers waiting for the big wave' (Kingdon 1984/1995, p. 225), and in need of a 'window of opportunity' (Kingdon 1984/1995, ch. 8) to induce change. In contrast, inside activists are theorized as capable of opening policy windows at times as well as to keeping them open for some time (cf. Lovell 2009). They thus have the potential to influence both policies and the structural conditions of policy making (i.e., institutional change).

How entrepreneurs contribute to institutional change has been theorized in terms of institutional entrepreneurs. As discussed more

extensively in Chap. 2, institutional theory has primarily tried to explain the political behavior of individuals by the structural effects of institutional rules, norms, and practices. Among other things, this theorization has been criticized for its inability to convincingly explain change, which has generated a surge to 'bring the actor back in' (Lowndes 2005, p. 299). Institutional entrepreneurship has been defined as 'activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones' (Maguire et al. 2004, p. 657). Research on institutional entrepreneurship can be divided between a more actor-centric narrative and a process-centric narrative (Hardy and Maguire 2008). The actor-centric narrative is very much in line with the literature on policy entrepreneurship discussed above, tending to 'paint a neat picture of relatively rational, linear, a win-win problem-solving activity where the (usually successful) institutional entrepreneur possesses a degree of reflexivity or insight' (Hardy and Maguire 2008, p. 211). In this narrative, entrepreneurs are perceived as having extraordinary political and social skills that allow them to intervene strategically to realize institutional change by mobilizing and combining different types of resources in creative ways. In contrast, process-centric narratives focus on the process of entrepreneurship as an emergent outcome of various activities among spatially dispersed actors who face considerable difficulty in achieving effective collective action. In this view, the process is seen as impregnated by conflicts, power relations, and contested meaning-making where failure is just as likely as success, even though some individuals or organizations show entrepreneurial skills (Hardy and Maguire 2008, pp. 211–213).

This interest in individual agency has brought concerns that the structuring effects of institutions are neglected in the celebration of 'heroic "entrepreneurs" and great "leaders"' (Hardy and Maguire 2008, p. 213). Entrepreneurial skills and qualities need to be understood as part of institutional structures, both influencing and being influenced by institutional norms, rules, and practices. Institutions offer both constraints and possibilities for individual actors.

Organization Theory, Social Movement Literature and Governance Research

The importance of recognizing the impact of individuals has also been noticed in organization theory. One distinct contribution within this

field is on actors functioning as *boundary spanners* that facilitate cross-organizational interaction. Boundary spanners are members of organizations who are authorized to step outside organizational boundaries and to represent the organization in interaction with other actors. As such, they are given a key role in facilitating the in and out flux of information, knowledge, and innovations across organizational boundaries (Alvinius 2013; Williams 2002). A critical issue, however, is that although boundary spanners are responsible for managing cross-organizational relationships for the sake of their organizations, they can also act on their own agendas and thus influence organizational actions. Organizational members act not only as organizational representatives but also as individuals with their own feelings and characteristics (cf. Ahrne 1993; Ebers 1997).

The literature on boundary spanning brings key insights into the importance and function of actors crossing organizational boundaries, and how this role can give the actors important resources. In a similar vein, the inside activist is theorized as being a kind of boundary spanner between public administration and civil society networks, using influx from these different organizations to gain influence. However, unlike the boundary spanner as portrayed in organizational theory, the inside activist is not a formal representative of one or the other of these organizations, but rather acts informally in the shadow of these organizations to gain influence.

If boundary spanners are given formal positions to provide bridges between various organizations, *the institutional activism* literature theorizes about individuals who cross the boundaries between social movements and government organizations (Banaszak 2005, 2010). Social movements, their organizations as well as individuals, have largely been theorized as operating outside of government, trying to exercise political influence by using unconventional platforms and tactics. Connections to governments have primarily been seen as a risk of co-optation, including demobilization, bureaucratization, and deradicalization (Abers and Tatagiba 2015). Institutional activism is a concept that challenges the dichotomy between insiders and outsiders and the likely results of being an activist inside government. Institutional activists have been defined as 'individuals who affect change (from changing organizational norms to policy reform) from within organizations and institutions' (Pettinicchio 2012, p. 501). These activists are theorized as officials and politicians within the government who take on the causes of (outside) social movements, but they can also be social movement activists purposely taking

employment within government to advance the political agendas or projects of social movements (Abers and Tatagiba 2015). There are also cases where movement activists have been actively recruited into government (Banaszak 2005, 2010) and even given a formal mandate to pursue activism within the government (Eisenstein 1996).

The relationship between institutional activists and social movements is an increasingly important theme in the social movement literature, with several insights that are highly relevant and similar to the inside activism concept. A first insight is that institutional activists can retain a high level of activity within the social movement while upholding a position inside of government, and this relationship can be quite dynamic (Banaszak 2005, 2010). Institutional activists are not necessarily reactive—simply adopting and pursuing ideas and issues of social movements (Santoro and McGuire 1997)—but can be independent and proactive on issues that overlap with social movement activism. As discussed by Abers and Tatagiba (2015), the relationship with social movements brings both resources (knowledge, contacts, prestige, goals, problem framing) and different sorts of obstacles. Institutional activists face the problems, on the one hand, of being autonomous enough to take advantage of opportunities within the state and, on the other hand, being accountable to activists in the social movements. In policy areas comprising various social movements with different interests and grades of radicalism, institutional activism will likely generate criticism from somewhere (not doing enough or doing the wrong things). The risk of being subject to 'friendly fire' is a challenge that traditional officials usually do not face. Also, social movements may primarily value institutional activists based on technical knowledge and apolitical roles. When taking political action in support of social movements, such professional legitimacy may be reduced, risking both the support of the movement and the activist ability to act (Hoffman 1989, p. 198).

A second important insight, in line with inside activism, is that institutional activists can gain access to key resources as well as important opportunities to affect change by working inside government organizations. As insiders, the activists have routine and low-cost access to government resources (Santoro and McGuire 1997). They can engage in agenda setting and policy design as well as providing expertise and developing networks within the administration. While some researchers conclude that the prevalence of institutional activists increases the likelihood of policy change desired by social movements (Santoro and McGuire 1997), others

argue that a position inside a government or public administration does not automatically translate into influence (Pettinicchio 2012). Often the institutional activist has to work under severe political constraints in terms of limited resources and weak political interest. For instance, research on how activists within the women's movement have been recruited into government (so-called femocrats) (Yeatman 1990) shows that the activists were often brought into marginalized government organizations and that changes produced by their everyday activities were largely incremental (Banaszak 2005; Abers and Tatagiba 2015). However, there are also data on feminist insiders in the federal government of the United States that indicate considerable influence (Banaszak 2010).

A third important aspect is that institutional activists not only share beliefs and values with social movements but are also ready to act on these beliefs and values from inside the organization. These efforts at change include both 'conventional' actions within the established institutional rules and norms (e.g., persuasion, negotiations, and argumentation) and actions that challenge these rules and norms (e.g., changing the meanings and language surrounding an issue, engaging in activities 'under the radar,' following orders as minimally as possible, and providing information and news on government activities to the social movement). The insiders can also retain contact with the outsider social movement, encouraging protests and disruptive tactics to help overcoming obstacles within governmental institutions (Banaszak 2005). What institutional activists actually do to induce change—the micro-mechanisms involved—is, however, still an area in need of further research (Abers and Tatagiba 2015; see also Banaszak 2010).

Obviously, our theorizing about inside activism can benefit from the empirical and theoretical insights of institutional activism, most importantly, how the dual, combined commitment of public employment and social movement engagement can generate resources as well as help activists to 'stay true' to activist values in a sometimes inhospitable institutional setting. Institutional activism has a broad understanding of both the organizations in which activism takes place (political institutions, the military, the church, and so on) and who the activists are (ranging from presidents to low-level officials). Furthermore, relatively little interests have been devoted so far to the way institutional rules, norms, and practices limit and guide the activists' actions or to the micro-mechanisms that actually can help them work for change

effectively (Abers and Tatagiba 2015 and Banaszak 2010, being important exceptions). These two aspects are at the center of this book.

This brings us to the final conceptualization of public officials as political actors, namely the *network manager* or *meta-governor*. Governance scholars have argued for the proliferation of modes of governing that do not exclusively rely on the authority, legitimacy, and sanctions of government. They stress that a multitude of public and private actors interact to govern society, often in the form of network-organized governing arrangements (Sørensen 2006, p. 99; Torfing et al. 2012). However, such a proposed shift from government to governance does not mean that elected politicians or public officials become obsolete and powerless. It rather indicates that state actors are adapting to new circumstances by transforming their roles to be less based on constitutional powers and more focused on working as facilitators and cooperative partners (Pierre and Peters 2000). In particular, for public officials, these new governing arrangements offer new opportunities to exercise power and influence, acting as network managers (Kickert et al. 1997), gray-zone administrators (Sørensen 2004), or meta-governors (Sørensen 2006). This type of role includes facilitating the network through mediation and coordination, providing legitimacy for and participation in the network, and being a powerful actor within the collectively agreed rules of the game (Kickert et al. 1997; Kjær 2004; Sørensen 2006). This is a role and function that is not necessarily assumed by public officials. However, state actors that take part in networks are often in a privileged position in relation to other actors, based on their access to substantial financial, administrative, and political resources, including unique features such as their monopoly on the legitimate use of force, the legal right of sovereignty, and democratic legitimacy. This makes state actors well suited to act as network managers or meta-governors, enabling and facilitating networks (Kickert et al. 1997; Sørensen 2006; Sørensen and Torfing 2007). Those who are largely responsible for managing and administer networks are public officials, and there is thus a risk of elected politicians to become marginalized, and key democratic ideals such as participation, transparency, and deliberation may be disregarded (Sørensen 2002, 2006, 2013).

The importance of networks in policy processes and how individual actors can manage these networks are key lessons from this literature. In regard to inside activism, we stress the political nature of agency and networking, and we therefore caution against conceptualizing network management as a 'neutral' endeavor. It is also important to hold in mind the

various types of networks and their different aims and uses (Marsh and Rhodes 1992). The importance of networks for inside activism will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

KEY LESSONS IN RELATION TO INSIDE ACTIVISM

What have we learned from these various conceptualizations that can be used for further elaboration on inside activism? We will first discuss this question in relation to the three fundamental divides, discerned in the introductory chapter, which are continuously constructed in politics, administration, and social science: the inside and outside dimensions of public organizations, politics and administration as separate spheres and activities, and the agency–structure dichotomy and its relation to change. Second, we will elaborate on the political nature of green inside activism. Third, we will argue that an important strength of the inside activism concept is its relatively precise definition.

Bridging the Divides

When it comes to the inside–outside divide, there are a number of key-actor concepts that contribute to how and why this divide tends to be blurred in practice: the advocacy planner, the deliberative practitioner, boundary spanners, and in particular, institutional activists. It should be stressed that inside activism and institutional activism fish in the same waters. They focus on the same institutional phenomenon but take their departures from different and largely separate research traditions: policy and planning studies and social movement research. Nevertheless, the research agendas partly overlap, and there is thus potential for cross-fertilization, both empirically and theoretically. In theorizing about the inside–outside divide and its tendency to blur, it is of vital importance how we conceive of institutions and conceptualize agency. In Chap. 2, we argue for a new political institutionalism which develops micro-level theorizing by upgrading the political nature of institutional agency in general and inside activism in particular. In this respect, scholars of institutional activism have no common theoretical account in relation to institutional theory but do contribute important empirical insights into this phenomenon of great relevance to a revised political institutionalism.

In theorizing about how the inside activist connects actors on the 'inside' and the 'outside,' the policy network literature is of great

interest. It helps us develop insights into how the double belonging of inside activists can be productively used in processes of institutional change. In particular, key actors such as network managers and gray-zone administrators highlight the vital qualities of informal networking, which can work 'under the radar' of organizational elites, and connect relatively anonymous figures within various organizations. As we show in Chap. 6, informal inter-organizational networking can be of great importance to the influence of inside activists.

The politics–administration divide is addressed by a few key-actor concepts, in particular the contrasting concepts of policy entrepreneurship and the administrative guerilla, which bring insights on how inside activists can interact with and influence elected officials and superiors. While the entrepreneurial actor is theorized as an innovative actor who engages openly to try to convince political decision-makers, the administrative guerilla often operates in a secret and subversive way. They further deviate in that entrepreneurial ideas usually are conceived of as potential win-win solutions, while guerilla activities are conflictual in nature and tend to arise in zero-sum situations. These two contrasting dimensions are highly relevant for understanding how inside activism works in practice.

The literature on boundary spanners might look less relevant to inside activism considering that this key actor is theorized as an organization member authorized to interact with outsiders, while we have stressed the informal and anonymous character of inside activism. However, it can help us expand the inside activism concept when also considering that there are, in fact, cases in which environmental officials are recruited as change agents by leading politicians and managers who want to raise the green political ambition of their organization (Hysing 2009). This benevolent entrance can open up possibilities for more radical green ideas, and it may also challenge other parts of the organization with slightly different priorities. In times of turnover of the organizational elite, the situation may become quite different for the inside activist.

The street-level actor concept, in both its bureaucratic (Lipsky 1980) and democratic versions (Laws and Forester 2015), highlights the dual challenge of handling both the political–administrative and the inside–outside divide. Frontline officials come under pressure from both superiors and clients, and they often have to deal with limited resources, conflicts, and difficult decisions. While Michael Lipsky stressed the problematic side of it in terms of coping strategies, David Laws and John Forester are quite optimistic about individual street actors' capacity to

handle conflicts through dialogue and innovation. These two accounts of street-level actors imply a duality, which is very important to acknowledge and expand on to understand the basic conditions for public officials such as green inside activists. They often find themselves trapped in structural conditions, but beyond the practice of coping, new openings occasionally appear, which the inside activist can exploit.

The structure–agency divide is a fundamental dimension in social science (Giddens 1979, 1984) and of great importance for understanding inside activism and change. While highlighting the individual as a central object of study, inside activism does not resort to a biographic approach of the 'heroic "entrepreneurs" and great "leaders"' (Hardy and Maguire 2008, p. 213). Most concepts assume relatively large degrees of freedom for action and change, which holds in particular for the entrepreneurship literature. Within this literature, there even seems to be a theoretical development toward increased discretion of entrepreneurs and expanded use of the concept in relation to different theoretical traditions, such as incrementalism, institutionalism, and the advocacy coalition framework (Mintrom and Norman 2009), which deviates from the pioneering work of Kingdon (1984/1995), who rather stressed the patience and the limits of entrepreneurs, waiting for the right moment to show up.

In the debate between the more traditional institutionalists, stressing the structural nature of institutions (March and Olsen 1989; Olsen 2010), and the more constructivist-oriented scholars, who emphasize the creative capacity of actors (Schmidt 2010), we seek a third position, which can be summarized as follows: We upgrade the importance of individual actors as creative and discursive actors, but their influence on policies and institutions is largely dependent on the context understood in terms of both structural conditions (material aspects and dominant rules and norms) and the particular setting of actors and networks. This third position means that we acknowledge and upgrade the internal logic of change processes at the expense of static structural variables. This is much in line with different types of work in planning studies (Laws and Forester 2014) and in new institutional theory (Lowndes and Roberts 2013). We thus need to better understand the change efforts of inside activists in relation to specific institutional contexts over time. Inside activists act strategically to promote change, using both inside and outside tactics, which include acting on opportunities that present themselves ('window of opportunity') as well as trying to create such opportunities, that is, seeking to 'open windows' as well as to keep them

open for some time. Such actions require the inside activist to be creative and innovative, very much through the use of spoken language, but also to be ready to invest time and energy and to take personal risks. Inside activists engage in open, deliberative, and highly legitimate actions to promote change, but also act subversively on the dark side of organizational life (Olsson 2016). These various actions need to be made sense of in relation to the context in which the inside activists find themselves.

Our review of key actors shows that a lot of different arguments and discussions have evolved over a rather long time within different fields of research in the broad river of social science. Most of the concepts have important things to say about a *specific* divide and how it tends to blur and overlap, while a few others consider two or three divides, such as institutional activism and different versions of street-level actors. There is thus a lot of theoretical work to draw on. The novelty of the inside activism concept mainly lies in the combined use of insights from several of these concepts and the acknowledgment of all three divides as relevant in order to understand processes of influence and change. However, the most important characteristic of green inside activism is its political nature, to which we now will turn.

The Political Nature of Green Inside Activism

The previous section has already suggested some elements of the political nature of green inside activism, even though it is a weak part for several of the key-actor concepts. We will now address it in a more systematic way. As argued, the political influence of green inside activists very much centers on the three divides, either by bridging or by exploiting them. We have so far stressed the blurring, interaction, and bridging of these divides as a source of influence, but in some situations, the divides can also be exploited and reconstructed for tactical reasons, for instance, when an environmental official deliberately plays a very strict bureaucratic role to avoid giving active support to a 'problematic' decision. Occasionally, it can be wise for green inside activists to reconstruct some structural limitations to hinder action, while the opposite holds when opportunities for green change arise.

To further theorize about the political nature of green inside activism, five characteristics are essential. First, green inside activists have in general a deeper and more radical commitment to green interests and values than expressed in existing public policies and institutions. This

commitment is emotional rather than rational/calculated. Second, they are ready to further these values quite purposefully, take various actions to induce policy and institutional change but also to protect against threatening new policies. Inside activism takes place in processes where really important values are at stake. Third, inside activists develop and manage networks and coalitions of actors both within public organizations and across organizational borders. Fourth, they have a dualistic nature. They can be combative as well as adaptive, power-seeking and tactical as well as cooperative and compromising depending on situation and context. Fifth, through their positions inside of public administration as well as their external contacts with civil society networks and organizations, they get access to various forms of power resources. These are used in creative and innovative ways to try tackling difficult, conflictual issues. These essentially political characteristics are intertwined and used in complex ways in different situations, which we will come back to in Chaps. 5 and 6.

The nature of activism from inside public administration differs from the more traditional activism of social movements. Political activism is mostly associated with social movements taking actions that confront established societal norms or institutionalized practices ('outside tactics'). Rather than following commonly held norms guiding acceptable and appropriate political behavior, this activism challenges such norms openly, often through the use of controversial methods. Breaking societal norms and rules, such as those related to ownership and property rights, is seen as necessary to gain the public and political attention that activists seek (cf. Humphrey 2006; Welchman 2001). This also requires that actions are deliberately public, even at a personal risk. For instance, when environmental activists climb the smokestacks of industrial plants, sneak into nuclear power plants, or disturb whaling ships, they do so at great personal risk, both of getting hurt and of suffering legal consequences (Hysing et al. 2016).

Inside activism also includes actions taken at a personal risk that challenge established institutions, but at the same time, it differs in important respects from activism taking place outside of the political–administrative sphere. Activists inside governments and public administrations need to be careful of taking action openly. Secrecy is often the key. Following the reasoning of Needleman and Needleman (1974, p. 326), the inside activist can go underground within the public administration, covertly staying committed while seeming to work and think

in accordance with institutionalized norms and values (compare administrative guerrillas). The ability to disguise ideals and actions in different ways and for different actors is needed to be able to secure a continuous position within the administration over time. Thus, we also assume inside activists to have a strategic long-term commitment to their beliefs and values.

A Precise Concept

Green inside activism is deliberately defined relatively precisely to lend itself to further theorizing as well as empirical testing (cf. Sabatier 2007, p. 327). The green inside activist is a public official with a formal position within a public organization, who has a personal value commitment in line with the green movement; and who seeks to further these values from the inside, in cooperation with like-minded actors, through the use of networks and coalition building. This definition is more clear and precise in comparison with most other key-actor concepts, in particular that of the policy entrepreneur, which is vague when it comes to motives and types of actors. We see the policy entrepreneur and the Weberian bureaucrat as essentially two principally different ideal types: the bureaucrat as a formalized rule follower focused on factual matters, and the entrepreneur for whom the essential characteristic is innovative results. These two influential concepts are valuable as normative yardsticks and heuristic devices, but are less useful for systematic empirical research and theoretical development. We need to move beyond this type of ideal types to understand political agency of public officials: its complexity, variation, and importance.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have conducted a relatively broad review of key-actor concepts within different fields of social science research. The inside activist concept both resembles and differs from other more or less well-known conceptualizations, such as the policy entrepreneur, the institutional activist, and the administrative guerilla. We argue that the novelty of the inside activism concept derives from the combined use of insights from some of these previous concepts and from giving it a pronounced political character. In comparison with several of the key-actor concepts, inside activism provides a relatively precise concept, which is important

for further theorizing about institutional conditions and mechanisms of change as well as for systematic empirical testing. We define the green inside activist as a public official with a formal position within a public organization, who has a personal value commitment in line with green networks and environmental organizations, who seeks to further these values from inside public organizations in cooperation with like-minded actors.

References

Abers, R. N & Tatagiba, L. (2015). Institutional activism: Mobilizing for women's health from inside the Brazilian bureaucracy. In F. M. Rossi and M. Von Bülow (Eds.), *Social movement dynamics. New perspectives on theory and research from Latin America* (pp. 73–101). UK: Ashgate.

Ahrne, G. (1993). Delvis människa, delvis organisation/Partly human, partly organization. *Sociologisk Forskning, 30*(1), 59–78.

Alvinius, A. (2013). *Bridging boundaries in the borderland of bureaucracies. Individual impact of organisational adaption to demanding situations in civil and military contexts* (Ph.D. thesis). Sweden: Karlstad University.

Banaszak, L. A. (2005). Inside and outside the state: Movement insider status, tactics, and public policy achievements. In D. S. Meyer, V. Jenness & H. Ingram (Eds.), *Routing the opposition. Social movements, public policy, and democracy* (pp. 149–176). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Banaszak, L. A. (2010). *The women's movement inside and outside the state*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baumgartner, F. R., & Jones, B. D. (1993). *Agendas and instability in American politics.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

Brouwer, S. (2015). *Policy entrepreneurs in water governance.* Cham: Springer.

Campbell, H., & Marshall, R. (1999). Ethical frameworks and planning theory. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 23*(3), 464–478.

Davidoff, P. (1965). Advocacy and pluralism in planning. In S. S. Fainstein & S. Campbell (Eds.), *Readings in planning theory* (3rd ed., 2011, pp. 191–205). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

du Gay, P. (2000). *In praise of bureaucracy. Weber, organization, ethics.* London: Sage.

Ebers, M. (1997). *The formation of inter-organizational networks.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eisenstein, H. (1996). *Inside agitators: Australian femocrats & the state.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Ferguson, K. (1984). *The feminist case against bureaucracy.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Fischer, F. (2003). *Reframing public policy. Discursive politics and deliberative practices.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Forester, J. (1999). *The deliberative practitioner. Encouraging participatory planning processes.* London: The MIT Press.

Giddens, A. (1979). *Central problems in social theory: Action, structure and contradiction in social analysis.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Goodsell, C. T. (2004). *The case for bereaucracy. A public administration polemic* (4th ed.). Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Hajer, M. A. (1995). *The politics of environmental discourse. Ecological modernization and the policy process.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hammond, D. R. (2013). Policy entrepreneurship in China's response to Urban poverty. *Policy Studies Journal, 41*(1), 119–146.

Hardy, C., & Maguire, S. (2008). Institutional entrepreneurship. In R. C. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin, & R. Suddaby (Eds.), *The sage handbook of organizational institutionalism* (pp. 198–217). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hoffman, L. M. (1989). *The politics of knowledge: Activist movements in medicine and planning.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Humphrey, M. (2006). Democratic legitimacy, public justification and environmental direct action. *Political Studies, 54*(2), 310–327.

Hupe, P. L., Hill, M., & Buffat, A. (Eds.). (2015). *Understanding street-level bureaucracy.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Hysing, E. (2009). Greening transport—explaining urban transport policy change. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning, 11*(3), 243–261.

Hysing, E., Olsson, J., & Dahl, V. (2016). A radical public administration? Green radicalism and policy influence among local environmental officials in Sweden. *Environmental Politics, 25*(3), 535–552.

Ingold, K., & Varone, F. (2011). Treating policy brokers seriously: Evidence from the climate policy. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 22*(2), 319–346.

Kelly, M. (1994). Theories of justice and street-level discretion. *Journal of Public Administration and Theory, 4*(2), 119–140.

Kickert, W. J. M., Klijn, E. H., & Koppenjan, J. F. M. (1997). (Eds.), *Managing complex networks. Strategies for the public sector.* London: Sage.

Kingdon, J. W. (1984/1995). *Agendas, alternatives and public policies.* New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.

Kjær, A. M. (2004). *Governance.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Klemp, N., McDermott, R., Raley, J., Thibeault, M., Powell, K., & Levitin, D. J. (2008). Plans, Takes, and Mis-takes. *Critical Social Studies, 1,* 4–21.

Laws, D., & Forester, J. (2015). *Conflict, improvisation, governance. Street level practices for Urban democracy.* New York and London: Routledge.

Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Lovell, H. (2009). The role of individuals in policy change: The case of UK low-energy housing. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy, 27*(3), 491–511.

Lowndes, V. (2005). Something old, something new, something borrowed…. *Policy Studies, 26*(3–4), 291–309.

Lowndes, V., & Roberts, M. (2013). *Why institutions matter: The new institutionalism in political science*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mackenzie, C. (2004). Policy entrepreneurship in Australia: A conceptual review and application. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 29*(2), 367–386.

Maguire, S., Hardy, C., & Lawrence, T. (2004). Institutional entrepreneurship in emerging fields: HIV/AIDS treatment advocacy in Canada. *Academy of Management Journal, 47*(5), 657–679.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1989). *Rediscovering institutions*. New York: Free Press.

Marsh, D., & Rhodes, R. A. W. (1992). *Policy networks in british government*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Meyers, M. K., & Vorsanger, S. (2007). Street-level bureaucrats and the implementation of public policy. In B. G. Peters & J. Pierre (Eds.), *The handbook of public administration* (pp. 153–163). London: Sage.

Mintrom, M., & Norman, P. (2009). Policy entrepreneurship and policy change. *Policy Studies Journal, 37*(4), 649–667.

Needleman, M. L., & Needleman, C. E. (1974). *Guerrillas in the bureaucracy: The community planning experiment in the United States*. New York: John Wiley.

Niskanen, W. A. (1973). *Bureaucracy: Servant or master?* London: The institute of economic affairs.

O'Leary, R. (2010). Guerrilla employees: Should managers nurture, tolerate, or terminate them? *Public Administration Review, 70*(1), 8–19.

O'Leary, R. (2014). *The ethics of dissent: Managing guerrilla government (2nd ed.)*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Olsen, J. P. (2010). Change and continuity: An institutional approach to institutions of democratic government. In J. Pierre and P. W. Ingraham (Eds.), *Comparative administrative change and reform: Lessons learned*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Olsson, J. (2016). *Subversion in institutional change and stability. A neglected mechanism*. London: Palgrave MacmillanWaterman.

Petridou, E. (2017). *Political entrepreneurship in swedish: Towards a (re)theorization of entrepreneurial agency* (Ph.D. thesis). Sweden: Mid Sweden University.

Pettinicchio, D. (2012). Institutional activism: Reconsidering the insider/outsider dichotomy. *Sociology Compass, 6*(6), 499–510.

Pierre, J., & Peters, B. G. (2000). *Governance, politics and the state*. London: Macmillan.

Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. (2011). *Public management reform. A comparative analysis: New public management, governance, and the new-Weberian state* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pressman, J. L., & Wildavsky, A. (1984). *Implementation. How great expectations in Washington are dashed in Oakland, or why it's amazing that federal programs work at all* (3rd ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Roberts, N. C., & King, P. J. (1991). Policy entrepreneurs: Their activity structure and function in the policy process. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 1*(2), 147–175.

Sabatier, P. A. (1993). Policy change over a decade or more. In P. A. Sabatier & H. C. Jenkins-Smith (Eds.), *Policy change and learning: An advocacy coalition approach* (pp. 13–39). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Sabatier, P. A. (1998). The advocacy coalition framework: Revisions and relevance to Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy, 5*(12), 98–130.

Sabatier, P. A. (2007). Fostering the development of policy theory. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the policy process* (2nd ed., pp. 321–336). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Sabatier, P. A., & Weible, C. M. (2007). The advocacy coalition framework, innovations and clarifications. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the policy process* (2nd ed., pp. 189–220). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Santoro, W. A., & McGurie, G. M. (1997). Social movement insiders: The impact of institutional activists on affirmative action and comparable worth policies. *Social Problems, 44*(4), 503–519.

Schmidt, V. A. (2010). Taking ideas and discourse seriously: Explaining change through discursive institutionalism as the fourth "new institutionalism". *European Political Science Review, 2*(1), 1–25.

Schneider, M., Teske, P. E., & Mintrom, M. (1995). *Public entrepreneurs: Agents for change in American government*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Sevä, M., & Jagers, S. C. (2013). Inspecting environmental management from within: The role of street-level bureaucrats in environmental policy implementation. *Journal of Environmental Management, 128*, 1060–1070.

Sørensen, E. (2002). Democratic theory and network governance. *Administrative Theory & Praxis, 24*(4), 693–720.

Sørensen, E. (2004). Democratic governance and the role of public administrators. In P. Bogason, S. Kensen, & H. T. Miller (Eds.), *Tampering with tradition* (pp. 107–131). Oxford: Lexington.

Sørensen, E. (2006). Metagovernance. The changing role of politicians in processes of democratic governance. *American Review of Public Administration, 36*(1), 98–114.

Sørensen, E. (2013). Institutionalizing interactive governance for democracy. *Critical Policy Studies, 7*(1), 72–86.

Sørensen, E., & Torfing, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Theories of democratic network governance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Spicer, M. W. (2014). *In defense of politics in public administration. A value pluralist perspective*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press.

Torfing, J., Peters, B. G., Pierre, J., & Sørensen, E. (2012). *Interactive governance: Advancing the paradigm*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Weber, M. (1947). *The theory of social and economic organization*. edited with an introduction by Talcott Parsons. New York: Free Press.

Weible, C. M., Sabatier, P. A., & McQueen, K. (2009). Themes and variations: Taking stock of the advocacy coalition framework. *Policy Studies Journal, 37*(1), 121–140.

Welchman, J. (2001). Is ecosabotage civil disobedience? *Philosophy & Geography, 4*(1), 97–107.

Williams, P. (2002). The competent boundary spanner. *Public Administration, 80*(1), 103–124.

Yeatman, A. (1990). *Bureaucrats, femocrats, technocrats. Essays on the contemporary Australian State*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Green Inside Activism in Context

Introduction

Considering that this book contributes to institutional micro-level theorizing, it may seem contradictory to raise the issue of context as a force behind inside activism. We run the risk of finding ourselves back in the strong structuralism tradition of institutional theory, instead of moving beyond it and opening up space for creative political agency. However, we are also trying to avoid the risk of overemphasizing agency by stressing the importance of multiple contexts, and in particular the interactivity between agency and contexts in a longer time frame. We will, for instance, argue that fundamental beliefs and values are formed in the early years in different small-scale contexts, such as at home and in peer groups, constituting important conditions and limitations for future socialization efforts in the world of organizations. More on this later.

We understand and use 'context' in a broad sense, which is commonplace in social science research. Considering that context is often used in a relatively vague and unsystematic way, the question has been raised whether it is a 'missing link' that needs more explicit and systematic attention (Pollitt 2013; Goodin and Tilly 2006). Christopher Pollitt argues that there is a tendency to perceive of context as 'everything out there that may influence the thing we are studying in here' (Pollitt 2013, p. xvii). In the literature, context is de facto used very much in reference to specific policy fields and levels of organization or to the general environment surrounding the organizations. In this chapter, we

will first contextualize inside activism; that is, we base our discussion on the way we have previously conceptualized inside activism to get some clues as to what types of contexts are potentially relevant. After that, we discuss whether inside activism can be perceived as an institutional phenomenon whose time has come during the last decades. We then develop a general argument of a more fundamental character, stating that most public organizations are more or less fragmented in a political sense and are thus fertile contexts for inside activism. In the last section, we discuss the institutional complexity of public organizations and how inside activism can be understood as one way for public officials to deal with this.

WHAT CONTEXTS TEND TO GIVE RISE TO INSIDE ACTIVISM?

Our conceptualization of inside activism in the previous chapter gives some indications of where we can expect to find it. We have identified a number of characteristics that can guide the way for us. First, we assumed inside activists to be in positions that grant them chances to influence policy and politics (if not always successfully exercised). This may indicate that we can locate inside activism among public officials close to formal power positions with easy access to key actors such as leading politicians and top-level managers. Public officials can, for instance, get strategic insider positions as experts working in management functions such as boards, committees, and advisory groups. When we have interviewed green inside activists operating within Swedish municipalities, one key factor highlighted for successfully influencing local policy was to be organizationally positioned close to the top political and administrative management level (Hysing 2014). Thus, inside activists would most likely be found on the higher levels of organizations. However, access to power is not equivalent to closeness. Public officials handling environmental and development issues often work at organizational and geographical distance from top politicians and managements, but may still be influential, either by having relatively autonomous responsibility for specific tasks or being consulted on specific issues. For instance, when the management of a public organization discusses specific matters, a somewhat distant environmental official may very well be consulted and, on that particular issue, constitute an authoritative and trustworthy voice in the process. We can expect political and management elites to regularly turn to environmental officials for

advice, regardless of which part or level of the organization they belong to. The likely qualities in demand are expertise, creativity, and convincing arguments, even though there may be much more to it from the inside activism perspective, for instance, officials having a more radical green agenda. To conclude, we assume inside activism to be present within the networks of leading politicians and managements, but on a daily basis, it can have a relatively low and cooperative profile.

Second, we have argued that inside activism is likely to occur in situations where important values are at stake, as in critical decisions concerning a new traffic route or a reformed law to better consider sustainable forestry. We can expect the number and importance of these critical situations to occur in particularly dynamic policy areas where, for instance, new problems and issues are continuously raised, big investments are part of the game, new research results are launched, and a number of different actors position themselves. Considering these characteristics, we can expect inside activism to take place within many policy areas, such as transport, energy, land-use planning, and environmental policy, rather than within highly regulated and more stable sectors, such as taxation and social security payment.

Third, a central component of inside activism is institutionalized relations and commitment to civil society networks and organizations and their values and interests. An important clue here is the types of policy areas in which this double belonging—to both a bureaucratic position and a civic engagement—is most likely to occur. The fast and easy answer is policy areas surrounded by strong and extensive social movement activism. Or to put it the other way around: What are the target policy areas and public organizations for environmental activists? We expect a number of people within environmental movements to be willing to make a difference inside relevant public agencies. For green inside activists, we can in particular assume environmental public organizations and agencies to be relevant, but considering the cross-sectoral character of sustainable development, we can also expect people with green activist sentiments to approach policy areas such as public planning, transport, energy, and food and health among others.

To summarize, considering how green inside activism is defined, we can expect to find it within the networks of political and management elites and on different levels of public organizations. We can further assume it to be frequent within dynamic policy areas dealing with

environment, development, and planning—in short, areas attractive for green social movements to influence.

AN INSTITUTIONAL PHENOMENON WHOSE TIME HAS COME?

Maybe inside activism can be perceived as something relatively new within the public sector—an institutional phenomenon whose time has come? It can in fact be argued that social and political trends over the last decades have increased the discretion and potential influence of individual public officials such as inside activists. First, the *governance* trend is opening up opportunities for new ideas and strategies on how to govern and administrate public organizations. The usefulness and legitimacy of hierarchical governing have been increasingly questioned in favor of other, more flexible and interactive forms of organization, such as market solutions, networks, and deliberative practices (Kjær 2004; Pierre and Peters 2000; Rhodes 1997, 2007). An interrelated trend is *new public management* (NPM), which has had a large impact on how governance and organization of public administration have been reformed and developed (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Pierre and Ingraham 2010). In these new discursive and organizational contexts, public officials gain more room for maneuver and flexibility as they are less hindered by bureaucratic ideals and practices. Public officials are acting, increasingly, as new public managers, network managers, and meta-governors, rather than as rule-abiding, hierarchically controlled bureaucrats (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Kickert et al.1997; Sørensen and Torfing 2007). Thus, we can expect a greater acceptance of and growing plurality of roles for public officials, including the inside activist role.

Second, the trend of *civic engagement* in various forms complements and partly replaces traditional political channels (political parties and elections) for political engagement and participation. When political parties lose members and party identification among citizens declines, the role of political parties to uphold the legitimacy function of the political system decreases (Muller-Rommel and Casal Bertoa 2015). Instead, civic engagement is increasingly organized in issue-specific interest organizations and social movements, which constitute alternative venues for legitimacy and resource mobilization of actors within the public sector (della Porta and Diani 2006). The importance of civil society organizations also means a growing demand for public organizations to interact with civic organizations and movements, which enhances the opportunities and the

legitimacy for public officials to use their own civil society networks in their professional roles. In general, governments and public administrations have become more open and interactive in relation to citizens and their organizations, which increases the likelihood for inside activism.

Third, *expertise* is becoming increasingly important in policymaking, as a number of policy problems and issues become more complex and dynamic. What is more, the role of the expert seems to be changing from one with a narrow focus on 'technical expertise' to one that also includes practical problem-solving capabilities that bring professional knowledge together with political values and knowledge from alternative sources (Fischer 2009; Sehested 2009). Furthermore, in many policy areas, there are contested claims about scientific knowledge and expertise, implying that gaining a position as 'the expert' requires not (only) superior knowledge about factual matters but also an explicit recognition by powerful decision-makers. In this sense, the inside activist has a relative advantage over external experts, thanks to his/her continuous access to important decision-makers of public organizations.

Fourth, *bureaucratic politics and influence* have been well documented for a long time. Insights from this research highlight the futility of separating politics and administration (Lundquist 1992; Overeem 2005; Svara 2001, 2006; Spicer 2014). Public administrations are often political in their efforts to support and realize policy objectives by (re) formulating policy and inducing policy change; coping with difficult value conflicts; and prioritizing between different goals, values, and target groups (Thacher and Rein 2004; Campbell and O'Leary 2015; De Graaf 2015; De Graaf et al. 2016). Inside activism is just one example of this type of 'policy politics' (Brodkin 1990) and stresses the importance of policymaking from inside the administration. This implies a more 'political' role for public officials, with far more influence on policymaking than recognized in the formal parliamentary chain of governance (Page 2012; Svara 2006; Spicer 2014). In combination with reduced trust in hierarchical governing, this means that there is a decreasing demand for traditional bureaucratic behavior and growing acceptance for creative public officials who may fulfill important political functions in the new governance context (Egeberg and Trondal 2009; Svara 2006; Nieuwenburg 2014).

These important trends are of general importance to politics and public administration and seem to give public officials more responsibilities and larger degrees of freedom. However, we do not support the idea that

inside activism, and political agency of public officials in a more general sense, is something new, following from these recent powerful trends. Lee Ann Banaszak shows, for instance, that the women's movement acted inside governments even in its early days, which indicates that this is not a new phenomenon and that we need to understand inside activism in relation to the specific history of different social movements (Banaszak 2010, Chaps. 2, 8). Different social interests have always sought various ways of influencing the public policy process, and inside activism is just one strategy among others, such as lobbying, making use of informal contacts with external organizations, and applying direct forms of pressure on officials. We rather see inside activism as an increasingly important phenomenon that deserves more attention. In the next section, we provide more fundamental insights on this theme by elaborating on different views on consolidation and fragmentation of organizations and their implication for political action and inside activism among public officials.

Consolidated or Fragmented Organizations?

Dynamic policy fields and trends in public administration are important contextual factors for inside activism. The most immediate context, however, is public organizations. In this section, we will discuss how such contexts can provide fertile ground for inside activism. There are debates in different fields of research concerning processes of consolidation and fragmentation within organizations, which of these processes tend to be the most powerful, and what types of forces or mechanisms are operative in these processes. This type of discussion is an essential starting point for understanding the nature of organizational contexts and what it means for the power and influence of public officials. We will now take a closer look at some of those debates, and in relation to them, argue for a third position, which acknowledges forces of both consolidation and fragmentation, making it very difficult to develop organizations into coherent and well-structured units. This further means that we expect considerable space for political agency in most public organizations.

Forces of Consolidation

There are a number of arguments in support of the idea that organizations—public and private—are efficient in developing relatively coherent organizational units. From a traditional institutional perspective,

consolidation is accomplished through authoritative measures such as top-down control, rules of discipline, and imposed training programs. These types of measures constitute a firm strategy to hold organizations together (Olsson 2016, pp. 27–29; Clegg 2009).

Another well-known account of consolidation has been developed in normative institutionalism, stressing that socialization of organization members is the vital mechanism. Norms and values of individuals are mainly assumed to be shaped endogenously through their involvement with institutions. Socialization and adaptation take place through processes of learning, identity formation, and development of cultural codes and social roles. It is assumed that socialization and adaptation develop over time into more conforming and predictable behaviors of organization members (March and Olsen 1989, 1995; Peters 2011).

A more functionalistic idea of consolidation is also prevalent in social science research as well as in common sense thinking, implying that individuals rather quickly adapt to the goals and purposes of specific positions within organizations. The behavior of the individual occupying a professional position is supposed to follow from the functional logic of that particular position. It has been labeled Miles' law, which says: 'Where you stand depends on where you sit' (Miles 1978, p. 399). It is argued that every person has a function to perform within an organization and that the assigned responsibility 'markedly influences one's judgment' (Miles 1978, p. 400). There are, of course, a number of real-life examples supporting this simple idea, but we cannot easily accept that this is all there is to it. There are a number of other motives, forces, and mechanisms at work within public organizations, which determine individual behaviors.

Another idea of consolidation is to be found among social movement scholars who argue that public organizations have the capacity for co-optation of claims by social movements. According to Phillip Selznick (1949), two variables are of central importance: power imbalances to the advantage of the public institutions and the presence of a threat from a social movement. Thus, co-optation may follow when the challenging social movement criticizes and opposes government policies and practices. In such a situation, a process of discussion may start that can lead to quite different outcomes: policy change, compromises, or co-optation. The assumption of power asymmetry means that the formal political organizations (government, public agency, and so forth) are expected to be effective in responding to as well as reducing and limiting the external criticism. For instance, in a negotiation process

between a government agency and members of a social movement, the activist agenda may in different ways and in subsequent steps be compromised and weakened. Some empirical research supports these ideas. For instance, one study on the adoption of environmental values concluded that policy changes are rare and that the deployment of a 'green ceremonial façade' is common (Forbes and Jermier 2012).

As a contrast, Rebecca Abers and Margaret Keck are quite critical of the idea that non-state actors, such as social movements, would be so powerless that they cannot influence the rules of the game or can even be manipulated (Abers and Keck 2009). In their stories about participatory water policy in Brazil, a more diverse picture is presented. They argue that non-state actors can help to build institutional capacity in states with relatively weak institutions, such as in Brazil (Abers and Keck 2009) or in Argentina (Spiller and Tommasi 2009). They summarize their insights in the following way: 'Where state institutions are weak and agendas precarious, civil society groups or alliances between civil society and state actors can propel an agenda for state action. Moreover, they can actually equip the state to implement policies. Although state officials do sometimes manipulate agendas and undermine the authority of participants, this occurs less frequently than we might expect' (Abers and Keck 2009, p. 296).

Thus, empirical research on co-optation comes to varied conclusions, and some empirical data are ambiguous, subject to interpretation and debate among social movement researchers (Dryzek et al. 2003). The contrasting picture above indicates, quite interestingly, that states tend to consolidate either by using their power to co-opt their challengers or by harnessing external help to overcome institutional weaknesses.

To conclude, there are a number of arguments for why organizations should be efficient in consolidating, with the potential result being relatively coherent and well-structured organizational units. If this were the whole story, there would be very little or no space at all for political agency and inside activism within public organizations. However, as we will see, organizational forces of fragmentation make the picture more comprehensive and complex.

Forces of Fragmentation

Beside these different ideas of consolidation, there are also strong arguments about various forces and mechanisms that tend to make and keep organizations somewhat fragmented. Those arguments have in common

that even though forces of consolidation may be important, they will never be completely successful, because contradictory beliefs and values are always present within organizations and tend to remain over time. At times, they may also increase and dominate within specific organizations.

To begin with, we find a central fragmentation argument among rational choice scholars, who assume that individuals bring their preferences with them when joining or getting involved with an organization. Preferences are thus exogenously determined in contrast to the normative institutionalism argument of endogenous preference formation. This debate can be understood in relation to the distinction between aggregative and integrative political processes. Rational choice scholars focus on a*ggregative processes*, which are contractual to its nature, and individuals are assumed to participate mainly for personal benefits. Through some sort of negotiated agreement, organizations can consolidate to some extent through new rules, which work as incentive structures for the actors, but conflicts and fragmentation will likely persist because actors are assumed to be driven by strong deviating self-interests. However, many rational choice scholars just accept the fact that there are specific rules and incentive structures that the actors have to accept as the rules of the game. As a contrast, normative institutionalism theorizes that *integrative processes* effectively socialize individuals through institutional rules, norms, and practices (March and Olsen 1996; Peters 2011, Chap. 2).

Quite another fragmentation argument is to be found among postmodern organization theorists, who maintain that culture is a futile project when interpretations incessantly shift and organizations are in 'constant state of flux' (Meyerson and Martin 1987; Martin 1992, 2002). This hyper-flexible view of organizations and human behavior needs to be understood in relation to the postmodernist ontology that reality comes into practical existence insofar it is enacted by social actors. The structural nature of institutions and organizations is thus entirely neglected.

In contrast to these two ideas of organizational fragmentation, we argue in favor of a third type of fragmentation argument, which tries to make a balanced and integrated account of the forces of consolidation and fragmentation. We argue that political agency, like inside activism, is more or less prevalent in various public organizations, which tends to make them fragmented to some extent, despite management ambitions to govern and socialize organization members. The basic force behind

this—thoroughly supported by socialization research—is that fundamental beliefs and values are formed to a large extent during childhood and youth (Hurrelmann 2009; Sears and Brown 2013). Thus, we can assume individual organization members to be socially and politically 'programmed' before they enter organizations. To a large extent, people already have their social and cultural codes, beliefs, and political values in place when joining an organization. This includes personal experiences and habits of how to handle value conflicts. Michael Spicer argues that whenever we engage in practical reasoning concerning moral matters, including within public administrations, 'we draw upon habits of thinking about procedural justice or fairness that we have picked up in seeking to resolve interpersonal or social conflicts that have arisen among ourselves' (Spicer 2014, p. 94).

This early socialization history of individuals is a challenge for organizations that intend to socialize their members into some sort of culture. There are thus good reasons to seriously doubt the basic idea of normative institutionalism, which claims that organizations are powerful in socializing their members sooner or later (March and Olsen 1989, 1995; Jacobsson et al. 2015) as well as the simple idea of external preference formation of rational choice. Thus, in relation to this debate on preference formation in political science, we argue for the third position, which we call *the fragmentation thesis.*

The prevalence of inside activism within organizations is particularly problematic for normative institutionalism and its assumption about endogenous preference formation. Inside activists are not only 'programmed early' like everybody else; they also continually socialize and develop new insights through a committed interaction with civil society networks and organizations. However, this does not mean that the rational choice model of exogenous preference formation is more valid and thus better explains the institutional phenomenon of inside activism. On the contrary, we argue that this model is too simple and with limited interest in actual *processes* of preference formation. People are much more than 'carriers' of preferences in relation to specific policy issues and decisions. Beliefs, values, and conceptions are certainly formed outside organizations to a large extent, but in a more social, fundamental, and lasting sense than assumed among rational choice scholars. What is more, we assume that specific issue preferences develop in complex processes where exogenous and endogenous forces interact, which is particularly important for the phenomenon of inside activism.

The idea of normative institutionalism, that organizations tend to socialize their members, is to some extent correct, but it will never be completely successful in terms of coherent organizational cultures with clearly defined roles and identities. Organizations are always disharmonic in different respects; questioned and/or undermined by subversive groups or countercultures (Martin and Siehl 1983; Van Maanen and Barley 1984; Pfeffer 1981, 1994; Olsson 2016). Thus, the fragmentation thesis stresses the relevance of exogenous forces and personal historical roots behind the development of basic individual beliefs and values as well as acknowledges the idea that some norms, values, and preferences are adjusted and formed through individuals' involvement with organizations. We can expect these contradictory forces to remain over time, because organization members' initial, powerful socialization within family, and school, and among peers, is relatively stable. We can thus assume fragmentation to be a more or less persistent phenomenon within organizations.

This fragmentation argument is not a new one in the literature. It has, for instance, been discussed by Guy Peters, who argues that 'nonconformity' can be a source of institutional change, using the example of military organizations having to react to changes in the values of their young recruits in the 1970s (Peters 2011, pp. 41–42). However, Peters is also open to the opposite argument; even though individuals may bring some values with them when joining an organization, he assumes them willing, by virtue of joining, 'to allow institutional values to dominate at least this aspect of their lives' (Peters 2011, p. 180). One way out of these contradictory forces is to argue, in line with normative institutionalism, that social adaptation will take over in due time through forces of socialization and learning. The other solution, which we adhere to, is to accept that organizations are always plagued by contradictory forces of consolidation and fragmentation, although not only leading to negative consequences. As we know, organizations can be far too consolidated, with negative consequences for individual creativity (Ferguson 1984), as well as being too fragmented, undermining the governing capacity of the organization. To try to 'balance' forces of consolidation and fragmentation within organizations is a really difficult task, both from an empirical–theoretical and a normative–practical point of view.

Organizational fragmentation needs to be understood as a multi-layered phenomenon: On a basic level, organization members' fundamental beliefs and values are relatively stable, while their attitudes and

preferences are more flexible in relation to different issues and situations. This idea bears some resemblance to the advocacy coalition framework's tripartite belief system of coalitions (deep core, policy core, and secondary aspects) (Sabatier and Weible 2007, pp. 192–196). Thus, we assume that deep-seated and partly disguised fragmentation exists within organizations at the same time as organizational culture and subcultures develop in parallel. Within organizations, there are open processes of cooperation and consolidation, but under this 'official surface,' there are always fragmentation, friction, and potential conflicts, which will likely trigger political activities in specific situations when important values are at stake.

An important aspect of the fragmentation thesis is that many jobseekers are not in the position of choosing their employers. A lot of people therefore take positions they find less attractive than their ideal and have to accept some organizational values and goals that contradict their own personal beliefs and values. This is a daily, and often boring, experience for many employees. Employers from their perspective face a dilemma in times of severe competition for attractive specialists: They need and eagerly search for specific competencies, but the likely recruits may not fit into the culture of the organization. The more severe this dilemma, the more likely they will be to hire employees with a predisposition to inside activism. Take, for instance, the Snowden case. When the NSA's mass surveillance expanded after 9/11, IT specialists were increasingly in demand, and among those were many young IT techies with values in sharp contradiction to the NSA mission (Greenwald 2014).

Furthermore, committed people like civil society activists have an interest in seeking employment in organizations in which they can exercise influence on important issues. These may be public agencies and organizations that are more or less perceived as 'enemies' or as strategic centers for their activism. In those instances, they will naturally disguise or not clearly speak out about their strong value commitments in the recruiting process. Instead, they will stress their factual competence, formal education, and professional experiences, which are often impressive thanks to their strong interests and commitments in the specific issue area. Considering that public agencies and organizations have a 'pull' effect on people who want to challenge the culture and values of the organization, managements need to develop strategies and schemes for how to recruit the 'right' type of people. Interestingly, this seems to be a neglected theme in the recruitment literature (Orlitzky 2007).

Based on this reasoning, we assume organization members to have an 'official personality' adapted to the identity and norms of their organization, but we also expect them to have a 'non-official personality' concealed to the public sphere of the organization. This non-official personality can be more or less critical of and subversive to specific rules, norms, and practices of the organization. We therefore expect very few individuals to have beliefs, values, and interests that are completely in line with the official rules and norms of 'their organization.' In this partly disguised fragmentation, there are seeds of resistance and potential change.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLEXITY AND DYNAMICS

The implication of the fragmentation thesis, outlined above, is that public officials operate in institutionally complex contexts in which they have to handle multiple rules, norms, and practices not necessarily compatible with one another. Simply stated, there are a number of partly different expectations of public officials, and they have to handle contested issues. In this hybrid organization, Weberian ideals exist together with democratic ideals of responsiveness to politicians, service-mindedness in relation to citizens and new consumer ideals, governing and management inspired by NPM ideas, professional values and ethics largely determined within professions, participatory innovations in relation to user groups and organizations, and activist values and commitments in line with particular social movements and interest organizations. As already indicated, institutional complexity within public organizations seems to have increased over the last decades, making it increasingly difficult for managements to try to uphold and reproduce organizational identities and cultures.

Research on public administration has traditionally perceived of public officials as loyal and subservient to the law and to superiors in the bureaucracy. The ideas of the Weberian ideal type have had an immense influence on how we have generally understood public administration and the behavior of public officials. In both research and practice, many of these old ideals still persist, such as public officials understood as 'neutral' bureaucrats, acting according to formalized rules and routines, and basing decisions and actions on expertise. However, as argued, there are layers of other ideals, which have developed over time and turned public organizations into 'arenas' of institutional complexity. In handling

institutional complexity, public officials need not only to be flexible and dynamic in their daily work, but also to internalize different types of rules and norms. In the words of John Dryzek, particular environmental officials may even inhabit competing discourses that make claims upon them:

> An individual working in a government environmental agency may be an administrative rationalist at work, a green radical in conversations with friends, an economic rationalist in buying and selling. This individual may sometimes have to think long and hard when these discourses pull in different directions, opening space for reflection. (Dryzek 2013, p. 22)

Considering this situation, the growing interest in public ethics and a public service ethos (Lawton et al. 2013; Rayner et al. 2010) can be seen as an important way of interpreting and handling this complexity. Public officials are not expected to only follow the letter of the law or to uncritically respond to the wishes of politicians and citizens but also to be guardians of more general values and norms within the public administration and to make their own informed and value-based judgments (Lundquist 1992). This also means that an official should take action to try to change things that are deemed unethical or unlawful, or in some other way run counter to a public service ethos. This can be a fine balancing act between staying loyal and acting according to some ethical ideas and norms. This can be played out and handled in many ways. Whistle-blowing is one option, which has received increasing attention in the last decade (Lewis et al. 2014). Whether a whistle-blower is doing the 'right thing' by going public with government secrets or 'organizational wrongdoings' (Skivenes and Trygstad 2014) is often a difficult question, due to institutional complexity and conflicts between different rules and norms. But there is also an institutional side to this; regardless of being sympathetic or not to a specific whistle-blowing event, we can support the right to blow the whistle as an important instrument to ensure transparency in public administration and, thus, to strengthen political accountability and rule of law as well as efficient and effective administration (Brown et al. 2014).

