

# Public Management and Civil Society: Renewing and Reforming Relationships

## Proposal for a Panel at IRSPM 2019

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The relationships between governments and civil society organizations (CSOs) are undergoing enormous change in most countries. Policy and regulation of CSOs have been subject to more significant reform in the last 25 years than in the previous century (McGregor-Lowndes & Wyatt 2017), and arguably the pace and extent of change is accelerating as the sector becomes more complex and more hybrid. Financing and contracting models are also in flux as the popularity of social impact investment spreads, as governments introduce strategies to stimulate social finance and social innovation, and as more integrated models of service delivery are implemented. Growing income inequality is generating new questions about the public responsibilities of private wealth and greater scrutiny of when nonprofits are actually nonprofit. Differing assumptions about the role of CSOs in democracy are playing out both through attempts to restrict advocacy and, particularly in the US, to politicize the sector by facilitating greater participation in partisan politics. In contrast to the creation of more supportive policy frameworks for civil society and a greater role for nonprofits in public management in many countries, many other governments have intentionally restricted the space for CSOs to operate, seeking greater control over them (Breen 2015; Rutzen 2015).

In recent years, public management research has focused attention on the important topic of co-production of services (Osborne, Radnor & Strokosch 2016; Pestoff 2012; Vanleene, Voets & Verschuere 2018), but to the relative exclusion of these other important policy, regulatory, financing and relationship issues that also have significant consequences for how governments work with – or against – civil society and philanthropy.

This panel invites papers that provide critical analysis of the changing patterns of government-civil society relationships in different countries and of specific initiatives that attempt to renew or reform these relationships, with an assessment of the implications for public management. Papers that are comparative or would facilitate cross-country comparisons are particularly encouraged. The intent is that the papers (or a subset of them) will eventually be published as a collection similar to *Governance and Regulation in the Third Sector: International Perspectives* edited by the panel co-chairs.