The Role of Intermediation for Public Open Innovation – The Case of Open Data in the UK

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As private sectors does (cf. Chesbrough, 2003; Huizingh, 2011), larger city halls increasingly make use of open innovation to respond to a growing competitiveness amongst other metropolitan cities (Parkinson et al., 2004). To tap into the innovative potential of public and private sector organisations in their environment, cities seek the collaboration with public open innovation (POI) intermediaries (Bakici et al., 2013). POI intermediaries are public or private firms, which function as bridges "across the large cognitive distances between city halls and a network of organisations, while orchestrating the collaboration of actors and executing innovation projects" (Bakici et al., 2013:311).

City halls might feel the need to innovate for different reasons. Following the neo-institutional strand of literature, one of these reasons can be the desire to regain organizational legitimacy, which has previously been challenged by social movements (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). When social movements gain momentum, city halls might feel the necessity to adapt for as much as it needs to regain legitimacy. One of such movements is Open Data, which has started as a social movement to achieve societal emancipation through transparency, accessibility and accountability (Davies, 2010).

We therefore think that it is worth investigating the role of POI intermediaries as boundary organisations between social movements and the public administration of metropolitan cities. Boundary organisations enable parties, who challenge established social systems to collaborate with defenders of those systems and to achieve mutual goals (O'Mahony & Bechky, 2008). We would like to understand how these boundary organisations emerge and what their practices in the process of public sector innovation are.

To answer these explorative questions, we will develop a single case study (Flyvbjerg, 2006) of the London-based *Open Data Institute* (ODI). As described in previous research (Heimstaedt et al., 2014; Heimstaedt, 2013) the Open Data Institute operates as a non-profit but independent innovation vehicle sponsored partly by the UK government to promote the use of Open Government Data. The data collection in London will be conducted within two weeks in summer 2014. Semistructured interviews and press material will be used to retrace the historical development of the ODI. Through a "quick" ethnography (Bate, 1997) we will be able to create a typology of organisational practices of this specific POI.

Literature

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