Considering the pervasive institutional complexity, we should not assume that public officials act as inside activists very often, but rather that they play different roles in different contexts and situations. They may, for instance, act most of the time in line with bureaucratic rules and norms, but can switch to inside activism in critical, conflictual

situations when important values are at stake. In those situations, they can, for instance, be strongly committed to protecting a specific wetland (O'Leary 2014) or a bird habitat (Olsson 2009) by a number of strategies and means, of which some may be questionable in relation to fundamental rules and norms.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we address green inside activism in different contexts. We first contextualize inside activism in relation to the way the concept is defined, and conclude that we can expect to find it within the networks of political and management elites and on different levels of public organizations. We further argue that green inside activism is likely within dynamic policy areas such as environment, development, and planning, which green movements and organizations find attractive to try to influence.

We further discuss whether inside activism can be seen as an institutional phenomenon whose time has come during the last decades. Recent trends in governments and public administrations such as governance, civic engagement, expert-based policy-making, and bureaucratic politics have likely increased the space for creative agency and inside activism among public officials. However, we do not see this as a new phenomenon, but rather an increasingly important one that deserves more attention.

We then develop a general argument of a more fundamental character, stating that most organization members have an 'official personality' adapted to the identity and norms of their organization but we also expect them to have a 'non-official personality' concealed to the public sphere of the organization. This non-official personality can be more or less critical and subversive to specific rules, norms, and practices of the organization. Public organizations are thus suitable contexts for political agency such as inside activism. In the last section, we discuss the institutional complexity of public organizations and how this is an opportunity for public officials to deal with value conflicts in a dynamic, activist orientation.

References

Abers, R. N., & Keck, M. E. (2009). Mobilizing the state: The erratic partner in Brazils's participatory water policy. *Politics & Society, 37*(2), 289–314.

Banaszak, L. A. (2010). *The women's movement inside and outside the state*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brodkin, E. (1990). Implementation as Policy Politics. In D. Palumbo and D. J. Calista (Eds.), *Implementation and the policy process. Opening up the black box*. New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 107–118.

Brown, A. J., Lewis, D. R., Moberly, R., & Vandekerckhove, W. (Eds.). (2014). *International handbook on whistleblowing research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Campbell, K., & O'Leary, R. (2015). Big ideas for big problems: Lessons from conflict resolution for public administration. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly, 33*(1), 107–119.

Clegg, S. R. (2009). Managing power in organizations: The hidden history of its constitution. In S. R. Clegg & M. Haugaard (Eds.), *The sage handbook of power*. London: Sage.

De Graaf, G. (2015). The bright future of value pluralism in public administration. *Administration & Society, 47*(9), 1094–1102.

De Graaf, G., Huberts, L., & Smulders, R. (2016). Coping with public value conflicts. *Administration & Society, 48*(9), 1101–1127.

Della Porta, D., & Diani, M. (2006). *Social movements: An introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Dryzek, J. S. (2013). *The politics of the earth. Environmental discourses*. Third edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dryzek, J. S., Downes, D., Hunold, C., Schlosberg, D., & Hernes, H.-K. (2003). *Green states and social movements. Environmentalism in the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and Norway*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Egeberg, M., & Trondal, J. (2009). Political leadership and bureaucratic autonomy: Effects of agencification. *Governance, 22*(4), 673–688.

Ferguson, K. (1984). *The feminist case against bureaucracy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Fischer, F. (2009). *Democracy and expertise: Reorienting policy inquiry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Forbes, L. C., & Jermier, J. M. (2012). The new corporate environmentalism and the symbolic management of organizational culture. In P. Bansal and A. Hoffman (Eds.) The Oxford handbook of business and the environment. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 556–571.

Goodin, R. E., & Tilly, C. (Eds.). (2006). *The Oxford handbook of contextual political analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Greenwald, G. (2014). *No place to hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the U.S. surveillance state*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Hurrelmann, K. (2009). *Social structure and personality development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hysing, E. (2014). How public officials gain policy influence—Lessons from local government in Sweden. *International Journal of Public Administration, 37*(2), 129–139.

Jacobsson, B., Pierre, J., & Sundström, G. (2015). *Governing the embedded state. The organizational dimension of governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kickert, W. J. M., Klijn, E.-H., & Koppenjan, J. F. M. (Eds.). (1997). *Managing complex networks. Strategies for the Public Sector*. London: Sage.

Kjær, A. M. (2004). *Governance*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lawton, A., Rayner, J., & Lasthuizen, K. (2013). *Ethics and management in the public sector*. London: Routledge.

Lewis, D., Brown, A. J., & Moberly, R. (2014). Whistleblowing, its importance and the state of the research. In A. J. Brown, D. Lewis, R. Moberly, & W. Vandekerckhove (Eds.), *International handbook on whistleblowing research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Lundquist, L. (1992). *Förvaltning, Stat och Samhälle*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1989). *Rediscovering institutions*. New York: Free Press.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1995). *Democratic governance*. New York: Free Press.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1996). Institutional perspectives on political institutions. *Governance, 9,* 247–264.

Martin, J. (1992). *Cultures in organizations. Three perspectives*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Martin, J. (2002). *Organizational culture: Mapping the terrain*. Thousand. Oaks, CA: Sage.

Martin, J., & Siehl, C. (1983). Organizational culture and counterculture: An uneasy symbiosis. *Organizational Dynamics*, pp. 52–64 (Autumn).

Meyerson, D., & Martin, J. (1987). Cultural change: An integration of three different views. *Journal of Management Studies, 24,* 623–647.

Miles, R. E., Jr. (1978). The origin and meaning of miles law. *Public Administration Review, 38*(5), 399–403.

Muller-Rommel, F., & Casal Bertoa, F. (2015). *Party politics and democracy in Europe*. London: Routledge.

Nieuwenburg, P. (2014). Conflicts of values and political forgiveness. *Public Administration Review, 74*(3), 374–382.

O'Leary, R. (2014). *The ethics of dissent: Managing guerrilla government* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Olsson, J. (2009). The power of the inside activist: Understanding policy change by empowering the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). *Planning Theory and Practice, 10*(2), 167–187.

Olsson, J. (2016). *Subversion in institutional change and stability. A neglected mechanism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Orlitzky, M. (2007). Recruitment Strategy. In P. F. Boxall, J. Purcell, & P. M. Wright (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of human resource management* (pp. 273–300). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Overeem, P. (2005). The value of the dichotomy: politics administration and the political neutrality of administrators. *Administrative Theory & Praxis, 27*(2), 311–329.

Page, E. (2012). *Policy without politicians: Bureaucratic influence in comparative perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Peters, B. G. (2011). *Institutional theory in political science: The "new institutionalism"*. London: Pinter.

Pfeffer, J. (1981). *Power in organizations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pfeffer, J. (1994). *Managing with power: Politics and influence in organizations*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

Pierre, J., & Ingraham, P. W. (Eds.). (2010). *Comparative administrative change and reform. Lessons learned*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Pierre, J., & Peters, B. G. (2000). *Governance, politics and the state*. London: Macmillan.

Pollitt, C. (Ed.). (2013). *Context in public policy and management: The missing link?*. Cheltenman: Edward Elgar.

Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. (2011). *Public management reform. A comparative analysis: New public management, governance, and the new-Weberian state* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rayner, J., Williams, H. M., & Lawton, A. (2010). Public service ethos: Developing a generic measure. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 21*(1), 27–51.

Rhodes, R. A. W. (1997). *Understanding governance: Policy networks, governance, reflexivity and accountability*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Rhodes, R. A. W. (2007). Understanding governance: Ten years on. *Organization Studies, 28*(08), 1243–1264.

Sabatier, P. A., & Weible, C. M. (2007). The advocacy coalition framework, innovations and clarifications. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the policy process* (2nd ed., pp. 189–220). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Sears, D., & Brown, C. (2013). Childhood and Adult Political Development. In L. Huddy, D. Sears, & J. Levy (Eds.), *The oxford handbook of political psychology* (pp. 59–95). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sehested, K. (2009). Urban planners as network managers and metagovernors. *Planning Theory & Practice, 10*(2), 245–263.

Selznick, P. (1949). *TVA and the grass roots: A study in the sociology of formal organization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Skivenes, M., & Trygstad, S. C. (2014). Wrongdoing: Definitions, identification and categorizations. In A. J. Brown, D. Lewis, R. Moberly, & W. Vandekerckhove (Eds.), *International handbook on whistleblowing research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Spicer, M. W. (2014). *In defense of politics in public administration. A value pluralist perspective*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press.

Spiller, P. T., & Tommasi, M. (2009). *The institutional foundations of public policy in Argentina*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Svara, J. H. (2001). The myth of the dichotomy: Complementarity of politics and administration in the past and future of public administration. *Public Administration Review, 61*(2), 176–183.

Svara, J. H. (2006). Introduction: Politicians and administrators in the political process—A review of themes and issues in the literature. *International Journal of Public Administration, 29*(12), 953–976.

Sørensen, E., & Torfing, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Theories of democratic network governance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Thacher, D., & Rein, M. (2004). Managing value conflict in public policy, *Governance, 17*(4), 457–486.

Van Maanen, J., & Barley, S. R. (1984). Occupational communities: Culture and control in organizations. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (pp. 287–366). Greenwhich, CT: JAI Press.

Mechanisms of Institutional Change

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters, we have argued that there are various types of public officials, likewise that individual officials vary to a large extent when it comes to their beliefs and values as well as their propensity to take action on those. Hence, public organizations have to live with some amount of fragmentation, despite forces of social adaptation and efforts of consolidation. Consequentially, there is great variation among public officials when it comes to political activism. Some are really committed and want to make a difference within all spheres of life, while others perceive of political issues as something more or less private, and still others have a very limited interest in political matters whatsoever. Inside activists differ from the average public official by being more prone to power-driven action within and outside public organizations. In this chapter, we develop theoretical arguments about how green inside activists can work for institutional change by using different strategies and mechanisms of both a combative and adaptive character (see Chap. 2).

This chapter starts by addressing the theme of politics and power in public organizations and goes on with a more targeted discussion about public officials and their basic power conditions. We then develop theoretical ideas on micro-mechanisms of change, followed by a discussion about how inside activists can use these mechanisms to produce institutional change by (i) expanding political agency and (ii) exploiting institutional ambiguities. We end this chapter by discussing three dilemmas

of influence for green inside activism. The radicalism–change dilemma deals with how radical a green public official can be in the short perspective without provoking powerful interests and undermining the possibility of inducing change on the longer time frame. The power–deliberation dilemma raises questions whether sustainable development can be achieved through open deliberation or if secret, tactical, and power-driven action is unavoidable to make a difference. The openness–secrecy dilemma is about how far secrecy and subversive action can be taken without losing its effective capacity and under what circumstances it is better to act more openly. We elaborate on how inside activists can handle these dilemmas in different situations and through alternative tactics.

Politics and Power in Public Organizations

Politics and power is a persistent phenomenon within public organizations, even though it has not been a main theme over the years in political science and public administration. As stated by Norton Long more than 60 years ago:

> Power is only one of the considerations that must be weighed in administration, but of all it is the most overlooked in theory and the most dangerous to overlook in practice (Long 1949, p. 257).

Since then, research on politics and power in public organizations has increased and there are different approaches of relevance to this book (Rohr 1986; O'Neill 1988; Spicer 2014; O'Leary 2014). First, the research tradition of bureaucratic politics approaches public policy by emphasizing internal bargaining within the state (Allison and Zelikow 1971; Halperin et al. 2006). Thus, policy outcomes are assumed to result from the bargaining power of a limited number of highly placed governmental actors—politicians and officials—having varying preferences, abilities, and positions of power. Participants are assumed to choose strategies and policy goals based on their organizational and personal interests. Unfortunately, this approach tends to focus narrowly on issues of high politics and actors with formal power positions, while largely neglecting daily based policy-making, the importance of power-driven action behind the scenes, and informal inter-organizational networking.

Second, public administration scholars study how public officials and professionals, in their everyday activities, handle ethically problematic value conflicts of both a procedural and substantial character. Recent research has focused on value profiles among public officials, the value conflicts they face, and how they handle them (Thacher and Rein 2004; Campbell and O'Leary 2015; De Graaf 2015; De Graaf et al. 2016). In understanding how value conflicts are handled, this literature often uses concepts such as value pluralism and moral and legal reasoning (Spicer 2014), while paying less attention to power-seeking action of public officials as well as their networking with external organizations.

For public officials, there are different ways of handling value conflicts, which need to be addressed in more comprehensive and inclusive ways. This means a more ambitious agenda for theorizing on the power of public officials within public organizations. We therefore need to draw lessons also from other fields of research as well, in particular some contributions in the theoretical power debate (Lukes 2005), organizational studies (Pfeffer 1981, 1994; Martin 2014), and institutional theory (Mahoney and Thelen 2010; Lowndes and Roberts 2013; Olsson 2016). However, before theorizing on how inside activists can work for change through the use of different types of mechanisms, including power-driven action, we need to look into the basic power conditions of public officials in general.

Power Conditions of Public Officials

The institutional context of public organizations yields specific conditions of great importance to understand the power and influence of public officials. This includes both power resources for the officials and restrains or limitations for other actors, most specifically elected politicians. To start with, a basic formal condition of public officials is their paid positions, a seemingly simple and self-evident fact that actually constitute a powerful, authoritative platform for action. This formal position can legitimize various sorts of initiatives and decisions as well as give access to other types of important resources, such as budgetary funds and networks with governing elites. Furthermore, when this position is a permanent employment, the official has an opportunity for strategic long-term commitment and has thus comparative advantages to those officials—politicians and administrators—who are directly or indirectly dependent on popular votes. While elected officials come and go, the permanent staff can

continue to develop appropriate competences and experiences within the relevant context. In complex policy areas such as sustainable development, public officials may also have more than one superior, giving them strategic discretion and 'incentive to treat different types of principals in different ways, such as responding more substantively to some principals and more symbolically to others' (Waterman et al. 2004, p. 128).

To get a permanent position as a public official, it is usually necessary to have some form of appropriate higher-level education as well as years of training and experience. Knowledge is a vital power resource, and generally speaking, public officials have an advantage in this respect over popularly elected politicians (Weber 1978). Of course, the type of expertise varies to a large extent within the very large collective of public officials and, for many officials, their factual competence is very specialized. However, their permanent positions give them plenty of time for developing praxis-based experience and competence as well as for networking with actors having other types of competencies and resources, be they colleagues within the same organization or external experts. As discussed in Chap. 4, expertise in itself is insufficient to generate influence. The abilities and opportunities to develop trusting relations with key decision-makers are of vital importance.

The formal position of public officials has over the last decades—generally speaking—got increased discretion. The traditional bureaucracy has given way to different forms of performance management, leaving more room for interpretation, decision-making, and implementation within public organizations (Chap. 4). While public managers have got more responsibilities to manage, and professionals and administrators take care of the daily activities, popularly elected politicians are increasingly busy with an ever present media-based politics, largely driven by opinion polls, short-term initiatives, and 'symbol' politics. This further means that politicians (and sometimes top-level managers) get most of the limelight and are the main targets of critical media reportings, while ordinary public officials can operate more anonymously, even though their units are continuously evaluated.

Despite authoritative positions of politicians and managers at different decision-making levels, a couple of conditions tend to limit their de facto power in relation to public officials and professionals. Leading politicians and governments have, first of all, responsibility for a large number of policy areas and issues, which often lead to time pressure and a reactive policy style with an exception for a limited number of high-profile issues.

This situation means that politicians come to depend on public officials to win time and to get depth and quality in preparing decisions. As a consequence, background reports for decisions tend to have one or just a few well-prepared decision-making alternatives, largely influenced by the professional biases and desires of a limited number of public officials (and their networks) (O'Leary 2014, p. 109). Of course, politicians and their appointees usually have some interaction with public officials during preparations of decisions, but public officials have degrees of freedom to select 'appropriate' perspectives and facts, consult external experts and interests, and to let 'troublesome' information remain unknown to the political decision-makers ('cherry picking' and 'sexing up the evidence'). The final decision proposal can thus be largely influenced by a few key public officials in line with their own views of what is wise to do.

Second, it is not always clear what those in power want. Politicians can stay silent on various public policy issues, leaving officials free to develop policy as they see fit (Page 2012, p. 7). Politicians can also say too much. Public officials have to deal with a large number of different, and sometimes conflicting, policies and political goals. Such policy ambiguities give officials important degrees of freedom for taking action—gaining legitimacy by referring to the policies and goals of their liking. For example, a local government can simultaneously prioritizing reduced number of travels by private cars to decrease CO_2 emissions and increasing regional trade by approving the further expansion of external shopping malls. Sometimes, leading politicians can disagree on important matters due to conflicts both within a single party and between parties within a government coalition. In this situation, important problems and issues will not likely be addressed but will rather be postponed for the time being, until new openings eventually occur. However, some issues are so precarious that they have to be handled here and now, and in such a situation, public officials can get the mediator role, giving them opportunities to suggest compromises. A similar situation can occur when politicians and parties have to face new problems and issues, which can be difficult to handle for several reasons, for instance, due to limited insights on the nature of the problem, its likely consequences, and what it might mean for the political party in question.

Thus, the formal authoritative power of governments (at different levels of decision-making) has important limitations in relation to public officials and their de facto power, which officials can use in various ways in different stages of policy and planning processes.

Mechanisms of Institutional Change

It is far from enough to consider the basic and general power conditions of public officials to understand how green inside activists can influence processes of policy and institutional change. We need to develop theoretical insights on the micro-mechanisms of change and, in particular, how power comes into play in connection with other mechanisms.

Institutional theory's neglect of political agency in general and inside activism in particular mean it has underestimated the importance of interactivity between endogenous and exogenous forces as well as the potential for gradual change with transformative effects (see Chap. 2). As presented in Chap. 1, there are various theoretical ideas on how to explain institutional change but fewer thoughts about the role of public officials as change agents. We rather find some good ambitions to theorize on individual actors in the policy and planning literature, which we assessed in Chap. 3. We concluded that the political nature and inter-organizational character of green inside activism are of particular importance for theorizing agency and institutional change. Institutional change through inside activism can occur dramatically as well as evolve through gradual processes but both ways can head toward transformative change where existing institutional rules, norms, and practices are largely replaced. While previous research largely assumes that transformative change most commonly emanates from external shocks and critical events (Krasner 1984; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Pierre 2009; Mahoney 2000; Thelen 1999), we argue that it can also follow from endogenous processes of different kinds and from gradual interactivity between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' of organizations (see also Streek and Thelen 2005; Mahoney and Thelen 2010; Lowndes and Roberts 2013; Olsson 2016). As argued in Chap. 4, green inside activism can provide and nurture seeds of change. Here, minor external changes can lead to new or better opportunities to turn radical ideas of change into action, which in turn may trigger dynamic change processes. We can further expect inside activists to secretly monitor the environment in search for opportunities that may support and strengthen their own change agendas (cf. Kingdon 1984/1995). Active attempts to strategically connect are likely done from both within and outside organizations as well as through dialogue between like-minded people in inter-organizational networks.

Fundamental change can follow from such gradual interactive processes until a 'tipping point' is reached, or may result from a dramatic revealing, for instance, of a government caused environmental or health hazards, likely triggering reactions and new disruptive events ('internal shocks') (Olsson 2016, pp. 88–92). In these types of processes, inside activists can play a crucial role for change. To understand how this may come about, we need to take a closer look at some power mechanisms that inside activists can employ in combination with other types of actions.

Mechanisms of Power and Influence

In their daily activities, green inside activists seek power and influence in terms of strategic goal-oriented action and seizing of opportunities. However, in paraphrasing Francis Bacon, well-experienced inside activists *make* more opportunities than they happen to *find*, which is quite natural when continually being at the center of events. Inside activists seek *power to* preserve or change institutions through the use of various micro-mechanisms, such as collecting facts, developing arguments, and taking part in open deliberation with politicians, managers, and other colleagues. If the organizational culture allows open and free discussions, green inside activists have good opportunities to utilize the light side of political agency in trying to convince relevant politicians and managers of new ideas. This is easy power; so easy that we can speak preferably of influence: getting what you want with no resistance, maybe even being actively supported in a number of ways (funding, more staff, open support, and so forth). We can also understand it in terms of *power with*, implying learning and cooperation, which means that 'actors with a transformational orientation have substantial agency, if they act in concert' (Partzsch 2017, p. 195). However, there is often a thin line between convincing argumentation and persuasion through powerful framing.

Considering that there are elements of conflict in institutional dynamics, we also expect green inside activists to try to exercise *power over* other actors, particularly in situations when important values are at stake. However, we do not see this power-seeking within public organizations as equivalent to the first dimension of power that 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do' (Dahl 1957, p. 80; see also Lukes 2005, p. 16). Although

formal, authoritative mandates give opportunities to high-level officials to impose their will on subordinates, we expect it to be rather seldom practiced within highly institutionalized contexts, such as public organizations, for two interrelated reasons. First, power by force tends to be costly and ineffective, because it normally violates fundamental rules and norms of appropriate behavior, which likely provoke criticism and may lead to new or worsened conflicts. Second, it is usually unnecessary to act forcefully because power is 'socialized' and embedded in institutions, making organization members sensitive to the formal power for social and cultural reasons. They will likely show a willingness to adapt but, as previously argued, we do not expect this to be a full commitment without reservations. The logic of social adaptation is a consolidating force within public organizations, which tends to reduce traditional power-seeking behavior but not the use of all forms of power mechanisms, rather the contrary.

We expect more subtle and indirect forms of power mechanisms to be important in the institutional dynamics of public organizations. This cautious type of power-seeking still has the intention of getting power over someone or something and can involve several dimensions such as the effort of undermining the conditions and the capacity of an opponent, influencing the agenda setting of a government by secret networking and coalition building, or weakening a strong policy discourse through whistle-blowing and negative publicity (Olsson 2016; Pfeffer 1981, 1994). Thus, we think of power in a broad sense, in line with Steven Lukes' three dimensions of power. He further argues that 'we need to attend to those aspects of power that are the least accessible to observation: that, indeed, power is at its most effective when least observable' (Lukes 1974/2005, p. 1). In line with this fundamental argument, green inside activists can use some of their advantages to get influence, such as being relatively anonymous and having continuous opportunities for subversive action (Olsson 2016).

The concept of *institutional subversion* may sound as a contradiction in terms. However, it rather underscores that subversive action is a type of power mechanism on the dark side of political agency that interacts with institutional rules, norms, and practices. Institutional subversion is understood in a broad sense and is usually not about subverting an entire government or political regime. Subversive action has been defined as follows:

secret political actions against institutional rules, norms, and practices by ignoring, violating, or seeking to change them, or trying to preserve stability by secretly resisting or undermining activities or initiatives, which are perceived as threats to existing institutions (Olsson 2016, p. 40).

Subversive action is political in the sense of questioning or securing some rules or norms, not in relation to narrow personal interests, but for trying to address social and political problems and to fight for specific values and norms supported by special interests. This means that activities for pure personal profit—such as corruption and 'grabbing' (Rothstein 2015; Søreide and Williams 2014)—fall outside the definition. As argued in Chap. 2, people often act from complex motivation structures in which self-interest plays a part but is usually embedded in other beliefs, values, and interests.

In public organizations, subversive actions can be of quite different kinds, which can be illustrated by a few examples: whistle-blowing by a committed public official to make the media aware of dubious government activities such as environmental destruction; a secretly coordinated exit by disappointed environmental officials to leave 'their organization' in a troublesome situation; a politician talking in public about the importance of investments in green technologies, while in practice acting to let other values be prioritized; and a top-level environmental official attempting to sow dissent between the parties in a government coalition so as to be able to divide and rule on environmental issues.

These examples illustrate the variety of subversive action and its basic political character: It is about conflicts concerning specific rules, norms, and values as well as actions and non-actions to handle those, by either working for change or trying to preserve the status quo. Subversive action in terms of non-action can take place when public officials, for instance, avoid taking responsibility in certain situations in order to let things deteriorate for some reason, for example, due to secret opposition against a new management initiative having detrimental environmental effects (O'Leary 2014).

Subversive action is political—not in the traditional sense of open protest, political negotiations, formal decision-making power, or dominant political discourse—but in a secret, tactical, and power-driven way (Forester 1989; Alexander 2001; Flyvbjerg and Richardson 2002; Olsson and Hysing 2012). However, subversive action can be used in combination with other power strategies and with more appropriate behaviors.

Moreover, the examples above indicate that subversive actions are of different magnitudes and importance and are driven by various actors in different stages of the policy process. However, the secret character of this power mechanism makes it particularly attractive for actors, such as public officials, who are expected to follow the logic of social adaptation. They have limited possibilities to open combat and thus need to find more secret ways to exert influence, beside the more appropriate ones. Last but not least, it is obvious that subversive action can be fundamentally problematized from ethical and democratic points of views, in relation to both its ends and means, which we will come back to in Chap. 7.

In understanding the nature of subversive action, we can also draw on insights from the guerilla government research of Rosemary O'Leary, adding some of her illuminating examples on how public officials can exert this sort of influence. O'Leary shows that they can slip data to other agencies, ghostwriting testimonies for others, leak information to the press, set up secret meetings to plot unified staff strategies, and quietly sabotage the actions of their agency (O'Leary 2014). Thus, subversive actions vary from the small to the big. In the word of O'Leary, these actions 'range from putting a work order at the bottom of the desk drawer and forgetting about it to slipping information to a legislative staff person to outright insubordination' (O'Leary 2014, p. 108).

It can further be argued that the frequency of subversive action is largely dependent on contexts and situations. We can in particular expect it within organizations where the management is negative toward or even counteract on open discussions. This means that green inside activists even may have to go underground for some time, waiting for better times, or to act subversively 'under the radar of the dominant actors' (Mahoney and Thelen 2010, pp. 29–30; Needleman and Needleman 1974). Notwithstanding the plausibility of this argument, a more general argument is that subversive action is a varied and fundamental mechanism in the daily life of public organizations. We can thus assume it to be relevant in most contexts and situations, but in quite different ways and versions: from subversive chit-chat to concerted subversive networking (Olsson 2016, Chap. 3). This argument is in line with the ideas of Rosemary O'Leary (2014). It can even be argued that subversive action is particularly effective when least expected, that is, in public organizations with a deliberative and open organizational culture. On the other hand, in such a 'friendly context,' there may be limited need for a

controversial and risky mechanism like subversive action as well as good opportunities to influence in more appropriate ways.

A fundamental argument is that we expect subversive action to be tempting for a number of actors in *critical situations* where really important values are at stake for those involved and where the outcome is hard to predict. Critical situations like this can be of different magnitudes and take place on different levels of organizations, which means the argument is in line with the general assumption that subversive action is a relatively common and varied mechanism in the life of public organizations. In other words, where we observe sensitive conflicts, we should expect to find subversive action.

From our distinctly political approach on institutions and institutional change, we will now further theorize on gradual and interactive processes by putting the light on two types of main strategies for institutional change: expanding political agency and exploiting institutional ambiguities.

