

Editorial

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The 2017 IFIP Annual Conference was organized in cooperation with USE (Utrecht School of Economics) and EAEPE (European Association of Evolutionary Political Economy), and concentrated on several aspects of the „Res Publica“, the public cause or public interest. While economists have certainly developed many concepts on dealing with market failure and state intervention, law makers, courts, and governments regulate, provide and finance public activities such as public goods and services with much differentiated approaches, instruments and strategies. In this context, a new book (Unger et al., 2017) was published in 2017 dealing with specific topics in public and economic policies.

The discussion in the book and also during our conference was based on two broad sets of questions:

- i. What is public and why should something be in public responsibility? Which criteria, and theoretical and empirical arguments are relevant to determine whether the provision, and financing of a good is a public or private responsibility, or a mixture of both?
- ii. Who determines what is public and what is private? Which actors do what? And why are they doing this? How is the public intervention justified? How can one decide whether there is a role for public intervention, and given there is a role for public intervention, who intervenes and how?

This issue of “Der öffentliche Sektor – The Public Sector” is devoted to documenting key inputs of authors of the book as well as prominent experts in this field of economics. Professors Judith Clifton (Spain), Dieter Plehwe (Germany) and Lukas Haffert (Switzerland) gave talks on “Reflections on recent examples of public-private politics”, “Economists and the welfare state”, and “The effects of consolidation programs on public spending”, respectively. The talks were complemented by comments and short presentations by prominent authors of the Res Publica book.

The conference also included the award ceremony of this year’s Egon Matzner Prize for Socio-Economics which was conferred for the sixth time in 2017. We were glad to hear a presentation by Sonja Flechtner (Germany) about individual responsibilities in the context of poverty and social disparities.

I am very thankful to all contributors to our annual conference, and to all authors of this issue for their papers containing the main arguments made in their presentations. Also, I want to seize the opportunity and invite all interested audiences to the 2018 IFIP Annual Conference, on 1 March 2018 in Vienna. There, we will be focussing on housing policy and affordable housing. Please find more information here: www.tinyurl.com/ifip2018

Reference

Unger, B., v. d. Linde, D., Getzner, M. (2017). Public or Private Goods? Redefining Res Publica. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.