Expanding Political Agency

We know it is difficult for individuals alone to make a difference, even when they have advantageous positions and good opportunities to influence political issues. This is well-illustrated by recent whistle-blowing research, showing that it is more difficult than assumed by whistle-blowers themselves to actually change or preserve institutional rules and norms, even when an employee has really sensitive information of great disadvantage to the management of an organization. Solitary whistle-blowers, who report organizational wrongdoings, tend to overestimate their ability to come to grips with the problems (Martin 2014, p. 515). This may be due to emotional outrage against the organizational wrong-doing and limited insights about the complex political nature of organizational conflicts (Pfeffer 1994). For individual whistle-blowers, and other activists within public organizations, expanding political agency is an important, multifaceted strategy to effectively handle conflicts and seeking to change institutions.

In order to strengthen their chances of institutional change, inside activists can expand their capacity for political action in various ways. Following the 5C model of Vivien Lowndes and Mark Roberts (2013, pp. 104ff.), we will elaborate on expanding political agency through developing collective power, combative strategy, cumulative effects, and

combinative solutions as well as to bend and break constraints on their actions.

To be able to put pressure behind their goals and to exert influence, green inside activists can develop *collective force* by, for instance, mobilizing networks and building coalitions of actors. Networking is a vital strategy for any individual who wants to influence on political matters. The importance of networks has been shown in a number of studies on policymaking and policy change (Marsh and Rhodes 1992; Sørensen and Torfing 2007), but network analysis has also been criticized for lacking understanding of how individual actors are important within networks (Blom-Hansen 1997). Some network characteristics are particularly important for networks to be powerful and influential, such as informal and personal relationships between key individuals as well as the capacity of the network to mobilize and connect competencies and resources from different types of organizations and intra-organizational networks (Olsson 2016; Hysing 2014). As argued by Mintrom and Norman (2009, p. 652), 'policy actors who get along well with others and who are well connected in the local policy context tend to achieve more success in securing policy change than do others.' Similarly, an essential element in the success of Norman Krumholz and colleagues to make equity planning work in the City of Cleveland in the 1970s was the social relationships within the group of planners and with powerful administrative and political officials (Hoch 1994; Krumholz and Forester 1990). Thus, green inside activists can expand their political agency by strategic personal networking within their organizations and across organizational borders. When this is done in combination with subversive action, it can work quite effectively as we illustrate below.

The Cleveland case also illustrates that inside activists not only can operate through networks but also develop collective force by systematically building a new staff within their own organization (Krumholz and Forester 1990, Chap. 2). The planning group of Krumholz became well-known and highly respected but also criticized for some of their activities. Their inside activism was open and argumentative rather than subversive and tactical, giving them wide public attention and support, but it also meant an obvious risk of criticism and countermeasures from some opponents (Krumholz and Forester 1990, Foreword and Part II).

Second, green inside activists can develop *combative* strategies against values and interests of their opponents in a way that do not obviously violate highly valued institutional rules and norms, even though some

of those may be part of the conflict. Thus, for combative actions to be effective, they need to have a low profile, ideally taking place in secrecy, and choose their battles carefully. A good example is subversive networking, defined as 'secret cooperation between actors from different organizations who intend to change or preserve specific rules and norms' (Olsson 2016, p. 99). A key point for getting the most out of subversive networking is to have it take place in the 'shadow of appropriate behavior,' for instance, by openly supporting norms that one wants to undermine. In subversive networking, inside activists can coordinate parallel activities in secrecy, such as mobilizing external actors for open political action, like doing the 'dirty' work (protests, negative campaigning) to weaken the legitimacy of an organizational regime. Furthermore, the green inside activist can do whistle-blowing by leaking disadvantageous information about opposition to allies in other units and external organizations, and at the same time initiating 'trustworthy dialogues' with superiors to make them feel safe and updated. In subversive networking, secrecy is the key component, making it difficult to trace back radical action to individual public officials, and thus avoiding blame and reprisals for breaking institutional rules and norms. However, there is no guarantee that subversive networking goes on unnoticed by superiors and inside activists need to be ready to pay the price. If it is revealed, superiors can initiate countermeasures, such as to redeploy or to fire disloyal employees and to temporarily postpone the controversial issue to cool down the critics. Furthermore, superiors can also start monitoring activities and networks of suspected employees. If revealed, the subversive networking turns into a more open conflict and the superiors will likely have the upper hand, thanks to its formal power position in relation to the official (Olsson 2016).

Third, green inside activists can expand their political agency by developing *combinative* strategies, such as using combative and appropriate methods in smart ways, such as acting subversively in the shadow of appropriate behavior. In the Cleveland case, Norman Krumholz acted on the 'theater of politics' (Hoch 1994, p. 210) and assumed a nonthreatening public identity—including dressing, talking, and behaving as a businessman so that a potentially unsympathetic audience would presume shared values and listen—while also acting in support of more radical and potentially contentious issues of equity (Hoch 1994, pp. 209–210). Combinative action is at the heart of inside activism by bridging institutional divides between the public and the private, and

between political and administrative realms. It is very much about innovation and creativity in specific contexts, underscoring the entrepreneurial character of inside activism. One way to do this is to connect their own highly valued issue to other values or issues prioritized by potential alliance partners. For instance, an environmental coalition can try to include business interests by adding a proposal of financial support for investments in environmental friendly energy production. There are also combinative possibilities in trying to connect different policy areas to increase the positive effects and the overall support of a political package. For instance, in working for reduced inner-city congestion by introducing charges, it can also be tactical to offer other, more attractive elements, such as building new bicycle lanes and introducing reduced prices for public transports. Hitting two important targets with one shot can, for instance, be accomplished by letting long-term unemployed get paid public jobs for cleaning up polluted areas. There are always available combinative possibilities but they are largely context dependent and green inside activists need to actively search for and develop creative combinations. If they are successful in doing this, they will expand their political agency through the inclusion of other important actors and interests.

Fourth, it is strategically important for green inside activists to work for *cumulative* effects in terms of systematic impact on institutions over time (cf. Hysing 2014). New openings and dramatic events sometimes occur but do not take away the importance of gradual change efforts and their cumulative effects. One can remind of the snowball effect metaphor, starting from an initial state of small significance, successively building upon itself, and getting larger and larger. We can also understand the process in terms of the tipping point metaphor; hardly noticeable the gradual process can add new ideas and activities until a point of no return where transformative change de facto has taken place (Olsson 2016). Green inside activists are value-driven and committed, working eagerly and impatiently in support of their values. Inside activists should not only be seen as 'surfers waiting for the big wave,' like John Kingdon's policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon 1984/1995), but also as committed activists continuously working to keep opportunity windows open as well as seeking to open new ones. Thus, in comparison with the policy entrepreneur of Kingdon, inside activists have potentially more influence by acting behind the scenes, bending the rules, and trying to cut corners by reinterpreting policies.

Five, inside activists are *constrained* in various ways by institutional rules, norms, and practices, but can also try to escape some of these restrictions by continually testing their viability and thus to potentially expand their agency further. As argued in Chap. 4, institutions are fragmented which enable inside activists to avoid co-optation as well as to act to promote institutional change. Some structures in society are 'hard' material conditions, such as types of infrastructures that actors just have to adapt to, at least in the short run. More 'soft' constraints, such as norms, tend to inhabit or redirect human behavior, not necessarily in a coherent way as if people in general adapt in a passive, mindless sense. People are different: Many take rules and norms for granted, others try to bend them, and a few seek to create their own rules of the game. The structural nature of institutions has both an objective and subjective side. On the one hand, when 'structures' are put to the test institutions occasionally reinstate themselves (carried out by representatives of the institutions), but in some situations, existing institutions will collapse (like the Berlin Wall in 1989). On the other hand, actors subjectively interpret the structural character of institutions and adapt their behavior in relation to their own mental pictures and conceptions of institutions. This dualistic construction of institutions can have very real material expressions but can also mean that institutions are perceived as more stable than they actually are, which could have been obvious if they had been challenged at an earlier point of time. Thus, institutions can demonstrate their persistence in critical situations, manage the test, and even come out stronger than before. Such an event easily become symbolic and likely remains in the memoirs of people, making them hesitant for the time being to put the institution to test again (Hattam 2000). However, green inside activists can also successfully challenge institutional constraints by exploiting institutional ambiguities. How this can be done is our next point of interest.

Exploiting Institutional Ambiguities

New institutionalism theory tends to overstate the structural nature of institutions. To establish a more nuanced understanding of institutions, we need to recognize institutions as being increasingly ambiguous and messy and in continuous need of support to persist (Mahoney and Thelen 2010; Lowndes and Roberts 2013; Olsson 2016). Rules, norms, and practices tend to change in different speeds over time. While some

rules and norms remain stable, practices on the ground can change or vice versa. This more elaborated view on institutions also underscores that new institutionalism has underestimated the possibility for change agents to undermine and alter the composition of institutions. This further means that we need to bring in *political* actors for developing a more elaborated understanding of institutional change. As frankly stated by Vivien Lowndes and Mark Roberts, 'in politics, as elsewhere, rules exist to be broken as well as to be obeyed' (Lowndes and Roberts 2013, pp. 47–48).

In the same vein, James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen (2010) argue that institutional ambiguity is a relatively persistent feature of institutions, which are never clearly structured and are constantly interpreted by actors with divergent interests. They further argue that 'gaps' or 'soft spots' between the rule and its interpretation as well as the rule and its enforcement can explain how institutional change evolves as a gradual, endogenous process (Mahoney and Thelen 2010, p. 14). These gaps often emerge from vague compromises in which some actors turn out as winners and others as losers, leading to built-in conflicts of institutions. Actors who are satisfied with the status quo will avoid these conflicts, while opponents will likely try to exploit tension points when opportunities arise. These insights on institutional ambiguities and how dissatisfied actors can try to exploit them underscore the importance of political agency in explaining institutional change.

Considering the complex, diverse, and dynamic political challenges of sustainable development, green inside activists have great opportunities to exploit institutional ambiguities. They can develop strategies and tactics for how to use ambiguities in working for green change. For example, ambiguities can come about when a rewritten policy end up greenwashing overarching goals while specific rules, norms, and practices remain unchanged on the ground, impeding real material change. Rules and norms of a principle character can persist, and even be publicly defended as very important by political elites, at the same time as concrete practices are more strictly organized with fundamental effects for how the institutional rules and norms will be interpreted and applied in practice. When discrepancies emerge between rules, norms, and practices, detailed 'hard' rules or strongly institutionalized praxis on the street level (Lipsky 1980; Hupe et al. 2015) can work as the institutional rudder, turning principle rules and norms into empty symbols (Olsson 2016, pp. 92–95; Edelman 1964).

This insight can help green inside activists to direct their attention to those institutionalized practices that constitute the main obstacle for green change. For instance, in working for sustainable forestry, which takes biodiversity seriously, traditional norms on the ground may have to be challenged, like ideas of well-tended forests without coarse woody debris and snags which are often perceived as a necessity to avoid forest pests and diseases. This fight may entail assessments of research and experience, information dissemination, opinion-making, networking with forest owners and their organizations, monitoring of logging operations, and so on. The activist behavior can be driven both from the insider position and through environmental movements.

In the opposite situation, where a government does not prioritize sustainable forestry, green inside activists can try to sidestep it by working for change on the ground: trying to create sustainable forestry bottom up, independently of the weak green status of the formal policy. If successful, this implies increasing institutional ambiguities, which can be exploited later on in terms of criticism against policies for not being in line with reality. Green inside activists can launch this criticism both through factual/expert argumentation, from their insider role, and indirectly by secretly supporting environmental movement protests.

Institutional ambiguities can also arise from the ambition of leading politicians and managers to secure the stability of existing institutions. In situations of severe criticism, they may try to cool it down by making minor changes in a new legislation, such as adding one more goal in a framework law. This 'harmless' compromise may later turn out as the weak spot, which opponents can effectively use in working for more fundamental change. This may be particularly attractive for actors with 'practical authority' in the local context, having capacity to initiate activities that can make a difference (Abers and Keck 2013).

Considering that green inside activists are change agents, they have everything to gain from trying to increase ambiguities of outdated institutions, for instance by strengthening existing contradictions and further weakening the soft spots, until the time is right to forcefully exploit them. However, other actors can also exploit ambiguities to undermine previous victories of green inside activists. Thus, they therefore need to reduce ambiguities of their own green institutions to consolidate green rules and norms.

Dilemmas of Influence

When should inside activists take action? Even if green inside activists succeed in expanding their agency and exploiting institutional ambiguities, they need to handle difficult dilemmas that might put them in risky situations. They are often balancing on a knife edge and can sometimes fail simply because they are unlucky. We focus on three fundamental dilemmas, which can be formulated as critical choices for inside activists: How radical can one be (green radicalism–change)? What strategies should be used (power-seeking–deliberation)? And when to stay hidden and when to come out the closet (secrecy–openness)? We expect inside activists to engage in a mix of activities to exert influence in which these dilemmas become relevant and need to be handled in different ways (see also Chap. 2). We elaborate on how inside activists can handle these dilemmas through alternative tactics.

The radicalism–change dilemma is the most fundamental one for any change agent. How radical on the short term can green public officials be without provoking countermeasures by powerful interests and undermining their possibility to induce long-term change toward a more sustainable development? Green inside activism is about securing previous green victories as well as to take on new challenges. Green inside activists are likely to have radical ideas and sentiments in different meanings, and on average, we expect them to be more radical than other environmental officials, which is supported by survey data on local environmental officials in Sweden. The survey indicated that officials with inside activist characteristics were more radical than the environmental officials in general. They agreed to a larger extent that 'environmental problems demand a radical transformation of society' and that 'sustainable development requires that the capitalist system be changed in its core.' Inside activists were also more prepared to take action in support of their beliefs than the average environmental officials, in terms of being prepared to leave their jobs (exit) if the local government policy would be incompatible with their beliefs and to go to the press if the local government would destroy valuable nature (Hysing and Olsson 2011; Hysing et al. 2016).

However, we did not find any general trade-off between green radicalism and policy influence. Often, environmental radicals, inside as well as outside government, are expected to be marginalized, both in number and in influence, and thus to have limited direct policy importance.

Instead, their significance for policy has been described as being 'the radicals' who make moderate environmentalists seem reasonable by comparison (Rootes 2003, p. 6; Dobson 2007, p. 192). The intuitively reasonable dilemma between radicalism and influence is not as straight-forward as it seems. Maybe the degree of radicalism among public officials tends to affect the acceptance of green radical ideas within the specific context, which means increasing radicalism over time could successively lead to growing acceptance of these ideas. In line with the arguments in this chapter, maybe the environmental public officials perceive their actual and potential influence as relatively strong and well-received during the last years. However, we should interpret these results cautiously consider-ing that it is a single study based on subjective perceptions of the public officials themselves. Obviously, we need more empirical research on green radicalism and change within public organizations.

The *power—deliberation dilemma* is ethically problematic for the green inside activist: Is sustainable development through open deliber-ation the most efficient and legitimate strategy or is tacit, tactical, and power-driven action unavoidable from time to time? This parallels a central debate within green political theory on how to balancing proce-dural–democratic and substantial green values (Saward 1996). We have previously argued that inside activism tends to be dualistic (Chap. 2). We have also argued that inside activists take action under the 'shadow of appropriate behavior'; that is, subversive actions are hidden most of the time behind a façade of appropriate and acceptable actions, such as deliberation. We also expect the use of subversive action and other tacti-cal measures to come to expression as a dilemma in different situations, either in public or as pangs of conscience for the activists themselves.

In this respect, Rosemary O'Leary presents an interesting case about the 'guerrilla government and the Nevada wetlands' (O'Leary 2014, Chap. 2). This study is about the so-called Nevada Four, three sci-entists from the US Department of Interior and one from the Nevada Department of Wildlife, who succeeded to get a bill passed through Congress in 1990 to dedicate water to the Nevada wetlands. This com-prehensive case is very interesting in terms of how different micro-mechanisms are used in combination by the guerrillas. The 'Nevada Four' worked behind the scenes to develop support for the bill, and they were ghostwriters of parts of the final act. They were committed and put their jobs on the line in some situations by disobeying their

superiors. From an ethical point of view, it is of great interest that the Nevada Four used an environmental crisis in the form of extensive fish and bird deaths as arguments for their goal, even though the cause of the deaths was unknown. A potential explanation was a selenium toxicosis associated with the drainage of some Bureau of Reclamation irrigation projects. Environmental crisis was thus tactically used as an important symbol that could work as a decisive trigger (O'Leary 2014, pp. 32–33). Paradoxically, O'Leary finds that the administrative guerrillas also perceived factual information as a key to their success (O'Leary 2014, p. 40). This case evokes quite important normative questions: Is it wrong to compromise with the truth even though the intention is to save environmental values? Is it always wrong or is there some long-term goals and values that can legitimate short-term compromises with facts? In our opinion, it is particularly problematic if experts, who base their legitimacy on scientific knowledge, compromise with the truth or even intentionally falsify the truth for political purposes. Acting in this way means a huge risk to overplay one's hand, which can result in serious negative consequences for their own mission as well as for fundamental public and democratic values, which we will come back to in Chap. 7.

Inside activists using subversive action as a strategy likely face *the secrecy–openness dilemma* sooner or later: for how long is secrecy productive and when may it be the right time to change to an open strategy (Olsson 2016, pp. 95–98). If Steven Lukes is right in arguing that 'power is at its most effective when least observable' (Lukes 2005, p. 1), subversive action could be seen as the main strategy. However, there are also strong arguments for open and transparent actions to further public argumentation, deliberation, and opinion-making.

To dwell deeper into this dilemma, we can draw insights from the research on whistle-blowing. To begin with, there are strong arguments for both continuous and temporary secrecy. In whistle-blowing research, anonymity is typically perceived as both effective and valuable to the personal interests of the whistle-blower: The anonymous whistle-blower is far less likely to suffer different forms of reprisals; will more likely retain his/her employment; and can continue to collect and leak information. Furthermore, the audience for open disclosures is usually managements, human resource staff, and outside agencies (ombudsmen, oversight committees, and so forth), while anonymous leaking usually goes via media or action groups who will normally spread the information to civil society organizations and the general public (Martin 2014). However, this

is the general picture and we must remember that there are great variety and complex context dependency when it comes to whistle-blowers and their handling of the secrecy–openness dilemma (Lewis et al. 2014; Olsen 2014; Roberts 2014; Martin 2014).

Anonymous whistle-blowers who leak information can for several reasons chose to come out to explicitly motivate their actions. First, the work situation can make it difficult to continue as an anonymous whistle-blower without being revealed sooner or later. In such situation, prevention can be better than cure. Coming out can also be motivated by concerns for colleagues who can be suspected, falsely or not. Furthermore, the nature of the leaked information can be of extraordinary importance to the public interest, making the opinion-making strategy the right thing to do from a moral standpoint. It can also be argued that the subject matter may prosper from openness, for instance by getting support from important third parties and to be able to dismiss criticism for acting in obscurity and secrecy.

However, it can be argued that going public will reduce future possibilities to leak more information: The public whistle-blower will have fewer cards to play. This could be detrimental for the 'higher goals,' especially if the issue would slowly disappear from the media agenda with declining public awareness as a likely consequence. In contrast to this pessimistic account, it can be argued that disclosure opens up for actions among other actors on different arenas, even though it is an open question what this triggering effect will lead to in a longer time perspective.

In other cases, whistle-blowers have remained anonymous and have thus been able to leak more relevant information of the same kind. Thus, if whistle-blowing triggers extensive media coverage, it can be wise to remain anonymous, if possible, because the option of more whistle-blowing is still available as well as continuing cooperation between the whistle-blower and the journalists. The question of remaining anonymous or coming out is of central importance and is essentially context dependent in many respects: the nature of the policy area and the risk of being revealed.

Maybe the secrecy–openness dilemma can be dissolved by opting for both at the same time. There are two options at hand. The first, more realistic one is to go public and operate as an opinion-maker and continue to present secret information which is provided by former colleagues (cooperative whistle-blowing). The public whistle-blower has thus got a new mediator role, like a digging journalist. A second, more

unique option is suggested by Edward Snowden in an interview. On a question concerning a rumor about a new whistle-blower at the National Security Agency (NSA), he replies 'maybe it is me.' The point is that when the NSA has not identified how many documents that were actually taken by Snowden, all whistle-blowers who leak information which is older than May 2013 can use Snowden as a sort of protection. Of course, this argument is quite reasonable but holds only for unique cases of extreme magnitude (Sundström 2015; Olsson 2016, pp. 95–98). In sum, the secrecy–openness dilemma is a true one for the solitary activist, but it is possible to partly dissolve the dilemma, more or less, through expanded political agency.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter mainly deals with mechanisms of institutional change, that is, to identify and discuss strategies and efforts that can be used by green inside activists to effectively induce institutional change. We start by addressing the theme of politics and power in public organizations and focus more specifically on the basic power conditions of public officials in relation to politicians and managers. We conclude that the formal authoritative power of superiors has limitations in relation to the de facto power of public officials, such as knowledge, permanent positions, and increased discretion.

In particular, this chapter develops theoretical ideas on the mechanisms green inside activists can use to work for gradual institutional change. We argue that the change efforts tend to be dualistic: open, deliberative, and consensus-seeking as well as power-driven, tactical, and subversive. Thus, green inside activists follow both the logic of social adaptation and the logic of combat on the 'light' and 'dark' side of political agency. We further argue that power-driven, subversive action is most likely in critical situations where really important values are at stake for those involved and where the outcome is hard to predict. Moreover, we elaborate on how green inside activists can actually work to produce gradual institutional change by expanding political agency in a number of respects and by exploiting institutional ambiguities that continuously arise as opportunities for change.

We end this chapter by discussing three dilemmas of influence for green inside activism. The radicalism–change dilemma deals with how radical green public officials can be in the short perspective without

provoking powerful interests and undermining the possibility of inducing change on the longer time frame. The power–deliberation dilemma raises the question whether sustainable development can be achieved through open deliberation or if secret, tactical, and power-driven action is unavoidable to make a difference. The openness–secrecy dilemma is about how far secrecy and subversive action can be taken without losing its effective capacity and under what circumstances it is better to act more openly. We elaborate on how inside activists can handle these dilemmas in different situations through alternative tactics.

References

Abers, R. N., & Keck, M. E. (2013). *Practical authority. Agency and institutional change in Brazilian water politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Alexander, E. R. (2001). The planner-prince: Interdependence, rationalities and post-communicative practice. *Planning Theory & Practice, 2*(3), 311–324.

Allison, G., & Zelikow, P. (1971). *Essence of decision. Explaining the Cuban missile crisis* (2nd ed.). London: Longman.

Baumgartner, F. R., & Jones, B. D. (1993). *Agendas and instability in American politics.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

Blom-Hansen, J. (1997). A 'new' institutional perspective on policy networks. *Public Administration, 75*(4), 669–693.

Campbell, K., & O'Leary, R. (2015). Big ideas for big problems: Lessons from conflict resolution for public administration. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly, 33*(1), 107–119.

Dahl, R. (1957). The concept of power. In R. Bell, D. V. Edwards, & R. Harrison Wagner (Eds.) (1969). *Political power: A reader in theory and research.* New York: Free Press.

De Graaf, G. (2015). The bright future of value pluralism in public administration. *Administration & Society, 47*(9), 1094–1102.

De Graaf, G., Huberts, L., & Smulders, R. (2016). Coping with public value conflicts. *Administration & Society, 48*(9), 1101–1127.

Dobson, A. (2007). *Green political thought* (4th ed.). London: Routledge.

Edelman, M. (1964). *The symbolic uses of politics.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Flyvbjerg, B., & Richardson, T. (2002). Planning and Foucault: In search of the dark side of planning theory. In P. Allmendinger & M. Tewdwr-Jones (Eds.), *Planning futures: New directions for planning theory* (pp. 44–62). London: Routledge.

Forester, J. (1989). *Planning in the face of power.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Halperin, M. H., & Clapp, P. (2006). *Bureaucratic politics and foreign policy* (2nd ed.). Washington: Brookings Institution Press.

Hattam, V. (2000). History, Agency, and Political Change, Polity, *32*(3), 333–338.

Hoch, C. (1994). *What planners do: Power, politics, and persuasion*. Chicago, Il: Planners press.

Hupe, P. L., Hill, M., & Buffat, A. (Eds.). (2015). *Understanding street-level bureaucracy*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Hysing, E. (2014). How public officials gain policy influence—Lessons from local government in Sweden. *International Journal of Public Administration, 37*(2), 129–139.

Hysing, E., & Olsson, J. (2011). Who greens the northern light? Green inside activists in local environmental governing in Sweden. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy, 29*(4), 693–708.

Hysing, E., Olsson, J., & Dahl, V. (2016). A radical public administration? Green Radicalism and Policy Influence Among Local Environmental Officials in Sweden, *Environmental Politics, 25*(3), 535–552.

Kingdon, J. W. (1984/1995). *Agendas, alternatives and public policies*. New York: HarperCollins College Publishers

Krasner, S. (1984). Approaches to the state: Alternative conceptions and historical dynamics. *Comparative Politics, 16*(2), 223–246.

Krumholz, N., & Forester, J. (1990). *Making equity planning work. Leadership in the public sector*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Lewis, D., Brown, A. J., & Moberly, R. (2014). Whistleblowing, its importance and the state of the research. In A. J. Brown, D. Lewis, R. Moberly, & W. Vandekerckhove (Eds.), *International handbook on whistleblowing research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Long, N. E. (1949). Power and administration. *Public Administration Review, 9*(4), 257–264.

Lowndes, V., & Roberts, M. (2013). *Why institutions matter: The new institutionalism in political science*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lukes, S. (1974/2005). *Power. A radical view* (2nd Ed). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mahoney, J. (2000). Path dependence in historical sociology. *Theory and Society, 29,* 507–548.

Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (Eds.). (2010). *Explaining institutional change: Ambiguity, agency and power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marsh, D., & Rhodes, R. A. W. (1992). *Policy networks in British government*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Martin, B. (2014). Research that whistleblowers want—And what they need. In A. J. Brown, D. Lewis, R. Moberly, & W. Vandekerckhove (Eds.), *International handbook on whistleblowing research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Mintrom, M., & Norman, P. (2009). Policy entrepreneurship and policy change. *Policy Studies Journal, 37*(4), 649–667.

Needleman, M. L., & Needleman, C. E. (1974). *Guerrillas in the bureaucracy: The community planning experiment in the United States*. New York: Wiley.

O'Leary, R. (2014). *The ethics of dissent: Managing guerrilla government* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

O'Neill, T. D. (1988). Liberal Constitutionalism and Bureaucratic Discretion. *Polity, 20*, 371–393.

Olsen, J. (2014). Reporting versus inaction: How much is there, what explains the differences and what to measure. In A. J. Brown, D. Lewis, R. Moberly, & W. Vandekerckhove (Eds.), *International handbook on whistleblowing research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Olsson, J. (2016). *Subversion in institutional change and stability. A neglected mechanism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Olsson, J., & Hysing, E. (2012). Theorizing inside activism: Understanding policymaking and policy change from below. *Planning Theory & Practice, 13*(2), 257–273.

Page, E. (2012). *Policy without politicians: Bureaucratic influence in comparative perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Partzsch, L. (2017). 'Power with' and 'power to' in environmental politics and the transition to sustainability. *Environmental Politics, 26*(2), 193–211.

Pfeffer, J. (1981). *Power in organizations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pfeffer, J. (1994). *Managing with power: politics and influence in organizations*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

Pierre, J. (2009). Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc? Path Dependency and Punctuated Equilibria in European Aviation Safety Regulation, *Critical Policy Studies, 3*(1), 105–120.

Roberts, P. (2014). Motivations for whistleblowing: Personal, private and public interests. In A. J. Brown, D. Lewis, R. Moberly, & W. Vandekerckhove (Eds.), *International handbook on whistleblowing research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Rohr, J. A. (1986). *To run a constitution: The legitimacy of the administrative state*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Rootes, C. (2003). The transformation of environmental activism: An introduction. In C. Rootes (Ed.), *Environmental protest in Western Europe* (pp. 1–19). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rothstein, B. (Ed.). (2015). *Political corruption*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Sabatier, P. A. (1993). Policy change over a decade or more. In P. A. Sabatier & H. C. Jenkins-Smith (Eds.), *Policy change and learning: An advocacy coalition approach* (pp. 13–39). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Saward, M. (1996). Must democrats be environmentalists? In B. Doherty, & M. de Geus (Eds.) *Democracy and green political thought. Sustainability, rights and citizenship* (pp. 79–96). London: Routledge.

Søreide, T., & Williams, A. (Eds.). (2014). *Corruption, grabbing and development. Real world challenges*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Sørensen, E., & Torfing, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Theories of democratic network governance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Spicer, M. W. (2014). *In defense of politics in public administration. A value pluralist perspective*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press.

Streek, W., & Thelen, K. (2005). Introduction: Institutional change in advanced political economies. In W. Streek, & K. Thelen (Eds.) *Beyond continuity. Institutional change in advanced political economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sundström, L. (2015). Five hours with Edward Snowden, *Dagens Nyheter*, 6 November 2015. Available at http://www.dn.se. Accessed 9 March 2017.

Thacher, D., & Rein, M. (2004). Managing value conflict in public policy. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions, 17*(4), 457–486.

Thelen, K. (1999). Historical institutionalism in comparative politics. *Annual Review of Political Science, 2*(1999), 369–404.

Waterman, R. W., Rouse, A. A., & Wright, R. L. (2004). *Bureaucrats, Politics, and the Environment*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and Society: An outline of interpretative sociology*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Green Institutional Change: A Case Study

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we addressed change strategies of green inside activists and dilemmas of influence that they face. Some of these building blocks will come into use in this chapter when we elaborate and theorize on actual processes of change. We will put more flesh and bones to these theoretical discussions by illustrating how green inside activism can work productively in processes of institutional change. This chapter presents a heuristic case, which is a type of case study with great potential to inductively identify new variables, causal mechanisms, and causal paths (George and Bennett 2004, p. 75; Eckstein 1975, p. 104; Blaikie 2009, p. 195). This case is about sustainable land-use planning, a planning process with unexpected outcome. We offer a comprehensive explanation to this outcome by using theoretical insights from the previous chapters, focusing in particular on how specific change strategies and mechanisms of action are used in combinations and in sequences. We also discuss how these patterns of action are related to contextual factors such as the specific policy problem and the political landscape (see Chap. 4).

A central argument in this chapter is that combative actions can be useful and effective in policy and planning processes if they are wisely handled in relation to dominant institutions. For most officials, the logic of social adaptation is a more fundamental and 'natural' logic than combative action, at least in relatively institutionalized contexts. Nonetheless, there are always potential change agents underneath the surface, and in

specific situations, combative actions come to use, with potential triggering effects toward institutional change. In line with previous research (Lowndes and Roberts 2013), we elaborate on how inside activism can further change by expanding political agency: collective action (networks and coalitions), combinative efforts, combative and cooperative action in combination, and persistent activism to produce cumulative effects. As discussed in Chap. 5, attractive targets for combative action are institutional ambiguities and in particular the weak spots of institutions, such as specific norms or practices whose time has passed. Those weak spots have relatively few defenders and can thus be the strategic entrance for further change.

A Heuristic Case

The so-called case of Rynningeviken (the bay of Rynninge) is a heuristic case in terms of having generated theoretical concepts such as inside activism and value networks as well as having contributed with valuable insights on different mechanisms of institutional and policy change. This case is about land-use planning and has been partly presented before in other publications (Olsson 2004, 2005, 2009). We will summarize this case relatively thoroughly as an empirical basis for further theoretical elaborations on how inside activism can contribute to green change.

A 'Free' Geographical Area

In the early 1990s, in the Swedish city of Örebro, a land-use issue suddenly became high on the local political agenda as a consequence of the state decision to terminate a military regiment (the third infantry regiment, I 3). This was a great opportunity for the city, considering that Örebro was (and is) an expanding regional center and that the 'freed' area was adjacent to the lake of Hjälmaren as well as close to the city center, thus offering great potentials for different types of use. As a result of its industrial history, a large part of the area was the polluted backyard of the city; a location of the former municipal dump; oil harbor and storage; and military exercise fields with rifle ranges. This meant that places with high natural values within the area were difficult to access. Traditional open meadowland next to the lake, a result of the historical agricultural activities, had slowly been replaced by near-lake riparian forest with the consequence that the lake of Hjälmaren was difficult to see

and its shores were hard to reach. For the citizens of Örebro, its seaside location close to the fourth largest lake in Sweden was of limited value for recreation and experiencing nature.

In the beginning of the 1990s, the closing of the military regiment meant that all the previous dirty activities of the area were gone. The land use of this area could now be reconsidered. The local government set up a planning committee responsible for developing a comprehensive plan for the geographical area, composed of leading bureaucrats and planners from the departments of traffic, planning, and job creation. The planning proposal that the committee delivered in 1992 had a focus on exploitation of the area in a quite traditional way: a traffic route right across the area designed to reduce inner-city congestion; attractive housing areas near the lake of Hjälmaren along with new modern offices. The executive committee of the local government approved the proposal in October 1992, and the first stage of the planning process was thus successfully implemented.

In parallel with the planning process, a small-scale project targeted at unemployed youths was set up by the labor market office of the local government. The initiator was a public official who had the idea of creating an environmental project in Rynningeviken that could give about hundred young unemployed meaningful activities, focused on nature conservation, restoration, and protection. The project group consisted of public officials from the labor market office and the planning office of the local government, the County Administrative Board, and 10 regional environmental organizations. The initiating official became the project leader. A plan for the area was developed, which included the idea of creating a nature reserve. Concrete activities were also carried out by the unemployed youths, such as cleaning up the old city dump and clearing forest and vegetation to try to restore the once dominant historical landscape of open meadows.

Thus, in 1992/1993, there were two processes at work heading in different directions. The environmental project group saw the exploitation plans as a threat to its green visions of the area, while the official planners were more self-confident and borrowed some ideas from the environmentalists, in particular the idea of an open landscape with a beautiful view of the lake. In their proposal, something of a 'both plans' strategy' was adopted; exploitation and environmental protection were not seen as impossible to combine. The leading politicians of the governing center-right majority were also positive to this compromise.

However, there were still two quite different ideas and conceptions of the future land use of the area. When the planning committee proposal of the area was sent out for review among organizations and authorities, it was met with severe criticism of the traffic route in particular. This was the beginning of the end for the proposal. The issue became increasingly significant in the local political debate, and in the 1994 election campaign, the Social Democrats promised not to build the traffic route if they came to power. The center-right political majority, consisting of the Center Party, the Liberal Party, and the Conservatives, was thus challenged by the Social Democrats. The Social Democrats won the election and terminated the road project, including the plans of residential areas and new offices. However, there was nothing to hinder the implementation of the environmental development visions, and in 1995, the local government established the Rynningeviken nature reserve. The management plan of the nature reserve declared a vision to transform this backyard of Örebro into a recreational landscape of great natural beauty, close to the city center and easily accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. This vision has been successfully implemented during two decades; the area is quite popular among people in general, and there are ambitious, continuous efforts to secure good habitats for different species, in particular water birds. In an environmentally friendly way, the city of Örebro has now a more close contact with the lake.

How can we understand this planning process with its dramatic and somewhat surprising outcome? A straight forward explanation from a political science perspective is of course that party politics and elections matter. This is surely true, but it was much more to it. Digging deeper into the process, a number of important actions took place during a two-year period before the 1994 election.

ACTORS AND CONFLICTS UNDER THE SURFACE

After conducting fieldwork for some time, the research team felt bored by the Rynningeviken case study; the results seemed too well-ordered and 'normatively correct.' However, when a delayed interview was made at last, an unexpected pattern suddenly was revealed. A number of important actors in the planning process were bird-watchers and semi-professional ornithologists. They were not only active within the environmental movement (in particular bird-watchers associations), but they also had formal positions as professionals and officials within the local

government and the County Administrative Board. They had thus great opportunities to act as inside activists.

The value base of the bird-watcher network was to clean up the polluted area, to protect it from exploitation, and to restore the former historical landscape of open meadows with a lot of shorebirds in springtime. In fact, the vision was to extend an already existing nature reserve—Oset—which lay next to Rynningeviken. In their view, these two places were a contiguous area, and Rynningeviken was thus not a 'free' area to exploit; they rather perceived it as an important part of their own backyard. The bird-watcher community and its networks existed long before the local government planning process started. In the region of Örebro, with open agricultural landscape and shallow lakes, the bird-watching community has been quite strong for a long time. Many of the bird-watchers have had a long experience of nature conservation and restoration work in the region (Lennqvist 2007; Thor 2002). In the eyes of the bird-watchers, there was now a great opportunity to create a nature reserve that effectively integrated the two areas of Rynningeviken and Oset.

There were three officials involved with great potential for inside activism and with close contacts with one another. The official at the local government labor market office, that initiated the project for unemployed youth, was an active bird-watcher and member of a local bird-watcher association. So was the public administrator from the County Administrative Board of Örebro, who also was a member of the environmental project in Rynningeviken. Another public official with inside activism characteristics showed up very timely when the local government employed a new municipal biologist. He was a leading local environmentalist and biology teacher as well as an active bird-watcher. The position as municipal biologist meant that he got the formal responsibility of the local government to plan and coordinate environmental activities in Rynningeviken. This official had thus a really strategic position and became a central actor in the process. Beyond this, there were other bird-watchers who were strategically important for the sake of the bird-watchers' network: a young, upcoming local politician in the Liberal Party and a journalist at the big local daily newspaper (Nerikes Allehanda).

The municipal biologist was very important for initiating and coordinating activities in Rynningeviken. He became highly respected by colleagues in different parts of the local administration and among leading politicians, while at the same time keeping his close ties with the

environmental movement. He and the other inside activists did a lot of networking among like-minded people, not only within the bird-watcher community, and developed a coalition of important actors. The core of this 'environmental coalition' was the inside activists and their bird-watcher network. The local journalist was a bird-watcher and a strategically important actor in the bird-watchers' network. One of the inside activists stated that 'when the environmental planning process slowed down from time to time, we could always ask the journalist to write something inspiring about the area.' Similarly, the young liberal politician was also an organized bird-watcher and was mobilized by leading ornithologists in the region. The politician was well aware of the process and his own role in it. In the interview, he said with a smile that 'I let them use me,' referring to the fact that he was the co-author of a debate article in the local newspaper. The other author was the chairman of one of the regional bird-watchers' associations. Later on, in the process, the politician played an important role in the liberal intra-party discussion, supporting the environmental project and criticizing the planned traffic route. This internal discussion weakened the position of leading local liberal politicians who continued to argue for exploiting the area.

There were also actors outside the bird-watcher community that were dragged into the environmental coalition. In particular, the local government Councilor for the Center Party, who was also chairman of the environmental committee, was really important. She was thus a key decision-maker in the planning process, but was not aware of the bird-watchers' network and the initial phase of the environmental project. However, she was satisfied with what came out of the process later on and valued the efforts made by 'her' public officials as she put it, in particular refereeing to the municipal biologist. For the bird-watchers, this politician was really important for getting access to the top-level decision-making of the local government. She became an important actor for the environmental coalition, but was not included in or even aware of the bird-watchers' network.

Despite a unitary position of the local environmental movement in terms of a common statement in the review process, there was no easy consensus among the ten organizations. Relatively early in the process, an important conflict arose on how to take care of an area such as Rynningeviken. A small group of environmentalists argued that the local government should allow the area to develop in a natural way with very limited human involvement. They were critical toward the

radical transformation plan favored by the bird-watchers and wanted instead to preserve the existing habitat consisting of riparian near-lake forests and marshland, suitable for different species of amphibians and insects. However, the bird-watchers were stronger in terms of having a larger number of environmental activists and associations as well as having their own people in strategic insider positions. Considering that the environmental movement also had a strong common 'enemy' in the exploitation plan and that there was limited time for discussion, the critical minority had to accept the policy goals of the bird-watchers. Actually, riparian forests were also saved in parts of the area, in particular along the shores of three small creeks running through the area (The Black Creek, The Small Creek, and The Old Creek). However, some of the critics remained disappointed, even though they did not give voice to it openly.

Contested Transformational Change

The nature reserve was a critical junction for the development in the area, which meant that environmental ambitions had come to dominate over more traditional ideas of exploitation. The outcome of the case had fundamental material effects in terms of not building the road and the residential areas but instead restore the open meadows by clearing a large part of the near-lake forest. These decisions had thus very clear impacts with long-term effects, which are obvious for each and everyone visiting the area. This case also meant a critical junction in an institutional sense. It had a very strong symbolic value with important effects on how to think and act on environmental and development issues in the city of Örebro. For instance, new environmental projects, similar to that in Rynningeviken, were subsequently implemented, and the terminated traffic route meant that a new perspective on congestion was more firmly established among local government officials. New roads were increasingly perceived as reducing congestion only temporarily, leading to more traffic and renewed congestion later on. The uncritical epoch of automobility was over. In our empirical fieldwork of this research project, commenced a couple of years after the establishment of the nature reserve, it was very difficult to find opponents to this 'green solution.' Almost all interviewees described the nature reserve as a good example of sustainable land use, which also meant that it took some time to find out about the actual conflict dimensions.

However, despite this 'corrected' historical retrospect among the interviewees, the case actually had three alternative views of 'good' land use, which all had some advantages in relation to ideas of sustainable development. The official planning project argued that the traffic route could effectively address the increasing problem of inner-city congestion and thus reduce the negative health effects due to high levels of air pollution. The critics within the environmental movement argued from an ecocentric view to leave the area alone, adhering to a wilderness perspective of nature conservation, with positive effects for rare species (e.g., salamanders and other amphibians). The bird-watcher vision was to restore a former historical landscape of open meadowlands clearly connected to the agrarian society, which had disappeared to a large extent during the industrial epoch. Obviously, in relation to the specific context of Rynningeviken, quite different, contested ideas of sustainable land use were launched. Even though factual arguments were used, there were no decisive facts that could scientifically determine what the right thing to do was in this particular case. So even if these competing ideas would have been presented as decision-making alternatives for the governing majority, it would have been an essentially political discussion. However, as already described, these different ideas were never considered momentarily in the same decision-making situation, but were handled partly in parallel and partly in different phases, and to some extent under the surface of the official planning process. Thus, it was far from a rational decision-making process, and neither was there any common arena for deliberation among sentient actors in the meaning of Vivien Schmidt (2010). Instead, the process had a pronounced political nature, which we will take a closer look at.

EXPLAINING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE IN THE RYNNINGEVIKEN CASE

How can we explain the outcome in the Rynningeviken case? By which mechanisms did the bird-watchers and their inside activists become influential? What contextual factors were important and how were key actors contextualizing the issue at stake? We draw on the model of Vivien Lowndes and Mark Roberts (2013, pp. 104–110) to elaborate on how inside activists can work for more influence by expanding their political agency: develop *collective* force, act to *combat* opponents in intelligent ways, *combine* institutional possibilities in the specific context, work to

produce *cumulative* effects, and bending and weakening *constraints* by exploiting institutional ambiguities. Our analysis adheres to the insight of Grant Jordan, stating that 'political outcomes are the result of processes and not only simply the consequence of structure' (Jordan 1990, p. 301). We will now dig deeper into the process of the Rynningeviken case and offer an explanation to the unexpected outcome.

A Collective Enterprise

Green inside activism, just as political action in general, needs to be a collective enterprise to be effective, which does not mean, however, that individual key actors cannot play decisive roles.

In the Rynningeviken case, the network of bird-watchers coordinated activities throughout the process and has been conceptualized as an informal value network (Olsson 2009). It is a network characterized by a strong value-based commitment among a limited number of individuals with personal relations with one another, not necessarily as friends. The network is relatively extensive thanks to its informal value base and the lack of other types of mechanisms for exclusion, like professional criteria. This further means that it has the capacity for horizontally connect various individuals and organizations. The crucial thing for inclusion is support of the value base, but other qualities that can help the network implementing its values are also important, such as expertise, experience, and insider status. Leadership qualities in the network are strong commitment, competence, and personal capacity to inspire people through visions and value-based arguments (Olsson 2009, p. 175).

An informal value network has two important characteristics separating it from familiar types of networks, such as policy communities (Marsh and Rhodes 1992) and governance networks (Sørensen and Torfing 2007): (i) Traditional policy networks have a political nature per se, in contrast to the value network, which is primarily social but can be mobilized politically in certain situations when important values are at stake; and (ii) the value network is not stable like a policy or governance network, but has frequent periods of inactivity. In times of crisis, key actors can mobilize the network for political action, but when the conflictual issue is resolved, it can go back to a lower, social profile.

A value network can get influence through subversive networking, which was introduced in Chap. 5 and defined as 'secret cooperation between actors from different organizations who intend to change or

preserve specific rules and norms' (Olsson 2016, p. 99). A key point for getting the most out of subversive networking is to have it take place in the shadow of appropriate behavior to avoid suspicion from potential opponents. Leading actors in subversive networking, such as inside activists, can coordinate activities in secrecy, which can include activities such as mobilizing external actors for political action, such as doing the 'dirty' work (open protest, negative campaigning) to weaken the legitimacy of an organizational regime.

In the Rynningeviken case, the subversive networking had a constructive and visionary character, rather than being a 'dirty' power game. Instead of openly combating the official planning ideas, a green vision of the area was effectively launched as a better alternative for taking advantage of this historical opportunity for the city of Örebro. The effective power of the bird-watchers lay in their capacity to inspire and convince people—including some leading actors of the official planning project—that the environmental project was attractive and possible, while at the same time mobilizing support for critical positions against the official planning proposal. Values, facts, and arguments were important elements of their actions as well as their propensity to listen, discuss, and sometimes adapt in a flexible way. However, combative action was also important in the process in different phases, which we now will turn to.

Combative and Cooperative Action

To work for green institutional change, we can assume different forms of combative actions to be necessary. However, we should not expect much open conflicts, because pronounced political strategies and methods are not in line with fundamental rules and norms of public administrations. Therefore, we should rather expect more tacit and subversive forms of combative action combined with locally appropriate talk and behavior.

In the Rynningeviken case, this was very much the case. Generally speaking, the bird-watchers with the municipal biologist as a leader figure had a diplomatic and inspiring style of talking and avoided potential problems and obstacles by following 'the line of least resistance,' that is, rather backing off and being patient than getting involved in difficult discussions, while at the same time looking for alternative venues of influence. In the interviews, the municipal biologist was commonly described as a very positive and constructive person; not a single interviewee had any negative things to say about him. However, beside this social

adaptive behavior, combative action was also a prevalent force in at least three situations in more or less cautious ways.

First, the public official at the labor market office initiated at an early stage of the process activities for unemployed youths, such as clearing forest and vegetation to try to restore parts of the historical landscape. At first, this was controversial within the environmental movement, as mentioned above, and later on by some of the actors within the official planning project. This activity had a subversive character by having a long-term goal of creating a specific type of nature reserve, and instead of waiting for a formal decision, the official acted as an inside activist by starting to reshape the area in line with the bird-watcher's ideas. This was also embedded in the more general good ambitions of creating a beautiful landscape attractive for ordinary citizens. As already mentioned, this framing was also effectively reproduced in the local newspaper, with inspiring texts and large color images. While institutional rules and norms remained stable, concrete institutional practices were changed with material consequences: The area got a new character and people increasingly visited the area. All this happened at the same time as the traditional planners of the local government made a lot of future looking desk work.

Second, the municipal biologist, working closely with leading politicians on the environmental project, seems to have kept his own 'sensitive' preferences regarding the traffic route for himself, or at least not letting the leading politicians know about his critical point of view. It was probably wise to let the politicians believe in their 'both plans' strategy' in order to get the green part of the package accepted and to win time for further countermeasures. The municipal biologist had relatively intense contacts with the local Center Party leader, responsible for environmental issues, and cultivated this relationship very well. This meant that she became quite interested in the inspiring green ideas, with the implication that the Center Party leader and the Liberal Party leader stressed different parts of the development package, even though both agreed to it as a whole. The conservative Mayor even had to mediate between rival factions within the governing coalition when a leading administrator ordered a stop in clearing forest in Rynningeviken. The bird-watchers perceived this as a tactic from some of the leading actors within the official planning project to undermine the environmental project and contacted therefore the Center Party leader, who took a fight on this with the Mayor. She got what she wanted; the forest clearing could continue. Thus, the coalition government was not very consistent on this

issue and tensions arouse during the process, partly as a result of the efficient influence of the municipal biologist and the environmental coalition. This can be interpreted as subversive action in line with the 'divide and rule' metaphor; in relation to the Center Party leader, the municipal biologist kept his preferences secret concerning the traffic route, while at the same time influencing her about the green visions of the area in a convincing and inspiring way, which obviously rubbed off on her. The Liberal Party leader was a really strong proponent of the traffic route and wanted even to start the project in her last months in office despite the fact that the Social Democrats had won the election with the termination of the traffic route as one of its election promises. However, this idea was turned down by the other two parties in the governing coalition.

A third type of combative action took place behind the scenes through coordination of inside activists, with help of their bird-watcher network and environmental coalition. This was particularly important for the outcome of the review process of the formal planning proposal. In this process, a large number of organizations rejected the planning proposal and its difficult compromise between environmental exploitation and protection. There were strong arguments against the weak analysis of environmental consequences, and a number of organizations were really critical of the traffic route and the barrier effect it created for humans and animals, once again making it hard to reach the lake of Hjälmaren. It was also argued that the traffic route would lead to increasing noise and vibration, which was not considered properly in the proposal. Neither was the consequence for rare species. This broad and diverse criticism expressed in the review process undermined the political realism of the planning proposal.

This result must be seen in relation to the insistent activism both inside and outside public agencies. The inspiring green vision of the bird-watchers had been extensively spread in the local community through various venues. First of all, there was continuous opinion-making in favor of the bird-watcher vision: The 'friendly' journalist wrote a large number of positive newspaper articles over the years and proponents for the environmental project wrote debate articles and arranged inspiring information meetings. Second, inside activism in some crucial public agencies gave the bird-watcher's network direct influence on how public officials commented on the proposal. Similar ideas and arguments were brought up by important stakeholders in the review process, including the local government, the County Administrative Board, and the environmental

organizations. Third, there were also other meeting points where different interests could share opinions and discuss future ideas of the area. One particularly important point of contact was the inter-organizational connection between the Oset Committee (dominated by environmentalists and in particular the bird-watchers) and a local house-owner organization near the lake of Hjälmaren (Rynninge Egnahemsförening). The house-owner organization had a representative in the Committee. In commenting on the planning proposal, the house-owner organization not only expressed a not in my backyard (NIMBY) perspective, but also stressed the importance of considering the consequences for birds and other species in the area. A broad environmental coalition of actors was formed thanks to the bird-watchers' extensive network in the local community.

The 'both-plans strategy' of the official project meant that institutional ambiguities were built into the proposal. The traffic route and the lack of environmental assessments were two weak points of the official planning project. The heydays of traffic routes as the obvious solution to congestion were over, and serious environmental assessments were increasingly perceived as a necessary element in any land-use plan. Thus, a strong attack on these two weak points opened up for a general criticism of the ideas and norms of the planning proposal. Against this background, it could have been wise from the official planning project to use a 'salami tactic'; not launching the whole package at once but to sell it piece by piece, starting with the least controversial parts. They could, for instance, have acted more tactically by suggesting small-scale housing areas well adapted to the landscape, and waiting with the traffic route.

Combative action in general and subversive action in particular are a tempting but risky activity that inside activists need to handle cautiously. At the moment a public official is revealed as acting subversively, he/she is considered unreliable and thus his/her influence within the organization quickly erode. In the Rynningeviken case, the successful outcome for the bird-watcher community can largely be understood as an effect of the green inside activist's capacity to social adaptive behavior and low-profile combative action.

COMBINATIVE ACTION

Combinative action is at the heart of inside activism by bridging institutional divides through creative action in specific contexts, underscoring its entrepreneurial and innovative character. A fundamental type of

combinative action, which we have paid much attention to, is how inside activists combine social adaptation and combative action in intelligent ways; using mechanisms on both the light and dark side of political agency.

Another combinative strategy, which was highly relevant in the Rynningeviken case, was to extend the importance of the project across policy fields, thereby increasing the potential support for it. The municipal biologist did not frame the project as an environmental project in a narrow sense, which made it more attractive than the more ecocentric idea of leaving the area alone. The vision and strategy of the bird-watcher community covered ideas and activities of great relevance to environment in a broad sense (cleaning up polluted areas, nature restoration, and conservation); recreation and nature-based tourism (outdoor life, bird-watching); education (establishment of a House of Nature for nature and environmental education); and job creation for youths and later on for park workers. Thus, it is easy to understand the fast increasing attractiveness of the area and its strong public and political support. Of course, this had a price in terms of the area losing some of its former inaccessible wilderness.

Furthermore, the bird-watcher vision of open landscapes was not fully implemented. After discussions with various interests, the municipal biologist combined different types of biotopes in the area, such as a natural museum of biotopes. Riparian forests were preserved along the shores of the three creeks that culminate in the lake of Hjälmaren, even though the prioritized biotope in the area was to restore open meadowlands. This end result can be interpreted both as a remission to the critique within the environmental movement and as a personal belief that this was the right thing to do.

A really important combinative strategy is to legitimate one's own ideas and actions in relation to dominant and widely accepted discourses. Leading actors of the environmental project, in particular the municipal biologist, skillfully connected the local environmental project to the global idea complex of sustainable development. It was contextualized as an ideological discourse of great relevance to the project and to Örebro as a community. In the first management plan of the Rynningeviken nature reserve, explicit references were made to the Rio declaration and local Agenda 21. In its foreword, the following statement was made:

Right now our city is in an exciting development phase, working towards long-term sustainability and adaptation to systems of recycling. An

important part of our concentrated efforts on the environment is to create a living green habitat, where we preserve and develop the diversity of good living conditions for humans, vegetation and animals, also within the city. The restoration and protection of Rynningeviken will be one of the cornerstones in the green Örebro (Örebro stad, Skötselplan för naturreservatet Rynningeviken, 1995, p. 1, authors' translation).

This way of framing local action in relation to broader political and social trends, generally perceived as new and promising, can provide a powerful source of legitimacy, especially when it is done by someone who is deemed trustworthy in the local context. The municipal biologist was the new expert in the local government, and commonly held as a highly competent and creative professional 'knowing what he is talking about.'

CUMULATIVE CHANGE

To understand how transformative institutional change can follow from gradual change efforts of inside activists, it is important to take the cumulative nature of the process seriously. One can remind of the snowball effect metaphor and the tipping point metaphor, which were mentioned in Chap. 5. Change can follow in a hardly noticeable way through a gradual process, in which new ideas, norms, and practices are continually added until reaching a point of no return where transformative institutional change takes place (Olsson 2016).

The planning process in the Rynningeviken case developed over a period of about five years, from the window of opportunity when the local government could buy the area from the state following the closing of the military regiment, to the establishment of the nature reserve in 1995. Of course, 'the case' did not end there but has evolved over two decades, which we comment on at the end of this section. How did the two parallel planning processes develop to the advantage of the environmental project? What steps in the process were particularly important?

First of all, as already mentioned, for the bird-watcher community, the geographical area was never perceived as 'free,' from which the new planning process could start from, as if there were no historical links. The bird-watcher community was used to take different forms of action within the area. It was not a dramatic thing for them to start clearing vegetation, even though it was done for tactical reasons this time. They anticipated the official planning process and got a really important head

start, which was difficult to catch up for those who preferred another kind of development. It takes a lot of time just to plan a traffic route and housing areas, followed by a formal review process, secure political support, and make a formal political decision. As a contrast, the environmental development work in Rynningeviken could proceed quite fast thanks to its more limited task, committed leaders, and free labor force at the start. Furthermore, this also had cumulative effects in terms of making the area increasingly attractive to ordinary citizens, supported by positive reporting in the local newspaper. Thus, while the official project developed plans for the area, the environmental project already recreated it in line with its visions.

Furthermore, this head start in the process also meant that the environmental project caught the attention of the official planners. This led after a while to the 'both-plans strategy,' which had two cumulative effects: It legitimated the environmental project and made the official planning proposal vulnerable to criticism on its weak environmental parts. Compromises are often important and necessary but are problematic when they lead to obvious institutional ambiguities. This was important for the effectiveness of the harsh critique against the proposal. Moreover, this had the cumulative effect of opening up for implementing the environmental project, including the nature reserve, which was finally established in 1995.

The success of the environmental project meant that the nature reserve and the surrounding areas could be developed in line with the ideas of the municipal biologist and the bird-watcher community. This gave them a legitimate platform from which they could continue their work. A cumulative change process has evolved over two decades, which has resulted in new nature trails and crossings, construction of water pounds and small observation towers and coverts, and The House of Nature for nature and environmental education, also housing a restaurant. However, these human activities are geographically limited to specific areas and paths to give living space for different species, which is particularly important for breeding shorebirds. The area is populated at all seasons (outdoor life, picnics, bird-watching, nature walks, and skating). It is hard to see how the old exploitation ideas of the area could be reasserted, even though new housing areas have been established relatively close by, but not visible from the nature reserve. In short, the green vision of the area has step by step been institutionalized in a systematic way.

The municipal biologist is still active and highly respected, both locally and nationally. He has received prices and awards for his committed environmental work in Rynningeviken and Örebro: *The Örebro citizen of the year award* 2010 ('Årets örebroare'), and the national nature conservation price from WWF in Sweden 2013, handed out by the Swedish King, Carl XVI Gustav. A public official being honored in this way and being well-known to the local public is quite unusual.

Constrained Change Efforts

Considering the lesson from this case that much can change during a planning process, we should be somewhat cautious to definitely state what structural conditions and institutions that actually constitute constraints on observed actions and non-actions.

From a historical institutionalist perspective, our case analysis could be argued to be close-sighted, missing the broader picture of social and political change. It could, for instance, be argued that the early 1990s was characterized by a macro-discursive transformation in large parts of the world from a more traditional view on economic growth and industrial development to a 'new' motley discourse of sustainable development. Maybe the outcome of the Rynningeviken case could be explained as a consequence of such a discursive transformation, manifesting itself by a general upgrading of local environmental policy, and a new generation of planners ('old school' traffic planners was retired and replaced by 'greener' planners like the municipal biologists) (cf. Hajer 1995).

However, macro- and micro-perspectives are not mutually exclusive in explaining processes and outcomes, rather the contrary. Recent research among historical institutionalists also stresses the importance of creative political actors, in particular in formative stages of institutional development (Mahoney and Thelen 2010). To accomplish change on the ground, macro-trends can be of help, but there also need to be local actors who interpret those macro-trends, understand the local situation, and take committed action in intelligent ways. Furthermore, there are always structural conditions in the local context. In the Rynningeviken case, the initial stage was a new structural condition following from a state decision to terminate the military regiment, which opened up for alternative land use. Another structural condition is the marshlands in Rynningeviken, which made exploitation in this particular area more challenging than usual, thus giving the environmental project one more

advantage. With reference to structural conditions, one interviewee suggested that the environmental movement was lucky in this case. Maybe this is true, but it is far from the whole picture. The statement was probably based on limited knowledge of what actually happened under the surface of the official planning process.

A Case of Expanded Political Agency and Exploited Institutional Ambiguities

What lessons can be drawn from the Rynningeviken case when it comes to institutional constraints and the importance of political agency? Our arguments in this chapter can be summarized in terms of the two explanatory themes discussed in Chap. 5: expanding political agency and exploiting institutional ambiguities.

As we have seen in this chapter, green inside activists can expand political agency in several ways. Through various forms of *combative* action, inside activists can oppose and undermine ideas, values, and interests of other groups as well as to further its own green values and goals. However, as already stressed, combative action needs to be wisely combined with more adaptive measures perceived as appropriate in the specific context. Furthermore, inside activism has to be a *collective* political force by mobilizing networks and like-minded actors both inside and outside of their organizations to put pressure behind their specific values. Moreover, inside activism needs to produce *combinative* qualities such as connecting different issue areas and combining various mechanisms of change that can create innovative and broadly supported solutions. Last but not least, inside activism can make a difference by producing a gradual and continuous impact on institutions, leading to *cumulative* effects. A comprehensive expanding of political agency in all these respects increases the likelihood to overcome some institutional constraints and to open up for green change of a transformative character.

However, to be effective, inside activists also need to approach institutions in an intelligent way by exploiting institutional ambiguities and weaknesses. This should not exclusively be seen as a temporary possibility thanks to a new opening ('window of opportunity'), like the so-called freed area in the case study. In new political institutionalism, we rather perceive of institutions as continuously ambiguous and differentiated, following from complex processes of combat and adaptation (Olsson 2016). In the Rynningeviken case, the 'both-plans strategy'

unintentionally legitimated the environmental project and made the planning proposal vulnerable to criticism on its weak environmental parts. The official proposal was a shaky compromise composed of contradictory institutional ideas and values. Thus, the traffic route and the lack of environmental assessments were two weak points taken advantage of by the bird-watchers' network. In the parallel planning process, the environmental project developed into a clear and inspiring idea of the area, attractive to many organizations and actors, also within the local government majority. Considering the rather complex and composite planning process, the outcome was after all not that surprising.

Before ending this chapter, we need to address the vital normative question: Is the materialized bird-watcher vision a good example of sustainable development? As already stated, all alternatives for the area had their merits in different respects, even though the two environmental solutions were not fundamentally different at the end. Nevertheless, for three reasons, the implemented decision can be judged as a well-balanced solution for a sustainable development in the area and for the city at large. First, it actually took the sustainable development discourse seriously as an explicit source of inspiration and a guidance for concrete development on the ground. Second, this was done through a combinative strategy, which considered both different environmental values and more human-centered interests such as recreation. Considering this broad compromise and the positive local storytelling about the area, just a couple of years after the establishment of the nature reserve, it seems to be a sustainable solution in a long-term perspective. Third, at the end, the solution turned out as a well-balanced compromise between different biotopes: open meadowlands, riparian forests along the creeks, deciduous forest, and pasture and grazing land. However, the question of inner-city congestion is still a difficult one, particularly in rushing hours, and remains to be solved, hopefully through more innovative ideas than by constructing a ring road through a unique environmental landscape.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter elaborates on mechanisms of green change in a heuristic case of land-use planning. Its beneficial environmental outcomes seemed from the onset to be a clear-cut case of party politics and electoral competition, but when scrutinized closer reveled as a result of the successful political activism of a bird-watcher community and their networks, and

in particular the strategic work by green inside activists. More specifically from a theoretical point of view, the outcome is explained by effective use of two types of strategies. It is argued that inside activism can exert effective influence by expanding political agency and exploiting institutional ambiguities.

We show how an expanded political agency can be accomplished, arguing that it needs to be comprehensive: develop political collectives such as networks and coalitions; combine different resources and possibilities; combat for specific values; and tirelessly work for cumulative change effects. Attractive targets for inside activists are institutional ambiguities between rules, norms, and practices and, in particular, the weak spots of institutions with few defenders. Those weak spots can work as strategic entrances for further change.

We further argue that combative actions to be effective need to be wisely handled in relation to dominant institutions, even being partly adapted to highly valued rules and norms. We thus hold the logic of social adaptation to be more 'natural' than combative action, but change agents are always present; hidden under the surface and prepared to activate in specific situations where important values are at stake. Combative action comes in different shapes through mechanisms such as open argumentation and deliberation as well as subversive action.

References

Blaikie, N. (2009). *Designing social research: The logic of anticipation*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Eckstein, H. (1975). Case study and theory in political science. In F. J. Greenstein & N. W. Polsby (Eds.), *Handbook of political science* (Vol. 7, pp. 79–137). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

George, A. L., & Bennett, A. (2004). *Case studies and theory development in social sciences*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Hajer, M. A. (1995). *The politics of environmental discourse. Ecological modernization and the policy process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jordan, A. G. (1990). Policy community realism versus "new" institutionalism ambiguity. *Political Studies, 38*(3), 470–482.

Lennqvist, J. (2007). *Våtmarkshistoria: Hjälmarens och Kvismarens stränder under 1800- och 1900-talen*. PhD thesis. Örebro University.

Lowndes, V., & Roberts, M. (2013). *Why institutions matter: The new institutionalism in political science*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (Eds.). (2010). *Explaining institutional change: Ambiguity, agency and power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marsh, D., & Rhodes, R. A. W. (1992). *Policy networks in british government*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Olsson, J. (2004). Ornitologernas makt—Om informella nätverk och hållbar utveckling, *Miljöforskning för ett uthålligt samhälle 2.*

Olsson, J. (Ed.). (2005). *Hållbar utveckling underifrån*. Nora: Nya Doxa.

Olsson, J. (2009). The power of the inside activist: Understanding policy change by empowering the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). *Planning Theory and Practice, 10*(2), 167–187.

Olsson, J. (2016). *Subversion in institutional change and stability. A neglected mechanism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schmidt, V. A. (2010). Taking ideas and discourse seriously: Explaining change through discursive institutionalism as the fourth "new institutionalism". *European Political Science Review, 2*(1), 1–25.

Sørensen, E., & Torfing, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Theories of democratic network governance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Thor, C. (2002). *Fågelliv betyder orden. Vandringar i Erik Rosenbergs riken.* Örebro: Gullers Förlag.

Legitimacy and Green Inside Activism

INTRODUCTION

As argued in this book, public officials can be powerful actors in policy and planning processes and may thus function as political agents for major policy change. Within the literature on public administration, this is largely portrayed as an unfortunate consequence that should be avoided as far as possible. The functioning of modern states requires situational adaptation and thus discretionary power of individual public officials, but as non-elected officials, this power can bring considerable legitimacy problems (Rothstein 2007). The fundamental tension between democracy and bureaucracy (or politics–administration) in modern societies has been seen as a great risk of a general decrease in the citizenry's trust and confidence in government (Stout 2013, pp. 5–6). In many ways, inside activism can be seen as a clear manifestation of this tension.

Traditionally, justifying the political power of public administration has relied on discourses of rule conformity and procedural correctness as described in Weber's (1947) bureaucratic ideal model. However, bureaucratic grounds for legitimating public administration have been questioned and various new grounds for legitimacy have been discussed, including involving citizens and interest organizations in the everyday activities of public administration or making public administration more representative of society at large.

In this chapter, we introduce the legitimacy problems of powerful public officials and how to address these problems in various ways. We

identify four legitimacy dilemmas concerning how inside activism needs to be reconciled with fundamental principles of democracy and rule of law: (i) the discretion of inside activists and democratic accountability; (ii) the secret and tactical nature of inside activism and procedural values of openness and transparency; (iii) the innovative thinking of inside activists and democratic procedures of representation and participation; and (iv) the value commitments of inside activists and a democratic public interest. We finally discuss and theorize on three logics for legitimizing inside activism: doing things with democratic support, doing the right thing, and doing the things we can (all) agree on.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEGITIMACY

How should we understand the importance of legitimacy? Power relations involve negative features (exclusion, restriction, deprivation, compulsion, and so forth) that need to be justified in relation to those subordinated to this power. That those societal power relations are characterized by justice and rightfulness is important in its own right, but it is also of key importance for effective governance. If the wielding of power is not considered legitimate, the powerful needs to rely on inducements or coercion to maintain social order and control. Such systems are enormously costly to maintain (especially to keep the loyalty of the civil and military administration), ineffective in terms of achieving policy goals, and less resilient to withstand shocks or policy failures and, thus, more vulnerable to dramatic regime changes. Legitimacy, or the rightfulness of power, is a necessary (if not a sufficient) feature to ensure order, stability, and effectiveness in any political system (Beetham 2013, Chap. 1; Bernstein 2011, p. 20).

According to David Beetham (2013), power is legitimate to the extent that it conforms to established rules, ranging from informal conventions to formalized legal codes. These rules further need to be justified by reference to beliefs shared by both the superiors and the subordinates, e.g., that power is rightfully obtained, properly exercised, and used to serve a general interest rather than the self-interest of the powerful; and that there is an active consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation. Thus, legitimacy is understood as a multi-dimensional, context-sensitive concept comprising shared rules (legality), normative beliefs (justifiability), and appropriate action (active consent, acceptance, and acknowledgment of power relationships by

affected groups) (cf. Bernstein 2011, p. 21). In today's complex governance context, the grounds for legitimacy are varied and highly contested, including a liberal democratic order, tradition, moral authority, science and expertise, the personal charisma of the leader, and market position (Beetham 2013, p. xv; Bulkeley 2012; Stout 2013, p. 60). In this chapter, we will discuss several such grounds for legitimacy, but within the overall framework of a liberal democratic system. Democracy is a contested concept, conceptualized, and modeled in various ways (cf. Held 2006). However, for most people (as well as in most constitutions), democracy is basically about ensuring that political decisions by the government reflect the will of the people. This is ensured in practice through the regular holding of free and fair elections in which the citizens are voting for competing political alternatives. Elected representatives are entrusted with the power to make decisions (generally within a constitutional framework that protects basic civil liberties and human rights) and are held accountable for these decisions in the following election (Hysing 2013). We take this basic idea of representative democracy as our point of departure when continuing our discussion about legitimacy.

Legitimacy in Public Administration

Questions of legitimacy are among the most classical questions in political science and have occupied political thinkers for centuries. However, the question of legitimacy for the public administration has remained an unsettled issue, theoretically as well as in praxis. The scholarly field of public administration has largely focused on management and governance rather than the legitimate role of administration in democracy. Thus, there is a need to resurrect and resituate this issue in 'the modern topography of public administration' (Nabatchi 2010, p. 390).

A basic premise for discussing legitimacy in public administration is to recognize its political power. In order to successfully carry out politically assigned responsibilities and serve the broader public, public administrations need to have the capacity and power to do so. Critics tend to portray such power as illegitimate; as being the perverse result of bureaucrats acting in their own self-interest to strengthen their position and power (cf. Niskanen 1973). Those who are more supportive of a strong state rather argue that most powers of public administration are not a matter of choice but of necessity. The often routine and mundane operations of public administrations are of key importance in making

democracy functional and in building and maintaining public trust in government (Goodsell 2006). From a legal constitutional perspective, actions of public administration are legitimate only by being granted specific authority and jurisdiction expressed in statues adopted through due legal process by the parliament, making the issue of legitimacy a rather straightforward matter (Lowi 1993). However, as already noticed, public officials are empowered beyond detailed legal prescripts by the need for situational adaptation of policy, which necessitates discretionary powers and autonomy. To only act on the formal mandates specified in laws, policies and explicit orders would effectively make it impossible for public officials to fulfill their tasks. To even identify such formal mandates would be highly problematic as the mandates of public officials often are ambiguous, conflict-ridden, and changeable (Applbaum 1992, p. 248). As citizens cannot hold non-elected officials directly accountable and as superiors cannot control and steer from above due to lack of insights and knowledge on the specific cases, legitimacy in public administration becomes a contested matter (Rothstein 2007; Stout 2013, p. 5, 59).

Traditionally, justifying the political power of public administration has relied on discourses of rule conformity and procedural correctness. In this model, the legitimacy of public administration is secured in three ways: knowledge/expertise, procedures, and organization. Bureaucracies hold specialized knowledge and historical experiences that are highly valued in society (Goodsell 2006). Modern societies' trust in this expertise is generally founded on (theoretical and applied) science. However, expertise in itself is not enough; it also needs to be associated with neutrality, objectivity, and fairness (Stout 2013, pp. 90–92). The bureaucrats can be entrusted with powers because they are acknowledged by key political powers as professionals who are educated, trained, disciplined, and experienced in dealing with specific problems (Goodsell 2006). Bureaucratic powers are also accepted as they are seen as adhering to certain procedures that guarantee rule adherence, transparency, and liability (Koppell 2005). These procedures should not only be legal prescripts—reflected in precise regulations and mandates, and upheld and controlled through a hierarchical bureaucratic organization—but also be reflected in institutionalized norms of what public service duty means. The idea of an institutionalized public ethos provides a partially different rationale for action within public administration. Here, bureaucrats are seen as being motivated and acting on a set of ethical norms, such as integrity, objectivity, openness, and others, rather than on their own interests (based on

personal values) or the interests of elected politicians (cf. Lawton et al. 2013; Lundquist 1999). A key question when discussing bureaucracy as a ground for legitimacy is official's autonomy vis-à-vis elected politicians. On the one hand, in a democratic system, bureaucracy can only be considered legitimate if it is willing to subordinate its abilities and powers to the wishes of elected politicians (Lowi 1993). On the other hand, de-professionalization and increased emphasis on political loyalty risk key grounds for legitimacy, such as objectivity and neutrality (Olsen 2006; Suleiman 2003).

The bureaucratic grounds for legitimating public administration have undergone a long period of criticism. Johan P Olsen (2006, p. 2) describes it as 'decades of bureaucracy bashing' brought about by real changes in the operations and contexts of public administration but mostly as part of an ideological shift where public administration increasingly has been portrayed as a problem rather than a solution. Although key bureaucratic grounds for legitimacy—especially procedural legitimacy—remains and even have had a revival, see, e.g., New Weberian State (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011), other grounds for legitimacy have been placed in the spotlight (Table 7.1).

Cost efficiency of public services has been promoted as a basic ground of legitimacy. This has been used to motivate reforms throughout the world under the label new public management (NPM) (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). These include administrative reforms such as contracting out, privatizations, and management by objectives and results. NPM also aimed to increase the flexibility and responsiveness of public administration—directing attention to the needs and desires of the administration's constituents/clients (Koppell 2005)—seen as of vital importance to an increasingly individualized citizenry's trust in government.

Another ground for legitimacy has been to target the internal composition of public administration, that is, to increase legitimacy by ensuring

Table 7.1 Grounds for legitimacy of public administration

Expertise (scientific, professional)
Procedures (rule boundedness, transparency, liability)
Political control
Cost efficiency
Responsiveness
Representativeness
Participation (interest groups, affected stakeholders)

a reasonable representation of different subsets of the citizenry within the public administration. One argument is that such representation increases legitimacy by showing that the administration is accessible to the common people. Another is that such representation also can translate into public policies being developed in accordance with the interests or desires of the groups that are claimed to be represented. However, the correlation between passive and active representation is mediated by many other factors, including institutional norms and values (Bryer and Sahin 2012; Wise 2007).

A third ground for legitimacy focuses on involving interest groups or citizens in policymaking and public administration operations. In both cases, the legitimacy is deduced from both the resources that external actors can contribute with to improve the operations of public administration (knowledge, finances, personnel, and so on) and that their involvement as such, giving them a voice in the process and a real or symbolic capacity to improve or change policy, can increase their trust and confidence in government. Neo-corporatism focuses on the direct involvement of interest groups in policy formulation and implementation, securing legitimacy for public policy by being developed in close cooperation with representatives of key social interests (Rothstein 2007). This kind of argumentation has also been highlighted in research on governance networks and other forms of public–private interactions in policymaking (Sørensen and Torfing 2007; Hysing and Lundberg 2016). The involvement of organized interests is always a balancing act as the organizations risk being seen as co-opted and loses their member's confidence and thus their basis for creating legitimacy for the administration. For public administration, the formation of strong alliances with powerful interest groups risk-reducing legitimacy within society as public administrations are seen as captured by special interests (Rothstein 2007). Citizen participation increases legitimacy for public administration by directly engaging those affected by their operations to participate and (ideally) effectively influencing public policy and implementation (Rothstein 2007). Much research on different forms of public consultations points, however, to the risk that this involvement becomes a 'show,' not giving the stakeholders real influence and thus reduces legitimacy (Irvin and Stansbury 2004).

As shown in this short introduction, there are various grounds for legitimating the power of public administration. Classical bureaucratic qualities are far from obsolete, but have been complemented with other

qualities such as cost efficiency and participation in order to strengthen legitimacy. We now turn our attention to inside activism and how such actions can be considered particularly problematic when it comes to legitimacy.

Inside Activism: Particularly Problematic?

On what grounds can inside activism be considered legitimate? Four important characteristics of inside activism need to be reconciled with fundamental principles of democracy and the rule of law in order for this phenomenon to be considered legitimate (cf. Bellone and Goerl 1992). First, there is a conflict between the discretion and autonomy of public officials necessary for inside activism and *accountability*. Inside activism requires a certain degree of autonomy, and as demonstrated by the research on street-level bureaucrats, discretion is widely spread among public officials. As already argued, such discretion is often necessary in order for public administration to function. Elected politicians have a limited ability to stay informed about the actions of the officials as well as to effectively control and influence these actions. As power is transferred to non-elected officials, accountability problems arise in democratic systems as the possibilities for citizens to hold the true power holders accountable are limited.

Second, there is a conflict between the secret and tactical nature of inside activism behavior (Chapter 5; cf. O'Leary 2014) and procedural values of *openness and transparency*. Political activism is about taking actions that confront or avoid rather than conform to established norms of acceptable and appropriate behavior. Like acts of civil disobedience (Rawls 1999, p. 320), activism in civil society is deliberately public, even in the face of potential legal consequences, to gain the public and political attention that activists seek (Welchman 2001; Humphrey 2006, p. 320). Activism inside public administration also holds actions that challenge institutionalized norms, rules, and practices but it differs from activism taking place outside the political–administrative sphere. Inside activists typically choose strategically not to go public. Rather than acting openly, they choose to remain 'in the closet,' acting behind the scenes (O'Leary 2014, p. 6). Their reasons for not acting openly are numerous. As discussed in Chap. 5, there often is a heavy personal price to pay for challenging institutions, including retaliations from superiors. There is also a risk that open opposition reduces future opportunities for change

efforts. For inside activists, their insider status is of key importance as well as their relationship with important decision-makers. Open opposition risks alienating potential allies and gets the activist out of the loop of information and important assignment. Thus, secrecy is often a necessity. However, such hidden actions come into direct conflict with key principles of openness and transparency. If elected politicians and citizens think that public officials have hidden agendas, it will reduce the legitimacy for public administration.

Third, there is a potential conflict between the entrepreneurship and innovative thinking of inside activists and democratic representation and participation. Entrepreneurship and innovation are about new ideas and visions; about new ways of doing things; and about challenging established norms, rules, and practices as well as entrenched political interests. Almost by definition, entrepreneurial and innovative ideas are uncommon, unorthodox, and often controversial and, as such, may be difficult to reconcile with and gain support through traditional forms of democratic processes. The conservative nature of liberal democratic systems is often raised as a fundamental criticism by more radical environmental activists (Humphrey 2007, p. 29). Also, entrepreneurial ideas are likely to be risky. Citizens expect the prudent use of resources and power by the political and administrative systems. High-risk projects may generate great success but also great failures. Following democratic procedures, innovative and risky ideas and actions need to be legitimated by informing, discussing, and getting a formal mandate from elected representatives and/or affected citizens (Bellone and Goerl 1992). However, such a process is likely to moderate the ideas and actions. As legitimate actions by public officials require that they are supported (directly or indirectly) through the democratic system, inside activism may become too innovative and entrepreneurial to be considered legitimate. On the other hand, the moderation on actions resulting from the formal democratic system is likely to be an important reason for why officials engage in inside activism in the first place.

Fourth, there is a conflict between inside activism based on personal value commitments and a democratically defined *public interest*. Public administrations are based on the idea of acting in the interests of the public rather than the interest of the ruling elite or a strict self-interest. There is a relative consensus in democracies that elected representatives should define the public interests, but what if these democratically decided policies run counter to basic values of individual public officials?

Can moral principles and personal integrity take precedence over democratically decided policies (cf. Burke 1989)? It could be argued that public officials have a duty and obligation to certain norms and rules and should be willing to fulfill this duty even when it goes against personal preferences. We cannot expect all public officials to always agree on public policy, and thus, we cannot have a system that requires such agreement. However, public officials also need personal integrity, to be ready to protect basic values even when it goes against orders or superiors (even democratically elected ones) (cf. 'the Eichmann phenomenon,' see Arendt 2006). At the end of the day, public officials need to be able to look him/herself in the mirror. An argument presented previously is that by taking a position within public administration, an official agrees to certain values and practices and, thus, moral questions are expected to be settled more or less at the time of employment (Peters 2011, p. 180). However, it is impossible to foresee all the moral difficulties to be encountered beforehand. The world of public administration is filled by changing resources, inconsistent policies, and complex situations that can place officials in unanticipated moral dilemmas. To argue that personal value commitments should take precedence over democratically decided policies seems antidemocratic, but to argue that the duty and obligations of officials always should take precedence, even when they go against deeply held moral convictions and value commitments, also places key democratic values at risk (Burke 1989).

To summarize, inside activism provides legitimacy problems for public officials in democratic societies. Inside activists have discretionary power but cannot be effectively held accountable. At times, they strategically choose to stay hidden, secretly acting to induce change from inside public organization, rather than promoting openness and transparency. They are creative, entrepreneurial, and innovative and, thus, prone to controversial and risky actions that are not easily navigated through democratic processes. They take action based on a personal value commitment sometimes in conflict with democratically decided policies. While these four legitimacy problems relate to general discussions on the legitimacy of public administration—they are not unique for inside activism—the combination of legitimacy problems associated with inside activism arguably makes inside activism a most-difficult case. In the following, we discuss and theorize on three alternative logics for legitimating inside activism, drawing partially on the theoretical framework of Margaret Stout (2013).

Three Logics of Legitimacy

Doing Things with Democratic Support

A first ground for legitimacy is to try and tap into the legitimacy generated through the representative democratic system. One way of looking at inside activism is that officials can assume tacit support from elected politicians for their actions. Most of the time, elected officials only review policies and their implementation when facing a scandal or when a problem arises. In the absence of such drama, officials can, and should, actively pursue their own professional missions as forcefully and skillfully they can by using the resources and action strategies available (Applbaum 1992; Goodsell 2006). In other words, legitimate action 'is nothing more or less than what in fact the political process allows [the official] to get away with' (Applbaum 1992, p. 249). Such political realist view can be contrasted against a more legal constitutional perspective. Contrary to citizens who are free to act in the absence of regulations, public officials are free to act *only* within the authority and jurisdictions granted to them from parliament (Lowi 1993). However, the increasing use of rather abstract multi-value framework laws can give considerable room of maneuver for public officials and professionals (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Spicer 2014). Here, if elected politicians choose to grant officials wide-ranging discretionary powers, it should be perfectly legitimate to use them.

On the most basic level, legitimacy could be strengthened by ensuring that elected representatives at least make the formal decision. However, if this means that the politicians only sign off on measures suggested and formulated by public officials, then such logic would cover over the power of the inside activist rather than legitimating it. It could also result in negative consequences for the legitimacy generated through the democratic system; how can citizens hold elected politicians accountable for decisions that they only have a marginal influence over?

A more viable approach would be to involve elected politicians in a network-like fashion. Public administration research has criticized the dichotomization of politics and public administration, describing it as a 'useful myth' (Svara 2001, p. 177; see also Overeem 2005), and instead providing arguments that the relationship is better characterized by overlapping functions, reciprocal influence, and mutual respect and acceptance (Svara 2001, 2006). Thus, we can regard politics and

administration as complementary (rather than dichotomous) and stress interdependence along with distinct roles for administration and politics. In such view, close cooperation between elected politicians, with democratic legitimacy, and officials, contributing expertise and other resources, could provide fertile ground for legitimating inside activism. However, it would require some type of safeguards against inside activists manipulating politicians and high-ranking officials to secure desired policy changes. Also, separation of power between politics and administration can be an important source of legitimacy for public officials as it provides important safeguards against politicization and political populism.

When relying on the support of democratically elected representatives to legitimate actions, it is usually based on formal positions and roles; that elected and non-elected officials are of different worlds. In real-life policymaking, they largely face the same challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities. Involving elected politicians may increase one type of accountability, but effective accountability needs to be discussed as a matter of degree. While politicians are held accountable on the Election Day, public officials can be held accountable for their actions on an almost daily basis through direct interaction with citizens and community groups (Applbaum 1992, pp. 258–259). At a systems' level, representative democracy also has limitations to legitimate actions. For example, it only grants the present human population, located within a specific territory, the right to give its active consent, acceptance, and acknowledgment of power relationships (Bernstein 2011). Furthermore, what if a poorly performing democratic system is at the root of the problem, e.g., if the short-termism of democratic electoral systems makes politicians unwilling (or unable) to take necessary, long-term steps to create a sustainable society (Hysing 2013)? Or if the political elite are unwilling to change in the face of a pressing issue due to vested interests? In such situations, inside activists need to seek legitimation for action in alternative venues, e.g., getting the active consent by those affected by their actions through the use of participatory and deliberative processes.

Doing the Right Things

A second potential ground for legitimacy of inside activism is to argue that some issues are so important in relation to some socially constructed system of norms that they simply cannot be ignored. To simply follow

orders and directives of hierarchical superiors in the face of an obvious injustice is not a defensible position for officials (Bellone and Goerl 1992). In such a situation, inside activism could be morally justified, based on specific ethical arguments, even if it means breaking the rules or going against the decisions of democratically elected leaders. How can we ensure that such moral arguments are not used to justify the personal preferences of an individual or to give benefits to vested interests? Here, the importance of public interest becomes vital. Inside activists need to justify their actions in relation to a public interest, acting in accordance with a 'public service ethos' (Lundquist 1998). Grounding legitimacy on that kind of argumentation is commonplace within the political sphere; elected representatives are not expected to strictly follow the expressed wishes of their voters (delegates) but also to act in the best interest of the people (trustees) or independently act on political–philosophical principles such as environmental values (Applbaum 1992, p. 260; Boström and Uggla 2016). The legitimacy of such action is, however, largely evaluated after the fact. Or put in another way, good results speak the truth and politicians are held accountable for their actions in general elections.

A key question is why we would expect inside activists to know and act to the benefit of public interests. If legitimacy essentially is about 'whom in governance is trusted to determine what is Good and how to achieve it' (Stout 2013, p. 60), then public officials are in a good position to argue for the necessity of certain policy changes, founding such claims on their professional expertise and practical experience. A variety of reasons for such expert intervention can be listed, such as politicians being captured by special interests and citizens lacking knowledge (Stout 2013). Within environmental governance, scientific expertise is a necessary but often insufficient and sometimes unreliable source for legitimacy and many green thinkers have been distrustful in granting experts more political power (Boström and Uggla 2016; Yearley 1992). Here, two paths to legitimacy based on expertise can be identified. First, public administrations embody the professional expertise necessary to efficiently and effectively pursue environmental purposes. The competence of the officials grants them legitimacy to take discretionary actions and decisions. Such competence needs to be unleashed from rules and procedures ('red tape') and be entrusted to the professionals to determine the best way to achieve public purposes. Second, public administrations embody the public service ethos needed to ensure a just and equitable

allocation of public goods and services. While the first path grounds the legitimacy of public officials in their technical expertise ('men of reason'), the second path grounds it on professional virtues and ethics ('men of conscience') (Spicer 2014; Stout 2013, pp. 119–126).

Some critics of this ground of legitimacy point to the risk of legitimating a 'Platonic guardian class' (Stout 2013, p. 125). This is especially relevant in environmental politics, where the historical shadow of eco-authoritarian ideas of granting power to an ecological elite of scientific experts (Ophuls 1977) has influenced much of the debate on the relationship between democracy and expertise (Carter 2007). A more practical problem is that the legitimacy of decisions based exclusively on claims of expertise has been reduced in modern society. While scientific expertise and experts retain a key role in environmental governance (Lidskog and Sundqvist 2011), they are increasingly contested and challenged. Anyone can provide an 'expert' to support its claims. In many issue areas, the basic problem is that there are no scientifically 'correct' answers, only more or less acceptable measures and arguments (i.e., wicked problems). In addition, expertise means specialization. Thus, how can we ensure that problem-solving in one area does not generate unexpected consequences (or lack of opportunities) in other areas? How do we ensure 'the big picture' in policymaking? (Thiele 2011). Although it is important to recognize these limitations for relying on expertise for legitimacy, it does not take away the fact that public officials hold knowledge and experiences of great values, not only based on a scientific expertise but also on their practical experience of how to act in the 'messy' world of public administration and policymaking. Both these types of expertise increase the legitimacy of inside activism. If policymaking and implementation are characterized by muddling through (Lindblom 1959), whom are better to make the key decisions than the public officials? This said, we fully agree with Applbaum (1992, p. 273), that when public officials take upon themselves to use their discretionary powers, humility—recognizing the fallibility of one's judgment—is a critically important virtue.

Furthermore, how could we expect the decisions of inside activists to be evaluated after the fact? To some extent, accountability could be obtained by holding inside activists liable for their actions but that require the actions being carried out in the open (Koppell 2005) and inside activism is often carried out in secrecy, and sometimes even in tactical and power-driven ways (Chap. 5).

Doing the Things We (All) Can Agree on

A third ground for legitimacy is to ignore the political–democratic system and go straight to the people and their organizations in civil society. The most often argued vision of a 'green' democracy places key emphasis on decentralized decision-making, participation, and deliberation. This is, for example, often seen as core principles for green party politics (Carter 2007). By actively engaging with civil society, inside activists can strengthen their resources (knowledge, 'good arguments,' financial resources, and opinion-making) but potentially also its legitimacy by gaining direct popular mandate from affected interests to take action. Within planning research, originating in the 1960s, it was argued that planners should act as political advocates of weak groups in society to help compensate for their weak political power (Davidoff 1965). However, acting as advocates of special interests could only be seen as legitimate as long as there is a shared set of beliefs regarding what constitute good or worthy causes. Inside activism is primarily discussed in relation to issues such as environmental protection, civil rights, gender equality, and social justice that might be easier to legitimize. In contrast, network research has demonstrated that public administration also forms alliances and coalitions with powerful interests in support of the status quo ('iron triangles') (Kenis and Schneider 1991). Here, it would be more difficult to legitimize inside activists in support of polluting industries, patriarchal networks, or elite economic interests. There is also a clear risk of inducing a spiral of democratic degradation. As some officials act strategically to promote certain personal values (business or environmental), other actors may respond in kind; and thus devalue the importance of democratic and bureaucratic institutions. Thus, even if green inside activism may be justified in a specific situation or context, such activism needs to consider the wider (democratic) consequences of their actions. Or put in another way, if the democratic consequences of inside activism are sufficiently bad, then it cannot be considered legitimate (and thus should be avoided). Here, we need to recognize that democracy is both a set of procedures and a set of fundamental values. While the procedures may be seen as producing the 'wrong' output—and thus motivating inside activism—they are still upholding fundamental democratic values, which is put at risk by inside activism (Applbaum 1992).

A more direct path to get a popular mandate would be to engage the public in more open deliberative processes designed to 'rediscover the role of the public in shaping societal affairs' (Nabatchi 2010, p. 377). Getting to know the preferences and the needs of citizens is of key importance for public policy to reflect a genuine public interest. Instead of being defined through rules and procedures overseen by politicians or through moral justification of individual inside activists, public interest is here the product of genuine deliberation and agreement among affected citizens through participatory processes. A government *by* the people (i.e., participatory self-governance) needs to grant political authority to an active citizenry, i.e., 'people engaged in deliberation to influence public-sector decision-making, animated, at least in part, by concern for the public interest' (Stout 2013, p. 173). Here, inside activism can be legitimated by being responsive to the citizens. However, critics argue that these processes are too consensus-oriented and thus risk excluding alternative ideas, values, and possible solutions as well as central elements of democracy, namely difference, disagreement, and conflict (Mouffe 2005, Chap. 2).

In conflictual situations, public officials play vital roles by facilitating, involving, and engaging in participatory and deliberative processes. By engaging in such a facilitating role, inside activism can gain legitimacy by the following: (a) decentralizing authority and responsibility to the people; (b) defining public interest in relation to specific situations in dialogue with affected stakeholders; and (c) engaging in processes in which citizens actively can hold officials accountable (Stout 2013). While officials act more like facilitators and less like experts in these processes, they neither give up their substantive knowledge nor their activist role (Forester 1999). The inside activist would rather act as a steward or helper in these processes; acknowledged for their expertise, actively arguing in favor of certain outcomes, yet, function to facilitate an active citizenship. However, how do we avoid that such stewardship becomes more manipulative than facilitating and that deliberative processes become more symbolic than effective (Bellone and Goerl 1992; Irvin and Stansbury 2004)? Here, many proponents argue for the importance of the institutional design of the processes themselves; addressing issues in a 'nonpartisan' political fashion; infusing the participants with a commitment (and proper behavior) to this type of process; and establishing procedurals to guide and structure the deliberation (Stout 2013).

LEGITIMATING INSIDE ACTIVISM?

We have identified and discussed three logics of legitimacy for inside activism. Although all three have merits that can help to legitimate some aspects of inside activism, none of the logics in themselves can provide sufficient ground of legitimacy for inside activism. The optimal scenario for inside activism is of course to found decisions and actions on all three logics of legitimacy. For instance, one green inside activist could draw on all three logics of legitimacy to promote a new traffic plan, his actions being (i) supported by environmental organizations; (ii) anchored among leading politicians; and (iii) convincingly argued to be based on relevant research (Hysing 2009). The opposite situation where inside activism would have weak legitimacy in all respects may at first be hard to imagine short of criminal or fundamentalist activism. However, radical (or even revolutionary) agendas for policy change may motivate subversive inside activism that upset leading politicians, only attract minor support from citizens and organized interests, and go against conventional science and established societal norms (Olsson 2016). Legitimacy is not an all-or-nothing affair, but rather a matter of degree, and in most situations, we expect inside activism to be founded on some, but not all, logics of legitimacy. Inside activism in the face of grave injustices or threats to the public interests might be considered legitimate despite being done counter to political decisions, established procedures, and the public opinion (e.g., whistle-blowing on widespread government surveillance that violates the personal integrity of citizens around the world). This raises an important question in relation to the legitimacy of inside activism, namely the relative importance of the issue to society.

If the situation is dire, most people are more ready to support actions that essentially put democratic decision-making on hold to deal with the problem. This is not argument for legitimizing inside activism a priori. Instead, we argue that the grounds for legitimacy are contingent on the particular issues and situations (cf. Applbaum 1992). Inside activism can be legitimized by acting on the experiences of affected interests even if such actions are not supported by solid scientific evidence or elected representatives, for instance acting on the perceived health effects of residents near a compressor station leaking poisonous wastewater into the groundwater.

It is also important to consider the actions taken when discussing the legitimacy of inside activism. That public officials take part in open

deliberation and debate to influence public opinion or the interests of political groups can be seen as strengthening democracy, enabling those most knowledgeable of the functioning of the public sector to contribute to political debates. Subversive actions, on the other hand, are much more difficult to legitimize, because such actions can challenge fundamental principles of democracy and rule of law and, thus, require stronger grounds of legitimacy. If a policy process is characterized as democratic, fair, open, and so forth, but generates a policy not favored by an inside activist, it is difficult to see how subversive actions by the activist could be perceived as legitimate. In another situation, where there are highly important issues at stake, all other options have been exhausted, and the policy process is compromised and corrupted; subversive actions could be considered legitimate. Public officials are accountable for what they do. Sometimes this means that they need to get their 'hands dirty' and use subversive actions based on moral grounds. However, eloquently stated by Rosemary O'Leary (2014, p. 5), this type of activism run the spectrum 'from constructive contributors to deviant destroyers.' In other words, when discussing legitimacy, we need to recognize that inside activism can be used for both 'good' and 'evil.' Here, it is also important to keep in mind that legitimacy is highly context sensitive (Beetham 2013); that is, what is considered legitimate in one place at one historical period might be considered illegitimate in another.

Conclusions

The power of non-elected officials is often necessary in order for public administration to function, but it also brings considerable legitimacy problems. In this chapter, we have argued that inside activism is particularly problematic to reconcile with basic principles of democracy and rule of law. Three logics of legitimacy were discussed and assessed in relation to legitimacy problems of inside activism. The first logic—doing things with democratic support—focused on getting the support of elected officials for inside activism. We argued that the relationship between elected and non-elected officials is far from dichotomous and that closer interaction between them could provide fertile ground for legitimating inside activism, while also warning for the risk of manipulation as well as politicization. The second logic—doing the right thing—focused on generating legitimacy through the professionalism, expertise, and moral judgments of the inside activists. A public official acting in

the public interests and in accordance with a public service ethos is a good candidate as a decision-maker of both reason and conscience. While concluding that everyone is responsible for their actions, it is precarious to ground legitimacy on individual moral judgment and we discuss key issues such as humility, liability, and the limitations of expertise. The third logic of legitimacy—doing the things we can (all) agree on—focused on getting support from affected interests. While such support could be a powerful ground for legitimacy, it also brings critical questions about equality, representation, and power. We discussed problems such as deciding what causes are good and worthy for inside activism and the risk of inside activism corrupting policy processes by granting special interests preferential treatment. Inside activism in terms of representing affected interests also raises issues about manipulation and its role in deliberative and participatory processes.

While all three logics have key merits, none of the logics in themselves can provide sufficient ground for legitimacy. We argue that combining these logics can strengthen the legitimacy, but we also recognize that it is largely contingent on the particular issues and situations.

References

Applbaum, A. I. (1992). Democratic legitimacy and official discretion. *Philosophy & Public Affairs, 21*(3), 240–274.

Arendt, H. (2006). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil.* New York: Penguin Books.

Beetham, D. (2013). *The legitimation of power* (2nd ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bellone, C. J., & Goerl, G. F. (1992). Reconciling public entrepreneurship and democracy. *Public Administration Review, 52*(2), 130–134.

Bernstein, S. (2011). Legitimacy in intergovernmental and non-state global governance. *Review of International Political Economy, 18*(1), 17–51.

Boström, M., & Uggla, Y. (2016). A sociology of environmental representation. *Environmental Sociology, 2*(4), 355–364.

Bryer, T. A., & Sahin, I. (2012). Administrators as deliberative representatives: A revised public service role. *International Journal of Public Administration, 35*(14), 925–933.

Bulkeley, H. (2012). Governance and the geography of authority: Modalities of authorisation and the transnational governing of climate change. *Environment and Planning A, 44,* 2428–2444.

Burke, J. P. (1989). Reconciling public administration and democracy: The role of the responsible administrator. *Public Administration Review, 49*(2), 180–185.

Carter, N. (2007). *The politics of the environment. Ideas, activism, policy* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Davidoff, P. (1965) Advocacy and pluralism in planning. In S. S. Fainstein & S. Campbell (Eds.), *Readings in Planning Theory*. Third edition (2011). (pp. 191–205). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Forester, J. (1999). *The Deliberative Practitioner. Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes*. London: The MIT Press.

Goodsell, C. T. (2006). A new vision for public administration. *Public Administration Review, 66*(4), 623–635.

Held, D. (2006). *Models of democracy* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Polity.

Humphrey, M. (2006). Democratic legitimacy, public justification and environmental direct action. *Political Studies, 54*(2), 310–327.

Humphrey, M. (2007). *Ecological politics and democratic theory. The challenge to the deliberative ideal*. London: Routledge.

Hysing, E. (2009). Greening transport—Explaining urban transport policy change. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning, 11*(3), 243–261.

Hysing, E. (2013). Representative democracy, empowered experts, and citizen participation: Visions of green governing. *Environmental Politics, 22*(6), 955–974.

Hysing, E., & Lundberg, E. (2016). Making governance networks more democratic: Lessons from the Swedish governmental commissions. *Critical Policy Studies, 10*(1), 21–38.

Irvin, R. A., & Stansbury, J. (2004). Citizen participation in decision making: Is it worth the effort? *Public Administration Review, 64*(1), 55–65.

Kenis, P., & Schneider, V. (1991). Policy networks and policy analysis: Scrutinizing a new analytical toolbox. In B. Marin & R. Mayntz (Eds.), *Policy networks. Empirical evidence and theoretical considerations* (pp. 25–59). Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag.

Koppell, J. G. A. (2005). Pathologies of accountability: ICANN and the challenge of "multiple accountabilities disorder". *Public Administration Review, 65*(1), 94–108.

Lawton, A., Rayner, J., & Lasthuizen, K. (2013). *Ethics and management in the public sector*. London: Routledge.

Lidskog, R., & Sundqvist, G. (2011). Science-policy-citizen dynamics in international environmental governance. In R. Lidskog & G. Sundqvist (Eds.) *Governing the air. The dynamics of science, policy, and citizen interaction* (pp. 323–359). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Lindblom, C. E. (1959). The science of muddling through. *Public Administration Review, 19*(2), 79–88.

Lowi, T. J. (1993). Legitimizing public administration: A disturbed dissent. *Public Administration Review, 53*(3), 261–264.

Lundquist, L. (1998). *Demokratins väktare. Ämbetsmannen och vårt offentliga etos.* Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Lundquist, L. (1999) Ämbetsmännen som demokratins väktare. In E. Amnå (Ed.) *Maktdelning. Demokratiutredningens forskarvolym 1.* Statens offentliga utredningar (SOU) 1999:76 (pp. 147–178). Stockholm.

Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the political.* London: Routledge.

Nabatchi, T. (2010). Addressing the citizenship and democratic deficits: The potential of deliberative democracy for public administration. *The American Review of Public Administration, 40*(4), 376–399.

Niskanen, W. A. (1973). *Bureaucracy: Servant or master?* London: The Institute of Economic Affairs.

O'Leary, R. (2014). *The ethics of dissent: Managing guerrilla government* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Olsen, J. P. (2006). Maybe it is time to rediscover bureaucracy. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 16*(1), 1–24.

Olsson, J. (2016). *Subversion in institutional change and stability. A neglected mechanism.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ophuls, W. (1977). *Ecology and the politics of scarcity.* San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company.

Overeem, P. (2005). The Value of the dichotomy: Politics. Administration, and the Political Neutrality of Administrators, *Administrative Theory & Praxis, 27*(2), 311–329.

Peters, B. G. (2011). *Institutional theory in political science: The "new institutionalism".* London: Pinter.

Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. (2011). *Public management reform. A comparative analysis: New public management, governance, and the new-Weberian state* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rawls, J. (1999). *A Theory of justice.* Revised edition. Cambridge: Belknap Press.

Rothstein, B. (2007). Political legitimacy for public administration. In B. G. Peters & J. Pierre (Eds.), *The handbook of public administration* (pp. 213–222). London: Sage.

Spicer, M. W. (2014) *In defense of politics in public administration. A value pluralist perspective.* Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press.

Stout, M. (2013). *Logics of legitimacy: Three traditions of public administration praxis.* Boca Raton: CRC Press.

Suleiman, E. (2003). *Dismantling democratic states.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Svara, J. H. (2001). The myth of the dichotomy: Complementarity of politics and administration in the past and future of public administration. *Public Administration Review, 61*(2), 176–183.

Svara, J. H. (2006). Introduction: Politicians and administrators in the political process—A review of themes and issues in the literature. *International Journal of Public Administration, 29*(12), 953–976.

Sørensen, E., & Torfing, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Theories of democratic network governance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Thiele, L. P. (2011). *Indra's net and The Midas Touch. Living sustainably in a connected world*. Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Weber, M. (1947). *The theory of social and economic organization*. Edited with an introduction by Talcott Parsons. New York: Free Press.

Welchman, J. (2001). Is ecosabotage civil disobedience? *Philosophy & Geography, 4*(1), 97–107.

Wise, L. R. (2007). Representative bureaucracy. In B. G. Peters & J. Pierre (Eds.), *The handbook of public administration*. London: Sage.

Yearley, S. (1992). Green ambivalence about science: Legal-rational authority and the scientific legitimation of social movement. *British Journal of Sociology, 43*(4), 511–532.

Conclusions, Future Research, and Implications for Practice

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GREEN INSIDE ACTIVISM

Sustainable development has become the dominant global discourse of ecological concern, with the prospect of guiding us into a development path that balances environmental protection, economic development, and social justice across time and space. Even though sustainable development is an essentially contested concept, it also persists as an attractive political vision continually interpreted and applied in different situations and contexts to address various problems and challenges. We witness both major prevailing problems and good news about working solutions on the journey toward a more sustainable society. Despite many good intentions, green institutional change is a difficult challenge. When consulting institutional theory, it is easier to find arguments for continuity than for change and transformation. However, we argue in this book that the strong emphasis on the structural nature of institutions means that institutional theory for a long time has underestimated the possibilities for actor-induced change. Thus, a more nuanced theorizing on the micro-level of institutions, to which we contribute, can help us see new ways and mechanisms for green institutional change.

In this regard, public officials are still a largely neglected subject of study within environmental and sustainable development research. Despite the fact that they are central in all public policy and planning processes and thus have the potential to act as key actors for green

changes, they are only rarely considered as political change agents. Regardless of preferred modes of governance, be they traditional state governance, market mechanisms, or civic engagement, public officials are at the center of the efforts to address green challenges. They are often important actors in political processes, and they acquire influence in many different ways. Instead of treating them as neutral instruments for political processes or as automatically adapting to institutional norms, rules, and practices, we need to understand their actions and behaviors as institutional political agency. In this book, we focus on how public officials can act as 'activists' within governments and public organizations, using both open authoritative measures and secret subversive actions.

The central theoretical concept of this book is *green inside activism*, which captures institutional political agency of public officials, being personally committed to agendas of green networks and organizations, and acting within public organizations to induce policy and institutional change. Inside activism is thus an institutional phenomenon. Throughout this book, we have theorized on this phenomenon and the ways it can contribute to green change by altering institutional rules, norms, and practices as well as securing institutions perceived as favorable to a more sustainable development. We have addressed questions on the nature and characteristics of green inside activism and the contexts that tend to give rise to this type of activism; how inside activism further our theoretical understanding of green institutional change and the mechanisms of power and influence inside activists can exploit to make a difference in processes of change and continuity; and how and on what grounds green inside activism can be legitimized.

By taking institutional political agency seriously, we move beyond institutional theories that stress the structural nature and stability of institutions. We argue that green change efforts of committed public officials do not have to be undermined by institutional inertia. The potential for actor-induced change in specific situations and contexts has been largely neglected in institutional theory. Different versions of new institutionalism lack a more nuanced understanding of human agency and how it relates to institutions: They tend to focus on single logics of action, to neglect the importance of various micro-mechanisms of action, and to downplay discursive aspects in theorizing change and continuity.

As a contrast to the dominance of economic and sociological theorizing in new institutionalism (rational choice institutionalism and sociological/normative institutionalism), we make a theoretical positioning

labeled new *political* institutionalism. It acknowledges the relevance of what we call *the logic of combat* elaborated as a complement to the *logic of social adaptation*, which is based on sociological and normative institutionalism. Together, these logics capture the two essential dimensions of political life: combative action and adaptive behavior. Thus, it is an argument of consolidation and of upgrading political discourse in institutional theory.

THE POLITICAL NATURE OF GREEN INSIDE ACTIVISM

When comparing green inside activism to other more or less well-known key actor concepts in the literature, such as bureaucrats, policy entrepreneurs, street-level democrats, administrative guerillas, and institutional activists, we show that there are important similarities and differences between these available concepts and inside activism. On a conceptual level, the novelty of inside activism mainly lays in three factors. First, the inside activism concept draws important insights from various concepts within this literature, but it combines important findings in a novel way. In particular, it draws from institutional activism covering the same type of institutional phenomenon; the policy entrepreneur in terms of innovative solutions; the street-level democrat for its discursive interaction; and the administrative guerilla for its insights on subversive actions.

Second, the inside activism concept challenges and problematizes three divides largely constructed in both social science and within the public realm: public–private; politics–bureaucracy; and actors–structures. Inside activism helps us to seriously consider how and why the public–private dichotomy is blurred in practice. It does so by directing our attention to policy and institutional change emanating from both 'inside' and 'outside' as well as by making us sensitive to the interactivity between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in gradual processes of change. Furthermore, the inside activism concept can help us look beyond the problematic conceptual dichotomy between 'value-driven politicians' and 'neutral public officials.' Thus, inside activism can shine new light on the classical democracy–bureaucracy dilemma within public administration research by elaborating on the discretionary power of environmental public officials as well as its associated legitimacy problems. We have argued and illustrated that 'neutral' expertise does not work as the guiding rule of environmental public officials and inside activists but rather creative problem-solving based on value-laden, contested knowledge.

Moreover, we have showed how inside activism gives degrees of freedom for individual action and thus explicitly addresses the classical problem of 'agency versus structure' in social science. In this sense, the concept of inside activism helps us move beyond the troublesome dichotomy between institutions and agency. In certain situations and contexts, inside activism can exploit opportunities for policy and institutional change. Thus, individuals are no simple intermediaries for structures and external forces. Inside activism takes political agency seriously and can help us discover important logics and mechanisms behind institutional change and stability.

Third, the inside activism concept is defined relatively precisely to lend itself to further theorizing as well as empirical testing. In the final part of this chapter, we will present an agenda for such future research endeavor.

Green Inside Activism in Context

In what contexts do green inside activism tend to arise? We theorize on this question, based on both empirical experiences and theoretical ideas. First, we discuss the question in relation to how the inside activism concept is defined. We can thus expect to find inside activists in contexts where they have potentials to influence important decision-making, for instance, within the networks of political and management elites but also on the ground where a more practical authority can develop and make a difference in concrete situations. We further argue that green inside activism is likely within dynamic policy areas and issues of great relevance to sustainable development, such as environmental policy, climate change, traffic and land-use planning, and so on. Put straight: We expect green inside activism in a number of policy and issue areas attractive for green movements to influence.

We argue furthermore that important trends in governments and public administrations such as governance and public management reforms, increasing civic engagement, expert-based policymaking, and bureaucratic politics have likely increased the space for creative agency and inside activism among public officials. However, we do not see this as a new phenomenon, rather an increasingly important one, which has made green inside activism more likely over a decade or so.

We also develop a more fundamental argument of organizational contexts and inside activism. We develop a fragmentation thesis, which seeks to make a balanced and integrated account of the dual forces of

consolidation and fragmentation within public organizations. We argue that political agency, like inside activism, can be expected to prevail in various public organizations, making them relatively fragmented, despite management ambitions to govern and socialize their organization members. The fundamental force behind this is that basic beliefs and values are formed to a large extent during childhood and youth. Individual organization members are socially and politically 'programmed' before they enter public organizations. To a large extent, people already have their social and cultural codes, beliefs, and political values in place when joining an organization.

Although public organizations are largely permeated by forces of political consolidation and socialization, there are also counterforces of fragmentation as a consequence of the varied mixture of employees with different beliefs and values already in place when joining the organization. The dual forces of organizational consolidation and fragmentation enable organization members to have an 'official personality' adapted to the identity and norms of their organization but also a 'non-official personality' concealed to the public sphere of the organization. This non-official personality can be more or less critical and subversive to specific rules, norms, and practices of the organization. Public organizations are fertile grounds for political agency such as inside activism, because they are plagued with institutional complexity, giving opportunities to deal with value conflicts in a dynamic, activist orientation.

We must also remember that activists in green movements have both competences and personal interests to seek employment opportunities in governments and public administrations, being responsible for issues of relevance to sustainable development. These actors may have own change agendas and can monitor available, attractive employers where they hope to make a difference.

Institutional Change Through Green Inside Activism

This book develops theoretical ideas on the mechanisms green inside activists can use to work for gradual institutional change. We argue that the change efforts tend to be dualistic: open, deliberative, and consensus-seeking as well as power-driven, tactical, and subversive. Thus, green inside activists follow both the logic of social adaptation and the logic of combat on the 'light' and 'dark' side of political agency. We further argue that power-driven, subversive action is most likely in critical

situations where really important values are at stake for those involved and where the outcome is hard to predict.

Green inside activists have to face different dilemmas in their daily work. The radicalism–change dilemma deals with how radical green inside activists can be without provoking powerful interests and undermining the possibility of inducing change on the longer time frame. However, available empirical data do not support this type of dilemma. There are also theoretical arguments in line with this, saying that the activities of green inside activists can successively influence norms and attitudes toward a more tolerant view of radical ideas, especially when they are favored by environmental experts that manage to disguise eventual subversive actions. The power–deliberation dilemma raises the question whether sustainable development can be achieved through open deliberation or if secret, tactical, and power-driven action is unavoidable to make a difference. This dilemma has to be handled in processes of institutional change and continuity and is associated with great risks for the inside activist. The openness–secrecy dilemma is about how far secrecy and subversive action can be taken without losing its effective capacity and under what circumstances it is better to act more openly. We argue that this dilemma can, to some extent, be escaped through cooperative action with like-minded people.

Moreover, we elaborate on how green inside activists can actually work to produce gradual institutional change by *expanding political agency* in a number of respects and by *exploiting institutional ambiguities* that continuously arise as opportunities for change. Expanding political agency can be accomplished in various ways, and to be efficient, it needs to be comprehensive: develop political collectives such as networks and coalitions; combine different resources and possibilities; combat for specific values; and tirelessly work for cumulative change effects. Attractive targets for inside activists are institutional ambiguities between rules, norms, and practices and, in particular, the most weak points of institutions with few defenders. Those weak points can work as strategic entrances for further change. We illustrate these arguments through a heuristic case of local land-use planning, showing how inside activists expanded their political agency and exploited ambiguities in ways that lead to unexpected institutional change, in line with sustainable development ideals. The case further illustrates that combative actions to be effective need to be wisely handled in relation to dominant institutions, even being partly adapted to highly valued rules and norms. The logic

of social adaptation is more fundamental than combative action for most public officials, but change agents such as green inside activists are always under the surface prepared to activate in specific situations when important values are at stake. Combative action comes in different shapes and takes place on both the light and dark side of political agency, through legitimate mechanisms such as open argumentation and deliberation as well as subversive action behind the scenes.

Legitimizing Green Inside Activism?

The power of non-elected officials is often necessary in order for public administration to function, but it also brings considerable legitimacy problems. We argue that inside activism is particularly problematic to reconcile with basic principles of democracy and the rule of law. Inside activism involves public officials with a substantial amount of discretion; being innovative and entrepreneurial; and acting secretly and tactical in support of personal value commitments. These characteristics challenge values such as accountability, openness, transparency, and democratic representation.

Three logics of legitimacy are further discussed and assessed in relation to these legitimacy problems of inside activism. The first focused on getting the support of elected officials for inside activism. The relationship between elected and non-elected officials is far from dichotomous, and closer interaction between them could provide fertile ground for legitimating inside activism, but there are also risks of manipulation and politicization. The second logic focused on generating legitimacy through the professionalism, expertise, and moral judgments of the inside activists. A public official acting in the public interests and in accordance with a public service ethos is a good candidate as a decision-maker of both reason and conscience. While concluding that everyone is responsible for their actions, it is precarious to ground legitimacy on individual moral judgment and we discuss key issues such as humility, liability, and the limitations of expertise. The third logic of legitimacy focuses on getting support from affected interests. While such support could be a powerful ground for legitimacy, it also brings critical questions about equality, representation, and power. We discussed problems such as deciding what causes are good and worthy for inside activism and the risk of inside activism becoming just another example of a compromised policy process where special interests get preferential treatment.

Inside activism in terms of representing affected interests also raises issues about manipulation and its role in deliberative and participatory processes.

While all three logics have key merits to legitimate inside activism, none of the logics in themselves can provide sufficient ground for legitimacy. We argue that combining these logics strengthens the legitimacy, but we also recognize that the legitimacy is largely contingent on the particular issues and situations. In a corrupted policy process, where highly important issues are at stake and where other options have been exhausted, the legitimacy of inside activism is higher than in processes only generating the 'wrong' policy. We also argue that legitimacy needs to be assessed in relation to the actions taken. Raising debate on an issue from inside public administration is far easier to legitimate than to engage in subversive actions. We also need to recognize that the grounds for legitimacy are contextual to some extent and that inside activism can be used in quite different ways and for various purposes.

FUTURE RESEARCH

There are still a lot of things we do not know about green inside activism. This type of research is in its initial phase in need of more empirical, normative, and theoretical research, which also evokes methodological considerations. Here, we will raise some—but far from all—questions for future research that we think would further our understanding of inside activism in important ways.

MAPPING THE RELEVANCE OF INSIDE ACTIVISM

A first challenge for future research is to map the importance and relevance of inside activism in different contexts. Examples of inside activism have been noticed in various countries around the world (e.g., Australia, Brazil, Sweden, and the USA), but those studies are primarily case-based and lack comparative and synthesizing efforts to a large extent. One explanation for this is conceptual fragmentation. As discussed in Chap. 3, the literature is full of partially overlapping conceptualizations of public officials as key political actors in policy processes. A first step to develop a more coherent research agenda on inside activism, as well as providing the basis for more comparative and synthesizing research, would be to review already existing studies within a number of potentially relevant

fields of research (policy and planning studies, public administration, and organization). Such a review would likely reveal far more examples of inside activism, 'hidden' under other conceptual labels, such as policy entrepreneurs, boundary spanners, and street-level actors.

As noticed in Chap. 4, much of the research on inside activism has focused on policy fields related to environmental protection, civil rights, gender equality, and social justice. A possible reason for this is that inside activism actually takes place within these particular policy fields because they are closely associated with social movements in civic society. Thus, maybe existing research simply reflects the reality. Another potential explanation is that the researchers may have biased interests toward these particular fields, for instance, because they are perceived as representing 'good' and 'worthy' causes, or because there are methodological difficulties to identify inside activism in other policy areas. For example, we could easily imagine to find inside activism related to the alliances and coalitions between public administration and powerful economic interests. Future empirical research may very well find inside activists being committed to quite different issues and values, including elite economic interests, polluting industries, or patriarchal networks. However, we expect this type of inside activism to be even less prone to come out in the open, making it a particularly difficult object of study but a really urgent one. What happens, for instance, when different inside activists support contradictory values in the same policy process? Will a 'dirty' power struggle follow inside public organizations, resulting in democratic degradation, as discussed in Chap. 7?

Thus, a first appeal for further research would be to widen the empirical base on which inside activism is theorized. To re-analyze cases in light of inside activism and to compare and synthesize insights across countries are of key importance. It is also important to broaden the number of policy fields and issues in which inside activism may be relevant, not the least to capture processes of competing inside activism.

Capturing the Dynamics of Inside Activism

A second issue in need of further research is the dynamics of inside activism. We should not expect public officials to act as inside activists all the time. In practice, public officials play different roles in different contexts and situations. While some officials are hired with explicit mandates to take action in support of institutional change along certain

values, and thus enabling practices of inside activism on an everyday basis (e.g., Hysing 2009; Yeatman 1990), others may act most of the time in line with bureaucratic norms but may switch to inside activist behavior in critical situations when personal values are at stake (Olsson 2009; Needleman and Needleman 1974). This dynamic of inside activism raises several important questions for future research.

A first group of questions are which particular officials that become inside activists as well as how and where their activism sentiments develop. The most fundamental question here is whether public officials became environmental activists before they got their professional positions or if some of them developed their environmental commitment and activism as a result of their work experiences. In Chap. 4, we argued that individuals actively engaged in environmental organizations have been an important group of people to recruit as environmental officials, both through active government initiatives and by the simple fact that environmental activists search attractive jobs. We mainly see socialization as an important force, which means that we expect green beliefs and values to develop in the early years, influencing career choices in life (education, training, workplaces). However, we cannot rule out the possibility that at least some public officials become radicalized and more activist-oriented in their work, for instance, through socialization into a radical green subculture within a public organization. As argued in Chap. 4, there are both forces of consolidation and fragmentation within public organizations. A related question is whether most public officials are ready for inside activism under the right circumstances or if it requires specific personal characteristics, such as being prone to risk taking, professionally and emotionally committed to their work, being skilled in conflict handling, and so on? Our expectation is that inside activism to some extent is latent in all of us but that certain individuals are more prone to inside activism than others. However, we have limited knowledge about this theme and it is worth much more attention.

A second group of questions is when and how public officials 'activate' inside activism? What triggers inside activism behavior and in what situations? We have argued in this book that inside activism becomes an option in situations where important values are at stake. It can be a situation where a superior officer sidesteps important environmental values, trigging an official to reach out to environmental movements and start engaging in inside activism. But could it also be activated by policy

opportunities, that is, situations in the policy process in which an opportunity to further key values opens up? In the case of Rynningeviken presented in Chap. 6, inside activism seems to have been activated in a situation characterized by both. The area under development was, on the one hand, considered by the inside activists as 'their own backyard' and the development plans were thus considered a threat to their key values, but, on the other hand, alternative development plans were considered an opportunity to further their own values. Future research should dwell deeper into such dual incentives and opportunity structures of inside activism.

A third question relates to how inside activism evolves over time. This is an important research question, both for increasing our knowledge of how inside activists keep their capacity for change over time and how they may be co-opted subsequently by norms and rules of their organization. Public officials are under constant pressure to adapt to the norms and praxis of their organizations. There is a risk of co-optation of inside activists. A public official starting as an inside activist may, in the years that follow, adapt to the elite interests of public agencies and later on even become a good representative of institutionalized norms and values. However, there are also other possible developments. First, even though inside activists come under pressure, they can remain faithful to their ideals by being quite good at disguising them in different ways and for different actors, that is, by being activists inside (cf. Needleman and Needleman 1974). A second way this might go is that an inside activist becomes more radical over the years or develop from a pragmatic public official to a more eager inside activist. Frustrated by slow policy progress, inside activists may over time search for alternative strategies for policy change.

A second appeal for future research is thus to look deeper into the dynamics of inside activism. This may include in-depth studies of individual inside activists—their motives, beliefs, and experiences—and their political and organizational contexts. This may include process-tracing and other ways of studying policy and planning processes, developing understanding of situations and phases in the policy process in which various forms of inside activism takes place. This may also include anthropological research into the functioning of public administration, developing a deeper understanding of the effect of institutions over time.

ELABORATING ON THE LEGITIMACY OF INSIDE ACTIVISM

Inside activism manifests a fundamental tension between democracy and bureaucracy existing in all modern democracies. On an overall level, we believe this to be an unsolvable dilemma, but rather than ignoring or downplaying it, we need to research both how it is handled in practice (empirical research) and further reflect on how it should be handled (normative research). Thus, we can lay out two additional questions for future research: How are individual inside activists legitimizing their activities and what is the normative basis and source of legitimacy of inside activism in a democratic society? A first step to answer the latter question was taken in Chap. 7 where we discussed three logics of legitimacy for inside activism. Here, we concluded that none of the logics is sufficient in itself but that a combination of them can provide relatively strong claims for legitimacy, for example, when inside activism is supported by affected interests, anchored among leading politicians and supported by research. Furthermore, legitimacy is contingent on the particular issues and situations making it difficult to make strong claims for legitimacy a priori.

Green political theory—and the long-standing tension between procedural values of democracy, on the one side, and substantial values of green change, on the other side (Saward 1996)—could provide a useful starting point for future research on legitimacy and legitimation of inside activism. Responding to what is perceived as ineffective and/or illegitimate actions within established institutions is a likely motive for engaging in inside activism. Thus, a basic way to legitimate inside activism would be to refer to criticism against the functioning of the current system or put simply: if the system is unable to induce green change. Hence, to understand how inside activists legitimate their actions, a first step could be to look into green critique. For example, one critical flaw of liberal democracy, often pointed out in the literature, is that the short-termism of the democratic electoral systems makes politicians unwilling (or unable) to take necessary, long-term steps toward a more sustainable society. Representative democracy may prevent politicians from being visionary enough to bring about a 'green society' as they depend on public opinion for their political survival (Hysing 2013). If the politicians are perceived as unable or unwilling to deal with environmental problems, it can provide important motivation for public officials to strategically go around the political level; legitimating inside activism

as a corrective for political impotence. Another example could be critique that the distribution of power in democratic systems is systematically skewed in favor of business interests. If the democratic system is seen as corrupted by special interests, inside activism can be legitimated as a way to weighting up the influence of other interests ('leveling the playing field') (cf. Davidoff 1965). Here, inside activism becomes legitimated not only by promoting green values but also as a way to correct democratic process. As discussed above, it is far easier to legitimate inside activism drawing on both substantial/ecological grounds (e.g., the perceived threat of a valuable wetland) and procedural/democratic grounds (e.g., that vested interests have corrupted the democratic process). In sum, revisiting the green criticism of the liberal democratic state could be a first step to further understand how inside activists motivate and justify their actions.

A third appeal for future research is to engage in normative research in two ways. The first way is to further research the legitimacy of inside activism (and the power of public officials more generally) in relation to different schools of thought within democratic and public administration theory. This would be a way to further develop the public administration research theme of value conflicts and value pluralism (Spicer 2014; De Graaf 2015; De Graaf et al. 2016). The second way is to further research the motives, justifications, and legitimation of inside activists themselves. Here, we propose to contribute to critical debates on the relationship between democracy and green change with green political theory as a theoretical starting point.

Overcoming Methodological Challenges

It is a difficult challenge for researchers to try to capture what is hidden under the surface; things that respondents are reluctant to talk about, such as violating established practices, ignoring orders from superiors, or even breaking the law. In the Rynningeviken case presented in Chap. 6, the practices and importance of inside activism were stumbled upon when an outspoken respondent was willing to open up about the case. This openheartedness was probably helped by the fact that the inside activism had been largely successful in terms of the project gaining widespread approval among both elected officials and the public after the fact. The sensitive conflict was settled. Nonetheless, several respondents—including the key inside activist in the case—were sticking

to a public storyline of a 'routine' planning process, even if they largely corroborated the facts of the story. It is important to recognize that the bureaucratic ideal remains a dominant discourse in public administration, framing the way public officials perceive of themselves and making it a methodological challenge to get officials to acknowledge and reflect upon their more political role. As shown by both the Rynningeviken case (Olsson 2009) and the Nevada Four case (O'Leary 2014), intensive research designs—where researchers are able to follow a case over time, gain contextual knowledge, understanding, and trust from the respondents, and conduct in-depth case studies—have proved successful. However, it is also important that less intensive studies have the tools necessary to identify this type of behavior and activities within the public sector. A first step in that direction is to complement existing theoretical frameworks for policy and planning research; recognizing inside activism as a potential explanatory variable for institutional change and stability. Essentially, policy and planning research need to keep an eye open for inside activism. However, we also need to develop methodologies that make respondents prone to tell about their behaviors, value commitment, and networks. This requires trust and thus raises key issues of guaranteed anonymity and our ability to secure such. An alternative strategy is to wait until the gun smoke of a conflict has dissipated before starting to investigate a case, even though we cannot be that patient all the time.

Another challenge is to design research that can capture relevant aspects of inside activism. Extensive research designs have proved useful to map likely candidates to be inside activists (Hysing and Olsson 2011). Another way would be to place our focus on institutional change and try to map the influence of inside activism backward (Olsson 2016). A key challenge, however, is that inside activism is a highly contextual and situational phenomenon; that is, behaviors and activities are activated in certain situations. Thus, while extensive designs can help identify general characteristics of individuals (i.e., identifying potential inside activists) or cases of institutional change, it is more difficult to capture the situation/contextual data which are necessary to understand inside activism as an institutional phenomenon. Intensive research designs are better equipped to capture such data but risks, on the other hand, leaving us to fumble in the dark in the sense of not actually finding relevant cases. While we have argued in this book that inside activism is a largely overlooked institutional phenomenon of great importance to understand institutional

change, we do not want to overstate its generalization. If we want to study inside activism, we cannot choose policy and planning processes at random. A dual research design might provide an answer: using extensive research to identify potential inside activists or cases and then use them as a starting point for intensive studies into actual policy and planning processes.

To summarize the need for further research, we suggest to work on two fronts at the same time. We need to complement the existing theoretical tool kit in policy and planning studies, ensuring that researchers keep an eye out for this phenomenon. We also need to make more concentrated efforts to find and study this phenomenon systematically, using a dual design of both extensive and intensive research.

Implications for Practice

Inside activism raises a lot of important questions of great practical relevance. Here, we will shortly reflect on the most important conclusions for politicians and managers and inside activists.

For Politicians and Managers

Throughout this book, we have demonstrated how green inside activism can play decisive roles in policy and planning processes, thus contributing to transform society in a sustainable direction. We believe there are a large numbers of public officials that act from inside public administration to induce change in accordance with their personal commitments to green values. Acknowledging the efforts of these officials is important, not only for researchers interested in getting a better understanding of policy and institutional change, but also among those trying to induce green change in practice. On a general level, the dominant discourse of sustainable development has highlighted the responsibility as well as potential of individual actions, reducing personal or household impact on the environment (e.g., through changed consumption patterns). Individual's responsibility and potential to also further sustainable development in their professional role are less pronounced in the literature. Instead of fearing and repressing committed public officials, politicians and managers need to accept that this not only is an unavoidable feature of modern public administration, but also that such commitment can be a vital resource for improvements and development. Simply put, we need

to encourage and take advantage of the enthusiasm and engagement of public officials in appropriate ways, even though this type of commitment will also find its ways behind the scenes out of reach of those in power.

An obvious objection, discussed at length throughout this book, is that of democracy and legitimacy. Of course, elected politicians cannot let non-elected officials do what they want. Inside activism can be used for 'good' and 'evil' and actions often have unintended consequences. We need to clearly acknowledge the potential importance of inside activism for green change but also be aware of its potential negative implications for democracy and rule of law. Responding with increased political control and micromanagement comes at a cost, not least in the form of reduced creativity and innovation. A better way for elected politicians and managers to respond is to engage more actively with the officials, finding ways to intensify contacts and cooperation between politics and administration. Such interactions also enable politicians and managers to get to know individual officials and get a feel for the organization, providing the ground on which to build relationships of mutual respect and trust.

There are also clear risks. In times of increasing political populism and disregard of facts and truth, classic concerns over politicization of public administration remain highly relevant and need to be carefully considered. So, of course, is the risk of manipulation. Inside activism brings the political power and policy influence of public officials to the fore, but also that special interests are at work, not only from outside the political–administrative sphere (traditional lobbying), but also from inside the administration. However, striving to create a cadre of neutral public officials is unrealistic—it simply is not how the world works. Inside activism is unavoidable within public administration. Likely, most actions are never noticed and thus impossible to protect against. As discussed in this book, inside activism often takes different forms and the way it is executed largely determines its potential negative consequences. An organizational culture where everybody feels free to speak their mind encourages some forms of inside activism, such as deliberation and debate, which means opening ways to influence and express dissent that do not include subversive actions. Thus, although inside activism cannot be avoided, encouraging dissent might be a way of harboring its potentials while avoiding some of its more problematic expressions.

In the end, how to respond to inside activism in practice is impossible to say a priori. It depends ultimately on the situation and context in question. There is no simple answer to this complex challenge, such as a checklist on how to balance different values in different situations, but being attentive to the potential power of public officials is a good starting point.

FOR GREEN INSIDE ACTIVISTS

Inside activism, taking action from inside public administration to try and change government policy and actions in line with a personal value commitment, disregarding bureaucratic 'red tape' and circumventing frustratingly passive political leaders, can be an attractive path. While such actions can help bring about important green change, they also come with a lot of risks and problems. Even actions with the best intent can bring about unintended consequences, and in situations where inside activism brings beneficial results, negative democratic effects may also follow. Power also has a tendency to blind those who wield it. Just because someone can engage in inside activism, he or she should not necessarily do it.

Inside activists need to be clear on their motives. The inside activist needs to be convinced that inside activism is the right and the just thing to do in the given situation and making this decision by balancing personal moral convictions, the formal obligations and duty of a public official, and political prudence (O'Leary 2014). It is important to try and see the big picture. A single policy decision might seem wrong, but might free resources that could be put to better use. It is also important to try and see the potential consequences of one's actions. Inside activism in support of environmental values may trigger officials holding other values into inside activism, resulting in a downward spiral of democratic degradation. Inside activism can look attractive in a single policy process but when considering the wider risks, the price might be deemed too high.

An inside activist also needs to ask him/herself, how do I know I am right? As discussed in this book, it is far easier to motivate inside activism in situations where the democratic decision-making process has been corrupted, than in situations where the process is correct but has resulted in an output not preferred by the inside activist. Acting against democratic decisions always requires critical reflections on one's own basis for

dissent as well as a large dose of humility. In complex policy situations, limited information and knowledge are the way things are and, thus, recognizing that we do not know it all is crucial (see also the excellent list of questions one should ask oneself as a potential government guerrilla presented in O'Leary 2014, p. 114).

Not all inside activism is equal. Engaging in deliberation or raising public debate on an issue from inside public administration is far easier to legitimize than the use of subversive actions (Applbaum 1992). That public officials take part in open deliberation and debate to influence public opinion or the interests of political groups can be seen as strengthening democracy. Subversive actions, on the other hand, can challenge fundamental principles of democracy and rule of law but can also secure the same principles and values, due to organizational wrongdoings, for instance, illegal action with detrimental environmental effects. Even though this may seem to be the morally correct thing to do, subversive action should be considered as a last resort.

Finally, and just as likely for politicians and managers, awareness of special interest manipulation is crucial for inside activists. Drawing on the resources and support of outside organizations and social movement can help in efforts of green change but such support likely comes at a price. These groups operate under different circumstances than public officials, free of many of the constraints imposed by principles of democracy and rule of law. As such, they do not have to face the dilemmas of balancing different values, such as democratic legitimacy, problem-solving, and transparency. In the quest for results, they might put pressure on the inside activists to take more radical actions or denounce the inside activist as co-opted or as a sellout.

NOT A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE TO INSIDE ACTIVISM

Inside activism raises critical questions about the legitimate conduct of public officials. In some cases, we expect public officials to engage in inside activism, while in others, we consider such behavior as intolerable and unethical. These ethical questions may also reflect back on the purpose and use of this book: Are we presenting *a practitioner's guide to inside activism*?

The answer is no. Inside activism is a theoretical concept designed to capture an empirical phenomenon. Or put in another way, inside activism is out there. Good or bad, it takes place in public administrations all

over the world, influencing policy on a daily basis. This is neither new nor especially controversial within public administration research. The dichotomy between politics and administration has been described as a 'useful myth' (Svara 2001) and the political importance of public officials is commonly recognized. We also have widely noticed examples of whistle-blowing, such as the case of Edward Snowden, which increase public and political awareness of the phenomenon of dissenting public officials. For research to uphold the 'useful myth' rather than to dwell deeper into the phenomenon of inside activism is far more problematic and unethical, in our opinion, than to provide potential inspiration for misguided inside activism.

REFERENCES

Applbaum, A. I. (1992). Democratic legitimacy and official discretion. *Philosophy & Public Affairs, 21*(3), 240–274.

Davidoff, P. (1965). Advocacy and pluralism in planning. In S. S. Fainstein and S. Campbell (Eds.), *Readings in planning theory* (3rd Ed. in 2011, pp. 191–205). Oxford: Wiley–Blackwell.

De Graaf, G. (2015). The bright future of value pluralism in public administration. *Administration & Society, 47*(9), 1094–1102.

De Graaf, G., Huberts, L., & Smulders, R. (2016). Coping with public value conflicts. *Administration & Society, 48*(9), 1101–1127.

Hysing, E. (2009). Greening transport—explaining urban transport policy change. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning, 11*(3), 243–261.

Hysing, E. (2013). Representative democracy, empowered experts, and citizen participation: Visions of green governing. *Environmental politics, 22*(6), 955–974.

Hysing, E., & Olsson, J. (2011). Who greens the northern light? Green inside activists in local environmental governing in Sweden, *Environment and planning C: Government and policy, 29*(4), 693–708.

Needleman, M. L., & Needleman, C. E. (1974). *Guerrillas in the bureaucracy: The community planning experiment in the United States.* New York: Wiley.

O'Leary, R. (2014). *The ethics of dissent: managing guerrilla government* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Olsson, J. (2009). The power of the inside activist: Understanding policy change by empowering the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). *Planning Theory and Practice, 10*(2), 167–187.

Olsson, J. (2016). *Subversion in institutional change and stability. A neglected mechanism.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Saward, M. (1996). Must democrats be environmentalists? In B. Doherty and M. de Geus (Eds.), *Democracy and green political thought. Sustainability, rights and citizenship.* (pp. 79–96). London: Routledge.

Spicer, M. W. (2014). *In Defense of Politics in Public Administration. A value pluralist perspective.* Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press.

Svara, J. H. (2001). The Myth of the Dichotomy: Complementarity of politics and administration in the past and future of public administration. *Public Administration Review, 61*(2), 176–183.

Yeatman, A. (1990). *Bureaucrats, femocrats, technocrats. Essays on the contemporary Australian State.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Index